

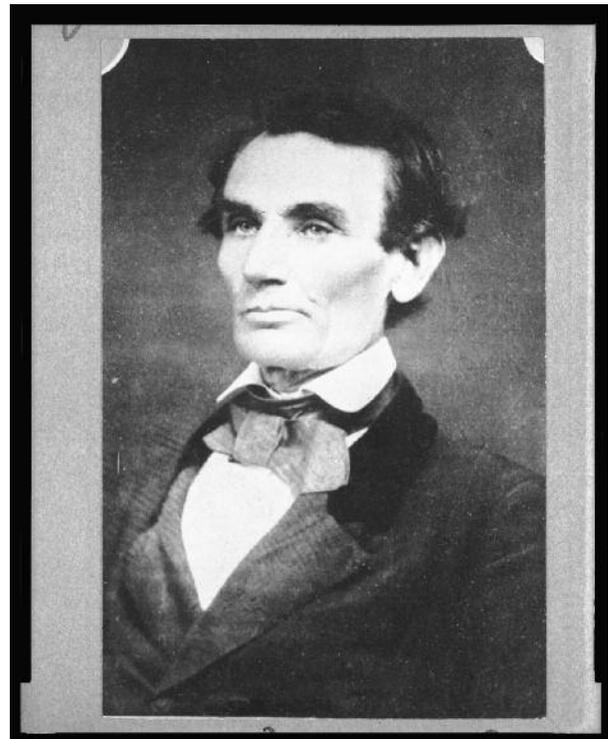


chicago jewish history

Exhibition LINCOLN AND THE JEWS New York Historical Society March 20 – June 7, 2015

“Marking the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and Lincoln’s assassination, this exhibition focuses on the significant, and hitherto unknown, relationships and interactions between Abraham Lincoln and his Jewish friends and associates.”

Since there are many Illinois and Chicago connections in the exhibition, CJHS members might enjoy a post-blizzard-season excursion to enjoy the show and New York City’s myriad Jewish cultural delights. www.nyhistory.org.



Photograph taken by Jewish photographer-friend of Lincoln, Samuel Alschuler, who loaned Lincoln his own velvet-trimmed coat for the occasion. Urbana, Illinois, April 25, 1858. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



Companion book:
*Lincoln and the Jews:
A History.*

By Jonathan Sarna and
Benjamin Sharpell.
(Thos. Dunne Books,
March 17, 2015).

*Oil painting of photographer
Samuel Alschuler. Collection of
his great-granddaughter, CJHS
Life Member Jean Soman.*

**Northwestern University’s Jewish Theatre Ensemble
Presents**

“Toni & Markus” By Walter Roth

featuring Jeff-Award-Winning Actress Roslyn Alexander

Directed by Grace Overbeke (‘18)

*A staged reading of excerpts from Roth’s memoir.
Intimate and revelatory conversations between a child
refugee of the Holocaust and his stepmother.*

Saturday, April 18, 6:00 p.m.

Fiedler Hillel Center, 629 Foster Street, Evanston

Admission free – Refreshments – Q&A with the author

CJHS Open Meetings, Spring 2015

Lecture

HILLEL IN ILLINOIS: A HISTORY

Sunday, May 3, 2:00 p.m.

Guest Speakers: Patti Ray & Rabbi Paul Saiger

Anshe Emet Synagogue

3751 North Broadway, Chicago

Lecture

THE SAUL BELLOW CENTENNIAL

Sunday, June 7, 2:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Richard Reeder *Venue to Come*

President's Column



Edward H. Mazur.

AS I WRITE THIS COLUMN IN LATE FEBRUARY, Chicago's temperature is minus 10 degrees (with the wind chill factor).

This morning I spoke with our Vice-President and Program Chairman Jerry Levin at his outpost on Marco Island, Florida. Jerry, a native Southsider, is intelligent; I, a humble Humboldt Park native, am keeping the home fires burning and keeping ComEd prosperous. Chicago is experiencing the second coldest February in our City's recorded history—exceeded only by the winter of 1875.

I claim no knowledge of that winter. My entire *mishpocha* resided in Bialystok at that time. But enough about the weather! I need space to write my regular appreciation of Jewish holiday food.

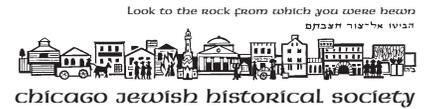
PURIM AND PASSOVER Our Christian friends, especially those who observe Fat Tuesday and Lent, may have their paczkis, but what beats Purim hamentashen from a kosher bakery, with a choice of fruit or poppyseed fillings and soft or cookie dough?

The first Passover Seder is Friday evening, April 3, sandwiched (no *chometz* please!) between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The most popular Passover Haggadah in the United States between 1900 and 1925 was translated by a woman. Before Maxwell House, there was Lillie Goldsmith Cowen (1851-1939). She was the wife of the publisher of the Jewish weekly newspaper, *The American Hebrew*. In 1904, she published the *Cowen Haggadah*, the first mass-produced translation of the haggadah into modern American English vernacular. It became the most popular haggadah in the United States in the first quarter of the twentieth century, with distribution of 295,000 copies by 1935. But I digress. Back to food.

MACHINE-MADE MATZOS Let us consider the great matzo controversy, which revolved around the use of machines for baking matzos. Two of the parties to the controversy in the 1850s, in Europe, were Rabbi Shlomo Kruger of Brody and Rabbi Yosel Shaul Nathanson of Lemberg (now Lviv). Kruger argued that the use of the machine would create additional financial hardships for the poor, who subsidize their meager income by baking matzos for Passover. Rabbi Nathanson argued that Jews did not prohibit the printing press because it put scribes out of work.

Historians agree that one of America's first steam-powered matzo baking machines was located at Cohen's Bakery on Cherry Street in Lower Manhattan. New York journalists wrote that while previous machines "were considered irregular by doctors of Jewish law, with the march of improvement it has been allowed." Currently, in the Chicago area, most Orthodox and many Conservative Jews favor the round, handmade *shmura* matzos for the seders. Machine-made matzos from Israel are popular, as are Manischewitz and Streit's.

Continued on page 18



2015

Officers & Board of Directors

Dr. Edward H. Mazur
President

Jerold Levin
Vice President

Dr. Rachele Gold
Secretary

Marvin Dickman *Z"L*
Treasurer

Leah Axelrod

Rachel Heimovics Braun*

Dr. Irving Cutler

Dr. Carolyn Eastwood *Z"L*

Herbert Eiseman

Elise Ginsparg

Clare Greenberg

Dr. Adele Hast*

Janet Iltis

Jacob M. Kaplan

Mark Mandle

Dr. Stanton Polin

Joan Pomaranc

Burton Robin

Muriel Rogers*

Walter Roth*

Norman D. Schwartz* *Z"L*

Dr. Milton Shulman

Carey Wintergreen

**Past President*

Chicago Jewish History

is published quarterly by the CJHS at 610 S. Michigan Ave., Room 803, Chicago, IL 60605-1901. Phone (312) 663-5634. info@chicagojewishhistory.org. Successor to *Society News*. Single copies \$4.00 postpaid.

Editor/Designer Beverly Chubat
Editorial Board Edward Mazur, Burton Robin, Milton Shulman.

Send all submissions to Editor: electronically to e-mail address or via standard mail to street address. If manuscript is sent via standard mail, enclose SASE.

Jacob M. Kaplan Elected to CJHS Board of Directors



Jacob M. Kaplan.

We welcome Jacob Kaplan. He was elected to a three-year term at a meeting of the Board of Directors. He is a Chicago historian with a particular interest in our city's overlooked built environment. Kaplan is a co-founder and editor at Forgotten Chicago (forgottenchicago.com), a group set up to conduct research, write articles, and conduct tours and lectures focused on Chicago's overlooked history and architecture.

Jacob Kaplan is author of the recently released book, *Avondale and Chicago's Polish Village (Images of America)*, Arcadia Publishing), which recounts the

overlooked history of that multi-ethnic immigrant neighborhood on Chicago's Northwest Side. He is an alumnus of Northeastern Illinois University, where he majored in History and Political Science.

In addition to his history pursuits, Jacob Kaplan is the Executive Director of the Cook County Democratic Party.

At our December 7, 2014, open meeting, before the start of the "American Heroes" program, an election was held. The following Board members were re-elected to a three-year term: Leah Joy Axelrod, Dr. Irving Cutler, Elise Ginsparg, Dr. Rachele Gold, Dr. Stanton Polin, and Carey Wintergreen.

Jewish Theater is Alive in Chicago and Suburbs

As announced on our front page, **Northwestern University's Jewish Theater Ensemble** will present staged excerpts from *Toni and Markus*, the memoir by CJHS President Emeritus Walter Roth. Featured with the students will be a beloved doyenne of Chicago theater, Roslyn Alexander.

Continuum Theater is new on the scene, but as its name shows, it intends to carry forward our city's once-active Jewish performing arts life. Its mission statement describes itself as "an arts organization dedicated to sharing a wide range of Jewish theatrical, musical, and dance experiences with a diverse Chicago audience. Our mission is to serve Jewish continuity by preserving our heritage, energizing our evolving culture, and building community around a love for Jewish performing arts and Jewish learning. Continuum Theater incorporated in 2012 and is a 501(c)3 charity." Coming up:

The Chicago Jewish Play Reading Festival

Sunday, March 8, 7:00 p.m.

THE LAST SCHWARTZ

Stage 773, Chicago

Tuesday, March 10, 1:00 p.m.

ESTELLE SINGERMAN

Temple Sholom, Chicago

Sunday, March 29, 7:00 p.m.

CLOSE TO HOME

B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom,
Homewood

Sunday, April 12, 7:00 p.m.

PARIS TIME

Congregation Solel,
Highland Park

Sunday April 26, 7:00 p.m.

OH, GOD!

Congregation Beth Shalom,
Naperville

*For information and to buy tickets:
Online: [Brown Paper Tickets](http://BrownPaperTickets.com)
By phone (800) 838-3006*

Devorah Richards is Executive Director. devorah@continuumtheater.org

Welcome, New Members of the Society

Beth Hillel Congregation
Bnai Emunah
Wilmette, IL

Willa Bryer-Douglas
Chicago, IL

Richard & Jackie Favish
Mount Prospect, IL

Robert Goldman
Highland Park, IL

Warren G. Hamer
Southampton, NY

Joseph Kolman
Jackson Heights, NY

Rabbi Seth Limmer
Chicago Sinai Congregation
Chicago, IL

Susan Miller
Chicago, IL

Rabbi Frederick Reeves
KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation
Chicago, IL

Bob & Margie Rosenbaum Family
in honor of Norman D. Schwartz
Chicago, IL

David N. Rosenbaum
Pleasant Hill, CA

Fred Rothschild
Northfield, IL

Jeffrey Schesnel
Scottsdale, AZ

Abby Schmelling
River Forest, IL

Marcey Siegel
Chicago, IL

Laura R. Smith
Santa Cruz, CA

Michael Traison
Chicago, IL

Charles Wolf
Chicago, IL

Nina Wolgel
Skokie, IL



John Grunsfeld. NASA photograph.

Hall of Fame Honor for Astronaut with Chicago Jewish Roots

A Chicago native of the Hyde Park neighborhood and a graduate of Highland Park High School, John Grunsfeld, will be inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame this spring, officials with the Kennedy Space Center have announced.

He is the grandson of architect Ernest Grunsfeld, Jr., designer of the original building of Chicago's Adler Planetarium and also the Jewish People's Institute (JPI) on Douglas Boulevard; philanthropist Julius Rosenwald was the architect's uncle. The astronaut's late father, Ernest (Toby) Grunsfeld III, was a noted architect of North Shore homes.

John Grunsfeld's space resume includes eight spacewalks, three trips to repair the Hubble Space Telescope, and flights on the Endeavor, Atlantis, Discovery, and Columbia shuttles.

See him on YouTube—as a child in his Chicago snowsuit and on a Hubble Space Telescope repair mission. Read more about him in the *Chicago Tribune*, February 18, 2015, and in *CJH* Summer 2009.

Northeastern Illinois University 20th Annual Asian and Asian-American Heritage Conference

A Special Presentation by

Professor Xu Xin

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies,
Nanjing University
People's Republic of China



“Chinese Perception of Jews: Why Chinese are interested in Jews and [Our] Culture”

**Thursday, April 2
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Golden Eagles Room
Student Union
Northeastern Illinois
University Campus,
5500 North St. Louis Avenue**

An analysis of Chinese knowledge and attitudes toward the Jews of the 20th century. Most Chinese people are fascinated by the Jews—how we survived, were revived, and have achieved so much in modern times, even though we have been persecuted through the ages. The image of the Jews in the Chinese mind serves as an “other” which remains a mirror for the Chinese to judge or construct themselves, and as a model for them to learn modernization without losing one's traditions.

CJHS Colleagues of Norman Schwartz Share Their Memories



Norman D. Schwartz (1922-2014).
Spertus Institute.

Norman was a *Mensch*

I first met Norman in 1976, at the Museum of Science and Industry exhibit celebrating the United States Bicentennial, where the idea of a new Chicago Jewish Historical Society was first conceived. It was a privilege to know Norman all these years. He was a real *mensch*. I'll never forget his integrity and strong values. He worked tirelessly on causes he believed in. Norman was loyal, faithful, and kind. He was self-effacing, not ego-driven.

Mark Mandle
Member, CJHS
Board of Directors

Errol Magidson will make a presentation on the history of **Beth Torah Synagogue** at the Ridge Historical Society 10621 South Seeley Avenue, Chicago **Sunday, June 14, at 2:00 p.m.**

Magidson tells *CJH* that the Chicago Department of Buildings has documentation that the Beth Torah synagogue, which had been sold to the Chicago Public Schools at the end of 1974, was not torn down until 1999. This means that the Spertus 1983 exhibit of buildings that were former synagogues in Chicago missed Beth Torah.

Norman D. Schwartz: The Chicago Jewish Archives “Go-To Guy”

I remember Norman Schwartz as my “go-to guy” for Chicago Jewish history, my “if-all-else-fails” resource that I knew would come through for me. Back when I first arrived at Spertus, I was fresh out of grad school. I had training in history and library science, but I was a complete beginner where Chicago Jewish history was concerned. I did not grow up in Chicago, and had to learn the neighborhoods along with the history.

I fielded many calls from researchers who were trying to trace their family’s involvement with synagogues that were now closed and largely forgotten. I quickly learned the value of the CJHS two-volume database, *Synagogues of Chicago*, to which Norman contributed, and which we kept handy at the reference desk. When more was needed, I phoned Norman at home. He’d consult his notes and clippings file and tell me what he knew, while I scribbled as fast as I could to get it all in my notes. He generously shared his knowledge and recounted many stories and tidbits of history in our conversations. I would tell our researchers, “I’ve consulted with our local expert,” and they were as appreciative of his knowledge as I was.

Norman had contacts all over Chicago, and he was always on the lookout for synagogues that were about to close, or personal papers that might be available to save for the archives. Many times he called to alert me to a collection we needed to acquire. I would start arranging to pick up boxes of files and photographs, grateful for the tip. Sometimes we walked through a building together with others from the CJHS, looking for forgotten papers and photographs. Many of the small collections in the archives were collected in this way.

Norman often brought in material that he had collected, or that someone else had sent him. He would sit in the library office and open a manila envelope, spreading out his finds and telling me the background story. He brought in yearbooks, programs, High Holiday tickets, photographs, synagogue histories—archival material of every type. Later I would add the new material to the archives. The donations were always recorded with the original owner’s name, and with Norman’s name, on behalf of the CJHS, as the facilitator of the donation. The material he brought to the archives filled in many gaps in the collections, and added pieces of history we never anticipated.

He not only collected documentation of Chicago Jewish history—he created it as well. He traveled through the neighborhoods of Chicago to photograph synagogues, former synagogues, and other buildings.

One example of his efforts was his Chicago Mikvah Project. In 1999, he researched and photographed the exteriors of all known *mikvaot* in Chicago and recorded their addresses. He donated the resulting collection of photographs to the archives, together with a copy of the articles of incorporation of the Chicago Mikvah Association (1974) and an article by the founder of Mikveh Education International. His efforts preserved information that might have been lost forever, and he created a resource that will be valuable to future historians.

Norman Schwartz, as part of the CJHS, was an essential community partner of the archives. Without his knowledge, dedication, and generosity, much of the archival evidence of Chicago Jewish history would have been lost. His willingness to share his knowledge helped me guide the researchers who came to the archives. Our conversations were a pleasure and an education for me. Historians who never had the privilege of knowing Norman Schwartz will be in his debt. I hope that we will all be inspired by his story to continue his efforts to document and preserve Chicago Jewish history.

Joy Kingsolver

Director of the Chicago Jewish Archives
Spertus Institute, 1996-2008

Norman and Moselle Schwartz: An Epic Pair

My great-great-grandfather, Ignatz Jacob Kunreuther (1811-1884) was Chicago’s first rabbi and *shochet*. When Norman and Moselle Schwartz learned that I was unable to find his grave, Norman started “digging.” The death certificate said Graceland Cemetery, but that was wrong. Norman located the grave at a different historic Chicago Jewish cemetery, Mount Mayriv, at Addison Street and Narragansett Avenue.

Moselle took a photograph of the gravestone, a pedestal upon which was an open bible with the inscription in Hebrew and English, “I know that my redeemer liveth” [Job 19:25]. And Norman wrote my name on a cemetery index card.

A few months later, a gentleman came looking for the Kunreuther grave, found my name, and gave it to Steven Kunreuther in New York City. Steven contacted me to say he was organizing a family reunion to take place the following summer. My daughters and I attended. We met family from Israel, Europe, England, South America, and all over the USA.

What a wonderful sequence of events, initiated by Norman and Moselle’s skills, interest, and kindness!

Janet Iltis

Member, CJHS Board of Directors

Report: CJHS Open Meeting Sunday, December 7, 2014

AMERICAN HEROES: Chicago Jewish Veterans of World War II

The open meeting was held at Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette. Program Moderator Fred R. Rosenberg is now editing a video of the slide lecture he gave. The book discussed by author Cyndee Schaffer, *Mollie's War: The Letters of a World War II WAC in Europe*, can be purchased online.

The panel of Chicago area World War II veterans were allotted too short a time to fully speak of their experiences, so we are presenting the memoirs of Irving Cutler (U.S. Navy) and Allen H. Meyer (U.S. Army) here. We hope to publish Sidney Brichta (U.S. Army Air Corps) and Joseph Groner (U.S. Army) in our next issue.

Irving Cutler

In 1942, at the age of 19, and in my junior year at the University of Chicago, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy V7 Officer Training Program. After receiving months of training at various naval facilities in such subjects as navigation, gunnery, damage control, recognition, and anti-submarine warfare, I was sent to the Columbia University Midshipmen's School in New York. After three months of very intensive training there, I graduated and was commissioned an Ensign, later upgraded to Lieutenant (J.G.). The graduates were known as the "90-day wonders."

I was assigned to the destroyer escort USS Stewart (DE 238).

Arriving on the ship, I was amazed by its size—slightly longer than a football field, although smaller and lighter than a destroyer—with eight officers and a crew of 201. As a civilian, my previous boat experience had been in a rented rowboat in the Douglas Park lagoon.

The USS Stewart through the years, in conjunction with three similar destroyer escorts and a destroyer, helped to safely escort numerous convoys, each consisting of about 60 ships loaded with troops and supplies, across the submarine-infested Atlantic Ocean to the European war zones. The naval ships formed a semicircle in front of the convoy, and with our sonar



USS Stewart DE 238.

equipment we were able to pick up any submarines.

With the newly invented radar we were able to keep the ships lined up properly and not running into each other during fog and night blackouts, although there was one collision, when we had to board a freighter to put out a fire.

En route we would change course frequently as Naval Intelligence was good at locating the German submarine wolf packs. Sometimes, in mid-winter, we would be sent north to near Iceland, in very rough seas. That's where I saw an almost-frozen lookout with icicles hanging from his nose. The ship would tilt almost 90 degrees, but always snap back.

When we would return to the United States with a convoy we would usually spend a couple of days practicing chasing submarines off our northeast coast.

After 1943, we practiced by chasing Italian submarines manned by Italian crews, as Italy had surrendered, and the U.S. Navy obtained some of their submarines. We would try to locate the maneuvering subs and pretend to drop depth charges on them.

On the Stewart, I served as gunnery, recognition, and recreation officer. I taught groups of crew members to recognize enemy ships and planes by flashing their photos on a screen—interspersed about every tenth slide by a photo of a

nude woman to keep the men attentive.

As recreation officer, I was able to organize a ship's library, with the men getting library cards, and also arranging for movies almost every night when we were at sea. At various ports I would take our whaleboat with a couple of men and go to places where we could get all the books and movies that we wanted for free. On land, I often arranged for baseball games. I was the umpire.

Being about the same age as most of the sailors, I got along very well with the crew. For years afterwards I remained in contact with some of the crew and officers, but most are gone now. As far as I know, I was the only Jew on the ship. I never experienced any anti-Semitism while I was in the Navy.

When the war ended in Europe, the Stewart was sent to the Pacific war zone, as part of a flotilla around the cruiser Baltimore, to prepare for the invasion of Japan. When the atomic bombs were dropped ending the war, we were sent back through the Panama Canal to be decommissioned and mothballed, with numerous other ships, in the St. Johns River in Florida, south of Jacksonville.

Decades later, while on a vacation trip to Miami, I returned to that site, only to find there were no longer any ships there. Most had been sold as scrap.

By chance, of the 85 destroyer escorts of the same class, the Stewart is the only one to survive, and remains basically intact and is in the Seawolf Park in Galveston, Texas. It is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. If I'm ever in that area, I plan to visit my old ship, aboard which I spent most of World War II, about three years, until I was discharged in 1946. ❖

Allen H. Meyer

For over a year I have spoken of my WWII service on a number of panels of veterans, resulting from my having been a member of a unit which was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2010. The medal is awarded to persons "who have performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipient's field long after the achievement."

Yesterday [December 6, 2014] I enjoyed my 89th birthday. As I had just turned 16 the day before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, I had two years in which to decide my role, if any, in the war effort.

The following June I graduated from Senn High School, having behind me seven semesters of Latin, two semesters of Spanish, and membership in the Greek Club, all preceded by an Orthodox *cheder* education in Hebrew and a light exposure to Yiddish. My dad's graduation gift to me was a German Grammar/Dictionary and a book of German short stories. I spent the summer of 1942 studying them.

That fall I entered Harvard College, qualifying for Intermediate German, in a class full of boys expecting to serve in Europe in some capacity. Then one day the following spring my life was changed. Our instructor interrupted the class to introduce a colleague who told us, in effect, "I know why you are studying German, but there is an even greater need for other languages, in particular, Japanese." He urged us to consider the change. The man was the scholar Edwin O. Reischauer, later to serve as United States Ambassador to Japan.

That summer, back in Chicago, I attended DePaul, studying Physics and Chemistry. Two or three nights a week I traveled down to the University of Chicago to study Japanese with a young lady recently released from the internment camps. As I progressed, she suggested that I enroll in the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for full-time language study until I turn 18, because that was the location of the Army's Intensive Japanese Language School. I took her advice, and with another 17-year-old, Burke Peterson, studied language alongside those already in the service until we joined the Army in early 1944.

Naturally, the Army sent us to the Infantry! The head of the Language program found where Burke and I had been sent and pulled us back to Ann Arbor. We entered late, into a class of over 120, which ultimately graduated and commissioned only 70.

After intensive months in Ann Arbor and more Infantry training in Alabama, we were sent to Fort Snelling, in Minnesota. As the war was winding down, we were being trained in the areas of counter-insurgency and, hopefully, a peaceful Occupation. One of our challenges there was at the radio shack, listening to wire reels of uncoded Japanese Naval messages so scrambled and scratchy that linguists in Washington and Hawaii were unable to make sense of them. On a few occasions, some of my classmates, sons of missionaries, with a knowledge of both street slang and polite phrasing, were successful where others had failed.

A sidebar on anti-Semitism in the Army: certainly we Jews were called vile names during Infantry training, where our cadre tended to be battle-hardened Southern backwoodsmen, but we accepted that as part of our

Continued on page 8

Allen H. Meyer *Continued from page 7*

training, to harden our psyches. But in Alabama, by which time we were already ranked as Corporals, when the Nisei feared repercussions by violating the local morés—were they “White” or “Colored”?—we Jews had them join us in our Enlisted Men’s facilities, whether on-base or in Anniston (a Klan stronghold at the time). Earlier, in Ann Arbor, we Jews had no problems, because we constituted a portion of the student body well above our three-percent of the US population at the time, and we happened to become some of the top students in the program.

Our group arrived in Japan in early 1946. The Surrender had taken place in September, but we were still in the early stages of the Occupation. Even on the Home Islands there were incidents of unrest and disbelief that their leaders had surrendered in a conflict they had been led to believe they were winning.

A few dozen of us came over on a troopship along with a like number of Nisei, and we all settled into the NYK building, facing the Palace, four short blocks from MacArthur’s headquarters in the Dai-Ichi Building. Our building was exclusively for linguists assigned to ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Service), where we lived, worked, and ate our meals. It was truly “Allied.” British, Dutch, Chinese, and Australians were among our roommates.

My first few months’ assignment was to translate periodicals. My team consisted of six or seven Japanese university students, almost fluent in English. Each morning, at 8:00 a.m., our round table was handed a fresh load of newspapers flown in overnight from all over Japan. We were concerned with political, economic, social, and editorial features. If any of us spotted anything unusual, we would all discuss the article, analyze the nuances, and I would bring it to the officer in charge of our floor (consisting of about 25 similar tables). He would alert the interpreters on the 2nd floor, who would summarize our findings.

By early afternoon, articles with significant problems would be carried over to GHQ for further analysis. Yes, it was a form of censorship. Our table was dealing with the same daily newspapers, and occasionally, a few days after our report, we would find a retraction or an editorial review of what we had highlighted.

After about three months of this, I was moved up to the 2nd floor to work on summaries of the daily output. Quite a job for a 20-year-old who barely understood those issues in his own country.

An incident with a Jewish aspect is worth mentioning. Pre-Surrender, one of Japan’s most nationalistic organs was *TOA RENMEI* (All the world under one roof), a propaganda source for booting the white colonizers out of the Far East. While in training we were exposed to some of their publications. During the week or so between the Emperor’s request to surrender and the actual Surrender on the Missouri, groups like this destroyed their records, closed their offices, and disbanded.

However, *TOA RENMEI* issued a final newsletter, stating that “Japan made a fatal mistake by siding with Hitler, when we should have emulated the Jews, who had a history of 3,000 years of survival.” GHQ must have known of this, but for some reason, didn’t suppress it. We surmised that the head of Intelligence (G-2), General Charles Willoughby, had bigger fish to fry.

Born in Prussia, but a member of MacArthur’s innermost circle, Willoughby was later known to be an anti-Semite. However, in January, a reporter for the *Christian Science Monitor* published the article in the States. It was then picked up by the Japanese media and came to the desks of a few of us in different newspapers.

At this point, it could no longer be suppressed. We all reported on it, it made the summaries, and the bigger Japanese papers began to show an interest in the subject—Jews. Some of the Japanese at my table had never heard of Jews and explored the subject with me at length, even though I was by no means an expert.

My team brought our discussions home to their families and friends and came back with more questions than I could adequately answer. We could not oblige their desire to meet one of those people known as Jews, because Willoughby was adamant that his non-Japanese Americans not fraternize with the Japanese.

Sidney Mashbir

ATIS, a small part of Willoughby’s G-2, was headed by Sidney Mashbir, a Jew from New York, who joined the Army in 1910, became a linguist, was sent to Japan as a Military Attaché after WWI, and became widely recognized as a friend of Japan at the time of the disastrous earthquake of 1923, when he was in the forefront of humanitarian aid to the victims.

More than 20 years later, MacArthur brought him to Australia to head ATIS for the next four years. Mashbir made radio broadcasts to Japan, urging surrender, because his name was still well-known there. At the Surrender, if you recall motion pictures of the ceremony, he is the short officer in the cocked hat leading the Japanese delegation up the stairway to the

surrender deck on the USS Missouri. After the Surrender, Willoughby prevailed and selected a successor. No Jew ever headed ATIS again during Willoughby's tenure.

Mashbir returned to the States, resigned his commission, and wrote a book entitled *I Was An American Spy* (Vantage, 1953). He drifted into oblivion. He no longer fit in that inner circle. If you refer to your Hebrew-English dictionary and look up מִשְׁבָּר you'll find that it is a Hebrew word meaning "crisis."

Early in the Occupation, Joe Klein and I took out an ATIS Jeep for our first trip into the Hakone Lakes region, on the way to Mount Fuji. From our Army studies we knew it to have been a popular vacation spot for foreigners during the pre-WWII period. Our first stop was to be Lake Ashi. As we approached it we saw a sign in Japanese directing us to the Hakone Hotel. However, the hotel was now surrounded by a fence.

The MP we approached told us that the current occupants were all Nazis awaiting transport back to Germany. As we sauntered down toward the Lake for a better view of Fuji, one of the prisoners, still in a Nazi uniform, pointed at us and announced to his comrades, with a strange and guttural "J"—"Jude."

Joe, who had been a Brooklyn high school teacher and an athlete, was ready to jump the fence, but he was pushed back by our MP to avoid an incident.

How odd! We were two Jews in US Army officers' uniforms who had come halfway around the world to Japan only to be insulted by Nazis, whom we had thought we were intended to fight, but who were already imprisoned under the protection of our Military Police!

The First Seder

In a lighter vein, a few weeks later, when Joe and I were relaxing in the Officer's Lounge after dinner, our new chief, Colonel Austin, a non-linguist whom Willoughby had chosen to succeed Mashbir, made a rare visit to our off-duty facility, normally frequented by officers of Japanese-American descent. Austin looked around, walked over to us, and asked, "Do you know enough Jewish language to help out at a dinner in a few weeks?"

He then gave Joe the phone number of a Jewish chaplain.

It turned out that a Passover Seder was to be performed for an audience of certain members of the Japanese Diet—probably motivated by the *Christian Science Monitor* article I mentioned earlier. The host was to be a Mr. Eisenberg, a Jew who escaped Germany when Hitler came to power, found refuge in Tokyo, where he developed a successful business and married a Japanese woman. After Pearl Harbor he was kept under house arrest with his wife and their *au pair* servants. He taught the three of them German and a little Hebrew, and in hopes of converting them, wanted to introduce them to a Passover Seder.

None of the four knew any English, but the chaplain gave us some Maxwell House *Haggadot* to help us, and to supply the other guests, a few Army officers well above us in rank. Joe was to read a few lines in Hebrew, then I would read the English and translate into Japanese, then we would reverse roles. The chaplain began by explaining (in English and Yiddish) that questions and interruptions were appropriate. Joe repeated his remarks in Japanese.

Our 25 or so attendees truly

understood that interruptions were appropriate—and we never got beyond The Four Questions.

For example, when Joe got to the *charoses*, one Japanese guest commented that he couldn't understand the connection with mortar. Mr. Eisenberg, in Japanese, then offered an explanation that included the ingredients his mother had used in Germany; Joe then described the contents his mother favored in Brooklyn. Then Mr. Eisenberg looked at me, asking how we made it in "Al Capone's city." I had to admit that my *bubbe* never had occasion to discuss her *charoses* recipe with me!

The chaplain summarized the rest of the Seder, and Joe and I translated his comments into Japanese. A merry, informative time was had by all. Joe and I never had further contact with our host or the chaplain, so we never realized how legendary that Seder became.

In 1973, my wife and I visited Japan on a pleasure trip, and while in Tokyo, went to the new Jewish Community Center to attend a Friday evening service. We arrived early to learn more about the community from Rabbi Marvin Tokayer. He was amazed to meet someone who had participated in that first Seder after the Surrender 27 years earlier.

One last anecdote about Jews: I was working at Ports, doing repatriation work, which occupied most of my 19 months in Japan.

As of September 1945, there were over seven million Japanese, military and civilian, located outside Japan. The Documents of Surrender dictated by MacArthur directed that repatriation be handled by the Home Ministry, using Japanese ships and personnel. Their fleet had been

Continued on page 12

ED MAZUR'S PAGES FROM THE PAST

My source for these selections is the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey Microfilm Collection at the Chicago Public Library Harold Washington Library Center.

In the autumn of 1936 the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey was organized under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Illinois. The purpose of the Survey was to translate and classify selected news articles appearing in Chicago's foreign language press from 1861 to 1938.

Financial curtailments in the WPA program ended the Survey in October 1941. The Chicago Public Library published the work in 1942. The project consists of a file of 120,000 typewritten pages from newspapers of twenty-two different foreign language communities in Chicago.

Yiddish is the foreign language of the Jewish press in the Survey. English language periodicals are also included, as well as the publications of charitable institutions, communal organizations, and synagogues.

PERSIAN JEWS IN CHICAGO IN ZIONIST GROUPS

There is a large collection of Oriental Jews in Chicago who mix or assimilate very little with other Jews. This is mostly on account of the difference in language. Not being able to converse with one another, there cannot exist anything in common between them.

The modern Zionist is compared to the legendary Elijah, the Prophet whose aim was to unite the Jews of the entire world. The leaders of Zion here in the city have arranged a meeting for the purpose of getting better

acquainted with one another. Mr. M. Abrams, secretary of the Executive Committee, Knights of Zion, will be the honored speaker, and will speak in the Hebrew language. A Zion Council of each Chicago Gate is being represented by three delegates. This meeting is for the sole purpose of Zionist publicity in the city....

Rabbi Saul Silber of Anshe Sholom and Mr. Max Shulman will speak on the question of getting the Persians and other Jews united.

Daily Jewish Courier,
May 17, 1914

ENGLEWOOD IS ACTIVE

Dear Editor: Kindly insert in your newspaper the following report on collections from the Englewood War Relief Committee. This organization was launched January 27 of this year, and since then the Committee has collected, from monthly subscribers, the sum of \$2,840.72. This is the total amount collected during the six-month period ending August 1. The president of this organization is Mr. Whithall; Mr. D. Levin is vice-president; and Mr. Herman Liebovitz is treasurer.

Thanking you in behalf of the Englewood War Relief Committee,

I remain

Rabbi Jacob Levinson
Daily Jewish Courier
August 18, 1916

PERMANENT JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS BEING FOUNDED IN CHICAGO TODAY

This evening, a permanent Jewish Historical Society will be founded, which will contribute to the century jubilee of our State. [A printed account will be made] of the contributions of Jews to the success of the State of Illinois in these few generations.

The meeting will be held at eight o'clock in the evening at the Chicago Historical Society Building, Dearborn and Ontario Streets. For the benefit of those present, the rich museum of the Society will be open from seven until ten-thirty, enabling everybody to view the antiques and valuable articles which are to be found there.

Dr. Otto L. Schmidt, president of the Illinois Centennial Commission and Vice President of the Chicago Historical Society, will address the meeting on the very interesting theme: "The Jewish Pioneers Whom I Knew."

The well-known Jewish banker, M.E. Greenebaum, has agreed that his father, Elias Greenebaum, the oldest Jew in Illinois, should be the honorary president of the Jewish Historical Society. Mr. Elias Greenebaum is ninety-five years old.

All those who are interested in Jewish history in general, and the history of Jews of Illinois in particular, are invited to the meeting.

Daily Jewish Courier,
April 30, 1918

MASS MEETING TO PROTEST THE POGROMS IN EUROPE

Negotiations are underway to have the Jewish Welfare Board use its influence to have the Commander of the Great Lakes Naval training Station free all Jewish sailors on Wednesday so that they may participate in the mourning and the mass meeting for protest against the pogroms. The sailors and soldiers will form separate divisions.

A second large division will be that of Jewish women, a third

will be that of children. Jewish women desirous of assisting in this holy work are requested to attend a meeting tonight in the Workers Institute. All Mothers League branches have decided to gather in the Institute tomorrow at 1 P.M. and there organize a division for the procession.

The Joint Board of the Cloak Makers decided that all cloak makers should stop work at 1 P.M. so that they may participate in the march and meeting. Information as to where and when the cloak makers will meet to form their own division, will be announced tomorrow.

The Jewish grocery stores of the West Side have decided to close their stores from 2 to 4 P.M. Jewish Watchmakers will gather Wednesday at 1:30 P.M. on the corner of Wabash Avenue and Madison Street and from there they will march to 12th St. and Robey St. where they will join in the procession.

All Jewish children will participate in the demonstration against the Polish pogroms.

Forward,

May 19, 1919

B. HORWICH AT HIS DESK IN THE RELIEF OFFICE Returning from his travels in Europe to his position as president of the United Jewish Relief Committee with offices at 720 Roosevelt road, Mr. B. Horwich busied himself yesterday dictating letters to the various agents of the organizations composing the committee. He asked them to continue with renewed energies to secure aid for the unfortunate Jews in the war-torn countries.

The regards and letters which Mr. Horwich brought back from

his sojourn in Lithuania and Poland, and which are now being carefully distributed to the addressees, are further proof of how great the need is there....

Besides dictating letters, Mr. Horwich is formulating an appeal which should reach every Jew in Chicago that the ship of food for the starving, which was decided upon at the conference, shall be sent on its way as soon as possible. The plan is to send a ship laden with flour, oil, beans, rice and condensed milk....

Daily Jewish Courier,

July 15, 1919

MAX SHULMAN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNITY STATE BANK

At the last meeting of the board of directors of the Community State Bank, 1637 West Roosevelt Road, Mr. Max Shulman, the well-known Jewish lawyer, Zionist leader, and one of the most popular Jews in Chicago, was elected president of the West side financial institution. Mr. Shulman will take over his new duties right after the holidays. With him at the head, the directors plan to enlarge the bank building and arrange the various departments in such a way that the depositors shall get faster and better service.

... Some prominent Jewish businessmen have entered the bank together with Mr. Shulman.

The Community State Bank is established as a state bank in its own building. Mr. Jacob Gurwitz, a well-to-do businessman with a fine reputation, remains, as before, its vice-president.

Daily Jewish Courier,

October 1, 1921

HISTORY OF THE CHICAGO JEWS

The history of the Jews in Chicago for the last seventy-five years has at last come to light. The material for this history was compiled by the Jewish Historical Society, which will give it to the public in connection with the celebration of the day, seventy-five years ago, when the first Jew came to Chicago.

The History of the Jews, which has been published at much effort and expense, owes its appearance to the untiring work of Mr. Hyman L. Meites, who spent five years at the difficult task, in the Jewish Historical Society, an organization founded in 1918 for the purpose of writing it. The Society's first president was Julius Rosenwald. This position is now occupied by S.J. Rosenblatt.

Only three thousand copies of the book will be published.

The history contains all the activities of the Jews from the time of the first Jew settling in Chicago until this day. Copies will be distributed to all members of the Jewish Historical Society at our meeting next Monday night, as well as to news-paper publishers, libraries and colleges. Very few copies will be sold.

President Rosenblatt declared that the task of writing this book was a very difficult one, but that the results are worth the trouble." "I feel," said Rosenblatt, "that this book will be kept sacred by all Chicago Jews because it is a memorial to their marvelous participation in the growth of Chicago.

Forward,

January 21, 1924

Our CJHS is proud to have reprinted the book in 1990.

Allen H. Meyer

Continued from page 7

decimated during the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns, so the process started very slowly. Ports were a low priority for our linguists, who were kept busy in Tokyo or spread out to assist Military Government and CIC units.

When GHQ realized that potential war criminals and trouble-makers were beginning to return undetected, ATIS organized small teams to be sent to the 10 ports. Seven Nisei and I were sent to Uraga (the closest port to Tokyo for repatriation) from Spring 1946 off-and-on through the end of the year.

Two incidents attracted media attention. One involved a ship coming from Europe, carrying mid-level diplomats, whose diaries we started to translate and confiscate for use in War Crimes Tribunals, linking Japanese to the Nazis. Another was the arrival of the *Katsuragi*, an aircraft carrier which sailed from Singapore and picked up Imperial soldiers from the Dutch East Indies. These men were still armed, having been used by the Dutch and British to fight the insurgents who ultimately liberated Indonesia.

The more than 6,000 men aboard looked down in wonderment at the eight of us, reaching from our fishing boat for the rungs to climb to the base of the stairs, carrying dictionaries and papers on our backs—but no weapons.

When we finally arrived at the flight deck, some 700 officers were called to attention, and the adjutant of General Kunomura (famous for his role in taking Singapore) offered me his sword. I demurred, thanking him, and stating that demobilization would take place as they disembarked; we were there to welcome them back to a new and

democratic Japan.

This may have fallen on deaf ears (the officers were still armed), but a few did walk up to us to identify some bad guys among the passengers, many of whom looked upon our Nisei as “traitors to our race,” and as rural emigrants who had left one or two generations ago. So the eight of us, unarmed, were not inclined to do any interrogations or search for diaries, but waited until we were ashore and could ask the Demobilization staff to help us locate the potential war criminals among the 6,000 men.

The return of the war criminals from Europe and the the armed troops aboard the *Katsuragi* were considered newsworthy by the Japanese media, our *Stars and Stripes*, and foreign correspondents, but no mention was made of the eight of us. All credit was given to the First Cavalry, which actually had no connection to either event. Yet we were pleased that they were a presence in the region, for counter-insurgency was always a possibility, especially among those recently returned to Japan bereft of their ill-gotten gains and embittered by the loss of a war they came to feel should be blamed on someone among their allies.

Unlike European war criminals, who tended to melt into communities around the world, Japanese could not disguise themselves in alien regions, and most of them were rounded up with relative ease. But by the end of 1946, repatriation work was about to take a new course. The Cold War was coming to Japan and was a cause for concern at GHQ.

The Soviets were holding a million Japanese nationals, primarily as slave labor in Siberia, and they were beginning to allow some of them to trickle back—those they

had tried to indoctrinate—to join Communists like Tokuda and Nozawa, who had returned early in the Occupation.

In December 1946, about 150 linguists gathered in Kyoto. About half were to go to Maizuru (and its established Naval base). The rest would be sent to Hario, a small island off Sasebo, where Army engineers were dumping Quonset huts on clay to form a new base.

Soviet and Japanese ships began arriving at Hario and Maizuru, bringing back the Japanese they had been using as slave labor for the past 11 months. The Japanese had built an industrial giant in Manchuria from 1931 to about 1942. In a few months after August 1946, the Soviets used Japanese to dismantle and accompany the plants and equipment to Siberia, which they then reassembled throughout the area and west to the Urals.

It was a massive project, but once it was done, the POWs became a drain on the resources of the USSR, and shiploads of Japanese began returning. (It would take them a few years to send back the more than 800,000 survivors.)

Moscow quickly learned what we were doing at Hario and Maizuru—learning of heretofore unknown military bases, airfields, roads, caves, communities, new industry, and population shifts, and finding out who they had indoctrinated. Moscow had no idea how cooperative these repatriates were in all important aspects.

Granted, a small number had been successfully indoctrinated, but we now knew who they were, and by our friendlier approach were able to influence some of them to consider a non-Communist way of thinking.

Birobidzhan

One day, a few of us noticed a strange phenomenon. There was an upswing in favorable comments about the Reds in a particular area. The POWs were being treated like human beings by the inhabitants.

It was a forested area. The POWs were being used, under horrible conditions, to help the indigenous population in cutting down the trees and loading the wood onto nearby trains. The local Russians treated the POWs as fellow-sufferers, bound to jump whenever the soldiers yelled, and the two groups empathized with each other. We had no idea who these people were until we superimposed a map printed in English over the Japanese maps, and discovered that this region north of the river was the small Jewish Autonomous State to which Henry Ford had urged the world to isolate all Jews. [See other sources for a comprehensive history of Birobidzhan.]

The POWs didn't understand who the compassionate people were until one of them recalled that the soldiers occasionally ordered their fellow laborers around by spitting out the pejorative Russian slang word for Jew. When two of us identified ourselves as Jews, some of the POWs flocked to us to describe everything they knew about their earlier locations of servitude in Siberia.

Fortunately we never had to engage in war with the USSR, but if it had happened, our GHQ now knew of a small pocket in the taiga where the US might find friendly inhabitants. ❖



ALLEN H. MEYER *After his 19 months of service in Japan, Allen returned home to graduate from college and law school. He recently retired from law practice after 63 years. He married Suzanne Novak in 1952. They have three children and four grandchildren. In the summer of 2000, Allen guided our summer tour: "Living Waters: a Tour of Jewish History in North Central Illinois," and we published his narration in the Year-End 2000 issue of our journal. Sue and Allen Meyer reported on our "Catskills of the Midwest" tour in the Fall 2005 issue. They are longtime members of the Society.*

CJHS "AMERICAN HEROES" PROGRAM

Sunday, December 7, 2014

Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, Wilmette, IL



Moderators Cyndee Schaffer Schwartz and Col. Fred R. Rosenberg.



Panelists (left to right): Irving Cutler, Allen Meyer, Sidney Brichta, and Joseph Groner.



President Ed Mazur conducting the Q&A.
Photographs by Doug Schwartz.

Jewish Spain and Portugal: A Visit to Our “Older Neighborhoods”

BY EDWARD H. MAZUR

An important part of our Society’s historical mission is conducting tours of Chicago’s old Jewish neighborhoods. Last November, my wife Myrna and I traveled farther afield to explore some earlier dwelling places of our People.

In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain expelled the Jews of their country. In 1497, King Manuel I, the ruler of their Iberian peninsula neighbor, Portugal, expelled the Jews from his land. Currently, both countries, members of the European Union, proclaim the lengthy saga of their Jewish denizens.

When Myrna and I visited both countries, we were surprised by the activities being supported, and sites being visited, by our co-religionists. Our journey took us to Barcelona and Girona in Spain; and to Lisbon, Porto, and Ghimaraes in Portugal. In each of these cities tours of the Jewish areas are offered. There are synagogues or vestiges of synagogue structures, Jewish museums, kosher restaurants, or available kosher food, and small, but growing, Jewish communities.

Barcelona From the late fifteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, reportedly there were no Jews in Barcelona. Currently, the city has a population of approximately 4,000 Jews (about 1,000 families), and one “Jewish” school, from pre-school through the 5th grade. Barcelona has four synagogues located in the city’s suburbs. Two are Orthodox and two are Reform.

The main street for strolling in central Barcelona, for visitors as well as natives, is La Rambla. It reminded us of *shpatsiring* down Roosevelt Road, Lawrence Avenue, and Devon Avenue in their Jewish heydays. Within two blocks of our hotel, on La Rambla, we found the Maccabi Kosher Restaurant. We looked inside, studied the menu, and observed that every seat was occupied.

It was there that we met Rabbi Dovid Lieberman, a native of Venezuela, who, in addition to being the Chabad Rabbi and *mashgiach* of Barcelona, is also the community *mohel*. The restaurant’s owner is an Israeli Jew who also owns two adjoining restaurants: one proclaims that it is *halal*; the other is “Mediterranean.”

Rabbi Lieberman invited us to join him for a nosh, and then took us on a tour of the oldest Jewish area, the *Call*. These quarters in Catalan cities contained synagogues, *mikvaot*, bakeries, slaughterhouses and other institutions of Jewish life.



**Myrna Mazur, Rabbi Dovid Lieberman, and Ed Mazur.
La Rambla, Barcelona, Spain.**

Rabbi Lieberman explained that in 1996, an excavation in a warehouse building revealed a stone that had the Hebrew word *chai* inscribed. This initiated the momentum for the organization of a group called *Associació Call de Barcelona* that began to develop the site of the former *Sinagoga Mayor* (Main Synagogue).

In 2002, a museum opened on the site. It is currently staffed by Israeli students and Barcelona residents, Jewish and non-Jewish. The synagogue/museum consists of two small rooms whose walls date from the thirteenth century.

The second room is the focal point of this medieval synagogue. By our standards it is a small space, approximately 4 by 20 feet, to conform with what the Spanish authorities permitted at that time. Originally, the synagogue had two large open windows in the southeast wall that direct the visitor’s gaze toward Jerusalem. This room has a large menorah of forged iron, donated to the synagogue by a Majorcan artist, Ferrain Agullo, in memory of his ancestors.

In the last decade, archeological researchers have uncovered the names of Jewish owners of vineyards and the location of the city’s Jewish cemetery on a mountainside called *Monjuic* (Hill of the Jews). Today, the cemetery site is home to an amusement park and public walking and viewing areas.



**Sign at the entrance
to the Call, the oldest
Jewish area of
Barcelona, Spain.**

Girona Rabbi Lieberman urged us to visit the nearby walled city of Girona, a well-preserved medieval town about 36 miles from Barcelona. Girona's *Call* is a tiny area approximately four blocks long and two blocks wide that houses the Museum of Jewish History.

As we wandered the museum, we met a group of Israeli tourists from various moshavim, who gathered in the courtyard proudly displaying the Israeli flag, taking photographs, and singing. They were guided by a transplanted university student from Tel Aviv.

The galleries in the museum took us through the history of Jewish Catalonia, with rooms dedicated to the intellectualism of Jewish Spain, the Kabbalah Circle of Girona, Nahmanides (*Ramban*) and other important thinkers who lived there. Nahmanides was born in Girona around 1194. Towards the end of his life, he went to Israel, from where he wrote letters expressing his longings for Girona. He died in Akko around 1270. The entire top floor focuses on the Inquisition.

The museum is home to the Nahmanides Institute for Jewish Studies, funded by the Girona Cultural Council. The Institute is basically a library that offers lectures and discussions.

Surrounding the museum there are several stores offering an abundance of Jewish ritual and ceremonial



Israeli tourists at the Museum of Jewish History, Girona, Spain.

giftware. Nearby, a recent archeological dig has led to the discovery of the remains of the water drainage system and other components believed to be part of Girona's Jewish ritual baths.

Lisbon The capital of Portugal has an estimated Jewish population 1,000. During World War II, Portugal was neutral and attracted numerous refugees fleeing the Nazis. Our time in Lisbon was limited, and we could find only one Orthodox synagogue. But as we wandered the narrow and winding streets of the *Alfama* district, in the oldest part of the city, we encountered a

building that had a large sign announcing that it was the future home of the Jewish Museum of Lisbon.

In Lisbon proper, there is one Chabad synagogue/meeting place. Even in medieval times, the city did not have more than four synagogues.

Porto From Lisbon, we journeyed to Porto, the second largest city in Portugal and the departure point for Douro River cruises. After cruising for seven days (and drinking more Port wine—ruby, tawny red, white, and vintage—than anyone should), Myrna asked our boat concierges, Paulo and Sonia, if there was a Jewish presence in Porto. Sonia told us that her family had recently discovered that they were *conversos*. She said that she would be delighted to arrange for us to meet with members of the Porto Jewish community at the *Sinagoga Kadoorie Mekor Haim*.

That afternoon, upon returning to our cabin aboard the Queen Isabel, we found a printed invitation to meet with the Vice-President of the Jewish Community of Porto at 6:30 p.m. *Oy vay!* This would be Saturday night, and by this time in our trip our clothing was rather wrinkled. I did not have a jacket or tie—but this was an opportunity that no self-respecting scholar, historian, and Chicago Jew could let pass.

Our taxi deposited us in front of the synagogue. Waiting for us on a dark, rainy *Motzaei Shabbat* was Mr. Hugo Miguel Vaz, of the *Comunidade Israelita Do Porto*, who proceeded to give us a private tour of the synagogue. We spent several hours talking about the history of the Jews of Porto and of Portugal.

We learned that Porto has several synagogues, but other than the Kadoorie, all are located in the outlying and suburban areas. The synagogue had 5,000 visitors in 2013 and almost 10,000 in 2014.

The Kadoorie Mekor Haim is the largest synagogue on the Iberian Peninsula and the center of the Porto Jewish community. It was established by Jews of various nationalities in 1923 under the guidance of Artur Carlos de Barros Basto and the Community of Portuguese Jews in London, England.

Ironically, the synagogue opened in 1938, the very same year that *Kristallnacht* was perpetrated on the Jews of Germany. The closest neighbor to the Kadoorie Synagogue was a German school. The Portuguese authorities quickly planted large trees between the synagogue and the German school.

Kadoorie is the surname of Jews from Hong Kong who donated the funds needed to complete the building, and it is named in honor of a deceased family

Continued on page 16

Spain and Portugal

Continued on from page 15

member, Laura Kadoorie, who was descended from Portuguese Jews. *Mekor Haim* in Hebrew translates as “source of life.” Laura’s husband, Sir Elly Kadoorie, who died in 1944, is still named Honorary President of the Jewish Community of Porto.

The synagogue is Orthodox and includes a main prayer room, a museum, a schoolroom, a mikveh, a library, a community dining room, a kitchen, a pantry to hold kosher food, and a patio on which a sukkah is built for the Sukkot holiday.

There is an apartment for the rabbi, Daniel Litwak, a native of Argentina, who divides his time between Porto and a synagogue in Ashdod, Israel, and for the *shamash* of the synagogue. If a *mohel* is needed, they contact the Jewish community in Golders Green, London, England.

The current synagogue president is a woman. She sits in the women’s balcony during services. The synagogue will celebrate both a *bar mitzvah* and a *bat mitzvah* this year.

Dr. Vaz told us that the earliest documentary references to Jews in Porto date back to the twelfth century. At that time, to live in Porto, Jews needed an authorization from the Bishop of Porto. Over decades, a high-walled area came to form the Jewish Quarter. The inhabitants could not leave without special permission. The houses within it had no exit from the Quarter. The *Call* had its own officers and a certain degree of autonomy, including its own courts to resolve Jewish issues.

In 1492, thirty families of Jews expelled from Spain, led by Rabbi Isaac Aboab settled in the Jewish Quarter by royal order of the Portuguese King Joao II. In

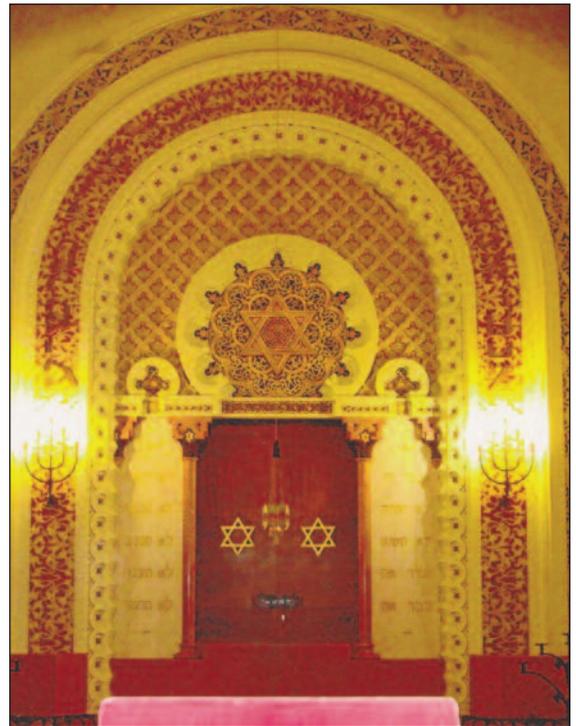
December 1496, the Edict of Expulsion of Jews from Portugal was signed by King Manuel I. It appears that Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Aragon demanded the expulsion of Jews in return for allowing their daughter, Elizabeth, to marry the Portuguese King. Scholars estimate that approximately twenty percent of Portugal’s population was Jewish at that time.

The general forced conversion that followed the Edict of Expulsion officially ended the Jewish presence in Portugal until the twentieth century. In fact, the former Jewish Quarter became, and is designated today, as *Vitoria* (Victory), a possible allusion to the “victory” of Christianity over Judaism.

A Court of the Inquisition was active in Porto between 1542 and 1544, and during this period there were two *autos-de-fe* (public penance ceremonies), and an estimated 100 New Christians were punished for maintaining Jewish practices. The number of crypto-Jews at that time was certainly much higher. In 1618, an Inquisitorial Visitation led to the detention of 150 New Christians. Historian Cecil Roth has written that “a new generation had grown up without the knowledge of the traditional language of the prayers and without literature to guide it.”

Artur Carlos de Barros Basto In 1920, Captain Basto, a career Portuguese army officer, a veteran of the trenches of Flanders during World War I, and a poison gas attack survivor, who was of Crypto-Jewish descent through his father, and the son of a Catholic mother, converted to Judaism before a Rabbinical Court in Tangier, Morocco, was circumcised, and decided to reside in Porto. In 1910, when the Republic of Portugal was established, Barros Basto had raised the Republican flag in the city.

Prior to moving to Porto, Basto had lived in Lisbon and married Lea Israel Montero Azancot, a member of Lisbon’s Jewish community.



Exterior (above) and Interior (Holy Ark and Bima), Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, Porto, Portugal.

Their granddaughter, Isabel Ferreira Lopes, is the current vice-president of the Jewish Community of Porto.

When Basto was young, his dying grandfather revealed to him that he had Jewish ancestors. In 1904, Basto became aware of the existence of other Portuguese Jews when he read a newspaper article about the inauguration of the Shaare Tikva Synagogue in Lisbon.

Years later, when, as a soldier, he was ordered to attend a course at the *Escola Politecnica de Lisboa*, Basto attempted to become a member of Shaare Tikva. The synagogue leaders did not grant him permission.

In 1921, he returned to Porto with his wife. There they found approximately two dozen Jewish merchants who had immigrated from Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Russia.

In 1923, under Basto's leadership, the Jewish Community of Porto and the Israelite Theological Center were organized with the main purpose of reviving the public practice of Judaism. So, ironically, the prayers were offered primarily not by Sephardim but by Ashkenazim.

The group rented an apartment and transformed it into a synagogue. Within weeks, they were besieged by numerous Portuguese citizens seeking membership. Barros Basto traveled from town to town by car,



Inquisition mark inscribed on homes of New Christians who were suspected of secretly practicing Judaism. Guimaraes, Portugal.

on foot, or on horseback determined to bring crypto-Jews into the fold. He founded numerous Jewish communities in rural areas.

Cecil Roth called him the "Apostle of the Marranos."

Basto's mission faced enormous problems—from the fears of crypto-Jews to the fury of Catholic priests.



Barros Basto and Lea Azancot, n.d.

For example, in the eyes of the Church, any action that would "steal" its baptized children was considered sacrilegious.

In the early 1930s, the Jewish community began building a synagogue. Local journalists referred to it as "a piece of Palestine" carved into Porto. The synagogue was dedicated on January 16, 1938, with Jewish representatives from Lisbon, Braganca, and Covilha in Portugal, and London and Berlin.

Captain Barros Basto, a republican, was considered *persona non grata* by the dictator Antonio Salazar, who ruled Portugal at the time. The Army stationed him far away from Porto as punishment.

In 1937, Basto was dismissed from the military for allegedly participating in circumcision

ceremonies of the students of the Israelite Theological Institute of Porto. The incident would become known as the "Portuguese Dreyfus Case." The Supreme Council of Military Discipline asserted that Basto "had no moral capacity for the prestige of his function and the decorum of his uniform." Basto was disgraced and left without resources. The Jews felt that they had lost their leader and feared for their future. With the growing virulence of anti-Semitism in Europe, many returned to clandestine religious practice.

In the run-up to, and during World War II, Basto found a new cause. Jewish refugees from Western and Central Europe were arriving in northern Portugal in desperate straits. He organized a Committee of Moral and Material Assistance to aid them in rebuilding their lives in Porto. Many of the handwritten and printed documents from this period are located in the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue and in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Basto died in 1961. Efforts by his wife, daughter, granddaughter, and other supporters, led to the Portuguese Parliament's unanimous declaration on February 29, 2012:

Barros Basto was separated from the Army due to a general climate of animosity towards him, motivated by the fact that he was Jewish and not hiding it, but, on the contrary, showing an energetic proselytism, converting Portuguese Marrano Jews and their descendants.

Abraham Israel Ben-Rosh (Barrox Basto's Hebrew name) is commemorated on a plaque on Porto's *Rua da Vitoria*. ❖

President's Column

Continued from page 2

WINE OR GRAPE JUICE

In addition to the matzo controversy, there was the so-called "Grape Debate." Wine at the seder is associated with freedom. Slaves were not permitted to drink wine. The four cups of wine are associated with four expressions of freedom and redemption.

When the 18th Amendment went into effect in January, 1920, Prohibition threatened to eliminate this symbol of religious freedom from Jewish ritual life. Jews in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States, found themselves embroiled in a battle both with the U.S. government and with each other. Sacramental wine would be permitted for Jews, but the new law required special government permits to make it, and, in some cases, to import it.

These permits became a major target for organized crime. Congregations that existed only on paper applied for permits. This received substantial negative press and became a source of concern and embarrassment for the Jewish community. Chicago's Jewish newspapers regularly filled columns with editorials, articles, and reports about these mysterious congregations and their leaderships.

Much of the attention by the authorities was directed at small immigrant congregations and *shtibel* shuls. Blame was laid squarely at the feet of Orthodoxy. This led to one of American Jewry's interdenominational crises.

Conservative and Reform rabbis volunteered to give up their wine-making permits, claiming that grape juice could be substituted for the "real drink" without violating Jewish law. Some Orthodox rabbis agreed that under certain circumstances grape juice could be substituted for wine, but stated that wine was preferred for healthy adults.

When some Reform Jews asked that permits be abolished, saying "Let the Orthodox drink grape juice,"—Orthodox Jews accused Reform Jews of betrayal, and worse.

With the end of Prohibition in 1933, the diverse American Jewish communities muted their differences and banded together to face Nazism.

COCA-COLA AND KASHRUTH

(Growing up in a kosher household, the favorite libation of my childhood was limited to fizzy drinks that came in an Old Colony bottle.) The formula for Coca-Cola ranks with the most zealously kept secrets.

Tobias Geffen of Atlanta, an Orthodox rabbi, who served Atlanta Jewry from 1910 until his passing in 1970, is responsible for Coca-Cola being kosher. Geffen, a native of Kovno, Lithuania, became rabbi of congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta, the headquarters of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. He was asked by rabbis from around the United States if the drink was kosher.

In 1935, Geffen contacted the company and asked for a list of Coke's ingredients. He did not realize that the formula was such a closely guarded secret. Eventually, Coca-Cola made a corporate decision to allow Geffen to access the list of ingredients. He was required to give them his word to never reveal the secret to anyone else. Rabbi Geffen agreed.

The formula included traces of grain alcohol. Anything derived from grains is potentially *chametz*. (I really did pay attention at Yavneh Talmud Torah, corner of Rockwell and Hirsch Streets, directly across from Von Humboldt Grammar School.) So Coca-Cola could not be certified Kosher for Passover even after the original formula was changed to include vegetable glycerin.

Eventually, the chemists at Coca-Cola experimented and found that, during Pesach, they could substitute sweeteners produced from beet and cane sugar without compromising Coke's taste. This Kosher for Passover Coca-Cola is manufactured with new sugars several weeks before Passover each year and is sold in special bottles with yellow caps.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

This year, *Yom ha-Shoah* is Thursday, April 16. One of the most unforgettable experiences in my life was when I was visiting my daughter Amanda in Israel when she was a student at Tel Aviv University, and I was there on Holocaust Remembrance Day. In Israel, a siren is sounded at 10 a.m. for two minutes throughout the country. The entire population stops whatever they are doing. Everybody pauses to remember the victims of the Holocaust.

WITOLD PILECKI

Very few of us are familiar with the name Witold Pilecki. He was an officer in the Polish resistance to the Nazi regime who deliberately let himself be captured by the Germans in

1940 so that he could gather information about Hitler's concentration camps. Inside Auschwitz, Pilecki set up resistance cells even as he almost died of starvation, torture, and disease. He helped build a radio transmitter, and, in 1942, he broadcast to the outside world accounts of atrocities inside Auschwitz, as the guards frantically searched the camp looking for the transmitter. He worked to expose the Nazis' depraved medical experiments, savage camp punishments, and the crematoria, in hopes that the world would act.

In April 1943, Witold Pilecki escaped from Auschwitz and wrote an eyewitness report laying out the horror of the extermination camps. He campaigned unsuccessfully for an Allied attack on Auschwitz. Eventually he was tortured, and executed—not by the Nazis, but after the War, in 1947, by the Communists. They then suppressed the story of his heroism for decades. His account was finally published in 2012 as *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery*, translated by Jarek Garlinski (Aquila Polonica).

“THE PASSENGER” Lyric Opera of Chicago is currently staging a production of composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg's “The Passenger,” at the Civic Opera House. Joining the cast for the final opening night curtain calls was Zofia Posmysz, the 91-year-old Polish author and Auschwitz survivor on whose novel of the same name Weinberg and his librettist, Alexander Medvedev, based their 1968 opera.

2015 is the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps. Perhaps the best way to honor past victims of atrocities is to stand up against slaughter today, with concrete efforts. Our world leaders are excellent at giving eloquent “never again” speeches, but rarely offer much beyond this lip service. Humanitarian crises rarely offer good policy choices, but we seem all too eager to embrace the worst option—paralysis. I think that the basic lesson for us to consider is that humans are capable of astonishing evil, and that some individuals respond with heroism—while too many in our world find it is too easy to acquiesce.

I WISH YOU ALL A MEANINGFUL

PASSOVER And I look forward to greeting you at the Society's upcoming open meetings on Sunday, May 3, and Sunday, June 7, when this winter will have given way to a warm and sunny springtime.

Remembering Marvin Dickman



The members of the Board of Directors of the CJHS mourn the passing of our treasurer, Marvin J.

Dickman, B.S., M.A.S., M.S., on January 19, 2015. Although the Board had the privilege of his professional expertise and camaraderie as a colleague for too short a

time, Marvin and his wife, Susie (nee Merlander), were active members of our Society for many years.

His professional achievements, commitments to the community, and educational enthusiasms were many. He spent his entire career of 35 years as a CPA at Arthur Andersen & Co. He was admitted to the partnership in 1976, using his expertise in small business and tax. Upon his retirement from AA&Co, he studied for a degree in Jewish Studies at the University of Chicago. He then taught Jewish History at several synagogues and JCCs.

Marvin was a former member of the Board of Directors of the Juvenile Protective Agency, The Museum of Broadcast Communications, Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute, Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim, The National Board of URJ, (formerly UAHC), and Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion Board of Overseers. He served as president of the Board of Jewish Education of Metropolitan Chicago 1989-1991, and on the Illinois Humanities Council (appointed by Gov. Quinn).

A student of Jewish history, he was a member of The Ezra Consortium of the American Jewish Archives. A devotee of the theater and an aspiring playwright, he was a board member of Chicago Dramatists. An old-time radio enthusiast, he enjoyed presenting public readings of vintage program scripts.

Rabbi Emeritus Mark Shapiro of BJBE recalled: “He was ethical, absolutely. His children were taught that you didn't cut corners. He wanted to learn more and more, studied with our clergy here, took the HUC para-rabbinic program, went to *Ulpan Akiva*, where he fulfilled his desire to be more at home in modern Hebrew. He and I studied Hebrew novels together.... May God grant us leaders and teachers with Marvin's backbone and Jewish *neshama*.”

He is survived by wife Susie, daughters Alyssa Dickman and Rabbi Reni Dickman (Aaron Nessel) who serves Sinai Temple, Michigan City, Indiana, and grandchildren Gabriel and Tori.

Look to the rock from which you were born
הביטו אל-צור חצבתכם



chicago jewish historical society

610 South Michigan Avenue. Room 803 • Chicago, IL 60605-1901

Non-Profit Org.
PRESORT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 6590

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Lincoln and the Jews**
- **Irving Cutler and Allen H. Meyer: Memories of WWII Service**
- **Spain and Portugal: Our “Older Neighborhoods”**

Our History and Mission

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 by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the American Jewish Congress. Two years after celebrating our “double *chai*,” the Society’s

About the Society

unique mission continues to be the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open meetings, tours, and outreach to youth. The Society does not maintain its own archives, but seeks out written, spoken, and photographic records and artifacts, and responsibly arranges for their donation to Jewish archives.

Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials The card design features the Society’s handsome logo. Inside, our mission statement and space for your personal message. Pack of five cards & envelopes \$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. You may also order online at our website.

Visit our website — www.chicagojewishhistory.org

All Issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present have been digitized and posted on our website in pdf format.

Simply click on “Publications,” and scroll down through the years. There is an Index to the issues from 1977 to 2012.

Pay Your Dues Online

Visit our website to pay dues via credit card or PayPal, or use the printable membership application to pay by check.

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations, and includes:

- A subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is \$10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- 10% discount on purchases at the elegant Spertus Shop.
- Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1st are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership....	\$1,000
Annual Dues:	
Historian.....	500
Scholar.....	250
Sponsor.....	100
Patron.....	65
Member.....	40
Student (with i.d.).....	10



Like us on Facebook