



chicago jewish historical society

# chicago jewish history

*Celebrating 350 Years of the Jewish People in America:  
Large Audience Enjoys Special CJHS Evening Program*

## “Haym Salomon in Chicago”

*Report on page 8*



**Robert Morris (left) and Haym Salomon flank George Washington on Chicago's patriotic monument. Dedication, Heald Square, December 19, 1941.**

*The square was demolished during last year's reconstruction of Wacker Drive, and the statue was moved to a new site near the river at Wacker and Wabash.*

### **Save the Date: Sunday, June 27— Civil War Historian Marshall Krolick to Address CJHS Open Meeting**

“Jewish Issues and Chicago Jews in the Civil War” will be the subject of the next meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society on Sunday, June 27, 2004 at Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim, 901 Milwaukee Avenue, Glenview.

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## President's Column



Walter Roth

**CHICAGO JEWISH PHILANTHROPISTS** played a leading role in re-establishing and reorganizing The University of Chicago in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Thereafter the University seemed to have had a special attraction for Jewish scholars as well as donors.

In the 1930s, as Hitler threatened the very existence of Jewish life in Germany, many German Jews sought refuge in America. Among them were renowned intellectuals. United States law at the time allowed entry to immigrants only if they could obtain an affidavit of support (or job) from an American institution or citizen.

In this context, The University of Chicago, under its then President Robert Maynard Hutchins, was of special assistance. A number of leading German émigrés were invited to join the faculty. Among them were Professor Hans Morgenthau (Political Science), Professor Max Rheinstein (Law), Professor Bruno Bettelheim (Psychology), and Hannah Arendt (Political Science). There is an article in this issue of *CJH* about Professor Leo Strauss (Philosophy), who came to the U of C after a period of teaching in New York.

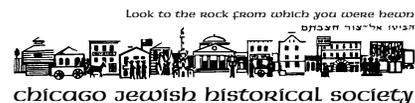
A later émigré was Professor Karl Joachim Weintraub, who came to Chicago after the end of World War II. He was born in Darmstadt, Germany in 1924. His parents, a Jewish father and a gentile mother, sent him to the Netherlands for safety when the Nazis came to power. When the Germans invaded the Netherlands, he was hidden by a Quaker family and his life was saved. At The University of Chicago he earned his undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees, and in 1954 began teaching in The University College while still a graduate student. The U of C was to be his home for 60 years. He died on March 25, 2004.

On April 21, the respected writer and commentator Andrew Patner, a student of Prof. Weintraub, offered a memorial tribute on his WFMT radio program, *Critics' Choice with Andrew Patner*:

"One of his great influences at Chicago was his own teacher and fellow refugee, Christian W. Mackauer, whose selfless devotion to the Western Civilization course that Weintraub went on to embody became a model for the younger man...."

"When, for a complex number of reasons, younger faculty members lost interest in teaching his beloved course, Mr. Weintraub uncharacteristically became something of a fighter. Recalling his time as a hidden child and adolescent, he told several people, 'I had enough of life without civilization.' Illness took him from his own teaching soon after....His life was one filled with the search for understanding and his death is surely the end of an era."

A memorial service was held on Friday, April 30 at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. Karl J. Weintraub's long devotion to The University of Chicago, and the intellectual contributions of the other émigrés who found refuge there, indicate that the early Chicago Jewish community leaders made a good investment. ❖



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## Letters to CJH

### The Gefilte Fish Tapeworm

Years ago, biology students were sometimes given this example of ingenious medical research. We were told a number of women had been appearing at the Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Hospital at Artesian and Le Moyne, in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood, suffering from a syndrome of anemia, chronic weakness, dizziness and nausea. There was no known cause. After a while, several very peculiar facts were noticed: 1) All the patients were women; 2) Only one woman in a family was ever affected; 3) All of them were said to be either Swedish or Jewish. At the time, the available research was not helpful and it all seemed utterly baffling.

In time, research completely solved the problem. We now know that the direct cause was infestation with the freshwater-fish tapeworm, *Dibothriocephalus latus*. The women affected were the family cooks. They were Swedish or Jewish because their respective ethnic cuisines included forms of *fiskbuller* or gefilte fish. While entire families usually ate the cooked product, only the cooks had tasted uncooked ground fish, because that was how they customarily checked the seasoning. Cooking destroyed the parasites for the rest of the family.

I did not know the name of the researcher until I read in *Chicago Jewish History* [Winter 2004] that it was Dr. Louis D. Boshes. By the way, the hospital involved has become the Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge.

David H. Heller  
Highland Park

*A distinguished educator and former president of Loop (now Harold Washington) College, Dr. Heller is a member of the CJHS Board.*

### Rosa Sonneschein

I thoroughly enjoyed Walter Roth's book, *Looking Backward: True Stories from Chicago's Jewish Past*. I liked it so much that I bought an extra copy for a friend! I was particularly interested in turn-of-the-century Chicago's contribution to the Zionist movement in America.

In this connection I was intrigued by his piece on Rosa Sonneschein and her association with Theodore Herzl, which resulted in her becoming a strong champion of Zionism. I'd like to find out more about her. For instance, is CJHS in possession of copies of her magazine, the *American Jewess*?

Maybe you can answer a quick question or two: What year did Rosa travel to Europe to write about the Dreyfus affair, during which time she met Herzl? Did she and Herzl correspond in any way before this meeting? Thank you. And thanks for a great book.

Ray Aducci  
Calumet City

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### June 27 Meeting

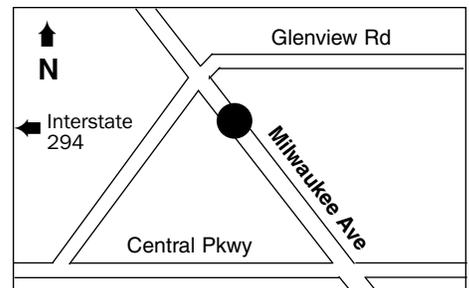
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The program will begin at 2:00 p.m., after a social hour with refreshments at 1:00. Admission is free and open to the public. Cong. B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim is co-sponsoring the program.

Marshall D. Krolick is a distinguished lawyer, Civil War historian, Jewish community leader, and past president of BJBE. He will present a double-barrelled program.

First, he will give a brief history of the congregation, which dates from 1893. Then he will present a multi-faceted talk about Jewish issues in the Civil War. Included are the controversy created by a Congressional action which excluded rabbis from the military chaplaincy, and a stereotypical anti-Semitic military order which caused great hardship to a portion of the Jewish community and almost wrecked the career of a great American hero.

He will also identify prominent Jewish civilian and military leaders of the Civil War era and review the history of Company C of the 82nd Illinois Infantry, the only all-Jewish unit to fight in the Civil War. ❖



**Cong. B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim,  
901 Milwaukee Avenue, Glenview.**

*Drive to the temple via Milwaukee Avenue (Illinois 21), Central Parkway, Glenview Road, and Interstate 294. Create your own road map at the temple Web site: [www.bjbe.org](http://www.bjbe.org).*

# Leo Strauss at The University of Chicago

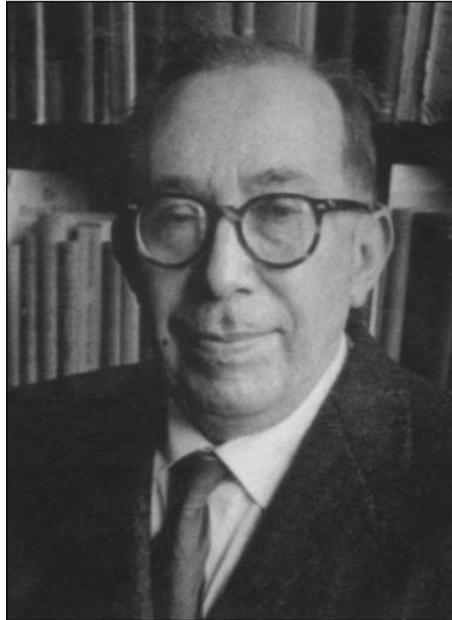
BY WALTER ROTH

Several years ago my wife and I joined a tour of Spain and Morocco that focused on the life and accomplishments of Moses Maimonides, said to be the greatest Jewish philosopher in medieval times. It was said of him: "From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses." In our own time there was a professor of political philosophy at the University of Chicago who some have called the greatest Jewish philosopher since the second Moses. His name was Leo Strauss.

Strauss was born on September 20, 1899 in Kirschhain, a small rural village in the German province of Hesse, near the University city of Marburg. He left Germany in 1932, having received scholarships from the Rockefeller Foundation to study at universities in France and England. He came to the New School for Social Research in New York in 1938. He was invited to join the University of Chicago faculty as professor of political philosophy in 1949 and where he remained until 1968. He died on October 18, 1973.

While Leo Strauss was almost unknown to the general public at the time of his death, his teachings were very well-known in academic circles. And then, quite suddenly, a quarter of a century after his death, Strauss's name began appearing in the media. A plethora of articles, books, and a broad range of essays about him began appearing. In fact, the Strauss literature—in addition to his own 14 volumes of collected essays and articles—is so overwhelming and controversial that this article is merely an attempt to give the reader a hint of what Leo Strauss is all about.

In 2003, the United States and its allies invaded Iraq for varied reasons, one of them being the "defense of Western civilization." In that connection many of President Bush's advisors and consultants invoked the teachings of Leo Strauss as justification for the invasion. *The New York Times* reported that President Bush paid a tribute in February 2003 to a group of journalists, politicians, philosophers and policy advisors known, primarily among themselves, as Straussians. "You are of



**Professor Leo Strauss.**  
*Department of Special Collections,  
The University of Chicago.*

the best brains in our country!" President Bush declared in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute, "and my government employs about twenty of you." The President was undoubtedly referring to, among others, Paul D. Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense, his associate Richard N. Perle, and William Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard*. The above three, and many of the other Straussians, incidentally, are Jewish.

Paul Wolfowitz was a student of Allan Bloom (1930-1992), a student of Leo Strauss and later a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. Bloom became famous as the author of a bestselling book, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (Simon & Schuster, 1987). It was Bloom's book that undoubtedly helped to propel Leo Strauss to national prominence. Bloom's book was enthusiastically endorsed by political conservatives; it has been described as a popularization of Strauss's philosophy.

This conservative group also included persons who had once been politically liberal—the neoconservatives.

Irving Kristol, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in "The Neoconservative Persuasion" (AEI Online, August 20, 2003):

"Since its origin among disillusioned liberal intellectuals in the 1970s, neoconservatism has been an intellectual undercurrent that surfaces only intermittently.... It has flowered again of late, and President George W. Bush and his administration seem to be at home in the political environment created by neoconservatism's renaissance....

"And then, of course, there is foreign policy, the area of American politics where neoconservatism has recently been the focus of media attention. This is surprising since there is no set of neoconservative beliefs concerning foreign

policy, only a set of attitudes derived from historical experience. (The favorite neoconservative text on foreign affairs, thanks to professors Leo Strauss of the University of Chicago and Donald Kagan of Yale University, is Thucydides on the Peloponnesian War.)

These attitudes can be summarized in the following “theses” (as a Marxist would say): First, patriotism is a natural and healthy sentiment and should be encouraged by both private and public institutions. Precisely because we are a nation of immigrants, this is a powerful American sentiment. Second, world government is a terrible idea since it can lead to world tyranny. International institutions that point to an ultimate world government should be regarded with the deepest suspicion. Third, statesmen should, above all, have the ability to distinguish friends from enemies....”

Jennie Strauss Clay, Strauss’s adopted daughter, a professor of classics at the University of Virginia, vigorously protested the use to which her father’s philosophy was being put by the neoconservatives. In a *New York Times* Op-Ed article dated June 7, 2003, headlined “The Real Leo Strauss,” she wrote that her father was “a teacher, not a right wing guru.”

His teaching aimed to provide “an understanding of mankind’s present predicament; what were its sources and what, if any, were the alternatives.” Leo Strauss sought an answer in the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers. His teaching method was primarily raising questions with his students—“which is a method they adored.” He confronted his students with the question: what is “the good life?”

For Strauss, she wrote, the choice boiled down to the life in accordance with “revelation” or the life according to “reasoning,”—“Jerusalem versus Athens”—as these alternatives were often called. The vitality of the Western tradition, Strauss felt, lay in the invigorating tension between the two. This tension, while brilliantly dealt with by Strauss in his works, has led to many seeming contradictions and inconsistencies in his writings. It has also given rise to the neoconservatives’ tendency to quote Strauss as seeming to support their political position.

It should be noted that Strauss’s fame was not only as a scholar of the ancient Greeks and later philosophers, such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Heidegger; in his early life in Germany, he also studied and wrote on great Jewish thinkers, including Maimonides, Spinoza, Mendelssohn, and Rosenzweig.

After coming to the University of Chicago, Strauss, in addition to his classroom teaching, regularly lectured on Jewish themes at Hillel House. He was a close friend of Maurice Pekarsky, rabbi at Hillel during that period. Many of the lectures that Strauss delivered over the years—at Hillel, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and other venues—were recorded. Many of these lectures are preserved on CDs at Hillel House, where they are available for listening. His lectures on “Why We Remain Jews” are classics in themselves.

In these lectures, Strauss expresses a profound love for Judaism, its roots and its belief in justice and goodness. Above all, despite the tensions with Athenian reasoning, he was committed to his faith in Judaism and in his attachment to his ancestors. As part of his commitment to his Jewish roots, young Leo Strauss had joined the Zionist movement in Germany before he was twenty years old, and for a time was a follower of the militant revisionist, Vladimir Jabotinsky. Zionism remained important to Strauss for the rest of his life.

While at the University of Chicago, Strauss wrote a letter to the conservative magazine *National Review*, that was published in the January 5, 1956 issue. His letter defends the State of Israel against a charge of racism that had been made in an article in the magazine. He states his belief that Israel must be defended against its enemies. He recounts that he taught at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1954-55, so he was able to judge with his own eyes what Israel was like. “Israel is the only country which is an outpost of the West in the East. Whatever the failings of individuals may be, the spirit of the country as a whole can justly be described in these terms: heroic austerity supported by the nearness of biblical antiquity. A conservative, I take it, is ‘a man who believes that everything good is heritage.’ I know of no country today in which this belief is stronger and less lethargic than in Israel.”

Strauss defends Israeli leaders whom the magazine accused of being labor unionists and states that they laid the foundation of Israel under the most difficult conditions. “They are pioneers, not unionists. They are looked upon by all non-doctrinaires as the national aristocracy of the country, for the same reasons which Americans took up the Pilgrim fathers.”

These pioneers had brought back to Judaism their “spine and inner freedom, that simple dignity of which only people who remember their heritage and are loyal to their fate, are capable.” Political Zionism, says

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## Leo Strauss *continued from page 5*

Strauss, “is problematic for obvious reasons. But I can never forget what it achieved as a moral force in an era of complete dissolution. It helped to stem the tide of ‘progressive’ leveling of venerable, ancestral differences; it fulfilled a conservative function.” The letter was signed “Leo Strauss, Chicago.”

**T**o more fully understand Strauss’s philosophy as a professor in Chicago, it is helpful to learn of his early life in Germany. Early ancestors of Leo Strauss moved to Kirschhain, had a mercantile business and prospered. Jews were scattered in hundreds of such villages in the Province of Hesse, and nearly all were of “sturdy, provincial Orthodoxy,” as Professor Ralph Lerner, a student and colleague of Strauss wrote in a memorial article published in the *American Jewish Year Book 1976* (The American Jewish Committee and The Jewish Publication Society of America).

Leo Strauss’s copy of his Family Tree [see box on page 7] is imprinted: “What you inherited from your fathers, acquire it, so that you may own it.” It also includes a comment by the Family Tree creator thanking “one of our still living Seniors, Meyer Strauss, son of Löb, from Kirschhain, who remains, despite his age, extraordinary alert. He showed great interest in his family history and helped me greatly.” Meyer was Leo Strauss’s grandfather. Meyer continued to operate the business with his son Hugo Strauss, Leo’s father. The Strauss business ceased operating in 1934, soon after Hitler came to power.

Leo Strauss entered primary school at Kirschhain in 1905, and went to the *Gymnasium* (high school) in Marburg in 1912. Marburg, located a few kilometers from Kirschhain, was then, as it is today, an important university town, and the home of Hermann Cohen, a leading German Jewish philosopher. In the *Gymnasium* he was exposed to the message of German Humanism, prevalent in pre-World War I years. Strauss recalled that he read Schopenhauer and Nietzsche “on the side.”

While at the University at Marburg in 1917, he was drafted into the German Army and served as an interpreter in Belgium until the end of World War I. He then attended the universities in Frankfurt and Hamburg, and returned to Marburg where he met Martin Heidegger, who had succeeded Hermann Cohen as the most prominent philosopher in Marburg.

Strauss received his Ph.D. from the University of Hamburg in 1920. The Jewish post-war renaissance was in full swing in Germany and Strauss met leading

philosophers. He came to know Franz Rosenzweig in his *Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt. He participated in seminars on Maimonides and Hermann Cohen; he wrote articles on the Theory of Political Zionism; and he became a research assistant at the Academy for Jewish Studies in Berlin. He wrote his first book, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion as the Foundation of his Science in the Bible*, and also published a treatise on Spinoza dedicated to the memory of Rosenzweig.

Strauss now met Martin Buber, Gershom Sholom and Walter Benjamin, all famous German Jewish philosophers. He began researching works on Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn. The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes became a subject of his research dealing with enlightenment and reformation.

He received a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1932 and went to Paris to study medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy. There he married Miriam Bernson Petry, a German Jewish widow with a son, Thomas. In Paris Strauss wrote his book on Maimonides, *Philosophy and Law: Contributions to the Understanding of Maimonides and his Predecessors*. Gershom Sholom was at that time attempting to obtain a position for Strauss at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. “Ludicrous” is the word Sholom used to describe Strauss’s theory that “atheism” was a “watchword” of Maimonides and Judaism. Sholom added, “I admire his ethical stance but regret the obviously conscious and deliberately provoked” controversy sparked by this theory.

Strauss did not receive the Jerusalem appointment and wound up in England in 1935, first at Oxford University and then at Cambridge. There, in 1935, he was able to publish *the Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Clarendon Press, Oxford). but he had no meaningful job offers from English universities.

**I**n 1936 Strauss visited the United States and the following year was appointed a Research Fellow at Columbia University. In 1938 he came to the New School for Social Research as a lecturer in political science. Strauss’s wife and stepson managed to come to New York just before the outbreak of World War II.

Leo’s sister Bettina left Kirschhain in the 1930s and married a famous scholar in Medieval Islamic culture, Paul Kraus of Prague. In the late 1930s they left Prague for Cairo, Egypt, where Bettina died in childbirth in 1942. The child was a daughter, Jenny. Two years later, in 1944, Paul Kraus died under mysterious circumstances—some historians write that he was murdered, others say that he committed suicide. Leo Strauss, who was then in America, adopted Jenny. She went from Egypt to a kibbutz in Palestine and then to the United

States. In Chicago she attended the University of Chicago Lab School, went to Sunday School at Temple Isaiah Israel where Leo Strauss was also a member for a time.

Leo's father Hugo died on January 25, 1942 in Kirschhain. Shortly thereafter, Leo's stepmother Johanna and many of his relatives were deported to ghettos in Poland, where they all perished with many of their Jewish brethren from neighboring towns and villages as the "Final Solution" reached the German Jews still alive at that time. Leo apparently did not know what happened to his family until after the end of the war.

**W**hen Strauss published *On Tyranny* in 1948, his fame was beginning to spread among American scholars, and he was invited to the University of Chicago. He came there in the summer of 1948. It is said that Hans Morgenthau, who was acting chairman of the Political Science Department that summer, "took Strauss over to Chancellor Robert Maynard Hutchins's office and left him there. By the time he came out a half hour later, Strauss was a member of the department of Political Science, a full professor, with a salary more than anybody else in the department was getting."

From 1949 to 1968 he was a Professor of Political Philosophy at the University. He and his family lived on 60th Street and Ingleside Avenue in university housing. Strauss began to deliver public lectures and worked on his book *Natural Right and History*, published in 1953.

Professor Ralph Lerner, in his article on Strauss, notes that, in 1954 while stationed in Giessen with the U.S. Armed Forces, he met Leo Strauss, who was on his way to Israel. Strauss had stopped in Germany to visit the grave of his father. It was Strauss's only visit to Germany after the war. Unlike Hannah Arendt, his colleague at the University of Chicago, who resumed her correspondence and visits to Heidegger, Strauss apparently did not, nor did he have much to do with Arendt.

His *Thoughts on Machiavelli* was published in 1958. In 1959 many of his essays were collected and published under the title *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Essays*. In that year he was appointed the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago.

In 1966 he received an honorary doctorate for contributions to Jewish thought from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

In 1967 he retired from The University of Chicago. Professor Strauss's last public appearance for the University occurred in December of that year at the Downtown Center. Subsequently, he taught briefly at Claremont Men's College in California. For the last four years of his life, he was the Scott Buchanan Distinguished Scholar in Residence at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, where he continued to teach, although on a much reduced schedule.

Leo Strauss died of pneumonia on October 18, 1973, having suffered for a number of years from cardiac myopathy. He is buried in the cemetery of the Kneseth Israel Synagogue, Annapolis. Psalm 114 was read at his funeral. This psalm is read as part of the Passover Haggadah service, celebrating the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. ❖

*Walter Roth wishes to thank Ralph Lerner, the Benjamin Franklin Professor in the College, and professor in the Committee on Social Thought at The University of Chicago, for his help in researching this article.*

## *Two Branches of One Family Tree*

Walter Roth was born in the small town of Roth, in the German province of Hesse, a few miles from Kirschhain, the birthplace of Leo Strauss. Walter heard that his grandmother had been shown a magnificent *Stambaum* (Family Tree), created in 1910. The artwork showed a mighty tree growing in the small town of Amonenburg, which traces its history back a thousand years, and where the Jews of the region are said to have settled as far back as the 1600s. Names of these Jewish families filled the branches. Copies of this Family Tree were being offered to Walter's grandmother and other local Jews by an itinerant rabbi for the high price of 24 marks, too expensive for Walter's grandmother.

Many years later, during a visit to Israel, Walter Roth was surprised and delighted to find a copy of that same *Stambaum*. He had another copy made in Chicago that is framed and hanging in Walter and Chaya's home—with many new names added to their family branch.

When he was researching this article, Walter Roth contacted Leo Strauss's daughter, Jenny Strauss Clay. She told him that she has her late father's copy of the very same *Stambaum* framed and displayed in her home. ❖

## CJHS President Walter Roth Honored by His Family with Gift of Books to Asher Library



**Gift Ceremony, Asher Library, April 18.**

**(Left to right) Glenn Ferdman, director of the Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies; Dr. Chaya H. Roth; Walter Roth; and Dr. Howard Sulkin, president of the Spertus Institute.**

*Photograph courtesy of the Roth family.*

A beautiful ceremony took place in the Asher Library on Sunday morning, April 18. The guests gathered in the reading room, conversing and paging through the dozens of new books scattered on the tables. Each volume bore a handsome bookplate: "A special honor to Walter Roth from his loving wife, children and grandchildren." The 60 donated items include books by and about prominent German Jews (primarily Professor Leo Strauss), and about Chicago Jewish history.

The hosts (listed on the invitation as Talia, Tema, Emma, Miko, Jonah, Sophie, Isabel, Miri, Mark, Judy, Steve, Kate, Ari, and Chaya), other family members, friends and colleagues had come to honor Walter Roth on his 75th birthday and to celebrate the generous donation to the Asher Library.

Library Director Glenn Ferdman offered greetings, as did Spertus President Howard Sulkin. Dr. Chaya Roth attached a new golden leaf to the Tree of Knowledge on the wall of the reading room. Walter then invited the throng up to the ninth floor classroom for a festive brunch.

As the meal concluded, after the grandchildren had offered special readings and songs, wife Chaya, brother Herbert, and friends rose one by one to salute Walter with fond recollections—some dating from the time when Walter was a young refugee from Germany living in Hyde Park.

Walter's response was very moving. He noted that his birthday is in the same month as Hitler's; that this year *Yom ha-Sho'ah* is commemorated on April 18; and that the books donated in his name attest to the vitality and accomplishments of the Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany. ❖

## **Celebrating 350 Years of the Jewish People in America "Haym Salomon in Chicago"**

*continued from page 1*

The Society departed from its tradition of Sunday afternoon meetings to present a special evening program on Thursday, May 13, in Bederman Hall of the Spertus Institute. President Walter Roth offered opening remarks and the program's planner and chair, Past President Norman D. Schwartz, introduced the guest speakers.

The idea for the special meeting came early this year when Mr. Schwartz received a phone call from Dr. Joseph L. Andrews of Concord, Massachusetts. He was visiting the city and wanted to learn about Chicago's statue of George Washington, Robert Morris, and Haym Salomon. A meeting was arranged in front of the monument at Wacker and Wabash.

Dr. Andrews is a physician, a writer and speaker on the Jewish participation in the American Revolution, and a great-great-great-grandson of Haym Salomon. During this year's commemoration of 350 years of Jewish life in America, Dr. Andrews is speaking to organizations around the country, and he agreed to address CJHS.

Haym Salomon was Polish-born. Barnet Hodes, the attorney and dedicated promoter of the Chicago monument, was of Polish Jewish descent. Dr. Andrews suggested that we invite the Polish consul general in Chicago to speak. The Hon. Franciczek Adamczyk accepted Mr. Schwartz's invitation.

Consul General Adamczyk named some of the many prominent Jews who were born in Poland. During the fifty years of post-WWII Communist rule, he said, there was silence about Polish Jewish history—“the good and the bad.” He hoped that this silence would be broken by the establishment of the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews in Warsaw. The proposed museum, to be designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry, will be the first multi-media museum in Central and Eastern Europe, and will be located facing the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on land donated by the city.

Dr. Andrews presented a slide-illustrated talk, first showing us a scene of the harbor of Dutch colonial New Amsterdam, where, in 1654, twenty-three Jewish refugees landed. They were fleeing Brazil and the Inquisition when their French ship was attacked by pirates; they were robbed of all their possessions, and arrived destitute in America. The anti-Semitism of Governor Peter Stuyvesant was eventually overcome by legal action, and Jewish settlers were permitted to reside permanently in New Amsterdam.

**D**uring the American Revolution (1775-1783), Jews numbered about 2500 out of a total population of 2.5 million. In preceding Diaspora history Jews had been mostly forbidden to fight as soldiers or officers. However, in the American colonists’ struggle against their British overlords, many Jews, including three of Dr. Andrews’ ancestors, fought for or supported the patriots: Haym Salomon (1740-1785), born in Lezno,



**Leonard Crunelle, associate of Lorado Taft, shown putting finishing touches on the head of Washington. Looking on, left to right: Barnet Hodes; Paul H. Douglas; and Mrs. Douglas, daughter of Lorado Taft.**  
*Patriotic Foundation of Chicago.*



**Guest speakers at CJHS open meeting, May 13. (Left to right) Joseph L. Andrews, M.D., great-great-great-grandson of Haym Salomon; and the Honorable Franciczek Adamczyk, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago.**

*Photograph by Norman D. Schwartz.*

Poland, won recognition as one of the most important financiers of the American Revolution. Major Benjamin Nones (1757-1826), born in Bordeaux, France, saw combat throughout the south. Colonel Isaac Franks (1759-1822) of New York, fought in many battles for the duration of the Revolution.

Joseph Andrews (1753-1824), born in Strasbourg, France, married Salomon’s daughter Sallie in 1794. In 1849 Salomon’s and Nones’s grandchildren, Joseph I. Andrews and Miriam Nones, married, which helped to perpetuate nine generations of Dr. Andrews’ Jewish American family. (Yes, he is researching how the Strasbourg Jewish family came to have the surname “Andrews.”) Dr. Andrews writes for the *Boston Globe*, is the author of *Revolutionary Boston, Lexington and Concord*, and is currently writing a book about Jewish American history, *Moses and Miriam in America*.

He showed a slide of our statue—George Washington flanked by Robert Morris, superintendent of finance, and Haym Salomon, trader in foreign currencies and moneylender. Dr. Andrews encouraged us to read about the conception and realization of our statue in Harry Barnard’s book, *This Great Triumvirate of Patriots* (1971), now out of print, but still available at the Chicago Public Library or for sale online.

Our Web site—[www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)—has past issues of *CJH* to read and print out. The *CJH* Year-End 2001 issue features an article about the statue. ❖

FROM THE  
CHICAGO JEWISH  
archives

## The Diaries of Irma Rosenthal Frankenstein

By Joy Kingsolver

**“I shall never be a success in my own eyes until I am a literary success.” — Irma Frankenstein, August 24, 1929.**



**Irma Frankenstein's Diaries.** Chicago Jewish Archives.

A recently published book by Ellen FitzSimmons Steinberg, *A Chicago Woman's Story, 1871-1966* (University of Iowa Press, 2004), is generating a buzz of interest in our city. The book tells the story of an “ordinary” middle-class Jewish woman in Chicago. The sources used to write the book form a new collection at the Chicago Jewish Archives.

Irma Rosenthal grew up on Chicago's South Side, in a little house on 24th Street in the Back of the Yards neighborhood around the Union Stockyards. She was related to Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, one of the founders of Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv (KAM).

She was married to Dr. Victor S. Frankenstein, one of the early resident physicians at Michael Reese Hospital. They had two daughters, Emily and Ruth, and a son, Alfred. She was active in the community as a member of the Jewish People's Institute, Sinai Temple, the National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago Jewish Woman's Aid Society and B'nai B'rith. (The first women's auxiliaries of B'nai B'rith were formed in 1897.) She took responsibility for paying the dues and writes of her own “club memberships.”

Her story is fascinating not only because she lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression and

many momentous social changes, but also because she recorded her thoughts over the course of nearly eighty years.

The original diaries, notes, clippings and certain books owned by Irma Frankenstein have been donated to the Chicago Jewish Archives by Ellen Steinberg. The story of how these diaries were discovered and the journey they took to publication is as fascinating as the story their pages tell.

Ms. Steinberg relates how, while looking for a used bookstore in Champaign, Illinois, she wandered into the wrong one by mistake, and while walking down the aisles, stubbed her toe against a box of diaries and papers bearing the sign: “ENTIRE BOX—DIARY COLLECTION—\$50.” Leafing through the pages, intrigued by references in the diaries to Carl Sandburg and Thornton Wilder, she asked the owner about them. “It's nobody famous,” he shrugged. On impulse, she bought the box and took it home to explore.

The box was a jumble of bound journals and loose papers and clippings. Carefully working her way through them, Ms. Steinberg gathered the loose pages and reconstructed the diaries, using small plastic bags to keep them together. The reconstruction was a long, slow process of detective work. Clippings and notes that had originally been kept between the pages of the diaries had, over time, been shaken loose and were scattered throughout the box. But the acidic quality of the paper helped; when newsprint is placed within the pages of a book, the acid in the paper transfers over time to the nearby pages, leaving behind a “burn mark” that traces the outline of the clipping. By matching these acid marks to the shape and size of the clippings, she was able to figure out the original placement of many of them. This was helpful in that it brought out the associations between the articles and the diary entries, clarifying Irma's thinking and documenting the events that influenced her.

Ms. Steinberg used another unusual source to understand her subject: notes written by Irma in the margins of a 15-volume set of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Notes and drawings in the margins of

books, called “marginalia” by scholars, have been used to shed light on sources ranging from medieval manuscripts to the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In Irma’s case, these marginal notes showed the extent to which she was influenced by what she read; mentions of Emerson in the diaries were correlated with marginalia in those passages, illuminating her life and thinking.

Above all, Irma was a “good reporter,” according to Ms. Steinberg. Most of the facts that she mentioned in her diaries could be substantiated with outside sources, and there were few errors. Irma’s account of her life and the times in which she lived will give historians and researchers a valuable first-person view of Jewish Chicago in the twentieth century.

**W**hat’s next for the diaries? From a jumble of miscellaneous papers to plastic bags to archival preservation, this collection has passed through many phases, but has finally found a permanent home. The original diaries will be preserved and housed in archival enclosures to protect them. They will be evaluated by the Asher Library

conservator, Karen Lee, to see what kind of treatment might be appropriate for them.

As for the newspaper clippings, nothing will reverse the deterioration that has already taken place, but the clippings can be de-acidified and photocopied onto acid-free paper to keep them readable. Temperature and humidity are regulated in the archives to provide the best environment for preserving fragile documents like these; this alone will extend the life of the collection by many years.

Why preserve the originals after they have been published, if the published version is so much easier to use? There is nothing that can replace the look and feel of the original diaries; the handwriting, the way words are scribbled in the margins or crossed out and rewritten all combine to add up to more than just the words on the pages. The next historian to look at these documents may be searching for something we can’t even guess at today, and may extract new meanings from Irma’s life.

“It gives me shivers to know that this collection will be available to scholars,” says Ms. Steinberg, and her gift of these records has ensured just that. ❖

**JOY KINGSOLVER** is Director, *Chicago Jewish Archives, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.*

## *Oral History Excerpts: Pearl Feldman Lieberman*

*Pearl Feldman Lieberman, with her husband Eugene, was interviewed in their home by CJHS Oral History Chair N. Sue Weiler, on May 1, 2002, as part of an effort to learn more about the members of the Jewish War Veterans, Fem-Vets Post 192, organized in 1976 by Chicago women who served in the military during World War II.*

*Pearl and Eugene Lieberman joined Post 192 in 2000, and shortly thereafter Pearl became membership chair. (For more about Post 192, see CJH Summer 2002; past issue of CJH since Winter 1999 can be read at our Web site: [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org).)*

*The interview was recorded and transcribed by Dr. Weiler. The audiotape and transcript are at the Chicago Jewish Archives.*



**Staff Sergeant Pearl Feldman.**

*Courtesy of Eugene Lieberman. A copy of this photograph is in the collection of The National Museum of American Jewish Military History.*

**W**hen Pearl and Eugene visited the exhibit “Women in the Military: A Jewish Perspective” at the National Museum of American Jewish Military History in Washington D.C., they saw this photograph of WAC Staff Sergeant Neomia “Pearl” Feldman and a snapshot she took of Leyte, in the Pacific, under bombardment, in April, 1945.

Pearl enlisted in 1943, the year the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), gave women full military status. She had tried earlier, but was rejected the first time because of poor eyesight. I asked Pearl why she volunteered when few women did.

She answered proudly: “The war was on and I was very patriotic. I wanted to go.”

*continued on page 12*

## Oral History *continued from page 11*

- Pearl, her sister Miriam, and her brother Edward were born and educated on Chicago's West Side. Their father came from Russia and their mother from Poland. The Feldmans owned a Shell Service Station at 16th and Kolin, doing car repair and maintenance. (A competitor across the street brought his own cars to Feldman's for repair.) Mrs. Feldman, Pearl and Miriam worked at the station. During World War II, father Harry Feldman scrupulously followed the rules of eligibility for parts and maintained price controls. After the war, when price controls and regulations continued, he kept up his strict observance. Eugene Lieberman was very proud of his father-in-law.

Like many Chicago immigrants' children, Pearl and her siblings attended Herzl Junior High and Marshall High School. They were encouraged to attend college. Her late brother, Dr. Edward Feldman, a psychiatrist, was chief of staff under Dr. Karl Menninger, at the Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas. Pearl graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a BA in Education.

"I didn't get my Master's, but I took many graduate courses at De Paul University. [After the war] I was going to sign up to get my degree at Northwestern. But they said they only take three women a year and already had enough for that year, and I should fill out an application. I said: 'Forget it with your quota on Jews and your quota on women.'"

**A**fter basic training at Daytona Beach, Florida, Pearl spent a year closer to home, at Fort Sheridan, where she trained as a Classification Specialist.

"From there we went overseas. We were heading for Australia and they turned us around. We had clothes for Australia. They changed it to New Guinea, and then Leyte. I worked as administrative assistant to General Wanamaker, chief of Staff for Transportation, on General MacArthur's staff, during the reconquests of New Guinea, Leyte, and the Philippines. I was not his secretary. But whenever [she] was off, I had to go there at night and be his secretary."

One of Pearl's more frightening experiences happened while she was aboard an aircraft repair ship taking testimony at a court martial: "In the middle of that—we were out at sea— there was a bombing. As the ships on either side of us were hit, I remember one of the captains saying, 'This is as close as I've ever come. I don't want to come any closer.'"

Pearl remembered another voyage: "We went on a

ship. When we landed they took us to a cave and there were hundreds of dead people there, Japanese. And I remember one of the WACs—braver than I am—she took it hard. Fifty years later you still remember. It was bad, the smell of death."

WAC Staff Sergeant Pearl Feldman was awarded three Bronze Battle Stars for service under fire and the Philippine Liberation Medal.



**Pearl and Eugene Lieberman.**  
*Undated. Courtesy of Eugene Lieberman.*

**P**earl and Eugene had lived in the same Chicago neighborhood, went to the same schools, even served in the Pacific at the same time, but they did not meet until 1945. According to Eugene: "A friend of mine said, 'I know a young woman who is my wife's sister—beautiful and very, very intelligent and very, very nice,' and he invited me for dinner."

Pearl: "And it will be 55 years this year."

Eugene: "And we're still head over heels in love with each other."

Pearl: "And our three sons always knew it."

As a young married couple, Pearl and Eugene lived in an apartment owned by her parents, at 16th and Kolin, across the street from the station.

She continued working after their children were born: "I taught high school. I was assigned to Tuley High. I was a teacher in the Business Department, and I turned out some very fine secretaries."

Pearl Lieberman died in February 2004.

This *Chicago Tribune* death notice reads, in part: "Pearl 'Pearlie' Lieberman, nee Feldman, age 85. Beloved wife for over 56 years of Eugene; loving mother of Mark (Kathleen), Robert (Andrea) and Steven (Elizabeth) Lieberman; proud grandmother of Amy, Kevin, Michael, Shana, Alexandra Lieberman and Alexandra Paul; fond sister of Miriam (the late Albert) Allen and the late Dr. Edward Feldman." ❖

*The recording of oral histories is an important part of the mission of CJHS. If you have experience conducting this kind of interview, and would like to participate in our work, please contact Dr. Weiler at (312) 922-2294.*

## March 21 Meeting: “Maxwell Street Kaleidoscope” Slide Lecture by Carolyn Eastwood

Carolyn Eastwood presented a well-attended talk at the CJHS open meeting on Sunday afternoon, March 21, in the ninth floor classroom of Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 618 South Michigan Avenue. The lecture was based on her book, *Near West Side Stories: Struggles for Community in Chicago's Maxwell Street Neighborhood* (2002, Lake Claremont Press). Illustrating the talk were projected slides of photographs from the book.

*Near West Side Stories* profiles four extraordinary “ordinary” representatives of four different ethnic communities that lived in the Maxwell Street area: Harold Fox (Jewish); Florence Scala (Italian); Nate Duncan (African-American); and Hilda Portillo (Mexican). The book describes their unequal struggles with the city's power structure—the Daley administration (father and son), the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Catholic Archdiocese—to maintain the unique character of the neighborhood and its century-old market.

Dr. Eastwood's kaleidoscopic neighborhood no longer exists. It has been completely gentrified and a “New Maxwell Street Market” has been installed on Canal Street.

CJHS is proud to have played an important role in the genesis of Carolyn's book. Her article about the flamboyant Hal Fox, designer of the zoot suit, was published in *CJH* (Winter 1995). Maxwell Street's Jewish community and his own fascinating life story comprise the first quarter of her book.

Hal Fox was also a musician. As “Jimmy Dale” he led an interracial

jazz band for which he also designed the uniforms. He designed suits for many other bands, and his family's shop, Fox Brothers, tailored them.

Another of the heroes of *Near West Side Stories*, Nate Duncan, had a close connection to the Jewish community of Maxwell Street. As a teenager he began working at Lyon's Delicatessen and learned to prepare Jewish foods. By 1973, the owner, Ben Lyon, was ready to retire, and offered to sell him the store. Nate was dubious about becoming a business owner, but accepted the challenge. With Ben's help and advice, Lyon's became Nate's. The deli lasted until the Maxwell Street Market was closed down.

Carolyn Eastwood serves as the recording secretary of CJHS. She is an adjunct professor of Anthropology at the College of DuPage and at Roosevelt University, and she is at work on another book. ❖



**Hal Fox, his mother Sarah Fox, and Nat “King” Cole at Fox Brothers tailoring shop.**

*Courtesy of Harold Fox.*



**Carolyn Eastwood.**

*Photograph by Anthony Eastwood.*

### CJHS Welcomes New Members

Mr. & Mrs. Irving Cohn  
John Mark Donlon  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Evans  
Alan & Dvora Gold  
Howard & Natalie Goldberg  
Leon Goldwater  
Gita Goodman  
Howard & Roberta Goss  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Harris  
Dianne Kaufman  
Joan D. Levin  
A.J. Lifton  
Gordon Pollock  
Gloria Schachtel  
Lester Schlosberg  
& Helen Helfgott  
Abbe Sussman  
Ruth Winter  
Andrew Zunser

## City Council Designates “Ben Hecht Way”: Street Naming Ceremony Tuesday, June 29

Sixty years after Ben Hecht used his powerful pen to alert Americans about the Holocaust, a ceremony will be held in Chicago to designate part of West Walton Street “Honorary Ben Hecht Way.”

The street naming ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 29, at 10:00 a.m., on West Walton Street between North Clark and North Dearborn. This portion of Walton is in front of the Newberry Library, where Hecht’s papers are housed. The public is invited to attend.

Dr. Rafael Medoff, director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, tells CJHS that the street designation was made at the initiative of the Institute and 42nd Ward Alderman Burton F. Natarus.

Speakers will include Alderman Natarus; Dr. Medoff; Frank Sullivan, formerly spokesman for the Mayor of Chicago; and Audrey Cantor, niece of boxing legend Barney Ross, another Chicagoan who was active alongside Hecht in promoting Holocaust rescue. Newberry President Charles Cullen will also take part in the ceremony. ❖



**Ben Hecht c. 1924.**

## Jewish Artists Club Exhibit at Spertus Museum

CJHS members and friends are urged to view the exhibit: “Engaging with the Present: The Contribution of the American Jewish Artists Club to Modern Art in Chicago, 1928-2004.”

Included are works by abstract artists, social realists and surrealists, selected from Spertus holdings and private collections. The exhibit continues through August 1 at the Spertus Museum, 618 South Michigan Avenue. For information call (312)922-6406 or visit [www.spertus.edu](http://www.spertus.edu).

## Letters to CJH *continued from page 3*



**Rosa Sonneschein.**  
*Helaine Victoria Press.*

*Walter Roth answers: There are bound copies as well as microfilm copies of the American Jewess in the Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Rosa Sonneschein and Theodore Herzl met in 1895.*

*There are references to correspondence*

*between them in Herzl’s diaries, but as yet no letters have yet been found. However, research on the subject is being done at the University of Missouri.*

## Sima Miller: Yiddish Songs on Tape, CD and Live in Concert

*Chicago Jewish History* is so informative and entertaining. I’m proud to be a member of CJHS.

Perhaps you could tell your readership about our recorded compilation of over 80 Yiddish songs, *Heritage: The Art of the Yiddish Folk Song*: Sima Miller, soprano, and Arnold Miller, piano.

The recordings are available locally on Devon Avenue at Rosenblum’s and the Chicago Hebrew Bookstore. They can be also purchased directly from me by calling (847) 673-6409.

*Sima Miller  
Skokie*

*Sima Miller, soprano, Alex Koffman, violin, and Gerald Rizzer, piano, will present a program of Yiddish folk and art songs and Klezmer melodies on Tuesday, June 22, 12:15 p.m., at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton Street. Admission is free and open to the public. The program is part of the Chicago YIVO Society Summer Festival of Yiddish Culture. View the festival calendar at [www.chicagoyivo.org](http://www.chicagoyivo.org).*

*CJH welcomes questions and comments from our readers.*

# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Summer Tours 2004

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society — in cooperation with the Dawn Schuman Institute — has planned three fascinating half-day Sunday tours of Chicago sites rich in Jewish history.

### SUNDAY, JULY 11

#### Chicago Loop Walking Tour

GUIDES: HERB EISEMAN, NORMAN SCHWARTZ, LEAH AXELROD.

This first of our local tours offers an opportunity to rediscover our Jewish history in downtown Chicago. Included are places of architectural, cultural and social importance.

1:00 pm — MEET Spertus Museum, 618 South Michigan Avenue

4:30 pm — FINISH Hyatt Regency Hotel, 151 East Wacker Drive

\$15/Member of CJHS or DSI \$20/Nonmember

### SUNDAY, JULY 25

#### Chicago Jewish Roots

GUIDE: DR. IRVING CUTLER. Air-Conditioned Bus. The author of *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* leads a sentimental journey to the Maxwell Street area, Lawndale, Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Albany Park and Rogers Park. Includes special stops!

12:00 noon — MEET Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 West Touhy — RETURN 5:00 pm

\$30/Member of CJHS or DSI \$40/Nonmember

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 15

#### Devon Avenue Walking Tour

GUIDES: MARK MANDLE, LEAH AXELROD. Explore the thriving West Rogers Park Jewish community. Visit active local synagogues. Experience the sights and tastes of this fascinating neighborhood — from a *shatnes* testing facility to bakeries and notable Jewish bookstores.

1:00 pm — MEET Corner of Devon & California

4:00 pm — FINISH On Devon

\$15/Member of CJHS or DSI \$20/Nonmember

*Phone Leah Axelrod if you need transportation to start of tour.*

For Information phone: CJHS Leah Axelrod (847) 432-7003 or DSI (847) 509-8282



### Summer Tours 2004: Reservations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Eve) \_\_\_\_\_

Membership:  CJHS  DSI  None

**July 11** Loop Walk \$15/20

**July 25** Roots Bus Tour \$30/40

**Aug. 15** Devon Walk \$15/20

Advance Payment Required.

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Chicago Jewish Historical Society

MAIL TO: LEAH AXELROD · 2100 LINDEN AVENUE · HIGHLAND PARK, IL 60035-2516

# About the Society

## What We Are

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

## What We Do

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

## Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to become more involved in the activities of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society? We invite you to take part! Please contact any of the committee chairpersons listed here.

### ■ Membership Committee

Dr. Rachelle Gold  
(773) 338-6975 and  
Mark Mandle  
(773) 929-2853, Co-Chairs

### ■ Oral History Committee

Dr. N. Sue Weiler, Chair  
(312) 922-2294

### ■ Program Committee

Charles Bernstein, Chair  
(773) 324-6362

### ■ Tour Committee

Leah Axelrod, Chair  
(847) 432-7003

## Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

## Dues Structure

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

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

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

## www.chicagojewishhistory.org

The Society is now online! Browse our Web site for information about our upcoming programs. Read past issues of our quarterly journal. Discover links to many interesting Jewish sites. Use the printable membership application. We welcome your inquiries and comments.  
**e-mail: info@chicagojewishhistory.org**

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