CJHS Open Meeting Sunday, December 7

“American Heroes: A Salute to Chicago Jewish Veterans of World War II”

An open meeting of the CJHS was held on Sunday, December 7, 2014, at Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette, Illinois. The program began at 2:00 p.m., preceded by the election of nominees to the Society’s Board of Directors. (See the names of the nominees on page 3.)

The “American Heroes” program was moderated by Colonel Fred R. Rosenberg, CAP Great Lakes Region, Civil Air Patrol, and Cyndee Schaffer, co-author of the book *Mollie’s War: The Letters of a World War II WAC in Europe* (McFarland Publishing, 2010), which she wrote with her late mother, Mollie Weinstein Schaffer. This book may be the first collection of letters published by a Jewish American WAC.

Colonel Rosenberg gave a talk on American Jews from around the country who served with distinction in World War II. Ms. Schaffer delighted the audience with a presentation about her book. She moderated a panel of four Chicago area World War II veterans with interesting, inspiring stories: Sidney Brichta (U.S. Army Air Corps), Irving Cutler (U.S. Navy), Joseph Groner (U.S. Army), and Allen H. Meyer (U.S. Army). The program was followed by a social hour with kosher refreshments.

CJHS Past President Norman David Schwartz

Norman David Schwartz, 92, died on Friday, November 28, the anniversary of his wedding to his late beloved wife, Moselle, née Aison Mintz. Services were held on November 30 at Temple Sholom of Chicago, followed by interment in Zion Gardens.

Until his mid-50s Norman was the adored bachelor uncle (called “Unclee”) of his sister Betty Gerson’s daughters, Janet and Dee. When he married the charming and creative Moselle, he became a “grandpa by choice” to the children of her daughter, Marjorie Mintz (Robert) Rosenbaum, and of her son, Daniel (Emily) Mintz.

The grandchildren used Norman as a reference for their middle school history papers. Researchers from near and far could depend on receiving authoritative information about the Chicago Jewish community, often with photographs of relevant sites.

Norman was a founding member of the CJHS and our first vice-president. He served as our president from 1984 to 1988. By profession he was an accountant at the Florsheim Shoe Company, and he called himself a “bean counter.” But as we knew him, and as Rabbi Michael Siegel said in his eulogy, “He made every day count.”

There will be more about Norman, a U.S. Navy veteran of WWII, in the next issue of our quarterly. The books that he co-authored are listed on pages 16 and 20 of this issue. – B.C.
THE FALL SEASON IS HARD UPON US.
Before raking leaves gave way to shoveling
snow, it was a busy and fulfilling time for your
Chicago Jewish Historical Society. Three open
meetings offered exceedingly well-received
public programs. Elsewhere in this issue of
CJH you will find reports on the September
talk by Dr. Nathan Harpaz, Director of the
Koehnline Museum of Art at Oakton
Community College, and the October talk by
Professor Peri Arnold of the University of
Notre Dame. In our next issue you will find a
detailed report on our equally informed and illuminating Sunday,
December 7, program that honored our World War II veterans.

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND DECEMBER we will have
observed, each in his or her own ways, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur,
Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, and
Hanukkah. As I read, research, and write about the Chicago Jewish
experience, I reflect on how we have observed these meaningful
religious and secular occasions. A recent issue of The Forward
(October 7, 2014) features an article by Jenna Weissman Joselit,
“What Does This Photo of Tashlikh Say About the Evolution of
Jewish Life? Famed 1909 Image Depicts Move From Shtetl to
Metropolis.” The photo, now in the Library of Congress, depicts
Jews standing on a bridge in New York City performing tashlikh, the
waterside custom of symbolically casting away their sins on the first
day of Rosh Hashanah. The writer comments:

“What’s most striking about the image… is its juxtaposition of the
old and the new, situating an age-old minhag, or custom, against
the marvels of engineering (the bridge) and the wonders of
modern-day technology (the camera). The photograph speaks to
the ways in which modernity did not sound the death knell of
religious ritual so much as reposition it, a process that was at once
a matter of geography and attitude. In its migration from shtetl to
metropolis and its transformation from a practice derided by some
as silly, superstitious and outmoded into a popular contemporary
pursuit, tashlikh reflects the modern Jewish experience and the
ongoing need for the gestures of community.”

The article caused me to reflect on how tashlikh was observed by
Jewish Chicagoans in the past and how it is observed today.
Did West Siders cast their symbolic breadcrumbs into the Douglas
Park and Garfield Park lagoons? Did the Jews who resided along the
lakefront cast their sins into Lake Michigan? Did my zayde lead my
parents, brother, uncles, and aunts to the Humboldt Park lagoons?
How about the residents of Albany Park? Did they gather at the
north branch of the Chicago River in Eugene Field Park or at the
bridge crossing Ridgeway Avenue?

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Election of Members to Our Board of Directors

At the CJHS open meeting on Sunday, December 7, before the “American Heroes” program begins, we held an election of members to a three-year term on our Board of Directors. The nominees are all current Board members.

LEAH JOY AXELROD has been a Highland Park resident since 1957. Her lifelong interest in history led her to become a founding member of the Highland Park Historical Society and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. In addition, she has been a member of the Historic Preservation Commission of Highland Park and is now a citizen advisor for that commission. She serves on the Board of the Chicago Area Women’s History Conference. In 1975, Leah became affiliated with My Kind of Town Tours & Events, and she has been president since 1979. She is a member of the Chicago Tour Professionals Association (CTPA). She is the Tour Chairman of the CJHS. A Milwaukee native, Leah earned a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin. She is listed in Who’s Who in America and Who’s Who of American Women. She and her husband, Les, have six children and four grandchildren.

DR. IRVING CUTLER is a founding member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and has also served as president of the Geographic Society of Chicago. After serving as a U.S. naval officer in World War II, he went on to receive a Masters Degree in Social Science from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in Urban Geography from Northwestern. He served on the faculty of Chicago State University for 24 years, 10 as chairman of the Geography Department. He has also taught at DePaul University. He has been a consultant to a number of government agencies and is the author of numerous articles and eight books including two award-winners, Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent and The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb. Dr. Cutler has participated in a number of radio and television programs and has given many bus and boat tours and talks on various aspects of Chicago, including Jewish Chicago. He was curator of two major Jewish exhibits in the City.

ELISE GISNAPARG is proud to be a Life Member of the Society and a member of the Board, where she currently serves on the Program Committee. She graduated from Loyola University Chicago with a B.A. in Education and earned a Master’s in Audiology from Northwestern. Since retiring from teaching in the Chicago Public Schools, she has been a lecturer, slide show presenter, and book reviewer, concentrating on Jewish life in cities around the world. She was a speaker on the panel discussing Hyde Park High School and its Jewish community at a Society open meeting (Report, CJH Fall 2007), and she contributed an article to our journal on a trip to Israel (CJH Winter 2011). Elise coordinates the annual “Night of Knowledge” at Congregation Yehuda Moshe in Lincolnwood.

DR. RACHELLE GOLD is a clinical psychologist in private practice. Her involvement in the Society derives from her pride in her heritage as a Jew and a fourth-generation Chicagoan. She joined the Board in 2002 at the invitation of President Emeritus Walter Roth. She currently serves as Membership Chairman and Secretary. Her other community activities include being a volunteer professional at The ARK, advocating for Israel, and participating in Jewish Studies groups.

DR. STANTON POLIN is an active member of the Board of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. He also serves on the Board of the Skokie Board of Health. Stanton is a retired cardiovascular surgeon and a retired Commander of the U.S. Navy, where he served for 23 years. He is an avid Zionist and has two sons and nine grandchildren living in Jerusalem. He is a participant in many local and national Jewish organizations. Stanton attended the Hebrew Theological College and is an active member of Congregation Or Torah in Skokie. He is also a certified mohel. His wife is Leah Polin, a noted adult Jewish educator, public speaker, and former director of the Dawn Shuman Institute.

CAREY WINTERGREEN has been the Social Media Chair of the CJHS since joining the Board three years ago. Carey is a Chicago architect with a lifelong passion for synagogue architecture. Although he has not yet had the honor of designing or renovating a synagogue, he visits and documents each extant synagogue structure ever built in Chicago. In recent years, he was a major stakeholder in the ultimately unsuccessful fight to keep the City from demolishing the former Anshe Kanesses Israel Synagogue in North Lawndale. More recently, he has been involved with other members of the preservation community seeking ways to renovate and reuse the shuttered, but still impressive, Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation in Uptown. Because of his interest and efforts in saving Chicago’s synagogue heritage, he was selected as one of the ten Jewish Chicagoans of the Year 2013 by The Chicago Jewish News. Carey is a Rogers Park native, now living in Lakeview. He is a member of Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel Congregation.
President’s Column
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And today, do the residents of West Rogers Park perform the ritual at the north branch of the Chicago River?

YOM KIPPU R. In my family, my mother exceeded her usual Wonder Woman-like efforts to prepare a sumptuous pre-fast dinner. My father came home from work early. We ate, dressed in holiday clothing (purchased for the males at either United Clothing Company on Roosevelt Road or Aidem & Dess on the North Side), and went to Kol Nidre. The next morning, before leaving for shul, my mother set the table for the break-the-fast meal. She stayed in shul all day without any breaks, sitting in the women’s balcony, davening and conversing.

At about three o’clock, my father, less religiously observant than my mother, returned to our apartment to make coffee and see that our evening meal would be ready when we came home at about seven o’clock. Once this was done, he would return to services. Did other families have a similar routine?

COLUMBUS DAY, OCTOBER 12. I came into the world on October 13 at Lutheran Deaconess Hospital, located near Leavitt and Division Streets, so this holiday is special for me.

This year, I happened to be walking along State Street when I encountered the Columbus Day Parade. I am aware that the explorer had at least one, if not more Jews, aboard the Nina, the Pinta, or the Santa Maria, and that there may have been monetary support from Spanish Jews, who had survived the Inquisition.

Parades are inherently tribal, and most parades in the United States look back and boast, “See how far we’ve come!” But the best parades reach out to others with messages of good will.

Chicago’s 2014 Columbus Day Parade honored the brave efforts by thousands of Italians during the Nazi era to save Jews from the horror of the Holocaust. Not a single Jew of any national origin under Italian control was handed over to the Nazis until 1943 when Italy was invaded by Germany. “Jews in Italy survived the war at a higher rate than anywhere under Axis rule save Denmark,” writes journalist Jonah Goldberg.

Floats in the parade honored individuals and entire communities who risked their lives for their fellow men and women. One float honored Italian businessman Giorgio Periasca, who is credited with saving as many as 10,000 Jewish lives in Budapest by impersonating the Spanish ambassador to Hungary. He granted them Spanish citizenship. Another green-red-and white-festooned float (the colors of the Italian flag) honored Giovanni Palatucci, Chief of Police in the port city of Fiume, where thousands of Jewish refugees had streamed. He arranged transfers to southern Italy and safe passages to what was then Palestine.

General Giuseppe Amica, commander of an Italian army division in Yugoslavia, refused to deport 140 Jews under his control. He said it would not be honorable. The Nazis shot him.

Many in the CJHS are familiar with the courage of the Italian priest and the villagers who sheltered young Chaya and Gitta Horowitz and their mother. Dr. Chaya Roth is the wife of Walter Roth, our president emeritus; Gitta Fajerstein is a longtime, supportive member of the Society.

THANKSGIVING. The Thanksgiving holiday suits Chicago Jewry. It includes a family gathering and lots of food. Rituals: Thanksgiving “requires” watching a televised football game before or after the feast. But seriously, Thanksgiving is what Brandeis University historian Jonathan Sarna calls the “cult of synthesis” in American Jews since the nineteenth century. Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch of Sinai Temple observed that Thanksgiving had the “Jewish views of liberty and law…in creative concordance with the distinctive principles pillaring American civilization.”

HANUKKAH. Ah, the Hanukkah menu: those wonderful, golden brown, crisp, and flavorful latkes! In my mother’s kitchen, our latkes were prepared by hand: potatoes peeled and grated; onion, eggs, salt, flour, baking powder, and most importantly, oil—and only Planter’s High Hat Peanut Oil!

Today, the pre-holiday food sections of our daily newspapers feature recipes for latkes with unusual ingredients or recipes for “the perfect latke.”

Hanukkah features a beautiful family ritual: watching the faces and hearing the voices of the younger generations as they light the candles on the menorah. The shtetl ritual of Hanukkah gelt—a few coins given by adults to children—has turned into a-gift-a-day ritual for many families, and today’s coins are gold-foil-wrapped chocolate.
A recent book, *Hanukkah in America: A History*, by Dianne Ashton, a professor at Rowan University, states that, unlike Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which are sacred, with their rituals more rooted in the Torah, Hanukkah could and would be redesigned for the American Jewish masses.

Hanukkah’s rites were developed in the Talmud, a few hundred years after the event. Dreidels are believed to have been set spinning in the 1500s in Central Europe. The most famous traditional holiday song, “Maoz Tsur,” was written in the thirteenth century; its English version, “Rock of Ages,” was penned in the nineteenth century.

Ashton’s research finds that by the mid-nineteenth century, the holiday’s themes had already surfaced in the debates among rabbis in the U.S. over tradition and modernization. Traditionalists wanted to use the story of the second century BCE revolt of the Maccabees against the Syrian Greeks and the subsequent rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem to highlight the need for American Jews to return to Jewish practice. Reformers wanted to de-emphasize the role of God in favor of a more America-friendly story of liberty and revolution embodied in the Maccabees’ struggle against religious persecution. Others saw Hanukkah as a “simple, joyous holiday that could easily be made grand,” as a way to lure children, and by extension, their parents, into active Jewish life.

Each American Jewish generation has reinvented the holiday. Abraham Cahan, the founder-editor of the Yiddish *Forverts*, saw Judah and his cohorts as models for modern day Socialists; Zionists saw the Maccabees as nationalist prototypes.

In the 1960s and 1970s, *The Jewish Catalog*, the “Bible” of the Jewish Renewal Movement, instructed its readers to “forage in the wood to find your own menorah.” Chabad has made Hanukkah prominent in American cities with their huge public menorahs. Currently, we see the holiday celebrated in the White House, gubernatorial mansions, and city, town, and village halls.

The records of Chicago’s Jewish communities reveal that by the late 1800s and early 1900s, public Hanukkah concerts and synagogue-based celebrations proliferated. In our time, Jewish bookstores and mail order merchants enlarged and diversified their stock of giftware, and sisterhood-run synagogue gift shops benefitted. Some day, a graduate student may write a research paper about the place of the American synagogue gift shop in the history of the Jewish businesswoman.

On behalf of the officers and Board of Directors of our Society, I wish all of our members and friends a wonderful holiday season. Gift memberships in the Society are meaningful to Chicago natives who may have relocated beyond the reach of the polar vortex, but retain a strong bond with their home town and its fascinating Jewish history. And remember to encourage your history-minded children’s and grandchildren’s interest with gift memberships. We will welcome them into the CJHS mishpokha (family).
To all our activists, achievers, and honorees… the Hebrew phrase means “More Power to You”…

At the recent annual conference of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, held in Austin, Texas, October 23-26, CJHS Past President Rachel Heimovics Braun was awarded the Saul Viener Award for Outstanding Career Service in the Field of Southern Jewish History. This honor was presented to her as she retired as managing editor of Southern Jewish History, the annual peer-reviewed journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Rachel served in this position since the journal’s first volume in 1998. She was named Founding Managing Editor, and her name will continue to appear on the masthead of the journal.

On Sunday morning, November 23, at Congregation Rodfei Zedek, there was a dramatic reading of excerpts from Toni and Markus: From Village Life to Urban Stress, the newest memoir by President Emeritus Walter Roth. The performers were Roslyn Alexander, the acclaimed Chicago actress, and Ari Roth, Walter and Chaya’s son, the artistic director of Theater J in Washington, D.C., and a distinguished playwright and teacher. The performance was followed by a lively question-and-answer period and refreshments. Walter tells us that a Jewish student drama group at Northwestern University is planning to create a play based on the book. Photo of Walter (at left) and Ari by Michael Bier.

Abner Mikva was honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama, a man he helped school in Chicago politics (“We don’t want nobody nobody sent”). The award is the nation’s highest civilian honor. Mikva, 87, a Democrat, is a former Illinois congressman and state legislator, who worked in all three branches of the federal government. He also served as chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington and was White House counsel for President Bill Clinton. Ab and his wife Zoe were longtime member of the CJHS.

Board Member Elise Ginsparg expertly planned and coordinated the 17th annual “Night of Knowledge” on Motzaei Shabbat, November 15, at Congregation Yehuda Moshe in Lincolnwood. As she does every year, Elise gathered eight scholars to lecture on a wide variety of topics of Jewish interest, from “Iran: Deal or No Deal” to “The Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean” to “The Whys and Hows of Doing Kiruv” to “Ebola: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.” The sessions were followed, as always, by a gala melava malka.

Many thanks to Board Member Joy Kingsolver, whose term is up this year, for the professional help she gave us in her years as director of the Chicago Jewish Archives at the Spertus Institute. She wrote articles for CJH (which we hope she will update), in addition to gathering, documenting, and exhibiting the archives’ holdings. Thanks to our colleague, Spertus Collections Manager Kathy Bloch, for continuing to make materials available to the Society for publication in our journal.

Tour Maven Leah Axelrod (left), Editor Bev Chubat, and indulgent White Sox fan President Ed Mazur represented the CJHS at the Illinois State Historical Society’s gathering at a Cubs game on Friday afternoon, August 22, to commemorate Wrigley Field’s 100th year. ISHS photograph by William Furry.
Report: CJHS Open Meeting Sunday, September 21

1937: Chicago Jewish Artists Create a Portfolio of Woodcuts

A Gift to Biro-Bidjan

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society open meeting on Sunday afternoon, September 21, was held at Temple Beth Israel, 3601 West Dempster Street, Skokie. Our speaker was Nathan Harpaz, Director of the Koehnline Museum of Art at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, where he teaches art history and museum studies. He earned degrees in Psychology and Art History from Tel Aviv University and a doctoral degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Union Institute & University, Cincinnati. Dr. Harpaz is a former art museum director in Tel Aviv, and an expert on the early architecture of that city. He is the author of the book *Zionist Architecture and Town Planning: The Building of Tel Aviv 1919–1929*.

The Jewish Autonomous Region of the Soviet Union was designated in 1934 by Josef Stalin. It rests between the Biro and Bidjan rivers in a remote taiga of Siberia. It was meant to satisfy the national aspirations of the Jewish people as an alternative to Zionism, and some thousands of Jews did set out to clear the forests to make the area liveable. The talents of Jewish artists, writers, filmmakers, and actors in the USSR were used to cast a rosy light on the venture. A Bauhaus architect made plans (never realized) to move the settlement to a hill to escape the frequent floods.

In 1937, a group of 14 Chicago Jewish artists (perhaps the group informally led by Todros Geller, and called “Around the Palette”) created a portfolio of woodcuts as a fundraising project for Biro-Bidjan. Their themes reflect world events and personal concerns: the Great Depression, the Nazi rise in Germany, Jewish life past and present, lots of pitchforks and smokestacks—subjects they used as WPA artists. Printing was done locally by L.M. Stein and sold by subscription only, so in a time of economic hardship the fundraising effort failed.

Dr. Harpaz presented slides of the woodcuts and related material with insightful comments (such as correcting far downward the population number in the Gropper illustration), and he projected photographs of Birobidzan (the current spelling) as it looks today. A complete portfolio is in the permanent collection of the Koehnline Museum. See all the prints online at [www.oakton.edu](http://www.oakton.edu).

There was an organization of American Jewish activists, including some Chicagoans, called Ambijan, founded to aid settlement in the region. Walter Roth wrote about it in the Winter 1995 issue of *CJH* which is posted on our website.
The Chicago Jewish Historical Society open meeting on Sunday afternoon, October 19, was held in the social hall of Kehilath Chovevei Tzion, 9220 North Crawford Avenue, Skokie. We were warmly welcomed by Rabbi Shaanan Gelman, the synagogue’s spiritual leader. He invited us to visit the two sanctuaries—one Ashkenazic and one Sephardic—in the building.

The Society had gathered at KCT once before, last December, and we were impressed with the exquisite new building where worshippers can choose the sanctuary that accommodates their traditions, and where there is respect for their individual rituals. The nine-year-old congregation is celebrating its first year anniversary in this building.

Our featured speaker was Peri E. Arnold, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame. His talk was entitled “What Bonded North Lawndale’s Jews to the Democratic Machine? Exploring Jacob Arvey’s Leadership in Chicago’s 24th Ward.”

Professor Arnold teaches and researches American politics and the Presidency. He is author of Making the Managerial Presidency (1986, 1997) and Remaking the Presidency (2009), along with numerous articles and essays and three edited books. He was educated at Roosevelt University (B.A.) and the University of Chicago (Ph.D.). He grew up in North Lawndale, hearing tales of the impregnable Arvey Machine. His lecture reported his recent research on Jake Arvey, inspired to an extent by those tales.

Professor Arnold began his PowerPoint presentation with this statement: “Jake Arvey was the most gifted figure in American Jewish political history.”

Jacob M. Arvey was born in 1895, in Chicago’s Maxwell Street neighborhood. He dropped out of high school, but was later able to graduate from The John Marshall Law School. He married Edith Freeman in 1915 and began his law practice in 1916. From 1920 until 1977 he practiced law in Chicago.

Arvey’s political rise began in 1923 when he was elected Alderman of the new 24th Ward, which was controlled by the Rosenberg organization—tough guys! Alderman Arvey distinguished himself as floor leader for Mayor Dever, and then, in 1931, as leader of Mayor Cermak’s new Democratic Organization.

In 1934, Arvey replaced Moe Rosenberg as 24th Ward Democratic Committeeman.

Corrections and Clarifications

In CJH Summer 2014 (page 6), we wrote that the former home of the Austrian-Galician Congregation, 1357 North California Avenue, had been demolished. The Humboldt Park building is still standing. It is now home to the Upper Room Pentecostal Church.

In CJH Summer 2014 (page 15), we stated the reason for the split in the Israelite House of David and the establishment of Mary’s City of David. Mike Eliasohn, historian of Temple B’nai Shalom, Benton Harbor, MI, corrected us: “Benjamin and Mary Purnell established the Israelite House of David in 1903. Following his death, there was a split in the colony between those who believed his second-in-command, Tom Dewhirst, should be the new leader and those who supported Mary Purnell. Dewhirst’s supporters prevailed, so Mary and her followers went a short distance down Britain Avenue and established Mary’s City of David.”
The 24th Ward was the most densely populated non-black ward in the City of Chicago in the 1930s. It was an area of “second settlement,” after the Maxwell Street immigrant entry area. With its ninety to ninety-five per cent Jewish population, Jacob Arvey called it “a Jewish City.” President Franklin D. Roosevelt is said to have called it “the most Democratic ward in America.”

How was Arvey different from his predecessors, the Rosenbergs? Professor Arnold counted the ways: Arvey appealed to his constituents’ Jewishness and their anxieties. He was an over-the-top activist for the Jewish community, serving on the boards of synagogues and other Jewish institutions. He was an early activist in national and local Zionist organizations. He proposed a north-south “L” line to connect the Lawndale and North Side Jewish communities. He eliminated the intense activity of Christian missionaries in Lawndale. Despite their First Amendment right to free speech, Arvey claimed, “They don’t have a City License.”

In 1936, there was a crisis in Arvey’s Jewish leadership. The Democratic Machine rejected Governor Henry Horner’s bid for re-election because he had vetoed legislation to permit open gambling in Chicago. Instead they nominated City Health Commissioner Dr. Herman Bundesen. What was Arvey to do? Two days before the Primary, he went on “The Jewish Hour” radio program and argued, “We must remain loyal to the Party that protects us.” Arvey was able to appeal to his 24th Ward patronage-dependent constituents to vote against the Jewish candidate. The Jews on the South Side did vote for Horner. He was nominated and re-elected.

Arvey was to make another important radio speech. On November 30, 1940, he used the “Jewish Hour” again to announce that at 45 years of age he was resigning his office to join the Army. Arvey served with the Illinois National Guard as judge advocate general and a civil affairs officer, stationed in the Pacific. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Thereafter he was known as Colonel Jack Arvey. In 1946, he was elected Chairman of the Cook County Democratic Central Committee.

In 1948, Chairman Arvey wisely chose candidates Paul Douglas for U.S. Senator and Adlai Stevenson for Governor, and helped President Truman win Illinois. But in 1950 a disastrous nominee for Sheriff led to the Party’s defeat, and Arvey lost his chairmanship. He was named Democratic Party National Committeeman from Illinois, a title with no power, and as a member of the Board of the Chicago Park District, Prof. Arnold said, “He was able to get boat slips for his friends.” Arvey turned his attention to the new State of Israel.

He died in 1977, leaving his papers to a library (which few local politicians would dare to do), and an Ethical Will for his three children. Arnold concluded, “The ghetto walls did fall, ‘Jewish Lawndale’ came to an end, and our people moved out into America. City political machines were, and are, dominated by the Irish. That is why Arvey was such an exception.”


Arvey Chairs “Jerusalem Festival” at Chicago Stadium

[In 1953, Jacob Arvey paid his first visit to the State of Israel and wrote a series of reports that were published in the Chicago Sun-Times.] When “journalist” Jacob Arvey returned to Chicago, he soon capped his efforts on behalf of the Israel Bond campaign by chairing a spectacular rally at the Chicago Stadium. It was billed as a festival in observance of the three-thousandth anniversary of Jerusalem. It was held on Saturday night, November 28, 1953. Former President Harry S. Truman was the guest of honor and principal speaker. The festival was preceded by a tribute dinner in the ballroom of the Covenant Club, held “as an expression of appreciation from the Jewish people of Chicago to Mr. Truman...for his contributions to the creation and development of the State of Israel while President of the United States of America.”...— CJH Fall 2008.
“Unknown Shtetl” Lawn Manor Holds Reunion

BY RACHELLE GOLD

Lawn Manor apparently was the best kept secret of the Jewish community in Chicago. We were the largest and most unknown shtetl in the Chicago area... our shul was the focal point of all Jewish activity in our corner of the city. Lawn Manor was our identity for almost everything.” Gerald (Gerry) Silberman, an organizer and the master of ceremonies at the first-ever Lawn Manor reunion, used these words to describe the beloved community in which he and more than 380 others grew up.

The reunion took place on August 24 at Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah in Wilmette. It was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of 117 Lawn Manorites ranging in age from 62 to 102 and residing in 10 states. The event was the outgrowth of what began as a small monthly social gathering of Gerry and several of his Hebrew School classmates at Lawn Manor Hebrew Congregation, the synagogue led by Rabbi Mordecai Schultz z”l from 1930 until his retirement in 1974.

Dating from 1925, the synagogue was first located at 6641 South Troy Street. It was known as Lawn Manor Community Center and then Lawn Manor Jewish Community Center before it became Lawn Manor Hebrew Congregation and moved to a new building at 6601 South Kedzie Avenue in 1956.

The reunion ceremonies began with a welcoming address by Gerry Silberman, whose family lived in the community until 1976. He noted that the synagogue served a 24-square-mile area of the southwest side (with a north-south spread from 47th to 95th Street and Evergreen Park) and for many years was the only synagogue in the area. Gerry fondly recalled his formative years in the community, centered around the synagogue and anchored by the warm, non-judgmental leadership of Rabbi Schultz. The synagogue was a hub of activity, with a Hebrew School, Sunday School, junior congregation, Jewish Youth League chapter, BBYO groups, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. In addition to fond memories of Rabbi Schultz, Gerry mentioned other memorable synagogue figures: Cantor and choir leader David Squire, Cantor Jack Levy, office manager Dave Giffin and assistant Mrs. Weimer, and teachers Dr. Steiner, Mr. Duchon, Ms. Twersky, and Mrs. Ethel Kass.

Then came a presentation by Rabbi Mordecai Schultz’s son, Rabbi Joseph Schultz, Ph.D., of Brookline, Massachusetts, and a greeting from his daughter, Ruth Schultz Hecktman of Skokie. Rabbi Joe, a congregational rabbi, author, and founder of university Jewish Studies programs, summarized the history of the synagogue and the role of his father in making it the central, binding force of the community.

Rabbi Joe captivated attendees with his memories and insights, from the amusing to the bittersweet, about life in the synagogue, his family, and the community. His father was a master of good relations and was well respected, but the presence of anti-Semitism in the neighborhood presented challenges for the Jews living there. One significant incident, showing his father’s support for civil rights and his “acute political sense and intuitive street smarts” became clarified only in recent years.

At the request of one of the associates of Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr., Rabbi Schultz agreed to allow the synagogue to be used as a safe house in the event of violence during Dr. King’s civil rights march down Marquette Boulevard in the summer of 1964—but only if the agreement remained private. The rabbi wanted to support the march, but he publicly distanced himself from it so as not to put the synagogue and the Jewish community at risk. Unbeknownst at the time to Joe and his sisters, their parents’ annual summer vacation was cancelled that year so that their father could be in town during the march.

Rabbi Joe added to the list of notable synagogue personalities mentioned by Gerry Silberman: Ralph Levin, the program director whom his father had recruited from Congregation Anshe Emet, where Ralph was an assistant to Ben Aronin; Mr. Fadden, teacher-principal of the Hebrew School, cantor and choir director; and Rabbis Moshe Kopperman and David Fox, his father’s former students at the Hebrew Theological College, who succeeded Mr. Fadden as educational directors.

Ruth Schultz Heckelman, an integral member of the reunion committee, thanked the crowd and emphasized the closeness of the community, “Lawn Manor was truly one family. You were part of us and stayed a part of us.” I refer our readers to Ruth’s article on Lawn Manor in the Summer 2011 issue of CJH, posted on the Society website.

The formal ceremonies concluded with the sharing of sharply etched individual memories. One former Lawn Manorite recalled the anti-Semitism of her high school classmates. Another speaker, my brother, Alan Gold, remembered our father Jacob’s involvement in the synagogue’s Israel Bond campaign, headed by Morris Zemsky, in the 1950s. As a young boy Alan accompanied our father and a delegation of other synagogue members to greet Abba Eban, then Israel’s ambassador to the United States and representative at the U.N., upon his arrival in Chicago.

There was animated socializing throughout the event. Old friends reconnected, and attendees of different generations became acquainted. A center of attention was the large display of memorabilia contributed by Lawn Manorites. Thanks to the reunion organizers, the community had an opportunity to remember and celebrate its beloved rabbi and Lawn Manor’s importance for its members and for Chicago Jewry as a whole.

**DR. RACHELLE GOLD** lived in Lawn Manor until age five, when her family moved to the up-and-coming Jewish “shtetl” of West Rogers Park. Dr. Gold is the secretary and a Board member of the CJHS.

**Group and individual photos were taken at the reunion and will eventually be viewable on a website.**
In the summer of 1953, at the urging of Flora Lee Lisse (née Hyman) of Chicago’s Beverly Hills neighborhood, Jews living on the far southwest side of Chicago and in several south suburban communities, including Evergreen Park, Blue Island, and Oak Lawn, decided to create a Reform congregation they named Beth Torah, meaning “Temple of Learning.” All but one of the new officers, including President Morris Price, lived in the Beverly-Morgan Park community. Their first services were conducted in January 1954 by visiting rabbis and lay members. They met in a building in Beverly at 10244 South Longwood Drive that is perched atop the highest natural feature in Chicago, a building known to area residents as “the Castle.” Looking like a medieval stronghold, it is three stories high, built of Joliet limestone, and has crenelated towers. It was built in 1886 and 1887 for Robert C. Givins, a prominent real estate developer, a founder of what is now called the Chicago Association of Realtors, a citizens’ advocate, and a popular novelist. Since 1942, the Castle had been home to another liberal religious group, Beverly Unitarian Fellowship (renamed Beverly Unitarian Church in 1957). Beth Torah held services there on Friday nights beginning in January 1954.

The congregation’s first Bar Mitzvah, that of Alan Goldberg, was held in the Castle on March 25, 1955. Alan recalls giving a short speech so quickly that the rabbi commented, “Welcome to the Jet Age.” The first Torah was obtained by the congregation in honor of Alan’s father, who had passed away a few months earlier. The congregation also held some fundraisers at the Castle. Larry and Rhonda Wollheim were part of the twenty or so members of the Beth Torah youth group. They fondly remember Friday night services in the Castle, especially for the opportunity it afforded them to socialize with other teenagers after the services. Most of the young people of Beth Torah attended public schools where there were few Jewish children. Special events that could not be accommodated in the Castle’s sanctuary, such as High Holiday services,
were held in Beverly’s Trinity Methodist and Bethany Union Churches. Summer services took place in members’ homes. Harve Bogolub remembers that his father, Hyman, blew the shofar during the High Holiday services.

The congregation was quite active. Beth Torah held religious classes first in a building at 10546 South Western Avenue, and for several years, beginning in 1955, at Sutherland Elementary School, a public school in Beverly. Classes met on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Alan Goldberg remembers having confirmation classes in members’ homes. (It should be noted that Reform congregations have confirmation ceremonies that are separate from and in addition to Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.) Beverly resident Barry Finkel recalls attending Hebrew school classes at Bethany Union. The Sisterhood of Beth Torah sponsored activities such as a fashion show at Bethany Union in 1958 and a dinner dance at the Sheraton Hotel in 1959, the same year they held a membership drive party. The Sunday Evening Club sponsored various events, including a hay ride in Palos Park. In 1961, the congregation raised money by putting on a play, “Very Precious Cargo.”

Barry Finkel recalls watching religious programs on television that were led by Beth Torah’s Rabbi Daniel Silver. The Chicago Tribune’s television guide of February 18, 1956, noted in its “Sunday Highlights” a half-hour program called “Faith of Our Fathers” on WGN Channel 9. The information indicated “Rabbi Daniel Silver conducts the services from the Beth Torah congregation of Beverly Hills, Chicago.” The program was broadcast at the same time as the Ed Sullivan show. There were only five television stations in Chicago then. On June 22, 1958, Rabbi Leonard Devine, Beth Torah’s second and longest-serving rabbi, was the host of a fifteen-minute, Sunday morning TV show called “The Pulpit.” His topic was Marriage and the Family.

Of course, a major goal of the congregation was to have its own synagogue, to which end Caesar Wollheim and Eric Otten led the building fund drive. By 1959 there were about 125 member families. That same year a site for the proposed $200,000 synagogue was found. It was a triangular-shaped strip of land wedged immediately south of the intersection of the Rock Island suburban railroad line and the old Panhandle tracks (now Major Taylor Trail) at 91st Street, the base of the triangle following the east-west line of 93rd. (This land may have been purchased because its price would be reasonable, as building a home on that awkward lot would not have been particularly desirable.) Though the building was given an address of 9200 South Vanderpoel Avenue, the street did not run north of 93rd, so the number actually fell on the short driveway constructed up into the property from the south.

Acquiring the land for the synagogue was not a simple process. Permission had to be obtained from the Chicago Zoning Board because lot lines fell so close to the construction. In addition, and not surprisingly, families living in nearby homes protested that inevitable heightened activity there would result in too much traffic on adjoining streets. The congregation prevailed, however, and work began on June 30, 1960, following about two and a half years of fundraising.

The new one-story temple was designed by the firm of Jewish architect Albert R. Belrose, who later designed Malibu East, the well-known condominium building on Sheridan Road. The synagogue included a sanctuary that could accommodate about 180 people, a religious school with seven classrooms, a social hall, library, study, kitchen, and rabbi’s office. The design of the new building, particularly the sanctuary, included sound insulation that muffled noise from passing trains. A portion of this grand space included a bump-out where the organist and choir could perform. The parking lot

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Beth Torah  Continued from page 13

fell between the library/classroom side of the structure and the railroad tracks to the east, with the building's main entrance facing south.

The new temple was completed by October 1961, and during its dedication on the 13th, Rabbi Leonard Devine awarded plaques of appreciation to the ministers of the three churches where services had formerly been held. For the High Holidays in the 1960s, the congregation paid a choir comprised of mostly non-Jews. Larry and Rhonda Wollheim recall that one of the non-Jewish women in the choir, who had five children, was converted by Rabbi Devine. Judy Holz, Rabbi Devine’s eldest child, reminisced about the synagogue and the Hebrew school:

“Looking now at the photos, I see that it was a small congregation, away from the large Jewish population centers…and that the building was quite modest and bare-bones, although I never thought that at the time. It managed to be an active, even thriving congregation.”

“There were probably at least three classes, based on age and previous years of Hebrew. They met for an hour or an hour and a half, twice a week. My dad prepared the Bar and Bat Mitzvah kids with their Torah and Haftorah portions. The Hebrew school teacher and youth advisor was Dan Kaufman.”

One of the problems the congregation faced was vandalism. In 1966 Rabbi Devine noted that the temple had to spend about $1,200 to repair damage, particularly to the windows of the synagogue. They decided to do away with larger, more costly panes, dividing them into smaller sections that would be less expensive to replace. This challenge was not unique to Beth Torah. Public buildings and several churches had also been targeted. Rabbi Devine led a group of ministers to deal with the problem. The group started a letter-writing campaign to members to alert and enlist the help of parents to stop the youthful offenders.

By the late 1960s, the major problem for Beth Torah was its aging membership coupled with a decline in the number of Jewish families living in the Beverly area. Helene and Steve Gabelnick recall moving to Beverly in July 1970, in part because of Beth Torah. They were enthusiastic and committed members, and Steve became its president in 1971. Within a short time, however, only a handful of the ninety-five member families were active, and because so many were older, there were fewer children in religious school.

As a consequence, on September 7, 1974, about a third of the Beth Torah congregation affiliated with the Reform congregation Anshe Sholom in the southwestern suburb of Olympia Fields. The merger brought a new name to the synagogue: Anshe Sholom a Beth Torah. After holding a special service at Beth Torah, members drove to their new home taking with them religious symbols and artifacts of the congregation.

Helene and Steve Gabelnick report that Sabbath services were still held in the Castle once a month for about a year after the merger for those members living in or near Beverly who chose not to attend services in Olympia Fields. Either Anshe Sholom’s rabbi or assistant rabbi led these services. A bus picked up children in Beverly for Sunday school classes at Anshe Sholom.

The Beth Torah building also served as a non-sectarian school before and after the merger. In September 1972, the Beverly Learning Center rented the classrooms of Beth Torah. They held a contest for children to sketch the outside of the Beth Torah building. The drawings were on display at Standard Bank at 2400 West 95th Street in Evergreen Park. On December 31, 1974, the Chicago Board of Education, which had rented the building for classes, purchased it. At that time the building was used as a school to prepare eighth graders for high school, and in 1976 the Board considered using it as a district headquarters. Information obtained from the Chicago Public Schools indicates the building was used through 1978. Anna-Marie Brodsky, one of Beth Torah’s members whose family joined Anshe Sholom after the merger, indicated how upsetting it was to see the building deteriorate.
Four rabbis served Beth Torah from 1954 to 1974: All were graduates of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, where Reform rabbis are ordained. The first was Rabbi Daniel J. Silver, who served from 1954 to 1956. He was a graduate of Harvard University, which has a fellowship named in his honor, and the University of Chicago. He left Chicago to join his father, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, at Temple-Tifereth Israel in Beachwood, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. Abba Hillel Silver was a renowned Jewish spiritual leader. The Temple-Tifereth Israel congregation had a membership of over 2,000 families when Daniel Silver became rabbi in 1963, and it was highly influential in the Reform movement. Daniel Silver remained there as senior rabbi until his death in 1989. He wrote several books, including A History of Judaism (1974, Basic Books).

The rabbi who served the longest at Beth Torah, from 1956 to 1969, and who was spiritual leader when the congregation moved into its new building in 1961, was Rabbi Leonard Devine. In March 1958, Rabbi Devine led an interfaith workshop on Basic Beliefs of Judaism and Christianity sponsored by the South Cook County Interfaith Institute, held by the Inter-Faith Institute at Temple Anshe Sholom, which was at that time located in Chicago Heights. Rabbi Devine’s sermons at Beth Torah were on such topics as Israel, the Jewish view of marriage, tests of character, and Reform Judaism compared to Conservative Judaism.

Rabbi Devine spent several years teaching Judaism to those interested in conversion, and also served as a rabbi at the UAHC camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, where he helped start a tenting program (Tzofim). Rabbi Devine and his family became friends with Beverly Unitarian Church minister Vincent Silliman and his wife, Elizabeth. The Church purchased the Castle in 1942 and continues today as steward of the historic building.

Rabbi Jonathan Brown served from 1969 to 1972. Rabbi Brown graduated from Yale University in 1961 and was ordained from the Hebrew Union College in 1967. When he came to Beth Torah in 1969, he invited his uncle, Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of the Hebrew Union College and a famed biblical archaeologist, to install him in the pulpit, and later wrote a biography of his uncle.

Rabbi Brown served Ohev Sholom Congregation in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for four years. After serving a number of other places, including Temple Israel of Long Beach, California, he retired from the pulpit of Beth El Congregation in Winchester, Virginia, where he now resides.

Rabbi Sherman Stein served Beth Torah from 1972 until it merged with Anshe Sholom in 1974. He later served as rabbi at Temple Sinai, Lake Charles, Louisiana, for 20 years, where he created a project to provide meals to the poor people of the community.

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DVD: ROMANCE OF A PEOPLE: The First 100 Years of Jewish Life in Chicago: 1833-1933. Beverly Siegel, Executive Producer-Director, 1997. Rare film footage, vintage photos, sound recordings, and informative interviews combine to tell the story of the building of Chicago’s Jewish community and its impact on the City of the Big Shoulders. Highlighted is the role of the early German-Jewish settlers in the development of some of the city’s major cultural institutions, the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe, and the founding in Chicago of several national Jewish organizations. One of the most moving segments is actual film footage of the Jewish community’s spectacular pageant, The Romance of a People, presented on Jewish Day at the 1933 Century of Progress. Color and B&W. Running time 30 minutes. DVD $29.95

ROMANCE OF A PEOPLE: DVD and PROGRAM BOOK. In the year 2000, the Society published a facsimile of the 72-page souvenir program for the Jewish Day pageant The Romance of a People. Includes program notes, names of the participants and sponsors, and lots of ads. Walter Roth’s eight-page essay adds a historical perspective. 80 pages. Paper. Special Offer! DVD and Program Book $39.95

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY. Edited by Stephen Norwood and Eunice Pollack. ABC-CLIO, 2007. The encyclopedia’s six-page entry on “Chicago” is by Dr. Irving Cutler. Illustrated. Two volumes, total 775 pages.


NEAR WEST SIDE STORIES: Struggles for Community in Chicago’s Maxwell Street Neighborhood. By Carolyn Eastwood. Lake Claremont Press, 2002. Four extraordinary “ordinary” people try to save their neighborhood and the market at its core. One of them is the flamboyant Jewish clothier and jazz musician, Harold Fox, designer of the first zoot suit. The other highly motivated, sympathetic subjects are Florence Scala, Nate Duncan, and Hilda Portillo, who represent the Italian, African-American, and Mexican communities. Illustrated. 355 pages. Paper.


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JULIUS ROSENWALD: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South. By Peter Ascoli. Indiana University Press, 2006. Historian Peter Ascoli is the Chicago businessman-philanthropist’s grandson. He tells J.R.’s story with professional skill as well as insights that only an insider with access to family records and memories could have. Illustrated with black and white photographs. 472 pages.

THE DOCTORS BECK OF CHICAGO. Second Edition. By Sidney J. Blair, M.D., FACS. Chauncey Park Press, 2013. The Becks visited and adopted the idea of cooperative medicine from the Mayo Clinic, and their North Chicago Hospital was established with this principle. It was the first hospital to do so in Chicago. Black and white photographs. 263 pages. Paper.


AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GLENCOE: The Little Migration. By Robert A. Sideman. The History Press, 2009. While little has been written about Glencoe’s African American heritage, the author discovered ample historical resources to tell the story from the very first days. Illustrated. 126 pages. Paper.

“The Catskills of the Midwest” Three books about South Haven by Bea Kraus. Published by Priscilla Press. Illustrated, paper.


A JEWISH COLONEL IN THE CIVIL WAR: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers. Edited by Jean Powers Soman & Frank L. Byrne. University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Marcus M. Spiegel, a German Jewish immigrant, served with the 67th and 120th Ohio Volunteer regiments. He saw action in Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, where he was fatally wounded in May 1864. These letters to Caroline, his wife, reveal the traumatizing experience of a soldier and the constant concern of a husband and father. (Caroline Hamlin Spiegel was the first convert to Judaism in Chicago.) Illustrated. 353 pages. Paper.


THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AT TEMPLE SHOLOM. By Norman D. Schwartz and Rolf Achilles. Photographs by Rich Master. Design by Dianne Burgis. Temple Sholom, 2001. Twelve sets of brilliant stained glass windows enhance the stately beauty of Temple Sholom of Chicago. The earliest windows were moved to this building in 1928-29 from the congregation’s previous home, and the most recent set was dedicated in 1998, so a wide range of art glass techniques and styles are represented. The co-authors are art historian Rolf Achilles, curator of the Smith Museum of Stained Glass, and Norman Schwartz, Temple Sholom member and past president of the CJHS. 20 pages. Paper.

THE INTERIOR AND ARTIFACTS OF TEMPLE SHOLOM OF CHICAGO. By Norman D. Schwartz and many credited contributors. Temple Sholom, 2011. This second volume of a projected three-volume set describes the ritual and decorative objects inside the Temple. The cost of the project was underwritten by the Moselle Schwartz Memorial Fund. 51 pages. Paper.

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THE ALEXANDRIA LETTER: A Novel. By George R. Honig. Synergy Books, 2010. Cambridge scholar Nathan Tobin discovers an ancient Aramaic letter which contains surprising revelations about the lives of Jesus, John the Baptist, and Paul of Tarsus. If true, the contents threaten to overturn long-held tenets of Christianity. As Tobin races to verify the letter’s authenticity, he faces rejection by his fellow scholars and sinister opposition from within the Church. 329 pages. Paper.


DEPARTURE AND RETURN: Trips to and Memories from Roth, Germany. By Walter Roth. Amazon Kindle, 2013. In the summer of 1938, nine-year-old Walter Roth arrived in Chicago with his immediate family after they escaped Nazi Germany. Growing up in Hyde Park, he was a typical American immigrant teen. However, a trip in 1953 back to Roth, his hometown in Germany, proved to be a turning point on which would begin a lifelong journey exploring his roots. This project grew into the creation of a memorial in Roth to commemorate the Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust, and his continued involvement with his village, to which he has traveled with his wife, Chaya, their children and grandchildren to explore his family’s tragic past. Illustrated, 165 pages. Paper.

New! TONI AND MARKUS: From Village Life to Urban Stress. By Walter Roth. Amazon Kindle, 2014. In this memoir, Roth explores the everyday lives of his father, Markus, and his stepmother, Toni, and other members of the family in Germany and as refugees in Chicago. The interview format allows the reader to hear the story in Toni’s own words and to sense the joys and sorrows she experienced in her 99 years of life. Recipes at the end of the book are part of the family’s heritage. 121 pages. Paper.

A Film by Ethan Bensinger REFUGE: STORIES OF THE SELFHELP HOME (2012, 60 minutes.) Refuge reaches back more than seventy years to give voice to the last generation of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The film traces the lives of Holocaust survivors and refugees who today live in Chicago at Selfhelp, a home that has provided refuge for more than 1,000 elderly Central European Jews since the end of World War II. Told through the eyewitness experiences of Selfhelp’s residents and founders, it is a story of remarkable courage and resilience. www.storiesofselfhelp.film.com
SHORT SEA SAGAS. By Harold Berc. Athena Press, 2000. Extraordinary sea experiences, gathered out of the author’s own readings in maritime lore for over fifty years. Mutinies, unimaginable sinkings, mystery ships sailing for years without crews, ships at sea, accounts of piracy, wartime disasters, and phenomena of the unknown are among the subjects recounted in quick and pungent studies. Berc provides a separate chapter on his own dramatic World War II naval service aboard the USS Washington at Guadalcanal and the USS Reno in the battle of Leyte Gulf, and later as National President of AMVETS. In his long, full life, Harold Berc was a journalist, an attorney, and a valued Board member and benefactor of the CJHS. 190 pages. Paper.

THE CURSE OF GURS: Way Station to Auschwitz. By Werner L. Frank and Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon Kindle, 2012. In an October 1940 aktion, Jews from the States of Baden and the Pfalz/Saar were gathered at Vichy’s Gurs internment camp, then in the Parisian suburb of Drancy, where they faced a final deportation to Auschwitz. 408 pages. Paper.


ETHNIC POLITICS


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