

Look to the rock from which you were hewn

הביטו אל-צור חצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

618 South Michigan • Chicago, Illinois 60605 • Telephone: (312) 663-5634

society news

VOL. III - NO. 2

OCTOBER, 1979

NOV. 18 PROGRAM AN HISTORIC FIRST

In what is believed to be the first study ever made of the topic, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will present, "The German-Jewish Emigration of the Thirties: Its Impact on Chicago," at Congregation Ezra-Habonim, 2620 West Touhy, Chicago, Illinois, on November 18, 1979. A distinguished panel will review the institutions created by the German Jews who came here in the 1930's to escape the Nazis, the prominent personalities of the community, and the community's role in Chicago and in the larger Chicago Jewish community.

The panel will include:

Dr. ROLF A. WEIL, president of Roosevelt University and president of the Self-Help Home.

Dr. KURT SCHWERIN, Professor of Law Emeritus and retired law librarian of Northwestern University, co-chairman of the Chicago Chapter of the Leo Baeck Institute, and a Board member of the Leo Baeck Institute.

HERBERT PRAUER, businessman and past president of Congregation Ezra.

WALTER ROTH, attorney and a national vice president of the American Jewish Congress, will moderate the discussion.

All of the participants came to Chicago from Germany in the 1930's.

The program will also help to commemorate the 41st anniversary on November 9 of Crystal Night (Kristallnacht), a date of great importance which is annually observed on the calendar of Chicago's German-Jewish community.

SUNDAY, NOV. 18, 1979

1:30 P.M. SOCIAL HOUR

2:30 P.M. PROGRAM

Congregation Ezra-Habonim 2620 W. Touhy Chicago

ALL ARE WELCOME

TODAY'S HISTORY MAKERS

DON'T THROW IT OUT!

NOTABLE DOINGS OF SOCIETY MEMBERS

SOL BRANDZEL has been appointed by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union to represent them at the SALT II talks. He has also been named Chairman of the Hospital Review Committee of the Chicago Health Systems Agency. NANCY COHEN has been elected President of the West Valley Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. . . SHAINA PEARL COHN was elected by the national office of NOW to be an honoree among nine women of achievement from Illinois at a reception August 26 at the Park West which was attended by many notables including pro ERA legislators of Illinois. Shaina Pearl was honored for her work on the ERA Board since 1972 as a delegate of the American Jewish Congress. . . . SALLY GOLD-SMITH has been elected President of the Women's Division of Technion. . . . JUDAH and ALICE GRAUBART have recently come out with a new book DECADE OF A DESTINY (Chicago, Contemporary Book, Inc., 1978, 339 pp.), a collection of 64 interviews, memoirs and reminiscences of the 1930s, the era of the Great Depression. Included are memoirs and reminiscences of many Chicago Jews, including Col. Jack Arvey, Dr. David Graubart, Abe Feingloss, Morris Yanoff, and Shirley Bell Cole. SARA JACOBSON was honored by HIAS for her four decades of untiring work in that organization at a testimonial luncheon September 12 at the Pioneer Court. RABBI RALPH SIMON of Congregation Rodfei Zedek, of which Sara is an active member, gave the testimonial address. Sara, a graduate of Lewis Institute, Northwestern University, the University of Chicago and Spertus College, has also been active all her life in Hadassah, Brandeis University, School of Retarded Children, SS-ORT, Nathan Goldblatt Cancer Society, Spertus library and the CJHS.

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When in doubt, don't throw it out, send it to the Society for the Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus College.

What should you and your Jewish organizations save and send?

- . Congregational minute books.
- . Organizational minute books, year books, ad books, program books and the like.
- . Family correspondence or pictures.
- . Documents of early Jewish settlers or first settlers in your family to come to Chicago, including citizenship papers; marriage and birth certificates; passports and steamship tickets, etc.

For further information on archival material call our Archives Chairman ELSIE ORLINSKY at 643-9666 (or leave a message for her at our office 663-5634).

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE HISTORY?

From time to time, we cover special events that will someday be of historical interest. Recently, for example, members recorded the reunions of former residents of two Jewish orphanages in Chicago, and attended the anniversary celebration of a north side synagogue. We need observers who would be able to attend such special occasions in their neighborhoods. These reporters would interview the participants, tape-record their responses, and/or take photographs. We would be happy to give instruction to the observer in taping and history. If you are interested in participating in this activity, please call Moselle Mintz Schwartz (944-4444) or Adele Hast (256-5768). Become a part of the history you record!

SOCIETY OFFICE NEEDS ADDING MACHINE

Our dedicated volunteer office staff could use an adding machine to facilitate their work. If you have one to donate or sell cheaply or know of someone who does, please call RUTH BRANDZEL at our office 663-5634.

BOOK NOOK

by
Mark Mandel

The bibliography I compiled for the last issue of the newsletter tried to provide a framework to study Chicago Jewish history. People have pointed out I omitted things. I am sure they are correct, because it would take considerable effort to write a comprehensive bibliography on a major Jewish community like Chicago.

I mentioned two synagogue libraries, and other synagogue libraries felt slighted. There are eighty synagogues in the Chicago area, and I have not visited most of their libraries. I referred to two synagogue libraries I knew well. I did not intend to insinuate that other synagogues do not have excellent libraries.

A future issue of this bulletin will contain an addendum to the bibliography that appeared in June. I welcome your contributions and suggestions to this column at any time.

* * * * *

Editor's note: Mark Mandel will be a regular contributor to this space from now on.

BECOME PART OF ORAL HISTORY

We invite you to join the Oral History Project that is recording the history of Jewish Chicago. Can you type? We need volunteers to transcribe tapes already made. Do you like to keep track of things? We are looking for an administrator to maintain project records in the Society office. Do you enjoy a sparkling conversation? Become an interviewer. Please call to volunteer your services or to obtain further information on these interesting activities. MOSELLE SCHWARTZ, 944-4444 or ADELE HAST, 256-5768, evenings.

Membership Information

Membership in the CJHS is open to all. The dues categories are the following:

\$ 5.00	Students & Senior Citizens
10.00	Contributing Membership
25.00	Sustaining Membership
50.00	Patron Membership
100.00 & up	-- Sponsoring Membership
25.00	Minimum contribution for synagogue and organization membership.

IN OUR MAILBAG

Dear Roberta:

I am sending the following information as an addendum to the interesting article by Nathan Hoffman and the bibliography by Mark Mandel [in the June, 1979 issue of Society News].

It is true that Congregation B'nai Zion has the longest record of affiliation with the United Synagogue, but from the point of view of congregational age, there are other synagogues which are affiliated with the conservative movement which have a longer history. I refer particularly to Anshe Emet and Rodfei Zedek. Rodfei Zedek is now 105 years old and it, quite early in its history, made changes which put it in the conservative orbit. It joined the United Synagogue officially in 1927. If you count the date of affiliation it is younger than B'nai Zion. If you count the date of organization it is much older.*

The bibliography on Chicago Jewish history omitted a very significant work. It is entitled, "Rodfei Zedek: The First Hundred Years" by Carole Krucoff. This volume of 218 pages is an outstanding work of research which has been reviewed in a number of periodicals and has received high praise for its thorough documentation. It represents in a sense, a significant segment of Chicago Jewish history. I hope that your future publications will take note of the facts which I have stated.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Rabbi Ralph Simon

*Editor's note: To set the record straight B'nai Zion is the oldest Conservative congregation in Chicago that was founded as a conservative congregation. No other claim has ever been made by this bulletin or any member of the CJHS speaking officially.

To become a member, or to increase your membership contribution, send your check to the Treasurer, Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 618 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605.

TOUR OF HISTORIC SYNAGOGUE FEATURED AT SEPTEMBER MEETING



Chicagoland's only landmark synagogue, Congregation KAM-Isaiah Israel, was the star attraction at the September 16 meeting of the Society at the Temple, 1100 East Hyde Park Blvd.

The afternoon included a guided tour of the architecturally renowned building, the Morton B. Weiss Museum of Judaica, and the historic KAM Archives. Following the social hour Rabbi SIMEON J. MASLIN gave a verbal audiovisual history of the two Temples and the historic building. A CJHS founding member, along with Rabbi HAYIM G. PERELMUTER, with whom he shares the KAM-II pulpit, Rabbi Maslin is the latest in a long line of distinguished spiritual leaders of the two Temples. His most recent distinction is the publication this year of Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle. He was called to KAM in 1967 and has been co-rabbi of KAM-Isaiah Israel since the merger in 1971.

The merger of the two temples was the reunification of family members. KAM, the oldest synagogue in Chicago and the first synagogue in the Northwest Territory, was founded in 1846 or 1847 (which is the correct year is a century-old argument among Chicago Jewry) by Jews primarily from Bavaria. In 1852 a group of Posen Jews split off from KAM and founded Bnai Sholom. This congregation later merged with Temple Israel to become B'nai Sholom Temple Israel. BSTI then merged with Isaiah Temple to become Isaiah Israel. KAM and Isaiah Israel merged in 1971.

The synagogue structure presently being used by the merged congregations is the old Isaiah Israel building, designed by the renowned architect Alfred Alschuler and dedicated by Isaiah Israel in 1924. The building received landmark status in 1977.

Besides outlining the history of the predecessor congregations, interspersed with anecdotes about the early members, Rabbi Maslin presented a series of slides of the previous buildings of the constituent congregations and of their rabbis. He pointed out that KAM-II is the only congregation in the country that can boast three former presidents of the Central Conference of American Rabbis among its past rabbis: Rabbi Joseph Stolz, Rabbi Solomon Freehof and Rabbi Jacob Weinstein.

Rabbi Maslin concluded his remarks with excerpts of the sermons of some of these rabbis, including a heartrending eulogy delivered by Rabbi Liebman Adler on the death of Abraham Lincoln.

HERBERT LEVY, chairman of the Temple's Archives committee, then spoke about the architectural aspects of the synagogue. He pointed out that there is not and never has been a standard style for synagogue architecture. Jews always copied the styles for churches and public buildings prevailing in the time and place in which they lived.

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A RIDE DOWN ROOSEVELT ROAD, 1920-1940

BY SIDNEY SORKIN

Each of us has our own special reserve, sane interval in time, sane extension of space, even an Einsteinian warp of time and space, where we manipulate illusion in our own interior perspective. For what? To recreate a mile of a street, definable clatter, warm and cold things to touch, pungent tastes and smells, an intrusion briefly into another plane, where all the yesterdays can be viewed. There are many neighborhoods where you can see the gay colors in each of the seventy-five Chicago communities. Surely there was at least one Jewish storekeeper, one Jewish family, one Jewish peddler in each of those communities.

Four years before Chicago was incorporated, Cicero was organized and North Lawndale was part of that township. Before the turn of the century, part of Cicero had been incorporated into Chicago. Between 1910 and 1920 the population in this community had more than doubled. In 1929 the area had reached what sociologists call "residential maturity." By 1930 there were 112,261 people living in that teeming arena and 51,640 of them were Jews. North Lawndale was "the West Side," whereas the Maxwell Street area was the "Old West Side." Actually, it is called the Near West Side because of its proximity to the Loop, and that is where the original Jewish community lived. The majority of Chicago's Jews lived in the south end of the Loop area until the time of the Chicago Fire in 1871. By the turn of the century the Near West Side had taken the flood of Jews, had supported them, nurtured them in some thirty shuls, and then sent them forth. As the economics improved, so did the demand for newer and better housing. Before World War I, there was a large Jewish presence in North Lawndale. In thirty years--one generation--from 1930 to 1960, the area changed from 46% Jewish and 95% white to 91% black.

There is something smoothing, soothing and blending about our remembrance of the halcyon days of Lawrence Avenue in Albany Park, the promenades down 53rd Street in Hyde Park, the traffic and intersected streets right at Logan Square, the card games in Humboldt Park, the flowers in Garfield Park, and the boat rides in Douglas Park. Roosevelt Road is the northern edge of Douglas Park from California to Albany, and it's just a few blocks from here that I want you to join me in a ride down Roosevelt Road, from Kedzie to Pulaski, some thirty, forty or fifty years ago. . . .

We'll take a ride, a street-car ride going west here in front of the Liberty Bank. What vitality and business acumen, the Luftmensch turned entrepreneur displayed on this mile of road. Widened in 1916, renamed in 1920, a step and a generation beyond the carts and stands of Maxwell Street.

Let's stand on the back platform and take a nostalgic ride down Roosevelt Road from Kedzie to Crawford Avenue. . . . PAY THE CONDUCTOR FIVE CENTS!

There were so many restaurants and delicatessens in a little over a mile. AH: The sharp smell of pickles green and crisp, the dilled tomatoes and pungent sauerkraut, interwoven with the tongue tingling savor of corned beef. Right here in the first few blocks before we cross Kedzie Avenue, there were six places to eat. To eat and schmooz in Zweig's Paradise Restaurant, Gwartz, or one of the famous gathering places, the "in" spot, Zuckies.

The Liberty Bank on one corner, and diagonally across the street, United Clothing, two floors of ready to wear clothes.

QUICK, there is Peter Gianoulis' ice cream parlor (on the northwest corner). On both sides of the street are these dress shops and specialty shops--we call them boutiques today--Goldberg's, Bernard's, The Fashion Shop, B. Nathan's, Katz Millinery, with Davie Miller's restaurant, the better's and sportsman's rendezvous, on the north side, to liven things up. Popularity and reputation drew crowds to Karl's deli and restaurant. There were many famous and perhaps infamous restaurants and hangouts all along Roosevelt Road, but that will be for another time.

All of this eating and greeting before we even get to Spaulding Avenue. On the south side between Spaulding and Christiana was the Circle Theater, the first of the Balaban and Katz movie houses. Let's see what is playing this week. . . .

Are we the people of the Book or People of the Boyech? Twenty-six muncheries and only four places to feed the mind, four book stores, two we still remember: Goodman's and Rosenbloom's.

DID WE SEND NEW YEARS CARDS IN THOSE DAYS?

Here, not far from the corner of Homan, was Anton's ice cream parlor, and next door was the Gold Theater, the second of the six places and palaces. The feet or the face, shoes or a photograph, Jewelers or Alex Drexler's Beauty Shop, a part of the Flukey Hot Dog Family, all in the same block. Ladies' luxurious furs or Fagman's Men's Fashions.

The corner of Roosevelt and St. Louis, the crowds gathered inside and outside of Silverstein's delicatessen. A good place to argue about pastrami, but also the merits of hard or soft salami, Best Kosher, Kosher Zion, Sinai or Wilno. Just a few blocks from the A.B.C. BOYS CLUB, the J.P.I. and close to three movie houses, all within walking distance on a pleasant evening.

In the middle of the block on both sides of the street were two shows, the Central Park and the 20th Century.

WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE THIS WEEK?

What sweet memories, courting and dating at Nathan's or Ye Old Chocolate Shop. After the show how about a snack, a hot dog with all the trimmings, at Flukey's, for just a nickel. What a sport a fella could be with his date, or best girl, for twenty-one cents!

There were no nation-wide drug or food stores on the street. We seem to patronize the small man, our own big man, the independent merchant for special things. Certain stores were well known for the quality of their merchandise, like Finkelstein's grocery and butter and egg store. Strikingly clean, served by Mr. Finkelstein, Der Pilisher, as he was known, tall and handsome with his trimmed beard and clear skin. What a delight when you walked in, the mixed smells of coffees from burlap bags, beans, groats, rice, peas and buchshure, lined up along the floor. On the shelves the canned goods, with local labels, Holleb's, Monarch's, Savoy, Richelieu and Yacht Club. Fresh creamy cheeses and yellow butter, as well as the cookies and crackers in boxes with the hinged glass tops.

As long as we are on the back platform with the conductor we can take a look back to the block between Homan and Central Park to point out the furniture stores, Homan's, Homer Brothers and Hartman's. One half of a dozen in that mile, with classy looking quiet establishments like Harris-Wolff just west of Avers Avenue. And upstairs, how many doctors for aches, and how many dentists for every pain, and more doctors for every pimple?

We went by so fast, did you see the Douglas Bath House with the big sign, Turkish Baths, close to the 20th Century Theater? Quite a few of those schvitz bouds in the very old and old West Side. Baths both public and private. There were three along the way that offered a schvitz, clean sheets, rye bread, hot tea and a good schmaltz herring. But more of that at another time.

There is Yompolsky's, here Abraham Miller's kosher butcher shop, one of almost a dozen shops on the street. Quite a few had kosher Boshers on the window, the traditional butcher shop. There were stores with live poultry, hand chosen and tested, to be prepared by the shohet. Kosher and Kosher style as well as gentile markets were found along the way. But for that special cut, where else but in a Jewish butcher shop could you order a thick cut "book-steak"? Let your memory do the frying.

Did you ever play kick the can, variations of hide and seek, as well as "not it"? The games were hard on your body and sole. But if your soles wore out there were fifteen shoe stores to choose from to buy new ones, from O'Connor and Goldberg at one end, to Louis Cohen's at the other end. Did you ever wear shark skinned tipped shoes from the Kidland Store?

The blocks run by so fast. With all the places of business we seem to forget all the second and third floor apartments over the familiar places of business.

Before we get to Lawndale Avenue, we must look into Frank Newman's butter and egg store. As in so many others, there was a six door refrigerator behind the counter, each door with a glass panel, and you could see the wooden tubs with golden butter, the balls of butter still wrapped in cheese cloth, as well as a wide variety of paraveh and milk products. Boxes of fish, smoked to a delicious honey hue as well as half of a smoked salmon, or lox, were on the counter. Cans of salmon, sardines and imported Baltic Sprotten, the special smoked sardines, were on the shelves. There were fourteen m/b stores, along with the Yellow Front chain and all the other private stores scattered around the west side.

There is Abe Becker's bakery near Fine's Barber Shop. Becker's was one of seven bakeries, and five were on the south side of the street. The kaiser rolls, bagels and vienna bread, so easy to smell and so great to eat! Wasn't there something special about the rye bread? We do not have much time or distance left on this trip, and there is so much left that we missed or forgot, my friend.

LOOK! Sol Mandelbaum's billiard parlor near the corner of Springfield. This was one of three on this mile. The other two were Rosenberg and Schwartz near the 20th Century and the very popular Lawndale Restaurant and Billiards.

CRAWFORD AVENUE! Before we get off and transfer, there is the marquee of the Lawndale Theater, a United Cigar Store on one corner and Samuel Bernstein ladies shop, one of sixteen on the street. . . .

We passed many of the old familiar places, atuned ourselves to the sounds of iron wheels, set on rails within granite cobble stone streets, all guided by the curbs and wide cement slabs of the sidewalks. Step off of the back platform.

(TWO RINGS)

And Roosevelt Road is gone.

©1979 Sidney Sorkin

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(SIDNEY SORKIN, though well-acquainted with the sights and sounds and smells of Roosevelt Road (as well as of most Jewish neighborhoods in Chicago), has been a Southsider all his life. History is both his bread and butter and his love. A graduate of Roosevelt University with a degree in history and American literature, he earned an MA in American history from DePaul and became a history teacher at Bowen High School (on the south side, of course) in 1961. Since 1969 he has been Assistant Principal at Bowen.

A Board member of the CJHS, he is an avid contributor to the work of the Society's Audio-visual committee, working on stories about the West Side. His work will eventually be used in the TV scripts the committee is developing.

For several years he has been researching and writing a book about the Lands-menschaften of Chicago. Excerpts of this work will appear in future issues of Society News.)

con't. from p. 4

In the nineteenth century in Europe, Jews in Europe began copying classical, Gothic, Byzantine, Moorish and even Egyptian designs. In America, some of these styles became popular along with the widely-used Georgian Colonial style.

In Chicago, Alschuler had already designed a Georgian style and a Classical style synagogue before commissioned to do Isaiah Israel. For that he chose the Byzantine style, modeling his design on the San Vitale Church in Ravenna, Italy, built in 535 C.E. Like its predecessor, the new Temple had a low dome supported on eight pillars, an octagonal shape, and an entrance arranged with two spiral staircases leading to the balcony.

For the designs of the stained glass windows and the frieze around the balconies, he copied photographs of a second century synagogue in Tiberias that had recently been excavated.

The Isaiah Israel structure has been considered by all experts as one of the great synagogues in the world. In 1973 an addition, designed by John Alschuler, son of Alfred, and Ron Dirsmith, was built by the merged congregations. It includes the garden, the Stone Chapel and the Community Hall.