



chicago jewish historical society

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society news

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 1

SEPTEMBER, 1984

RECENT CHICAGO JEWISH ARTISTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT SEPTEMBER 16TH MEETING

Gathering at Spertus To Feature Talk and Slide Presentation

A prominent local artist will discuss Chicago Jewish artists of the period 1940-1980 at the Sunday, September 16 meeting of the Society. Using slides, Michael Karzen will demonstrate the contributions of local Jews to recent painting and sculpture.

The meeting will be held at 2:00 PM in Bederman Hall at Spertus College, 618 S. Michigan Avenue and will be preceded by a social hour at which refreshments will be served. The public is invited free of charge.

Heads American Jewish Art Club

Mr. Karzen is especially qualified to speak on his chosen topic by virtue of his many years as president of the American Jewish art Club, his years as a teacher and author, and his own distinguished record as an artist.

A graduate of the University of Chicago, which has awarded him a masters degree in fine arts, he has also done graduate work at the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of California at Los Angeles. He teaches at Clemente High School in Chicago and has written many articles and monographs in his field.

Paintings Widely Exhibited

His own paintings have been exhibited at the Art Institute, the University of Chicago, the Spertus Museum, and in many galleries. Mr. Karzen speaks as a practicing artist as well as a keen observer of art trends and developments. His works

are also in many private collections.

Among his many efforts to bring the work of Jewish artists to local attention have been lectures at local congregations including Anshe Emet, Temple Sholom, Oak Park Temple, KINS, and Solel. His formal title for the September 16th presentation is "Chicago Jewish Artists, 1940-1980: An Overview."

Mr. Karzen's talk and slide show will open the Chicago Jewish Historical Society's 1984-85 program season under the chairmanship of Burt Robin.

DES PLAINES STUDENT WINS CJHS PRIZE AT METRO HISTORY FAIR

Beth Gertz, 15, of Des Plaines won the prize offered by CJHS for the best essay on a local Jewish topic in the recent Chicago Metro History Fair.

The Forest View High School student won a cash award of \$25.00, some history books, and a one-year membership in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society for her essay titled, "Eastern European Jews in Chicago."

To prepare her essay Ms. Gertz interviewed her grandfather and other relatives who emigrated to Chicago from White Russia, and read books and articles on the topic of local Jewish immigration.

The Society has contributed prizes for essays on topics of local Jewish history for a number of years. This year the CJHS contribution was matched by a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council to further the work of the Metro History Fair, which is held annually at the Museum of Science and Industry.

President's MessageSUMMER ACTIVITIES PROVIDE
RICH HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES

This has been an exciting summer!

The interesting tours offered by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society (planned by Tour Chairperson Leah Axelrod and led by Leah Axelrod and Irv Cutler) have again provided a combination of nostalgia and information on Jewish history. The tour to Milwaukee is a first and has



President Schwartz

drawn an overcapacity response and undoubtedly will be repeated next year.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society co-sponsored a national seminar on genealogy which was well-planned, well-executed, and provided the participants (through a rich assortment of lectures, seminars, and trips to research sites) with more opportunities than they could possibly absorb. Congratulations are well deserved.

I have just returned from a Jewish United Fund mission to New York City to see "The Precious Legacy," an exhibit of Tenth to Twentieth Century Judaica. It consists of a selection of items confiscated by the Nazis and shipped to Prague for future use in a museum to an extinct race. Unfortunately it will not be shown in Chicago, but the exhibit is a must. Perhaps you can see it when it comes to Detroit (March 13 to May 5, 1985). A walking tour of the Lower East Side of New York City raised some questions about the state of preservation of Jewish history there.

We need your help in preserving Chicago Jewish history. You can collect archival material. You can volunteer your services to save Chicago's Precious Legacy.

Please call us.

--Norman D. Schwartz

SLIDE PRESENTATION DONATED
TO SOCIETY BY EX-PRESIDENTBoard Studies Possible Uses
For Gift from Rachel Heimovics

An important additional resource for the dissemination of information on local Jewish history was presented to the Society by Ex-President Rachel Heimovics before she moved to Florida.

Mrs. Heimovics has donated a complete copy of her slide presentation, "The History of Chicago Jewry." The gift includes trays of slides with an accompanying script so that the slides might be effectively commented upon as shown. The gift was made for the use of the Society and such other groups as the Society might wish to permit to use it.

During her many years of residence in the Chicago area, Mrs. Heimovics acquired extraordinary knowledge of local Jewish history, becoming an authority on it as a result of her research, publications, and public appearances. The slide presentation was prepared and used through the years in many of these appearances.

"We are grateful to Rachel for yet another contribution to the aims of our society," said President Norman D. Schwartz. "Our Board will be exploring the best possible uses of this valuable tool for the study of local Jewish history."

List Tentative Dates for
1984-85 Society Meetings

Members and friends of the CJHS are advised to make notes on their calendars of the tentative dates for 1984-85 meetings of the Society. According to Program Chairman Burt Robin, in addition to the September 16 meeting discussed on page one, these will be December 9, 1984; February 10, 1985; April 14, 1985; and June 2, 1985.

Most if not all of the meetings will be open to the public and to members. Some change in dates might be necessary, but such information, as well as the time and place of each meeting, will be included in future issues of Society News and other notices sent to members.

ORAL HISTORY TAPES INCLUDE JUDGE MAROVITZ; OTHERS ADDED RECENTLY

In its listing of oral history interviews which the Society has on tape published in the March, 1984, issue of Society News, two very important interviews were inadvertently omitted: both interviews were with Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, senior judge of the U.S. District Court.

The interviews dealt with the Judge's tremendous knowledge in the areas of law, government, and politics. The first interview dates back to 1974, while the later one was taped at a CJHS meeting in February of 1982 when the Judge spoke.

We regret the omission of these valuable tapes from that listing and are gratified that they do exist as a major contribution to local Jewish history.

Apart from the omission of Judge Marovitz's name, the list of oral histories in the Society's collection is already considerably longer than it was six months ago. Oral history co-chairmen Adele Hast and Sidney Sorkin and their volunteer group have added several other persons to the collection. Lists of additions will appear from time to time in future issues of this publication.

--I.J.S.

New Members of the Society

The Society welcomes the following new members who have joined in the late spring and early summer. Their membership indicates a desire to assist in the preservation of Chicago's Jewish heritage and to participate in the many entertaining and educational activities of our organization.

Mr. & Mrs. H. Alex
Gary Barron
Daniel E. Beederman
Irwin M. Berent
Mrs. Gerald Berryman
Rabbi & Mrs. T. Blanchard
Andrea J. Brown
Mrs. Esther Chroman
Marcella Corwin
Isaiah Dorfman
Sylvia Graber Foley
Lorraine Gerson

Mr. & Mrs. Ezra Gordon
Joan Halvorsen
Geraldine Holubow
Holli Rosenberg
Mrs. H. J. Rothenberg
Lillian Rubenstein
Mrs. Philip D. Sang
Howard A. Sulkin
Max Targ
Fagel Unterman
Leonard A. Worsek

Marion Cutler
Membership Chairman

of using larger buses where that is feasible. She can be reached at 423-7003.



Buses are almost a second home to CJHS Tour Chairman Leah Axelrod (right), who led two of the three summer tours offered by the Society.

SOCIETY'S SUMMER TOURS AGAIN DEMONSTRATE THEIR POPULARITY

Repeats of Some Sellouts Possible during 1985 Season

The Society's schedule of 1984 summer Sunday tours and visits proved once more to be one of our most popular offerings with two of the three bus tours selling out long before demand was satisfied and the third receiving "rave" reviews from its participants.

According to Tour Chairman Leah Axelrod, there is a good likelihood that next year's tours will include some repeats of current tours because so many interested people had to be turned away.

Sold out tours included Dr. Irving Cutler's half-day bus tour of "Chicago Jewish Roots" and Mrs. Axelrod's full day tour of "Jewish Milwaukee." A tour of North Shore congregations was also led by Mrs. Axelrod.

"The three low-cost tours offered during July and August are possible only because the two leaders donate both their time and their expertise," said CJHS President Norman Schwartz. "We are all grateful for their willingness to broaden our understanding of local Jewish history in such an enjoyable way."

Mrs. Axelrod, who has directed the Society's tour program since its inception, welcomes suggestions as to future tours and is looking into the possibility

NER TAMID CONGREGATION COMPLETES FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM IN WEST ROGERS PARK

Pioneer Group Witnesses Jewish Arrival and Departure

By Arthur Z. Wolke

Fifty years ago, in the depths of our country's worst depression and in the midst of an essentially gentile neighborhood, a few dozen Jews met in an office loft above stores on Devon and Campbell Avenues. Their purpose was one which has motivated Jewish families all over the world through the last two thousand years: to establish a house of worship, study, and assembly for their families.

At this meeting the North Town Jewish Community Center was organized. Shortly thereafter the group merged with the fledgling Northtown Hebrew Congregation, and in 1936 the combined congregation rented a hall on Devon and Fairfield Avenues in which to hold services.

Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary

Thus began Ner Tamid Congregation of North Town, the pioneer West Rogers Park Conservative congregation, which this year celebrates fifty years of service to the Jewish community.

Its first rabbi was Samuel Schnitzer, who served from 1935 to 1937. He was succeeded by Rabbi Chaim Cohen, who led the congregation for four years.

In 1938 the cornerstone was laid for the first part of the present building at 2754 West Rosemont Avenue, and later that year services were held in the unfinished building. In 1941 the pulpit was offered to its first long-term occupant, Rabbi Benjamin Birnbaum, who was to grace it until his death nearly twenty years later.

The Neighborhood Becomes Jewish

During Rabbi Birnbaum's tenure, the trickle of Jews moving into the West Rogers Park neighborhood became a flood. Instead of being virtually the only Jewish congregation in the area, Ner Tamid found itself welcoming new neighbors each year as congregations from the Jewish West Side moved northward.

Yet Ner Tamid continued to grow as the greatest concentration of synagogues in the city gathered in the area. Its Hebrew school, started just before Rabbi

Birnbaum's arrival, also flourished.

400 Students in Hebrew School

Under the dynamic direction of the late Harry Kessler, the Hebrew school grew to four hundred students and acquired the reputation of being one of the city's finest. Among its alumni are a number of rabbis, state legislators, and business and professional leaders, spread today throughout the continental United States, Hawaii, and Israel.

Cantor David Brandhandler, son of a prominent Norwegian rabbi, joined Ner Tamid in 1954 as cantor, a position he still holds. He has prepared hundreds of bar and bat mitzvahs and has added new music within the traditional framework of the religious services.

New Rabbis Take Over

Rabbi Stanley J. Schachter succeeded Rabbi Birnbaum in 1960 and provided active leadership until 1972, when he left to assume the vice-chancellorship of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Present spiritual leader is Rabbi Samuel Klein, a scholar concerned particularly with adult education who has introduced many new programs at the congregational level.

Changes Through the Years

Naturally, the congregation has changed with the times. As the years went by, the Jewish children who crowded the schools during the postwar years grew up, married, and moved to the suburbs. The congregational student body dwindled to the point where the Hebrew school was closed in 1974. Only recently, in yet another change, the previously dropped Sunday school was re-established.

While below its peak membership, Ner Tamid Congregation still counts 450 families on its rolls. The bulk live in West or East Rogers Park and Budlong Woods, yet many members come from Lake Shore Drive and from Lincolnwood, Skokie, and other suburbs. Another contingent have retired to warmer climates, but are sustaining members and welcome periodic



Ner Tamid Congregation as it appears today after fifty years. The school building to the left was added in the Nineteen Sixties.

IN SEARCH OF

Research Project Seeks Jewish Survivors Rescued Through Aid of Righteous Gentiles during World War II

I am writing you because I need your help. I was born in Poland and survived the War by being rescued by a kind and wonderful Polish peasant family. I left Poland as a boy in 1945 and I have been in the United States since 1950. I am now a citizen of the United States.

As you know, there has been a great deal of interest in the Holocaust. Many claim that the people of Europe cooperated with the Nazis in the destruction of the Jews. While this was largely true, many people risked their lives to rescue

participants.

Maintains Broad Range of Programs

It is still necessary to offer High Holyday services in two locations to handle the crowds. The second location, led for nearly twenty-five years by Visiting Rabbi Mordecai Simon, is an important congregational entity.

Although worship continues to be the congregation's basic purpose, it maintains a broad program of other activities. Its sisterhood and men's club are active organizations; its unusually well-stocked and staffed library has many book borrowers; its numerous adult education programs are popular. Among its special programs are ones for Russian Jews, for bereaved families, and for visitation of the sick, as well as a scholar-in-residence.

Thus Ner Tamid Congregation enters its second half-century busy, healthy, happy, and looking ahead with confidence.

Jews and others. This was especially true in Holland, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Bulgaria.

I have long been interested in this topic of heroic rescue. Recently, the John Slawson Fund of the American Jewish Committee awarded me a grant to conduct a study of these heroic individuals. The study will consist of interviewing survivors and rescuers in all of the above-named countries, as well as the U.S. and Canada.

We need your help in locating survivors and rescuers. Because the War generation is dying out, time is of the essence. Could you please communicate our need to your readers?

I would like to hear from survivors who have been rescued by Gentiles in Nazi-occupied Europe. By survivors, I mean those who survived the war as a direct result of some Gentile aiding them. Please ask them to send me a brief description of: 1) name and address of the rescuer; 2) where they were rescued; 3) duration of rescue, the kind of aid received, and any other important details; 4) why, in the survivor's opinion, the rescuer(s) helped him or her; and 5) if the survivor would be willing to be interviewed by a member of our research project.

Samuel P. Oliner
Professor of Sociology
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521

Note: "In Search of...." welcomes inquiries concerning Chicago Jewry which our readers might be able to answer. Send them to the Editor, Society News.

JULY SEMINAR ON JEWISH GENEALOGY ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM ACROSS U.S.

CJHS Plays Important Role In Planning and Programs

by Mark Mandle

For four days in July, I thought that I had left Chicago and entered nineteenth century Russia. I wasn't in a time warp but rather at Routes to Roots, the Fourth National Seminar on Jewish Genealogy. This seminar was co-sponsored by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and held in Evanston, Illinois, July 22-25, 1984.

One hundred and eighty people from across the country attended the seminar. People attending ranged from those just beginning to explore their family history to advanced genealogists who had worked on their roots for several years. They had started doing family genealogy because of curiosity, a need to examine their Jewish identity (perhaps a la the book Roots), and perhaps a need to find yichus--status.

A Broad Range of Activities

The seminar featured a comprehensive schedule of programs, workshops, panels, field trips to research sites, and exhibits. There were fascinating programs on general topics such as health care records and yizkor books (community memorial volumes published after the Holocaust). The field trips covered a variety of sites including Hebrew Theological College and the Chicago Regional Branch of the National Archives.

Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, president of the Jewish Genealogical Society Inc. (New York) was keynote speaker. (A report on his speech appears elsewhere in this issue.) Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, founder of the Jerusalem Institute for Jewish Genealogy, was seminar scholar in residence. Rabbi Gorr spoke on his Chicago Jewry project, 1880-1922, and discussed the subject of Jewish personal names.

Extensive CJHS Participation

A planning committee from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois and Chicago Jewish Historical Society, including Janet I. Hagerup as Seminar Chairman and



Planning committee members for July's Seminar on Genealogy masquerading as their ancestors. Clockwise from the top: Freya Maslov, Judith Frazin, Mark Mandle, Bobbie Berkowitz.

Mark Mandle as preparer of some bibliographies had worked diligently for several months preparing for the seminar. Several other Chicago Jewish Historical Society board members participated in the seminar.

Irving Cutler and Leah Axelrod gave tours of past Chicago Jewish neighborhoods. Dr. Cutler also presented his audio-visual program, "From Maxwell Street to Highland Park." Charles B. Bernstein spoke on Legal Records and their Genealogical Applications, and Sidney Sorkin spoke on Landsmanschaften and on Oral History Techniques. Norman and Moselle Schwartz served as volunteers for some of the field trips, and Elsie Orlinsky, an archivist at the Chicago Jewish Archives of Spertus College of Judaica, assisted participants at the Archives.

People at the seminar had a fascinating variety of backgrounds. They included those who could trace their forebears to twelfth century Spain, sixteenth century Germany, and a Skokie man, Dr. George Sackheim, who has found 9,000 relatives on his family tree.

The seminar was rewarding, hectic, and an excellent learning experience. It was an opportunity for genealogists to share information, and whether they had Chicago roots or not, to learn something about Chicago Jewish history.



Planning committee members for July's Seminar on Genealogy masquerading as their ancestors. Clockwise from top right: Charles Bernstein, Natalie Bradford, Janet Hagerup, Dale Amdur, Scott Meyer.

SEMINAR HEARS RABBI STERN ON JEWISH MIGRATION AND SURNAMES

by Mark Mandle

Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, considered by many to be the father of Jewish Genealogy, was an important speaker at the recently held National Seminar of Jewish Genealogy, co-sponsored by the Society.

Rabbi Stern came from New York to give the keynote speech, "Jewish Migration Through the Ages, a Framework for Jewish Genealogy." He discussed the uniqueness of Jewish history from the Bible to today, detailing the history of Jewish migrations to the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. He compared the Sephardi and Ashkenazi streams of practice in Jewish naming traditions and languages. He then talked about the several waves of Jewish migrations to America.

He thus provided a systematic framework for understanding Jewish genealogy through the experience of Jewish history.

Rabbi Stern also gave the seminar a fascinating speech on Jewish surnames titled "Jewish Surnames as a Clue to Genealogy," in which he explained the origins of several types of names. Some Biblical names are divinity names using "el," like Ezekiel. There are post-Bib-

BERNSTEIN DISCUSSES USE OF LEGAL RECORDS AS GENEALOGICAL TOOLS

Charles B. Bernstein, noted Chicago genealogist, historian, and long-time Chicago Jewish Historical Society board member, presented an excellent workshop entitled Legal Records and their Genealogical Applications at the recently held National Seminar on Jewish Genealogy. Bernstein's comprehensive presentation covered probate records, divorce cases, and adoption records. He touched on naturalization records; birth, marriage, and death certificates; business records; current voting records; real estate records; and records held by the Chicago Municipal Reference Library.

Bernstein took his audience step-by-step through Chicago's Daley Center, explaining what records were available and how to use them. He made the records come alive and gave special tips on what to expect and how to act at Daley Center. He provided a great deal of information which would be helpful not only to genealogists but also to people researching Chicago Jewish history. --Mark Mandle

lical patronymic names using the father's name, like Rabbi Eleazar ben Azarya; and acronyms such as Rashi for Rabbi Shlomo ben Isaac. Later surnames came from geographical names--usually the place from which one came-- house names such as Rothschild (red shield); or matronymic based on mother's name, like Gittelson.

Sephardic names commonly predate Ashkenazic names and first came from baptismal names converted Jews continued to use after they reverted to Judaism. Ashkenazi surnames seem to have started around the time of the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648, and became much more common at the end of the eighteenth century.

There are also special categories of Jewish names. Cohen and Levi/Levy were originally the titles of priest and levite preserved by ritual in traditional synagogues. Austro-Hungarian registrars used physical descriptions such as Gross (big or fat) or Klein (small). Suffixes like -ski, -witz, or -ovitch in surname endings mean "son of."

Learning about Jewish genealogy, history, and names through Rabbi Stern's presentation helps us to understand ourselves and our history as Chicago Jews.

LOST WALDHEIM CEMETERY REDISCOVERED AS AMATEUR GENEALOGISTS PERSIST IN SEARCH FOR ANCESTRAL ROOTS

Spokane Woman's Letter to the Society Spurs Search for Dorsche-Moische

By Sidney Sorkin

The Society News for June, 1982, contained in its "In Search of..." column a letter from a Spokane, Washington, woman who was seeking her genealogical roots and searching for the grave of a Jewish grandfather who was buried in 1926 in a cemetery in Jewish Waldheim that had somehow gotten lost. Despite the best efforts of many cemetery officials who worked with me and the woman, Amie Louise Picard, when she visited in Chicago, neither the cemetery nor the grave could be found.

Although no Society News reader was able to help, I am happy to be able to bring to its readers some very interesting developments which have resulted in locating the missing cemetery and, perhaps, ultimately the grave of Mrs. Picard's grandfather.

Genealogical Interest Prompts Search

The joys of the amateur genealogists are small but intense and come from a long labor of a painstaking kind of love. As Mrs. Picard wrote on January 18, 1984:

I was so thrilled to receive your letter that I simply had to call. Time and patience are very important; this is the fourth year that I have been working on this. I have come a long way considering there was really nothing to start with.

The obstacles encountered by the genealogists generally and Mrs. Picard in particular are marked not only by their variety, but also by their large number.

There are treasures to be found in libraries, both public and private, in attics, closets, trunks, photo albums, garages, and even laundry bags. There is a beginning even for the genealogist: it is called life; and there is an end for all of us: it is called death. For the dead there is a place and the Greeks had a word for it: "cemetery."

The beginning as well as the end for the genealogist at some time is in the

cemetery. It is a most important element in research, especially if written records cannot be found. But then, cemeteries are for the living as well as for the dead. Cemeteries provide an immediate repository for the deceased, some comfort for the mourners; they may satisfy the curiosity of the tourist, add some assurance to the historian, provide a capstone for the antiquarian as well as a haunt for the genealogist.

It is one kind of frustration not being able to find a grave or a family plot in a given cemetery. It is another kind of frustration and anguish, even disbelief, when a cemetery cannot be found. When Mrs. Picard came to Chicago, there was a cemetery lost. Somewhere within Jewish Waldheim lay Dorsche-Moische, but where?

Looking for Harry Friedman's Past

This is first of all the story of the search for Harry Phillip Friedman. It is a search by his last living grandchild. It is a search for a grandfather she never knew. In immediate terms, both the time and the distance are large. It is fifty-eight years since Mr. Friedman died, and his granddaughter lives more than 2000 miles away.

A portion of the story of this Jewish immigrant is explained by Mrs. Picard:

I was never able to get any more information on my grandfather's service record. A claim number finally led me to the Chicago Title and Trust Company.

Harry P. Friedman 2962332
National Army, from May 28, 1918, to
August 1, 1918
Honorable Discharge, Camp Dix, New
Jersey

Physical Disability
Date of birth August 26, 1887, Russia

I tried the Veterans Administration. They used his name and claim number but could not give me any information.

During these years of research, correspondence, and phone calls, the cemetery was still lost to her and indeed to many

of us here in Chicago.

As early as the tenth of August, 1835, the City of Chicago had surveyed and marked two cemeteries, one each for the North and South sides. The North side site is the most famous. This one, near the Chicago Historical Society, has a mausoleum belonging to the Couch family, which still stands. That cemetery had to be moved for many reasons, one of the major ones being the washing up of bones from the shallow graves by a stormy Lake Michigan.

Waldheim Becomes a Cemetery

The surveying for the two city cemeteries had been done in 1835, and the last Indian was buried in the Waldheim area, to the west, that year also. Twenty years later the first white settler was buried in the Waldheim area. The Jews were not far behind in using the Waldheim location.

Waldheim is a name that is given to two major cemeteries, the Jewish Waldheim and, to the north, the non-sectarian cemetery where the martyrs of the Haymarket Riot as well as Emma Goldman are buried. The non-Jewish Waldheim was founded and incorporated with state license #2 in 1876.

Waldheim is one of thirteen Jewish cemeteries in the Chicago Metropolitan area. Though it is not the oldest, it is by far the largest. Its location was to give it a special place in Chicago Jewish history.

Jewish Waldheim Has 301 Cemeteries

Jewish Waldheim is located in the southwest area of suburban Forest Park, almost due west of the Maxwell Street and Lawndale sections of the city. The one and one-quarter square miles of cemetery is bounded on the south by Cermak Road, on the north by Roosevelt Road, on the east by Harlem Avenue and on the west by the Des Plaines River. There are 301 numbered gates, with an additional fourteen subdivided A, B, or C sections.

The forerunner of many a Jewish congregation was a burial or benevolent society. This was the case with the pioneer Chicago congregation of K.A.M.

Fraternal organizations were among the first to purchase lots in Jewish Waldheim and have the largest number of gates. Anshe Kanesses has gate #1, and gate #301 belongs to the Masons. Each gate has a sponsor as well as a number, and the DesPlaines Avenue gates alone go

from A, Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation, to Z, Zidetshover Cemetery Association, with yet another alphabetical listing for other gates on Harlem Avenue. The story of the lost Dorsche-Moische is buried someplace behind one of those gates.

Losing a Cemetery

Dorsche-Moische, all of it, the entire cemetery section under that name, was missing. Could it have been removed, misspelled, or misplaced? Something becomes lost even before you cannot find it. The fact that this cemetery was lost first came to public notice in 1981.

The "In Search of..." column in the June, 1982, Society News contained Mrs. Picard's letter, which said in part:

Harry Friedman married my grandmother, Mamie Gilstrap, on June 30, 1911, in Evanston, Illinois. I went down to the Cook County Records office and got a copy of the marriage certificate when I was in Chicago last May. The only way that I will ever find out where they buried him is if we can find a living relative.

Who buried Mr. Friedman? An editor's note to the Picard letter reported the results of my initial researches:

Harry Phillip Friedman died on February 24, 1926, and was buried in Waldheim by Silverman and Weiss, in a section, designated on the death certificate, called Dorsche-Moische. Silverman and Weiss, however, cannot find any records (or maps) showing the existence of a cemetery section by that name.

Role of the Sextons

The organizations and congregations which sponsored cemetery sections were small, frequently poor, and not always appealing to the upwardly-mobile younger generations, and some of them disappeared entirely while others were merged into other groups, sometimes twice or even more times. Who was to keep the records, arrange for maintenance and continued existence of these little cemetery sections?

Fortunately there are about a half-dozen companies and associations which, among them, serve as permanent sextons for all the cemeteries in Jewish Waldheim,

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Lost Jewish Cemetery Found [Continued]

[Continued from page 9]

arranging burials, stone-settings, and the like as well as serving as record keepers. Silverman and Weiss, which buried Mr. Friedman in 1926, is one of these sextons.

Role of the Chevra Kadisha

Judaism has traditions that are thousands of years old, and some of these customs and traditions are concerned with death and burial. A cemetery, though not sacred in a religious sense, nevertheless carries a sense of sanctity in our Jewish community. From the cave purchased by Abraham at Beer Sheva to the burial of Harry P. Friedman in Waldheim, there have been variations in tombs, stones, caves, crypts, plots, and mausoleums in a variety of places throughout the entire diaspora.

Part of the mystery of the missing cemetery may have been related to an ancient tradition by a very special group in Jewish communal life. Sometime between Abraham and Mr. Friedman begins the story of the Chevra Kadish, or holy friends. The workers of the Chevra Kadisha are those men and women who perform the prescribed preparations for an Orthodox burial. This brotherhood/sisterhood was a highly regarded, very closely knit, powerful section of the Jewish community and communal organization in most of Europe and the Near East.

It was their responsibility to prepare the body and provide the simple burial raiment for its interment. In the case of the poor, and there is poverty even in death, they would also provide a place for burial. If it were a rich man, and he had been parsimonious during his lifetime, there were even threats, and sometimes the body was held as hostage. The family of the deceased was forced to pay a handsome fee before the funeral took place, for the benefit of those who could not afford burial expenses. These societies no longer have that kind of power, but in some circles they still carry on with the prestige of a group that performs a mitzvah.

Dorsche-Moische Again!

Since Mrs. Picard's original letter, pieces of information have come together to help answer the question of where the Dorsche-Moische Cemetery is. Finding the grave site of Harry P. Friedman is now in

the realm of real probability.

Here is what happened. Russell Blender of Highland Park was looking for the grave site of his great-grandmother, Bessie Shiparetsky. Millions came to America, thousands came to Chicago, and Bessie was one of those thousands who came here to make a new life. Bessie had made the overland journey and the great crossing from the shtetl of Wasilkow, near the great city of Kiev in the Russian Ukraine.

She had died in October of 1917 and was buried in Jewish Waldheim, under the direction of the sexton, Silverman and Weiss, also in the section called Dorsche-Moische. Within two weeks after Mr. Blender called me seeking any pertinent landsmanschaft information as well as the location of the lost cemetery, he called back with some good news.

The Lost Is Found

Three months earlier Mr. Blender, in the process of doing his own family genealogy, had called Mr. Irving Lapping, an executive of Barnett Joseph & Sons, another firm of sextons, as well as the office of Silverman and Weiss, in a fruitless search for information. Some time after that conversation, he called Mr. Lapping again about the lost Dorsche-Moische, and they had good news for him!

In the interval between his first and second calls an elderly couple had walked into the office on DesPlaines Avenue and mentioned the Dorsche-Moische Cemetery. He repeated part of the conversation as follows:

Sexton: Do you know where Dorsche-Moische is located?

Couple: Of course we know. Why do you ask?

Sexton: Because we have no record of it and cannot find it on our map!

Couple: Oh, that's easy: it's right here on Des Plaines Avenue at gate #49!

Further Search Now Possible

Mr. Blender can now continue in his search, and as Mrs. Picard said in the closing paragraph of her most recent letter:

I will start saving to come again someday, and hopefully by then we will have even more information.

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LEAH AXELROD PAYS TRIBUTE TO RACHEL HEIMOVICS AT JUNE MEETING

Sunday Brunch Also Features Presentation, Klezmer Band

The Society's June meeting featured a special brunch for members only, entertainment by the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band, and an address in appreciation of departing President Rachel B. Heimovics, who has moved to Florida.

The appreciation, given by CJHS Board Member Leah Axelrod, struck a personal note early on because Mrs. Axelrod grew up in the Milwaukee synagogue of which Mrs. Heimovics' father was rabbi, knew her as a neighbor when both had moved to Highland Park, and had worked with her in many local activities, not the least of which was the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. She spoke with a personal warmth immediately felt and echoed by Mrs. Heimovics' many friends and admirers in the audience.

Her Achievements Mentioned

Mentioned were some of Mrs. Heimovics' achievements in the area of local Jewish history, including her work on the early architect Dankmar Adler, her slide lecture on Chicago Jewish history, her

Lost Cemetery [Concluded]

There are many faded and rusted blue-and-white signs that mark the entrances to the cemeteries of congregations, fraternal orders, cousins' clubs, landsmanschaften, and family circles. On gate #49 the sign reads "Machzicki Hadas." In many instances the sign carries only part of the name and part of the story. There is a congregation called Chevro Kadisho Machzick Hadas at 2040 West Devon, whose rabbi is Yehudah D. Goldman, Apparently somewhere in its past or in the past of Gate #49 there was a Dorsche-Moische.

There are still some unanswered questions. Why was Mr. Friedman buried there? Mr. Friedman was married to a non-Jew; why so Orthodox a burial? What was the role of the Chevra Kadisha?

His actual grave is yet to be found. But, with this new information, the mystery is partially solved and the lost cemetery has been found.



President Norman D. Schwartz presents a farewell gift to departing ex-President Rachel Heimovics at the June meeting of the Society.

Photo by Moselle A. Schwartz

many program appearances at the Society and other groups, and her publication of The Chicago Jewish Source Book, a compendium of area Jewish resources published a few years ago.

After Mrs. Axelrod's appreciation, the Society presented Mrs. Heimovics with a mizrach, a work of art which designates and adorns the eastern wall of a Jewish home. The framed paper cut-out of richly embellished Hebrew letters was personally executed for her by talented Chicago artist Rose Ann Chasman.

Klezmer Band Proves Popular

The Maxwell Street Klezmerim, a young group playing Yiddish music from early in the century, not only set hands clapping and feet keeping time but also had much of the audience on their feet doing Jewish dances old and new.

Several members expressed their appreciation for the fine program and full brunch provided at such a nominal cost and expressed a desire for a similar "members only" affair next year.

The meeting was held Sunday, June 3, at Spertus College. Both the program and the brunch were organized and supervised by founding President Muriel Robin and the Society Program Chairman Burt Robin.

Rachel Heimovics, a founder of CJHS, completed a two-year term as Society president in June. A message of appreciation from the American Jewish Historical Society for her work was also read at the meeting.

--I.J.S.