



chicago jewish history



New Book: *The Stained Glass Windows at Temple Sholom*

See article on page 3

Left: Temple Sholom, Main entrance. 3480 North Lake Shore Drive.

Right: Temple Sholom, Rachel. One of four Matriarchs windows, Stratford corridor. Artist, Miriam Schapiro.



IN THIS ISSUE

Physicist Jack Steinberger, Nobel Laureate

Mail Order and Bungalows: Philanthropist Benjamin J. Rosenthal

Fem-Vets Post No. 192, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.

From the Archives: Congregation B'nai Zion

Summer Tours: Milwaukee and NW Indiana

Save the Date! Sunday, October 6: Judge Simon to Speak at Meeting

The next CJHS open meeting will be held on Sunday, October 6 at Temple Sholom, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive. Our guest speaker will be retired Illinois Supreme Court Justice Seymour F. Simon.

A social hour with refreshments will begin at 1:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m., before the appearance of our speaker, President Walter Roth will review the Society's activities in the past year and look ahead to our Silver Anniversary celebration. The annual election of members of the Society's board of directors will then be held. (Well before the meeting, CJHS members will receive a postcard listing the nominees.)

In "Seymour Simon Looks Back," the Albany Park-born attorney, U.S. Navy veteran, Chicago 40th ward alderman, Cook County board president, judge of the Appellate Court and justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, will reflect on his eventful life of public service.

Admission is free and open to the public. For further information call CJHS office (312)663-5634.

**CJHS
Silver Anniversary
Exhibit Opens
Sunday, November 17
at Spertus Institute**



President's Column



Walter Roth

AN ESSAY, "SORTING OUT BEN HECHT," was featured in the Books section of the *Chicago Tribune*, Sunday, March 31. "Evaluating the multifaceted writer and onetime Chicago reporter is no simple task," writes the author, Professor Robert Schmuhl of the University of Notre Dame. He is studying Hecht's papers at Chicago's Newberry Library for a prospective book.

The essay is illustrated with photographs: Hecht, his wife Rose and daughter Jenny; stills from the movies "Scarface" and "The Front Page;" and a collection of some of the Hecht memorabilia at Newberry. Rose donated Hecht's papers to the library, where they are contained in many boxes (sixty-seven in all, according to Prof. Schmuhl—about one hundred and fifty by my count), for use by scholars and laymen.

Prof. Schmuhl adds a sidebar to his essay, listing twelve works by Ben Hecht "that show his breadth as a writer and help explain his life." Included in the list are "*A Guide for the Bedevilled* (1944)—an extended personal and passionate essay on the evils of anti-Semitism by a writer previously unconcerned about his Jewishness," and "*Perfidy* (1961)—a controversial and polemical account of the establishment of Israel and the Jewish state's early leadership."

Chicago Jewish History has published works by and about Ben Hecht. We were delighted to reprint three columns with Jewish content from the famous "1001 Afternoons in Chicago" series he wrote for the 1921 *Chicago Daily News*.

Our pages contained articles about two major stage works, *We Shall Never Die* and *A Flag is Born*, the hugely successful but controversial pageants that he wrote for the Revisionist Zionists.

"Peter Bergson, the Irgun and Chicago," was published in our Fall 2001 issue under my by-line. Bergson was Ze'ev Jabotinsky's Revisionist representative in the United States for whom Hecht wrote polemics against Hitler and in favor of the formation of a Jewish Army to fight at the side of the Allies.

After the end of World War II, Hecht helped to raise money to buy arms for the beleaguered Irgun fighters in Palestine in their struggle against the British. After an explosion at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem caused British military and civilian deaths, several Irgun fighters were hanged for the crime. Hecht then published an ad in American newspapers proclaiming his joy each time a British soldier was killed in Palestine. As a result, for many years Hecht's movies and books were boycotted in Great Britain. In his subsequent screenplays, Hecht used an alias.

As scholars such as Professor Schmuhl explore the Hecht papers at Newberry, they must cast their expert eyes on the materials from these later years, and try to weave them into a true and complete account of Ben Hecht's life.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish a Happy New Year—*shana tova*—to all the members and friends of CJHS. ❖



chicago jewish historical society

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Chicago Jewish History

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An Inquiry about Carl Loeb, the Rising Star Lodge, and a Cane

A CJHS member writes:

"Some years ago, I purchased a gold-headed ebony cane from an Evanston antique dealer. [Recently] I came across this cane and it occurred to me that it may have an interesting history.

"The engraved inscription reads as follows: 'From Members of the Rising Star Lodge #50 AOFS of I to Carl Loeb, November 16, '79.'

"Perhaps there is someone in our organization who could identify Carl Loeb and the Rising Star Lodge. I would appreciate a response."

If you can provide a clue or an answer, please contact the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605, or call (312) 663-5634. ❖

New Book Describes and Documents Temple Sholom Stained Glass Windows

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AT TEMPLE SHOLOM.

By Norman D. Schwartz and Rolf Achilles. Photographs by Rich Master. Design by Dianne Burgis. (*Temple Sholom*, 2001; 20 pages, 6" x 9"; \$5.00).

Twelve sets of brilliant stained glass windows enhance the stately beauty of Temple Sholom. The windows portray scenes of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs of the Jewish people as well as our prophets and kings.

The earliest windows were moved to this building in 1928-29 from the congregation's previous home, and the most recent set was dedicated in 1998, so a wide range of art glass techniques and styles are represented.

This monograph is at once a visual delight and a valuable document of Judaic art history. The co-authors are art historian Rolf Achilles, curator of the Smith Museum of Stained Glass, and researcher Norman Schwartz, Temple Sholom member and past president of CJHS. The cost of the project was underwritten by the Moselle Schwartz Memorial Fund. ❖

Welcome to New Members of CJHS

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Axelrod

Roger Baskes

Harriet Berman

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Brenner

Sharon Ellison

Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Franklin

Jeanette Marsh

Marcia Pomerantz

Thelma Ross

Dr. & Mrs. Elliot Roth

Shirley Shoger

Joanne Stein

Corrections and Clarifications

In the Spring 2002 issue of *CJH*, the front page heads-up about our forthcoming Silver Anniversary exhibit at Spertus should have listed the opening date as Sunday, November 17, 2002.

In the same issue, in the report on the Society's open meeting on May 5, some names were spelled incorrectly. Guest speaker Carl Fox's middle initial is H (not J). Fifth District Relief Lieutenant, Chicago Fire Department, is Lisa Barber (not Barbour), and Stu Gootnick (not Gutnick) is a member of the North Maine Fire Protection District.

In the same report, it should have been reported that the Jewish chaplain of the Chicago Fire Department, Rabbi Moshe Wolf, attends all two-alarm and bigger fires (not only five-alarm or bigger).

CJH regrets the errors. ❖

Raisa Biographer to Speak at Area College

"Rosa Raisa: Chicago Diva" is the title of a talk to be given by Charles Mintzer, author of the recent biography of the great Jewish star of Chicago Opera. Mr. Mintzer is considered the foremost authority on the life of Mme. Raisa.

He will address a class on Wednesday, December 4, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., at Oakton Community College, Ray Hartstein Campus, 7701 North Lincoln Avenue, Skokie. This one-time music appreciation class is offered through Oakton's noncredit Emeritus Program. \$16.00 for seniors. Out-of-district seniors add \$5.00.

You can register by walk-in, phone, fax, or mail. For information call the Emeritus Program office at (847) 635-1414. ❖



Rosa Raisa in 1936. From the book *Rosa Raisa—A Biography of a Diva with Selections from Her Memoirs* by Charles Mintzer (Northeastern University Press, 2001). Photo by Maurice Seymour Studio, Chicago.

Physicist Jack Steinberger

To: Jack Steinberger
European Laboratory for Particle Physics, CERN
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Steinberger,

Our organization has been doing research on young German Jewish refugees who escaped to Chicago and became well-known Americans.

In the last issue of our newsletter [*CJH* Spring 2002], we published an article on a Berlin-born molecular biologist, Gunther Stent.

As a result of this article, I have received several phone calls that mentioned your name as a young refugee who came to Chicago in the 1930s and became a spectacular success, including your being the recipient of a Nobel Prize in Physics.

I have read your biography on the Nobel Web site, but I wonder if you would be willing to write to us in more detail about your life in Chicago...

Since we are a local historical society, we are primarily interested in your Chicago experiences, and in taking *full credit* for all your success being the result of your living in Chicago!

I look forward to hearing from you,
Walter Roth

Jack Steinberger replied:

Dear Mr. Roth,

My Chicago life began in 1935, when I was 14, in Winnetka, Illinois, in the home of Barnett Faroll, a well-to-do owner of a grain brokerage firm. I attended New Trier High School, graduating in 1938. (Incidentally, I gave the school my Nobel medal.)

With the help of Mr. Faroll, my parents and younger brother could also come to the States.

In 1938, the family, again with the help of Mr. Faroll, bought a modest Jewish delicatessen in Chicago, called Stein's, the name of the previous owners. (My father had been a cantor and a Hebrew teacher, my mother an English and French teacher, but there was no possibility to find jobs.) The store was on [Glenwood] on the west side of the "L" between Lunt Avenue and [Morse]. We lived on Lunt. We could barely make ends meet.

I went to Armour Institute [now IIT] and

studied chemical engineering until my scholarship ran out in 1940, and I had to go to work at G.D. Searle as a lab assistant. I studied chemistry at the University of Chicago night school. The next year, the U of C gave me a scholarship, so I went back to day school and got a B.S. in Chemistry. With the war on, I participated in a course at the U of C sponsored by the U.S. Army Signal Corps, preparing people to use the newly invented radar.

From spring '43 I worked as a civilian in the Radiation Lab at MIT. (Incidentally, by that time I was married, and in 1944, in Cambridge, we had our first son.) On the side I could take some physics classes at MIT. After the German surrender I was called to active duty and was discharged after the Japanese surrender. I could then return to the U of C for graduate study with the help of the GI Bill, living in one of the "prefabs" the University had erected south of the Midway for war veterans.

The U of C then had the great Italian physicist, Enrico Fermi, as a professor, and he sponsored my thesis. There were other very good faculty members and some outstanding fellow students. I finished my Ph.D. thesis in 1948 and went to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

So this is the story of my life in Chicago. Looking back, the two years of graduate school there were the best years of my life.

With best wishes,

Jack Steinberger

After a year in Princeton, Jack Steinberger went on to Columbia University. There, he and two colleagues, Leon M. Lederman and Melvin Schwartz, performed a landmark experiment. Their discovery of a new elementary particle, the muon neutrino, led to a theory that is a cornerstone of modern physics—the "standard model" of fundamental particles. A quarter-century later, in 1988, the three men shared the Nobel Prize in Physics for this work.

After receiving the Nobel, Steinberger was invited back to his German birthplace, Bad Kissingen, on the fiftieth anniversary of Kristallnacht. The town mounted an exhibit, and he was very moved by it.

Jack Steinberger is about 80 years old and lives in Geneva, Switzerland. He has visited Chicago often, particularly the University of Chicago. His last visit was in late 2001 for the University's celebration of the centenary of Enrico Fermi's birth. ❖

Mail Order & Bungalows: Philanthropist Benjamin J. Rosenthal

BY WALTER ROTH

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is a grateful recipient of grants from the Benjamin J. Rosenthal Foundation. The foundation was created in 1922 by a Chicago businessman best known as one of the founders of Aldens, Inc., a large Chicago-based mail order business. The foundation was dedicated to the pursuit of cultural activities and the "well-being of all citizens." One of the original trustees was Henry Horner, an attorney, judge, and the first Jewish governor of Illinois (1933-40). Among the trustees of the foundation today are descendants of Benjamin J. Rosenthal.

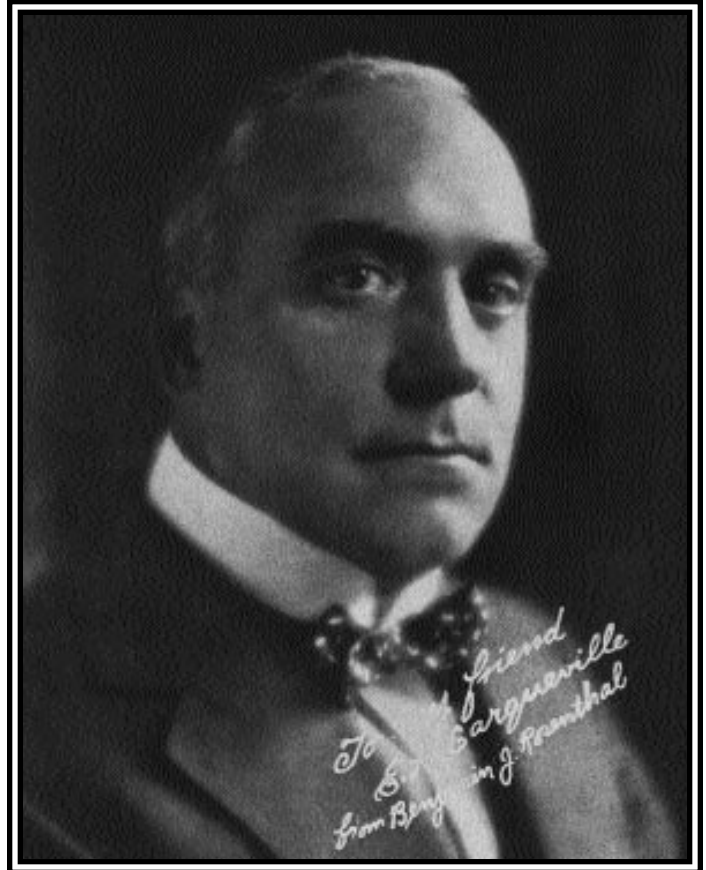
Benjamin Jefferson Rosenthal was born in Chicago on November 5, 1867, of German (Prussian) ancestry. Upon graduation from high school in 1884, he entered the employ of Gage Wholesale Millinery where he worked for several years.

In 1889, in association with his brother Samuel, he rented a small loft at Wabash and Congress Streets, hired five employees and started the Chicago Mail Order Millinery Company. Louis Eckstein and Louis M. Stumer subsequently joined the new enterprise. No doubt the success of the Sears Roebuck catalog business, under the leadership of Julius J. Rosenwald, had an influence on the new firm. Be that as it may, Benjamin J. Rosenthal became one of America's mail order pioneers.

The first Chicago Mail Order Millinery Company catalog was the size of a pocket notebook. It displayed the unbelievably large, flowered, veiled, and feathered hats of the day, which were priced from \$1.69 to \$8.00.

As the number of women in the work force grew and bicycling became a national fad, fashions and shopping habits changed. CMO's business boomed as women ordered the new, simpler attire via the catalog. In 1902, the company was incorporated in Illinois. Its name was simplified to "The Chicago Mail Order Company" (familarly known as "CMO") to reflect its growing and diversifying lines of merchandise.

In 1905 the CMO catalog was expanded to 66 pages; in 1906 it became 118 pages. The company moved to larger quarters at 14th and Wabash as the business grew. More lines of merchandise were added: handbags, selling at prices ranging from \$.03 to \$1.98, and a 70-inch beaver scarf, \$6.48. An 85-inch mink throw was listed at \$4.98 in the 1906 catalog.



Benjamin J. Rosenthal.

From his book Reconstructing America—Sociologically and Economically (Arcadia Book Co., 1919).

CMO brought out its "big" catalog in 1909. Its 961 pages contained fashions, toiletries, stoves, sewing machines, dining tables, bookcases, writing desks—and even a monstrous folding bed that was disguised as a mantel during the day. As business flourished, the company moved again, to a four-story building at 20th and Indiana. Weekly wages of employees ranged from \$5 to \$7, supplemented by a profit-sharing plan. During this period a 25¢ corset cover was reported to be a "runaway" sales leader.

A New York office was opened, but catalog merchandise was cut back to apparel and accessories, its original strength. (By now, Rosenthal, though retaining substantial equity in the company, had turned over its management to others.) In 1928, CMO moved to a

continued on page 6

Benjamin J. Rosenthal

continued from page 5

large new building at 511 S. Paulina. Its sales for 1929 were \$26,400,000, a substantial amount for the times, but dropped to \$19,000,00 by 1932. Installment sales and credit accounts were introduced, and CMO managed to survive the Great Depression. With Rosenthal's death in 1936, CMO became a public company listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

In 1946 the Chicago Mail Order Company changed its name to "Aldens, Inc.," to eliminate confusion with other Chicago mail order companies. ("Aldens" had long been used as a private brand name on much of CMO's upscale merchandise, and the transition was smooth.) That year the catalog contained 638 pages. Aldens had

become one of the leading mail order catalog companies in America—the others being Sears Roebuck, Spiegel, and Montgomery Ward—and all of them were Chicago-based.

By the mid-1970s, all of the mail order giants were in decline. Aldens, Inc. was sold, and its name disappeared.

While mail order remains Rosenthal's chief claim to fame, he was also active in other enterprises. Together with his partners, Eckstein and Stumer, he was involved in such ventures as clothing and millinery establishments, restaurants, and drugstores. Emporium World Millinery was one of their largest ventures. The partners also owned and managed real estate properties, and even had success as magazine publishers (*The Red Book* and *The Blue Book*).

The real estate group built on land owned by the Chicago Board of Education, on 99-year leases dating from 1890.

The flagship property was the North American Building at 36-44 South State Street, a 19-story office building with many tenants, most of them wholesalers. Benjamin Rosenthal's office was located in this building. The seven-story Emporium Building at 26-28 South State was occupied for many years by the Miller-Wohl Company, retailers of ladies' ready-to-wear. The Mercantile Building at 10-14 South State was leased by the S.S. Kresge Company for its own use.

Benjamin Rosenthal and Hannah Stumer (sister of his partner Louis Stumer) were married on New Years Day, 1891. Rabbi Aaron A. Messing officiated at the ceremony. The Rosenthals had two daughters, Gladys and Elaine. Gladys was married to Ernest Byfield, a well-known Chicagoan who for some years owned the Sherman Hotel and the Ambassador East and West. Elaine was a superb golfer who became a national champion (see box on page 7). She was married to S.L. Reinhardt. Both daughters' first marriages ended in divorce, and both daughters later remarried.

Rosenthal was a lifelong Democrat, and politically active in the Party. In 1914 he ran for a seat in the U.S. Congress, as Representative at Large from Illinois, but lost the election. In his files is a letter from President Woodrow Wilson's office endorsing his candidacy.

WALTER ROTH is president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

1910

*Chicago
Mail Order
Company*



*Checked
spring
suit
sold for
\$6.49*

1929

*Chicago
Mail Order
Company*



*Flapper
ensemble
with removable
jacket. Dress
had an all-lace
top. 2-piece
set sold for
\$14.98*

By 1919 Rosenthal was spending a great deal of his time on worthy causes. His ideas for preparing our nation for the postwar world were expressed in his book, *Reconstructing America—Sociologically and Economically*. He worked to secure employment for Chicago's "down-and-outers," for older people, for the disabled, and for "colored" women. He pressed for affordable housing, and a "living wage." He pressed for legislation to improve the shipping of manufactured goods by strengthening the United States Merchant Marine and improving our inland waterways.

That same year he funded the building of single-family bungalows in Chicago. The project, called "Garden Homes," was a 175-unit development started at 8818 South Wabash Avenue. His idea was to build affordable homes for working class families. Operating through the Chicago Dwellings Association, which he had founded, Rosenthal hired architect Charles Frost

to design 133 detached bungalows and 21 duplexes. The exteriors were varied for individuality, but all had five rooms and the same interior design. The homes were a great success and bungalow developments spread to many parts of the city, where they remain a distinctive part of Chicago architecture.

Through his foundation, Rosenthal made grants to many worthwhile causes. For years annual awards were presented to citizens who had distinguished themselves by public service. Contributions went to the Chicago Jewish Charities, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and many other charities. A major project of the foundation was funding the establishment of the Benjamin J. Rosenthal and Hannah S. Rosenthal Camp in

Southern Michigan, a year-round fresh air camp for inner city youth.

Rosenthal was a member of the Standard Club. An entry about his early life is contained in the 1924 *History of the Jews of Chicago*, edited by Herman Meites (and reprinted by CJHS in 1991). His wife was a sponsor of *The Romance of A People*, the pageant presented on Jewish Day at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933. (She is listed in the *Romance* pageant program book which CJHS reprinted in 1999.)

They lived for many years at the Ambassador Hotel and maintained a summer home in Homewood, Illinois. Benjamin J. Rosenthal died on May 14, 1936 at the age of 68. He was survived by his wife and daughters, two granddaughters and three grandsons. His grandsons all served overseas with the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II. Their grandfather, Benjamin Jefferson Rosenthal, was a great American patriot, and he would, undoubtedly, have been proud of them. Hannah Rosenthal continued to live at the Ambassador Hotel until her death in 1970 at the age of 100. ❖

Men's three-piece wool suits with vests and cuffs sold for \$7.45

1933

Chicago Mail Order Company



Elaine Rosenthal and Bobby Jones in 1918.

Image from the Web site www.bobbyjonesgolffexhibit.com

Golf Champion Elaine Rosenthal

Elaine Rosenthal was inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame in 1995.

Elaine began collecting tournament trophies in 1914 when she placed second in the U.S. Amateur championship. In 1915 she won the Women's Western at Midlothian Country Club, a feat she repeated at the same site in 1918, and at the White Bear Yacht Club, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1925. Elaine won the Florida State championship in 1916 and 1917, and the North & South in 1917.

In 1918 Elaine joined Bobby Jones, Perry Adair and Alexa Stirling in playing eighteen golf exhibitions to benefit the American Red Cross war relief effort and one for the Women's Section of the Navy League.

Elaine's mother was the chaperone on the tour. Hannah Rosenthal had a wonderful time, and loved recalling stories about it for the rest of her life.

The Illinois Golf Hall of Fame exhibit is located at The Glen Club in Glenview.

Muriel Robin Rogers

Founding President (1977-80, 1981-82)

It all began in the summer of 1976, our country's Bicentennial year. Some members of the local chapter of the American Jewish Congress met with some members of the Jewish Federation of Greater Chicago to plan the Bicentennial Jewish Exhibit.

This exhibit of Jewish contributions to the city of Chicago was held at the Museum of Science and Industry and attracted very large crowds. Our group of planners worked together for the six week run of the exhibit, and many of us became docents. When the show closed, we felt a need to continue to study and to educate others about the contributions of Chicago Jewry.

On a cold and snowy day in January 1977, we (Muriel and Burt Robin) hosted a brunch-meeting for many of the docents at our home. We discussed the idea of starting an organization in Chicago modeled after the American Jewish Historical Society. At our next gathering, an organizational meeting at the home of Doris and Joe Minsky, the Society was officially formed, and its name and purpose decided upon. Our purpose was to be the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

In March we held our first public meeting in the party room of Sol and Ruth Brandzel's apartment building. Our speaker was Bernard Wax, of the American Jewish Historical Society. More than fifty people became members of our new organization, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, on that day.

During the Society's first two years, we began publishing a newsletter, now *Chicago Jewish History*, and began conducting summer day tours of Jewish Chicago. We received the cooperation of Spertus College (as it was then known), and opened an office in its building. We began holding many of our bimonthly public meetings at Spertus, and presented our first exhibit there. We began contributing materials to the Chicago Jewish Archives, also located at Spertus.

For 25 years the Society membership has remained active, and many projects have been accomplished. We look forward to the next 25 years with great anticipation. ❖

Past Presidents Reflect on the Society's History and Look Forward to Our Silver Anniversary Exhibition:

Adele Hast

President (1980-81)

Chair, 25th Anniversary Exhibition Committee

When I became president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society in 1980, we were in the early years of carrying out our purpose—preserving the history of the Jewish community in Chicago and the surrounding areas by collecting and exhibiting pertinent materials, providing historical information to the public, and encouraging research. Our 25th anniversary is a good time to see how much the Society has accomplished in fulfilling its mission.

One of the most ambitious projects resulted in the video *Romance of a People: The First Hundred Years of Jewish History in Chicago, 1833-1933*. The Society's tours of Jewish places span four states—Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. An ongoing oral history project began with a training program for new interviewers and continues to record the recollections of members of the Jewish community. Many collections of papers of synagogues, Jewish organizations, and individuals, gathered by the society, are part of the Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus. The Society has a list of varied publications. Our quarterly, *Chicago Jewish History*, with its many articles on historical topics, has become an important source for information not previously published.

One of the goals of the Society is to present historical information to public audiences. Several open meetings each year provide such a forum. In addition, the Society has mounted several exhibits, including a major display on landsmanshaften. The exhibit at Spertus, celebrating the first quarter century of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, will provide a glimpse of the many aspects of preserving the history of metropolitan Chicago's Jewish community. These materials are available to all readers and researchers who seek to learn more about the development of our community. ❖

“Chicago Jewish Historical Society 1977–2002: Preserving Community History”

Rachel B. Heimovics

President (1982-84)

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is wonderful! I celebrate this milestone because of all the Society’s accomplishments and all its future possibilities. I celebrate any opportunity to focus on Chicago Jewish history, which is still very dear to my heart. And, most important of all, I celebrate all of those who share and have shared the passion, many of them good friends, some co-founders, some gone, and all those who are carrying on the Society’s mission.

My flirtation with Chicago Jewish history began years before 1977. By the time of the Bicentennial, I was lecturing on the subject.

At one presentation that I gave for Hadassah, Muriel Robin introduced herself to me, and informed me of plans to start a local Jewish historical society. I attended my first meeting—the organizing meeting—at the home of Doris and Joe Minsky. There we “founders” worked out details for launching the Society in March 1977.

Today, I live in Central Florida where I am ever on the lookout for Chicago Jewish connections. How thrilled I am when I make such a connection, such as finding an archival cache of Chicago Jewish material at the University of Florida in Gainesville! I regularly pore over the minutes of the CJHS board, wishing I were still there to participate, and I regularly marvel at the Society’s publications, tours, programs, exhibits, films, and other projects. It was not easy to move away from Chicago, and impossible to abandon Chicago Jewish history.

The silver anniversary of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is not only a high point in Chicago Jewish history, it is also a very personal, very moving occasion for me. ❖

*Exhibit Opens Sunday, November 17
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies
618 South Michigan Avenue*

*Reception & Program at Spertus
Sunday, November 24*

Norman D. Schwartz

President (1984-88)

The fact that CJHS is celebrating its 25th anniversary confirms the belief we had back on January 2, 1977, that there was a need for a Jewish Historical Society in Chicago.

One aspect of my participation in the work of the Society is answering questions which are addressed to us. Some answers are almost routine, but are nevertheless important to the questioners. Others offer me real challenges. My reward comes from the satisfaction of reconnecting someone with his/her past. Following are just two examples:

A man in Springfield, Virginia recently inquired about Commander David Goldenson of the U.S. Navy. The man was helped by Goldenson to gain admission to Annapolis, and wants to put something in the naval academy chapel in honor of his benefactor. I found a death notice and an obituary. Goldenson was the chief recruiter for the navy in Chicago during World War II.

A woman in Mesa, Arizona inquired about Emil Armin, a Jewish painter and woodcarver born in Radauti, Roumania in 1883. I found that he graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago and was an art teacher for the Board of Jewish Education. He died in 1971. (An Emil Armin painting, which hangs in a Chicago public school, is currently on exhibit at the Art Institute.)

My research is only one facet of the work that justifies the Society’s existence. I am proud to have been part of this endeavor. ❖



Four Members of Fem-Vets Post No. 192: Florence Berke, Gertrude Lowenstein, Elaine Bogetz and Harriet Lipson, 1998.

At monument "Dedicated to America's Military Women, Past, Present And Future." North Chicago Veterans' Administration Medical Center.

CHICAGO JEWISH WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

*Fem-Vets Post No. 192, Jewish War
Veterans of the United States of America*

BY N. SUE WEILER

Evelyn Epstein Silverstein^{Z"l} was a member of Post 192. She served overseas in World War II, arriving in Oro Bay, New Guinea in 1944, in the first contingent of women assigned to the U.S. Army Signal Corps, part of the group which eventually retook the Philippines.

"I knew about the Holocaust before I entered the army," she said in a 1994 interview. "It was why so many Jews joined the war effort." Before joining the army, Silverstein had never been far from home. She said that her military experience made her independent, opened her mind about people, and taught her not to be afraid. "Whether we were male or female, it didn't matter. We did what we had to do."

Fem-Vets Post No. 192 was organized in Chicago in November, 1976, ninety years after Jewish Civil War veterans had established the Hebrew Union Veterans Association, which in 1929 was renamed Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America.

While some JWV posts had auxiliaries composed of their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters, the first all-women's JWV post was founded

in 1946. Slanger Post No. 313 was named for Lt. Frances Y. Slanger of Roxbury, Massachusetts, one of four US Army nurses who waded ashore at the Normandy beachhead on D-Day plus four, June 10, 1944, assigned to a field hospital to aid casualties from the invasion. Slanger was killed four months later by a German sniper.

American women entered the military in large numbers in the 1970s when the U.S. Armed Forces became all-volunteer. But women had always been volunteers: disguised as men in the Revolutionary War; serving as nurses during the Civil War; and as drivers, secretaries, clerks and telephone operators during World War I. Only the army admitted women officially, in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps.

One of those nurses was Chicagoan Ethel Gladstone. A biographical note in the JWV book, *One Hundred Years of Service*, states that she was graduated in 1916 from West Side Hospital as a registered nurse. ("West Side" may mean Maimonides Hospital, which was renamed Mount Sinai, rebuilt and enlarged on the same site.)

She joined the US Army Nurse Corps in March 1918 and was immediately sent overseas, where she remained on active duty following the Allied victory, until July 1919. After her discharge, Nurse Gladstone and her colleagues were given a special commendation for bravery and devotion to duty. She died in 1987 at age 91, and is interred at Quantico National Veterans' Cemetery.

When World War II broke out, women were encouraged to volunteer for administrative jobs in order to "Free a Man to Fight." Twelve Jewish women were among the first graduating class of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)

officers at Fort Des Moines, Iowa on August 29, 1942. Among these graduates were Bee Rosenberg and Ruth Spivak from Chicago. Despite the fact that women in the WAAC did the same jobs as men, they did not receive the same pay, rank, or benefits. Not until June 1943, when the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was established, did women gain full military status.

Ruth Resnick Steinberg Krawetz was the first Commander of Fem-Vets 192. In 1943 while working as a civilian employee filling Air Corps supply orders, she enlisted in the WAVEs so she could attend Radio School. Her wish was granted when she was accepted at the Radio Division, Washington D.C.

In later years she elected to work for the JWV Department of Illinois in Chicago. Though retired in Florida, she remains a proud member of the post she helped found.

Miriam Gobstoob Canter^{Z"L}, a nurse, was assigned to the hospital at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where she worked in all departments of the laboratory. Canter served as commander of the JWV Slinger Post in her native Massachusetts before moving to Chicago. (She became Commander of Post 192 in 1998, the first woman in the country to command two such posts.)

Canter continued her work at the University of Chicago Hospital and Michael Reese Hospital where she worked for 23 years as a medical sociologist for the Dysfunctional Child Center. She dedicated her life to strong public schools in her Hyde Park-Kenwood neighborhood, civil rights and nuclear weapons ban movements. The Miriam G. Canter Middle School is located at 4959 South Blackstone Avenue.

Edythe Mermelstein Wolgel^{Z"L} was assigned to Special Services at Fort Hamilton, New York, where she was responsible for presenting orientation sessions to groups of soldiers prior to their embarkation for overseas duty. Her worst experience was an incident of anti-Semitism one Christmas. The Jewish WAACs had volunteered for duty so that the gentiles could go home for the holiday, but one who did not go home got drunk and ran through the barracks screaming, "Kill the Jews." Wolgel's best experience was greeting her fiancé at the dock when he returned from overseas and arranging for him to get off the ship before the others!



Ethel Gladstone.
U.S. Army Nurse Corps,
World War I.

A charter member of 192, Shirle Berman Domsky, ^{Z"L}, Yeoman first class in the Coast Guard, was a member of the SPAR Drum and Bugle Corps and marched in President Roosevelt's funeral cortege.

Goldie Boudid Lewis^{Z"L} began her service as a WAAC clerk/typist, moving from basic training at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, to assignments from Texas to New York City, until concluding her service as a WAC sergeant at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Lewis was installed as the second commander of Post 192 in 1978, one of many offices she held over the years. She served as Department President of Illinois Jewish War Veterans.

While all JWVs participate in similar programs, Lewis's painstaking efforts in assembling the record of JWV involvement in North Chicago Veterans' Administration Medical Center, other Illinois State Veterans' Homes and VA programs, captured an award for the JWV Department of Illinois at a national convention.

Past Post Commander Harriet Bieber Lipson was a recruiting officer in Oklahoma and Texas during part of her army service, and she is *still* recruiting—asking women veterans to join Post No. 192. Post Commander Betty Brandwein and Membership Chair Pearl Lieberman summon you! Vets, please call Pearl at (847) 251-8010.

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is currently taking oral histories of women in the military. The audiotapes and transcriptions will be deposited at the Chicago Jewish Archives, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies. The archives

is also seeking documents and photographs to add to its holdings on the Jewish War Veterans. All vets—men and women—are encouraged to share their experiences.

Call Sue Weiler, (312) 922-2294 or e-mail: nsweiler@avenew.com. Call Joy Kingsolver (312) 322-1741 or email: archives@spertus.edu. ❖

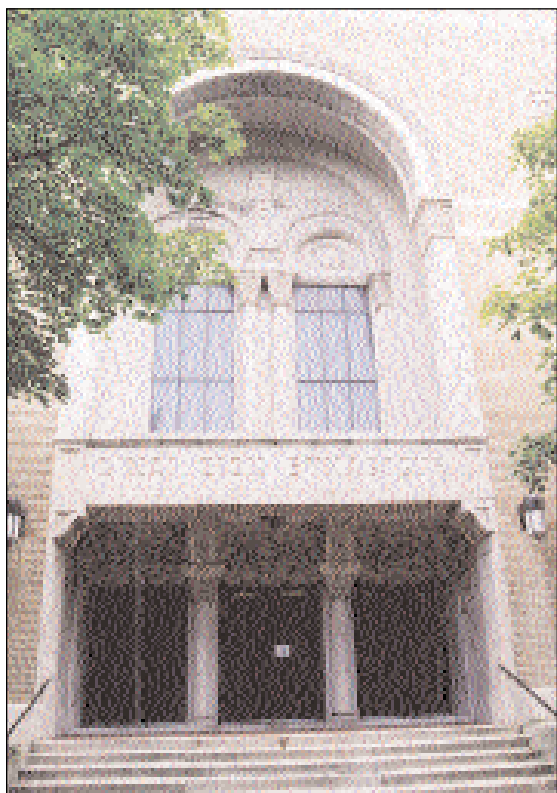
N. SUE WEILER, *Ph.D. in History, University of Illinois at Chicago, is oral history chair of CJHS.*

Sources for this article include: The Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.—One Hundred Years of Service (Turner Publishing Co., 1996); JUF News, "D-Day 50 Years Later," June 1994; and the oral history of Harriet Lipson. Photographs are from One Hundred Years of Service, Volume II (Turner Publishing Co., 2001).

FROM THE
CHICAGO JEWISH
archives

Remembering Congregation B'nai Zion

By Joy Kingsolver



When Congregation B'nai Zion, the oldest Conservative congregation in Chicago, closed its doors last month, it also marked the end of the last synagogue in Rogers Park. It is never easy to see a synagogue close, especially one with such a venerable history as B'nai Zion. The beautiful and impressive building itself will be a loss to the Jewish community.

The congregation's history, however, will not be lost. The records of the congregation will be preserved alongside those of many other Chicagoland synagogues in the Chicago Jewish Archives. "We've always been savers," said Jeanette Katz, the congregation archivist, and I was delighted to find that this was true. The records of B'nai Zion are extensive, consisting of bound books of minutes and annual reports, bulletins, photographs, dinner books, and memorabilia. Together, these records will give historians a full picture of the life of the congregation from its early years.

B'nai Zion, founded in 1918, at first occupied a former church called Saint Paul's by the Lake, at 1715 West Lunt Avenue. Its beginnings were modest: "Thirteen years ago," S.J. Natkin, congregation president, wrote in 1932, "...there were enough Jewish

inhabitants to form a small congregation, and enough children to warrant the opening of a religious school...it remained, as usual, for a few conscientious Jews to do the work of the pioneer in this community." By 1924, B'nai Zion had grown enough to purchase a lot on Pratt Boulevard; the new building, designed by Edward Steinberg, was dedicated in 1928.



B'nai Zion Synagogue, 2002.

1447 West Pratt Boulevard.

Above: main entrance.

Below: sanctuary.

Photographs by Joy Kingsolver.

Chicago Jewish Archives.

From the beginning, the fundraising efforts of the Sisterhood were key to the success of the congregation; from 1919-1932 they raised \$40,000 for the school and other educational programs. Rabbi Abraham Lassen, who served the congregation from 1919-1945, was instrumental in guiding the growth of these years, and in encouraging affiliation with the Conservative movement.

Henry Fisher became rabbi in 1945, and his first priority was the building of a school and community center. This long-held dream was fulfilled in 1950 with the opening of the Wolberg Community Center. The 40th Anniversary Journal, published in 1959-60, features many pictures of the vibrant student life that characterized those years. China monogrammed with "BZ", contracts with the rabbis, and membership lists from the 1950s give evidence of a thriving congregation. In recent decades, changes in the demographics of Rogers Park brought about the gradual decline in the size of the congregation, until this year, when it became necessary to sell the B'nai Zion buildings and merge with another congregation.

The property was sold to the Lake Shore School, located next door. The school building had been a part of BZ until it was purchased from the congregation a few years ago (with an option to buy the rest of the property if BZ were to close). A merger was arranged with Shaare Tikvah, 5800 North Kimball Avenue, creating Congregation Shaare Tikvah B'nai Zion.

Since its founding in 1966, an important part of the Chicago Jewish Archives's mission has been the collecting of synagogue records. Morris Gutstein, rabbi and historian, wrote to area congregations asking for copies of bulletins and other records; this was the beginning of the effort to document the life of the Jewish community in Chicago. Today, the archives has records from more than 100 congregations; the smallest collection consists of one piece of paper; the largest contains more than 25 boxes. Many of the collections were gathered and brought to the archives by members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

In 1984, for example, Norman Schwartz and Ira Berlin, with Richard Marcus, the archivist from Spertus, met to gather material at Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue, which was closing. They boxed up Hebrew school records, financial records, bulletins, sisterhood records, flyers, programs, and other items. The collection was brought to the archives, processed and inventoried, and is now one of our largest synagogue holdings. Among the more unusual items in the collection are drinking glasses with the initials "KJS"



Library of Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue, 1984.

Norman D. Schwartz collecting material. Photograph by Moselle Schwartz. Chicago Jewish Archives.

and a wooden gavel dated 1941. Some of the items from this collection will be on display as part of the upcoming exhibition at Spertus, "Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 1977-2002: Preserving Community History," opening in November.

The KJS collection also contains bar mitzvah records for some years. This is very unusual. Birth, bar/bat mitzvah, wedding, and funeral records are very rare in synagogue collections because they are typically kept by the rabbi and not by the congregation officially. Many genealogists have been disappointed to learn how difficult it is to find this kind of information. Chicago Sinai Congregation is another exception to this rule, and its congregational archives include some wedding records which have been microfilmed. Fran Luebke, a genealogist, transcribed the wedding records of Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal, 1861-1905, and had made them available to researchers; the archives obtained a copy of the transcription through CJHS.

The B'nai Zion collection contains resources vital in bringing to life the history of the era and the people whose hard work kept the congregation going for so many years. The collection is being processed by one of the archives' dedicated volunteers, Pearl Slaton, and will be available for research in the near future. We are proud to be able to preserve the records of this historic congregation in the archives, and pleased to contribute to the study of Jewish history in Chicago. ❖

JOY KINGSOLVER is Director, Chicago Jewish Archives, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.

Roots, Transplants & Blossoms: 2002 Summer Tours to Milwaukee, Northwest Indiana & Chihuly

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Milwaukee: New Museum, Old Neighborhoods

GUIDE: LEAH AXELROD. Even before our bus arrived in Milwaukee, this tour was cooking! En route, Leah told us the story of *The Settlement Cookbook*, first published in 1901, in Milwaukee.

Lizzie Black Kander (1858-1940), a daughter of German Jewish immigrants, was teaching cooking classes to young immigrant girls at her Jewish settlement house (patterned after Hull House). She found that the girls had to spend too much time copying recipes from a chalkboard, and decided to print a little cookbook for them. This publication evolved into the most successful fund-raising cookbook in American history; the settlement house evolved into the Abraham Lincoln Settlement House, and then into the JCC.

Our first stop was the Milwaukee Art Museum, which we entered through the new, sail-shaped Quadracci Pavilion. Docent Clarice Zucker described the features of this magnificent structure. She then led us on a tour of works by many of the thirty-six Jewish artists who are represented in MAM collections.

The museum overlooks Lake Michigan, as does the nearby Pieces of Eight Restaurant, where we enjoyed a buffet lunch.

We could not visit Milwaukee's main synagogue, Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun, 2419 East Kenwood Boulevard, because of construction blocking the street. The building was sold to the University of Wisconsin, and it is now used for Jewish services only on the High Holidays.

We drove through "Brewers' Hill," the old Jewish neighborhood, and saw the Golda Meir School (formerly the Fourth Street School, which Golda attended).

Our last stop was at Lubavitch House, where Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin treated us to soft drinks, helped three men in our group to perform the tefilin ritual, showed us a Lubavitch outreach video, and guided us on a tour of the mansion's well-appointed mikvah.

SUNDAY, JULY 14

(Northwest) Indiana Safari

GUIDE: LEAH AXELROD. Our first stop was in Hammond at St. Michael's Church on Sibley Boulevard. This was once Kneseth Israel Synagogue. We found the building



Munster, Indiana. Above: Rabbi Michael Stevens, spiritual leader of Temple Beth-El. Photograph (detail) from front cover of congregation brochure.



Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Left: Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin, executive director of Lubavitch of Wisconsin, binds tefilin on the arm of CJHS member Mark Mandle.

Below: Lubavitch House of Wisconsin, a thirty-five room mansion, 3109 North Lake Drive.

Hammond, Indiana.

Above right: St. Michael's Church, formerly Kneseth Israel Synagogue. Photographs by Bev Chubat.





closed, with its roof fallen in, only a few months away from demolition. Faint vestiges of Hebrew lettering showed through the plaster above the main entrance doors.

Mergers and moves: Kneseth Israel merged with Gary's Cong. Beth-El and became Beth Israel. Its Hohman Avenue building, dating from 1958, is just a half-block away from a different Beth-El. (Jewish history can get very complicated!)

Temple Beth-El moved from its 6900 Hohman Avenue building to its new home in Munster three years ago. Munster is a growing bedroom community where a Jewish Federation building is under construction, and a JCC will be built. Whiting's Cong. B'nai Judah plans to build in Munster, too.

We lunched at the Michigan City Yacht Club, situated between Lake Michigan and looming steel mills.

From congregation leaders we learned about an inevitable move (Hammond's Beth Israel), a hoped-for merger (East Chicago's B'nai Sholom), and the employment of a trio of part-time spiritual leaders (Michigan City's Sinai Temple).

At Temple Israel in Miller Beach, Gary, Rabbi Stanley Halpern offered a frank, humorous, and stirring affirmation of his congregation's commitment to tikun olam.

CJHS Mourns Ethel Shulman



Ethel Shulman Z"L

Society Board Member Ethel Fratkin Shulman died on June 13, 2002. Ethel was an accomplished artist and art historian, a charismatic teacher, and a knowledgeable devotee of music, theater and dance. She grew up in Humboldt Park and was a valued resource for information about the growth and decline of Jewish life in that neighborhood.

Her interests and talents led Ethel to enthusiastically accept an invitation to join the Board of Directors of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, along with her husband, educator Dr. Milton Shulman. Ethel wrote a feature article for *CJH* (Fall 1998) to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Chicago-based American Jewish Artists Club. Personal involvement enriched her writing about the group and its debates. "Some artists believed that there was a uniquely Jewish art," she wrote, "while others felt that art had no religious barriers, and still others maintained that works of art reflect the uniqueness of the artists regardless of their religious beliefs. This argument continues to the present day."

Ethel Fratkin was born into a family in which Jewish culture, and especially Zionism, was a way of life. Yiddish was spoken in her home, and she attended the Sholom Aleichem Folk Institute, and later taught there. At the time of her death she was working with a researcher on a history of secular Yiddish schools in the United States and Canada.

After achieving a master's degree in art history from the University of Chicago, Ethel taught in the Chicago public schools and became a master teacher. When she married Milton, she retired to raise a family, but later returned to teach for 14 years at Ida Crown Jewish Academy.

There were many messages of condolence sent to Ethel's family. One of her former students at ICJA, now an administrator, wrote: "She was a wonderful teacher and was truly admired and cherished by so many. But even more, as [her son] Bill's classmate, I know first-hand what a wonderful mother she was, how she cared for her entire family and for all of their friends. She made us all feel like her own children, and we felt honored to know her."

Ethel was an active, lifelong member of Na'Amat and the Labor Zionist Alliance. A friend wrote: "There are always some individuals who personify the complete expression of the Jewish and Zionist ideal: commitment to the community; devotion to family; love of the Jewish people and Eretz Yisrael; and unshakable personal integrity. Ethel was just such a person." ❖

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18 Chicago Jewish Roots

GUIDE: DR. IRVING CUTLER. Cheers when we rode past our old schools; sighs when we remembered Mrs. Little Jack's cheesecake; delight

when we discovered Dale Chihuly's blown glass art among the plants at Garfield Park Conservatory; finally, applause for Irv Cutler's interesting anecdotes, and for his wife Marian's homemade cookies! —Bev Chubat

About the Society

What We Are

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977 and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the American Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Muriel Robin was the founding president. The Society has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects and preserves appropriate written, spoken and photographic records; publishes historical information, holds public meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; mounts appropriate exhibits; and offers tours of Jewish historical sites.

Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to become more involved in the activities of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society? We'd love to have you! Following are the various committees on which you can serve. Contact the Society at (312)663-5634 or any of the Chairpersons listed here.

■ PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Do you have a great idea for a meeting topic? If you are organized and creative, friendly and outgoing, the Program Committee would welcome your help in planning and implementing our bi-monthly and annual meetings. Call Charles Bernstein (773) 324-6362.

■ MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Society's membership continues to grow, and you could help us introduce Chicago Jewish history to even more people. Share your ideas and energy! Contact Janet Iltis (773) 761-1224 or Clare Greenberg (773) 725-7330.

■ TOUR COMMITTEE

Bring your creativity and organization to planning and promoting our popular roster of tours on Jewish history. Contact Leah Axelrod (847) 432-7003.

■ EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Do you like to write? Are you a great proofreader? You can contribute to our quarterly publication, *Chicago Jewish History*. Contact editor Bev Chubat (773) 525-4888.

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Dues Structure

Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1000
Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron or Family	50
Individual or Senior Family	35
Synagogue or Organization	25
Senior Individual or Student	20

Make checks payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and mail to our office at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Dues are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Look to the rock from which you were born
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