

Look to the rock from which you were hewn  
הביטו אל-צור הצבתם



# chicago jewish historical society

618 South Michigan • Chicago, Illinois 60605 • Telephone: (312) 663-5634

## society news

VOL. V - NO. 2

FEBRUARY, 1982

C J H S PRESENTS

THE FIRST CHICAGO ROUNDTABLE  
IN LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1982

10 AM TO 4 PM

at

Spertus College of Judaica

All sessions conducted as  
Roundtable Discussions

### SCHEDULE

10:00 AM Registration  
10:30 to 12:30: Two Simultaneous  
Sessions:  
A. Jewish Genealogy  
B. Synagogue Documentation  
12:30 to 1:30: Kosher Buffet Lunch  
1:30 to 3:30: Two Simultaneous  
Sessions  
A. Neighborhood Documentation  
B. One-of-a-Kind Local  
Research Projects  
3:30 to 4:00 Conclusions

Registration Fee - \$3.00 for members  
\$5.00 non-members  
includes Lunch

If you wish to participate and have not  
yet registered, phone at once to:  
Rachel Heimovics, 831-2548  
or Mark Mandle, 252-8443  
Co-Chairmen of the Day

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND  
OUR MEETING

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 14, 1982

PROGRAM

THE ADVENTURES OF A SOLDIER-RABBI

Presented by

RABBI OSCAR LIFSHUTZ

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) U.S. Army, Ret.  
Rabbi, Agudas Achim North Shore Cong.  
Member, Chaplaincy Commission, JWB

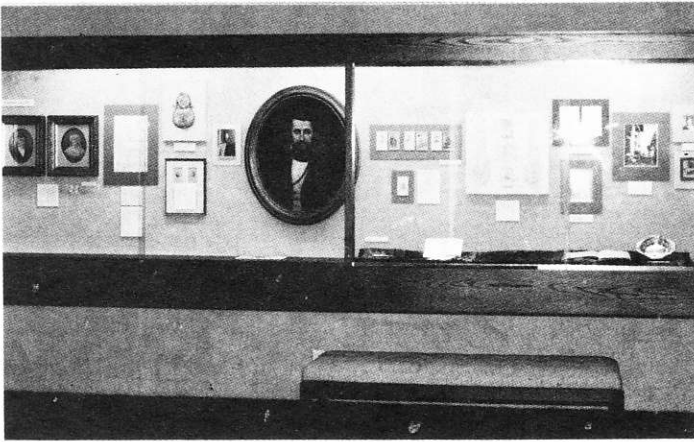
BEDERMAN HALL

SPERTUS COLLEGE OF JUDAICA

618 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago

ALL WELCOME

1:30 PM - SOCIAL HOUR      2:00 PM - PROGRAM



A portion of the Tombstones and Castles exhibit presented by C.J.H.S. at Spertus College. It has been extended through April of 1982. (Photo by Burt Robin)

### CJHS-SPERTUS FAMILY HISTORY EXHIBIT EXTENDED THROUGH APRIL

Tombstones and Castles, an exhibit displaying the interesting and surprising results of one woman's search for her ancestors and their history, has been extended and will remain open to the public through April. The exhibit, resulting from the interest of Mary Lou Seidenfeld in her roots, is being presented by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society in cooperation with Spertus Museum of Judaism and is on the second floor of the Spertus College building.

The Seidenfeld collection demonstrates how one can recreate personal history through family archives, an aunt with a fondness for family stories, and public records. The story stretches from nearby Homewood, Illinois, back through the years to a castle on the Rhine. Included in the exhibit are an old diary, portraits, a ketubah, and a folding spoon used for travel as well as other family mementoes.

The exhibit was prepared under the direction of Norman Schwartz, C.J.H.S. exhibit chairman, and Mrs. Seidenfeld and was opened in September. Maria Holden was the designer.

It traces the history of the various branches of her family from its base in the Grand Duchy of Liechtenstein during the nineteenth century to its presence in the Chicago area today. A factsheet which includes a brief bibliography of Jewish genealogy resources is furnished visitors to the display.

At the February C.J.H.S. meeting, a roundtable will discuss tracing Jewish genealogy such as that behind this exhibit.

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Through this issue of Society News I am pleased to greet our members and friends and to invite you to enjoy the many articles of Chicago history and of the Society activities on the following pages.

This issue introduces our new editor, Dr. Irwin Suloway. We welcome him and look forward to the continuing publication of interesting and informative editions of Society News. A brief biographical sketch of Irwin appears on page 6.

This year marks the completion of the first 5 years of the CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY - a period of great and varied activities. Our committees and board have functioned, though some of the people have moved on and others replaced them, and our reputation as an important Chicago Jewish organization has grown. We have changed some of our directions and we hope to continue to grow and change in the coming years. We welcome and need the participation and encouragement of you, our members and friends, to find new ways to preserve, record and study the history of the Jews of Chicago. Our meeting on Sunday, February 21st, is an example of a new type of activity. I hope that you will enjoy this program of participation.

JEWISH MUSIC IN CHICAGO - A 75 YEAR RETROSPECT will be presented on May 23rd at Loop Synagogue - a joint program of CJHS and the Institute for Jewish Sound Recording. It will be a beautiful day of celebration to conclude our 5th year. Ticket information will be forthcoming.

Shalom.

MURIEL ROBIN

## OPEN MICHAEL REESE CORNERSTONE AT CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

CONTENTS PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO  
19TH CENTURY CHICAGO JEWRY

A chamber brass band, sunshine, and a crowd approaching 250 were present July 2 to help open the Michael Reese Hospital cornerstone. The cornerstone, containing historical documents, was laid on July 4, 1905, for the second and larger Michael Reese Hospital, replacing the original hospital built in 1881. The 1981 cornerstone opening was part of Michael Reese Hospital's centennial celebration.

The outdoor ceremony was held in front of the Main Reese building on the northeast corner of 29th and Ellis Ave., next to the Michael Reese statue, which overlooked two eight-foot tables on which some of the documents removed from the cornerstone were displayed under glass.

### A Storehouse of Jewish History

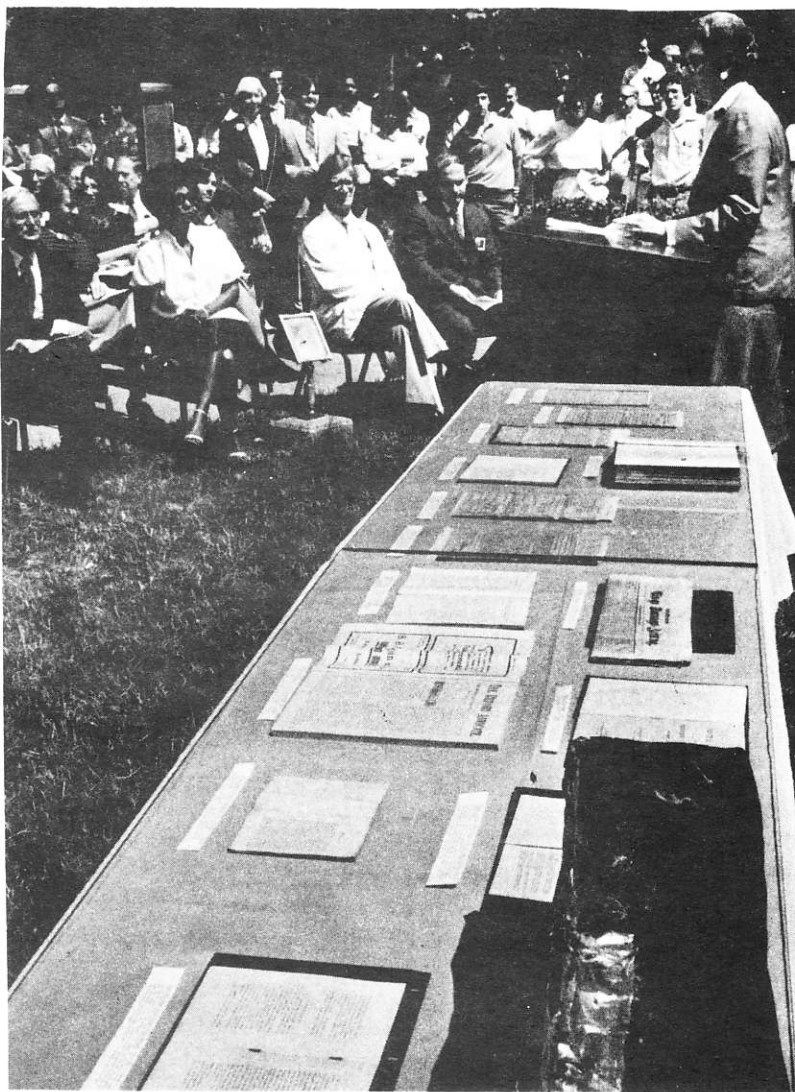
While the cornerstone itself was sealed in 1905, many if not most of its contents, were from the original 1881 cornerstone. All in all they represent a rich resource for students of Chicago Jewish history.

In addition to the 1879 handwritten will of Michael Reese, a bachelor whose \$50,000 bequest made the hospital possible, there were numerous other papers relating to the hospital's founding and a set of rules and regulations at the time of the construction of the building replacing the original in 1905. Many reports of the activities of the United Hebrew Relief Association, which, as the predecessor to the United Jewish Federation operated the hospital from its inception, were also found.

### Records of Early Congregations

Other significant items included charters or current constitutions of the four congregations which, with B'nai B'rith and other organizations, constituted the Relief Association in 1881. These were Kehilath Anshe Maariv (now KAM-Isaiah Israel), Chicago Sinai Congregation, Zion Temple (now Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion) and North Side Hebrew Congregation (now Temple Sholom).

Sermons by Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch of Sinai and Liebman Adler of KAM, all more than



Michael Reese relative Mrs. Malcolm N. Smith addresses guests attending the cornerstone ceremony. Afterward guests viewed cornerstone items on display, including the copper box that held historical documents for 76 years.

one hundred years old, were found in addition to five volumes by Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal of Zion Temple. Felsenthal's works included two Hebrew grammars--one dating back to 1866--as well as books in German on Jewish schools in America (1866) and a critique of Christian proselytizing of American Jews (1869).

Also in the cornerstone were some twenty copies of various newspapers in English and in German and some Jewish magazines covering a period from 1867 through 1905. In each case the newspaper contained items of Jewish interest.

The various documents will be stored in the rather extensive archives, mainly medical, already in existence at Reese. They will be available for study by qualified interested persons by appointment made with David Burns, hospital archivist, at 791-4476.

Valued documents were retrieved by engineers who chipped and drilled to get into the Michael Reese cornerstone



### INGENUITY, HARD WORK REQUIRED TO FIND REESE CORNERSTONE

It took more than a jackhammer to discover the 1905 Main Reese cornerstone. The Engineering Department resorted to creative ingenuity and two days of sheer manual labor to find and retrieve the hospital's "buried" treasure, a copper box containing historical documents, located within the walls of the Nursing Service staffing office.

The documents, discussed on page three, constitute an important addition to the archives of Chicago Jewish history.

#### Documents Hard to Get At

"First we had to locate the copper box, then come up with the right tools to get at

### TWO CJHS BOARD MEMBERS APPEAR ON TV PROGRAM

Two members of the Board of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society appeared on "Of Cabbages and Kings," Sunday, August 2, 1981, at noon on WLS-TV, with host Rabbi Herman Schaalman of Temple Emanuel. Rachel Baron Heimovics, historian and author of the recently published The Chicago Jewish Source Book, and Dr. Irving Cutler, professor of geography and department chairman at Chicago State University, and author of Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent, discussed historical development and contemporary status of Jews in the Chicago area.

Dr. Cutler narrated a number of slides of past and present Jewish communities. Rachel Heimovics discussed the uses of her book, a directory of resources encompassing all facets of the Jewish community.

it, "Bob Quinn explained. . ." "Before beginning, we really didn't know where we were supposed to start," Mr. Quinn continued. "A lot of people were involved in just locating the copper box. Mike Czub finally thought of using a metal detector to locate it from the outside of the building."

The engineers then had to figure a way to retrieve it from the inside. "We ended up having to chip out a two-foot-thick wall," explained Mr. Quinn, "then go down 21 inches to the copper box, and another 18 inches below that." He added, "We needed a half-dozen different tools. We discovered we had to use smaller tools to get the job done ..."

The chaos, dust, and hard work finally paid off when the lid was removed from the copper box, revealing not only treasures from Reese's past but also important relics of Chicago's Jewish community.

Paula Shaffer  
Michael Reese Staff

# SOCIETY NEWS

Society News is published by the CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605 Telephone: (312)663-5634. Editorial Inquiries should be directed to (312)348-2800.

President . . . . . Muriel Robin  
Editor . . . . . Irwin J. Suloway

#### Editorial Board

Marion Cutler, Rachel Heimovics, Mark Mandle, Burt Robin, Sidney Sorkin

IMPORTANT NEW MATERIALS  
RECEIVED BY CJHS ARCHIVES

Last summer and fall were busy seasons for the Spertus Chicago Jewish Archives. The Chicago Jewish Historical Society received some very interesting contributions both from individuals and from organizations.

We received a letter describing the contents of an accompanying package from Jean Gamin of Miami, Florida. She had seen one of our Newsletters, the one with the picture of the 1892 class of the Jewish Manual Training School of Chicago. Her grandfather was the founder of the school, and she sent a great deal of material about him and the school. These pictures and the information she sent here greatly enriched our collection.

Mr. Charles Goldberg gave Sidney Sorokin several cartons of memorabilia from the "Synagogue That Would Not Die," now known as Agudath Achim-Bikur Cholim.

Organizations Contribute

The Chicago Board of Rabbis was required to move their offices and therefore to "houseclean." This was then a perfect time to separate their archival from their ongoing usable materials. Consequently, we now have photos, correspondence, and old records to be catalogued and placed in the C.J.H.S. permanent archival collection.

The United Synagogue of America, Chicago office, also facing a move, is putting its archival materials together for us.

Mrs. Apter of the National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago Chapter, has been gathering Council materials, both old and current, (the former becoming archival records), and periodically sends them to us.

The recent closing of the Drexel Home for the Aged resulted in the acquisition of valuable records and lists of residents in that almost one-century-old South Side Institution.

We Want More

Charters, clippings, letters, photographs, family histories and directories, yearbooks and adbooks, as well as flyers and meeting notes, all are important to present and future interested researchers and historians as well as the curious public. Developing an archival collection is so important to the Jewish community of

IN SEARCH OF . . . .

Board Member Sidney Sorokin conducts this inquiry service for persons seeking information about Jewish individuals or organizations from Chicago's past. When he cannot supply the information himself, he prints the information sought in Society News. Individuals with questions to ask can write him in care of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. Persons with information may send it directly to the addresses indicated.

Former Chicagoan  
Seeks Father's Roots

Dear Sid:

You'll recall my two main interests: (1) Learning about my father's life in Chicago during the period 1912 - 1931, (his having come from Gomel, in the Ukraine (Homel) where he was born in 1897 in the providence of Hoghileff, then having lived in New York for six years); and (2) Documenting (especially with photographs) as much as possible my childhood on the West Side, including living in back of my Dad's stores on West 16th Street between Drake and St. Louis, 1939 - 1941, and on the 3500 block of West Roosevelt Road, 1941 - 1949, and 3506 West Ogden, 1936 - 1939.

If you ever run across a Vietka (Vetka) verein...Many of my ancestors lived in Vietka, a small town near Homel...one of several Ekaterinoslaver landsmanschaften: my father belonged to one with a cemetery section in the Jewish Waldheim Cemetery at 19th and Harlem...my father is buried in this section block 451 and lot 2801....

I'm super-interested in the HOMLER PROGRESSIVE UNTERSTITZUNG VEREIN, founded April 10, 1913....The first Lubliner Independent Society, of which my father was a member from 1940-51, despite the fact that he wasn't from Lublin.... Anyone with information may contact Phil Chavin, Tre Liljor 6, 111 - 113 44 Stockholm, Sweden, or the Society.

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Chicago and America. So, if you have any material or leads, please contact the C.J.H.S. office, (312) 663-5634 or the undersigned at 643-9666.

Elsie Orlinsky  
Archive Acquisitions



### Who Are These People?

Dear Mr. Sorkin:

My grandfather, Edward Rubovitz, was the full-time secretary or director of the Jewish Charities of Chicago, and is sitting at the official desk in this photograph taken around 1898 or 1900. Who is the lady sitting at the other desk? Who is the young man sitting near him? Where is the office? Michael Reese hospital, which published this photograph as part of its centennial, says that the office was on 26th Street. During which years was he the executive secretary, and what was the exact name of the organization? What were its activities during those years?

I am sure that somewhere a historian of the Jewish Charities has answered these questions, and somewhere there are records which can amplify the answers. Edward Rubovitz now has 35 descendants, of whom I am one, and all of whom are deeply interested. Besides, this is a part of Chicago history. We will appreciate any help or information.

Sincerely yours  
Leon M. Despres

(Mr. Despres is a lawyer and former Alderman of the Fifth Ward. In 1979 he was designated Parliamentarian for the Chicago City Council. He can be contacted at his law office: 77 West Washington Street, Chicago 60602 or (312) 372-2511)

### SULOWAY APPOINTED EDITOR OF SOCIETY NEWS

Irwin J. Suloway, a local professor and editor, was appointed editor of Society News by the C.J.H.S. Board in December. This issue represents the first of his efforts in the job.

A longtime professor of English and administrator at Chicago State University, Dr. Suloway has also served as an editor of College English, the English Journal, the Chicago Schools Journal. He has also been active in Jewish education and synagogue affairs.

He welcomes contributions, news leads, and advice from all C.J.H.S. members and can be reached either at 348-2800 or through the society office. His home address is 3500 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago 60657.

## A HERO'S STORY; THE DEATH OF SAMMY MEISENBERG

BY SIDNEY SORKIN

Sixty years ago news was wired to Chicago of a hero in the undeclared war with Mexico. A young man from Chicago enlisted in the Marines using the name Sam Martin. He was killed in action at Vera Cruz, on April 21, 1914. Sam Martin was really Sammy Meisenberg, a Chicago Jew.

In his autobiography, A Child of The Century (1), Ben Hecht somewhat erroneously recalled: "I wrote three columns on the funeral of Sammy Meisenberg. Sammy was a soldier under General Pershing in the Pancho Villa Mexican campaign. Sammy was the only American casualty in the capture of Vera Cruz.

"The Jews of Chicago's West Side followed Sammy's hearse as if escorting a new Maccabee to the grave. I wrote of the thousands of mourners as if they were all my aunts and uncles, describing them humorously and lovingly. A Jew had died for his country--their new country--and the people of Chicago walked proudly under American flags. I recall of the story chiefly that my name was printed above its lead in bold-face type. It was my first by-line and it stirred a patriotic fervor in me equal to Sammy Meisenberg's. I would gladly have died for Mr. Finnegan and the Journal."

### Another Account

The Meisenberg story actually ran ten days in the Chicago Journal. The first article appeared April 21, 1914 and the last on May 21, 1914. The same story described by Hecht, is described in more detail in The History Of The Jews Of Chicago, Edited By Hyman L. Meited (2):

"The year following brought the Jews of Chicago another cause for deep feelings of another kind. This in connection with the disorders along the Mexican border, which reached a serious pass in April, 1914 when the American Government found it necessary to dispatch naval forces to Vera Cruz. In the clash which ensued at the port, a number of American Marines were killed, of whom the first to fall was Sammy Meisenberg, a Chicago Jewish boy. It was a significant occurrence which stirred the community profoundly. The

home of the slain boy became a center for crowds of visitors who came to pay homage to his memory . . . .

"The body of Meisenberg was brought to Chicago and buried with military honors in Waldheim Cemetery, where, a marble shaft was erected over the grave. The stately memorial rising in solemn grandeur seems like a foretoken to the time so soon to follow when hundreds of other Jewish boys would yield their lives on the altar of country-love, in the Great War."

### A Christian Reaction

"The Chicago Tribune, in its issue of April 25, paid a tribute to Meisenberg and his people generally, in these words:

"Chicago is taking proper pride in the Jewish lad, Samuel Meisenberg, who was one of the first to give his life at Vera Cruz for the honor of the American flag. Samuel Meisenberg was not born in this country. He came here as an immigrant. In the brief span of time he had been in the new world he acquired not only the language and outward characteristics of an American but also high American ideals, as all who knew him testify.

"He is a credit to the city and more especially is he a credit to the Ghetto of the city, for he is a product of that Ghetto. . . . Sammy Meisenberg shows that beneath the foreign exterior of the Ghetto is a heart that beats with loyalty to the United States.

"Nothing cements people to a country as much as blood shed for that country. The thousands of West Side citizens who for days have been journeying to the Meisenberg home to lay their condolences and tribute at the feet of the hero's proud but sorrowing parents, have come away with a loftier feeling of patriotism for their adopted land than they had known."

### The Facts Are Elusive

Autobiography written by an experienced reporter and famous author becomes a primary source, and should provide accurate information and excellent insights. But

(continued on Page Eight)

## A HERO'S STORY: SAMMY MEISENBERG

(continued from page six)

the reader and researcher should be wary and investigate the accuracy of anyone's memory. In the two short paragraphs cited above from A Child of The Century, Ben Hecht had at least four errors.

The first error was that Sammy Meisenberg was really a Marine and not in the army. Secondly, he was under the command of the Admiral in the harbor of Vera Cruz and not with General John J. Pershing chasing Pancho Villa. Thirdly, Sammy was not the only American killed in that action. The headline from the Chicago Journal for April 21, 1914 reads: "Four Americans Killed at Vera Cruz." Sammy was the first Marine killed at Vera Cruz, not the only one. The fourth and last error is the most puzzling of all, because it is the most personal to Ben Hecht. Contrary to Hecht, it was not his first by-line. The story, the three columns with pictures, covering one quarter of a page, does not have any by-line whatsoever! (3)

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(1) Hecht, Ben; A Child Of The Century: Play Bill Ballantine Books, New York, 1954. Reprint 1970. L.C. 53 9699 SBN 345-02087-1-125, pp 192-193.

(2) Meites, Hyman L. ed. The History of The Jews of Chicago, Jewish Historical Society of Illinois, March, 1924. No. 238, pp 250-251.

(3) The Chicago Journal: April 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, May 1 and 2, 1914.

## SEEK INFORMATION ON FINNISH-JEWISH RELATIONS IN AMERICA

For his study of Jewish-Finnish relations, CJHS member Dr. Sherwin Schwartz would like to hear from anyone who has had personal dealings or business contacts with Finnish-Americans, especially in connection with labor unions and the labor movement. Dr. Schwartz, member of the faculty of Brisk Rabbinical College, Skokie, plans to present his findings in the form of a lecture or lecture series at both Finnish and American universities. A series of articles and/or a book are also possibilities. Contact Dr. Schwartz at the Brisk Rabbinical College, 9000 Forestview Road, Skokie, IL 60203.

## AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO MEET IN KANSAS CITY

The American Jewish Historical Society, the nation's oldest ethnic historical society, will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 1982. The American Jewish Historical Society at Ninety will be the theme of the annual meeting to be held April 30 to May 2 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Besides the anniversary celebration, the Kansas City meeting will focus on the study of local United States Jewish history with special events, tours and speakers. Members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society are urged to attend--and, for that matter, to join the national society.

The American Jewish Historical Society is housed in a modern museum-library office building on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. The museum is well worth a visit on your next trip to the Boston area. Among its newest projects is the establishment of the National Center for Jewish Film.

Extensive Film Archives

The Film Center began with the Rutenberg and Everett Film Library, the largest extant collection of American made Yiddish films. The Film Center also includes a growing archive of films documenting all aspects of the Twentieth Century Jewish experience, including early silent film features, films from the archives of Jewish organizations, and films documenting the Holocaust.

The Society has also through the years produced a distinguished series of publications on American Jewish history ranging from scholarly histories to biographies and works on local Jewish communities.

For further information about the American Jewish Historical Society, including membership, call or write the Chicago Jewish Historical Society for referral or write directly to the American Jewish Historical Society, 2 Thornton Road, Waltham, MA. 02154.

Rachel B. Heimovics  
Liaison, A.J.H.S.



## JEWISH NOVELISTS WRITING ABOUT JEWISH LIFE IN CHICAGO

The following is a brief summary of some titles discussed by Reviewer Rhoda Hauptman at the December CJHS meeting when she spoke on Jewish novelists writing about Chicago.

Chicago has been the home of so many Jewish writers that the difficulty one encounters is in selecting from among their number a representative few. The method I have chosen for doing this is to tell of Chicago Jewish authors who wrote books centered in the various neighborhoods in which Chicago Jews have lived.

Certainly, Meyer Levin's The Old Bunch is a case in point. The book is set on the West Side--the Lawndale, Douglas Boulevard, Independence Boulevard area. I have been told that anyone who lived in that neighborhood can easily recognize many of the characters in that work, as the identities are thinly veiled.

Philip Roth, although not a Chicagoan by birth, attended the University of Chicago. His book, Letting Go, is centered in Hyde Park and the area immediately adjacent to the University, where much of a later Meyer Levin book, Compulsion, takes place.

Edna Ferber, in a short story, "Every Other Thursday," writes of a German Jewish family who lived in Woodlawn, as many of them did. And in a novella, Old Man Minnick, the action takes place in that area around South Park Avenue and Garfield Boulevard, where I grew up.

No doubt Saul Bellow is Chicago's greatest contribution to the field of Great Literature. In his To Jerusalem and Back, he highlights the Hyde Park neighborhood, where he lived for a long time. He also writes of the same neighborhood in Humboldt's Gift, but one usually associates Bellow with the district around Humboldt Park, where he grew up.

Many Chicagoans have written brilliantly of our city. Some, although Jewish, like Nelson Algren and Studs Terkel, wrote of the wider community and thus it would be wrong to mention them among "Jewish Writers."

The spirit of the City of Chicago sharpened the awareness of Chicago's Jewish writers. In return, these writers added luster to Chicago's literary reputation.

## BERNSTEIN, MARCUS DISCUSS BASIC WORKS OF LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY

The following are annotated comments on significant books on the history of the Chicago Jewish Community summarized from the presentation at the CJHS December meeting by Richard Marcus, Librarian of the Asher Library of Spertus College of Judaica.

Sentinel's Chicago Jewish Community Blue Book, probably about 1918 (no date).

A Jewish city directory. Has descriptions of organizations, institutions, and Synagogues with a short description of their work, officers, and staff at publication time. Well illustrated. The remainder of the book is a list of names and addresses of all the officers listed in the previous section.

Sentinel Presents 100 Years of Chicago Jewry, August, 1948

Sentinel's History of Chicago Jewry 1911-1961, issued on Sentinel's 50th anniversary. Both are paeans to the vitality, growth, and accomplishments of the Chicago Jewish Community. Underlying the kudos is the thought that Chicago Jewry has contributed much to Chicago and is a "legitimate" community. Tucked between the apologetics are some interesting bits of contemporary history, since most of the historical material in Volume I is drawn from Meites. Rabbi Gutstein has a timeline of great value from 1832 to 1948. The remaining portions are divided by topic and by type of organization: look at the table of contents. Most fascinating are the ads, both commercial and dedicatory.

Chicago Pinkas: edited by Simon Dawidowicz and published by the College of Jewish Studies on its 25th anniversary, 1952. Pinkas (minutebook) is a record book of history of the Chicago Jewish Community. It was published to answer the lack of "authentic and reliable information about the history, development, and realities of the second largest Jewish community in the world." Foreword by Samuel Blumenfeld, then College president. It addresses several issues: 1) determining the Jewish population of Chicago--a full

## MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DECEMBER MEETING

(continued from page nine)

methodology; 2) a look at Russian Jewish life in Chicago from 1893 to 1915; 3) examination of the Hebrew and Yiddish press and Hebrew and Yiddish publishing in Chicago. There is heavy emphasis on Chicago Jewish bibliography, appropriate for our celebration. 122 of 319 pages are in Hebrew:

Fabric of My Life, Hannah Greenebaum Solomon, 1946. Hannah Solomon was best known for the founding of the National Council of Jewish Women. She began her idea by organizing the Jewish Women's Congress in 1891 and serving on the Women's Board of the World's Parliament of Religions held during the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Her parents, Michael and Sarah Greenebaum, were among the earliest Jewish settlers in Chicago, showing up in a city directory as early as 1847. She recounts growing up in the young Chicago.

History of the Jews of Chicago, Hyman Meites, 1924, Jewish Historical Society of Illinois. Although Meites is listed as editor, most of the writing was done by associate editor David Hinsch, now living in Israel. It is basically a "mug book," short biographies of significant and important figures in the community at that time. The value of the historical pieces is uneven at best, without any documentation accompanying the text. The opening essay on Jewish influence upon the Colonial development of Illinois was, however, written by Edward Chauncey Baldwin of the University of Illinois.

Its greatest value is as a contemporary record. It gives short biographies with pictures of individuals of note in the arts, professions, public office, industry and commerce, labor, and athletics. It then gives short histories, with pictures of institutions; synagogues; religious, cultural, and educational organizations; welfare organizations; homes and hospitals; Palestine aid; and fraternal organizations. For each it lists officers of the time and the rabbis of the synagogues. It gives addresses and provides a visual glimpse of the period.

My First Eighty Years, Bernard Horwich, 1939. Autobiography of this most prominent man of Chicago Jewish history, founder of the order Knights of Zion, a founder of the Federated Jewish Charities, active in all facets of Jewish communal activity. The autobiography is a very readable but information-filled book of one man's perspective of activities here in the Chicago Jewish community. He was involved in aid distribution in Europe after World War I, Zionish politics here and abroad, and many general business activities. A good portion of the volume recounts his rise from immigrant to successful businessman. It is a most engaging and fascinating story.

### Bernstein Discusses Bregstone

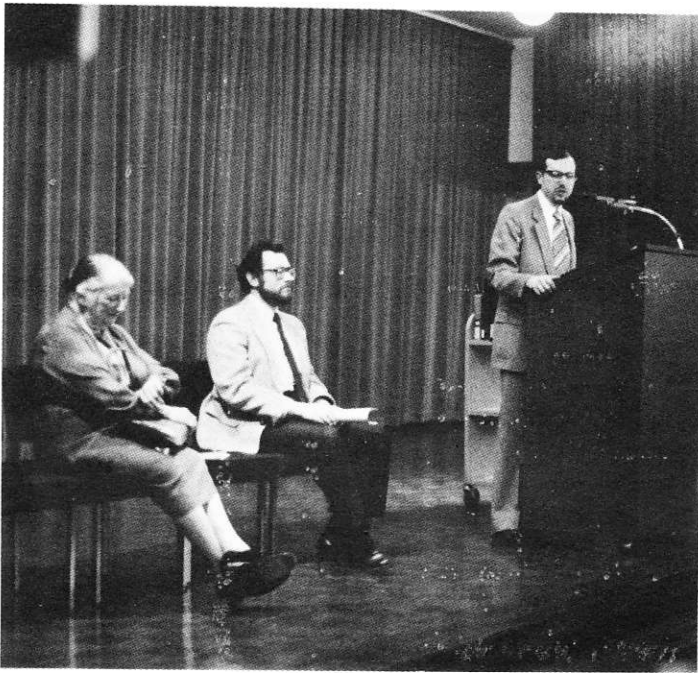
Picking up where Mr. Marcus left off at the December meeting, Charles B. Bernstein, vice president in charge of programs for the CJHS, discussed two other basic books on Chicago Jewish history as well as some influential periodicals. A brief summary of his remarks follows:

Chicago and Its Jews, by Philip P. Bregstone, was published privately in 1933. It is the second of the three major books which attempt to approach Chicago Jewish History on a comprehensive basis. The first was The History of the Jews of Chicago by H. L. Meites, which Richard Marcus just discussed. The third is A Priceless Heritage, by Rabbi Morris A. Gutstein, which we will talk about in a few moments.

Chicago and Its Jews is subtitled "A Cultural History." A general history, the book is not presented in a chronological style, but rather as a potpourri of reminiscences, in which the author interjects his comments and opinions. Most of the reminiscences consist of brief biographies of a few people who were prominent in the facet of the Jewish community which he is discussing, be it social welfare, religion, the arts, or what-have-you.

Consequently, what the book boils down to is a memoir of the author, which jumps from topic to topic. His acknowledgment in

(continued on page eleven)



Speakers on the Chicago Jewish literary scene as they appeared at the C.J.H.S. December meeting. From left to right, Rhoda Hauptman, Richard W. Marcus, and Charles B. Bernstein (Photo by Ken Singer)

(continued from page ten)

the beginning of the book leads us to believe that he spent much time going over back issues of The Reform Advocate, which served as his major documentary source.

The book contains much behind-the-scenes and otherwise unpublished information. While it does not follow a clear pattern of organization, it does have one outstanding formalistic feature--which Meites lacks to a certain extent--an excellent alphabetical index of the names of persons mentioned in the book.

The third of our triumvirate of major books of general Chicago Jewish History is A Priceless Heritage, The Epic Growth of Nineteenth Century Chicago Jewry. It was published in 1953 by Bloch Publishing Company. The author is of course our own esteemed member, Rabbi Morris A. Gutstein, who was supposed to be with us today but unfortunately was ill and could not make it.

The book is a classical documentary history, meticulously based on primary sources which are copiously footnoted as thoroughly as any Ph.D. thesis. It covers

the Nineteenth Century, which, practically speaking, starts in 1845, when the first Jewish religious services were held in Chicago. Rabbi Gutstein covers the next 55 years with a microscope. His basic tools were synagogue records and periodicals.

Published on the eve of the 1954 Tercentenary celebration of Jewish life in America, A Priceless Heritage sets out to treat the Chicago Jewish community in a sociological sense, in light of the total economic, cultural, political, and social environment.

The book is divided into four parts and is well-organized. In Part I, The Community, the author traces the founding of the synagogues and other Jewish organizations.

Part II, The Synagogue, is one of the highlights of the book. The first chapter locates and describes each synagogue structure of the various congregations. The next chapter, Synagogue Leadership, presents biographical sketches of the rabbis of each of the congregations in chronological order by congregation. The sketches include obscure material not otherwise readily available in secondary sources to the casual researcher, such as date and place of birth, early education and where ordained, and what became of the person after he left Chicago.

Education is featured in Part III, from the early day school of KAM in 1859 to the Talmud Torahs and Yeshivahs of the West Side. This part also includes a discussion of Jewish educational texts in use from time to time.

Part IV, entitled The People, is on the generalized potpourri format of Bregstone. The author discusses immigration; social, welfare, and intellectual organizations; Zionism; artists; public officials; and professional people from the Chicago Jewish community. Again, in keeping with our theme today, he includes a large section on literature of a Judaic nature published in Chicago.

At the conclusion of the book is an ample appendix in which many of the sources such as old synagogue constitutions are reprinted.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION;

### JOINING THE SOCIETY

Membership in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is open to all interested persons and organizations. The membership year is from January to December; however, non-members may join at any time. Information concerning dues appears in the next column.

Membership in the Society includes a subscription to Society News, discounts on other Society publications and at the Speritus Museum Store, information about Society meetings and other activities, and the opportunity to learn and inform others concerning Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Committees currently active and seeking members include Oral History, Archives, Ex-

hibits, and the Speakers Bureau. Anticipated are a photography committee and an audio-visual committee. Requests for additional information and membership inquiries may be addressed to our office (Phone 663-5634). We welcome your membership and active participation.

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