



chicago jewish history

Bialik's Visit to Chicago

BY WALTER ROTH

In its April 9, 1926 issue, the Chicago Jewish weekly, *The Sentinel*, announced the forthcoming visit of Chaim Nachman Bialik, calling him the first, and indeed the greatest, poet that modern Hebrew literature had produced. Nevertheless, the magazine noted that “we are aware of a marked lack of real enthusiasm which the arrival of such a man should arouse.” While local Zionists and a small Hebrew-speaking society were planning a welcome, there were no plans for the kind of mass meeting and parades that had greeted the earlier visits of Zionist leaders such as Chaim Weizmann, Albert Einstein and Shmarya Levin.

Bialik had left Russia for Berlin in 1921, and two years later settled in Tel Aviv. In March, 1926 he embarked on a mission to the United States on behalf of the United Palestine Appeal to raise money for Jewish settlements in Palestine. He arrived in Chicago on April 15, 1926, and as *The Sentinel* had predicted, there was only a modest welcome for the great poet.

About 400 Jews attended a dinner for Bialik at the Palmer House. Among the guests were Rabbis, including Saul Silber and Solomon Goldman, Judges Henry Horner, Julian Mack and Hugo Pam, and leading citizens and Zionists such as Julius Rosenwald, S.B. Komaiko and Max Shulman. Bialik's remarks were apparently made in Yiddish, as he spoke little English at that time. Individual contributions totalled \$30,000. Bialik also appeared before

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Bialik stamp, with the poet's autograph, issued by the Israel Post Office in 1958. (Reproduction from Encyclopaedia Judaica. Jerusalem, 1978, © 1972)

Society's March 14 Open Meeting to Feature Lively "Cemetery Lady"

Lively lecturer Helen Sclair will present a slide-illustrated talk, “From Lincoln Park to Eternity: An Overview of Chicagoland's Jewish Cemeteries,” at the next open meeting of the Society. Mrs. Sclair has been conducting a popular course on Chicago and its cemeteries at Newberry Library for the past six years. She brings almost 25 years of research in the fascinating history of “who, where, when, and why” of burial grounds in the Midwest.

Subjects will range from Chicago's first Jewish burial site—Lincoln Park, 1846—to background on the magnificent European Jewish cemeteries of Venice and Prague. Mark your calendar for Sunday, March 14. The presentation begins at 2 p.m., following a social hour starting at 1 p.m., at Temple Sholom, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive. Members and guests are welcome.

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Walter Roth

MONICA LEWINSKY WAS NOT

the first young Jewish woman to become notorious with the American public after a sex scandal, and the commission of alleged crimes. While Monica's affair, (whatever that may be), has occurred within the past year, the Dora Feldman affair took place in Chicago over 90 years ago. I have been researching the strange and exotic story of Dora Feldman, Monica's Chicago counterpart.

Dora was born on the West Side to parents who had immigrated to Chicago from East Prussia. Dora was said to have been very beautiful and attractive to men. First married to a major league baseball player, Dora divorced him in 1890 and then married the most powerful Democratic politician in Chicago, Michael Cassius McDonald, (who converted to Judaism as a condition of the marriage). Mike built her a beautiful mansion at 4501 South Drexel Avenue. Seven years later, Dora was accused of fatally shooting her paramour, a young man named Webster Guerin, in his office located in the Chicago Loop area.

The shock from the shooting was too great for Mike McDonald. He was already in his 60's, not well, and suffered a heart attack—a "broken heart" some said—when he heard of the shooting. He died on August 9, 1907 after he had established a defense fund for Dora's trial, which commenced five months later.

Dora's trial lasted three weeks. With Mike's money she hired several of the finest attorneys in town. One was J. Hamilton Lewis, (who later became a U.S. Senator from Illinois). Another was her uncle, Benjamin Schaffner.

By agreement among the litigants, no Jews served on the jury. Dora's trial was one of the most controversial and popular trials in Chicago history, widely covered in the press. Charges of corruption, bribery, and other misconduct filled the air. Dora, however, survived the furor, and she was found not guilty. Since McDonald had left part of his huge estate to Dora, she became a wealthy woman. Soon thereafter she disappeared from Chicago, the remainder of her life clouded in mystery.

This is a short synopsis of the Feldman story. I am seeking help from my readers who may have information about Dora. Her mother, Fanny Feldman, died in 1923. Her father, Fogel Feldman, had died at an earlier time. Attorney Benjamin Schaffner died in 1933, survived by his son Clarence, also an attorney. Please phone me at (312)602-2020 if you have any information regarding any of these individuals so we may complete the story of Dora Feldman. ♦



chicago jewish historical society

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The Reception Committee for Dr. Nahum Sokolow on one of his first visits to Chicago:

Seated, from left : H. Steinberg, H. Waiss, Bernard Horwich, Nahum Sokolow, Max Shulman, Samuel Ginsburg and Benjamin Perlstein. Standing, from left: B. A. Antonow, H. L. Meites, D. B. Pollock, Bernard Shulman, Meyer Abrams, Harris Horwich, Jacob Miller and Jonah Fisher.



CORRECTION: In Fall 1998 article about the Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow's 1913 visit to Chicago, the wrong photo was used.

“With Best Wishes, Irving Salomon, U. S. Marine”

Irving Salomon's greeting on this fine photographic portrait is the only identification we have of this proud, handsome Jewish Marine.

The photograph was thoughtfully donated to the Society by Anita Navon of Berkeley, California, as part of the vintage photograph collection of her grandmother Hattie Grossberg Goldstein and great-aunt Matilda Grossberg Bender. Both were Chicagoans who eventually moved to California.

Dating from the late 19th century to the 1920's, the photographic portraits were taken in Chicago, mainly of Jewish men, women and children who were friends and relatives of the Grossberg sisters. The only portrait with identification is Irving Salomon's.

The Society has given the unidentified portraits to the Chicago Jewish Archives at the Spertus Institute for use in exhibits to show style of dress, hair treatment, and family poses, to give a flavor of the period.

Do You Recognize U.S. Marine Irving Salomon?

We want to pose some questions about this interesting portrait. Do any Society members or friends recognize Irving Salomon? If you are a U.S. Marine Corps veteran or a military history buff, can you tell us the time period of his uniform? Send any information to the editor of *Chicago Jewish History* at the address shown on page 2, and we will be pleased to publish it.

Society members and friends are encouraged to add ingredients to the rich mix of Jewish history by transferring archival material to the Chicago Jewish Archives at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Send materials to the attention of archivist Joy Kingsolver. ◆



Irving Salomon

**“SYNAGOGUES OF LAWNSDALE”
BOOK PROJECT**

**Looking for photos and memorabilia relating to
synagogues that were located in Lawndale at some time.**

Contact Bea Kraus (847)675-1338

Bialik's Visit *continued from page 1*

the Chicago Rabbinical Association and spoke to this group in Hebrew. Writing in the *Reform Advocate*, the editor, Dr. Gerson B. Levi, (Rabbi of Temple B'nai Sholom), commented at length on Bialik's presence in Chicago. Calling Bialik "an unassuming genius," Levi wrote that he had read Bialik's poems and knew of his greatness "long before the Zionists had sent him to Chicago on his mission to raise funds." The struggle between Reform Judaism and political Zionism was growing, and Levi, a leading Reform thinker, disapproved of Bialik's nationalistic interpretation of Jewish history and culture. He reminded Bialik that Jewish culture in the Diaspora was not to be belittled. Let the Zionists "take their hands off" Jewish thinkers and stay with their "philanthropic needs." Dr. Levi concluded: "Whoever wants to go to Palestine, let him go, but let him go without saying before he leaves that Judaism in the world has no chance."

A different view was expressed by another Chicago Rabbi, S. Felix Mendelsohn. He wrote in *The Sentinel* of his sadness at Bialik's visit because it revealed how little "Hebrew" culture had permeated Chicago Jewry and highlighted the lack of Jewish education in Chicago.

It was not only the hostility of the Reform movement that affected Bialik's visit. That same year, wealthy Jews of Chicago were also called on to support efforts by the Joint Distribution Committee, among others, to raise large sums of money to aid the creation of Jewish settlements in the Soviet Ukraine. (At that time it was believed that Soviet leaders supported such a plan, which of course was considered by Zionist organizations to be hostile to their efforts in Palestine.) The Ukraine

plan collapsed when it was learned that the Soviet regime had no intention of permitting Jewish organizational life in the Ukraine.

Bialik went from Chicago to Washington D.C. where he was presented to President Coolidge on May 10. From there he returned to New York City in early June for further fund-raising meetings, and to receive an honorary Doctorate of Hebrew Literature from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

He concluded his American tour with a speech at the 28th annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America in Buffalo. Over 1,000 delegates were present, including many from Chicago. In his farewell speech Bialik declared that American Jews were the sole hope of the world and that the Jewish homeland would be restored and rebuilt by Jews of this country.

Despite this upbeat statement to American Zionists, Bialik's inner beliefs were probably better stated in a letter he wrote to an American journalist after he returned home to Tel Aviv. "Palestine," Bialik said, "is the single and central location toward which G-d has pointed His finger, saying: This is the only place where you will find rest. There is no other."

Bialik's visit to America and Chicago came only two years after he had managed to flee Odessa and settle in Palestine. As his early life was spent in Russia, his knowledge of the Jews of the West was scant. After his visit to America, he returned to Tel Aviv where he continued to write and publish. Bialik's 1926 trip to America and Chicago had given Chicagoans a unique encounter with this great artist and fervent nationalist who preached a Zionism that most American Jews were not prepared to accept. ♦

CHAIM NACHMAN BIALIK

Bialik was born in 1873 in the village of Radi, near Zhitomir, in the Russian province of Volhyn. In early childhood he lived with his widowed mother and siblings in great poverty. In some of his poems the pictures of want and suffering are drawn from his memories. In one vivid passage he says that he literally lived on his mother's tears, "for she wept into the dough which she kneaded for her children's bread."

At the age of seven he went to live with his grandfather, a stern and pious Jew. Bialik showed great aptitude in his studies and at the age of 13 entered a

yeshivah. He was already a grown youth when he secretly took up his secular education, with much exuberance.

After a good deal of wandering, during which he knew much poverty, he settled in Odessa, where he became acquainted with Achad Ha-Am, Mendele Mocher Seforim, and other great Jewish leaders. It was there that he published his first poem, *El Ha-Tzipor*, and *City of Slaughter*, a poem about the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 and the passivity of the Jewish victims. This poem made him famous among the Jewish masses, and he became a leading exponent of Zionism.

With the advent of the Soviet regime, he escaped to Berlin in 1921 with the help of the writer Maxim Gorky. In 1924 he settled in Tel Aviv, where together with Shmarya Levin, he came to direct the important Hebrew publishing house *Moriah*. In his later years Bialik published many scholarly and editorial works.

Bialik died in 1934 at age 61, in Vienna, where he had gone for medical treatment. Considered the greatest Hebrew poet and writer of his time, it is said that Bialik's influence on modern Hebrew literature was not unlike that of Shakespeare on English literature. ♦

Excerpts from two of Bialik's greatest poems

EL HA-TZIPOR (The Bird)

A little bird, the first bird of Spring, alights upon the window sill. It must have just returned from southern climes. To Bialik, it appears as though the bird in its flight has visited Palestine, the land that to him means relief and hope. And he tenderly greets the little creature:

Bird on my window perching
Returned from the land of the sun,
Blessed by this thy coming,
For now is the winter done.

He eagerly speaks to it: Tell me, there in Eretz Yisrael, how fares it with my brethren? Hast thou brought me word of the swift Jordan, of the hills of Judea, of the vineyards of Carmel. And how about the palm trees and orange groves and the fresh breath of the meadows?

Is Hermon still covered with pearls
When the dew of the morning distills?
And what news of the waters of Jordan?
What news of the ancient hills?

Has the shadow departed
And the cloud been lifted at last
From the land where my youth was passed?

BE-IR HA-HAREGAH (The City of Slaughter)

The pogrom is the climax of the bitterness of the exile. Bialik paints the scenes after the massacres in Kishinev with great pathos, not unlike Jewish liturgy. What arouses the poet's anger after the Shechita (slaughter) is when the wretched survivors, who had been through living hell, and who lost father and mother, wife, child and all, huddle together in cellars of the Shul beating themselves on the breast with the words of Ashamnu ("We sinned" prayer recited on The Day of Atonement), begging G-d to forgive their sins. Bialik makes G-d speak to the survivors:

They pray of Me forgiveness for their sin.
Their sin? the sin of shadows on the wall,
The sin of broken pots, of bruised worms!
What will they? why stretch out their hands to Me?
Has none a fist? and where's the thunderbolt
To take revenge for all the generations,
To blast the world and tear the heavens asunder
And wreck the universe, My throne of glory?

Translations and commentary from article, "Golus and Geulah," dedicated to Chaim Nachman Bialik, by Rabbi Philip A. Lang. *The Sentinel*, April 9, 1926

Recent Open Meetings of the Society

October 25, 1998

**Chicago Jewish Artists
1940-1980: An Overview.
Michael Karzen**

Artist and teacher Michael Karzen offered a slide-illustrated talk about Chicago Jewish artists from 1940-1980. This presentation was an updated reprise of the popular lecture given to the Society in 1985. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the American Jewish Art Club, and Mr. Karzen commemorated the event in his talk.

November 1, 1998

**The South Side: The Racial
Transformation of an American
Neighborhood.**

Louis Rosen

Joint Meeting with American Jewish Congress and Human Relations Foundation of Illinois. Author Louis Rosen discussed the experience of interviewing the participants in the racial change in the neighborhood of his youth that formed the basis of his book.

January 10, 1999

**Photographs:
The Synagogues of Chicago.
Larry Stern**

Photographer Larry Stern offered a slide-illustrated talk about his long-term project to photograph the synagogues of Chicago. Through his fine photographs he has already preserved images of Jewish Chicago that are unavailable anywhere else.

The Next Open Meeting

March 14, 1999

**From Lincoln Park to Eternity:
An Overview of Chicagoland's Jewish
Cemeteries. Helen Sclair**

The lively "Cemetery Lady," Helen Sclair, will present a slide-illustrated talk based on her almost 25 years of research in the fascinating history of burial grounds in the Midwest. Presentation at 2 p.m., preceded by 1 p.m. social hour. Temple Sholom, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive.



Above: The original home of the Covenant Club.

Below: A room in the new building. Placard on easel reads: "New Covenant Club Building, 6% First Mortgage Gold Bonds, Subscribed by Loyal Members for a Greater Covenant Club."



The Covenant Club was established in 1917 for Chicago members of the B'nai B'rith Organization, with Morton A. Mergentheim as its first president. Dues were \$50 a year. It is often said that The Covenant Club was formed in response to the German Jewish majority of the Standard Club; this is hard to document, but an early speech emphasized that "the Covenant Club membership recognizes no caste, no aristocracy except for the fundamental aristocracy of the Jewish integrity."

By 1922 the club's membership and resources had grown so rapidly that they had outgrown their home, located on two upper floors of a building on Dearborn Street.

FROM THE CHICAGO JEWISH archives

That building was demolished and a bigger building was erected on the same site, 10 North Dearborn. The new building was eleven stories high and contained a library of Judaica, an excellent art collection and a gymnasium. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt posed for a bust commissioned by the club; first exhibited at the Century of Progress fair in that year, the bust resides in the lobby of Roosevelt University today.

Many of the archival records of the Covenant Club document the social side of the group; events such as the Sons and Daughters Dance, women's luncheons and Opera Night were regular features.

President Harry Truman, President Richard Nixon, Eleanor Roosevelt, Abba Eban, David Ben Gurion, Danny Thomas and Judy Garland, as well as many other celebrities, visited the club to support its many charitable efforts.

Covenant Club documents stress the Jewish identity of the club; a Second Seder and a Chanukah party were among its annual Jewish events. During World War II, the club formed a Red Cross Unit and contributed a U. S. Army ambulance.

In 1974, under pressure from feminist groups, the Covenant Club opened its membership to women. At its peak in the late 1940's, the club membership had been twelve



Above: During World War II. "Defense Saving Stamps on Sale at This Desk—Keep 'Em Flying"

Below: Dining at the club. Note the Moorish-style architecture.

The Covenant Club

By Joy Kingsolver

hundred, but in 1986, with a membership low of six hundred, the club sold its building because it could not cover its expenses.

The archival records of the Covenant Club were acquired by the Chicago Jewish Archives in 1978. The collection consists of administrative files, membership applications, the *Covenant Club News*, an extensive collection of photographs, and scrapbooks of photos and clippings. Most of the records cover the period from the late 1940's through the 1970's. These records are open to the public and may be used for research by calling the archivist for an appointment. ♦

Joy Kingsolver is archivist of the Chicago Jewish Archives at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.



My Maternal Grandfather

BY MIKE HECHT

My abiding image of him, Moishe Mortre Orlansky, is his three nicotine-stained fingertips. He chain-smoked Camels, Chesterfields, Lucky Strikes—whatever cigarettes whoever would buy for him—down to the last drop. This was in the mid-1920's, beginning when I was about five, and he in his early 70's, living with my mother's sister, Aunt Lizzie, and her husband Uncle Julius, (pronounced Jullis), and my cousins Bob, Ruthie and Kaynee at 2116 West Cortez, on Chicago's near northwest side.

He had a long white beard, a full head of hair topped by a yarmulke, always buried in the *Forvertz*—the Yiddish pronunciation of the *Daily Forward*, or a book. Not just any book, or even a good book like *Left Guard Thayer* or *Right Fielder Merriwell* or *Tom Swift and His Electric Gadabout*, but one of them Hebrew books—the *Chumash*, the *Talmud*, the *Gemorrhah*, or one of them others which religious Jews somehow could never get enough of.

I soon developed a dislike for him. For one thing, he never smiled—or so it seemed to me—and for another, you couldn't have a conversation with him—and who needed more? You not only couldn't talk baseball with him, but Holy Watska, with or without that cigarette in his mouth, you couldn't talk anything with him. The dummy didn't speak English, and I hadn't learned Yiddish yet. So he was outside my circle.

By the time I was nine or ten, my dislike turned to contempt. Not only couldn't he talk English, in this country already who knows how many years, and too dumb to learn the language. And he never worked. He sat around the house all day smoking those cigarettes and reading or studying God knows what foolishness from those heavy Hebrew books—not a batting average in the whole mess of them—while my Uncle Julius, a clothing customer peddler, worked every day and some nights to pay for grandfather's meals, his damn cigarettes, and to put a roof over his head. I pegged him for what he was: a sponger, or in the Yiddish that I now had a smattering of—a schnorrer.

In the summer of 1931 my father sold or closed the grocery store we lived behind at 4057 West Armitage, one store east of Karlov, and we moved to an apartment, third floor front, in a six-flat on the northwest corner of Spaulding and Eastwood, exactly one block due east of Theodore Roosevelt High School, in the heart of Albany Park. The back of the building faced the ground level Ravenswood 'L' tracks, about a half mile east of the end of the line at Kimball and Lawrence. The whole building shook when the train rumbled by. You could tell the number of cars on the train by the length of time the building shook. You knew it was rush hour

when the the building went into non-stop shakes. Had my mother been technologically inclined, she coulda made malteds like in the drugstore without the equipment, had she timed her preparation to the rush hour trains. Double thick.

For reasons not clear to me, then or now, my grandfather moved in with us. I was not consulted on it, nor given any advance notice. I came home from playing ball one summer afternoon, and there he was. Was my Uncle Julius no longer willing to put up with his schnorrer father-in-law? Had there been angry words from the three lively Levin kids, fed up with this old sourpuss, no-speaka-da-English furriner taking up space in their house? Maybe there was even a direct confrontation that in the interest of *sholom habayit* forced gentle Aunt Liz to shunt her father over to her poorer older sister? Was my grandfather to become the man in our home so my mother wouldn't be manless while my father was back on the road buying eggs from farmers in central Wisconsin, candling the eggs in his depot there, and trucking them to the Randolph Street Market in Chicago?

Came September, and 12 years old now, I entered Roosevelt High School, a full-fledged freshman. Maybe it was later that Fall, or in the early Spring of '32, but there I was one evening after dinner, sitting at the rectangular white porcelain table in the kitchen, struggling with my algebra homework—it was on the progress of numbers—and getting nowhere. Frustrated. Upset. Angry. Muttering. Good thing my algebra teacher wasn't there, or I'd have given him a piece of my mind. The fact is, I didn't understand the principle, so how could I solve all those crazy problems?

My grandfather was sitting across the table, smoking a cigarette, his nose stuck in the *Forvertz*. He asked me in Yiddish, "What's the problem?" "Holy Watsseka!" I said to myself, "this dumb bunny can't even talk English and he's bothering me with questions!" I was on the verge of shouting at him, "Shut up, already, old man, and leave me alone!" But at the last moment, instead, I relented, and explained my problem to him. Very put upon, you understand.

To my astonishment—what am I talking about—to my complete amazement, "totally," as the kids would say nowadays—my grandfather explained the principle to me. This dummy, this ignoramus, this know-nothing, knew it, understood it, comprehended it, and conveyed it to me, his math (and in other ways) hotshot grandson, while the passing 'L' train rattled the table, my algebra book, and my homework papers. Holy Watsseka!

And that ain't all. After he assured himself that I really did understand the principle by checking my answers to some of the problems, he showed me the short-cut route. Bing! Bang! Boom! Zip! Zap! Zup!

Well! It changed my whole perception of the man. Clearly he knew more than my teacher and maybe the person who put together the algebra book. And the inescapable conclusion was—anybody that smart couldn't be all that stupid! Moses at the Burning Bush had had his Revelation, and I had mine at the Quivering Kitchen Table. (Probably

bought second-hand, or hand-me-down from my father's sister, Aunt Ethel, who was very rich and had a maid and a butler, and a good heart.)

We became friends. Come to find out my zadie—you see, after Revelation a grandfather becomes a zadie—understood English and could speak it, but as a matter of principle, wouldn't. (It was many years before I discovered that between couldn't and wouldn't is the world.)

A man of learning, a scholar even, in the Old Country, to escape the Czar and his pogroms, comes here to the land of freedom and opportunity and finds there is no respect for learning—it's all nickels and dimes, and Mammon, not God, is worshipped as God, and English is its language. So ha-ha, he'll get even, he'll show 'em, he'll have no part of it. He didn't ask the Czar to make it impossible for the Jews to live over there, and he didn't ask anybody to make America the way it was, and if anybody had to suffer the consequences of his reaction to the realities of the New World, too bad. He was, after all, a man of principle.

As fate would have it, we were friends for only a short while. He died suddenly five or six months later at age 79, probably from cigarette smoke poisoning his lungs. As I write this I remember that he coughed a lot, even at my Aunt Lizzie's. I think I gave him a little pleasure, as friends should, those last months. At least I console myself that I did. ♦

Society Newsletter Seeks Memoirs of Jewish Chicagoans

Chicago Jewish History, the newsletter of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, occasionally publishes memoirs of individual Chicagoans.

A wonderful example of that sort of memoir appears on these pages.

Individual memoirs give us the opportunity to present history in its narrowest contours. A story you might recall from your childhood or from some unusual situation in which you found yourself often prompts other people's memories to flow as well.

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.

Keep in mind that manuscripts should be no longer than six double-spaced pages, and preferably should be submitted on Mac-compatible disk using one of the popular word-processing applications for the Mac. For those of you without access to computer technology, good old paper will work just fine!

We encourage you to record what you remember from your first-hand experiences. Memories are most convincing when they are most personal. Much of the rest 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.

We attempt to comment on every memoir submitted, but are not always able to do so, and cannot guarantee the publication of any work. Be sure to include a return address and phone number with your submission.

Memoirs may be sent to the editor of *Chicago Jewish History*, Beverly Chubatz, at 415 West Fullerton Parkway, #1102, Chicago, IL, 60614-2859. ♦

Max Robert Schrayer and the Founding of Roosevelt University

ORAL HISTORY EXCERPT

The following oral history excerpt was taken by Society Past President Norman Schwartz on August 25, 1986 at the offices of Max Robert Schrayer, 230 West Monroe Street. Mr. Schrayer died less than a month later, at age 83. Among the many distinguished civic activities in his long life, he had been president of K.A.M. Temple, general chairman of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and vice chairman of Roosevelt University. This excerpt begins with Mr. Schrayer describing his leaving K.A.M. Temple after a dispute between its two Rabbis:

SCHRAYER And we started Beth Am. This was the worst experience I had in my whole life. It lasted over a year—about two years. And I don't know how I got myself into this thing. I was trying awfully hard to hold the thing together and I was failing right along. Then we built a wonderful congregation which you know about. The neighborhood killed us.

SCHWARTZ It said in one paper that Rabbi Friedland was the Rabbi of a congregation called the Fifteenth Reform Congregation.

SCHRAYER That was the first name because we didn't have a name. So we called ourselves the Fifteenth Reform Congregation. But that was temporary.

SCHWARTZ That was an unfortunate situation because K.A.M. could have had the benefit of all those wonderful people and of Rabbi Friedland, whatever problems were in the way with Rabbi Weinstein. It was unfortunate. But meanwhile, you weren't only working at K.A.M., you were working in the general community here on all kinds of things, an ardent supporter of the University of Michigan...

SCHRAYER Roosevelt University. I was on the board since 1955.

SCHWARTZ How did you get involved with Roosevelt?

SCHRAYER Well when I read in the paper that...I really don't think I knew about it at the moment...I did afterwards. There was a YMCA College on LaSalle Street. It was a regular college and the president was a fellow named Sparling. And I didn't know this at the time, but I knew it shortly thereafter. They had a lot of Jews and Coloreds at YMCA College. And they had a

board of directors that were a lot of high grade WASPS of the city. The rich, sophisticated people who were on the board of the YMCA. You know, the YMCA is a nice institution to be on the board of. It doesn't cost you money. You give them \$50 a year and they think you're a philanthropist and you got a nice reputation...

So they said to Sparling, why can't we have a quota? Northwestern has a quota, why can't we have a quota for Jews and Negroes and so forth? So Sparling said, "Not while I'm president, you can't. I wouldn't stand for it." Well, they said, that's what we think. He said, "Nothing doing. I won't stay here if you have a quota." So they had a board meeting and they voted to have a quota. We are having a quota. He said, "Gentlemen, I'm resigning. Right today." They had 81 professors—80 out of the 81 resigned. And they practically broke the YMCA College. For a year they were out of business. They lost their whole faculty.

They started another university which they called Thomas Jefferson College. And they got half the money to start from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, from the manager of that fund. He gave them half the money to start and the other half came from Field—the newspaper man, Marshall Field. Those two guys put up the money to start Thomas Jefferson College. And they had an old loft building on Adams near State Street in which they started the school. I don't know if it was a year or less than a year when Roosevelt died, so they quickly changed the name to Roosevelt College. Thomas Jefferson was already passé, so they called it Roosevelt College. But their theory was—no discrimination. Anybody who could qualify as a student was a student. They have no discrimination.

SCHWARTZ Sparling was Jewish, wasn't he?

Editor's note: Edward J. Sparling was the first president of Roosevelt College, which later became Roosevelt University.

SCHRAYER No. When I heard that, I thought, gee, I've got to give money to an organization like that, so I sent a check. And I sent a check the second year. Before I sent the check the second year, Sparling walked into my office and he said, "I notice you're interested in the school." And I said, "I'm very much interested. I'm interested in your program. He said, "Would you be chairman of our campaign?" I had never done that before. That's how I got into Roosevelt. I was the chairman of their fund-raising. I wasn't on the board at first. I wasn't on the board for four or five years and then I was on the board...I'm the oldest guy on the board by a long shot. ♦

Help Wanted with Oral Histories

One of the ongoing projects of the Society is to capture the history preserved in our midst through the recollections and stories of community leaders, business pioneers and other exceptional Chicago Jews. We invite you to take part in that effort by joining the Oral History Committee.

Conducting an oral history is a way to record history that can be as rewarding to the interviewer and subject as it is to the Society, the archives and the community. Many Society members are experienced in

the techniques of interviewing and can assist you. The oral history project has been a priority of the Society for the past year and we are eager to include as many of our members as possible in the planning and the work. The voices we record and transcribe may well turn out to be the voices that tell today's history to tomorrow's historians.

Plans are being made for an Oral History Workshop where Society members can gather to observe the interview of a prominent Chicagoan by an experienced questioner.

For information on getting started in taking oral histories, call the Society office (312)663-5634. ♦

Tribute Cards Offered for Special Occasions

The Society announces the availability of our Tribute Cards. These attractive cards can be used for many reasons—to honor someone, memorialize a loved one, thank a friend or offer congratulations.

The cards are printed on heavy, white stock, 9-1/4" x 4" folded. They bear the handsome Society logo on the outside. The inside is blank, offering space for your personal message if you wish to add one. A package of eight cards with matching envelopes is \$10.

Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at a cost of \$5 per card, (postage included). To order packages of eight or individual cards, call the Society office at (312)663-5634 or Clare Greenberg at (773)725-7330. ♦

Information Wanted about Any Aspect of the Short History of **King David Hospital at Mary's City of David in Benton Harbor, Michigan**

Jewish Doctors, Staff, Fund Raisers
or Patients from 1937 to 1939

Also, any information or personal memories of visits to Mary's Resort in Benton Harbor, 1930-60. In particular, visits and worship in the synagogue at Mary's City of David, The Gate of Prayer Congregation, Max Star, President.

This information is to be placed in the museum at Mary's City of David, that will open for its third season in June, 1999.

The information will also be studied for possible use in an upcoming two-hour PBS documentary on the Israelite House of David and Mary's City of David.

Contact: R. James Taylor, P.O. Box 187
Benton Harbor, MI 49023-0187
E-mail rjtaylor@parett.net

Beverly Chubat Named New Editor of Society Quarterly

Life-long Chicagoan Beverly Chubat, whose first journalistic experience was on the staff of her West Side high school paper, the *Marshall News*, has been chosen as the new editor of the Society quarterly, *Chicago Jewish History*.

Bev earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Illinois, Urbana, and is a working graphic designer and illustrator as well as a writer. She is a Macintosh *maven*, and considers her computer to be an invaluable partner in the creative process.

Immediate Past Editor Joe Kraus will continue to bring his scholarly skills and professional experience to *Chicago Jewish History* as an active member of the Editorial Board. ♦

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 below.

■ 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 proof-reader? You can contribute to our quarterly publication, *Chicago Jewish History*. Contact our Editor, Bev Chubat (773)525-4888

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.

Minsky Fund

The Doris and Joseph Minsky Memorial Fund was established in memory of two of the Society's founders and longtime leaders. It seeks to publish annually a monograph on an aspect of Chicago area Jewish history. Society members receive a copy of each monograph as it is published. Manuscripts may be submitted, and contributions to the Fund are welcome at any time.

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, each monograph published by the Minsky Memorial Fund as it appears, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago 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..... | 50 |
| Family..... | 50 |
| Senior Family..... | 35 |
| Individual..... | 35 |
| Synagogue / Organization..... | 25 |
| Senior Individual / Student.... | 20 |

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



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