



# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

## The Annual Book Issue

### Around Chicago in 90-Plus Years: Tales of a Jewish Tour Guide

By Dr. Irving Cutler

**M**y more than half century of giving tours started in a small way. After returning from the Navy in World War II and receiving a master's degree in Social Science from the University of Chicago, I landed my first teaching job in 1948 in a very small high school in the little town of Bridgman, Michigan, population about 950. I soon learned that most of my students had never been to a big city so, using the school bus, I took my geography class of about 15 to Chicago.

The students were wide-eyed and enthralled when we passed through the Calumet steel district, went up and down Lake Shore Drive, riding through some ethnic communities, including Chinatown, and ended up at the then-flourishing Chicago Union Stockyards, where we saw some of the operations at the Swift plant. They were puzzled in one place, where they saw a man with a beard and a skullcap supervising the slaughter. I explained that he was overseeing the production of kosher meat that was eaten by some Jewish people, and I went on to explain what kosher meant.

After two years at Bridgman, I moved into the Chicago high school system, first at McKinley and then Crane high schools, and, in 1965, into the Geography Department at Chicago Teachers College (later Chicago State University). At the college, I gave an occasional tour in conjunction with the courses I was teaching.

In 1973, when I was on the Board of Directors of the Geographic Society of Chicago, I was asked to write a book about Chicago on the occasion of the organization's 75th anniversary. The book, "*Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent*," received wide circulation and good publicity. Through the years, it was enlarged and updated; it is now in its fourth edition. Thanks to that book, I started getting calls to give tours to the general public.

Through the years, I developed some 16 distinct tours. I gave them to a large variety of groups, including synagogues, churches, foreign visitors, high schools, farm associations, family gatherings, and large organizations, such as the Field Museum, the Geographic Society of Chicago, universities, park districts, and museums. They included three Jewish-oriented tours, three ethnic tours, a historic tour, a food tour, a great streets tour, a magnificent shoreline tour, a religious institutions tour, and a cemeteries tour, along with

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Dr. Irving Cutler leading a boat tour

## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold

All of the Olympics Games captivate and inspire me. This year's Tokyo Olympics affected me in a new way. I am not referring to the success of the organizers and the prowess of the athletes amid the specter of COVID, though they were both impressive. Rather, I found myself thinking about how the Chicago Jewish community, from its early days, has enabled and encouraged ordinary young people—both girls and boys—to participate and excel in athletics. I owe my own love of sports to the influence of my parents, second-generation Jewish Chicagoans who benefited from our community's progressive athletics programs.

Note these entries in the 1934–1935 diaries of my mother Harriet B. Gold (nee Goldberg), during her teens:

- “Gym. Swell game of volleyball. Beat other team four times.”
- “Chose teams. Am captain of a team. Played well.”
- “Went to gym. Played basketball with boys, then played volleyball with girls.”
- “Watched boys play basketball game with Normal. They won.”
- “Had very good game of basketball in gym.”

My mother grew up in the North Lawndale Jewish community during its heyday and lived in the heart of the community, at Independence Avenue and Douglas Boulevard. The gym she attended was at the Jewish People's Institute (JPI), a few blocks away at 3500 West Douglas. The JPI's magnificent building, completed in 1927, with a modern gym and pool among its many offerings, was the gathering place, a “home away from home,” for her and her peers. In her first year of junior college, covered by her 1935 diary, she spent time in the gym several days a week, playing on teams and in pickup games, watching girls' and boys' teams compete, and socializing. In addition to the sports that she mentions in her diaries, she was an avid swimmer and tennis player.

The founders of Chicago Hebrew Institute (CHI), established 1903, the forerunner to the JPI and today's Jewish Community Centers (JCCs), deserve credit for seeing the value of physical education, equally for Jewish men and women. This subject is addressed in an article by Dr. Linda Borish, Chair of the Department of History at Western Michigan University, and a researcher in the areas of sports history, gender and women's history, and American Jewish history (“Jewish Girls, Gender, and Sport at the Chicago Hebrew Institute: Athletic Identity in Jewish and Cultural Spaces,” *Journal of Jewish Identities*, July 2019). Borish cites the CHI's Director of Physical Culture, Harry Berkman, who wrote that “the mind, body, and morals should be developed at the same time, for both men and women.”

CHI leaders President Jacob M. Loeb and General Director Dr. Philip L. Seman built upon the contemporary ethos that promoted the benefits of physical education. Progressive Era reformers had advocated for organized exercise and play as a wholesome, healthful antidote to life on the streets and cramped housing. Settlement houses provided physical education, along with other educational and recreational programs, as a means of acculturating immigrants. At CHI, physical education was not just beneficial, but integral. There was a wide range of classes—in English, citizenship, business, culture, literature, the arts, and other fields—in a Jewish context, together with physical education.

For the Jewish community, physical education advanced additional goals. It countered the antisemitic stereotype of the weak Jew. At the Second Zionist Congress in 1898, Max Nordau had advocated for the creation of “a New Jew.” Organized Jewish physical culture clubs began to appear, first

***Founded in 1916, the JPI's competitive women's basketball team was one of the top women's amateur teams in Chicago. It was remarkable in that it played under the more aggressive and exciting men's rules, rather than the sedate women's “line game.”***



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in gymnastics, and after 1906, in broader areas of athletics. By 1915, when the CHI opened its larger, updated center in a new location at 900 South Lytle Street, with a gym and pool for men and equal facilities for women, Jewish athletic clubs had proliferated across many countries.

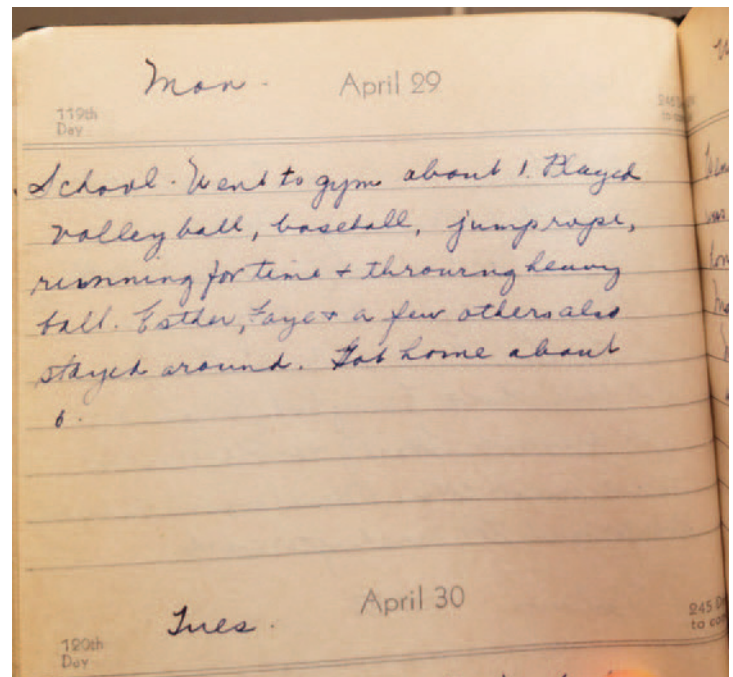
CHI and JPI participated in and sponsored many competitions.

During the 1920s and 1930s, their female and male athletes regularly won awards in team and individual events in basketball, volleyball, swimming, and track and field. The JPI's competitive women's basketball team, known as the JPI Girls, was one of the top women's amateur teams in Chicago. Founded in 1916, it was remarkable as one of the first women's teams to play under the more aggressive and exciting men's rules, rather than the sedate women's "line game" that was prevalent. The CHI hosted the first Chicago women's basketball tournament in 1918-1919. (For a fascinating account of the exceptional CHI/JPI female athlete Anne Goldstein, see Chicago writer Robert Pruter's article "Anne Goldstein: Putting the Lie in Chicago to the Unathletic Jewish Female," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, Spring 2014).

Meanwhile, Jewish regional sports groups continued to multiply. The Maccabi World Union, uniting the clubs, was founded in 1921 with the credo "The goal of the Union is the physical and moral rejuvenation of Jews for the sake of restoration and existence of the Jewish land and people." Olympic-style competitions, held in Israel, began in 1932 with the first Maccabiah Games (then called Maccabiada), in Tel Aviv. Since 1953, the Maccabiah Games have been held every four years in the year following the Summer Olympic games. The last Games, in 2017, had 10,000 participating athletes representing 85 countries. Maccabiah Games XXII will be held in July 2022.

Here in North America, the JCCs continue the tradition of providing top-notch sports facilities, instruction, and competition for Jewish people. In the spirit of the Maccabiah, the JCC Maccabi Games, for Jewish teens ages 13-16, is held annually, sponsored by the JCCs in partnership with the Maccabi World Union, Maccabi Canada, and Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel. Chicago was the host in 1988. The last Maccabi Games, in 2019, took place in Atlanta and Detroit. Next year's Games, to be held during their 40th anniversary, will take place in San Diego.

I have provided you with just a glimpse of the role of visionary Jewish leaders and institutions in the development of sports for recreation and the pursuit of excellence in the Jewish community. If you have stories to tell about your involvement in Jewish sports organizations, please share them!



From the 1934-35 diary entries of the author's mother, who was then a teen athlete

# THE BOOK SECTION

*“Three possessions should you prize: a field, a friend, and a book.”*

—Hai ben Sherira [Hai Gaon]

## Anne Rorimer’s “Monuments Man”

By Esther Mosak

*Writer’s Note: The following Q&A was crafted from an in-person interview with Anne Rorimer and augmented by additional sources.*

Many readers of *CJH* are familiar with the Nazi theft of artworks all over Europe, including those from many Jewish homes and collections, as well as the subsequent efforts to find and return the priceless stolen items. These efforts involved ordinary people thrust into extraordinary situations—from resistance fighters sabotaging railway lines to conservators switching from loupes to explosives. Their stories have been popularized in films such as *The Train*, *Woman in Gold*, and, most recently, the George Clooney-directed *Monuments Men*, starring Matt Damon as James Rorimer. Rorimer went on to become director of one of the world’s greatest museums, New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art.

*CJHS* recently sat down with James Rorimer’s daughter, Chicago resident Anne Rorimer, herself a curator, as well as a member of the Society, to talk about the reissue of her father’s 1950 book about his experiences as a “Monuments Man” and a major rescuer of Nazi-stolen art, *Survival: The Salvage and Protection of Art in War*. The new edition, to be released in March 2022 by Rizzoli International Publications, has been retitled “Monuments Man: The Mission to Save Vermeers, Rembrandts, and Da Vincis from the Nazis’ Grasp,” with Anne and her brother, Louis, credited as co-authors, along with their late father.

**Please tell us about how your family came to this country and where they settled.**

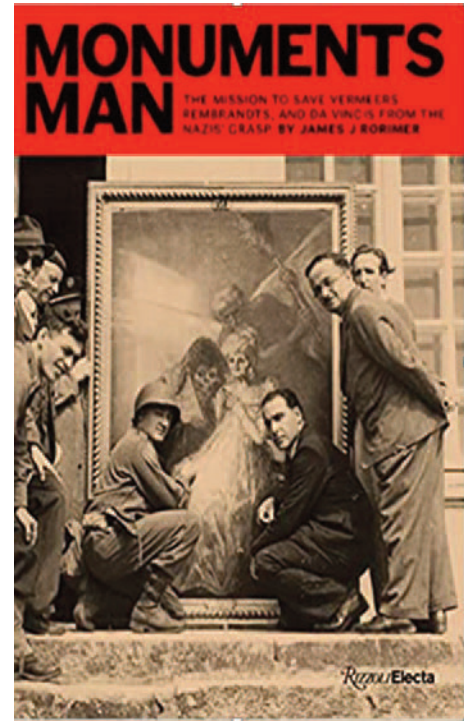
My great-grandfather was Jacob Rohrheimer. An obituary called him “one of the best known and best beloved Israelites of this city” [Cleveland]. He was born in Lorsch, Germany, in 1829 and immigrated to the U.S. as a 19-year-old, becoming not only a successful businessman, but also an eminent philanthropist. He was a founder of Cleveland’s B’nai Brith endowment fund and the Sir Moses Montefiore Home and served as president of the Hebrew Benevolent Association.

The youngest of his seven children, Louis, after whom my brother is named, studied decorative arts and design in Munich and Paris, returning to create Rorimer-Brooks Design Studio. [Louis changed the family name to Rorimer in 1917 in the wake of anti-German and anti-Jewish sentiment.] Heralded in the book “*Louis Rorimer: A Man of Style*,” he

introduced the work of contemporary European designers such as Bugatti and Lalique to America. The 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts had a great impact on him. His badge as a U.S. delegate to that exposition is on display at suburban Cleveland’s Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage.

Louis brought his young son James, my father, along on trips to Europe and influenced his artistic development. Although my grandfather had a “modern streak,” my father became Curator of Medieval Art at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1934 and launched the Cloisters in 1938. He was responsible for the acquisition of such famous pieces as *The Hunt of the Unicorn* tapestries. My dad landed a job at the Met fresh out of Harvard with a B.A. in fine arts. In those days, you could do that with just an undergraduate degree. Ultimately, he became the museum’s director. It was there that he met my mother, who was a secretary in the library, literally “falling for her” down some stairs. My mother ultimately earned a graduate degree in art history and worked at Princeton University.

**How did your father become a “monuments man?”**





#### AUTHOR OF "SURVIVAL" IS BOOK SHOP GUEST

James J. Rorimer of the Metropolitan Museum of New York was a guest of the Halle Book Shop, 7 E, on Tuesday afternoon, June 27th--the publication date of his new book, "Survival: The Salvage and Protection of Art in War." He is shown here autographing

copies for some of the Clevelanders who came in to meet him. Standing directly behind him is Vera Chappell, Book Shop assistant buyer. Mr. Rorimer is the first guest author since the Book Shop's recent move to the new location.

Newspaper clipping, circa 1950, most likely from Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer* from the archives of Louis Rorimer

Rose was a museum curator and member of the French Resistance who secretly documented the provenance, movement, and location of tens of thousands of pieces of art. She shared her most important records with him, tipping him off to major hiding places, such as the famed Neuschwanstein Castle, still a tourist attraction today. There was a lot hidden there. He found it out through Rose.

Rose was one of the most decorated women in French history. It was her obituary that prompted the art scholar Lynn H. Nicholas's research and subsequent publication of the 1994 book, *The Rape of Europa*. She was also a main subject of Robert M. Edsel's 2009 book, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*. There are photographs included in the new edition of the book of Rose, plus a warm, handwritten letter congratulating my father when he became director of the Met in 1953.

#### How did your father's book come to be written?

I remember it very clearly. I have childhood memories of my father in his study, writing the book. He had taken a lot of notes, and we do have letters from him to my mother, although this correspondence does not include anything that would have had to pass through U.S. Army censorship. He'd sometimes write that he would have quite a story to tell upon return. As soon as he settled back in the United States and resumed his job at the Met, he decided to write up his experience from start to finish.

I regret not having learned more from my father directly. If I'd only known about Rose, I would have liked, in retrospect, to have met her when I was in Europe with my father in 1962. There is a younger generation of people who had parents in the war but never heard much about it either. In my father's case, he had a big job, and when he was writing the book, I was a small child. ... He hardly ever spoke about what happened in Europe. I didn't know enough to ask." [Sadly, James Rorimer died prematurely in his sleep of a heart attack at age 60 in 1966.]

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His lifelong career at the Met was interrupted by World War II. He enlisted in the Army in 1942, went through basic training as an infantryman, then shipped out to England, and ultimately was part of the D-Day landing in France. He just wanted to serve his country. He did it out of patriotic sensibility.

Once in Europe, he was motivated by his love of medieval art and the fact that churches and other repositories of art were being ravaged across the continent. My father spent three war years there, traversing France and Germany, from 1942 to 1945. He had left the States right after getting married. In letters back to my mother, he complained about the military hierarchy and how low his rank was, and how big his responsibilities were. Because of his museum affiliation, he was assigned to a small group whose mission was "finding where all the art was hidden" by the Nazis. His account of the mission of the Allies' "Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section" is recorded in his 1950 book.

My dad's success in locating much of the art plundered by Nazis, including works selected by Hermann Göring for his personal collection, owed much to his professional relationship and friendship with Rose Valland. They were kindred spirits.

## The Librarian Recommends: Rachel Kamin's Reading List

**C**JH is pleased once again to avail itself of the expertise of outstanding Jewish Librarian Rachel Kamin, Director of the Joseph and Mae Gray Cultural & Learning Center at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park and Book Review Editor for Children & Teens for The Association of Jewish Libraries Newsletter. She is also the most recent recipient of the Association of Jewish Libraries' Fanny Goldstein Merit Award.

CJH thanks Ms. Kamin for providing the following book recommendations, all of which relate in some form or manner to Jewish Chicago:

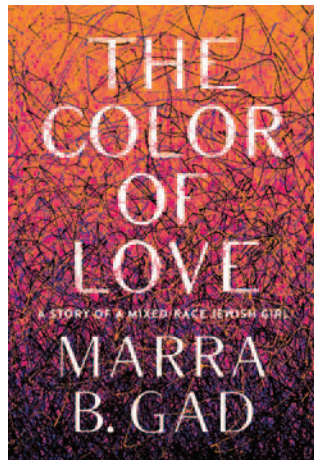


### Nonfiction

*The Art of Inventing Hope: Intimate Conversations with Elie Wiesel*  
by Howard Reich

(Chicago Review Press, 2019, 192 pp.)

This book offers an unprecedented, in-depth conversation between the world's most revered Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel, and a son of survivors, Howard Reich, the former music critic at the *Chicago Tribune*. During the last four years of his life, Wiesel met frequently with Reich—and spoke with him often by phone—to discuss the subject that linked them: Reich's father, Robert Reich, and Wiesel were both liberated from the Buchenwald death camp on April 11, 1945. What had started as a newspaper assignment quickly evolved into a friendship and a partnership. Wiesel's insights on life, ethics, and memory—and Reich's illumination of them—will not only help the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors understand their painful inheritance, but will also benefit every reader, young or old.



### Nonfiction

*The Color of Love: A Memoir of a Mixed-Race Jewish Girl*  
By Marra B. Gad

(Agate Publishing, 2019, 235 pp.)

The biological daughter of a Jewish woman and a Black man, Gad was adopted by a white Jewish family in Chicago. In this book, she recounts what it was like growing up as “not enough”—not Jewish enough in the Jewish community, not Black enough in the Black community. She also discusses the re-establishment of ties with an estranged great-aunt, whose Alzheimer's disease erases her racial prejudices. The book, which received the 2020 Midwest Book Award for Autobiography/ Memoir, features Rabbi Herman Schaalman of Chicago's Emanuel Congregation. Gad is an independent film and television producer.

### Fiction

*The Bloom Girls*

by Amy Pine

(Grand Central Publishing, 2021, 368 pp.)

Alissa Adler's plans of making 40 her banner year and turning her new bakery into a success are derailed by an unexpected pregnancy. The father is her estranged husband, from whom she has been divorced for almost 20 years and with whom she had a daughter, Gabi Bloom, who has just turned 22 and is newly in love. Alissa must untangle multiple complications while planning Gabi's wedding. *Publishers Weekly* said of this book: “As both generations navigate complicated matters of the heart, the wonderfully flawed heroines come to realize that change is possible at any age if they just let go of fear. The result is sure to win over readers.” The novel takes place in Highland Park. The author, who lives in the Chicago area, is a librarian by day. In a recent online interview in *The Nerd Daily*, Pine said, “I also wanted to write a story with all Jewish characters that wasn't about

being Jewish but simply about the characters living their lives and navigating the challenges they face. Bloom is a family name...it's a title that honors my family and my Jewish roots."

### Children's/Young Adult Literature

Reeni's Turn

by Carol Coven Grannick

(Regal House, 2020, 204 pp.)

This novel, recommended for readers ages nine to 12, is about an 11-year-old dancer, Reeni Rosenbloom, who has struggled with lifelong shyness and anxiety and now lives in a newly developing and expanding body that does not match the ballerina posters on her bedroom wall. After taking a wrong turn, Reeni, who resides with her family in Chicago, realizes she must choose between coming to terms with her natural limitations or taking a chance on becoming the girl of her dreams. The story addresses universal themes of emotional resilience, body acceptance, and the search for courage, identity, and voice. Reviewing "Reeni's Turn" on the Jewish Book Council website, librarian Jillian Bietz wrote, "There is significant Jewish content in the book; Reeni's family celebrates Shabbat and other holidays, and Reeni even expresses how dancing evokes emotion that parallels what she experiences at Yom Kippur services.... Carol Coven Grannick's prose is elegant and impactful. Not one word is wasted in this heartfelt story. Reeni will stay with readers long after the last page is read." Carol Coven Grannick is a Skokie-based children's author and poet.

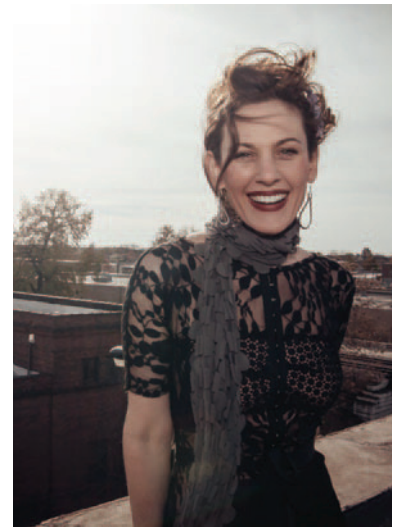
### Young Adult Literature

Someday We Will Fly

by Rachel DeWoskin

(Penguin Viking, 2019, 368 pp.)

This novel, the 2020 Sydney Taylor Book Award Winner for Young Adults and the 2019 recipient of a National Jewish Book Award, tells the story of 15-year-old Lillia, who flees Warsaw with her father and baby sister in 1940 to try to make a new start in Shanghai, China. But her family's situation is far from stable there, particularly as America and Japan become involved in World War II. DeWoskin, an associate professor at the University of Chicago who is affiliated with the university's Centers for East Asian Studies and Jewish Studies, is the author of four other novels: "Banshee" (Dottir Press, 2019), "Blind" (Viking Penguin, 2015), "Big Girl Small" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2011), and "Repeat After Me" (The Overlook Press, 2009). She also wrote "Foreign Babes in Beijing" (W.W. Norton, 2005), a memoir about her time in China in the 1990s, and the poetry collection "Two Menus" (University of Chicago, 2020).



## New and Notable Books

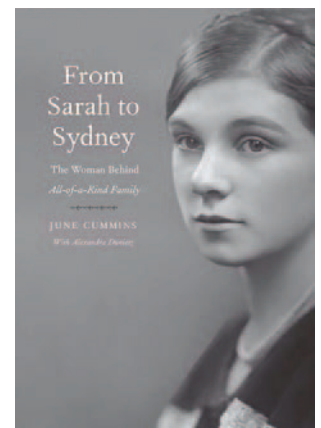
### Nonfiction

From Sarah to Sydney: The Woman Behind All-of-a-Kind Family

by June Cummins with Alexandra Dunietz

(Yale University Press, 2021, 400 pp.)

Sydney Taylor was not a household name, but in Jewish children's literature, she was a force to reckon with. Taylor was the author of the All-of-a-Kind Family series, which introduced the Jewish-American immigrant experience to countless young readers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. As one of the first to do so—if not the first—she was a catalyst in the proliferation of Jewish-themed fiction for young readers that focused on the lives of our grandparents and great-grandparents on New York's Lower East Side. So popular are her books that they remain in print some 60-plus years after their initial release.



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## New and Notable Books

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The author of this prodigious biography of Sydney Taylor, the late June Cummins, was also a force to reckon with. Cummins, an Orthodox Jewish academic who lived in Skokie but flew back and forth to California, where she taught in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San Diego State University, was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease while researching and writing this book. Yet she remained doggedly working on it until the very end of her life, in 2018, aided by friend and Skokie neighbor, Alexandra Dunietz, herself a scholar, a University of Chicago-trained historian of the medieval Middle East.

Of "*Sydney to Sarah*," novelist Jennifer Weiner wrote in the *New York Times Sunday Book Review* earlier this year: It is "a work of scholarship, with the serious goal of establishing Taylor as an author who both reflected and shaped ideas of what it meant to be Jewish in America. By that metric, Cummins more than succeeds."

### Nonfiction

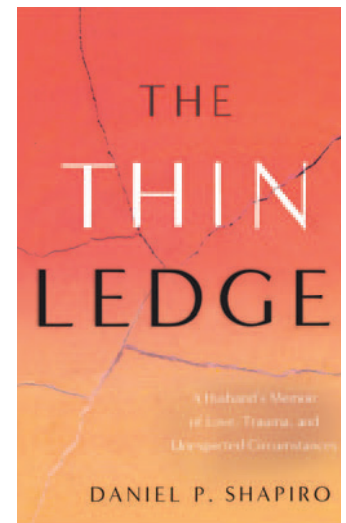
*The Thin Ledge: A Husband's Memoir of Love, Trauma, and Unexpected Circumstances*

by Daniel P. Shapiro

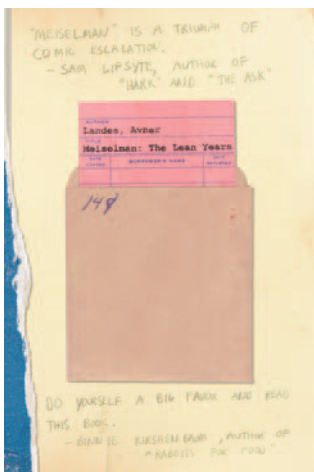
(Greenleaf Book Group, 2021, 248 pp.)

Lifelong Chicagoan and veteran trial attorney Daniel P. Shapiro, a longtime Highland Park resident, has written a compelling, candid account of the many years he spent taking care of his late wife, Susan, who sustained catastrophic neurologic injuries following multiple brain hemorrhages. The potency of Shapiro's story is not only attributable to his lucid, exacting prose, but also to his desire to avoid making himself into a hero or martyr. He writes openly of his despair, frustration, anger, and helplessness, and he has no compunction about acknowledging where he felt he fell short of the mark as a husband and as a Mr. Mom to his and Susan's three children.

Shapiro sought counsel from many professionals—including his own rabbis—during his years as a caregiver. Jewish content notwithstanding, his is a book that readers of any religious tradition will appreciate for its forthrightness and its insights into the burdens of caregiving and the pain of observing a loved one become a stranger before your eyes.



### Fiction



*Meiselman: The Lean Years*

By Avner Landes

(Tortoise Books, 2021, 416 pp.)

This witty and sardonic novel, taking place in a Chicago suburb strikingly reminiscent of Skokie, where the author himself grew up, revolves around the miscalculations and misapprehensions of a second-in-command library administrator, who seems thwarted at every turn. As *CJH* Editor Robert Nagler Miller wrote earlier this year in "The Neb as Hero," a profile of the author for Chicago's *JUF News*, "There are the schlemiels and nebbishes of the world—the hapless sorts who fall on the cracks in the concrete and endure rubbery chicken after ordering succulent brisket—and then there are the Meiselmans."

Landes, an alumnus of Columbia University's MFA program in writing, now lives in Israel with his family. But he retains strong ties to his Chicago Jewish roots. As Nagler Miller noted in *JUF News*, one of Landes's great-grandfathers, Rabbi Menachem BenZion Sacks, established the Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago in 1929.



## Anne Rorimer's "Monuments Man"

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**Tell us how this new edition came about.**

My niece and nephew, Sarah and James, my brother's children, spearheaded the development of the new book. I give credit where credit is due to Robert Edsel, whose book jumpstarted all this interest. It inspired the *Monuments Men* movie, which then inspired my niece and nephew to track down their grandfather's story. After they saw the movie, they became interested. Sarah followed my father's World War II route through Europe and blogged about it, even going down into the Heilbronn salt mine in Germany where the Nazis stored so many treasures. James, named after my father, enlisted a friend who is an editor to go through the original book and fix up the prose, initially thinking in terms of producing an ebook. My brother took it from there. He put it into shape for publication. He added footnotes and sidebars. Lynn Nicholas wrote the foreword. The new book has the original text but is much expanded photographically and has additional scholarly information.

The manuscript did not immediately find a publisher, being neither a purely art historical study nor the kind of popular subject that could necessarily be expected to generate huge numbers of sales. Then, at an art history conference, serendipity took over. I was introduced to an editor from Rizzoli. I said, "How nice to meet you, and by the way, I have a book proposal under my arm." I didn't hear back from Rizzoli for a while after their editor had taken the manuscript draft for consideration. Ultimately, though, I received the welcome call that they wanted to reissue the book. Choosing the photos was a big job, with the inspired help of a professional photo researcher. Some photos are from the original book, while others are from the National Gallery of Art, the Met, the Library of Congress, even *Life* magazine, etc.

The new book adds another piece to the overall historical puzzle. There was only one other contemporary account [*Salt Mines and Castles: The Discovery and Restitution of Looted European Art*]. It's also a rare first-hand account that complements the research now being published by a younger generation of scholars.

**The real-life Monuments Men were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their work in protecting historical sites and recovering cultural artifacts. Did you find the film version of their "treasure hunt" factual?**

It is basically historically accurate, and there are many events that actually took place. I think it does a good job in terms of Hollywood. But the scene where my father steps on a land mine, for example, is apocryphal.

**You yourself are an art historian and author. Tell us about your work.**

I graduated from Bryn Mawr College and then interned at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. I started out as a curator at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo after getting an MA. I came to Chicago in the 1970s to be a curator at the Art Institute, where my exhibitions included the annual "American Exhibition," "Europe in the Seventies: Aspects of Recent Art," and "Idea and Image in Recent Art." After I left the Art Institute in the 1980s, I wrote the book "New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality." It's basically everything you wanted to know about Conceptual art but were afraid to ask! I also organized a big exhibition with Ann Goldstein [now in Chicago] at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, "Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975." I continue to write scholarly articles and occasionally guest-curate.

**Finally, how did you become interested in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society?**

I was introduced to the Society by my former neighbor [and longtime CJHS member and immediate past *CJH* editor] Bev Chubat. Another friend, Kay Kamin, recently became involved with the organization after learning of CJHS support of the "Three Patriots" monument, which had been conceived by the late Barnett Hodes, Kay's father. When Kay pulled out the Journal to show me an article about it, I told her I already had it!

## Books by CJHS Members and Friends

**The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants, an Illustrated Guide.** By Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz. Ohio University Press/Swallow Press, 2001.

**Prairie Directory of North America: U.S. & Canada.** By Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz. Lawndale Enterprises, 2002.

**The City in a Garden: A History of Chicago's Parks, Second Edition.** By Julia S. Bachrach. The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

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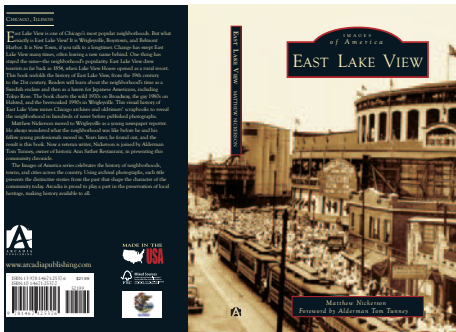
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*And coming off the presses soon:*

**The Curious Odyssey of Rudolph Bloom.** By Richard Reeder. (Propertius Press, February 2022). Reeder describes the book this way: "It is the first-ever prequel to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The book reveals the enigmatic life of Rudolph Virag Bloom, the father of Leopold Bloom. The writers Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker play major roles in the story.... The scheduled publication date, February 2, commemorates the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Ulysses* and the 140th birthday of James Joyce."

"

## Book Review

### Spies of No Country: Israel's Secret Agents at the Birth of the Mossad

Reviewed by Dr. Edward H. Mazur

In 1950, my parents enrolled me in the Yavneh Talmud Torah Hebrew School, at Hirsh Street and Rockwell Avenue, in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. One of the first "learnings" for the boys and girls was the Aleph-Bais, followed by the numbers one to 10. *Echad*-one; *shnayim*-two; *shalosh*-three; *arba*-four; and up to *eser*-10. Other than the Four Questions at Pesach, I had not given much thought to the numbers until a recent visit to the West Rogers Park branch of the Chicago Public Library, where I found a most readable and compelling monograph.

I chanced upon the volume "*Spies of No Country: Israel's Secret Agents at the Birth of Mossad*" by Matti Friedman. I opened the book, found an empty table, and began reading it. When the library closed for the day, I checked it out, went home, and continued reading until I finished it.

Few of us know or are aware of the "*Spies of No Country*," or the Arab Section of the Palmach, the elite squad of the Haganah, the Zionist military organization. The spies were Gamliel Cohen, alias: Yussef, born in Damascus, Syria, in 1922; Isaac Shoshan, alias: Abdul Karim, born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1924; Havakuk Cohen, alias: Ibrahim, born in Yemen, in the 1920s; and Yakuba Cohen, alias: Jamil, born in Jerusalem, British Palestine, in 1924.

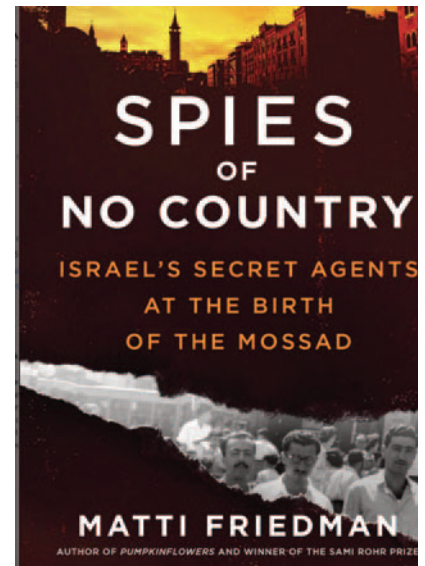
The unwritten rules of espionage writing seem to require a claim that the subjects altered the very course of history, or, at least, the war in which they were engaged. This is not the case of these four or others in the Arab Section. Their contribution to the 1948 War for Independence was significant. But their missions did not culminate in a dramatic explosion that averted disaster or in the solution of a devious puzzle. Their importance is that they turned out to be the embryo of one of the world's most formidable intelligence services: the Mossad.

The Arab Section was the direct link between amateurish, small-scale beginnings of Zionist intelligence work and the larger, more professional efforts from 1948 to the present day. The way in which Israel conducts espionage began with the group in the Arab Section referred to as "The Dawn." "*Spies of No Country*" centers on a period of 20 pivotal months, from January 1948 through August 1949; on two port cities 80 miles apart, Haifa and Beirut; and on four young people drawn from the margins into the center of events.

The book reads like a classic spy story. Its parts include a high-stakes war for a new state's existence, double identities, suspense, and betrayal—and all of it is true. It is also about being an outsider. The four agents at the center of the story were part of a ragtag unit, conceived during World War II by British spies and Jewish militia leaders in Palestine. Their intent was to gather intelligence and carry out sabotage operations.

The unit consisted of Jews native to the Arab world who could easily assume Arab identities. These men, with the existence of Israel hanging in the balance, went undercover to Beirut, where they spent the next two years operating out of a newsstand, collecting intelligence and sending messages back to Israel via a radio whose antenna was disguised as a clothesline. Of the dozen spies in the Arab Section at the war's outbreak, five were caught and executed.

"*Spies of No Country*" is more than a spy story. It is also about the complicated identity of Israel, a country that presents itself as Western but, in fact, has more citizens with Middle Eastern roots and traditions, like the spies in the narrative. The book is a revelatory look at the challenging paradoxes of the Middle East. In January 1948, nearly all the Jews in Israel were from Europe, led by the socialists of the Zionist movement. Israel was in the Middle East, but it had been dreamed up in Europe as a solution to a European problem, the chronic and pathological hatred of Jews. The other Jewish world, the one in the lands of



## Book Review

Islam, faced less organized hostility and seemed more stable. Although Zionism had attracted some from this world, like our spies, it had not succeeded in moving the masses.

The Arab Section was an outlier in the Palmach. It was created by Ashkenazi officers and remained under the overall command of Ashkenazi officers. One could safely attend a Section bonfire and enjoy the Arabic songs and coffee without upsetting anyone's idea about what the country was or would be. When the spies left for their missions beyond the border, most of the Jews of Islam were still in their native communities, as they had been for centuries: a million people in enclaves from Casablanca, Morocco, to Kabul, Afghanistan. The spies from their perches watched this world end. The Jews who came to Israel from the Islamic world brought a deep distrust of that world; an appreciation of the importance of religion, which many Jews of Ashkenazic descent still do not understand; and the knowledge that nothing good befalls the weak.

Therefore, for half of Israel's Jews, the Middle East crisis is not new; nor is tension with its Muslim neighbors. It is simply the latest iteration of a force that has shaped their families for centuries. The four spies central to this book saw Damascus and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War differently than their peers from Bialystok or Warsaw, though all were allies. Israel is more than one thing. It is a refugee camp for the Jews of Europe, most recently augmented by Jews from the United States. For those with antecedents in the Islamic world, Israel can be viewed as a minority insurrection inside the world of Islam.

Most of the histories and stories I have perused about Israel have people like the spies of the Arab Section coming from the Islamic world and joining the story of the Jews of Europe. In truth, what happened was much closer to the opposite. Matti Friedman demonstrates in this engrossing volume that the Palmach, a brash militia animated by the revolutionary energy of mid-20th century Europe, is one of Israel's notorious founding myths. The Arab Section, a tiny outfit of Middle Eastern Jews cautiously traversing their own dangerous region, is not famous. Friedman concludes that the Palmach explains little about the Israel of today. The Arab Section, he posits, explains a lot. The complicated identities of the four spies offer us a window into Israel's complex identity and into the stories beneath the stories it tells about itself.

***The four spies  
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or Warsaw.***

In our lifetimes, Israeli intelligence services have been blessed and benefited from the efforts of thousands with ancestry in Arab countries. But many of these people's children have spoken Hebrew, not Arabic. They are something new: Israelis. Israel's identity is increasingly Middle Eastern, but many of the old languages and mannerisms are gone, as the Zionist movement always intended. This has resulted in many benefits for the Jewish people but, argues Friedman, it has been a curse for the spy services. A concrete example: The Hebrew word, "mista'arvim," ones who become like Arabs, lives on in Hebrew, but now it denotes soldiers or police who

carry out brief operations in Arab guise—those darting into Palestinian areas to arrest or kill suspects.

Friedman's 2016 book "*Pumpkinflowers*" was chosen as a *New York Times* Notable Book and one of Amazon's 10 Best Books of the Year. His first book, "*The Aleppo Codex*," won the 2014 Sami Rohr Prize and the American Library Association's Sophie Brody Medal. A contributor to the *New York Times* opinion page, Friedman has reported from Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Moscow, the Caucasus, and Washington, D.C. He grew up in Toronto and now lives with his family in Jerusalem.

"Spies of No Country: Israel's Secret Agents at the Birth of the Mossad," Matti Friedman, (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, a division of Workman Publishing, 2019), 248 pp .

## Urbana-Champaign Memories Continued: Alvin Sokolow, Ph.D.

**C**hs is pleased to continue our ongoing series in which we pay tribute to the Hillel of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), the oldest Hillel in the country. It will be observing its centennial in 2023. We have invited Society members and friends to share with us their memories of their formative years at the state's flagship institution, and we encourage other alumni to send their recollections of Jewish life on this campus. Please email reminiscences to [Robertnaglermiller@gmail.com](mailto:Robertnaglermiller@gmail.com).

In this issue, we are delighted to hear from Society member Alvin Sokolow, UIUC Class of 1956:

It was September 1952, the start of the fall semester. With a friend, I wandered over to the new Hillel building on John Street to check out the Sunday evening "Corn Beef Capers"—the social opening of the season—and there I met Sandra Elaine Dolgonos, my future wife. We were introduced by her new roommate at LAR (Lincoln Avenue Residence), Sonny Hirsch, who was my high school classmate. Sandy then was a second semester freshman, having completed a semester at Wright Junior College. I was a beginning freshman.

Although both from Chicago, Sandy and I came from different and competing neighborhoods. I was a kid from Lawndale, then the heart of the Windy City's Jewish community. She lived in Humboldt Park, a more upscale neighborhood. My high school was Marshall; she went to Roosevelt.

What helped bridge the gap—besides personal attraction—was our common interest in journalism. Having both worked on our high school newspapers, we enrolled in the School of Journalism as undergrads. And we both joined the DI (Daily Illini) as beginning reporters. She covered intramural sports; I was on a

city beat. (I became the DI's editor in 1955–56.)

We were married in 1955, about the time Sandy graduated. I got my undergraduate degree in 1956. We stayed on in Champaign-Urbana for several years while I earned my master's degree and PhD in political science.

The Hillel connection didn't end then. In 1965, we moved to California (with three kids and one more to come), where I joined the political science department at the University of California, Davis, teaching state and local politics. Sandy worked as a stringer for area newspapers.

A few years later, a faculty friend and his wife began to gather Jewish students for social events at their home. From these gatherings emerged a formal Hillel organization around the 1980s. Sandy and I became financial supporters, and I served on the Davis Hillel board from 2008 to 2017, a period that saw the construction and opening of our gorgeous 9,600-square foot building across the street from the campus.

From the oldest to one of the newest Hillels—a great journey!

Sandy and I have been retired from our professional work for some years, and we now live in a retirement community in Davis. We would love to hear from old friends and other readers: [ajsokolow@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ajsokolow@ucdavis.edu).



A striking couple: Al and Sandy Dolgonos Sokolow at an Illini Union dance in the 1950s

*"It was September 1952, the start of the fall semester. With a friend, I wandered over to the new Hillel building...and there I met Sandra Elaine Dolgonos, my future wife."*

## The High Holy Days: A Walk to Shul in North Lawndale

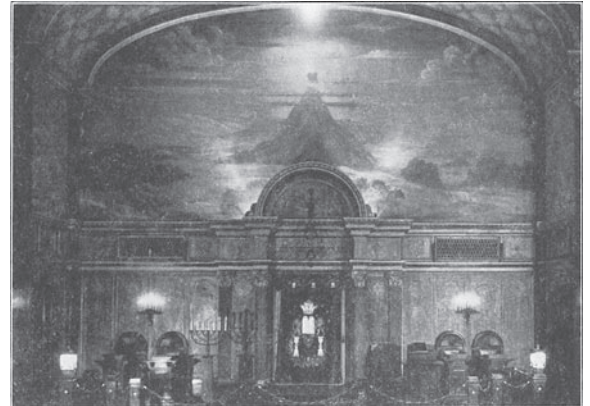
by Beverly Chubat

When I was six years old, my Uncle Isaac took me on my first walk to shul. It was a short walk, just a block and a half from my home to Anshe Sholom Synagogue, located on the corner of Independence Boulevard and Polk Street. It was on the High Holy Days—I don't remember which day—and I don't think Uncle had a ticket. We were just going to stop in for a while.

We entered the sanctuary and easily found seating in one of the back pews. Uncle picked up a machzor, a prayer book, and placed it in my hands ceremoniously. I turned the pages of Hebrew text that I couldn't yet read but already found beautiful. Uncle was a learned man, a teacher, and a *maskil* [a person of the Enlightenment, interested in both the secular and religious worlds]. He whispered to me, "Look around. Absorb the atmosphere."

I saw the cantor on the bima. He was chanting, surrounded by a small choir of boys, some of whom I recognized from the neighborhood. But my attention was soon captured by a fantastic mural painted on the wall behind them, above the Aron Kodesh, the Torah ark. It depicted the Tablets of the Ten Commandments hovering above Mount Sinai, enveloped in a powerful glow, casting beams of light down into a mysterious and rugged landscape.

Of course, I never entered the "main floor" again for services at Anshe Sholom—girls and women were in the balcony—except on Simchat Torah, when both girls and boys would line the aisles to blow kisses at the Torah scrolls as they were brought out from the ark and paraded past us. On those occasions, I always took the opportunity to gaze up at the mural and admire it anew.



**Top image: Mural above the ark, Anshe Sholom Synagogue. From "The Book of Memories (Seyfer ha-zikorn): History of American Jewish Institutions," 1932. Courtesy of Spertus Institute, Chicago.**

**Bottom image: Pediment, Independence Boulevard Seventh Day Adventist Church (former Anshe Sholom Synagogue), 2016. Photograph by Eric Allix Rogers. The ark and mural no longer exist.**

## Welcome New Members

Daniel Felix, Highland Park, IL

Hanna Goldschmidt, Chicago, IL

Marvin Harris, Aventura, FL

Jessica Kirzane, Oak Park, IL

Jackie Kulesza, Park Ridge, IL

Ezra Landman-Feigelson, Chicago, IL

Gerald Lasin, Deerfield, IL

Michael Livshutz, Deerfield, IL

Gale Neiman, Highland Park, IL

John Simon, Sarasota, FL

Michael A. Solomon, Glencoe, IL

Thompson and Joan Webb, Seekonk, MA

Daniel Weinberg, Chicago, IL

## Around the World in 90-Plus Years

continued from front page

tours of the Indiana Dunes, Lake County, Illinois and Michigan Canal, and a waterways boat tour. In the development of each, I spent many hours conducting research, talking to people, and scouting the routes.

My favorite tours were the three Jewish tours to Chicago's West Side, South Side, and North Side. I had to do plenty of research on these Jewish areas, although I was fortunate to have lived in each of them: I was born in the Maxwell Street area, grew up in North Lawndale, and lived in Hyde Park while attending the University of Chicago. After I married, I moved north, like so many of Chicago's Jews after the middle of the 20th century.



A tour of the Indiana Dunes

On the hundreds of tours that I gave through the years, I found that people especially enjoyed when I included a little personal touch. For example, while going down a half-mile stretch of Douglas Boulevard on the West Side Jewish tours, we would stop at the former home of the Labor Zionists, 3322 West Douglas Boulevard, where Golda Meir would sometimes speak.

Living nearby, my older sister, an ardent Zionist, would take me there, where it seemed that they were always dancing the hora and singing Zionist songs. In 1933, during the heart of the Great Depression, my sister got married at this Zionist building. The announcer of a Jewish radio program, who knew my sister and her fiancé, congratulated them on the air and announced that everyone was invited to the wedding. When my mother heard that, she almost fainted. She arranged for me to go with my little red flyer wagon to a nearby Wonder Bread outlet store, where I loaded up with some 20 loaves at a dime a loaf. My mother bought a number of large salamis and made hundreds of sandwiches to take care of the overflow crowd.

After the wedding, the couple took off for Israel, where they lived on Kibbutz Degania Bet. Decades later, their sabra grandson, Zohar, age 12, while visiting Chicago, went on this same tour. When we stopped at the former Zionist hall, he asked for the microphone and gave a beautiful talk on Israel's wonders and gently scolded the passengers for not settling there.

Moving a few blocks along Douglas Boulevard on the West Side Jewish tour, I would stop at the Jewish People's Institute (the JPI) and explain its importance and many activities, including its summer roof garden dances, where many a match was made. I'd relate the story of the young Jewish lady from Elgin who almost every Sunday, accompanied by her girlfriend, would take the electric train into Chicago to attend the JPI dance, as there weren't many eligible Jewish men in Elgin. She came and she came, and she danced and she danced, until she finally caught one up there.

Another stop on this tour was a Black church—either the Stone Temple Baptist Church, which had been the site of the former Romanian Synagogue, or the Greater Galilee Church, the former Knesses Israel Nusach Sfarad (KINS), where I had developed good relations with the Black pastors.

On one of those tours, we stopped at North Lawndale's Reform Temple Judea, which had become a church. Two beautiful, large menorahs still graced its roof. A rabbi on the tour got off the bus and went inside the



church, hoping to buy the menorahs, but the church declined his offer. The church was recently torn down. I don't know what happened to the menorahs.

On this tour, we often went a few blocks to 1306 South Lawndale Avenue, where Golda Meir had lived on the third floor of a back apartment. I'd relate that some of us had testified before a city commission to make the site a historical landmark with a placard on it. The star of our contingent was the late actress Valerie Harper, who at that time was in "*Golda's Balcony*," the one-woman show about the Israeli prime minister. Unfortunately, the commission rejected our proposal.

Another memorable Jewish West Side tour was geared for Marshall High School graduates of the early 1950s. As we approached their school, they suddenly burst out singing the Marshall fight song, and a couple of former cheerleaders got up and led the cheers. As the two older women moved their arms and legs, I thought I heard their bones creaking. Suddenly, the doors of Marshall opened, as prearranged, and greeting them was the school's principal. The group entered the building and was served refreshments and allowed to roam through the building. These former students' great enthusiasm, more than 50 years after graduation, made a great impression on me.

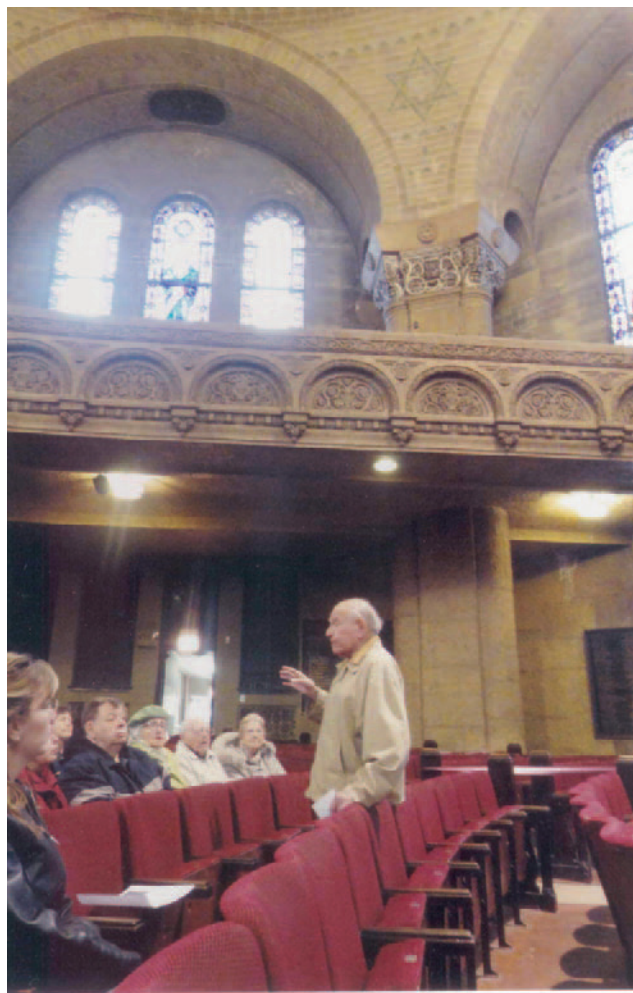
The food tour was quite popular because it had a shopping component. We would watch the action at the Chicago Board of Trade before heading to Eli's Cheesecake factory to observe its operations and perhaps purchase a great variety of its products. Then off we'd go to a Fannie May candy outlet store, where my tour group could purchase candy at about half price. The tour also included stops at the Greater Chicago Food Depository to witness the efficient task of preparing food for the needy and a walk through the produce-selling South Water Market.

On all the tours, I would sit directly behind the driver to direct him. I would have a microphone in my hand to explain what we were seeing. I never used any notes.

For the all-day waterways tour, which I gave regularly for the Field Museum, the Geographic Society of Chicago, and occasionally for other groups, we used the Wendella sightseeing boat. We would go south along the Lake Michigan shoreline to the Calumet River and the Calumet Sag Channel, returning via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the South Branch of the Chicago River. This was my hardest tour. I usually had about 125 people; my bus tours usually had 40 to 50 people. My late wife, Marian, made the most delicious chocolate chip cookies for all my tours, so we had to schlep a couple of large containers of cookies, plus the tour handouts and maps, for everyone on the boat. (Incidentally, my wife's cookies were a main attraction of all my tours. At the annual meeting of the Geographic Society of Chicago at the Palmer House, she was given a special award for her cookies. For years, I would run into tour members on the street and they often mentioned my wife's cookies.)

Speaking of food, restaurants were an important part of the tours. I must have taken the tours to a dozen-plus different restaurants. All groups, Jewish or not, liked to go to Manny's Cafeteria & Delicatessen. A couple of great fish restaurants were Phil Schmidt's in Hammond, which had the best perch and gooseberry

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A tour of KAM Isaiah Israel congregation in the city's Hyde Park neighborhood

## Around the World in 90-Plus Years

continued from previous page

pie meals. To the north, there was Mathon's in Waukegan. Mr. Mathon was a colorful character who liked to predict what the coming winter would be like based on the fat on the fish. There is a street in Waukegan named for him.

Another favorite was a Bohemian restaurant in Cicero, Klas, where Al Capone, while headquartered there, would often eat and sometimes play cards with Mr. Klas. The owner, I understand, usually allowed Capone to win. The deck of cards they used was on display.

Sadly, all of these restaurants are closed, save for Manny's, which has been around since 1942 and is now run by third- and fourth-generation family members of its founder.

One very hot day, the bus broke down in Pilsen, a Mexican-American neighborhood. It would take about two hours for the bus to be replaced. It was lunchtime so I decided to walk the group to nearby 26th Street, where I knew of some Mexican restaurants. We piled into one that turned out to be delightful, with good food. It was the first Mexican restaurant that many of the passengers had ever visited.

On an ethnic tour, we visited the Polish Museum on Milwaukee Avenue. One of its main attractions was the original Paderewski piano. My 9-year-old grandson, Rahm, a budding pianist who was on the tour, asked if he could try the piano. Given permission, he beautifully played a Mozart sonata to the applause of the tour group.

Many of the tour groups were very interesting. Among the church groups, I gave a number of tours for members of the St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, a Black church at 6105 South Michigan Avenue. About midway in a Lake County tour, I brought them into the Highland Park Library to see a beautiful building and to use the restrooms. As the 40 tour members walked through the library, I observed the surprise of some white patrons. But after a while, there were some friendly exchanges between the groups.



A tour of Chicago's Loop Synagogue

On that same tour, the bus scraped and dented its roof while going under an unmarked bridge on the city's North Side. A passenger on the bus took out a piece of paper and wrote a note indicating that it was not the bus driver's fault, as the bridge did not have a height clearance sign. The note, signed by everyone, was given to the driver to pass along to his company. No one wanted to see him get into trouble. Actually, it was my fault for choosing that route. After

that mishap, I bought a trucker's guide for bridge clearances for the area so that such an incident would never recur.

For about a dozen years, I gave a U.S. State Department-sponsored ethnic tour to a busload of English teachers from scores of small countries, including Nepal, Ghana, Chad, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The purpose in touring the U.S. was to help improve English skills and learn about American culture. It was intriguing to see how these different groups got along so well, often joking and teasing each other, although their mother countries were sometimes at odds.

I also gave tours to visiting Dutch, German, Chinese, and Russian groups. The Chinese were very quiet until we visited Chinatown, where they started talking, yelling, and taking numerous photos.

The Russian group at first asked if it could take pictures. I later noted that the Russians were especially eager to take photos of the poorer parts of the city, probably to bring back pictures of a decadent America. As they wanted to go shopping, we stopped at Northbrook Court for lunch and shopping. I steered them away from Neiman Marcus and instead toward Sears, which used to be in the mall.

The Russians also wanted to see an American home so I took them into my modest home in Wilmette. While looking around, their leader spotted a set of the Jewish encyclopedias on my bookshelves. He shouted to the group that I was Jewish. However, that fact didn't seem to affect my relations with the comrades. They liked that my parents came from Russia and that I knew a few Russian words.

Another interesting group was the Flying Farmers of the Midwest. They flew their planes into the Greater Kankakee Airport. By chartered bus, they picked me up in front of the Art Institute. We toured some interesting parts of the city, and then they took the bus back to the Kankakee Airport.

I never had any problems with the passengers. After a designated stop, they usually returned to the bus promptly at the appointed time. At times, I asked passengers with special knowledge of particular sites to talk to the group, including a daughter of the rabbi of an Austin shul, a daughter of an owner of a busy Roosevelt Road radio and record store, and a man who helped buy the real estate for the Skokie yeshiva. While I was teaching on the tours, I was also learning a great deal from the passengers, who fed me bits of interesting information.

In general, the best groups were the senior citizens who knew the city and waxed nostalgic as we went through certain areas. The least interesting were the visiting businessmen who seemed more interested in finding out where the best restaurants and girly shows were. The school groups from Anshe Emet and Beth Hillel B'nai Emunah were interesting because almost everything was new to them.



Outside the Mexican Fine Arts Museum in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood

## Around the World in 90-Plus Years

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I also once gave a tour to a busload of Jewish doctors, one of whom was celebrating his birthday. My doctor was on that tour. He later told me to take it easy, to not jump up and down out of my seat so often.

A couple of tours for Glencoe's Am Shalom congregation were especially interesting. On one tour, the bus stopped at the Greater Bethlehem Healing Temple, a Black church, at 12 South Oakley Avenue to deliver food; on another, we went to the Waldheim Cemetery, where the synagogue had bought a regular plot to bury Hebrew prayer books. The synagogue, during a special ritual service, buried hundreds of books, most old but some evidently new and unused.

Another unusual tour was for a Bar Mitzvah group that wanted a Jewish tour after the Saturday service but didn't want the rabbi to know that they were touring on Shabbat. The bus parked a couple of blocks from the shul, and the guests were quietly told where to board the bus. After the tour, they celebrated in a reserved part of Manny's delicatessen.

Some of the tours were for small family groups celebrating a birthday or just wanting a nostalgic tour of their old neighborhood. For these tours, a 15-passenger van was rented.

I had my favorite drivers. One, Kass, would even call me the night before the tour to tell me of possible problems, such as road construction, bridge openings, or a movie set. Another was my son, Danny, who works as a supervisor for PACE, the suburban bus company. Besides driving some of the large buses, he also drove the vans on my tours. One driver who brought in a group from the Kenosha Museum gave me a tip—rather than vice versa—because, he said, he learned so much on the tour.

My fees for the tours were quite modest; I didn't depend on them for a living. I usually wouldn't charge charitable or poor groups. For 10 years, I was chairman of the geography department at Chicago State University so I could set my own hours, although most tours were on weekends. I would sell my Chicago book and my "*Jews of Chicago*" book on many of the tours.

Through the years, a number of frightening incidents occurred. On one waterway tour, heading back to Chicago, we experienced a heavy rainstorm and dense fog. The captain could barely see ahead. Fortunately, he was able to contact a ship ahead of us with working radar. We were able to pull up close to it and follow it back to Chicago safely.

Another time, I took a group into a small veteran's cemetery north of Fort Sheridan. The road in the cemetery was narrow, and it



The author frequently engaged his family in his tours, including his son (right), who often served as his bus driver.

had been raining. The bus's right wheels slipped off the road and got stuck in the mud. As hard as the driver tried, he couldn't get the bus out of the mud. Fortunately, after a few minutes, the cemetery's groundskeeper happened by, saw our dilemma, and told us to wait. In a few minutes, he returned, leading a U.S. Army bulldozer with a couple of soldiers in it. They hooked up to the stuck bus and pulled it out of the mud. Thankfully, we were on our way.

One summer, I had scheduled a Jewish tour through Humboldt Park. The day before the tour, I heard about rioting in the area. I drove out there to assess. I saw people waving the Puerto Rican flag, so I bought a couple of the flags and put them on the bus. As we safely passed through the neighborhood next day, we were met with cheers.

Twice our tour bus was sideswiped—once, on a curvy stretch of Sheridan Road in Glencoe by a car of young cleaning women; a second time, by an empty school bus downtown. There were no injuries in either case, but waiting for the police to come, especially in Chicago, delayed the tours and threw them off schedule.

A scary incident took place in the Vietnamese neighborhood on Argyle Avenue. After eating in one of their restaurants, I gave the group time to walk its two blocks, go into a Vietnamese grocery store with some very exotic products, shop at the other stores, and then meet at the bus at the corner of Argyle and Sheridan Road at a designated time. At the given time, I made my usual count of bus passengers and found we were one short. On questioning, I found an older woman was missing. We waited a while, and then I went out in search of her—to no avail. I then had the bus circle the area without any success. When I heard a passing ambulance siren, my heart sank. I finally I gave up and continued the tour. Eventually, I learned that the old lady was partially deaf, didn't hear my instructions, got lost, and took the CTA bus home safely.

Other challenges included maneuvering carefully along flooded roads in Lake County and in the Indiana Dunes. There was also the occasional restaurant problem. One time, I was to bring an Illinois Geographical Society group to lunch at Manny's on a Sunday, only belatedly learning that it was closed for a movie shoot. Finding another restaurant that could handle about 50 was not easy. We ended up eating at Santorini's in Greektown.

One incident about which I laugh in hindsight took place in the Joliet area. The tour bus came to a new long and very high bridge, and the bus driver pulled to the side of the road at the foot of the bridge and stopped. I noticed he was very agitated, and I asked what was wrong. He said he was afraid of heights and didn't want to jeopardize the passengers. He said he thought his assignment was to tour in Chicago, where he could handle its little hills. So we were stuck there until a relief driver came.

Top 10 lists are fun to read, so after thinking back over the years as to what my passengers most enjoyed viewing or visiting, I offer my top 20, not in any particular order:

- (1) Chicago Loop Synagogue, with its beautiful windows
- (2) the architectural treasure KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation, across from President Obama's home
- (3) the North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, designed by the famed architect Minoru Yamasaki
- (4) Maxwell Street
- (5) In North Lawndale, Roosevelt Road and Independence and Douglas boulevards, with its Black churches (formerly synagogues)
- (6) South Shore Cultural Center
- (7) Wicker Park

***“To me, giving the tours was one of the most enjoyable, rewarding, and fulfilling experiences of my life. Though my final tour was in 2019, when I was 96, I still think of these tours that I loved giving. They live on frequently in my mind and even in my dreams.”***

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## Around the World in 90-Plus Years

continued from previous page

- (8) University of Chicago in Hyde Park
- (9) shopping and snacking in Long Grove
- (10) Devon Avenue in West Rogers Park
- (11) the South Water (produce) Market
- (12) Graceland Cemetery, where so many prominent people are buried
- (13) Oak Woods Cemetery on the South Side, which has a very old Jewish section, as well as a new one
- (14) Pullman
- (15) Prairie Avenue
- (16) the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago in Lemont
- (17) the gold-domed Saints Volodymyr & Olha Ukrainian Catholic Church
- (18) Louis Sullivan's Holy Trinity Church (for Russians)
- (19) the waterway tour
- (20) the colorful and challenging Indiana Dunes tour, where tourists climbed Mt. Baldy.

Over the years, it was most heartwarming to receive letters and comments from tour members. I received one from the membership of Temple Israel in Gary, Indiana, who wrote, "Some of the group had lived in Chicago all their lives and were shocked at how much they didn't know. You opened our eyes to another world, and we loved it. Thank you for giving us a day to remember."

To me, giving the tours was one of the most enjoyable, rewarding, and fulfilling experiences of my life. Though my final tour was in 2019, when I was 96, I still think of these tours that I loved giving. They live on frequently in my mind and even in my dreams.

## Sunday in the Park...with Birds

In CJHS's first in-person get-together since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, about two dozen Society members and friends gathered in Wilmette's Gillson Park on a beautiful Sunday morning this past September to take in the wonders of the feathery world. They were led in this birding expedition by CJHS member, naturalist, and avian maven Joel Greenberg, along with birdwatching veteran Paul Quintas. The group observed about 20 species, according to Greenberg, including six types of warblers, a cuckoo, and three red-breasted nuthatches (photo right). The red-breasted nuthatch, said Greenberg, is "a distinctive bird that migrates through and often spends the winter here [in Chicago], but not always."

This recent outing followed a highly successful CJHS Zoom program this past June on Jewish Chicagoans involved in birding activities. In addition to Greenberg, it featured local birding experts Josh Engel and Nathan Goldberg, who are also Society members. The program can be viewed on the CJHS website: [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org).



A red-breasted nuthatch.

Photo by John Cassidy



Photo by Rachelle Gold

## We Want You—and Your (West Rogers Park) Images!

**A**lthough we have recently entered the Jewish New Year of 5782, the Society is already hard at work on a dynamic program for early 5783.

In an exciting collaboration with our friends at the Jewish Neighborhood Development Council (JNDC) of Chicago, the CJHS is co-sponsoring and -organizing a photography exhibit at Northtown Branch of the Chicago Public Library that will illuminate the century-long history of Chicago's Jewish community in West Rogers Park. This partnership comes following a vote by the CJHS Officers and Board of Directors to devote time and resources to a venture that has the potential to enhance the CJHS's name recognition and stature in both the Jewish and general communities.

This collaboration, of course, will necessitate the engagement of you, our members and friends.

If you and your family members have roots in the West Rogers Park neighborhood, or if you still live there, we would love to review any images you may possess that depict the religious, organizational, familial, commercial, and cultural lives of the Jewish community there. You may email images to *CJH* Editor Robert Nagler Miller at [Robertnaglermiller@gmail.com](mailto:Robertnaglermiller@gmail.com), or you may contact him at 323-793-1293 to let him know that you would like to share personal photos with the Society.

We cannot promise that every image you share with us will be used—we are capping the exhibit at approximately 20 images—but we can assure you that we will handle with the utmost of care any picture you contribute to the exhibition. After we professionally scan and enlarge the images for the show—an expense the Society and JNDC is jointly sharing—we will return the pictures to you in the condition in which you donated them to us.

The exhibition, to take place in the light-filled gallery and meeting space at the entrance of the Northtown Library, located at 6800 N. Western Avenue, will commence in October 2022 and run for at least four weeks.

We thank JNDC Executive Director Ellen Doppelt and JNDC Board President Beverly Siegel, both members of the CJHS, for inviting us to partner with them on what we expect will be a most successful program.

## CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

*The Hebrew phrase means  
"More Power to You."*

Board member **Dr. Irving Cutler** was awarded the honor Distinguished Geographer at the recent annual meeting of the Illinois Geographical Society.



Society member **Sandra Holubow** curated and organized the "Celebrating Survival" exhibit by 12 members of the Artists Breakfast Group. The show was at Chicago's Leslie Wolfe Gallery this past

September and October. Holubow's painting "Nature's Playground" won 1st Prize at a recent Chicago Alliance of Visual Arts exhibit; it was part of the Chicago Society of Artists Exhibit at Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois, this past month.

Society member **Rabbi Burton H. Wax**, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Ezras Israel, compiled a compendium of readings for the synagogue, "Yamim Noraim: Some Random Thoughts for the High Holiday Season," 9th series 2021-5782. Rabbi Wax gave a presentation for the Society on "Orthodoxy/Traditional Judaism in Chicago" in June 2012 at Ezras Israel. An edited text of his lecture is in the Spring 2012 journal.

Board member **Alissa Zeffren** was named by JUF one of its extraordinary 36 Under 36.

Holubow's "Nature's Playground"

Look to the rock from which you were hewn

הביטו אל-צור חצבתכם



## chicago jewish historical society

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### THE ANNUAL BOOK ISSUE

- Around Chicago in 90-Plus Years
- Chicago's Young Jewish Athletes
- Anne Rorimer's "Monuments Man"
- The Librarian Recommends:  
Rachel Kamin's Reading List
- New and Notable Books
- Book Review: "Spies of No Country:  
Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel"
- Urbana-Champaign Memories: Alvin  
Sokolow, Ph.D.
- The High Holy Days: A Walk to Shul in  
North Lawndale
- We Want You—and Your  
(West Rogers Park) Images!

#### Our History and Mission

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society, founded in 1977, is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Forty-four years later, our mission remains the discovery, collection, and

#### ABOUT THE SOCIETY

dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open programs, tours, and outreach to youth and others interested in the preservation of Chicago Jewish history.

**Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials** The card design features the Society's handsome logo. Pack of five cards and envelopes \$36. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at \$5 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to CJHS, P.O. Box 597004, Chicago, IL 60659-7004. You may also order online at our website.

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

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

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

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

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

Life Membership \$1,000

Annual Dues

Historian 500

Scholar 250

Sponsor 100

Patron 65

Member 40

Student (with I.D.) 10



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