



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

Vol. 42, No. 4, Fall 2018



# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

## THE ANNUAL BOOK ISSUE



**Henry Horner.** Portrait by John Doctorow.

Twice elected Governor of Illinois, **Henry Horner** served from January 1933 until his death in October 1940.

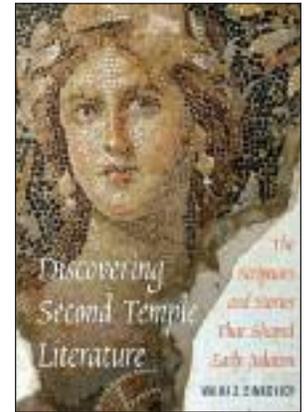
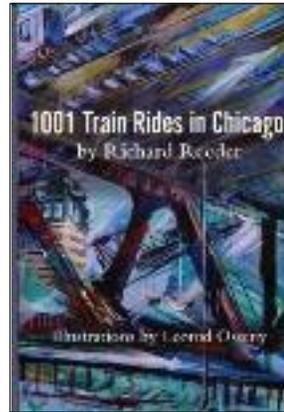
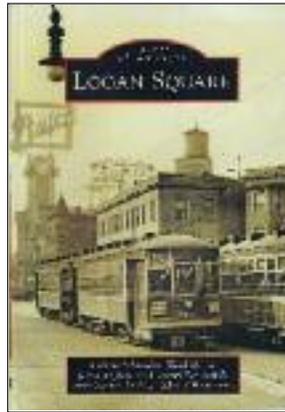


**Samuel Shapiro.**  
Spertus Institute,  
Chicago.

Twice elected Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, **Samuel Shapiro** served from January 1960 until May 1968. He took office as Governor when Otto Kerner resigned to accept

appointment to the federal appellate court. Samuel Shapiro served as Governor from May 1968 to January 1969. He ran for Governor in 1968, but was defeated by Richard Ogilvie.

When **J.D. Pritzker** is inaugurated in January 2019, he will become the third Jewish Governor of Illinois.



**Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership**  
610 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

### TODROS GELLER: STRANGE WORLDS

**Exhibition Details on Page 7**

Todros Geller, *Industrial Scene*, for WPA, 1938, watercolor, 22 in.x 28 in. Spertus Institute, Chicago.

## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



**Dr. Rachelle Gold.**

**M**y mother, Harriet, raised in Chicago's Lawndale neighborhood, did not have to go far to get an outstanding arts education, nor did I and my peers in West Rogers Park. We just walked a few blocks to a Jewish community center. I was reminded of this, amid fond recollections and renewed appreciation, during a visit to the marvelous exhibition now on view at Spertus Institute, "Todros Geller: Strange Worlds."

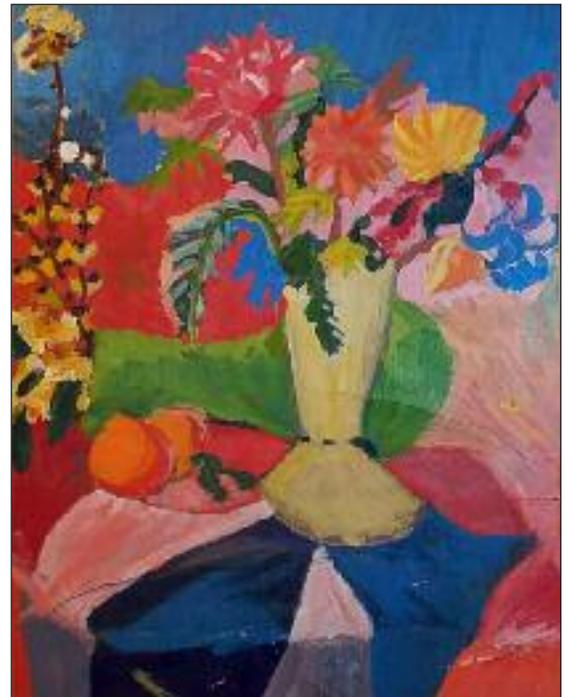
Geller was a revered figure among Chicago Jewish artists of the 1900s—an educator, administrator, and organizer, as well as a tremendously productive artist. He was head of the art department at the Jewish Peoples Institute (JPI), Supervisor of Art at the Board of Jewish Education, Director of Art at the College of Jewish Studies (now Spertus Institute), and founding member and first president of the Chicago Jewish artists group, "Around the Palette," now the American Jewish Artists Club.

Geller's artwork on exhibit at Spertus was absorbing, but what stirred my arts memories was a small printed artifact, an invitation to a lecture by Geller at the JPI entitled "Art in the Jewish Home," some time in the 1940s. It filled me with images from my youth: my wonderful teachers and arts classes at the Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center—familarly, the J.

**T**he JPI on Douglas Boulevard was a magnificent, singular Jewish institution, with programs, teachers, facilities, and communal impact unimaginable in today's world. The JPI ceased operations in 1954 due to the loss of Jewish population in the area. When the J on Touhy Avenue in West Rogers Park opened in 1960, it became a worthy successor, though on a smaller scale, and adapted to a new generation. The J offered programs in painting and drawing, ceramics, dance, music and theater. As at the JPI, the teachers at the J had dual careers as artists and educators, with Jewishness as the foundation of both. For an artistically inclined child like myself, the J was the ideal place to learn and have fun while strengthening my Jewish values and connections. It was at the J that I first pursued my interests in art and dance.



**Harriet Gold, *Planter*, 1984, red clay, glazed and fired, 13 in. (height) x 12 in. (diameter).**  
Created in Nina Turner's class at the J.  
Collection of Rachelle Gold.



**Rachelle Gold, *Still Life*, 1963, oil on paper, 17 x 22 in.** Painted in Maurice Yochim's class at the J.  
Collection of the artist.

I had the privilege of taking painting classes with two artists from Geller's circle: Victor Perlmutter, director of the J art program, 1959-1974, and Maurice Yochim, director of the children's art program, 1963-1967. Perlmutter and Yochim had each served as a director of the Todros Geller Gallery, indeed it was founded by Perlmutter. After Geller's retirement, they followed in his tradition and were art supervisors for the Board of Jewish Education and other Jewish institutions in addition to the J.

My ceramics teacher was the extraordinary Nina Turner, who directed the J ceramics studio from 1963 until it closed in 1985. Over the years, hundreds of students of all ability levels and ages, including my mother, came to the J to work with her. Turner taught with patience and love. She knew how to develop the artistic potential in every student. All three of my art teachers were active for many years in the American Jewish Artists Club.



**Maurice Yochim, *Trees*, 1936, linocut,  
6 x 8 in. (block); 8.5 x 11 in. (sheet).**  
Collection of Rachelle Gold.

Yochim and Turner each served a term as president.

The Club's story is significant in its own right for its important role in 20th-century American art, the Chicago art community, and the Jewish community. In September 1984, artist and teacher Michael Karzen, then the president of the Club, presented a talk at a CJHS open meeting, "Three Generations of Chicago Jewish Artists." The text was published in the December 1984 issue of our journal. In October 1998, Karzen presented a talk for us in commemoration of the Club's 70th anniversary, and Ethel Fratkin Shulman celebrated the anniversary in an article in our journal.

In 2004 the Club celebrated its 75th anniversary with a magnificent exhibition at Spertus, "Engaging with the Present: The Contribution of the American Jewish Artists Club to Modern Art in Chicago, 1928-2004." I must mention that the exhibit included a commissioned portrait of Geller by my cousin, James Axelrod, who studied with Geller and was a founding member of the Club.

**M**y dance experiences at the J were as formative and meaningful as my art experiences. The J had made the inspired decision to engage the celebrated couple Felix Fibich and Judith Berg, important figures in the Jewish dance and theater worlds in their native Poland, the Soviet Union, and Europe, and after coming to the U.S. in 1950, in New York and other U.S. cities, as well as in South America. Berg had choreographed and danced

the part of Death in the 1937 classic Yiddish film, "Der Dybbuk." Fibich directed the J dance department and created a performing group of which I was a member.

We presented dances that Fibich and Berg choreographed "to show the beauty of the tradition...to explore every aspect of Jewish life...to preserve the elements of Jewish movement, which is a foundation for Jewish dance" (quotes from a 1997 oral history interview of Fibich conducted by Jewish and Israeli dance scholar Judith Grin Ingber, excerpted in *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology*, Vol. 20, 2000).

After seven years in Chicago, Fibich and Berg left for New York where they continued their distinguished careers. Fibich choreographed, danced, acted, and taught into his 90s. It was years after I danced with them, when I learned more about their backgrounds and accomplishments, that I was able to truly appreciate the opportunity to get to know these extraordinary artists.

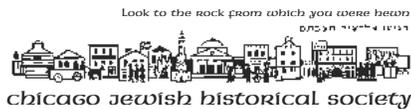
**R**eaders, if you studied with any of these teachers or participated in other JCC arts programs that made a difference in your life, please send us your recollections via email to [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org). We look forward to publishing them. Today, societal changes may have ended the primary role of Jewish community centers as arts institutions, but the value of the arts, and Jewish arts, lives on. ❖



**Nina Turner in her studio at the J.**  
Collection of Charlotte LeVee Kaplan.

**Edith LeVee, *Dancers*, 1976,  
red clay, glazed and fired,  
9 in. (height); 9 x 12 in. (base).**  
Created in Nina Turner's class at the J.  
Collection of Charlotte LeVee Kaplan.





2018

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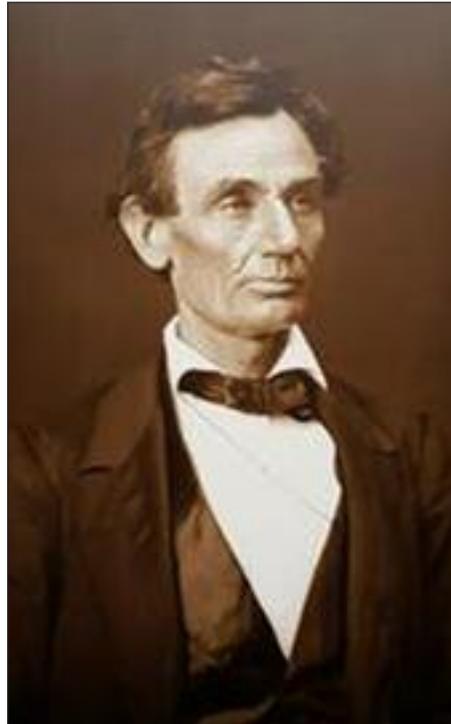
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*Illinois Bicentennial 1818-2018***HESLER PHOTOGRAPH OF LINCOLN  
PLACED IN DALEY CENTER**

This is the portrait by Chicago photographer Alexander Hesler that was used by Abraham Lincoln for his 1860 Presidential campaign. The photograph is being placed in all county courthouses in Illinois as part of the Illinois Bicentennial celebration. There are 102 counties in our State, and by December 31 there will be a portrait in each one. The project is an initiative of the Illinois State Historical Society.

Generous monetary contributions by four organizations made the project possible:  
 Illinois State Bar Association  
 Illinois Bar Foundation  
 Illinois Judges Association  
 Illinois Judges Foundation

**Leah Axelrod** is the president of the Illinois State Historical Society. She is a founding board member of the CJHS and its tour director. Leah and her husband Leslie attended the November 27 dedication of the Cook County copy of the Lincoln photograph at the Richard J. Daley Center. The ceremony was held in the 17th floor Jury Room at noon. There were about 150 attendees, including many judges who attended on their lunch hour.

**Elise Ginsparg** originated the Night of Knowledge at Congregation Yehuda Moshe in Lincolnwood, and has chaired the popular event every year, selecting the roster of eight speakers. This year, the 21st annual edition was held on *Motzaei Shabbat*, November 18.

Elise is a lecturer on Jewish travel, and this year she was one of the participants as well as the organizer of the evening. She spoke on "Warsaw—the Zoo, the Museum, and the Kosher Restaurant," about a visit she and her husband Colman made to that city when they were en route to Israel. You can read the article she wrote about the visit in the Summer 2017 issue of our journal on our website, [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org).

Attorney **Colman Ginsparg** discussed the recent changes in the Federal Income Tax laws. Filmmaker **Beverly Siegel** presented the award-winning CJHS video documentary, *Romance of A People: The First 100 Years of Jewish Life in Chicago: 1833-1933*. Siegel was the executive producer/director. See the book section of this journal for price and availability of the DVD.

**Julia Bachrach, Jacob Kaplan, Richard Reeder, Malka Zeiger Simkovich,** and **Patrick Steffes** authored books or contributed entries to books in 2018.

## CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

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

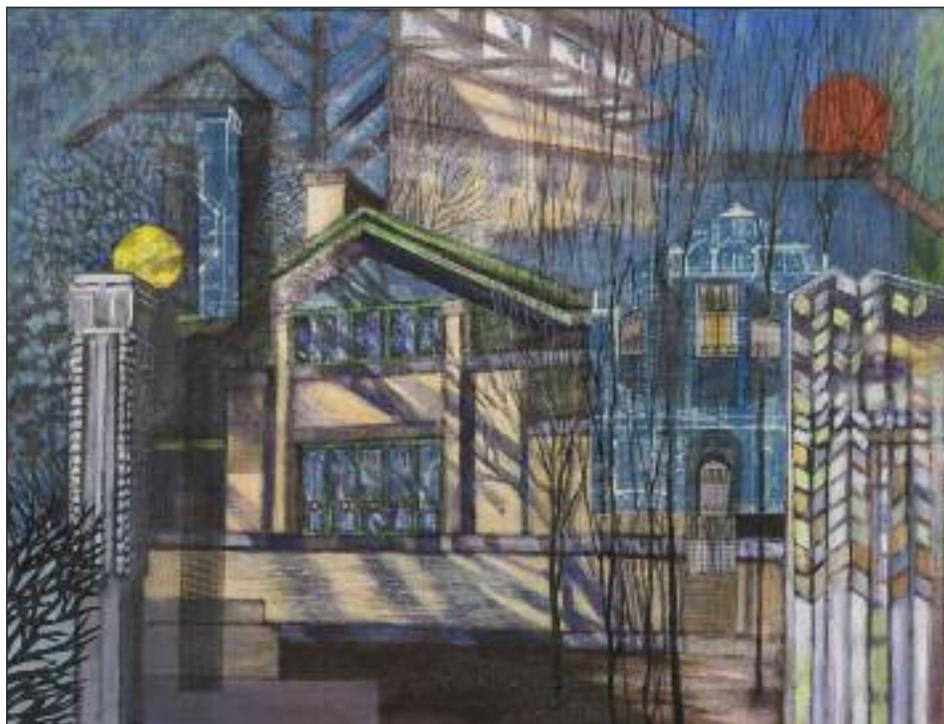
It has been a busy year for artist **Sandra Holubow**. She had two solo Illinois Bicentennial exhibitions of her work—one at the Lincolnwood Village Hall, and another at the Illinois Math & Science Academy in Aurora. Portrait artist Julia Oehmke and Holubow presented their Bicentennial works together at the Chicago Cultural Center. Holubow contributed her brilliant cityscapes and sensitive rural scenes.

Her work, “Elements of Wright Remembered,” shown here, was included in the Chicago Society of Artists (CSA) Bicentennial Exhibit at the Vanderpoel Art Museum. The CSA exhibit “Collective Expressions” at the Bloomingdale Museum included two of her works.

On August 30, Ronaldo Gomlevsky, editor/publisher of *Menorah Brazil*, visited from Rio De Janeiro to research a report on the Chicago Jewish community. **Ed Mazur** and **Rachelle Gold** guided him on an intensive seven-hour tour.

Gomlevsky also interviewed **Irving Cutler** in his Wilmette home and **Sandra Holubow** in her Old Town studio.

On November 15, at Temple Chai in Long Grove, as part of the congregation’s Third Thursday series, **Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff** spoke about our Society’s newest project, the Rose L. and Sidney N. Shure Chicago Jewish Oral History Library. In an informative and entertaining presentation, he discussed the importance, methodology, and use of oral histories. He provided four examples of interviews in the CJHS collection.



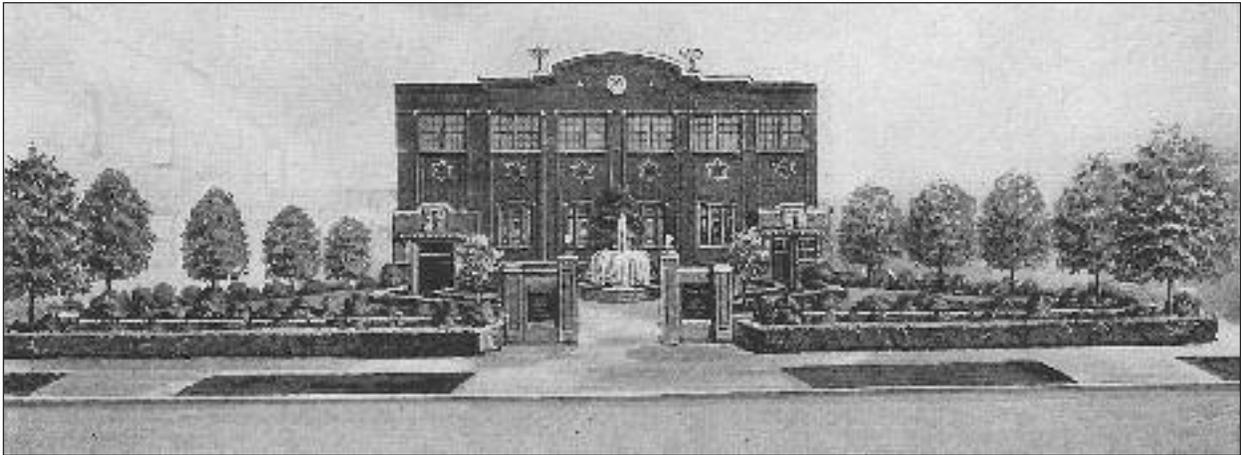
**Sandra Holubow, *Elements of Wright Remembered*, 2018, mixed media, 28 in. x 22 in.**



**From left: Ronaldo Gomlevsky, Dr. Rachelle Gold, and Dr. Edward H. Mazur.**  
Tel Aviv Kosher Pizza, 6349 North California Avenue.

# Another Synagogue Demolished in Lawndale — Temple Judea

DR. IRVING CUTLER



**Temple Judea, 1227 South Independence Boulevard.** Architect's drawing, *History of the Jews of Chicago*, 1924.

Several months ago I was touring a Jewish bus group along Independence Boulevard in Lawndale. As we approached Roosevelt Road I was ready to give my spiel about the former Temple Judea, the only Reform Temple in the immediate Lawndale area, where it once had existed among some seventy Orthodox synagogues. To my dismay, there was only an empty lot.

The former Temple Judea (later an ailing African American church with many building code violations) had been torn down without any publicity, unlike the rallies and protests that preceded the razing in 2012 of the renowned Anshe Kanesses Israel (the RUSISHE SHUL) on Douglas Boulevard. Temple Judea was unique in what was mainly an Orthodox community.

Many of the Orthodox Jews were suspicious of a synagogue where men and women sat together, where the men didn't need a head covering, and where you could drive up in a car on Saturday. Some of the Orthodox Jews, when they walked by the Temple, would close their eyes or turn their heads. Some even speculated that the Temple was supported by Christian missionaries.

Temple Judea was located at 1227 Independence Boulevard in the heart of the Jewish Lawndale community. The apartment building next to it housed the family of Eli Schulman, later of Eli's Cheesecake fame. Immediately across the street lived Barney Balaban, the future movie mogul. Just around the corner on Roosevelt Road was the Independence Theatre, which occasionally showed Yiddish films. (In 1938, it was remodeled and renamed the Road.) Across the street

was J. Weinstein & Sons Funeral Home.

A block east, at 1306 South Lawndale, is where the young Golda Mabovitch lived when she was employed at the Douglas Branch of the Chicago Public Library. She would marry and become Golda Meyerson, and then Golda Meir, Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Temple Judea was one of the first congregations in Lawndale, founded in 1913. It first met in the Douglas Park Auditorium at Kedzie and Ogden Avenues. Its progressive constitution rejected many of the Orthodox religious rituals, provided equality for women, and looked toward the younger generation. As it grew, the congregation purchased the site on Independence Boulevard, and the cornerstone (initially for its community center) was laid on October 1, 1916.

The Temple was built far back from the street so there was room for a sizeable fountain and beautiful foliage, and it advertised itself as "The Temple in a Garden." The building was of yellow brick with six large Stars of David stretching across the façade.

The Ten Commandments were mounted above the two doorways. On the roof were two large menorahs. A rabbi on one of my tours wanted to buy one of the menorahs, so we stopped to let him go inside, but the pastor refused to sell one. It would be interesting to learn what happened to those huge menorahs.

Despite its location in such an Orthodox community, the Temple would often draw more than a thousand people to its services or programs. It had a very active youth group and a popular lecture series. One of its Men's Club's more memorable programs was held in

## AN EXHIBITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership  
610 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

### TODROS GELLER: STRANGE WORLDS

Through Sunday, February 17, 2019



**Todros Geller**

**Above: *The Dance*, 1928, oil on canvas, 17 x 20 in.**  
**Right: *South of Chicago*, 1937, wood engraving, 8 x 10 in.**  
*Spertus Institute, Chicago.*



Todros Geller (1889-1949) was fondly known as the “Dean of Chicago Jewish Artists,” but he was much more than that. His work directly addressed the social, political, and artistic concerns of his time. The exhibition draws primarily from the Spertus collection, which includes extensive Geller holdings. More than 30 works are on view—the majority for the first time—along with archival material.

**Admission Free. [www.spertus.edu](http://www.spertus.edu)**

Orchestra Hall on May 18, 1931, featuring a debate between attorney Clarence Darrow and Rabbi Solomon Goldman entitled “Is Religion Necessary?”

By the mid-1950s, most of the Jewish population of Lawndale had left, and most of the synagogues were either closed or about to be sold to Black churches.

**I**n 1954, some Temple Judea members who had moved to Skokie and the surrounding area, led by Rabbi Karl Weiner, founded a new Temple Judea at 8610 Niles Center Road. In 1977, it merged with Temple Mizpah, which had been in Rogers Park on Morse Avenue for almost fifty-five years, forming Temple Judea Mizpah.

In September 2018, Temple Judea Mizpah, after a total of sixty-four years in Skokie, and Beth Emet the Free Synagogue, came together as one congregation at Beth Emet, 1224 Dempster Street, Evanston. ❖



**New Lawndale Missionary Baptist Church, Summer 2017.**  
*The former Temple Judea. Photograph by Patrick Steffes.*

# “Lower Your Voice, Rose”

## The Lebrint Family’s Story of Adaptation and Assimilation in Chicago

ROSIE RUDAVSKY

“Lower your voice, Rose,” Leonard Fuchs would say to his wife, Rose Lebrint, both of them first-generation Americans. “He always wanted her to be...more American, more WASP-y, and less excitable,” as their daughter Betsy Fuchs explained in an interview.

Earlier this year, Betsy Fuchs, a self-proclaimed family archivist, collected and donated the stories of the Fuchs and Lebrint families to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, complete with photographs, timelines and most important for this article, the writings of her mother, Rose Fuchs. Understanding Rose’s experience as a first-generation American, in contrast to the experiences of her parents, Abraham and Anna Lebrint, offers a window into the series of choices, the negotiations of discomfort and acceptance, involved in assimilating as a Jewish immigrant in Chicago.

Exploring the Lebrint family’s background in the Russian Empire, their experience on the West Side of Chicago, and their move to Albany Park, opens up the history of the purposeful and inadvertent shifts that led the Lebrints and other Jewish immigrant families towards assimilation.

**R**ose Lebrint’s parents immigrated to America at the beginning of the twentieth century after waves of anti-Jewish violence swept the Russian Empire. They lived in the Pale of Settlement, the region within czarist Russia where Jews were legally authorized to reside. Though separated by only fifty miles, Rose’s parents, who were first cousins, may as well have grown up in distinct worlds—she in the shtetl, he in a cosmopolitan city. The differences in their upbringings would influence their respective approaches to life in America.

Rose’s mother, Anna Menkes, grew up in the village of Ovidiopol, in modern day Ukraine, where her father traversed Eastern Europe as a rabbi and scholar. Anna’s mother supported the family by running a grocery store. Anna told her daughter Rose that the peasants would not harm them. However, on Jewish holidays and Easter, drunken peasants would steal from the store and pour vinegar into the barrel of sugar. “It was nothing personal,” writes Rose, “It was just a reminder that [my mother] was a Jew and the Jews killed Christ.”

This nonchalant response suggests that antisemitism was a common experience for Anna growing up, that this behavior did not qualify as extraordinary. Rose also mentions that her mother, who had gone to grammar school and was literate, would read and write letters for

the gentiles in her village, and that the grocery store customers would call Anna’s mother “Auntie.” This fluctuating relationship with gentiles may have convinced Anna, that no matter the connections built between Jews and gentiles, there would always lurk a threat of antisemitism beneath the surface.

### Kishinev

In contrast to his wife, Rose’s father, Avram Loberant, grew up in Kishinev, in modern-day Moldova, a large and sophisticated city. Avram was worldly: he worked at a Yiddish newspaper as a printer and developed an interest in socialism, which he learned about through the papers circulated by German Jews and the Bund. He likely interacted with gentiles in passing, in less stirring encounters than Anna. At the turn of the century, however, antisemitic tensions boiled over in Kishinev and beyond.

The Ministry of the Interior and other high Russian officials helped to set off the first major Kishinev pogrom, on April 6th and 7th of 1903, during Easter. After a barrage of anti-Jewish newspaper articles, the discovery of a dead Christian youth and a Christian woman suicide were enough to incite violence against the Jewish community. Though neither event actually implicated the Jews, the newspaper circulated the accusation of a blood-libel. Forty-nine Jews were killed, more than five hundred were injured, and two thousand families were left homeless after homes and shops were looted and destroyed, while the soldiers stationed in Kishinev took no action to stop the mob’s violence.

Anti-Jewish violence continued after the socialist uprising in 1905 was suppressed. The Kishinev pogrom on October 19th and 20th, 1905, killed nineteen Jews and injured fifty-six. Avram’s proximity to such extreme violence against Jews may have contributed to his embrace of America and eventual distancing from his Jewish identity. Between 1902 and 1908 around six-thousand-eight-hundred Jews left Kishinev, many of them immigrating to America.

In the wake of the pogroms, Anna was sent to Chicago where her half-brothers were already well

established. Meanwhile, Avram had been inducted into the Czar's army. His only escape would be through a bribe. It took more than a year before Anna, with the help of her half-brothers, earned enough money in Chicago for the bribe. Anna sent for Avram in 1907. Avram Loberant, now Abraham Lebrint, married Anna Menkes in August of 1908. Their first home was at 1744 West 14th Street, where they started their family.

### The West Side

When they arrived on Chicago's West Side, Anna and Abraham entered an established community of Eastern European Jews that had existed there since the 1880s, with an estimated fifty-five thousand more immigrants arriving by 1910. German Jews who had come decades earlier were less observant and highly assimilated. They lived largely on the South Side, among well-established secular communal institutions, while the Near West Side, the first stop in America for many Jewish immigrants, retained some of the flavor of the Old Country. Kosher markets, dry goods stores and bathhouses, identified with Yiddish and Hebrew signage, lined the streets. Synagogues, Hebrew schools, and Yiddish theaters were scattered among the poor quality housing.

Abraham was uniquely capable of finding work, unlike the many new immigrants who lacked a secular education and were limited to work as peddlers. He entered the printing trade, working at Shulman Bros., setting type even before he understood the English he printed. Abraham saved money and went to night school, where he eagerly learned English from Christian missionaries. But even with a steady job, the conditions in which the family lived were difficult.

### The Lebrints at Home

Anna gave birth to five children in the following ten years—Mary, Rose, George, Claire, and Perle—and the home was crowded. Rose recalls, “We dressed and undressed in the kitchen and had our baths in a tin tub with water heated on the cook stove. Our parents went once a week to the public baths.” This was not uncommon on the West Side. Inadequate plumbing plagued the neighborhood, with ninety percent of the population lacking facilities to bathe at home. The six public bathhouses were essential. But despite the squalid conditions, growing up on the West Side had its fun.

Rose recalls the ways her family made do with what they had. In her parents' bed, which they all called the Golden Bed, the kids would gather after Shabbes dinner to hear their father tell them stories from memory—*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *Around the World in 80 Days*.



**The Lebrint children. Claire on the pony; George, Rose, and Mary standing, c. 1917–1918.** Collection of Betsy Fuchs .

There was no money for toys, but Rose played with dolls her mother made out of ten-pound cloth flour sacks. When the flour was gone, Anna would wash the sack, cut out the doll that was printed on it, stuff the doll, and sew it up. Even the newspapers her mother laid down to dry the wooden floors became a source of fun. Rose and her siblings would sprawl out to look at “the funnies”—the comic strips.

While it wasn't a house of plenty, she remembered happily eating whatever her mother cooked. Like others on the West Side, the Lebrints kept a kosher home, using two cutting boards, one for dairy and one for meat. There was always “something good in the icebox...” Rose recalls. “One of the best things would be the chicken feet that had simmered in yesterday's soup. I don't mean drumsticks or thighs. I mean chicken feet with the toes intact.”

Where Rose saw fun and comfort, her relatives saw an embarrassingly immigrant lifestyle. Anna's half brother, George David, and his American-born wife,

*Continued on Page 10*

## “LOWER YOUR VOICE, ROSE” *Continued from Page 9*

would visit the Lebrint home with their children. Rose explains, “I always had the idea that [they] thought we were “greenhorns,” in the language of that time, that we were being raised in a foreign, non-orderly way, the way they imagined life was lived in the Russian shtetls.”

To Rose, these relatives, a family that also included recent immigrants and first generation kids, seemed like seasoned Americans. Historian Barbara Schreier writes that judging others as “greenhorns” marked the progress more established immigrants had made, separating them from the less assimilated newcomers. It was a way of measuring how far you had come. By 1919, the Lebrint family had saved enough money to move from the West Side into the middle class neighborhood of Albany Park.

### **Albany Park**

This was a material step up for the Lebrints and also a symbolic move away from their Jewish immigrant identity. They shared their new home, at 4951 North Troy Street, with their friends and former neighbors, the Greenbergs, each family taking one level of a two-story house. Unlike their West Side home, their new house had electricity, a washing machine, a refrigerator, and a gas stove. There was even an artificial fireplace where logs glowed. The bathroom had tile floors and hot and cold running water in the sink, tub, and shower.

Albany Park was a middle class neighborhood where the Jewish population only reached its peak in 1950. While many families moved from the West Side farther west to Lawndale, which by 1920 was mostly Jewish, the Lebrints opted for a neighborhood that had only begun its development, when the Northwestern Elevated Railroad extended its Ravenswood branch to the Kimball and Lawrence terminal in 1909.

While this may have been a purposeful move *away* from the high concentration of Jews in other areas, it may also have been a purposeful move *toward* a less developed area in general. Either way, Albany Park was a transitional middle ground for the Lebrints, who, on the one hand eagerly tried to Americanize, while on the other hand, held on to relationships and cultural ties they had left behind on the West Side.

**T**he Greenberg daughters, Edith and Bessie, who were now their neighbors, took it on themselves to instruct young Rose and her sister Mary, “how to stop looking and acting like foreigners.” Rose remembers her excitement that older girls paid her any attention, and listened to them because she was “envious at how attractive the Gentile girls were and... felt somewhat

inferior.” In order to fit in to their new surroundings, Rose and Mary had to change their personal style and behavior. First off, they were to get rid of their “Yiddish way of talking.” They were to call their parents Mother and Dad instead of Ma and Pa, wear only clean and ironed blouses, and change into play clothes after school. “Our socks must be white as snow,” Rose writes, expressing the unattainable quality of such a high bar of cleanliness. After applying these changes, Rose reflects, satisfied, “I think we began to look like Gentiles.”

Ediths and Bessies were common in Jewish immigrant communities everywhere. Slightly more established Jews wanted to “mute the alien ‘Jewishness’ of the newcomers,” according to historian Priscilla Fishman. Individual efforts then took the form of social institutions created to facilitate assimilation. Having moved to Albany Park earlier than most, Rose writes, “we Old Timers felt superior [to those who moved there later]—they with their Yiddish looks and sing-song voices.” The Yiddish Theater, a common pastime for many Jewish immigrants, played into this feeling of superiority. It depicted the comic mishaps of greenhorns, thus tapping into Americanized Jews’ relief that they were no longer in such a position of vulnerability.

### **Abraham and Anna: Distinct Approaches to America**

While Rose expresses her desire to assimilate by adhering to the rules explained by her peers, Abraham and Anna each had distinct modes of adapting to America. Abraham refused to speak Yiddish, working hard to rid himself of his accent. In Rose’s view, he “completely Americanized.” Abe would take his wife and kids to visit his Gentile business partners’ families.

Between 1923 and 1930, Anna and Abe began “flipping” houses in Albany Park. They sold 4951 North Troy and bought a two-flat at 5015, sold it, and bought a two-flat at 5045, sold it and bought a two-flat on Christiana next to the Swedish Covenant Church, a house that Abraham’s business partner had to purchase in his own name because the area had restrictive housing codes, preventing Jews from buying there. Next, they sold the Christiana two-flat and bought a single family house on Central Park near Carmen, sold it, and bought a two-flat at 5011 North Troy.

When they lived on Christiana, Abraham took the family to church one Sunday, a visit that Rose interprets as a gesture “to show our friendliness,” which was not returned by the neighbors. Rose remembers her first experience with antisemitism in this neighborhood, when Gentile children harassed her and her siblings on

the street. Despite this undisguised hostility, Abraham had, according to Rose “developed a love for their religion.” When Anna refused to return to church, Abraham began attending a Sunday evening service, a practice he kept up for years. The service was held in the Auditorium Theatre, where prominent religious voices came to speak, promoting moral and religious welfare. It seems that Abraham’s interest in Christianity intersected with his desire to assimilate and Americanize. Becoming Christian would aid his assimilation, and assimilation would aid his acceptance into a new Gentile community.

Though his affiliation with Christianity was highly unusual for a Jewish immigrant, it was common that couples adapted differently to life in America. Historian Barbara Schreier writes that often, Jews who grew up in urban areas, like Abraham, adapted more easily to life in America, while those who came from the shtetls, like Anna, were typically more overwhelmed.

Anna remained self-conscious among Gentiles, preferring to spend time in the company of other Jews. She was “the last word in shtetl mentality” according to Rose. Abraham even accused her of “ghettoizing” the family. “Here we are in a free world,” he said, “welcomed by the Gentiles. Why should we do to ourselves what the czars had forced on the Jews?”

**A**braham’s accusation does not take into account the differences in his and Anna’s experiences. While in Chicago Abraham worked with Gentiles every day; Anna likely had little interaction with them, except through him. Spending much time at home, as many women did, Anna continued to view Gentiles as others, and perhaps as dangerous others. Abraham who clearly lacked an interest in the Jewish faith had come to America to shed his persecuted religious identity. Many, however, had come to America for the freedom to hold on to their Jewish identity and saw the waning of Jewish tradition as a terrible loss.

Despite Abraham’s desire to assimilate, Rose remembers the strong ties to the West Side that remained in her family. Her father used to drive the kids back to the West Side from their home in Albany Park to attend the Yiddish Theater, a place where you could throw your orange peels on the floor. She remembers her family hosting their old West Side friends who came to Albany Park once a week to take baths, eat bagels, lox, blintzes, and borscht. She remembers her father dancing the *kazatsky*, crossing his arms, and kicking his feet out while listening to Russian music. What, then, did it really mean to assimilate in the 1920s in Chicago?

Both attempting to fit in, while unwilling to let go of their past, this multigenerational process of assimilation was a widespread struggle. Learning to dress, act, and speak like an American—a WASP American—sometimes carried over through the generations, a project unfinished even by those who had lived in America their whole lives, as in Rose’s case.

**J**ournalist Hutchins Hapgood wrote in 1902: “Jewish women lack the subtle charm of the American woman, who is full of feminine devices, complicated flirtatiousness, who in her dress and personal appearance seeks the plastic epigram.” What Hapgood didn’t comprehend was that Jewish women, and men too, yearned to belong in their new country, but were not willing or able to overcome their distinct culture. The *je ne sais quoi* that Hapgood identifies could be what Rose lacked. It could have been her lack of sophistication, her West Side childhood, her very Jewishness, that her husband meant when he nagged: “Lower your voice, Rose.” But that was Rose, caught between her immigrant parents and the goal of full assimilation, the representative of a transitional generation, fraught with contradiction. ❖

*Rose Lebrint attended Amundsen-Mayfair High School at 4646 North Knox (now the Irish American Heritage Center), and then transferred to Theodore Roosevelt High School, 3436 West Wilson Avenue (by then Abraham and Anna had bought a six-flat at 3722 West Wilson).*

*Rose’s husband, Leonard Fuchs, received a law degree at the University of Chicago, but soon quit his career to work at a cousin’s company selling raw paint materials and volunteering at social service and neighborhood organizations.*

*Encyclopedia Judaica.* Ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, 2007, Keter Publishing House, Ltd.

*The Jews of the United States.* Ed. Priscilla Fishman, 1974, Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel.

*Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920.* Barbara A. Schreier, 1994, Chicago Historical Society.

*The Jews of Chicago from Shtetl to Suburb.* Irving Cutler, 1996, University of Illinois Press.

**ROSIE RUDAVSKY** is a senior at Oberlin College where she studies History, with minors in Religion and Politics. She is interested in Jewish history, Soviet history, socialist movements, and historical memory. Rosie is originally from New York City, but loved her summer near Lake Michigan researching this article as an intern for the CJHS. In her free time Rosie plays competitive ultimate frisbee, cooks for up to one hundred people weekly at her food co-op, and enjoys hiking, dancing, and making art.

## LETTERS TO CJHS

### **Nina's Department & Variety Store in Spring Green, Wisconsin**

To CJHS Co-President Dr. Rachelle Gold, Joel Marcus told me about your article (*Chicago Jewish History*, Summer 2018, page 2) and forwarded your email to me so I could read it. He and I have been friends for decades and make a habit of a weekly lunch to discuss local events and politics.

I grew up in the Lake View area of Chicago. Went to Nettelhorst Elementary at Aldine and Broadway. When I attended in the 1950s, ninety percent of the students and teachers were Jewish. Although I was a gentile, I was warmly received in my friends' homes and lives and never was made to feel like an outsider. Consequently I developed a great love and appreciation for Jewish life, culture, and politics that began back in the old neighborhood and continues to this day.

After settling in Spring Green I became the newspaper editor for many years. So I appreciate good writing and wanted you to know I enjoyed your article. Thanks for bringing some welcome recognition to the Marcus family business and their Chicago connections.

Don Greenwood  
Spring Green, Wisconsin

### **A Return to the Crown of Zion**

My family belonged to Congregation Atereth Zion from the middle 1930s until we moved in 1955. Dr. Mazur's article (*Chicago Jewish History*, Summer 2018, pages 5-7) mentions a book by Robert Packer that says the first spiritual leader was Rabbi Marbodetsky.

I do not remember the first rabbi's name, but my Hebrew teacher for five years at Atereth Zion was Mar (Mr. in Hebrew, I believe) Brodetsky. He was the Hebrew teacher and principal of the school for many years, but not a rabbi.

He had the students conduct their own Saturday morning services in a separate hall. Students took turns, if they wished, with prompting from Brodetsky, to be the cantors for the entire service. He left in the '50s and went on to teach Hebrew at the Albany Park Hebrew Congregation, 4601 North Lawndale. I think he was also at the College of Jewish Studies on 11th Street.

One of the mainstay student cantors at Atereth Zion was Joe Davis, who was the cantor for many years at Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Deerfield.

Gerald Pam  
Highland Park, Illinois

### **The Werners and the Wienmans in Sandwich, Illinois**

I am a member of CJHS and received the Summer issue of *Chicago Jewish History*. My mother-in-law was visiting our home and she leafed through it. She was excited to tell me how she read the article featuring the Werners and the Coopers in Sandwich, Illinois (page 8), and that the names in the article were familiar to her.

My mother-in-law's grandfather was Joseph Rubin, who settled in Rock Falls, Illinois, in the early 1900s. Joseph was friends and connected business-wise with Werner and Wienman, pictured in the article. Like them, Joseph started as a junk dealer and morphed into a car dealer. He appears in newspaper articles of life events along with Meyer Werner and Barnett Wienman.

The Rubin family had relatives living in Dixon and Dekalb as well. Indeed, Joseph Rubin and his wife are buried next to the Werners and Wienmans at Waldheim Cemetery, along with other families who resided in those towns, including the Manfields and the Sinows.

The article gave my mother-in-law a reminder to write something about her ancestry in Rock Falls, which she always wanted to do. Perhaps, one day.

Alexander Feller  
Chicago, Illinois

### **Fond Memories of Humboldt Park**

As I started reading the article by Dr. Edward Mazur in the Summer 2018 issue of *Chicago Jewish History*, I experienced one of those WOW! moments.

My grandparents lived in a house two doors south of Atereth Zion from the early 1920s until 1957, when my grandfather passed away. My mother and her four siblings were raised there. Growing up in the Logan Square neighborhood until I was eleven years old, my sister and I, as well as our cousins, were at our grandparents' home often.

When I was researching my mother's family history, I discovered that the hazzan of Atereth Zion, Rev. Anshel Freedman, had married my parents in 1939, in my grandparents' backyard. I also discovered that my mother had written about her memories, as a child, of hearing the hazzan chant the Yom Kippur service. Thank you, Dr. Mazur. Your article brought back many fond memories of Humboldt Park.

Mrs. Dale Amdur  
Chicago, Illinois

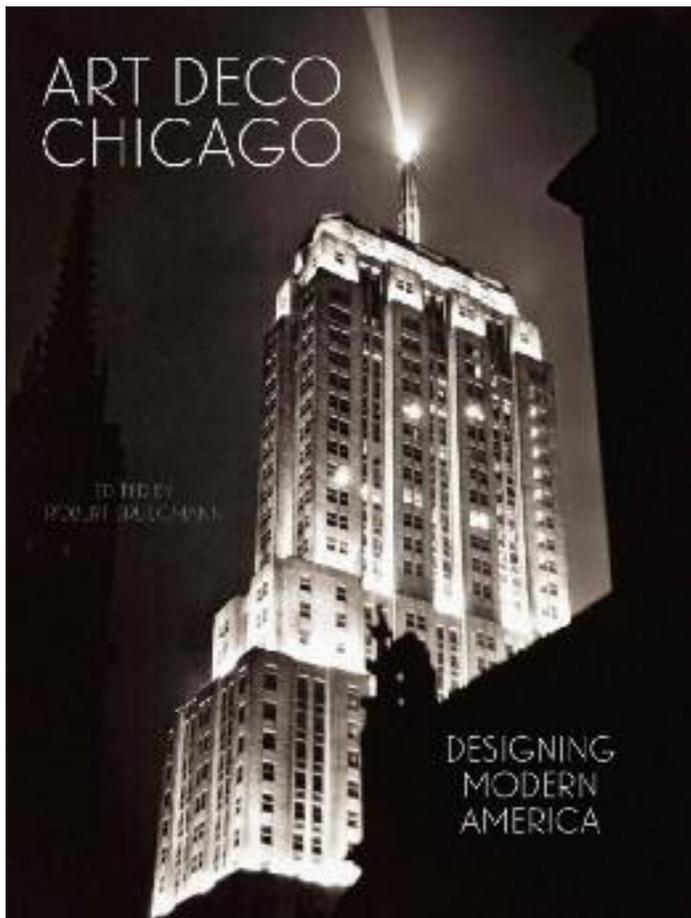
# THE BOOK SECTION

## our city and our community

Today, books are available in many formats from many vendors, so we don't list prices, except for the *\*starred selections on pages 14 and 16* that can be purchased from the CJHS office.

Some books are out of print, but reference copies may be found in libraries.

Most of our listed books can be purchased on the internet, but please also shop local bookstores!



### **ART DECO CHICAGO: Designing Modern America.**

Edited by Robert Bruegmann; With essays by Robert Bruegmann, Jonathan Mekinda, Teri J. Edelstein, Lisa D. Schrenk, and Neil Harris. Yale University Press, 2018. An expansive take on American Art Deco that explores Chicago's pivotal role in developing the architecture, graphic design, and product design that came to define middle-class style in the twentieth century.

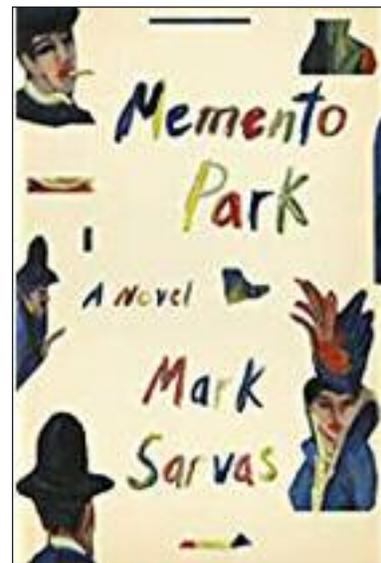
412 pages, 9 x 12 inches. 325 illustrations. Hardcover.

Includes contributions by CJHS members  
Julia S. Bachrach and Patrick Steffes.

### *Chicago's Jewish Book Month 2018*

#### *One Book | One Community Selection*

**MEMENTO PARK. A Novel.** By Mark Sarvas. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2018. Set in LA, NY, and Budapest (with a short stop in Chicago), *Memento Park* begins with an unexpected call from the Australian consulate.



Thus protagonist Matt Santos learns of a valuable painting believed to have been looted from his family during WWII. To recover it, he must repair his strained relationship with his father, unearth his family history, and restore his connection to his own Judaism. 288 pages.

### *Related Exhibition*

#### **MODERN BY DESIGN: Chicago Streamlines America**

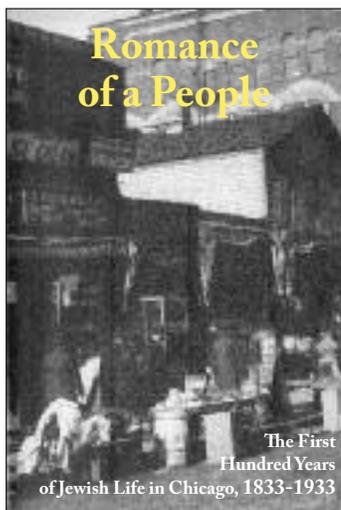
Through December 1, 2019

*Chicago History Museum  
1601 North Clark Street*

*www.chicagohistory.org*

For the eighth year in a row, Jewish Book Month was celebrated in November with One Book | One Community, in which a single title is selected for discussions and activities across greater Chicago. Spertus Institute spearheads this initiative.

## our publications



**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 a snippet of film footage of the

Jewish community's spectacular pageant, *The Romance of a People*, presented on Jewish Day at A Century of Progress, the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. Color and B&W. 30 minutes. \$30\*

**HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF CHICAGO.** Edited by Hyman L. Meites. The Chicago Jewish Historical Society's 1990 facsimile of the original 1924 edition and supplementary excerpts from the 1927 edition. With a new introduction by James R. Grossman. Foreword by Thomas R. Meites and Jerome B. Meites. Hundreds of biographical entries; synagogue and organization histories; index. Illustrated with black and white photographs and drawings. 856 pages. **Limited Edition Sold Out.** *Reference copies can be found in the Asher Library of Spertus Institute, the Chicago Public Library, and other libraries. Copies are sometimes offered for sale on the internet.*

### **HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF CHICAGO is Digitized.**

Great news for researchers!

The original 1924 edition of the Meites history is online in the University of Florida Digital Collections.

[www.ufdc.ufl.edu](http://www.ufdc.ufl.edu)

### **THE GERMAN-JEWISH EMIGRATION OF THE 1930s AND ITS IMPACT ON CHICAGO.**

Publications Committee Chairman: Roberta L. Bernstein. Edited by Curtis C. Melnick. 1980. Report of CJHS symposium at Cong. Ezra-Habonim on November 18, 1979. Illustrated. 24 pages. Paper. \$5\*

### **A WALK TO SHUL: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops on the Way.**

By Bea Kraus and Norman D. Schwartz. 2003. **First Edition Sold Out — Second Edition in Preparation.** *Reference copies in Spertus Institute Library and the Chicago Public Library.*



### **SYNAGOGUES OF CHICAGO.**

Edited by Irving Cutler, Norman D. Schwartz, and Sidney Sorkin. Project supervised by Clare Greenberg, 1991. A compilation of information on local synagogues, based on listings in Chicago city directories (1839 through 1928-29) and Chicago classified phone directories (1929-30 through 1992).

The information was entered into a computer database from microfilm prints of the directories located in the Chicago Municipal Reference Library. To make the synagogue listings more readily usable by scholars, entries have been sorted into various categories, and separate lists have been made:

1. Master information: **all available information** listed in alphabetical order by record number.
2. Basic information: synagogue name, address, year of record, and record number, in alphabetical order **by synagogue name.**
3. Basic information as above **by year**, with all entries for a given year together.
4. Basic information as above sorted by year, by street address, and **by alphabetized street names.**
5. Basic information sorted by year and **by alphabetized names of rabbis.**
6. Basic information sorted by year and **by alphabetized names of congregation presidents.**

Three parts, spiral-bound paper.

CJHS Members \$90\*

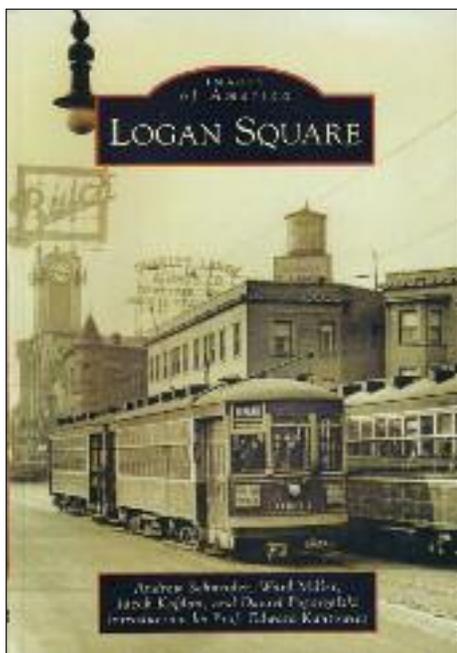
Non-Members \$100\*

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## new from our authors

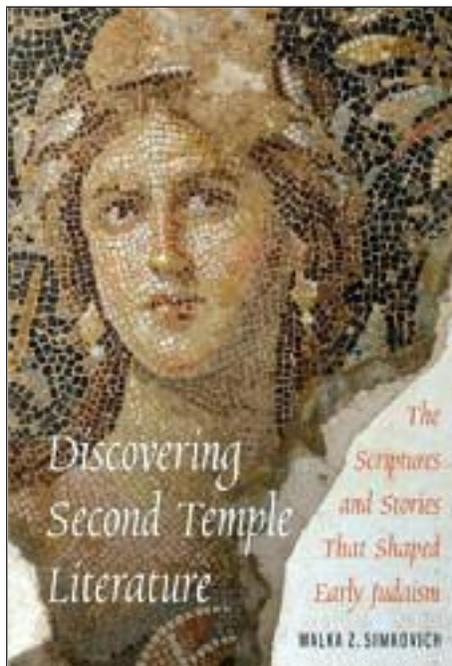
### **New! LOGAN SQUARE.**

By Andrew Schneider, Ward Miller, Jacob Kaplan, and Daniel Pogorzelski. Introduction by Prof. Edward Kantowicz. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2018. The shifting kaleidoscope of peoples who called Logan Square home included Jews. Synagogues are pictured, accompanied by carefully researched histories. 201 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.



### **Rosenwald & Weil, 1918.**

Before his great years heading Sears, Julius Rosenwald, together with his cousin Julius Weil, founded this company to manufacture men's clothing. Their Logan Square plant on the southwest corner of Armitage Avenue and Hamlin Avenue was designed by architect Alfred Alschuler. *Collection of Jacob Kaplan.*



### **New! DISCOVERING SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism.**

By Malka Z. Simkovich. Jewish Publication Society, 2018. In this book, Simkovich takes us to Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, to the Jewish sectarians and the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus, to the genizah in Cairo and the ancient caves that for centuries kept the secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls. As she recounts the history of Judaism during this vibrant time, she presents samplings of some of the period's most important works and analyzes them for both known and possible meanings—illuminating the

perspectives of Jewish writers, leaders, and readers in this formative era. Simkovich's "popular archaeology" style will engage readers in understanding the remarkably creative ways Jews at this time chose to practice their religion and interpret its scriptures in light of a cultural setting so unlike that of their Israelite forefathers. 384 pages.

**The 2019 Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, "Christianity Through Jewish Eyes," will be presented by Dr. Malka Z. Simkovich  
Monday, March 11, 2019 - 7:00 pm**

**DePaul University's Lincoln Park Student Center, 2250 N. Sheffield Ave.**

*The annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture commemorates the Cardinal's 1995 visit to Israel. It continues the conversation he started between Chicago's Catholics and Jews.*

*Dr. Simkovich is the Crown-Ryan Chair of Jewish Studies and director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies program at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.*

**Free. Reservations requested. Reserve online at [archchicago.org](http://archchicago.org)**

### **New! 1001 TRAIN RIDES IN CHICAGO.**

By Richard Reeder. Eckhartz Press, 2018. Nearly a century has passed since Ben Hecht wrote the last of his "1001 Afternoons in Chicago" columns for the *Chicago Daily News*. Richard Reeder pays literary homage to Hecht in his new book—sixty-four short fiction vignettes of ordinary people who ride the eight rail lines of the CTA, a social tapestry of contemporary Chicago, depicting its heterogeneous population and diverse neighborhoods. Lively line drawings by Leonid Osseny. 158 pages. Paper.



## our authors

### Walter Roth's Jewish Chicagoans

*Famous, Infamous, and Little-Known Heroes and Happenings*

#### **LOOKING BACKWARD: True Stories from Chicago's Jewish Past.**

By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2002. The unknown story of Jewish participation in the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 is only one of the fascinating nuggets of history unearthed and polished by Walter Roth in the pages of *Chicago Jewish History*. He chronicles events from the late 1800s to the end of World War II. Illustrated. 305 pages. Paper. \$20\*

#### **AVENGERS AND DEFENDERS: Glimpses of Chicago's Jewish Past.**

By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2008. This second collection of articles from our journal by President Emeritus Roth. The avenger in the title is Sholom Schwartzbard. He assassinated the Ukrainian nationalist leader Simon Petlura, whose followers had perpetrated the post-World War One pogroms in Ukraine. Illustrated. 235 pages. Paper. \$20\*

#### **AN ACCIDENTAL ANARCHIST: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago's Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America.**

By Walter Roth & Joe Kraus. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1998. The episode took place on a cold Chicago morning in March, 1908. Lazarus Averbuch, a 19-year-old Jewish immigrant, knocked on the door of the Near North Side home of Police Chief George Shippy. Minutes later, the boy lay dead, shot by Shippy himself. Why Averbuch went to the police chief's home and exactly what happened afterward is still not known. The book does not solve the mystery, rather the authors examine the many different perspectives and concerns that surrounded the investigation of Averbuch's killing. Illustrated. 212 pages. Paper. \$20\*

#### **EVERYDAY HEROIC LIVES: Portraits from Chicago's Jewish Past.**

By Walter Roth. Amazon Kindle, 2016. A collection of columns and articles first published in *Chicago Jewish History*. 228 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 his hometown, 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. 165 pages. Paper.

#### **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 then as refugees in Chicago. The interview format allows the reader to hear the story in Toni's own words, in dialogue with young Wally. 121 pages. Paper.

#### **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. The author is the grandson of the Chicago businessman-philanthropist as well as a historian. He tells J.R.'s story with a historian's professional skill and with insights that only an insider with access to family records and memories could have. Black and white photographs. 472 pages.

#### **WOMEN BUILDING CHICAGO, 1790-1990: A Biographical Dictionary.**

Edited by Adele Hast and Rima Lunin Schultz. Indiana University Press. 2001. Of the more than 400 individual entries, forty are Jewish women. Illustrated. 1,088 pages.

#### **CREATING CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE: A Suburban History.**

By Michael H. Ebner. University of Chicago Press, 1988. Evanston, Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka, Glencoe, Highland Park, Lake Forest, and Lake Bluff—eight communities that serve as a genteel enclave of affluence, culture, and high society. Prof. Ebner explains the origins and evolution of this distinctive region. Photographs and maps. 368 pages.

#### **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.

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## our authors

### Irving Cutler's Neighborhoods

*Our Community, Our City, Our Region*

**THE JEWS OF CHICAGO: From Shtetl to Suburb.** By Irving Cutler. University of Illinois Press, 1996. The authoritative, vividly told history of Chicago's Jewish community by the professor emeritus of geography at Chicago State University and a founding board member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. 162 black and white images. 336 pages.

**CHICAGO'S JEWISH WEST SIDE.** By Irving Cutler. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2009. A gathering of nostalgic photos from private collections and Dr. Cutler's own treasure trove. Former West Siders will *kevel* and maybe also shed a tear. 207 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.

**JEWISH CHICAGO: A Pictorial History.** By Irving Cutler. Arcadia Publishing, *Images of America*, 2000. A sentimental snapshot of the city's Jewish community. 200 images. 128 pages. Paper.

**CHICAGO: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent. Fourth Edition.** By Irving Cutler. Southern Illinois University Press, 2006. Dr. Cutler skillfully weaves together the history, economy, and culture of the city and its suburbs, with a special emphasis on the role of the many ethnic and racial groups that comprise the "real Chicago" neighborhoods. Illustrated. 447 pages.

**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 Cutler. Illustrated. Two volumes, 775 pages.

**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHICAGO.** Edited by James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff. University of Chicago Press, 2004. The "Jewish Community" entry is by Cutler. Illustrations and maps. 1,152 pages.

**URBAN GEOGRAPHY.** By Irving Cutler. Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1978. A general study of cities in the USA and some of their major characteristics. Illustrated. 120 pages. Paper.

**THE CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA: Selected Geographical Readings.** Irving Cutler, Editor. Simon & Schuster, 1970. 322 pages.

**THE CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE CORRIDOR.** By Irving Cutler. Northwestern University Studies in Geography, 1965. A study of intermetropolitan urban coalescence. Includes 117 maps and illustrations. 322 pages.

**CHICAGO'S FORGOTTEN SYNAGOGUES.** By Robert A. Packer. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2007. The author is a former history teacher, professional building inspector, and freelance photographer. His goal was to document the many old synagogues and communal buildings before they met the wrecking ball. His explorations cover every area of the city where there was a Jewish population. Packer includes photographs of rabbis, Hebrew school class pictures, social event announcements and invitations. 200 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.

**DOORS OF REDEMPTION: The Forgotten Synagogues of Chicago and Other Communal Buildings.** Photographed and edited by Robert A. Packer. Booksurge, 2006. 282 pages. Spiral-bound paper.

### THIS USED TO BE CHICAGO.

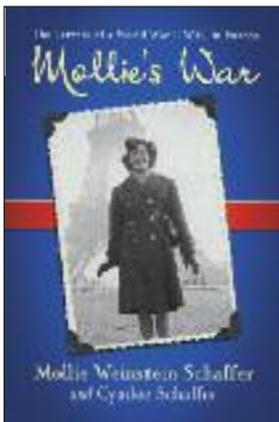
By Joni Hirsch Blackman. Reedy Press, 2017. Every building has a past! Included are the stories behind more than 90 Chicago buildings that used to be something else: the liquor store that used to be a speakeasy during Prohibition; the yacht club that used to be a ferry boat; the countless condominiums that used to be factories, and, perhaps the most incongruous, the circus school that used to be a church. Illustrated. 192 pages. Paper.

**EAST LAKE VIEW.** By Matthew Nickerson. Foreword by Alderman Tom Tunney. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2017. One of Chicago's most popular neighborhoods, also known as Wrigleyville, Boystown, and Belmont Harbor. Its diverse history is captured in photographs in which the members of Anshe Emet Synagogue are well-represented. 210 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.

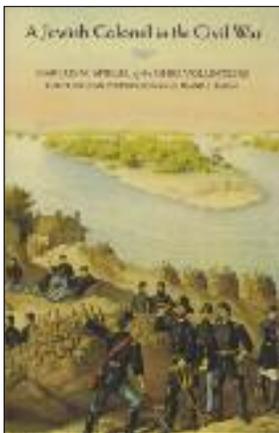
**LAKE VIEW.** By Matthew Nickerson. Foreword by Norman J. Dinkel, Jr. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2014. In the old days, shopkeepers in the neighborhood risked rebuke if they did not speak German. 204 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.

**AVONDALE AND CHICAGO'S POLISH VILLAGE.** By Jacob Kaplan, Daniel Pogorzelski, Rob Reid, and Elisa Addlesperger. Foreword by Dominic Pacyga. Arcadia Publishing *Images of America*, 2014. Home to impressive examples of sacred and industrial architecture, and the legendary Olson Waterfall, Avondale is often tagged as "the neighborhood that built Chicago." 207 black and white images. 128 pages. Paper.

## our authors



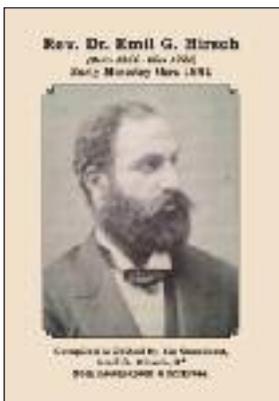
**MOLLIE'S WAR: The Letters of a World War II WAC in Europe.** By Mollie Weinstein Schaffer and Cyndee Schaffer. *Contributing Editor Jennifer G. Mathers. Introduction by Leisa D. Meyer.* McFarland Publishing, 2010. Mollie Weinstein Schaffer (1916–2012) was accepted into the WAC. After basic training in Florida she was on her way to Europe as a secretary in Medical Intelligence, following the American troops into England, France, and finally Germany with the Army of Occupation. *Mollie's War* was based on the letters and photos that she sent home and that were saved by her sister. Illustrated. 291 pages. Paper.



**A JEWISH COLONEL IN THE CIVIL WAR: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers.** Edited by Jean Powers Soman and 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. 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.) Spiegel was fatally wounded

in battle in May 1864 in Louisiana, and his body was not recovered. His cenotaph is in the Hebrew Benevolent Cemetery in Chicago, near the graves of his wife and children. Jean Soman, a great-great-granddaughter of Colonel Spiegel, is a Life Member of the CJHS. 353 pages. Paper.

**REV. DR. EMIL G. HIRSCH: Early Ministry thru 1881.**



Compiled and Edited by his Grandson, Emil G. Hirsch, 3rd. Collage Books, Inc., 2014. Rare *Chicago Tribune* and *American Israelite* newspaper articles, 1866-1881. 304 pages. Paper.

“In these collected newspaper articles, I visit my grandfather. I was born two years and ten months after his death and never appreciated his personality until I helped my father [David] before his death in 1976, to extract and publish in a book, *Theology of Emil G. Hirsch*, the fifty-one essays that my grandfather wrote for *The Jewish Encyclopedia* of 1903 (which were in addition to the hundreds

that he edited). But only five years ago, in 2013, after I visited via the internet, the archives of the University of Pennsylvania, and then the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and then newspapers of the time, with their eyewitness reporting by my grandfather, did I come to feel his presence.”—*Emil G. Hirsch, 3rd.*

**DVD: WOMEN UNCHAINED.**

By Beverly Siegel. National Center For Jewish Film (NCJF) 2011. English and Hebrew with English subtitles. An important film documenting the experiences of modern-day *agunot*, or women whose husbands refuse to grant them a Jewish divorce. Narrated by actress Mayim Bialik (*The Big Bang Theory*), *Women Unchained* offers strategies for what women can do to protect themselves and why the issue matters to all Jews. 60 Minutes.

### *Food and Food for Thought*

**FROM THE JEWISH HEARTLAND: Two Centuries of Midwest**

**Foodways.** By Ellen F. Steinberg and Jack H. Prost. University of Illinois, 2011. Authors Steinberg and Prost *fressed* their way through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri—all in the name of research! This is not a cookbook. Rather it is a fascinating exploration of how immigrant Jews adapted their Old World recipes to the ingredients they found in the Midwest. Illustrated. 224 pages.

**IRMA: A Chicago Woman's Story, 1871-1966.**

By Ellen F. Steinberg. University of Iowa, 2004. Based on the diaries and later memoirs of Irma Rosenthal Frankenstein, a Chicago-born member of the German Jewish community. 252 pages.

**LEARNING TO COOK IN 1898: A Chicago Culinary Memoir.**

By Ellen F. Steinberg. Wayne State University, 2007. Based on Irma Rosenthal Frankenstein's manuscript cookbook. Recipe adaptations by Eleanor Hudera Hanson. 240 pages.

## our authors

### *Fiction*

#### **THE ALEXANDRIA LETTER:**

**A Novel.** By George R. Honig. Synergy Books, 2010. Cambridge scholar Nathan Tobin discovers an ancient Aramaic letter that 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 the Church. 329 pages. Paper.

#### **BEYOND THE SCENT OF OLIVES.**

**A Novel.** By Alice Marcus Solovy. CreateSpace, 2012. Historical novel follows a Jewish family that flees the Spanish Inquisition. Their experiences take them through England, Ireland, France, Holland, Poland, and Germany over a fifty-year period. The family is fictional but the historical events and historical figures are real. 308 pages. Paper and Kindle.

#### **CORPORATE WAR: Poison Pills and Golden Parachutes.**

**A Novel.** By Werner L. Frank. Amazon, 2010, A business thriller portraying the cutthroat behavior of two computer companies engaged in a hostile takeover during the early days of the computer industry by an author who was an integral part of it. The novel is set in the 1980s when movement off the IBM mainframe was occurring and is built around a computer pioneer who is reluctant to give way to the new technologies. Golden parachutes, poison pills, stock options and extraordinary compensations open to senior management are all part of the business environment. 360 pages. Paper and E-book.

### *Music*

#### **THE ART OF THE YIDDISH FOLK SONG.** Sima Miller, soprano, Arnold Miller, piano.

A collection of performances by Chicago's renowned concert artists. These recordings were chosen for inclusion in the collection of the National Library of Israel. Four CDs or five audiotapes. *To order phone (847) 673-6409.*

### *Art*

#### **NEW ART IN THE 60s AND 70s: Redefining Reality.**

By Anne Rorimer. Thames & Hudson, 2004. A detailed account of developments centered around the conceptual art movement, highlights the main issues underlying visually disparate works dating from the second half of the 1960s to the end of the 1970s. These works questioned the accepted categories of painting and sculpture by embracing a wealth of alternative media and procedures. Traditional two- and three-dimensional representations were supplanted by a variety of linguistic and photographic means, as well as installations that brought into play the importance of presentation and site. 304 pages. 303 illustrations. Hardback and Paper.

### *Humor*

#### **BLOSSOM WINTERS IS DRIVING ON THE LOS ANGELES FREEWAYS and Other Short Stories.**

By Albert Zimble. CreateSpace, 2012. One of the six-short story collections by this comic writer. 263 pages. He asks our readers to visit his website to enjoy examples of his humor. *AlZimComedy.com.*

### *Nature*

#### **THE CITY IN A GARDEN: A History of Chicago's Parks, Second Edition.**

By Julia S. Bachrach. The University of Chicago Press, 2012. Through unprecedented access to a cache of historical plans, photographs, and drawings, Bachrach documents the city's 175-year commitment to its public parks and explains how luminaries such as architect Daniel H. Burnham, landscape architect and conservationist Jens Jensen, and social reformer Jane Addams shaped and influenced the city's green spaces. 150 halftone illustrations. 224 pages. Paper.

#### **INSPIRED BY NATURE: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago's West Side.**

By Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan. The University of Chicago Press, 2007. Celebrates one of the nation's most stunning and intriguing botanical havens. 150 illustrations. 160 pages.

#### **CHICAGO'S ONLY CASTLE:**

**The History of Givins' Irish Castle and Its Keepers.** By Errol Magidson. Magidson LLC, 2017. Tells the stories of the five Castle "keepers"—Robert C. Givins, the Chicago Female College, the Burdett family, the Siemens family, and Beverly Unitarian Church. Their stories are tied to the history of Chicago from 1886, when the Castle was built, to the present. Over 400 images. 284 pages. Paper.

#### **DVD: CHICAGO'S ONLY CASTLE: The History of Givins' Irish Castle and its Keepers.**

Errol Magidson, producer and co-director; Joshua Van Tuyl, co-director. 2011. One hour, 26 minutes. [www.chicagosonlycastle.org](http://www.chicagosonlycastle.org).

## our authors

### **THE MAKING OF JEWISH UNIVERSALISM: From Exile to Alexandria.**

By Malka Z. Simkovich. Lexington Press, 2016. This book argues that scholars and theologians have not properly defined the term "universalism," and that their misconceptions of this popular term have led many to ignore the universalist ideas that were circulating in Jewish communities in the late Second Temple and early rabbinic period. By redefining universalism, Simkovich argues that the binary of "Christian universalism" and "Jewish particularism" must be done away with, and that both religious communities have universalist and particularist elements at their core. Simkovich explores little-known Jewish documents from this period to demonstrate that some of the most universalist Jewish ideas were preserved in ancient Jewish writings that have not been sufficiently appreciated as being foundational to later Jewish thought. 216 pages.

### **WHO RULES THE SYNAGOGUE? Religious Authority and the Formation of American Judaism.**

By Zev Eleff. Oxford University Press, 2016. An award-winning study of the tensions between lay and religious authorities in the United States during the nineteenth century. 345 pages.

**MODERN ORTHODOX JUDAISM IN AMERICA: A Documentary History.** By Zev Eleff. Forward by Jacob J. Schacter. The Jewish Publication Society, 2016. An edited and annotated collection of texts and visual primary sources that tell the history of Modern Orthodox experience in the United States. The work includes a lengthy introduction as well as prefatory remarks before each chapter. 570 pages.

**MINYANS FOR A PRAIRIE CITY: The Politics of Chicago Jewry 1850-1914.** By Edward H. Mazur. Garland Publishing, 1990. CJHS Past President Mazur displays his deep knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject in this reference book for researchers. 428 pages.

**THE ETHNIC FRONTIER.** Holli and d'A Jones, editors. Eerdmans, 1984. Essays on the history of group survival in Chicago and the Midwest. The entry on "Jewish Chicago" is by Edward H. Mazur. 422 pages.

**BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN MAYORS, 1820-1980.** Holli and d'A Jones, editors; Edward H. Mazur, contributing editor. Greenwood Press, 1981. 441 pages.



**CHICAGO SKETCHES.** By Richard Reeder. AMIKA Press, 2012. Single-page stories drawn from the author's childhood and from the neighborhoods he visited in his work for the city: Rabbi Mendel's Purim party, Maxwell Street, the Arbeter Ring social hall, the racial situation in Canaryville. Color illustrations by Leonid Osseny. 45 pages. Paper.

### **IGGUROT HA-LEVI: Essays on the Service of the Levites According to Rambam and Other Essays.**

By Zev Eleff. Boston, 2012. A small collection of traditional rabbinic novellae; one is a path-breaking work on the intersection of academic historical writing and Jewish law. Hebrew.

**LIVING FROM CONVENTION TO CONVENTION: A History of the NCSY, 1954-1980.** By Zev Eleff. Ktav, 2009. A history of Orthodox Judaism's leading youth movement in its formative years.

**SHIRAT MIRIAM: Essays on Rambam and Talmudic Discourses.** By Zev Eleff. Baltimore, 2009. A collection of traditional rabbinic novellae that explores many areas of Jewish law and literature. The lengthiest chapter explores the historical Beruriah of the Mishnaic period. Hebrew.

**MENTOR GENERATIONS: Reflections on Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.** Edited by Zev Eleff. Ktav, 2008. A collection of original essays on the life and legacy of the leading and towering rabbinic figure in American Orthodox Jewish life.

**REMEMBERING CHICAGO'S JEWS.** By James Finn. CreateSpace, 2015. An encyclopedic compilation of the contributions to Chicago by Jews between 1832 and 1920. Each entry includes a brief biography, the major achievements, and the lasting contributions to Chicago life. Complete with indexes searchable by events and fields of vocation. 518 pages. Order from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or from the author at [finncpa1@comcast.net](mailto:finncpa1@comcast.net). or (847) 997-1411.

## our authors

### **LEGACY: The Saga of a German-Jewish Family Across Time and Circumstance.**

By Werner L. Frank. Avoteynu Foundation, 2003. The history of a German-Jewish family spanning several hundred years. Includes a portion on the author's immigration to Chicago and growing up in Hyde Park. 926 pages plus CD.

### **JUDENHAUS: Small Ghetto at Grosse Merzelstrasse 7.**

By Werner L. Frank. Foreword by Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon, 2016. The National Socialist rule in Germany issued more than 2,000 anti-Semitic decrees. A lesser-known restriction was The "Law on Tenancies with Jews" imposed on April 30, 1939, forcing the Jewish population to be crammed into a limited number of designated houses, the *Judenhaus*, the Jews' House, or sometimes called "small ghetto." This book focuses on one such Judenhaus in the city of Mannheim and follows the fate of its 80 residents in the period 1938-1940, reflecting their experiences during the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938 and the massive October 1940 deportation of all Jews in the Baden/Pfalz/Saar area to Camp de Gurs in Vichy France. 306 pages. Paper and E-book.

### **THE CURSE OF GURS: Way Station to Auschwitz.**

By Werner L. Frank. Foreword by Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon, 2012. In an October 1940 *aktion*, Jews from the States of Baden and the Pfalz/Saar were deported to Vichy's Gurs internment camp, followed in 1942 by deportation to Auschwitz from the Parisian suburb of Drancy. The book records the events and fate of more than 6,500 Jews. 408 pages. Paper and E-book.

### *A Film by Ethan Bensinger*

#### **REFUGE: STORIES OF THE SELFHHELP 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](http://www.storiesofselfhelp.film.com)

**THE FATE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIES: Transmission and Family Dialogues.** By Chaya H. Roth with the voices of Hannah Diller and Gitta Fajerstein. Amazon Kindle, 2013. Part oral history, part psychological exploration. The book uses interviews, diary entries, and psychological analysis to reveal how each generation has passed on memories of the War and the Shoah to the next. Finally, this work speaks to the remaining survivor generations who struggle with issues of Holocaust transmission, wondering about the value, necessity, and manner in which Holocaust memories are handed down. Illustrated. 295 pages. Paper.

### **OUT OF CHAOS: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust.**

Edited by Elaine Fox. Preface by Phyllis Lassner. Northwestern University Press, 2013. Brief or elongated moments, fragments of memory and experience. In all, the anthology expresses these survivors' memories and reactions to a wide range of experiences as they survived in many European settings. Some writers chose to write story clusters, each one capturing a moment or an incident, often disconnected by memory or temporal and spatial divides. 318 pages.

**TRANSPLANTED LIVES: The adventures of young Jewish immigrants from post-Fascist and Communist Hungary to the Free World following the 1956 Uprising.** By Susan V. Meschel and Peter Tarjan. CreateSpace, 2016. Anthology of personal recollections of escaping from Hungary, the land of their birth, where they never had real roots, following the 1956 uprising against Communist rule. Filled with hope and fear, most of the young adult storytellers were eager to learn the language of their new home and complete their education to become professionals. Their family backgrounds represent a broad range as does the spectrum of their careers at the time of writing these memoirs—more than half a century later. 288 Pages. Paper.

*Most of the protagonists described their wartime experiences as children and post-war experiences as teenagers in two earlier collections.*

**YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK: Surviving the Holocaust in Hungary.** By Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1993.

**RED STAR, BLUE STAR: The lives and times of Jewish students in Communist Hungary, 1948-1956.** By Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1997.

## Report: CJHS Tour, Sunday, August 19, 2018 “Jewish Albany Park and Rogers Park”



Interior, former Congregation B'nai Zion, 1447 West Pratt Blvd.  
Photograph by Frances Archer, 2018.

A reprint of our journal articles about Albany Park and Rogers Park, featuring pieces by Dr. Edward H. Mazur and Esther L. Manewith, is available free from the CJHS office while supplies last. Email [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org) to order.

Our tour began in West Rogers Park at the Bernard Horwich JCC on Touhy Avenue, where a large group joined the folks already aboard the comfortable coach that had come from the downtown pick-up spot on Ohio Street, across from the Marriott Hotel.

Guides Jacob Kaplan and Patrick Steffes pointed out synagogues, schools, institutions, and residential and commercial buildings as our driver navigated the narrow streets that were designed for automobile traffic.

Kaplan and Steffes are mavens of Chicago's built environment, and they offered insightful comments on the characteristic Art Deco details in the architecture of the Far North Side neighborhoods.

We stopped in at the former Congregation B'nai Zion. (CJHS Board member Herbert Eiseman was President, 1987-1992.) It is now a school. The auditorium is well-maintained, the stained glass windows are intact, and the facade retains its dignity. Some in our group grew nostalgic. Some had belonged to B'nai Zion. Peri and Beverly Arnold were married there. ❖

## Memories of B'nai Zion

JANET TATZ

Congregation B'nai Zion was a second home to me and everyone I knew growing up in East Rogers Park in the 1950s and '60s. It was within walking distance of most of our homes, the local grammar schools (Kilmer and Field), as well as Sullivan High School. And why not? Many of our parents had grown up in the very same neighborhood, attended the same schools, and worshiped at B'nai Zion in their youth.

It was not just Friday night services, the delicious onegs, or the Junior Congregation services (including a lunch!) on Saturdays. B'nai Zion was where we attended Hebrew school, Sunday school, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, post-bar and bat mitzvah club, United Synagogue Youth (USY), and so much more.



B'nai Zion, 1715 West Lunt Avenue.  
*History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.*

My own family history parallels much of B'nai Zion's. My paternal grandfather, Dave Tatz, came to America in the early 1900s and

quickly went about the business of making a home for himself and his growing family. He settled in Rogers Park, and along with a few other men, helped establish the first home of B'nai Zion on Lunt in 1919.

As more and more Jews moved into Rogers Park, the congregation outgrew that building. By 1928, Congregation B'nai Zion had found a home on the corner of Pratt and Ashland. My father, Irving Tatz, had his bar mitzvah there, and my brother, my sister, and I were b'nai mitzvah there, as well.

Both of my siblings were married in the beautiful sanctuary. My brother's son, Robert, came back to B'nai Zion for his bar mitzvah. (The family had moved to the suburbs by that time.)

In a similar vein, since my family and I live out in Montana where there is scant Jewish life, one of my own sons, Joel, made his first aliyah at B'nai Zion.



**Congregation B'nai Zion, Main Entrance and Sanctuary, 2002.**

From "Remembering Congregation B'nai Zion,"

*Chicago Jewish History*, Summer 2002. Article and photographs by Joy Kingsolver, Spertus Institute, Chicago.

When the first rabbi of B'nai Zion, Abraham Lassen, passed away, my grandfather, Dave Tatz, already a widower, married the rebbe'sn, Anne Lassen Tatz. An interesting twist of fate, since it was Rabbi Lassen who had officiated at my parents' wedding.

My parents established the Young Marrieds group in the early '50s. They were one of the original couples in B'nai Zion's Investment Club that continued into the early 2000s. My parents held just about every office that the synagogue had to offer. And since we lived only a few short blocks from B'nai Zion, it was my father who would get the call in the middle of the night if the burglar alarm happened to go off. In addition, my dad was on the B'nai Zion bowling team!

The synagogue offered stability to us kids. If one of our parents wasn't home after school, we knew we could go hang out at BZ, and all would be well. We knew the janitor

and school bus driver personally. (They were the parents of some of our friends!)

In the '40s and '50s, many Chicago apartment building owners maintained a "No Jews Allowed" policy. To right that wrong, Grandpa Dave bought several buildings in East Rogers Park and rented to Jews so that they could walk to B'nai Zion, if they so desired.

Even after B'nai Zion closed its doors, those of us who grew up in its heyday have remained friends. Many have become rabbis, Jewish educators, cantors, or synagogue administrators. Our education was meaningful, personal, and deep.

An article in *The Chicago Jewish News*, May 16-22, 2003, tells a great story in The Maven column.

When B'nai Zion was closing, my mom, with the help of my sister, Marcia Tatz Wollner, helped distribute BZ's Torahs to synagogues around the world. One scroll was donated to the Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw, Poland, where it was installed in a gala ceremony. One was donated to Ethiopian Jews in

Jerusalem. Others went to Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Wisconsin, to a Hillel at the University of California-San Diego, and to my small synagogue in Helena, Montana. One Torah went to the newly merged entity, Congregation Shaare Tikvah-B'nai Zion.



**Beverly Gertrude Zoot.**

**Von Steuben High School Yearbook, 1943.**  
Collection of Jackye Sullins.

Finally, an interesting tidbit you might enjoy. In the Summer-Fall 2016 issue of *Chicago Jewish History*, in the report on Frances Archer's presentation, "Von Steuben High School: The Jewish Glory Days," there is a photo of girls with impressive pompadours. One of them is my mother, Beverly! ❖

## Report: CJHS Open Meeting, Sunday, October 14, 2018

### “That’s No Job for a Jewish Boy”



Harvey Choldin.

When young Harvey Choldin told his mother that he wanted to be an architect, she said, “That’s no job for a Jewish boy.” True, in the decades before World War II, architecture resembled other high-level professions that discriminated against Jews. But Harvey remained interested in architecture—especially modernism—as he pursued his career as a sociologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), where he is Professor Emeritus since his retirement in 2005. Choldin has traveled to architectural sites in several countries. He has volunteered at the Ricker Library of Architecture and Art at UIUC and in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago. He is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians. One of his special interests is Chicago’s Jewish architects.

His slide presentation for us at Emanuel Congregation, “Chicago’s Jewish Architects: Three Memorable Modernists,” focussed on the lives and careers of Milton Schwartz, Ezra Gordon and John Macsai.

**Milton Schwartz** (1925-2007) grew up in Albany Park, where he attended Von Steuben High School. His father, from Romania, was a heating and plumbing contractor. Milton went on jobs with him and decided he wanted to be an architect. He entered the University of Illinois, then the only architecture school that didn’t discriminate against Jews. UIUC attracted aspiring Jewish architects from around the United States.

After graduation, Schwartz started a contracting firm, and afterward, his own architecture firm. He was the developer of many of the buildings he designed. He and his family lived in the 21st floor penthouse of his 320 West Oakdale Avenue high-rise.

Schwartz’s projects included the Executive House Hotel, 71 East Wacker Drive (1960), and the redevelopment and redesign of the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas (demolished 1993). Architect Mies van der Rohe greatly influenced architects here, emphasizing clean lines, glass, and little ornamentation. Schwartz, in an Art Institute of Chicago oral history interview, opined that Mies was too rigid and had no sense of humor.

**Ezra Gordon** (1921-2009) was born in Detroit, the son of a seller of Yiddish and Hebrew books and the grandson of a sofer. Ezra grew up in Chicago’s Garfield Park neighborhood where he attended Crane Tech High School and Herzl Junior College. After service in the US Army in WWII (1942-1946) he studied architecture on the GI Bill at UIUC. A fellow student, Jack Levin, later became his business partner.

As an ardent Labor Zionist, Gordon’s dream was to move to Palestine as an architect and help build the Jewish State. He worked as a draftsman at a Chicago firm, started a family, and realized he was not going to

make aliyah. Gordon was hired by Harry Weese, whose firm was working on residential projects that suited Gordon’s interest in social justice. Later, his own firm, Ezra Gordon–Jack M. Levin & Associates, gained renown for their South Commons residential complex, Dearborn Park high-rise, the East Bank Club, and the unique, circular Simon Wexler Psychiatric Research Pavilion at Michael Reese Hospital, which was razed along with the other buildings on the Reese campus. Gordon taught architecture for many years at UIC.

**John Macsai** (1926-2017) was born in Budapest as John Lusztig, a Germanic name common among Hungarian Jews. He always loved to draw and studied at the Atelier Art School until the Nazis came in 1944. Within a month antisemitic laws were imposed and John was condemned to a forced labor camp and then to infamous Mauthausen. He survived a death march before his liberation by the US Army in 1945.

After the war he returned to Budapest and studied architecture at the Polytechnical University. He changed his name to Macsai because of antisemitism there. He accepted a Hillel Foundation scholarship to study in the US when the Communist takeover of Hungary was imminent. He spent two years at Miami University of Ohio, learned English, and moved to Chicago in 1949.

Macsai was hired by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, where he worked for four years, then elsewhere, before starting his own firm with Robert Hausner.

He designed Malibu East and many other high-rises on Sheridan Road and Lake Shore Drive. He designed Lieberman Geriatric Center in Skokie to feel homey and warm and conducive to social contact. Macsai was the recipient of many AIA awards. He taught architecture for many years at UIC. It was his client who chose the color—purple—for the Hyatt Hotel on Touhy Avenue in Lincolnwood (demolished in 2013).

*From notes by Rachelle Gold*

## Report: CJHS Open Meeting, Sunday, November 4, 2018

**Dr. Theodore B. Sachs:****“...like a David, he resisted the Goliath of tuberculosis...”***Daily Jewish Courier*, April 4, 1916 —translated from Yiddish

**Dr. Theodore B. Sachs  
(1868-1916).**

In the early 1900s, when tuberculosis was widespread in Chicago’s poor Jewish immigrant community, Dr. Sachs treated patients at the West Side Dispensary (later the Mandel Clinic) at Maxwell and Morgan Streets, a free health clinic. Supported by Jewish charitable organizations, Dr. Sachs led a fifteen-year movement that culmin-

ated in the establishment of a 650-bed public health institution devoted to TB treatment and research, the Chicago Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium.

Theodore B. Sachs was born into a wealthy, educated, Jewish merchant family in Cherkov, Russia. He studied law, then immigrated to the US, hoping to establish a practice here, but was inhibited by his inability to speak English fluently. So he abandoned his law career for medical school at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, later the University of Illinois College of Medicine. During his internship at Michael Reese Hospital, he met Lena Louise Wilson, a nurse who would become his wife and change his life. He established a medical practice on Halsted Street and she assisted him. Then she contracted TB. Dr. Sachs accompanied her to a sanitarium in Denver and stayed through the three years of her recovery. When they returned they set about researching and treating the disease.

Frances Archer’s presentation followed Dr. Sachs’s career as he campaigned tirelessly for proper treatment and spearheaded the founding of the Chicago facility in a large, secluded area, completely closed off from the surrounding population. He faced continuing challenges when skilled employees were replaced by political appointees, and he was denounced by corrupt City officials. Tragically, he took his own life.

The Sanitarium continued operating until 1974, a huge, hidden world that Frances Archer and others would begin to explore.

The attendees at our meeting were treated to a brief concluding talk by Dr. Jay Rothenberg about his experience treating TB as well as the scourge of our time, HIV Aids. Our event was held at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, 9220 Crawford, Skokie, the first shul in the area to serve as home to both Ashkenazic and Sephardic minyanim, with two equally beautiful sanctuaries.



Frances O’Cherony Archer has researched the history of the Chicago Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium extensively, and she conducts walking tours of its former



**Frances O’Cherony Archer.**

grounds, now known as North Park Village. Her previous presentation for the CJHS was “Von Steuben High School: The Jewish Glory Days.” She writes the blog *Me & My Shadow: A life in Chicago* about her old Hollywood Park and other North Side neighborhoods. Archer has developed a subspecialty in sanitarium lore, so much so that now there’s a separate blog at [chicagomts.wordpress.com](http://chicagomts.wordpress.com).

### Welcome, New Members of the Society

Gail R. Bush  
*Evanston, IL*

Frances P. Davis  
*Highland Park, IL*

Arnold Kranz  
*Bell Canyon, CA*

Sybil Mervis  
*Danville, IL*

Moshe Simkovich  
*Skokie, IL*

Judith Wolf  
*Chicago, IL*



# BEYOND CHICAGO: ILLINOIS JEWISH ROOTS

## Families of Downstate Danville

**SYBIL STERN MERVIS**

*Historian of the Danville Jewish Community*

**J**ewish folks have lived in downstate Illinois for nearly two centuries, emigrating from across an ocean to find freedom from oppression and make a good life for their families. They were often drawn to small downstate communities because acquaintances or relatives had settled here and recommended the small town life.

Danville, Illinois is located 130 miles straight south of Chicago on the Illinois-Indiana state line. Jewish men, probably “drummers,” appeared on the 1850 census. By the 1870s, the earliest Jews to move to Danville had opened stalls or small shops on the main streets, muddy as they were. Among those nascent businessmen were the Basch family from the LaSalle, Illinois area, and Louis Platt, who moved down from Chicago after the Great Fire.



**Louis Platt (1850-1935).**

**Louis Platt** was born in Posen, Germany. Orphaned early, he sailed alone from Hamburg to New York in 1863 when he was just 13 years old. He roamed the country, settling first in Detroit and moving on to Chicago in 1871 after the Great Fire.

Failing at cigar manufacturing in Chicago, he moved south to Danville in 1875, opening a clothing store downtown alongside four or five other early Jewish merchants. Even two of the Gimbel brothers, of the famous New York City Gimbel’s Department store, had a dry goods business in the same area for a time.

In 1890, Platt sold his clothing business, and in 1898 embarked on an insurance business. According to a local historian of the time, “He is now one of the wealthiest and most substantial citizens of Danville.”

Platt and Judge E. R. E. Kimbrough built what was then the first office building and also the tallest building in Danville at that time.

Louis Platt married Delia Summerfield of Chicago in 1876, and they had four children. By 1909 he was elected the first (and only) Jewish mayor of Danville, “on the Citizens’ ticket by the largest majority any Danville mayor has ever received, carrying every ward and every precinct.”

One of his sons, Casper, studied law at his father’s urging and served sixteen years on the local Circuit Court before being appointed to a federal judgeship in 1949 by Harry Truman. He served until his death in 1965.

Casper married Jeanette Regent, whom he had met at the University of Chicago. She was related to the Pritzker family. They raised three daughters in Danville where Mrs. Platt helped start Girl Scouting and the League of Women Voters in her new home city.

**Helen Weinstock (Wells)** The Basch family brought along relatives from both sides who eventually established clothing stores. Some played in the band at the local Old Soldiers Home, now a Veterans Administration hospital. Later, Aaron Basch’s daughter married Herman Weinstock. They had three children, one of whom was Helen.

The Weinstocks moved to New York City in 1918, and Helen, after graduating from New York University, began to write books for girls. Changing her name to Helen Wells, she authored twenty-two books in a popular series about “the adventures of a young and dedicated career nurse.” Her heroine, Cherry Ames, inspired many a mid-century girl to follow her path!

Cherry grew up in Hilton, Illinois, which was really Danville. Helen’s brother, Robert, was also a talented writer. An Army veteran of the WWII Normandy invasion, he lived to age 104.



**Helen Wells  
(1910-1985).**

**Commemorative sign on the brick wall of Danville Paper & Supply Co., 18 E. North St., the former home of John Rissman & Son.**

**The Genuine "WINDBREAKER"  
AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS JACKET**

American soldiers home and abroad benefited from the patriotic devotion to excellence from the men and women employed by the Rissman & Son Company of Chicago, Danville, and Westville. Local workers produced over 300,000 jackets for World War 2 Army personnel. Even on weekends, production continued as workers completed items to be used by the Red Cross.... When peacetime returned, the famous Windbreaker jacket made in Danville became famous worldwide.



**Harry Morris Friedman** was born in a small town north of Warsaw, Poland, in 1881. He managed to escape to America and was living in Chicago by 1900. Employed by the John Rissman & Son garment factory, he was transferred to Danville in 1917, where he established a new plant and was its first manager. He was the designer of the original "Windbreaker" jacket.

Initially, the company employed fifty workers. Over the next three decades, Rissman would employ over more than hundred persons in three factories in Vermilion County, designing and producing all types of outer garments, including nearly half a million field jackets for the United States Armed Forces during World War II. Rissman was then the largest manufacturer of outerwear in the United States.

In 1902, Harry married Goldie "Gussie" Greenberg of Chicago, and they raised two children, Leon and Martha, in Danville, where the Jewish population was quite small. During the summer of 1917 they moved to an apartment at 114 North Robinson Street. Harry could easily walk to work east on North Street. Both children attended nearby Washington Elementary School and graduated from Danville High School, which was then located close to their home.

Leon went on to the University of Illinois. Martha attended business school locally and then worked in Chicago for a while in the Palmolive Building.

Harry Friedman worked as superintendent for Rissman in Danville for thirty-five years. In 1937, when some of the Rissmans left to open a plant in Frankfort, Indiana, Harry and Goldie moved there at that time, and Harry was their plant manager. He retired from the garment industry in 1950 and died in Danville in 1973.

There were at least four garment factories in the Danville area during the first half of the twentieth century. All were Jewish-owned at one time or another—chapters in a saga of determined, creative immigrants finding success in America!

**Lou Mervis** was a native of Danville, the son of Isadore and Martha Friedman Mervis. He devoted his adult life to improving his hometown in numerous ways. An Indiana University graduate (the first in the Mervis family to earn a college education), Lou returned to Danville to assist his father in the family scrap business in 1957. Full of ideas from his accounting courses, and despite his father's concerns,



**Lou Mervis (1934-2017).**

he began to expand the services offered by Mervis Iron & Metal.

He became deeply involved in the functions of his community, serving on a variety of boards and commissions, from zoning to hospitals to banking, to charitable organizations—and gaining appointments to state boards by three Illinois governors.

Due to his father's illness, Lou was soon CEO of Mervis Industries, while helping to raise our five children, and eventually presiding over both the local and state Boards of Education. He was known far and wide for his generosity to almost anyone in need. Most important was his focus on education, establishing more than one-hundred-twenty-five college scholarships at the local community college, Indiana University, and the University of Illinois.

He was responsible for establishing the Danville Area Economic Development Corporation and in bringing many industries to town. The family scrap yard at which he first worked is now one of the largest family owned scrapyards in America, due in no small part to his hard work and ingenuity.

Lou Mervis's commitment to improving life in Danville was deeply felt. *Tikkun olam* guided his life. ❖

Look to the rock from which you were born

הביטו אל-צור הוצבנים



## chicago jewish historical society

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### 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. Three years after celebrating our "double *chai*," the Society's

**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.

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Inquiries: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org)

All issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present are digitized and posted on our website in pdf format. Click on the Publications tab and scroll down through the years. There is also an Index to the issues from 1977 to 2012.

### 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.

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

- A subscription to the Society's award-winning quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is \$10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- 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



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