The Fall Book Issue

Save the Date! Sunday, March 23, Author Alex Garel-Frantzen: “Gangsters & Organized Crime in Jewish Chicago”

The next open meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will take place on Sunday, March 23, 2:00 p.m., at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. General admission is $10 per person. Members of the CJHS and members of Emanuel Congregation, Free.

Our guest speaker will be Alex Garel-Frantzen, whose book, Gangsters & Organized Crime in Jewish Chicago (The History Press, 2013), concerns the early years of the twentieth century, when the harsh environment of the Maxwell Street immigrant ghetto produced a proliferation of Jewish gangsters involved in everything from labor racketeering to “white slavery.”

Garel-Frantzen is a student at the University of Illinois College of Law, where he is a juris doctor candidate set to graduate in 2015. He has won awards for his research and writing, and is a member of the University of Illinois Law Review.

His research for the book was based on contemporary newspaper articles and editorials in the Chicago Tribune and the Yiddish language press, as well as studies by historians, sociologists, and reformers. His idea for the project was sparked by memories of that colorful era as related to him by his grandfather.

A book-signing and social hour with kosher refreshments will follow the program. For further information phone the Society office at 312-663-5634.
“THANKSGIVUKKAH”
This year, Hanukkah was different from any Festival of Lights in our lifetime. The first candle was lit on Wednesday, November 27, the evening before Thanksgiving. What fun, what significance! According to the experts in such matters, the two holidays will not occur together again for over 70,000 years.

General George Washington, after victory in the Battle of Saratoga, proclaimed a day “for Thanksgiving and praise” on December 18, 1777, which fell during Hanukkah.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared that the national holiday of Thanksgiving would fall on the last Thursday in November, and in 1888, Thanksgiving occurred during Hanukkah.

In 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt changed the day of Thanksgiving to the fourth Thursday of November, not necessarily the last Thursday, as a move intended to extend the holiday shopping season.

This year, President Obama held two Hanukkah receptions at the White House. Menorahs of historical significance were used.

The Forward reported on December 6, 2013: “A ‘menurkey’—a menorah in the shape of a turkey—was featured at both receptions, and its creator, 10-year-old Asher Weintraub of New York City, was a guest at the first reception, as was Dana Gitell, the Boston mom who coined the term ‘Thanksgivukkah’ and who trademarked it.”

GREETINGS AND FAREWELLS
We are a volunteer organization with leadership that can be characterized as “not having all the time, but having all the heart” to work at achieving our mission. Some of our officers and Board members have been active since our beginnings; others have joined us recently. Our two newest Board members are Marvin Dickman and Joan Pomaranc. Please read about them on the facing page.

We remember those who are no longer with us. Our Society is saddened by the passing of one of our founders and stalwarts, Sidney Sorkin. Please read our memorial tribute to him on page 19.

On a personal note, my family missed one of our patriarchs at our Hanukkah/Thanksgiving gathering. My uncle Bebe, Dr. Bernard Hankin, died at the age of eighty-five. A graduate of Schley Grammar School, Tuley High School, and the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Bebe was a pediatrician who practiced until three weeks before taking ill. Many members of our Society, their children, and grandchildren, were patients of “Dr. Bebe.”

AN ELEVATOR TO SHUL
One of our Society’s most popular publications is the book, A Walk to Shul: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops on the Way, by Bea Kraus and Norman D. Schwartz. Recently, on Sunday afternoon, November 3, I took an elevator to shul. Continued on page 18
Election of Members to Our Board of Directors

At the CJHS open meeting on Sunday, December 1, before Ron Grossman’s talk, Nominations Chairman Herbert Eiseman conducted an election of members to a three-year term on our Board of Directors.

Nominees included these current Board members:

DR. CAROLYN EASTWOOD taught Anthropology for many years at Roosevelt University in Chicago and the College of DuPage in suburban Glen Ellyn. She is the author of the award-winning book, *Near West Side Stories: Struggles for Community in Chicago’s Maxwell Street Neighborhood.* Carolyn won the Chicago Jewish Historical Society 1991 Doris Minsky Memorial Award for her study, *Chicago’s Jewish Street Peddlers,* and later served as CJHS secretary. Carolyn lives in Glen Ellyn.

HERBERT EISEMAN is a certified member of the Chicago Tour-Guide Professional Association (CTPA). He gave the popular, slide-illustrated CJHS lecture, “Jewish Merchant Princes of State Street,” and guided our summer bus tour of South Side Jewish Chicago. Herb is a member of the Board of Directors of Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel Congregation. He makes his home in Chicago’s East Lakeview neighborhood.

CLARE (CHAIKEY) GREENBERG is a West Side-born Yiddishist, Labor Zionist, and arts enthusiast. Chaiky served as director of the Newspaper Division of the Municipal Reference Library in City Hall from 1957 until her retirement in 1990. There she established and built the clip file into a unique resource for information seekers (including CJHS historians). *The Chicago Jewish News* named her a Jewish Chicagoan of the Year 2006. Chaiky is a member of Temple Beth Israel in Skokie. She lives on the North Side of Chicago.

DR. EDWARD H. MAZUR has served as President of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society since Fall 2010. He has a BA and MA from UIUC and a PhD from the U of C in Urban History and Politics. He is professor emeritus of the City Colleges of Chicago. The author of *Minyans for a Prairie City: the Politics of Chicago’s Jewry, 1850-1940,* he has published articles on ethnicity, urban history, politics, and transportation. He serves on the Boards of the Illinois Historical Society, World Chicago, and the City Club of Chicago. A model train enthusiast, he is the president of the Lionel Operating Train Society (L.O.T.S.). Ed and his wife Myrna live on the Near North Side of Chicago.

BURTON ROBIN is a founding member of the CJHS and a former vice president. He is a retired Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Physical Science at Kennedy-King City College of Chicago and a retired producer of Opera Society programs for seniors at the Chicago Cultural Center. Burt is a valued proofreader for the Society quarterly. He and his wife Suzanne are members of Congregation Rodfei Zedek. They live on the Near North Side of Chicago.

New nominees to the Board were:

MARVIN DICKMAN is “actively retired” after a lengthy career as a CPA in Chicago. During his working years his activities included membership and presidency of the Chicago Board of Jewish Education; membership on the national board of the UAHC (now the URJ); membership on the Boards of Overseers of the Hebrew Union College with particular involvement with the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives; and board service for Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute. Post-retirement, Marv earned a Master’s degree in the Humanities (concentrating on Jewish Studies) at the University of Chicago, and taught American Jewish History, primarily the colonial period, at JCCs, Elderhostels, and other educational venues. Marv and his wife Susie live in Highland Park.

JOAN POMARANC is Director of Programming for AIA Chicago, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects. As an architectural historian, she is on the Issues Committee of Landmarks Illinois, and on the Chicago Advisory Committee of Partners for Sacred Places. Joan is a Board member of KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation where she is active on its various committees. Joan holds a degree from the University of Chicago. She lives in the South Loop.

All of the nominees were elected by acclamation.

Corrections and Clarifications

*CJH Summer 2013,* President’s Column, page 2: Dr. Mazur, in his memorial salute to Ruth Rothstein, quoted her remark on a very busy day, “I have so much on my *tish* (plate) today.” Ernie Smolen e-mailed us to quibble with that translation, reminding us that the Yiddish word for “plate” or “dish” is *teller.* Rothstein certainly meant “desk” or “worktable” rather than plate. In Jewish life a full plate is to be anticipated, enjoyed down to the last latke, and promptly refilled with a second helping and a third—or at least with the offer of a nice piece of fruit.
To all our activists, achievers, and honorees… the Hebrew phrase means “More Power to You”…

- Our office received this e-mail from Agudas Achim Synagogue: “Nearly 2,000 individuals, many from out-of-state, visited our synagogue during the Open House Chicago event held on the weekend of October 19th and 20th. Rabbi Lefkowitz and his sons, Moshe and Levi, saw to it that the synagogue was as clean as possible. Special thanks to Mike Supera of Supera Asset Management for sending a crew to clean up the front of the building, including our gardens. They look beautiful.” Yasher koach to Mike for phoning our office to volunteer his services. Carey Wintergreen—yasher koach for promptly connecting Mike with Rabbi Lefkowitz!

- Beverly Siegel wrote an article in the October issue of JUF News—“Influencing perception, making change in Chicago’s ‘Jewish stronghold,’” about the ongoing community efforts at reviving commerce on Devon Avenue between California and Kedzie.

  Her husband, Howard Rieger, is involved in the effort. He says: “Chicago’s Jewish community as a whole has a big stake in preserving West Rogers Park because we have an investment in schools and social service agencies here that would be impossible to recreate.”

  Rabbi Leonard Matanky of Congregation K.I.N.S. of West Rogers Park is quoted as commenting: “A neighborhood is not just its residential base. It needs commercial streets that match it.”

- Ethan Bensinger’s documentary film “Refuge: Stories of the Selfhelp Home” has been licensed by American Public Television and was broadcast nationwide on PBS in November. It will be aired again in April 2014. There is now a comprehensive study guide to the film that can be downloaded free at www.refugestories.com.

- Elise Ginsparg organized and chaired the Sixteenth Annual Night of Knowledge at Congregation Yehuda Moshe in Lincolnwood, on Motzaie Shabbat, November 16. Her well-chosen roster of speakers attracted a capacity crowd. There were two sessions, with four lectures in each time slot. Themes ranged from “Strategies for Healthy Living” to “The Rise of Radical Islam.”

  Mark Mandle lectured on “West Side vs. South Side – Which was Better?” at the Night of Knowledge and again at a meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois on Sunday afternoon, November 24, at Temple Judea Mizpah in Skokie.

100 Years Ago
The blood-libel trial of Mendel Beilis, which occurred in October 1913, was one of the great legal dramas of the twentieth century. Beilis, a Jew, was arrested in 1911 by the Tsarist Russian secret police in Kiev and accused of ritually murdering a Christian boy and using the boy’s blood to bake matzah for Passover. Jailed for over two years while awaiting trial under horrible conditions, Beilis heroically resisted all pressure to implicate himself or other Jews. In 1913, after a dramatic trial that riveted the Jewish people and much of the rest of the world, Beilis was acquitted by an all-Christian jury.—www.tabletmag.com

During the trial, the Chicago American printed an “extra” front page mostly in Yiddish under the banner headline “Chicago’s Protest Against Tsar,” and featured a photograph of Jane Addams. History of the Jews of Chicago.
“The Monuments Men” Movie to Open Feb. 7

George Clooney’s movie “The Monuments Men” is scheduled to receive its local premiere on February 7, 2014. It is the tale of a band of art historians, museum curators, and academics racing to rescue works of art looted by the Nazis. The film was adapted from Robert Edsel’s nonfiction book, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*.

There are Jewish, Chicago, and Chicago Jewish Historical Society connections to the story.

The leader of the rescuers was James Rorimer (1905-1966), a descendant of the Jewish Rohrheimer family of Cleveland, OH, and later President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His daughter, Ann Rorimer, is an art historian and independent curator, and a member of the CJHS.

Chicagoan Seymour Pomrenze (1916-2011), was the uncle of CJHS Board member Chaiky Greenberg. “[He] served as the first director of the Offenbach Archival Depot in 1946. He was instrumental in the restitution of thousands of looted archives, including those of the Strashun Library in Vilna, Lithuania. The library was the premier Jewish library in Europe before World War II, and luckily survived the Nazi destruction of Vilna. The contents of the library, along with those of the YIVO building in Vilna, were looted for eventual placement in the anti-Semitic “Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question.” Pomrenze oversaw the return of tens of thousands of items from the Strashun Library to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research headquarters in New York.” — www.monumentsmenfoundation.org

Sandra Holubow and Judith Roth

*Unforgettable Places, Memorable People*

Exhibition through January 24, 2014


Oakton Community College, Koehnline Museum of Art

1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL

A fascinating side-by-side look at works by contemporary Chicago artists Sandra Holubow (member of the CJHS) and Judith Roth. Roth's paintings and drawings focus on the individual from head to toe, while Holubow's collages and paintings examine the collective aspects of community.

Museum Hours: Monday–Friday 10-6; Saturday 11-4

www.oakton.edu/museum

Berit Engen

*Woof and Drash*

Weaving the Jewish Experience

Exhibit through February 23, 2014

Berit Engen began weaving as a child in Norway, and now practices this ancient craft of entwining woof (horizontal threads) with warp (vertical threads) from her home in suburban Oak Park. Engen's miniature tapestries are modern-day commentaries (in Hebrew *drash*) on the engaging, joyous, and at times challenging aspects of Jewish living.

Meet the Artist

Sunday, Feb. 23 at 2 pm

Meet weaver Berit Engen

Learn about the process, technique, and inspiration behind her unique tapestries.

No reservations needed.

No charge.

Spertus Institute for Learning and Leadership

610 South Michigan Avenue, Lobby Gallery

Exhibit Hours: Sunday-Wednesday 10-5; Thursday 10-6; Friday 10-3.

Closed to the public Saturdays and Jewish and secular holidays
Report: CJHS Bus Tour
Sunday, October 6:
“Jewish Milwaukee”

At the Jewish Museum Milwaukee we were reminded how important Golda Meir is to the city where she grew up. There is a section devoted to her, and a Marc Chagall tapestry includes her image.

(The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Golda Meir Library is southeastern Wisconsin’s largest academic research library.)

We were guided through the JMM, viewed the special exhibit, “Push Carts to Professionals” on the development of the city’s Jewish businesses and featured Manpower, the firm that provides staffing services and employment opportunities worldwide. We enjoyed a kosher lunch and went on to the Chudnow Museum of Yesteryear, where we wandered through a delightful collection of memorabilia from the early decades of the 20th century. Our last stop was north of the city at Congregation Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun, where Rabbi Berkson invited us into the magnificent sanctuary, with its abstract elements designed by artist Tobi Kahn.

Thanks to CJHS Tour Chair (and Milwaukee native) Leah Axelrod for an interesting day!

Chudnow Museum of Yesteryear.
839 North 11th Street, Milwaukee.
chudnowmuseum.org

Report: Edgewater Historical Society/CJHS Open Meeting Sunday, October 13:
“A Conversation with Rabbi Herman Schaalm An and His Biographer, Richard Damashek”

Over 125 attendees gathered in the sanctuary of Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, for this event. Bob Remer, president of the EHS, opened the meeting, and our president, Ed Mazur, introduced the speakers and conducted the Q&A. Lotte Schaalman, the rabbi’s wife of 72 years, was present.

The occasion was the Edgewater Historical Society’s Annual Austin Wyman Lecture, which the Chicago Jewish Historical Society co-hosted. Professor Richard Damashek recently published A Brand Plucked From the Fire, a massive and detailed 600-page biography of Rabbi Schaalm, and a book-signing followed the program.

Rabbi Schaalm began the conversation by telling us that that he was a child of a “mixed marriage.” His father’s family in Munich objected to their son’s betrothal to a girl born in Ukraine! In this humorous vein he began narrating incidents in his long and productive life. Rabbi Schaalm turned 97 in April. He is rabbi emeritus of Emanuel Congregation.

When young Herman and four classmates were sent to the United States, to the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati to study for the Reform rabbinate, he was at a loss. He had heard of the Roman Cincinnatus but had never heard of that American city. Any plans to return to Germany after his ordination were impossible with the outbreak of World War II.

He took his first post in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1941, and married his sweetheart, Lotte. He told us that when he distributed a questionnaire to the townsfolk asking them to name three Jews they knew, the only name they wrote was “Roosevelt.” Our audience gasped at hearing this.

Rabbi Schaalm has been an active part of the Edgewater community since 1955, when he came to Emanuel Congregation, co-founding the Edgewater Clergy and Rabbi Association, a first collaboration of its kind in Chicago, which eventually became the Edgewater Community Religious Association. He reached out to the Catholic clergy which had not been approached before. In a ceremony in November, Rabbi Schaalm was named one of Edgewater’s Living Treasures.

In the 1980s he became friends with Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. So close was their friendship, that when Bernardin was on his deathbed, he asked Rabbi Schaalman to participate in his funeral. Schaalman agreed, and for the first time in history, a rabbi spoke at the funeral of a Cardinal.

Rabbi Schaalman spoke movingly about his own theological views, which have changed over the turbulent years of his near-century, and how the Holocaust caused him to reassess his concept of God.

In his eyes his most significant achievements are his work in establishing the first youth camp of the Reform Movement at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and serving as president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reform Movement’s rabbinical assembly with membership worldwide.
Report: CJHS Open Meeting Sunday, December 1: “You Can Go Home Again (Ron Grossman’s Love/Hate Affair with Albany Park)”

On Sunday afternoon of the “Thanksgivukkah” weekend, the CJHS held an open meeting at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, the exquisite new shul in Skokie at the corner of Crawford and Church that has both Ashkenazic and Sephardic sanctuaries. Chicago Tribune reporter Ron Grossman regaled the audience of well over a hundred people in the social hall with his memories and his feelings about Albany Park. He lived at Sacramento and Montrose.

What does he love—remembering the cohesiveness of the community; what does he hate—wallowing in sentimental attachment to it.

It was safe to be a rebel in Albany Park. He could play tennis on Yom Kippur. He and his friends could boycott the Bateman Elementary School’s multicultural holiday assembly, listening outside as the Gentile kids dutifully sang “I Have a Little Draydel.” He could enjoy the foods of other ethnic groups (Italian and Mexican—not too rebellious).

He wondered why Chekhov wrote a play about a clothing store in Albany Park, “The Three Sisters.” At the Albany Park Public Library he discovered that Nelson Algren and James T. Farrell experienced what he did, in other neighborhoods. The kids who got Wednesday afternoons off for catechism at Our Lady of Mercy—was that a martial art they used to beat up Jewish boys on the way home from cheder? The “Von” girls with so many cashmere sweaters—did they have cashmere under their cashmeres? If you asked a “Von” girl for a date, it was an honor even to be rejected!

No Roosevelt High or Von Steuben for Ron. Since an uncle was an engineer, the family thought that “something with a T-square and a triangle” was best, so he attended Lane Tech and the U of I at Navy Pier.

The genius of Mies van der Rohe did not rub off on him, so he took a sharp turn to the world of the classics at the U of C. In that rarified atmosphere he found “Jews who were not Jews,” at least not the Jews he knew. Their wine was vintage, with labels, not Manischewitz. They studied Philosophy. Ron thought that philosophers were the guys behind the deli counter who commiserated with the kvetchings of their customers. Ron began teaching, first at the U of Nebraska and then at Lake Forest College.

During a Chicago Public Schools racial crisis Ron wrote some articles for the Chicago Journalism Review about the affected Gage Park neighborhood that impressed the editors of the Chicago Tribune, and he began freelancing for the paper. Eventually he gave up “professoring” and became a staff reporter, writing his thoughtful pieces about Chicago history.

MOE BERG. Morrie’s Hot Dog Stand (two Viennas on a slice of French bread) had a baseball card of Moe Berg on the wall. The reclusive third string catcher was a spy for the OSS during World War II. Ron visited the CIA Museum where he got to swing Berg’s bat, wearing white museum gloves. He even attended Moe Berg’s shiva. People came from all over.
Dear Readers,

When I visited the Shalom Chicago exhibition at the Chicago History Museum for the third time I got quite a surprise.

Previously, I had looked closely (I thought) at all the material, read the labels, and made notes on subjects for possible future articles in CJH. I admired the way various Chicago Jewish families were shown in typical settings.

I had only glanced at the photograph of the C.H.I. English Class, although there was a huge enlargement, as well as the original, on display. This time, though, I looked closely, and there she was—my cousin Ann! In one of my most treasured family photographs, taken two years earlier, she is in the same corner of the image.

My maternal grandparents, Reb Shmuel and Leah (Gershmans) Kuzminsky, had eleven children; my zeyde was a widower with two kids when he married Bobbe Leah, and she gave birth to nine more. The family lived in a shtetl in Ukraine; the nearest town was Uman.

My mother, Adele, was the middle child. She was a teenager (with a revolutionary spirit) when Reb Shmuel died. The oldest daughter, Pessie, had already married Mayer Singer, had borne three children, and was a widow.

One by one, the unmarried Kuzminskys emigrated to America. The sons and grandson Willy Singer left to avoid service in the Tsar’s army; my mother, to avoid the matchmaker.

Uncle Max (not pictured) came over in 1908, my mother in 1910, Sophie in 1912, Isaac and Willy soon thereafter. Then World War I broke out. The feisty Pessie, her two daughters, and Fannie traveled across Siberia and northern China to Yokohama, sailed to Seattle, and were reunited with the others in Chicago.

Their lovely young cousin Ida Rovner joined them in the group photograph (singles only!) that they sent to Bobbe Leah and their older and younger siblings back in the Old Country.

Bev Chubat
the book section

SHALOM CHICAGO. By Olivia Mahoney. Chicago History Museum, 2013. Handsome catalog based on the exhibition on view at the Museum from October 21, 2012, to September 2, 2013. Illustrations include rare portraits, documents, photographs, costumes, religious objects, and works of art that together create a lasting record of the exhibition and the Chicago Jewish community’s rich history. The publication was made possible by a generous gift from Thomas R. Meites and Jerome B. Meites. 168 pages. Paper.


CHICAGO’S HISTORIC HYDE PARK. By Susan O’Connor Davis. The University of Chicago Press, 2013. With a Foreword by John Vinci. A biography of this distinguished neighborhood, from house to home, and from architect to resident, describing Hyde Park–Kenwood’s most celebrated structures from the time of Lincoln through the racial upheaval and destructive urban renewal of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s into the preservationist movement of the last thirty-five years. 504 pages. Illustrated with 343 halftones and eleven line drawings.

Some New Books of Special Interest


JEWS AND THE MILITARY: A History. By Derek J. Penslar. Princeton University Press, 2013. A comprehensive and comparative look at Jews’ involvement in the military and their attitude toward war from the 1600s until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Confronts the myths and realities of Jewish draft dodging, Jews’ reaction to facing their coreligionists in battle, the effects of WWI on Jewish veterans, and Jewish participation in the Spanish Civil War and WWII. Culminates with a study of Israel’s War of Independence, which drew on the military expertise and financial support of the global Jewish community. Illustrated. 376 pages.

Books are now available in various formats and at various prices—from e-tailers, at bookstores (if you are lucky enough to find one), and on loan from public libraries—so the only publications in this issue with listed prices are those published by the Society and available for purchase from our office.

DVD: ROMANCE OF A PEOPLE: The First 100 Years of Jewish Life in Chicago: 1833-1933. Beverly Siegel, Executive Producer-Director, 1997. Rare film footage, vintage photos, sound recordings, and informative interviews combine to tell the story of the building of Chicago’s Jewish community and its impact on the City of the Big Shoulders. Highlighted is the role of the early German-Jewish settlers in the development of some of the city’s major cultural institutions, the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe, and the founding in Chicago of several national Jewish organizations. One of the most moving segments is actual film footage of the Jewish community's spectacular pageant, The Romance of a People, presented on Jewish Day at the 1933 Century of Progress. Color and B&W. Running time 30 minutes. DVD $29.95

ROMANCE OF A PEOPLE: DVD and PROGRAM BOOK. In the year 2000, the Society published a facsimile of the 72-page souvenir program for the Jewish Day pageant The Romance of a People. Includes program notes, names of the participants and sponsors, and lots of ads. Walter Roth’s eight-page essay adds a historical perspective. 80 pages. Paper. Special Offer! DVD and Program Book $39.95 From Ergo Home Video. www.jewishvideo.com


CJHS Minsky Fund Prize Winners

Doris Minsky was a founder, director, and officer of the Society. The Fund was established in her memory for the purpose of publishing monographs on the history of the Jews of Chicago. Submissions were judged and cash prizes awarded by the CJHS Publications Committee.

Volume One: 1991
CHICAGO JEWISH STREET PEDDLERS. By Carolyn Eastwood. A valuable study by an eminent urban historian and CJHS board member. Illustrated with drawings. And MEMORIES OF LAWNDALE. By Beatrice Michaels Shapiro. Illustrated with photos. Total 103 pages. Paper. $5.00*

Volume Two: 1993

Volume Three: 1996
THE CANTORS: Gifted Voices Remembered. By Bea Kraus. Chicago was well-known for her fine congregational cantors and the world-famous vocal artists engaged for the High Holy Days. Illustrated. 85 pages. Paper. $5.00*

Volume Four: 1997
MY FATHER, MYSELF. By Rabbi Alex J. Goldman. A son’s memoir of his father, Yehudah D. Goldman, America’s oldest practicing rabbi. Illustrated. 120 pages. Paper. $5.00*

Volume Five: 2001
THROUGH THE EYES OF THEIR CHILDREN. By Myron H. Fox. A riveting account of Chicago’s bloody Taxi Wars of the 1920s and the author’s research into the victimization of his taxi driver father. Illustrated. 160 pages. Paper. $5.00*

Walter Roth’s Jewish Chicagoans

LOOKING BACKWARD: True Stories from Chicago’s Jewish Past. By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2002. The unknown story of Jewish participation in Chicago’s great fair of 1893 is only one of the fascinating nuggets of history unearthed and polished by Walter Roth in the pages of Chicago Jewish History. The material chronicles events and people from the late 1800s to the end of World War II. Illustrated. 305 pages. Paper.

Buy Direct from CJHS at Special Price $10.00*


Buy Direct from CJHS at Special Price $10.00*


Buy Direct from CJHS at Special Price $15.00*

Coming Soon!

CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY INDEX 1977-2012. Compiled and Edited by Adele Hast. Covers the first thirty-five years of the Society’s periodicals, from the typewritten newsletters to the digital journals.

*TO ORDER OUR PUBLICATIONS
Shipping/handling included in price. Prepay by check to:
Chicago Jewish Historical Society
610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803
Chicago, IL 60605-1901
Irving Cutler’s Neighborhoods


**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY.** Edited by Stephen Norwood and Eunice Pollack. ABC-CLIO, 2007. The encyclopedia’s six-page entry on “Chicago” is by Dr. Irving Cutler. Illustrated. Two volumes, total 775 pages.


**NEAR WEST SIDE STORIES: Struggles for Community in Chicago’s Maxwell Street Neighborhood.** By Carolyn Eastwood. Lake Claremont Press, 2002. Four extraordinary “ordinary” people try to save their neighborhood and the market at its core. One of them is the flamboyant Jewish clothier and jazz musician, Harold Fox, designer of the first zoot suit. The other highly motivated, sympathetic subjects are Florence Scala, Nate Duncan, and Hilda Portillo, who represent the Italian, African-American, and Mexican communities. Illustrated. 355 pages. Paper.


our authors


AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GLENCOE: The Little Migration. By Robert A. Sideman. The History Press, 2009. While little has been written about Glencoe’s African American heritage, the author discovered ample historical resources to tell the story from the very first days. Illustrated. 126 pages. Paper.

JULIUS ROSENWALD: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South. By Peter Ascoli. Indiana University Press, 2006. Chicago’s Julius Rosenwald was one of the richest men in America in the 1920s, but few people today, other than the older members of the Jewish and African American communities, know the story of his far-reaching philanthropy. Historian Peter Ascoli is Rosenwald’s grandson. He tells his grandfather’s story with professional skill as well as insights that only an insider with access to family records and memories could have. Illustrated with black and white photographs. 472 pages.


AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GLENCOE: The Little Migration. By Robert A. Sideman. The History Press, 2009. While little has been written about Glencoe’s African American heritage, the author discovered ample historical resources to tell the story from the very first days. Illustrated. 126 pages. Paper.

SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY. The peer-reviewed annual journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Dr. Mark K. Bauman, editor. Rachel Heimovics, managing editor. Published each year in October, the journal contains articles, primary documents, and reviews related to the southern Jewish experience. Current and back volumes are available for sale to individuals and institutions. The journal is also a benefit of membership in the Southern Jewish Historical Society. www.jewishsouth.org

Nature, Art, and Music

A FEATHERED RIVER ACROSS THE SKY: The Passenger Pigeon’s Flight to Extinction.

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AT TEMPLE SHOLOM. By Norman D. Schwartz and Rolf Achilles. Photographs by Rich Master. Design by Dianne Burgis. Temple Sholom, 2001. Twelve sets of brilliant stained glass windows enhance the stately beauty of Temple Sholom of Chicago. The earliest windows were moved to this building in 1928-29 from the congregation’s previous home, and the most recent set was dedicated in 1998, so a wide range of art glass techniques and styles are represented. The co-authors are art historian Rolf Achilles, curator of the Smith Museum of Stained Glass, and Norman Schwartz, Temple Sholom member and past president of the CJHS. 20 pages. Paper.

THE INTERIOR AND ARTIFACTS OF TEMPLE SHOLOM OF CHICAGO. By Norman D. Schwartz and many credited contributors. Temple Sholom, 2011. This second volume of a projected three-volume set describes the ritual and decorative objects inside the Temple. The cost of the project was underwritten by the Moselle Schwartz Memorial Fund. Paper.

Compact Discs/Audiotapes:
THE ART OF THE YIDDISH FOLK SONG. Sima Miller, soprano; Arnold Miller, piano.
A vintage collection of performances by Chicago’s internationally renowned concert artists. These recordings were recently chosen for inclusion in the collection of the National Library of Israel. Four CDs or five audiotapes. Sima Miller, 8610 Avers Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076 (847) 673-6409.

Miriam Schapiro:
Matriarch Window.

Our authors


Of Prairie, Woods, & Water:

New Art in the 60s and 70s:
Redefining Reality. By Anne Rorimer. Thames & Hudson, 2001. The first detailed account of developments centered around the conceptual art movement. The book highlights the main issues underlying visually disparate works dating from the second half of the 1960s to the end of the 1970s, through close examination of individual works and artists. Illustrated. 304 pages.


The Stained Glass Windows at Temple Sholom.
By Norman D. Schwartz and Rolf Achilles. Photographs by Rich Master. Design by Dianne Burgis. Temple Sholom, 2001. Twelve sets of brilliant stained glass windows enhance the stately beauty of Temple Sholom of Chicago. The earliest windows were moved to this building in 1928-29 from the congregation’s previous home, and the most recent set was dedicated in 1998, so a wide range of art glass techniques and styles are represented. The co-authors are art historian Rolf Achilles, curator of the Smith Museum of Stained Glass, and Norman Schwartz, Temple Sholom member and past president of the CJHS. 20 pages. Paper.

Both Schwartz books at Temple Sholom Gift Shop, 3480 N. Lake Shore Drive, (773) 525-4707
our authors


THE BIBLICAL PATH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL MATURITY: Psychological Insights into the Weekly Torah Readings. By Vivian B. Skolnick, Ph.D. Trafford, 2010. Sigmund Freud would be amazed that his discipline could contribute to a deeper understanding of the Torah. The author, through her training in psychoanalysis, succeeds in applying some of Freud's findings to delve into the psyches of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs and explore the unique personality of Moses. Dr. Skolnick links her observations to the synagogue's weekly Sabbath cycle of Torah readings. 305 pages.

JEWISH LAW IN TRANSITION: How Economic Forces Overcame the Prohibition Against Lending Interest. By Hillel Gamoran. Hebrew Union College Press, 2008. The intention of the biblical prohibition was to prevent the wealthy from exploiting the unfortunate. However, in the course of time it was seen to have consequences that mitigated against the economic welfare of Jewish society as a whole. 196 pages.

THE SIDDUR COMPANION. By Paul H. Vishny. Devorah Publishing, 2005. This work is intended to form the background for a meaningful devotion to prayers. 112 pages. Paper.

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

Refuge reaches back more than seventy years to give voice to the last generation of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The film traces the lives of Holocaust survivors and refugees who today live in Chicago at Selfhelp, a home that has provided refuge for more than 1,000 elderly Central European Jews since the end of World War II. Told through the eyewitness experiences of Selfhelp’s residents and founders, this is the story of remarkable courage and resilience. You will fall in love with these extraordinary people and be moved by their stories. Order at: www.storiesofselfhelp.film.com

New! DEPARTURE AND RETURN: Trips to and Memories from Roth, Germany.
By Walter Roth. Amazon Kindle, 2013. In the summer of 1938, nine-year-old Walter Roth arrived in Chicago with his immediate family after they escaped Nazi Germany. Growing up in Hyde Park, he was a typical American immigrant teen. However, a trip in 1953 back to Roth, his hometown in Germany, proved to be a turning point on which would begin a lifelong journey exploring his roots. This project grew into the creation of a memorial in Roth to commemorate the Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust, and his continued involvement with his village, to which he has traveled with his wife, Chaya, their children and grandchildren to explore his family’s tragic past. The memoir includes the last letters received from his family trapped in Germany. Illustrated, 165 pages. Paper.

Newly Revised Edition!
THE FATE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIES: Transmission and Family Dialogues.
By Chaya H. Roth with the voices of Hannah Diller and Gitta Fajerstein. Amazon Kindle, 2013. Part oral history, part psychological exploration. After her father’s murder in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the author fled with mother Hannah and sister Gitta from Berlin to Belgium, France, and Italy, scrambling on foot up the Alps, hiding in primitive stone caves, and in a Dorothean convent. The book also charts their escape to Palestine in 1945, assisted by soldiers of the Jewish Brigade. The book uses interviews, diary entries, and psychological analysis to reveal how each generation has passed on memories of the War and the Shoah to the next. Roth asserts that Holocaust memories engender values, ideals, and beliefs, just as trauma can engender vitality and hope. Those learning about the Holocaust will find in this book both an intimate depiction of the trauma endured by Jews during World War II, and its ramifications in the present day. Finally, this work speaks to the remaining survivor generations who struggle with issues of Holocaust transmission, wondering about the value, necessity and manner in which Holocaust memories are handed down. Previously published by academic publisher Palgrave Macmillan, this revised edition makes The Fate of Holocaust Memories available in an affordably-priced paperback format. Illustrated. Bibliography and Index. 295 pages.

A Film by Ethan Bensinger
REFUGE: STORIES OF THE SELFHELP HOME
(2012, 60 minutes.)

A compassionate oral history and psychological exploration by Chaya Roth, Ph.D., and a moving memoir by her husband, CJHS President Emeritus Walter Roth

(See WR’s other books on page 11)
**SHORT SEA SAGAS.** By Harold Berc. Athena Press, 2000. Extraordinary sea experiences, gathered out of the author's own readings in maritime lore for over fifty years. Mutinies, unimaginable sinkings, mystery ships sailing for years without crews, sin at sea, accounts of piracy, wartime disasters, and phenomena of the unknown are among the subjects recounted in quick and pungent studies. Berc provides a separate chapter on his own dramatic World War II naval service aboard the *USS Washington* at Guadalcanal and the *USS Reno* in the battle of Leyte Gulf, and later as National President of AMVETS. In his long, full life, Harold Berc was a journalist, an attorney, and a valued Board member and benefactor of the CJHS. 190 pages. Paper.

**THE CURSE OF GURS: Way Station to Auschwitz.** By Werner L. Frank and Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon Kindle, 2012. In an October 1940 *aktion*, Jews from the States of Baden and the Pfalz/Saar were gathered at Vichy's Gurs internment camp, then in the Parisian suburb of Drancy, where they faced a final deportation to Auschwitz. 408 pages. Paper.


**Ethnic Politics**


**BRIDGES TO AN AMERICAN CITY: A Guide to Chicago’s Landsmanshaften 1870 to 1990.** By Sidney Sorkin. Peter Lang American University Studies, 1993. Valuable overview of the hundreds of service organizations, named after their Old World origins, that were a significant part of the Jewish immigrant experience. A primary reference on the subject for urbanologists, historians, and sociologists, the book is the result of a ten-year labor of love, 480 pp.

Books are now available in various formats and at various prices—from e-tailers, at bookstores (if you are lucky enough to find one), and on loan from public libraries—so the only publications in this issue with listed prices are those published by the Society and available for purchase from our office.
Central Synagogue of Chicago, formerly the South Side Hebrew Congregation, is now located on the ninth floor of Water Tower Place, 845 North Michigan Avenue. First located at Indiana and 34th, then at 59th and Michigan, and later at 74th and Chappel in South Shore, the congregation moved to the Near North Side in the 1970s, and to its current home on the Magnificent Mile in 2010. Central Synagogue is celebrating its 125th anniversary. On that Sunday afternoon I took the elevator to join in the festivities, which featured a slide lecture, “Chicago Jewry: From Maxwell Street to Suburbia,” by our own Irving Cutler.

When I lived in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, my family, led by its patriarch, my zayde, Jacob Kleinbort, davened at a small synagogue, Moor Chaim, located at 948 North Rockwell Street. We walked to shul. We men and boys sat in the pews on the main floor of the sanctuary. Only the women and little children climbed the stairs to the balcony in this Orthodox synagogue.

My visit to the Central Synagogue for Dr. Cutler’s lecture involved walking just two blocks from my condominium, taking an elevator to Suite 913E, and joining with almost a hundred others in a wonderful Sunday afternoon experience. Mazel Tov to the Central Synagogue on its anniversary!

**President’s Column**

*Continued from page 2*

**AMERICAN JEWISH LITERATURE**

Recently, a discussion in the literary/academic world about the origins of American Jewish literature was sparked by a new book, *Roth Unbound: A Writer and His Books* by Claudia Roth Pierpont (no relation to her subject, Philip Roth), and the review by Martin Amis in *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* (October 17). Amis states that in Philip Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint*, “the tensions and conflicts of the Jewish American experience are reduced to their core: shikas.”

Critics have proclaimed this to be the dumbest sentence they have ever read on the subject of Jewish American literature. The implication is that the tensions and conflicts in our experiences are chiefly sexual. This simply is not accurate. Yes, many males in American Jewish culture never move past an adolescent fascination with, and fear of, the imaginary woman that “shiksa” denotes.

Our literature did not begin circa 1950 with Philip Roth or that graduate of my (now shuttered) Lafayette Grammar School, Saul Bellow. Amis chooses to ignore or dismiss significant Jewish American writers of earlier eras, such as Sholem Asch, Abraham Cahan, Edna Ferber, Michael Gold, Albert Halper, Ben Hecht, Meyer Levin, Clifford Odets, Elmer Rice, Isaac Rosenfeld, Sam Ross, Leo Rosten, Henry Roth, Louis Zara, and many, many others.

**THE PEW SURVEY: A PORTRAIT OF JEWISH AMERICANS**

The Pew Research Center conducted a survey in the first part of 2013, the first-ever independent study of American Jews. It looks at who we are, what our strengths and concerns are, and how we are changing.

The study estimates that the American Jewish population is 6.6 million—5.3 million adults, and 1.3 million children being raised at least partly Jewish. Thus, we continue to be the largest Jewish community in the world. (Israel currently has a population of six million Jews.)

The study affirms that the Jewish connection for American Jewry is weakening. About one in five identifies as a cultural/ancestral Jew, not a Jew by religion. This phenomenon is not restricted to the Jewish community. Americans overall are becoming more secular. Differences between religious and non-religious Jews are predictable. The latter identify less with formal expressions of Judaism and Jewish communal life and are more prone to intermarriage and not raising their children Jewish. They tend to be an ever-growing cohort in the younger generation. Among non-Orthodox Jews, the Pew survey found, the rate of intermarriage rises to 69% percent among Jews without denomination. Over all, intermarriage has risen to 58% from 45% in 1990, and 17% in 1970. 45% of intermarried Jews are raising their children as Jews or partially Jewish.

**THE PEW SURVEY AND CHICAGO**

Peter Friedman of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation in Chicago estimates that locally, intermarriage is 37% to 44%, according to Pew. A higher proportion of Chicago area intermarried families, 49%, are raising their children exclusively Jewish. 50% of Chicago Jews have traveled to Israel, as compared to 43% nationally.
Remembering Sidney Sorkin: Educator, Historian, Author, CJHS Activist

“He was an educator with a capital E.”
This description appears in the obituary for Sidney Sorkin, age 90, published on November 3, 2013, in the Chicago Tribune and in the local Jewish press.

Sid was assistant principal of Bowen High School for many of his thirty years in the Chicago Public Schools, and principal of the religious schools of South Shore Temple and Chicago Sinai Congregation. He was very proud of his seven well-educated grandchildren, and their names and the names of their colleges are listed in the obituary.

His involvement in the plans and achievements of the CJHS began in our early days. By January 1978 he was a member of our Board of Directors, and with his wife, Shirley, a member of the audio-visual committee, intending to produce material on Chicago Jewish history for local TV. He began writing articles for our periodical, originally called Society News. His first contribution, in October 1979, was “A Ride Down Roosevelt Road, 1920-1940,” a charming, first-person narrative about a streetcar ride, based on good historical research. (Sid Sorkin was a native South Sider.)

He wrote “A Hero’s Story: The Death of Sammy Meisenberg,” about a Jewish Chicagoan, a soldier under General Pershing in the pursuit of Pancho Villa, who was the only American casualty in the capture of Vera Cruz. He wrote about the twenty Chicago Public Schools named for Jews. He spoke and wrote about Jewish installment dealers in Chicago (in his research he was able to identify more than 450 of them by name).

Landsmanschaften and vereins were aid and mutual benefit societies created by immigrants from the same towns and/or with the same ideologies, to serve as sources of comfort, camaraderie, and support for the strangers in a strange land. As far back as 1980, Sid had been researching such organizations (the Mariampoler, the Plonsker), hoping to bring his material together in a book. When our Society mounted the exhibit “Landsmanshaftin in Chicago” at Spertus in November 1989, Sid contributed a wealth of photographs and artifacts.


His last article in CJH (Year-End 2001) was “Reel Men: Chicago’s Movie Exhibitors.” It displayed yet another area of his knowledge.

Sidney Sorkin was predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Shirley, née Levy. He is survived by his sons Samuel (Debbie) and David (Shifra Sharlin), seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

May his memory be for a blessing.
THE BOOK ISSUE

- Fall Reports: Milwaukee Tour and Two Open Meetings
- Shalom Cousin Ann
- Eight-Page List of Publications by Our Members
- Sidney Sorkin Memorial

Our History and Mission

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977, and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 at an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Science and Industry by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the American Jewish Congress. Now in our 36th “double chai” year, the mission of the Society continues to be the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open meetings, tours, and educational outreach to youth. The Society does not maintain its own archives, but seeks out written, spoken, and photographic records and artifacts, and responsibly arranges for their donation to libraries and archives.

About the Society

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

- A subscription to Chicago Jewish History.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is $10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- 10% discount on purchases at the Spertus Store.

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.

Pay Your Dues Online

Visit our website to pay dues with credit card or PayPal. Buy our tribute cards and books, see announcements of upcoming events, and read issues of Chicago Jewish History. www.chicagojewishhistory.org

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

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Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials

The card design features the Society’s handsome logo. Inside, our mission statement and space for your personal message. Pack of five cards & envelopes $18.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at $5.00 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to the CJHS office, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803. Chicago IL 60605-1901. You may also order online: Visit www.chicagojewishhistory.org