



*Errors throughout the
print edition corrected
here, August 29, 2012*

chicago jewish history

Rae Silverman: West Side Basketball Star

Last year, in March, the Society received a donation of memorabilia from the collection of the late Rae Silverman Levine Margolis.

The collection was mailed to us from Omaha, Nebraska, by Rae's daughter-in-law, Rayna Levine, the wife of Rae's son, Daniel.

Among the items were cut-out and wood-mounted photographs of Marshall High School basketball stars of the early 1940s—"Whitey" Siegel, Izzy Acker, Morry Kaplan, and Seymour "Chickie" Zomlefer.

Rae's first husband, Nathan "Boscoe" Levine, was a longtime JPI and ABC coach and gym teacher, as well as a gym teacher, coach, and athletic director at Marshall. The photos might have been decorations, perhaps from a party in Boscoe's honor. (Boscoe, Lou Weintraub,

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JPI Girls' Basketball Team (undated, 1920s).

*Standing: far left, Rose Rodkin, manager; far right, Emil Gollubier, coach.
Kneeling: far left, Rose Olbur Winston. Seated: second from left, Gertrude Goldfein Edelcup; third, Anna Goldstein; far right, Rae Silverman Levine Margolis.
Spertus Special Collections. Gift of Daniel U. and Rayna F. Levine.*



Mollie Alpiner Netcher Newbury: The Jewish Merchant Princess of State Street

*Conclusion of the report on "Jewish Merchant Princesses of State Street,"
the program presented by Herb Eiseman at our open meeting on April 2, 2011.*

Mollie Alpiner was the knit underwear buyer at the Boston Store in 1891 when she married her boss, Charles Netcher, owner of the store. He had come to Chicago from Buffalo, NY, after the Great Fire of 1871 as a hard-working, ambitious young man, eager to make his fortune as our city began rebuilding. He had first worked wrapping packages at the Partridge Brothers' store, became a partner, and then sole owner. Charles and Mollie began buying parcels of land adjoining the store, intending to enlarge it.

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Mollie Alpiner Netcher Newbury (undated). U.S. Library of Congress.

President's Column



Edward H. Mazur

OUR SOCIETY IS CELEBRATING ITS 35th ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR!

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was organized as an outgrowth of the exhibit "My Brother's Keeper," sponsored by the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago at the Museum of Science and Industry in November-December 1976, in celebration of the United States Bicentennial.

Under the chairmanship of Muriel Robin (now Rogers), in cooperation with the Board of Jewish Education and Moshe Samber, the exhibit materials were stored at the BJE building until it could be decided how to continue the project on a permanent basis.

On January 9, 1977, an organizational meeting was held at the Hyde Park apartment of Burton and Muriel Robin. On January 23, 1977, a meeting was held in the Northbrook home of Joe and Doris Minsky, where the fledgling organization elected its first officers—President Muriel Robin; Vice-Presidents Norman D. Schwartz and Ruth Brandzel; Recording Secretary Allene Frost; and Treasurer Charles B. Bernstein. A founding meeting open to the public was held on March 13, 1977 in the party room at 330 West Diversey Parkway, hosted by Sol and Ruth Brandzel. By the close of that meeting, the membership of the Society was almost 100!

The mission statement, drafted by Bernstein, and adopted at the founding meeting, continues to serve us today:

To collect, preserve and exhibit memorabilia and materials of every kind pertaining to the settlement, history and life of Jews and the Jewish community of Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois; and to conduct education programs, encourage study and research, and disseminate information pertaining to the settlement, history, and life of Jews and the Jewish community of Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois.

In 1977, the Society established a cooperative relationship that continues today with Spertus | A Center for Jewish Learning and Culture (formerly Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies). The Society's business office is located on the eighth floor of the beautiful new Spertus building. Over time, the Society has made—and continues to make—significant donations of historical materials to the Spertus Special Collections (formerly the Chicago Jewish Archives).

Since its founding, the Society has presented more than 140 public programs on a wide diversity of topics; instituted a series of bus and walking tours; developed a speakers' bureau; and established an oral history program. The Society has undertaken important publishing projects, the most prominent of which was the reprinting of *History of the Jews of Chicago* (1924) the monumental reference

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Chicago Jewish History

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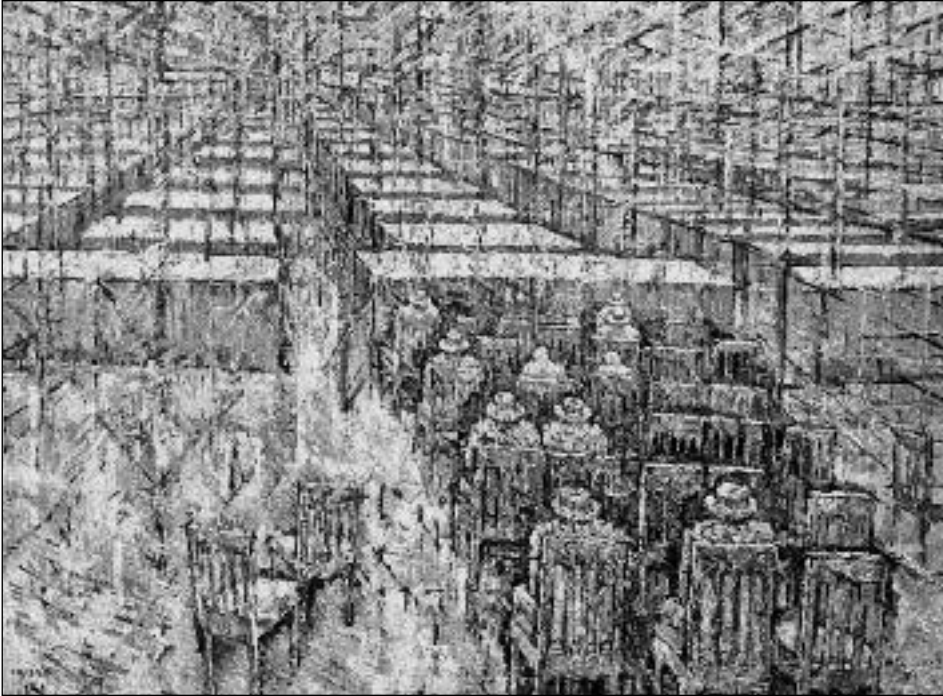
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Send all submissions to:

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Rosofsky Art in Emanuel Office



Seymour Rosofsky (American, 1924-1981). *Unemployment Agency, 1957-58.* Oil on canvas, 129.5 x 182.9 cm (51 x 72 in.), Restricted gifts of Carol Rosofsky, Steven Rosofsky, Amy Rosofsky, J. Rebecca R. Ryan, and The Judith Rothschild Foundation; Ann M. Vielehr Prize Fund, 2001.159, The Art Institute of Chicago.

The headline of a *Chicago Tribune* article by Mark Caro, published on December 5, 2011, reads: “Mayor Emanuel a locavore when it comes to the artwork hanging in his City Hall office. Emanuel wanted office to reflect city and its artists.” The article is illustrated with this Rosofsky painting, which the Mayor chose to hang behind his desk, to display his concern about the city’s economic crisis and its human toll. This and other works by Chicago’s professional and student artists, on loan from local museums, replace the landscapes favored by Mayor Richard M. Daley. ❖

Report on the CJHS Open Meeting, March 25 **“Mayor Emanuel, The City, and The Jewish Community”**

Our first open meeting of 2012 was held on Sunday, March 25, in the sanctuary of Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. The speaker was Paul M. Green, Director of the School of Policy Studies and Arthur Rubloff Professor of Policy Studies at Roosevelt University. He is the author of several books and articles on Illinois and Chicago politics, in addition to his role as WGN Radio Political Analyst.

Prof. Green opened his talk with a brief history of the Jewish population in Chicago, which grew from “a trickle” in 1837 to 270,000 in 1933 (9% of the city’s population); only New York City and Warsaw had more Jews.

Continued on page 4

Save the Dates! Upcoming CJHS Open Meetings

**Sunday,
 September 23**

REFUGE:

**Stories of the
 Selfhelp Home**

A Film by Ethan Bensinger
 2:00 p.m.

Temple Shalom Of Chicago
 3480 N. Lake Shore Drive

**Sunday,
 November 18**

**REMEMBERING
 SULLIVAN HIGH:
 The Jewish Glory Years**

Guest Speaker:

Esther Manewith

2:00 p.m.

**Jewish Reconstructionist Cong.
 303 Dodge Ave., Evanston**

EXHIBITION

SHALOM CHICAGO

Opens

Sunday, October 21

**Chicago History Museum
 1601 North Clark Street**

Through personal stories, rare artifacts, and engaging media presentations, this exhibition will illustrate the Jewish community’s rich history and many contributions to Chicago’s growth and development.

Mayor Emanuel *Continued from page 3*

In the 1930s, Jacob Arvey's West Side 24th Ward became "a ghetto that votes," recognized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as "the Number One Democratic Ward in America." Never again would there be such a mass of Jews in Chicago able to flex its political muscle. By the end of the twentieth century, 70% of all Chicagoland Jews were suburbanites.

Rahm Emanuel's Background

The Mayor's father, Benjamin Auerbach, was born in Jerusalem. He served in the Irgun, the militant Jewish underground movement that was active before the founding of the State of Israel. His brother, Emanuel, was killed in an Arab insurrection in 1936. Benjamin then changed his last name from Auerbach to Emanuel.

Benjamin Emanuel immigrated to Chicago and married Marsha Smulevitz, a civil rights activist. He became a pediatrician, now retired. Marsha Emanuel is a practicing psychotherapist. They have three sons: Ezekiel (Zeke), a prominent oncologist/bioethicist; Rahm; and Ari, a top Hollywood agent.

Education, Career, and Family

Rahm Emanuel attended Anshe Emet Day School, New Trier High School, and Sarah Lawrence College (to study ballet). He turned down a Joffrey Ballet scholarship to attend Sarah Lawrence. After graduation, he pirouetted into politics:

1984 — Meets David Axelrod, running Paul Simon's campaign for U.S. Senate; works for Simon. Axelrod later comments that Rahm redefined the term *chutzpah*.

1989 — Fundraiser for Rich Daley's mayoral campaign (again, the Axelrod connection).

1992 — Fundraiser for Bill Clinton's presidential race.

1993–1998 — Senior Advisor to President Clinton.

1998–2002 — Investment Banker (very successful).

2002–2008 — U.S. Representative, 5th Congressional District of Illinois (succeeding Rod Blagojevich).

2009–2010 — Chief of Staff, President Barack Obama.

2011 — Elected Mayor of Chicago. It took one hundred and fifty-six years from Henry Greenebaum's election as the first Jew on the Chicago City Council for the City to elect a Jewish mayor.

Mayor Emanuel is married to Amy Rule, who converted to Judaism before their wedding. David Axelrod was one of the signers of their *ketubah*. Amy and Rahm have three children.



Speaker Paul Green and CJHS President Ed Mazur.
Emanuel Congregation, March 25, 2012.

The Fourth Edition of the book that Paul Green wrote and edited with Prof. Melvin Holli of UIC, *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition*, will be released in Fall 2012. He gave the CJHS audience a "snapshot" of the entry on our newest Mayor's election:

How Did Rahm Emanuel Become Chicago's Mayor?

1. Leaves his White House job in October 2010.
2. Immediately goes on a fundraising blitz. (An Illinois law limiting campaign contributions is to go into effect January 1, 2011, so Emanuel becomes a fundraising "Energizer Bunny.")
3. Secures an implied, if not spoken, endorsement from President Obama.
4. Brings in an "A Team" of political operatives.
5. Puts on a non-stop personal campaign.

But two things stand in his way:

a. The 1995 law that makes Chicago mayoral contests non-partisan (no party identification).

A candidate has to win 50% plus one vote in the February Round One Election to avoid a Round Two Run-Off in April.

b. Emanuel's residency. Did he or didn't he maintain a Chicago residence for at least one year prior to the election? The legal battle lasts several weeks in many courts until the Illinois Supreme Court ends it by declaring Emanuel a lawful candidate.

6. Emanuel wins the April election with 55.3% of the vote. He defeats three major opponents: Gery Chico, Carol Mosely Braun, and Miguel Del Valle, with a "modified Harold Washington coalition"—The Lakefront, African-Americans, and Gentrifiers.

The City of Chicago Today

On March 25, Paul Green pointed out what the new Mayor faced. No longer the “City of Big Shoulders,” though manufacturing is still important, the City depends on trade, tourism, and services. The population is increasingly Hispanic. There is an enormous budget deficit—six hundred and fifty one million dollars when Rahm Emanuel took office—so there is a need for new revenue and cuts in expenditure, and renegotiation of pensions and health insurance for City employees.

Since Prof. Green’s talk, the potential problems and disputes that he discussed—crime, education, transparency, accountability—have indeed confronted Rahm Emanuel. Now is not an easy time to be Mayor.

Rahm Emanuel’s Impact on Chicago’s Jews

Prof. Green listed reasons why, whatever your politics, if you are Jewish, you take some pride in Rahm Emanuel’s victory. There was little anti-Semitism in the campaign or now that he is Mayor. His intelligence and tough guy persona make most Jews proud, as do his devotion to family and his observance of Jewish holidays. For years, Jewish politicians and businessmen have only been supporting players or active behind the scenes. Now a Jew is in the leading role.

In conclusion, Prof. Green observed that Rahm Emanuel is following in the true Chicago political tradition: “Don’t make anyone who can unmake you.” There is no Number Two in his administration. ❖

Shalom



Shalom Memorial Funeral Home
Shalom Memorial Park

Presents

Highland Park as a Summer Resort: The Wildwood Experience

The Origins of Chicago’s Jewish North Shore

Premiere **Sunday, September 9** 5:00 p.m.

Highland Park Historical Society – 326 Central Avenue



The Foreman, Leopold, Schwab, and Steele families at Wildwood in Highland Park, ca. 1909.

Photo courtesy of Patricia Stein, great-granddaughter of Charles Schwab.

A program that explores the roots of the Jewish migration to Chicago’s North Shore at the beginning of the last century. The core of this program is an exhibit consisting of the remarkable Schwab family archive of over 350 photographs relating to Wildwood, the little-known Highland Park summer resort of prominent German Jews, from 1900 to 1921. Never before seen photos of many notable people will be exhibited, including the Charles Schwab and the Nathan Leopold families, with a very young Nathan Leopold, Jr., of “Loeb and Leopold” notoriety. Descendants of Gerhard Foreman and Hannah Greenebaum Solomon have also made available family scrapbooks and diaries for this program. Free refreshments will be served.

CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

To all our activists, achievers, and honorees... the Hebrew phrase means "More Power to You"...

Herbert Franks of Marengo has been elected President of The Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois. The LTF is the leading state-level funder of civil legal aid to the poor in Illinois. LTF's grants support non-profit organizations that provide a legal safety net for low-income people with desperate needs and nowhere else to turn. These legal aid organizations augment the legal system and ensure that the door to justice is open to every Illinoisan, regardless of their income and resources.

Dr. Edward H. Mazur of Chicago has been elected President of the Lionel Operating Train Society (LOTS). "Our friendly band of model train enthusiasts is dedicated to having the most fun possible operating and collecting those wonderful trains from yesteryear and today—Lionel!" You're on the right track, Ed.

Joel Greenberg of Westmont, author of *A Natural History of the Chicago Region* and consultant on environmental issues, is an avid birder. His next book will be about the passenger pigeon, vast flocks of which once filled the skies of North America east of the Mississippi River. They were a seemingly inexhaustible natural resource until they were hunted to extinction. Greenberg has become an organizer and point man in the Chicago area for Project Passenger Pigeon, a national effort geared to the hundred-year anniversary in 2014 of the demise of the last such bird. The project has grown into a much broader cautionary environmental effort.



Eric Holubow. Hollowed Ark. Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation, Chicago. Large format photograph.



Sandra Holubow. Dream Factory. Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 in.

View the Holubows' art in full color on our website in the PDF version of *Chicago Jewish History* posted there.

Sandra Holubow creates art in her Old Town studio. Having grown up in several Chicago neighborhoods, she has made them the backdrop of her imagery. She captures what we have today, before our vanishing cityscape evolves into new communities and new forms. Her latest exhibit of paintings and collages, "Urban Insights," was mounted in the Renaissance Court Gallery of the Chicago Cultural Center in Spring 2012. Her son, photographer Eric Holubow, also exhibited his work at the Cultural Center, "In Decay—Stitching America's Ruins." Whether grand or commonplace, Eric's highly detailed, ultra-wide angle architectural images are startling in their magnitude and explicitness.

Sima Miller of Skokie, the soprano whose concerts have delighted audiences for many years, shared this happy news with *CJH*: She feels very honored that the five audiotapes and four CDs of “Heritage: The Art of the Yiddish Folk Song,” that she recorded with her late husband, pianist Arnold Miller, are now in the music archives at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.

Daniel Koch of Skokie authored the article “From Some to One to None? Jewish Hospitals in Chicago 1857-2011” (*Chicago Jewish History*, Spring 2011) and dedicated it to his younger brother, Steven Koch, Chairman of the Board of Sinai Health System, 2005 to present.

Steven Koch has just been named deputy mayor of the City of Chicago, starting September 4. He succeeds Mark Angelson, with whom he worked on Mayor Emanuel’s transition team. According to an article by Melissa Harris (*Chicago Tribune*, August 1, 2012), “The economic team that Angelson leads and Koch will inherit includes the city budget director, procurement commissioner, chief technology officer, chief financial officer, and the controller ... Koch will receive a \$1 annual salary, just as Angelson did.”

Dan and Gini Maxime of Las Vegas, NV, are Life Members of the CJHS. Since 1993, the husband and wife team has published the quarterly *Tuley Review Alumni Newsletter*. Dan is the editor, historian, and archivist. Gini’s title is Technical Advisor (photographer, scanner, copier, folder, mailer).

Chicago’s Tuley High was turned into a middle school years ago, but Dan continues to find fascinating historical material about the high school, the teachers, and the students for the *Review’s* devoted alumni-subscribers.

Dan was a longtime Chicago precinct captain.

His knowledge of our city is encyclopedic, and his collection of Chicago political memorabilia is mind-boggling! The Maximes have graciously provided scanned images to illustrate *CJH* articles. Tuley alums and political researchers can contact them at gdmx@embarqmail.com.



Inset: Gini and Dan Maxime. Dan in their home museum of Chicago political memorabilia. Las Vegas, NV. Courtesy Dan and Gini Maxime.

Welcome, New Members of the Society

- Lawrence Bernstein
Chicago, IL
- Larry & Patty Chapman
Wilson, WY
- Kenneth & Allison Davis
Northbrook, IL
- Dan & Stacy Derby
Chicago, IL
- Dan & Fran Dvorkin
Lombard, IL
- Dr. Michael & Marcy Feinberg
Park Ridge, IL
- Irwin & Adrienne Friedman
Lincolnwood, IL
- Renee Ransenberg-Gale
Skokie, IL
- Robert & Devorah Heyman
Des Plaines, IL
- Sandra Holubow
Chicago, IL
- Sheldon Holzman
Glenview, IL
- Marcia Kulinsky
Chicago, IL
- Elaine Lieberman
Chicago, IL
- Peggy Morrow
Hoffman Estates, IL
- Allen & Rita Pomerance
Skokie, IL
- William Post
Chicago, IL
- Robert Remer
Chicago, IL
- Herbert Root
Lincolnwood, IL
- Steven & Adrienne Rotfeld
Chicago, IL
- Mayer & Cara Steibel
Highland Park, IL

Orthodoxy/Traditional Judaism in Chicago

BY RABBI BURTON WAX

Edited text of the lecture delivered on Sunday, June 10, 2012 / 20 Sivan 5772,
at an open meeting of the CJHS at Congregation Ezras Israel, 7001 North California Avenue, Chicago

After Jerry Levin approached me with the idea of giving a talk on the subject of Orthodox Jewry in Chicago, I happened to come across an envelope containing yellowed, tattered pages of sermons that I gave back in the 1950s, when I was still a student in the Hebrew Theological College. I decided to enter them into my computer because I might want to use some of them again. I expected to have to do some editing to bring them up to date, but what I found was surprising.

The nature of much of the preaching in the 1950s was just about the complete opposite of the way we look at things today. Back then, the outlook for Orthodox/Traditional Judaism was pessimistic.

When Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks was here last October, he quoted something from Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman, z"l. During the time that [Fasman] was a student in the HTC in the 1920s and '30s, one of his fellow students asked their rebbe, "Why are we learning here?" The rebbe replied, "So that you can deliver the eulogy over Orthodox Judaism in America."

Today, it seems to me, the outlook is optimistic.

Let me begin with a definition of Orthodox Judaism, which considers itself the authentic bearer of the religious Jewish tradition. Until the Emancipation, Orthodoxy held sway over almost the entire Jewish community. The term Orthodoxy is actually a misnomer for a religious orientation which stresses not so much the profession of a strictly defined set of dogmas, as submission to the authority of halacha.

If we examine the great Jewish Bible commentators and philosophers throughout the ages, we find a wide range of what we would call beliefs and dogmas. In other words, Orthodox Judaism is more concerned with behavior and action than thought and theology.

Orthodoxy's need for self-definition arose only during that period when the internal existence of Jewish society had been shattered. Orthodox Judaism holds that the eternal revealed will of God, rather than the values of any given age is the ultimate standard.

The term "Orthodoxy" first appeared in relationship to Judaism in 1795, and became widely used from the beginning of the 19th century in contra-distinction to the Reform movement. In later times, other terms, such as "Torah-true," became popular. But in general, "Orthodox" came to designate those who accept as

divinely inspired the totality of the historical religion of the Jewish people as it is recorded in the Written and Oral Laws and codified in the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries until recent times, and as it is observed in practice according to the teachings and unchanging principles of the halacha.

Orthodoxy, as a well-defined and separate phenomenon within Jewry, crystallized in response to the challenge of the changes which occurred in Jewish society in Western and Central Europe in the first half of the 19th century—Reform, the Haskalah, and trends towards secularization. Those who opposed change and innovation felt it necessary to emphasize their stand as guardians of the Torah and its Commandments under altered conditions, and to find ways to safeguard their particular way of life.

At the very dawn of Emancipation, many Orthodox leaders foresaw the perils that the breakdown of the ghetto walls meant for Jewish survival. They went so far as to urge the Jewish communities to reject the privileges offered by Emancipation. Others, while willing to accept the benefits of political emancipation, were adamant in their insistence that there be no change in the policy of complete segregation from the social and cultural life of the non-Jewish environment. And we see this same dichotomy today.

With the initiation of liturgical reforms by the Reform movement, the Orthodox community intuitively realized that liturgical reforms were only the beginning of a long-range process designed to change the tenets and practices of Judaism, so as to remove all barriers against full immersion in the majority culture. Therefore, they reacted with an all-out effort to preserve the status quo, and the slightest tampering with tradition was condemned.

To this day, Orthodoxy has not been able to resolve the dilemma that a considerable section of Jewry (actually, a substantial majority) today no longer obeys the halacha. There are those who lean toward a policy of withdrawal, lest they be responsible for the implicit "recognition" of non-Orthodox ideologies.

Others, so concerned with preserving the unity of the Jewish people, advocate the involvement of Orthodoxy in the non-Orthodox Jewish community. It was, ironically, the issue of separation that precipitated



Rabbi Burton Wax

most of the internal conflict that has plagued Orthodoxy. Another bone of contention was the place of secular learning, if any, in Orthodox Jewish life.

From the Orthodox point of view, Rabbinic Judaism, from which Orthodoxy evolved, represented not a break with the biblical past, but rather the ingenious application and development of teachings which ultimately derive their sanction

from the Sinaitic revelation.

What has come to be called Modern or Centrist Orthodoxy espouses the synthesis of Torah with modern culture. The operative term has been Torah u'Madda. In Israel, the split between the two approaches is especially evident, and it is certainly noticeable in our community here.

The differences within American Orthodoxy were evidenced by the establishment of different rabbinic bodies here. The rapid polarization within the Orthodox camp has seriously threatened to split the movement completely. While much of the controversy seems to revolve around the question of membership in religious bodies containing non-Orthodox representation, the real issue goes far deeper.

The Modern/Centrist Orthodox element (including the Traditional) is under severe attack for allegedly condoning deviations from halachic standards in order to attract non-observant Jews. On the other hand, there is unrest and impatience on the part of significant elements that are dismayed over the slowness with which Orthodoxy has responded to the upheavals of Emancipation, the Enlightenment, and the establishment of the State of Israel.

The charge has been made that instead of coming to grips with these events which have confronted the Jew with entirely new historical realities, Orthodoxy has been satisfied with voicing its disapproval of those who reacted to them.

There is no thought of “updating” the halacha in order to adjust it to the spirit of the times, as the other branches of Judaism have done. What is advocated is only that its meaning be interpreted, applied, and advanced in the light of ever-changing historic conditions. The contention is that as long as halachic opinion is evolved in conformity with the proper procedures of halachic reasoning, its legitimacy as accepted halachic data is assured.

*At this point, permit me to comment on my preparation for this talk. I have not put this material together as if it were a full-blown research paper, a thesis, or a dissertation. I used mostly secondary sources. And therein lay another surprise. I found published material that was not only sometimes contradictory and/or erroneous, but also sometimes poorly written, and even more haphazardly edited. Where I have found such conflicting reports, I have either tried to reconcile them or to omit them from the discussion altogether. We may also find some discrepancies between some of the historical data here and that presented by the Eiseman-Levin-Mazur triumvirate at the Society's Meat Industry program on May 6 at Temple Beth Israel in Skokie. [A detailed report on that program will appear the next issue of *Chicago Jewish History*.]*

In looking at American Jewry as a whole—for the most part, the descendants of the Sephardim who arrived in 1654 were non-existent as Jews by the nineteenth century. Other Sephardic Jews, however, continued to arrive, in relatively small numbers. During all of that time there were no ordained rabbis in the Colonies or in the United States. There were shochtim in most of the Jewish communities (if they were large enough to be called communities), and the religious leadership was in the hands of hazzanim.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the first rabbis to come to the United States were German-speaking Reform rabbis. Other than Shearith Israel in New York, and perhaps the Touro synagogue in Rhode Island, the oldest congregations still in existence in the United States are Reform temples. The first substantial immigration of Jews to the U.S. began in the 1830s as a result of the revolutions in post-Napoleonic Europe—namely those of 1830 and 1848. And the Jews who came during this middle of the 19th century were mostly German-speaking Central Europeans.

A Brief Chicago Chronology

- According to *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, the first Jewish settler in Chicago was J. Gottlieb in 1837.
- Next, a group of four in 1840, and about twenty German Jews arrived here between 1840 and 1844, slowly augmented by settlers between 1840 and 1849.
- With completion of the Galena and Chicago railway to Elgin in 1849, there was a strong tide of Jewish immigration, mostly German.
- The first Yom Kippur services were held in 1845; next in 1846.

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Orthodoxy Continued from page 9

- KAM was established November 3, 1847. when a constitution was adopted by fourteen members.
- In 1853, KAM established a day school, where Hebrew was taught in addition to the regular common-school curriculum. At this point KAM was an Orthodox congregation, but by 1873, organ, choir, family pews, and Reform prayerbook were introduced.
- Most of the synagogues established before the Great Chicago Fire in 1871 were Reform.
- There were also a number of “ultra-Orthodox” congregations before the Fire.
- In several instances, a number of small chevrahs among the Jews of Slavonic parentage amalgamated and formed congregations. Most prominent were Bet Hamedrash HaGadol uBnei Yaakov (chartered March 1867) and Ohave Sholom Mariampol (1870).

After the Fire:

- Anshe Emeth Congregation on Sedgwick St. in 1872.
- Ezras Israel on the Northwest Side in 1895.
- Beth Moshav Z'keinim (Orthodox Home for Aged Jews) in Douglas Park, organized in 1899.

All of these last-named Orthodox congregations are still in existence, although some have different names and different affiliations.

As was true nationally, the first Chicago rabbis were Reform. I have in my possession a collection of addresses by these rabbis from an ecumenical interfaith conclave. They are very scholarly, but not what we would call Jewish today. They were very assimilationist—almost Unitarian in content, and nothing like what I read and hear from today’s mainline Reform rabbinate.

The Orthodox community in Chicago began its growth, as it did in New York, with the mass immigration of Jews from czarist Russia as a result of the impossible conditions of oppression and pogroms. These masses came from 1880 through the end of World War I. They settled for the most part on the near West Side, centered on Ashland and Polk.

In the early 1920s, The Congress of the United States passed new immigration laws (perhaps anti-immigration laws would be a more correct description), and immigration from Eastern European and Mediterranean countries was reduced to a trickle.

But let us go back to the end of the nineteenth century.

The premier, and for many years the only, Orthodox institution of higher Jewish learning in Chicago was the Hebrew Theological College (Yeshivat Beth Medrash LaTorah), which was organized in its present form in 1920. However, its beginnings go back to 1895. As we shall see, its development and growth was fraught with politics and religious conflict. Perhaps by examining the history of this institution, we can get some understanding of where the Orthodox community is today.

Beth Medrash LaTorah had to undergo many trials before it attained its mature position of authority. In the Jewish community of the 1880s and 1890s, a few good teachers and other members of the Chicago religious intelligentsia had to teach a bit of Talmud to their students in the Talmud Torah in secret.

At that time, the local Talmud Torahs did not have the character of general educational institutions, where children of all Jewish households studied. The Talmud Torah was a charity institution, only for poor children. A well-to-do student went to a private tutor, or had the private tutor come to him.

The presidents of these charity institutions always argued with the teachers that a Talmud Torah child need only be able to read the prayers and follow the weekly Torah portion. They would never become rabbis, and it was foolish to waste time teaching them Talmud. The few good teachers decided secretly among themselves to disobey the “ignorant presidents,” and to teach the children a bit of Gemara.

It was difficult, however, to obtain a volume of the Talmud in Chicago. There were large folio editions in a synagogue or in a rabbi’s home, but it was dangerous to keep a large Gemara in a Talmud Torah.

Suppose the president should walk in for an inspection, where would one hide the big book? For such illegal work—teaching Gemara in a Talmud Torah—a small, student size book was needed. Should the president suddenly put in an appearance, one could hide the Gemara under his clothes.

Time passed. The teachers continuously and quietly made inquiries of friends and relatives until heaven took pity, and they found a little student Gemara, exactly the size necessary for such secret work. What was to be done, however, with one Gemara when there were three teachers in three separate Talmud Torahs?

They cut the binding in three, one part for each teacher, and they began to teach. The works of the Talmud do not have to be taught sequentially.

One Saturday, it happened that a president dropped in on a Talmud Torah just when the teacher was drilling the children in Gemara. The teacher turned as white as

chalk. The president, as was the custom, was not a learned man. However, he did notice how frightened the teacher was, and he understood that something was wrong. He asked what was being taught. The teacher, heaven forbid, would not tell a lie. He answered, "Gemara." The president became exceedingly angry, and grabbing the Gemara pages, began beating the teacher. The few children became frightened and hid under the table. It is understood that, after this incident, there was no longer any mention of Gemara in the Talmud Torahs.

In 1895, a class of seven pupils was organized to begin studying Gemara in a private cheder. The number of pupils gradually increased.

In 1902, a group of "Old Country Jews" held a meeting and resolved to found a yeshiva for young boys. First, they established a fund. They went among the Jews and asked them how much they were willing to contribute weekly for the support of a Chicago yeshiva. Some promised five cents a week, others more. When the pledges amounted to ten dollars weekly they called the first organizational meeting (at Morgan and Maxwell Streets). They rented quarters for five dollars a month, and the well-known Jacob Dolnitzky, who until then conducted a private cheder, became the teacher in the new yeshiva which was named Yeshivas Etz Chaim.

At the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1903, many Jews left Russia for America, and for those who came to Chicago, it was unnecessary to explain what a yeshiva was and what Gemara meant. They contributed to the Yeshiva from their meager earnings, and the leaders of Etz Chaim were able to buy a house at 100 Johnson Street (now Peoria Street). A few dozen pupils between the ages of twelve and fifteen studied in the Yeshiva, and the teaching staff now numbered three.

The Yeshiva no longer had to worry about money, because the Jews contributed freely. The happiness of the leadership of Etz Chaim was great indeed.

Then there was an "incident." The well-known Rabbi Yaakov David ben Ze'ev Wilovsky (the Ridvaz) came to Chicago and was elected Chief Rabbi. This did not please the local Rabbi Simon Album. The officials of the Yeshiva sided with Album, and he retained supervision of the Yeshiva.

This went against the grain of the Ridvaz and his faction. He claimed that the authority of the Chief Rabbi should extend over everything, including the Yeshiva. A real conflict broke out between the two sides—the Albumists and the Ridvazists. There was no possibility of a compromise. No one wanted to concede even an iota. Once it seemed that one of the parties was



Rabbi Simon Album
History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

willing to yield. That is, someone told the Ridvaz faction that he had heard the leader of the Albumists admit that the Yeshiva should be under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi.

The news sounded very good to the Ridvaz faction. Their leader immediately went to the leader of the Yeshiva, and asked him if the report were true—that the Yeshiva would be under the authority of the Chief Rabbi.

"Certainly it's true!" answered the Yeshiva leader. "May I then announce in all synagogues on Saturday that you said so?" asked the Ridvaz leader.

"Certainly you may," replied the Yeshiva leader. "You should not fail, however, to mention the name of the Chief Rabbi—Rabbi Album."

With others, such a conversation might have resulted in quarrelling and perhaps in cursing, too. These two Jews were, however, peace-loving. They agreed that it did not pay to quarrel and cause division among Jews, and that they should call a meeting and let the assembly decide who should supervise the Yeshiva.

The following Saturday it was announced in all the synagogues that, God willing, there would be a 7:00 meeting that night for the purpose of electing officers of the Yeshiva. Everyone was asked to attend.

At 7:00 p.m. sharp, the president opened the meeting. A few cried out that he should wait a while, that several more people would be arriving soon. He answered that the meeting had been announced everywhere for 7:00, and he was not obliged to wait for latecomers. The assembly agreed, the voting began, and the old officers were reelected. The whole meeting had lasted less than three quarters of an hour.

Just as the meeting was adjourned, members of the other faction arrived. There was a lot of shouting: "What's the rush? It's only 8:00, and everything is over?" The others replied quietly: "There was, heaven forbid, no undue haste. The meeting was announced for 7:00, and it began at 7:00. Who is to blame if some men came an hour late?"

The opposition could not accept the situation. "Since when does a meeting of Jews start exactly on time? A meeting called for 7:00 ordinarily begins at 9:00. We arrived at 8:00, so we are an hour early!" The protests fell on deaf ears. The Albumists had no

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intention of voting again. The Yeshiva remained in the hands of the old leaders. The Ridvaz left Chicago, and the two opposing camps disappeared.

There is a strange psychological mindset among Jews today—Orthodox Jews in particular and *ba'alei teshuva* even more so—and that is, from a Jewish intellectual viewpoint, everything was better in the old days. Well, not exactly so! In 1905, there were forty students in the Yeshivas Etz Chaim. Forty students! At that time all they really studied was Chumash with Rashi. Gemara was technically on the program, but they were biding their time until the yeshiva boys would develop sufficiently to study Gemara.

In our day, with so many Hebrew day schools and high schools, as well as post-Hebrew school programs, adult education opportunities, and a proliferation of kollelim, it is hard to imagine that the Yeshiva then did not have any students from the local Talmud Torahs just because the respective presidents would not permit it.

The yeshiva students were only from the newly arrived Jews, and these Jews did not have children old enough to study Gemara. However, due to the rise of Zionism in the old country, there was a desire to study the Hebrew language. Schools and progressive chederim had opened in Eastern Europe. Therefore, these immigrant parents wanted to introduce the study of the Hebrew language into the Yeshiva here in Chicago. The teachers of the Yeshiva agreed to this.

In 1910 the activity in connection with the Yeshiva increased thanks to the newly arrived young rabbis, A. I. Cardon, Saul Silber, Ephraim Epstein, and Eleazer Muskin. The Yeshiva enrollment doubled to about eighty students. Around that time, a young engineer from Germany, Rabbi Jacob Greenberg, arrived in Chicago. He became principal of the Yeshiva and taught

the advanced students. Then came World War I, and immigration to America was at a standstill. The Yeshiva was faced with the problem, “Where can we get children?” The existence of the Yeshiva was so shaky that Rabbi Greenberg resigned his post and went to teach in the Talmud Torah.

But once again it was proved that every crisis can be overcome. Jews came to the realization that being cut off from the Torah centers of Eastern Europe, Jews in Chicago (and in America in general) had to nurture themselves. Etz Chaim grew stronger. The Talmud Torah began to prepare students for the Yeshiva. In the one year in which Rabbi Greenberg was principal of the Chicago Talmud Torahs, fifty Talmud Torah pupils entered the Yeshiva. But his Yeshiva students were left teacherless, so three of them, who were already studying codes, were sent to RIETS (Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary), Yeshiva University, in New York City, and money was sent to them for expenses.

There was also another class in the Yeshiva made up of the children of some of the prominent rabbis of the city. They withdrew their sons from the Yeshiva and began to teach them themselves. This “circle” of students with their teacher moved from place to place.

One day during Chol Hamoed Sukkot 1916, the officers of the circle gathered in the sukkah of Rabbi Ephraim Epstein and decided to declare the circle an independent Torah institution, on a higher level than Etz Chaim. The name of this new institution would be Beth Medrash leRabonim. They would appeal to Chicago Jewry for financial support. It didn't matter that there were only ten students.

The instructors were paid salaries, and the annual budget of \$5,000 was raised by the rabbis.

It was said that Etz Chaim was the businessmen's yeshiva, and the Beth Medrash leRabonim was a rabbinical establishment. The officers of Etz Chaim considered the Beth Medrash leRabonim a competitor.



(From left) Rabbis Abraham Cardon, Ephraim Epstein, Eleazer Muskin, and Saul Silber.

History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

The Beth Medrash leRabonim was located in the Lawndale area, and Etz Chaim, because of the changing neighborhood, moved from the Ashland Boulevard area to Douglas and Homan, in the same neighborhood as the Beth Medrash leRabonim.

There was a repetition of the old quarrel that the Yeshiva leaders years ago had engaged in with the Ridvazists, but this time with greater fury and venom.

This time, however, the Yeshivas Etz Chaim had reinforcements—the local Orthodox Jewish newspaper and the RIETS. The motive behind the struggle was more one of leadership and politics than direction and purpose. RIETS felt that they alone should ordain rabbis in America. In addition, no other yeshiva had presented itself as a school for the preparation of rabbis. Yet against great opposition did the Beth Medrash leRabonim climb to great heights.

In 1920, the matter was settled. The Yeshivas Etz Chaim and the Beth Medrash leRabonim merged and took the name Beth Medrash LaTorah (English name: Hebrew Theological College).

It consisted of two departments—the Etz Chaim, the high school or preparatory department, and the Beth Medrash leRabonim, the advanced department for the ordination of rabbis. A building on Douglas Boulevard at St. Louis Avenue was constructed and formally dedicated in 1922. It served as the home of the HTC for over thirty years.

The Depression years were not easy ones for the Yeshiva, its faculty, and students. Although the HTC contracted to bring Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik to Chicago as the Rosh Yeshiva, they could not maintain the deal financially and had to back off. That is how the Rav ended up in Boston and then in RIETS.

The HTC grew in stature and became a nationally recognized institution of higher Jewish learning. Already, in its early days, it sponsored a Teachers Institute for Women, and together with the Associated Talmud Torahs founded the Chicago Jewish Academy during the years of World War II.

By the mid-1950s, the declining and racially changing Lawndale neighborhood posed problems for the HTC. Around 1955, the Yeshiva moved to temporary quarters in the Anshe Sholom Synagogue on



Hebrew Theological College, Douglas Boulevard at St. Louis Avenue.
History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

Independence Boulevard at Polk Street. They were going to buy property in Evanston to build their new quarters, but couldn't get the necessary zoning. (I will let you decide what was behind that refusal.)

The HTC settled on its current location on Carpenter Road in Skokie and moved into the first campus building in 1957. It is there that this institution has expanded and thrived.

It not only consists of a high school and rabbinic studies department, but also houses an accredited liberal arts college program, a graduate school offering an advanced degree in Hebrew Letters, and a kollel. The Ann Blitstein Teachers Institute for Women is housed in another campus on Touhy and Rockwell in Chicago. The Institute offers a fully accredited religious and liberal arts program.

The Chicago Jewish Academy, now known as the Ida Crown Jewish Academy, started out in the Yeshiva building on Douglas Boulevard, and then moved into its own facility on Wilcox and Pulaski. When that area became intolerable, it moved to temporary quarters in the Torah Center building at Congregation Anshe Sholom in Lakeview.

In 1964, the current building housing both the Academy and the Associated Talmud Torahs was dedicated. Today, the Ida Crown Jewish Academy has an international reputation as an Orthodox Jewish co-ed school with high educational standards and achievements in both Jewish and secular studies.

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When I was in elementary school in the '40s, there was only one viable Jewish day school in the city. That was the Hebrew Parochial School on the West Side. Jewish education was relegated to the afternoon Hebrew Schools and to the Sunday Schools. However, from the '20s through the '60s, and in some synagogues even into the '70s and '80s, many of these Hebrew School programs were very intensive, with classes meeting two or three hours a day, four or five days a week.

Today, the afternoon school is practically non-existent in Orthodox synagogues—except for the several community schools and afternoon high schools established in various communities by the Associated Talmud Torahs and Chabad.

This is mostly due to changing demographics, in which a day school education is considered a priority. Elementary and secondary day schools with various philosophies of Jewish education now exist.

The Orthodox community today has different priorities than those of past generations—and building impressive edifices are not one of them. Today's priorities are intensive Jewish education and kashruth. Both of these involve above normal expenses.

This may help to explain the nature of the synagogue in the Orthodox community today, and how it has changed from the impressive bastions of Judaism that lined the boulevards of Lawndale. Most of the younger Orthodox community looks for a “no frills” synagogue—a place for worship and for study.

This does not mean that there are no attractive Orthodox synagogues being built today. Congregation Adas Yeshurun Anshe Kanesses Israel has remodeled the interior of the former Temple Beth El building on Touhy Avenue into a beautiful synagogue and educational facility. Congregation Shaare Mizrah, a Sephardic synagogue, remodeled the interior and exterior of the former Adas Yeshurun building on Devon into an attractive edifice. We look forward to the upcoming building of Kehilat Chovevei Tzion in Skokie and the remodeling of the church recently purchased by Mikor Chaim in West Rogers Park.

The charitable concerns of the Orthodoxy are education, social services, and Israel. By the time a day school child gets to the university level, the parents have been in “tuition training” for thirteen years. If you visit an Orthodox home in a middle class neighborhood, you are likely to find bookcases filled with religious and secular volumes, but in many cases only enough

furniture so that everyone in the family plus a few guests can have a place to sit. Probably both parents of these families are working.

The Traditional Synagogue Movement

By the end of World War II, Orthodoxy was in decline. How to withstand the flight to the other movements? That was the question. Reform Judaism had overtaken Orthodoxy in terms of synagogue membership. Conservative Judaism was on the rise. It became the fastest growing religious movement in American Judaism and eventually surpassed the membership of the Reform movement.

Therefore, the Traditional Synagogue movement was created. It was a Midwest phenomenon, centered in Chicago, that eventually spread to other parts of the country. The rabbis involved were for the most part members of the Chicago Rabbinical Council (CRC), but the newly formed Chicago Council of Traditional Synagogues was basically a lay organization.

Its *raison d'être* was to keep its membership from moving too far to the left. Certain non-Orthodox practices were condoned, hoping not to throw out the baby with the bath water. The goal of the Traditional Synagogue movement was to eventually restore full Orthodox practice to the respective synagogues.

One of the current local Roshei Yeshiva, who has been critical of its sponsorship of the Traditional Synagogue movement, said a couple of years ago, “The CRC saved Chicago Orthodoxy.” Thus, one of the hopes of the Traditional Synagogue movement has been fulfilled.

The membership of the CRC was made up mostly of HTC graduates, almost all of whom were born and/or raised in the United States. There was an older Orthodox rabbinic organization—the Merkaz HaRabbanim—consisting mostly of European-born and European educated rabbis. Through the 1940s and '50s, kashruth in Chicago was mostly in their hands. Today, this situation has greatly reversed itself.

During the population shift from the West Side in the 1950s, some Jews wanted to stay close to the old neighborhood, so they moved to Austin, where they established an Orthodox synagogue and a Traditional synagogue. They even opened and maintained a day school until Austin experienced racial change.

Some Jews moved to the western suburbs, but no Orthodox/Traditional synagogue was to be found there. Beth Shalom in Naperville was started as Traditional, but as it grew, it shifted its practice and affiliation to the Reconstructionist movement.

The bulk of the West Siders moved north—to

Albany Park, which had a substantial Jewish population and synagogues, and to the North Park, Hollywood Park, and Peterson Park neighborhoods, which did not have Orthodox synagogues when the movement began, and to Rogers Park, which was well-established with synagogues, and to West Rogers Park. Some moved directly to Skokie, then to farther north and northwest suburbs. The second and third generation Jewish Americans did not maintain the ties to the synagogue traditions of their parents and grandparents.

Congregation K.I.N.S., founded as the West Rogers Park Hebrew Congregation, and Ezras Israel, which moved up from the Northwest Side, both were formed and built during the middle 1950s. Both were founded as Traditional synagogues. Orthodox synagogues that relocated from the West Side to West Rogers Park during the '50s and early '60s included Mishne Ugmoro, Anshe Motele, Poalei Zedek, and Bnei Ruven. Subsequently, other Orthodox congregations either moved into the neighborhood or were organized there.

I mentioned Ezras Israel as having moved up from the Northwest Side, where it was founded in 1895. Yet I have not touched on the Northwest Side at all. It seems that not only did I neglect this once-thriving Jewish neighborhood, but it seems that everyone does, unless one is a native Northwest Sider. Humboldt Park was an older Jewish community than Lawndale, Douglas Park, or Garfield Park, and it lasted longer.

The Northwest Side was already a viable Jewish neighborhood in the 1890s. The more famous West Side really didn't come to the fore until after World War I. The Northwest Side had a community Talmud Torah—Yavneh Talmud Torah. There were Jewish businesses on Division Street, including M. Ceshinsky, a Yiddish book publisher and retail bookstore.

One difference that I have noticed, however, is that in the 1940s and '50s, Jewish West Siders were still attending Marshall High School, and some even going to Manley. Northwest Siders were already getting transfer permits to high schools further north—mostly to Roosevelt, but many to Von Steuben.

Today, Orthodox enclaves are spread throughout Chicagoland, particularly in Peterson Park, West Rogers Park, and Skokie. There are fledgling Orthodox communities in Glenview-Northbrook and Buffalo Grove. Lakeview has a smaller Orthodox group as does the Loop and its environs. In addition, we find Chabad in many suburban locations as well as downtown. Due to the efforts of the Associated Talmud Torahs, community Hebrew schools were founded in Northbrook and Buffalo Grove, among other areas. In

some of these cases, synagogues opened as an offshoot of these afternoon Hebrew schools.

The Development of Day Schools

In the early 1950s, day school education moved to Albany Park. Central Hebrew Day School, the forerunner of Arie Crown Hebrew Day School, was founded. The Academy was on the move, first to temporary headquarters in Lakeview and then, in 1964, to the current facility on Pratt Avenue. The Torah Day School was functioning in Lakeview. The Hillel Day School opened in West Rogers Park. North Suburban Day School opened in Skokie about 1959. In 1962, the Hillel School, Torah Day School, and North Suburban Day School merged into Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School.

In the 1960s, the Telshe Yeshiva Chicago opened its doors. Akiba Day School was functioning on the South Side. The HTC, which had been using the Academy for the secular studies of its high school students, opened their own high school. Last November, the Annual Dinner of the HTC marked the 50th anniversary of the Yeshiva High School. Demonstrating that day school education was the way to go, the Solomon Schechter Day School also opened during the '60s.

The haredi day schools also began in the '60s with Bais Yaakov. It subsequently split into two schools—Bais Yaakov for girls and Tiferes Tzvi for boys. Eventually, The Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov Girls School split off from the Ida Crown Jewish Academy and became an independent school. Lubavitch Chabad opened an elementary school in Skokie. Lubavitch also opened a girls' high school, which eventually split because of differing philosophical attitudes regarding Chabad messianism and the Rebbe z"l. In the 1990s, the Lubavitch Mesivta (boys' high school) was opened.

Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov was not right-wing enough for some, so another girls' Bais Yaakov High School was opened in Peterson Park. Buffalo Grove now has a fledgling day school that seems to be flourishing.

Day schools are still opening. Chicago Jewish Day School, which was founded and run as a communal rather than sectarian school, is thriving. Gesher HaTorah Day School, now meeting in Skokie, was established to provide an elementary Jewish education for special needs children. Yeshiva Meor Hatorah was founded as a *haredi* high school for boys. These last two were founded in the twenty-first century.

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When I was growing up in the '40s and '50s, the Jewish Federation was mostly concerned with social services and Israel. The founding fathers of the forerunners of the Federation were concerned with *Lama yom-ru hagoyim*. (What will the Gentiles say?)

The German Jews, who were here first, were worried that the poor immigrant Ostyiden (Eastern European Jews) would become a burden on the resources of the City. The German Jewish establishment feared for its status in the secular community and the possible rise of anti-Semitism. They had to “take care of our own.” Also, they may have been assimilated, but they understood the Jewish virtue of Tzedakah.

In the 1970s, their mission began to expand beyond charity. The Federation and its professional staff came to the realization that without Jewish education there would come a day when there would be no Federation.

As a finance vice-president of the Associated Talmud Torahs, I sat across the table from Federation staff and Board members, making the case for our annual allotment, as did the representatives of the other educational institutions that receive Federation support and grants. The JUF/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago currently supports Jewish education to an extent unmatched by any other Federation in the country. We must give credit where credit is due. Federation and Jewish educational institutions are no longer in an adversarial relationship. They are working together for a common goal.

If I may be permitted a personal aside, I have always told my congregation that if you can make but one charitable contribution a year outside of your synagogue and school, that donation should be to JUF/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. It is highly rated as a charitable organization, with over 90% of its income going to useful purposes. Federation handles its money well. It is one of the few that were not affected by the machinations of Madoff.

Who could have imagined, looking at Orthodoxy back in the 1940s and 1950s, that today there would be Orthodox synagogues and communities in Northbrook, Buffalo Grove, Highland Park, and Glenview. These inroads and successes can be attributed to the efforts of pioneering rabbis, the Associated Talmud Torahs' communal Hebrew schools, groups of individuals looking for something more traditional in their synagogue, and the ubiquitous Chabad.

Chabad is one of the great success stories of Jewish

outreach. Who would have dreamed of the proliferation, participation, and success of the various kollelim that now abound in metropolitan Chicago?

Eruv, Mikva, and Supermarket

The Orthodox Jewish population is probably one of the prime reasons for the stability and growth of West Rogers Park and Peterson Park. And one of the creative works of Rabbinic Judaism—the eruv—is one of the things at the root of this stability and growth.

There was flight by Orthodox Jews, especially those with young families, to Skokie, which had an eruv for several years. The West Rogers Park eruv and subsequently the one in Lincolnwood-Peterson Park, kept these sizeable young Orthodox families in Chicago, in the neighborhoods' single family homes.

Houses in these two areas of Chicago, and especially on certain blocks, are at a premium, and command premium prices when compared to the current real estate market. Take a ride around these neighborhoods and look at some of the homes. There are add-ons. There are new homes built on the few lots that were empty. And there are knockdowns with impressive replacements comparable to homes on the North Shore.

South Shore was the site of the first “modern” mikva built in Chicago. It was next to the building of the Torah Synagogue. Subsequently, new mikvaot were built in Albany Park, and then in West Rogers Park. Smaller mikvaot followed in the following decades in Peterson Park, Lincolnwood, Skokie, Highland Park, and Lakeview. The Conservative movement built a mikva in the Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah building in Wilmette. And I am sure that Northbrook/Glenview and Buffalo Grove will follow soon, if a mikva is not already being planned.

Let us look at the supermarket scene in order to get an idea of the influence of Orthodox/Traditional Jews on the economy of Metropolitan Chicago. Hungarian Kosher started a small delicatessen, manufacturing its own products on Lawrence Avenue. It moved to Devon Avenue and expanded with a small grocery line. Then the Kirsche family made the move to Skokie and opened a full-line kosher supermarket.

The Jewel in Highland Park and Garden Fresh Market in Northbrook have clearly identifiable kosher departments. When the Jewel supermarket on Howard Street opened, people were amazed at the size and variety of the kosher departments—grocery, bakery, deli, dairy, carry-out, fresh meat and fish, and Chinese. Most pages that can be heard over the loudspeaker system are, “Rabbi _____, call on line one...”

Trader Joe's has a tremendous amount of products under their own label with kosher supervision. I can't tell you about Dominick's now, but when they had a store on Pratt and Kedzie, that store was their biggest seller of ethnic foods. In the trade, kosher is "ethnic."

There are more products than ever under kashruth supervision by the respective agencies around the country. At last count, the Chicago Rabbinical Council was the fifth

largest kashruth supervision agency in the country, with accounts around the world. This proliferation of supervised kosher merchandise cannot be accounted for only by the number of Jews in America, let alone by the number of Orthodox Jews. (And let me tell you a little secret. Until the Moslem community opened their own hallal slaughterhouses, many of them bought kosher meat from Jewish butchers and supermarkets.)

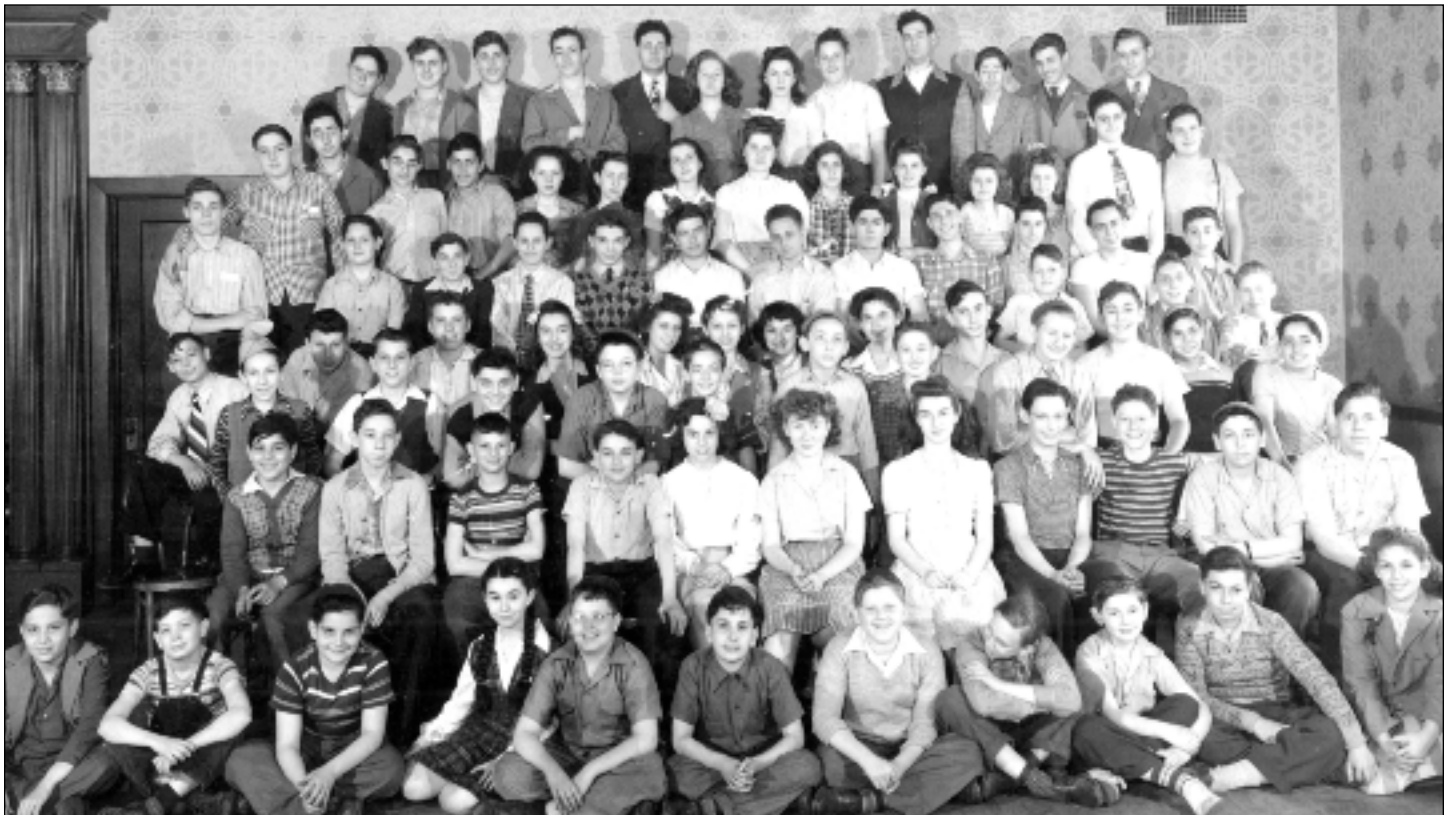
As to the future of Orthodox Jewry and Judaism in Metropolitan Chicago, its prospects are probably as good as anywhere in the country, or maybe better.



History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

RABBI BURTON WAX was born and raised in the Albany Park neighborhood. He attended Chicago Public Schools—Volta Elementary and Von Steuben High. He began attending the Hebrew Theological High School Department in Albany Park in 1947 and entered the Rabbinic Department in 1950. BA, Roosevelt University, 1955; MA, Northwestern University, 1958. Rabbinic ordination, 1959. Teacher, Kehilath Jeshurun Hebrew School. Principal, Cong. Bnai David Hebrew School. Part-time rabbi, Cong. Agudath Jacob, Evanston, 1963-1976; Part-time assistant rabbi Cong. Ezras Israel 1991-2003; Rabbi, Cong. Ezras Israel 2003-2008; currently Rabbinic Counsel, Cong. Ezras Israel. Full time in Jewish Book Store business 1956-2001.

Rabbi Wax has held the offices of Education Vice President and President, Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School; President, Religious Zionists of Chicago; Vice President—Finance, Associated Talmud Torahs; Vice President—Finance, and Chair, Public Affairs Committee, Chicago Rabbinical Council. He is married to Maxima (nee Schwartz); son Ari N. Wax (New York); daughter Ora Aaron (Skokie), Five grand-children and one great-granddaughter.



Chicago Jewish Academy Students, 1946-47. Spertus Special Collections (Chicago Jewish Archives).

Published in the Winter 2002 issue of Chicago Jewish History in a report on a Society open meeting at Ida Crown Academy.

Letters to CJH

The History of Ezra Habonim, Continued

Comments about Ezra Habonim in the President's Column in CJH Summer 2011 (page 2) elicited a letter from Max Lorig, which we published in CJH Fall 2011 (pages 18-19) along with further comments by President Ed Mazur and Mr. Lorig. CJH asked anyone who wanted to contribute to this exchange to write to us.

Let me add some more details to the report by Max Lorig. I take the liberty to do so because I joined Temple Ezra in 1947 at the time of my marriage, when the congregation was on Aldine Street in Chicago. The rabbi was Dr. David Schönberger, German-speaking and more or less Reform.

In 1951, I was asked to join the Board of Directors, and I served in every position over the years. At the time Rabbi Sud was engaged the name was changed to Ezra Congregation. (As was stated in the previous correspondence, when we were at the old Greek Orthodox Church, we did not have enough room on the High Holidays, and we rented the Peoples' Church on Lawrence Avenue.)

In late 1966, Ezra Congregation bought the Touhy Avenue building from Rabbi Levy. He was the owner of the building, and it was he who had formed the New Israel Congregation. But after a few years he ran out of money.

In 1967, I was elected president of Ezra Congregation and served for four years. Many New Israel members joined us. On the High Holidays we were so crowded, we held dual services—one in the main sanctuary and the other downstairs in the Bonem (social hall). Late in 1970, I met with Herman Cohn of Congregation Habonim and invited them to join us, should they ever have the need to leave the South Side. That happened in 1972-73 when Fred Sinay was president of Ezra Congregation and I was chairman of the board.

The name was changed to Ezra-Habonim Congregation. By that time most South Siders lived north. For the few who stayed south, we held services for them on the South Side. However, this lasted for only a couple of years.

By 1980, when we noticed the heavy movement of Conservative Jews to Northbrook and Buffalo Grove, Ezra-Habonim was taking precautions to be able to move further north if need be. We therefore helped, financially and spiritually, to start a satellite Ezra-Habonim of Northbrook. That was fine to start with, but after a few years, they became a burden, and the support was stopped. This, I

believe, was a mistake by the Touhy Avenue leadership. The Ezra group in Northbrook then went on their own and became Traditional.

By 2011 they could no longer exist on their own, and with Adas Yehuda v'Shoshana of Northbrook and Maine Township Jewish Congregation, they merged to form the new Northbrook Community Synagogue.

Back in 1997-98, Ezra-Habonim on Touhy Avenue had run into trouble. They split into two groups. One group rented space in Temple Menorah, 2800 West Sherwin Avenue, Chicago. This group no longer exists. The other, larger group went to Niles Township Jewish Congregation, now Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation, 4500 Dempster Street, Skokie.

Now, in the year 2012, there are only a handful of original Ezra or Habonim members left at the Dempster location, and I am the last living past president of the original Temple Ezra—which in my opinion was a unique congregation.

Jack C. Heiman
Northbrook IL

P.S. A gentleman named Rolf Brandis made what I would call a beautiful film to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Temple Ezra. It is now somewhere at the Dempster location. It should be put on a DVD and archived.

I remember the pre-meeting discussion on the Ezra Habonim "dance" with new partners. The short chronicle after Ed Mazur's narrative is that the Northbrook group was a satellite of the Touhy Avenue *shul*. Northbrook broke away from the Touhy Avenue group about 1985. It became an independent shul affiliated with the United Synagogue movement. About 1999, Rabbi Dan Sherbill left Northbrook Ezra Habonim, taking with him a substantial group from Ezra Habonim and establishing AYSH. I built the new building for AYSH in the summer of 2000.

(Last summer Northbrook Ezra Habonim merged with AYSH and the remnants of Maine Township. Rabbi Sherbill left AYSH. They are looking for a new rabbi. Their *minhag* is somewhere between Conservative and Traditional.)

About 1989, Ezra Habonim Touhy decided to close up shop at that location. The older German leadership wanted to merge with Niles Township Jewish Congregation. Niles Township wanted the merger, as Ezra Habonim was very sound financially. But many of the young people from West Rogers Park wanted to stay in the neighborhood. The younger group formed the Egalitarian Minyan of Rogers Park (Conservative) and rented space from Ner Tamid.

When Ner Tamid merged with Bnai Zion, the egalitarian group relocated to Temple Menorah's building, which is where they are today. The synagogue in Niles Township's building is now called Ezra-Habonim, The Niles Township Jewish Congregation, which has membership in both the Reconstructionist and United Synagogue movements.

Doug Zelden's Orthodox group, Or Menorah, which used to meet at Ezras Israel, now meets in the Temple Menorah building, as does an Orthodox girls' school. Congregation K.I.N.S. has three or four *minyan* groups. Congregation Adas Yeshurun Anshe Kanesses Israel, which purchased our Temple Beth-El building at 3050 West Touhy from ORT, has four *minyan* groups. A *kehillah* has purchased the former Catholic church building at 2901 West Chase.

Jerold Levin
Chicago, IL

Remembering Harold Berc & Maynard Wishner

Harold T. Berc knew Chicago history and Chicago Jewish history. He imparted his knowledge in a gentle, courtly manner at meetings of the CJHS Board of Directors, of which he was a most respected member for a number of years. One of his suggestions was that the Society hold mini-reunions of Chicago Public High Schools which once had large Jewish populations. Roosevelt, Marshall, Hyde Park, and Austin events have been held, and Sullivan is upcoming.

He practiced law in Chicago for over sixty years. He was Past National Commander of AMVETS, Past President of the City Club of Chicago, and Past President of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers. He served on the Board of the Northwestern Club of Chicago. He was also an alumnus of DePaul University. For many years he was Of Counsel with the law firm of Carroll & Sain.

From 1930 to 1938, he was employed by Universal-International News Service. He was a charter member of the Old Chicago Press Club and a Board member of the Chicago Press Veterans Association, and he received its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

Mr. Berc saw action in World War II as a naval officer. He participated in 10 major major naval engagements aboard Battleship Washington and Anti-Aircraft Cruiser Reno. During his command at AMVETS in 1960, Mr. Berc was instrumental in establishing a concept of Burial Allowance for the 1,102 men entombed in the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor, which led to a congressional appropriation which assured the completion of the Arizona Memorial as it is now established. He was also key in establishing the USS Chicago Anchor Memorial at the east end of Navy Pier, which bears his name.

Mr. Berc, 97, died Sunday, February 26. He was the husband of the late Shirley R. Berc (Meyerovitz-Zatz-Fadim) and the late Mary E. Amtman. He is survived by many beloved nieces and nephews, as well as by his special friend and stepson, James B. Fadim.

Maynard I. Wishner was an attorney and activist who took part in two of the Society's most successful projects. He appeared in Beverly Siegel's documentary film "The Romance of A People," and he wrote an erudite foreword to Kraus & Schwartz's book *A Walk to Shul: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale*. He held leading positions in many prominent Jewish organizations, and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society was proud to count him among our loyal, longtime members.

He was president of the Chicago chapter of the American Jewish Committee from 1961 to 1963 and its national president from 1980 to 1983. He received numerous awards, including the Julius Rosenwald Memorial Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, and the AJC's Mensch Award. He was respected for his efforts to create understanding among ethnic, racial, and religious groups.

Mr. Wishner died Monday, December 19, 2011, at age 88. He is survived by his wife Elaine, three daughters, a sister, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Basketball Star *continued from front page*

and, later, Isadore “Spin” Salario, were the memorable Jewish coaches of youth basketball.)

Boscoe, Earl Katz, and Lou Weintraub founded the Chicago Academy of Athletics, a summer day camp for boys that operated from the late 1940s until about 1960.

Daniel Levine and his twin brother, Ed, played on the Marshall Juniors team (5’8” and under). Rayna wrote: “It was news that their Dad was coaching his twin sons. The team did well enough to play for the Public League Championship in March 1951. To this day, Daniel remembers the 56-55 loss to Tilden—a dark moment!”

Boscoe was involved with the Senior basketball team in 1958 and 1960 when the school won Illinois State Championships. In the mid-1960s, he transferred to Mather High, where he closed out his career teaching physical education. Upon his retirement he moved to Chula Vista, CA, where he died in 1997.

The rare gems in the donated collection were photos of Rae Silverman and other Jewish girl athletes, as well as Rae’s 1927 Marshall yearbook, the *Review*.

Rayna Levine wrote in her cover letter: “Rae Silverman graduated from Marshall, where she was president of the Marshall Athletic Association. She played basketball at school, at the JPI, and later, I understand, on a semi-pro team that traveled in Illinois, Wisconsin, parts of Michigan, and possibly Iowa. She had quite a career at a time when it wasn’t ladylike to ‘sweat.’

“One of the girls’ team members was Gertrude Goldfein. Gertie married Sam Edelcup, a physical ed teacher and basketball coach at



Roosevelt High. Gertie became an elementary school phys ed teacher.

“Gertie and Rae remained friends from the mid-1920s until Gert’s death in 1998.

“Rae and Boscoe were divorced in the 1940s and each remarried.

Gertie and Sam Edelcup, Rose Albur Winston, and Emil Gollubier attended my wedding to Daniel in 1958.

“These were friendships that endured over many years.”

In a subsequent letter, Rayna wrote: “While scrolling down the contents of recent issues of *CJH*, I found an article about David and Miriam Canter. What a surprise!

“The Canters were instrumental in encouraging my enrollment in the University of Chicago, and, thus, for my meeting my future husband. We were married two years later.

“It’s a small world!”

“When I met Dan, his mother was working in the downtown offices of the Jewish Federation as a bookkeeper. When the Bernard Horwich JCC opened, she joined the original staff and worked there until her retirement in about 1980.

“Ed died in 1998. My mother-in-law died in 2003.

“Daniel and I are very pleased that these ‘artifacts’ will now be in such capable hands.” ❖



Rae (seated) and Gertie Edelcup at Rae’s 85th Birthday Party, August, 1995.

Spertus Special Collections.

Gift of Daniel U. and Rayna F. Levine.



Marshall High School Junior Basketball Team, 1949-50.

Middle row, left: Coach Ted Perzanowski. Far right: Dan Levine and Ed Levine. Marshall Review 1950. Collection of Bev Chubot.



Marshall High School Illinois State Championship Basketball Team at City Hall, 1960.

Team members with Principal Ann Lally, Head Coach Isadore "Spin" Salario, Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, and Coach Nathan "Boscoe" Levine. Collection of Eda Levine Crosby.

Merchant Princess *Continued from front page*

After Charles Netcher's death in 1904, Mollie took over. She ran the store shrewdly through its most prosperous years. After incremental additions were made from 1905 to 1917, the store occupied a massive 17-story building half a block long—fronting State Street and running west along Madison to Dearborn.

And Mollie had remarried. An article in *The New York Times* on July 5, 1913 announced: "Mrs. Charles Netcher, known to thousands of women in Chicago and the Middle West as the owner of the Boston Store, one of the city's largest department stores, has taken unto herself a second husband. He is Sol Newberger, a Chicago paint salesman...." In 1918, the Newbergers changed their name to Newbury.

In 1922, the Boston Store grossed \$32,500,000. The store provided many amenities, including rooftop tennis courts for its employees. At the CJHS open meeting, an audience member told us that the store offered free dancing lessons, and she took up the offer. Her mother sent her downtown on the streetcar.

But Mollie did not modernize. The outmoded business remained "cash only." By 1945, sales had slipped to \$14 million. She sold the store in 1946, and it closed in 1948. Mollie had run the business for forty-two years. She died in 1954, survived by the four children she had with Charles and their grandchildren.

The building was converted into office space with retail only at street level. Then, after a complete renovation in 2000, in a twist of retailing fate, the first few floors of the building became a Sears store.

The very last "Jewish Merchant Prince of State Street" was Morris B. Sachs. He opened his store on State and Monroe with great fanfare in May, 1957. He died the following September at age 61.

The diminutive immigrant merchant began as a peddler in 1913, opened successful retail clothing stores on the South and Northwest sides, and sponsored the weekly "Morris B. Sachs Amateur Hour" on radio starting in 1934. Listeners would phone in their votes. (Young accordionist Ed Mazur was a contestant, but, unfortunately, not a winner, playing "Lady of Spain.")

Sachs was known for his stores' easy credit policy, and for his philanthropy and public service. Mayor Martin Kennelly tapped him as his running mate for City Treasurer in 1955. Kennelly was rejected by the Democratic Party in favor of Richard J. Daley, but a scandal opened the Treasurer slot for Sachs, and he won as a "clean hands" candidate. He donated his salary to a range of independently selected charities and fired the Machine freeloaders and crooks who infested his office. He came close to winning the Democratic nomination for Governor in 1956 with support Downstate.

Today, State Street is revitalized, but the stores are owned by out-of-town corporations. Hello, Target! ❖

President's Column *continued from page 2*

volume edited by Hyman L. Meites. This effort and the reprint of the program for "Romance of a People," the Jewish Day pageant presented at Soldier Field at the 1933 Century of Progress, were spearheaded by CJHS President Emeritus Walter Roth.

The Society takes pride in the monographs we have published over the years. We maintain a website where inquiries about Chicago Jewish history are welcomed. Our quarterly journal is distributed in a paper edition, and current and past issues are posted on the website.

THE DEMOLITION OF A SIGNIFICANT *SHUL*

The history of Jewish Chicago can be summarized as settlement, growth, transformation, and movement. Some months ago, we learned of the City's proposed demolition of the building that formerly housed Congregation Anshe Kanesses Israel (*di Russishe shul*) in Lawndale. Organized in 1875, this congregation had a long and impressive history. The property at 3411 West Douglas Boulevard (the *Champs Elysees* of Jewish institutional life) was built in 1913, had a seating capacity of 3,500, and housed thirty-five Torah scrolls. Ephraim Epstein was its most prominent rabbi. He served the congregation for almost fifty years.

Lawndale's Jewish residents began moving to other neighborhoods and suburbs in the 1940s, '50s and early '60s, and the *shul* building became the property of a succession of African-American churches. (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once addressed a crowd from its steps).

Eventually, financing and maintenance failed, and early this year the City of Chicago scheduled the building for demolition. An eleventh-hour effort to save the structure was made by Carey Wintergreen, architect, preservationist, and CJHS Board member, to no avail.



Lawndale men helping to remove AKI memorial plaques.

William Jones, Clarence Smith, and Mark Hardiman.
February 26, 2012. Photo by Carey Wintergreen.

But before the building was taken down, Wintergreen, *Chicago Tribune* reporter Ron Grossman, and I managed to gain entry. Protected by hard hats, we carefully made our way from the basement to the first floor to the sanctuary level and up to the balcony *mechitzah*. We encountered crumbled concrete, twisted wood, steel beams, water damage, and nary a sign that this was once a magnificent Jewish institution.

However, we did find, hidden in a closet behind much concrete and plaster, three tall marble memorial plaques listing the names of *shul* leaders (including Bernard Horwich), and, in some cases, the dollar amounts donated in their memory. Wintergreen enlisted some Lawndale *shtarkers* to load the plaques on a truck, and the artifacts were transported to temporary storage at Congregation Adas Yeshurun Anshe Kanesses Israel on Touhy Avenue—appropriately, the successor to the Douglas Boulevard congregation. Buildings may rise and fall, *am yisroel chai v'kayam*.

DOCUMENTARY FILMS BY CJHS MEMBERS

On page 3 of this issue, there is an announcement of our upcoming screening of **Refuge: Stories of the Selfhelp Home**, a film by Ethan Bensinger, on Sunday afternoon, September 23, in the Chapel of Temple Sholom of Chicago, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive. This riveting documentary chronicles the organization that brought together more than a thousand Central European Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors. Walter Roth was instrumental in getting the project started. I was honored to be included in the production as a historian, and I participate in the various presentations of the documentary in the city and suburbs.

Women Unchained is an important new film by the Emmy-award-winning director, Beverly Siegel. Characterized as "daring yet dignified" by *The Jewish Press*, it documents the experiences of modern-day *agunot*, or women whose husbands refuse to grant them a Jewish divorce. According to traditional Jewish law, a woman who is an *aguna* (from the Hebrew word meaning "chained") cannot remarry.

My wife, Myrna, and I were among hundreds in the audience when Spertus presented the Chicago premiere, Sunday afternoon, March 11. Siegel introduced her film and participated in a post-screening panel.

From the details available at www.spertus.edu—"The documentary includes illuminating interviews with leading women's rights advocates, rabbis, and experts. The film explores the state of women's rights in Judaism and details 'get-o-nomics,' the outlandish extortion schemes levied against some women."

Best wishes to all for a restful and refreshing summer!

What We Are

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977, and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 at an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Science and Industry. The Society has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials The card design features the Society's handsome logo, our mission statement, and space for your personal message. A pack of five cards and envelopes is \$18.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at \$5.00 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to the CJHS office, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803. Chicago IL 60605-1901.

About the Society

What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects and preserves written, spoken and photographic records, in close cooperation with Spertus, A Center for Jewish Learning & Culture. The Society publishes books and the quarterly journal *Chicago Jewish History*; holds open meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; and offers tours of local Jewish historical sites.

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 Store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation. Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December.

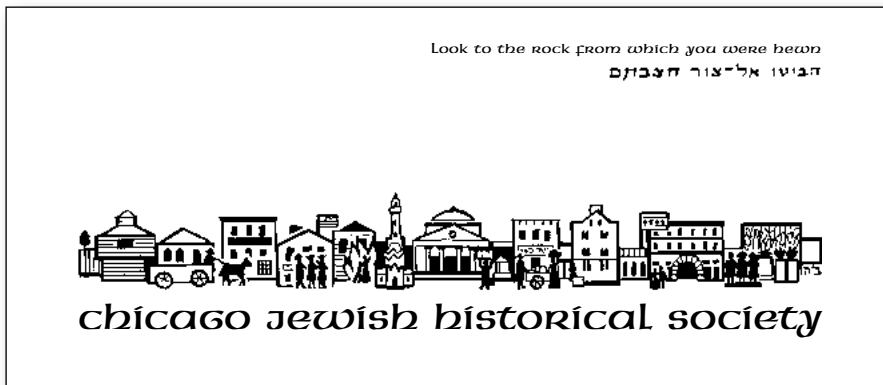
New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Browse Our Website

www.chicagojewishhistory.org
Use the printable membership application. Find information on upcoming CJHS events. Read issues of *Chicago Jewish History*. Discover links to other Jewish sites.

E-mail We welcome your inquiries and comments at: info@chicagojewishhistory.org

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CJHS WALKING TOUR "Downtown Jewish Chicago" SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

1:00 PM — 3:30 PM

Meet in the Chicago Cultural Center Lobby • 78 East Washington Street

Guide: Herbert Eiseman

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*Certified Member of the Chicago Tour-Guide Professional Association (CTPA);
Board of Directors, Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel Congregation and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.*

The big-shouldered splendor of 21st century Chicago can trace much of its history to the creativity and enterprise of our city’s Jewish merchants, builders, and artists. Herb Eiseman guides you from today’s architectural wonders in Millennium Park back to the Jewish community’s beginnings on Lake Street. View the *Hands of Peace* sculpture at Loop Synagogue, a monumental tribute to patriot Haym Salomon, and a memorial to Chicago’s own Irv Kupcinec. And much more – all with expert commentary.

Bring along a drink and a snack. Wear comfortable shoes.

Member of CJHS \$15 Nonmember \$20



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SUNDAY, AUGUST 26 “DOWNTOWN JEWISH CHICAGO” 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

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