



chicago jewish historical society

CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

The Annual Book Issue

North Lawndale – Then and Now

By Dr. Irving Cutler

In the summer of 2022, I revisited the North Lawndale neighborhood, which for almost half a century—from 1910 to the 1950s—had Chicago’s largest-ever Jewish community. At its peak, North Lawndale’s Jewish population was 110,000, about 40 percent of the Chicago area’s Jewish population. It contained some 70 synagogues, virtually all Orthodox, in addition to many ancillary facilities.

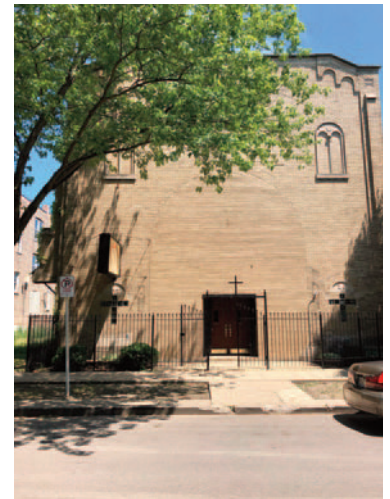
So, what vestiges and symbols are left of this once vibrant community, and what is the community like today?

The population today is virtually all Black, but it is only about one quarter in size of what it was when the community was Jewish. The riots of 1968, after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., devastated the community, resulting in a major exodus of residents and businesses, leaving about 2,000 vacant lots. Crime and drugs increased.

But what about the beautiful buildings and institutions that once served the Jewish community? Many are still standing, but others are gone. Of the schools, Lawson and Bryant are gone. Herzl Junior College is now an elementary school. Many of the local high school graduates had gone to Herzl Junior College.

During World War II, it was taken over by the U.S. Navy. Through the years, its auditorium hosted rallies for the powerful 24th Ward Democratic party and the establishment of the State of Israel and against Nazism.

Marshall and Manley High Schools still serve the community, and there is a new high school, Collins, located in the northwest corner of Douglass Park. There is also a new Lutheran school on Arthington Avenue, near the old Sears complex, and a couple of new grade schools.



North Lawndale’s now-defunct Odessa shul

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In a New Year, Reflections on CJHS Membership

By Jerry Levin, CJHS Co-President

It’s a truth universally acknowledged that the last several years have been challenging for all of us on multiple levels. Each one of us has had to adjust, then readjust, our thinking about the best ways to protect ourselves and our loved ones in the face of COVID-19, weather-related catastrophes precipitated by global warming, and personal crises that always seem to crop up just when we think we’ve averted the next big storm.

So, as we are now fully in the thick of the Jewish New Year of 5783—a belated Shana Tova to all CJHS members and friends from me and my wife, Evie—I cannot help but reflect on what a stabilizing influence that the Society has been in my life in recent years. Through all the “pivoting” I have been forced to do, thanks to COVID and

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CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold

Two years after its creation by Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the Chicago Monuments Project has issued its final report, “Recommendations for the Current & Future Collection.” The Chicago Jewish Historical Society has eagerly awaited the findings. The full report can be read at chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dca/cmp/cmpreport.pdf. The Project was created in August 2020 by Mayor Lightfoot to evaluate the City of Chicago’s monuments as part of a process of “racial healing and historical reckoning.” The Project Advisory Committee identified 41 works of art that, according to criteria established by the City, warranted attention and possible action by the City.

As *CJH* readers are aware, the Three Patriots Monument (George Washington– Robert Morris– Haym Salomon Monument) was one of the artworks chosen for scrutiny. (See the Spring 2021 issue cover story.) The Society took the lead in advocating for this landmark and iconic monument. Our advocacy was multifaceted.

We researched the monument’s history and significance for the Jewish community, as well as the larger community, and shared this information in persuasive detail in a letter to the Advisory Committee. Our team of experts produced an outstanding educational program, “The Three Patriots Statue: Why it Matters,” which we presented to the public on April 20, 2021, through the Project’s Community Partner Series. (See the homepage of our website—www.chicagojewishhistory.org—for a link to the recording.) Our efforts were featured on the radio and in print and online media.

We connected with other individuals and institutions that were passionate in support of the monument. Our board members followed the progress of the Chicago Monuments Project and stayed in touch with the Advisory Committee to show our continuing interest and involvement.

The Recommendations of the Chicago Monuments Project

The Project report offers four “treatment options” for the artworks that were reviewed. They are:

- (1) Take down
- (2) Re-site
- (3) Modify
- (4) Revise or add narrative

The Three Patriots Monument falls under the group of works recommended for “revise or add narrative.”

Specifically, the Project recommended the following: “Add information to the monument placing it in a more informed context. Information can be provided through various methods to promote engagement and ensure accessibility through onsite signage, digital information, or tours.”

In clarifying the recommendation of “revise or add narrative,” the Project offered this elaboration:

“The City will continue to engage community members, including American Indian constituents, regarding long-term treatment options for the monuments identified below. Concurrently, the City will revise the monuments’ accompanying text. Though not prioritized for immediate artistic interventions, such measures may be employed in the future through ongoing program investments.”

In considering the report, we should keep in mind that the findings are recommendations, not decisions or actions. The authority to decide and to act resides in other entities. However, the recommendations were issued after a lengthy, deliberative process, and their influence has to be taken seriously. In that regard, the recommendations for the Three Patriots Monument present opportunities, as well as concerns.

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society supports the addition of information to add context to the monument. Few Chicagoans know about Haym Salomon: why he deserved monumental honor and why he was depicted with George Washington and Robert Morris. In addition, very few know of the historical context that motivated Chicago Corporation Counsel Barnet Hodes to commission the statue in 1936 and of the symbolisms surrounding the monument’s dedication on December 15, 1941: In a decade of



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growing antisemitism and threats to democracies, there was a driving need to celebrate a Jew who contributed to the founding of the United States and to remind Americans of their democratic freedoms and ideals. These aims became more urgent in the years leading up to the dedication of the monument and beyond.

As we have become more knowledgeable about the historical context of the statue, we have become even more convinced of the importance and relevance of the message it was intended to convey. The public would benefit from this knowledge, and we are well equipped to provide it. We welcome the opportunity to do so.

We hope that the Project's recommendations will be carefully studied and clarified, with collaboration and community input, before any action is taken. We look forward to staying informed and involved with this process.

On a different note ... Great Vest Side lives on!

You will enjoy this issue's "North Lawndale - Then and Now," by our esteemed Dr. Irving Cutler, which focuses on the remaining signs of this once-thriving Jewish community. There is an outgrowth of the community that survives, though dispersed, to this day. It is the Great Vest Side (GVS), a formidable charitable organization that began as a social club of "Vest Side" buddies. In 2019, I interviewed GVS leaders Herb Kanter and Art Farber and wrote about GVS in the Summer 2019 issue of *CJH*.

GVS raises money to buy equipment for Magen David Adom (MDA), the national emergency service of Israel. Thus far, GVS has donated 15 ambulances, a medicycle, and, most recently, a defibrillator. For many years, it held twice-yearly fundraising dinners featuring a prominent speaker. Even though these dinners ceased in 2020, due to COVID, the GVS did not pause. It continued to collect donations to MDA, and this summer, it resumed its hospitality with a lovely brunch for 300-plus guests. The speakers were GVS President Herb Kanter and MDA Midwest Region Director Richard Zelin.

I enjoyed getting acquainted with my tablemates, a group of women who were Marshall High School classmates, class of 1953. The women have stayed close through the years. They told me that they took a tour of the West Side, led by Dr. Cutler, for their Marshall 50th reunion. The most recent GVS ambulance donation was in memory of the husband of one of the women. She was touched to learn that a baby was recently delivered in that ambulance. I asked the group what they liked about growing up on the West Side. They said, "The camaraderie... Everyone took care of each other. We didn't have much but we didn't know it... Everyone went to shul," echoing the reminiscences of my late mother, Harriet (Goldberg) Gold, a West Side girl. The women commented on the reduced attendance, compared to past GVS events, but the energy and the chatter in the room showed plenty of vitality.



A Magen David Adom ambulance donated by Great Vest Side

THE BOOK SECTION

“You must write, and read, as if your life depended on it.”

—Adrienne Rich

Books by CJHS Members and Friends

The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants, an Illustrated Guide. By Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz. Ohio University Press/Swallow Press, 2001.

Prairie Directory of North America: U.S. & Canada. By Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz. Lawndale Enterprises, 2002.

The City in a Garden: A History of Chicago’s Parks, Second Edition. By Julia S. Bachrach. The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Inspired by Nature: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago’s West Side. By Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan. University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Downtown Naperville. By Jodi Hirsch Blackman. Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

This Used to Be Chicago. By Jodi Hirsch Blackman. Reedy Press, 2017.

Chicago’s Jewish West Side. By Irving Cutler. 2009.

The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb. By Irving Cutler. University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Synagogues of Chicago. Edited by Irving Cutler, Norman D. Schwartz, and Sidney Sorkin. Project supervised by Clare Greenberg, 1991.

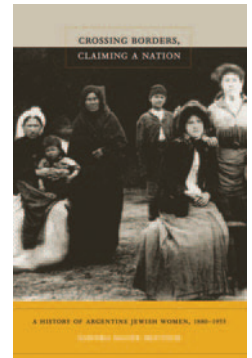
The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present. Co-edited by Sandra McGee Deutsch. Scholarly Presses, 1993.

Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900–1932: The Argentine Patriotic League. By Sandra McGee Deutsch. University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880–1955. By Sandra McGee Deutsch. Duke University Press, 2010.

Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939. By Sandra McGee Deutsch. Stanford University Press, 1999.

Women of the Right: Comparisons and Interplay Across Borders. Co-edited by Sandra McGee Deutsch. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.



Member Profile: Yiddish Scholar and Translator Dr. Jessica Kirzane

One of the rising stars in Yiddish studies in the United States, Dr. Jessica Kirzane has received plaudits over the last few years for her translation of *“Diary of a Lonely Girl, or the Battle Against Free Love.”* The sardonic novel by Miriam Karpilove was published in serial form in the Yiddish-language press more than a century ago.

In her 2020 *Tablet* magazine review of *“Diary,”* novelist Dara Horn proclaimed Kirzane a “valiant translator” who deftly contextualized for contemporary readers the difficulties—and dangers—of being young and single and female on New York’s Lower East Side in the early 1900s. Earlier this year, the *New York Times* featured Kirzane prominently in the article “How Yiddish Scholars Are Rescuing Women’s Novels from Obscurity.”

Kirzane, who joined the CJHS last year, is an assistant instructional professor of Yiddish at the University of Chicago. She is also the Editor-in-Chief of *In Geveb*:



Clear It with Sid! Sidney R. Yates and Fifty Years of Presidents, Pragmatism, and Public Service. By Michael C. Dorf and George Van Dusen. University of Illinois Press, 2019.

Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History. By Michael H. Ebner. University of Chicago Press, 1988.

The Ma and Pa Story: A Novel. By Anne H. Edwards. Amazon, 2019.

Remembering Chicago's Jews. By James Finn. Creative Space, 2015.

Out of Chaos: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust. Edited by Elaine Fox. Preface by Phyllis Lassner. Northwestern University Press, 2013.

Corporate War: Poison Pills and Golden Parachutes. A Novel. By Werner L. Frank. Amazon, 2010.

The Curse of Gurs: Way Station to Auschwitz. By Werner L. Frank. Amazon, 2012.

Judenhaus: Small Ghetto at Grosse Merzelstrasse 7. By Werner L. Frank. Amazon, 2016.

Legacy: The Saga of a German-Jewish Family Across Time and Circumstance. By Werner L. Frank. Avoteynu Foundation, 2003.

Ballad of an American: The Autobiography of Earl Robinson. Eric A. Gordon, co-author. Scarecrow Press, 1997.

Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein. By Eric A. Gordon. St. Martin's Press, 1989.

A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction. By Joel Greenberg. Bloomsbury USA, 2014.

A Natural History of the Chicago Region. By Joel Greenberg. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Of Prairie, Woods, & Water: Two Centuries of Chicago Nature Writing. Edited by Joel Greenberg. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Tables Turned on Them. By Michael Greenberg. Page Publishing, 2019.

Red Star, Blue Star: The Lives and Times of Jewish Students in Communist Hungary, 1948-1956. By Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1997.

Young People Speak: Surviving the Holocaust in Hungary. Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1993.

Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990. Edited by Adele Hast and Rima Lunin Schultz. Indiana University Press, 2001.

The Alexandria Letter. A Novel. By George Honig. Synergy Books, 2010.

Avondale and Chicago's Polish Village. By Jacob Kaplan et al. Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

Logan Square. By Jacob Kaplan et al. Arcadia Publishing, 2018.

A Walk to the Shul: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops Along the Way. By Bea Kraus and Norman D. Schwartz, 2003.

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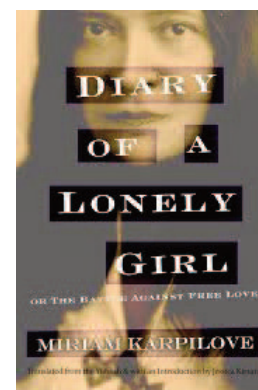
A Journal of Yiddish Studies, an online publication that includes essays and peer-reviewed articles of interest to Yiddish scholars and students. She received her Ph.D. in Yiddish Studies from Columbia University in 2017. She lives in Oak Park with her husband, Daniel Kirzane, Associate Rabbi at Oak Park Temple, and their two children.

Earlier this year, *CJH* Editor Robert Nagler Miller talked by phone with Kirzane to learn more about her entrée into the world of the Yiddish language and culture. Edited excerpts of their conversation follow.

Robert Nagler Miller: Did you grow up in an environment in which Yiddish was spoken?

Jessica Kirzane: Not at all. I grew up strongly identified as Jewish, and I attended Reform and Conservative synagogues, but my parents are monolingual. Their parents and grandparents, however, grew up in multilingual environments. I had a grandfather, for instance, who was born and raised in Cuba – Spanish and Yiddish were his first languages.

RNM: But you were always interested in languages, right?



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Books by Members and Friends

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The Kosher Capones: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters. By Joe Kraus. Cornell University Press, 2019.

Chicago's Only Castle: The History of Givins' Irish Castle and Its Keepers. By Errol Magidson. Magidson LLC, 2017.

Minyans for a Prairie City: The Politics of Chicago Jewry 1850–1914 . By Edward H. Mazur. Garland Publishing, 1990.

Transplanted Lives: The Adventures of Young Jewish Immigrant from Post-Fascist and Communist Hungary to the Free World Following the 1956 Uprising. By Susan V. Meschel and Peter Tarjan. CreateSpace, 2016.

East Lakeview. By Matt Nickerson. Arcadia Publishing, 2017.

Lakeview. By Matt Nickerson. Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

Doors of Redemption: The Forgotten Synagogues of Chicago and Other Communal Buildings. Photographed and edited by Robert A. Packer. Booksurge, 2006.

Chicago's Forgotten Synagogues. By Robert A. Packer, 2007.

1001 Train Rides in Chicago . By Richard Reeder. Eckhartz Press, 2018.

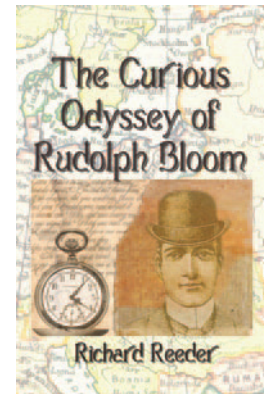
Chicago Sketches. By Richard Reeder. AMIKA Press, 2012.

The Curious Odyssey of Rudolph Bloom. By Richard Reeder. Propertius Press, 2022.

New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality. By Anne Rorimer. Thames & Hudson, 2004.

The Fate of Holocaust Memories: Transmission and Family Dialogues, By Chaya Roth, with the voices of Hannah Diller and Gitta Fajerstein. Amazon Kindle, 2013.

An Accidental Anarchist: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago's Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America . By Walter Roth and Joe Kraus. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1998.



Member Profile:

Dr. Jessica Kirzane

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JK: I always loved the English language. In high school, I took French. In college, at the University of Virginia, where I double majored in English and Jewish Studies, I studied Hebrew. Between my junior and senior years of college, I spent the summer at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, and I found it to be a utopia.

RNM: How so?

JK: I was attracted to this community of people who were lugging Yiddish books around and learning about them. It felt like we were engaged in a sacred task.

RNM: So, when you went back to Virginia for her senior year, what did you do?

JK: I began studying Yiddish with Dr. Gabriel Finder in the Jewish Studies program at the university. It was a motley little group of

“[My parents] are very pragmatic people ... so they wouldn't have predicted that I'd pursue Yiddish. They probably think it's kind of weird. But I'm grateful that they've never been anything other than celebratory of my work.”

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- Avengers and Defenders: Glimpses of Chicago's Jewish Past.** By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2008.
- Looking Backward: True Stories from Chicago's Jewish Past.** By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2002.
- She Said What? (A Life on the Air).** By Turi Ryder. Tortoise Books, 2019.
- Mollie's War: The Letters of a World War II WAC in Europe.** By Mollie Weinstein Schaffer and Cydee Schaffer. McFarland Publishing, 2010.
- A Bicentennial Commemoration of the Prairie State: Readings from the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*.** Edited by David W. Scott. Foreword by Leah Joy Axelrod. Southern Illinois University Press, 2018.
- African Americans in Glencoe: The Little Migration.** By Robert A. Sideman. The History Press, 2009.
- Discovering Second Temple Jerusalem: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism.** By Malka Z. Simkovich. Jewish Publication Society, 2018.
- The Making of Jewish Universalism: From Exile to Alexandria.** By Malka Z. Simkovich. Lexington Press, 2016.
- A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers.** Edited by Jean Powers Soman and Frank L. Byrne. University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- Irma: A Chicago Woman's Story, 1871–1966.** By Ellen F. Steinberg. University of Iowa, 2004.
- Learning to Cook in 1898: A Chicago Culinary Manual.** By Ellen F. Steinberg. Wayne State University, 2007.
- From the Jewish Heartland: Two Centuries of Midwest Foodways.** By Ellen F. Steinberg and Jack H. Prost. University of Illinois, 2011.
- Blossom Winters Is Driving on the Los Angeles Freeways.** By Albert Zimmler. CreateSpace, 2012.
-

undergrad and grad students and professors who showed up for fun. The warm community we had felt different from my other, more formal classes.

RNM: How do you respond to those who describe the flourishing of Yiddish Studies programs as some kind of revival of the language?

JK: It's a misnomer to call it a "revival," because it suggests that something died. And Yiddish never died.

There has to be, of course, a recognition of the loss of the language among those who perished in the Holocaust, as well as the effects of assimilation. But there has been a steady growth and interest in Yiddish.

RNM: What's it like teaching Yiddish at the University of Chicago?

JK: I teach beginning, intermediate, and advanced Yiddish to undergraduate and graduate students. They are extremely motivated people, and they, in turn, encourage me to go further with my own Yiddish study.

RNM: What did your parents make of your Yiddish ambitions?

JK: My parents are very supportive. They are also very pragmatic people—my mother is a nurse, and my father is an engineer—so they wouldn't have predicted that I'd pursue Yiddish. They probably think it's kind of weird. But I'm grateful that they've never been anything other than celebratory of my work.

North Lawndale

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Of the three major youth centers, all of which, like most of the synagogues and population, came from the Maxwell Street area, only the ABC (American Boys Commonwealth) still serves the neighborhood youth. Marcy Center has recently been torn down, and the B.B.R. (Boys Brotherhood Republic), at 1530 South Hamlin Avenue, is now the Lawndale Christian Legal Center.

Missing also are the numerous social and athletic clubs where young men would rent a basement apartment, furnish it cheaply, and use it as a clubhouse for their baseball teams and for weekend parties to which they would invite young women for dancing and snacks.

A drive along the connecting parkways of Douglas and Independence Boulevards, “the Lake Shore Drive” of the area, with its fine homes and buildings that once housed numerous Jewish organizations and a dozen large, architecturally imposing synagogues, reveals some significant changes. A new residence has replaced the former home of the Labor Zionist building at 3322 West Douglas Boulevard, where Golda Meir had frequently spoken. A block west, near Homan Avenue, was the famous and beautiful Anshe Kanesses Israel (the Russische shul), which was built in 1913 and had some 35 Torahs. Rabbi Ephraim Epstein (1876 – 1960) served as the congregation’s rabbi for almost half a century. It was torn down in 2012, despite strong efforts to save it. Two blocks west at St. Louis Avenue, the Lukvick synagogue was also torn down and replaced by a new Black church.



North Lawndale’s Sears Tower

Directly across the street, the Jewish People’s Institute (JPI 1926–1955) still stands. It is now a public elementary school. The JPI was a very well-attended institute offering a great variety of social, cultural, educational, and recreational programs for all ages. It had a swimming pool, library, museum, large auditorium, and the Blintzes Inn. Its Sunday summer roof garden dances were an early version of JDate.

Almost across the street from the JPI had been the Hebrew Theological College, a bastion for the Orthodox community (1922–1956). Through the years, it has ordained over 500 rabbis and trained thousands of others in Judaic programs. The building was torn down in 2011 and replaced recently by the Lawndale Community Academy School.

A few blocks further west on Douglas Boulevard, the former Romanian Synagogue (Shaari Shomrim) still stands. It also housed a small Sephardic shul in the basement. It is now the historic landmark Stone Temple Baptist Church, with a connection to Dr. King. In 1926, the synagogue had been visited by Queen Marie of Romania. She was treated royally, although many Jews had fled her country because of its antisemitism. In 1966, Dr. King lived at Hamlin Avenue and 16th Street, which now houses the Dr. King Legacy Apartments—at 1550 South Hamlin—that opened in 2011.

Across the street was Kehilath Jacob, now a Black church. The synagogue’s Hebrew school had included Benny Goodman. A few blocks to the north, at 1306 South Lawndale, the building where Golda Meir once lived remains.

Nearby on Independence Boulevard is a vacant lot that once boasted the mansion of Jacob Arvey, the longtime boss of the 24th Ward Democratic Party. Just north of the mansion was the KINS synagogue, also known as the “laundrymen’s shul.” At one time, the prominent cantor Yossele Rosenblatt performed there. It is now a Black church (Greater Galilee MB Church).

Further north near Roosevelt Road was the only major Reform synagogue in the immediate area: Temple Judea. It had a beautiful water fountain and two large menorahs on its roof. The Orthodox of the area were suspicious of a temple, where the men and women sat together and could pray without a head covering. The building was torn down in 2018.

Further north on Independence Boulevard was the former home of Hapoel Hamizrachi (the religious Zionists). Just to its north is a very large apartment building still standing. It was known as Kessel Garden. Inhabited by Jewish immigrants, it was named after their point of entry in New York Harbor, Castle Garden.

On the fringe of the area on the boulevard was the large Anshe Shalom synagogue, which also had a large Hebrew school. Its rabbi for many years was Saul Silber (1881–1946), who was also the longtime president of the Hebrew Theological College. Its famous cantor was Joshua Lind, who often performed with his sons. The building is now occupied by a Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Most of the neighborhood shuls are still standing and are used as Black churches or for other purposes. But a number of the synagogue buildings have been torn down, including Poalei Zedek, B'nai Reuben, Adas B'nai Israel, Anshe Chomsk, Anshe Chudakov, Anshe Mazer, Lev Someach, Anshe Cobrin, and Beth Jacob, along with many small shtiebl ("little house") shuls that were in the homes of rabbis. Still standing at 1625 South Lawndale is the Anshe Odessa shul, built by Jews who fled pogroms and restrictions in the Russian Ukraine. My father used to pray there. It is now a Black church. The large Moses Montefiore Talmud Torah on St. Louis Avenue and the Grenshaw Street Talmud Torah, near where Admiral Hyman Rickover once lived, are both gone. Many of the Lawndale Jewish facilities were reestablished in other Jewish neighborhoods, especially in the northern parts of Chicago and its suburbs.

Much of the commerce of the area was provided by mom-and-pop stores on most corners. Major shopping streets were Kedzie Avenue, 16th Street, and especially Roosevelt Road. 16th Street had a couple of small department stores, the W.W. and Wallace.

Kedzie Avenue at 13th Street once housed the *Jewish Daily Forward* and some labor unions. Before the widespread use of the radio, the newspaper would flash major election results on the wall of the building across the street. Further south on the street was the White Palace movie theater. A block further south, at Ogden and Kedzie avenues, was a large multipurpose building, the Douglas Park Auditorium. It once housed the Workmen's Circle, Jewish labor unions, fraternal organizations, a Yiddish school, and, from 1938 to 1951, a Yiddish theater. Many famous Yiddish actors and actresses performed at the theater. A young man, Bernard Schwartz, performed there, later going to Hollywood, where he became Tony Curtis. The building is now a Black church. Directly across the street was the Ogden Huddle restaurant, owned by Eli Schulman, who later founded Eli's Cheesecake.

A real estate map of 1930 shows that on the mile stretch between Kedzie and Crawford (now Pulaski) avenues, on Roosevelt Road, there were 26 restaurants, 12 kosher butcher shops, four bookstores, and seven bakeries, virtually all Jewish owned. Not listed were three gambling venues: Zookie the Bookie, Davey Miller's, and Puttys. Zookie was killed in front of his establishment. The tough Jews who frequented Davey Miller's gym often went out to fight antisemitism and to break up Nazi Bund meetings.



Banquet at the Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged in North Lawndale, 1925

Of the four Jewish funeral homes on the street, two are still standing. One is a Black funeral home; the other, Weinstein, is now a Black church. The two large banquet halls, the Café Royal and the Blue Inn, are also gone. The second-floor meeting halls for Jewish organizations, especially for vereins (people from the same community in the Old Country), also no longer exist. Of the six movie theaters on Roosevelt Road, only the 1,700-seat former Balaban and Katz theater, the Central Park, remains. It is a Black church in need of repairs. There is some talk of making it a community center.

Of the former popular eateries, such as Fluky's, Ye Old Chocolate Shop, Silverstein's, Dave's, Carl's, Zweig's, Joe Stein's, Romanian, and Gwirtz, only Dave's still exists in Lawndale—under Black ownership.

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North Lawndale

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Attempts by the community to reestablish the once thriving commerce on Roosevelt Road have not been successful. A new movie theater, the Lawndale, a Starbucks, and a new supermarket all closed after a few years. However, there has been some new housing along the street, as well as some chain businesses, including Walgreens, Popeye's, and McDonalds. There is no major chain supermarket in the community.

There is also new housing a block to the south, where Lawson Elementary School once stood. There are also clusters of new housing throughout the area.

By far the largest single housing development (Homan Square) is in the vicinity of the former huge Sears complex on Arthington Avenue. Sears at one time employed almost 20,000 workers there, many of them Jewish. The development had been largely built when Julius Rosenwald was the Sears president. Also on the street are a new YMCA and a large community center. In addition to Sears, other large employers that left the community include Western Electric and International Harvester.

On the eastern border of North Lawndale is Douglass Park. In 2020, the park was renamed to honor the Black abolitionists Frederick Douglass and his wife, Anna. In the park, through the middle of the 20th century, people would sleep on hot summer nights, rent row boats for a quarter an hour, listen to summer band concerts, and ice skate in the winter. In the summer, various Jewish groups would meet to picnic, sing, and dance—often until late in the night.

On the western edge of the park, on Albany Avenue, there once was a cluster of four Jewish institutions: the Jewish Day and Night Nursery, the Jewish People's Convalescent home, the Marks Nathan Orphanage, and the Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged. Now, only the building that housed the orphanage remains—as a recovery and rehabilitation center called MADO Healthcare Douglass Park, at 1550 South Albany Avenue.

On the eastern side of the park stand Mount Sinai Hospital and the Schwab Rehabilitation Center building. The hospital, built by the Jewish Orthodox community more than a century ago, now mainly serves the local Black and Mexican-American communities. The hospital, recently expanded, is still partially supported by the Jewish community.

Another recent change is the restoration of the once-abandoned 14-story original Sears Tower (now called Nichols Tower), which once housed the first Sears store in the country. It now houses a branch of the School of the Art Institute and the Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, among other organizations and businesses.

In conjunction with the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Lawndale Christian Health Center, an aquaponics farm has been established on Ogden Avenue. It grows fresh produce for the neighborhood and employs and trains about 100 people.

Since 2015, Riot Fest, a rock and hip-hop music festival, has taken place in Douglass Park, attracting thousands. However, there has been some opposition to the festival from neighbors and nearby hospitals.

Another very recent proposal by the city is a 38-million-dollar development project to turn a vacant 21-acre city-owned site along Roosevelt Road and Kostner Avenue into an industrial park and other community-related uses. There are also plans to build affordable housing and some commercial stores on a vacant lot on Ogden Avenue.

So, what is left of the "Great Vest Side" Jewish community? Only the partially Jewish funded Mount Sinai Hospital complex. But throughout the neighborhood are former Jewish institutional buildings and certain telltale signs and symbols: Stars of David, Hebrew lettering, and, on some homes, mezuzahs—or, more likely—two little holes on a doorpost, all reminders that North Lawndale was once the flourishing center of Jewish Chicago.



The North Lawndale building in which Golda Meir once lived

Chicago's American Jewish Artists Club: An Update

By Naomi Pollak

The American Jewish Artists Club (AJAC) was founded in 1926 in Chicago. The membership ranges from professional career artists to those who pursue art as an avocation. Among the group are painters, photographers, sculptors, computer graphics artists, and fiber artists.

I had become familiar with some of the work and exhibits of the Club, and I viewed my membership as an opportunity to network with other artists in the hope that eventually I would be able to participate in its exhibitions.

My first opportunity to participate with the group was in the summer of 2020 for the exhibit "Nature's Treasures" at the Emily Oaks Nature Center in Skokie. The COVID-19 pandemic precluded an in-person event. However, with the collaboration of the Emily Oaks manager, Lee Hansen, AJAC was able to exhibit members' work online and on the Skokie Park District's website in August 2020. This exhibit featured works from 16 AJAC members depicting images of nature in various media, including computer-generated art and photography, as well as acrylic, watercolor, graphite, ink, and oil paintings.

Despite the isolation during lockdown, the AJAC was able to create an online Rosh Hashanah video of artists' work, also in September 2020.

In December 2020, the AJAC revised its website to reflect its history and display the recent works of several of its members. (<https://www.americanjewishartistsclub.com>)

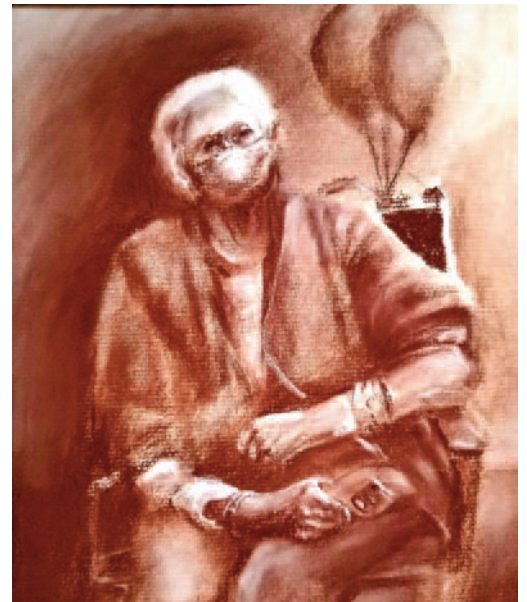
In June 2021, in collaboration with the AIR Gallery of Glencoe, the AJAC exhibited works of several members and offered monetary prizes in a juried competition.

In February 2022, the North Shore Senior Center hosted the AJAC exhibition "Isolation in the World," which allowed AJAC artists to communicate feelings that cropped up during the pandemic. The work I contributed to that show, "Reflections on My Mother's 100th Birthday-Cards Only, No Family," received the second-place award. This was a Conté crayon sketch on paper of my late mother, Esther Baila Perkel, who celebrated her 100th birthday in June 2020 when she was a permanent nursing home resident. My sketch shows her sitting forlorn in a wheelchair behind a glass window, wearing a face mask and holding the strings of celebratory balloons. I was only able to communicate with her via telephone as I sat in the hot sun outside the nursing home window. With only one other exception, a grandchild, none of the more than 40 members of our extended family were able to celebrate her milestone birthday in person.

Medical literature cites many peer-reviewed studies that document how persons engaged with the arts experience positive health outcomes. During the pandemic, when so many were isolated, AJAC members could communicate and engage with each other through their artwork. On a personal level, my computer and artistic skills advanced, and I learned how to share artwork on the internet with others through Zoom classes, PowerPoint presentations, and YouTube videos. I was also successful in developing my own website to display and promote my art. (artworkbynaomi.com)

Going forward, I am hopeful that the AJAC will continue to grow its membership and create opportunities for members to share and promote their work.

About the author: Naomi Pollak has been a hobby artist for over 18 years. In late 2019, she chose to decrease her work hours as a community physical therapist to devote more time to painting, drawing, family, and other interests.



The author's prize-winning portrait of her mother: "Reflections on My Mother's 100th Birthday-Cards Only, No Family"

Remembering a Chicago Jewish Deli Man: Dan Wolf

This past July, Chicago lost one of its stalwarts in Jewish delis, Dan Wolf, who died at 77. Wolf was the owner of The Bagel Restaurant & Deli, a longtime fixture on Broadway in the city's Lakeview neighborhood, which boasts tens of thousands of Jews. He previously oversaw operations at The Bagel's now-defunct locations in Chicago's Albany Park—home to the original restaurant, which had been founded by his maternal grandparents, Chaim and Elsa Golenzer, and his parents, Ruth and Edward Wolf—and in Skokie.

"He was passionate about the business," said Mitch Kaufman, Wolf's husband. "He was at The Bagel at least five days a week."

Many local articles and websites this past summer noted that Wolf created a "heykish" atmosphere at his deli, warmly greeting all patrons, both longtime and new, and engendering a loyalty among his staff, many of whom have worked at The Bagel for decades.

Wolf was a highly regarded civic leader and philanthropist who gave of his time and resources. He served on the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce for many years, and he was honored several years ago by Chicago's Jewish Child & Family Services for his dedication to Jewish causes. He and Kaufman were longtime members of Anshe Emet Synagogue in Lakeview, and he was also active for many years in State of Israel Bonds. Kaufman added that Wolf is being inducted posthumously into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame for his support of people with AIDS and HIV.

Not a few have speculated that Wolf's compassion and empathy stemmed, at least in part, from his harrowing beginnings. He was born in Theresienstadt concentration camp, where his mother was an inmate, and it is believed, said Kaufman, that Wolf was kept safe by other Jewish prisoners.

Wolf immigrated as a young child to the United States with his family, added Kaufman, thanks to the assistance of HIAS, formerly known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. The Golenzer and Wolf families initially settled in East Chicago, Indiana, before moving to Chicago.

Wolf and Kaufman met more than 60 years ago as fellow students at Chicago's Roosevelt High School. They continued their education together at the University of Illinois at Navy Peer, and they formed a bond that endured for six decades.

In addition to Kaufman, Wolf was survived by his aunt, Haya Golenzer.



The late Dan Wolf, owner of Chicago's Bagel Restaurant
Photo courtesy of JCFS Chicago

Playing Jewish Geography: Name That Shul



Longtime CJHS member Robb Packer, a Chicago synagogue maven who has researched and written extensively about the history of the Windy City's shuls, recently received a treasure trove of archival materials from another longtime member, Rachel Heimovics Braun, a past CJHS Board President. Among the gems in the collection is a photograph of a Jewish institution that he cannot identify. He asks, "Is there a CJHS member who can ID it for me?" Fellow Chicago Jewish history buffs, let's try to help Packer out. Send your responses to info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

On Display: CJHS-JNDC Photo Exhibit of Jewish West Rogers Park

The photo exhibition “Then and Now: 10 Decades of Jewish Community in West Rogers Park” chronicles the constancy and change, the values, and the resilience of this storied community. The show’s images depict domestic, commercial, religious, and civic life in West Rogers Park over the past 90-plus years, and they point to the diversity of Jewish experiences in the neighborhood throughout this time.

The exhibit, a collaboration between the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Neighborhood Development Council of Chicago, in partnership

with the Chicago Public Library (CPL), opened to great fanfare on Sunday, October 23, at CPL’s Northtown branch with a reception and keynote address by noted Chicago author Joseph Epstein, who grew up in West Rogers Park.

The exhibit can be seen through November 20 during the library’s regular hours. Check the CPL’s website for individual branch hours of operations: www.chipublib.org. The Northtown branch is located at 6800 North Western Avenue.



Upcoming CJHS Program: The Jewish History of Shure Incorporated

A pioneer in microphones and related audio equipment, the late Sidney Shure founded in 1925 the internationally recognized Shure Incorporated, a Niles, Illinois-based company he ran with his late wife and business partner, Rose, for many decades. To this day, Shure remains one of the world’s largest manufacturers of professional wired and wireless microphones.

The Shures also contributed immensely—albeit quietly—to the well-being of the Chicago community, and they gave generously to Jewish, cultural, and civic causes.

On Sunday, November 13, at 2 p.m., CJHS members and friends will be given an insider’s look at the Shures, their groundbreaking company, and how teachings from the Talmud shaped the business principles of Shure Incorporated, when they are treated to a special in-person presentation by longtime Shure

historian Michael Pettersen. Pettersen’s talk, which includes a slide show, will take place at the Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy Avenue.

After more than two years of virtual events, the CJHS is excited to offer an in-person program, which will be followed by a question-and-answer period and a refreshment hour with kosher pastry. The Shure program is free for Society members and \$10 for guests.

Those members unable to attend the event can view a livestream presentation; a link will be emailed to them. If you need the link, please send an email request to info@chicagojewishhistory.org.



The late Rose and Sidney Shure

Photo courtesy of Shure Incorporated



Photo courtesy of Shure Incorporated

Clara Landsberg, the Hamilton Sisters, and Their Experiences at Hull House

By Dr. Cynthia Francis Gensheimer

Breaking with convention, Clara Landsberg (1873–1967) found a world in which she could be herself: a small subculture of college-educated, upper-class Protestant women who did meaningful work while finding love and companionship among women. Even among these women, however, Clara’s Jewishness posed a significant obstacle to her romantic and professional aspirations, and she became a member of the Episcopal Church around the same time that she became a resident of Hull House.

As discussed in Part One of this series, Clara’s parents, Rabbi Max and Miriam (Isengarten) Landsberg, were national leaders among Reform Jews and civic leaders in New York State—leaders who worked across denominational lines to alleviate suffering. Like her parents, Clara pursued intellectualism, shunned materialism, and strove to make the world a better place.

In teaching and supervising adult educational programming, Clara improved the lives of countless people served by Hull House, including many Jews. She became very close to Jane Addams, who recognized the importance of her work. However, because Clara avoided public attention and seems not to have participated in efforts to lobby public officials on behalf of the poor and underprivileged, she has not been credited as a trailblazer in Jane Addams’ inner circle. Although much remains unknown about Clara’s life, what is certain is that her association with Jane Addams was crucial in establishing her credentials, advancing her career, and bringing her happiness among similarly independent, serious, open-minded women.

Clara Landsberg was the first Hull House resident with a Jewish background. When Clara decided that she wanted to live there, she had to be approved by the current residents, a process akin to candidacy for a college sorority. As Eleanor Stebner explains, after “initiates” completed a probationary six-week residency, they were evaluated for “the proper qualities of service, commitment, and tolerance.” This system created a tight-knit group of individuals who, despite their varied interests, shared “a prevailing social and spiritual vision.”¹ It is unclear exactly when Clara underwent her probationary period and evaluation and whether her religious background was a consideration, as it would have been for admission to most college sororities.²

Clara spent some time at Hull House in 1898, but she did not begin her continuous 20-year residency until 1900.³ She might have been turned down for residency in 1898, or she might have been offered a spot at Hull House that year but decided not to take it. Unfortunately, there are no detailed minutes of the residents’ meetings from that period.⁴ The years between Clara’s Bryn Mawr graduation in 1897 and the start of her residency at Hull House in 1900 were undoubtedly turbulent ones, during which she was sorting out her religious beliefs, her sexual orientation, her relationship with Margaret Hamilton, and her vocation.

The few surviving letters that Clara wrote to Margaret suggest that Clara fell in love with Margaret during college, though without formal marriage records, it is difficult to determine precisely when the two became committed to one another. A year after graduation, they studied and lived together in Paris, where women lived openly as lesbians long before it was customary to do so in the United States.⁵ In 1917, Clara would formalize their relationship when she named her sole heir as “my friend Margaret Hamilton.”⁶



Clara Landsberg in the Bryn Mawr College Class of 1897 group portrait. Clara is in the third row from the bottom, smack center.

Image courtesy of Bryn Mawr College Libraries Special Collections

I have been unable to find any official church record of Clara's conversion, but it likely occurred around 1900.⁷ In April 1899, Margaret wrote to her sister Edith that Clara had decided to become Episcopalian.⁸ A letter Clara wrote to Margaret on Easter Sunday 1900 from her family's home in Rochester, New York, suggests that she was sincere in her embrace of the Episcopal religion. In this letter, Clara describes a morning spent listening through the window to the organ music from a nearby Presbyterian church and reading a sermon of Episcopal priest Phillips Brooks. She hints, moreover, that her Christian faith is closely bound up with her love for Margaret: "I was with you all morning, dear-est." Finally, she mentions that she is memorizing the Lord's Prayer in Latin.⁹

At Bryn Mawr College, Clara had come to sympathize—perhaps even empathize—with the Christian-centric worldview of her peers, including the woman she loved.¹⁰ Clara would have attended Protestant chapel every morning and Wednesday evening, programs given by missionaries and church officials, and meetings of the college's various Christian societies.¹¹ Most of the other Jews who attended Protestant colleges at this time came to better understand and even appreciate Christianity, but few formally embraced it—except, sometimes, to marry a Christian man. Charlotte Mitchell, who graduated from Smith College in 1896, was disowned by her Jewish parents when she married a Christian.¹² Helen Frances Rosenthal, an early Jewish student at Vassar, also converted and married a Christian.¹³ Similarly, Clara seems to have been drawn to Christianity through her attraction to Margaret.

A letter by Margaret Hamilton to her cousin Jessie in November 1894—during her and Clara's sophomore year—explains that, for her, (Protestant, Christian) religion meant far more than simply a "love of humanity and the desire of cultivating the spiritual part of ... [their] nature[s]."¹⁴ Margaret had hoped to change the minds of two non-Christian students who had expressed their suspicions of a Protestant evangelist who was visiting campus to enlist missionary recruits: "[T]wo girls were there whom I know would be prejudiced and not want to like him and I listened with their ears for I wanted to see if they would be as impressed as I told them they would." One of those two girls was a member of the Ethical Culture Society.¹⁵ The other, whom Margaret described (somewhat condescendingly) as "my little Jewish friend," must have been Clara Landsberg, the only Jew in the sophomore class.

Clara did find the speaker to be every bit as eloquent and charismatic as Margaret had promised. Margaret wrote, "I think [he] made every one want to do something. My little Jewish friend said last night he made her feel like going out somewhere immediately, but then she said 'He would not let me go, for he would not think I could do any good.' I do not think I ever appreciated quite so much the differences of opinion there are in this world on religious subjects as lately."¹⁶ In other words, Clara had perceived that as a Jew, she would not be able to perform the humanitarian work of a Christian missionary.¹⁷ As Clara came to know Margaret better, she would have understood that to earn Margaret's love, she would have to convert to Christianity.

From Clara's childhood in Rochester through her college years at Bryn Mawr, she had always been closest to people who took their religion seriously. She likely converted only after a period of thoughtful introspection and study.¹⁸ Todd Endelman notes that in the heyday of Berlin's salons, well-to-do Jewish women converted in larger numbers than men, who were preoccupied by business.¹⁹ Much as Annie Jonas, who was from a prominent Jewish family in Illinois, was drawn to Episcopalianism through close friendships forged with Protestant women in Civil War benevolent and study societies, so, too, Clara Landsberg seems to have converted as a direct result of the love she found and the friendships she formed with Protestant women at Bryn Mawr.²⁰

Jane Addams, who had received a strong Protestant upbringing, strove to make Hull House nonsectarian.²¹ She was herself open-minded, questioning, and tolerant of people of other beliefs. Through Hull House and her political activism, she befriended Jews of all sorts: capitalists, socialists, and anarchists; day laborers and academics; Orthodox, Reform, and non-practicing. Especially in the early years, nearly all Hull House residents were upper-class, educated Protestants (though Ellen Gates Starr eventually converted to Catholicism). In 1907, a Jewish couple, Dr. Rachelle Yarros, a physician and early supporter of birth control, and her journalist husband, Viktor, moved into an apartment in a separate building on the Hull House campus designated for



Clara holding Jane Addams' great niece, Alice Haldeman-Julius
Image courtesy of Schlesinger Library, Harvard University

Clara Landsberg

continued from preceding page

families. The Yarroses remained until 1927, but the extent to which they were practicing Jews or affiliated with the Jewish community is unknown.²² Esther Loeb Kohn, a widow who was involved in many Jewish causes, moved to Hull House in 1911 and eventually played a significant role there.²³

Clara Landsberg likely first went to Hull House to visit Margaret's sister, Alice Hamilton, who had moved there in 1897. By that time, Hull House was already famous as the country's leading settlement and was home to about 25 residents.²⁴ The 20 or so women lived in the original building, and their communal lifestyle reflected Jane Addams' sense of aesthetics and pragmatism.²⁵ They dined together on simple fare in elegant surroundings with luminaries as their guests.

Using today's terminology, many Hull House residents would be described as lesbians. In 1963—when Alice Hamilton was in her 90s—the biographer Allen F. Davis asked her about the nature of female relationships at Hull House. He wrote:

“She denied that there was any open lesbian activity involving Hull House residents, but agreed that the close relationship of the women involved an unconscious sexuality. Because it was unconscious it was unimportant she argued. Then she added with a smile that the very fact that I would bring the subject up was an indication of the separation between my generation and hers.”²⁶

Apart from yearning for Margaret, Clara likely shared Alice's feeling that “the life there [at Hull House] satisfied every longing, for companionship, for the excitement of new experiences, for constant intellectual stimulation, and for the sense of being caught up in a big movement which enlisted my enthusiastic loyalty.”²⁷ During their two decades rooming together at Hull House, Clara and Alice became as close as sisters.²⁸

Clara took on a variety of roles at Hull House, earning Jane Addams' trust and acquiring a reputation as a skilled, sensitive, and well-intentioned social worker. Early on, she attempted to live and work at Hull House full-time, but at the end of the year, decided never to do so again. Reflecting on Clara's experience, Alice wrote, “I do not believe anybody can do it [full-time settlement work] and keep perfectly healthy and normal.”²⁹ Clara began teaching at private high schools during the day and volunteering at the settlement in the evenings. In addition to teaching classes and managing adult programming, Clara served as Jane Addams' personal secretary and even indexed Addams' memoir, “*Twenty Years at Hull-House*.”³⁰ She performed what she called “charity organization work,” meaning that she evaluated applicants by using the latest scientific principles and visiting some in their homes to determine how best to help them.³¹



Morris K. Levinson and his parents
Image courtesy of Nancy Chiswick

Part One of this article described Clara's friendship with two of her students at Hull House: a boy named Morris Levinson and a girl named Hilda Satt. A young man named Morris K. Levinson—likely a different Morris Levinson—acted in Hull House plays, taught at Hull House under Clara's tutelage, and eventually became a resident of the settlement himself. This man, too, had a personal relationship with Clara Landsberg, and his story reflects Clara's impact on the lives of many young Chicago Jews.

Morris K. Levinson was an only child who had emigrated as a very young boy from Russia with his parents in 1892. Since his family lived just blocks from Hull House, Morris attended programs there and likely studied Shakespeare with Clara. He was one of a group of Jewish high school boys who put on plays at Hull House under the direction of Enella Benedict and Edith de Nancrede, who supervised the art program and the dance and drama programs, respectively.

Clara had grown up well-versed in the Hebrew Bible's stories and lessons and would have been able to advise Benedict and de Nancrede—both Protestants—in 1906 when Jewish boys at Hull House insisted that “Joseph and his Brethren” be staged to “conform with the traditions of

the Talmud.”³² Morris Levinson had played a major role in the 1902 Hull House production of a Purim play and was likely still a member of the Jewish drama club in 1906.³³ Addams, remembering those plays years later, wrote, “[The] Jewish boys ... had almost a sense of proprietorship in the fine old lines.”³⁴

As an adult, Morris taught English and Shakespeare at the settlement under Clara’s supervision.³⁵ When he married in 1912, he and his wife moved into an apartment at Hull House, where they lived for three years. On the birth of their first child, Clara Landsberg, Alice Hamilton, and Enella Benedict gave them a gift and signed their names “with love to the baby” on the back of a calling card belonging to “Miss Landsberg, Hull House.”³⁶ Morris’s granddaughter recalls that even in his 60s, pushing a hand lawnmower, Morris was still memorizing lines from Shakespeare.³⁷

The settlement movement served as a bridge between the residents and the immigrants they served, shaping attitudes and enlarging the horizons of both groups. Socialists, labor organizers, politicians, and speakers of all sorts were welcome at Hull House—a hospitality that had its risks. In part because of their sympathy with the immigrants they served, many Hull House residents, led by Jane Addams, became spokespeople for the principles of American democracy and freedom, for the rights of working people, and for the preservation of liberal immigration policies.

Russian Jewish immigrants, who came to the United States in large part to escape pogroms and police brutality and other forms of antisemitism, flocked to the citizenship and English language classes offered at Hull House. As Jane Addams observed, these refugees, like her own Protestant ancestors, reveled in the American freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press. Yet one incident in Chicago threatened to unleash rampant antisemitism and upset the Jewish immigrants’ faith in American democracy. Jane Addams and Clara Landsberg were both drawn into the affair.

In 1908, Chicago’s Chief of Police George Shippy saw a dark-haired, young man entering the police station and, fearing that he was a violent anarchist, shot him dead. The victim was later identified as Lazarus Averbuch, a Russian Jewish immigrant. While the press fueled public outrage, the police conducted unlawful searches of Jewish homes and businesses and used harsh methods in interrogating suspects. Non-Jewish residents overwhelmingly backed the police department.

In light of Jane Addams’ insistence on an investigation and the rumors that Averbuch had become radicalized at a settlement, a reporter asked Clara Landsberg, who was then head of Hull House’s adult education program, whether Averbuch had ever been a student there.³⁸ When Clara said no, the reporter followed up: “Would you have accepted him if he had applied and you knew he was an anarchist?” “Certainly,” Clara replied. “We do not ask anyone what his political theories are.” The headline read: “Miss Landsberg admits that there are anarchists in the classes at Hull House.”³⁹ The reality, as Jane Addams later explained, was not quite so sensational. Roughly 9,000 people attended programs at Hull House every week and were not screened for religious or political beliefs.⁴⁰

Jane Addams argued that the lessons immigrants learned in citizenship classes could be negated by their actual experiences with the American government. The Averbuch incident contributed to the development of “a deep suspicion and fear of the police and a hostility toward newspaper reporters” in Alice Hamilton and, indubitably, in Clara Landsberg, too.⁴¹ Although many Jewish immigrants were socialists, only an extremely small minority embraced anarchism. Jane Addams quoted a Russian Jew on this subject:

“All our radicals are socialists, not anarchists. We are not such fools as to pursue the method of terrorism in a country where there is free speech and an opportunity for agitation. We fill up the night schools, we learn English faster than anyone else; no one tries so hard as we do, to be Americans. To attach anarchy to us means persecution, plain Jew-baiting and nothing else.”⁴²



Front-page news from a 1908 edition of a Chicago newspaper includes headlines about the fatal shooting of a Jewish immigrant by the city’s Chief of Police.

Clara Landsberg

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In her own memoir, Alice Hamilton would explain that her experience living and working at Hull House had gradually changed her political leanings without her even noticing: “At Hull- House one got into the labor movement as a matter of course, without realizing how or when.”⁴³ Jane Addams backed centrist labor unions and urged reconciliation between labor and management. Hull House residents lobbied for all sorts of social reforms: mandates for safer working conditions, a ban on child labor, and government provision of many basic services.

Through Alice Hamilton, Clara became involved in some of this work. Alice, pioneer in the field of industrial medicine, got her start as a young doctor at Hull House, investigating underlying threats to the neighborhood: contagious diseases, poor sanitation and nutrition, and cocaine addiction. Later, she began studying working conditions and industrial pollution, and in 1919, Clara accompanied her on a trip to Arizona to study the health of copper miners.⁴⁴ Although the two of them descended into mines that Alice described as “perilous,” Alice also called the trip “the most wonderful” of her life.⁴⁵

After living at the settlement for more than a decade, Clara was a member of the Hull House family. When Clara’s mother was dying of cancer in Baltimore in 1912, Jane Addams observed how bravely she faced death and sent her love to both mother and daughter.⁴⁶ Clara and Jane Addams drew even closer when Jane Addams’ niece, Marcet Haldeman, fell in love with Emanuel Julius, a Jewish socialist. In 1916, two months before her engagement, Marcet visited Chicago and had a heart-to-heart talk with Clara, whom she had known, by this time, for more than a decade.⁴⁷ Their discussion likely touched on the subject of religion, since Emanuel, like Clara, had given up the Jewish faith.⁴⁸ Rather than embrace another religion, however, he had become a free thinker and an atheist.⁴⁹ Emanuel agreed to have a Presbyterian minister officiate at the marriage and likely deferred to Marcet with respect to the faith in which their children would be reared.⁵⁰ About a year later—immediately after the birth of the couple’s first child—Jane Addams wrote to Clara: “I am sending this on as requested, please ‘read and destroy’ as the old novels said. I miss you every minute...”⁵¹ Whatever the secret Jane Addams shared with Clara Landsberg, they were both present at the child’s baptism in the Addams family home in Cedarville, Illinois—Jane Addams holding the baptismal font, and Clara Landsberg serving as godmother.⁵² In other words, Clara was now so close to Jane Addams that she was practically part of her extended family.⁵³

Clara’s father, an erudite rabbi with friends among the Christian clergy, would have certainly understood the significance of Clara’s being god-mother to a Presbyterian baby. When Clara sent him a photograph of herself holding the infant, he wrote back approvingly.⁵⁴ What we do not know, however, is how much he knew. Did Clara simply mention in passing that she had attended the christening? Or did her father know that she had converted and that she was, in fact, the baby’s godmother? Clara took the role of godmother seriously; she sent the gift of a seed pearl necklace, offered advice on baby shoes, and even warned that the baby must not be allowed to suck her thumb. Clara seems not to have offered spiritual counsel, however—beyond recommending a book of Protestant hymns, Eleanor Smith’s “*The Children’s Hymnal*.”⁵⁵

Clara Landsberg found her niche at Hull House among similarly intelligent women committed to social reform. Following her parents’ lead, Clara specialized in “the intellectual needs of immigrants,” even speaking on that topic at a meeting of the Jewish Chautauqua Society.⁵⁶ Her kindness earned her friendships among Jewish immigrants, and, like the other residents, Clara came to empathize with their needs, embracing liberal political views and likely also reevaluating her religious beliefs over time.

Clara’s story forms a vital part of the history of Jewish lesbians in the 19th-century United States. As the *Jewish Women’s Encyclopedia* acknowledges, it was only in the early 20th century that Jewish lesbians began to live openly as gay women. The clandestine nature of their relationships has meant that even today, many

Clara was highly unusual for a woman reared in comfortable circumstances in a committed Reform Jewish household. Prior to 1900, fewer than 100 Jewish women graduated from the Seven Sister colleges.

scholars are hesitant to identify them as such. The classic example is Lillian Wald: “Wald’s relationships were crucial to her social world, yet they remained hidden from view. It is still considered controversial to label Wald a lesbian, despite considerable historical evidence.”⁵⁷ Among 19th-century American Jewish women who had the means to live independently, choosing not to marry was not unusual, but no one seems to have examined the data to determine whether this practice was more prevalent among Jews than among Christians. Of course, many of these women may have remained unmarried because they had chosen work instead of marriage or because they were unable to find suitable Jewish husbands—not necessarily because they were lesbians.⁵⁸

Clara was highly unusual for a woman reared in comfortable circumstances in a committed Reform Jewish household. Prior to 1900, fewer than 100 Jewish women graduated from the Seven Sisters colleges; of those Jewish alumnae, only a fraction remained unmarried throughout their lives. Clara found tacit acceptance of her “friendship” with another woman in the rarefied world of highly educated, mostly Protestant women who devoted their lives to education and social work. Perhaps she did not expect to be able to live such a life among Jewish women, with other Jewish lesbians. Yet, as was the case with American lesbians until recently, Clara never lived “openly” as a lesbian with Margaret Hamilton, nor did Alice publicly acknowledge Clara as a “sister.” These relationships are better described as “open secrets.”

In 1916, Clara, together with three Hamilton sisters, purchased a house in Hadlyme, Connecticut. Although Margaret and Alice were both happy to share the house with Clara, it seems that Edith had some reservations about Clara, possibly linked to her Jewishness.⁵⁹ In 1921, Clara finally moved to Baltimore, where she lived with Margaret and taught Latin and German at the Bryn Mawr School. Clara, Margaret, and Alice spent their summers together at Hadlyme, where they lived together in retirement for three decades—until their deaths in extreme old age. Late in life, Alice described Clara, perhaps somewhat disingenuously, as “a friend who lives with us, a Bryn Mawr classmate of my sister.”⁶⁰ In her memoir, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, Alice Hamilton devoted many pages to the house in Hadlyme, which she described as “the house where Margaret and I live,” never mentioning Clara.⁶¹ When an Englishwoman approached a 90-year-old Alice about writing a biography of the Hamilton sisters, Margaret refused to “have anything to do with it,” and Alice concluded that the idea was “quite impossible.”⁶² This decision, which the sisters probably made with the aim of protecting Margaret’s reputation, has had the unfortunate effect—until now—of virtually erasing Clara Landsberg from women’s history.

Footnotes

¹“Although homogeneity was not explicitly sought in regard to age, class, and race, the necessity of sharing daily life resulted in efforts to regulate the overriding ideology of potential members.” Eleanor J. Stebner, *The Women of Hull House: A Study in Spirituality, Vocation, and Friendship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 107, 108.

²Marianne R. Sanua, *Going Greek: Jewish College Fraternities in the United States, 1895–1945* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), and “Here’s to Our Fraternity”: *One Hundred Years of Zeta Beta Tau 1898–1998* (Hanover, NH: Zeta Beta Tau Foundation, 1998).

³Jane Addams stated in 1920 that she had known Clara for 22 years; according to Clara, she began living at Hull House in 1898. Jane Addams’ letter of recommendation (1920) and Clara Landsberg’s application, American Friends’ Service Committee Archives (AFSCA).

⁴Email from Cathy Moran Hajo, August 30, 2022.

⁵Clara’s parents had some reservations about her plans to live with Margaret and Norah Hamilton and study at the Sorbonne for “6 months or a year.” Rabbi Max Landsberg to David Jayne Hill, former president of the University of Rochester, October 20, 1898, University of Rochester Rare Books and Special Collections. In the 1920s, in Harlem and Greenwich Village, same-sex relationships were accepted, but such acceptance was extremely rare in the United States. Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in 20th-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 67.

⁶Will of Clara Landsberg, dated January, 1917, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Jane Addams Memorial Collection, Hull-House Association Records, Reel0049_1747, Jane Addams Papers Project.

⁷In 1920, Mary Thorne Lewis Gannett, a close family friend of the Landsbergs, wrote, “Miss Landsberg, during her college course joined the Episcopal Church – and as far as I know is still a loyal member of that Communion.” When asked in 1926 what her religion had been in 1920 when she was applying to work with the AFSC, Clara replied, “I am sorry I left your records incomplete. I should have registered myself as an Episcopalian when I made out my application.” Clara Landsberg to Mr. Thomas, September 11, 1926, Clara Landsberg Personnel File, AFSCA.

⁸Edith Hamilton to Mary Garrett, April 18, 1899, as quoted in Part One of this series. It is possible that Clara may have converted in Munich, but records of the Episcopal Church in Munich were destroyed by fire.

⁹Clara Landsberg to Margaret Hamilton, April 15, 1900, Hamilton Family Papers (HFP), folder 690, Schlesinger Library.

¹⁰Crushes” on classmates were commonplace, and many students, including Clara and Margaret, later lived as lesbians.

¹¹Frances Arnold’s entry in the *Triennial Book: Class of 1897* (Bryn Mawr College, 1900), 53–4, Bryn Mawr College Archives.

¹²Disown Eloping Daughter,” *The Scranton Republican*, July 1, 1903, 2.

¹³Helen Frances Rosenthal (Mrs. Frank Stout) was a sincere convert. Helen Frances Rosenthal, Biographical questionnaire for Associate Alumnae, Vassar College Archives.

¹⁴Margaret Hamilton to Cousin Jessie, postmarked November 20, 1894, folder 683, HFP, Schlesinger Library.

¹⁵Margaret identified the student as “a sister-in-law of Professor Adler,” narrowing the possibilities to Pauline Goldmark (Class of 1896) or her sister Josephine (Class of 1898).

¹⁶Margaret Hamilton to Cousin Jessie, postmarked November 20, 1894.

¹⁷Although Bryn Mawr was founded by Quakers, nearly all of the students in Clara’s class seem to have been Episcopalian or Presbyterian. My assessment is consistent with statistics on the incoming Class of 1897, which had 30 Episcopalians, 24 Presbyterians, two Quakers, and two Roman Catholics. “Monthly reports of the President to the Trustees,” October 25, 1897, Bryn Mawr College Archives, as quoted in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 127.

Clara Landsberg

continued from preceding page

¹⁸Clara's mother's close friend, Mary T. L. Gannett, a Unitarian and Quaker, knew of Clara's conversion by the time she recommended Clara for missionary work in 1920. Would Clara have discussed it with her as early as 1900? In the letter that Clara wrote to Margaret on Easter Sunday, 1900, Clara states that she has talked with her mother and father, respectively, about the concepts of personal happiness and forgiveness. It is possible that Christian theology may have entered into those conversations.

¹⁹Todd M. Endelman, "Gender and Conversion Revisited," in *Gender and Jewish History*, eds. Marion A. Kaplan and Deborah Dash Moore (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 173-74.

²⁰Cynthia Francis Gensheimer, "Annie Jonas Wells: Jewish Daughter, Episcopal Wife, Independent Intellectual," *American Jewish History* 98, no. 3 (July 2014): 83-125.

²¹Stebner, *The Women of Hull House*, 79-83.

²²Rachelle Yarros, a doctor who promoted reproductive rights and education, was a good friend of Alice Hamilton. Melissa R. Klapper, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890-1940* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 76, 223, 252, 274.

²³"Esther Loeb Kohn," Jane Addams Papers Project (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/3383>); "Esther Loeb Kohn," *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women* (<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kohn-esther-loeb>).

²⁴Sicherman, 114.

²⁵Sicherman, 114, 118-119.

²⁶Allen F. Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 306.

²⁷Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, (Fairfax, Virginia: American Industrial Hygiene Association, 1995) 69.

²⁸In a letter that Alice Hamilton wrote to Margaret, she describes a romantic relationship between Margaret and Clara. "Clara is almost more necessary to you than anybody in the world and ... if you are to be happy, it can only be together with Clara... And Clara loves you too deeply to do anything for any great length of time that would make you unhappy." Alice describes her own relationship with Clara in sisterly terms: "Clara and I have lived together, in the same room, for eighteen years more or less, and I have the tenderest affection for her, and so close a knowledge of her that nothing she could do would antagonize me for long. I could not think of a life in which Clara did not have a great part, she has become part of my life almost as if she were one of us." Alice Hamilton to Margaret Hamilton, March 19, [1917]. Quoted in Barbara Sicherman, *Alice Hamilton: A Life in Letters*, 195-197. Classicist Judith Hallett has described last-
ing same-sex relationships of Margaret's and Alice's sister Edith Hamilton in "Edith Hamilton," *The Classical World* 90, no. 2/3, Six Women Classicists (November 1996-February 1997): 107-147.

²⁹Alice Hamilton to Agnes Hamilton, [likely mid-June 1902], as quoted in Sicherman, *Alice Hamilton*, 142-143.

³⁰Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1910), ix, 437.

³¹Clara Landsberg's application, AFSCA. As head of United Jewish Charities in Rochester, Clara's father, Rabbi Landsberg, had spent 10 hours per week doing similar work within the Jewish community. "Intent of the Article Headed 'Pride and Poverty,'" *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 18, 1896, 5.

³²"Several Hebrew scholars" were pleased with the play and its actors. *Hull House Year Book 1907*, 38

(<https://archive.org/details/hullhouseyearboo1906hull/page/38/mode/2up?q=jewish>).

³³It was resident Enella Benedict, founder and supervisor of the settlement's art department for 40 years, who wrote the script of the Purim play based on "Bible history." All roles in "Queen Esther" were played by boys, but two girls performed songs, one in Yiddish. *Hull-House Bulletin* (Mid-Winter, 1903-4): 12 (<https://www.google.com/books/edition/Bulletin/hjQgAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%22morris+levinson%22+%22hull+house%22&pg=RA2-PA16&printsec=frontcover>).

³⁴The boys also brought "from home bits of Talmudic lore" for the play. Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 394.

³⁵Notes from eulogy of Morris K. Levinson, email from Nancy Chiswick, May 28, 2022.

³⁶Email from Linda Camel, September 4, 2022.

³⁷"When we lived with them (1948-1950), I have memories of being in their backyard, and his pushing the lawn mower, but stopping every now and then to take out a pocket Shakespeare volume, from which he was memorizing some lines. Then he would continue mowing while he recited the lines from memory." Email from Nancy Chiswick, August 30, 2022.

³⁸Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 111; Victoria Sciancalepore, "The Averbuch Incident: A Century in Chicago's Violence" (<https://janeaddams.ramapo.edu/2016/07/the-averbuch-incident-a-century-in-chicagos-violence/>).

³⁹Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, 78.

⁴⁰"Purge United States of Anarchy Is Order," *The Inter Ocean*, March 4, 1908, 2.

⁴¹Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, 76.

⁴²Jane Addams, "The Chicago Settlements and Social Unrest," *Charities and the Commons* May 2, 1908, 157

(<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/7511>).

⁴³Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades*, 80.

⁴⁴Sicherman, 209-14; EDT, 208-222.

⁴⁵Alice Hamilton to Clara Landsberg, June 22, 1923, Alice Hamilton Collection, Connecticut College Archives. Sicherman, 210.

⁴⁶Addams had hoped to visit Miriam Landsberg when she was on her deathbed in Baltimore. Jane Addams to Sarah Alice Haldeman, February 19, 1912

(<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/4008>).

⁴⁷Clara Landsberg to Marcet Haldeman, January 30, 1916, box 19, folder 212, MC 72, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius Collection, University of Illinois at Chicago. Marcet had spent weekends at Hull House during the two years that she attended the Dearborn Seminary, where Clara taught English and German. Marcet later said that Clara "gave me my first insight into the method and magic of words." Anna Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Jane Addams, April 26, 1919 (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/18691>). Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "Jane Addams As I Knew Her," 8 (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31822043021575&view=1up&seq=26&skin=2021>).

⁴⁸Both of Emanuel Julius's grandfathers were rabbis, but Emanuel's immigrant parents were indifferent to their Jewish religion. As a teenager, Emanuel left home to forge his own path. When he met Marcet, he was an atheist, socialist, and journalist. Marcet had reservations about his relationship to his family. Emanuel wrote to Addams seeking her blessing and submitted a list of references. Addams seems to have accepted the match, but suggested to Marcet that she retain her maiden name, a highly unusual practice at the time.

⁴⁹"Haldeman-Julius, Emanuel," *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief*

(https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_New_Encyclopedia_of_Unbelief/fsZ26vQxJKMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA374&printsec=frontcover).

⁵⁰Newspaper accounts of the marriage described the wedding as "of more than usual interest." Emanuel Julius was described as "one of the editors of the Appeal to Reason, a well known Socialist newspaper, with the largest circulation of any Socialist organ in the world." Marcet, well-known as a banker from a prominent family, was to have been escorted down the aisle by Jane Addams, but Addams had been unable to attend because of illness. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius later published an essay reflecting his disdain of religion: "Religion—A Pile of Garbage." "The Julius-Haldeman Wedding," *The Girard Press*, June 15, 1916, 7. "Haldeman-Julius, Emanuel," 375.

⁵¹Jane Addams to Clara Landsberg, June 9, 1917 (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/15158>).

⁵²"Four Generations Present at Beautiful Haldeman-Julius Christening," *The Girard Press*, August 30, 1917, 1.

⁵³As early as 1905, Addams sent Clara warm notes of encouragement when Clara had to leave Hull House to convalesce in Rochester. In 1908, Addams wrote to her sister Sarah Alice Haldeman that Clara and she "had a real lark" touring Baltimore and Washington, D.C., together. Jane Addams to Clara Landsberg, July 4, 1905 (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/840>); Jane Addams to Sarah Alice Haldeman, March 24, 1908 (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/2241>)

⁵⁴Clara Landsberg to Anna Marcet Haldeman-Julius, September 23, 1917 (<https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/16116>).

⁵⁵Clara Landsberg to Anna Marcet Haldeman-Julius, February 16, 1919, box 19, folder 212, MC 72, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius Collection, University of Illinois at Chicago.

⁵⁶A Protestant, Anna F. Davies, the head of Philadelphia's College Settlement, also spoke, as did several prominent Jews. "Jewish Chautauqua," *American Is-raelite*, June 20, 1901, 7.

⁵⁷"Lesbianism," Rebecca T. Alpert, updated by Marla Brettschneider, *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women* (<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/lesbianism#pid-12181>).

⁵⁸It is unknown why Sadie American and Minnie Low, both prominent Chicago Jews, never married. American co-founded the National Council of Jewish Women, and Low, a co-founder of the Maxwell Street Settlement, was a good friend of Jane Addams for decades. Similarly, the five Lesem sisters from Quincy, Illinois, never married, but lived together in Chicago as adults. Rebecca Lesem was an early national leader of the National Council of Jewish Women. Josephine and Pauline Goldmark, among Bryn Mawr's most distinguished early alumnae, also remained single. This is not to suggest that any—or all—of the aforementioned women remained single because they were lesbian or bisexual. Yet it is a reminder that any number of accomplished Jewish women of that era, and from a particular social class, did not marry for a variety of reasons—and those reasons may have included sexual orientation. Shelly Tenenbaum, "Minnie Low," in *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women* (<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/low-minnie>.) Cynthia Francis Gensheimer and David A. Frolick, "Inching Toward Women's Equality: Tentative Steps in Three Small Jewish Communities." *American Jewish Archives Journal* 72, nos. 1 & 2 (2020): 1 - 55.

⁵⁹Alice Hamilton to Margaret Hamilton, March 19, [1917], as quoted in Sicherman, 196 and Hallett, "Edith Hamilton," 131.

⁶⁰Alice Hamilton to Charles Culp Burlingham, January 23, 1953, as quoted in Sicherman, 390.

⁶¹Alice Hamilton dedicated *Exploring the Dangerous Trades* to "my three sisters [Edith, Margaret, and Norah] and my brother." The first edition was published in 1943.

⁶²Neither Alice nor Margaret felt that their sister Norah should be included, either. Alice Hamilton to Katherine B. Codman, April 5, 1959, folder 658, HFP, Schlesinger Library.

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Two descendants of Rabbi Max and Miriam Landsberg have provided ongoing, invaluable assistance: great-granddaughter Stephanie Tomiyasu and great-great-granddaughter Patty Orr.

Welcome New Members

Vivian Bloch Skokie, IL	Myra Schwartz Hermann San Diego, CA	Colleen Melone Lincolnwood, IL
Victoria Curtis Goulburn New South Wales, Australia	Tracy Hirsch Munster, IN	David Neumann Rockville, MD
Jane Davis Chicago, IL	David Hurwitz Northbrook, IL	Michael Newman Skokie, IL
Michael Edidin Baltimore, MD	Herb Jacobson Albany, NY	Jonathan Reeder Chicago, IL
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	Lauren McDaniel Crawfordsville, IN	Lorel Zar-Kessler Newton, MA
		Jack and Molly Zwanziger Evanston, IL

Reflections on CJHS Membership

continued from front page

other crises, I have been able to count on the CJHS, and the people affiliated with it, for centering me during this time of uncertainty and volatility.

I became involved with CJHS many decades ago because I love history, Chicago, and Jewish culture. Being part of an organization dedicated to Chicago Jewish history reminds me of the challenges our forebears faced—and how they survived, and thrived, through very trying experiences. For me, these reminders are humbling, illuminating, and, yes, hopeful—hopeful, because I know that I can weather storms and learn from them.

In the season of renewal, Evie and I are renewing our membership in CJHS with a gift well above the \$40 basic membership (a fee that has not changed in at least five years!). I am grateful for the outstanding virtual programming that the Society has been able to bring to all of us during this era of social distancing, and I look forward to a mixture of live and virtual programming as the world re-opens itself to the possibilities of in-person gatherings. I am also grateful for the constancy of our quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*, which continues to attract new contributors offering articles on a wide range of topics: from antisemitism in suburban Chicago school districts and smalltown Jewish life in Central Illinois to the Jewish influences at Hull House and a celebration of the first Hillel chapter at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

I hope, in the spirit of an appreciation for all that the CJHS has accomplished over the last two years—and many years before COVID—that you will not only renew your membership in the Society, but that you will also consider a tax-deductible gift above basic membership. As a small 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society sustains itself on your support. Allow us to continue serving you and others who are committed to preserving the very important history of the Chicago Jewish community.

On behalf of Co-President Dr. Rachele Gold, and myself, we want to thank you for your continued participation in the CJHS and wish you and your loved ones a very happy and healthy New Year.

Letters from CJHS Members and Friends

An Attitude of Gratitude

This year, especially, I am truly grateful for my CJHS membership. In the last issue of your publication, I read with interest the part-one article about Clara Landsberg, who had worked at Hull House (“A Tale of Many Cultures”). I got in touch with the article’s author, Dr. Cynthia Francis Gensheimer, and asked about a footnote in her article.

To make a long story short, it turned out that my correspondence with Dr. Gensheimer has connected me to family members whom I had long ago given up on as lost. It was a bittersweet moment, almost out of a Sholem Aleichem story, when I was able to speak with a long-lost relative on the telephone. We both burst into tears when we realized that we had been seeking a “lost” relative almost all of our lives.

I look forward to catching up on at least 100 years of history and enjoying a sweet present and future addition to my family.

Had I had not joined the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and read its quarterly publication, I would not be in this moment of gratitude.

Michael Levinson

South Shore Remembered

Your article on the Shore Bakery was terrific (“Bakery and Community: Shore Bakeries 1952 – 1982,” Summer 2022). I was raised in South Shore—first at 69th Street and Clyde Avenue, then at 70th Street and Chappel Avenue—and the Illinois Central was my transportation.

My dad, Avrum Matthews, had an award-winning photography studio in South Shore. On the High Holidays, he was cantor at the South Side Hebrew Congregation.

I went to O’Keefe Grammar School off of 71st Street and Hyde Park High School. 71st Street was like Michigan Avenue in those years, with gorgeous dress shops, ice cream parlors, and two movie houses.

Your article awakened terrific memories of those years!

Renee Matthews Engerman

CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

*The Hebrew phrase means
“More Power to You.”*

CJHS social media manager **Dr. Nathan Ellstrand** is working as the postdoctoral Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Research Partner Fellow in the History Department at San Diego State University. He will be supporting the DPAA, as well as teaching public history courses at the university.

CJHS member **Dr. Daniel Greene**, President and Librarian of the Newberry Library, served as a consultant to the new Ken Burns documentary series, “*The U.S. and the Holocaust*.”

This past August, CJHS members **Rabbi Jerold and Jocelyn Isenberg** participated in the World Zionist Organization’s 125th anniversary commemoration of the first Zionist Congress. The event took place in Basel, Switzerland. Rabbi Isenberg is the Executive Director of Mizrahi-Religious Zionists of Chicago.

CJHS Board member former **President Dr. Edward Mazur** presented “Celebrating Jewish Businesses” at the Bernard Horwich Center JCC as part of the JCC’s monthly event series.

CJHS member **Alice Solovy** had a letter published in the August 12 *Chicago Tribune* in which she criticized Illinois Republican gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey for his comparison of abortion to the Holocaust. She wrote, “Bailey should keep his mitts off the Holocaust....He owes a sincere apology.”

Look to the rock from which you were hewn

הביטו אל-צור חצבתכם



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The Chicago Jewish Historical Society, founded in 1977, is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Forty-five years later, our mission remains the discovery, collection, and

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open programs, tours, and outreach to youth and others interested in the preservation of Chicago Jewish history.

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