

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



chicago jewish historical society

FORMERLY SOCIETY NEWS
volume xiv, no.1, Fall, 1990

CHICAGO JEWISH History

October 28 Meeting To Mark Publication Of Meites History

*Judge Marovitz, Dr. Cutler,
Meites Kin To Speak*

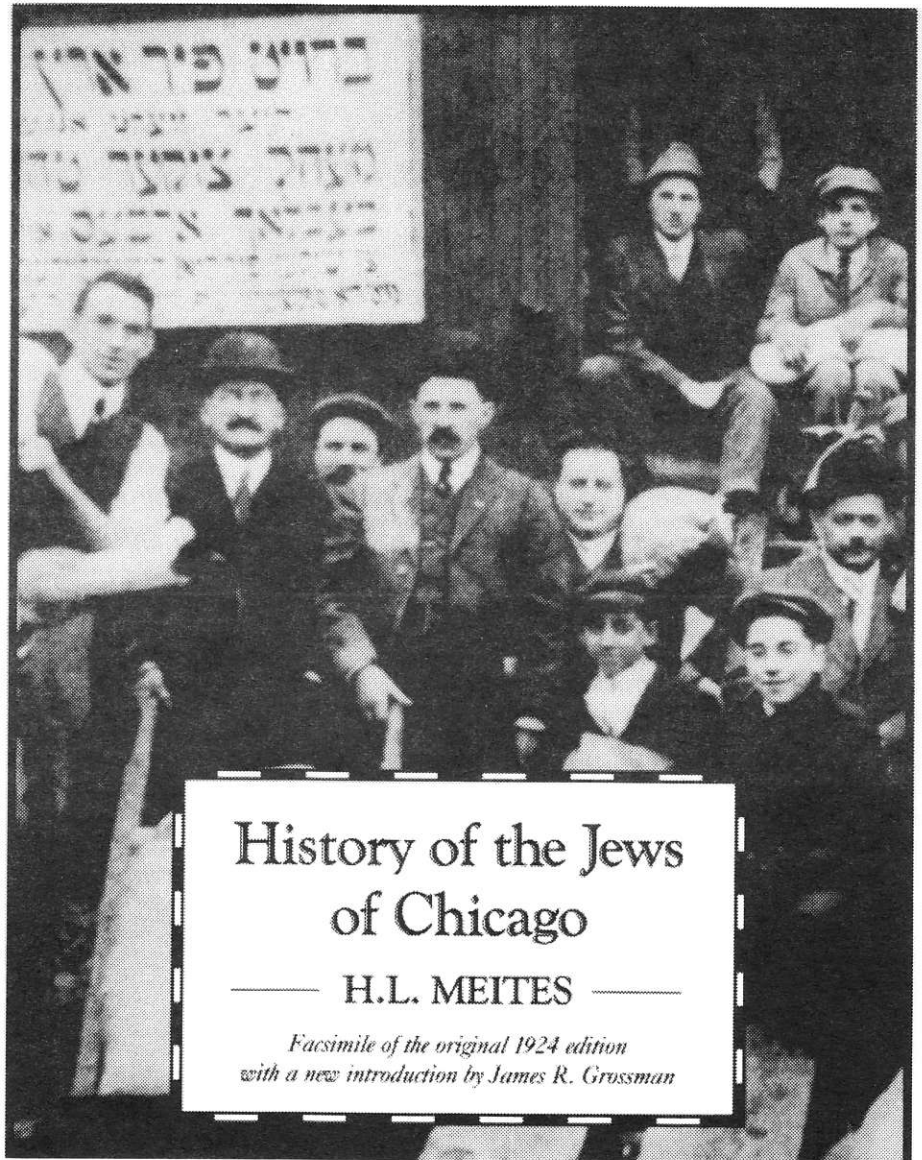
A special program marking the republication by the Society of H.L. Meites' landmark *History of the Jews of Chicago* will be the highlight of the CJHS meeting on Sunday, October 28, at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road. The program will start at 1:30 PM.

Speakers will be Jerry Meites, a Chicago lawyer and grandson of H.L. Meites; Dr. Irving Cutler, Chicago historian and a Society founder; and Federal Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, distinguished jurist and community leader. The meeting will be chaired by and speakers introduced by the program chairman, Vice-president Burt Robin.

Slides, Reminiscences Featured

Mr. Meites will discuss his grandfather; Dr. Cutler will show slides of Chicago Jewish scenes at the time H.L. Meites was compiling his history in the teens and twenties of this century; and Judge Marovitz will speak of growing up in Chicago during years covered in the book.

Copies of the *History of the Jews of Chicago*, newly received from the printer, will be available for viewing during the



continued on page 11

Cover of the reprinted Meites history.

Looking Back at Albany Park When It Was Jewish

Jews Lend Special Flavor to Community For Nearly Forty Years

By Edward Mazur

Albanys Park, an overwhelmingly Jewish neighborhood by the era of the 1930s Depression, was a fascinating, vibrant, and good neighborhood to grow up in for more than four decades.

Bounded on the south by Montrose Avenue (4400W), on the north by Foster Avenue (5200N), on the east by the north branch of the Chicago River and on the west by Pulaski Avenue (4000W), Albany Park was a German and Scandinavian farming community several miles distant from the congestion of the inner city before it was developed and populated between 1900 and 1920. Major stimulus for this development was the extension in 1909 of the elevated railway's Ravenswood line to a new terminus on Lawrence Avenue at Kimball. Lawrence Avenue (4800N), an east-west artery, bisects the Albany Park community and Central Park Avenue (3600W) was to divide the areas of Jewish population into eastern and western sections. The housing was primarily multiple-family apartment buildings with a significant number of bungalows and two-flat structures.

Jewish Residents Predominate

The area began to attract hundreds and later thousands of Jewish families during World War I. This was the start of a process that continued in increasing intensity until the late 1950s. A report issued by the Jewish Charities in 1934 noted that a majority of the 15,000 families in Albany Park had resided there for less than five years. During the decade of the 1920s, approximately 28,000 Jews moved into Albany Park and, by the mid-thirties, a study for the Jewish Welfare Board estimated that out of a total population of 55,500, approximately 33,500 or sixty percent were Jewish.

Overall, Albany Park's population on the eve of World War II was approximately 60,000. Only twenty-two percent were native born of native born parents. A majority of the foreign born and native born of foreign or mixed parentage were Jewish – primarily of Russian, Polish, Austrian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, and Roumanian

At its peak as a Jewish neighborhood, nearly a quarter of the city's Jews lived in Albany Park. Only Lawndale had ever exceeded that record. In this article Edward Mazur, a professor at the Chicago City College, recounts how this concentration came about and how it changed. But, more than that, Dr. Mazur, who grew up in the area, portrays the rhythms and textures of that vibrant community and the many institutions within it.

extraction. A 1940 Chicago Board of Education study indicated that ninety percent of those attending English classes for adults in the Albany Park area were Jewish.

Decline Began in Fifties

The Jewish population of the area peaked around 1950 when an estimated seventy thousand Jews lived there. By 1980 the number of Albany Parkers who were Jewish had declined to approximately twenty-five thousand, primarily elderly and less physically, socially, and financially mobile. Today the Jewish population of Albany Park is probably no more than several thousand.

Throughout their period of residency the Jews of Albany Park were primarily middle class with small groups of economically lower middle class and working class. It was an area that Jews moved to as they achieved sufficient economic mobility to leave such West and Northwest Side neighborhoods as Lawndale, Humboldt Park, and Logan Square. Significantly, relief statistics for the 1930s Depression years are much lower for Jewish groups than for others in the area. A 1937 study of 3,000 Albany Park families on relief indicated that only about one hundred were Jewish.

This article is essentially a backward look at Albany Park after 1920, when it was one of Chicago's largest and most vibrant Jewish neighborhoods. It is a nostalgic overview of the institutions—public, private, religious, secular, charitable, and commercial—which contributed to and helped define the quality of Jewish life in the Albany Park that is no more.

Synagogues Many and Important

If the synagogue is the heart of the Jewish community, then Albany Park during its Jewish heyday had many hearts. Temple Beth Israel, a Reform congregation founded in the autumn of 1917, was the first Jewish institution in Albany Park. Originally located in a rented hall, then in a building at 4718 North Kedzie, in 1923 it occupied its magnificent structure at 4850 North Bernard. An adjoining school building was erected in 1928 and an upper sanctuary in 1948. Virtually throughout its history in the community two individuals, Rabbi Felix Mendelson and Rabbi Ernest Lorge influenced the Jews of Beth Israel, Albany Park, and the larger Chicago Jewish and non-Jewish community. Today, Beth Israel is located in Skokie.

Congregation Beth Itzchok, "the Drake Avenue shul," was the first Orthodox house of worship in Albany Park. It was organized in 1919. Its founders originally met at Beth Israel and in various storefronts and apartments. The first services in the permanent structure were held on Rosh Hashanah in 1922 under the auspices of Rabbi Isaac Milner. During the 1920s, the congregation's rapid growth resulted in expansion to the north and south and the erection of a balcony for the women of the congregation. During the congregation's "glory years" of 1930-1950, Rabbi Isaac Siegel was the spiritual leader. In the 1940s, Beth Itzchok expanded yet again and acquired an Episcopal

Lawrence and Kimball Avenues in 1909 when the "L" was being extended to the heart of Albany Park
— Chicago Historical Society Photo



church building on the southwest corner of Drake and Leland Avenues. Under the leadership of Rabbi Aaron Rine, Beth Itzhok today is one of the significant "shuls" in West Rogers Park.

Huge Conservative Congregation

Congregation Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol, later to be known as the Albany Park Hebrew Congregation, was the third significant and magnificent Albany Park institution. Though Orthodox when founded in 1923, it became a Conservative synagogue in 1939. For more than thirty years its activities were directed by Rabbi Abraham E. Abramovitz, who was ordained in Israel in 1909. In 1928, the structure located at Lawndale and Wilson Avenues was erected at a cost of \$250,000. The origins of this Congregation can be found in a dispute over "progressivism" within the membership of the Orthodox Congregation Beth Itzhok. During the 1940s and 1950s more than 3,000 worshippers thronged the congregation for high holiday services. Among the many famous Cantors who served the congregation were Yossele Rosenblatt, *Der Blinder* Greenberg, Cantor Shellensky, the Lind family, and Maurice Geffen. A victim of changing demography, the congregation no longer exists.

Other significant Albany Park synagogues included Kehilath Jeshurun, B'nai Sholom, Nusach Ari, and Beth Jacob.

Other Institutions Flourished

Dozens of social, economic, and cultural institutions complemented the religious institutions and served as additional focal points for the Jewish community of Albany Park between the 1920s and the 1960s.

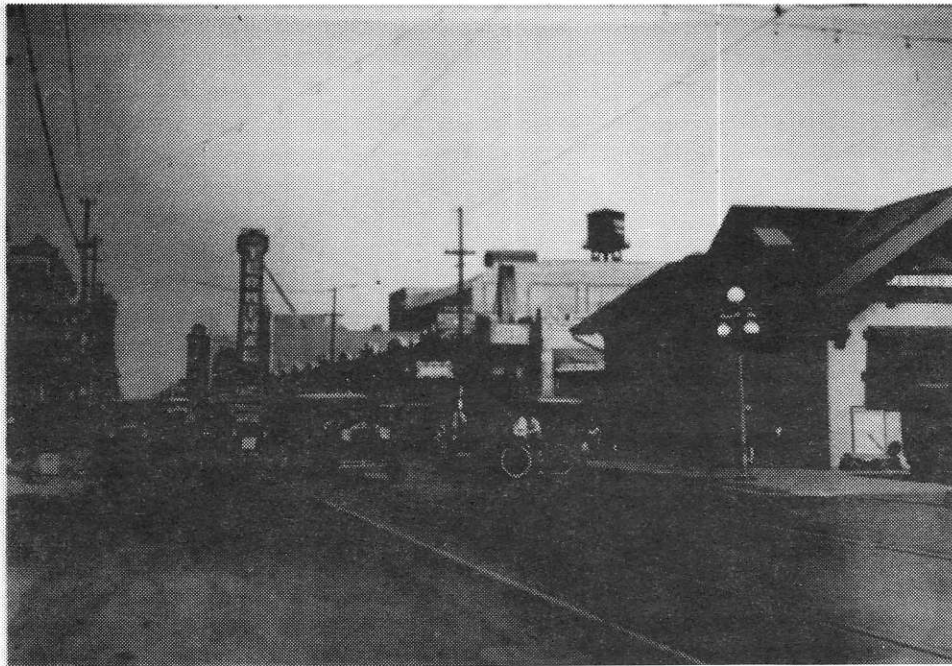
Many communal, fraternal, and social organizations met in one of two commercial halls—the Albany Park Masonic Building at Kedzie and Leland Avenues and the Capitol Hall at Kedzie near Lawrence Avenue.

Some organizations that met at the former were the B'nai Brith, the Old Friendship Social Club, the Chicago Consumptives Aid, the Mothers of Young Judea, the Sudlikoff Sheptikover Verein, the Bleiweise Verein, the Friends in Need, the Bialystoker Relief and Social Society, the Chicago Builders Northwest Branch of the City of Hope, and the Young Breziner Fraternity. Among those who met at Capitol Hall were the Elchanan Lodge, the B. Friendly Ladies Aid Society, the Isidor Chern Rest Haven Lodge, the Independent Sisters of Charity, and the Jacobson Auxiliary of the Daughters of Zion Nursery.

Other groups met in Chicago Park District Field-houses located in Jensen Park and Eugene Field Park. Among those who met at the latter were the Ezrath Chalutzim Day Nursery, the Doba Club, the Herzl Chapter of Avukah, the Council of Jewish Juniors, the American Jewish Congress, the Free Sons of Israel, and the Rose Proteus Social Service Club.

Such groups as the Poalei Zion, the Pioneer Women, and Habonim met at a hall at 4825 North Kedzie. The Workmen's Circle groups met at 3605 West Lawrence, and the IWO (International Workers Order) School #91 was headquartered at 3543 West Lawrence. Prior to the German invasion of Russia in 1941, this school was not overtly concerned with Jewish issues, but following the Nazi invasion, the school's teaching materials began to emphasize more traditional Jewish learning materials and themes.

Secular learning was, naturally enough, concentrated in the area's public schools. Only two elementary schools, Haugen and Hibbard, had existed prior to 1926, but the next half-dozen years witnessed a veritable school building boom with the construction of Palmer Elementary in 1926, Roosevelt High in 1927, Von Steuben High (originally a junior high) in 1929, and Volta Elementary in 1930. Additions to school buildings soon followed. Most schools were virtually without students on



Looking east from Kimball on Lawrence Avenue in 1930 when Albany Park was already a major Jewish neighborhood.

— Chicago Historical Society Photo

Jewish holidays.

Role of Young People's Groups

In 1941, the Max Strauss Center, named in honor of the Jewish business leader, was dedicated to the needs of Albany Park Jewish youth. Located "kitty corner" from Congregation Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol and across the street from Jensen Park, the Strauss Center served the community for more than thirty years. During the 1950s and 1960s, more than 2,000 people a week utilized the Max Strauss Community Center, participating in sports, dancing, dramatics, sewing, table games, and reading.

The Strauss Center had been preceded by the Albany Park Boys Club, started by the Young Men's Jewish Council in 1934. In 1936, the Women's Division of the Jewish Charities began a club located at 4721 North Monticello for girls seven to seventeen years old. Later that year, that Albany Park Girls Club became the Albany Park Jewish Center of the Jewish Peoples Institute.

The Albany Park Boys Club was located on Central Park Avenue just south of Lawrence Avenue. Both clubs offered a wide range of activities including crafts, dramatics, music, art, communications, games, athletics, and social events and parties.

During the 1940s, the Albany Park Boys Club became part of the Deborah Boys Club. In 1949, a new facility located at Kimball and Ainslie Avenues was dedicated to the Jewish youth and community of Albany Park. Interestingly, since it was located north of Lawrence Avenue, it attracted large numbers of Jewish participants from such areas as Peterson Park and North Park in addition to Albany Park. Today this facility is the Albany Park Community Center and serves the growing Hispanic and Asian communities of the area.

A Look at Lawrence Avenue

The community institutions referred to above did much to set the basically Jewish tone of Albany Park, but

equally a part of that tone were the many commercial ventures in the area. Lawrence Avenue—the Champs Elysee, the Fifth Avenue, and the Michigan Avenue of Albany Park—was the major commercial artery that attracted residents, shoppers, visitors, and regular "spazierers." From Sacramento (3000W) to Pulaski (4000W) along Lawrence Avenue there stretched a huge variety of kosher meat markets, fresh fish stores, live poultry markets, clothing emporiums, furniture stores, eating places, and amusement palaces.

Many a Jewish parent bought his son's bar mitzvah suit at Weinberg's Clothing Store on Lawrence near Kedzie and then crossed the street for a C.B. on Rye (corned beef, Rosen's rye,) and a vanilla Coke at the S and L Delicatessen. Just north of Lawrence on Kedzie was the always exciting Hollywood Roller Rink. For the less adventurous the Alba Bowling Alley beckoned. The more adventurous and/or amorous could go to the movies at the Alba Theatre. South of Lawrence on Kedzie was the Wolf and Frankel Furniture store. How many of Albany Park's Jewish families purchased their sofas, chairs, dining-room sets, and the eventual "plastic seat covers" in that magnificent store!

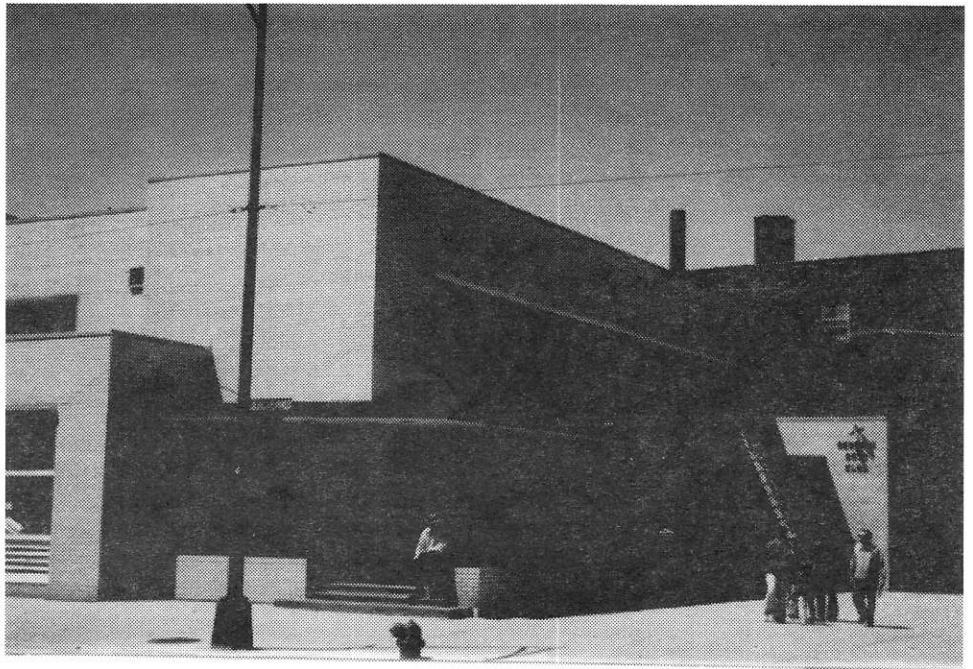
Gambling at the Cigar Store?

Across the street a group of men were always standing in front of Terry's Perfecto Garcia Cigar store. Rumor has it that gambling and making bets on the horses were the major activity in the cigar store. From Kedzie to Sawyer Avenue along Lawrence, Albany Parkers could dine, be dressed from "top to bottom," and fill medical prescriptions. "Kitty corner" from the S and L was Deutsch's Bonfire Restaurant, Hurwitz and Reed Arno's Mens Shops, Esther's Lingerie, Libby Diamond Hats, Siegel's Shoes, and Goldstein Drugs.

Between Sawyer and Spaulding Avenues was B. Nathan, located in a storefront that was originally built for the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Only a few doors

The Deborah Boys Club was built during Albany Park's peak years as a Jewish neighborhood. Today it is a community center building for area residents.

— Photo by Irving Cutler



away was another exclusive dress shop—Levine's, and then Maling Shoes. If you crossed to the north side of Lawrence, you could go into Herman Lynn's Tots and Teens Shop, Julius Marks' Page Luggage, and the Baritz and Garland Lamp Store.

The Movie Theatres

From Sawyer to Kimball Avenues on Lawrence were the Rusnak and L. Fish furniture stores, Seymour's Frocks, the original Ned Singer Sporting Goods store, and the truly fabulous Metro Theatre. This was the only movie house in Chicago (and maybe the *ganze velt*) where the screen was behind you as you entered the theatre. How could you beat two John Garfield movies and twenty-five cartoons for fifteen cents?

Let us cross Lawrence again, and in the block where the Ravenswood "EI" begins (or terminates) was Manny Berger's shoe store, another haute couture shop with the imposing name of "Parisienne," Schwartz' Corset and Girdle shop (one of four such Schwartz shops in Chicago at one time), and the Terminal Theatre. One could order a chopped liver (hold the *gribenes*) and lean corned beef on a Kaiser roll, a chocolate phosphate, and a side of *kishke* at the Purity. Nearby were the Karmelkorn Shop and Solovitch the watchmaker.

Vanished Cigar Stores

The southwest corner of Lawrence and Kimball was originally home to a Walgreen's drug store and later the location of Devin-Klein Clothiers. The northeast corner was highlighted by a cigar store featuring a variety of tobacco items, magazines, and candy. Until recent urban renewal changed the aspect of Lawrence Avenue, this corner had been the location of a tobacconist for more than fifty years. Next to the cigar store was the first location of Cooper and Cooper, a familiar restaurant, and the Skokie

Valley Ice Cream Parlor (so named because before World War II vast reaches of prairie remained north and west of Lawrence and Kimball, stretching to Skokie which itself was to become a Jewish mecca in the 1950s.

West on Lawrence were the Albany Park National Bank and the upstairs offices of the Myers Publishing Company, publishers of the community newspaper. Between Kimball and Bernard Avenues there were three more eateries: Palestine, Quality, and the 3 K's (*Kugel*, *Kishke*, and *Knishes*), and three clothing stores: Kaner Modes, Green's Dress Shop, and Burton Fox's Haberdashery.

Bookstore Row

From Bernard to St. Louis Avenues were found Cheshinsky's Bookstore, originally located on Division Street, and Rosenbloom's Bookstore, originally located on Roosevelt Road. These stores sold Jewish books, newspapers and journals, *tallithim*, *tefillen* and the bags (*zekels*) to hold them. Down the street were such emporiums as Harriet's Variety Store, Paris Drapery, and Harry Lastik's Paramount Furs. Remember the ubiquitous Persian lamb coats?

Between St. Louis and Drake Avenues the International Workers Order School, Kiefer's Bookstore, and Ben and Son Printers (who supplied Albany Parkers and others with announcements for b'nai mitzvahs, sweet sixteen parties, weddings, and other *simchas*) Gold Star Foods, and Zaretsky-Kinbergs "Butter and Egg Store" with its inviting illuminated neon sign proclaiming "Lox and Fresh Smoked Fish" were arrayed.

Branch Library among Stores

From Drake to Central Park Avenues one could buy an ice cream cone at Bob's and then spend the afternoon discovering the many intellectual delights hidden in the precious volumes of the Albany Park Branch of the



After the exodus began in earnest some familiar stores remained behind on Lawrence Avenue for several years. Photo taken in 1976.

—Photo by Irving Cutler

Chicago Public Library. One could pick up the family's meat order at Hobfall and Levin's or watch Mr. Krader *shlug kaporis* (kill chickens) if one were willing to stand ankle deep in chicken feathers at Krader's Live Poultry Store. Then there were the lengthy lines of women carefully observing Mr. Cutler fillet and grind pike, trout, and suckers for gefilte fish at the St. Louis Fish Market.

News Stands and Bookies

On the northeast corner of Central Park and Lawrence Avenues was Rudich's Delicatessen. In front of Rudich's was the newspaper kiosk of Moishe, the "bookie." Prominently displayed were two Yiddish newspapers, the *Courier* and the *Vorwärts*. Walking west one could inspect the shoes in the windows of the Four Cohns' shoe store, pause near the Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) School, the Lox King, Lester's, and Lessa Drug. On the north side of Lawrence, Sol Lieberman's barber shop catered to tonsorial needs while Bertha's Hot Dogs, Max's meat market, Benjoya's fruit store, and Sam's fish market provided a variety of gustatory and gluttonous delights.

Between Monticello and Lawndale Avenues many Albany Parkers spent afternoons in Foss's Hobby Shop, dropped off their dry cleaning at Siegan's cleaners, and dropped in to visit and nosh at Hy Zaslowsky's delicatessen. Could anyone pass up the tempting apple slices at either Kaplan's or Meyers' bakeries?

Outpost for Conversion

Just off the corner at Lawndale was the original site of Maury's Hot Dog Stand. Maury—with his special Viennas on crusty French bread—is remembered for his sincere inquiries about school, your family, and girls, and his seemingly unique ability to procure desirable tickets for sporting events.

At Hamlin and Lawrence was Art Levy's Northwest Buick. Across the street was the Holiday Ballroom and the Mission Orange Soda Pop Company. If you took the tour, you received a free bottle of pop to slake your thirst. Parents warned their children to be careful, because on Lawrence between Avers and Springfield was the Peniel Center, a Christian institution that tried but inevitably failed to attract and convert Jewish youth. At Lawrence and Hardin was Brown's Pet Shop. Shouldn't every Jewish home have a parakeet?

There were many more interesting shops, stores, and hangouts on Lawrence Avenue, too many to mention in our allotted space. The street is still full of bustling businesses, though the names like Schwartz, Weinberg, and Abrams have been replaced by Kim, Lee and the like.

Success Changed Community

As a result of Jewish mobility, movement, and success in achieving the American dream, Albany Park is no longer a Jewish community. Its former residents now live in other Chicago neighborhoods, primarily West Rogers Park and the lakefront areas, and in many suburbs north and northwest of the city. Recent studies indicate that Albany Park is home to twenty-seven identifiable ethnic groups. The groups that have grown the most since the 1980 census are East and Southeast Asians, Spanish-surnamed peoples, East-central Europeans, and Arabs from a variety of Middle Eastern countries.

Although Albany Park has experienced the familiar urban rhythms of growth, maturation, decay, and rebirth, a few manifestations of life remain constant. The Ravenswood elevated terminus, which more or less started it all, remains at Kimball and Lawrence. The wise owl sculpted atop Roosevelt High School continues to watch over students through four years of high school life.

Meites History of Chicago Jews Best Way To Learn of Our Past

*Book Is Mine of Information, Photos
Of Events, Institutions, Individuals*

By Walter Roth

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society will present to the local Jewish community its republication of the *History of the Jews of Chicago* by H.L. Meites at its October 28, 1990 meeting. This classic work was first published in 1924 and was originally presented to the public in a meeting that took place on Monday evening, May 19, 1924 at the Chicago Historical Society. In its original version, it contained nearly 900 pages of pictures and stories of individuals, organizations and edifices that depicted the lives of Chicago Jews from the early 1800's to 1924. A small supplement was added to the book for a second edition published in 1927.

The book recounted the life stories of hundreds of Chicago Jews who helped to build this metropolis. Meites, himself an immigrant from Odessa, Russia loved his adopted city and wanted to weave the story of the Jewish contribution to Chicago's establishment and success. Meites made clear the theme for his work when he noted in his remarks at the 1924 presentation that he had learned from Professor Edward Chauncey Baldwin of the University of Illinois at Urbana, who had found records proving it, that back in 1747 "a group of Jewish fur traders from Pennsylvania purchased the land which comprises practically the whole of Illinois for the sum of \$37,000." Meites recounts that he submitted Professor Baldwin's account to Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, an idol for Meites and then rabbi at Sinai Congregation, who, fairly leaping to his feet, shouted, "Fine, fine, now no one will dare accuse us of being aliens, strangers. We were actually among the first white men in Illinois."

Tells of Earliest Settlers

Meites starts his history with the early Jewish settlers in Chicago, beginning with J. Gottlieb, a German-Jewish peddler who arrived in Chicago in 1838. Prior to the Civil War, the Meites story pictures the early Jewish settlements along Clark and Wells Streets in what is today downtown Chicago. Jewish settlers also bought land in Schaumburg in 1840 in an unsuccessful attempt to settle there. He then tells us that during the Civil War, when the Jewish population of Chicago numbered less than one thousand, the Jews raised a company of soldiers in two days, right after the call for volunteers came from President Lincoln.

He presents us, in great detail, with the story of the American flag, interwoven with a Hebrew quotation from the Book of Joshua ("be strong and of good

courage") that Abraham Kohn, then president of K.A.M. Congregation, gave to Abraham Lincoln on the eve of his departure for Washington, D.C. in 1861. Abraham Kohn's daughter was later married to Dankmar Adler (soon to be a world-famous architect), the son of Liebman Adler, an avowed abolitionist who was the German-speaking rabbi of K.A.M. Congregation. Abraham Kohn and his family were early Chicago Jewish merchants who had originally started their business in Massachusetts, where they soon discovered that they had settled in a colony of Christians who believed that the end of the world was at hand. In this frame of mind, they bought little of the material wares sold by their Jewish neighbors; and so the Kohns moved to Chicago.

Results of Fire of 1871

From the Civil War to the Great Fire in 1871, Meites recounts, the immigration of Jews to Chicago continued in greater number. These immigrants were primarily Jews from small towns or villages in Germany. The first Jewish hospital, more synagogues, and early self-help institutions were founded; and many merchants established their stores in Chicago.

Then came the great fire of 1871 and a second disastrous fire that followed three years later. K.A.M., which had survived the first fire, saw its temple at Wabash Avenue and Peck Court go up in flames. The Standard Club's old building at Michigan and 13th Street was taken over by General Sheridan, and a number of congregations lost their buildings and many merchants their stores to the fire.

Meites has a number of amusing stories about the fire. He tells us the Reverend Ignatz Kunreuther, the first teacher of K.A.M. Congregation at the time of the fire, was living on Harrison Street in a section originally spared by the fire but immediately north of which almost everything burned to the ground. Meites claims that the Reverend always insisted that his prayers saved his congregation. But why didn't it save the synagogue of B'nai Sholom across the way, he was asked. "It was probably," as a wag of that day suggested, "because Kunreuther's prayers were in accordance with *Minhag Askenaz* [the German prayerbook] while B'nai Sholom's prayer book was *Minhag Polen* [the Polish one]."

East European Immigration

It was after the second Chicago fire that Jews began to cross the Chicago River and to settle along Canal Street. The Mariampoler congregation, whose synagogue was in ruins, crossed the river and became the

Everybody has heard so much about H.L. Meites' history of Chicago Jews but few among us have seen that heretofore rare volume. CJHS President Walter Roth has received an early reviewer's copy of the Society's new reprint of that monumental but very readable work and has studied it carefully. In this review he gives us insight into the texture and the flavor of the book, describes its scope, and tells of its relevance for the modern reader.

first Russian-Polish congregation to be established in what became a great new Jewish community on Chicago's West Side as immigrants poured in from Eastern Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

With the influx of the mass East-European migration came all the social problems that beset poorer immigrants. Meites, at great length, writes of the individuals and institutions who came to the aid of their poor Russian brethren. He has little patience with the perennial German-Russian Jewish tensions but instead concentrates on the many acts of charity and contributions made by the established Jewish settlement on behalf of West Side Jewry. Over and over again, the name of Julius Rosenwald appears as benefactor and angel of a West Side Jewish institution.

The Jewish labor movements that developed in the turmoil of the West Side are briefly mentioned in the book but are said by Meites to be beyond his capacity to develop in their entirety. His chapter on the Jewish unions, such as the Cloakmakers Union, the Cigar Makers Union, and the Carpenters Union is informative, albeit skimpy.

He includes, however, a story of the Haymarket riot which has otherwise been lost in history. In early May, 1886, August Spiess, one of the Haymarket anarchists, spoke to the Cloakmakers Union, consisting mostly of Jews and led by Abraham Bisno. On May 4 nearly 400 Jewish strikers began a march to the Chicago River, their intention to have girls in the Loop factories join them. A police patrol wagon, however, met them and dispersed them with clubs. As the strikers met later that day to discuss the police action, a worker rushed in to tell them he had just read in a German paper that "an anarchist had exploded a bomb."

Meites a Pioneer Zionist

Meites claims he was the first "card-carrying" Zionist in Chicago, and some of the finest research in his book concerns the founding and activities of the Zionist organizations in Chicago. By 1900, the Knights of Zion had taken over the leadership of the Zionist movement in Chicago. He includes an unforgettable picture of the Volunteers of Zion, young men dressed in military uniforms. They marched, Meites writes, in "soldierly precision with a Zionist flag seen for the first time on Chicago streets." He tells us that "they headed parades, preserved decorum at public gatherings, and guarded the dignity of the Jewish name." The death of Theodore Herzl on July 3, 1904 was memorialized with a mass parade on the West side, led by the Zionist military units and bands. Poale Zion, the workmen's branch of the Zionist organizations, developed in Chicago at this time; and a few years later, in 1916, came the founding of the original American Jewish Congress in Chicago by local Zionist leaders.

As an intriguing aside, Meites includes an entire chapter about another incident, now almost forgotten in Chicago's history. He publishes in their entirety "The Blackstone Memorials" prepared by the Reverend William E. Blackstone, a Christian evangelist who was a leading exponent of Zionism. Blackstone's first Memorial

was widely circulated and presented to President Benjamin Harrison in 1891; the second Memorial was presented to President Woodrow Wilson in 1916. The Memorials called for the return of the Jews to Palestine, their homeland. Blackstone's motives for the return of the Jews to Palestine were those of a Christian fundamentalist praying for the "Second Coming" of the Messiah. Be that as it may, he was a favorite of the American Zionists and often spoke at Zionist functions. Meites undoubtedly considered his efforts of great value for the Zionist movement in Chicago.

Jewish Record in World War I

Meites' pages glow with patriotism as he recounts the story of his people in World War I. His topics include: "Record of military service; record of civilian service; statistics on Jewish service; Jewish volunteers; proportion of Jewish combatants to the non-combatants; Jewish soldiers praised; feats of valor by Chicago Jews; Camp Grant test war by Jews; list of Chicago Jews winning decorations and citations; list of Chicago Jewish officers of high rank; list of Chicago Jewish dead; Jews in the Liberty Loans; as Four Minute Men; on draft boards; entertainment for service men; the services of Jewish women; the loyalty demonstration."

After the war, the Jews of Chicago began a great drive together with brethren throughout America for war relief for Jews in Eastern Europe. Julius Rosenwald, already deeply involved in relief efforts for the six million Jews of Eastern Europe ravaged by the war, made a pledge of \$1,000,000 on the condition that a total amount of \$10,000,000 be raised in the entire nation. Meites publishes a letter from Woodrow Wilson to Rosenwald acknowledging his gift and adding, in words strongly applicable today: "The Russian Revolution has opened the door of freedom to an oppressed people. It is to America that these starving millions look for aid; and out of our prosperity, fruit of free institutions, should spring a vast and enabling generosity. Your gift lays an obligation even while it furnishes inspiration."

Biographies of Individual Jews

Chapter after chapter of Meites' book picture the Jews of Chicago during the years he covered in his book. Special chapters feature individual Jews in public office; industry, commerce and finance; the labor movement; and athletics. Other chapters on organizations and institutions include synagogues and temples; religious, cultural and educational organizations; welfare and aid organizations; homes and hospitals; and fraternal and social organizations.

When Meites presented his book to the community in 1924, peace and prosperity prevailed in America. Jewish life was growing in Chicago. On May 18, 1924 Congregation Rodfei Zedek laid the cornerstone of a new temple, designed by Abraham Epstein, at Fifty-fourth Street and Greenwood Avenue. In that same year Isaiah Israel dedicated its new temple at Fifty-first and Greenwood on September 12; and K.A.M., the oldest congrega-

tion in Chicago, dedicated a new temple at Drexel Boulevard and Fiftieth Street on September 5. The Jews of the South Side were then at their zenith of growth and prosperity. Many other new religious buildings were to follow during the ensuing years in other parts of the city.

Meites could feel justifiably proud of his Chicago fellow Jews and their prosperity. Yet a cloud of uncertainty-already was beginning to appear. Judge Harry M. Fisher of the Circuit Court mentioned in his remarks at the 1924 ceremony that a new immigration bill had just come into effect, closing American borders for the first time in its history, except for those who could be included in a yearly quota, which for all Poland was about 3,000 persons per year. Does this immigration bill, asked Judge Fisher, portend a new era? "Is there not some little cloud upon the horizon that may spread and overhang and darken the next chapter? Who knows!"

A Gentile Looks at Local Jews

The concluding address of the 1924 ceremonies was given by the flamboyant attorney James Hamilton Lewis, a former U.S. Senator and Governor of the State of Illinois. Many years earlier, in February 1908, Lewis had defended a Jewish former barroom dancer, Dora Kaplan, who after marrying Mike McDonald, a powerful gambler and leader of the Democratic Party, had shot to death a young lover who had betrayed her. Appealing to the "mothers of Israel," Lewis in a masterful defense had won Dora Kaplan's acquittal.

He was introduced to the audience by Rabbi Joseph Stolz, the president of the Chicago Rabbinic Association, who opined that like Abraham of old, the History of the Jews of Chicago manifested that the "Divine Majesty, the Shekinah, abides in the West." (No doubt he meant Chicago.) Lewis' remarks at the dedication ceremonies are set out in full in the 1927 supplement added to the second edition of the Meites book. Full of humor, Lewis recalled the "old days" in his speech as told to him

in stories by his immigrant father.

In one of these stories, his father told Lewis that real estate was so cheap when he came to Chicago that he could have bought the Courthouse square for a song. Unfortunately, the father said, he could not sing.

Lewis finally turned his eloquent oratory to the history of the Jews. "Where was there an idea presented to this country that cannot be traced to the wisdom of the Jew?" he intoned. Recalling the long history of the Jews from biblical times to the present, Lewis concluded, "Therefore, that you meet here this night to leave this record to the dear home which you have adopted in a volume to be transmitted to your people that they may see what those who are Jews in your splendid metropolitan community have done in this land of your people is most fitting."

Meites Meeting Offers Opportunity

Members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and their friends will have an opportunity to relive the 1924 "occasion" by participating in our October 28, 1990 meeting. At that time, the newly issued republication of the *History of the Jews of Chicago* will be available for purchase. The original edition was available to only a limited number of individuals and only to those who made a substantial contribution to defray the cost of the original publication. Because of a generous contribution by members of the family of H.L. Meites, the Society is now able to make this grand work available at a fraction of the original price.

We urge our members and friends to bring this treasure into your home so that you can "remember the days of old" with your families. Some of you will recognize with fondness the picture of a beloved family member; all of you will delight in the stories of the great (and sometimes just average) Jewish people who helped to build our metropolis.

□

Program Chairman Announces Topics For Future Meetings

Two stimulating programs are in the works for the Society's January and early Spring meetings if plans currently being finalized by CJHS Program Chairman and Vice-president Burt Robin work out.

One Sunday in January will feature a talk by Rabbi Michael Azose on the Sephardic Jews of Chicago. That meeting will probably be held in the Sephardic Synagogue at 1819 West Howard Street in Evanston. Rabbi Azose will be discussing an unfamiliar segment of Orthodox Chicago Jewry, one which is virtually unknown

to the vastly greater numbers of local Jews who are of Ashkenazi background. Details will be forthcoming later in the year.

The early Spring meeting, to be held at a time and place as yet undetermined, will be addressed by Dena Polachek Epstein, who recently edited and had published a book of her mother's memories of growing up at Hull House early in the century. Her account of the memoirs and the research necessary to make them publishable is fascinating and should provide additional insights into Jewish immigrant life on the near West Side.

"The Society seems to be on the threshold of an exciting series of programs, beginning with the Meites one on October 28 and extending well into 1991," said CJHS President Walter Roth. "I congratulate Burt Robin on these achievements and am confident that our members and friends will find the programs stimulating and enjoyable." I.J.S.□

Select Two To Get Cash Prizes From Doris Minsky Fund

Entries Will Be Published As Monographs by Society

Two \$1,000 winners of the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund monograph competition have been announced by Fund Chairman Dr. Irving Cutler. Manuscripts submitted by both will be published by the Society in the near future.

The winners were selected from among a number of manuscripts submitted by amateur and professional historians on the basis of their suitability for publication by the Society and the value of the manuscripts as contributions to the record

of local Jewish history.

Checks for \$1,000.00 each will be awarded, probably at the Society's January meeting, to Carolyn Eastwood, a professor of history at Roosevelt University, for a monograph titled "Chicago's Jewish Street Peddlers: A Toehold on the Bottom Rung" and to Beatrice Michaels Shapiro, a freelance writer familiar to readers of the Jewish United Fund News, for her "Memories of South Lawndale in the Thirties and Forties."

"The two entries chosen by the committee of judges as winners are very different from each other," said Dr. Cutler. "They exemplify in many ways different strands of historical interest which have been present in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society from its earliest days. Dr. Eastwood has made a real contribution to the factual history of Chicago Jewry, illuminating a dark corner previously unexplored. Mrs. Shapiro has provided a full-bodied and heartwarming reminiscence which will elicit a personal response in a good many readers."

Joseph Minsky, founder of the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund, expressed his satisfaction that two entries were deemed worthy of winning, particularly since the committee was unable to select any entry for publication in the earlier year's competition.

Monographs Free to Members

The winning entries will be published together as the *Doris Minsky Memorial Monographs Number One and Two*. A free copy will be distributed to each current CJHS member desiring one. In addition, copies will be available for universities, libraries, and students of Jewish history throughout the continent.

The Minsky Fund was established by the Society in 1988 to honor the memory of Doris Minsky, a founder and longtime officer of the Society, at the request of her husband Joseph. Hundreds of friends and admirers contributed to the fund and those contributions combined with generous gifts by the Minsky family have made possible the annual competition, prize-giving, and publication.

Donors' Names To Appear

The names of all donors will appear in this first publication of the series. Donations, which are still welcome, will be included in the publication if received by the Society by December 1, 1990.

Members of the Minsky Fund Committee besides Dr. Cutler include Mark Mandle, Mr. Minsky, Norman Schwartz, and Dr. Irwin Suloway. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for the 1991 competition will be available from Dr. Cutler at 3217 Hill Lane, Wilmette, IL 60091 shortly. □



Eliahu Kite, now identified as the dancer celebrating the creation of Israel at the Chicago Stadium in 1948.

Celebrant in Famous Old Photo Finally Identified

Among the photos illustrating the Society's current information and membership brochure is one familiarly known as the "Dancing Yiddel." It was taken by a news photographer in May 1948 in the Chicago Stadium at a celebration marking the birth of the State of Israel. It features a old white-bearded man dressed in the somber clothes of traditional Orthodox Jewry who is literally dancing for joy down the aisle of that huge auditorium.

Originally appearing in the old *Chicago American* newspaper, the figure was identified merely as "an elderly Jewish gentleman." This heartwarming photograph has since appeared in many publications, always without further identification of its subject.

Today, through the good offices of Rose K. Rosenman, we can identify this Jewish gentleman whose contagious joy has lived on though he himself is gone. He was Eliahu, called Elie Lieb, Kite, Mrs. Rosenman's father's oldest brother.

Mr. Kite, who came to Chicago from the Odessa area before World War I, was a sales representative for a coal company. Although his children are all dead, many of his grandchildren live in the area as do descendants of his six brothers and sisters. He is buried in the Narodich section of Waldheim Cemetery. □

We are grateful to Mrs. Rosenman for sharing with us her knowledge and contributing an interesting footnote to the record of local Jewish history. I.J.S.□

History Fair Elicits Four Jewish Entries

Four of the student entries in the annual Metropolitan Chicago History Fair dealt with Jewish historical topics, and one was chosen by the judges to win a twenty-five dollar savings bond donated by the Society and to receive a gratis one-year CJHS membership. Another Jewish entry won a scholarship.

Andrew Lee Karsen of Mount Prospect, who submitted a brief history of Chicago Jews which excellently synthesized existing works, was awarded the CJHS prizes. Deborah Rubin's entry, a history of the evolution of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston over the years, was based on original research and interviews and was judged worthy of a scholarship donated by Citibank Corporation.

Two exhibit entries were of Jewish interest, though only one, by David Levin, was actually Jewish in subject matter. He showed the contrasting development of two local congregations which had chosen to follow differing streams of Judaism—Temple Beth El and Congregation Ezras Israel.

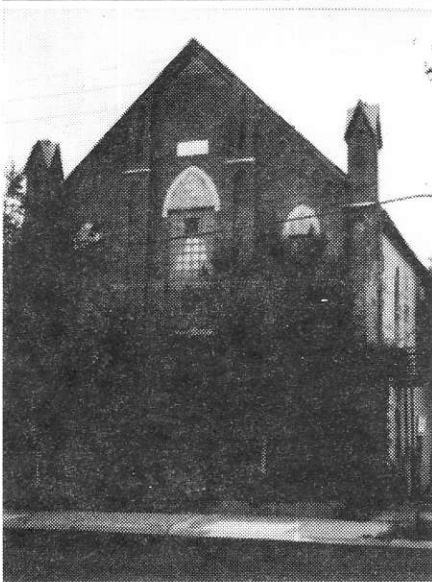
A second exhibit was devoted to Tootsie Roll Industries, a candy corporation with a history of Jewish ownership and leadership. The students preparing the exhibit, Joanne Blonski and Renata Kaczmarczyk, are not Jewish.

The Metropolitan History Fair is an annual competition for secondary level students designed to foster interest in history among young people. The Society has for many years donated prizes for Fair entries with Jewish historical content and has occasionally had winning entries featured at its meetings or in its publications. □

What's Nu? Presidents!

The Society received some television exposure last August when President Walter Roth and Past President Norman Schwartz appeared on Channel 9. They were guests of Rabbi Mordecai Simon on the Chicago Board of Rabbis' program "What's Nu."

In addition to discussing the importance of preserving local Jewish history and the work of the CJHS, they mentioned the forthcoming republication of the Meites history. □



The old congregation: a building in Rockford visited on the Society's summer tour.

How To Buy the Meites History: The Best Deal

The desirability of owning a copy of H.L. Meites' *History of the Jews of Chicago* and its availability once more raise the question of how one may purchase it most expeditiously and/or most economically. Two years ago copies of the original printings fetched \$150.00 in the used book market on the rare occasions when they were procurable. Librarians required readers to consult copies in their presence to make sure that they didn't "disappear."

Now new copies are available at a fraction of the former used book price. For Chicago Jewish Historical Society members the price is even lower. Here are the options for buying the 900-page hard-cover book, profusely illustrated with over 900 photographs, drawings, and reproductions of documents:

- Buy it at Jewish or other bookstores at \$48.95 plus tax. Many congregational and museum giftshops will also stock the book.
- Buy it by mail from the co-publisher (Wellington Publishing, Inc., 950 North Shore Drive, Lake Bluff, IL 60044) for \$48.95 plus tax and \$3.50 for postage and handling (\$45.00 plus tax and \$3.50 if a CJHS member in good standing). Checks and credit cards acceptable.
- Best of all, buy it at the Sunday, October 28 meeting at Emanuel Congregation at the member's price of \$45.00 plus tax or non-member's price of \$48.95 plus tax and pay no shipping charges. Payment



Tour members in front of the new sanctuary of Ohave Sholom in Rockford.

— Photos by Les Axelrod

by check or cash only.

Regardless of how you buy it, remember that the new printing is a limited edition not expected to be available very long, especially since the volume makes an ideal holiday gift for family members and friends interested in Chicago's Jewish past. □

New and Repeat Summer Tours Prove Popular This Year

Yet another successful season of Society summer bus tours has itself become a part of local Jewish history as approximately one hundred lucky individuals found space on the buses for the three tours held in July and August.

Tours Chairman Leah Axelrod had prepared a pot pourri for this year which included the annual rerun (and sell-out) of Irving Cutler's tour of the old Jewish neighborhoods, a new tour of landsmanschaften sites led by Sidney Sorkin, and a new all-day tour which focussed on past and present Jewish life in the Northwest exurban areas of Elgin, Rockford, and Beloit, led by Mrs. Axelrod. Some photos of this third tour appear in this issue.

"Once again Society members are indebted to Leah, whose careful planning, organization, and attention to detail have provided us with a memorable and highly successful series of tours," said CJHS President Walter Roth. "We all profit from her energy and skill." □

More about Oct. 28 Meeting

continued from page 1

social hour and refreshments, which will follow (rather than as usual, precede) the program. Copies of the book will also be available for sale on a cash and carry basis at the discount price of \$45.00 plus tax to Society members in good standing and at \$48.95 plus tax to non-members.

The *History of the Jews in Chicago*, a landmark volume covering local Jewish history from the earliest days through 1924, is a hard-cover, oversized book of more than 900 lavishly illustrated pages, which is unique in its inclusion of several hundred biographies of local Jewish residents with the names of their families. It constitutes a valuable resource for learning more about one's ancestors.

It has been scarce and out of print for over fifty years until the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, assisted by financial aid from the Meites family (particularly Tom and Jerry Meites) arranged for its republication. The new printing includes an introduction by Newberry Library historian James Grossman as well as introductory remarks by CJHS President Walter Roth and Jerry Meites.

Parking Available

Mr. Robin was assisted in the planning for this meeting by Past President Norman Schwartz. Board member Janet Hagerup is handling refreshments and hospitality.

CTA buses stop at the Emanuel Congregation door, and there are parking facilities in the rear of the building. Admission is free to all. □