



chicago jewish history

Save the Date! Open Meeting on Sunday, June 24: CJHS to Present Program on 1920s Taxicab Wars

"Through the Eyes of Their Children," a story of murder during the bloody taxicab wars between the Yellow and Checker Taxicab companies and its effect on a Chicago Jewish family, will be presented by Myron H. Fox at the next open meeting of the Society on Sunday, June 24, 2001.

The program will begin at 2:00 p.m. after a social hour and refreshments at 1:00 p.m., in Bederman Hall, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 618 South Michigan Ave. Admission is free and open to the public.

The talk is based on Mr. Fox's book of the same name. The book was awarded this

Bella Leibovitz and Philip Fox at the time of their engagement, 1923.

From the cover of the book "Through the Eyes of Their Children." Photograph from the collection of Myron H. Fox.



year's Doris and Joseph Minsky Memorial Fund Prize for the best monograph on Chicago Jewish history submitted to the Society. The book relates a dramatic story: the sentence to life imprisonment and ultimate pardon of Myron Fox's father, Philip, during the taxi wars. It also paints an enlightening and up-close picture of life on Chicago's West Side for an immigrant Jewish family.

The book will be available for sale and Mr. Fox will autograph copies during the social hour, after which an annual meeting will be held. President Walter Roth will review the Society's activities, and conduct an election of members of the Board of Directors.

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CJHS Open Meeting at Cong. Rodfei Zedek

Nominees to Society Board of Directors

At the Society's June 24 meeting, there will be an election of members of the Board of Directors. Nominees for a three year term (2001-2004) include current Board members Carolyn Eastwood, Clare Greenberg, Burt Robin, and Ethel Shulman, and first-time nominee David Heller. CJHS members are urged to participate in the voting.

President's Column



Walter Roth

AT THE RECENT ISRAEL FILM FESTIVAL (April 28 to May 3), Chuck Olin, a native Chicagoan, received the Festival's "Visionary Award 2001" during the Gala Opening Night festivities held at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema. The award was in recognition of the documentaries produced by Olin and his production company in the past and for the film shown at the Festival, "Is Jerusalem Burning?

Myth, Memory, and the Battle of Latrun."

The Olin family has deep roots in the business and philanthropic history of American and Chicago Jewry. Chuck Olin, after graduation from Harvard, began his career in Chicago in the 1960s co-producing award-winning documentaries about the social unrest in America and elsewhere, including the riots in Chicago at the time of the 1968 Democratic Convention. Film clips from these documentaries were shown at the Gala. Several years before "Latrun" Olin had produced his most ambitious and probably best known documentary, "In Our Own Hands," a full length film that tells the story of the exploits of the Jewish Brigade, the only all-Jewish fighting unit during World War II, which was organized in Palestine and fought as a part of the British Army in Europe. The film was shown in Chicago and was warmly received.

This was not to be the case for Olin's film shown at the Festival. At the screening and discussions that followed it, "Latrun" was attacked for some of the comments expressed in the film by certain Israeli historians and military officers with respect to the battle. One Chicago Jewish publication bitterly attacked the film as a one-sided political criticism of Israel's leadership at the time of Israel's War of Independence.

The film begins with sweeping views of the Judean hills. The time is 1948. The Arab Legion from Jordan has occupied Latrun, a strategic British police post on the main (and only) road to Jerusalem, and the city is isolated, besieged and starving. A United Nations-dictated armistice date is looming. If the Israelis have no access to Jerusalem, the city will fall into the hands of the Arabs, a calamity for the newly established Jewish State. In these circumstances Prime Minister Ben Gurion of Israel gives orders that Latrun must be attacked and captured. Many of his military advisors, including Yigdal Yadin, commander of the Haganah, urge him not to attack, since the Arab Legion is too deeply entrenched, and that attacks from Egypt and Syria pose a more serious threat. But Ben Gurion orders the attacks, and in desperation, employs troops who are newly arrived survivors from the concentration camps of Europe, ill-equipped and poorly trained.

After several attacks, the Jewish forces lose the Latrun battle. Olin's interviewees graphically tell their story of tragic errors.

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Chicago Jewish History

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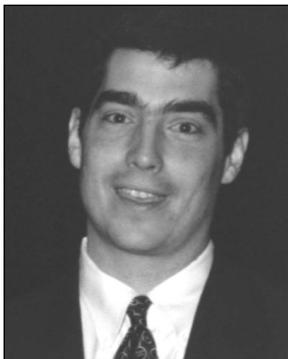
Irwin J. Suloway

Editorial Board

Burt Robin, Walter Roth, Norman Schwartz, and Milton Shulman

Board Member and *CJH* Past Editor Joe Kraus Departs for New Teaching Post

Society activist Joe Kraus has accepted a faculty position in the English Department of King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Joe, his wife Paula Chaiken, and their young son Richard, will be leaving Chicago before the start of the Fall 2001 academic year.



Dr. Joe Kraus

In 1992 Kraus succeeded Irwin J. Suloway as editor of *Chicago Jewish History*, and he held the post for seven years. In 1999 his full schedule of teaching college courses in American literature and his (successful) Ph.D. candidacy in that field obliged Joe to give up the editorship.

With Society president Walter Roth he co-authored the book "An Accidental Anarchist." He was involved in the preparation of the Society's documentary video "Romance of a People: One Hundred Years of Jewish History in Chicago, 1833-1933," and was also an onscreen participant in the award-winning production.

In addition to editing *CJH*, Kraus wrote fascinating articles for its pages about Chicago's legendary Jewish tough guys: two Chicago Jewish gangsters, both named Maxie Eisen; and the "Boss of the Ghetto," politician Manny Abrahams. He also wrote about the history of Chicago's Havurot.

Activism in the Society has been a Kraus family endeavor. Paula Chaiken was a member of the Board of Directors and the Editorial Board. She wrote articles and snapped photographs for *CJH*. Last June, along with Joe and baby Richie, Paula "manned" the Society information table at the Greater Chicago Jewish Folk Arts Festival.

Most recently, Joe emceed the Society's successful October 31, 2000, afternoon presentation commemorating the pageant *The Romance of A People*, first performed on Jewish Day at "A Century of Progress," the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Last October's event was timed to coordinate with the Society's reprinting of the original pageant program book.

Joe Kraus and Paula Chaiken brought their intelligence, talent, energy, and deep Jewish consciousness to the Society, and they will be missed. We wish the young family a happy, healthy, and successful future. *B'hatzlacha!*

Welcome to New Members of CJHS

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Dolnick
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Elkins
Devra R. Jacobson
Ruth & David Kahn
Janeen Lambert
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Novak
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Robbins
Mr. & Mrs. David Robin
Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Schmelling
Robert Sideman
Dr. Howard Sulkin

New members in the year 2001 will receive a copy of the CJHS reprint of *The Romance of A People* program book. The 2001 Minsky Award-winning book "Through The Eyes of Their Children" is also being sent to all current and new members of the Society.

Members who renew at the \$100 level or higher will receive an additional copy of the *Romance* program book.

It is through the generosity of our members that the Society is able to accomplish its goals. Thanks to all of our membership—new and continuing—for your support.

Board Member Harold T. Berc Honored by City Club of Chicago

The City Club of Chicago held its 2001 Civic Salute and Awards Dinner on Thursday, April 19, at the Drake Hotel. CJHS Board Member Harold T. Berc was honored with the 2001 President's Award for Service.

Mr. Berc, former City Club President and Chicago native, is currently a Senior Counselor with the Illinois State Bar Association, and Senior Member of both the American Bar and Chicago Bar Associations. He was employed for eight years on the editorial staff of the Universal-International News Service and is a long-time

board member of the Chicago Press Veterans Association. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, has been active in and has served as the National Commander of AMVETS. He played a key role in establishing the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor by convincing President Eisenhower to approve an appropriation of funds necessary for its completion. He was a principal figure in salvaging the eight-ton anchor of the USS Chicago, which is now permanently exhibited at the east end of Navy Pier.

My Jewish Postcard Collection

BY SENDER LEIB ARONIN

Many years ago I used to collect stamps and coins. When I married and had children the prices of collectible coins had increased, and I had to make a decision—should I continue to invest in coins, or should I invest in my children's spiritual future by spending the money on tuition at a Jewish day school? It was no contest.

But I remained a collector at heart. One day I visited the Saul Silber Library at the Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, (much of my life revolves around the Yeshiva), and saw an exhibition from the postcard collection of Mrs. Leah Mishkin, who was then the librarian at HTC. That experience changed my collecting life.

The world of postcard collecting is vast and exciting, with thousands of collectors and hundreds of postcard dealers. Topics sorted in the boxes of dealers range from “disasters” to “*Grus aus* (greetings from...)”, from “holidays” to “libraries,” and countless others. Some dealers have a section for “Judaica” (sometimes spelled “Judica”). “Disasters” can yield postcards of Temple Emanuel after the San Francisco Fire. In “*Grus Aus*” I found a postcard from Karlsbad, Germany, picturing three Jews. In the olden days mail was stamped by both the sending and the receiving post offices. One of my cards was received before it was sent, according to the post marks! Only an auditor with a trained eye could discover such a wonder.

Dealers get together periodically for postcard shows where they display and try to sell their wares. Years ago, my wife Margaret wanted us to visit the new apartment of her brother, Rabbi Yissacher Frand of Ner Yisroel Yeshiva in Baltimore. I looked at the listing of shows published in a bi-weekly newspaper for postcard collectors and found that there would be a show in Baltimore the last week in November. Guess where we spent Thanksgiving that year?

One of my favorite postcards turned up in an antique shop in La Grange, Illinois. There, for the princely sum of one dollar, I purchased a postcard entitled *Une Circoscision Juive*, picturing a Jewish circumcision ceremony in North Africa. The message on the back of the card, written in 1909, announces, “This is not very pretty!! But shows how the rite of circumcision is performed in Algeria....”



הרה"ג ר' אריה ליב אהרנין ז"ל
שהיה רב בעיר שיבויגען באה"ב

Hebrew caption reads: *The Great Rabbi Aryeh Leib Aronin of Blessed Memory who was Rabbi in the city of Sheboygan in the United States.*

Another favorite card of mine is one I created myself. My great-grandfather was Rabbi Aryeh Leib Aronin (grandfather of the prominent Chicago personalities Ben Aronin and his sister Blanche Aronin Lippitz). He headed the Jewish community of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, for about 25 years between 1900 and 1925, when he moved to Palestine. At that time Sheboygan was known as “Little Jerusalem” because of the strict religious observance by its Jewish citizens, numbering about 250 families. I discovered, in the pages of the 1903 edition of the American Jewish Yearbook, that Rabbi Aronin was born on July 20, 1849. This made July 20, 1999, the 150th anniversary of his birth. What a great occasion for a commemorative postcard!

From Lori Lippitz, of Maxwell Street Klezmer fame,

(a granddaughter of Blanche Aronin Lippitz), I received a photograph of Rabbi Aronin. I took the photo to my “other office”—Kinko’s—and used their color copier to produce several reproductions on a sheet of thick, glossy paper. I cut the pictures apart so each one became the front of an Aronin postcard. On the reverse side of each I placed a sticker printed with the birthday information, and also stamped it with the Aronin family crest. I addressed the cards to family and friends and mailed them to the Postmaster at Sheboygan, with a request to mail them all on July 20, 1999. Presto! I had created a postcard memento of this event.

Celebrating the 150th
Anniversary of the Birth of
Rabbi Aryeh Leib Aronin
July 20, 1849 - 1999
Former Chief Rabbi of
Sheboygan WI 1900-1925



The shape of the Aronin crest represents the mitre of the High Priest; the stones represent the Breastplate; the Hebrew letter *aleph* at the bottom stands for Aronin. The three Hebrew letters *tav*, *ayin* and *gimel* stand for Torah, Avodah, and Gemilas Chasodim—the Law, Divine Service, and Good Deeds—the three pillars upon which the world stands, according to Simon the Righteous (Ethics of the Fathers 2:2). According to tradition, we Aronins are descended from this great man—a High Priest!

Recently my daughter Shanny of Toronto gave birth to our eighth grandchild, and my wife flew out there to assist her. Our other daughter Shelly invited me to her home in Skokie for Shabbos. The trip was for a short distance and only for a night and a day, but I put much thought into packing a suitcase for the trip.

As I near retirement age, I have been thinking about my ultimate trip. For this trip I cannot take with me any physical objects—only spiritual ones—the Torah that I have learned and the *mitzvot* I have done.

One spiritual deed which I have embarked upon relates to Rabbi Aronin. His seventy-fifth *yahrzeit* will occur on the seventh of Cheshvan—October 30, 2006. As there are almost six years to that day and there are six chapters in *Pirkei Avos*—Ethics of the Fathers—the Aronin family has taken it upon ourselves to complete a reading of this small volume by the time of the *yahrzeit*. We are almost halfway through the first chapter. Upon completion there will be an Aronin family reunion. This project is not restricted to Aronins. We welcome relatives and friends. ❖

Postcard Exhibition Offers Fascinating Pictures of Jews at the 1893 World's Fair

Past Perfect: The Jewish Experience in Early 20th Century Postcards is at the Spertus Museum through August 26, 2001. The exhibition is based on a traveling exhibition of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City, but the Chicago content is all-important!

Introductory wall panels tell us that it was at the time of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago that the practice of sending picture postcards became “the rage.” In fact, the first commercially available postcards in the United States were sold at the Fair.

The panels feature photographs of three Jewish participants in the Fair, pictured as fantastic “orientals.” The beautiful dancer Rahlo Jammele holds a sword over her shoulders. She wears a jaunty fez, a necklace of heavy amber beads, and a rich, heavily embroidered gown. “Far-Away-Moses,” a 55-year-old native of Constantinople, is pictured as quaint and exotic in his beard and turban—but his real name was Harry R. Mandil, and with his business partners, he was one of the wealthiest merchants in that city. The handsome, moustached, R.J. Levi is shown in fez, sash, and pantaloons. He holds a rifle at his side. Another photograph shows Cyrus Adler's display case of Jewish ritual objects in the Fair's “Exhibition of Comparative World Religions.” The explanatory text comments on the attitudes and prejudices that prevailed at the time of the Fair.

CJH published articles about Jews at the Fair in our Summer and Year-End 2000 and Spring 2001 issues. Our readers are enthusiastically encouraged to visit the large and varied Spertus exhibition to learn more about early 20th century Jewish life as pictured on postcards. *Bev Chubat*

SANDY ARONIN wrote about his first year at the Hebrew Theological College for *CJH* Winter 2000.

A delightful Jewish New Year's greeting card from the Aronin Collection—printed in 1915, and picturing three people riding bicycles and holding Shana Tovah cards—is featured in publicity for the postcard exhibition currently at the Spertus Museum. Other pieces from his collection are also included in the exhibition.

Jewish Big Sisters: Chicago Organization Celebrates 85 Years of Friendship and One-to-One Mentoring

BY BEV CHUBAT



Illustration from 1961 JBS Brochure.

"Jewish Big Sisters--1916-1961--45 Years in Behalf of Girlhood. 'Prepare and Prevent Rather than Repair and Repent.'" Image courtesy JBS.

Eight socially conscious young women gathered at the home of Miss Jean Feldman, 3642 West Douglas Boulevard, on January 10, 1916. This was the first meeting of Jewish Big Sisters of Chicago. The goal of the organization was recorded by the secretary, Miss Anna Preaskil: "to take care of one or more girls and develop them along certain lines, morally, mentally, and physically, which would otherwise be neglected on account of environment and poor circumstances."

In subsequent meetings, one-to-one matches were made with troubled girls from the West Side, and these cases were discussed as the relationships developed. (One girl was soon dropped because she was "too independent.") An account was opened at Greenebaum's Bank, from which, through the



Honorary President Louise Franks (left) and First Vice-President/Corresponding Secretary Ruth Rubin. Pictured at the October 20, 1996 JBS Reunion, celebrating the Chicago organization's 80th year. Photograph by Norman D. Schwartz.

kindness of a Mr. Falkner, the Big Sisters would receive a hundred "dime banks" to use for their fund-raising campaign.

Founded under the direction of Minnie F. Low, Superintendent of the Bureau of Personal Service of the Associated Jewish Charities, as an autonomous agency, JBS has operated continuously for 85 years, providing friendship and companionship to more than 40,000 Jewish girls in Metropolitan Chicago.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (as the movement has been called since the merger of Big Brothers and Big Sisters in 1977) was founded in 1904, and is the nation's oldest mentoring organization. Jewish Big Sisters is affiliated with the national movement in this "therapy of friendship," but it remains independent of BBBS and also of the Jewish Federation.

Most Little Sisters are referred through the Courts and schools, and the balance by personal referral. Big Sisters are all volunteer lay persons. They are carefully paired with Little Sisters, working under

the direction of a social worker, the organization's only paid professional. Big Sisters receive orientation courses in human relations, undergo in-service training, and participate in case discussion meetings.

In past years, leading Jewish community activists have been JBS volunteers. In the mid 1930s, Sylvia Hollender invited her neighbor, Mildred Shlensky, to join JBS. (In 1933, Mildred's father, Frank Kohn, a founder of Big Brothers, and an executive with Sears, had been transferred from Philadelphia to the company's Chicago headquarters.) Mildred liked the one-to-one idea; she eventually became president of JBS, as did Sylvia. Although her organization affiliations changed, Mildred continued to attend JBS reunions and kept in touch with her Little Sister. In a phone conversation with *CJH* from her retirement home in Connecticut, she fondly recalled her JBS colleagues, Zelda Anixter, Bernice Dale, Molly Goodman, Lenore Novy, social worker Lois Payne, and the formidable, persistent, Persess Sachs.

During its heyday, JBS maintained an office at 203 North Wabash Avenue. In those days, before the creation of massive government and community agencies to effectively aid the needy, Jewish Big Sisters' one-to-one mentoring and group activities also included filling the basic material and health needs of Little Sisters. And even today, JBS may provide referral resources to the girls and their families, and may offer financial assistance for specific needs. The organization, now numbering about 100 members, led by President Faith Shulruff, still occupies a niche for insecure adolescent girls that other agencies do not.

Group activities have always complemented the one-to-one relationships at JBS. Cultural, religious, educational, and recreational events are scheduled, with emphasis on Jewish holiday gatherings. Throughout its history, JBS has had spiritual advisors affiliated with the Reform Movement, including Rabbi Louis Mann (a leader in Big Brothers and Big Sisters) and Rabbi Samuel Karff of Chicago Sinai Congregation. Rabbi Herman Schaalman has now been spiritual advisor for many years and has welcomed JBS to Emanuel Congregation for its group activities.

A JBS Reunion is held every five years. This is an occasion for Big and Little Sisters to get together to renew their friendships and to note their achievements. The 85th anniversary event will be held on Sunday, October 21, 2001, at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. Phone (773)764-4759 for Reunion particulars and membership inquiries. ❖

Jewish Big Sisters 35th Anniversary Luncheon.

Standard Club, January 9, 1951. Photographs by Philip J. Weinstein, Lawrence-Phillip Studios. Photographs courtesy JBS.



Left to right: Mrs. Philip Sachs, Mrs. Harold Shlensky, and guest speaker Dr. William C. Menninger.

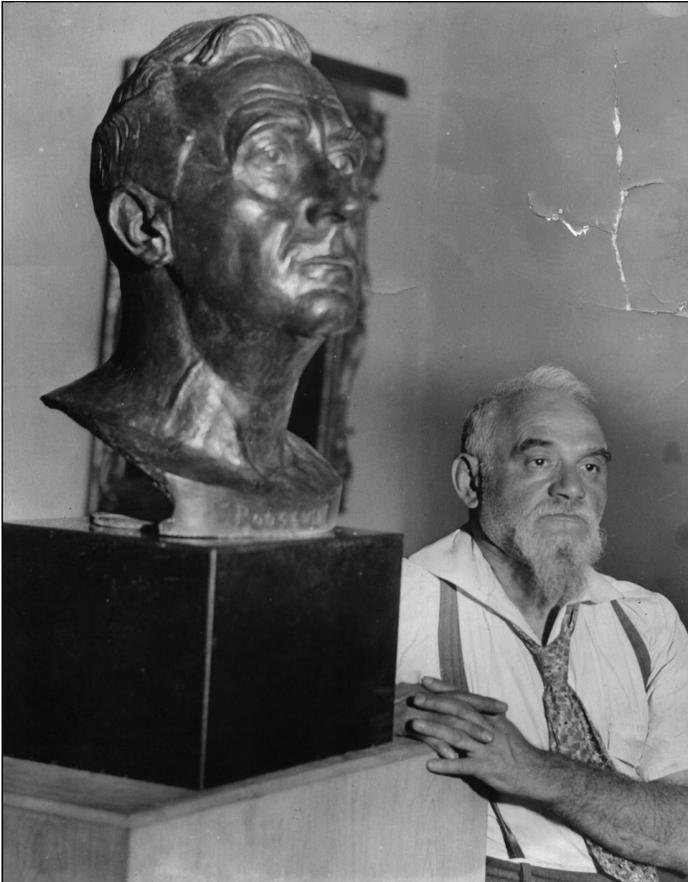


Left to right: new Board member, Mrs. Julius Zahler conferring with two past presidents, Mrs. Maurice J. Weiss and Mrs. Samuel S. Hollender.



Left to right: Mrs. Harry L. Nathenson, Mrs. Morton Witlin, Mrs. Jack L. Lazarus, and Mrs. Jules B. Anixter.

Enrico Glicenstein: Sculptures Commissioned by the Covenant Club in the 1930s



Enrico Glicenstein with his bronze bust of FDR, 1934.
Photograph courtesy Charlotte Sholod.

Where is Chicago's *Messiah*? Our Spring 2000 issue included an article about Hyde Park native Charlotte Sholod, archivist of the estate of artist Enrico Glicenstein, and her search for the bronze cast of his *Messiah* sculpture, purchased by the Covenant Club during the time he resided in Chicago, from the middle of 1929 through early 1934.

CJH asked Charlotte Sholod for information about the missing statue, and she answered:

“The *Messiah* measures about 27 x 14 inches. As far as I know, there are three extant bronze casts and one plaster cast; the bronzes are in Warsaw, London, and Jerusalem, and the plaster is in Turek—Glicenstein's hometown in Poland. The cast prepared for the Covenant Club may well be the fourth bronze, unless this cast somehow reached Jerusalem. (If it was sent to Israel prior to the early 1960s, it would have been donated to the Bezalel Museum which later became part of the Israel Museum. Maybe your Chicago contact from the Covenant Club would remember if there were works sent to Israel even though he doesn't remember the particular fate of Glicenstein's *Messiah*.) The Israel Museum has no records relating to its sculpture's provenance, unfortunately, though I did just write them again to repeat the question.

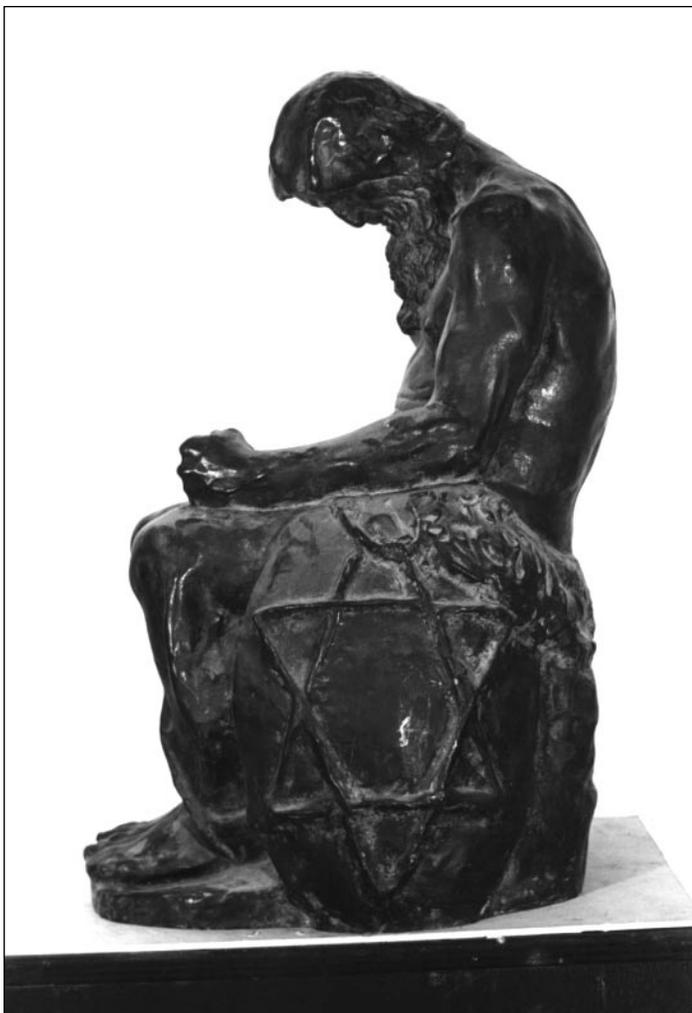
Originally there was a very large—perhaps as high as seven feet tall—version of the



Left: Covenant Club event, 1947. Dated but untitled; perhaps the annual dinner, May 15, 1947.
Dr. Samuel S. Hollender. c. 1945. Both photographs, Covenant Club Collection, Chicago Jewish Archives.

Messiah. This was completed in 1905 and was exhibited at the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, where Max Nordau brought the audience's attention to the bronze sculpture. The plaster cast of the work was sent to Bezalel where it stood in the courtyard of the Museum for many years (again, what happened to it is a mystery). The tall bronze was purchased by a Dr. Minden in Berlin, stood outside his home for many years, and during World War II was melted down by the Nazis."

There is no mystery connected with the whereabouts of Glicenstein's 1934 bronze bust of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, commissioned by the Covenant Club under its president, Dr. Samuel S. Hollender. The bust, bearing a plaque reading: "Donated by the Covenant Club of Illinois," is located on a landing in the lobby of Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. ❖



Enrico Glicenstein, *Messiah*, bronze. Collection, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photograph © Israel Museum.

CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY Summer Tours 2001

The Society--in cooperation with the Dawn Schuman Institute--has planned three exciting Sunday historic Jewish Tours. Tours are conducted in air-conditioned buses with restroom facilities.

SUNDAY, JULY 15

Summer Safari: Elgin, Rockford, and Beloit.

Guide: Leah Axelrod. Continue exploring the Jewish communities that surround Chicago. Learn about the congregations on the Illinois-Wisconsin border. See their previous houses of worship and visit their present synagogues. Enjoy the ride through our midwest countryside. Luncheon buffet is included.

Pickups at Two Locations:

8:00 am Marriott Hotel, 540 N. Michigan, (Rush St. Entrance). Return 7:00 pm.

8:30 am Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy. Return 6:30 pm.

\$57/Member of CJHS or DSI \$65/Nonmember

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

Chicago Synagogues: Past, Present, and Future.

Guide: Leah Axelrod. Visit Chicago synagogues you may have heard of but not seen: Renaissance in Uptown: Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation. Spiritual Life Downtown: Cong. Kol Ami and Lake Shore Drive Synagogue. Vision for the Future: Cong. Rodfei Zedek.

Pickup 12:00 noon: Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 W. Touhy. Return 5:30 pm.

\$28/Member of CJHS or DSI \$33/Nonmember

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Chicago Jewish Roots. Guide: Dr. Irving Cutler.

A sentimental journey to the Maxwell Street area, Lawndale, Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Albany Park, and Rogers Park. Special stops included.

Pickup 12:00 noon: Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy. Return 5:00 pm.

\$26/Member of CJHS or DSI \$31/Nonmember

For Information: Leah Axelrod (847) 432-7003

Advance payment required. Make check payable to: Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

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

**REGISTER TODAY!
LAST YEAR'S TOURS SOLD OUT!**

Oral History Excerpt

Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz

Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz was a beloved figure on the Chicago scene, whose long life spanned the 20th century. He was born on August 10, 1905 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin to Jewish immigrant parents from Lithuania. His mother named him after the 16th president because she was moved by stories of Lincoln she heard at a settlement house lecture in New York City. (But Judge Marovitz loved to say that she heard that Lincoln had been shot in the temple, so she thought he was Jewish.)

His family moved to the Maxwell Street neighborhood of Chicago when Marovitz was five years old. In his teens he worked in the law library of Mayer, Meyer, Austrian & Platt (now Mayer, Brown & Platt), and the firm provided him with tuition for law school, which he attended without having spent a day as a college undergraduate.

Marovitz was named an assistant state's attorney for Cook County at age 22—the youngest person to hold that position. In the 1930s he teamed with his brothers in private practice, representing some of the most notorious

gangsters of the day. West Side boss Jacob Arvey backed his candidacy for the Illinois Senate in 1938. Marovitz was the first Jew elected to that body, and he helped to introduce the first Fair Employment Act. In Springfield, he strengthened his friendship with his fellow senator Richard J. Daley. Except for two years' service in the Marines during World War II, he remained in the Senate until 1950, when he was elected to the Circuit Court.

In 1963 President John F. Kennedy named him to the federal bench, as judge in the Northern Illinois District. In recent years, as a senior judge, he stopped hearing cases, but would preside over marriages and the swearing-in of new American citizens. Over the years he administered the mayoral oath of office to the Daleys, father and son.

Judge Marovitz died of kidney failure on Saturday, March 18, 2001 at his North Side home. He was 95.

Following is an excerpt from the oral history taken by Sol Brandzel and Charles B. Bernstein on February 22, 1982, at the Federal Building office of Judge Marovitz.

MAROVITZ [Governor Henry] Horner said not to be a politician. But I got a little plaque on the wall from my fifth grade grammar school teacher who gave me these two little Lincoln bookends, the start of my Lincoln collection. When I got elected to the state senate, she sent me this little plaque...

CJHS What was her name?

MAROVITZ Helen McGarr. She was distantly related to Frank McGarr, our chief judge now. I used to go to see her every Saturday at a home out at Harlem and Harrison. She said, "I want my little Abe to be a statesman and not a politician." This little plaque says, "A politician thinks of the next election, a statesman of the next generation." I have [the plaque] on my wall outside. You can see it. So I have a lot of wonderful memories of

people who have helped me through the years...

In '49 I was elected judge. I had a real donnybrook with a senator—his daughter's my very good friend today, Dorsey Connors. Bill Connors was the leader of the 42nd Ward. I went to him to get some help with this so-called Doctor's Bill, a bill that was debarring Jewish doctors from practicing until they had full citizenship. I went to Connors, and I remember he said, "There are too many Jews here now." He was kind of a commercial guy. And I said, "I'll kill every money bill you've got on the calendar. That crack will cost you and your guys a quarter of a million dollars." And I did.

CJHS How did you happen to first get slated for the bench?

MAROVITZ I was in Las Vegas

with my great friend Joe E. Lewis. I got a call that Joe was drinking and he was in hock gambling, so flew out there. I heard myself paged, "Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz." I wasn't a judge then. Now there were Judges Markowitz and Marlowitz, and all that kind of thing. But it was "Abraham Lincoln," so I went [to the phone], and it was Jack Arvey.

He says, "Congratulations. You've been nominated for the Circuit Court." I said, "Don't be kidding me. I'm here trying to get Joe Lewis to stop losing crap games." He said, "No. I'm serious. You'll never guess who seconded your nomination." I said, "It wouldn't be hard. My friend, Dick Daley." He said, "No. Bill Connors." I said, "The only reason that bum did it was to get me out of the Senate."... That was so, but I

had indicated to Jack that I wouldn't go back [to the senate] because, immodestly, it was costing me \$60-, 70-, 80,000 a year to be down there. I always took my work seriously— never myself—but I was on committees, and you do a conscientious job. It was hard, and my brothers were very unhappy with my going away. It cost me, and it cost them, so...

CJHS Had you actively campaigned for the nomination? Or did Arvey just know that you wanted...

MAROVITZ No, no, I really didn't. I really didn't want it, because I had to make some money. I was gone three years—and I sound immodest—but I always had great earning power. I was a trial lawyer, and I specialized in criminal law, which was good paying. I represented some of the worst people in town; they were the best payers. So I wanted to stay around and make some money. But the opportunity apparently came up, and Jack had a chance to put me on the ticket. Those opportunities don't come too often, so...

CJHS In '50?

MAROVITZ In 1949, really. I was nominated. It was a convention in those days.

CJHS You were nominated by the convention?

MAROVITZ Yes, then ran in the special election in April of 1950.

CJHS You were just saying you wanted to get out of the legislature because you had to get back to work, but, actually, going on the bench you must have taken a substantial pay cut.

MAROVITZ Took a terrible loss, and that was ego. Strictly ego.



Jacob Arvey (left) and Abraham Lincoln Marovitz.
Undated photograph; Chicago Jewish Archives.

CJHS You just had to do it because it's a great honor.

MAROVITZ That's right. My mother was still alive, God bless her beautiful soul. And it's an interesting thing. This is the gospel truth. After Daley got elected mayor in '55, he and Jack Arvey and Phil Gill and Al Horan and some of the leaders downstate with whom I served in the senate wanted me to be a candidate for governor...the Horner image, you know.

One night my friend Joe E. Lewis came in from Las Vegas. We were going to see some fight in New York. And Joe was very Jewish. His mother was very Orthodox—wonderful old gal, lived to be almost 100. Joe loved my mother and my mother loved Joe. He called me from Vegas. He said, "We'll have gefilte fish at the house Friday and then we'll go to New York Sunday

and see the fight." So he came to the house. Mother was very *frum*. She never lit the lights, you know... Joe must have had six pieces of gefilte fish that night. We had real, real, matzah balls.

Mother was a very great devotee of Fahey Flynn, who is my great friend today. He was then on Channel 2. So I turned on the television for her. No matter who was there, she had to listen to Fahey Flynn at ten o'clock. So Fahey opens his program by saying, "Looks like the next Democratic candidate for governor will be Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, longtime..." Mother says, "I don't want my son to be governor. Let him alone. I don't like you anymore"—to Fahey Flynn in the television. Joe and I laughed.

continued on page 12

Marovitz Oral History *continued from page 11*

There was a guy named Howard Miller in town here...

CJHS The radio guy?

MAROVITZ Yes, I had prosecuted before his father. His father was a judge. I knew Howard since he was a kid. Howard had a variety show.

CJHS Excuse me, was that Judge Harry Miller?

MAROVITZ That's right. Judge Harry B. Miller.

CJHS He wasn't Jewish, was he?

MAROVITZ No, no, he wasn't... Howard wanted to get Joe on his program...so he went there. It was at the Garrick Theater, and I sat in the audience. The first thing that Howard said when Joe came on stage was, "It looks like your pal and good friend, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, is the next Democratic candidate for governor. I've been a Republican all my life, but he's one Democrat my father wanted me to vote for."

Joe said, "There isn't a chance. Rachel said, 'I don't want him to be' —Rachel is my mother's name—I don't want him to be governor. I want him to stay a judge."

That night I bounced around with Joe. We closed, I think, the Singapore Restaurant. I came home and mother was there reading the Jewish papers, just as big as life, at five o'clock in the morning. I thought the maid forgot to put the lights out. She couldn't sleep. So I went in. I said, "Don't you feel well, Rachel?" She said, "I feel fine. I don't think you feel so good." I was half-tipped. I'd been out with Joe all night.

She said, "Sit down, son. I've never interfered in your life, love life, or law profession. I never liked you in criminal law, or in politics, but you've got to make one promise to me, that you won't leave the bench to run for governor." I said, "Mother, it's a long way to—." "Yeah, yeah, mentioning your name on the television and giving the nomination and [winning] the election. I know all about it, son. I'm not that dumb. I have people calling you from all over the state here, so if it doesn't mean—" I said, "Mother, no problem at all. You have my promise."

CJHS Why was she so opposed?

MAROVITZ First, because of what it did to Horner. She said, "No higher honor could come to a member of the Jewish people than to be a judge. You just stay a good judge. Stay the *mensch* that you are."

Mother died in '57. When Daley's mother died, his wife called me up. I think I was the first one over at the house...

You know, it's an interesting thing. I don't profess to great scholarship, but I'm talking about *yoysher*, to do *yoysher*, to do the right thing. My ma and pa, they inculcated that in our young hearts when we were kids. I'll never forget when my brother Harold and I were feuding. My grandmother said something about "*yoysher, kinderlech*." Harold said, "What does *kosher* have to do with it, Grandma? She said, "*Yoysher, yoysher, yoysher*."

CJHS Do you feel a Jewish judge approaches the bench differently than a non-Jewish judge?

MAROVITZ It all depends how Jewish you are. There are some Jewish judges that have no more *yiddishkayt*, you know, than—

CJHS Do you feel you sit there with a Jewish point of view? Not that you'd be partial to a Jewish litigant, but I mean point of view...

MAROVITZ Yes, I do think so... I've said it in public forums. I think we're kinder, generally speaking, and more compassionate because of our own persecutions. And being reared in the Maxwell Street area made a great contribution to my trial work.

CJHS Do you feel that being a Jew on the bench is a circumstance where you have to bend backwards to make sure there is a sense of impartiality and objectivity?

MAROVITZ No, I've never really felt that way. I know that as a Jew I never felt a Jewish consciousness in the sense that I lean one way or the other. I'll tell a final story that may point up what I'm saying.

Judge Strayhorn, who is on the bench now, was my prosecutor, a young colored lad that I was very much interested in, greatly interested in his career. When I was out at the Criminal Court Building, two hillbilly federal narcotics agents arrested a colored lad in a pool room, took him on the South

Side, had him make some buys of narcotics, using him for about a month. When he outlived his usefulness, they pinched him for making a buy or a sale or something. It was a clear case of entrapment. The kid was married, had three or four kids, worked at Acme Barrel Company...so the public defender made a motion of directed verdict...and Earl vehemently argued against. I said, "I'll take care of you after a while." To the two federal agents I said, "You wouldn't dare take this case into federal court. They'd throw you out. This kid ought to sue you. You entrapped him. Get out of this courtroom and stay out. Don't you come back here."

I called Strayhorn. I said, "I happen to be a Jew. No Jew gets the worst of a Jew or the best. He gets a square shake—which he sometimes doesn't get elsewhere. What happened to you today, because this kid was black and you were black and these two hillbilly guys were white, you were going to show that it didn't mean anything to you, so you leaned backwards the other way. If that was a white kid, you'd say to me, 'Judge, I think that is entrapment.' ...Never let that happen again." Tears come down his eyes and he embraced me. Lincoln's birthday was a month or two in advance, and he asked if I would speak at a joint meeting of the men's and women's groups of his church. He was the president of the men's club...He gave me the shortest and best introduction I ever got. "I want to introduce my

mentor, my friend, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, from whom I've learned more about life and people and human nature in one year than I have in the 24 years of my life."

Daley appointed him to the Sanitary District—I may have had a hand in that—and he asked me to induct him over there. At that time the place was rife with corruption. As a matter of fact, half a dozen of the guys went to the penitentiary. When I got over there I said, "Earl, you gave me the shortest and nicest introduction I've ever gotten, and I'm going to make the shortest induction speech I've ever made. I just want to remind you, you came in this morning with your self-respect. Make damn sure you leave with it. Now raise your right hand—"

It's the same thing here. I walk in that door with my self-respect every morning, and I leave with it. I don't stop to think whether I'm a Jew or non-Jew. I know I'm a judge, and I'm supposed to dispense justice fairly and impartially and compassionately, and that's what I have in mind. I repeat, no Jew gets the worst of me, no Jew gets the best of me. He gets what he's entitled to, a fair trial.

CJHS Judge, we thank you very much for these sessions. They've been extraordinarily illuminating, and more important, we hope they will be illuminating to a generation yet to come. That's what this is all about. ❖

CJHS Tribute Cards Available

These attractive cards are printed on heavy white stock, 9-1/4" x 4" folded, and bear the Society logo. The text inside describes the purposes of CJHS:

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society, through its many programs and publications, collects, preserves, records and retells the history of the Jewish community of Chicago.

A GIFT HAS BEEN MADE TO THE
CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BY _____

There is also ample space for your personal message if you wish to add one. A package of eight cards with envelopes is \$10.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from the Society office at a cost of \$5.00 per card (postage included). To order packages of eight or individual cards, phone our office at (312)663-5634, or Clare Greenberg at (773)725-7330.

Society Newsletter Seeks Memoirs of Jewish Chicagoans

Much of the work we publish in *Chicago Jewish History* focuses on broad themes, famous individuals, and notable events. Memoirs allow us to focus on the history that most of us actually lived. The memoirs we seek are refined versions of the same stories you may tell at family gatherings or when you and old friends get together. We encourage you to record what you remember from first-hand experience. Recollections are most convincing when they are most personal.

Manuscripts should not exceed six double-spaced pages. We would prefer to receive your submission via e-mail, but for those you without access to a computer, good old paper is fine. We attempt to comment on every memoir submitted, but cannot always do so, and cannot guarantee the publication of any work. Send memoirs to Editor Bev Chubat (see address on page 2).

Many members of Cong. Rodfei Zedek were instrumental in the 1976 revival of our organization, which had existed in an earlier time. CJHS President Walter Roth has been a member of RZ since his arrival in Chicago in 1939. CJHS Vice-President Burt Robin is a congregation activist. CJHS Board Member and Program Chair Charles B. Bernstein is also member of the Rodfei Zedek board. So it was fitting that we held an open meeting of the Society to commemorate the historic congregation's own renewal and rebirth.

We met on Sunday, April 22, 2001, in the sanctuary of the new RZ building at 5200 South Hyde Park Boulevard. The building houses RZ and the Hyde Park Jewish Community Center. Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School is also located on the synagogue's campus.

Congregation President Edward Hamburg addressed the meeting, stating that RZ is "not about a building." It was founded 127 years ago, largely by Jewish workers at



Sanctuary, Congregation Rodfei Zedek. Photo by Norman D. Schwartz.

CJHS Visits the New Home of Historic Congregation Rodfei Zedek

Chicago's Union Stock Yards, on a principle of "continuity of the Jewish community through change"

—and this is the fifth home of the congregation.

Rodfei Zedek's 1948 building had a 900-seat sanctuary, but by the 1990s, membership stood at about 300 and a smaller space was needed. Architect Philip Kupritz, a Conservative Jew who had done synagogue work, was hired. His background would be helpful through the ensuing years of complex negotiations, revisions, and restructuring. Ground was broken for the new building in 1999, and in September, 2000, it was dedicated—an adaptable, cross-functional building combining sacred and secular spaces.

The sanctuary has a thrust bimah with seating for 310 on three sides; the Eternal Light and menorahs come from the 1948 building, as does a small stained glass window by Yaacov Agam, and



Congregation Rodfei Zedek., 5200 South Hyde Park Boulevard.
Photo by Norman D. Schwartz.

the sanctuary's large stained glass window—actually two panels that were formerly on each side of the chapel bimah.

Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel then offered a historical narrative with sound bites (audio recordings from the congregation's archives, dating from the early 1950s to 1965), "Voices of Rodfei Zedek." The opening selection was a 1961 rendition of the *Rodfei Zedek Song*, sung to the tune of *Mañana* by the Children's Chorus led by Ann Goldberg, wife of Cantor Maurice Goldberg.

We heard the recorded voice of Rabbi Benjamin Daskal (RZ 1919-1974), reminiscing in 1955 about a marriage ceremony he performed at Camp Howe, in Gainsville, GA, where he was visiting his son during WWII, stepping in at the last minute for the local rabbi who was ill. "Destiny!" proclaims Rabbi Daskal, since it turned out that the tearful, thankful bride and groom were from Hyde Park!

We heard Rabbi Ralph Simon, who arrived in 1943 (Rabbi Daskal was named Rabbi Zedek), in a 1950s interview. He discusses his founding of Camp Ramah with the help of the RZ laity. There are now Ramahs all over the country, and a consequent growing group of Hebrew-speaking leaders.

We heard a lively selection from a 1950s Sisterhood musical. The RZ Sisterhood, founded in 1906, has always been active and independent.

Rabbi Gertel's program held many other such fascinating, recorded and narrative insights.

Mr. Hamburg conducted a tour of the building: classrooms, meeting rooms, and gymnasium. He noted that Akiba-Schechter Day School has 1,000 students (not all of them Jewish), and RZ Hoffman Religious School, 55 students. ❖

President's Column *continued from page 2*

But shortly after the defeat, an unpaved path to Jerusalem is located which bypasses the Latrun blockade. A herculean construction crew expands the path and opens this so-called "Burma Road" to the city. Jerusalem is saved and the New City is declared by the U.N. to belong to Israel.

It is said that the battle of Latrun was really not lost since it led to the building of the Burma Road. Is this fact or myth? The use of concentration camp survivors in the battle continues to be a matter of dispute in Israel. Some say hundreds of these survivors were killed in the battle, but this may be a myth; Olin's research indicates that less than 100 of them were killed. The facts surrounding the role of the concentration camp survivors appear to have been overwhelmed by myth generated by memory.

Olin's documentary was apparently commissioned by an Israeli general who was a commander of the forces that attacked Latrun. Some of the historians in the film are so-called "revisionist" historians, deeply critical of many of the founders of Israel and the "myths" surrounding their accomplishments. At the end of the film, in a lengthy polemic, the film enters a treacherous area—the implications of such "myths" and how they are used to justify decisions by the present government.

Olin makes a heroic effort to present the competing points of view. Does he obscure the facts in the process? You will have to view the film and reach your own conclusions. For those involved in the telling of history whether by written, audio, or visual means, "Latrun" is a reminder of how quickly facts can become memories, producing myths that later obscure the facts. Chuck Olin's latest film is a thoughtful work of art about the difficulties encountered in historical presentations.

Is Jerusalem Burning? Myth, Memory, and the Battle of Latrun. (VHS Video, 52 min.) \$29.95

In Our Own Hands: The Hidden Story of the Jewish Brigade in World War II. (VHS Video, 84 min.) \$39.95

Both available for purchase from Chuck Olin Assoc. (800)704-2641 or for loan from Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.

Looking forward to the Society's June 24 season-end meeting, and reviewing the year's events, I want to take this opportunity to thank our officers and members of the board of directors for their generous commitment of time and energy throughout the year.

Elise Ginsparg and Norma Spungen, two long-time board members, have recently retired. I want to commend them for their enthusiastic involvement in the Society's work. Fortunately both Elise and Norma continue to be active in our community, preserving and teaching Chicago Jewish history.

Thanks to Eve Levin for another year of diligent management of the Society office. Thanks to editor/designer Bev Chubatz for keeping our quarterly publication interesting. ❖

About the Society

What We Are

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977 and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the American Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Muriel Robin was the founding president. The Society has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects and preserves appropriate written, spoken and photographic records; publishes historical information, holds public meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; mounts appropriate exhibits; and offers tours of Jewish historical sites.

Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to become more involved in the activities of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society? We'd love to have you! Following are the various committees on which you can serve. Contact the Society at (312)663-5634 or any of the Chairpersons listed here.

■ PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Do you have a great idea for a meeting topic? If you are organized and creative, friendly and outgoing, the Program Committee would welcome your help in planning and implementing our bi-monthly and annual meetings. Call Charles Bernstein (773)324-6362.

■ MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Society's membership continues to grow, and you could help us introduce Chicago Jewish history to even more people. Share your ideas and energy! Contact Janet Iltis (773)761-1224 or Clare Greenberg (773)725-7330.

■ TOUR COMMITTEE

Bring your creativity and organization to planning and promoting our popular roster of tours on Jewish history. Contact Leah Axelrod (847)432-7003.

■ EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Do you like to write? Are you a great proofreader? You can contribute to our quarterly publication, *Chicago Jewish History*. Contact our editor, Bev Chubat (773)525-4888.

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 Museum store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Dues Structure

Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1000
Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron or Family	50
Senior Family or Individual	35
Synagogue or Organization	25
Senior Individual or Student	20

Make checks payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and mail to our office at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago IL 60605. Dues are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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