

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
הביטו אל-צור הצבנתם



chicago jewish historical society

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CHICAGO JEWISH History

Chicago's Havurot Boast Varied History During Recent Decades

Alternative Religious Gatherings Provide Differing Solutions for Rootlessness in City

By Joe Kraus

In 1973 *The First Jewish Catalogue*, a popular guide to Judaism that sought to reconcile observance with the energy of the late 1960s and early 1970s youth movement, described a new phenomenon within the American Jewish world: the havurah. "One answer to our quest for fellowship and joy," it wrote, "seems to be emerging from the youth culture – the creation of a new form of extended family: communes, co-ops, and, within the Jewish counter-culture, the havurah." That idea it suggested, the idea of a small group of Jewish families or individuals making a commitment to observe Judaism communally, had the potential to revitalize Jewish life in the future.

In the 20 years since then – and the 26 years since the first havurah-like group was established at the University of Chicago – havurot in the Chicago area have created a colorful history. While the movement probably peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s, its roots go back to the 1960s and it remains vital today. Different communities in different parts of the city and suburbs have interpreted the havurah concept to fit their differing needs and so there has been a wide variety of groups in the area. Some have attracted younger, more transient populations and so have flourished and then disbanded. Others, consisting more often of several families of similar age, have remained together long enough to watch infants grow up to go through Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

Although there is no clear-cut definition of what a havurah is, a typical one uses Jewish observance as a means of creating a sense of community that many of its members cannot find elsewhere. Phyllis Toback, who with her husband and children was active in a Hyde Park area havurah from about 1982 through 1986, said that many of the people in her havurah felt rootless as newcomers to the city. "Most of us did not have family living in Chicago," she said. "This was a way of creating an extended family for us."

The Tobacks' group brought together a wide variety of temperaments

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Summer Tours Another Success

The summer tours of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society are just one of its many continuing projects. Ever since it started in 1977, the Society has been giving the Jewish community of Chicago the opportunity to go on tours of Jewish interest. I have had the good fortune to go on the first three tours this summer and would have gone with Irv Cutler on the last one except I have already done it three times. This is being written before his tour but I already know that he did a great job, as he always does.

The tours can be viewed on three levels:

1. A pleasant way to spend a summer Sunday afternoon
2. A chance to learn of Jewish activity in a particular geographical area.
3. An opportunity to understand the motivation which has enabled the Jew-

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The alternative Jewish worship and discussion groups called havurot may have begun less than 30 years ago, but they have already appeared throughout Chicago's neighborhoods and suburbs as a new and distinctive way for people to explore Judaism. With many havurot still going strong, they remain vital, if seldom seen, elements of the city's Jewish community.

Chicago Jewish History editor Joe Kraus, himself active in an unnamed North Side area havurah, has spoken with several long-time havurah members in an effort to trace the story of groups that have left little formal record of their doings. He invites readers who have personal experiences in Chicago area havurot to submit them in writing and so help us preserve this chapter in Chicago's Jewish history.

President's Message

We begin another year of our activities with renewed vigor and plans for an exciting new year. Our summer trips were again a sold-out success, topped this year by our first trip to Jewish communities located in Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan.

We also received many letters and comments from our members concerning the article in our *Chicago Jewish History* publication recalling the *Romance of a People* pageant produced at Chicago's 1933 World's Fair. Some of the correspondences we received is printed elsewhere in this journal. Needless to say, they have been a source of deep satisfaction to us and a reflection of the wonderful memories that we have recalled with all those who participated in this splendid event. It has also inspired us to continue our research on the role of the pageants in *Chicago Jewish History*.

This current issue contains a description of Ben Hecht's pageant, *We Will Never Die*, which was produced in 1943. In this connection, an Israeli professor on leave from Tel Aviv University contacted us enlisting our support for a project which he wishes to undertake to make a film about the Jewish pageants. Any one of our readers who would be interested in such a project should contact us. We would like to obtain your help in this creative undertaking.

As we are on the subject of World Fairs, the Jewish Archives of Spertus Museum has mounted an exhibit on the second floor of the Spertus building containing posters, fliers and other materials pertaining



President
Walter Roth

to the Jewish involvement in the 1893 and 1933 World's Fairs. It is well worth viewing.

Our recent booklet published by the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund containing stories on "Chicago's Jewish Street Peddlers" and "Memories of Lawndale" is continuing to receive wide acceptance. The booklet can be purchased at leading Chicago Jewish book stores. We also have sold almost all of our first printing of H.L. Meites' *History of the Jews of Chicago*. If you have not purchased this book as yet, I urge you to do so at a special reduced price to our members. Our recent publication entitled *Synagogues of Chicago* is also still available in a limited quantity. This book can be purchased by calling our office.

We shall soon have our first meeting for all of our members and resume our other activities. We look forward to seeing you at that time. In the meantime I wish you all the very best for the New Year. □

design these projects, and the colloquium will encourage the development of creative options for the market area. Representatives of civic and ethnic organizations will be invited to attend and to enter into dialogue with the presenters.

Zashin is well qualified to help direct such a colloquium. As director of the Levine Hillel Center at the University, the first Jewish institution to locate in the vicinity of Maxwell Street in many decades, he knows the area as well as many of its merchants. In addition, he helped the Levine Center win a grant to develop an exhibit about the old Jewish neighborhoods.

For more information on participating in the colloquium, contact Elliot Zashin at the Levine Center at (312) 829-1595. □

Society Welcomes New Members

In the wake of another summer of successful tours, the Society is pleased to announce a number of new members. We welcome them and urge them to participate in our efforts to preserve the record of Chicago Jewry.

Harold Alper
Mr. & Mrs. Paul
Boender

Mr. & Mrs. Charles
A. Cohn

Philip Drebnin
Mr. & Mrs. Milton
Fields

Michael Fisch
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald
Franks

Kenneth Gardner
Joseph Glossberg

Harold Halperin
Kate Kinser

Arthur Levin

Ted Lowitz

Robinn Magid

Mildred Mallin

Joseph Marcus

Becky Patner

Esther Probis

Readmore, Inc.

Shirley Rosenthal

Ernest Rubinstein

Gloria Schachtel

Edward Schuman

Sol Segal

Eve Shulruff

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel

Siegel

Rabbi William

Smason

Shelby Tennant

Janet Gerson Tribich

Hyman Warshawsky

Harold Weinberg

Sylvia Wolfe

We would like to invite our new and continuing members to take part in the full range of Society activities. In addition to our quarterly open meetings, we have ongoing committees responsible for conducting oral histories, constructing a Chicago Jewish photo archive, working toward cemetery preservation and increasing Society membership. Call the office at (312) 663-5634 if you are interested in more information.

We urge you as well to consider giving memberships as gifts to friends, family and all the people you know who have left Chicago but not gotten it out of their hearts. □

Maxwell Street Market Colloquium Planned

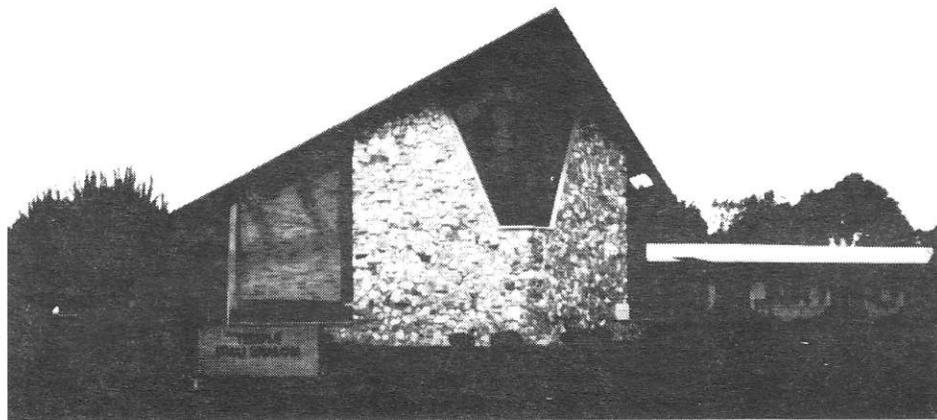
A group of academics, historians and current and former Maxwell Street area residents will hold a colloquium on the historic market to determine its place in Chicago's history as well as to examine approaches to save it from imminent destruction.

The colloquium, co-directed by Society board member Elliot Zashin, will bring together persons with academic and practical experience in a variety of fields and specializations, including history, urban studies, urban planning, architecture, museum development, sociology, and economics for a day long gathering on May 23, 1993 at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The Maxwell Street Market has

been diminished year by year. Virtually all of the residences in the area have been torn down and most of the commercial district has moved elsewhere due to the development plans of the City Department of Urban Renewal and the University. Few traces of the older ethnic groups can be found. Except for a small number of stores and eateries, what remains is large and varied open-air market where a heterogeneous crowd of shoppers bargain and buy every Sunday of the year from street vendors mainly of Hispanic, African-American or Asian origin.

One objective of the colloquium is to propose a number of alternative methods of conserving the historical and physical presence of the market area. There have been a number of innovative projects in other cities to preserve sites of significance to local communities, particularly groups that have not received much attention from local historiography. The project participants include individuals who have helped



B'nai Sholom, Benton Harbor, Michigan

Tours

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ish people to survive.

The tours were organized by Leah Axelrod with her usual consummate skill and attention to important details.

The first tour, to the South Shore area, was led by Charles Bernstein. He not only covered Oak Woods Cemetery and many of the synagogues in the area at various periods, but also enhanced his commentary with much anecdotal material about persons involved. It was interesting to note the effects of demographics on the non-survival of the Jewish presence in this area.

The second tour was innovative in that it was a walking tour of Lake view, a new departure for the Society. With the weather cooperating, Mark Mandle, currently a resident of Lake View, took us on a pleasant, informative trip of two hours which included Anshe Emet (formerly Sholom), Anshe Mizrach (formerly Anshe Emes) and "Jewish Graceland" Cemetery.

The third tour had Leah and Judge Sheldon Gardner as guides. Leah told of the results of her historical research and Sheldon of his experiences in the formerly popular Jewish resort area of Michigan. We stopped in Benton Harbor at B'nai Sholom, a modern building. We also saw two other synagogues as well as the cemetery. Our local guide was Joe Marcus, a long-time resident and polished raconteur. He told us that Jews were so eager to own land (since they could not do so in Eastern Europe) that they bought land for farming even if it was poor. Many came there during the Depression. We saw many of the resorts to which Jews from Chicago came by the thousands during the summers.

We then went to South Haven where Hy Warshawsky showed us the first Hebrew Congregation, founded in 1917, now with a membership of 20 families. The cemetery is sparsely used because, in the early days, Jews were buried in Chicago. We also saw many former resorts and many new condominiums.

The reduction in factories supplying automotive parts has depressed the eco-

nomie activity in the community and the lure of the big city has drained away many from the younger generation. Nevertheless, the Jews are still optimistic that they will survive there. In South Haven, the Sisterhood held a bake sale recently which raised \$1000 for the local hospital fund drive. This was done under the guidance of Becky Mendelson Patner whose family had owned the Mendelson Resort.

One of those enjoying the trip, Iona Levenfeld, gave a thorough summary of the activities at the Workmen's Circle Camp and told of the effect it had on her life.

From this brief summary, you can see how these tours have helped the Jews of Chicago understand and appreciate Chicago's Jewish History.

—Norman D. Schwartz □

Michael Ebner, North Shore Expert, Next Society Speaker

Michael Ebner, a historian of Chicago's North Shore area, will be the speaker at the Society's fall membership meeting. He will talk about the development of the Jewish communities in the Chicago's north shore suburban areas.

A professor of history at Lake Forest College and the author of the prize winning book *Creating Chicago's North Shore*, Ebner is one of the leading authorities on the subject.

As most Society members are aware, the North Shore is the most recent Jewish population center in the Chicago area and so its history should be of particular interest.

As always, the membership meeting and presentation are open to all members and their guests without charge. A social hour begins at 1 p.m. and the address starts at 2 p.m.

The meeting will be held at Emanuel Congregation, 5959 N. Sheridan Rd. □

Marks Nathan Holds Reunion

On Sunday, July 12, 1992, a reunion was held for those who had been residents of the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home. In the years 1906 to 1946, 5000 boys and girls were lovingly nurtured by this institution which was started with a bequest in the will of Marks Nathan who died in 1903.

The event drew former residents from as far away as California. The walls of the banquet room and lobby were decorated with reprints of pictures and several tables in the lobby had photo albums and other memorabilia.

On the program were Dr. Robert Bloom, executive director of the Jewish Children's Bureau; Mark Levy, President of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Children's Bureau; and Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf whose mother was a social worker on the staff of Marks Nathan Home. Presentations for outstanding personal and business achievement were made to six individuals who then made brief responses. This was followed by entertainment featuring Hasha Musha and the Kiev Klezmer Band.

The camaraderie was wonderful. The rediscovering of old friends and sharing memories was heartwarming. The success of this event was in no small way due to the efforts of Joyce Leviton and her staff of volunteers. I was happy to be an observer at this joyous occasion.

The most poignant part of the day was a comment made by a person who said with tears in his eyes, "Marks Nathan saved my life."

—Norman D. Schwartz □

Society Announces Guidelines for Photo Contest

The Society's Photography committee has released the rules governing the first photography in the Society's history. Open to amateur and professionals alike, the contest is held in honor of Moselle Schwartz, for many years the chief photographer for Chicago Jewish History.

The contest is seeking photographs that have an identifiable Jewish theme, that were taken in the Chicago metropolitan area and that were photographed some time between June 1, 1992 and December 31, 1992. They may be black and white or color and should be at least 8" x 10".

Each photograph entered should be accompanied by a contest entry form. To receive a copy of the form as well as further guidelines for the competition, call the Society office at (312) 663-5634. □

Chicago's Havurot

continued from page 1

who often had different ideas about what they hoped to get out of their shared rituals. "It was a group of people that had a lot of ambiguity about their spirituality," she said. Some of the group's members came out of non-religious families, some from actively Zionist or socialist backgrounds that had been anti-religious, and still others came out of orthodox upbringings. "It was kind of a safe place for all of us to live out those complexities we felt," she said.

As far as the level of ritual in their observances, the Tobacks' havurah seemed to have struck a compromise between the davening centered worship of some groups and the social, discussion character of others. "The main interest for us was that this was something we could do on shabbas and our kids could do it with us. We could have our discussions and they could play together," she said.

While the official oldest havurah is in Boston and the National Havurah Institute is in Philadelphia, Chicago has nonetheless played an important role in the movement's history. When several junior faculty, graduate students, Hillel rabbis and Hyde Park area Jews began meeting together at the University of Chicago Hillel House in

1965, they established the Upstairs Minyan, one of the first organizations in the country that conformed more or less to the havurah model. In fact, according to long-time Upstairs Minyan member Marian Neudel, Boston's Chavurat Shalom, cited by *The First Jewish Catalogue* as well as Bernard Reisman's 1977 study *The Chavurah* as the country's oldest, was co-founded by a pair of Upstairs Minyan alumni.

The Upstairs Minyan included two rabbis in its original membership but was officially leaderless. Attracting an average of 10 to 15 people to each of its weekly Saturday morning services, the group still has about 20-25 active members according to Neudel.

The center of each weekly service has always been a leaderless prayer session, but the group has traditionally made time for education and discussion as well. As long-time member Stuart Starr said, "Some people have come to the Minyan with strong davening skills and others have come and learned." Neudel adds, "It's intended to be an educational experience. Some members know quite a bit about Judaism from being long-time Minyan members."

Unlike traditional congregations, the Upstairs Minyan – in keeping with the havurah model – is satisfied to remain as small a group as it is. That way members can continue to know everyone else in the group intimately and can continue to carry out the bulk of the group's business

communally. Explaining that members take turns leading the service and discussion sessions, Neudel said that the group runs considerably more economically than most synagogues. "We have dues that we pay annually and we use those for tzedakah and refreshments. Our annual budget runs into the three digits."

Such economy is an attractive component of the havurah alternative for many havurah members. For some havurot that meet in one another's homes and serve potluck dinners, the only communal expense is postage for the announcements of topics and meeting locations.

Self-sufficiency carries with it another price, though: unusual demands on members' time and energy. People with full-time work or full-time studies, many of them with the additional responsibility of raising families, have a hard time arranging and leading a religious service, discussion or communal meal every month or so. As Stuart Starr said, "One of the reasons some havurah have fallen apart is just that the experience is too intense."

As a result, countless havurot have come and gone in the Chicago area. Since even the best known and longest lasting kept few records – budgets of three digits or less don't leave much of a paper trail – many of those havurot have vanished without a trace. The Toback's havurah, like many others, never even

took a name for itself. When members talk of it today, they refer to it simply as "the havurah."

Gary Belenke, who has been active in havurot both in Rogers Park and Oak Park, said that havurot can expect to benefit from an initial burst of enthusiasm from their members but that they become increasingly difficult to maintain after about two years. "I've discovered havurot are very difficult to keep going. They are very easy to start."

Belenke knows what he's talking about when it comes to establishing havurot. In 1976 he helped found Minyan Sheini, one of the city's best known and most enduring havurot. Like most young adults attracted to the havurah idea, Belenke was new to town and feared he wouldn't find any immediate closeness in a traditional synagogue setting. Managing to meet a couple of other couples sharing the same impulse, Belenke and his wife convened a small meeting at B'nai Zion, a conservative synagogue in Rogers park.

"We got together after I moved to Rogers Park from Columbus, Ohio," he said. "I was looking for something that was like the Saturday morning davening group I'd known at the Ohio State University Hillel. My question was, how do you take a Hillel situation and plunk it down in the middle of a neighborhood?"

Belenke and the members of what came to be

"I was looking for something that was like the Saturday morning davening group I'd known at the Ohio State University Hillel. My question was, how do you take a Hillel situation and plunk it down in the middle of a neighborhood." – Gary Belenke

Minyan Sheini answered that question by arranging to meet regularly at B'nai Zion where they conducted their own services separate from the congregation. "We met there on a regular basis from 1976 to about 1987," he said. "It was a fairly standard (havurah) structure – which meant almost no structure at all."

Among the people Minyan Sheini eventually attracted was Stuart Starr, who remained active in the Upstairs Minyan at the University of Chicago after he moved north to Rogers Park, but who also sought a nearer alternative. He said that the Minyan Sheini service, like that of the Upstairs Minyan, has traditionally been open to members of varying religious backgrounds. "It's not orthodox although it spans the spectrum of those who observe kashrut and those who don't. A number of people who've come to the minyan over the years haven't had much background at all," he said.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Minyan Sheini found itself at the heart of a thriving Rogers Park area group of havurot. It had a number of ties, including some shared members, with Am Chai, a group organized in large measure to serve as an outlet for political energy within a Jewish setting. That group often went to protest marches together and a splinter of it went on to produce the alternative Jewish publication *Chutzpah*. Together, Am Chai and Minyan Sheini were even able to maintain a weekly religious school for a time.

Also not far away was yet another version of the havurah model at Congregation Ner Tamid. Where Minyan Sheini members got along well with their host congregation at B'nai Zion, they never saw all of their members join the larger congregation. At Ner Tamid, the egalitarian minyan there established a model that has been followed at other congregations throughout the Chicago area.

Rich Moline, a founding member of the egalitarian minyan, explained that the impetus for its founding came from members' dissatisfaction with the limited role women were permitted in conservative services. "Many of us came out of a traditional or conservative background," he said. Reconciling that background to their social beliefs became difficult when, "whether a woman could give a d'var Torah became an issue."

So, minyan members established an alternative service featuring equal gender participation that eventually permitted them to join the congregation without losing their autonomy. "When we came in there was some reluctance on their (Ner Tamid's) part," Moline said. "You know, they wondered 'who are these kids' and all. But now it's a very warm relationship... We pay dues to the minyan and the minyan then pays some percentage of that so that all members of the minyan are Ner Tamid members as well."

Since its founding in 1978, the minyan has flourished. "When the group started most of us were single or recently married. It's to the point now where we have three different programs for kids (of different ages) during the Torah reading," Moline said. "We're about to have our first b'nai mitzvah. It's really developed into a community."

Minyan Sheini, in contrast, has had to curtail much of its activity. No longer meeting weekly at B'nai Zion, the group now holds monthly discussions at members' homes. Starr explained that while many members now have other places for regular worship, the group continues its meetings because, "what's held us together, to a large extent, is personal friendships."

Belenke, who moved with his family from Rogers Park to Oak Park and so was less able to participate regularly in Minyan Sheini activities, has been active in the Shir Ami havurah for the last several years. He said that one reason Minyan Sheini was unable to survive in the way it was originally conceived is that the neighborhood simply attracts a different kind of havurah member. "The positive thing about Minyan Sheini was that being in Rogers Park we always attracted a lot of characters. Shir Ami is more stable. We have mostly married people," he said.

Suburbs have been hospitable sites for havurot in recent years. In Evanston, the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation has experimented with yet another type of havurah as it has encouraged the formation of smaller groups from within its existing congregation. JRC currently has five different havurot: a sixty-plus havurah for seniors; an inter-faith havurah for families in mixed marriages; a pot-luck havurah that grew out of a singles group victimized by its own success at marrying its members off; a North Shore havurah for families too far from JRC to attend regularly; and a day school family havurah for families whose children attend Jewish day schools.

Harry Goldin, a member of the day school family havurah, said that the smaller groups help make a large congregation feel more inviting. "JRC's a large synagogue. I think the havurah makes small networks of people and develops a sense of community within the larger community," he said. "Each person is more involved than just coming to the show."

Leah Oxman, active in JRC's sixty-plus havurah echoed his sentiments. "The basic philosophy behind it is reaching out to other seniors of similar interests," she said. "As in any organization not everybody brings the same energy, but lots of people do participate."

What will become of havurot in the future is hard to predict. While many of the discussion oriented groups are thriving, it seems more difficult for the ones meeting weekly and featuring more ritual to continue. Nevertheless, the impulse behind the original havurot has had an impact on traditional congregations according to Belenke. "Going back fifteen years ago, I thought havurot would make an awful lot of positive things happen," he said. Citing the increasing roles for women and lay members in services as examples, he added, "A lot of good that havurot did has been co-opted by the large congregations."

The havurot, in whatever of the many different variations Chicago has seen over the last quarter century, still remains a possibility for members of the Jewish community, however. As Gary Toback put it, "When it's working, it's really wonderful. People wind up creating a Jewish environment where they can be themselves." □

The response to Society President Walter Roth's article "Jewish Day Shook Chicago" in last quarter's issue of the newsletter was so impressive that we have decided to dedicate the middle section of this issue to responses and additional research on Jewish pageants in Chicago. It is with some chagrin that we acknowledge a rather prominent mistake from the last issue: the large photograph on page 6 was not from the 1933 World's Fair pageant but rather from a subsequent pageant staged in 1943 and written by Chicago's own Ben Hecht. It has proved a fortunate mistake, however; as Mr. Roth's curiosity was so piqued that he had researched and written an article about that second pageant. We should add that we are always grateful to receive written responses to material printed in the newsletter but that we are unable to print all of it that we receive.

Ben Hecht's Pageant Rallied Jewish War Efforts

By Walter Roth

The ten years between the stagings of *Romance of a People* and Chicago's next major Jewish pageant, Ben Hecht's *We Shall Never Die*, saw a dramatic change in the Jewish situation. Where 1933 had been a hopeful year for world Jewry, 1943 marked the darkest time imaginable. Two million European Jews had already been murdered while 4 million more stood on the edge of extermination. The united, enthusiastic, Zionist-oriented groups that had produced the first pageant stood momentarily stunned and seemed unable to formulate any plans for the rescue of those Jews still alive in Europe. Into this melancholy American scene stepped a previously silent group of Jews whose anger and outrage shook American Zionism and culminated in the production of *We Shall Never Die*.

The militant group sponsoring the 1943 Pageant was called the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews. The Committee was originally founded by young members of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, an underground group in Palestine actively engaged in fighting the British restrictive immigration policy then in effect. Their leader was Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of revisionist Zionism, and their enemies were not only the British but also any Jews or Zionists who did not agree with their paramilitary tactics. In America, Peter Bergson lead the Irgun and the Committee; his real name was Hillel Kook but he

chose an alias to protect the family of his late uncle, the former chief Rabbi of Palestine. Bergson had been among those who seceded from the World Zionist Congress in 1935 to form the Irgun under the leadership of Jabotinsky. He had then organized a militant group of young supporters in the United States in the early 1940's; among his most prominent followers was Ben Hecht, the noted Chicago playwright.

Ben Hecht was then at the height of his fame. After years as a Chicago newspaper reporter and writer of fiction, he had gone to Hollywood and became the author of many successful screenplays, including *Scarface*, *Twentieth Century* and *Wuthering Heights*. With Charles MacArthur, he wrote one of the biggest hits ever produced in America, *The Front Page*. Sometime in the middle 1930s, Hecht became enraged by the anti-Jewish persecutions in Nazi Germany. He wrote articles, plays and advertisements attacking Nazism and calling for action. In early 1943 he joined the Bergson group and began to write the script for a Pageant to call American Jews to action by, among other things, the formation of a Jewish army.

As Hecht worked on his pageant, mainstream Jewish opposition grew to the plans for its production. The Bergson group was anathema to the Jewish leadership in New York, in Chicago and throughout the country. On December 2, 1942, a nation-wide day of mourning was proclaimed by the mainstream Jewish organizations — a day for fasting, ten-minute work stoppages and prayers. A week later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with a delegation of Jewish leaders at the White House, but the only result was a statement by F.D.R. condemning the Nazis. But specific details of the murderous onslaught then taking place in Eastern Europe were reaching American Jews and, working

Letters

Dear Mr. Roth,

Thank you for the copy of Chicago Jewish History which arrived today. I read your beautifully-written article with great interest but there is only one important correction I would like to make, with your permission. The photograph on page 6 is not of The Romance of a People, but of Ben Hecht's We Will Never Die which was staged in Chicago as part of a national tour in the spring of 1943.

Concerning the \$100,000 that Weisgal had promised to Weizmann, I think the "critics" you refer to on page 7 were partly right: the sum was collected in New York but the run was by no means a financial loss. The net receipts were about \$200,000, of which half went directly to

Weizmann's Central Refugee Fund and the rest was divided among the New York philanthropic institutions that took part in ticket distribution.

—Atay Citron
Tel Aviv

Dear Mr. Roth,

I enjoyed the story on Jewish Day at the World's fair very much. I was there and can still remember the enormous crowd at Soldier Field.

I was very surprised to read that there were three authors of *Romance of a People*. Both Maurice Samuel and Meyer Weisgal were very close friends of my father, Rabbi Solomon Goldman. Maurice Samuel gave a eulogy at his funeral and was the recipient of much help from my father on many of his lean days. It is just not

possible that my father would have included *Romance of a People* in a book of his essays, *Crisis and Decisions*, without giving credit to people who were responsible for any of the script. Meyer Weisgal's great expertise was public relations and a slight stretching of fact sometimes enters into that profession.

I know that it is sometimes difficult to know the true facts of past years but the work that you personally and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society do is most impressive.

—Gayola Goldman Epstein
Chicago

Dear Mr. Roth,

I always enjoy reading Chicago Jewish History, but I was especially en-

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with Dr. Hayim Greenberg, editor of the Labor Zionist Journal Jewish Frontier, Hecht wrote articles bringing the full horror of the Nazi atrocities to Americans. His article which appeared in the January, 1943 issue of the American Mercury detailed the genocide as vividly as we today know it to have been. He also completed the script for the *We Will Never Die* Pageant.

Mainstream Jewish organizations opposed the Pageant's initial showing in New York's Madison Square Garden on March 9, 1943. The production featured an all-star lineup of talent: Kurt Weill wrote the musical score, Moss Hart directed it, Billy Rose produced it and the New York cast was led by Paul Muni, Edward G. Robinson, Luther Adler, Jacob Ben-Ami, Claude Raines, Burgess Meredith and John Garfield. Nevertheless, groups like the American Jewish Congress, led by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, opposed the production and saw it as a perversion of Zionism. Wise had first been offended by the Irgun's full page newspaper ads calling for the paying of ransom to the Romanian government for the rescue of Jews and later by its plan for a Jewish army to fight the Nazis as a Jewish national unit. Such mainstream Jewish organization opposition proved surprisingly ineffective, however; the Pageant was performed twice on the same day in Madison Square Garden, to sold out audiences numbering 40,000 people.

On the evening of May 19, 1943, the Pageant moved to Chicago Stadium. Despite the lack of support for the event by Chicago Jewish organizations, the pageant drew a capacity crowd of 20,000. The Committee for a Jewish Army opened its own offices at 139 North Clark Street in the Sherman Hotel under its executive director, Ernest Byfield, a Chicago business executive and President



Paul Muni

of the Sherman Hotel and College Inn restaurant. The Chicago Committee had acquired the rights to the Pageant after its performance in New York and several other Eastern cities, and had reassembled it in Chicago with Chicago volunteers. Byfield, the local director, was not otherwise identified with Jewish causes and had never before taken an active role in Zionist or Jewish projects.

The Pageant was presented in three sequences. The cast of hundreds included movie stars John Garfield and Burgess Meredith, and the great actor of the Yiddish stage, Jacob Ben-Ami. The three acted as narrators. Leo Kopp of the Chicago Civic Opera Company, conducted the symphony. Cantor Avrum Matthews, a well known Chicago cantor who had led the cantorial singing in the "Romance" ten years earlier, was again the featured singer this night. The actors moved on a stage towering with two tablets containing the Ten Commandments. As Matthews finished chanting the Kol Nidre, Ben-Ami, in white robes as the Rabbi of the Pageant, came onto the stage and, as the audience stood with heads bowed in prayer, he intoned:

"We are here to say our prayers for the 2,000,000 who have been killed in Europe because they bear the names of Jews. We are not to weep for them, although our hearts are burdened with their fate. We are here to honor them and to proclaim the victory of their dying. For in our Testament are written the words of Habakkuk, Prophet of Israel: 'They Shall Never Die'."



Ben Hecht

Garfield and Meredith began their narrative while an organ and a chorus hidden behind the stage provided soft music. Alternately, they spoke of the contributions of Jews to the welfare of humanity. As 150 black-robed women each carrying a lighted candle filed onto the stage for each name mentioned, Garfield and Meredith called the roll of famous Jews throughout history: "Moses ... David ... Solomon ... the Prophets ... Spinoza ... Maimonides ... Mortaigne ... Mendelsohn ... Disraeli ... Zangwill ... Proust ... Frence ...

Bizet ... Saint Saens ... Heine ... Brandeis ... Freud ... Einstein ... We summon this fame not to boast, but to give strength to hearts that have forgotten in their sorrow the shield, the sword, the valor and the indestructibility of their people."

As the lights dimmed, there appeared on the stage a "Table of Judgment". On one side of the table were the Axis leaders and on the other side sat the delegates of the victorious United Nations, who were there to pass judgment on the defeated enemy.

Up through the gigantic tablets came a long procession of the slaughtered Jews - men, women and children who chanted "Remember Us" as they appeared before the audience. "Remember us - we are the children of Freiberg, hanged and left dangling from our kitchen windows. Remember us - we are from the town of Szcuccin in Poland ... All of us were killed before sundown. Remember us - in Lublin, 500 of our women and children were led to the market place, put against the wall and machine-gunned."

The procession of the living corpses and their sorrowful stories continued, until the final episode of the Pageant was heralded with a call to arms and vengeance. Called "Jews in the War", this sequence began with Garfield and Meredith dressed in American military uniforms, but in place of the dead victims, this time U.S. soldiers, sailors and marines marched on the stage. The narrators read accounts of Jewish war heroes. There was Irving Strobinger, a 22 year old Jewish soldier from Brooklyn who telegraphed the final message from Corregidor and who was a prisoner of war. There was Maurice Levy, a tall, lean Chicago soldier, who was called "The Blue Crane" and



Kurt Weill



The Stage at Chicago Stadium

who killed 25 Japanese until a sniper's bullet stilled him. The Nazis said "The Jews cannot fight," jeered the narrator, "Wait until Barney Ross gets to Berlin." Ross, the world middleweight boxing champion raised in Chicago's Maxwell Street area, would go on to win a U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor for his war-time contributions.

As two soldiers blew Reveille, the orchestra played "The Star Spangled Banner" and the audience cheered, while the narrator spoke:

"Every Jew who fights today is not only a soldier, but also an avenger. They fight on all fronts but we feel the stateless Jews have a right to form an army of their own and to strike back at Hitler under their own banner - the Star of David. The corpse of a people lies on the steps of civilization. But we here tonight have a voice. Let us raise it. Perhaps the dying will hear and find hope. Perhaps the four freedoms will hear it, and find tongue. It is the voice of prayer."

"Hatikvah" was sung as the entire cast gathered on the blazingly lighted stage with the American flag and the Star of David being held side by side. Cantor Avrum Matthews then led the audience in the rendition of the Kaddish. The narration concluded:

"They shall never die though they were slaughtered with no weapons in their hands. Though they fill the dark land of Europe with the smoke of their massacre, they shall never die. For they are part of something greater, higher and stronger than the dreams of their executioners."

As a one night performance, *They Shall Never Die* was a great success. It was widely reported by the secular press. The *Tribune*, *The Chicago Times* and the *Daily News* and other Chicago papers carried lead stories on the event,

with great sympathy and warmth. The Jewish press, however, almost ignored its presentation. As an example, the *Sentinel*, in its May 27, 1943 issue, one week after the Pageant took place, carried a short note by one of its feature writers, Dr. G. George Fox, which stated that while the Pageant was full of historical errors..."Nevertheless, it was a fine spectacle." Fox called on Byfield and his Committee to repeat the Pageant for non-Jews so they could "really see what has been done to the Jews in Europe. We know, they don't."

From Chicago, *They Shall Never Die* moved to the Hollywood Bowl where it was performed by many more famous movie stars to a mass audience. That production seems to have been the last for the pageant. Splendidly written and produced, performed by stars, it was presented to an American Jewry that was warned to see its main message as a call for "foolhardy" Jewish action. Of course, this is what differentiated *They Shall Never Die* from 1933's *Romance of a People*. The *Romance* was presented as a non-controversial pageant of the glory of Jewish history and the emergence of Jewish nationalism in Palestine. It made no direct demands on its audience. While Hitler had come to power, extermination of Jews was not yet in grasp of human imagination in 1933. Ten years later, extermination was a fact. Yet American Jewish leadership seemed powerless to help and the masses of Jews appeared bewildered by the events. The replica of the huge Tabernacles that stood on the stage of the Chicago Stadium on the evening of May 19, 1943 and the Pageant that was there presented are worth remembering. But unlike the glorious feeling of good fellowship and heroic history that were the legacy of *The Romance of a People*, only dismay is the legacy of *They Shall Never Die*. □

Letters

continued from page 9

tranced with the article on the Romance of a People pageant. Unfortunately I couldn't find myself in picture you published. It is interesting to note that there were details in the article of which I was unaware. So much for being there!

—Bea Fox
Chicago

Dear Mr. Roth,

My brother, Seymour Mandel, sent me your newsletter with the lead story headlined, "Jewish Day Shook Chicago." What memories your account of that unique day evoked in me! I was ten years old when my mother took me and my younger brother, the late Eugene Mandel, to Soldier Field to witness "The Romance of a People."

We were electrified by the spectacle envisioned by Meyer Weisgand the pageant sent our spirits soaring. Suddenly we felt an enormous pride in being Jewish. We hung on every word of the narrator, thrilled to the music and dances. I will never forget the moment when all the lights were extinguished and the huge crowd, on signal, lit matches. Little did we know what symbolism was involved, for that was the year that lights started to go out for people in Germany and subsequently throughout Europe.

It was the first display of the flag of Israel; 15 years before our state would be reborn, a harbinger of that historic moment when the Star of David would be unfurled across our Holy Land. It was also proudly saluted at the Chicago Stadium when Medinat Yisrael became a reality at a massive rally that celebrated that momentous event in 1948.

As a 10 year old I was an ardent Zionist, thanks to my grandmother, the late Ida Gratch who founded the Ladies Volunteers of Zion. I read avidly the accounts in the Chicago Tribune of Jewish Day. I remember seeing photos of Chaim Weizmann in the press. His bald head and small goatee prompted me to tell my mother and father, the late Mollie and Arthur Mandel, that the famous man with his picture in the papers looked exactly like Max Lesser, the shammash in our family business, the Gratch-Mandel Funeral Chapel.

For this 10 year old, Jewish Day was the highlight for me of the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair. I shall never forget it.

—Sidney A. Mandel
Carmichael, CA

Dear Mr. Roth,

I enjoyed your write-up on the "Day (that) Shook Chicago (Jewry)!" I had

come all the way from New Orleans, LA where I was the rabbi, by an overnight train to attend this affair.

I'm sending you a copy of the original manuscript which I sent to the Sentinel with my article on Chicago Jewry. Your readers might enjoy it.

The Tribune that underwrote a repetition of the Pageant for July 6, 1933 was prompted by the joint sponsorship of the orthodox kehilla of Chicago, led by Rabbi M.B. Sacks and by a Mr. Lurie who corresponded on behalf of the Yiddish Jewish Day and Arbeiter Ring in Chicago for purposes of raising funds for the Hebrew schools and Yiddish schools of our city. You can read it in The Daily Jewish Courier of that date.

—Leonard Mishkin
New Orleans

Editor's Note: What follows is the text of the letter Rabbi Mishkin wrote to the Sentinel about the pageant.

The conjunction of such tiny disparate acts, that of lighting a cigarette, a cigar or a pipe, when viewed on a large scale in such large numbers, presented a panorama of planned purpose, programmed succession, a systematical alignment and an hypnotic effect. All the individual actions merged into one grand plan and picture. — Rabbi Leonard Mishkin

On Monday July 3, 1933, 125,000 Jews of Chicago (one third of its total Jewish population) filled the Soldier Field Stadium to celebrate Jewish Day at the World's Fair commemorating a century of progress of our city. Never again, here or anywhere else in the world, would there be such a large crowd of Jews gathered into one place for an entire evening to mark such an occasion.

As darkness enveloped the field and all eyes were turned to the huge stage in the center of the arena, representing the facade of the Temple in Jerusalem, with a huge replica of a scroll opened on one side reading, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and thousands of actors participating in the pageant massed at the other end of the stage and in front of it, one became enthralled, awed, inspired, and reflective — but not because of what one's eyes beheld on the stage. But by something that was unplanned and quite incidental and not by design. As the eyes of the beholder swept across and around the huge stadium, thousands of tiny flashes without cessation lit up, hundreds after hundreds, rolling like

an unending rhythmical wave over the indiscernible heads of the people, as if planned and measured. The conjunction of such tiny disparate acts, that of lighting a cigarette, a cigar or a pipe, when viewed on a large scale in such large numbers, presented a panorama of planned purpose, programmed succession, a systematical alignment and an hypnotic effect. All the individual actions merged into one grand plan and picture.

As a flash it occurred to me then and there that Jewish history — or for that matter all history — if viewed from a certain vantage point in time shows a certain rhythmic movement and design that becomes meaningful.

In 1933 the Chicago Jewish community reached its high water mark of its development. That year did not mark quite 90 years since the first Jew arrived here. Only 85 years back was the first minyan organized; not quite four different generations of Jews could demographically be marked

up as having lived in our city; only 62 years after the Chicago Fire devastated the pioneering Jewish community of our city; only 50 years since the beginning of that great wave of incoming Jews from Russia, Galicia and Romania that formed the old West Side Jewish community and sent waves of Jewish settlers into Lawndale and the Humboldt Park area and the new South Side to build up the largest Jewish community in the U.S. outside of New York; only 25 years since the beautiful Jerusalem city of Chicago began to develop and flourish into a most beautiful, viable, colorful, hustling, bustling Jewish community with a character of its

own, a topographical beauty unsurpassed anywhere in the U.S., teeming with life, activity, movement, affluence and promise; the Sentinel celebrating that year its Bar Mitzvah; and it is barely two months since the Nazis burned books by Jewish authors in Berlin at the "Operaplatz".

Dear Mr. Roth,

I enjoyed reading your article "Jewish Day Shook Chicago." I have a coin that was issued to commemorate this day.

One side shows Moses with the Ten Commandments and said in English, "The Romance of a People," and in Hebrew "And Moses went down to the People."

The other side has a Star of David, the date in Hebrew, and in English, "Century of Progress, 1933, Jewish Day."

The coin is about the size of a half-dollar, is a gold color, and is non-magnetic.

—Frank Nussbaum
Chicago

Editor's Note: Mr. Nussbaum has generously donated this coin to the Society for our archives.

Oral History: Sol Brandzel Interviews Justice Arthur Goldberg

The following is an excerpt from an oral history conducted with the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg by Society member Sol Brandzel on March 19, 1985. Goldberg spent his childhood in Chicago and established himself as a successful attorney and expert on labor law. He served as Secretary of Labor in President Kennedy's cabinet for a year before being appointed to the Supreme Court in 1962. He resigned from the court in 1965 to serve as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President Johnson. He ran for governor on New York in 1970, but was defeated by Nelson Rockefeller. He died in January, 1990.

Goldberg: We lived in a townhouse. You know, a common bathroom arrangement where maybe ten families lived – an old townhouse. And not like the New York tenements. Chicago didn't have high-rises – but still a tenement, maybe a three story complex with maybe nine apartments or so with one bathroom in the middle. Each one had a coal stove, of course, and you had your own coal in the basement, which I used to have to drag up as a kid. But [my father] would bring [new arrivals from Europe] to our house. And as a consequence, I never had a bedroom when I was a kid. I slept in the kitchen on the couch, because whatever bedrooms we had were always in use: six other kids, my mother and father, and all the greeners who stayed with us until they found jobs...

And that's where we lived. And in Chicago, of course [immigrants] didn't have the language. And you perhaps will recall from your family experience that these were the days of no adult education courses. These were the days when you tried to acquire some language...And [my father] tried to acquire some, but he had to make a living. And what living he made until he died was he got employed sort of as an independent contractor. He had his own horse, which was a blind horse – the only thing he could afford – and a blind horse which made its way in Chicago and a wagon. And he worked in a business that was a traditional Jewish business, and that was in the commission business. They called it commission. That's wholesale fruits and vegetables. And he would get up at three o'clock in the morning and go to the old market on Wacker Drive and load up with potatoes. He worked for an outfit – I remember the name – Cohen Commission House. And as I say, he was sort of an independent contractor because he owned his own vehicle. And I used to love to go with him and skip school and go because he sold

potatoes to the hotels downtown and he would deliver. And as a kid I enjoyed that very much, because the chefs in the hotel – I'd go with him – and they would, of course, feed me. And I thought it was a great treat. But you had to get there at four o'clock in the morning, because farmers brought their stuff in every week to that old market. And you were through about two o'clock in the afternoon. It was one of the biggest treats of my childhood. I recall that made me the biggest man on the campus of the old West Side. Since he was there, at the end of the day, the people like himself were given their tip: half-rotten apples. And he'd load up and take them home and I would pass them out in the neighborhood. That was a great treat. You peeled off the rotten part and ate the rest...

Brandzel: As I understand it, you went to Crane [High School]?

Goldberg: Well, of course. I was determined to get an education, but I was on my own [after my father died]. The kids were then all married, and they had their own problems with their families. And some died young. One of my sisters died young, and then one of my brothers died young. So I had to support my mother. So through a combination of factors I had a lot of jobs. I worked in the post office and that's where I met Lillian Herstein who was a teacher of mine at –

Brandzel: My teacher as well.

Goldberg: And she found me sleeping one morning. She was put out with me until I explained to her I was on the night shift at the post office. So I worked there. I worked in the public library as a page they call it, which is a kind of way of paying cheap salaries for an assistant librarian, which is what I actually was. And interesting enough, I worked in a branch that was in our old neighborhood near Halsted Street. I remember the librarian, a small...she was a nice woman. So I went to Crane, which interesting enough, my wife also went to, but not...I was a year ahead of her. I never met her there; I met her much later in a Zionist Group, Avukah Young Zionists.

And I went to Crane. And then I was determined to go to law school. And again the pressure was very great. I had to accumulate money to get into Northwestern Law School. I wanted to go to a good law school. At that time you had an option: You either had a college degree – four years and go to law school – or you could elect to go [before you got your degree] after three years. Then you would go four years to law school. So I chose the easy route: three years. And then I realized I wouldn't be able to make it if I didn't hurry it along. Because if I went to law school, I could get a law job – which I did – and then earn some more money.

So I went to two colleges at one time. I went to Crane and I went to DePaul. When I presented my credentials to North-

western, I had to bring the registrar of DePaul and Crane to make sure I was the same fellow. They would not accept that a person could do that.

Brandzel: How old were you at the time you were seeking entrance?

Goldberg: Well, I finished high school when I was fifteen and a half, and so I entered law school when I was eighteen. So fifteen and a half to eighteen was when I went to Crane and DePaul.

Brandzel: About your experiences before we get into the law practice – there were some great institutions on the West Side: JPI, the Hebrew Institute. Were you involved in any of those?

Goldberg: No. My family...We were so into poverty, and I was really so poverty stricken that it was apolitical, and I never heard [about those things]. And so there wasn't any political discussion. Or who was there to become members? My brothers and sisters were spread around. And, as I say, they never went to high school. My mother was fully occupied taking care of me and the household and managing what little I earned. So I never got involved.

I remember only two sort of extracurricular things where I used to go occasionally. One was Helas. See, that's the old neighborhood where I had my first glass of milk in. I think it was what they call a settlement house where I learned how to play basketball. But we were not involved in any political things. I didn't know about the labor movement until I was in law school...

[After working briefly for A.N. Pritzker's law firm] then I established my own practice. Now I had a practice...first it was largely my classmates. Because I'd worked in a law office – there were no clinical programs [in law school] in those days – I at least knew where the court house was. My classmates did not. So a great bulk of my early practice was representing my classmates. Those were the days when there weren't very many big firms. And so I taught private practice, arguing cases, trying them, writing briefs and so on. And I also had some small business clients. But it wasn't a bad period. I was independent.

Now how do I get into labor things? Well, I at that point started through reading otherwise to become identified with some liberal movements in Chicago. Paul Douglas and I, for example, were responsible for – before I had anything to do with labor – for a big meeting protesting the Republic Steel massacre. That was long before I represented the steel workers. And I had also managed Paul's campaign for alderman...

I remember walking around Carpenter's Hall the night [Sacco and Vanzetti] were executed – you know, a demonstration – not like present demonstrations, but we walked and I was in law school. But in the practice, I had nothing to do with labor.



Arthur Goldberg

You know, the Chicago labor movement outside of the amalgamated union, don't you? It was run by John Fitzpatrick, Vic Rona and Mackoff and had I had nothing to do with it. I came through Sam Levin and Maurice Bialis. The CIO was in its infancy. And the Chicago newspaper Guild was on strike...And one day Sam and Bialis called and asked if they and some others could come and see me at my law office. And they came. And accompanying them was Van Brickner. Van Brickner was, as you know, Phil Murray's right hand man. And he was in charge in Chicago of the Packing House Warehouse Committee and Steel Workers Organizing Committee. And the CIO in general, from the national standpoint. And they all came to me. And they said they were there to urge me to take over the defense of the Newspaper Guild's case. And I asked, "why me?" Well, they said, the union was represented by a communist-oriented lawyer. Whether he was a communist or not I don't know. But it was being handled in a fashion where they were worried...because all three hundred newspaper men were held in contempt by an Italian judge.

Brandzel: Was that newspaper... the Herald Examiner?

Goldberg: Yes Herald Examiner which folded. And I remember the name of that judge: Johnny Lupe. Always use to say, "I'll take that matter in the breast of

the court." That was his favorite expression...

So, [the labor leaders] asked if I'd take [the newspaper guild case] over. That was a very strange request. I wasn't doing that work. And I said, "When will we see the judge?"...

You see, all my early training, that was one of my assets. Running around for those law firms, all the judges knew me. As a kid I used to go in for motions for a delay or extension or passing on a legal convention. That's how I got admitted to the Bar before I was twenty-one. There was Justice DeYoung. I came, and the rules were you couldn't take the Bar until you were twenty-one, and I wasn't twenty-one.

Brandzel:

How old were you when you took the Bar?

Goldberg: I wasn't twenty-one. I was twenty and a half. And I went to the judge to get an extension. I have the letter [he gave me] saved in my farm. That's one thing I've saved. And he called me in, and he said the Bar was to take place on Monday. This was on a Friday. I hadn't taken his course. I hadn't done anything, because the rule said I couldn't take it until September. I'd be twenty-one in August. And the old justice said, "Look you've been practicing law three years. Don't you think you ought to make it legal?" And I said, "I'd like to, but I won't be twenty-one." And he says, "Don't you know any law?" And I said, "What do you mean, Justice?" He said, "We're judges of our own rules. It's our rule." So he calls the secretary in. He said, "Dictate a motion to waive all the requirements except the Bar exam and to admit you on Monday." This was Friday. I was intimidated. I was crazy. I hadn't studied. I hadn't taken the Bar review - nothing. This was in July. You see, I wouldn't be twenty-one until August, and that's prior to September. That's the one thing I was thinking of. I was intimidated. I did take the motion. He signed it. And I took the Bar on Monday. Fortunately, I passed. □

Author's Query:

Seeking Romance of a People Memories

Do you have first-hand reminiscences of Romance of a People? Atay Citron, a Theater professor at the University of Tel Aviv would like to hear from you for work he is doing toward a book and possible documentary on major American Jewish pageants. If you have information for Mr. Citron and would be willing to speak with him, please let us know at the Society office and we will forward your name to him. □

Have Tape Recorder Will Travel

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 and publicize history that can be as rewarding to the interviewer and the subject as it is to the Society and community. Many Society members are experienced takers of oral histories and are available to give you advice on how to prepare and conduct interviews.

We at the Society have compiled a list of people from whom we hope to take oral histories. You might consider interviewing someone we have already identified or you might bring to our attention someone who has made significant contributions to his or her profession, neighborhood or community. In addition, you might consider arranging for an oral history testimony from someone who was a first hand witness to some of the events that are already at risk of being forgotten.

Think for a moment about friends and neighbors with rich backgrounds. Let us know about them so we can record their stories for future generations. Better yet, let us know about them and then work with us to record those stories yourself.

Working with the Oral History committee is a good way to participate directly as a historian and a good way to become more active in the Society. For information about how to get started conducting oral histories, contact Sid Sorkin, chairman of the oral history committee, at (708)541-2188. □