



chicago jewish history

Tours of Our Historic Neighborhoods

**Report: Dr. Irving Cutler's
"Chicago Jewish Roots" Bus Tour
Sunday, July 14**



Knesses Israel Nusach Sfard (KINS).
1308 Independence Blvd.
History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

Today, this pictured synagogue building is the home of the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church. The highlight of Dr. Cutler's "Roots" tour was a visit to the church, where our group received a warm welcome from the pastor, Rev. Steve Spiller, Sr. The sanctuary's original wooden pews, with their carved Stars of David, are still in place. The entire room is decorated with Stars.

Continued on page 17

**Sign Up Today! Herbert Eiseman's
"South Side Jewish Chicago" Bus Tour
Sunday, August 18**

Professional tour guide Herbert Eiseman, architect/preservationist Carey Wintergreen, and sixth-generation Chicagoan and synagogue maven Mark Mandle narrate the ride. Starting on Lake Street, where the first Jewish congregation was founded, we'll head south through the neighborhoods into which the Jewish community settled—Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Washington Park—then east to Kenwood, Hyde Park—and South Shore, which became the center of the South Side Jewish community in the 1950s.

Our experts will discuss the significant synagogues, leading personalities, community institutions, and business districts. Expect lots of nostalgia and pride for native South Siders, a well-informed introduction to the city for new Chicagoans and visitors, and eye-openers for dubious West Side and North Side natives. Bring the children and grandchildren—it's their history!

Sign up online at www.chicagojewishhistory.org or use the **application on the inside back cover of this issue.**



Bima, Sanctuary.
K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation.
1100 East Hyde Park Blvd.
*The tour will visit architect Alfred
Alschuler's masterpiece.*

Ed Mazur's Armchair Tour of Jewish Albany Park starts on Page 7

President's Column



Edward H. Mazur

RECENTLY I HAVE BEEN READING

about the attitude of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the United States Congress to Jews between 1933 and 1945.

FDR enjoyed the overwhelming support of American Jews during his presidency. He led the war against Hitler, supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine, appointed a Jew to the Supreme Court, chose another to be his Secretary of the Treasury, and surrounded himself with Jewish advisers who helped shape the laws that revolutionized the role of

government in American life. His wife Eleanor's concern for minorities fused the bond even tighter. When the President died in 1945, the Rabbinical Assembly of America described him as an "immortal leader of humanity and peerless servant of God."

The Roosevelts were hardly immune to the prejudices of their time. Before 1932, Eleanor had described Felix Frankfurter as "an interesting little man, but very Jew," and after attending a function for financier Bernard Baruch, complained, "The Jew party was appalling. I never wish to hear money, jewels, and sables mentioned again." Franklin used anti-Semitic banter to charm world leaders like Joseph Stalin, who was known to fear and hate Jews. Thankfully, when it mattered most, their nobler instincts took over.

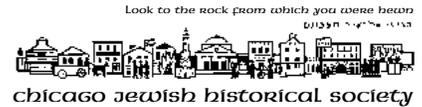
All Presidents are subject to the tides of revisionist history. For FDR, the most controversial scholarship concerns the moral question: What exactly, did he do in his twelve years in office to protect the Jews of Europe from Nazi genocide? The answer, believed by many, is not nearly enough.

Beginning in the 1960s, books began appearing with titles like *No Haven for the Oppressed* and *While Six Million Died*. The most influential account has been David Wyman's *Abandonment of the Jews*, published in 1984. The author, the grandson of two Protestant ministers, considered the responsible parties to include a badly divided Jewish community, a nest of anti-Semites in the U.S. State Department, and a distracted President, largely indifferent to humanitarian concerns that he felt were beyond his control.

Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, history professors at American University, offer the most recent, and I believe, the most thoughtful, entry into what can only be described as a scholarly minefield, in *FDR and the Jews* (Harvard University Belknap Press).

FDR left behind a rather thin paper trail. He did not write a memoir or record many White House conversations, and he refused to allow note-taking during his personal meetings. To fill this gap, the authors have combed the archives of those leading players who did write down their thoughts and recollections. The result, to this historian, is quite impressive. Readers may disagree with their

Continued on page 18



chicago jewish historical society

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR/DESIGNER ABOUT THIS “SPRING” ISSUE

Yes, this is the Spring 2013 issue of our quarterly—although you will find reports on summer events that have

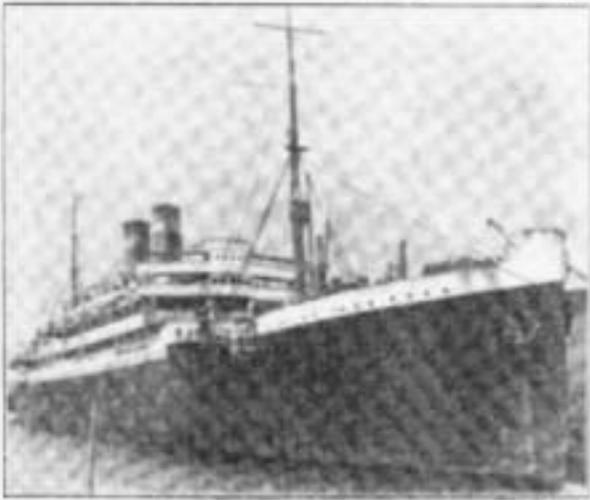
already occurred. An unpleasant virus (cough, cough) that persisted for many weeks sapped my strength and slowed the progress of my work. Also delaying me was my need for a new computer. *Kol hakavod* (all due respect) to my venerable Power Mac G5; it served me well for seven years; but enough was enough.

This issue of *CJH* was produced on a new iMac with updated desktop publishing applications. I had to leap four generations of Photoshop in a single bound. So glad to find *Photoshop for Dummies* online!

Even with up-to-date technology I couldn't correct this photograph of the ship *S. S. President Arthur* from the January 2, 1925 issue of the *Sentinel*. I copied it from the website of digitized issues of the magazine (see www.spertus.edu). So it is a copy of a copy of an original that itself was probably no great shakes. Please turn to the article on page 12 to see why I included it.

You can expect two more issues of *CJH* this year—summer and fall (the Book Issue). In all, four seasonal journals. Thank you for your interest and patience.

S. S. President Arthur Flies Jewish Flag



F. A. Photo

The S. S. President Arthur, owned by the Palestine American Line, is the first ship to fly the Jewish flag. She arrived at Brooklyn from Norfolk, Va., on November 22. The President Arthur will ply between New York and Haifa, the port of embarkation for Palestine, the Jewish homeland.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

In the Fall 2012 issue of *CJH*, in the report on our Sullivan High School program, the four images of Rogers Park synagogues were taken from the book *Chicago's Forgotten Synagogues* by Robert Packer. He should have been credited as the photographer.

Also, three elementary schools were listed as Sullivan High School feeders: Hayt, Field, and Kilmer. Paul Malovitz of Los Angeles wrote to say that Gale Elementary, 1631 West Jonquil Terrace, should have been included. Many of Paul's cousins went to Gale and then Sullivan.

In the Winter 2013 issue, we published Adele Hast's review of Cornelia Wilhelm's book about the Independent True Sisters, and also reprinted Joy Kingsolver's article about materials from that organization that were donated to the Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus. Board member Janet Iltis noted the discrepancy between the abbreviations of the organization's name in the review (IOTS) and the reprint (UOTS).

Dr. Hast checked Cornelia Wilhelm's sources for her use of the "Independent" name. In a footnote on pg. 263, she gives the following information: "The UOTS was originally founded as *Unabhangiger Orden Treuer Schwestern*, literally translated 'Independent Order of True Sisters.' The name was gradually anglicized in the early twentieth century and officially became the United Order of True Sisters in 1918." According to Wilhelm, the collection of records that she used is called Independent Order of True Sisters Archive and abbreviated UOTS Archive. The collection was transferred to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. Her book goes through 1914, when the Independent name and the abbreviation IOTS were still being used.

Welcome, New Members of the Society!

Frances Archer
Glennview, IL

Stan & Carole Derdiger
Highland Park, IL

Marianne C. Dreyfus
Chicago, IL

Dr. Sheldon & Roberta Edelson
Chicago, IL

Lee Feigon
Winnetka, IL

Alyce Hemon
Skokie, IL

Rosalie Hoffen
Lincolnwood, IL

Robert Raffeld
Chicago, IL

Alan & Andrea Solow
Chicago, IL

CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

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



Carey Wintergreen.

Courtesy Chicago Jewish News. Photo by Joe Kus.

Congratulations to CJHS Social Media Chair **Carey Wintergreen!** He has been honored as a "Jewish Chicagoan of the Year" by *The Chicago Jewish News*. An architect and preservationist, he is singled out for his activities on behalf of today's Chicago Jewish community and his devotion to saving significant artifacts from our past. He joins a list of other distinguished CJHS members who have been so honored.

Read about Wintergreen in the just-published *Chicago Jewish News 2013-2014 Guide to Jewish Chicago*.

Herbert Eiseman recently returned from Israel. He travels there annually for SAREL, Volunteers for Israel, joining volunteers from many lands who work at routine tasks on military bases on behalf of the IDF. (This year, he did his bit by cleaning radios.)

Eiseman had given a tour of Chicago to the parents of **Roey Gilad**, Israel's Consul General to the Midwest (and CJHS Honorary Member). In Israel, Jacob Gilad, Roey's father, a veteran of the War of Independence, reciprocated by taking Herb on a tour of battle monuments of 1948 and to a ceremony for veterans and their families at Kfar Saba.

Max Lorig can take pride in this press release: "CDOT [Chicago Department of Transportation] Opens the Reconstructed Fullerton Bridge Over Lincoln Park Lagoon to Vehicular Traffic. \$12 Million Infrastructure Improvement Project Completed on Time and On Budget."

"The well-traveled Fullerton Parkway Bridge, which was originally built in 1940, needed to be replaced due to its deteriorated condition," said Congressman Mike Quigley (5th District). "We now have a new bridge that will give Chicagoans more access to enjoy activities in Lincoln Park."

The press release appeared on December 7, 2012, but with summer crowds enjoying the park and beach, it is worth mentioning now. There was signage at the bridge during the project: "**Lorig Construction.**"

Linda S. Haase wrote in the July issue of *JUF News*: "...**Manfred Steinfeld** is one of 14 German Jews featured in a new exhibition at the Allied Museum in Berlin highlighting 'Victors, Liberators, Occupiers: German Jews in Service of the Allies.' The exhibition illuminates a little-known chapter of German-Jewish history through the stories of German Jews who escaped the Nazi regime but returned to Europe as members of the Allied armed forces During World War II.

"Steinfeld arrived in Chicago at age 14 in June 1938 with \$10 stitched into his pants pocket. He went into the U.S. Army less than a year after graduating from Hyde Park High School and then heroically participated in five campaigns with the renowned 82nd Airborne Division for which he received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal. He was among the first American GIs to liberate a concentration camp, helping to free inmates at Woebblin...."

Report: Presentation of CJHS "Emerging Talent" Awards to Four Young Local Playwrights

A ceremony preceded Rabbi Ellen Dreyfus's talk (see facing page). CJHS President Ed Mazur presented awards of \$250 each to four playwrights whose work had received staged readings in the auditorium of the Chicago History Museum on February 12 as part of the museum's *Shalom Chicago* Jewish Theatre Series.

Each play is based on a well-researched aspect of local Jewish life. The staged readings benefited from the participation of members of the renowned Chicago theater community. Our awards were presented to foster the work of these talented playwrights and to encourage writing on Chicago Jewish history.

Playwrights William Glick, Brandy Reichenberger, and Gloria Terry were present at our open meeting. Naomi Brodtkin was given her award later. On hand to *shep nakhes* were Chicago History Museum Senior Curator Libby Mahoney, CHM Family and Youth Programs Manager Ilana Bruton, and Northlight Theatre Resident Dramaturg Dr. Kristin Leahey. ❖

*Ongoing Exhibit***“Shalom Chicago”
Continues through September 2****Chicago History Museum
1601 North Clark Street, Chicago***Parking available
at the corner of Stockton and LaSalle.*

Presented in collaboration with the Spertus Institute, *Shalom Chicago* illustrates the Jewish community’s rich history and contributions to Chicago’s growth and development, through personal stories, rare artifacts, and engaging multimedia presentations.

Many of the artifacts are on loan from Spertus, and some of those were donated by the CJHS.

*Upcoming Tour***“The Synagogue Speaks”****Sunday, August 11****1:00 pm – 5:00 pm****Guide: Rolf Achilles**

In conjunction with *Shalom Chicago*, expert tour guide and architectural historian Rolf Achilles guides a bus tour of Chicago-area synagogues.

Rolf Achilles is a curator, author, and historian who has lectured and written extensively about architecture in Chicago including a book he coauthored with Norman Schwartz on the stained glass windows of Temple Shalom.

*Temple Shalom, Chicago Sinai Congregation,
KAM Isaiah Israel, Spertus Institute*

Tour begins and ends at the Chicago History Museum**\$50 Spertus and Chicago History Museum members — \$55 Non-members****Purchase tickets: www.chicagohistory.org or phone (312) 642-4600****Report: Lecture by Rabbi Ellen W. Dreyfus, Sunday, April 14
“Women in the Rabbinate—Chicago”**

Rabbi Dreyfus addressed a large, attentive audience at the CJHS open meeting on Sunday afternoon, April 14, at Temple Beth Israel, 3601 Dempster Street, Skokie.

Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, a national leader in the Reform movement, has had a distinguished career. She was among the first group of women ordained in this country as a rabbi (she was the eighteenth one—and pregnant), the first woman rabbi in Illinois, and the first woman president of the Chicago Board of Rabbis.

She has been the rabbi of B’nai Yehuda Beth Shalom in south suburban Homewood since the congregation was founded in 1998 with the merger of Temple B’nai Yehuda and Congregation Beth Shalom. Before that, she served Congregation Beth Shalom in Park Forest for eleven years. She officiated at the ordination of her brother, Rabbi Michael Weinberg of Temple Beth Israel.

She described the challenges faced by a pioneering woman rabbi, mostly from her entrenched male colleagues, which she was able to overcome with determination and humor. She expressed her pleasure at the growing number of women in the Chicago-area rabbinate.

Rabbi Dreyfus concluded her remarks by telling us of her forthcoming retirement. She and her husband, Dr. James Dreyfus, hope to do some traveling—they have three grandchildren, none of whom lives in Chicago—but they will be staying in the area, and she will assume the title of Rabbi Emerita of BYBS.

An unusual happening in the southern suburbs will follow her retirement. Rabbi Shalom Podwal of Congregation Am Echad, a conservative congregation in Park Forest, is also retiring. Am Echad has sold its building and will relocate to BYBS. But the two congregations will not be merging. Each will retain its denominational character and will have separate religious services. They will share a spiritual leader, Rabbi Carmit Harari, who was ordained in the Reform movement. ❖

Report: Lecture by Leo Melamed, Sunday, May 19 “Chicago Financial Markets and Jews”

Leo Melamed is globally recognized as the founder of financial futures. The Society was delighted to welcome him as the guest speaker at our open meeting on Sunday, May 19, at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago.

He treated us to a historical overview. In the nineteenth century, the USA was agrarian. The Chicago Board of Trade, founded in 1850—the “Irish Exchange”—traded grain. The “Butter and Egg Exchange,” comprised of Jewish peddlers, was founded in 1870. The nation’s first financiers were German Jews connected to European firms. They created the New York Stock Exchange. Leaping ahead a hundred years:



Mr. Melamed told of his trading in produce futures in Chicago when he conceived the idea of financial futures. He credits his teacher-father’s early lesson in the relative value of currencies, taught to Leo as they fled from the Nazis—from Poland to Lithuania to Russia to Japan—and finally, to the USA.

Melamed discussed his idea with Milton Friedman: “Great!” He then presented Prof. Friedman’s

feasibility study to US Secretary of the Treasury George Schultz: “If it’s good enough for Milton....”

In 1972, as chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Leo launched currency futures with the creation of the International Monetary Market. ❖

“How do you get to the United Center?” “Practice! Practice!”

BY RACHELLE GOLD

We are thrilled that our hometown Blackhawks have won the Stanley Cup for the second time in four years. Did Chicago Jewish history play a role in their success? Because of my family’s association (albeit unintended and indirect) with the team’s superb preparation, I would like to think so.

Johnny’s IceHouse West, at 2550 West Madison Street, is the official practice facility for the Blackhawks, and is also used by lesser teams and clubs. It opened on February 1, 2010. But a different business had once stood on that land—Illinois National Manufacturers—a screw machine products factory that manufactured metal parts for automobiles, appliances, and various specialized machines, as well as trophy hardware. My father, Jacob V. Gold, owned it.

Founded during World War II, Illinois National Manufacturers operated continuously at the same site from the 1940s until the early 2000s. My father, who had a BA and an MBA from the University of Chicago, ran the business until his death in 1997. Another family member then took over on a transitional basis.

At the time of its founding, the business was close to the West Side Jewish community where my father grew up. Over the decades, West Madison Street became a blighted area, especially after the riots of

1968, but my father held on through the hard times. In the 1990s, plans were proposed for the revitalization of the area. Redevelopment efforts began, with the City of Chicago playing an active role. In 2006, Illinois National Manufacturers was closed, and the land was acquired by the City of Chicago. At the time, we were not aware of any specific plans for the site, and it lay untouched for a few years.

Our family was delighted when the new ice hockey facility opened there. The United Center is less than a mile east. My father would take us to watch the Blackhawks play in the old Chicago Stadium, now the site of the UC. There are many reasons for our team’s phenomenal success, but I like to believe that one of them is the connection to my father and his business.

By the way, one of my father’s customers was the trophy company that produces the Oscar statuettes—R.S. Owens & Company (founded in Chicago in 1938 by Owen Siegel). So when the winners clutch their awards, they’re also holding a bit of Jacob V. Gold’s Chicago Jewish history. ❖

RACHELLE GOLD, Psy.D., is a psychologist in private practice. She is CJHS Membership Chair. Dr. Gold is proud of being a third generation Jewish Chicagoan.

Edited reprint of an article originally published in the October 1990 issue of *Chicago Jewish History*

Looking Back at Albany Park When It Was Jewish

BY EDWARD H. MAZUR

At its peak as a Jewish neighborhood, nearly a quarter of the city's Jews lived in Albany Park. Only Lawndale had ever exceeded that record.—Irwin Suloway, editor, 1990

Albania Park was an overwhelmingly Jewish neighborhood for about four decades. It was fascinating, and vibrant, and a good community to grow up in.

Bounded on the south by Montrose Avenue (4400N), on the north by Foster Avenue (5200N), on the east by the north branch of the Chicago River and on the west by Crawford Avenue/Pulaski Road (4000W), Albany Park was originally a German and Scandinavian farming community several miles distant from the congestion of the inner city.

It was developed and populated between 1900 and 1920. The major stimulus was the extension in 1909 of the elevated railway's Ravenswood Line to a new terminal on Lawrence Avenue (4800N) and Kimball (3400W). The housing stock consisted of multiple-unit apartment buildings, two-flats, and bungalows.

The area began to attract Jewish families during World War I. During the 1920s, approximately 28,000 Jews moved into Albany Park, and by the mid-1930s a study for the Jewish Welfare Board estimated that out of a total population of 55,500 approximately 33,500—sixty percent—was Jewish.

Albania Park's total population on the eve of World War II was approximately 60,000. Only twenty-two percent were native-born of native-born parents. A majority of the foreign-born and native-born of foreign or mixed parentage were Jewish—primarily of Russian, Polish, Austrian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, and Roumanian extraction.

A 1940 Chicago Board of Education study indicated that ninety percent of those attending English classes for adults in Albany Park were Jewish.

The Jews of Albany Park were primarily middle class. The neighborhood was where Jews moved when they achieved sufficient economic mobility to leave such West and Northwest Side neighborhoods as Lawndale, Humboldt Park, and Logan Square. A 1937 study of 3,000 Albany Park families on relief indicated that only about one hundred were Jewish.

The Jewish population of the area peaked around 1950 when an estimated 70,000 Jews lived there.



1909: View of Lawrence and Kimball Avenues when the "L" was extended to that point.
Chicago History Museum; ICHI-29361.



1929: Intersection of Lawrence and Kimball Avenues. The sign on the terminal reads: ELEVATED STATION.
Chicago History Museum; DN-0088479.

By 1980 the number had declined to approximately 25,000. Today [1990], the Jewish population of Albany Park is probably no more than several thousand.

This article is essentially a nostalgic overview of the institutions—public, private, religious, secular, charitable, and commercial—which defined the quality of Jewish life in the Albany Park that is no more.

Continued on page 8



1

Albany Park *Continued from page 7*

Sara Hultmark's photos were made in the 1990s, when these synagogue buildings had become Korean churches.

Synagogues

If the synagogue is the heart of the Jewish community, then Albany Park during its Jewish heyday had many hearts. Three major ones were:

Temple Beth Israel, a Reform congregation, was founded in the autumn of 1917. Originally located in a rented hall, then in a building at 4718 North Kedzie, the congregation moved into its magnificent structure at 4850 North Bernard in 1923. An adjoining school building was erected in 1928, and an upper sanctuary in 1948. Two individuals, Rabbi S. Felix Mendelsohn and Rabbi Ernst Lorge, influenced the Jews of Beth Israel, Albany Park, and the greater Chicago Jewish community. Today Temple Beth Israel is located in Skokie.



2

Congregation Beth Itzchok, “the Drake Avenue shul,” was the first Orthodox house of worship in Albany Park. It was organized in 1919. Its founders originally met at Beth Israel and in various storefronts and apartments. The first services in the permanent structure at 4643 North Drake Avenue, were held on Rosh Hashanah 1922, conducted by Rabbi Isaac Milner. During the 1920s the congregation’s rapid growth resulted in expansion to the north and south and the construction of a women’s balcony. During the congregation’s glory years—the 1930s through the 1950s—Rabbi Isaac Siegel was the spiritual leader. In the 1940s Beth Itzchok expanded yet again, acquiring an Episcopal church building on the southwest corner of Drake and Leland. Today [1990], under the leadership of Rabbi Aaron Rine, Beth Itzchok is a significant shul in Rogers Park.



3

Congregation Beth Hamedrosh Hagadol, later known as the **Albany Park Hebrew Congregation**, was the third significant synagogue in the neighborhood. The origins of this congregation can be found in a dispute over “progressivism” within the membership of Congregation Beth Itzchok. In 1928, the structure located at Lawndale and Wilson Avenues was erected at a cost of \$250,000. Though Orthodox when it was founded in 1923, it became Conservative in 1939. For more than thirty years its activities were directed by Rabbi Abraham E. Abramowitz. During the 1940s and 1950s more than three thousand worshippers thronged to the shul for High Holiday services conducted by such famous cantors as Yosele Rosenblatt, Todros “*Der Blinder*” Greenberg, and the Lind family. A victim of changing demographics, the congregation no longer exists.

Other significant Albany Park congregations included Kehilath Jeshurun, Beth Jacob, Nusach Ari (not pictured), and B’nai Sholom.

1. Temple Beth Israel
4850 North Bernard

2. Congregation Beth Itzchok
4643 North Drake

3. Albany Park Hebrew Cong.
4601 North Lawndale

4. Kehilath Jeshurun
3707 West Ainslie

5. Congregation Beth Jacob
4926 North Kimball

6. Congregation Beth Sholom
4852 North Sawyer



4



5



6

Photographs by Sara Hultmark.

Institutions

Dozens of social, economic, and cultural institutions complemented the synagogues and served as additional focal points for the Jews of Albany Park between the 1920s and the 1960s.

The Albany Park Masonic Hall at the corner of Kedzie and Leland was the meeting place for many—B'nai B'rith, Old Friendship Social Club, Chicago Consumptive Aid, Mothers of Young Judea, Sudlikoff Sheptikover Verein, Bleiweise Verein, Friends in Need, Bialystoker Relief and Social Society, Chicago Builders, Northwest Branch of the City of Hope, and the Young Breziner Fraternity.

Among those who met at the Capitol Hall at Kedzie near Lawrence—Elchanan Lodge, B. Friendly Ladies Aid Society, Isidor Chern Rest Haven Lodge, Independent Sisters of Charity, and Jacobson Auxiliary of the Daughters of Zion Nursery.

Meeting at the Chicago Park District fieldhouses in Jensen Park (North Lawndale Avenue) and Eugene Field Park (North Ridgeway)—Ezrath Chalutzim Day Nursery, Doba Club, Herzl Chapter of Avukah, Council of Jewish Juniors, American Jewish Congress, Free Sons of Israel, and Rose Proteus Social Service Club.

The Poale Zion, Pioneer Women, and Habonim met at a hall at 4825 North Kedzie; the Workmen's Circle met at 3605 West Lawrence.

The International Workers' Order (IWO) School #91 was located at 3543 West Lawrence. Prior to the German invasion of Russia in 1941, this school was not overtly concerned with Jewish issues. After the invasion, the school's teaching materials began to emphasize more traditional Jewish learning and themes.

Secular learning was, naturally enough, concentrated in the area's public schools. Only two elementary schools—Haugen and Hibbard—had existed before 1926, but in the next six years there was a veritable building boom, with the construction of Palmer Elementary in 1926, Roosevelt High in 1927, Von Steuben High (originally a junior high) in 1929, and Volta Elementary in 1930. Additions to the school buildings soon followed. On Jewish holidays, most schools were practically without students.

Youth Organizations

In 1941, the Max Strauss Center, named in honor of a Jewish business leader, was dedicated to the needs of Albany Park Jewish youth. Located on Wilson Avenue near Congregation Beth Hamedrosh Hagadol and Jensen Park, the Center served the community for more than thirty years. During the 1950s and 1960s, over two thousand people utilized the center every week.



Children entering the Max Strauss Center, c. 1941-1969.
Chicago History Museum; ICHI-67693.

The Max Strauss Center had been preceded in the neighborhood by the Albany Park Boys' Club, established in 1934 by the Young Men's Jewish Council, and located on Central Park Avenue just south of Lawrence. In 1936, the Women's Division of the Jewish Charities founded a club for girls ages seven to seventeen at 4721 North Monticello. Later that year, the girls' club became the Albany Park Jewish Center of the Jewish People's Institute. All the clubs offered a wide range of activities—fine arts, crafts, sports, and games.



Deborah Boys' Club. 3401 West Ainslie.
Photograph by Sara Hultmark.

During the 1940s, the Albany Park Boys' Club became part of the Deborah Boys' Club. In 1949, a new facility at Kimball and Ainslie was dedicated. Since it was located north of Lawrence Avenue, the club attracted large numbers of Jews from the Peterson Park and North Park neighborhoods. Today this facility is the Albany Park Community Center, serving the growing Hispanic and Asian youth populations in the area.

Continued on page 10

Albany Park *Continued from page 9*

Lawrence Avenue

The community's religious, organizational, and educational institutions did much to set the Jewish tone of Albany Park, but commercial ventures played an equal part. Lawrence Avenue (4800N) was the major business artery. Dear readers, settle into your armchairs for a nostalgic stroll. Be sure to take along a nosh.

Lawrence and Kedzie How many Jewish parents purchased their sons' Bar Mitzvah suits at Weinberg's Clothing Store, near Kedzie, then crossed the street for corned beef sandwiches on Rosen's rye bread and vanilla Cokes at the S and L Delicatessen?

South of Lawrence on Kedzie was Wolf and Frankel Furniture. How many Albany Park Jewish families purchased their sofas, chairs, dining room set, and protective plastic covers at that magnificent store?

Across the street, a group of men was always standing in front of Terry's Perfecto Garcia Cigar Store. Rumor had it that gambling and making bets on horse races were the main activities there.

North of Lawrence on Kedzie was the Hollywood Roller Rink. For the less limber, the Alba Bowling Alley beckoned. Movie fans and amorous couples could check out the presentations on the Alba Theatre's screen.

Kitty-corner from the S and L Delicatessen was Deutsch's Bonfire Restaurant, then Hurwitz and Reed Arno's Men's Shops. Esther's Lingerie. Libby Diamond Hats, Siegels Shoes, and Goldstein Drugs.

Between Spaulding and Sawyer

B. Nathan, a clothing store, was located in a storefront originally built for the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Only a few doors away was another exclusive dress shop—Levine's—and then Maling Shoes. If you crossed to the north side of Lawrence, you'd find Herman Lynn's Tots and Teens Shop, Julius Marks' Page Luggage, and the Baritz and Garland Lamp Store.

From Sawyer to Kimball Here were the Rusnak and L. Fish furniture stores, Seymour's Frocks, the original Ned Singer Sporting Goods store, and the Metro Theatre. This was a movie house where the screen was behind you as you entered to find a seat. [On the South Side, the Frolic on 55th Street and another theater on 69th Street were also configured that way.]

Lawrence and Kimball In the block where the Ravenswood "L" terminal is located, there was Manny Berger's shoe store, another *haute couture* shop with the

impressive name of Parisienne, Schwartz's Intimate Apparel (at one time there were four Schwartz shops in the city), and the Terminal Theatre.

At the Purity deli, one could order a chopped liver and lean corned beef on a Kaiser roll, a side of kishke, and a chocolate phosphate. Nearby were the Karmelkorn Shop and Solovitch the watchmaker. The southwest corner of Lawrence and Kimball was home to a Walgreens, and later, Devin-Klein Clothiers. There was a cigar/variety store on the northeast corner. Until recent urban renewal changed the look of Lawrence Avenue, this corner had been the location of a tobacconist for more than fifty years.

Next to the cigar store was the first location of the Cooper and Cooper restaurant and the Skokie Valley Ice Cream Parlor (so named because before World War II, open prairie remained north and west of Albany Park, stretching to what became the Village of Skokie, a Jewish "mecca" starting in the 1950s).

There was the Albany Park National Bank and the upstairs offices of the Myers Publishing Co., publishers of North Side community weeklies.

Between Kimball and Bernard there were three more eateries—Palestine, Quality, and Three K's (kugel, kishke, and knishes). There were also three clothing stores—Kaner Modes, Green's Dress Shop, and Burton Fox's Haberdashery.

Bookstore Row

From Bernard to St. Louis were Ceshinsky's Bookstore, formerly on Division Street, and Rosenblum's, originally on Roosevelt Road. They sold Hebrew and Yiddish books, newspapers, journals, and music, as well as Jewish ritual, ceremonial, and holiday goods.

Down the street were Harriet's Variety Store, Paris Drapery, and Harry Lastik's Paramount Furs. Remember those ubiquitous Persian lamb coats?

Between St. Louis and Drake Avenues were the International Workers' Order School, Kiefer's Bookstore, and Ben and Son Printers, who supplied Albany Parkers and others with invitations for weddings, bar mitzvahs, and other simchas. And more eats could be purchased at Gold Star Foods and Zaretsky-Kinberg's Butter and Egg Store, with its inviting neon sign, "Lox and Fresh Smoked Fish."

From Drake to Central Park One could buy an ice cream cone at Bob's and then spend the afternoon discovering the many intellectual delights in the precious volumes in the Albany Park Branch of the Chicago Public Library. One could pick up the family's meat order at Hobfall and Levin's or watch Mr. Krader

slaughter chickens in his live poultry store—if one were willing to stand ankle-deep in feathers. One could observe or join the long lines of women carefully observing Mr. Cutler fillet and grind pike, trout, and suckers for gefilte fish at the St. Louis Market.

On the northeast corner of Lawrence and Central Park Avenues was Rudich's Delicatessen. In front of the deli was the newspaper kiosk of Moishe the Bookie. Prominently displayed were two Yiddish newspapers, the *Courier* and the *Forverts*. Walking west, one could inspect the shoes in the window of the Four Cohens, pause near the Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle) School, and proceed to the Lox King, Lester's, and Lessa Drug.

On the north side of Lawrence, Sol Lieberman's Barber Shop catered to tonsorial needs, while Bertha's Hot Dogs, Max's Meat Market, Benjoya's Fruit Store, and Sam's Fish Market purveyed gustatory delights.

Between Monticello and Lawndale

Many Albany Parkers spent afternoons at Foss's Hobby Shop, dropped off their dry cleaning at Siegan's, and stopped in for a nosh at Hy Zaslowsky's delicatessen. Could anyone pass up the tempting apple slices at either Kaplan's or Meyers' bakeries?

Just off the corner of Lawndale was the original site of Maury's Hot Dog Stand. Maury—with his special Viennas on crusty French bread—is remembered for his sincere inquiries about school, family, and girls, and his ability to procure desirable tickets for sporting events.

At Hamlin was Art Levy's Northwest Buick. Across the street was the Holiday Ballroom and the Mission Orange Soda Pop Company. (If you took the tour of the plant you received a free bottle of pop.)



1



2



3

- 1. Henry Hart JCC**
4920 North Kimball
- 2. Young Israel of Chicago**
4931 North Kimball
- 3. Congregation Mt. Sinai**
4710 North Kedzie
- 4. Congregation Oir Israel**
4610 North Kedzie

Photographs by Sara Hultmark.

Between Avers and Springfield—Be Careful!

Jewish parents warned their children about the Peniel Center, a Christian institution that tried, but inevitably failed, to attract and convert Jewish youth.

["Originally 'Chicago, First Hebrew Christian Church. Name changed to 'Chicago, Adat Hatikvah.' Met at Peniel Center on Lawrence Ave. Dissolved 2/14/89."—www.chicagopresbytery.org]

At Lawrence and Harding was Brown's Pet Shop. Shouldn't every Jewish home have a parakeet?

There were many other interesting stores and hangouts on Lawrence Avenue—too many to mention in our allotted space. The street is still bustling with businesses, though the names have changed from the likes of Schwartz and Weinberg to Kim and Lee.

Success Brought Change

As a result of Jewish mobility and success in achieving the American Dream, Albany Park is no longer a Jewish community. Its former residents now live, primarily, in West Rogers Park, the lakefront neighborhoods, and the north and northwest suburbs.

Recent studies indicate that Albany Park is now home to twenty-seven identifiable ethnic groups. Since the 1980 census, most are East and Southeast Asian, Spanish surnamed people, East-Central Europeans, and Arabs from various Middle Eastern countries.

Although the neighborhood has experienced the familiar urban cycle of growth, maturation, decay, and rebirth, a few manifestations of life remain constant—the CTA "L" Terminal—which more or less started it all—and the wise owl sculpture atop Roosevelt High School, continuing to watch over the students. ❖



4

The “Zionist Mayflower”

Chicagoans Travel to the Holy Land

BY SHERRY LEVY-REINER Z”L

On March 12, 1925, the S.S. *President Arthur* left the pier at the foot of West Houston Street on the Hudson River. A front page article in the *New York Times* reported 5,000—the *Chicago Tribune* reported 15,000—celebrants cheering with “patriotic frenzy.” The *Trib’s* article on page 20, otherwise almost a verbatim copy of the article in the *Times*, added, “Only a few of them had friends among the 400 passengers.”

Herman Hirsch, a passenger from Chicago, recorded in his diary, “At 7:30 o’clock on the morning of Thursday, March 12th, I was the first passenger aboard the ship and was promptly assigned to my cabin. ... [the ship] moved into the great ocean, with 239 passengers.” In 2005, I found Mr. Hirsch’s diary online but the site has subsequently been taken down.

Herman Hirsch’s account of the maiden voyage of the “Zionist Mayflower,” as its promoters called it, is the only passenger’s account we have of the ship’s journey. Like many on board, Hirsch’s primary destination was the opening ceremonies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, scheduled for April 1, and the major preoccupation of the world Jewish press. Hebrew University endures; the ship was scrapped.

In the fall of 1924, Jacob Strahl, an active Zionist and municipal court judge from Brooklyn, headed a syndicate of owners of the new American Palestine Line and its ship, the S.S. *President Arthur*. On October 9, 1924, they announced their intent to operate regular passenger service between New York and Palestine.

The ship itself, originally built by a German company in the early 1900s, had been captured in 1914 by the United States and used as a troop transport. After the war, it was a mail ship and even transported members of the 1920 U.S. Olympic team to Antwerp. While it had taken as many as 2,300 passengers to America, the owners refurbished it to carry “550 first- and second-class passengers only.”

On November 2, 1924, a full-page ad in the *Forverts*—in Yiddish, of course—announced that the American Palestine Line would link the two lands of America and *Eretz Yisrael*. The ad was both detailed and rhetorical, attempting to inspire American Jews to make *aliyah* or at least come and visit.

The “Zionist Mayflower” quickly captured the imagination of American Jews, an enthusiasm the American Palestine Line kept engaged with a regular drumbeat of publicity. The Chicago Jewish press seemed to publish every press release.

One of the first photos had appeared in the January 2, 1925, *Chicago Jewish Sentinel* under the headline, “S. S. President Arthur Flies Jewish Flag.”

The *Sentinel* announced in its February 26 issue, “Jewish Steamer Offers Free Service to Palestine.” It was cargo service, it could not exceed three tons, and it had to be goods for free distribution.

In February 1925, Chicago’s *Daily Jewish Courier* carried five articles about the *President Arthur*.

- On the 5th, the first article pointed out that both the captain and first mate of the ship were non-Jews, a “lesson in liberality” that the Ku Klux Klan should take to heart. (February 5, 1925)
- The very next day an article speculated that Bishop Manning of New York, who had made an “inquiry” about the ship, “May Eat Kosher” if he actually embarked along with “many other less known...priests” from whom the American Palestine Line had received inquiries.
- Ten days later, “New York, Palestine at last to get a square deal in shipping” described how American Palestine had successfully—and self-sacrificially—argued against high cargo rates on goods bound for Palestine.
- A week later, on February 22, two articles appeared on page 1: “Freight service to Palestine cut to one third price” and “Rabbis to have ‘minyan’ on Jewish steamer.”
- And, finally, two weeks later on March 2, the *Courier* trumpeted, “Both on the ship and on the shore the spirits shall be exalted.”

From the *Chicago Sentinel* “Society” column on March 13: “Mr. Herman Hirsch, 6148 Evans avenue, left for Palestine on March 12. He is aboard the S.S. *President Arthur*.”

We know about Chicagoan Herman Hirsch (not much!) because he kept a journal of his trip, and some seven decades later his grandson Arthur typed it (before scanners existed) and posted it on the Internet.



Jacob Drapekin.

Courtesy Sherry Levy-Reiner.

Were it not for Herman Hirsch, I would never have learned the fate of my great-grandfather, Jacob Drapekin, a Chicago clothing salesman. Family legend had it that in the early part of the twentieth century he had sailed to Palestine, died on a ship, and been buried by a compassionate captain, somewhere in Palestine. Hirsch included the incident in his diary, and when I Googled my great-grandfather's name in 2005, there it was. I described my ultimately successful search for his grave on the Jewish Genealogy website:

jewishgen.org/jewishgen/testimonials/pages/Jacob%20Drapekin_2012March.html and in my blog, thereliablenarrator.blogspot.com on June 1, 2012.

I made a copy of the transcript and have deposited it in the American Jewish Archives and the Chicago Jewish Archives at the Spertus Institute.

Unfortunately, Herman Hirsch's diary now has disappeared from the Internet. It is a detailed and fascinating account of his experiences on board the ship, his landing a week late in Haifa, his journey to Jerusalem, the opening of Hebrew University, and of Hirsch's subsequent time in Palestine until he "reached dear old Chicago again."

Hirsch does not mention any Chicagoans by name other than my great-grandfather. In the course of my research, however, I pieced together an incomplete passenger list for the maiden voyage of the S.S. *President Arthur*. At that time, the United States did not keep lists of people who left our shores, only those who were arriving. An article in the *Times* names 322 passengers, and I was able to add to that list from various alternative sources cited in this article.

Jacob Drapekin was not on the *Times* list, probably because he was a second-class passenger. A manifest of arriving passengers from the Central Zionist Archives of the World Zionist Organization (File S104/560 reclassified as ISA 1/15489/2) includes the names of

184 passengers. The list is erroneously dated "31.3.24"; the error is corrected on the cover sheet and in the correspondence from the archivist dated May 14, 2009.

The identifiable Chicagoans listed in the *New York Times* article were:

Samuel Elman	Abraham Morris
Stephen K. Gier	Sallie Morris
Edward Grossman	Edward Newman
Morris Grunblatt	Morris Puliker
Peter Hard	Samuel Roller
Herman Hirsch	Morris Stolar
Mary Klass	Abraham Strikman
Victor Klass	John Talinsky
William Klass	Mary Talinsky
Anna Levy	Peter Tiess
Morris K. Levy	John K. Wilson
Stephen Levy	Jacob Zalkind

What drew them to Palestine on this ship? Were they attending the founding of Hebrew University? Were they deeply committed Zionists? Were they interested in historic occasions? Were they simply curious and looking for a special vacation?

Perhaps the individual motivations are known to their families, perhaps not. I hope those who may have more information will step forward and share it with the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. ❖

SHERRY LEVY-REINER Z"l was born in Chicago and briefly attended Nettelhorst until her father was transferred to Fort Snelling, MN. She moved back to the Chicago area when her husband, Rabbi Fred N. Reiner, rabbi emeritus of Temple Sinai in Washington, briefly served Temple Chai in Long Grove. Sherry was on the development staff at the University of Chicago. She has a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Cincinnati; her dissertation was about Saul Bellow's novels. Since moving to Washington, D.C., she has been an editor and fundraiser for the Association of American Colleges, the Library of Congress, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

Editor's Note: When Sherry e-mailed me the final version of her text, she added that she had received a "bad diagnosis" from her doctor. Soon after, I was shocked and saddened to read her death notice in the Chicago Tribune:

"Sherry... died peacefully on Friday, May 17, 2013.... Graveside service will be held on Monday, May 20, at Zion Gardens, 3600 North Naragansett Avenue, Chicago. ... memorial service will be held on Tuesday, May 21, at Temple Sinai, 3100 Military Road NW, Washington...."

I sent a message of condolence to Sherry's husband, Rabbi Reiner, and family, on behalf of the CJHS.—Bev Chubot

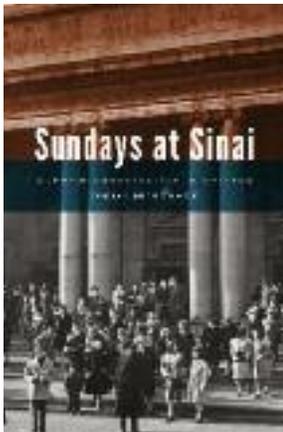
Book Review

BY RACHEL HEIMOVICS BRAUN

SUNDAYS AT SINAI: A Jewish Congregation in Chicago. By Tobias Brinkmann. *Illustrated, 384 pages. The University of Chicago Press, 2012.*

This work was a finalist for the Jewish Book Council's 2012 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies, which states: "In this masterful and ambitious book, Tobias Brinkmann has set a new standard for the writing of congregational histories.... Thoughtfully composed and fluently written, the book offers a novel, nuanced, and sophisticated reinterpretation of several key themes in American Jewish history, particularly central European Jewish immigration to the United States and the Americanization of Reform Judaism."

Brinkmann begins with the influences of the mid-nineteenth-century German emancipation of the Jews and progresses through Sinai's accommodation and adaptation to Chicago's often turbulent times. He shows how Sinai, in turn, impacted the greater Chicago Jewish community and the city itself. Although the main narrative is the period between 1880 and 1923, the book brings the reader up-to-date with the mid-twentieth-century decline and subsequent renaissance of the congregation.



The fact that Sinai chose to have services on Sunday set it apart as "radical Reform." Jews and non-Jews—sometimes numbering one thousand—poured into the temple sanctuary to be inspired by lessons in "social justice," "moral destiny," and "duty" as well as strong doses of progressive politics, in a setting that championed the universality of Judaism. The major performer on that public stage from 1880 to 1923 was Sinai's rabbi, Emil G. Hirsch, whom Brinkmann calls both brilliant and eccentric.

It was Hirsch who set the boundaries and the goals when some of his flock were drawn to the Ethical Culture movement, led by the charismatic Felix Adler, or by the liberal Protestant Jenkin Lloyd Jones, whose All Souls Church on the South Side also attracted large progressive-minded audiences on Sundays. Brinkmann writes, "It was the mission of Jews to spread the

universal truths, but this did not mean Jews would exchange Judaism for 'uniformity,' a humanistic religion or liberal Protestantism. Rather, the opposite would occur, for Hirsch the universal and ethical religion of the future was of course—Judaism."

Brinkmann describes the competing voices of ethical, universal, and progressive movements that vied for the congregation. He also deals with Sinai's, and Hirsch's, often pro-active response to changes wrought by Eastern European Jewish immigration and the resulting rise of traditional Judaism and Zionism in Chicago; the challenges of poverty, labor unrest, and women's issues; and interfaith relations.

After the 1894 Pullman Strike, "Hirsch stepped up his criticism of unrestrained capitalism."

"In one of his most influential discourses, 'The Inalienable Duties of Man,' he outlined his social justice platform.... Hirsch demanded more rights for male and female workers and a redistribution of wealth and presented a far-reaching social reform program."

Not all congregants agreed. "In 1899, meatpacker Nelson Morris, a founder of the congregation, resigned following repeated and thinly veiled attacks against him from the pulpit. His response remained the exception."

One of Sinai's early conflicts lay within American Reform Judaism itself—congregational independence versus a governing centrality; and fear of imposed dogma versus the growing need for a national, overriding structure. In Chicago, Bernhard Felsenthal and Emil G. Hirsch espoused the former position; in Cincinnati, Isaac Mayer Wise, the latter. Sinai did not join Wise's Union of American Hebrew Congregations until 1903, thirty years after its founding. "This step [joining UAHC] seemed to mark the end of a long era of isolation within the Reform camp."

A thread throughout *Sundays at Sinai* is the role that the German cultural concept of *Bildung* played. *Bildung*, meaning "education" and "formation" refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation. In the early nineteenth century, *Bildung* was a state-sanctioned approach to acculturating Jews (and others) through programs that exposed and educated them in secular, German *kultur*, and which played an enormous role in their emancipation. Emil Hirsch was a beneficiary of this process. Hirsch was one of the first students to attend the Berlin Hochschule where he studied with Abraham Geiger, a founder of German Reform Judaism.

“During the first half of the nineteenth century, German universities...had emerged as groundbreaking research institutions. The farsighted reforms of the higher education system in several German states owed much to the *Bildung* ideal held in such high esteem by many Jews in America.... Returning graduates and imported German academics helped to transplant the German model to America....Among the Jewish returnees, four sons of immigrant rabbis stand out: Felix Adler, Richard Gottheil, Morris Jastrow Jr., and Emil G. Hirsch.”



Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch.
History of the Jews of Chicago, 1924.

Hirsch was influenced by *Bildung*, and he, in turn, influenced his congregants in ways that impacted the philanthropic philosophy behind the organization of Jewish communal agencies, such as the Jewish Charities in Chicago, and extended to educational institutions, such as the Jewish Training School. Through the decades, Sinai members served on the Chicago Board of Education, the Chicago Public Library board, and became benefactors of the University of Chicago. Hirsch’s social justice theology inspired congregant Julius Rosenwald to initiate many good works, such as building public schools throughout the South for African American children.

Joseph Schaffner of Hart Schaffner & Marx was another Sinai member who heard Hirsch’s call for social justice. During the clothing workers’ strike of 1910, his meeting with organized labor changed the course of Chicago labor history. “[In] hindsight, Schaffner’s recognition of organized labor as a legitimate representative and partner constituted a turning point in the history of organized labor in Chicago, because it established a sphere where employers and workers could settle conflicts amicably.”

Bernhard Felsenthal, Sinai’s first spiritual leader, who set the congregation forth on its mission of independent Reform, is sympathetically portrayed throughout the book. His eventual “conversion” to the Zionist cause is presented and contrasted with Hirsch’s own conflicted anti-Zionist position.

Among the many other personalities who are brought to life in *Sundays at Sinai* are David Einhorn (an early Reformer, Emil Hirsch’s father-in-law); Kaufmann Kohler (Hirsch’s brother-in-law and predecessor at Sinai, originally was in favor of Sunday services but rejected them later; in 1903 appointed president of Hebrew Union College); Julian Mack (co-founder of the American Jewish Committee); the Greenebaum clan (especially Henry Greenebaum and

Hannah Greenebaum Solomon), and many other Chicago Jewish pioneers.

Along with my praise, I have a few cautionary comments. This is a wonderfully written book, but poorly edited. I found about a dozen cases where words were missing or incorrectly presented, names mixed up, incomplete sentences, and the like. More importantly, I wonder why Brinkmann, with all the lengthy discussion of Ethical Culture and liberal Protestantism luring away Hirsch’s flock, did not include another departure gate for assimilating Jews—Christian Science. Was it Hirsch’s silence or was the omission Brinkmann’s choice?

Christian Science shook the Reform rabbinate sufficiently that by 1912 the Central Council of American Rabbis “passed a resolution maintaining that ‘Jewish adherence to Christian Science implies abjuration of Judaism. Any Jew subscribing to Christian Science teachings...would henceforth be regarded ‘as a non-Jew in faith.’” —Ellen M. Umansky, “Christian Science, Jewish Science, and Alfred Geiger Moses,” *Southern Jewish History*, v. 6, [2006] p. 5.

I also wondered about the other Reform congregations in Chicago founded by German Jews vis-à-vis Sinai. Besides Zion Congregation led by Bernhard Felsenthal, there was barely a mention of KAM and the others. Finally, with all the discussion about Sinai’s Sunday services, I would have been interested to learn more about the services themselves, what they may have included and excluded from traditional worship.

Despite those shortcomings, *Sundays at Sinai* is illuminating and, in some places, high drama. One electrifying example demonstrates that Sinai was not immune to the power struggles that often occur between rabbis and their boards. Brinkmann raises the excitement when he takes the reader into a Sinai board meeting where a power struggle between the rabbi and his lay leadership ensued. There are verbatim minutes from 1898 and 1899 that Brinkmann was able to use for this high power drama.

“Hirsch talked himself into a rage. He bitterly complained about not being invited to board meetings and having been abused by certain members. He then stated his position in no uncertain terms:

‘I am not an employee of your congregation, working for a salary like other employees. I am co-ordinate with this Executive Board, and I do not need

Continued on page 16

Sundays at Sinai *Continued from page 13*

to ask for leave of absence....I am tired of hearing about this matter of my salary, my \$12,000 a year. I won't tolerate it!' and with this Dr. Hirsch jumped out of his chair and said, 'I am sorry I did not accept the call to New York, where they offered me \$15,000, \$3,000 more than you are paying me.'"

[The drama continues with the enraged responses of board members who threaten resignation.]

[August] Binswanger then explicitly asks Hirsch to end his public attacks on Sinai's board. He should have known better. Hirsch was angry; now he could not control himself.

"The Doctor then jumped out of his chair in a violent rage, tearing his hair, and said 'I want that issue made up, and I will resign!' and taking up his chair, which was a heavy one, he struck it down twice, and showed that he was in an ungovernable rage, and he leaned up against the mantle, whereupon someone said, 'For heaven's sake, Doctor, don't make such an exhibition of yourself. Be a man.'"

The result of this tiff between rabbi and board was that the rabbi came out on top. Not only did Hirsch win the power struggle, but he bequeathed this power to his successor, Louis Mann, who enjoyed the lofty position, but as a social conservative who stood aloof from the greater community and didn't understand the mission of Sinai in terms of *Bildung* or progressive politics, saw his congregation decline.

"Between the 1920s and 1950s, Sinai lost its role as a national leader, a process that can be traced back to the early 1920s." Partly because of its physical location, but also its "unwillingness to reach out proactively to

the large constituency of nonestablishment Jews—and to its African American neighbors. Rabbi Mann did not live up to the model of his predecessor, who for all his personal weaknesses had promoted social action and forged many relationships."

Emil Hirsch began serving Sinai in 1880. When he died on January 7, 1923, a great chapter closed on Chicago Sinai Congregation, on Reform Judaism, and on Chicago Jewish history. Hirsch's legacy and the legacy of Sinai on Chicago are beautifully presented.

Tobias Brinkmann makes one additional and important contribution with this book. Classical Reform Judaism has for too long been defined by those who were not participants in it nor comprehending of it, but by those who simply wished to distance themselves from it. Brinkmann pulls aside the curtain covering the driving forces and beliefs behind Classical Reform and aptly reveals them to the reader, thus allowing us to correct widespread misconceptions, misunderstandings, and prejudices. ❖

RACHEL HEIMOVICS BRAUN *is a freelance writer and editor with great interest in American and Chicago Jewish history. She was a founder and early president of the CJHS and frequently lectured on Chicago Jewish and immigrant history before moving to Florida in 1984. After her move, she served as president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. In 1998, she and Dr. Mark K. Bauman, a historian from Atlanta, created Southern Jewish History, the annual peer-reviewed journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Heimovics Braun and Dr. Bauman continue to serve as managing editor and editor, respectively. Heimovics Braun likes to say that although she left Chicago in 1984, Chicago has never left her. She and Matitihu Braun were married in 2004. They reside in a suburb of Orlando.*

Report: Lecture by Tobias Brinkmann, Sunday, April 21 "Germans vs. Russians: The Origins of Chicago's Organized Jewish Community 1859-1923"

Tobias Brinkmann is the author of *Sundays at Sinai*, reviewed here. His lecture at the Spertus Institute was given in conjunction with the ongoing *Shalom Chicago* exhibit at the Chicago History Museum. Dr. Brinkmann is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and History at Penn State University, a member of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society and the Board of the Leo Baeck Institute in London.

He assessed the highly charged conflicts between established members of Chicago Jewry: "Germans" (Central Europeans), and more recent immigrants: "Russians" (Eastern Europeans). As the whole community was diasporic, Dr. Brinkmann believes that the conflicts had much to do with social status and assimilation and little to do with actual origins. The term "German Jew" first turns up in the 1880s with the large immigration from Eastern Europe.

In 1923, the charitable organizations serving the two communities merged to found the forerunner of today's Jewish Federation. In conclusion, Brinkmann noted that the German culture lost status when Eastern European strivers began moving up from Maxwell Street into North Lawndale, which they dubbed "Deutschland."—*B.C.*



Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, Sanctuary.

Photograph by Rachel Bernkopf.



Rev. Steve Spiller, Sr., and Dr. Irving Cutler.

Photographs by Rachelle Gold.



Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, balcony border.

Photograph by Rachelle Gold.

“Roots” Tour *Continued from the front page*

Rev. Spiller said that the church tries to preserve the original synagogue furnishings and is very mindful of them when making necessary renovations.

He was delighted to meet people who had lived in Lawndale. His wife, Sister Gail Spiller, took a group picture of them and recorded the lively dialogue that took place between the pastor and the visitors.

The GGMBBC, which was previously located on 14th Street, a few miles east, is preparing to celebrate its seventieth anniversary in the former KINS building.

“Knesses Israel Nusach Sfar...was initially referred to as the laundrymen’s *shul*... In the mid-1950s, when...it was necessary to sell the underused building, the congregation was approached by a West Rogers Park congregation that was seeking a Hebrew name for its synagogue...and KINS of West Rogers Park was born, with a name already recognized by Chicago Jewry...In the fall of 1957, High Holy Days services were held in the newly refurbished building at 2800 West North Shore Avenue.”

—*A Walk to Shul: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops on the Way*. By Bea Kraus and Norman D. Schwartz. (CJHS 2003).

Dr. Cutler narrated from downtown to the site of the Maxwell Street Market, to Douglas Park, to North Lawndale along Douglas Boulevard, where the Jewish People’s Institute (JPI) is now a Chicago Public School, and past the Homan Square residential development across from the former headquarters of Sears on Arthington Street. There was a brief stop at the Garfield Park Conservatory, a century-old Chicago treasure.

The tour proceeded to Logan Square, West Town, Wicker Park, and Humboldt Park, passing the A.N. Pritzker School and streets where the names of Saul Bellow and Nelson Algren are commemorated.

In all, a wonderful day of nostalgia and learning!

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois presents “Remembering Jewish Lawndale” (30 minutes)

Documentary film produced in 2012 by the College of DuPage and the Illinois Geographical Society.

Sunday, August 25

Temple Beth Israel

3601 Dempster, Skokie

Program starts at 2:00 p.m.

The film includes an interview with Irving Cutler and a visit to the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church.

President's Column

Continued from page 2

conclusions but will have to acknowledge the mountains of research on which they rest. Their main thesis is that while saving European Jewry was never a high priority for FDR, he did more than any other world leader at the time, in spite of enormous obstacles that he faced at home. Their "middle ground" approach challenges those who are too forgiving of FDR and those who are not forgiving enough.

FDR took office in the Great Depression in 1933, the same year that Hitler took power in Germany. Roosevelt concentrated on domestic affairs. Bank failures and unemployment dwarfed any concerns about Nazism. Had he wanted to help European Jewry at this juncture, the President might have lobbied to bring more of them to America while they were still free to leave. This would have required the will to loosen the immigration quotas imposed in the 1920s. This would have been a very risky political stance. Few Americans would have welcomed more immigrants when jobs were so scarce, and Jews were among the least popular of those seeking admission. A modest bill to admit some Jewish children in 1939 encountered a brick wall of prejudice. A former Undersecretary of State told the bill's sponsor, "I should prefer to let in 20,000 old Jews who would not multiply."

By the late 1930s, FDR faced a new set of problems.

German and Japanese aggression had convinced him that war was coming, and that the United States would become involved. But isolationist sentiment was exceedingly strong. Breitman and Lichtman make clear that the desperate situation facing Jews in Europe served to complicate the President's attempt to prepare the nation for war.

They demonstrate that "the more Roosevelt risked on initiatives for Jews, the less he thought he could carry Congress and the public with him on broad issues of foreign policy." If he appeared too "pro-Jewish" this could have jeopardized the mobilization process. Hence, confronting Nazi tyranny was one thing; fighting to save an unpopular minority from extinction was quite another.

After December 7, 1941, FDR was consumed by events on both the European and Pacific fronts, and he appeared to wish away the "Jewish Question." The authors claim that FDR met only once with Jewish leaders during the war to "discuss what we call the Holocaust." Pressed to respond, the President was constant—the best way to save the Jews of Europe was to defeat the Nazis as quickly as possible, and that was what he intended to do.

In 1938, FDR recalled his ambassador to Germany to protest Kristallnacht. It was only a symbolic act but he was the only Head of State to do so. Over protests from his notoriously anti-Semitic State Department, Roosevelt encouraged efforts to settle European Jews in Latin America—and about 40,000 of them made it there from 1938 to 1941. He pressed the British to keep Palestine open to Jewish refugees. He approved of the War Refugee Board in 1943, which while often ignored and constantly under-

funded, worked with heroes like Raoul Wallenberg throughout Nazi-occupied Europe to save thousands of Jews.

To those who claim that Roosevelt could have blunted Hitler's killing machines by ordering the rail lines to Auschwitz destroyed, Breitman and Lichtman provide the following response: No doubt that Allied planes could have reached Auschwitz by mid-1944. Industrial targets in the area were being bombed. The problem was that the U.S. War Department viewed the project as a diversion from the more important military targets. Opposition was so great that the matter appears never to have reached FDR's desk. The success of bombing is debatable, given the mixed results elsewhere in Europe. We cannot deny that approximately 250,000 Jews were murdered in the months between the capture of Auschwitz and the German surrender in May 1945.

Finally, the authors note the squeamishness of America's modern Presidents in dealing with genocide, starting with Woodrow Wilson's virtually ignoring Turkey's slaughter of Armenians, Jimmy Carter's dallying during Pol Pot's extermination of twenty percent of Cambodia's population, and Bill Clinton's tortoiselike response to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and refusal to confront the mass killings in Rwanda. More recently, Presidents Bush and Obama have employed little more than words to condemn the atrocities in Darfur and Syria. From a historical perspective, FDR comes off quite well.

In 1945, following the Yalta Conference, FDR traveled to the Middle East and met with King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia. It did not go well. He tried to assure Saud that

allowing Jews into Palestine would improve the land for both Arabs and Jews. Ibn Saud said that cooperation with Zionism was impossible. On his return to the USA, Roosevelt apologized to Rabbi Stephen Wise,

for “failing your cause.” The following month Roosevelt died. *FDR and the Jews* is worthy of your attention, whether or not you agree with the authors’ conclusions. My desk is piled high with other

books and articles that illuminate the Jewish experience in Chicago and the world, and I intend to share their themes and ideas with you, in future issues. Enjoy the summer!

Look to the rock from which you were born



chicago jewish historical society

August & October Bus Tours

Sunday, August 18 South Side Jewish Chicago Guide: Herbert Eiseman

Starting on Lake Street in the Loop where the first Jewish congregation was founded, professional guide Eiseman and architect/preservationist Carey Wintergreen narrate the ride south through the neighborhoods into which the Jewish community settled—Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Washington Park—then east to Kenwood and Hyde Park—and on to South Shore. Throughout the tour they will discuss the significant synagogues, leading personalities, community institutions, and business districts. A special stop at K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation.

11:30 — 5:30 Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy Avenue

12:00 — 5:00 Marriott Hotel, 540 North Michigan Avenue (Rush Street Entrance)

\$40 Member / \$45 Non-member

Sunday, October 6 Jewish Milwaukee Guide: Leah Axelrod

An all-day tour conducted by a Milwaukee native, our Society’s tour *maven*. Stops include the Chudnow Museum of Yesteryear, a private collection that offers a delightful glimpse into the city’s Jewish life in the early 1900s; and the Jewish Museum Milwaukee, to view the special exhibit “Carts to Conglomerates: The Success of Jewish Businesses.” We will travel the path taken by one of Milwaukee’s earliest congregations—Temple Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun—from downtown to its beautiful new building in a north suburb where we will stop in for a visit. A kosher lunch with a view of Lake Michigan is included.

8:30 — 6:00 Marriott Hotel, 540 North Michigan Avenue (Rush Street Entrance)

9:00 — 5:30 Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy Avenue

\$75 Member / \$82 Non-member

2013 CJHS August & October Bus Tour Reservations

Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

SOUTH SIDE

— Horwich \$ _____
— Marriott _____

MILWAUKEE

— Horwich \$ _____
— Marriott _____

Make check payable to: Chicago Jewish Historical Society

Mail to: Leah Axelrod, 2100 Linden Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035-2516

Questions? Phone Leah at (847) 432-7003 or email: leahaxe@aol.com

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IN THIS ISSUE

- **Spring Lectures**
- **Summer Tours**
- **Looking Back at Albany Park**
- **The “Zionist Mayflower”**
- **Book Review: *Sundays at Sinai***

What We Are

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

About the Society

What We Do

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

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation. Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December.

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

Pay Your Dues Online

Visit our website to pay dues with credit card or PayPal, buy cards and books, see announcements of upcoming Society events, and read issues of *Chicago Jewish History*.

www.chicagojewishhistory.org

We welcome your inquiries and comments. Send e-mails to: info@chicagojewishhistory.org



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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: **Visit www.chicagojewishhistory.org**