



CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

Talent, Service, Enterprise



Sam "Snipe" Lambert is in the center of the photo, kneeling between the boys with the bats and ball. Photograph courtesy of Diane Lambert Blumenthal.

SWEET MEMORIES OF CHICAGO SOFTBALL

This story begins with soccer, not softball. In the Spring 2017 issue of *CJH* we published our correspondence with Dr. Gabe Logan of Northern Michigan University. He was conducting research for a monograph on early Chicago soccer history, 1883-1939, and had sent us an inquiry about the Maccabee A.C. that played in Kuppenheimer Stadium in the mid-1930s.

Earlier this year, Diane Blumenthal of La Jolla, California, found that correspondence in the publications archive on our website, where all our journals are posted—www.chicagojewishhistory.org. She kindly sent us a scan of this photograph. It portrays her father, Sam "Snipe" Lambert, on a team sponsored by the B. Kuppenheimer Company, then a prominent manufacturer of men's clothing. The stadium adjoined the factory.

Sadly, Sam Lambert died young, at age 49. Diane Blumenthal wrote, "My dad lived for Chicago's famous '16-inch-no glove' softball and had a bat and cleats in the trunk of his car when he died."

Apologies. Due to limited space in this issue, the Lambert family's Chicago history will appear in our Fall 2019 journal, as will Society members' memories of playing softball. Send your anecdotes to info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

CJHS Open Meetings Save the Dates!

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27
"TABLES TURNED ON THEM"**

Michael J. Greenberg will present a video and discuss his book on Jewish GIs who guarded and cared for German POWs in the USA.

2 PM

*Emanuel Congregation
5959 North Sheridan Road
Chicago*

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24
"NOTORIOUS BEN HECHT"**

Julien Gorbach will discuss his book on the iconoclastic writer and activist.

This program is presented in memory of
CJHS President Emeritus
Walter Roth.

2 PM

*Beth Emet The Free Synagogue
1224 Dempster Street
Evanston*

**SEE BOOK REVIEWS
ON PAGES 4 & 5**

CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold.

“We weren’t planning to be an organization.”

From modest beginnings emerge great enterprises, from our own Chicago Jewish Historical Society to our country, the United States of America. The above quote is from Art Farber, founding member and current treasurer of the Great Vest Side (GVS). I am hereby placing GVS in the category of great enterprises.

You may have heard about GVS as a social club for guys who grew up on Chicago’s West Side in the 1930s–1950s. The club was founded in the early 1990s, when a small group of friends would meet monthly at Manny’s Deli to reminisce, laugh, and reconnect.

Within a decade the group had developed into a major Jewish charitable organization with hundreds of members and supporters, while still perpetuating the friendships and fond memories of their formative years. In GVS’s first years of giving charity, funds were donated to a variety of Jewish and other causes. In more recent years, most of the funds go to

American Friends of Magen David Adom (AFMDA) for the purchase of ambulances for Israel. AFMDA Chicago area coordinator Sharon Kobernik provides administrative services.

I learned about the history of GVS from insiders Art Farber, Herb Kanter (GVS president), and Dr. Joel Goldberg. As an organization of aging members, the leadership felt it was important that longtime activists be interviewed in order to document the organization’s history for future generations.

Dr. Goldberg approached the CJHS to request our help, and I was honored to conduct interviews with Farber and Kanter in conjunction with our Society’s oral history project, The Rose L. and Sidney N. Shure Chicago Jewish Oral History Library.

As a prelude to the interviews, I was invited to be a guest at the semi-annual GVS dinner on May 13th at the Chateau Ritz in Niles. The organization’s dinners have been held there for the last ten years. The dinner is GVS’s only organized event, and its main source for fundraising. I accepted the invitation with pleasure.

I was struck by the lively buzz of greetings and conversations among the hundreds of attendees, some of whom come from other cities just for this event. Not all have West Side origins.

Art Farber announced the upcoming GVS purchase of its fourteenth ambulance, to be dedicated in memory of Jack Esses, a GVS founder. The ambulance will be displayed at the next dinner, on Monday, October 14th, before it is sent to Israel. Farber provided me with a list of other dedications, all in memoriam, except 2007, when it went to comedian Shelley Berman (d. 2017).

I was moved to see that the first ambulance was donated in memory of David Gritz (son of member Norman Gritz), a victim of the 2002 bombing of the Hebrew University cafeteria. The ninth ambulance was dedicated in 2013 to the victims of the Sandy Hook

massacre in Newtown, Connecticut. Farber and Kanter attended that dedication ceremony in Newtown.

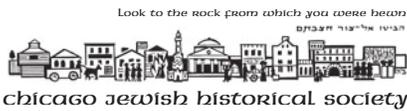
The funds involved are substantial. I was impressed to learn that ambulances now cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000, depending on their use. Midwesterners will be proud to know that these ambulances destined for Israel are built in Elkhart, Indiana.

In addition to occasions for camaraderie and charity, every dinner features a guest speaker, often one with West Side connections. I heard Jill Wine-Banks, MSNBC Legal Analyst and a Watergate prosecutor, whose parents were graduates of Marshall High School.

GVS President Kanter is in charge of selecting the speakers. Reviewing the roster of past notables, he described the emotional impact of Leon Leyson, the youngest survivor of Schindler’s List, and Dr. Bernd Wollschlaeger (son of a Nazi officer), who converted to Judaism and served as a medical officer in the Israeli Defense Forces. Some others were: Dr. Marvin Berman, Joel Weisman, Ira Berkow, Rich Cohen, Jerry Markbreit, and Irwin Mandel. See a more complete list of honorees and speakers at greatvestside.org.

More than a half-century after Jews left the West Side, that neighborhood still defines the ethos of GVS.

As a child of West Side parents, I heard many recollections of that place and time. Life certainly had its struggles, but what my parents found special about the West Side was echoed by Farber and Kanter—the importance of family, friends, the Jewish community, shared experiences, hard work, devotion, giving, and helping. I wish GVS years of continued good works and hope that its legacy will inspire others. ❖



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Chicago Jewish History

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UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Illinois Holocaust Museum, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie

Special Exhibition

"Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross"

September 22, 2019 – January 12, 2020

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is a Community Sponsor

Imprisoned in Europe's second-largest ghetto in 1940, Ross was assigned to take official identification photographs for the Nazi-controlled Jewish Administration. The Nazis forbade him from taking any unofficial images, under penalty of death. Yet against the explicit directives, Ross put his life in jeopardy to document history, sneaking his camera through cracks in doors and underneath his overcoat.

As the final residents of the ghetto were deported en masse to concentration camps, Ross stayed behind to clean up and bury his precious negatives. When the ghetto was liberated in 1945, Ross was able to excavate and recover about half of the buried negatives—one of the largest visual records of its kind to survive the Holocaust.

As its centerpiece, Memory Unearthed presents an album of contact prints created by Ross; a powerful summation of his memories that captures his personal narrative. Artifacts, including Ross's identity card and ghetto notices, accompany the haunting images. There is also video footage of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, where Ross's images and testimony were used as evidence of Nazi war crimes.

All photos courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of the Archive of Modern Conflict, organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario.

<https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/memory-unearthed>

Spertus Institute, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

"From Here to There"

September 23, 2019 – January 19, 2020

Four contemporary artists—Linda Robinson Gordon, Ellen Holtzblatt, Lilach Schrag, and Michelle Stone—explore the relationship between the physical and spiritual.

See their work on view in Spertus Institute's Ground Level Arts Lab and meet them at exhibition-related programs and events.

Inspired by the natural world, Gordon, Holtzblatt, Schrag, and Stone delve into the relationships between matter and energy and between the roles of process and materials in the act of creation. They explore their fascination with human experience, community, memory, time, and narrative.

Evoking the concept of Lech Lecha, a Hebrew phrase from the third parashah (Torah portion) that translates as "go forth," the artists experiment and take risks, stretching the boundaries of their artistic practices toward a place of personal authenticity. The exhibition is curated by Sarah Krepp.

For hours, reservations, and related programs see www.spertus.edu

Tikkun Olam in Prisoner of War Camps

ERIC BENJAMINSON

Tables Turned on Them: Jews Guarding Nazi POWs in the United States.

By Dr. Michael J. Greenberg (Page Publishing, Inc. Available via Amazon and other online booksellers).

In this deeply researched and innovative book, Dr. Michael Greenberg of suburban Northbrook, a retired food industry scientist, and longtime member of Congregation Beth Shalom, writes on a previously unknown facet of the history of the Second World War: the Jewish servicemen and medical personnel who guarded and cared for German prisoners of war (POWs) at various POW camps in the USA.

This phenomenon explains the book's title, as the Jewish camp officials were "turning the tables" on the Nazi soldiers' conceptions and beliefs about Jews, both because they were in a position of guarding the Germans but also because of their decisions "to conduct themselves with fairness, generosity and compassion"—their mission of tikkun olam.

Greenberg profiles Jewish military logisticians, medical personnel, interpreters, and military police, all US Army officers or enlisted ranks. His profiles are based on letters and diaries saved by family members, interviews with those family members, and in some cases, interviews with the elderly veterans themselves. The book also contains a fascinating selection of photos gleaned from family collections.

The first profile in the book is of the author's father, Arthur Greenberg, who had been a supply sergeant at the Clinton Prisoner of War Camp in Mississippi. He wrote letters home to his wife, and she saved them. Michael discovered the letters in 1997, and only then learned of his father's POW camp service. This new information became the catalyst for his research and writing his book.

As Greenberg notes, more than 400,000 German POWs served time at hundreds of camps throughout the United States during and immediately after the war, and at least several hundred American Jews were charged as their overseers between 1943 and 1946.

This might have presented a moral conundrum to these Jewish soldiers or, at least, an emotionally charged challenge, Greenberg writes, since the Germans' atrocities against the Jews were well-known by then.

It also raises a question which, unfortunately, Greenberg does not directly address in his book: did the

US military authorities place these Jewish soldiers in POW camps as a form of psychological warfare against the German troops? There may well be no evidence available to support such a conclusion either way, but I would be interested in hearing the author's views on that question when he discusses his book at the CJHS open meeting on Sunday, October 27th.

The book's underlying message is how many of the profiled men fought Antisemitism and Nazism through their positive behavior. Many of the case studies show, for example, medical personnel who not only treated the sick and wounded Germans with care and attention, but also took under their wings young Germans who were interested in medical careers. They helped them build skill sets to enter medical fields when they returned home to Germany after the war.

Greenberg is honest in showing cases where the American Jewish soldiers did not turn the other cheek. In one case, Military Police Sergeant Leonard Levy used his rifle butt to break the arm of a POW who called him a "dirty Jew." This caused Levy to be busted down to Private, and he noted several times in letters to family that he much preferred guarding Italian POWs as opposed to Germans. But by and large, the Jewish soldiers profiled in the book acted exemplarily. This is all the more noteworthy because, as Greenberg points out, these men grew up in the 1930s when Antisemitism in the United States was a common affliction.

Given these facts, it is Greenberg's contention that in treating the captured enemy soldiers as individual human beings rather than simply as Nazis, these servicemen were loyal to Judaic teachings about not treating human beings with contempt. He concludes "...these Jewish GIs instilled principles of American-style democracy, racial and religious tolerance, and insights into who American Jews are, and the role they played in building a better world."

It is noteworthy that at least half a dozen of the profiled men were from the Chicago area, and the book includes interviews that the author managed to get with some, including the longest-surviving of the book's subjects, Edwin Harris, who died earlier this year. ❖

ERIC BENJAMINSON is Assistant Director of Study Abroad at the University of Chicago. He was a US career diplomat from 1982 to 2013, including service as an ambassador. He is a member of the CJHS Board.

Hecht from Chicago—Repeatedly

RABBI MOSHE SIMKOVICH

Ben Hecht: Fighting Words, Moving Pictures.

By Adina Hoffman (Yale University Press: Jewish Lives).

Notorious Ben Hecht: Iconoclastic Writer and Militant Zionist.

By Julien Gorbach (Purdue University Press).

Two biographies of Ben Hecht have been published in the past year. They cover his first successes as a journalist and screenwriter—then focus in depth on his becoming an avid advocate for European Jewry as it was being destroyed in the Holocaust, and propagandist for the creation of the State of Israel as the imperative response to the tragedy. His advocacy was emphatic, dynamic, and disruptive.

Hecht was the counterpoint to the weak and vacillating dominant American Jewish response, campaigning to actively help Jews fight for their lives. Hecht left the wealth and comfort of Hollywood success to fight on behalf of those caught in Europe, and to fund the Irgun in Israel. These books wonder why. They examine his life story hoping to find the critical point at which the hardened and promiscuous writer Hecht became the political Hecht.

Hecht was born in New York, grew up in Racine, Wisconsin, and became Hecht the force while living in Chicago during and after the First World War. Although both biographies examine his life in Chicago—primarily the life of a journalist, ambitious to become a great writer—they find no clear evidence that growing up as a Jew in Chicago had any impact on his later activism. In Chicago, Hecht was largely oblivious to religion and to Zionism, and was quick to assimilate to the non-Jewish intellectual milieu he found in the city.

But there is something in the air of his early Chicago writing that permeated his responses to events in general. Chicago trained Hecht in cynicism, nurtured in the mundane reality of living in a bustling city where idealism was usually no more than a coverup for the pursuit of wealth and power. Idealism shriveled up in this terrain. Even the members of the dynamic intellectual scene in Hyde Park alive in that era moved on to New York in the next decade. Hecht came out of this Chicago suspicious of idealism, and more than ready to see the manipulations undergirding ambitions. His take on this came out in his books (now largely unread), in the play, *The Front Page*, and the films he wrote, co-wrote, or script-doctored (*Scarface*, *Nothing*

Sacred, *His Girl Friday*, *Twentieth Century*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Spellbound*, *Notorious*) and so many others.

In this sensitivity to the emotional and passionate forces underlying human behavior, Hecht arguably reflected how Jewish Chicago understood the world. An example of the same would be Saul Bellow, who embedded emotional strata deep within his intellectual characters, impelling them to actions that led to success and pain—and usually to cynicism. One could imagine either author, had they not had the drive to write so well, joining Jewish Chicagoans on the floor of the Merc trying to corner pork bellies by assessing the emotions of other futures brokers and bluffing them!

Was there anything Chicago about Hecht's turn to passionately working for the Jewish people in 1939, after forty years of ignoring them? These two biographies suggest a vigorous tendency to despise the powers that be, born of the political corruption that permeated early twentieth-century Chicago.

The two biographers also highlight Hecht's devotion to the cause, once he decided he was going to fight the powerful. This commitment against hard odds for a cause is shared with Chicago's social reformers, such as Jane Addams and Saul Alinsky. Hecht fought with his playwright's knowledge of how to sell a compelling story to people. He didn't mind if his fight wasn't socially admired, and even if Jews objected to his extreme advocacy.

Maybe Hecht was most Chicago in one important way: Once convinced that the cards were stacked against him and his cause, once he saw that the powerful would do their best to prevent his voice from being heard, once he saw the mortal end of those in Europe, he'd do whatever it took. He'd play dirty too, because dirty was what was being done to Jews. He even worked with Jewish mob bosses to raise money for the Irgun. He'd blast away with the Irgun at those who threatened his People. He'd fight with his gang, a gang to be proud of. Sounds like Chicago to me. ❖

RABBI MOSHE SIMKOVICH has been an educator in yeshivot and Jewish communities in the US and Israel. Presently in the Chicago area, he is the Educational Consultant for the Associated Talmud Torahs advising school administrators and promoting professional development in Chicago area yeshivot and schools. Rabbi Simkovich is a member of the CJHS Board.

Von Steuben High School Students Research and Honor Gold Star Heroes

MEGHAN THOMAS

Von Steuben social studies teacher and history club sponsor



Von Steuben High School Gold Star veteran Sherman Levine photographed in Hawaii.

Photograph courtesy of Debbie List.



During the 2018-2019 school year, the Von Steuben Historians, a new club, started looking into the school's rich history, starting with World War II. The club was born after students learned about a Von Steuben alumnus, Sherman Levine, who died in 1941 in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In their US History classes, students looked at photographs of Sherm, as his friends called him, in the yearbook and read a letter that he wrote home to his friend, Gil. Sherman told Gil that he missed hanging out with friends that summer and going on dates with girls.

Von Steuben art class agreed to make a mosaic to display in the school honoring Sherman Levine.

It includes the words, "Hey Gil, I'm back," referencing the letter to Gil where Sherman looks forward to returning to the neighborhood and seeing his old friend.

The students connected with this young man from the past whose life wasn't much different from theirs. They decided to find the names and stories of all of the young people from Von Steuben who died in WWII, and make a memorial to them at their school. They had learned that there was a previous memorial that had disappeared.

With documents found on Ancestry.com and at the National Archives and Records Administration in St. Louis, where military personnel files are stored, I was able to put together files for most of the servicemen. Students in US History and Chicago History classes looked through the files and wrote as much as they could about each man's life and service. For students, it was a meaningful experience. Shivam Patel, a student, wrote about how his project studying Navy Radarman John Joseph Weiss, Jr., impacted his learning about WWII. He said:

So many brave men risked their lives by entering the military. Some had not even finished high school. World War II has always just been another war for me, but now that I have learned all of this precious information about the people, the city, and even the neighborhood, I can proudly say that WWII changed many lives, including my own.

Mosaic honoring Sherman Levine quotes the words he wrote in a letter to his friend, Gil.

Photograph by Meghan Thomas.

This type of learning experience is wonderful for students because it makes them proud of the history of their school and neighborhood through primary source research.

Between 1930, when Von Steuben High School opened, until the 1970s, Von Steuben was a predominantly Jewish school. As a result, a majority of the men the students are researching are Jewish.

Von Steuben has been a Magnet School for many years and draws students from across the country. While it is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse schools in the city, the students are interested in the history of Albany Park.

The Von History Club ended the school year with a Memorial Day trip to Westlawn Cemetery where several of the fallen servicemen are buried. One of them is Sherman

Levine. His niece, Debbie List, accompanied the club to the cemetery and taught them about Jewish burial rituals and prayers said for the deceased.

Everyone was moved by Debbie's stories about how Sherman's death impacted her father (Sherman's older brother) and family, and by a eulogy, written by Von Steuben student Megan Gallardo.

The club was honored to remember Sherman at his grave, and they hope to visit as many of the graves as possible of the sixty-three identified Von heroes.

This year, the club is fundraising for a trip to Belgium, France and the Netherlands to visit the graves of Von Steuben servicemen who were buried overseas at American Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries.

We are also raising money to build a permanent memorial to the Von Steuben servicemen that will fulfill the promise of the previous principal, Varian Shea. In 1945 she wrote a letter to Sherman Levine's family, inviting them to the dedication of a plaque honoring Gold Star servicemen. Her letter said:

The plaque will be mounted permanently on the wall of our Assembly Hall, in order that present and future students of Von Steuben always will have before them the names of those heroes who purchased freedom for the rest of us at the expense of their own lives.



Sherman Levine's niece Debbie List said a prayer for her uncle and shared family stories with members of the Von History Club at Westlawn Cemetery.

Photograph by Meghan Thomas.



Von History Club members at Westlawn Cemetery on Memorial Day 2019.

Photograph by Meghan Thomas.

That plaque has been missing from the school for several decades. Today's students hope to create a new one, while reflecting on sacrifice and loss and how that affected their community.

If you would like to help the Von History Club achieve its goals, contribute through Go Fund Me at <https://www.gofundme.com/bring-back-the-plaque>. Money raised goes toward ordering files to advance their research, covering travel costs, and creating a memorial to the fallen heroes of Von Steuben. ❖



During World War II a Gold Star Banner of this kind would be displayed in the window of the family of a fallen serviceman.

ED MAZUR'S PAGES FROM THE PAST

My source for these selections is the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey Microfilm Collection at the Chicago Public Library Harold Washington Library Center.

In the autumn of 1936 the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey was organized under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Illinois. The purpose of the Survey was to translate and classify selected news articles appearing in Chicago's foreign language press from 1861 to 1938.

Financial curtailments in the WPA program ended the Survey in October 1941. The Chicago Public Library published the work in 1942. The project consists of a file of 120,000 typewritten pages from newspapers of twenty-two different foreign language communities in Chicago.

Yiddish is the foreign language of the Jewish press in the Survey. English language periodicals are also included, as well as the publications of charitable institutions, communal organizations, and synagogues.

LETTER TO OUR JEWISH PARENTS:

Allow your children to play outdoors. Do not deny your children the pleasures of outdoor sports. Sports are not a waste of time. They are essential to the natural growth of children. A sound body is essential to a sound mind.

If you have never played ball, which you probably have not, the following will be of interest to you. First, it teaches quick thinking and shows the child that he must do a thing and get it done fast. Secondly, it teaches the value of coordination and working with others. It teaches them when it is

best to act independently and when working with someone else brings better results. Above all, it brings a healthy color to your child's cheeks. Every breath of fresh air they get is better than a hundred dollars in the bank, and everyone knows health is better than wealth....

Daily Jewish Courier,
May 10, 1910

THE BOYS' BROTHERHOOD REPUBLIC

The meeting of the Boys' Brotherhood Republic (BBR) was of absorbing interest as well as a liberal education. The writer had looked in for a few minutes out of curiosity and remained to the end by choice. Though the participants were boys, the topics considered and the manner of handling them were worthy of men. Boy after boy took his stand and kept the interest of the audience to the very end. If the Republic is meant to be a miniature embodiment of our country, then the present citizens of the Republic will make ideal citizens of the future. They will be citizens alive to all vital issues....

The speakers favored the humane, liberal side of their respective topics. The abolishment of Capital Punishment was advocated by one, while another denounced the Boy Scout movement as nursing the ideals of blind obedience and the glory of war. Child Labor was compared to the ancient practice of sacrificing to Moloch. The Reform School was condemned as a training school where hardened criminals are manufactured. In the words of one, Preparation for War meant invitation to war, while still another glibly argued in favor of Prohibition. Moving Picture

Censorship condemned as a useless, even baneful institution, ended an evening spent to very good advantage.

*Chicago Hebrew Institute
Observer,* December, 1914

MISSIONARIES

Last Sunday, after the children left our Sabbath school to go home, they were stopped and given pamphlets by the missionaries. Some children returned the pamphlets to the school, showing them to us. Glancing through the pamphlets, we explained to the children their nature and subject, and the children immediately destroyed them.

Many parents on the West Side are not aware that the Jewish neighborhood is full of missionaries, whose sole purpose is to separate the Jewish children from Judaism and convert them to Christianity. They have opened a number of schools, where their gospel is spread....

A lot has been done to attract the children to the fold of Judaism, but much more must be done to draw them away from Christian influence. For this purpose we opened three Sabbath schools.... These schools deserve our thanks. Let the parents inform themselves as to where their children spend their time, to make sure that they will be an honor, instead of a curse among the Jewish people in the future.

Daily Jewish Courier,
July 7, 1915

LETTER TO OUR JEWISH CHILDREN

You will soon go back to school. After a ten-week vacation you should feel fresh and lively, and with rejuvenated energy should endeavor to continue your studies.

Many of you will return to school cheerfully, having been promoted; you are now on a higher rung of the ladder. You should feel proud of your abilities.

Other children will return to school with long faces. They are in the same class, they have the same teachers, and are using the same textbooks. These children should not feel defeated. If they will study conscientiously from now on, they will certainly be successful in school. Ambition leads to success.

...And do not forget, dear children, that you are living in a country where you can develop your talents....

Less fortunate are children in dark Russia, which withholds education from her people in general, and from Jews in particular. They crave knowledge as one thirsts for water, but they are shown only an empty quart.

Consider yourself lucky, dear children, because you live in a country where there is no prejudice against Jewish children. The doors of all schools are open to you. Enter and sate yourself with knowledge.

Sunday Jewish Courier,
September 3, 1916

THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE ARE THE OWNERS OF THE DOUGLAS PARK AUDITORIUM

Today the Workmen's Circle became the owners of the Douglas Park Auditorium. Last Saturday at 6 in the evening the deal was closed. It took four hours to prepare the legal documents that were turned over to the Labor Lyceum Committee of the Workmen's Circle. The dream of possessing a home of their own, a cultural social center, is now a reality. The auditorium will soon

develop into a workers' temple where the whole labor movement will find a home for the economical, political, social, cooperative, and cultural activities of Jewish workers of Chicago. The Workmens Circle of America started with one small branch of a few members and now has 80,000 members with a treasury of \$1,300,000.

Forward, June 1, 1920

REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN FOR THE CHILDREN'S COLONY OF THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE SCHOOLS

If you have any children in the Workmen's Circle schools, and you are interested in sending them to the children's colony, Yehupetz, in Tri-River, Michigan, you must register them by June 25.

The children in Yehupetz will be supplied with strictly fresh food, will be out in the fresh country air, will be under the constant supervision of the teachers, away from the city noise and filth. The colony is near Cooper's well-known summer resort and also near a small lake with fields, forests, and gardens all around it....

Forward, June 23, 1923

POALE ZION JUNIORS CELEBRATE THE FOURTH AT THE Y.P.Z.A. CAMP

The Chicago Poale Zion Juniors visited the camp of the Chicago Federated Poale Zion and the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, Sunday and Monday, July 3rd and 4th. The visit was extended into an enjoyable picnic and outing. The camp is located in New Buffalo, Michigan, sixty-nine miles southeast of Chicago.

It is situated a mile away from New Buffalo. At present, the camp

consists of eighty acres of land, including an orchard and nine acres of dense woods. It also has a two-story building containing fifteen rooms.

Sunday Jewish Courier,
July 10, 1927

CAMP CHI

...[W]e note that of the 551 girl campers, 368 were under the age of sixteen, seventy-nine between sixteen and eighteen, and 104 over eighteen years of age. Of this number, 147 represented full or partial scholarships....

The camp was practically self-supporting due to the contributions made by the Institute Women's Club....

Chicago Hebrew Institute Observer, 1928

CAMP WOOSTER AND THE YOUNG MEN'S JEWISH CHARITIES

The dedication of two new buildings at Camp Wooster, maintained by the Young Men's Jewish Charities for underprivileged boys, will take place next Sunday.

The camp is located on Lake Wooster, near Round Lake, Illinois. One of the new buildings is the William D. Stein Hospital, the gift of Mrs. William D. Stein and Philip Stein.... The second building is the Nature Cabin, an anonymous gift. This building is made of rough hewn logs and is furnished with rustic tables and chairs made by the boys in the camp's wood shop.

The camp accommodates 225 boys at a time. Because of the demand for accommodations, this year, 1,250 boys will be given vacations instead of the usual 1,000 taken care of in past years.

Chicago Jewish Chronicle,
Week of August 12, 1932

COMMENTS and INQUIRIES

Architect Stanley Tigerman (1930-2019)

One of his most significant buildings is the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie.

To the Editor,

Thank you for letting me know about the passing of Stanley Tigerman. The news awakened some memories of when we both were young and before he became famous. I worked for Ira Bach at Chicago's Department of City Planning between 1958 and 1964, handling public information. Stanley would visit the department about projects he was working on.

We would engage in conversations in which he introduced me to Op Art and Pop Art, and especially the theories of Josef Albers with whom he had studied at Yale—such as how colors can interact with one another to affect emotions and how some colors vibrate when juxtaposed. Stanley was very down to earth. He spoke rapidly because he was very excited about art and architecture (the *Tribune* obit says he was “passionate” about them). It was so nice of him to stop by my desk regularly to share his enthusiasm for these topics.

Rachel Heimovics
CJHS Past President
Maitland, Florida

The OK Bakery

To the Editor,

I am seeking information about the OK Bakery in Chicago that was owned by my great-grandfather, David Orenstein, in the 1920s. He came from Lodz, Poland, in the early twentieth century. There was a fire in the bakery sometime toward the end of the '20s, and he moved his family to Milwaukee. There he opened the Chicago Bakery. Can you help me with any information? I'd really appreciate it.

Jodi Reff
jodipt1@aol.com

Photographer H.R. Trachtenberg

Avid collector and CJHS member David Matlow sent us a beautiful sepia cabinet photograph of three Jewish brothers, c. 1920s. The mat is imprinted:

H.R. TRACHTENBERG
1738 ROOSEVELT ROAD
CHICAGO

Please send any information about this talented artist to info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

Congregation Or Torah

“Congregation Or Torah Jubilee” by Karen Kaplan. CJHS Journal, Spring 2019.

To the Editor,

Children of early members of Or Torah have gotten rabbinical ordination and are congregational rabbis in synagogues in the Chicago area, around the USA, and in Israel. That is certainly due to the leadership of the late Rabbi Berkowitz and Rabbi Pollack, now of Israel. Both of these rabbis were wonderful role models for the younger members of the shul through their great love of teaching and great examples of rabbinic leadership.

Thanks for the article!

Judith Gutstein
Lincolnwood, Illinois

To Judith Gutstein,

Thank you for your comments about my brief history of Or Torah in our journal. No synagogue can flourish for fifty years without the dedication of many people. I'm glad you shared your memories of the large and lasting contributions of Rabbis Berkowitz and Pollack. May the shul continue to grow and serve the community in the years to come.

Karen Kaplan
Evanston, Illinois

M. Sacks Grocery and Delicatessen

“A Photograph from the Early Days of Jewish Lawndale,” CJHS Journal, Spring 2019.

To the Editor,

I returned from Baltimore last night to find your journal in the waiting mail. I was so pleased. The article looks terrific. The photo is really sharp.

In Baltimore I had lunch with ten cousins, all descended from the siblings of Ada Sacks. None of us (except for one cousin and I) had ever met before, even though we all lived close by and all are fairly close in age. We were sorry that we didn't know one another when we were growing up.

The cousins loved seeing the photo of the grocery and hearing the story of the detective work involved. The get-together came about because of our research on Cape Charles, Virginia, that led to Chicago.

Thank you for all you did to make this happen.

Roberta Hyman
Seattle, Washington

CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

The Hebrew phrase means “More Power to You.”

Full speed ahead!

Co-presidents **Dr. Rachelle Gold** and **Jerry Levin** and Board members **Joy Kingsolver** and **Frances Archer** are combining their expertise and enthusiasm to get our oral history project, The Rose L. and Sidney N. Shure Chicago Jewish Oral History Library, underway.

Dr. Gold came up with the idea for us to be a community partner of the Illinois Bicentennial in 2018.

Leah Axelrod, who was president of the Illinois State Historical Society at the time, chose “Illinois Jewish Roots” a series of journal articles, as our project. The series has been so successful that we are continuing it through 2019 and beyond.

Galya Ben-Arieh was involved in the exhibition “Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa” at Northwestern’s Block Museum. She wrote the chapter “Saharan Crossing: The Realities of Migration Today” for the exhibition catalog.

Galya Ben-Arieh (Ruffer), J.D., Ph.D., is Professor of Instruction in the Political Science Department of Northwestern University.

Suzie Dickman can take pride in the accomplishments of her daughter, Rabbi Reni Dickman, newly named to a dual role as Executive Vice President of the Chicago Board of Rabbis and the Senior Educator of JUF.

Suzie’s late husband, Reni’s father, was Marvin Dickman, z”l, who served as CJHS Treasurer.

A full-page profile of Rabbi Dickman appears in the August issue of *JUF News*.



Sandra Holubow’s most recent landscape is “Evensong,” acrylic on wood, 11 inches x 25 inches. This is just a section (see it in full color in our web edition). See the whole piece at the S & G Restaurant, 3100 North Lincoln Avenue, the “home” of the Artists’ Breakfast Group, whose members include some of Chicago’s finest creatives.

This item appeared on the *Block Club Chicago* website on July 1, 2019.

“Chicago History Buffs Discover Old City Clerk’s Abandoned Office in Avondale, Full of Decades Worth of Political Dirt and More”

Back in 2012 and 2013, history buffs Daniel Pogorzelski and **Jacob Kaplan** were on a mission to get inside a nondescript brick building at the northwest corner of Diversey and Drake avenues. Longtime city clerk and former 35th Ward Ald. John Marcin, one of former Mayor Richard J. Daley’s closest political allies, had worked out of the building for years. There were rumors all of his stuff was still in there, virtually untouched since his death in 1984.

CJHS Board member Jacob and his *Forgotten Chicago* colleague Dan collected the trove this summer and delivered it to the U of Illinois at Chicago Richard J. Daley Library.



Jacob Kaplan gathering Marcin’s items.
Photo by Dan Pogorzelski.

Welcome New Members of the Society

Galya Ben-Arieh
Highland Park, IL

Arthur Farber
Highland Park, IL

Norman Goldmeier
Lincolnwood, IL

Sandy Portnoy Mills
Chapel Hill, NC

Dr. Michael Reynard
Santa Monica, CA

Nora Schwartz
Chicago, IL

Michelle M. Smith
Chicago, IL

“There are no Jews in Naperville,” my mom (of blessed memory) worriedly told me in the early 1990s. Her friend, Joe Rubin of Northbrook, disagreed. His cousins lived in Naperville. There was even a synagogue there.

BEYOND CHICAGO: ILLINOIS JEWISH ROOTS

Pioneers in Naperville

JONI HIRSCH BLACKMAN

Many north suburban and Chicago Jews are surprised to hear that Jews have lived in Naperville since long before I moved here twenty-six years ago. The city of 140,000 still has the one synagogue—Congregation Beth Shalom. But Naperville Jews also belong to Aurora’s Temple B’nai Israel and Lombard’s Etz Chaim. Since 2005, many also are active with Naperville Chabad. Each offers the inclusive attitude that has thrived since the former small farming town welcomed its first Jewish family in 1920.

Sam and Anna Rubin arrived when Naperville’s population was approximately 3,000. The story, as told by a family friend who compiled a Rubin family history, was that Chicago life had become “a little rough,” so the couple took a drive to the southwest on Ogden Avenue one day. When Sam saw the town along the DuPage River, he said, “This is where I think we should settle.”

They left Chicago’s West Side Jewish enclave to strike out among strangers, purchasing a two-story building and the empty lot next door. The store they opened joined downtown Naperville’s small trade shops—blacksmith, post office, drugstore, etc.

Sam continued working as a contractor in Chicago and Anna ran the store they named the Chicago Bargain Store (later renamed the Home Department Store), which carried groceries, household goods, and clothing.

The Rubins lived above the store in an apartment with, eventually, four children. Daughter Lucille was born in 1917, daughter Gish in 1919. The third child, Alfred, was born in December 1920, after the family arrived in Naperville. He was delivered in the back of the store with the help of a local veterinarian. It was a farming town! Norman was delivered more traditionally at Garfield Park Hospital in Chicago in 1929.



Inside the Home Department Store, 222 South Main Street, Naperville. From left to right: Anna Rubin, Pearl Meckler of Waukegan, who assisted Sam in the store; Sam Rubin; (in the background, a young girl); Frieda Rubin, who worked for Sam; Benny Rubin, Sam’s brother; two Naperville men (one in the background, one up front); Veneta Miller, owner of the Reiche store, located to the south of Rubin’s; two salesgirls; and Sam’s sister, Carrie Hayer. She was married to Bill Hayer of Naperville, a director of the Naperville National Bank and owner of Hayer and Springborn Gas Stations. Photograph from the collection of Norman Rubin, courtesy of Joni Hirsch Blackman.

With no other Jews in Naperville, the family joined the nearest synagogue miles away in Aurora.

Sheldon Hayer, a Naperville native now of North Carolina, remembers those days. His mother Carrie, Sam Rubin's second-youngest sibling, worked at the store, and even met her future husband there.

Barbara Hayer Zuckerman, Sheldon's sister, remembers their mother buying a turkey from a local farmer, putting it in a gunny sack in the trunk of their car, and driving to Chicago for kosher slaughtering.

"He gobbled all the way to the city," said Barbara. She left Naperville in 1953 to attend college.

The family celebrated the High Holidays at the home of Chicago relatives, where they also spent Passover week. The fact that there were no other Jews in Naperville was just the way it was, there was no discussion about it.

Sheldon Hayer was active in BBYO in Aurora, a district that included Elgin and Joliet. But did he have Jewish friends in Naperville?

"Noooooooooooo. Jews moved to Naperville after Argonne opened in 1946," Hayer said. "Jews were big in research and atomic stuff. Larry Kelman and David Shaftman were the first Jews I knew in town."

In 1941, Sam Rubin built Naperville's first supermarket, an A&P, where there is now a Talbots. Five years later he built a store for National Tea—the start of a long history of the Rubin family's developing and shaping modern downtown Naperville.

Rivka Shaftman, David's daughter, lives in Naperville again after years away.

"My mother told me they chose Naperville over Elmhurst because it had the best school system of the towns in the western suburbs that were willing to sell a house to Jews."

In 1958, the Shaftmans arrived to find seven Jewish families. Four were there because of Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont. Rivka and her sister Sarah attended Sunday school at Temple B'nai Israel from 1960-63, car pooling with the Spinrad family.

Her Jewish memories of Naperville are a mix of antisemitism—ignorant comments from teachers, cherry bombs and eggs thrown at their house on Passover—and fond friendships with members of other faiths in town. The pleasure of decorating Christmas trees and baking cookies with friends was tempered by a required school essay: "What Christmas Means To Me."

Rivka's enjoyment of being in the St. Procopius College Community Orchestra contrasted with her mother's displeasure when she came home from school with her Easter collage, featuring crosses.

"My mother was more upset because I didn't understand why she was upset," said Shaftman, who played the cello. "There was a wonderful feeling of community in that orchestra. Catholics were still a fairly unwelcome minority. I cherish memories of Christmas Mass with the junior orchestra."

The next wave of Jews arrived when Bell Labs opened in 1966. Newcomers settled in Naperville with an admonition from friends and relatives: "You've got to connect with so-and-so!"

Several women remember, in the late 1960s, getting an invitation to tea from Alfred Rubin's wife, Naomi. "If you know a Jewish woman, invite her," she said. Some were quite surprised by how many women were there—as many as thirty from Naperville and surrounding suburbs. Religion wasn't something they mentioned on a daily basis, so it was comforting to connect with other Jews.

Sheldon and Raye Isenberg came to the western suburbs in the early 1970s from Chicago to open their counseling practice, encouraged by a friend who lived in Geneva. "We said: 'That's so far!'" But on a hot August weekend they got in the car, and like the Rubins fifty years earlier, found their home. Thanks to an overheard conversation in Hebrew at Naperville's new Dominick's, they stumbled upon an entire community.

"The loose group of friends started as a social organization, just some bridge players," said Sheldon Isenberg, but a newspaper ad for a wine and cheese party brought more Jewish couples into what became the Naperville Jewish Community Organization.

"It was just a group of Jews trying to connect with other Jews in the area. I don't think there was an intent to start a synagogue. We were just happy to know there's more than two of us here," said Jay Fisher, who moved to Naperville in 1970.

Congregation Beth Shalom

In 2012, early members of CBS gathered to reminisce. Their children, they remembered, were the first Jewish students at various Naperville elementary schools: "We were the first Jewish family at Elmwood," "... at Ellsworth," "... at Highlands," "... at Mill Street."

"My son was the first Jewish child at Sacred Heart Montessori," said Sheldon Isenberg.

"They wanted him to be the Christ Child in the Christmas play. They didn't understand our objection, since Jesus was Jewish. Ten years later, the same nuns came to his Bar Mitzvah," said Raye Isenberg.

Naperville *Continued from Page 13*

NJCO's potpourri of Jews with traditions required compromises. "This area attracted mixed couples, so the natural thing was to accommodate everyone in one way or another," said Jay Fisher.

Years later, the group's third part-time rabbi, a Conservative, perused the motley crew—an Orthodox school director with a bunch of non-Jewish members and a Reconstructionist identity—and promptly dubbed them "Reconformidox."

From the start, everyone pitched in with talents and financial support. The first High Holiday services were held with a Torah borrowed from Arthur and Greer Braun's friend's synagogue in Flint, Michigan.

A non-Jewish spouse built an ark in his garage. A member who worked for Sears got a vendor to donate a kitchen cabinet to which rollers were added, creating a case for kippahs and talleisim. The Torah was unrolled on the pool table in the home where they gathered. Members led the service themselves.

When religious education was needed for the growing younger generation, the women took charge. They provided it with virtually no money, holding Sunday school in the home of a member whose hunting trophies hung on the wall. The moose heads scared some of the children.

A driving force behind the school was Edie Gold, the non-Jewish wife of Mickey. From the beginning, non-Jewish spouses were full members. Unflinchingly egalitarian, many in the group participated in the women's movement of the time.

Many members of this "geographic congregation" were risk-takers—people who were willing to move to Naperville when there weren't (many) Jews there," said Jay Fisher. They supported each other, working together to survive. "In a lifeboat, you don't ask for credentials," is how one early member put it.

For a while, the NJCO wrestled with becoming a synagogue. Some didn't want to belong to the type of synagogue they'd grown up in. They enjoyed having the freedom to innovate. Many early members well-educated in religious practices, figured formalizing was unnecessary. The spirited debate ended with the decision to form a synagogue, officially in 1972, though some remembered it being a bit later.

"One distinction of the group was that we had some very good volunteers who had skills to share," Sheldon Isenberg remembered. "In a sense, it was the little synagogue that could."

The nascent congregation met at Wesley Methodist Church. It is believed that Al Rubin asked the pastor for the space. Though the church offered free rent, members insisted on paying, appreciating the closet they were given to store items and grateful to the pastor for his warm welcome to the social hall, and later, the church sanctuary.

Members came early to services, setting out the ark and the Torah, climbing up on ladders, using pulleys and cloth, covering Christian symbols to "neutralize" the space. The church also offered a desk on the second floor where the group's secretary could type newsletters. The congregation's first prayer books and ark cover were donated by B'nai Israel of Aurora.

The synagogue's name was chosen during a meeting in the church social hall. Of those proposed, Beth Shalom—House of Peace—seemed perfect for the mostly gentile community, easy for the neighbors to pronounce.

Wesley Methodist Church choir members asked to join the congregation's first High Holiday choir. The husband of one of the Wesley women accompanied the choir on the piano.

The religious school moved into Jefferson Junior High on Sunday mornings. An Orthodox rabbi, Victor Amster from Chicago's Midwest Zionists, supervised classes. Once a year, seventh graders spent Shabbat with an Orthodox family in Rogers Park.

"They came back with a real experience of Orthodox practice—and here we were, in the wilderness," one member recalled.

As the organization gelled, opinions clashed.

"We underwent significant change, from a part-time rabbi to having someone run the school. Do we want a full-time rabbi or a building? We couldn't do both at the same time. Any time you have that kind of change, you're going to have conflict and different views of the future," said Jay Fisher.

"We needed some adults in the room," joked Isenberg. "We didn't have the next-level experience. We were in our early 30s and 40s. No one had been here before. But we took pride in being a haimish group." The part-time rabbi visited once a month, then twice a month, then once a week.

"There were many meetings to decide on affiliation," said Isenberg. "We were evenly divided between Conservative and Reform, and a major piece wanted to go Reconstructionist, because if your wife wasn't Jewish, the Conservative group wouldn't see your children as Jewish."

“From the beginning we wanted intermarried couples to feel at home. We decided we wouldn’t ostracize people, and we would be completely egalitarian with women. People like Raye Isenberg had synagogue skills and wanted to practice them.”

“**R**econstructionism,” said Sheldon Isenberg, “was a compromise—the social liberalism of Reform and the religious liturgy of Conservatism.”

“The congregation was still quite small,” Rich Katz remembered, “We were fifty or so—it made sense not to split. We needed each other. Everyone pitched in. I remember reaching seventy-five families, a hundred families. It was remarkable in those days to think we could sustain the organization with so few.”

One former synagogue officer remembered offering to compensate Katz for tutoring his daughter for her Bat Mitzvah. Katz declined, saying, “If you want to pay me, do something instead for the congregation.” Next thing Katz knew, he was the congregation president.

The first full-time rabbi, Michael Remson, was hired in 1983. By then, the Naperville Jews were gently educating their gentile neighbors. Rich Katz remembered when Oswald’s Pharmacy displayed Jewish New Year’s cards in December.

“I saw them on the rack and was taken aback. Realizing they wanted to sell these to Jews, I talked to my wife, saying we should let them know. We did, and they were very nice. I found the atmosphere in Naperville to be welcoming.”

In 1985, CBS bought a small church at the end of a residential street north of downtown, and grew there for more than a decade. It was too small for High Holiday services, so they rented the ballroom at what is now a Marriott on Naper Boulevard. Members called it the “High Holiday Inn.”

All along, Alfred Rubin offered quiet support. His three siblings had moved away.

“He didn’t throw his weight around. He was a consultant and a father figure,” said Sheldon Isenberg.

“I’ll never forget his comment when there was intense squabbling about some matter: He quietly told us that in his experience among Christians, they have what we need: ‘A little Christian charity!’ An uproar of laughter ensued, and the matter was settled in minutes.”

The original members of CBS were scientists, engineers, and a local veterinarian. Al Rubin, the only businessman, was a member of both B’nai Israel in Aurora and Beth Shalom in Naperville.

“Al was the kind of a guy who would come in, look around, say two or three words and go away. He’d come

back, say two or three words and go away again,” remembered one member.

“He kept on doing that, until one day he came in and said, ‘We need to buy land for a cemetery.’ We were all 35-36-years-old, thinking we don’t need that. He went away, and then we had a cemetery.”

Congregation Beth Shalom, DuPage County’s first original synagogue building, opened in 1998 on land donated by Norm Rubin. Al helped design the kitchen that could be used for kosher food service. He attended the groundbreaking in 1997, but died months before the building opened.

One of Al and Naomi’s three children, Steve, still lives in Naperville with his wife, Sheri, and their daughters. They, too, are members of CBS. Al’s cousin, Barbara Hayer Zuckerman of Riverwoods, returns to her hometown occasionally.

A few years ago, Zuckerman arrived during the winter holidays and saw something she never could have imagined as a child. Right near where she’d lived in downtown Naperville was a huge menorah, erected by Chabad. Nearly a hundred years after her grandparents lit a flame that endures, the public symbol stunned her: “It was a miracle.” ❖



Construction site, now Main Place in Naperville, c. 1997.

Left to right: Norman Rubin, Sam Rubin (his son), Steve Rubin (Alfred’s son), and Alfred Rubin.

Photograph from the collection of Norman Rubin, courtesy of Joni Hirsch Blackman.

JONI HIRSCH BLACKMAN is the author of *Downtown Naperville and This Used to Be Chicago*. She is a member of the *Chicago Jewish Historical Society*.

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



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IN THIS ISSUE

- **The GVS (Great Vest Side)**
- **Von Steuben High School History Club**
- **Kuppenheimer Stadium**
- **Jewish Pioneers in Naperville**
- **Fall Program Previews**

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

Inquiries: info@chicagojewishhistory.org

All issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present are digitized and posted on our website in pdf format. Click on the Publications tab and scroll down through the years. There is also 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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