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chicago jewish historical society

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CHICAGO JEWISH History

Who Was Lazarus Silverman?

Early Chicago Financial Magnate Overlooked Today

Article By Walter Roth

In the October 1909 issue of *The Market World*, a New York Wall Street publication, an article entitled "A Portrait of Lazarus Silverman" begins: "Born and educated in Bavaria, a pioneer banker in Chicago, a contributor to the equipment of regiments for the Union army in the Civil War, a more than generous philanthropist in the days following the Chicago fire

of 1871, author of the bill for the resumption of specie payments by the United States Treasury in 1873, a charter director in the company which first exploited the Mesaba Range and Vermillion County as the richest source of iron ore in the then coming age of steel construction, and a prominent figure in that group of men who have guided Chicago to the position of the second city in the Western world -- such is the brief record of the life of Lazarus Silverman, who died at the age of seventy-nine in Chicago, last June -- a record which will be more of a monument than stone."

A Brief Overview

H. L. Meites in his *History of the Jews of Chicago*, originally published in 1924, in his chapter on Jews in banking writes of Lazarus Silverman, that he was a "banker from the '60s and an authority on finance for a half century, whose service to the United

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- History of Tiktin Jews by Norman Schwartz
- Stanley Rosen Reviews Vol. 4 of AJHS History
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- Can You Identify any of the Faces in Our Photo?

President's Column

My wife, Chaya, and Society members, Gitta and Oscar Walchirk and I spent three weeks this June on a trip to Europe with The Holocaust Educational Foundation of Illinois. The trip was designed for 35 European History and Philosophy professors, each teaching a course on the history of the Holocaust in their respective U.S. college or university.



Walter Roth

The founder of the Holocaust Educational Foundation is Zev Weiss of Wilmette, an educator and himself a survivor of Auschwitz and other death camps.

Mr. Weiss established the foundation in 1983, together with co-founders Gitta Walchirk, Chaya Roth, and some 15 other mental health professionals and lay leaders, for the purpose of collecting videotaped educational curricula on the Holocaust for institutions of higher learning in the U.S.

The aim of the taping project -- which is affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University -- is to generate oral histories to enlarge the body of historical material on the Holocaust for the purpose of research and teaching.

Since its inception, the foundation has taken over 250 oral testimonies of greater Chicago's Holocaust survivors. Videotape masters are indexed and stored at the Sperling Library Archives at Yale University and copies are held at the Holocaust Educational Foundation and by individual survivors and their families.

In recent years, the foundation has

also focused on the study of the Holocaust on college campuses, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The foundation has a program of making grants to universities to encourage these study courses.

To date, the Chicago based foundation has made over 100 grants to universities throughout the country for the teaching of courses on the Holocaust.

The Scholars on our trip were all recipients of grants from the foundation and are deeply committed to the Holocaust study program. The universities represented included the three U.S. military academies; the Universities of Wisconsin, Florida, Nebraska, Indiana, Illinois, Notre Dame, San Diego, Mississippi, Dickinson State, Millikin, Southern Alabama, North Carolina, Northern Colorado, Massachusetts, and Utah; Northwestern University; Purdue University; Swarthmore, Kenyon, Wellesley, and Middlebury Colleges; as well as Pacific University, Clemson University, Southern Methodist University and Denison University; In all, they make a veritable tapestry of higher learning institutions cross-sectioning the United States Universities' private and public educational system.

Our itinerary started in Warsaw, Poland then to Lublin and its nearby death camp at Majdanak, then to Krakow and the concentration camp at Placow (pictured in the movie, "Schindler's List,") and a day's visit to Auschwitz and the adjoining Birkenau camp.

From there we headed by bus to Prague, and its well-preserved Jewish cemetery and Jewish edifices. Outside of Prague, we visited the so-called "model" ghetto camp of Terezin, which despite its name, has a unique

horror of its own.

We went by train from Prague to Berlin, where for several days we had an opportunity to visit the many museums and memorials now in place in Berlin. The nearby concentration camp at Sachsenhausen concluded our heavy tour of these monstrous camps built by the Germans throughout Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

While many members of Chaya's and Gitta's and my families perished in these camps and we were well-acquainted with what had occurred to the Jews of Europe, there is nothing to prepare one for the indescribable horror of confronting Majdanek and Auschwitz.

There is one word that one learns at these camps that uniquely describes why the Holocaust is unique to the Jews -- and that is "GAS." The German orders starting in 1942, were that while others could be starved, tortured and shot, the Jews in addition to all these cruelties would be killed en masse by gas.

The walk that over a million Jews took from the train ramps of Auschwitz to the gas chambers, only a short distance away is a horror beyond description. The crematoria that burned their bodies still stand at Majdanek and Auschwitz. The tons of clothing, the bundles of human hair, the hundreds of thousands of shoes from murdered Jewish children, are still all there.

Of all the numerous exhibits that we saw at the camps and in the cities, the most telling was the new Permanent Exhibit at the House of the Wannensee Conference in Berlin. There detailed in authentic archival material, maps and pictures is the history of the Holocaust from the Dictatorship in Germany; the War in Poland; the creation of the Ghettos; the mass shootings; the Wannensee Conference of January 20, 1942 where the "Final Solution" was

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President's Column

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formalized; the establishment of the death camps; the resistance of the Jews and the final Liberation. My grandfather, Herz Stern, died in Terezin; we were able to confirm that from the records at the camp; my grandmother and her two sons were deported from the village of Roth (where I was born) to Terezin in 1942; in Terezin and Auschwitz we found the date and transport numbers that took them to their death when they were transported from Terezin to Auschwitz in 1944. In Berlin we located the grave of Chaya's and Gitta's father who was murdered by the Nazis at Sachsenhausen in September, 1939.

Thus, our trip ended in great sorrow, but with a reaffirmation of our faith in the continuity of Jewish life in Israel and the United States. Organizations such as the Historical Educational Foundation of Illinois must continue their activities for the preservation and teaching of the history of the Holocaust. That organization is now contemplating broadening the participants in its oral history projects to those Jews of Greater Chicago, who while not necessarily having been in concentration or death camps during the war, were victims of the scourge Hitler inflicted on European Jewry. How they managed to escape Hitler's Europe and the reestablishment of their lives in America is also a tale that must be preserved for future generations. We hope the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will be able to join with the foundation in this oral history project.

I trust that all of our members and friends have a restful summer and we look forward to seeing you at our future meetings. In the meantime, we wish you the very best for the New Year. □

Society Schedules Next Two Open Meetings

Neuropsychiatrist Dr. Louis Boshes and Barbara Schreier of the Chicago Historical Society will be the speakers for the next two open meetings of the Society.

Dr. Boshes had been scheduled to speak at last quarter's meeting but was forced to cancel the engagement. His talk, entitled, "A History of Jewish Men and Women of Medicine in the Chicago Area: 1837-1994" will be Oct. 2.

Dr. Boshes is a distinguished, researcher, physician, educator, and author, whose first-hand experiences in the Chicago medical field should provide a colorful backdrop to his broader subject.

Barbara Schreier is the curator of the Chicago Historical Society's

exhibit, "Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience." She will present a private lecture to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society as well as offer a tour of the exhibit.

The well-received exhibit continues at the Chicago Historical Society and is available for public tours throughout the week.

Barbara Schreier will speak on Dec. 11, at a time to be determined later.

Take note that both meetings will be held at unusual sites. Dr. Boshes's talk has been moved to Temple Sholom at 3480 N. Lake Shore Drive. There will be a social hour starting at 1 p.m. and the talk itself begins at 2 p.m.

Barbara Schreier's talk will be at the Chicago Historical Society, located at 1601 N. Clark St.

We invite members and their guests to join us for either or both of the presentations. □

Leah Axelrod Named to Illinois Historical Society Board

Long-time Society board member Leah Axelrod received another honor recently, when she was elected to the board of the Illinois State Historical Society.

Axelrod is President of My Kind of Town Tours, Inc., and has helped oversee the Chicago Jewish Historical Society's annual Summer tour program for the last several years.

She was elected to her new position by the members of the Illinois State Historical Society, the statewide non-profit institution providing participation in the collection, preservation and appreciation of Illinois' history.

We at the Chicago Jewish Historical Society extend our congratulations to her. □

Society Offers New Line of Tribute Cards for Sale

The Society is pleased to announce the availability of our new Tribute cards. These attractive cards can be used for many occasions: to honor someone, memorialize a loved one, thank a friend, or congratulate somebody.

They are printed on heavy, white stock, measure 9 and 1/4 by 4 inches folded, and come with matching envelopes. They bear the well-known Society logo on the outside, with inside space for your own message if you wish to add one. A package of eight cards with matching envelopes is \$10. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office for \$5 per card (includes postage). To order call the office at (312)663-5634 or Clare Greenberg at (312)725-7330. □

Silverman

States government in connection with the Sherman measure (the resumption of specie payment following the Civil War) has been characterized as the greatest national service ever rendered by a Jew."

Who was this man, acclaimed locally and nationally during his lifetime but now virtually forgotten? Of his descendants, a great granddaughter, Carol Gail, lives in Chicago and now proudly recalls the memory of Lazarus Silverman. Carol is the granddaughter of Lazarus' only child to reach adulthood, a daughter Shalah, who married an insurance executive, Edwin Romberg and who attained local fame for her numerous philanthropic activities with Jewish charities and hospitals.

Finding His Way to Chicago

Lazarus Silverman was born in Oberschwarzag, Bavaria, on February 29, 1830 and immigrated to the United States in 1849, at a time when many young German Jews left Bavaria for the New World because of political, social and economic reasons. As many of his countrymen had done, he first went to a small town in the South (in Alabama) and earned a living as a peddler.

In April, 1853 he went north to Chicago and by 1854 he began his business as a note-broker and banker and appears to have almost immediately made real estate investments in and around Chicago. His Bank, aptly called "Silverman's Bank," was established by 1857, when it survived a

severe financial crisis, which periodically affected the American economy then and for decades to come. On April 12, 1859 he married Hannah Sachs of Louisville, Kentucky, who also became active in Chicago communal affairs.

The coming of the Civil War saw Silverman actively engaged in lending large sums of money for the equipment of cavalry regiments, and the purchasing of saddles, bridles and outfits for officers and other necessities for the Federal Army.

Bank Survives Great Chicago Fire

By 1870 a Chicago business publication characterized Silverman as a "thorough and

In April, 1853 he went north to Chicago and by 1854 he began his business as a note-broker and banker and appears to have almost immediately made real estate investments in and around Chicago.

completely successful businessman," who had established a bank many years ago, which had become known throughout the

United States and Europe as Silverman's Bank.

The Bank survived the great Chicago fire of 1871 which caused great material loss to Silverman. Despite that, after the fire, he was "instrumental in assisting and helping many poor and deserving people, filling his own house on Calumet Avenue near Twenty-Second Street, with the destitute and homeless, and erecting for others temporary structures for their protection and comfort, also purchasing at that time large amounts of flour and other food products, gratuitously distributing the same among the needy and homeless."

Silverman had also been frequently connected with large financial operations, and his judgment and advice was listened to by financiers and politicians. The "specie payment" law referred to by Meites as

Silverman's signal contribution was enacted in 1873.

Silverman himself dictated an account of this episode, "His Own Account During His Last Illness," which was published after his death in *The Market World*. As an aftermath of the Civil War, the currency of the large cities of the country and of the Federal government itself, fluctuated wildly often causing great economic distress. Silverman's business, of course, was also affected. He thereupon went to Washington, D.C., had a conference with General Logan, a U.S. Senator from Illinois, Senator John Sherman, Chairman of the Finance Committee, and other prominent politicians and statesmen and imparted to them a plan for the stabilization of the U.S. currency by making it attractive for foreigners to pay their debts in gold, thus enabling the U.S. to build a gold reserve and back its own currency with gold.

The plan was Silverman's, but Sherman apparently adopted it as his own and financial history knows the plan as the "Sherman Plan."

At the Height of Prosperity

By the end of the 1880's, Silverman living in a mansion at 2213 S. Calumet Avenue, was at the height of his success. He was associated with Marshall Field, Potter Palmer and other Chicago financiers in many ventures. He was one of the founders of the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad and the Minnesota Iron Company (later merged into U.S. Steel). He owned acreage in Upper and Lower Michigan, farmlands in Iowa, Washington and Wyoming and many

buildings in Chicago.

He also appears to have been active in a number of charitable undertakings. The Cleveland Orphan Home was said to be one of his favorite projects. He also was a member of the Jewish Agricultural Society, then active in attempting to settle Jews in farming communities. His purchases of farmlands were undoubtedly made in connection with this organization. In many cases, he advanced the funds for farm equipment, which assisted these early farm communities.

He thereupon went to Washington, D.C., and imparted to them a plan for the stabilization of the U.S. currency by making it attractive for foreigners to pay their debts in gold, thus enabling the U.S. to build a gold reserve and back its own currency with gold.

Strangely enough there is little in the books about Silverman's synagogue or other local Jewish affiliations. We know, however, from Meites that Silverman was a member of K.A.M. in the 1850's; and that in 1860 he was on a committee that rejected a new reform prayerbook for the Congregation, causing a split among the membership, with the reformists leaving to establish a new reform

synagogue, Sinai Congregation.

The World's Fair Comes

In 1893, the Chicago World's Fair brought great fame to Chicago. The White City on the Midway stood as a model for the wealth and prosperity of the United States, in general, and Chicago in particular.

Suddenly, in the summer of 1893, several Chicago banks failed, and just as suddenly, the United States was again caught in another financial depression, but this one, "the panic of 1893," was worse than others.

Henry Ericsson, a builder, was a friend

and client of Silverman. In his book *Sixty Years a Builder*, published in 1942, Ericsson describes the scene in 1893 in front of Silverman's Bank located in the Commonwealth Building at LaSalle and Washington Streets. Long lines formed in front of Silverman's Bank. Ericsson writes:

"As they crowded his bank to withdraw their money, Lazarus Silverman stood beside his trusted nephew, Minzesheimer, and on the counter back of the old fashioned cage heaped up piles of glistening gold and silver and stacks of paper money.

Unperturbed and with superb showmanship, he would go outside and mingle with

the throng to hear what the people were saying. All along the line, at the sight of him, one time peddlers, who had become merchants, small perhaps but successful, remembering how he had helped to equip them with their first shop would slip out of line and leave without asking for their money."

Silverman's Bank survived the June crisis. He resumed his activities, and Ericsson notes that he built a four story building for Silverman on Edina Place (now Plymouth Place) which today is the site of the Standard Club.

The Futures Collapse

Then, on August 1, 1893, the "pork and lard corner" at the Board of Trade, supported by a number of Chicago's largest meat operators collapsed and many fortunes vanished overnight. Panic gripped the city.

Ericsson writes that another Jewish businessman, whose bank had failed, went into Lake Michigan from Lincoln Park and

drowned himself. The man referred to was Herman Scheffner, who was a relative of A. G. Becker, whose bank did fail at this time, and who did drown in Lake Michigan.

"People somehow expected operations on the Board of Trade to fail, but Lazarus Silverman's bank was regarded as impregnable and his resources as all but inexhaustible."

Silverman left for New York immediately hoping to raise cash to meet the expected demands of his depositors. But the collateral he had to offer was not adequate and he was unable to raise the

necessary cash.

A Sabbath Without Rest

Silverman came back to Chicago, with a court hearing on

Silverman came back to Chicago, with a court hearing on his bankruptcy set for Saturday; this was an ironic day for the court hearing.

his bankruptcy set for Saturday. Because Silverman's Bank was always closed on Saturday, and his checks and notes were imprinted with the phrase "No business on Saturday," this was an ironic day for the court hearing.

Ericsson notes: "What his inward feelings were no man could discern, as on his Sabbath Lazarus Silverman appeared in court before a gentile pretrial judge. But there were people who thought it at least poetic justice, for had he not always kept his bank open till noon on the Christian's Sunday and spent his Sunday afternoons inspecting his properties?"

At the bankruptcy hearings, it appeared that many of Silverman's depositors were "small Hebrew merchants and peddlers," and his total unsecured indebtedness amounted to \$650,000.

Lawyer Suggests Ties to Traction Interests

Silverman was represented personally

by Julius S. Grinnel, who was the state's attorney at the trial of the Haymarket anarchists and was now general counsel of the Chicago City Railway Company. Silverman had for many years been an active investor in Chicago tractions enterprises, which probably explained Grinnel's presence.

Levi Mayer, already a well known Jewish lawyer of the wealthy and influential, represented the secured creditors. Silverman testified that his Bank had paid out between \$600,000 to \$700,000 in cash during the summer of 1893 and that he had assets to pay all of the unsecured creditors. All he requested was an extension to permit him to resume his banking business.

The End of the Bank

Despite efforts by his friends, Silverman's Bank never reopened. He removed his real estate business to the building on the present site of The Standard Club.

From there, true to his word, Silverman devoted his remaining years to liquidating his many holdings so that he could make good on his promise to pay off all of his depositors. He did do so, even though he was under no legal obligation.

Lazarus Silverman died on June 9, 1909

at the home of his daughter at 2213 Calumet Avenue at the age of 79. The funeral was held at the home and the interment was at Mount Maariv Cemetery.

How He is Remembered

On the occasion of his death, the *Chicago Tribune* printed an announcement requesting members of the Independent Order of B'nai Brith, especially those of the Ramah Lodge to attend the funeral.

From the papers filed with the Probate Court of Cook County, it appears that Silverman's fortune was gone by the time of his death. A few parcels of vacant real estate were all that was listed on the inventory for his estate.

"His Life was His Monument"

Undoubtedly the bankruptcy of his Bank and his determination to repay all his depositors had devastated his estate. Nearly all his worldly possessions were gone, but as *The Market World* had written at the time of his death, his life was his monument.

Though the bankruptcy of his bank and the loss of his fortune resulted in his name being all but forgotten, Chicagoans should remember Lazarus Silverman for his many endeavors on behalf of the City of Chicago and its inhabitants. □

You Can Get Tax Benefits from your Society Donations

Did you know that you can receive tax benefits for contributions to the Society? Of course, your annual dues are tax deductible. But, did you realize that any additional gifts during lifetime also qualify for an income tax deduction (assuming you itemize deductions) and that gifts given at death qualify for a charitable

deduction against an otherwise taxable estate?

While we hope you will want to make lifetime gifts so you can see the good that is accomplished, it is very easy to make testamentary gifts by your last will or living trust. Simply have your attorney include language similar to the following in either your will or your trust, as the case may be.

For unrestricted gifts:

"I give \$_____ (or specified property) to the Chicago Jewish Historical

Society, of Chicago, Illinois, for the unrestricted use of the Society, as determined by its Board of Directors."

For restricted gifts:

"I give \$_____ (or specified property) to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, of Chicago, Illinois, to be used solely for the purpose of _____."

If you or your attorney has any questions about this, please give us a call. □

Memoir:

A Streetcar Name Kedzie: Remembering a Childhood Spent on the West Side

By Abe Goldsmith

I didn't know until a lot later that the reason we moved in with my grandparents Schar above the bakery at 1240 South Kedzie was that there was a depression. I was just four years old.

The four bedroom apartment was just across the street from Grandpa's Kosher butcher shop. It has been a Baptist Church for some years now.

The hard dirt back yard was about twenty feet by twenty feet. In back of the building was a coach house, or old stable, that had been converted into living spaces. It was occupied by Blacks.

The folks in back were not apparent in the winter, but in the summer they would sit in the yard visiting. They killed chickens by holding them by the legs and banging their heads on the ground. The night Joe Louis whipped Jim Braddock for the heavyweight championship the celebration lasted long into the night.

Waking up to the smell of the bakery each morning was a welcome to life. My favorite delight was a conical pastry with a three-inch base of chocolate. Maybe it cost three cents.

The red trolleys served Kedzie Avenue. The street was so narrow that it was impossible to open a car door on the street side when the streetcar was about to pass. I would spend hours in a front window

writing the numbers of the cars as they passed to see how long it took them to come back the other way. Often there were monumental traffic jams of cars, trucks, horse-drawn wagons and streetcars clanging and clanging for a right of way.

I attended Lawson School until about half way through the second grade when we moved to Lakeview. My grandmother usually walked me a block or so toward school, and I went to the rest of the way myself. Mother was at home with my baby sister.

There was a school store on the way where I spent my penny for candy, that is until I was introduced to the gumball machine and the striped winner that meant

a nickel candy bar. Losing a couple of times cured me. I spent my pennies on monkey nuts or saved two or three for halvah.

Grocery stores had wonderful aromas from kegs of pickles and schmaltz herring. The grocer had a long pole with a claw to reach the boxes on top shelves.

Between 12th and 13th Kedzie was a Jewish Street. There were at least five Kosher butchers and four fish stores, each one with a bearded man grinding horse radish and wrapping it in waxed paper and newspaper and charging the housewives five or ten cents. Two of the fish stores had bath tubs in the window in which fish swam.

There were numerous grocery stores and several open-air produce stores. Home freezers were nonexistent; most folks had ice boxes so shopping was at least an every-other-day activity. Ice boxes were wooden, lined with metal. A block of ice was placed

Sabbath lasted until the street lights went on. Then Grandpa opened the store. He could not understand how competitors opened earlier, before the end of Sabbath.

inside and a pan underneath to catch the melt.

The iceman would drive his horse and wagon through the alley and look for the sign in the customers' windows. He could tell from the way the customers hung out their signs whether they wanted 100, 75, 50 or 25 pounds of ice; there was no sense carrying 100 pounds up three flights when only 25 pounds were wanted.

In the winter, perishables were kept on the window sill. Dairy products were delivered to the back door by the milk man whose wagon was also horse drawn.

Clothing and shoe stores, the Circle, Gold and Central Park Theaters and delis were on Roosevelt Road. If I visited Grandma and Grandpa for a weekend, Grandma Schar would walk me to the Circle and hand me a few coins wrapped in paper so I could get in to the movie and meet me after the film.

On the northwest corner of 13th and Kedzie was the publishing office and printing plant of *The Jewish Daily Forward*. Grandpa and I joined the scores of people who stood in the window and watched the papers emerge from the press each night. Across the street at Goldberg's Drug Store I got ice cream cones for a nickel and free cigar boxes for my valuables.

Grandpa Schar (Louis, or Lazar) was a Yeshiva student and *schochet* in Lithuania before coming to America in the Twentieth Century's "0" years. His store at 1245 S. Kedzie was his second; I never knew the first but my mother told me that she and her three brothers and their parents lived behind

the store. Grandpa opened his store at 6 a.m. every morning except Shabbat.

Every Saturday morning he walked to *Synagogue Mishna U'Gemora*, about three blocks west of Kedzie on Douglas Boulevard. After lunch he read the paper, looked out the window, and napped.

Sabbath lasted until the street lights went on. Then Grandpa opened the store. He could not understand how competitors opened earlier, before the end of Sabbath.

The butcher shop had an L-shaped counter with three chopping blocks, two scales and a wooden cash drawer. There was a walk-in refrigerator. Waiting

customers stood or sat on wooden benches.

In the winter a coal/wood pot-bellied stove warmed the store, and in the summer a ceiling fan did its best to cool.

Fly paper streamers hung from the ceiling. There was also a stove in the back where the chicken coops

were kept. There were usually one or two coops of chickens except before holidays when additional supplies (more chickens, ducks, geese -- turkeys for Thanksgiving) were delivered. Chickens were fed corn and water placed in troughs that hung from their coops. Several times a day, the coops were checked for eggs.

The *schochet* would come twice a week. When he was through, Grandma, or I if I were there, would yank out the feathers from the still-warm bird. Grandma would then hold the chicken over an open flame to burn off the pin feathers.

Customers viewed the chickens as they hung on hooks in the front window. The

When the schochet was through, Grandma or I would yank out the feathers from the still warm bird. Grandma would then hold the chicken over an open flame to burn off the pin feathers.

women would choose their bird by feeling its body and Grandpa would cut it according to their wishes. At night all of the meat and cheese was put in the refrigerator. Decades of walking in and out of the fridge took its toll on Grandpa's health and he developed TB and had to leave the business. Lifting heavy quarters of steer resulted in hernias that he never had repaired.

When the circus came to town, posters were always put into his store windows in return for free passes. The passes allowed us to walk to the highest seats in Chicago Stadium to watch what seemed to be a circus of ants.

As long as I could remember, I spent the High Holy Days with my grandparents, attending the synagogue with them and my three uncles who always showed up. Our family had the second bench. The Hebrew service was long; the sermons were in Yiddish. Most conversations were in Yiddish. Women sat in a balcony around the building.

Grandpa Schar was in demand to lead the service or to read from the Torah. He was exceptional. He did not have a beautiful voice. What he did have was a

good ear for music and he never made a grammatical mistake.

Grandma had soft mattresses and home-made comforters of goose down. There was a Philco radio in the living room and a Victor wind-up Victrola that played large, very breakable records. I remember listening to Caruso, a laughing record, and "A Certain Party." The telephone took nickels or slugs and a man came every so

often to empty it. Grandma had home-made lace doilies and tablecloths.

She cooked every day, except Saturday and Holy

Days, when a flame was left on to warm food. Grandpa chopped the liver. Grandma never learned to read English; Grandpa attended night school and would read me everything. He told me that he dreamed in Yiddish. He always wore a hat of some sort around the house and wore a fedora to synagogue where he replaced it with a yarmulke. There were dishes for meat meals and another set for milk meals. There were two sets just for Passover.

Grandma died in 1948 and Grandpa came to live with my parents. He died in 1963. Both are buried in *Shavel Yanover* section of old Waldheim. I miss them. □

Society Newsletter Seeks Memoirs of Jewish Chicago

Chicago Jewish History, the newsletter of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, occasionally publishes memoirs of individual Chicagoans.

Abraham Goldsmith's memories of

growing up as the grandson of a West Side butcher is an example of the sort of memoir we like to consider.

Keep in mind that manuscripts should be no longer than six double-spaced pages and, preferably, should be submitted on IBM-compatible disk in WordPerfect 5.1 or earlier or in ASCII or DOS format. (For those of you without access to computer technology, good old paper will work

also.)

The editors consider both the caliber of the writing and the originality of the subject matter in weighing which memoirs we will be able to publish. We encourage you to record what you remember from your first-hand experiences.

Submissions may be sent to Joe Kraus at 1241 W. Ardmore, Apt. 3, Chicago, IL, 60660. □

History of Tiktin Jewish Community, in Chicago and Europe, Uncovered

Board Member Shulman Helps Recover Book Recording History of Shtetl and Landsmanshaft

By Norman D. Schwartz

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was very fortunate that its board member Milton Shulman was present recently when some members of Ner Tamid Congregation were reviewing the Congregation's collection of books. He found a copy of the *Pincus Tiktin*.

The *Pincus*, as a historical book is called in Yiddish, is of interest as a history of one of the

many Eastern European shtetls from which so many Jewish immigrants to Chicago came and is an indication of the continuing communication between immigrants and the "Old

Country." It is also a record of the community institutions created by Tiktin *landsleit*, or, in Hebrew, *Anshe Tiktin* -- the people of Tiktin -- who began arriving in Chicago over a quarter of a century ago. Most poignantly, it also records in detail the tragic story of the destruction of the Polish town's Jewish population in World War II.

The slim volume, which also includes some memories and thoughts of Alter Hoffman, then a distinguished Chicago Tiktiner, was published in English and Yiddish in 1949 when the Chicago community was still attempting to come to terms with its European disasters.

Through Mr. Shulman's efforts, the Society has arranged for the *Pincus* to be placed in the Asher Library of Spertus Institute of Jewish

Studies and is available for public consultation.

The *Shtetl Finder* describes Tiktin as a city northwest of Bialystock, which itself was northwest of Warsaw and Southeast of Vilna. The following text is selected from the *Pincus* itself:

"The Jewish religious community or Kehilah of Tiktin was organized in 1522, when the Voevoda (military administrator) of Traks, the owner of Tiktin, Welbrecht Gotshtald, permitted ten Jews of Hurdno (Grodno) to settle in his city, where they were given space on Kotcharov past the bridge to build houses, to erect a synagogue, and to lay out a cemetery past the Gardens. They were also permitted to build shops near the "Magistrate" (City Hall) and to trade freely, with individual permits according to their wishes, as well as trade in sale [sic -- salt?] and beverages.

"Prior to World War I, Tiktin was not considered a prosperous city, but compared with its present status one must say that Tiktin was a prosperous town. It had specialized businesses and the

majority earned a living. For instance, there was a lumber business that supported fifty percent of our population. There was also a brush factory that employed about eighty workers, who earned good wages. Prayer shawls were made there, too. Now, after the war, both enterprises have vanished. The economic stability of Tiktin has sunk to its lowest level. During the war, Tiktin passed through various crises, the most terrible during the dreadful occupation by the Russians, the Germans, and the Bolsheviks."

The next section of the *Pincus* is entitled "The Destruction of Tiktin -- How the Jews of Tiktin Were Annihilated." It was written by a survivor and occupies over ten graphic pages.

"To condense this part of the tale would do an

The Pincus is an indication of the continuing communication between immigrants and the "Old Country." Most poignantly, it also records in detail the destruction of the Polish town's Jewish population in World War II.

injustice to the memory of the approximately 2100 Jews who were brutally murdered in August 25 and 26, 1941. Only 150 succeeded in saving themselves by flight, some by hiding. It would trivialize the horror to which the inhabitants were subjected if I were to summarize the steps taken by the Germans who killed the Jewish residents and then systematically liquidated Jewish property, defiled the Jewish cemetery, destroyed Jewish homes, and stripped the synagogue.

"One of the more dynamic members of the Chicago Tiktin community was Alter Hoffman, who came to America in 1891. He did so not to carve out for himself a career or build a future, only to be a messenger of the Tiktin Jews: that in all the years he would be here, he should rouse and appeal to the Tiktin *landsleit*, that they do not forget their home town Tiktin, and not cease their efforts in behalf of the Tiktin Jews. In 1920 he was sent as a delegate from the local *landsleit* to Tiktin. He faced many difficulties and finally left after ten months."

More than one third of the *Pincus*, 22 pages, is devoted to the Chicago Tiktin community. It is a representative tale of *landsleit* working together. Excerpts and summaries follow:

"When the Tiktin Jews met, their minds were filled with visions of the grand wonderful synagogue in Tiktin. They thought that it would serve a useful purpose to have one in Chicago. It would provide a spiritual center, a meeting place, as well as a house of prayer, and the satisfaction of an accomplished deed in Chicago. In the summer of 1889, a meeting took place in the house of Chaim and Rebecca Rafalovich, and it was decided to go to work immediately to erect a synagogue. A search was initiated to find a suitable site for it. The place was found on Canal and 14th Street in the house of Koper, on the second floor. The house was just across the street from the Mariampoler synagogue. Into the

large room was brought a holy ark with several scrolls of the law (*sifreh torah*) the *landsleit* purchased. This was the first Tiktin synagogue in Chicago."

They then moved to the front room of the apartment of Chaim Rafalovich on Canal at Bunker Street. Later they moved to Wilson Street (south of 12th at Clinton). After another move on the same street, they joined three other congregations and found a vacant house on the corner of Cramer and Jefferson Streets. The name chosen was Tiferes Isroel Anshe Tiktin.

The combination of the four groups did not last, and the Tiktinners found a building on Sangamon, between Maxwell and 14th Streets. Finally, they acquired a synagogue on Millard at 12th Street in 1924 (1230 S. Millard Ave.).

"The synagogue gratifies only a small segment in the life of a *landsmanshaft*. There are interests and functions a synagogue cannot fulfill. A *verein*

composed of *landsleit* is necessary; there one feels free to communicate with kindred people in a congenial atmosphere. It serves, too, various other purposes. In 1917 during the first world war, *vereins* of *landsleit* made their appearance in Chicago, New York, and other large cities. The Tiktinners too decided to organize a *verein*. The first organizational meeting took place in March, 1917 at the home of Joseph Fishel Malishevsky at 1119 S. Whipple Street. The aim was to help the needy in Tiktin and the Tiktinners who are in need of help here in Chicago. Among other things, it incorporated a Sick Benefit and Death Benefit feature."

Two years later, in 1919, when news arrived from Tiktin that conditions there were very grave, the misery unbearable, and help necessary immediately for the inhabitants of the town who remained without sustenance, there was organized at once a Tiktin Relief Society, in which the congregation joined and later the *verein* and Ladies Auxiliary.

The Tiktin Aid Society in Chicago was

*The Tiktin Aid Society in
Chicago never stopped
furnishing aid to the needy and
suffering in Tiktin.*

organized in 1917. Afterwards it merged with the Relief Society, the congregation, and the Ladies Auxiliary. It never stopped furnishing aid to the needy and suffering in Tiktin. After the second world war, when no more Jews were left in Tiktin, a few remaining in concentration camps in Shanghai and in Palestine were all given aid wherever possible.

"Those engaged in Jewish social activities are familiar with the high position of the ladies' section -- The Ladies Auxiliaries -- in the various institutions and organizations. Ofttimes the Ladies Auxiliaries are the very heart and soul of the institutions and instill in them the spirit of life. In 1924, when the Tiktin *landsleit* erected the new synagogue on Millard Avenue, the Tiktin Ladies Auxiliary appeared on the scene. Its aim was to collect funds for the synagogue by various entertainments. The first thing the Ladies Auxiliary did for the synagogue was to collect \$2000 for the Holy Ark. There is hardly an undertaking for the synagogue to which the ladies have not made a contribution. It is not to be forgotten that they are wives of the Tiktin *landsleit*, and the large sums that were collected by their husbands, in a sense, is also theirs. It is

amazing what enthusiasm the Ladies manifest in their manifold activities, whether for the synagogue or the Relief. The work simply "burns" in their hands. Generally, when familiar with activities of the Ladies Auxiliary, one must admit that the women have the full right to be proud of their achievements and the men may boast about their fine work."

Synagogue directories indicate that when the Tiktiners left Sangamon Street on the old West Side for Lawndale in 1924, they apparently combined with Atereh Israel Congregation, which had been at the Millard Avenue Address since 1916. The combined congregation was listed as Atereh Israel Anshe Tiktin in the directories from 1928 to 1932 when it disappears, perhaps combining with a Mikro Kodesh Congregation previously listed as being on the old West Side from 1897 through 1914 and possibly relocating after a merger in Lawndale between 1923 and 1929. At any rate the name Mikro Kodesh Anshe Tiktin reappears in the directories in 1956 at 2832 W. Foster where it merged with an earlier Ravenswood Budlong Congregation and exists to the present time. □

Information Request: **Flag Holiday a Result of Local Jew's Suggestion**

"Benjamin Alheimer, a B'nai B'rith member from Chicago and St. Louis, is credited with having suggested the idea of a Flag Day observance to President Woodrow Wilson while visiting Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas in 1912. President Wilson issued a proclamation establishing Flag Day on June 14, 1916."

The above quotation is from a pamphlet issued by B'nai B'rith International (Revised 1986) called

"Flag Code of the United States of America."

This information was brought to the attention of the Society by Alan L. Lessack, Executive Director of B'nai B'rith Midwest District Six.

"The first official recognition of Flag Day was made by the Governor of New York who gave orders that, on June 14, 1897, the National Flag should fly over all public buildings of the State. The fourteenth of June was chosen because, on this day, one hundred and seventeen years before, the flag of our union was formally adopted by Congress." (*Flag Day: Its History, Origin and Celebration as Related in Song*

and Story, edited by Robert Haven Schauffler.)

In 1932 Alheimer was lauded on the occasion of his 82nd birthday for a lifetime of service to communal causes and praised especially for his work on behalf of the National Jewish Hospital in Denver. Although little is recorded of Alheimer's life in Chicago, a Benjamin J. Alheimer is listed in the *Chicago Blue Book* for 1912 as living at 5435 Cornell Avenue. Any further information concerning him and his life in Chicago would be appreciated and can be mailed to the Society office at 618 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL, 60605. □

-- Norman D. Schwartz

Book Review:

New AJHS History Volume Examines Tensions Behind a Comfortable Era

An appreciation of the role of history has always been an important part of Jewish consciousness. Whether the roots of this interest came from biblical or religious concerns or the drive for social justice embodied in Marxism, socialism, or other social reform philosophies, historical understanding has been a tool and motivating force for the survival and growth of Jews in America.

This book, which is the fourth volume of the series *The Jewish People in America*, edited and distributed by the American Jewish Historical Society, provides us with a brief, yet comprehensive and well-balanced descriptive analysis of the period from 1920-1945, *A Time for Searching -- Entering the Mainstream*. It seeks to provide, "an examination of the historical forces that shaped American Jewry in the two decades preceding the Holocaust." Topics included are transformation of American Jewry's religious and ethnic culture, the growth of its elaborate organizational and communal structure, its ideological and political conflicts, the effect of anti-Semitism on Jews' attitudes, and their drive to attain middle class status.

Author Henry Feingold (who also serves as the general editor of the five-volume project) has succeeded in his goal to "present existing materials in a form that will satisfy the standards of the professional historian while holding the interest of the intelligent lay reader." This volume provides a historical foundation for understanding the problems faced by the Jewish community today. Feingold

examines the secularization and individuation that promoted individual achievement at the price of undermining effective Jewish communal action. He identifies the particular tensions of living in an America that generally accepted Jews and but that made it increasingly difficult to maintain even minimal forms of Jewish identity.

The book is organized in eight interesting and informative chapters. While they can be read as self-contained and self-sufficient articles, they are tied together into a total framework, relating complex historical events to Feingold's central analysis of the inadequacy of the American Jewish response to the Holocaust. He describes the Holocaust in his sixth chapter as the dramatic and tragic event that reshaped the structure and identity of the American Jewish community.

Chapter One, "Signs of Unwelcome," in its detailed description of anti-Semitism is a sharp reminder of both how far we have come in gaining

acceptability in American society as well as how quickly so many Jews have forgotten their own struggles and experiences. The gritty reality of discrimination against Jews and the almost primal fear that it engendered should provide us with the perspective to understand and empathize with current minority groups that are facing similar problems today, in a less than hospitable economic environment.

Feingold emphasizes that for ordinary Jews, anti-Semitism was not an abstraction. Employment discrimination was common.

Western Union, most banks, and the telephone company would not hire Jews. Educated Jews likewise found opportunities for employment limited. Discrimination maintained by the "invisible hand" kept Jews out of the housing market. Sunday blue laws spurred by Protestant religious fundamentalists were particularly problematic for Jews.

Anti-Semitic groups bolstered by an "Anglo-Saxon tradition of exclusiveness," waged war against Jews, identifying them with the Russian Revolution and charging them with practicing "Judeobolshevism." The various versions of *The*

*A Time for Searching:
Entering the Mainstream
1920-1945,*
By Henry L Feingold
Vol. 4 in *The Jewish People
in America*
Johns Hopkins University
Press and The American
Jewish Historical Society

◆
Reviewed by Stanley Rosen

Protocols of the Elders of Zion, distributed among others by Henry Ford, contained the idea of a world Jewish conspiracy. Jewish leaders were divided on how to respond. Some like the Anti-Defamation League spent their energies on developing and distributing to public leaders and the press guidelines for the use of the word "Jew." The radical Jewish Press responded with outbursts of indignation and calls for action by the organized Jewish community against the *Protocols*.

The campaign of the Jews to gain entrance to Harvard University is described in great detail. This section underlines the rampant discrimination against Jews in higher education. The attempts to segregate and isolate admitted students were based on the proposal that Jews and their religion were characterized by "poor hygiene, competitiveness and disdain for athletics." AT CCNY Jewish students engaged in serious discussions of ideology and ideas, including the controversy over informal dress on campus, were criticized for a total absence of what was called "school spirit." The solution offered by the university leaders was for the Jews to abandon their religious and cultural identity. The plight of "successful Jews was being conflicted between the prospects of losing their faith and not being welcomed into the new culture." This dynamic resulted in a devastating blow to their mental health. This struggle for achievement and equal treatment pressed the limits of their cultural identity.

The impact of the restrictive immigration laws and their public discussion fostered hostility to foreigners generally and to Jews in particular. Key public officials described Jews as "filthy... often dangerous in their habits... lacking any conception of patriotism or national spirit." Many Yiddish speaking Jews could in fact be described by their political radicalism, their constant agitation for unions, and the stridency of their political Zionism, characteristics which caused

embarrassment to the more acculturated German Jews.

The chapters that follow deal with acculturation, the development of a new Jewish-American culture, religion, class, struggle, upward mobility, Zionism, and Jews and American politics. In a cogent way we are presented with a summary of historical information and analysis easily forgotten or never yet examined by older and younger generations alike.

Like so many Jewish histories, it is unfortunately East Coast-centered, with particular emphasis on New York City. The book deals with the world west of the Hudson River in a perfunctory and minimal manner. One could have hoped that such an anniversary volume would have made at least an attempt to overcome this inadequacy. A closer and more critical look at Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles might challenge some too commonly accepted and oversimplified generalizations, and might have provided us with new insights or questions. For a more comprehensive discussion of Chicago in a general history, I would recommend Stanley Feldstein's book, *The Land that I Show You: Three Centuries of Jewish Life in America* (Anchor Press, 1978). As it is, Feingold is a competent researcher and writer. While his prose is often overly academic and lacks animation and excitement, he provides us with a competent and readable book.

The 338 page book which includes 16 pages of photos is worthy of both reading and contemplation. In a world where we are forever reinventing the wheel, this book provides us with a firm understanding of the critical events, problem definitions, and lessons of the past that grow out of "the historical forces that shape American Jewry in the two decades preceding the Holocaust." Equipped with these insights, we can better understand similar and newly defined problems facing Jews and the Jewish community today. □

Public Library to Open Yiddish Culture Display

A display of Yiddish culture in Chicago will open on October 20 in the Special Collections Gallery of the Harold Washington Public Library.

The exhibit will present a portion

of the sweep of the Jewish immigrant experience through its Yiddish organizations and programs. These range from theater boards to school boards, including many fraternal, social and cultural organizations.

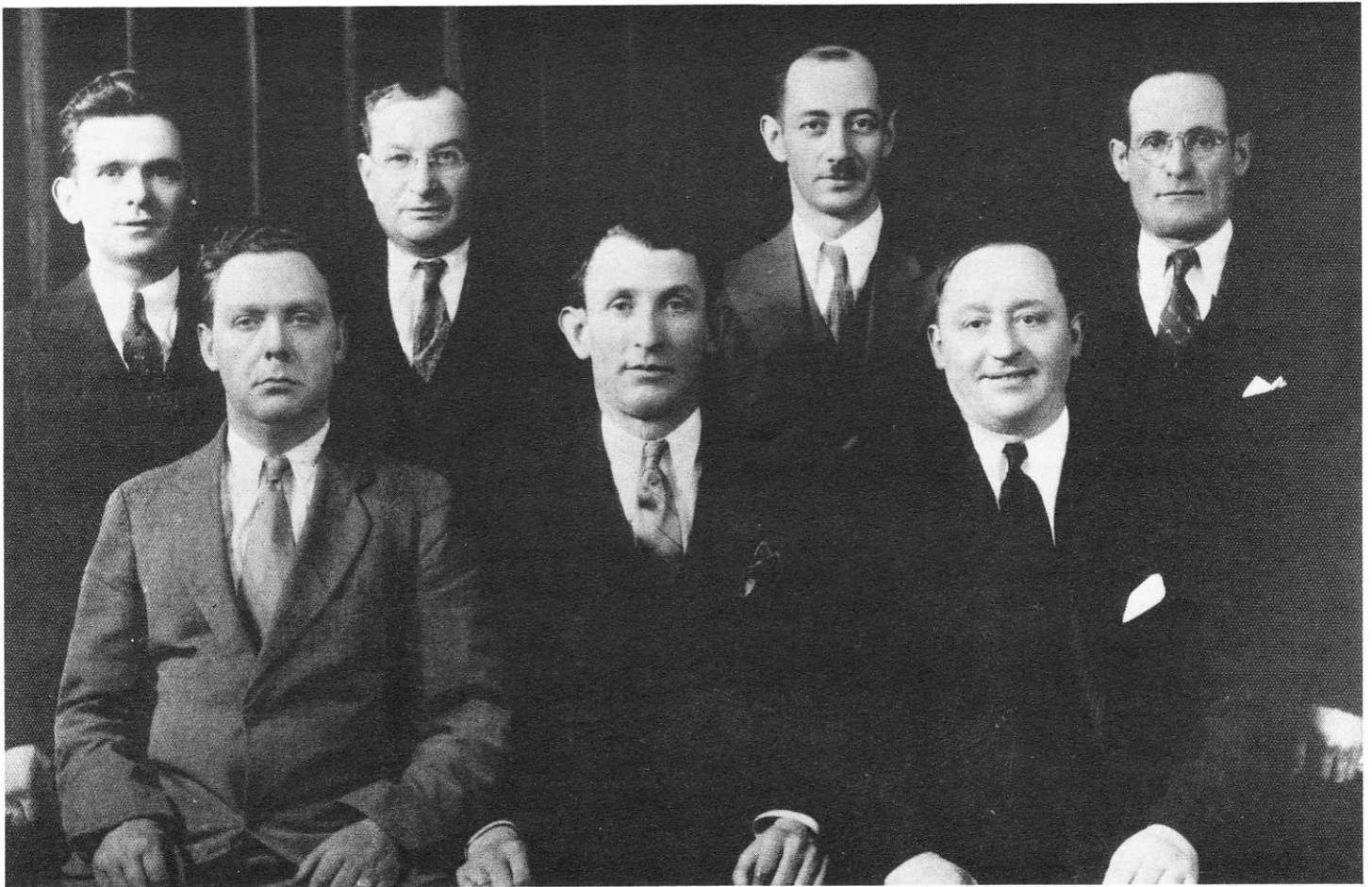
A series of seven programs were offered this summer in cooperation with the Chicago branch of YIVO. There will be six additional programs

offered in October and November in conjunction with the exhibition.

Society board members Dr. Irving Cutler, Seymour Persky and Sid Sorkin served on the library advisory board. Dr. Cutler will speak on Nov. 14 and Mr. Sorkin on Nov. 7.

The exhibit will be open until Dec. 31, 1994. □

--Sid Sorkin



Society Looks to Identify Butchers in Photograph

The photograph pictured above, a copy of one provided to the Society by member Rae Bittenfeld Kushner, shows members of the Chicago Kosher Butchers Union (Retail) from some time in the 1930s.

In the front row, at the left, is Joseph Bittenfeld. Next to him is "Langer" Bogoslawsky. In the back row, at the far right, is Max Simkin.

All the other men in the picture remain unidentified. If any of you have ideas on who the remaining men might be, we would appreciate hearing from you at the Society Office, 618 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL, 60605.

We are grateful to Mrs. Kushner for sharing the photograph with the Society and invite others to make available unusual items. □

Society Welcomes New Members

The last six months have brought a number of new members into the Society. As always, we are delighted to welcome each of them separately and all of them collectively.

The job of telling the history of our community is possible only when all of us participate in it.

We are grateful for our continuing members as well as the following new members:

*Sarah Barth
Marin Bugdanoff
Paula Chaiken
Janet M. Damm
Mr. & Mrs. T. Diamond
Dr. Danuta Ehrlich
David Gail
Harold Graham
Mr. & Mrs Marion Horwitz*

*Jonah Orlofsky
Elaine Murphy
Ann Pollack
Sheryl Robbin
Siddy Rogers
Taube Rotter
Beatrice Shapiro
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Skora
Mel Tanditash
Mrs. A. Weinzwig
Blackwell North*

*Helen Kracker
Edward Lewison
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lerner*

*America, Inc.
The Council for
Jewish Elderly*

We invite everyone to participate in all of our activities. See the newsletter and other mailings for announcements of our quarterly open meetings and consider participating in our oral history project, our proposed video history of the Jews of Chicago, and in the planning process behind the many events we undertake.

What's more, we ask you to consider giving memberships to our Society to friends, family members or former Chicagoans who may have left the city but not gotten it out of their hearts entirely.

The best advertisements for the Society are our members themselves and the dedication they show in helping preserving a history that requires all of us if we are to tell it as it ought to be told. □

Oral History Excerpt:
**Judith Gottlieb Recalls
Her Childhood with
Chicago's Early Zionists**

Judith Shapiro Gottlieb is best known as the founder of the American Israel Cultural Foundation's Scholarship Program, an arts development program that has helped nurture the talents of Yitzhak Perlman, Shlomo Mintz, and Daniel Barenboim, among others. Although a resident of Israel since 1932, Mrs. Gottlieb spent her childhood in Chicago where, with her parents serving as leading lights in the Zionist movement, she met a number of seminal Zionist figures.

The following is an excerpt of an oral history she gave to Emma Kowalenko and Clare and Daniel Greenberg at the Greenbergs' home on May 4, 1994.

Gottlieb: My name is Judith Shapiro Gottlieb. And I was born in Chicago on 13th Place and Homan Avenue, across the street from the then Chicago Hebrew Institute which then became the Jewish People's Institute which later was situated on Douglas Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue

Kowalenko: All right and now, I don't know how touchy this is but could you give us a year or approximate date of birth?

Gottlieb: Absolutely. I have *no* complex about my age. The date of my birth is May 10th -- May 16, 1910.

Kowalenko: So your birthday's coming up!

Gottlieb: No, I have absolutely no complex about age. I feel that every age has its beauty and we only have to know how to take it.

Kowalenko: I agree with you on that. Great. Now, you were born in Chicago then. And how long did you stay in Chicago?

Gottlieb: Well, I lived in Chicago until 1926. And it was not long before we moved from the place of my birth to Lawndale Avenue, 1306 Lawndale Avenue. And there I lived the major part of my life. Although even on 13th Place and Homan Avenue, I remember as a very little girl we had -- we always had guests in our home and very often on arising, I would have to jump over sleeping bodies

Kowalenko: Oh wonderful. That's a great memory.

Gottlieb: of people who would, people of the movement. My parents were in the very beginnings of the Poale Zion Movement.... It means the workers of Zion. There was then -- it was a socialist, Zionist movement. There was a Jewish socialist movement called The Bund but they were -- had no interest in a Jewish homeland.... Poale Zion, on the other hand, was also a Jewish socialist movement with its eyes focused on eventually going to Palestine.

By the way, then we were Palestinians....

Kowalenko: And did he explain or did your parents talk about why they had this fervor in this

Gottlieb: Well, they didn't really explain. I mean it was ...

Kowalenko: They did it!

Gottlieb: It was! That was our life. I mean, it didn't seem to need any explanation. And my earliest memory -- this is when we lived already at 1306 Lawndale Avenue -- I remember maybe I was 5, maybe 6. We had a small apartment but we had a big kitchen. And we had a big square table and that square table was the locale of many, many, many meetings of the members of the movement and the discussions and I remember And the bedroom was right next to the kitchen where my sister and I would be put to sleep. And I remember time and again being awakened with a pounding on the table [and talking in Yiddish about "principles"]. Well, I didn't know what [that] meant and I thought, "What do they have to do with my principal?" The only word principal I thought was the principal of my school. ...

Kowalenko: The movement had as its goal the return to Palestine.

Gottlieb: Right.

Kowalenko: But in terms of labor and ... which professions or which groups did it try to represent?

Gottlieb: There was no, there was no restriction as to profession and the idea was that there would be laborers in Israel -- not only students, not only merchants, but real laborers to build the country. ...

Clare Greenberg: Israel along socialist lines.

Gottlieb: Yes, right.

Kowalenko: I see.

Clare Greenberg: With your own hands kind of stuff. So they were the founders of the Kibbutz movement as a result.

Kowalenko: I see. I see. They attempted to recruit workers to go, of all ...

Gottlieb: No.

Kowalenko: No?

Gottlieb: No, no. The idea was that everybody -- nobody what their profession would be -- would become workers.

Kowalenko: I see.

Gottlieb: Would become workers, laborers in Palestine.

Daniel Greenberg: It was to normalize the Jewish people in a sense. So it would have a working class in Palestine. ... The Kibbutz movement was established by people who came from Europe

Kowalenko: I see.

Daniel Greenberg: who belonged to the same movement...

Kowalenko: The sentence about the principal that you mentioned earlier --

Gottlieb: Yes.

Kowalenko: Could you translate it?

Gottlieb: Oh sure. What it meant was: We are principally opposed.

Clare Greenberg: In principle.

Gottlieb: In principle. And what it meant -- what they were doing, they were dreaming, actually dreaming of the future of how it -- what shape it would take, what shape the new Israel would take. And the idea was that as soon -- Nobody had money to go or anything. And then, in 19 -- the war was over in November. The Armistice -- the First World War -- The Armistice was in 1918. I think it must have been the very beginning of 1919. My father was sent as an emissary from the movement to go to Palestine ... To find, to seek out a holding, a place where the members could eventually come and settle in Palestine.

But I go back a little bit. When in 19 -- I think it must have been 1917, probably 1917, when the Jewish Legion was formed of soldiers in America for people to volunteer to go to fight with the British for Palestine, for the liberation of Palestine from the Turks. And all the, many of the members of the movement went to volunteer and to go to fight as soldiers.

Clare Greenberg: There was a large contingent from Chicago.

Gottlieb: Yes, there was a large contingent from Chicago, from New York, from everywhere. And my father normally went to volunteer. But he was rejected for some physical reason and the day he came back was Yom Kippur in our house. It was

something terrible. "What do you mean -- Poppa won't go and fight, you know, for Palestine?!" And eventually -- so now I return to what I started that they sent him as an emissary for that purpose. And when he went to Palestine, he looked up -- this was already after the Armistice, you know, but the people were still not demobilized. They were still wearing their uniforms. And he looked up the various friends that he knew and one of them was a man by the name of Itzak Rabin. And he was a very close friend of ours.

Many years later -- and we had a picture of them seated together. Many years later, there was a book fair in Tel Aviv in a huge, huge area. And I went to the book fair and stood at a stall and was leafing through books and seeing. And then I see a little book which is called "My Father's House" by Itzak Rabin, who at that time was Chief of Staff when I knew that. And I leafed through the book and in the beginning there's a picture of his grandfather and then of his grandmother and the third picture -- I looked at it and said ... "That's my father!" And I got all excited. And the salesgirl said, "Oh, I" And she got excited, you know. And it didn't mention my father's name because it said, "My father with a tourist from America!" [Laughs] And the salesgirl said, "I really should give you this book but I can't because it doesn't belong -- I don't own it." I said, "Never mind. I'll buy it." And of course, it's on my shelf now. And I happened to see Itzak and Leah, his wife, and I told them about it and then they knew they could identify it. ...

Clare Greenberg: Today of all days was the day that Itzak Rabin signed the peace treaty. ...

Gottlieb: During World War I... my father then was the, sort of the head of the movement in the leadership anyway. And he asked them from New York to send Ben-Zvi as a speaker.

Kowalenko: Oh, to here, to Chicago.

Gottlieb: To Chicago. And they said no, that Ben-Gurion was the better speaker. By the way, in those years, Ben-Zvi was the top person and not Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion was sort of an intern. And as a matter of fact, this what I'm telling you now is included in his, in Ben-Gurion's biography and it mentions my father there, and about what I'm telling you now. And then Ben-Gurion came to Chicago and of course he made quite an impression and became a very close friend of my family's.

Kowalenko: Oh really?

Gottlieb: I think I showed you the photograph when you were in my house, of a photograph of Ben-Gurion. Then everybody took pictures, you know. Not snapshots like we take now but formal pictures. And he wrote on the back: "To Reizel and Ben" -- in Hebrew he wrote -- "Reizel and Ben, my friends in exile." [Laughs]...

Kowalenko: Now of the people that came -- since you mentioned Ben-Gurion, what other people do you remember came through?

Gottlieb: It was a cross section of the population. And some of the people that came through, I mentioned some of them here. I wrote them down. Shmaryahu Levine ... and Nahun Sokolow ... These were people from Europe who used to come to help in the movement and speak and so on. And all of these people were in our home. There was a man called Zerubabel. Gorgeous looking man. Tall with a black beard. And I remember -- You know, I remember these things not in terms of politics but the impression that they made on a little girl.

And I, at the ripe old age of 4, fell head over heels in love with [Zerubabel]. He was my love. I used to look adoringly at him.

Clare Greenberg: He was very, very tall.

Gottlieb: He was very tall. And he would come. And my father -- nobody had cars in those days, you know. And my father would rent a taxi and we would go for a ride, go for a ride to the lake. Or somewhere. Or we would go to this Coaches Electric Park in a taxi. And I remember he came at one time when there was a picnic and I was sitting on his lap. And he said to me [in Yiddish].

Kowalenko: Oh wow!

Gottlieb: [Laughing.] I was four years old. Yes, he says, "Are you comfortable?" And I said, "Even if I weren't comfortable, to sit with you is comfortable!" I wish I had that, that later. [Laughs]

Daniel Greenberg: A forward young lady, wouldn't you say? ...

Kowalenko: Talk a little bit about Golda [Meir].

Gottlieb: Yes, I'm coming to that. This was 1915, I think. There was a rumor that there was a *mishugena madel* in Milwaukee who was barnstorming for the Poale Zion.

Kowalenko: Now *mishugena* ...

Gottlieb: Yeah, *mishugena madel* means a cuckoo girl.

Zukerman and my father came to Chicago and he and my father went to Milwaukee.... The *mishugena madel* -- to see who she was. And they were absolutely bewitched by her. Believe it or not, she was quite a beautiful girl.

Kowalenko: Oh, I believe it.

Gottlieb: And Poppa said, Poppa said to Golda, "Golda, Milwaukee is too small for you. You must come to Chicago." And in 1916, she came to Chicago.

One day Poppa comes and the young woman descends from the train and before he had a chance to introduce her, my mother went up to her and "Du bist Golda." You are Golda.

Kowalenko: At your father's urging so he was the one who brought her.

Gottlieb: Absolutely. She came to Chicago and she lived in our

house. But before she came to live actually, my father -- when he returned from Milwaukee and told my mother about her but there was such a graphic description that my mother knew exactly who she was. In the summer time, my mother, sister and I used to escape from the heat of Chicago to Mackinac Island in Michigan. And Poppa would come for the weekend. And one day -- and we used to -- Every Friday we'd go to the train to meet Poppa. One day Poppa comes and the young woman descends from the train and before he had a chance to introduce her, my mother went up to her and "Du bist Golda." You are Golda. And then we walked to the rooming house where we stayed along the lake and I hear the heated discussion between these two women and I hear my mother saying, "Du" to her -- you know, in the familiar address. And I was shocked! Because we were taught that you don't use the familiar address. Although we spoke Yiddish all the time. You don't use the familiar address to people that you don't know. So I called Momma aside and I said, "Momma, you just met her and you're already saying 'du' to her!" And then it occurred to her only then how they clicked, you know. And something like you and I clicked. You see?

Gottlieb: Never. [Laughs] And 'til their respective dying days, they were the closest of friends. □