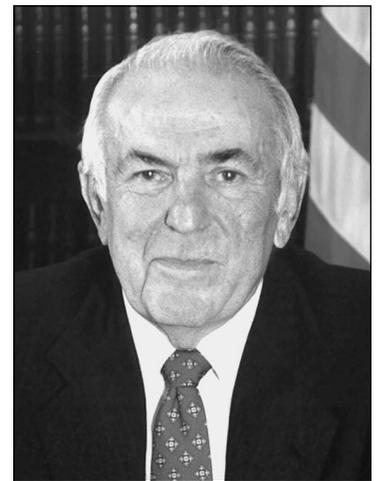




# chicago jewish history

## Abner Mikva to Speak at Society Open Meeting Sunday, September 18—Save the Date!

**J**udge Abner J. Mikva will speak informally about his life and work at the next open meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, Sunday, September 18. The program will begin at 2:00 p.m., after a social hour and refreshments at 1:00 p.m., at K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation, 1100 East Hyde Park Boulevard, Chicago. Admission is free and open to the public.



**Abner J. Mikva**

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Abner Mikva served as White House Counsel from October 1, 1994 until November 1, 1995. Prior to his appointment, he served as Chief Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. He was appointed to the bench on September 27, 1979, and became Chief Judge on January 21, 1991. Before coming to the bench, he was elected to Congress for five terms, representing portions of Chicago and its suburbs. Judge Mikva served on both the Ways and Means Committee and the Judiciary Committee while in Congress.

He started his political career in 1956 in the Illinois House of Representatives, where he served five consecutive terms. While in the legislature, he was Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

**J**udge Mikva received his law degree from the University of Chicago in 1951, graduating *cum laude*. He was the editor-in-chief of the Law Review.

He was a law clerk to United States Supreme Court Justice Sherman Minton. After his clerkship, he returned to Illinois, where he practiced law, becoming a partner of the late Justice Arthur Goldberg. He presented several constitutional cases to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Mikva has taught courses at many of the country's leading law schools. He has co-authored a political science textbook, *The American Congress: The First Branch*, and law school textbooks on the legislative process. He is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees. He was given the Paul H. Douglas Ethics in Government Award through the University of Illinois and the Alumni Medal of the University of Chicago. He was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

*continued on page 3*

## President's Column



Walter Roth

**AARON DIRECTOR.** Recently, on June 14, I attended a University of Chicago Law School Symposium in memory of Aaron Director, a celebrated "Chicago School" free market economist, who helped unite the fields of law and economics. He died on September 11, 2004, in Los Angeles, at the age of 102.

While he published sparingly and was almost unknown outside his intellectual circle, he was significant for his free market teachings at the University of Chicago, influencing many students and colleagues, including the jurists Robert H. Bork and Richard Posner. He also founded the *Journal of Law and Economics* in 1958 with Nobel laureate Ronald H. Coase. He was Jewish, and a brother-in-law of Milton Friedman, the most famous "Chicago School" economist.

Aaron Director was born in Charterisk, Ukraine. He came to the United States in 1914 with his mother and siblings to join his father, who had preceded them, seeking a new life here after his business failed. Aaron, a brilliant student, received a scholarship to Yale University, from which he graduated in 1924. He traveled to Europe and returned to teach at the Portland Labor College.

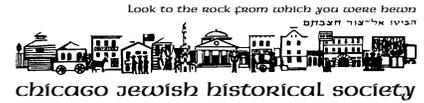
In 1927, at the suggestion of a friend, he came to the University of Chicago for graduate studies. He was offered a fellowship by Paul Douglas, an economist. For several years, he assisted Douglas in his studies of the labor market. (Paul Douglas became a leading liberal politician. He served as U.S. Senator from Illinois, 1948-1966.)

In 1930, Director was appointed to the faculty as an instructor of Economics. He now came to know Frank Knight, Henry Simons, and other economists at the University, a number of whom became Nobel Prize winners.

In 1946, at the age of 45, Director began to teach in the Law School. Now began his relationship with Edward H. Levi (later President of the University, then U.S. Attorney General in the Ford administration.). They split the Law and Economics course between them, Levi teaching it four days a week and Director, one day. It was said that Director used his one day to show that Levi's legal analysis "simply would not stand up."

I was fortunate to attend that class in the early 1950s. In my senior year, I received a C- on my final exam. Confident that I had understood all of Director's perplexing questions, I availed myself of an appeal process, to see the professor to discuss my grade. Director received me courteously. I was given such a low grade, he explained, because my handwriting was illegible! I asked that he let me read my answers to him, and he agreed. When I finished, he raised my grade from C- to A- without saying a word. For this I thanked him and praised him for teaching such a great course. ❖

Let me take this opportunity to wish you, our Society's members and friends, a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year. *Shana tova.*



### Officers 2005

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### Chicago Jewish History

*Chicago Jewish History* is published quarterly by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605. (312) 663-5634. Single copies \$4.00 postpaid. Successor to *Society News*.

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Send all submissions to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605 or e-mail: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org).



## *Society Donates \$2,500 to Archives Digitization Project*

The Chicago Jewish Archives, a unit of Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, has embarked on a two-year project: to create a database of archival images and make them available internationally via the Spertus website.

The ambitious project, called *Image Gateway to Chicago Jewish History*, has two main purposes. The

first is to provide easier access to a wide audience of people who use the Archives' images for research and publication; the second is preservation, because by digitizing the images, the Archives protect the originals, many of which are at high risk because of their fragility. Spertus has used a \$35,000 grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy

Donnelly Foundation to buy specialized software that will link the Archives images with the Asher Library's online catalog.

CJHS enjoys a close working relationship with the Archives and Library. Looking forward to the benefits of the new technology, our Society has made a donation to the exciting *Image Gateway* project. ❖

## NYC and LA Museums Commemorate American Jewish Anniversary (Sorry, No Show in Chicago)

### **"Greetings from Home: 350 Years of American Jewish Life"**

**May 17—September 30, 2005**

**Center for Jewish History**

**15 West 16th Street, New York, NY**

*Presented by the American Jewish Historical Society in cooperation with Yeshiva University Museum and the American Sephardi Federation with Sephardic House.*

**F**eaturing more than 200 rare and remarkable items drawn from the voluminous holdings of the American Jewish Historical Society and major research institutions such as the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of Hebrew Union College, YIVO, the Leo Baeck Institute, the American Sephardi Federation and the Yeshiva University Museum, "Greetings from Home" tracks the pioneering efforts of Jewish individuals and groups to define religious liberty for every American.

The exhibition illustrates the many ways in which Jewish immigrants in every generation were transformed by American culture and, in turn, helped to transform that very culture.

"Greetings from Home" explores the ongoing ties that have bound American Jewry to Jewish communities around the world for 350 years. It brings into poignant view the lives of the Sephardic, German, Yiddish-speaking, Mizrahi, and former Soviet Jewish immigrants who have come in successive waves to these shores, and highlights the ways those immigrants and their descendants, once at home in America, maintained their ties and sense of connection to the places from which they came. —[www.cjh.org](http://www.cjh.org)

### **"From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America"**

**November 8, 2005—February 12, 2006**

**Skirball Cultural Center & Museum**

**2701 North Sepulveda Blvd.**

**Los Angeles, CA**

*The Los Angeles installation of the exhibition differs slightly from New York's in name and focus.*

**T**he "Haven" section opens with a selection of pivotal documents expressing the ideals of freedom that have come to represent the promise of America. It goes on to explore the formative experiences of Jewish immigrants as they struggled to "become American." The "Home" section focuses on the opportunities and challenges inherent in a free society and the uniquely American Jewish religious movements, institutions and associations created in response.

Among the treasures on display are the deed for the Statue of Liberty; manuscripts of Lincoln's notes rescinding Major General U. S. Grant's infamous Order No. 11, which expelled the Jews "as a class" from the military; and the original letter from Moses Seixas (1744-1809) to President George Washington lauding the young nation as one that "to bigotry gives no sanction," as well as Washington's reply confirming the free and equal status of Jews in America.

The exhibition is among the commemorative activities associated with the congressionally recognized Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History. The exhibition was on view at the Library of Congress before traveling to Cincinnati, New York, and Los Angeles. —[www.skirball.org](http://www.skirball.org)

## CJHS Donates Prizes to Teen Historians



**From left: Danny Morgan and Warren Poetzing.**  
*Chicago Metro History Education Center.*

In a ceremony on May 22, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, represented by Norman Schwartz, awarded prizes to two Von Steuben High School students, Danny Morgan and Warren Poetzing, for their exhibit, "European Jews and Germans, Too," at this year's History Fair, organized by the Chicago Metro History Education Center. The awards ceremony, attended by nearly 400 students, teachers, and parents, took place at the Chicago Historical Society.

CJHS Past Presidents Adele Hast and Norman Schwartz had visited the Fair, held at the Chicago Cultural Center, and chose our award winners.

Danny and Warren's project posed a historical question: "What caused Jews and Germans to move to America, and what attracted them to Chicago?" The boys researched the history of the Jewish and German communities in Chicago and created charts, graphs, and a brief timeline. They recorded the immigrant experiences of their grandfathers, Henry Morgan and Arthur Poetzing, in oral history interviews. They included family documents and photographs in the exhibit.

The young historians learned from their findings that "immigration was and is a direct result of countries' struggles. Most immigrants flee from their countries in search of a new beginning, hope for their families, and freedom. They usually settle in larger cities because those cities have ethnic neighborhoods to support them. Big cities tend to give them a larger opportunity to work and make something of themselves. Our grandparents' experiences are typical of many other European immigrants."

## The Society Welcomes Our New Members

Meyer Kohn

Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Missner

Mr. & Mrs. Randy Nadell

Reuben Robinson • Roger Rudich

Margo Stern • Zella Wahnnon

## CJHS Announces \$1,000 Research Grant

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is pleased to announce an annual award for research on Chicago Jewish history done by an undergraduate or graduate student. CJHS will award \$1,000 for an outstanding paper on a topic of Chicago Jewish history.

The paper should be 25 to 40 pages in length, with documentation in endnotes. Guidelines for endnote form will be available at the address below. An independent committee of experts will judge the entries.

The winner will be invited to present the research at a meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. The winning entry will be considered for publication in the Society's quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*.

Applicant should submit a paper and a letter of support from a faculty adviser by June 30, 2006, to:

**Adele Hast, chair**

**CJHS Awards Committee**

**Chicago Jewish Historical Society**

**618 South Michigan Avenue**

**Chicago, IL 60605**

**E-mail: [adelehast@yahoo.com](mailto:adelehast@yahoo.com)**

**Phone (312) 663-5634**

The Fair is a year-long education program that engages students in grades 6 through 12 with the process of discovery and interpretation of historical topics. Each year, nearly 17,000 students in our metropolitan area create projects on topics in local and state history for the Chicago Metro History Fair. ❖

## Albert Halper: Chicago Workers' Lives in the 1930s

**“W**hen we stood at the mail-cases slinging the letters, we wore short aprons around our middles so that contact with the ledge which held our mail-trays, as we bent forward, reading the addresses, would not make our vests shiny and wear them out.... Our shirt sleeves were tucked high, as high as we could roll them, and our arms kept going.... Every few minutes, in the same tone of voice, the dispatcher far down the floor would call out train numbers; bags were locked, piled on

trucks, and rolled away.... The nights went slowly. The many clocks against the walls were controlled by electricity and every minute the thick black hands would jerk forward with a clicking sound....

“At first we had not much to say as we worked, but in a few weeks, when we knew the separations of the case, we did not bother to glance at the labels above the states. We had learned the ‘feel’ of sorting. Our arms became mechanical arms, and this freed our minds. As we worked we could feel our thoughts floating, and the steady rocking of our bodies, as we tossed, gave us the sensation of dancing.

“In the mailing section, on that one great floor, worked a thousand men—whites, Negroes, and Fili-

pinos—young and middle-aged, but all with that tired look under the eyes. Many of us were students, some from small towns and farms, working for tuition, board, and room rent. We had had to take complicated civil-service examinations for our jobs, we had had to wait months for our appointments, and now we were inside these thick, gray walls, throwing the mail. We were paid by the hour, and there was no loafing here.... Above our heads the small, wicked-looking first class-mail conveyor system rattled along like an endless belt of bullets fed into a machine gun....”

— “On the Shore,” title story from the collection, *On the Shore: Young Writer Remembering Chicago* by Albert Halper (Viking, 1934).

**C**hicago-born Albert Halper (1904-1984) based his proletarian stories and novels of the 1930s on his own close-knit West Side Jewish family life and his own experiences in various Chicago workplaces.

He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1934 on the merits of his first two published novels, *Union Square*, a Literary Guild selection in 1931, and *The Foundry* (1934).

*Union Square* is written from the perspective of a young Chicagoan living in New York and reminiscing about his home town; *The Foundry* takes place in the “Fort Dearborn Electroplating Foundry.” Halper worked in just such a place.

*The Chute* (1937) is set in a Chicago mail-order house. The narrator is an artistic young Jewish West Sider working as an order picker—as Halper himself did.

Stories in *On the Shore* describe his time as a postal worker. (When Halper learned that he was about to be promoted to a regular clerkship with increased wages, he fled!)

He published more novels, then edited *This is Chicago* (1952), a fine anthology of writings about our city; then he wrote a Jewish family

novel, *The Golden Watch* (1953); and finally, a memoir, *Good-bye, Union Square* (1970). All the books are out of print, but some can be found at the Chicago Public Library, 400 South State Street. —*Bev Chubat.*

*Many thanks to Dan Sharon, research librarian at the Asher Library for putting me on the trail of Albert Halper.*



**New Post Office, ca. 1932.** Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-21193.

## *Program at NSCI: “The Greenebaums: Memoirs of a Pioneer Chicago Jewish Family”*

**T**he Society’s June 19 open meeting was held at North Shore Congregation Israel (NSCI), 1185 Sheridan Road, Glencoe. Three Greenebaum descendants, all fifth-generation Chicagoans who all now reside in suburban Highland Park, reminisced about their family, whose members began emigrating from Germany to Chicago in the 1840s and 1850s. CJHS Program Chair Charles B. Bernstein deserves high praise for his hard work in preparing this excellent program.

**James Greenebaum II** was the catalyst for the program. In past issues of *Chicago Jewish History* we had published the names of local public places named for Jewish people but never mentioned Greenebaum Playlot Park, at 4300 West Wabansia Avenue, named for his great-uncle Henry Greenebaum. Henry had no descendants, so James decided to “speak up for him, to set the record straight.” From this beginning the program evolved.

The Greenebaum family emanated from Rheinessen, an area of Germany controlled by Napoleon. In 1808 an Imperial decree required Jews to take surnames. Jacob Greenebaum’s father’s family took the name Grünebaum because an earlier ancestor was the proprietor of an inn called Zum Grünen Baum (To the Green Tree). Jacob, born in 1797, was called Israel Baer prior to the name change. He was appointed by the government to head the Jewish congregation in Eppelsheim. He traded in iron (scrap?), rags and notions, and later added grain and agricultural products.

One of his sons, Michael (1824-1894), apprenticed as a tinsmith and then traveled as a journeyman. He was the first to leave for Chicago where, in 1842, piped water was first being provided to its citizens, and he could find work. In 1852 he returned to Eppelsheim to accompany his father and the rest of the family to America.

**Robert J. Greenebaum** began his remarks by posing a question: was there something special about his pioneer family? Indeed there was. The Greenebaum Brothers Bank, founded in 1855, antedated other early Chicago businesses—Marshall Field’s dry goods store (1856), R.R. Donnelley’s

print shop (1864), Potter Palmer’s hotel (1871), and Gustavus Swift’s meat packing plant (1875).

“The Greenebaum Bank” had a succession of names. First, the Greenebaum Brothers Bank; the brothers were Elias (1822-1919) and Henry (1833-1914). When the next generation took on leading roles in the business in 1877, the name became Greenebaum Sons Bank and Trust Co. In 1921, the Greenebaum Investment Co. separated from the bank to specialize in mortgage banking.

The stock market crash of 1929 shook the Investment Co. Moses E. Greenebaum (a son of Elias), wrote a letter to his mortgage bond holders, assuring them of help—from his own pocket—to make their interest and principal payments. “M.E.,” who was the longtime president of Sinai Congregation, died within nine months of writing this letter and clearing up the wreckage of his business. Edgar N. Greenebaum, a son of M.E. (and father of Robert), ran the business until its centennial celebration in 1955. By that time, the company was owned by its employees. The Greenebaum Bank was not so fortunate. In order to pay its depositors, it was forced to seek a larger bank to partner with. Two other Chicago banks founded by Jewish families, the Foreman Bank and S.W. Strauss and Co., suffered a similar fate.

**Joan Greenebaum Adler**, a sculptor, discussed the family’s civic and cultural involvement. After the death of Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, the premier pulpit at Sinai Congregation opened up. Jim and Joan’s father, Frederic Greenebaum, who had been a student in Louis Mann’s class at Yale University, recommended Dr. Mann for the position. Louis Mann came to Sinai and was there for forty years.

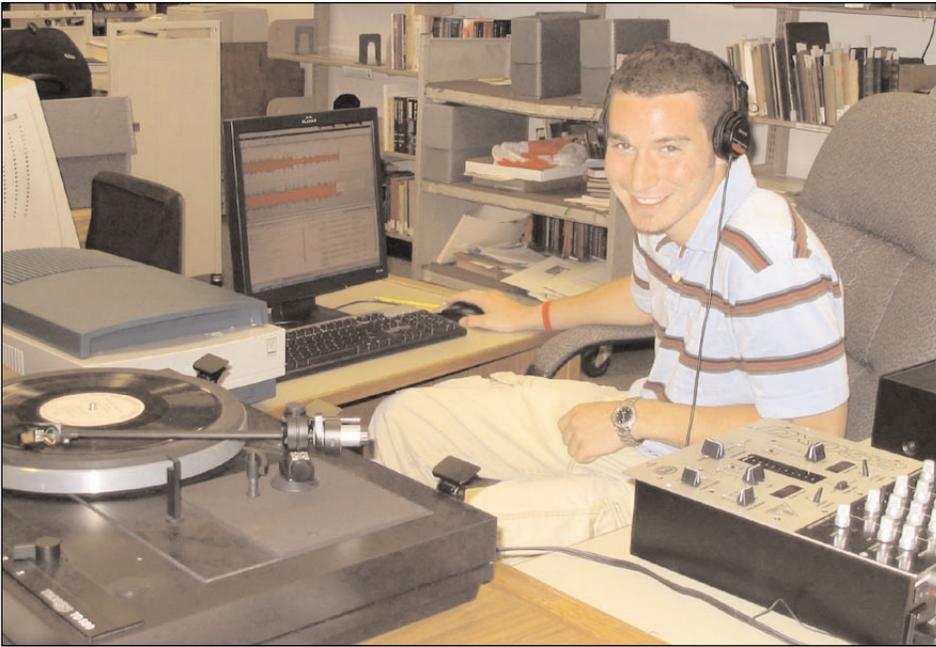
Hannah Greenebaum Solomon was an organizer of the Congress of Women at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition and a founder of the National Council of Jewish Women. Rose Haas Alschuler was a pioneer in early childhood education. Katherine Kuh was prominent in the Chicago art community in the 1940s and ’50s. She was a gallery owner, curator, and author. Michael Greenebaum (grandson of the original) managed

*continued on page 15*

FROM THE  
CHICAGO JEWISH  
archives

## Portrait of the Intern as a Young Digitizer

By David Marder



Intern David Marder at work. *Chicago Jewish Archives.*

For as long as I can remember, music has been a large part of my life. From my parents' old records that would pop and hiss, to cassette tapes that would easily tangle, to compact disks that sounded crisp and clear (as long as they were not scratched), to today's digitized music on computers, the technology of audio storage has evolved immensely. Likewise, pictures have gone from being preserved on film that could easily smudge or tear, to being digitally scanned and stored. A scanned image can now be cropped, rotated, and color corrected without ever physically damaging the original.

At the age of five I would sing along to analog tapes in my large, square-shaped Walkman. Those

tapes proved to be no match for my small, busy hands. I would pull the tapes in and out of players, or wind them with my fingers, so that they would end up as a tangled mess in a desk drawer that my parents referred to as "The Cassette Tape Graveyard." Later, at the age of ten, I was given my very own camera. Eager to take pictures of everything in sight, I took my camera everywhere. Once my masterpieces were developed, however, I would grab at them with my grimy hands. Before long the smudged photos would end up in the same place as the ruined audiotapes.

Eventually, digital media technology began to rid my parents' home, and other afflicted households, of such "graveyards." Much

the same has happened to the Chicago Jewish Archives. I am typing this article on a top-of-the-line computer that leaves all other multimedia computers in the dust! Next to this computer is a scanner, and in back of me is a turntable, a cassette deck, and an audio mixer.

Besides giving us the ability to throw a dance party on the sixth floor of Spertus Institute, all of this equipment has allowed the Archives to upgrade from the old technologies to "The Digital Age."

Through the use of audio cleaning software, Adobe Photoshop®, and many electronic gadgets, the Archives has begun the task of digitizing oral history tapes, records, and old photographs. Listening to a recording of the late Cantor Moses J. Silverman from the 1950s, one hears a very loud and persistent hiss, along with snaps, crackles and pops in the background. Now, through the use of our audio cleaning software, we can capture the voice of the cantor without the breakfast cereal noises. As with the Silverman record, a cassette tape interview with Mr. Herman Spertus from 1980 has been restored.

The Archives holds more than two hundred oral history interviews conducted by CJHS. Thanks to the handy tools in this software—known by such names as the "Dehisser," the "Denoiser," and the "Decrackler"—these important recordings can be converted into digital files that can

be played through a computer. Also, through the use of photo-editing software, it has become possible to scan pictures from as early as the 1800s so they look just like the originals.

As a child I ruined modern cassettes and photos. It is even easier to ruin older, more fragile items. Every day, researchers come in to Archives to learn more about their family or synagogue. Unfortunately, it has been hard to allow ready access to some of the holdings because of their fragility. This is an important reason why the Chicago Jewish Archives has begun to digitize its photographs and other media and organize them in a database—to make it possible for a researcher to view a picture or listen to a record without having to worry about the item's fragility.

For example, to view a picture of Mount Sinai Hospital in 1929, he or she could easily search for the words "Mount Sinai" and "1929" in the database. After typing in the request, an entry will show up giving the researcher informa-

tion such as the date the picture was taken, the photographer's name, and any information that was found on the actual picture. The database entry will also give the researcher the file name of the scanned picture that is stored on the computer.

This same procedure can be used for accessing numerous photographs of Chicago Jewish Federation events, synagogues, and other Jewish groups, audio recordings of local congregations—and much more.

The possibilities are endless for the Archives' ambitious digitizing project, *Image Gateway to Chicago Jewish History*. Posting pictures for public access on to the Archives' website can make researching a family member as easy as pointing and clicking on a computer screen from the comfort of one's own home. For those who enjoy the vintage sound of a vinyl record mixed with the new generation of digital media, a "Pod Cast" might now be set up containing recordings of Chicago Jewish artists and updates in the Archives.

I am a twenty-year-old student of Psychology without a strong background in the area of Chicago Jewish history. However, after spending a summer here as an intern at the Archives, I have come to a better understanding of our community and its traditions and gained a great respect for the individuals who have gathered and preserved our historical artifacts, documents, and memorabilia.

Digital media, I believe, will make it possible to keep Jewish traditions alive for Chicago's future generations. As technology continues to catch up with destructive ten-year olds and adults alike, the Archives will be prepared to do everything possible to inform the public—and keep audio recordings and pictures from falling into multimedia graveyards. ❖

**DAVID MARDER** is from Arlington Heights, Illinois. He has studied for two years at the University of Kansas. This fall he will transfer to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, where he will major in Psychology.



**Left: Sanctuary of North Shore Congregation Israel, 1185 Sheridan Road, Glencoe.**  
**Right: Sanctuary of K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation, 1100 East Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago.**

*Photographs by Laurence Stern. Digital images from Chicago Jewish Archives.*

# Meyer Levin and the Kibbutz Buchenwald Diary

BY WALTER ROTH

In 1938, author Meyer Levin returned home to Chicago from his travels in Spain and Palestine. His wife, chemist Mable Schamp, had conceived a child in Spain, and on June 18, 1938, gave birth to their son Eli in suburban Glencoe.

With the outbreak of World War II, Levin moved to Hollywood. Initially he worked as a writer on defense projects, then made films for the Office of War Information, and later enlisted in the Army, serving briefly as a propagandist in the Psychological Warfare Division and was posted to England. There, in 1943, he met Tereska Torres, whom he had come to know briefly in Paris when she was a young girl and he was studying with her father, the artist Marek Szwarc. (Tereska would become his second wife and the mother of another son, Mikael.)

After D-Day, Levin landed in France, and, as an American war correspondent, embarked on a journey through Europe, writing reports carried by many American newspapers and magazines. In his 1950 autobiography, *In Search*, Levin describes his journey from Paris to Prague, through the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of the concentration camps.

He was shattered by what he saw in the camps. His mission now was to be a witness to the genocide of his people, and to do everything in his power to help the survivors. He would devote his energy to their struggle to emigrate to Palestine. Among his early projects were two semi-documentary movies. He wrote and directed "My Father's House," the story of a child who survives the camps and embarks on a journey through Palestine searching for his parents, and "The Illegals," which follows a group of survivors on their perilous journey to Palestine, through Europe and across the Mediterranean, and their interception by British naval vessels. Levin and Tereska played parts in this film.

One of the early post-war publications about Holocaust survivors was *Kibbutz Buchenwald: Selections from the Kibbutz Diary*, translated and edited by Meyer Levin, with illustrations by Ann Neumann, published in 1946 by Lion the Printer, Tel-Aviv, for the Zionist Organization Youth Department.

Buchenwald was one of the first concentration camps entered by American troops in April 1945. War correspondent Meyer Levin accompanied them. The camp was located near the German city of Weimar,

whose citizens later claimed they knew nothing of the notorious nature of this place, where tens of thousands of Jews and political prisoners died from brutal physical labor, starvation and disease. Among the Buchenwald survivors were young Jews who had survived imprisonment in other camps, and had been transported to Buchenwald near the end of the War. Levin's shock at learning what had transpired at the camp and the resultant deep pessimism he felt about the future of the Jewish people appears to have been alleviated by his meeting and discussions with these young survivors.

A number of them had founded a kibbutz (commune) after their liberation. They had been moved to a farm area near the camp in order to begin their training for life on a kibbutz in Palestine. The young men and women of the commune had decided to keep a diary of the highlights of their commune activities, and the diary came to Levin's attention. He translated it from Yiddish to English and then edited it. In his foreword, Levin writes that "these Jewish survivors, the first concentration camp survivors to come to Palestine as a unit, provide the answers to many questions that had been debated with a great deal of confusion and very little evidence, by people who have had little or no contact with the facts of concentration camp life."

In their diary, Levin says, "are the answers to such questions as: What sort of people survived in the concentration camps? Are they fit material for life in Palestine? Is there any optimism left in them? How do they feel in relation to their past? Will they be a burden to Palestine? Have they anything to teach us?" To the final question Levin responds: "I believe they have."

The book makes two very strong points: first, the survivors—now comrades of Kibbutz Buchenwald—are determined to resume a vigorous life; and second, they feel a responsibility both to those who did not survive and to themselves never to forget the violence done to them all as Jews. One comrade mourns his "unforgettable ones:" his parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins. He recalls their deaths, his loneliness and suffering, and his ultimate liberation, wondering why he survived. "Why?" he asks, "For what? Why am I left alive? Is it for myself? For my own being? No, I cannot feel this. In the camp, I wander from one barrack to another, and everywhere I see only Jews. And in them I see my brothers and sisters, and I begin to feel such a closeness to Jews, such a love of

Jews and all that is Jewish, that I know that my only home is in this feeling”

Another diary entry records the first meeting between the comrades and the soldiers of the Jewish Brigade, Jewish soldiers from Palestine, in the British Army, who were helping the survivors. It reveals both the determination of the members of the kibbutz to survive as Jews and their feelings of pride in and unity with the men of the brigade: “...an army car drove into the yard, and there, instead of the usual American insignia, there was a yellow Star of David on a blue-white field. Shalom! Shalom! Thus, the first Palestine Jews to come to our kibbutz greeted us, who wanted only to go there, also to become Palestinians.”

The soldiers explain that their mission is to make contact with Jewish survivors wherever they are. The comrades learn that “the war might have ended for others, but not for the Jews.” After the victory they do not have “that for which we fought; the Jews were still suffering everywhere in Europe and moreover, the world was still intent upon turning us into Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, and nationals of every sort, who had as little to do with being Jewish as they did with the Books of Moses.” The *Diary* also includes moving episodes of meetings of survivors with American rabbis, representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress, and of their attempts to help the survivors reach Palestine.

The *Diary* ends with a description of the kibbutz-style environment created by the survivors. They built a hall which became the “center of this cultural and spiritual life.” Here they had copies of Hebrew

newspapers and the beginning of a library donated by the Jewish Agency. They began to read the Hebrew Bible and other texts; they celebrated the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. An entry in the *Diary* summarizes the feeling of the commune at the end of the initial phase: “This is a general summary of our work until now. There is being born in us a simple, natural orientation to truth, to truth in daily life, and a desire for a life full of meaning and truth. Our goal is to grow, and developing ourselves as Jews, to become responsible chalutzim, and responsible comrades in the ‘kibbutz of unity’ [translation of Hebrew *kibbutz hameuhad*].”

Levin’s *Kibbutz Buchenwald* is one of his shortest books, only 120 pages. But it is a powerful work, with Levin becoming one of the first to present Holocaust survivors’ writings to the world, in English. The work reinvigorated Levin into writing further about the survival of the Jewish people and the creation of the State of Israel.

The survivors of Buchenwald took their commune to Israel, to Kibbutz Afikim, near the Jordan River, where they formed their own autonomous group within the framework of the kibbutz. Meyer Levin, who had also begun a new phase of his life in Israel, often met with them.

He married Tereska in 1948. It was she who handed Levin a copy of another Holocaust diary, published in French in 1948, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Meyer Levin would now begin another fateful part of his literary life with his translation of this diary into English and the writing of his version of a play based on the diary. ❖

Approximately fifty years after Meyer Levin’s *Kibbutz Buchenwald* was published, Judith Tydor Baumel, the daughter of one of the young survivors of the camp and a member of the original commune, published *Kibbutz Buchenwald—Survivors and Pioneers*. Originally published in Hebrew in 1995 by Kibbutz Hameuhad and Beit Lochamei Hagetaot in Tel Aviv, it was translated into English in 1997. The book is dedicated to the memory of the author’s father, Yechezkel Tydor.

The Baumel book consists of the author’s interviews of her father and his comrades about their experiences immediately after their liberation, much as they are related in Levin’s book. But Baumel then proceeds to trace their lives as they leave Buchenwald, establish a collective in Germany, and begin to prepare for a new, agricultural existence in

Palestine. She interviews the survivors about their arrival in Israel at the internment camp at Atlit, near Haifa, and the meeting with their new comrades at Kibbutz Afikim. She uses the oral histories and written diaries of the survivors to describe the numerous sociological problems they faced in communal living and the political problems they encountered with the creation of the State of Israel.

The members of the original Buchenwald commune subsequently left Kibbutz Afikim to become part of their own independent settlement in 1948. Today this settlement is known as Kibbutz Netzer Sereni. It is located south of Tel Aviv.

Curiously, in her book, Judith Tydor Baumel makes no mention of Meyer Levin, the eyewitness correspondent who was the first to write about the beginning of Kibbutz Buchenwald. ❖

# *Family Memoir* Grandma, Dillinger, and the FBI

BY HELEN A. SCLAIR



**Program Chair Burt Robin and guest speaker Helen Scclair, CJHS open meeting, March 14, 1999.**

*Mrs. Scclair gave a slide-illustrated talk, "From Lincoln Park to Eternity: An Overview of Chicagoland's Jewish Cemeteries." Photograph by Norman D. Schwartz.*

**M**y late husband, Marvin Scclair, rejoiced every time he was able to tell the following story, a bit of Chicago history, virtually unknown.

It was a very hot night, July 22, 1934, when my husband's maternal grandmother, Ettie, decided to go outside on Lincoln Avenue to get a breath of fresh air. She and her husband, Jake Natelsky, owned and lived in the building directly south of the Biograph Theater.

Suddenly, there was chaos!

Ettie was hit by one of the bullets that killed John Dillinger! (He was shot down that night in an FBI ambush as he left after the movie. Dillinger had undergone plastic surgery to change his appearance, but his companion, Anna Sage, "the lady in red," had agreed to point him out to Elliot Ness and his men, who were waiting outside.)

What happened to Ettie? Removed from the pool of blood, this nice Jewish lady was taken to Columbus Hospital, where she was placed in the best room in the house, the one in which Mother Cabrini had died. The hospital authorities evidently thought that Columbus would get all kinds of publicity for its act of kindness. My husband, who was ten years old at the time, said that he liked to go to the newsreels to see himself standing by his grandmother's bed.

Ettie Natelsky was the first innocent bystander to be wounded by the FBI. She eventually recovered to live a long life, and is buried with her husband in Westlawn Cemetery.

For a long time, her brother, Moe, had run a saloon downstairs in the Lincoln Avenue building. After the ambush, he chained a bar stool to a radiator, glued a shot glass to a table, and put up a large sign stating that "Dillinger had his last drink here." Family legend says that he minted money with this presentation. ❖

**HELEN A. SCLAIR**, "*The Cemetery Lady*," has lectured and published extensively on the history of Chicago's cemeteries, and has appeared in many WTTW-Channel 11 documentaries. She is a valued member of CJHS.

## **CJHS Offers Tribute Cards for Special Occasions**

The Society reminds our members about the availability of our tribute cards. These attractive cards can be used to honor someone, memorialize a loved one, thank a friend, or offer congratulations.

The cards are printed on heavy white stock, folded to four by nine and a quarter inches. They bear the handsome CJHS logo on the outside. Printed inside is our mission statement, "The Chicago Jewish Historical Society, through its many programs and publications, collects, preserves, records, and retells the history of the Jewish community of Chicago," and "A gift had been made to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society by \_\_\_\_\_."

There is also space for a personal message if you care to add one. A package of eight cards/envelopes is \$10.00.

Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at a cost of \$5.00 per card, postage included. To order packs of eight or single cards and envelopes, call the Society office at (312) 663-5634. ❖

## **The Biograph Theater**

The Biograph, at 2433 North Lincoln Avenue, is currently closed, but the building has been bought by Victory Gardens Theatre, long located at 2257 North Lincoln. VGT plans to begin presenting live theater productions at the renovated Biograph in fall of 2006.

# Remembering Irwin Suloway, Educator and Editor Emeritus of *Chicago Jewish History*

*Dr. Irwin J. Suloway, educator and lifelong Chicagoan, died at 83 on May 31, at home near his loving children, Stephen and Ann; son-in-law, Tim Baker; and grandson, Asher. He is survived by his beloved sister, Phyllis Frank and other loving relatives, and was preceded in death by his devoted wife of 56 years, Elaine, nee Fox. A memorial service was held on Friday, July 1 at Oak Park Temple.*

Current editor Bev Chubat writes: “Although I met Dr. Suloway on only a few occasions, each encounter with the courtly gentleman was a pleasure. In preparing for my job as editor of *CJH*, I leafed through the back issues that were so expertly edited by Irwin. As my work proceeded, he would send me encouraging notes and helpful comments. Our photo of Irwin and Elaine at the CJHS 25th anniversary celebration is a beautiful keepsake of a true partnership.

“Shortly after being appointed editor of *CJH*, I asked our Board members to send me autobiographical notes. In June 1999, our editor emeritus sent me this succinct paragraph:

“Irwin Suloway’s knowledge of local Jewish History owes something to being born and raised on the South Side, living west in Oak Park while raising his family, and being a North Sider for the past twenty-five years. He is a retired Chicago State University professor of English and dean of faculty whose greatest ‘adventure’ was living in Saigon with his family while serving as an advisor to the Vietnamese Minister of Education during 1963-65. He has had varied experience as editor of professional journals, newsletters and books, and served on the Oak Park Public Library Board. Dr. Suloway also served as Education Director for Chicago Sinai Congregation.”

His longtime friend and colleague, CJHS Board member Dr. Irving Cutler, eulogized Dr. Suloway at the Oak Park Temple memorial service:

“I first met Irwin in the 1960s when he was my dean at Chicago Teachers’ College. When I became chairman of the Department of Geography, I always found him to be fair, reasonable, and concerned....

“Irwin was an excellent speaker.... He and I drove together to a Chicago Teachers’ College reunion where there were hundreds of alumni. He gave a very moving keynote speech, infused with wit, humor, and insight into the history of the College....

“Irwin was also very involved with the Jewish community....

“Utilizing his vast knowledge of literature, he wrote the chapter on Chicago’s Jewish authors in *The Sentinel’s History of Chicago Jewry*.

“Irwin was always available to answer the many questions I would periodically ask him about our pensions, our medical benefits, or which theatrical pro-

ductions to see in London or at the Stratford Festival in Canada. Although not in the best of physical health, he attended my wife’s funeral last year and gave me his support, sharing his experience and advising me. He also helped edit the three books I wrote, not only correcting my faulty English, but more importantly, providing ideas, information, and organizational suggestions that I found invaluable. We would sit for hours going over my manuscript.... It was during those long sessions that I learned a little about his two years in Vietnam, where he had helped set up a teacher training program, and also about his research of New Zealand’s first Jewish prime minister....

“Irwin Suloway was a man of great accomplishments, but he was always humble, kind, and



**Irwin and Elaine Suloway at the CJHS 25th anniversary celebration, November 17, 2002.** Photograph by David Rigg.

*continued on page 14*

## Irwin Suloway *continued from page 13*

considerate. I admired how he was always upbeat despite many serious illnesses. I know he was very well-liked and held in high regard by his many good friends.

Personally, I will always treasure our friendship and appreciate the good help and guidance he gave me through the years.”

**W**alter Roth, president of CJHS, writes: “Dr. Irwin J. Suloway was one of the founders of our Society and editor of our quarterly publication.

“I first came to know him in the early 1980s when I joined the Board of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. When he told me that he was a graduate of Hyde Park High School and a former editor of the the school newspaper, we became instant friends, as I am also a Hyde Park grad.

“Dr. Suloway soon became my mentor at the Historical Society. I had much to learn about taking oral histories and writing about local Jewish history, and he was a master of the techniques. While I did not know him in his prior professional career, I knew that he was much esteemed by his colleagues.

“He encouraged me to put my research into two books and helped to edit *An Accidental Anarchist* (co-authored with Joe Kraus), and *Looking Backward: Stories From Chicago's Jewish Past*, for which he wrote a generous foreword. Irwin Suloway will be greatly missed by all of us in the Society, as well as his many students and friends, and most of all by his family, which he loved so dearly.”

**J**oe Kraus writes: “I think I disagreed with Irv Suloway only once during the seven years that I was editor of *Chicago Jewish History*. When I began to edit the newsletter in 1992, I already felt that ‘newsletter’ didn’t do it justice. Largely under Irv’s editorship, it had become a small magazine, a quarterly publication that offered articles, columns, and short pieces of real substance.

“Before I began, I’d worked with Walter Roth on our book, *An Accidental Anarchist*, but editing

the newsletter meant learning about a lot of topics in Chicago Jewish history very quickly. It meant juggling some talented contributors to whom I could offer nothing but thanks. And it meant understanding what different Society members needed from our publication.

“If it weren’t for Irv, I’d have been gone after the first issue! He worked with me at every level, making suggestions about how I might edit individual stories, lay out the issues, develop and alter regular features, and cultivate my relationships with contributors. We lived fairly close to one another, so rather than speaking by phone, I’d usually head over to his and Elaine’s home to talk over whatever my current problem was. That first year, I visited them so often that the doormen came to recognize me and buzzed me in before I could explain what I was doing there.

“I find it even more impressive that, when I look back on it, Irv was so generous about letting go of the publication that he developed. He’d been editor, I believe, for more than a decade, and the result was very much his vision of what the newsletter should be. When I indicated that I wanted to try to add two or three things to what he’d been doing very well, he was always supportive. As Irv Cutler and Walter Roth have shown, he had a gift for helping other people become better at what they wanted to do.

“The one disagreement that we did have is still public. He did so much for the first issue of my tenure, that I wanted to give him credit. He wasn’t interested, and asked that I not bother to mention him. I got him, though—I invented the title of ‘Editor Emeritus’ and stuck it next to his name in our staff box. Bev Chubat still lists him that way, which seems appropriate to me. With or without his name, every issue of *Chicago Jewish History* for the last 20 years has borne his imprint.”

**S**idney Sorkin conducted an extensive oral history interview of Irwin Suloway for CJHS on April 28, 1984. The transcribed pages, now in digital form, are at the Chicago Jewish Archives, (312) 322-1741 or e-mail archives@spertus.edu. ❖

### Corrections & Clarifications

**CJH SPRING 2005: Mollie West, Labor Activist.** Mrs. West’s maiden name was misspelled. The correct name is Sheiman. We regret the error.

**Recommend a relative or friend  
for membership in the Society.  
Everyone is welcome.**

## *The Greenebaums*

*continued from page 7*

Paul Douglas's successful campaign for alderman, and treasurer for his winning U.S. Senate campaigns.

A gigantic Greenebaum family tree was on view at the program. Its branches are heavy with names of community activists. The tree was researched and prepared by Ernie Nathan, whose name is on the tree.

**Daniel R. Swett**, longtime congregation member and a retired attorney, gave a brief history of North Shore Congregation Israel.

He told us that NSCI was founded in Winnetka, of all places, in April 1920, as the North Shore branch of Sinai Congregation, then the bastion of the elite of Chicago's South Side German Jewry. Sinai's leader was Dr. Emil G. Hirsch.

North Shore, in 1920, was the first, and for more than a quarter century, the only Jewish congregation in the northern suburbs. Religious school classes met at what is now the Hubbard Woods School, and religious services were held at the Winnetka Congregational Church.

By 1926, North Shore was ready to sever its ties with Sinai and build its own facility at Vernon and Lincoln, and that became its home until 1962. (Now it is the site of Am Shalom.) The magnificent Sheridan Road building was constructed in 1961-62, and is based on the design of architect Minoru Yamasaki. About twenty years later, the smaller, more intimate Perlman Sanctuary was added.

For about the last seventy years the congregation has had four senior rabbis. Charles Schulman and Edgar

Siskin were proponents of an austere practice not far from the Classical Reform Judaism that North Shore's founders had experienced under Dr. Hirsch. Both these men had leanings toward a more traditional Judaism, but the proclivities of the congregational leadership kept them in line with Classical Reform.

**E**ventually the congregational membership came to represent more of a cross-section of the entire Jewish community, so by the time Herbert Bronstein arrived as senior rabbi in 1972, the congregation was ready for a heavier dose of tradition — Bar/Bat Mitzvot, kipot, a visible cantor, Hebrew in the service, congregational singing (even in Hebrew), and more. For the last eight years, Rabbi Steven S. Mason has continued along that path. ❖

### CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2005 "Chicago Jewish Roots" Tour SUNDAY, AUGUST 28

**GUIDE: DR. IRVING CUTLER.** The author of *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* leads a sentimental journey to the Maxwell Street area, Lawndale, Garfield Park, Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Albany Park, and Rogers Park. Includes special stops. Luxury air-conditioned bus with toilet facilities.

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

**\$30/CJHS Member \$40/Nonmember**

**For Information phone Leah Axelrod (847) 432-7003**

### 2005 "Chicago Jewish Roots" Tour Reservations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**Aug. 28 Jewish Roots \$30/40**

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 B. 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](http://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](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org)**

Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור הציבתם



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