



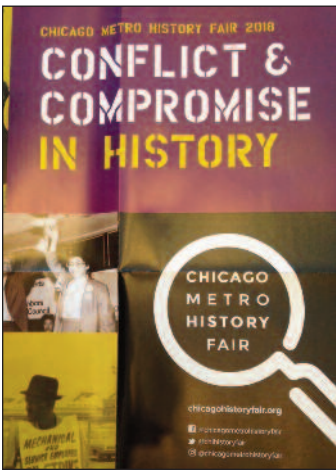
Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור הצבתם

Vol. 42, No. 2, Spring 2018



# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

## Talks, Tours, and Exhibitions



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### Reserve Now! The 2018 CJHS Tour:

### “Jewish Albany Park & Rogers Park” Sunday, August 19

**Guides: Jacob Kaplan and Patrick Steffes of [www.forgottenchicago.com](http://www.forgottenchicago.com)**

Enjoy a deluxe coach tour of Chicago’s far north side neighborhoods. View historical synagogues, well-remembered schools, famous and little-known gems. And see what’s new!

A generous rest stop is included. Bring lunch or a snack. Water will be provided.

**11:30 AM – 4:00 PM Marriott Hotel, 540 N. Michigan Ave. (Rush St. entrance)**

**12:00 PM – 3:30 PM Bernard Horwich JCC, 3003 W. Touhy Ave.**



#### RESERVATIONS CJHS “Jewish Albany Park & Rogers Park” Coach Tour Sunday, August 19, 2018

\$40 Member  \$45 Non-Member Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

PICK UP/DROP OFF: Specify:

Marriott Hotel (Rush Street)

Bernard Horwich JCC

NUMBER OF PERSONS \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to: Chicago Jewish Historical Society.**

**Mail to: Leah Axelrod, 2100 Linden Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035-2563**

Phone Leah (847) 432-7003 email: leahaxe@aol.com

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



**Dr. Rachelle Gold.**

### Seventy years ago, on May 14, 1948 (5 Iyyar, 5708)

David Ben-Gurion read the Proclamation of Independence of the State of Israel, building to the stirring line “Accordingly...we...Hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, to be called Israel.” I hope that many of you participated in local Yom Ha’atzmaut (Independence Day) festivities, as I did, and that some of you were even fortunate enough to celebrate in Israel. Celebrations will continue throughout the year.

As we appreciate the meaning of this 70th anniversary for Jews worldwide, as Chicagoans we also can take special pride in recalling the major role that our community played in the Zionist movement. I want to draw your attention to just a few highlights of Chicago’s Zionist history, amply covered in articles in our own *Chicago Jewish History*. The articles are easily accessible in pdf format in the Publications Archive on our website [chicagojewishhistory.org](http://chicagojewishhistory.org). I also suggest some other readings. I assure you a stimulating and inspiring experience!

A first highlight is Chicago’s claim to the first organized Zionist group in America. Called the Chicago Zion Society, it was created in 1895 by a group of community leaders, including Bernard and Harris Horwich, Leon Zolotkoff, and Dr. Bernhard Felsenthal. The group sent Zolotkoff as a representative to the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. Thereafter, the group organized as a fraternal society, The Knights of Zion, that had branches or “gates.” The group held a memorial for Theodore Herzl upon his death in 1904. (See journal articles by President Emeritus Walter Roth: “Zionist Pioneer,” Spring 1996, and “Zolotkoff,” Spring 1997.) Also see Irving Cutler’s book *The Jews of Chicago, From Shtetl to Suburb* for “The Growth of Zionism” on pages 114-119.

Another high point was the 1919 convention of the Zionist Organization of America, hosted in Chicago at the Auditorium Theater. The convention was noteworthy in that it was the first meeting of the unified American Zionist movement, after the merger the prior year of the Federation of American Zionists (the eastern Zionists) and the Chicago Knights of Zion. Chicago Zionists were prominently represented in the united group’s leadership. Judge Julian Mack was the national president of the organization. Other activists were Judges Hugo Pam, Harry Fisher, and Joseph Fisher, and attorneys Max Shulman and Nathan Kaplan. (See Walter Roth’s “Zionists’ Triumph” in *Chicago Jewish History* Winter 1994.)

My last historical point of pride is the magnificent reaction of the Chicago Jewish community to Israel’s Independence. A grand “Salute to Israel” was held just two days after the Declaration, on Sunday, May 16, 1948, at the Chicago Stadium. Walter Roth, who attended the event, recalled the profound impact of the experience (*Chicago Jewish History* Special Israel Jubilee Issue, Spring 1998, devoted to Israel’s 50th anniversary.)

*Continued on Page 15*



### 2018 Officers & Board of Directors

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#### Chicago Jewish History

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*Editor/Designer* Beverly Chubat  
*Editorial Board* Dr. Rachelle Gold and Dr. Edward H. Mazur.

Send submissions to Editor, electronically (preferred) or via standard mail. Enclose SASE.

## EVENTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER

Renaissance Court

78 East Washington Street, Chicago

*Sandra Holubow and Julia Oehmke:  
An Exhibition of Paintings, Collages, and  
Drawings Celebrating the Illinois Bicentennial*

**May 11 to July 5, 2018**



Sandra Holubow, *City of Jazz, Blues & Gospel*. Mixed media collage.

Holubow's acrylic paintings and collages focus on places that have contributed to our state's development and growth. Aware of how time and nature impact urban and rural communities, she wants to capture these sights before they evolve, vanish, and are forgotten. The artist is a member of the CJHS. See the artwork in full color in our digital edition at [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)

### SPERTUS INSTITUTE

for Jewish Learning and Leadership  
610 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

*Inquiry 01:  
Chicago Jewish Artists Fellowship  
Exhibition*

**May 23 to August 12, 2018**

This exhibition presents works by nine accomplished artists, participants in Spertus Institute's first Chicago Jewish Artists Fellowship. Throughout the last year, the artists conducted individual and collective research into their Jewish identity and artistic practice.

The 2017–2018 artists are

**Nelly Agassi, Leslie Baum, Iris Bernblum,  
Dianna Frid, Matthew Girson, Jesse Malmed,  
Geof Oppenheimer, Roni Packer, and Rana Siegel.**

The Fellowship program is co-directed by Spertus Institute's Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Ionit Behar and curator, writer, and educator Ruslana Lichtzier. The artists have had opportunities to learn from leading scholars, visit artists' studios, and work with objects from Spertus collections and archives.

**Gallery Talks on two Sundays:**

**June 10 and July 15**

These programs are free. Reservations appreciated.  
Information and reservations at [spertus.edu](http://spertus.edu)

### KOEHNLINE MUSEUM OF ART

Oakton Community College

1600 East Golf Road, DesPlaines

*Sculpting a Chicago Artist:  
Richard Hunt and his Teachers  
Nelli Bar and Egon Weiner*

**July 12 to September 14, 2018**

Richard Hunt developed his talent in the 1950s at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with the guidance of two dynamic teachers, both from a generation of artists who fled Europe after the rise of the Nazi regime and made Chicago their new home. Featuring works by all three artists, this exhibition explores creative influences across the generations.

## CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

*To all our activists, achievers, and honorees... the Hebrew phrase means "More Power to You"*

### Election of Members to Our Board of Directors.

On Sunday, March 11, at Temple Beth Israel, Skokie, before the start of Julia Bachrach's lecture, we held an election for membership to a three-year term on the CJHS Board. Current members **Leah Axelrod**, **Dr. Irving Cutler**, **Elise Ginsparg**, **Dr. Rachelle Gold**, and **Jacob M. Kaplan** were re-elected, and **Karen Kaplan** of Evanston was newly elected. After retiring from the financial services industry in 2011, Karen actively volunteers with Jewish organizations in the community. She has a double major degree from UIC in Mathematics and Philosophy. She loves Jewish learning and



**Karen Kaplan.**

participates in many classes. She is a talented writer. Karen's first article for *CJH* begins on the facing page.

**Leah Axelrod**, President of the Illinois State Historical Society, attended the ISHS "Sesquicentennial Houses of Worship" ceremony in Springfield on March 10. Four 150-year-old Illinois Jewish congregations were honored: KAM Isaiah Israel and Temple Sholom (Chicago), B'nai Sholom (Quincy), and Temple B'rith Sholom (Springfield). Representatives of the two downstate congregations were present to receive certificates from Leah.

**Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff** spoke on the topic "Why is this Town Different from All Others? The Unique Origins of Conservative Judaism in Chicago" at North Shore Synagogue Beth El, Highland Park, on March 18.

**Joan Pomaranc** represented the CJHS at the **Chicago Metro History Fair** awards ceremony on April 23 at the Chicago History Museum. This year's theme was "Conflict & Compromise in History."

The 2018 History Fair Chicago Jewish Historical Society Award for academic achievement was shared by

three students at the University of Chicago Lab Schools High School: Jeremy Chizewer, Grant Fishman, and Jamal Nimer. Their documentary "Conflict & Compromise in Skokie: The ACLU Defends the Nazis' Right to March" was selected to represent the State of Illinois at National History Day. NHD 2018 will take place on June 11-14 at the University of Maryland College Park campus. *Yasher koach*, boys!

### Welcome, New Members of the Society

Nathan Ellstrand  
*Chicago, IL*

Cynthia Roth Garfield  
*Chicago, IL*

Edward Hirschland  
*Chicago, IL*

Judith Ingersoll  
*Grand Rapids, MI*

Paul & Louise Lapping  
*Highland Park, IL*

Bill & Maureen Russman  
*Chicago, IL*

Nathalie Siegel  
*Chicago, IL*

Charlene Uney  
*Skokie, IL*

Gail Wright  
*Philadelphia, PA*

Gwen Yant  
*Kenilworth, IL*



**CJHS Treasurer/Past President Dr. Edward Mazur** was recently named a Prominent Alumnus by the Sullivan High School Alumni Association. The ceremony took place in the school lunchroom on April 5. A portrait photo of Ed will be added to those of other distinguished "Sol Levin" HS grads.

*Continued on Page 14*

# Bluesman Mike Bloomfield

BY KAREN KAPLAN

**S**ome of my most vivid memories as a child growing up in 1950s Chicago are of being taken to Maxwell Street by my father. Even now, 60 years later, I can recall the sights, smells, and, especially, the sounds that filled the street. The music was the blues, sung and played by ancient black men (at least they seemed ancient to my young eyes), seated right on the sidewalks, strumming their guitars, playing their harmonicas, and singing of a faraway world down South. It was music I only heard on Maxwell Street.

At home my tastes mirrored what was being played on the radio: the Everly Brothers, Elvis, then later the Beach Boys and Beatles. It wasn't until the mid-1960s that I heard white men—some of them young, Jewish, white men from Chicago—bring those memories to life and introduce this music to a whole new audience, the Woodstock generation. The story of how this came to be, this journey from Maxwell Street to Woodstock, is a fascinating and distinctly Chicago story.

Our story begins 100 years ago with the Great Migration that between 1916 and 1970 brought millions of rural, southern African Americans north, in search of jobs and greater freedom. More than 500,000 settled in Chicago, riding the Illinois Central Railroad up from the Mississippi Delta. The song “City of New Orleans,” written by Jewish Chicagoan Steve Goodman, memorializes the train that carried so many of these southerners north. They brought their blues music with them. Many settled in the Maxwell Street neighborhood on the Near West Side, already home to a large Jewish community.

In the 1940s musicians such as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Elmore James first played in the streets there, sharing the sidewalks with Jewish peddlers such as Ron Popiel (famous for his “But wait! There's more!” TV commercials) and competing for the attention of shoppers and passersby.

Among those who grew up on Maxwell Street, with this music all around them, were two Jewish brothers



**Mike Bloomfield.**

*Chicago History Museum,  
ICHi-137941;  
Raeburn Flerlage, photographer.*

from Motele, Poland, Lezjor and Fiszal Czyz, better known as Leonard and Phil Chess. In 1950 they founded Chess Records, a blues-oriented record label.

Just when Chess was getting started, the first commercial electric guitars hit the market, and Maxwell Street and the world of music were never the same. Suddenly, the blues musicians playing on the sidewalks had a way to be heard above the din of the marketplace. And the Chess brothers, who recorded their music, brought this former “race music” to the public at large.

The genre known as Chicago Blues was born, with its characteristic electric guitar and harmonica played through an amplifier. In the following years, another genre emerged. In the words of Muddy Waters, “The blues had a baby, and they named it rock & roll.”

Countless teenage boys began dreaming of stardom playing rock & roll guitar. For a few, however, the blues was their first love. One of those was a Jewish boy from the North side of Chicago, Mike Bloomfield.

**M**ike Bloomfield was born in 1943 to a wealthy Chicago family. His grandfather, Samuel, started a restaurant supply company in 1933, Bloomfield Industries, and his son Harold, Mike's father, took it over and expanded it. The business was highly successful. Mike's grandmother dreamed of being an actress. She made sure that her daughter Dorothy, Mike's mother, took dance and music lessons. Dorothy was a beauty who modeled professionally before marrying Harold. Their son Mike inherited his artistic leanings from his mother's side of the family.

A few years later, another son, Allen, was born. The family lived on Melrose Street, just off Lake Shore Drive in East Lakeview. At that time the neighborhood was heavily Jewish and affluent. It was more ethnically diverse and blue collar west of Broadway. Mike attended Nettlehorst Elementary School, 3252 North Broadway.

*Continued on page 6*

## Bluesman Mike Bloomfield *Continued from Page 5*

He loved the diverse mixture of friends he had there. He was a city boy through and through.

When he turned 12, the family moved to the north shore suburb of Glencoe. Mike, though very bright, was an indifferent student and not at all athletic, and he felt like a misfit in this environment of overachievers. It was around the time of his Bar Mitzvah that he received two gifts that would change his life: a transistor radio and a 3/4-size guitar. Like many wealthy and middle-class Jewish families, the Bloomfields had an African American maid, and she would play blues music on the radio while she worked.

**M**ichael loved what he heard and soon found station WVON (“Voice of the Negro”) on his transistor radio. After a few basic guitar lessons from his mother’s hairdresser, he taught himself to play. He had finally found something he could excel at, and he became proficient very quickly. His maternal grandfather owned Uncle Max’s Pawnshop on North Clark Street, where Mike would sit for hours and play the various unclaimed guitars. Soon he upgraded his own child-size guitar to a full-size model, and he played the blues.

Mike said, “It’s a natural. Black people suffer externally in this county. Jewish people suffer internally. The suffering’s the mutual fulcrum for the blues.”

He attended New Trier High School, but was expelled after his sophomore year. He’d started a teen band that played at various high school parties in the area, and signed up to perform at New Trier’s Talent Show. After being told to not play loud rock & roll, and not to play an encore, rebellious Mike did just that, and was expelled. His parents sent him to an East Coast boarding school, and when that didn’t work out, to the Central YMCA High School in Chicago, the last stop for those who had been thrown out of everywhere else. But school held no interest for him, and he often took his mother’s car keys and drove to Maxwell Street, where legendary blues musicians such as Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf and Bo Diddley played on the sidewalks.

In one of those instances of “Jewish Geography” a Glencoe neighbor of the Bloomfields was Marshall Chess, whose father, Leonard, owned Chess Records. Marshall gave Mike his first glass slide.\* Marshall took it from Muddy Waters himself at the Chess studio!

Mike also drove down to the South Side to hear his blues idols in the many clubs there. Often the only white person, and definitely underage, he was not only tolerated but eventually embraced because of his obvious respect for the music and the people making it. It wasn’t long before he was asked to join the musicians onstage for a song or two, first as a joke, but then seriously, when they recognized his talent. All the while he was mastering his craft.

He married when he was 19, eloping to Michigan without his parents’ knowledge. He and his wife Susan moved into Sandburg Village. He worked at The Fickle Pickle, a coffeehouse in Old Town, as an emcee and talent booker. Also working in the area was another Chicago-born bluesman, harmonica player Paul Butterfield. Mike would later join the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and record several successful albums with them. Mike was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2015 as one of its members.

**I**n 1963, at a nightclub on East Ontario Street called The Bear, Mike met an up-and-coming Jewish folksinger—Bob Dylan—and they hit it off immediately. Mike played guitar on Dylan’s “Highway 61 Revisited” album, and was onstage with Dylan playing the groundbreaking electric guitar set at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. The folk music purists were in an uproar! But as history has shown, Dylan, a genius, moved music in new and wonderful directions. Bob and Mike would remain lifelong friends.

Mike’s second album with the Paul Butterfield Band, “East–West” was recorded by Chess at their famed 2120 South Michigan Avenue studio. In the title song, Mike, who was the primary composer, combined Indian music, blues, and jazz into an extended improvisational piece with a complex underlying structure. It is considered a landmark piece in the history of rock music.

Mike left the Butterfield Band and formed his own group, The Electric Flag, with two longtime Chicago friends and collaborators, Barry Goldberg and Nick Gravenites. The group provided the soundtrack for the 1967 movie “The Trip,” and they played at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival. You can see snippets of their electrifying performance on YouTube. But the group was short-lived. They broke up due to internal rivalry and drug use among the members, including Mike.

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\*Slide guitar is a particular technique for playing the guitar that is often used in blues-style music. The technique involves placing an object against the strings while playing to create glissando effects and deep vibratos that make the music emotionally expressive. It typically involves playing the guitar in the traditional position (flat against the body) with the use of a tubular “slide” fitted on one of the guitarist’s fingers. The slide may be a metal or glass tube like the neck of a bottle. — Wikipedia

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**H**is next project was the album “Super Session” with Al Kooper (another Jewish kid who went on to have a long, highly successful career in music, including being a founding member of the group Blood, Sweat & Tears) and Stephen Stills (who went on to Crosby, Stills & Nash fame). The album received excellent reviews, was commercially successful, and led to a sequel, recorded live at the Fillmore West in 1968.

Unfortunately, Bloomfield, like many musicians during those years, had become a heavy drug user, and that affected his personal life as well as his career. His wife Susan divorced him after five years of marriage. He used drugs not just for their mind-expanding qualities, but to relieve his lifelong insomnia. He continued to make records, though none as successful as the early ones, playing guitar on albums with Peter, Paul and Mary, Brewer and Shipley, Moby Grape, Mother Earth, and other popular groups of the day. He composed the soundtrack for the movie “Medium Cool,” directed by Haskell Wexler, filmed during the 1968 Democratic Party Convention in Chicago.

Mike met Jewish author/musician Kinky Friedman in the late 1970s, and Friedman included Mike as a character in several of his novels. In late 1980, he rejoined his friend Bob Dylan onstage at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco where they played “Like a Rolling Stone” together to thunderous applause.

**S**adly, Mike Bloomfield died just a few months after that concert, on February 15, 1981. He was found dead of a drug overdose in his car in San Francisco. In sad irony, he had first discovered drugs as a teenager, at the boarding school where his parents sent him after he was expelled from New Trier. He lives on through his groundbreaking recordings. He was arguably the first guitar superstar, one of the pioneers who brought the blues to the white world of rock & roll, and who first performed the extended guitar solos that everyone from Jimi Hendrix to Eric Clapton would admire and emulate. In the words of Bob Dylan, “Mike Bloomfield was the best guitar player I’d ever heard.” ❖

#### Further Reading:

*Mike Bloomfield: If You Love These Blues, An Oral History.* By Jan Marl Wolkin and Bill Keenom (2000)

*The Record Men: The Chess Brothers and The Birth of Rock & Roll.* By Rich Cohen (2005)

*Spinning Blues into Gold: The Chess Brothers and the Legendary Chess Records.* By Nadine Cohodas (2012)

*Michael Bloomfield: The Rise and Fall of an American Guitar Hero.* By Ed Ward (2016)

*Windy City Blues.* By Renee Rosen (2017)

## Chicago Blues Exhibition and Tour

**T**he Chicago History Museum’s immersive, multi-faceted exhibition “Amplified: Chicago Blues” will continue through August 10, 2019.

The show includes photographs by Raeburn Flerlage that capture the streets, homes, and studios of our city’s blues artists. Mike Bloomfield can be glimpsed in a few, but the photo I chose for Karen Kaplan’s article, as well as other good views of Mike, can only be accessed in the online Flerlage archive at [chicagohistory.org](http://chicagohistory.org).

The museum offered a Blues Bus Tour, and I signed up, seeking connections with Chicago Jewish history. I didn’t have long to wait. After traveling south to Bronzeville, the first historical site pointed out by our guide was the shell of the burnt-out KAM Temple/Pilgrim Baptist Church at 3300 South Indiana Avenue. Banners on neighborhood lightpoles picture the famous Adler and Sullivan building as it was before an accidental fire gutted it.

The tour bus stopped at Willie Dixon’s Blues Heaven, 2120 South Michigan Avenue. The building’s Landmark plaque states that it was the office and studio of Chess Records from 1956 to 1967. The in-house guide carried a portable music player. She accented her talk with gorgeous recorded selections, including the first Chess hit, “My Foolish Heart,” with Gene Ammons on sax. The Chess brothers numbered that LP #1425 after their immigrant family’s Chicago address, 1425 South Karlov Avenue.



Chicagoan Jack Wiener (1935-1999) was the genius sound recording engineer who designed and operated the unique studio on the second floor of the building.

— B.C.

#### Monument to the Great Northern Migration.

Bronze sculpture by Alison Saar (1996).  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive at 26th Place.  
Photograph by Michelle M. Smith.



# BEYOND CHICAGO: ILLINOIS JEWISH ROOTS

## A Jewish Family in Coal Country

### THE ROSENBLATTS OF SESSER, ILLINOIS



In the summer of 1904, mining experts surveyed the wheat and corn-covered prairie in Franklin County, Illinois. They discovered a very high grade of coal, and obtained options on several thousand acres of land. On this land the city of Sesser was born.

Following the discovery, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (CB&Q) Railroad decided to extend their rail lines south from Centralia so that they could reach any new coal properties that were discovered. The rail lines were laid in January of 1906. Two railroad officials, John C. Elliot and John Sesser, a surveyor, laid out the original sixteen block plat.

During 1905-1906, Sesser's first mine, the Keller Mine, was sunk. Between 1904 and 1910, 14 mines were sunk in Franklin County. The coal boom was on!

**M**ary Kessler was 16 when she immigrated to the USA from Russia. She met and married David Rosenblatt in St. Louis. The young Jewish couple wanted to go into business. They became aware of the opportunity to open a store in a small southern Illinois town, Sesser.



1. Wedding photo of Mary Kessler and David Rosenblatt.
2. The oldest Rosenblatt children, Isadore (Izzy) and Zelda.
3. Rosenblatt's Oshkosh B'Gosh ad in a pocket notebook.

Photos 1 through 7 courtesy of Ellen Kaufman.

4. Senior Class photo of Ethel Rosenblatt in *The Tatler*. Goode-Barren Township High School yearbook, 1925. Ethel's offices in her senior year included Class Secretary, Tatler Social Editor, "AG" Club Stenographer, Girls' Glee Club Librarian, and Athletic Ass'n Secretary. Her epigraph was "Nature made her as it should, not too bad and not too good."



David Rosenblatt was born David Roselovitch in Novidvor, Lithuania. He had four brothers. One brother was offered 300 rubles to stand as a replacement for a German youth named Rosenblath, in the German army. Instead, this Roselovitch brother absconded with the money and went to America, under the soldier's papers and name. He later brought all of his brothers, including David, to the USA, one at a time. Their name eventually became Rosenblatt. Most of them were members of Congregation B'nei Emounoh (now B'nai Amoona) in St. Louis. [bnaiamoona.com](http://bnaiamoona.com).

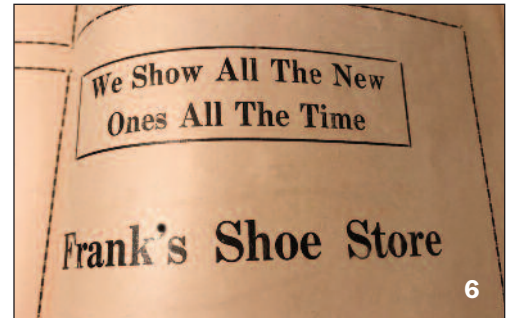
In 1922, the Rosenblatts of Sesser were parents of six children—a boy and five girls—with a general store, Rosenblatt and Son, serving the townsfolk and the miners, when tragedy struck. Within the year, David, 45, and son Isadore (Izzy), 25, died. They were interred in the Jewish cemetery in St. Louis.

Mary carried on. Eventually she closed or sold the store and moved to Chicago, where she joined her daughters. They all lived near each other. Mary died in Chicago in 1967.

**D**ianne Kaufman of Glenview (the granddaughter in the photo) responded to our flyer requesting family histories for our Illinois Bicentennial “Jewish Roots” project. She was generous with her memories, more than we could include here. Her daughter Ellen sent the photos as well as information.

They visited Sesser in 2004, the town's centennial year, and are preserving the family history for the next generations. ❖

**More “Roots” articles to come in our future journals.. — B.C.**



**5. The Rosenblatt home.** A great-granddaughter photographed this house in Sesser. Based on its age and location, they believe that it was the family's home in Sesser.

**6. Ad for Frank's Shoe Store in *The Tatler*.** Goode-Barren Township High School yearbook, 1925. Rosenblatt's sold everything from overalls to patent leather shoes. David Rosenblatt's customers called him “Mr. Frank.” Was the store's name changed?

**7. Mary Rosenblatt, four of her five daughters, and her first granddaughter.**

Left to right: Nettie, Ethel, Mary (holding Dianne, her oldest granddaughter, Nettie's daughter), Ann (Babe), and Zelda. Daughter Helen is not pictured.

**8. Sesser Opera House.** After the original structure, built in 1904, was destroyed by fire, the present Spanish Colonial-style building was erected in 1914. The Opera House has been restored and is now used for community theater and musical programs. The opera house has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1982. Photographed in 2013. — Wikipedia

**9. The Sesser City Logo** is based on the Opera House. — [www.sesser.org](http://www.sesser.org)



*Report on the CJHS Open Meeting on Sunday, March 11, 2018  
Temple Beth Israel, 3601 Dempster Street, Skokie, Illinois*

## Chicago's Jewish Architects: A Legacy of Modernism



**Julia S. Bachrach.**  
Photo by Robert Knapp.

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Dankmar Adler             | 10 Dubin & Dubin           |
| 2 Henry Leopold Ottenheimer | 11 Abraham Epstein         |
| 3 Alfred S. Alschuler       | 12 Loewenberg & Loewenberg |
| 4 Henry Leopold Newhouse    | 13 Louis R. Solomon        |
| 5 David Saul Klafter        | 14 Milton Schwartz         |
| 6 Walter W. Alschlager      | 15 Spitz & Spitz           |
| 7 Ernest Alton Grunsfeld    | 16 John Macsai             |
| 8 Emanuel V. Buchsbaum      | 17 Loebel & Schlossman     |
| 9 Oman & Lillienthal        | 18 Bertrand Goldberg       |

**J**ulia S. Bachrach is an award-winning author, historian, preservationist, and urban planner. She served as historian and planning supervisor to the Chicago Park District for more than two decades. In her PowerPoint presentation for the CJHS, she discussed 18 (chai!) Jewish Modernist architects and firms, some now famous and others who have long been overlooked. Their work contributed to Chicago's skyline from the 1890s through the 1970s. Our program planners were delighted to welcome a capacity crowd of our loyal members and new friends from the Chicago architectural community to a valuable talk and a congenial social hour.

### Corrections and Clarifications

*CJH* has a number of corrective zigzags to make in our report on a visit to Chicago by Eleanor Roosevelt.

In our Spring 2011 issue we published a Polaroid photo of leading members of South Side Hebrew Congregation gathered around Mrs. Roosevelt at a reception for her at the Himmels' home. The photo was donated by Paula Madansky, who pointed out her parents, Dr. Irving and Sarah Barkan. We wanted to know more: "Was Eleanor Roosevelt a guest speaker at South Side Hebrew Congregation? When? What was the occasion?"

Last fall we received an e-mail from George Sarfatty, with an attached scan of another Polaroid taken at the same reception, with a slightly different group around the honoree. George's mother, Ethel Sarfatty, the Sisterhood president at that time, appears in this photo. She dated it 1967 and identified most of the people.

Fact-checking after publication of that image and text in *CJH* Winter 2018 revealed that Mrs. Roosevelt died in 1962. Communication with Joan Himmel Freeman confirmed the year of the reception as 1957. She was a small child when her parents, Ivan and Lois Altschuler Himmel, hosted the event. Joan's Polaroids and more corrections will appear in our Summer issue.

In Dr. Rolf Weil's article about the geography of Hyde Park (*CJH* Winter 2018, page 11) he refers to 53rd Street as "Bachenheimer Allee" because of the deli owned by my father, Herman, and his brother, Louis. But the street was given that nickname for a bigger reason. Two blocks down was my uncle Herbert's kosher butcher shop. So whether you needed kosher food or kosher meat, Bachenheimer Allee was the place to be.

Regards,  
Frank Bachenheimer  
Sarasota, FL

### A Fond Farewell to the *Chicago Jewish Star*

Editor Douglas Wertheimer announced in the May 7-14 issue of the *Star*, "After over 27 years and 671 issues, the oldest independent Jewish voice in the city publishes its Final Edition.... The closing was propelled by an industry-wide decline in advertising."

We will miss the high professional standards that, over the years, earned the *Star* numerous Lisagor Awards for Exemplary Journalism from the Chicago Headline Club. Our editor offers special thanks to *Star* Associate Editor Gila Wertheimer for discovering terrific books.

An abridged, edited reprint of the opening essay in *Memories of the Manor* by Eva Gross.

Her collection shared the second CJHS Doris Minsky Memorial Award with Morris Springer's memoir *The Chayder, The Yeshiva, and I*. Both winning entries were published in 1993, in *Chicago Jewish Historical Society Doris Minsky Memorial Fund Publication No. 2*

## Memories of Jeffery Manor

BY EVA GROSS z"l

The 20 year reunion of Luella Elementary School was held on November 25, 1989, in the Grand Ballroom of the Lincolnwood Hyatt House—The Purple Hotel.

The former students gathered from all parts of the country. Among them were many highly educated young Jewish men and women who attributed their success in life to having been brought up in a small, village-like garden island within the City of Chicago. There they were saturated with Yiddishkeit as well as American family values, and they developed the will to make *mentshn* of themselves and serve humanity.

On the following day, a reception was held to honor us, the parents, and other close relatives of the Luella students. After flipping through the pages of the Brag Books, showing pictures and exchanging stories about our children and grandchildren, and revealing our various health problems, nostalgia took over.

While sitting together at a long table we talked about general subjects that affected everybody. The people who had lived in Jeffery Manor since the early days debated the exact date that the first building was erected. They finally agreed that the development between 95th and 103rd Streets and Torrence and Euclid Avenues started in 1941.

Gray-haired Mr. Cohen, with a pencil-thin moustache, said that after the end of WWII, returning G.I.s like himself were happy to find an affordable haven where they could start a family. Many of these original owners used the small Georgian duplex two-bedroom townhouses as stepping stones and moved on when family or income grew.

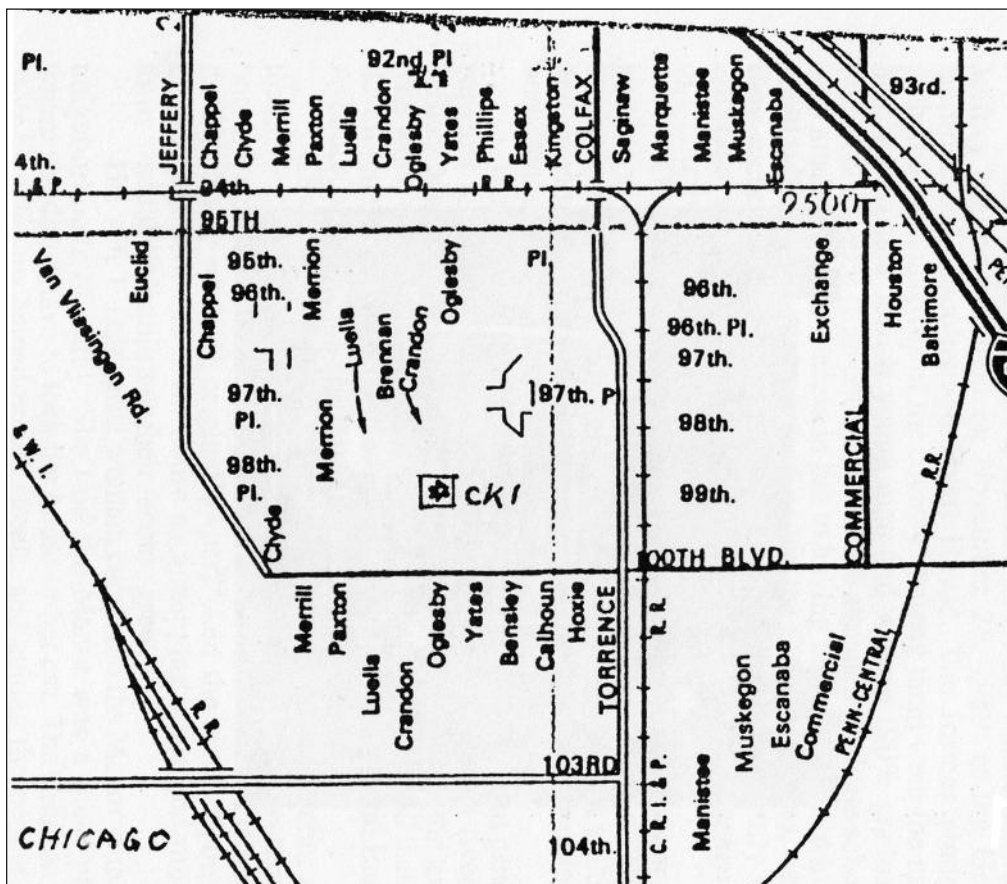
Mr. Cohen's wife Ella, a petite woman, compared the Manor with the neighborhoods of today. The Manor was a quiet place where she didn't have to lock

her house or her car, and the children left their bicycles unchained on the streets. Among the people she knew, drug use, school dropouts, vandalism, and teenage pregnancies were rare.

Mr. Lewy, a retired real estate broker, spoke about the increase in the Jewish population when survivors of the Holocaust from Hungary, Austria, Germany, and Eastern Europe moved into the Manor.

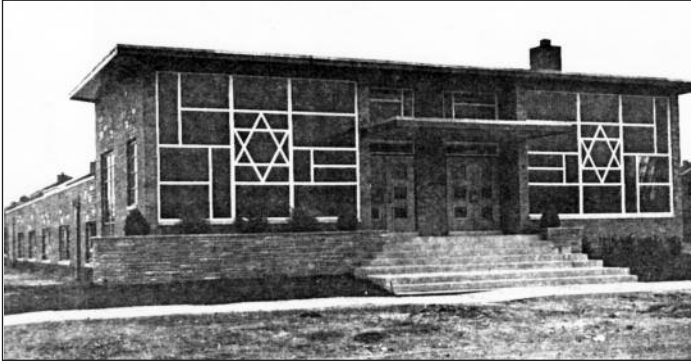
"We lived together with our Gentile neighbors in what I used to call 'a Brotherhood Week that lasted 52 weeks each year,'" he said in a trembling voice.

*Continued on Page 12*



**Map of Jeffery Manor.**  
*Memories of the Manor.*

## Jeffery Manor *Continued from Page 11*



**Congregation Kehilath Israel, 2349 East 99th Street, Chicago. Dedication, 1953.** *Memories of the Manor. The building is now a church.*

After the meal, the conversation turned to Congregation Kehilath Israel, the glue that held the majority of Jeffery Manor's Jews together. A volcano of talk erupted. Everyone spoke at once, and the cherished story of CKI unfolded. It was almost like watching an old time movie where each of us appeared as our younger self.

Someone said that the congregation began immediately after ten families moved in. We laughed. Then the fragments of stories were molded into the history of CKI.

In 1948, the year the State of Israel was established, Congregation Kehilath Israel was formed, with the help of Jews from the adjacent Merrionette Manor. The proud founders met and held religious services, occasionally in the field-house of Trumbull Park on 103rd Street. Sunday School was held at Luella Elementary School. From 1950, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Elliot J. Einhorn, CKI grew steadily. Services were held regularly at the home of the rabbi. The American Legion Hall at the corner of Hoxie Avenue and 104th Street was rented for Friday night and High Holy Days services.

The building of the synagogue began in 1952. In 1953, during the dedication ceremony, a Sacred Torah Scroll was carried with joy and

religious fervor from the rabbi's house into the new building.

"I sang and danced," said Mr. Israel, beaming at his remembrance of that day. "I wish I knew what happened to the movie we made."

The people around him began guessing its fate, but nobody was sure in whose closet the priceless memento was gathering dust.

The name of Dan Kwasman came up. He organized the choir which later was directed by Dorothy Klein. A children's choir was organized by Cantor Morton Pliskin. The Hebrew School became affiliated with Associated Talmud Torahs.

"Did you know that CKI was the only congregation in the city with its own 45-piece, non-sectarian symphony orchestra? They even performed for churches," a middle-aged woman said.

"I knew Mary Rosen, the conductor of the orchestra. She lived near us," I added.

The new shul that was only a basement had a proud facade, and with high hopes took its rightful place on "Holy Square," where other houses of worship were located.

CKI was considered to be the "in" shul, when Rabbi Einhorn was invited to exchange pulpits with the priests and teach Hebrew to the nuns at Our Lady of Heaven Roman Catholic Church.

"Not all the Jews of Jeffery Manor belonged to CKI, but as far as I know, between 1951 and 1955, 450 families did belong," a well-informed gentleman explained.

A young man named Gary joined the conversation. He recalled his teenage years, when it seemed that his family set its calendar according to the happenings at CKI.

"My Aunt Sylvia and Uncle Max belonged to so many organizations, they didn't have time to make love," Gary said with a chuckle.

"She served on the Sisterhood and the School Board. He served on the Congregation Board and the Men's Club Board."

Then, without taking a breath, Gary recited the long list of organizations that thrived in the Manor:

"ORT, Pioneer Women, NCJW, Hadassah, Yeshiva Women, B'nai B'rith Women, Mizrachi-Religious Zionists, Zionist Organization of Chicago, American Jewish Congress, Jewish War Veterans Sam Neivelt Post, the Junior Cancer League, Nathan Goldblatt Cancer Society, Michael Reese Hospital Auxiliary!"

When he finished he drank a full glass of water. Everyone applauded.

"Shame on you, Gary, you forgot the CKI Mothers' Club for the senior ladies," a little old woman interjected, and Gary apologized.

Then the talk turned to the rabbi. Rabbi Einhorn received his semicha from HTC, the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago. While serving at CKI he was elected president of the South Shore Ministerial Association. He taught adult Torah classes and was deeply concerned about the kind of education the children received.

It was recalled that one year he offered any student a silver dollar, out of his own pocket, for each of the 54 Torah portions if he or she could name all of them.

Rebbetsin Bess Einhorn wasn't forgotten. An educator herself, in 1956 she organized and led the Sisterhood Study Group. We held monthly sessions at members' homes. This group stimulated me to read about and present Jewish topics from history and be aware of Jewish current events the world over.

Those who participated in the CKI Sisterhood and Men's Club bowling leagues admitted that they didn't remember their old house numbers but could recall their highest bowling score. My husband Sam mentioned the Men's Club sponsorship of a Little League baseball team and a Boy Scout troop.

The Junior Congregation's religious services came to mind. Our sons Philip and Glenn received pins for perfect attendance at Sabbath morning services. After their B'nai Mitzvah the boys attended the Post Bar Mitzvah Club. They put on tefilin before each meeting. Our older son, Philip, joined the AZA. The South East B'nai B'rith Lodge sponsored four AZA and four BBG youth groups that met in the well-patronized Jewish Community Center on Jeffery Boulevard.

Fundraising events for Jewish charities were frequent. The State of Israel Bond dinners were successful. A record dollar amount of bonds

was sold at the dinner honoring Mr. and Mrs. Max Skolnick. Max never missed a minyan. Mrs. Esther Oberman, one of the most generous contributors to the shul, and her mother, Mrs. Cohen, prepared the dinner, not only for this occasion, but for all other events.

Who could forget the popular monthly shul bulletin, *The Sign Post*?

Like other Jews, we were involved in secular activities, such as the PTA, the Independent Voters of Illinois, or the 10th Ward Democratic Organization. Attorney Jay Bellows was the Democratic Party's leader in the 60th precinct, and a onetime president of CKI. He knew the names of all the eligible voters, their children, and even their pets. Rain or shine, Precinct Captain Jay got the voters to the polls, and he treated the election judges to kosher corned beef sandwiches.

Mr. Bellows indoctrinated me into the politics of the City. I was introduced to Mayor Richard J. Daley, to Abner Mikva, and to other notables. Being foreign-born, I was fascinated by the election process, wanted to be a part of it, and became an avid assistant precinct captain. My main function was to persuade eligible citizens to register and vote, especially in 1969, when delegates were elected to the Illinois Constitutional Convention, called CON-CON. Their purpose was to frame a new Illinois Constitution.

"We were pioneers just like our ancestors, with the same goals: to make a living and to raise children to be loyal and decent citizens who could proudly call themselves Jews," my husband Sam declared.

The party was over, and so were the reminiscences. The close knit and caring congregation now lives only in the memories of its former members. They still keep in touch

and meet on the first Sunday in August for their annual picnic.

After the gathering, I regretted not having spoken about these exceptional people: poet Helen Winter, artist Sara Reiner, and newspaper columnist Rhea Rosenberg who wrote "In the Manors" for the *Chicago Daily Calumet*. ❖

The author includes details about the talents of these women, and how they aided her development as a writer. She recalls other outstanding Jewish citizens who dedicated themselves to CKI, and apologizes for omitting some names.

*Jeffery Manor's Congregation Kehilath Israel existed for only a generation. The synagogue building became a church. In an epilogue set in Morton Grove on November 14, 1992, Eva Gross and her friends discuss the disposition of the CKI property.* — B.C.



#### **EVA GROSS**

*was born in 1925 in Mor, a small town in Hungary. A Holocaust victim, she was deported to Auschwitz in 1944, and from*

*there was sent to work in a munitions factory in western Germany. She was liberated by the US Armed Forces on April 1, 1945. Two months later, in a displaced persons camp, she met Sam E. Gross, a US Army Air Corpsman.*

*Eva arrived in Chicago in December 1948. She and Sam were married the following February. They first lived in Albany Park, then resided in Jeffery Manor from 1956 to 1970, and in Skokie thereafter.*

*Eva received a BA from Columbia College Chicago, an MA From NEIU, and held an Illinois Teachers Certification. She taught at Old Orchard Junior High School and served on the Skokie Fine Arts Commission.*

*Eva Gross died on April 10, 2018. May her memory be for a blessing.*



## YASHER KOACH!

*Continued from Page 4*



David Matlow. Photo by Yael Matlow.



Above from left: Beth Hillel and Herzl kids confer; Jacob Kaplan guides the tour; Aviv Ezra, Consul General of Israel to the Midwest, speaks to the tour group at the school, 3711 West Douglas Boulevard. Photos by David Matlow.

### Forgotten Chicago Herzl School Heritage Tour

On March 23, a group of 15 kids from Temple Beth Israel in Skokie took a bus ride to Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood where they were joined by kids from the Herzl School for a tour guided by CJHS Board member **Jacob M. Kaplan** and his colleague Dan Pogorzelski of [www.forgottenchicago.com](http://www.forgottenchicago.com).

The tour sponsor was a CJHS member, Canadian **David Matlow**, who owns what may be the world's largest collection of memorabilia associated with Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Matlow has visited the Herzl school many times. In his inspirational talks to the students, he connects the two dreamers, Herzl and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

When the Herzl School opened in 1915, the neighborhood was becoming increasingly Jewish—eventually there were more than 80 synagogues—and there was Sears Roebuck, the Amazon of its day.

The kids experienced an example of existing Jewish heritage. The landmarked Stone Temple Baptist Church building retains Jewish decorative elements of its original occupant, the Roumanian shul.

Max and Benny's Restaurant in Northbrook hosted "Albany Park Night 2018" on May 16. Nostalgia and sugar substitutes reigned.

**Richard Reeder** organized and emceed the program. **Ed Mazur** spoke about Roosevelt High School and recalled Lawrence Avenue in its Jewish heyday. **Frances Archer** spoke about Hollywood Park, the neighborhood where many Jewish Von Steuben High School alumni lived. Myles Golde read from his novel, *Albany Park*. **Jerry Levin** made our journals and membership applications available to everyone.



## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*Continued from Page 2*

Roth writes that an overflow crowd of more than 25,000 filled the stadium. This was the largest gathering of Chicago Jewry since July 3, 1933, at the Century of Progress World's Fair, when a massive audience attended "The Romance of a People" pageant in Soldier Field. This special issue of our journal features other testimonials and firsthand accounts of Society members who were active in the creation of the State.

To get a real-time picture of the impact of Israel's Declaration of Independence, I recommend reading the May 20, 1948 issue of the Chicago Jewish weekly, the *Sentinel*. (Search issues 1911-1949 in the Illinois Digital Archives [idaininois.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16614coll14](http://idaininois.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16614coll14).)

The *Sentinel* cover features a large portrait of Israel's newly elected President Dr. Chaim Weizmann. The inside pages hold photographs and text coverage of Chicago's "Salute to the New Jewish Republic" at the Stadium, and many fascinating editorial and news articles. Editor J. I. Fishbein lauds President Truman's recognition of the State of Israel, but calls for an immediate end to the arms embargo, warning, "The battle for Israel has only just begun."

As much as the succeeding seven decades have brought much change, there is a contemporary ring to many issues of those days. ❖



**Eliahu Kite dances in the aisles at the Chicago Stadium. May 16, 1948.**

*Spertus Institute.*

man for a coal company. He is buried in the Narodich section of Waldheim Cemetery. Although Mr. Kite's children are all dead, his grandchildren live in the Chicago area, as do the descendants of his six brothers and sisters.

Just as we were about to send this journal to the printer, we received an e-mail from Jerusalem, from Eliahu Kite's great-great-granddaughter, Beth-Eden Kite. We told her of our inclusion of the photo, and she expressed her pleasure at her family's participation in our commemoration of Israel's 70th anniversary.



**The Hoopoe (*duchifat*), the National Bird of Israel.**

## Early Bird Announcements

**SPERTUS INSTITUTE  
Ground Level Arts Lab  
610 South Michigan Avenue,  
Chicago**

***Todros Geller:  
Strange Worlds***

**September 6, 2018  
to January 6, 2019**

Spertus will present more than 30 works from its collection to survey the broad scope of Geller's creative endeavors, including paintings, prints, works on paper, and a group of the artists personal materials.

.....

**CHICAGO JEWISH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

***Chicago's Jewish  
Architects:  
Three Memorable  
Modernists***

**Sunday, October 14, 2018  
2:00 p.m.**

***Harvey Choldin will discuss  
the lives and work of  
Ezra Gordon, John Macsai,  
and Milton Schwartz***

**Venue to be Announced**

Look to the rock from which you were born  
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## IN THIS ISSUE

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- **Bluesman Mike Bloomfield**
- **Beyond Chicago: Illinois Jewish Roots:  
A Jewish Family in Coal Country**
- **Memories of Jeffery Manor**

**We hope you visited the CJHS table at the  
GREATER CHICAGO JEWISH FESTIVAL  
SUNDAY, JUNE 10**

### **Our History and Mission**

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977, and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 at an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Science and Industry by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the American Jewish Congress. Three years after celebrating our “double *chai*,” the Society’s

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

**Visit our website — [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)**

**Pay your membership dues online via PayPal or credit card,  
or use the printable membership application.**

Inquiries: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org)

All issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present have been digitized and posted on our website in pdf format. Simply click on “Publications” and scroll down through the years. There is an Index to the issues from 1977 to 2012.

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

unique mission continues to be the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open meetings, tours, and outreach to youth. The Society does not maintain its own archives, but seeks out written, spoken, and photographic records and artifacts, and responsibly arranges for their donation to Jewish archives.

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

- A subscription to the Society’s award-winning quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is \$10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1st are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1,000
Annual Dues	
Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron	65
Member	40
Student (with i.d.)	10



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