



# chicago jewish history

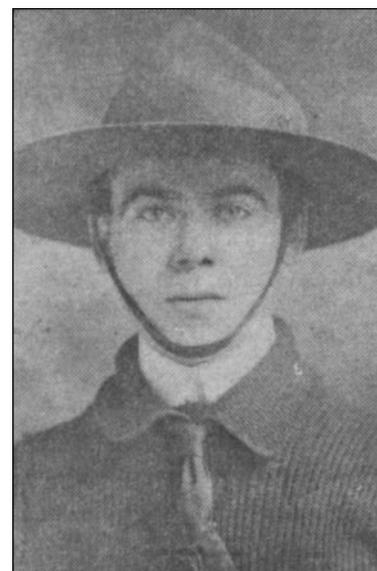
## *Save the Date! Sunday, June 4: Members' Meeting and Brunch*

Society members have already received their invitations to this year's brunch, but *CJH* offers another reminder. The event will take place at 11:30 a.m. on June 4, 2000, at Temple Sholom, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive.

A brunch of lox, bagels, and all the trimmings will precede the annual Society business of electing members to the board of directors. Nominated for three-year terms: Charles Bernstein, Herman Draznin, Sheldon Gardner, Janet Itlis, Seymour Persky, Walter Roth, Milton Shulman and Norma Spungen. Elise Ginsparg has been nominated for a one-year term.

The singing guitarists Darwin and Marv will provide the entertainment, presenting a selection of English, Israeli, Yiddish, folk and pop songs.

Charge for all CJHS members is \$12.00. For further information, phone the Society office at (312) 663-5634. ❖



**Chicagoan Solomon Miller**

*pictured in 1911 as Jewish Scoutmaster in his native city of Leeds, England.*

*(Photograph courtesy Bernard Miller.)*

*See story on page 10.*

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

**Society Events  
for Spring, Summer,  
and Fall 2000**

**Carl Sandburg's Letter  
to Jacob M. Loeb**

**Memoir: Sam Kweskin  
Remembers His  
Northwest Side  
Boyhood**

**Solomon Miller:  
Jewish Scoutmaster in  
Leeds and Chicago**

**Seeking Information on  
Lawndale Synagogues**

## **Society Summer Tours to include the "River People"**

Tour chairman Lea Axelrod has planned a wonderful program for 2000.

The 19th century Jewish peddlers who followed the rivers of Illinois will be the subject of the Society tour of North Central Illinois on Sunday, August 27. Allen Meyers, whose forebears are from that area, and his wife Sue, will guide the fascinating all-day bus excursion.

Our walking tour of West Rogers Park on Sunday, July 30 will be led by Mark Mandle, a sixth-generation Chicagoan, genealogist, and mainstay of the Society.

Dr. Irving Cutler will lead off the schedule with his best-selling sentimental journey—his annual bus tour, "Chicago Jewish Roots," on Sunday, July 9.

*continued on page 7*

**Save the Date!  
GREATER CHICAGO  
JEWISH FOLK ARTS  
FESTIVAL**

**Sunday, June 11  
11 am - 6pm**

*Caldwell Woods & Bunker  
Hill, Cook County Forest  
Preserve, Devon at  
Milwaukee/Nagle*

**Help staff the CJHS  
information table!  
Contact Joe Kraus at  
(773) 274-1323**

## President's Column



Walter Roth

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE WAS HELD FOR DR. EDWARD HIRSCH LEVI ON APRIL 6** at Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago. Dr. Levi died on March 7, 2000.

The imposing chapel was filled with an overflow crowd. Among the many local and national dignitaries present and participating in the service were Hugo Sonnenschein, President of the University of Chicago; Bernard D. Meltzer, Professor Emeritus of the University of Chicago Law School and brother-in-law of Levi; former President Gerald R. Ford, who had appointed Levi as Attorney General of the United States in the aftermath of the Nixon Watergate scandal; Katherine Graham, owner and publisher of the Washington Post and a stalwart supporter of Levi; United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who had been a student of Levi's; and Gerhard Casper, former Dean of the University of Chicago Law School and former President of Stanford University.

The gracious speeches ranged over the many accomplishments of Dr. Levi in his lifetime. In the musical interlude that followed, a brass ensemble performed the selections that had been played when he was installed as President of the University of Chicago in 1968.

Rabbi Michael Sternfield of Chicago Sinai Congregation was the last speaker. He recounted the great Jewish tradition and history which had produced Edward H. Levi, stating that he had carried on the heritage of his forefathers and was "a great Jew." The rabbi concluded the service with an abbreviated version of *el ma'aleh rachamim*, the tradition prayer said at the funeral of a Jewish person.

Edward H. Levi was born in Chicago on June 26, 1911. His grandfather was Rabbi Emil Gustav Hirsch, who came to Chicago in 1880. Rabbi Hirsch assumed the pulpit at Sinai Congregation, becoming a renowned scholar, teacher and leader of the American Jewish Reform movement. He served at Sinai for 42 years, until his death. His daughter Elsa married Rabbi Gerson B. Levi of B'nai Sholom Temple Israel, who had come to Chicago from Scotland. The two of them were Edward's parents. Edward Hirsch Levi was a Hyde Parker for most of his life, attending the University of Chicago Laboratory School, the College, and the Law School. He became a professor at the law school and its first Jewish dean. He was the first Jewish president of a leading American university.

I was one of the myriad students who studied under him at the law school. Levi was a great scholar and teacher. His courses on the antitrust laws were classic, and his basic work, "An Introduction to Legal Reading," is still the teaching guide in many law schools to this day. Not only was he "a great Jew," as Rabbi Sternfield stated, he was also a great American. In an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, Robert H. Bork, a student of Levi's and a former Solicitor General of the United States, called him "the greatest lawyer of his time." ♦



chicago jewish historical society

### Officers 1999-2000

Walter Roth	<i>President</i>
Burt Robin	<i>Vice President</i>
Clare Greenberg	<i>Secretary</i>
Herman Draznin	<i>Treasurer</i>

### Directors

Leah Axelrod  
 Harold T. Berc  
 Charles B. Bernstein  
 Dr. Irving Cutler  
 Dr. Carolyn Eastwood  
 Sheldon Gardner  
 Elise Ginsparg  
 Daniel Greenberg  
 Dr. Adele Hast\*  
 Rachel Heimovics\*  
 Janet Iltis  
 Bea Kraus  
 Joe Kraus  
 Seymour Persky  
 Muriel Robin Rogers\*  
 Norman D. Schwartz\*  
 Ethel Shulman  
 Dr. Milton Shulman  
 Norma Spungen  
 Dr. N. Sue Weiler

\*Indicates Past President

### Chicago Jewish History

*Chicago Jewish History* is published quarterly by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1993. Phone (312)663-5634. Please send submissions to the editor, Beverly Chubat, at 415 West Fullerton Parkway, #1102, Chicago, Illinois 60614-2859. Single copies \$2.00 postpaid. Successor to *Society News*.

### Editor/Designer

Beverly Chubat

### Immediate Past Editor

Joe Kraus

### Editor Emeritus

Irwin J. Suloway

### Editorial Board

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

## Filmmaker Plans Documentary on WWII "Refugee Fighters"

Steven Karras is planning to produce a film about men who escaped Europe before World War II and returned to fight as American soldiers. He is interested in contacting these veterans. Readers of *CJH* who were "Refugee Fighters," and might want their own World War II experiences included in the project, or know of others whose biographies fit the theme of the documentary, should phone Mr. Karras at (773)342-6292.

## Welcome to Richie Kraus, Youngest Member of CJHS

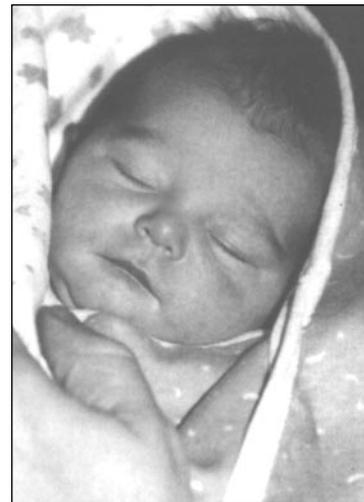
Paula Chaiken and Joe Kraus are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Richard Chaiken Kraus on February 16, 2000. Paula is a former Society board member, and Joe is a current board member and former editor of *Chicago Jewish History*.

Baby Richie is named for his paternal grandfather, Richard Kraus, of blessed memory, and he is growing rapidly.

Paula and Joe are grateful for all of the kind wishes and mazel tovs they have received from Society members.

While the board believes he is the youngest current member of the Society, Richie is already set to contribute to our continuing projects; he is signed up to help staff the CJHS information table at the Greater Chicago Jewish Folk Arts Festival at Caldwell Woods on June 11.

Anyone interested in helping at the Festival should contact Joe Kraus at (773) 274-1323 or by e-mail at j-kraus@nwu.edu. ❖



Richard Chaiken Kraus

## Corrections and Clarifications

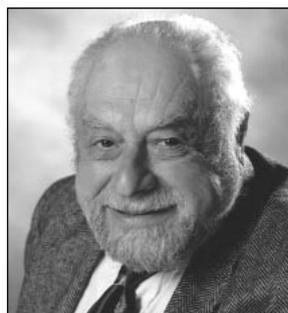
Errors in the Fall 1999 issue of *CJH* were brought to our attention by Ms. Elizabeth Stein:

■ In the article about the Paris Garter, the brand name of the women's foundation garments manufactured by A. Stein & Co. was incorrectly spelled. It should have been Permalift, not Perma-Lift. Also, the controlling interest in the company was sold to Kayser-Roth in 1962, the year of the death of Abraham Freiler.

■ In "Unique Anniversary Marked by Old Chicago Family," (reprinted from the November 1978 issue of *Society News*), the death of Mrs. Ernst Stein, the former Ella Barbe, was incorrectly printed as occurring in 1975 at age 98. Mrs. Stein died in 1976 at age 99.

■ In the article "Elizabeth Stein, Photographer," the approximate total of Ms. Stein's years of teaching art should have been 30, not 40.

*CJH* regrets the errors.



Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf

## Rabbi Wolf Addresses February CJHS Meeting

Historical insights, humor, and enthusiastic interaction with the audience contributed to the success of Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf's talk, "Judaism in the Encyclopedia of Chicago," at the CJHS Open Meeting on Sunday, February 20, at Bederman Hall of the Spertus Institute.

The Newberry Library is embarked on an impressive publishing project, "The Encyclopedia of Chicago," and Rabbi Wolf, rabbi emeritus at KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation, was asked to contribute a 1500-word article on the subject of "Jews and Judaism." His February talk to the Society presented an overview of this work.

Rabbi Wolf recalled the important 1893 Parliament of Religions, which among other achievements, led to the founding of the National Council of Jewish Women. He offered his own list of Chicago's greatest rabbis:

**Emil G. Hirsch**, Sinai Congregation (1880-1923); Reform; vast learning and powerful oratory. **Solomon Goldman**, Anshe Emet (1929-1953); Conservative; president of Zionist Organization of America. **Felix Levy**, Temple Emanuel (1908-1955); Reform; introduced more Hebrew, Zionism and return to tradition. **Jacob Weinstein**, KAM (1939-1967); Reform; social activist; egalitarian and humanitarian. **Saul Silber**, Congregation Anshe Sholom (1910-1946); quasi-Orthodox (no *mechitza*); Religious Zionist; built Hebrew Theological College into a great yeshiva.

Rabbi Wolf commented on the Jewish social agencies and the great Jewish families that created institutions in our city, and expressed regret that space did not permit his including a list of Jewish scholars in his article. ❖

# Carl Sandburg's Letter to Jacob M. Loeb

BY WALTER ROTH



**Jacob M. Loeb**  
from *H.L. Meites*  
*"History of the Jews of*  
*Chicago," 1924*

Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) was undoubtedly one of America's great poets. Many collections of Sandburg's poems have been published, and his books on the life of Abraham Lincoln have become classics. He had achieved his initial fame as a writer and reporter in Chicago. The young Carl Sandburg was a social radical, espousing causes of the working class and the underprivileged. In 1914, *Poetry* magazine published his poem "Chicago," which came to characterize our city:

"Hog Butcher for the World  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat..."

A recently published book, "Carl Sandburg—Poems for the People," edited by George and Willene Hendrick (Chicago; Ivan R. Dee; 1999), was brought to my attention by Dan Sharon, Reference Librarian at Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies. The book contains a collection of 73 newfound poems from Sandburg's early years in Chicago. One of these works, first published in 1915, cast in the same crude language as the "Hog Butcher" poem, is in the form of a letter:

## Sandburg to Loeb

"To Jacob M. Loeb:

You are one of the Jews sore at Georgia for the way they hanged Leo Frank and called him a damned Jew there in Atlanta.

And you're talking a lot about liberty and the rights of school children.

You came from Kovno in Russia and you ought to know something about liberty;

And how school boards, police boards, military boards and czars have gone on year after year

To choke the Jews from having societies, organizations, labor unions,

Shoving bayonets into the faces of the Jews and driving them to the ghettos.

You know what I mean. You know these European cities where they call the Jews a despised race;

And anybody who spits in a Jew's face is not touched by the police.

D'ye get me? I'm reminding you what you already know.

You're the man who is leading the school board fight on the Teachers' Federation.

And you forget, your memory slips, your heart doesn't picture

How you and your fathers were spit upon in the face.

And how the soldiers and police misused your women—

Just because they were Jews, and in Kovno

Anybody could get away with what they did to a Jew woman or a Jew girl;

And now you, a Jew stand up here in Chicago and act proud

Because you have in effect spit in the faces of Chicago women, accused them, belittled them.

First you tried to cut their wages, back here in May, a seven-and-a-half per cent cut,

And now you're going to make it a law that teachers can't have a labor union;

And they got to take what you and Rothmann and Myer Stein hand 'em.

I don't think you'll get away with it.

Sam Gompers, an English Jew, will speak tonight at the Auditorium,

And Jacob LeBosky and Sam Alschuler and other Jews in this town

Are against the game of shackling the teachers and repeating Kovno and Kiev and Odessa here in Chicago.

In fact, five hundred Jews are already in revolt at your Kovno trick

Of slamming the door on the free speech at the Hebrew Institute.

These five hundred are the real blood of the Jew race

That give it a clean flame of heroism.

You belong with the trash of history, the oppressors and the killjoys.

**W**ho was Jacob M. Loeb and what was the occasion that so aroused the ire of Carl Sandburg? Jacob Loeb was born in Chicago on September 17, 1875. His mother Johanna and father, Moritz, were of German birth. Johanna was very active in Jewish social causes and lodges that did the same social work for Jewish women that B'nai B'rith was doing for men. One of these lodges, the Johanna Lodge, was very active in Jewish self-help. Jacob Loeb graduated from public school at age 16 and entered the business world, organizing the insurance firm of Loeb & Coffee in 1894. From 1902 to 1916 he was a member of the firm of Eliel & Loeb, which was incorporated in 1916 as Eliel & Loeb Co., and soon ranked as one of the leading insurance firms in the city with Jacob M. Loeb as its president.

At the same time, Jacob Loeb's mother had become involved with the organization of a Jewish Institute on Chicago's West Side, active primarily in the education of the new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe. Under the leadership of Julius Rosenwald, who was also its principal benefactor, the Hebrew Institute was incorporated in 1908. Rosenwald became its first president and Jacob Loeb, a robust handsome man, became chairman of the Committee on Physical Culture. In 1910, when Rosenwald retired as president, Loeb was his successor. The institution's name then officially became The Jewish People's Institute.

Well-known and respected in the community, Jacob Loeb was appointed to the Chicago Board of Education in January 1913, and on June 29, 1914 he was elected its president, a position he held through June 17, 1917.

In later years, he became very influential in Jewish philanthropic activities and was a leader in raising funds and food for Eastern European Jews after World War I. He organized the highly successful "Foodless Banquet" held at the Drake Hotel on December 7, 1921. When 800 relief campaign workers arrived for dinner in the candle-lit, crepe-hung ballroom, Loeb, chairman of the committee, delivered an impassioned address in which he told them that the \$3,500 that the dinner would have cost was to be spent in a more meaningful way—helping the impoverished Jews of Europe. (This magnificent speech is quoted in full by H.L. Meites in his 1924 "History of Jews of Chicago," reprinted by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society in 1990.) Loeb also served as president of the Standard Club 1923-24. He died on February 17, 1944.

**L**oeb hardly appears to be the villain portrayed by Sandburg. As a successful businessman and head of the Board of Education, he had become embroiled with the efforts of labor organizers to

unionize Chicago's teachers. On September 1, 1915 under his leadership, the Board passed the so-called "Loeb Rule" which "prohibited teachers from belonging to organizations affiliated with organized labor or employing paid business representatives."

As if this was not enough to infuriate labor organizers, Loeb, as president of the Jewish People's Institute, refused to allow the Institute to sponsor a meeting organized by the Labor Defense League to raise money for "union men unjustly held in prison." It was reported that about five hundred students at the Institute, mostly immigrant Russian Jews studying English, went on strike to "gain freedom of speech."

In his poem, Sandburg calls Loeb's attention to the lynching of Leo Frank, a Jew, at the hands of a mob in Atlanta on August 17, 1915. On that same day, Kovno, now in Lithuania, had fallen to the German army, and there were reports that Jews of the area had been massacred by the retreating Russian army. Sandburg's assertion that 'you came from Kovno,' was not factually correct since Loeb was born in Chicago, but was an attempt to identify Loeb with anti-Jewish persecutions in Europe.

That the labor conflict tore at the fabric of the Jewish West Side community is undoubtedly true. But in the August 20, 1915 edition of the *Chicago Sentinel*, this Jewish periodical strongly defended Loeb's position:

It is easy to condemn Jacob M. Loeb's summary action last week in refusing the use of the Chicago Hebrew Institute by a radical labor meeting, but various considerations have first to be taken into account before a proper judgment can be arrived at. If the action taken by Mr. Loeb were the result of a personal antagonism to I.W.W. efforts and leaders, if he acted primarily as a capitalist throughout the proceedings, his actions were an abuse of his power. But no one who has a bit of sanity left will believe for a moment that Mr. Loeb injected anti-labor venom into the proceedings. This is what the labor agitators and the weak-minded sentimentalists who they appeal to, always insist upon and this is what their crowd, if not they, really believe. Mr. Loeb had only one thought in mind, we believe. He sought to prevent anything taking place at the Institute which might be a reflection on the Jewish name or the basis for an unjust charge against the Jewish people. Anyone who knows the easy way in which such elements as sought to use the

## Sandburg to Loeb *continued from page 5*

Institute last week, attack members of the government, outrage American sentiment and insult the American flag, realizes what inflammable stuff the Institute and Jews of Chicago and elsewhere were confronted with, Mr. Loeb had to act quickly, and he acted for the good of the Jewish people. This, after all, is the main point.

Sandburg's poem must be looked at as part of the class struggle between Chicago's immigrant community and those in power. (The bitter Hart Schaffner & Marx strike a few years earlier had been fought between Jewish labor and Jewish capitalist owners.) And in the wake of the Nazi horror, Sandburg's emphasis on Loeb's Jewish heritage is a bit grating.

Sandburg's heretofore unknown poem is a reminder to us of our past history and our constant need to remember the forces that shape our history, unpleasant as they may appear to be at times.

---

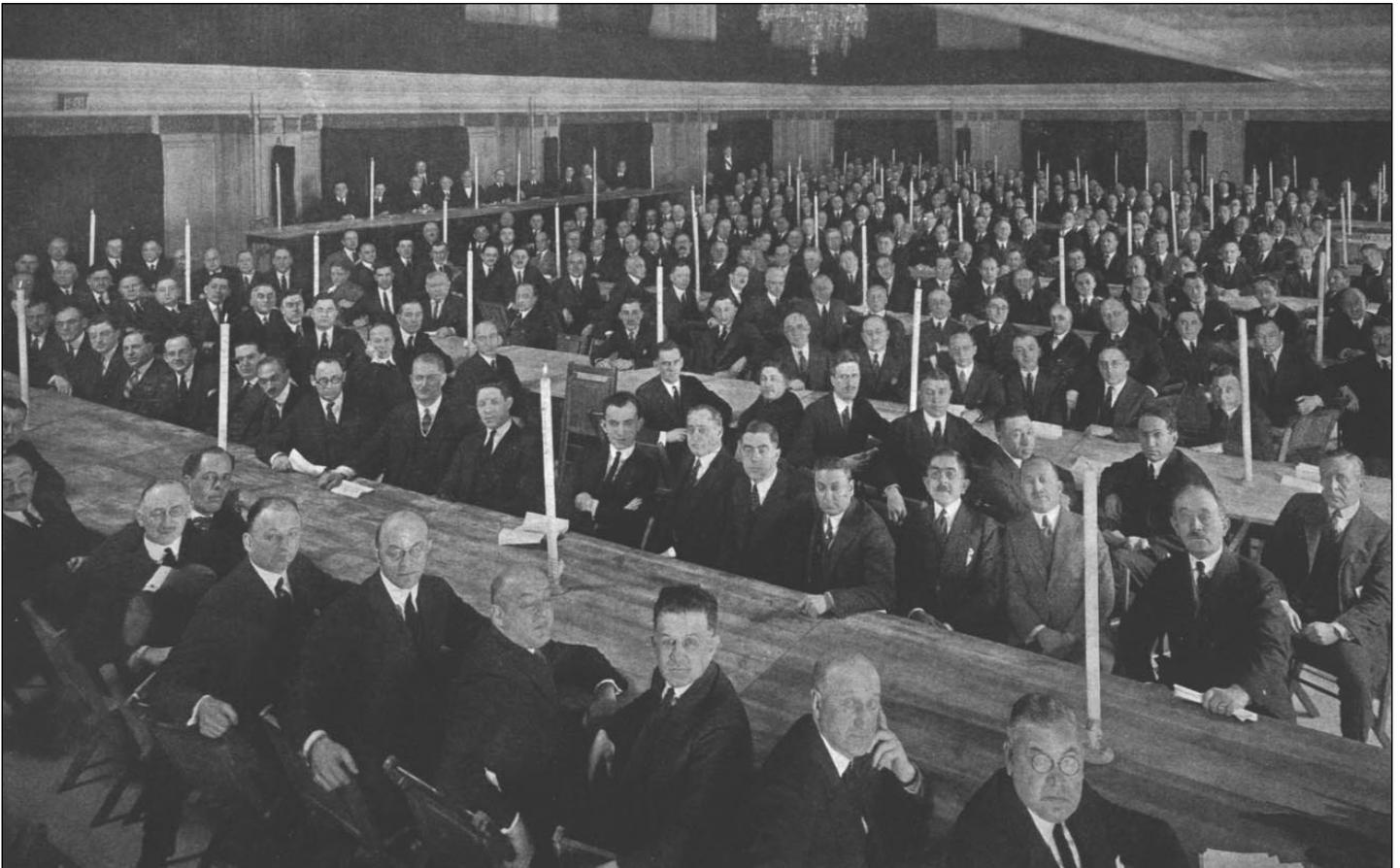
**WALTER ROTH** *is president of the CJHS.*

George and Willene Hendrick, editors of "Carl Sandburg—Poems for the People," write in their notes:

"Sandburg to Loeb" was published in *The Day Book* on September 8, 1915, but never collected by Sandburg. It is a difficult poem to read, especially after the Holocaust...At the heart of the poem is the effort of Jacob Loeb to break the Chicago Teachers' Federation, led by Margaret Haley, a friend of Sandburg's...

*The Day Book* published many reports about Loeb and his vendetta against the teachers' union and against free speech...

"Sandburg to Loeb" is a slashingly polemical work and extremely difficult for modern readers to consider dispassionately. There is no indication in Sandburg's life and work that he was anti-Semitic, but this bold poem is likely to be misinterpreted. It has been reprinted twice in recent years by Robert L. Reid and is included here because it reflects an aspect of Sandburg's radicalism during his *Day Book* years. His sympathies here, as always during his radical years, are with those fighting repression. ❖



**The Foodless Banquet** *from H.L. Meites "History of the Jews of Chicago," 1924*



**"FAIR ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL"**

*Water-carriers begin the day's toil at the well before the Temple, in the times of Jerusalem's glory and peace*

## CJHS to Present Program on 1933 Jewish Day Pageant

The picture and caption above this article come from the original rotogravure advertising material for the spectacular pageant, *The Romance of A People*, which was performed at Soldier Field as a feature of Jewish Day at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

A commemorative program about the pageant will be presented by the Society on Sunday, October 29, 2000, at the Chicago Historical Society, Clark Street at North Avenue. Gifted actors and musicians from Chicago's thriving arts community will participate. Brandeis University scholar Stephen J. Whitfield will speak.

Before the program date, a reprint of the pageant's original 72-page souvenir book, with additional new material, will be mailed to current members of CJHS.

Don't miss out! Join the Society today! If your membership has lapsed, now is the time to renew it. ❖

## Society Summer Tours

*continued from page 1*

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society-- in cooperation with the Dawn Schuman Institute-- has planned three exciting historic Jewish tours.

### CHICAGO JEWISH ROOTS -- Sunday, July 9 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.

**12:00 noon -- Bernard Horwich JCC**

**3003 West Touhy -- return 5:00 pm**

\$25/Member of CJHS or DSI \$30/Non-member

### WEST ROGERS PARK

#### WALKING TOUR -- Sunday, July 30

Guide: Mark Mandle

Explore the dynamic West Rogers Park Jewish community. Visit glorious local synagogues such as B'nei Ruven. Experience the sights and tastes of this fascinating neighborhood--from a *shatnes* testing facility to local bakeries and record shops.

**1:00 pm -- Corner Devon &**

**California Avenues -- return 3:30 pm**

\$15/Member of CJHS or DSI \$18/Non-member

### NORTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS:

#### A JEWISH PRESENCE -- Sunday, August 27

Guides: Allen and Sue Meyers

Sterling, Spring Valley, LaSalle and Dixon--these are all communities that Jews call home. Tour the heartland of our state and experience this chapter in Jewish history. Bring sack lunch. Drinks provided. Dinner included in cost of tour.

**8:00 am -- Bernard Horwich JCC,**

**3003 West Touhy --Return 8:30 pm**

**8:30 am -- Marriott Hotel, 540 North Michigan Avenue (Rush St. Entrance) -- Return 8:00 pm**

\$55/Member of CJHS or DSI \$63/Non-member

#### For information:

**CJHS Leah (847) 432-7003**

**DSI (847) 509-8282**

#### Register Today! Last Year's Tours Sold Out!

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

**MAIL TO: LEAH JOY AXELROD • 2100 LINDEN AVENUE  
HIGHLAND PARK, IL 60035-2516**

# Memoir: A Northwest Side Boyhood

BY SAM KWESKIN

**I**t was the Depression years, probably around 1933. My father owned a tavern in Humboldt Park on Chicago's northwest side. Sometimes I would find myself there—how, I do not know—but almost every time this occurred it meant that he would be going home with us, instead of remaining at the tavern until three or four o'clock in the morning.

Once, walking on Western Avenue with my parents during those years, I remember them talking about food—or the lack of it—and my turning to my father and saying, “Why don't you open a grocery store, Pa, so we will have food.”

By 1935, we were living in Albany Park, on Troy Street, and I was 11 years old. That year, Pa's life ended when, attempting to stop a tavern fight, he came between two men. Turning his back momentarily to one of them, he suffered a mortal blow from a beer bottle that crashed into his skull. He was 40 years old and left a young wife and two children.

Bereft, my mother now sought work by going back to what she had done when she first came to Chicago from Poland in 1911—sewing. She went to work in a textile factory in Waukegan, a long daily trip. Some years later she and others learned that their Social Security payments had been withheld for personal use by the factory owners.

I had been going to Hebrew school at Congregation Oir Yisroel on Kedzie Avenue from the time I was nine, and even made a couple of dollars by being a boy alto during the *yomim tovim* (holidays). Memories of that time still return to this day—the sounds of *k'vakaras roeh edro* (from the *u'nesaneh tokef* prayers said on Yom Kippur) and of the *mizmor shir chanukas habayis l'dovid* (a daily prayer from the Psalms).

It was also from Oir Yisroel that I remember the *shammes*, Zvorin

Rautbord, who was a compassionate teacher in a room roughly eight by fifteen, with a coal scuttle stove that, during the winters, made us sweat while we pored over our *reyshtis das* (Hebrew primer).

During this period I continued going to school at Hibbard Elementary, and working in my spare time and summers, selling newspapers at the northeast corner of Foster and Kedzie. Wriedt's flower shop was there and, diagonally across from where I was positioned with the *Herald-American* under my arm, was North Park College. These were the only two edifices there, and no place to have a drink of water or answer the call of nature.



Drawing by Sam Kweskin

Saturdays, my mother would come out on the #17 Kedzie trolley—all red and white and clanging—to the end of the line at Foster, carrying with her my lunch of two American cheese sandwiches and a pint of chocolate milk.

Suddenly we found we had to move, and an uncle found us a two-flat in Logan Square, at Francisco and Diversey. We paid our rent by having my sister and me shoveling coal in the basement during the winter and sweeping leaves, snow and any other detritus from the sidewalk. Traveling back to Albany Park on the #17 trolley was a miserable experience because of a conductor who, believing I was too tall to be only 12 years old, threatened to kick me off the trolley platform. The tears streaming down my cheeks on those days were not from the biting cold alone.

Fortunately, after a short time there, we moved back to Albany Park. I began to work as a delivery boy and occasional in-store helper at Zemel's Grocery in the Masonic Temple building just north of the Kedzie "L." Of course, I was still attending *shul* at Oir Yisroel directly following my classes, since, within a couple of months, I would have my Bar Mitzvah, (a year earlier than usual due to having lost my father when I did).

I made fine friends in my Albany Park neighborhood whom I didn't want to lose when we had had to move to Logan Square—Manny Colodny, Irving Kannett (later a Hollywood producer) and Richie Kraus who, with me, said the daily *kaddish* at Oir Yisroel—then located above Berger's meat market between Lawrence and Leland on the west side of Kedzie. (Richie became a professor of English at Dennison University. Next door to the meat market was Gordon's fish store. The Gordons' son Haskell went on to become a Broadway and Hollywood actor.)

Those precious moments when we boys could get together sometimes included a kind of hockey game in the vacant lot next to the *shul*, in which we used a can instead of a puck and wore no ice skates. (Who would even THINK of such a luxury?) We were on IER—Illinois Emergency Relief—and I was too naive to realize that almost everyone else's family was, too. Summertimes in the same lot, now overgrown with sunflowers some five feet high, we ate their seeds and captured grasshoppers.

Manny Colodny and I decided to add to our enterprising efforts by delivering the *Downtown Shopping News*. This might have been about 1938. We lasted one hot, miserable day. It seems my efforts to tightly wrap the paper in a roll and toss it onto the second and third floors displeased the area manager who had been watching us. He fired us immediately for

not walking upstairs and inserting the paper into every screen door handle.

From about 1939 through early 1942, while attending Roosevelt High School, I sold newspapers at the Kedzie "L" station from 6 to 8:45 a.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. I had, from early on, intended to contribute what I could to my mother and this was one way. Quite often, I worked on the extended platform that thrust out toward Spaulding, with no cover either in hot summer weather, snowstorms or rain. I also worked inside the station from about 7 p.m. on Saturday nights—doing my homework on the newspaper counter—until Richie Kraus took over at 6 a.m. I would then load up a wagon with Sunday papers: the *Tribune*, the *Herald-Examiner*, the *Sun* and (if I remember correctly), the *Times*, and set out through such streets as Leland, Eastwood, Wilson, Troy, Kedzie, Sawyer, Sunnyside and more—working again in rain, snow, and sun-baked streets. I would not return home until 11 a.m. Sunday morning, going off into my grandmother's bedroom to catch up on some sleep before eating lunch and starting my homework again.

I was completely overwhelmed when, somehow, although I was not the BEST student in my class, I was elected class president!

Were those the Golden Days? I'm in my eighth decade now, and I still haven't decided. ❖

---

**SAM KWESKIN** was born and educated in Chicago. A 1949 graduate of the School of the Art Institute, he began his career as a professional artist in Chicago. In 1953 Mr. Kweskin moved to New York City, where he worked as an art director for ad agencies and as a free lance illustrator until retiring to Boca Raton, Florida. There he teaches classes in art and conversational Yiddish, while also accepting commissions for portraits and other art projects.

---

## Chicago Jewish History Seeks Memoirs of Jewish Chicagoans

In addition to our articles on broad themes, famous persons and notable events, *CJH* occasionally publishes the memoirs of individual Chicagoans. These first-hand experiences allow us to focus on the history that most of us actually lived.

Manuscripts should be no longer than six double-spaced pages, and should be submitted via e-mail to [Bevchub@aol.com](mailto:Bevchub@aol.com). (For those of you without access to a computer, good old paper will work just fine!) Mail to the editor of *CJH*: Beverly Chubat, 415 West Fullerton Parkway, #1102, Chicago, IL 60614-2859. ❖

---

# “The First Jewish Scoutmaster”

BY BEV CHUBAT

Shortly after publication of the Winter 1999 issue of *CJH*, I received a phone call about our article on historic Chicago Jewish Boy Scout troops. The call was from Bernard Miller, a resident of Evanston, who proceeded to tell me the fascinating story of his father, Solomon Miller, who he described as “the first Jewish scoutmaster.”

Solomon Miller was born in Leeds, England in 1889. In 1911, while at Leeds University, where he graduated with a degree in education, he formed the first Jewish Boy Scout troop in that city. Bernard Miller told me that this was the very first synagogue-based Jewish troop ever formed, and that Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting, had personally signed Solomon Miller’s warrant. (This certificate of authorization is a precious Miller family heirloom.)

Bernard Miller went on to tell me that his father left Leeds for Canada in 1913. The policy of Great Britain during the First World War was that any young teacher who would go to Canada to practice his profession would be exempt from military service. So Solomon Miller spent the war years teaching Hebrew to Jewish children—“the children of Jewish farmers”—in a one-room schoolhouse in Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba, Canada. After the war, Solomon Miller came to Chicago on vacation, and here he met his future wife Minnie. After their marriage, they settled on the northwest side and raised their son and daughter.

Although Sol had by then changed careers, from teaching to accounting, he continued his scouting activities. From the 1920s to the 1940s he was not only financial secretary of Atereth Zion Congregation (1132 North Spaulding), but also scoutmaster of Troop #60 based in the synagogue and serving the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Mrs. Minnie Miller served as president of the ladies’ auxiliary and was leader of the Girl Scout troop. At that time Leonard Shabsin was scoutmaster of the synagogue’s Cub Scout Pack #6060. Bernard Miller remembers the AZC

**The Shofar Award** is granted by the local Jewish committee and BSA council to adults in recognition of outstanding service in the promotion of scouting among Jewish youth. Sol Miller received this award in 1972. Photograph courtesy BSA.



**Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Miller** proudly show the scroll presented to Mr. Miller by the 7th Central (Leeds Jewish) Old Scouts Association on August 26, 1964 on the occasion of his first visit to England after 50 years in America. (Photograph, Yorkshire Evening Post; courtesy Bernard Miller)

scouts’ camping trips that would feature “Mulligan Stew”—vegetables and kosher meat cooked in a tin can over an open fire.

In 1964 Sol and Minnie Miller paid a visit to Leeds, where they were feted by members of his old troop. Sol was pleased to learn that the troop he had organized 68 years earlier was still in existence.

His long years of service to scouting in Chicago have also been rewarded. On February 27, 1972, in the annual “Eternal Light Honor Night” ceremony at Chicago’s Loop Synagogue, 6 South Clark Street, he was given the Shofar Award in recognition of his 63 years of service to scouting in the USA. The award was presented by the Jewish Relationships Committee, Chicago Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Bernard Miller and his sister followed their parents into scouting, each of them as assistant leaders of troops in Skokie, and have passed that interest on to their children and grandchildren. ❖

**BEV CHUBAT** is editor/designer of *CJH*. The intrepid researcher, Norman D. Schwartz, past president and current board member of the Society, participated in the gathering of this and other material about the BSA.

## Seeking Information on Synagogues of Lawndale

CJHS Board member Bea Kraus is completing the writing of her book "Synagogues of Lawndale." She is searching for materials of any kind connected with the synagogues listed below: commemorative materials from dedications or other ceremonies, congregational records, anecdotes, photos and names of people who may have information. Please write to Bea Kraus at 4840 Foster Street #413, Skokie, IL 60077 or phone (847)675-1338. E-mail: bkwriter@aol.com.

- Agudath B'nai Eretz Israel** 1418 S. St. Louis  
**Ahavas Achim Chicago City** 3437 Ogden Ave.  
**Anshe Chudakov** 1519 S. Hamlin Ave.  
**Anshe Cobrin** 1621 S. Ridgeway Ave.  
**Anshe Karastishub/Korostichever** 3146 W. 15th St.  
**Anshe Lohishim Je-Lebashaw** 1216 S. Sawyer Ave.  
**Anshe Shavel VeYanova** 1615 S. Homan Ave.  
**Beth Jacob** 3540 W. 15th St.  
**B'nai Itzchok** 3842 W. Greshaw St.  
**B'nai Jehudah** 1617 S. Millard Ave.  
**B'nai Moishe Leib Anshe Antopol**  
 1303 S. Christiana Ave.  
**B'nai Israel** 2812 W. 12th St.  
**Knesses B'nai Itzchok** 3442 W. 18th St.  
**Oel Itzchok** 1136 S. Whipple St.  
**Shaara Tfilo Nusach Ari** 1526 Millard Ave.  
**Shearit Haplaita** 1445 S. Hamlin Ave.  
**Tickvat Yehuda** 1533 St. Louis Ave.  
**Tiphereth Moishe** 1302 S. Spaulding Ave.  
**Tomchei Torah Beth Abraham** 1339 S. Kedzie Ave.  
**Young Israel of Chicago** 1407 S. Hamlin Ave.

## Remembering Elmer Gertz, Civil Rights Champion

Chicago civil rights attorney Elmer Gertz died on April 27 at age 93. He was a CJHS member.

The last Society event Mr. Gertz attended was the Society Open Meeting on December 12, 1999. Our guest speaker, Robert Matanky, concluded his talk about the vitality of the Jewish community in West Rogers Park by listing the accommodations being made to Orthodox Jewish practices by the city government: use of city lightposts in borders of the *eruv*, sponsorship of pre-Passover *chometz* burning by the local fire station, and more. The aged but purposeful Elmer Gertz, always the outspoken civil libertarian, rose to ask what was being done to improve city services and public schools for everyone in the neighborhood.

Mr. Gertz himself had addressed an Open Meeting of the Society on February 18, 1996 at Temple Sholom, where he displayed his superb storytelling skills. A report in the Spring 1996 issue of *CJH* noted that Mr. Gertz was best known as the attorney who arranged for the probationary release of Nathan Leopold, and that he had represented the author Henry Miller and the assassin of Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby.

An article by Society president Walter Roth in the Winter 1996 issue of *CJH* discussed the case of libel brought by Nathan Leopold (represented by Mr. Gertz) against the author Meyer Levin.

An oral history of Elmer Gertz was recorded by the Society, and excerpts will appear in an upcoming issue of *CJH*. ♦

## Boy Scouts of America: More Chicago Jewish Troops

### NORTH SIDE

**TROOP 820: "Old" Temple Sholom (now Anshe Emet)**  
 From Stanley Leseritz: In years c. 1926, Scoutmaster was Mr. Spitzer. Non-sectarian troop, but membership was mostly Jewish. Boys of the troop ushered at fundraising events at Medinah Temple to raise funds for Frankenstein Building, the community center attached to "new" Temple Sholom.

### SOUTH SIDE

**TROOP 523: South Side Hebrew Congregation** (Address?)  
 Scoutmaster: Henry (?) Ross  
 CJH Editor Emeritus Irwin J. Suloway was a member c. 1930-36.  
**TROOP 646: Cong. Oir Chodosh**  
 702 West Englewood Ave.  
 Scoutmaster: Burt Robin  
**TROOP 650: Southtown Hebrew Congregation** 7742 S. Racine Ave.  
 Scoutmaster: Burt Robin

## Society Welcomes New Members

Joseph Ashman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernhard Ebstein  
 Marvell Ginsburg  
 Joseph Greenberg  
 Joseph Grossberg  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Karsen  
 Marla Saletta  
 Irving Wein  
 Evelyn Wigodner

# 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. Contact Burt Robin (773)667-6251

### ■ 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 Elise Ginsparg (847)679-6793 or Janet Iltis (773)761-1224

### ■ 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.



618 South Michigan Avenue • Chicago, IL 60605-1993

PRSR.  
Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Palatine, IL 60067  
Permit No. 307