



CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

*“To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope in a world serially threatened by despair.”—
the late Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom*

CJHS Member Sybil Mervis Catalyzes Creation of Central Illinois Jewish Archives at State’s Flagship University Campus

Much has been written, and will continue to be written, about the countless contributions that Chicago’s Jews have made in and around the city over the past two centuries. Almost every aspect of the city’s history and culture has been touched by the hard work and ingenuity of Jews who were born, grew up, and/or were educated in Chicago or its metropolitan area.

But what of Jews from other parts of the state—from, say, Bloomington/Normal, Decatur, Moline, Rock Island, Springfield, Urbana/Champaign, Danville, Peoria, Quincy, Ottawa, Mattoon, or Granite City? Though paling in number to their Chicago-area landsmen—perhaps making up less than 10 percent of Illinois’s Jewish population of approximately 300,000—they, too, have led lives of meaning and interest.



The facade of the main library at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, which houses the newly established Central Illinois Jewish Communities Archives/Mervis Archives
photo courtesy of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Now, thanks to a new initiative at the flagship campus of the University of Illinois, in Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), scholars, students, and others interested in Jewish life in small-town and small-city Illinois will be able to gain more than a cursory look at some of the Jewish Illinoisans whose personal and professional achievements had an impact on civic, political, and commercial life in the central and southern part of the state.

The initiative, the Central Illinois Jewish Communities Archives/Mervis Archives, housed at the university library’s Illinois History and Lincoln Collections, contains histories of Jewish-owned businesses, synagogues, rabbis, and other Jewish leaders from Danville, Illinois, a city of 31,000 approximately 140 miles due south of Chicago. In its heyday, Danville had a Jewish population of several hundred, according to Chicago Jewish Historical Society member Sybil Mervis, the catalyst behind the archive.

In 2012, Mervis took on the daunting task of shutting the remaining synagogue in Danville, Congregation Anshe Knesset Israel, which like many shuls in central and southern Illinois, experienced significantly declining memberships as younger generations of Jews moved to Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and other bigger cities for educational and professional opportunities.

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CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold

Chicago Jews had an early and significant role in the Zionist movement to establish the State of Israel. Recently, I had the opportunity to focus on an outstanding but lesser-known chapter of this history: the voluntary participation of Chicago Jews in World War I in the 38th and 39th Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers—known as the Jewish Legion—of the British Army in Palestine (the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces). Together with a predecessor World War I Jewish unit, the Zion Mule Corps, these were the first all-Jewish army units fighting for the Jewish homeland since the Maccabean Wars and the Bar Kochba Revolt.

I was impelled to immerse myself in this chapter of our history after CJHS received two separate, but related, inquiries from Israeli researchers. One was from Yaakov Ben-Ze'ev, a volunteer with the organization "Latet Panim" (Giving a Face to the Fallen), who wanted a list of names of the 212 Chicagoans who fought in the Jewish

Legion. "Latet Panim" was founded "to memorialize the fallen soldiers who fell before and during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948...[and to] complete the details of the lives of those individuals whose tombstones lack basic information and whose life stories are relatively unknown" (latetpanim.org.il/en). Ben-Ze'ev is trying to complete his research on Yaakov (Jake) Tucker, who served in the Jewish Legion, then remained in Palestine after World War I, ultimately dying in 1920 while defending Tel Hai (along with Joseph Trumpeldor). Tucker, a Detroit native, had relatives in Chicago, including a brother, who may also have served in the Jewish Legion.

Another inquiry came from an archivist at Jerusalem's Central Zionist Archives, who wanted information about a reported 1922 visit to Chicago and Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation by John Henry Patterson, the commander of the Jewish Legion.

I was not able to provide the specific information the researchers were seeking. However, as I explored the subjects of their inquiries, I eagerly discovered parts of our history that I hope you will find as illuminating and fascinating as I do.

The Jewish Legion

The idea for Jewish fighting units in World War I was based on their utility in achieving both Zionist and British aims. A major Zionist proponent was Ze'ev Jabotinsky, profiled in CJH by Walter Roth ("Jabotinsky: The Zionist Leader and Ideological Forebear of Today's Likud Party Drew Attention Wherever He Went, Even During His Two Visits to Chicago," Summer, 1996). Roth writes that in 1914, Jabotinsky "became convinced that the Turkish empire would collapse and that the Zionist movement should arm itself and abandon its neutral role in determining Middle-East Policy...While in Alexandria, Egypt, he and a fellow Russian Jew and former Russian officer, Joseph Trumpeldor, conceived the idea of raising a Jewish legion from the displaced Jewish deportees then living in Egypt to fight with the British against the Turks."

In alignment with British Army interests, the Zion Mule Corps was formed in 1915. It was commanded by Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson, the appointee of British Commander General John Maxwell. Patterson, a Dublin-born Christian, was a veteran officer with knowledge and love of the Bible and Jewish history and a dedicated supporter of the restoration of the Jewish people in the Holy Land. Trumpeldor was his second in command. Jabotinsky refused to join the Corps because it performed transport and support functions only and did not serve in Palestine. (It participated in the failed Gallipoli campaign in Turkey that ended in January 1916.) However, the creation of a Jewish force was the nucleus of Jewish defense forces formed later, including what eventually became the Israel Defense Forces.

Jabotinsky, Trumpeldor, and others continued a campaign for a Jewish force that would fight on the Palestine front. Events developed in their favor, due to the easing of opposition and to changing political conditions that benefited their cause. The formation of the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers was announced, with Patterson in command, in August 1917 and deployed in late October 1917. (It should be noted that the Balfour Declaration



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had been in preparation and was issued on November 2, a few days after the Battalion was convened.) This was a fighting force, to operate in Palestine. The initial enlistees (most of the 38th) were from Britain, many of Russian birth. Later groups of volunteers came from the United States, Canada, Russia, and other countries. The 39th consisted mostly of Americans and Canadians; and a 40th, of Jews in Palestine. Both Trumpeldor and Jabotinsky served with Patterson.



The members of the Jewish Legion on the steps of the Douglas Park Refectory, April 1918.

photo by Bloom, DeHaven Studio

Chicagoans in the Jewish Legion

Let's return to Ben Ze'ev's inquiry about 212 Chicago volunteers. Did we have their names? The figure of 212 came from Dr. Irving Cutler's "The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb." Dr. Cutler informed us that his source was Hyman L. Meites's "History of the Jews of Chicago" (pages 267-270). The Meites account and newspaper articles sent to us by Rabbi Dr. Jerold Isenberg, Executive Director of Mizrahi-Religious Zionists of Chicago, offer valuable details—but, unfortunately, just a few names rather than a whole list.

Citing the "American Jewish Year Book of 5680 (1919-1920)," Meites states that the first Chicago volunteers enlisted at British recruiting offices in Chicago as early as December 1917. An organized recruiting campaign, coordinated with the Zionist Organization, was established with offices in American cities. Meites highlights two Chicago Jews who were active in recruiting: Harry Goldman and Israel Sholom Privul. Volunteers who were not subject to the U.S. draft—that is, those who were not naturalized citizens—were also eligible for service.

On April 8, 1918, the first group of Chicago volunteers, numbering 75 to 100, left for training at a British camp in Windsor, Nova Scotia, before transfer to Plymouth, England, and deployment to Palestine. Before their departure, they were honored with a grand send-off by the Chicago Jewish community. The *Sentinel* described the festivities: a banquet on the evening of April 6 at the Ashland Club, hosted by Zionist and community leaders; a parade the next morning through Lawndale to a ceremony at the Douglas Park Refectory; and a farewell ceremony and march to the departure depot on April 8. "The Highland Drums rolled, the Stars and Stripes and Union Jack filed out with the Zion flag...the crowd cheering them as they went" ("Legion Leaves for Palestine," April 12, 1918). Additional Chicago Jews volunteered in the months ahead.

The return of Jewish Legion soldiers is mentioned in the *Chicago Tribune* ("Mauretania Brings Men of British and U.S. Armies Home," April 8, 1919). The names Henry Pasick, Samuel Misskin, Abe Sher, and Charles Ruchnick appear.

There is a great deal written about the Jewish Legion. I encourage you to pick a source and learn more. A good summary can be found at the Jewish Virtual Library (jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-legion). I very highly recommend the captivating account written by Patterson himself in his 1922

From Budapest to Chicago: A Hungarian-Jewish CJHS Member Reflects on Her Immigrant Experiences

By Susan Meschel, PhD

Early Life in Hungary

My family lived in Hungary for at least 150 years. It was a middle-class, observant Jewish family that kept all of the traditions of Jews in that area. My paternal grandparents had a small grocery store; my maternal grandfather ran a small factory that produced ice, which was delivered in blocks to hospitals and homes through horse and buggy.

Jews in Hungary were much more assimilated into the fabric of the society than in Eastern Europe. The spoken language was Hungarian. In my father's generation, they worked as rabbis, cantors, accountants, farmers, pub owners, kosher wine makers, and physicians. My Uncle David studied medicine in Prague, Czech Republic, because from 1920 onward, the antisemitic laws in Hungary retained a three-percent quota of Jewish students at universities.

The antisemitic laws became more strident in the years leading up to World War II. During the war, Hungary was an ally of Nazi Germany. In the Hungarian army units, many thousands of Jews served as forced laborers. Besides suffering from cold, hunger, and torture, they were assigned to locate explosives ahead of the army without training. Many thousands died in the forced labor battalions, both on the Russian front and in Hungary. The story of the forced labor battalions is a neglected part of the study of the Holocaust. My father was deported from a labor camp to Buchenwald in 1944 and perished in Bergen Belsen. On March 19, 1944, the German Army occupied Hungary, and the deportations began. All of my family members outside of Budapest were deported to Auschwitz. In four months, the Nazis and their Hungarian allies managed to murder 90 percent of Hungarian Jews.

My mother and I survived by luck—not by any plan we had devised. An underground Zionist group saved our lives in one dramatic incident. Three young Zionists dressed in Nazi uniform took us out of a line of people being led to the trains to Auschwitz. The Soviet Army liberated us in January 1945.

After World War II, life began again, though we mourned our missing relatives. Until 1948, Hungary was a liberal democracy. Then the Communist regime took over, and Soviet repressions began. The Zionist youth movement became illegal. Correspondence with Israel was forbidden, as was the study of Hebrew.

I attended the only Jewish high school permitted behind the Iron Curtain. This was considered risky, because I was labeled a “clerical reactionary” who was not a viable candidate for advancement or possible admission to the university. But those four years in the Anna Frank Gymnasium were the highlights of my years in Hungary. I met my future husband, George Meschel, there and enjoyed the family atmosphere and the high level of education the school provided.

By some luck and the help of a kind professor, I was admitted to the Technical University in Budapest to study chemical engineering. Around the same time—on October 23, 1956—the Hungarian revolution against Soviet domination began. For a week or two, it seemed that the young revolutionary fighters might succeed. However, on November 4, 1956, the Russian Army marched into Budapest and, by heavy artillery, defeated the fighters, many of whom were students.

In this chaotic and hopeless situation, many of us thought of leaving the country. The Soviet occupation, the resurgence of antisemitism, and the dangers to students who might be captured by Soviet forces all pointed to the need to take action. We left Budapest, our home, under a cover of a tarpaulin on the back of a truck. We were camouflaged by a row of cabbages. It took three smugglers to get us to the border area. During the night, over mined, muddy fields, we crossed the border over to Austria. I will always recall the green “Trink Coca-Cola” billboard, a sign that we had successfully escaped. The goal was to live in freedom!

Arrival in the United States

At that time, the United States accepted approximately 30,000 Hungarian refugees. The first groups contained families who had relatives in the country. We boarded an old U.S. Army plane in Munich on January 6, 1957. It was a rather exciting trip because we needed to make a forced landing in Scotland for repairs of two motors. The Scots treated us royally with tea and cookies. We also landed in Newfoundland, Canada, to refuel. The view at the airport was an amazing sight of glistening snow, like a fairyland. We arrived in Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, a well-organized U.S. Army camp. The cots were comfortable and the food much better than in the refugee camps in Austria. What particularly impressed me were the bowls of

bananas and oranges, which we could not get in Hungary. Two ladies in Red Cross uniforms walked around the camp trying to teach us English. They carried a list of what they judged as the 10 ten most important sentences we should learn in our new country. I recall only the first two:

1. "Doctor please take out my appendix."
2. "What size bra do you wear?"

We had great fun repeating the sentences and practicing with each other.

Aurora

My mother's sister and her husband came to pick us up in the camp and took us to their home in Aurora, Illinois, where I began my education in becoming an American. I must say that I did not like most of the new experiences in Aurora. We landed in a small town where, apparently, people did not walk, only drove. They also did not eat fresh fruit—only green Jell-O molds at dinner. My cousins showed me the new styles of clothing. At that time, large circular skirts were in fashion, with poodles embroidered on the hem. They also wore thick "bobby socks." Probably it would have been easier to create a relationship if we could talk, but I did not know any English. In Hungary, we were allowed to study only Russian. Uncle Martin instructed his wife, Aunt Elsa, to take me shopping—not for clothing, even though I had nothing to wear except the garments in which I had crossed the border to Austria, but for a girdle. Uncle Martin was concerned that if I walked and my hips swayed, people would think that I was a prostitute. I was quite offended by this purchase. In Hungary, only very old ladies or disabled people wore girdles. I was a 20-year-old, physically active girl.

Chicago

After a couple of weeks of difficult adjustments in Aurora, my stepfather—my mother had remarried by the time we had immigrated—and I took the train to Chicago. It was wonderful to see the big city and, in particular, beautiful Lake Michigan. We found an apartment on Pine Grove Avenue in the Lakeview neighborhood. It was a bustling, busy area. The L train was a few blocks away.

I quickly learned to navigate the different trains and their stops. The Broadway buses were also near our apartment. In a few weeks, I found the public library on Addison Street, where I became a frequent visitor. The most important discovery for me was Anshe Emet Synagogue, which influenced my life in a very significant way, as I will share a bit later in my story.

Jewish Vocational Services tried to get my parents and me jobs. Our relatives insisted that all new immigrants began their life in America with sewing jobs. My mother started working for the Hart Schaffner & Marx company, where the quota was to sew on 1,600 buttons per day.

I refused to do sewing and began to look around for something more suitable for myself. I found an advertisement by the Toni Company, which manufactured the first home permanent kits. I was hired as a chemistry technician, even though I could not speak more than a few words of English.

Most of the employees in the laboratory were newcomers to the country. My boss recited Shakespeare all day in Polish. I was assigned to test hair samples for protein damage by the home permanent lotion. We also compared the results to the competitors' products.



Susan Meschel (left), at her very first job in the United States: the Toni Company laboratories, which were located in Chicago's Merchandise Mart. Susan is pictured with the only other Jewish employee at the Toni labs, Ellie David, who survived Auschwitz as a teenager.

From Budapest to Chicago

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The laboratory was in the Merchandise Mart. It was great fun to visit the appliance and furniture showrooms during coffee breaks. All these items indicated to me a life of luxury and comfort in the United States. In addition to a salary, the Toni Company offered

other ways to earn money. We could volunteer to try out new products and be paid for this service.

My favorite job was the testing of the diaper rash ointment. A sample of baby urine was placed on our arm, and then the ointment was applied. In the afternoon, we reported the results. If the urine sample was from an older child and smelled, we received the royal treatment. The staff served us lunch, and we received perfume samples so we could go home on the train without offending fellow passengers. This was a great way to earn tax-free money!

I remember visiting the swimming pool in the Loyola University downtown center, on the top floor. It was a beautiful, old building and the view from the top was spectacular.

Learning English

Near Broadway and Irving Park, there was a YMCA offering English courses for newcomers. I happily signed up with great expectations. Unfortunately, I walked out after three lessons in tears. The written essay the instructor assigned was titled "From Gadfly to Gadabout." After more than 50 years and a PhD from the University of Chicago, I still have no idea what we were supposed to write. I left the class hopeless about learning the language. The World University Service offered a crash English course at the University of Illinois, in Urbana. I tried to register, but they accepted only male students. I still bear a grudge about this gender discrimination. I tried to find other ways to learn English. Jewish Family Services organized 5 o'clock tea dances on Washington Street, West of the Loop, which gave many of us a chance to practice spoken English.

I spent a lot of time at the downtown public library, which is now the Chicago Cultural Center. It had a large collection of Hungarian books. I practiced reading "Gone with the Wind," page by page, with the Hungarian translation. By the time Scarlett said, "Tomorrow is another day," I had a working vocabulary.

A Day on Maxwell Street

My stepfather enjoyed Maxwell Street tremendously. He loved the crowd, the noise, the bargaining. I remember that he bought a winter coat for two dollars after an hour of bargaining. He spoke some Yiddish, which was the language of communication there. My experiences were not as pleasant. I was asked by a distant relative to sell hats before Easter. I disliked selling the unattractive hats and charging extra for the ugly decorations. However, I enjoyed people-watching and observing the diverse clientele. One of my customers was a Puerto Rican American girl who made a purchase with a big bag of pennies.

Turning Point

The critical turning point in my life in Chicago happened during the summer of 1957. I will always be grateful to Rabbi Ira Eisenstein of Anshe Emet for taking an interest in me. He asked one of the synagogue's members to take me to visit the University of Chicago. We arrived on an early summer day, when all the bushes were ablaze with flowers. I loved the medieval-style buildings and the atmosphere of the campus. The Court Theatre group was rehearsing Oscar Wilde's "Salome," using the surrounding buildings as props. For the first time, English did not appear to be an obstacle course, but something poetic and beautiful. My companion introduced me to Mrs. Vera Laska, the foreign student advisor. Fortunately, for me, she was from Slovakia and could understand some Hungarian. She suggested that I apply for a scholarship. The University of Chicago offered to accept six Hungarian refugee students on probation. We needed to show that we could earn a B average, since we had no written documentation of previous academic work. I was the only woman student among the six accepted. I also take a bit of pride in that I was the only student among of us who earned a PhD in chemistry.

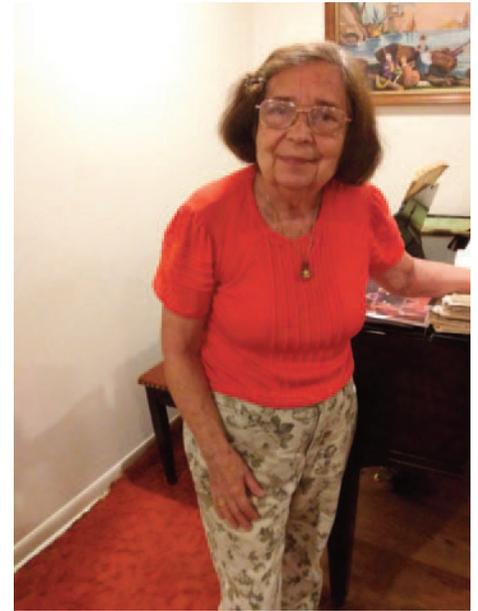
Epilogue

After the initial roadblocks, and culture shocks, I found my niche in the United States. I am grateful for the choices and opportunities offered to me. Throughout my years as a student and, later, as a faculty member and researcher, I never experienced antisemitism in this country.

George Meschel, whom I had met in the Anna Frank Gymnasium in Budapest, escaped from Hungary with my family. We married in 1958 in Chicago. We moved to Hyde Park, and we have been living here since. George earned a PhD in clinical psychology. We have two daughters and two wonderful grandchildren. We have been members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society for many years. Our interest in the Society was motivated by our friendship of many years with Evie and Jerry Levin, who is the organization's Co-President.

If you are interested in additional details about my life, you may consult the following references:

1. Andrew Handler, Susan V. Meschel: "Young People Speak: Surviving the Holocaust in Hungary." Franklin Watts Inc, New York, 1994.
2. Andrew Handler, Susan V. Meschel: "Red Star, Blue Star: The Lives and Times of Jewish Students in Communist Hungary." Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, New York, 1997.
3. Susan V. Meschel, Peter Tarjan: "Transplanted Lives: The Adventures of Young Jewish Immigrants from Post-Fascist and Communist Hungary to the Free World." CreateSpace 2016



The author, in a recent photo

CJHS Program Recap: Robb Packer's Virtual Tour of North Side Shuls

Chicago synagogue authority and CJHS member Robb Packer, author of "Doors of Redemption: The Forgotten Synagogues of Chicago and Other Communal Buildings" and "Chicago's Forgotten Synagogues," led Society members and friends on a rich visual and narrative journey of Chicago synagogues of yesteryear in an October 2021 Zoom presentation that focused on Jewish congregations in the Albany Park, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and West Town neighborhoods, all of which once had large and thriving Jewish communities.

Packer, who has spent years researching, photographing, and writing about now-defunct synagogues, mourned the demise of these institutions, which, he said, are "disappearing at an alarming rate," often the victims of "a wrecking ball."

Yet rather than striking a lugubrious tone, Packer offered a more nuanced, and somewhat hopeful, message, arguing that many of the ornate, intricately designed buildings that had once served as synagogues in the late 19th and earlier part of the 20th centuries remain intact—as churches. A case in point, he said, was the Cross & Crown Community Church, at 3707 West Ainslie Street, which had once housed Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue.



The now-defunct Congregation Shaare Zedek, which graced the Logan Square neighborhood

"Many of our Christian brothers and sisters were very, very respectful of their Jewish roots," he said, pointing to this Albany Park church as one of many examples. "In many cases, they went to great lengths to restore and maintain many of the beautiful windows, the stonework, the cornerstones. So that, in fact, even though it is a Protestant church today, you can still tell it was a synagogue."

Contextualizing it further, Packer said that a number of buildings that had once been churches in predominantly Christian neighborhoods had subsequently been transformed into synagogues. It is the loss of a building itself—not the fact that it no longer served as a synagogue—that is the greatest tragedy, he suggested, because a wrecking ball wipes the slate clean and eradicates, short of any preexisting photography or other documentation, the history of a city, society, and culture.

Packer's Zoom presentation can be heard in its entirety on the CJHS website: www.chicagojewishhistory.org.

Mervis Archives

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“There were so few members remaining,” Mervis said, “that I appeared to be the one physically capable of closing the place.”

While Mervis donated the synagogue’s Torahs, *siddurim*, and furniture to various Jewish institutions, including a number of Chabads and Hillels, there was a question as to how to dispose of the boxes of documentation relating to the history of the synagogue, its members, and other Jews of Danville. Eventually, she took ownership of them and began writing a record of the Jews of Danville, which has been published in the local historical society magazine as well as in *Chicago Jewish History* (Volume 44, No. 3, Summer 2020). She soon realized, however, that the information in her possession needed wider dissemination to enhance others’ understanding of small-town Illinois Jewish life and to encourage other dwindling Jewish communities in the state to contribute their own histories to a repository to which the public could have easy access.

Mervis approached Erez Cohen, the director of Hillel at UIUC, her alma mater, who facilitated the establishment of the archives at the university library. It is the hope of Mervis, Cohen, and university officials that the archives will grow to include the records of Jewish life in other small towns and cities throughout Illinois, where Jews participated actively in civic and commercial life, often in numbers disproportionate to their actual share of the population.

“Perhaps you grew up in a small town,” Mervis recounted in a recent Zoom presentation about the archives. “You may remember all the small stores on Main Street, locally owned or managed by Jewish men and women—ready-to-wear stores, men’s haberdasheries, shoe repair shops, lingerie shops, and of course, a furniture store.”

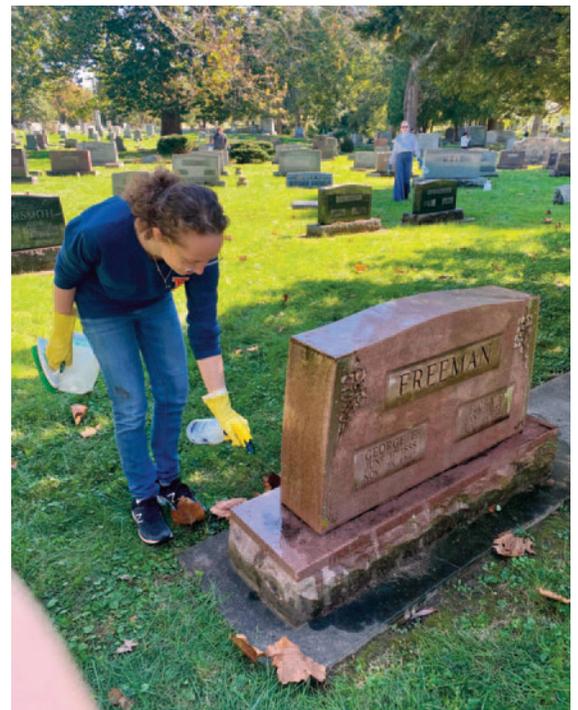
In conjuring up small-town Jewish life in Illinois and elsewhere in the Midwest and South, Mervis was harkening back to the first half of the 20th century, when many Jewish merchants, peddlers, and skilled tradesmen took up residence in off-the-beaten-path, out-of-the-way rural and semirural locales to make their mark and assume leadership positions. Mervis’s own family was a prime example. It owned and operated Stern Furniture Store, a fixture in downtown Bloomington, Illinois, for more than 80 years. Mervis’s sister, Judith Stern Harrison Markowitz, who died earlier this year, served for two terms as the city’s first female mayor, following several terms as a city council member.

Mervis’s late husband, Lou, who died in 2017, also had roots in small-town Illinois and Indiana. His grandfather, William, a poor Jewish immigrant, earned his keep in the scrap metal business in Arcola, Illinois, and Veedersburg, Indiana, before turning over his business to Isadore Mervis, Lou’s father. Lou was born in 1934 and grew up in Danville, where he spent his entire life, with the exception of his college years at Indiana University Bloomington, from which he graduated with honors. He subsequently took over the scrap metal business and morphed it into Mervis Industries, a multistate operation that is the fourth largest family-owned provider of recyclable products in the United States. Active in civic affairs, he served for 17 years on the Illinois State Board of Education. Two of Sybil and Lou Mervis’s sons are now directly involved in the operations of Mervis Industries.

Mervis said that as Jewish communities in the central and southern part of Illinois continue to shrink, the archives’ *raison d’être* becomes that much more compelling.

“When, as in my own town of Danville, all the Jews have gone, what will the remaining residents remember about us?” she asked.

The answer, she suggested, is found in the Central Illinois Jewish Communities Archives/Mervis Archives.



Students from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s Hillel recently took part in a cleanup of Danville’s Jewish Cemetery, which dates back to the 1870s.

Co-President's Message

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memoir, "With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign" (available from Amazon as an on-demand book). Patterson also wrote "With the Zionists in Gallipoli" (1916). Jabotinsky authored "The Story of the Jewish Legion" (1945).

Patterson in Chicago

Patterson was an extraordinary and heroic figure for his accomplishments both during and outside his British Army Service and his contribution to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. During his command of the Zion Mule Corps and the Jewish Legion, he became an increasingly fervent advocate for the Jewish people, a Jewish army, and a Jewish State of Israel. He established strong personal and ideological ties with Jabotinsky, and spent much of his remaining years lobbying and advocating for a Jewish army and Jewish State. He traveled to cities in the United States and other countries to rally support.

Did Patterson visit Chicago in 1922? Probably, but I couldn't locate documentation. However, I did find that he came to Chicago in 1924 or 1925, and during this visit, he completed a transaction that harkened back to a spectacular exploit that brought him fame years before his World War I service: his killing of the "man-eating lions of Tsavo."

In 1898, after several years in the British army, Patterson, who had studied engineering, took a job supervising the building of a railroad bridge over the Tsavo River in what is now Kenya (then part of the British Empire). A catastrophe struck. Lions, in an atypical act, seized workers from their tents and killed them for food, terrorizing the workers and the local population. Patterson, an experienced hunter, managed to shoot and kill the two man-eating lions. He turned them into trophy rugs. During the Chicago visit, he sold the lion remains to the Field Museum. According to the museum website, "Museum staff restored the lions to their former glory—minus the appetite—by mounting them as taxidermy specimens and displaying them in a diorama" (fieldmuseum.org/blog/tsavo-lions), where they are on display to this day. Patterson wrote a book about the episode, "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo" (1907), and several movies were produced about it.



Lt. Col. John Henry Patterson
photo courtesy of the
Jabotinsky Institute

Patterson's Return to Israel

His lion-killing heroism aside, Patterson's lasting legacy is his Zionism. As such, I was moved to learn that Patterson's final resting place is in Israel. In 2014, the ashes of Patterson and his wife were moved from California, where he died in 1947, to the cemetery of Moshav Avihayil, a community founded in 1932 by Jewish Legion veterans. Patterson had helped raise funds to establish the Moshav. He had conveyed his wishes to "lay with his soldiers."

In a ceremony presided over by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli dignitaries, Netanyahu called Patterson "the godfather of the Israeli Army." He said, "The idea that Jews could take up arms and fight and be perhaps among the best fighters in the world, this was viewed as lunacy, not only among the non-Jews, but among the Jews themselves...he infused in them their own confidence to take up the sword of David and to defend ourselves" (gov.il/en/Departments/news/eventgdodim041214).

Netanyahu's words did more than represent the nation. They came from a close family connection. Netanyahu's father, Dr. Benzion Netanyahu, was Jabotinsky's personal secretary in 1940. Jabotinsky, head of the Zionist Revisionist Movement that he founded in 1923, was trying at the time to convince the British to form a Jewish army to fight the Nazis. Tragically, he died of a heart attack later that year during a visit to the United States to gain support for his plan. He was 59. Benzion Netanyahu went on to become a Revisionist leader, a scholar of Jewish history (especially the era of the Spanish Inquisition), and a professor at Cornell University (1971-1975).

Benzion Netanyahu chose Patterson to be the godfather of his son Yonatan, born in 1946. Commander "Yoni" Netanyahu was killed while leading the rescue mission in Entebbe, Uganda, on July 4, 1976.

Readers, if you are familiar with any of the soldiers named in this article or you know anyone who served in the Jewish Legion, or you are aware of any past Chicago organizations or memorials for Jewish Legion veterans, please contact us at info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

Urbana-Champaign Memories Continued: Dr. Zalman Usiskin and Donald Newman

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society 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.

The Hillel Foundation Choir, 1959–1963

by Dr. Zalman Usiskin

In 1959, the Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign welcomed a new rabbi, H. Hirsch Cohen. Rabbi Cohen was a Reform rabbi. For him, the most important services of the week were the Friday night services. The Saturday morning services were Conservative/Orthodox.

That same year, I entered the university as a freshman. At Chicago's Von Steuben High School, I had worked hard and gotten good grades, but I convinced myself that now I would really have to work hard so I should be careful and not get involved in activities that could take significant time.

And then there was a mixer at the beginning of the fall semester at Hillel, and I went and met Rabbi Cohen. He asked me what connections I had to Judaism. I told him that my parents were ardent Zionists; that I had been brought up in a kosher household; and that I had attended many years of Hebrew classes at a Conservative synagogue, Shaare Tikvah, and the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago.

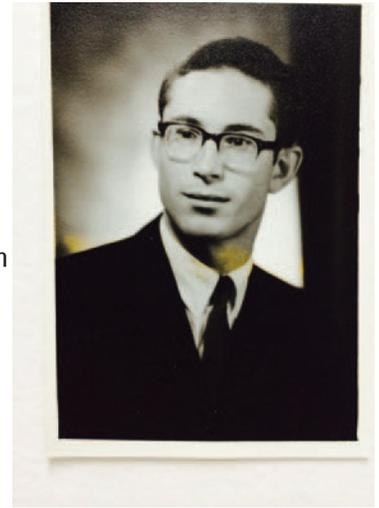
Then my pride got the best of me. I mentioned that I had been a cantor for youth services at Shaare Tikvah since the age of 8 and a student director of my high school choir and another choir outside of school. I also told him that I had sung for two years in the choir at Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue (KJS) at Friday evening services and on the High Holidays.

Rabbi Cohen asked whether I would be interested in being the cantor and forming a choir to sing at Friday evening services. I told him I would think about it. A few of my fellow choir members from high school were also at the university, and I thought they could be a foundation for a choir. I felt I could use the music of Max Janowski that we sang at KJS and supplement it with a few pieces we had sung in high school.

The next week, I met with the rabbi and agreed to try to form a choir that would sing at Friday evening services. Somehow, we found singers, ordered music, and by the end of the fall 1959 semester, we were rehearsing once a week and singing a few pieces at the Friday services.

When Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approached the fall semesters of my freshman and sophomore years, I could not act as cantor because I was committed to KJS. But in my junior and senior years, I was cantor for Hillel's High Holiday services.

For my four years at Illinois, the choir sang at the Friday evening services during the school year. Some of our favorite songs were Janowski's "L'cha Dodi," "Sim Shalom," and "Ahavat Olam." There were 12 in the choir in its first year and more than 20 in its last two years, with many fine voices. Some members of the Hillel choir sang in the University's Concert Choir, the best mixed chorus on campus. Jules Rothschild, Fran Israelstam, and Fern Nelson were among those in both groups and in the Hillel choir for at least three of the four years of its existence. Attendance gradually grew at these Friday evening services so that they were averaging 100-plus students at a time when Hillels at most other campuses were experiencing declines in participation.



Dr. Zalman Usiskin from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 1963 yearbook

I had thought that when I graduated, there would be enough of a tradition to continue the choir, but my understanding is that the choir ceased to exist.

About the author: Dr. Usiskin is professor emeritus of education at the University of Chicago, where he served as director of the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project for many decades. Dr. Usiskin received his doctorate in education from the University of Michigan. He grew up on the city's North Side. In addition to Von Steuben, he is a proud alumnus of Peterson Elementary School.

Living at Hillel

by Donald Newman

After graduating from Senn High School on the North Side of Chicago in 1957, my twin brother, Gerald, and I went off to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where we joined a Jewish fraternity, Phi Sigma Delta, which subsequently merged into ZBT many years ago.

While living at Phi Sig Delt and being somewhat active at Hillel, then located at 4th and John Streets, I arranged with the Hillel rabbi, H. Hirsch Cohen, then a recent graduate of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, to rent the apartment in the rear of the Hillel building. I lived there for two years while attending the university.

While living at Hillel, I maintained the laws of kashruth. I was also responsible for opening the building each morning and locking it at night. I usually had a roommate who also kept kosher. We attended Shabbat services and helped out when a minyan was needed. There was a community kitchen on the main level, as well as a more run-down kitchen on the lower level. The latter was used by the Kosher Club, of which I was not a member.

I spent about six years at the university, including my undergraduate years and one year of law school. I then completed my law studies in Chicago, where I was a practicing attorney for 55 years before retiring.

My involvement in the Conservative Chicago Jewish community has revolved around membership and participation in several Conservative synagogues, along with Camp Ramah in Wisconsin. I have also made a number of visits to extended family in Israel, starting with the United Synagogue pilgrimage in 1958, where we flew to Israel in propeller airplanes, a 27-hour trip, with several stops for refueling. Several of my children and grandchildren have attended, or are attending, Jewish day schools in Chicago, and my daughter teaches at Chicago Jewish Day School. All of my children and grandchildren have been campers and on staff at Camp Ramah.



A 1957 photo of Donald Newman



Rabbi H. Hirsch Cohen (left)
with Cantor Maurice Levy of
Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue
*photo courtesy of
Jules Rothschild*

Editor's Note: After receiving the contributions from Dr. Usiskin and Mr. Newman, I endeavored to learn more about Rabbi H. Hirsch Cohen, who figures prominently in both of their narratives. cursory online research revealed that he had died weeks after their submissions to this publication—on November 25, 2021, at 96.

Rabbi Cohen left the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1965 to become the Hillel rabbi at the University of Connecticut (Uconn) Storrs, where he worked for almost three decades. He authored several books and lectured on biblical literature at Uconn.

A Massachusetts native, Rabbi Cohen was a graduate of Tufts University and Hebrew Union College. He later earned a doctorate in theology from Temple University. He remained in New England until the end of his life, spending most of the last 27 years on Cape Cod. His funeral, in fact, was held at the Cape Cod Synagogue, where he had embarked on his rabbinical career some 70-plus years earlier.

RNM

The History of the Ida Crown Jewish Academy

By Ezra Landman-Feigelson

The Chicago Jewish Academy, now known as Ida Crown Jewish Academy, was founded to resolve a problem. Many teens were dropping their Jewish studies after their bar mitzvot. Those who wanted a decent secular education went to public school in the mornings, and then a yeshiva in the evenings. They were tired from these long days, and rather than continuing their Torah studies, they would drop out (Rapoport). Community leaders were concerned that over time, a lack of a strong Jewish education would lead to assimilation (Rapoport). Thus, the Academy was created to address this issue (Rapoport).

In the summer of 1942, eight community leaders met to discuss what could be done to improve Jewish education and ensure the continuity of Judaism in the city (Rapoport). They included Alex Eisenstein, Max Cohen, Rabbi Leonard C. Mishkin, and Rabbi Menachem B. Sacks, leaders of the Associated Talmud Torah (ATT), along with Rabbis Ephraim Epstein, Jacob Greenberg, Saul Silber, and Samuel Siegel of the Hebrew Theological College (HTC) (Rapoport). The Academy was created with a specific purpose in mind: “to integrate secular studies with a thorough Jewish education, in order to foster religious living and learning among the rank and file of American Jewish youth.” (*The Sentinel*). The Academy would be sponsored by the ATT and HTC, and a Joint Committee was formed to represent the two agencies (Rapoport). The Co-Chairmen of the Joint Committee were Harry A. Lipsky, a former member of the Chicago Board of Education, and Joseph Rolnick; Rabbi Harold A. Berger served as Secretary (Rapoport). Eventually, the Joint Committee morphed into the Board of Governors.

As Educational Director of the ATT, Rabbi Mishkin, along with Rabbi Berger, approached the University of Chicago’s School of Education with the hopes it could help find someone who was experienced in creating a school (Rapoport). The university recommended renowned educator Dr. Paul R. Pierce, who had just published a book on the development of secondary schools (Rapoport). Dr. Pierce became the Academy’s educational consultant just before its first school year began (Rapoport). Dr. Pierce hired four general studies teachers and appointed longtime high school administrator Glenn K. Kelly as principal (Rapoport). Judaic classes would be taught by the rabbis at HTC (Rapoport).

The Academy opened in Chicago’s Lawndale Neighborhood, the epicenter of Chicago Jewry at the time, in the 1942–43 school year. There were 42 students in grades 7 to 9 in the first year, with a plan to add a 7th grade class each year, until the 9th graders became seniors. An “experimental and pioneering venture,” it was the first school of its kind in Chicago and only one of seven outside the New York metropolitan area (Rapoport). The Academy opened with some opposition. Not everyone supported the idea of a parochial school because they saw it as contrary to the Great American Melting Pot, a very prevalent idea in the first half of the 20th century (Rabbi Leonard Matanky, Dean of Ida Crown Jewish Academy).

As the Academy grew, more space was needed. In May 1945, The ATT acquired the Metropolitan Masonic Temple near Lawndale as a future home for the Academy. In the meantime, Kelly resigned as principal at the end of the 1944–45 school year and Rabbi Shlomo Rapoport, a beloved mathematics teacher, who had been at the Academy since its inception, was appointed as acting principal. Ultimately, he became the permanent principal, a position he held for the next 35 years. (*Academy Memoirs*, 1946). The Academy graduated its first class in 1946, consisting of nine students, eight males and one female. It moved to the newly renovated Metropolitan Masonic Temple Building two years later and continued to grow, with a student body of 250 in grades 7 to 12. The Academy then opened a second branch, known as the North Side Branch, in the Lakeview neighborhood. The North Side Branch held classes in an existing elementary school building called the Torah Center. The North Side Branch lasted for three years, as enrollment was insufficient and the costs were too high. The students who were in the North Side Branch moved back to Metropolitan Masonic Temple following the closure of the satellite branch (Rapoport).

The Lawndale neighborhood began to change demographically in the 1950s, with many more Black families taking up residence. The Jewish families who had made up more than half of the neighborhood in the 1930s started to move north to Albany Park and Rogers Park, as well as to suburbs like Skokie and Lincolnwood. (steansfamilyfoundation.org). Due to the population shift, the Academy remained near Lawndale only for another year and a half before permanently moving north (Rapoport).

The Torah Center building in Lakeview was available, as the Torah Center had merged with the Hillel Day School, creating Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School. Rabbi Rapoport moved the entire school back to Lakeview (Rapoport).

The Lakeview location worked in the Academy's favor, as it attracted students from the far north and south sides of Chicago. This was the first time since 1947 that the entire school was housed in a building that was built as a school. It had a gym and could use Anshe Sholom synagogue next door as an auditorium space for assemblies (Rapoport).

Around this time, the Academy opened two gender-segregated, dual-curriculum divisions for families who wanted a strong general and Jewish education without a co-educational environment: the Yeshiva Boys High School and the Girls School, which ultimately became independent of the Academy (Rapoport).

As time went on, the Lakeview campus became too small for the student size. Again, with the help of the ATT, plans were made for a new school building in the West Ridge neighborhood (unofficially known as West Rogers Park). Following World War II through the 1960s, this neighborhood became highly populated by Jewish families from all different backgrounds (timesofisrael.com). Regardless of religious observance, the neighborhood had a strong Zionist feel (Friedman). This new location also worked well for families who had moved outside of the city limits into nearby suburbs.

When the Academy moved to West Ridge, it was renamed Ida Crown Jewish Academy (ICJA), in honor of the matriarch of the Crown family and its \$300,000 gift to the school (*Chicago Tribune*). The new building, at 2828 West Pratt Boulevard, was designed to house 500 students. The Academy moved into its new home at the end of the 1967-68 school year. At the dedication ceremony, Rabbi Rapoport reflected on the school's address and how 28-28 in Gematria is "כח - כח", which means "strength - strength," and how it should go from strength to strength (Berger).

An ICJA alumna from the 1980s observed a wider spectrum of Jewish diversity among the students than is seen today. This is likely due to the opening of Chicagoland Jewish High School—now Rochelle Zell—in 2001, which draws Jewish students and families across all branches of Judaism. Prior to this time, non-Orthodox families who were seeking a strong Jewish and general studies curriculum would opt for ICJA (Landman).

continued on following page

About the author: Recent Ida Crown Jewish Academy graduate Ezra Landman-Feigelson is among the newest—and youngest—members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society (CJHS) and serves the Society in the capacity of Student Liaison.

Ezra, who is spending a gap year studying in Israel, is a Chicago native who early in childhood developed a love of all things Jewish, Chicago, and historic.

"Ever since I was 3 years old, I knew many Chicago street names and their locations," he said. "I would even give people step-by-step directions on how to get to places. I have always loved riding and learning the history of the L and giving friends personalized tours of the city."



While in high school, Ezra had a chance to cultivate his expertise in Chicago public transportation as an intern at the Chicago Transit Authority. During non-school hours, he also spent a great deal of time at the Chicago History Museum's research center, poring over the history of Chicago's street address system. A longtime fan of Geoffrey Baer, a WTTW host and producer and Chicago architecture authority, Ezra was a contestant on Baer's "The Great Chicago Quiz Show."

Ezra grew up in the city's North Side in the Lakeview neighborhood and is a fourth-generation Chicagoan. He, his parents, and his younger sister and brother belong to Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation. The siblings all attended Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, where Ezra became better acquainted with CJHS during a special event sponsored by the school.

"I had the opportunity to go on an amazing bus tour of the Jewish South Side with Dr. Irving Cutler," he recounted, referring to the longtime CJHS Board member, author, professor emeritus, and expert in Chicago Jewish history. "I was the youngest person on the bus by about 50 years and enjoyed my time with my new acquaintances."

During his time in Israel, Ezra has been connecting with other Jewish Chicagoans, in whom he hopes to instill an enthusiasm for the work of the CJHS. He also looks forward to contributing additional articles to the *CJH* in the years ahead.

Ida Crown Academy

continued from previous page

The Academy continued to grow over the decades, and the need for a building that could better support the school's expansive offerings prompted the search for the Academy's fifth home. Rand McNally, the mapmaking company in Skokie, was in the process of downsizing, just as the Academy was looking to expand (*Crain's Chicago Business*). Following many hurdles, including a recession, the new home of the Academy became a reality just a little over five years ago, where it continues to provide a high-quality, co-educational, general, and Jewish education to its students, inspired by its original mission.

As revealed in the first Academy yearbook, *Academy Memoirs*, many of the characteristics that still define the Academy took form in its early years. An active student government was part of the culture from the first year. A basketball team and special interest clubs were added in the second. Classes were divided between intensive Judaics in the morning and general studies in the afternoon.

While the core courses, which were originally offered at the Academy, are mostly the same as today, many others have been added over the years, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Electives now include A.P. Psychology, Psychology, Business Law, Journalism, Band, Advanced Art, and EMT (emergency medical technician) training.

ICJA now has an expansive sports program, including wrestling, basketball, soccer, and more. There are now more than 25 special interest clubs, as well as state-of-the-art science laboratories (icja.org). The faculty has grown as the school has grown, and there are now 40-plus teachers.

Finally, the student composition of classes has changed significantly since the school's early years. This was shown in the most recent graduating class, the 75th graduating class in the Academy's history, which is made up of 55 students, with slightly more than half female.

Noting a typical day at the school, the Academy stated in its initial yearbook, "The Academy student must receive a well-rounded education in both Jewish and general fields, enabling him to live a harmonious life as a good citizen and good Jew on the American scene" (p. 33).

Since its opening, over 4,000 students have graduated from the Academy. Many represent multiple generations of graduates from the same families. Each graduate serves as a tribute to the eight visionaries who imagined a school that would provide a strong general education and, at the same time, keep their students educated and identified as Jews. Its graduates are leaders in both the Jewish and secular worlds who have made contributions to the arts, science, education, and more.

The "experiment" has been a success.

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Letters from Our Members and Friends

L'Chaim—We'll Drink to That

One of my grandmothers, Elsa Rosenthal Marcus, had an uncle, Charles Stern, who was a pioneer in the California wine industry. He was known as the first to ship wine in railroad tank cars. My great-grandfather, Meier Rosenthal, was a vice president of the company, and my grandfather, Isadore Marcus—Elsa's husband—managed the Chicago office, which went by various names over time, including Stern & Rose, Charles Stern & Sons, Charles Stern & Son, and Charles Stern & Sons, Inc.

At different times, the Chicago office was located at 27 Lake Street, 185–187 Lake Street, 198–200 East Kinzie Street, 51–53 West Kenzie Street, and 1300–1306 South Canal Street. Prohibition ended the Stern wine business, but I have one bottle of pre-Prohibition Stern wine, which is undrinkable.



Today, Siena Tavern, known for good food and drink, has the 51–53 West Kinzie address. I don't know whether this is the exact location of Stern's pre-Prohibition Chicago office, since the city went through street-numbering changes in 1908 and 1909. But since liquor is still sold at the address once claimed by the Stern wine business, things seem to have come full circle.

Alice Solovy
Highland Park, Illinois

Further Reflections on the Three Patriots Monument

I grew up in Chicago and still have family members in the greater Chicago area.

As a child and into my teens, I regarded the monument celebrating the financial, military, and political leaders of the Revolutionary War as quite significant. Seeing Robert Morris, George Washington, and Haym Salomon together was an important statement about the roots and role of Jews in American history. There is nothing comparable to it in Chicago.

Growing up through the 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement and the Viet Nam War as part of my developing identity, I found that this monument served a constant reminder and challenge to me about the importance of building an inclusive society. I entered Northwestern University, planning to work in education with minority groups, but eventually I found my calling as a rabbi for the Jewish community. I recently retired as Senior Rabbi of one of the largest synagogues in North America.

Whenever I returned to Chicago — I did community organization in the mid 1970s — I often would pay attention to the monument and reflect on my family history. My mother came to Milwaukee from Poland in 1938 to care for her sister and to attend Marquette University. She was the first of her generation to gain an advanced degree. My father and his brother, who were taken captive by the Czarist Army during World War I, eventually came to America. My uncle built a strong business, and one of his sons, Hebert Kohl, became a United States Senator from Wisconsin. Our family has always given back to the community, grateful for what America represented to us, to other Jewish immigrants, and to millions of others who sought a new life on these shores.

The roots of this desire for freedom, the efforts required to attain and maintain liberty, and the role of Jews in the history of the United States are embodied in the tribute memorial in the center of Chicago. I urge you to maintain this monument in its place, along with others that speak to the contributions of Native Americans, Blacks, and other minorities. They remind us all of the contributions of different peoples to the founding and future of America.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl
Rabbi Emeritus
Beth Tzedec Congregation
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Letters

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The Tours of Our Dreams

I read with interest the article by Dr. Irving Cutler, which appeared on the front page of *Chicago Jewish History* ("Around Chicago in 90-Plus Years: Tales of a Jewish Tour Guide," fall 2020 issue).

I first encountered Dr. Cutler more than 20 years ago, when I was an attendee of his Jewish Chicago tour given to Temple Shalom members. That tour was but a distant memory when I was asked in the fall of 2017 to serve as tour guide number two on the second bus that followed Dr. Cutler's—he was tour guide number one on the lead bus—on his Jewish Chicago tour. Our attendees were from Temple Beth-El of Munster, Indiana.

There was to be a "feed," or a live stream, of Dr. Cutler's commentary on my bus. And for a while, there was. But then it stopped working. So, as we moved through Douglas Boulevard on the West Side portion of the tour, I was able to recognize some of the facades that Dr. Cutler's bus had stopped in front of and could offer some commentary on the architectural features of the former synagogues, some of which still had the original name carved in stone above the entrances. I followed his lead throughout the entire tour.

I recall that we drove through what had been the produce-selling South Water Market. My father, an onion and potato broker, would sometimes take me along as a youngster when he had to make a business visit there. The entire market had moved, and the existing buildings were converted to residences. It was quite a surprise for me to see for the first time what the new South Water Market looked like! Like night and day.

We had a long lunch stop at Manny's Cafeteria & Delicatessen. Once again, I was recalling lunch visits with my father after spending a morning at his office near South Water Market. The food was every bit as good as I remembered. We all had hot soup, a sandwich, and a beverage, and we all loved the meal.

Then it was on for a tour of KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation in Hyde Park. On the way into the synagogue, everyone stopped to view President Obama's home across the street. We then gathered in a small auditorium at KAM to hear about the synagogue's history before viewing the main sanctuary. It was my first trip to KAM, and I was excited to be there.

Working with Dr. Cutler was a humbling experience for me. The best guides are often the ones who intimately know the areas they tour. Dr. Cutler was born in the Maxwell Street area, grew up in North Lawndale, and had lived in Hyde Park. For me, he was the model of a consummate professional and an outstanding tour guide. After reading his article, I had no doubt that he loved his career as a tour guide. That truly was, and is, a blessing.

Dr. Cutler, as you said in your article, "May your tours continue to live on frequently in your mind and in your dreams."

Michael Levinson
CTPA Certified Tour Guide
Chicago

"Dr. Cutler was born in the Maxwell Street area, grew up in North Lawndale, and had lived in Hyde Park. For me, he was the model of a consummate professional and an outstanding tour guide."

Welcome New Members

Robin Axelrod
Ann Arbor, MI

Liza Bachrach
South Elgin, IL

John Blew
Chicago, IL

Rabbi Reuven and Dr. Nechama
Brand
Skokie, IL

Rita Eicht
Highland Park, IL

Barbara Gilbert
Skokie, IL

Daniel Greene and Lisa
Meyerowitz
Evanston IL

Rabbi Jerold and Jocelyn Isenberg
Chicago, IL

Diane Jacobs
Austin, TX

Joseph Loundy
Chicago, IL

Robert Miller
Northbrook, IL

Donald Newman
Northbrook, IL

Zorba Paster
Oregon, WI

Hilarie Pitman Pozesky
Oak Park, IL

Edward Rice
Northbrook, IL

Alice Schreyer
Chicago, IL

Dr. Michael A. Solomon
Glencoe, IL

Terry Taylor
Niles, IL

CJHS members...

YASHER KOACH!

CJHS Board member **Eric Benjaminson** presented "My Family's History: Jewish Victims and Fighters During the Holocaust in the East" in an online program this past November sponsored by the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.

CJHS Co-President **Dr. Rachelle Gold** made a presentation to Lincolnwood's Congregation Yehuda Moshe as part of its annual Night of Knowledge this past November. She was invited to present by longtime CJHS Board member **Elise Ginsparg**, who has chaired the event for many years. Dr. Gold was also among those honored in November 2021 by AMIT Children, the Israeli-based educational organization, at its second annual Bessies awards ceremony, which was held virtually. She was the only Chicagoan so recognized. In addition, she was featured in the December 2021 *Jewish Chicago: The JUF News Magazine* article about heritage cooking. The article was penned by *CJH* Editor **Robert Nagler Miller**, who writes frequently for other Jewish publications.

CJHS member **Michael Greenberg**, author of "Tables Turned on Them: Jewish GIs Guarding Nazi POWS Held in the United States," talked this past summer about his book and research during a

Facebook and Zoom webinar sponsored by The National WWII museum.

CJHS member **Dr. Jessica Kirzane**, Assistant Instructional Professor in Yiddish in the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago, engaged in a virtual dialogue this past fall with *New Yorker* cartoonist Ken Krimstein following the release of his book, "When I Grow Up: The Lost Autobiographies of Six Yiddish Teens." Their conversation was held under the auspices of the university's Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies. Dr. Kirzane is also the editor-in-chief of *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*.

Board member and past CJHS President **Dr. Edward Mazur** was interviewed by the *Jerusalem Post* travel podcast about Chicago tourist spots of Jewish and general interest. (The podcast will air in 2022, and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will provide information so that members and others can listen to it.) Dr. Mazur also recently was an active participant in a Zoom book club discussion about Matti Friedman's "Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel," which he reviewed in *CJH's* fall 2021 book issue.

Board member **Rabbi Moshe Simkovich** contributed an article to "Agnon's Tales of the Land of Israel," a new book edited by Jeffrey Saks and Shalom Camry and published this past year by Pickwick Publications.

Thank You, and Best Wishes

The CJHS extends its warmest wishes to our members and friends, as well as to their loved ones, for continued good health and happiness in 2022.

The past two years have presented many challenges, but the Society has demonstrated its resilience and its ability to adapt to difficult circumstances. In 2021 alone, we presented no fewer than seven well-attended Zoom programs on a wide variety of topics of interest to Chicago Jewish audiences: from the Rosenwald Schools and the forgotten synagogues on the city's North Side, to the history of the Greater Chicago Jewish Festival and Jewish camping.

We took a strong stand on the preservation of the Three Patriots Monument in downtown Chicago. Our advocacy on this issue garnered the respect and attention of Chicago public officials. We also developed and launched a Chicago Jewish history curriculum, which piloted at the Ida Crown Jewish Academy this past fall.

We even had a safe and pleasant in-person outing: a birdwatching event at Gillson Park in Wilmette!

We were able to do all of this—and produce our award-winning quarterly journal—thanks to you. Your support has sustained us for more than 40 years, and as we gear up for new programming and initiatives in 2022, we know that we will need your membership to continue providing fresh, interesting, and relevant content on all matters relating to the history and culture of Jews in Chicago and environs.

We have included another membership envelope with the current issue of *CJH*, knowing fully well that many of you have already re-upped your membership following our letter to you last month. Thank you for your response and your generosity. But perhaps there are others in your family or social circle who would find our programming of interest? Consider giving them a gift of membership in our esteemed Society.

To those of you who have yet to renew your membership, now is the time to do so. Our basic annual membership fee remains unchanged, despite the higher costs we have incurred to produce programs and publications. We have retained this low rate, understanding that the past several years have posed countless challenges to many in our community.

Thanks again for being part of our community. We are honored to serve you and look forward to your continued participation in our programs.

The past two years have presented many challenges, but the Chicago Jewish Historical Society has demonstrated its resilience and its ability to adapt to difficult circumstances... thanks, in no small measure, to our committed members and friends.

CJHS Board Nominations

The CJHS is pleased to announce that the following Board members have been renominated for new terms that will end in 2025:

Sidney Amdur
Eric Benjaminson
Herb Eiseman
Joan Pomeranc
Rabbi Moshe Simkovich

The CJHS also wants to thank longtime Society member Karen Kaplan, who recently stepped down from the Board following the conclusion of her current term. In addition to her years of service on the Board, Kaplan has contributed to the Society's success in many other ways. She has written many articles for *CJH* over the years, and she has helped draw new members to the CJHS.

A Year in Review: 2021 CJHS Programs

Hear them, hear them.

As 2021 continued to present obstacles to in-person meetings and programs, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society remained committed to providing stimulating and informative online presentations for our members' and friends' enjoyment and edification.

If you were unable to join us on the days of our Zoom programs, do not fret. You can still listen to them. Simply go to the homepage of the CJHS's website—www.chicagojewishhistory.org—and follow the instructions to open the links to our programs, all of which have been recorded.

Here are 2021's program offerings:

January 10

"Come Away with Camp," presented by Jerry Kaye.

February 7

"The Greater Chicago Jewish Festival - Creating the Heart and Soul of Jewish Chicago" with Michael Lorge.

April 20

"The Three Patriots Statue: Why It Matters."

April 25

"Driving West Rogers Park: Chicago's Once and Future Neighborhood," with Beverly Siegel and Ellen Doppelt.

June 13

"CJHS Presents an At-Home Birding Adventure," with Joel Greenberg, Josh Engel, and Nathan Goldberg.

October 10

"Historic North Side Shuls: Albany Park, Division Street, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and West Town," by Robert Packer.

December 19

Author Andrew Feiler talks about his latest book, "A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America."

The 2022 year has already kicked off with a bang. With our occasional program partner, Chicago's preeminent Caxton Club, the CJHS co-hosted on January 19 the online program "The Durchslag Haggadah Collection: A Magnificent Scholarly Collection Reflecting Personal Connections and a Collector's Passion." We are hard at work to bring you other dynamic programs throughout the year. Stay tuned to get the latest about upcoming presentations.

If you have ideas for future CJHS-sponsored programs, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Society's Co-Presidents, Jerry Levin and Dr. Rachelle Gold, at jerry.42@rcn.com and rachgo6@aol.com, respectively, to share your thoughts.



Author and photographer Andrew Feiler

Look to the rock from which you were hewn

הביטו אל-צור חצבתכם



chicago jewish historical society

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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

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

Inquiries: 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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