



CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

Looking Back, Looking Forward



Remembering with Gratitude

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society lost one of its stalwarts this past spring, Dr. Adele Hast (right), who was an outstanding Board member for many years. Dr. Hast was also a former President of the Board.

A trained historian, Dr. Hast made numerous contributions to the Society, her chosen field, and the advancement of Chicago Jewish history.

She is pictured here with her husband of 67 years, Dr. Malcolm Hast (center), who survives her, and other former Board presidents (from left) Norman Schwartz and Walter Roth, both of blessed memory, and Dr. Edward H. Mazur.

Read more about Dr. Hast's enduring contributions on page 10 of this issue.

Zooming Right Along

The programs must go on!

That has been the attitude—and new practice—of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, which, despite the many challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic, is striving to bring to our members programs that are dynamic, illuminating, and, well, virtual.

The Society held its first Zoom program this past summer with Dr. Joe Kraus, author of "The Kosher Capones: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters."

Read more about Dr. Kraus' Zoom program on page 11—and see page 5 for more information about our next Zoom program, to take place on October 18.



CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

The simplicity of the text of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution belies the 70-year struggle for its enactment. This year, as we celebrate the centennial of the amendment’s ratification—on August 26, 1920—I proudly note that Illinois was the first state to ratify it. It is also a point of pride for me that Illinois was the first state east of the Mississippi—in 1913—to have given women partial voting rights: Women were included in the selection of electors to the Electoral College.

As a woman who has never skipped an election since coming of age to vote, I find it hard to imagine the time when my grandmothers were denied this fundamental right. Yet it was so. That’s why I have delved deeply into the history of the suffrage movement, researching how women in the Chicago area, and Jewish women in particular, contributed to women’s right to the franchise.

The foundation of the long fight to expand rights for women emerged in the mid 1800s from the abolitionist, temperance, and social reform movements. In Illinois, an early achievement was the 1861 legal recognition of married women’s property rights. Until then, a married woman’s property and wages were owned by her husband, and she had no contractual rights to them. Other early milestones, were the first Midwest Suffrage meeting, held in Chicago in 1869, and the formation of the Illinois Woman’s Suffrage Association. Organized efforts were imperative. The year before, the 14th Amendment had extended citizenship to all native or naturalized Americans, but inserted the word “male” (its first appearance in the Constitution) to define voting rights. In 1870, the enfranchisement of Black men was written into the new Illinois constitution in compliance with the 15th Amendment, while women were still excluded. For a detailed timeline of other achievements statewide, go to www.suffrage2020illinois.com.

The women who spearheaded the movement in Chicago and other American cities tended to be Protestant, white, and middle or upper class. The women’s clubs they formed initially attracted women from similar backgrounds who wanted to improve societal conditions for the benefit of the family and home. A club’s goals typically started with a defined focus and broadened over time. Its support base broadened as well. Important targets of reform were schools, public health, sanitation, housing, criminal justice, labor conditions, and access to education and the professions. Women’s suffrage was seen as a means to accomplish change, as well as a matter of justice in and of itself. An example of a successful reform group, prominent in the suffrage movement, was the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1874 in Evanston, by Frances Willard.

The most prestigious “club group” in Chicago was the Chicago Women’s Club (CWC), whose structure became a model for women’s clubs across the nation. In 1876, the CWC admitted its first Jewish members, Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858–1942) and her sister, Henriette Greenebaum Frank (1854–1922). *CJH* readers are familiar with Solomon’s role in forming the Jewish Women’s Congress of the World Parliament of Religions at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was established from these efforts. Solomon was president of NCJW until 1905. Her leadership in many areas of civic and Jewish life in Chicago is well known. Frank was the first and only Jewish president of the CWC.

Solomon supported the suffrage movement and befriended other Chicago reform and suffrage leaders, including Jane Addams and Frances Willard, as well as national figures. Solomon was a delegate in 1904 to the International Council of Women conference in Berlin, where suffrage was high on the agenda. Other local Jewish suffrage supporters included Sadie American (1862–1944), Flora Mayer Witkowsky (1869–1944), and Hilda Satt Polacheck (1882–1967).

American, already a social reformer before she joined the Jewish Women’s Congress at the invitation of Solomon, was a key leader in NCJW until 1914. Like Solomon and Frank, she was an active member of the



CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

2020 Officers and Board of Directors

Dr. Rachele Gold

Jerold Levin

Co-Presidents

Janet Iltis

Secretary

Sidney Amdur

Treasurer

Frances O'Cherony Archer

Leah Joy Axelrod

Eric Benjaminson

Dr. Irving Cutler

Herbert Eiseman

Elise Ginsparg

Jacob M. Kaplan

Karen Kaplan

Joy Kingsolver

Mark Mandle

Dr. Edward H. Mazur

Joan Pomaranc

Patti Ray

Rabbi Moshe Simkovich

Alissa Tantar Zeffren

Past Presidents

Muriel Rogers z"l

Founding President

Walter Roth z"l

President Emeritus

Dr. Adele Hast z"l

Rachel Heimovics Braun

Norman D. Schwartz z"l

Dr. Edward H. Mazur

Chicago Jewish History

is published quarterly by the CJHS at 610 S. Michigan Ave., Room 803, Chicago, IL 60605.

Phone (312) 663-5634

info@chicagojewishhistory.org

Successor to *Society News*.

Single copies \$4.00 postpaid.

Editor/Designer Robert Nagler Miller

Proofreader Eric A. Gordon

Editorial Board Dr. Rachele Gold,

Dr. Edward H. Mazur, Karen Kaplan,

and Frances O'Cherony Archer

Submissions: Request guidelines at

info@chicagojewishhistory.org

CWC and Sinai Congregation. (Sinai's Rabbi Emil Hirsch encouraged women to take a more public role in synagogue and community life and advocated for women's rights, including voting rights.) Among her many community achievements was the planning of public playgrounds.

Witkowsky, also affiliated with the NCSW, Sinai, and CWC, was an outstanding leader in both the Jewish and broader communities as well. She was a director of many institutions, including the Jewish Training School and Chicago Home for Jewish Orphans, and she supported arts and culture. The Visiting Artists Program at the School of the Art Institute was funded by her endowment.

Polacheck rose to leadership from a working-class background. According to CJHS Board member Karen Kaplan, who wrote about Polacheck in the Summer 2008 *CJH*, Polacheck, who benefited from years of involvement at Hull House, was in favor of women's suffrage since her young adulthood. Later, she joined the radical National Women's Party, whose policy was "not to ask for the vote but to demand it."

Many American Jewish women leaders and masses of Jewish women supported suffrage. However, a curious fact is that no American Jewish women's organization formally endorsed suffrage. Why was this so?

Melissa Klapper, a professor of history at Rowan University, has attributed this to the antisemitism, xenophobia, and segregationist views of some suffrage leaders and regional groups. Other factors were class tensions, differing politics and ideology, disagreements about strategies and priorities, acculturation pressures, and discomfort with the association of suffrage with feminism.

The 19th Amendment did not resolve all voting inequities for women. Still in effect was the 1907 Expatriation Act, which revoked the citizenship of a woman who married a non-citizen. This was partially remedied by the Cable Act of 1922, which gave women independent citizenship—but only if they married non-citizens eligible for naturalization. (Certain immigrant groups were denied eligibility.) It was not until 1931 that the distinction between men and women with regard to nationality rights was finally eliminated.

Over the last 100 years, there have been other reasons for exclusion from voting, unrelated to sex, that were applied to men as well as women. The right to vote still requires our vigilance and protection.

See Resources for Co-President's column on page 19

“As a woman who has never skipped an election since coming of age to vote, I find it hard to imagine the time when my grandmothers were denied this fundamental right. Yet it was so.”

Nu? Who's New?

The Honorable George Van Dusen and Susan Van Dusen

The Society continues our New Members feature with longtime Skokie residents the Honorable George Van Dusen, Mayor of Skokie, and Susan Van Dusen, an educator and writer. Mayor Van Dusen, 77, has presided over Skokie for 21 years, and was appointed a Trustee of the Village of Skokie in 1984. For 25 years, he was also the Director of Suburban Operations for the late Sidney Yates, the United States Representative who served Illinois' Ninth District. With one of his colleagues, Michael C. Dorf, he recently wrote "Clear It with Sid! Sidney Yates and Fifty Years of Presidents, Pragmatism, and Public Service," which was published by the University of Illinois Press. A native of Detroit, Mayor Van Dusen graduated from the University of Detroit and received his master's degree and doctorate from Loyola University Chicago. He is an adjunct faculty member at Oakton Community College, where he teaches history and political science.



The Honorable George Van Dusen, Mayor of Skokie, and his wife, writer and educator Susan Van Dusen

A Chicago native, Susan Van Dusen, 74, spent her early years on the South Side—in Jeffery Manor—before her family moved briefly to South Bend, Indiana, and ultimately settled in suburban Morton Grove. An alumna of Niles West High School, Susan Van Dusen matriculated to Washington University in St. Louis. After graduating from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, to which she had transferred when her father became ill, she spent several years in Israel and then began teaching in Chicago public schools. She ultimately parlayed part-time jobs as a freelance writer into a full-time journalism career. For many years, she was the editorial director of WBBM-AM Newsradio. She has also written children's history books about Skokie: "Little Rabbit Finds His Way," "Bitty's Trip to Town," and "The Great Fire of 1910," and she co-wrote "The Synagogue" with Rabbi Marc Berkson of Milwaukee.

The Van Dusens, married for 45 years, have been residents of Skokie for 43 years. They have two sons and two grandchildren, all of whom live in Skokie.

CJH: Please share how the two of you met.

SVD: We met at a meeting held in a church on the North Side. I was a stringer for a local paper, and George was there with Congressman Yates to talk to the group Clergy and Householders Opposed to Petroleum Profiteering. I also wanted to talk to George and the Congressman about a program that I had created at the McPherson School, near Uptown, to teach English to children from non-English-speaking families. I wanted to get a grant for the program, and I thought the Congressman's office could help.

CJH: You ended up getting the grant, but the meeting you set up to talk about it was not as professionally productive as you had intended it to be. Explain.

SVD: George and I arranged to have a meeting at a Chinese restaurant to talk about my students, but we never broached the subject. We talked about everything else, and we never stopped talking. We were married by the end of the year.

CJH: Mayor, you were raised as Roman Catholic, and you were educated by the Jesuits. Yet you converted to Judaism around the time you were married. Was this an issue for the two of you?

GVD: Never. I converted more than willingly. When I was in college, I worked at a Detroit pharmacy whose owner was Jewish. We would talk about philosophy and religion, and I was very attracted to Judaism.

I started studying Judaism at Temple Beth-El, which is now in Northbrook, but at the time was located on Touhy Avenue in Chicago. Rabbi Victor Weissberg, who eventually married us, was the teacher. Susan and I went together, and there were four or five other couples in the class with us. Since I'm an academic by training, I found the readings and discussions quite enjoyable.

CJH: Susan, you quibbled with the rabbi about a number of issues, didn't you?

SVD: I remember that the rabbi said, "The woman should obey her husband"—he attributed it to a passage in the Jewish Bible—and I said, "Not in this marriage."

CJH: That didn't deter either of you from pursuing a Jewish home or family.

GVD: We were longtime members of Temple Judea Mizpah, where both of our sons had their Bar Mitzvahs, and we became members of Beth Emet The Free Synagogue in Evanston, when Judea Mizpah merged with Beth Emet.

SVD: I was also a member of a Torah study group for about 10 years. I love Jewish learning.

CJH: Susan, although the Mayor has been involved in politics for more than 40 years, you have also worked on civic and political issues for many years as well. Would you elaborate?

SVD: I was motivated by my parents, who believed that because we Jews have been so despised throughout history, we have an obligation to help others who have been despised. So, I've always had an interest in fixing underdog situations.

When I was still at Washington University in the 1960s, I participated in the Montgomery, Alabama, march to end racial segregation. During my time as Associate Director of Public Affairs at the University of Illinois, I started a program that brought together professors and professionals of color with Black and Latino children from inner-city Chicago schools for a program called "Read In." The adults would come and read to the students. It started relationships between the grownups and the kids. I wanted the children to know that even if they were born in Cabrini Green, they could grow up and become university professors.

In Skokie, I started a program with a handful of other professional women of various backgrounds to promote diversity in Skokie. For the past 10 years, we have had "Coming Together" programs highlighting the contributions of various cultures, including Latinx, Chinese-American, Korean-American, Filipino-American, and African-American. There are about 50 programs each year—cooking demonstrations, lectures, concerts, and more.



Susan Van Dusen is the author of a number of books for children.

CJH: Mayor, not many people know this about you, but you are a baseball fanatic, starting with your hometown team, the Detroit Tigers. In fact, you co-wrote "The Detroit Tigers Encyclopedia" in 2002. Please share more about your almost-career in baseball.

GVD: My single objective early on was to play second base for the Detroit Tigers. I played in the pony leagues. I actually had a tryout with them, but I couldn't hit the curveball. After that, I had to decide whether I wanted to work on the assembly lines at Ford and Chrysler, like my uncles, or get serious about my studies.

CJH: Did you pass on your love of baseball to your sons?

GVD: Yes, but sadly, not the Detroit Tigers. One is a White Sox fan; the other is a Cubs fan.

Editor's note: Mayor Van Dusen and his co-author, Michael C. Dorf, will present a CJHS-sponsored Zoom program on Sunday, October 18, about the late Sidney Yates. Stay tuned for details.

History of the Danville, Illinois, Jewish Community

SYBIL STERN MERVIS

Introduction

By the 20th century, Danville, Illinois, was fortunate to have two Jewish congregations: Temple Beth El, which was Reform, and Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel—Congregation Israel, for short—which was Conservative/Orthodox.

As of this writing, both have disappeared. There remains but a handful of practicing Jews in Vermilion County. I am one of them.

For historical reasons, it is important to leave a record that Jewish people were here, contributing in many ways to the welfare, commerce, and enrichment of Danville.

Local Jews established many fine shops and department stores on the main streets of Danville. They actively supported cultural and educational institutions, provided two mayors in Vermilion County cities—Danville being the county seat of Vermilion—and produced a federal judge, several attorneys, numerous physicians, and community leaders.

History of the Reform Jews of Danville

In 1891, the *Cincinnati Israelite* published a report about the Jews of Danville, a passage of which is included here: “A friend writing to us from this thriving little city says that there are fifteen Jewish families and a number of young men living there, all prosperous, intelligent and pleasant people. Yet they have no burying ground, no place of worship, no Sabbath school, make no pretense of observing any of the Jewish holidays, and in fact, as far as outward indications go might be classed as heathens.”

From local news stories, we observe that Danville’s Jews did, in fact, meet on occasion for religious services, usually above someone’s store in downtown Danville. These Jews were most likely German immigrants, as they were earlier arrivals to Danville than the Eastern European Jews. The principal motivation for immigration had been the desire for material improvement. Economic conditions in many German states were difficult, as Germany fought several wars during the 1840s, especially the fateful revolution in 1848.



Ike S. Levin, founded by a German Jewish merchant, was a major store in Danville at the turn of the last century.

Later in the 19th century, Eastern European Jews sought new opportunities in the United States, driven by misery on their land and anxiety about violence.

Economic opportunities in Danville, a thriving rail center in the Midwest at the end of the 19th century, drew Jewish immigrants to the area in east central Illinois. Certainly, it wasn’t the rich farmland that attracted them, as they were more inclined, from their European backgrounds, to become merchants than farmers.

To some extent, occupations of local Jews were often determined by their place of origin. For example, many German Jewish immigrants started their

economic lives as peddlers, walking the Illinois countryside with packs on their backs full of notions and yard goods. As soon as a peddler could save enough funds, he might afford a “stall” in the downtown area, usually on Main, and later, Vermilion, streets. Later, he might open a store, usually, but not always, offering dry goods, shoes, or clothing.

German Jews, for the most part, became the merchants owning shops in downtown Danville. Some of the store owners were families by the names of Basch, Deutsch, Gimbel Bros. (briefly—and, yes, they were the Gimbels of the once-famous, now-defunct department-store chain), Greenebaum, Goldsmith, Levin, Meis, Plaut, Ries, Stern, Straus, and Strauss. All had stores adjacent to one another in downtown Danville in the early 1900s.



Greenebaum's, another major retailing hub in Danville, from a postcard sent circa 1911

The four bachelor Deutsch brothers, led by twins Louis and Albert, opened their fine men's store in 1904. The store stayed open in the same location, with the same fine fixtures, until October 2010.

The east central Illinois city of Danville once had a thriving Jewish community, composed of department store owners, haberdashers, physicians, attorneys, even a mayor and judge or two. By the author's estimate, the current Jewish population of Danville—including her—is six.

Two of the Deutsch sisters, Helen and Gertrude, opened a millinery shop in 1912, which evolved into one of the loveliest women's dress shops in central Illinois: Deutsch Uptown. With its array of stunning ladies wear, the sisters drew customers from miles around until it was sold in 1964 to Paul Levy.

Eastern European Jews in Danville made their livings as tailors, shoe repairmen, junk dealers, auto parts dealers, and in other service-related businesses. A great social divide developed between these Jews, who mostly worked with their hands, and the German-Jewish shopkeepers and department store owners.

The major department store in Danville, Meis Bros., was founded by Alphonse Meis and his relatives from Alsace in the 1890s. It was operated by the Meis family until 1964, when it was sold to H. P. Wasson of Indianapolis. Three years later, due to the owner's death, the remaining Wassons sold their stores, including Meis Bros., to Goldblatt's.

Professionals were few at that time, but included two Jewish lawyers, Sam Levin and Casper Platt, in the first half of the 20th century.

Jewish doctors were not accorded hospital privileges at the local Catholic and community hospital until the mid 1940s, when World War II caused a physician shortage. The only known Jewish doctor in the early part of the 20th century was Dr. Seward Landauer, who, after practicing in Danville from the early years of the 20th century, moved to the South in the 1930s following his wife's death. A number of Jewish physicians arrived in Danville after escaping Nazi Austria and Germany. They included psychiatrists at the substantial Veterans Hospital at the east end of Danville during

and after World War II. It is believed that Dr. Saul Halpern, who moved to Danville from the central Illinois town of Aledo, was the first Jewish doctor allowed local hospital privileges in 1944.

continued on page 8

Danville

continued from page 7

Although most of the Eastern European Jews in Danville during the second decade of the 20th century were Orthodox or Conservative, most of the German-Jewish immigrants and shopkeepers were Reform. They formally constituted Danville's first synagogue, the "Hall of Reform," later renamed Beth El Reform, in the first decade of the 20th century.

The congregation's first president, Solomon Plaut, was a banker and loan broker originally from Homer, Illinois, about 25 miles east of Urbana-Champaign. The vice president was Gus Greenebaum, owner of Greenebaum's department store. The secretary was Alphonse Meis, founder of the largest department store in east central Illinois. David Ries, a clothier, was the treasurer.

For eight years, members of the congregation held services at the Woman's Club Room and Odd Fellows Hall, usually on Sunday evenings. In 1910, the congregation purchased a lot on the southeast corner of Walnut and Fairchild streets for \$2,000. A year later, they hired architect Charles Lewis to build a temple for them. On May 1 and 2, 1914, the temple building was dedicated in an elaborate ceremony that received considerable coverage from the local press.

The synagogue never hired a full-time or resident rabbi, relying mainly on a roster of student rabbis sent for the season by Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Numbering, at any one time, never more than several dozen, students in the congregation's religious school classes were taught by women of the congregation.

In the early years of the congregation, the Jews of Danville largely socialized among themselves. Meeting other Jews took considerable effort. However, for Jewish social events in Champaign, a group from Danville would board the traction or interurban, an electric railroad operated by the Illinois Traction System, and travel to meet folks their ages. A news clipping from March 23, 1905, related that 24 guests from Danville attended the Purim Ball given by the Champaign B'nai B'rith lodge.

No doubt because their social circle was so limited, many of the local Reform Jews never married. In the prominent mercantile Deutsch family of seven siblings, for instance, only one, Albert, married—and not until he was in his late 40s. His bride was a Seventh Day Adventist. And because the mostly German-Jewish Reform Jews scorned marrying the mostly Conservative and Orthodox Eastern European Jews, they were further hampered in their social opportunities.

THE SHOP DISTINCTIVE
Since 1904

For 61 years, Deutsch Bros. has methodically separated—making Danville's most distinctive men's clothing.

Maintaining a single standard of high quality has always been our goal. We know that in the end, it is the quality that makes the buyers.

Our personnel serve you in the best way: What they advise you we will guarantee. Every customer must be pleased and our customers of satisfaction is judged by us and by the manufacturers.

All this is what we mean when we say Deutsch Bros. is "The Shop Distinctive"—quality clothing for the eternally distinctive and distinguished service.

Distinctive characteristics of Deutsch Bros. since 1904.

FASHION BRANDS
Forsythe Park
Forsythe
Hobbs
Landon Fox
Hobbs
Ferry
Ferry King
Hobbs
Forsythe
Hobbs
Hobbs

THE SHOP DISTINCTIVE
14 NORTH VINCENNES STREET DANVILLE, ILLINOIS

A 1966 newspaper ad promoting one of the many Jewish-owned businesses in Danville at that time

Between 1920 and 1970, Jewish organizations had local support. Danville's Jews were members of B'nai B'rith men's and women's chapters, and Jewish women in the area belonged to Hadassah.

The *American Jewish Yearbook* estimated Danville's Jewish population in 1927 to be about 335, about one percent of the city's population of 36,000 at that time. Forty years later, Jews comprised about half of one percent of the population—240 of Danville's 42,570 residents.

Most social clubs in Danville during the first half of the 20th century—including the country club, boat club, and a number of women's clubs—were closed to Jews, though the Elks Club was an exception.

Despite antisemitism and social restrictions, members of the Reform Jewish community were significantly involved in the community. Louis Platt, who arrived from Chicago as a recent immigrant to America in the 1870s and became a successful businessman, served as Danville's only Jewish mayor in 1909. Casper Platt, his son, was appointed to a federal judgeship by President Harry S. Truman in 1948. Jeanette Platt, Casper's University of Chicago-educated wife, founded the local chapters of the Girl Scouts and League of Women Voters in the 1920s.

Leonard Jaffe, who purchased the John Rissman Jacket factory, was active in establishing the Danville Junior College Foundation.

Temple Beth El celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1964, but gradually older members died, with no new members to replace them. The final marriage ceremony at the temple was in 1969.

It was sad, but not unusual, that the two congregations—one Reform, the other Conservative/Orthodox—could never find the terms on which to merge. Eventually, in January 1973, the Reform congregational building was donated to a local Boy Scouts Council before becoming a tae kwon do gym. In the spring of 1999, the 1914 brick building was demolished to make room for a CVS drugstore.

The synagogue's stone tablets, engraved with the Ten Commandments and located above the temple's ark, ended up at a local Conservative synagogue. They will find a permanent home at the Hillel Center at Indiana University in Bloomington. The disposition of the four Torahs is unknown. It is believed that the stained-glass windows were sold. Two of the bimah chairs were given to Danville's Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, which closed its building in 2012. They were subsequently donated to a Chabad congregation north of Los Angeles.

To learn more about the Jewish community of Danville, go to www.danvillejewishcommunity.com.

Editor's note: A longer version of this article, initially titled "History of the Danville, Illinois Reform Jewish Congregation," was published this spring by *The Heritage of Vermilion County*, the quarterly journal of the Vermilion County (Illinois) Museum Society. Permission to republish an edited iteration has been granted by the author and by the publisher of *The Heritage*, Donald G. Richter. Photographs accompanying the article are courtesy of the Vermilion County Museum archives.

About the author:

Sybil Stern Mervis grew up in Bloomington, Illinois, where her Polish-immigrant Stern grandparents settled in 1905. They were in the furniture business for 80 years on Bloomington's Main Street.

A 1957 alumna of the University of Illinois, where she earned a journalism degree, Mervis married her high school crush, Louis Mervis, whom she met in the Central Illinois Jewish Youth group Illinois Federation of Jewish Youth, which had been comprised of high schoolers from small congregations throughout the central part of the state: Danville, Champaign, Bloomington, Peoria, Springfield, Decatur, Mattoon, and Gibson City.

Mervis moved to Danville with Lou, who grew up there and returned to work *tikkun olam* in his community after being a campus leader at Indiana University until 1956. They raised a large family, with children and grandchildren in Illinois and Indiana. Mervis' sister, Judy Stern Markowitz, was the first female *and* first Jewish mayor of Bloomington, Illinois, where she served two terms.

Sybil remains the historian of the now nearly vanished Jewish community in Danville. In a recent phone conversation, she said that she is one of six Jews there. She has also written two books: "A Depression Era Courtship," which is about her parents' courtship, and "In the Middle: Growing up in the Middle of America, in the Middle of the 20th Century, in the Middle Class."

Readers may contact Mervis directly at sybilmervis@icloud.com.



Author photo by Roland Lim

In Memoriam: Dr. Adele Hast

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society mourns the death this past May of one of its beloved former Presidents, Dr. Adele Hast, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the Society and contributed immensely to the field of history as a researcher and scholar. Dr. Hast, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease for three years, was 88.

Born to Louis and Kate Krongelb in the Bronx, New York, in 1931, Dr. Hast was a product of the New York City public school system and graduated from the elite Hunter College High School. As a child growing up in a Yiddish-speaking household, Dr. Hast continued studying the language during her youth at Workmen's Circle schools.

At Brooklyn College, where she earned her bachelor's degree, she met her husband of 67 years, Dr. Malcolm Hast. She earned her master's degree and doctorate in history from the University of Iowa.

Over a rich career, Dr. Hast held significant positions at the Newberry Library in Chicago—where she was a scholar in residence—as well as at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago and St. James Press.



The late Dr. Adele Hast was a beloved and longtime CJHS Board member and former President.

“She was intimately involved in making the Society an important factor in the Jewish communities of Chicagoland.”

—Dr. Edward H. Mazur

From 1993 to 2001, she served as project director and co-editor of “Women Building Chicago 1790–1990: A Biographical Dictionary.” A good portion of her scholarly endeavors involved the study of the debts incurred by Americans to British merchants during the American Revolution. She was named a Fellow of Great Britain's Royal Historical Society in 1988, and she was awarded a “Jewish Women Making Community” research fellowship by the Jewish Women's Archive in 2003. Over the years, she was also the beneficiary of research grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies.

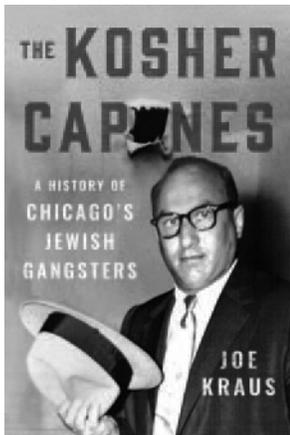
Dr. Hast's professional life was complemented by her dedication to the preservation of Chicago Jewish history—both as a Board member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and as one its Presidents. One of her major contributions to the Society was her compilation of “Chicago Jewish History Index 1977–2012,” an accounting of all the articles published in the group's journals during its first 35 years. It is now a major feature of the Society's website.

“She was involved intimately in making the Society an important factor in the Jewish communities of Chicagoland,” said Dr. Edward H. Mazur, a current Board member and past President.

Her “personality, leadership skills, and knowledge” benefited the Society in many ways, Dr. Mazur said, adding that Dr. Hast “always had time to talk with and advise the Society concerning articles and public lectures. She was a treasure.”

In addition to her husband, a research scientist and professor emeritus at Northwestern University's medical school, she is survived by two sons, David, a Society member, and Howard, as well as three grandchildren and a sister, Paula Barrett.

Zoom Report: Chicago's Jewish Mob Scene



Julius Rosenwald. Benny Goodman. Henry Horner. Saul Bellow. Marlee Matlin. David Mamet. Penny Pritzker. Mandy Patinkin. Studs Terkel. Judy Chicago. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.

Think of Chicago-area Jews, past and present, who've "done good," and some of these writers, artists, actors, public officials, business leaders, and philanthropists will surely come to mind.

Those who most likely *will not* make the list include Jack Guzik, Benjamin "Zuckie the Bookie" Zuckerman, Lenny Patrick, Julius "Lovin' Putty" Anixter, Jules Portugese, the Miller brothers—Max, Davey, Hirschie, and Harry—and David Yaras. During their salad days, they made a name for themselves, too, but they were more notorious than famous, more feared than vaunted. Yet certainly worthy of discussion.

Lucky for Chicago Jewish Historical Society members and friends, that's exactly what happened this past August, when writer, scholar, and former CJHS editor Joe Kraus talked about these men's outsize roles in his new book, "The Koshers Capones: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters" (Cornell University, 2019), during the Society's inaugural Zoom program, to which approximately 120 households logged on.

Kraus, now a professor of English and theatre at the University of Scranton, in Pennsylvania, said that the origins of his book, which was a 2019 bronze INDIES winner from Foreword Reviews, were as personal as they were unlikely. Years ago, his mother had mentioned that in Art Cohn's biography "The Joker Is Wild: The Story of Joe E. Lewis," the author had written that Max Miller, her father, one of the Miller brothers, had died of a gunshot inflicted by mobster Dion O'Banion.

"Is this how my father died?" she asked her son, then a doctoral candidate at Northwestern University.

Once Kraus began investigating family lore and Chicago Jewish gangster history, he learned that Cohn had erred: It was Davey, her uncle, who had been killed by O'Banion. His research did not end there.

As Kraus recounted during his Zoom presentation, he embarked on an in-depth look at the characters and forces who shaped Chicago's Jewish syndicate during the first half of the 20th century. Most of the pivotal figures came out of Chicago's West Side—Maxwell Street and Lawndale—and were involved in one of four operations: gambling, bootlegging, prostitution, and electoral politics. Many had developed their street smarts and muscle early on, Kraus suggested, in gangs whose purpose was to defend their immigrant Jewish communities against the violence perpetrated by non-Jewish gangs. Over time, he said, they transitioned from "a neighborhood operation to a much larger operation." Now, several generations later, most of these mobsters have been "completely forgotten."

Those who would like to remember this "forgotten" piece of Chicago Jewish history can learn more about the "The Koshers Capones" at www.cornellpress.cornell.edu. Stay tuned for more information about the Society's next Zoom program this coming fall.

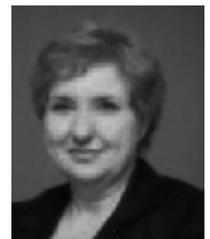
Welcome

The Society is pleased to welcome Esther Mosak, who has joined us in a part-time administrative capacity. Mosak handles membership details and other office responsibilities.

A former educator, Mosak graduated from Grinnell College. She holds two master's degrees: one from

Harvard University, the other from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

A native of Chicago, Mosak lived in Havana, Cuba, from 1981 to 1992. She is fluent in Spanish, and is the mother of two grown children.



Please send address and email changes to Mosak at info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

Profile of an Artist as an Older Man: Jerry Pritikin

Chicago native Jerry Pritikin has been many things over the years. An appliance salesman and jewelry store manager who worked retail to support his passions and make ends meet. A photographer who unwittingly captured history in the making. A Chicago Cubs enthusiast who served as a consultant for a Chicago theater production of “Bleacher Bums” and appeared on Harry Caray’s “The 10th Inning Show.” A political activist who fought for the rights of his LGBTQ community. And, in his own self-effacing words, “a gay Forrest Gump” who found himself accidentally face to face with some of the most newsworthy figures of the 20th century.

To these many identities, add “survivor.” Pritikin survived the slings and arrows of growing up in the pre-Stonewall days of the 1940s and 50s, when outing himself could have meant something far worse than being subjected to homophobic taunts, arrested in a bar raid, or fired from a job. In the 1980s and 90s, he watched his community decimated, as scores of friends and acquaintances succumbed to the ravages of AIDS. Now 83, he finds himself alone, mostly cooped up in his Chicago apartment, again trying to avoid another plague, COVID-19, which has wrought havoc among older Americans, and finding perhaps a bit too much time to revisit memories of times and places that have shaped him as an older, gay, Jewish man.



Pritikin’s 1977 photo of LGBTQ activist and San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk was widely circulated in the press. The image enhanced the photographer’s professional reputation.



Pritikin took this picture of then-candidate Jimmy Carter in 1976, some months before the presidential election. Carter is holding an image that reads “End Ford,” a double entendre referring to his opponent and to a street in the city’s Castro District.

Pritikin’s formative years, as recounted in the blog of CJHS Board member Frances O’Cherony Archer, who interviewed Pritikin in 2011, were spent in Albany Park, then a Jewish enclave, one of five children of a Hungarian Jewish mother and a merchant father, Hymie “Hank” Pritikin, who was known as the “Tomato King” on Chicago’s South Water Street Market. He spent at least one summer at Camp Henry Horner, the Jewish camp named after Illinois’ first Jewish governor.

From an early age, Pritikin knew he was gay—and he did his best to cover it up. There was a classmate at the very Jewish, very academically rigorous Von Steuben High School, who was “bookish and effeminate,” he recalled, “and everyone picked on him.” To avoid being exposed and meeting the same fate, Pritikin dropped out of school.

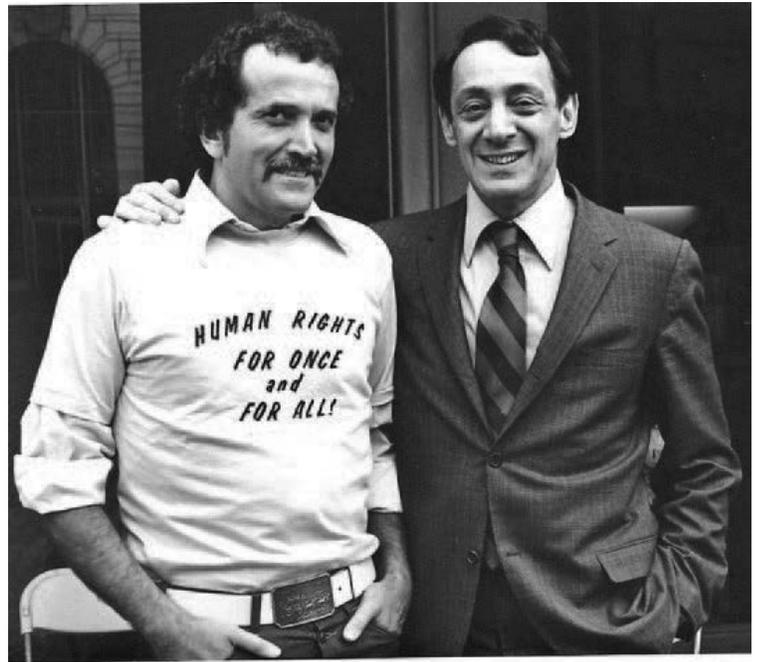
Though he was told that he “had three strikes against” him—he didn’t have a high school diploma, he had no experience, and he was Jewish—Pritikin was hired as an electrical appliance salesman at the Marshall Field’s flagship store on State Street.

By his early 20s, he had moved to San Francisco, where, he said, he bought “a cheap Kodak instamatic, an equivalent of a brownie,” and started taking pictures around the city. He soon graduated to more sophisticated camera equipment and became a customer of the gay rights icon Harvey Milk, a Jewish kid from Long Island, who before becoming a San Francisco

Supervisor owned a camera shop in the city's Castro District. One of Pritikin's pictures of Milk—leading a gay rights protest with a bull-horn—was widely circulated in the press, leading to five minutes of fame for the photographer and further establishing his bona fides as a professional from whom newspapers would request sharp, incisive images.

But when the AIDS crisis hit more than 35 years ago, Pritikin called San Francisco quits—"I was seeing young kids dying," he said—and moved back to his hometown, where he became a regular in the bleachers at Wrigley Field, sporting a pith helmet and carrying a sign that read "The Ten Cub-Mandments." His cultivation of a baseball fan persona earned him the sobriquet "Bleacher Preacher."

"Baseball takes my mind off things," said Pritikin, who said he developed his love of the sport as a child, when he would go to the games with his father or one of his brothers.



Two nice Jewish boys: Jerry Pritikin (left) with San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978. Milk was slain later that year by fellow Supervisor Dan White. photo by Dan Nicoletta



Pritikin (right) at Camp Henry Horner with his brother, Allen (left), and fellow camper Roy Wainer. Pritikin said, "It was sponsored by the ABC Club in Lawndale for three weeks in August 1945. I was 8, and my dad made me 9, since that's what age you had to be for me to go."

"Hank Greenberg was Jewish," said Pritikin, of the late Detroit Tigers first baseman, "and he became my first idol. I later met him and told him so."

Though Pritikin no longer shoots regularly, his reputation as a photographer remains intact. Over the past decade or so, a number of galleries and organizations have mounted shows of his images, and he continues to be approached by others who have expressed an interest in his work, though he remains modest about his artistic contributions.

"I really never considered myself a photographer," he said in a videotaped interview during an exhibition of his work at Roosevelt University's Gage Gallery in 2010. It was only after seeing his pictures mounted on the wall, he conceded, that he thought he might just be one.



Pritikin took this image of presidential candidate Bobby Kennedy in 1968, months before he was assassinated in Los Angeles.

Editor's note: All images courtesy of photographer Jerry Pritikin

Ha-Kol Annual: Iyar 5698

DR. EDWARD H. MAZUR

The year 1938 (5698) was an especially important year for Jews in Chicago and throughout the world.

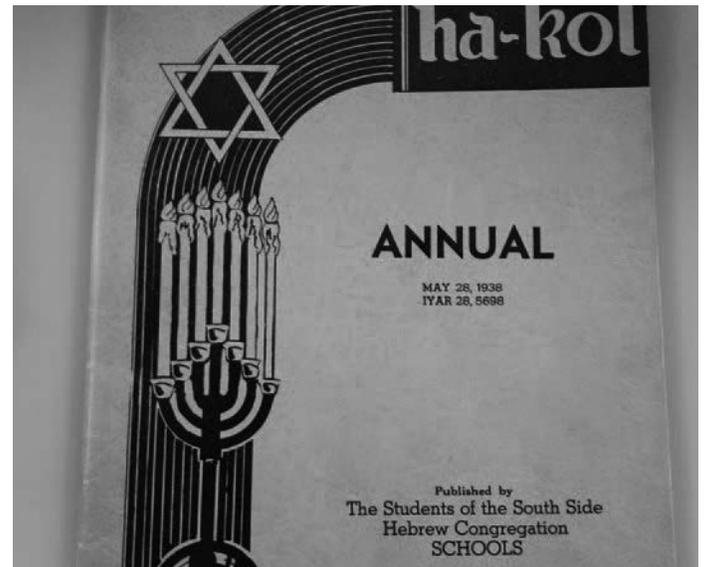
In November 1938, Nazi storm troopers plundered, burned, and destroyed Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues in Germany in what has come to be known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. This horrific event followed the July Evian Conference on Refugees, held in France, which revealed that no country in Europe was prepared to accept Jews fleeing persecution, and the September appeasement pact that England, France, and Italy signed with Germany.

Closer to home, Chicago Jewish West Sider Benny Goodman, who had learned to play the clarinet at Hull House and at Congregation Kehilath Jacob, which was located at Douglas and Independence boulevards, performed in a jazz concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Also in New York, American boxer Joe Louis knocked out Germany's Max Schmeling in a rematch at Yankee Stadium. The fight, observed by a crowd of 70,000 and broadcast to tens of millions of radio listeners worldwide, had political resonance, symbolizing the Allies' desire to defeat Germany and its racial and antisemitic laws. (It was later revealed that Schmeling himself was anti-Nazi who saved the lives of several Jews; he was bestowed an award from the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation for his acts.)

Here in Chicago, a little-known yet significant event took place on May 28, 1938 (Iyar 28, 5698) on Chicago's South Side. On that date, the very first—and perhaps only—issue of the Ha-Kol Annual, dedicated to the first graduation class of the High School Department of the South Side Hebrew Congregation Sunday Religious School, was published.

The South Side Hebrew Congregation's antecedents harken back to 1888. Like many congregations over time, it would move and relocate, following the migration of its membership to various Chicago neighborhoods. By 1927, the synagogue was located on the northeast corner of Chappell Avenue at 74th Street in the South Shore neighborhood. Over time, it would become one of the largest and most influential synagogues and community organization in Chicago. Today, its structure is home to a Baptist church.



In 1933, the congregation hired Rabbi Morris Teller, who would become for many decades a very important figure not only to his members, but to the entire Chicago Jewish community. In 1935, it appointed Dr. Irving Barkan the principal of the South Side Hebrew Congregation Schools.

Upon the publication of Ha-Kol, Rabbi Teller wrote to the editors and the student body that "...to those of us to whom Jewish ideals, Jewish culture and the Jewish way of living are matters of deep concern, every manifestation of interest in Jewish affairs, every indication of a desire to increase and intensify Jewish knowledge is most welcome and encouraging ... we look forward to you, the pupils in our schools and members of our clubs, to carry aloft the banner of Judaism, to re-enforce [sic] your pride in your Jewishness by knowledge of what our people have contributed and we still are contributing to civilization ... No efforts are spared to provide you with the best faculty available under the able and inspiring direction of Dr. Barkan and supervision of the Jewish Board of Education ... May your dear parents have very much 'naches' from you."

By 1938, Dr. Barkan had a faculty of a dozen, a secretary, and an assistant secretary, along with a school board of 12 men and women.

The school program was rich and diverse. Students took courses on the Jewish Bible, Jewish history, and Jewish literature, along with topics that spanned a wide range, including Jewish current events, cus-

toms, and philanthropy. They also benefited from Sunday school programs, Chanukah performances, a Purim carnival, and a School Seder. There were regular Sabbath morning and holiday services for the children, where they acquired “the habit of worship.” Post-Shabbat Melaveh Malkah celebrations were inaugurated in 1938. Extracurricular activities included the Hebrew Club, the Library Club, the Junior and Senior Dramatics, the Junior and Senior Choir, and the Aleph Tov Club. As Dr. Barkan, who died in 2008 at 99, stated in the Ha-Kol 5698 Annual, “Judaism does not always spell sorrow but profound joy as well.”

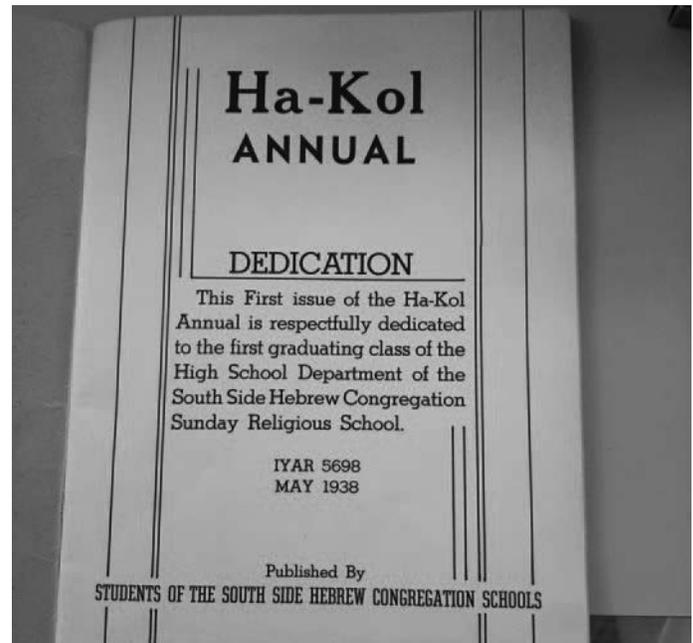
Ha-Kol 5698 was a 50-page publication that listed the names and photographs of the congregation’s confirmants and graduates. There were nine confirmants that year. Next to their photos were comments such as “Better known as ‘Toots’ is always bright and cheerful---and oh---what a smile” to “Class sophisticate...Wears clothes with an air and never fails to make an entrance---late!” There were 12 graduates: Harriet Distenfield, Shirley Drell, Vivian Epstein, Arthur Fradkin, Herbert Giblichman, Thomas Lieberman, Golton Golton [sic], Harold Levitt, Janet Schatzman, Joan Trackman, Anne Trock, and Alvin Saper.

The Ha-Kol 5698 offered graduating class prophecies and class news, interspersed with poetic writings such as “I have a little siddur/ belonging just to me; It’s printed all in Hebrew/ and I can read it easily/ Every Shabbos morning/ I find the Shabbos prayer/ I read it out with all my heart---and peace is in the air.”

This rhyme was offered for the Kiddush: “Mother lights the candles; Father blesses the wine; Then he drinks the most of it/ But the last few sips are mine.”

Several pages were devoted to “Club News.” This was where you would learn about Rishona Dorom for boys 10 to 12, where they learned the principles of Zionism, and Har Carmel Young Judea for boys 13 and 14. Other clubs included Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts Troop 521, Girl Scouts Troop 232, Shomrim, and Aleph Tov.

The students wrote short essays about Jewish settlers in the Americas, Jewish education in America, labor in Palestine, Mendele Mocher Sforim, Albert Einstein, Henrietta Szold, and more. A most interesting feature was titled “Listen-to-This---a Kibbitz Corner.” Items included “Famous Pastimes of Famous People,” including “Dr. Barkan---pushing the perambulator,” “Rabbi Teller---eating kneidlach,” and “You can hardly accuse Miss Ann Barzel of wearing the same hat twice in succession as she has collected a grand total of 27 hats.”



Ha-Kol 5698 included crossword puzzles featuring Jewish-related themes and photos of famous Jews, including Menachim Ussishkin, Chaim Weitzman, Solomon Schechter, Justice Louis Brandeis, Sigmund Freud, and Israel Zangwill. The volume ends with pages for autographs and six pages of stories and observations in Hebrew.

I came upon Ha-Kol 5698 by chance and good fortune. My house of worship is the Lake Shore Drive Synagogue, which I unfortunately I do not attend as often as I should. One of the congregants, Paula Madansky, a daughter of Dr. Irving Barkan, and her husband, Dr. Al Madansky, are members of our Chicago Jewish Historical Society. They asked whether the Society would be interested in receiving materials that belonged to her father. I responded in the affirmative, and the Society donated them to the archives at the Spertus College. Included was the Ha-Kol-5698 Annual that serves as the basis of this article.

I wonder if there were succeeding issues of the publication in following years. If so, are there any copies that could be donated to the Society and the Chicago Jewish Archives? If there are readers who attended the South Side Hebrew Congregation Schools, consider contacting our Society and writing about your experiences and memories.

Dr. Edward H. Mazur is a longtime CJHS Board member and former President.

Jews on Chicago's Skid Row During the Great Depression

DR. IRVING CUTLER

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, many of the poverty-stricken and downtrodden found refuge on Chicago's Skid Row—West Madison Street—where living was cheap and some assistance was available.

At that time, Skid Row, which stretched from just west of the Loop for about 1.5 miles to Ashland Avenue, more or less, had an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 people. The population was mainly white men, mostly elderly, a small number of immigrants among them. Though well in the minority, Jews and women also had a presence.

While most of Skid Row's denizens were ordinary people down on their luck and without jobs, there were some with small pensions, as well as alcoholics, social outcasts, those with physical disabilities, welfare recipients, transients, hobos, migrating workers, and the chronic homeless. A number had come to Chicago from outside the area.

The men usually liked the anonymity of the area while enjoying some companionship with fellow habitués. Serving these men were very inexpensive hotels, such as the McCoy and the Mohawk, along with even cheaper flophouses. The latter usually consisted of a prison-size cubicle surrounded partially by chicken wire, renting for about 50 cents a night and holding about 200 men to a floor.

The missions that were on almost every other block offered food; some provided lodging. Almost all were in the business of salvation. There were also soup kitchens, multiple taverns on each block, a barber college for free haircuts, and an employment agency. Often present on corners were the "redeemer" tambourine-playing men and women of the Salvation Army.

It was in this setting that two distinct classes of Skid Row Jews existed: the businessmen trying to eke out a living and the street regulars.

Among the mini-businesses on the street were my immigrant father's newsstands, where his merchandise sold for two or three cents—the cost of newspapers in those days—and where, as a teenager, I worked for about five years on weekends and during the summer. His two newsstands, one on each side of the street, were located at the busy streetcar stop on Madison and Racine Avenue, almost the exact center of Skid Row.

Besides newspapers, which even the indigent could afford so that they could keep up with the news, sports, and race results, my father also sold foreign-language newspapers like the local German *Abendpost* and popular magazines. His wares also included racing forms and scratch sheets, which he delivered to a nearby bookie.

Two of his popular-selling newspapers, the *Daily Worker* and *Moscow News*, attracted radicals to the newsstands, where they engaged in heated political arguments. My father also supplied newspapers to Julian Bentley, the newscaster for the nearby Barn Dance radio station WLS. In the late afternoon, he would bring a load of newspapers to two large factories on nearby Monroe Street. He also hired a reliable and trustworthy resident of the area, a non-Jewish man, to work at one of the stands, paying him a quarter an hour. In the evening, my father would bring home a lunch pail full of coins. Family members would have fun rolling them into bank paper wrappers, which my mother would use to buy needed household items.

Next to the shoe store was Cohen's Tavern—probably the most popular and busiest tavern on Skid Row. Opened shortly after Prohibition ended at the close of 1933, Cohen's quickly became known throughout the area and beyond, gaining the attention of some transients. A sign of its success was the perennial Prima Beer truck in the front, unloading dozens of barrels of beer every weekday. Inside, sitting around tables with giant steins of

Rosie, a Jewish prostitute, would usually come down from her apartment on nearby Washington Boulevard toward evening, often have a chat with my father in Yiddish, and then go into Cohen's Tavern. An hour or so later, she would emerge with a man in tow.

cheap beer, were mainly poorly dressed men and a very few women. They would drink and listen to the jukebox's "Roll Out the Barrel" or the Notre Dame fight song, often joining in with their discordant voices, which added to the raucous atmosphere.

Directly across the street on the northeast corner was Greenstein's drugstore, which employed two Jewish pharmacists. Just to its east was the large multistoried Gold Brothers, which sold store fixtures. Just to the east on the corner of May Street was the non-Jewish-owned Club Soho, a gay tavern decades before the word "gay" became part of the lexicon. When I would deliver papers there, I would sometimes see men wearing lipstick and dancing with other men. The last Jewish-owned store that I remember was just farther east; it sold cheap workingmen's clothing.

A number of interesting Jewish people would congregate around the newsstands and talk politics. I got to know a few of them quite well. One, a middle-aged man named Benny, was a firebrand communist. He would buy a *Daily Worker* every day and cluster around with others spouting the virtues of communism and of his idol, Joseph Stalin. I once saw him marching in a parade along Madison Street with about 100 or so bedraggled-looking men carrying banners denouncing unemployment, hunger, and the capitalist system and heading over to the nearby second-floor party headquarters of the International Workers Order near Loomis Avenue. The next day, the *Daily Worker* reported that there were 500 participants.

Another Jewish man who used to hang around the newsstand and talk to my father was Max, a former businessman who lost everything during the Depression. He was usually well dressed in a suit and was quite pleasant. However, at times, he would become obnoxious and a bit belligerent when he needed a fix. He had, after all, become a drug addict. After visiting his brother, a doctor with an office on Halsted Street, who would give him a shot, he would return to the newsstand in a better mood.

One of the more colorful Jews on Skid Row was a prostitute named Rosie, a short, chunky woman with heavily rouged cheeks and bright lipstick, probably in her early 50s. She would usually come down from her apartment on nearby Washington Boulevard toward evening, often have a chat in Yiddish with my father, and then go into Cohen's Tavern. An hour or so later, she would emerge with a man in tow and head north to her apartment. I often wondered how this Eastern European immigrant woman ended up on Skid Row.

Two non-Jews who used to stand around the newsstand were memorable. One, an Italian immigrant named Tony, would often park his pushcart full of fresh fruit near the newsstand and converse with my father. Although the two did not share culture and religion, and neither could speak good English, they would enjoy their daily chats and laughs.

The other was Nick, a Macedonian, a pensioner who was helpful to my father in many ways. He kept reminding me that Alexander the Great was a Macedonian. His great hope was for an independent Macedonia, just as the Jews were praying for an independent Israel. I believed that his hope was a wild pipedream. But sure enough, more than a half century later, Macedonia became an independent country. By that time, I'm sure, Nick was no longer around to celebrate.

Among my memories of Skid Row were the many intelligent people there with whom I had stimulating conversations. But there were also the winos who would often sit together on a step sharing a bottle of cheap wine, some becoming so drunk that the police had to cart them away. And there was the unforgettable time when I saw men dashing to pick up a cigarette butt that someone had just dropped.



The author's father, Zelig Cutler, near his newsstands on Madison Street's Skid Row, circa 1942.

Skid Row

continued from page 17

Later, when I started dating, I would often return with a nice Jewish girl. She would be quite startled when I took her into Cohen's Tavern, where I felt quite at ease because I knew some of the employees there. We would sit and absorb the ambience and talk with some of the people who came in and joined us at our table. After a few drinks, they sometimes told us their life story, often a very sad one. Decades later, when I met one of my former dates, she said all she could remember about me was that I was "the guy who took her to that dive on Madison Street."

A couple of summers ago, my rabbi invited everyone to weekly get-togethers at ice cream parlors throughout the area. One was to a charming ice cream shop on Madison Street, just a few structures east of where my father's newsstands had been. I was surprised to see that nothing of the Skid Row of some 80 years ago—still so vivid to me—remained. The street had been gentrified with expensive high-rise apartments, upscale restaurants and retail stores, and a Starbucks. But what intrigued me the most were the smartly dressed young women wheeling baby buggies along what had once been the Old Skid Row, sights I'd never seen during my childhood on the street.

Through the years, I thought I received a good higher education. But I have the feeling that the best practical education I ever received about the ups and downs of life was when I was a newsboy on Skid Row during the Great Depression.

CJHS Board member Dr. Irving Cutler is a noted authority on Chicago Jewish history, a professor emeritus at Chicago State University, and author of "The Jews of Chicago," among other books.

Upcoming Zoom Programs

Be on the lookout for details about two upcoming CJHS-sponsored Zoom programs:

Sunday, October 18, 2 p.m.: Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen and Michael Dorf talk about their book, "Clear It with Sid! Sidney Yates and Fifty Years of Presidents, Pragmatism, and Public Service."

Wednesday, November, 11, 7 p.m. Writer and historian Matt Nickerson will present "Flag of Our Fathers: The Story of Chicago's Jewish Pioneer, Abraham Kohn, and His Lost Flag."

Welcome to New Members of the Society

Felicia Abedellatif
Paris, France

Gary Auslander
Chicago, IL

Howard Feldner
Irvine, CA

David Hast
Grand Rapids, MI

Dr. Eliot Slovin
Arlington, TX

Stanley Zoller
Buffalo Grove, IL

Board Member Reappointments

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is pleased to note the reappointment of the following Board members for three-year terms:

Term Expired in 2019. New Term Expires in 2022

Herbert Eiseman
Dr. Edward H. Mazur
Joan Pomeranc

Term to Expire in 2020. New Term Expires in 2023

Leah Axelrod
Dr. Irving Cutler
Elise Ginsparg
Dr. Rachele Gold
Jacob Kaplan

L'Shanah Tovah 5781

Rosh Hashanah begins Friday evening, September 18. We extend warm wishes for a healthy, fulfilling, and peaceful New Year to all our members, readers, and friends. We are eager for the day when we can convene in person. Until then, during this ongoing pandemic, let us keep in touch. Drop us a line, let us know how you're doing, and share a thought or story or program idea. Email us at: info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

continued from page 3

Resources

Books

"American Jewish Women and the Suffrage Movement," in *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890-1940*, Melissa Klapper, NYU Press, 2013.

"Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990," Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast, Eds. Indiana U Press, 2001.

Websites

The Evanston's Women's History Project
suffrage2020illinois.org

Hadassah Magazine, July, 2020 cover story.
hadassahmagazine.org/2020/07/01/jewish-suffragists-white-dresses-yellow-roses/

Jewish Women's Archive jwa.org
JWA blog jwa/blog/jewesses-for-suffrage

Library of Congress Exhibit
"Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote"
loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote

National Archives Museum Exhibit
"Rightfully Hers: Who Decides Who Votes?"
museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers

Smithsonian Institution Herstory Project
womenshistory.si.edu/news/2020/08/19suffrage-stories-countdown-stories-19-15-0

Webinars

Hadassah video panel discussion with Jewish historians/educators Drs. Pamela Nadell, Melissa Klapper and Judith Rosenbaum, aired July 23, 2020.
hadassah.org/news-stories/hadassah-magazine-discussion-presents-votes-for-women.html

Illinois Holocaust Museum video panel discussion, "Rights, Responsibilities & Roadblocks: Critical Stories Leading to the 19th Amendment and Beyond," aired August 25, 2020. **Note:** Rima Lunin Schultz, co-editor with Adele Hast of "Women Building Chicago," was on the panel.

Society Correspondence

I was doing research for my memoir when I came across your newsletter with information about the Austro-Galician Congregation (Vol. 38 No 3, 2014). I grew up one block from the congregation in the 1940s and 50s. I remember vividly the visit of Richard Tucker, who sang at the synagogue. I am not Jewish, but his visit was the talk of the neighborhood. I can also remember seeing the well-known Chicago gossip columnist Irv Kupcic attending services there on the High Holidays.

Humboldt Park was right across the street from the synagogue. There was a small, fenced yard on Hirsch Street at the back of the synagogue and next to the alley. The Hebrew school kids would play there until it was time to start their studies. Sometimes the rabbi would emerge to shoo us away and scold the Jewish kids for talking to us non-Jewish children through the fence. We used the brick wall of the synagogue to play a game with a bright pink ball, made by Spaulding, called "pinners."

In the decades after World War II, certain norms were observed. My Jewish friends could play with us in the street, but we never ventured into each other's homes. The Jewish girls were also carefully guarded, lest they fall into the clutches of a *goy*. Despite these norms, my experience at Lafayette Elementary School and Tuley High School was that Jews and gentiles got along without any problem. Our class president in high school was Jewish; the vice president, Polish Catholic. The valedictorian was Jewish; the salutatorian, Polish Catholic. The same pattern was repeated in all the clubs and sports activities.

The neighborhood around the Austro-Galician Congregation was diverse. There was a Catholic parish one block away; two blocks away, a Russian Orthodox church. There was also a Baptist Bible school. Families in the neighborhood were from Italy, Greece, and many other nations.

My best friend and roommate in graduate school was Jewish. He became godfather for my daughter, who married a Jewish man. I have three lovely Jewish grandchildren. My goddaughter and niece married a Jewish man, as did another niece. I even have some Ashkenazi ancestry, according to Ancestry.com and the National Geographic Genome project. That must be why I have always had an affinity for things Jewish.

Dr. Edward Glab, Palmetto Bay, FL

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



chicago jewish historical society

610 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE • ROOM 803 • CHICAGO, IL 60605-1901 • 312-663-5634

Non-Profit Org.
PRESORT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 6590

IN THIS ISSUE

- Jewish Women's Efforts to Pass the 19th Amendment
- New Members: The Honorable George and Susan Van Dusen
- History of the Danville, Illinois, Jewish Community
- In Memoriam: Dr. Adele Hast
- CHJS' First Zoom Program: "The Kosher Capones"
- Profile of Artist Jerry Pritikin
- Ha-Kol Annual: Iyar 5698
- Jews on Skid Row During the Great Depression

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. Forty-three years after its founding, the Society's unique mission

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 P.O. Box 597004, Chicago IL 60659-7004. 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

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



Like us on Facebook