



# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

*“People’s talk and the stories they tell have been engraved on my heart, and some of them have flown into my pen”—S. Y. Agnon*

## From Stock Boy to Lawyer: Adventures on Chicago’s Old West Side

By Herb Kanter

I was born on June 5, 1939, and lived at 1222 South Keeler Avenue, Chicago, on the first floor of a three-story L-shaped apartment building. It was just south of Roosevelt Road, also known as 12th Street. My telephone number was Lawndale 1-5979. I attended Bryant Grammar School at 13th Street and Kedvale Avenue, kitty-corner from Congregation B’nai Reuven, the Orthodox synagogue where I attended Hebrew school and had my Bar Mitzvah.

My first job was as stock boy at the Manny Berger Shoe Store at 15th Street and Crawford Avenue. I then started working on Maxwell Street on Saturdays and Sundays, taking a streetcar early in the morning so I could open my stand on the street by 8 a.m. I would pick up a box of women’s nylons and men’s cotton socks on a Red Ryder Wagon, and I was in business. I sold my goods at three pairs for a dollar.

I then worked for Smilin’ Lou the Angel of Maxwell Street at his store on 13th Street and Newberry Avenue. We would set up tables and racks of shirts and pants on the street. The store was next to Vera’s hotdog stand, where, early in the morning, I would smell grilled pork chops, bratwurst, and onions.



The author as a budding epicurean

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## CJHS Presents: The Synagogues of Chicago’s South Side, with Robb Packer on March 15

Members and friends, please mark your calendars now — and register, of course! — for an upcoming CJHS presentation on a topic of great interest to many in our community.

CJHS member Robb Packer, a Chicago synagogue maven who has documented the almost 200-year history of shuls in the City of Big Shoulders, will be speaking on the synagogues of Chicago’s South Side, covering congregations in Hyde Park, South Shore, and Jeffery Manor, among other neighborhoods, and extending his reach to the southern suburbs (such as Homewood, Flossmoor, and Olympia Fields) and northwest Indiana.

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Sinai Congregation was originally on the South Side.

## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dr. Rachelle Gold

What are your favorite ways of learning about Chicago Jewish history? We hope that perusing *Chicago Jewish History* (CJH), reading books by CJHS authors, and attending CJHS public programs are near the top of your list. In the pre-digital era of CJHS's founding, these were the exclusive methods. Now, you also have the option to go to the CJHS website to read CJH and view recordings of programs we offered via Zoom.

In today's era, through digital technology, we are fortunate to have easy access to vastly expanded learning opportunities. I want to introduce you to a splendid example: the Jewish Chicago Research Portal (JCRP), a new resource created by our organizational "cousin," the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI). This tool is an exciting development for the Chicago Jewish community and everyone interested in Chicago Jewish history, not just genealogy enthusiasts.

We learned about JCRP from CJHS member Mike Karsen, Past President of JGSI and the initiator of the project. Through state-of-the-art software technology, JCRP enables the user to search a digitized trove of historical material compiled from selected Jewish sources, including our own *Chicago Jewish History*. As a longtime CJHS member who recognizes the unique historical value and high quality of *Chicago Jewish History*, Mike contacted us in the early stages of the project to request our permission to include our digital journal archive. We readily consented.

CJHS member Dale Amdur, Executive Editor of *Morasha*, the JGSI newsletter, summarized some facts Mike presented about the project in a November 2022 presentation for JGSI. She wrote, "The JGSI Jewish Chicago Resource Portal (currently in "beta," the user testing phase) has sources that contain more than names, dates, and vital records. In the subject database, there are 6,000 references from books, and references on Chicago Jewry, all JGSI meeting videos, and all past issues of *Morasha* and *Chicago Jewish History*."

Work on JCRP is ongoing and evolving. The database is expanding, and the search features are being refined and developed. The project relies on thousands of hours of work by a team of technical experts and dedicated volunteers.

At a presentation to the CJHS Board in December, Mike discussed JCRP and demonstrated its use. We tried a search — with delightful results — and we encourage you to do so. You can search JCRP through this link on the JGSI website: [jgsi.org/page-1845510](http://jgsi.org/page-1845510). Send feedback to Mike at [mike.karsen@gmail.com](mailto:mike.karsen@gmail.com). Eventually, using resources offered by JGSI, we hope to enhance our own journal search function.

On a related note, Mike reminded us that several seminal Chicago Jewish books and periodicals, well known to CJHS members, are available on the Internet to read and search. Books include "*The History of the Jews of Chicago*" by Hyman Meites (1924; published in facsimile edition by CJHS in 1990) and "*Bridges to an American City: A Guide to Chicago's Landsmanshaften, 1870-1990*" by Sidney Sorkin (1993). Periodicals include the popular weekly publication *The Chicago Jewish Sentinel* (1911-1996) and *The Chicago Jewish Post and Opinion* (1962-1981), which was digitized by JGSI in partnership with the University of Illinois.

We all extend our appreciation to JGSI for undertaking this important project. The Chicago Jewish community will greatly benefit for years to come. We are gratified that the expert knowledge amassed and so appealingly presented by CJHS will be more widely available thanks to the work of JGSI.



CJHS member Mike Karsen, who is also a member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI), initiated a research portal that will prove useful to all who are interested in the Jewish history of Chicago and Illinois.



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# Synagogues on the South Side

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Robb is the author, most recently, of "*Synagogues of Chicago: Faith, Form and Function 1851-2021: An Encyclopedic Book of Chicago's Synagogues, Temples and Community Buildings (Schools, Hospitals and Homes)*." He did a spectacular program for us in October 2021 on the shuls of Albany Park, Humboldt Park, Wicker Park, and West Town — which you can view on our website at [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org) — so you will not want to miss his latest program.

**The date:** Wednesday, March 15

**The time:** 7:30 p.m. (Central)

**The place:** Zoom

**To register:**

[www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org) (or wait for an invite that will be arriving in your email inbox soon)



The now-defunct Hyde Park Hebrew Center

**News flash:** As we go to press, CJHS wants to announce a spring presentation by CJHS member Dr. Daniel Greene, President and Librarian of the Newberry Library in Chicago. Details are forthcoming. Stay tuned.

## Welcome New Members

Nathan Lichtenstein Skokie, IL	Marvin Weinstein Chicago, IL
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## Jews and the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893

By Chaim Rosenberg, M.D., Ph.D.

The early Jewish settlers in Chicago were German-born. Several of them made their fortunes in real estate, manufacturing, and marketing. From 1880, Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews arrived in Chicago, many settling in the poor Maxwell Street neighborhood. During its first century, Chicago grew from a village into America's second city, with a population approaching 2 million. Chicago's 1893 World's Fair commemorated both the city's spectacular growth and the 400th anniversary of the journey of Christopher Columbus to the New World. Planning for the fair began with the appointment of a board of directors that included Abram M. Rothschild. Born to a German-Jewish family, Rothschild came to Chicago soon after the Great Fire and established the Palace Clothing Company. In 1895, he opened A.M. Rothschild and built it into one of Chicago's leading department stores.



Abram M. Rothschild

Dankmar Adler (1844-1900) was born in Germany and came to the United States in 1854 with his father, Rabbi Liebman Adler. Dankmar was one of Chicago's leading architects. He designed several synagogues, as well as the vast Auditorium Building, Jewelers' Building, and the Rothschild store. For the World's Fair, Dankmar Adler and his partner, Louis Sullivan, designed the Transportation Building with its famous

Dankmar Adler

Golden Gate. On display in the Transportation Building were many horse carriages, steam railroad engines, early automobiles that were powered by steam or electricity, and a plethora of bicycle companies, including the Chicago-based Sterling Bicycle Works.

In 1894, 25-year-old Annie Cohen Kopchovsky temporarily left her husband and three young children to

prove that a woman could cycle around the world. In a publicity stunt, Sterling Bicycle Works gave her a bicycle—and the promise to pay her \$10,000 if she successfully completed her journey. On September 12, 1895, Annie returned to Chicago to claim her prize money.



Annie Cohen Kopchovsky

Annie Cohen Kopchovsky, also known as Miss Londonderry, peddled her Chicago-built Sterling Bicycle Works cycle "around the world."

### Jewish Women's Congress

Born in Chicago in 1855, Hannah Greenebaum married merchant Henry Solomon. Solomon moved well beyond the traditional role of the Jewish woman as female head of her household to play a wider role in Jewish and secular society. Members of the Reform Congregation Sinai, she and her sister were the first Jewish women admitted to the prestigious Chicago Women's Club.



Hannah Greenebaum Solomon

Greenebaum Solomon was a member of the women's committee organizing the World's Parliament of Religions as part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. The Parliament aimed at mutual understanding and respect of all religions. Solomon used the occasion to arrange the Jewish Women's Congress, from September 4 to 7. The 93 delegates discussed the role of the Jewish woman from biblical to modern times, Jewish women as wage-earners, the role of women in religion, and their role in charitable works. Zionist leader Henrietta Szold, who went on to found the Hadassah women's organization, spoke on "What Judaism Has Done for Women." Solomon advocated for the Jewish poor and opposed the widespread practice of child labor. She set an example for other women to assume leadership positions in organizations. On the final day of

the Congress, the delegates voted to form the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), with Solomon as its first president. The NCJW grew rapidly in cities and towns across the nation. Today, the NCJW has 100 sections, aiming to "improve the quality of life for women, children and families and ... ensure individual rights and freedoms for all," as articulated in its mission statement.

### Midway Plaisance

Midway Plaisance was a mile-long, 600-foot-wide strip of land between 59th and 60th Streets in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. It contained the entertainment section of the 1893 World's Fair, with the famous 264-foot-high Ferris Wheel, Turkish Village, Cairo Street, African Village, Persian Bazaar, and Old Vienna, as well as indigenous villages from all over the world. Each village staged live performances of the dances, music, war chants, and costumes of their homelands. Thousands of visitors came each day to view the street artists, acrobats, jugglers, and belly dancers along Midway Plaisance. Among the performers were 19-year-old magician Ehrich Weiss, better known as Harry Houdini, the son of Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weiss; pianist and composer Scott Joplin; and sharpshooter Annie Oakley.

The genius behind the Midway Plaisance was 22-year-old impresario and sheet music publisher Sol Bloom. Born in 1870 in the central Illinois town of Pekin to Polish-Jewish immigrants, Bloom developed an interest in theater management. In 1889, he visited the Exposition Universelle in Paris and was much taken by the displays brought over from the French colonies in Africa and Asia.



The midway at the Expo's Turkish Village



Adler's Transportation Building

For the Midway Plaisance, Bloom offered visitors a stark contrast between the modern industrial world displayed at the World's Fair and the rural inhabitants of Africa and Asia. Bloom was helped by Istanbul-based Robert Levy and Dr. Cyrus Adler. Born in 1863 to a Jewish family in small-town Arkansas and raised in Philadelphia, Adler specialized in Oriental Studies after completing degrees at the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University. In 1890, he was sent to the Middle East to find exhibits for the Chicago Fair. Levy and Adler worked closely with L'Alliance Israélite Universelle, the French-Jewish philanthropy, to recruit craftsmen, artists, and merchants. Gaston Akoun, from an Algerian-Jewish family, together with other Sephardic Jews, owned concessions on the Midway Plaisance. Most of the inhabitants of the Turkish Village, including the belly dancers, were talented and educated Sephardic Jews. These exhibits helped create an exotic vision of Ottoman life.

Adler went on to play a major role in American-Jewish life as historian and founder of the Jewish Welfare Board and the Jewish Publication Society. He also served as Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. After the Columbian Exposition, Bloom moved from Chicago to New York. Entering politics, Bloom was elected in 1923 as a Democratic member of the United States House of Representatives from the 19th District in New York, representing Manhattan's Upper East Side, a seat he held until his death in 1949,

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## Jews and the Columbian Exposition

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Sol Bloom

when he was succeeded by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., the son of the late United States President. While in Congress, Bloom served as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was a strong supporter of Zionism and lobbied for American recognition of the State of Israel.

Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition closed on October 31. Many of the exhibits were sent to San Francisco for the 1904 California International Exposition. The Ferris Wheel was transferred to the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition held in St. Louis. Other exhibits went to Chicago's new Field Natural History Museum. A fire in January 1894 destroyed several of the major buildings.

The vast Palace of Fine Arts at the 1893 Fair, which had displayed the works of Jewish artists, including Max Rosenthal of Philadelphia and Louis Kronberg of Boston, was restored

some 30 to 40 years later, thanks to the beneficence of Sears, Roebuck magnate Julius Rosenwald, who chose the majestic structure as the home of the Museum of Science and Industry, which he helped found and underwrote with a gift of \$3 million.



PALACE OF FINE ARTS—SECTION OF SOUTH FRONT.  
The Palace of Fine Arts in 1893

### About the Author

A retired psychiatrist who was affiliated with Harvard and Boston University's medical schools, Dr. Chaim Rosenberg has long been passionate about American history. He is the author of more than a dozen books, including "Child Labor in America: A History," "The Life and Times of Francis Cabot Lowell, 1775-1817," and "The International Harvester Company: A History of the Founding Families and Their Machines."

The information and photos contained in Dr. Rosenberg's *CJH* article on the Columbian Exposition can be found in his 2008 book, "America at the Fair: Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition," and his profiles and images of Illinois Jewish veterans, which also appear in this issue, are from his latest book, "Shield of David: A History of Jewish Servicemen in America's Armed Forces" (2022).

All of Dr. Rosenberg's books can be purchased on Amazon and other online platforms.

Dr. Rosenberg was born in South Africa, where he completed his medical training at the University of Witwatersrand, and he has lived in Israel, the United Kingdom, and Australia. He now resides with his wife in Chicago.



Chaim Rosenberg,  
M.D., Ph.D

## The Palestinian Shul

By Sima Miller

**T**he Agudat B'nei Ub'not Eretz Yisroel Synagogue, or, as its members called it, "The Palestinian Shul," was located in a small building on Chicago's West Side at 1418 S. St. Louis Avenue. The shul, a "shtiebel," not well known to many in the Jewish community, was an Orthodox congregation, comprised of families who emigrated from Palestine in the early 1900s.

Life was very difficult in Palestine in those years, and, at age 21, in 1921, Dad decided to immigrate to America with his sister-in law and family to pursue a better life. The trip by ship was very precarious, but with G-d's help, they arrived safely to the land of opportunity, the "Goldeneh Medinah." His middle brother, "Yisrolik," (Dr. Israel Ben Ze'ev) and his family remained in Palestine, where he became the director of Arabic education in Jerusalem. My father never forgot the land of his birth. Israel was constantly in his mind and heart. When he retired in the 1970s, Mom and Dad booked a trip to Israel. What a revelation for him after all those many years!

Many of the congregants of the synagogue, like my father, were fifth- and sixth-generation Palestinians. The synagogue's by-laws held that there was to be no pulpit rabbi to lead the congregation. Instead, learned men took turns conducting the services, which, I was told, were very heartfelt and emotional. Each man had an assignment to complete a portion of the Torah. They had learning sessions once a week and on Shabbat, as well as classes every night.

The women took a very active role in the affairs of the shul. They raised money by having banquets, luncheons, picnics, and rummage sales. They did the cooking and baking. They were in charge of finances and fundraising; every week, packages and money were sent to their families in Palestine. Picnics were held on the South Side in Oak Forest and Beverly Woods. The annual banquets were held in the synagogue and, later, in banquet halls on the West Side. L'ag B'omer celebrations were very spirited, and Simchat Torah services were held late into the night. There were also Purim shpiels and annual Chanukah parties. Years later, many of the younger members became quite prominent and involved in the affairs of our Jewish community in the Chicago area.

I found the name, Agudat B'nei Ub'not Eretz Yisroel (the Sons and Daughters of the Land of Israel) most interesting and, with the inclusion of "Daughters," certainly well ahead of its time. Established so many years ago, the congregation gave equal billing to the women! Indeed, the women played a most important role in the workings of this extraordinary synagogue.

*The author wishes to thank the many people who, over the years, had shared information with her about the Palestinian shul.*

**About the Author:** Sima Miller, an accomplished singer, and her late husband, Arnold Miller, z"l, devoted their lives to Jewish music. In addition to Sima's Israeli heritage, Arnold was a well-known pianist, conductor, and composer. Together, they appeared extensively in concert throughout the United States and Israel and created the CD series "Heritage: The Art of the Yiddish Folk Song." They were honored by YIVO and numerous national and local organizations and twice honored for presenting the most popular musical programs at the Chicago Cultural Center.



**The Agudat B'nei Ub'not Eretz Yisroel synagogue, also known as the Palestinian Shul.**

Photo courtesy of Robb Packer and the late Norman D. Schwartz



Sima Miller

## Toby, Danny, and The Bagel: A 55-Year-Old Story of Friendship and Love

By Joel Levin

### The Beginning: 1950–1977

Harry Truman was President of the United States in 1950, the year The Bagel Restaurant opened. It was located at 4806 N. Kedzie Ave. in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood, a then predominantly Jewish enclave of the city. Like many of the area's residents, the restaurant's owners were refugees from a destroyed Europe and its concentration and death camps. There were Herman and Elsa Golenzer, their two adult children, Michael and Ruth and Ruth's husband, Edward Wolf. The youngest member of the family was Danny, Ruth and Eddie's son, who had been born in the Theresiensstadt concentration camp. He was 6 years old when The Bagel welcomed its first customers.

Competition and long hours, the bane of all restaurants, did not skip The Bagel's doorstep. Bonfire Restaurant was a few doors away, and S&L Delicatessen was just across the intersection of Kedzie and Lawrence, while Purity Delicatessen was an easy walk. The hours from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. were extensive and loosely enforced, should early birds or latecomers have made an appearance. Two shifts of waitresses were required. Survival mandated that they be mature, friendly employees who would report for work every day.

Toby Levin, 35 years old and with prior waitress experience, was one of The Bagel's first hires. While her husband, Benjamin, a cabdriver for Yellow Taxi Company, supervised their two children, Mitch and Joel, Toby quickly became the mainstay of the evening shift.

Danny started working at The Bagel one year after Toby did. When school ended for the day, he'd arrive at the restaurant to sweep floors, wash dishes, clean counters: anything a 7-year-old could physically do to help his family.

Each reporting for Bagel duty at 3 p.m., Toby and Danny soon became friends—a little schoolboy and a kindly waitress.

In 1956 Ruth and Eddie welcomed a daughter, Barbara, while a new waitress, Sara Leff, became a well-known presence at The Bagel's morning shift.

Customers came for omelets, lox, and pickled herring, served by Sara during breakfast hours, and stuffed veal breast, corned beef, gefilte fish, and other Jewish delicacies, served by Toby during dinner hours.

During the years of Danny's formal education, including Hibbard Elementary, Roosevelt High School, and the University of Illinois (Navy Pier), he assumed ever-increasing responsibilities at The Bagel: from cooking to hiring to greeting customers. By 1969, Danny and his Uncle Michael were co-managers of the successful storefront restaurant. Michael relied on Sara to be his morning shift "anchor," and Danny could always count on Toby for the evening shift. When Toby was widowed that same year, all The Bagel owners attended the service for her husband. The line for Toby, 19 years on the job, between employee and employer, had vanished. She was now part of The Bagel family, and The Bagel was now a fixture of Albany Park.

### The Middle: 1977–1992

Jimmy Carter was President of the United States in 1977, the year The Bagel Restaurant moved to its new location at 3000 W. Devon Ave. in West Rogers Park.

A number of concerns at the Kedzie site prompted the move: Lack of parking. Customers moving farther north. Limited seating capacity of only 34. Outdated facilities, with a single washroom located in the cook's kitchen. The long overdue relocation was welcomed by everyone connected to The Bagel.



**Toby Levin, who worked at The Bagel for 55 years, with restaurant owner Danny Wolf**

The Devon Avenue eatery, like its Kedzie predecessor, flourished. It was a large, modern operation on the ground floor of a new apartment building. The menu expanded, seating capacity greatly increased, and more employees came on board.

As expected, the two longest-serving waitresses, Toby and Sara, followed The Bagel to Devon. Both non-drivers, they found apartments within walking distance of their jobs. It was business as usual, with Sara on the morning shift and Toby on the evening shift. By now, each had a large following of "regulars."

Befitting a new location, Danny started a new tradition. Toby's birthday—on March 24—became an in-store celebration. With each passing year, her party became more elaborate, with increasing food and presents, more heartfelt tributes, and bigger cakes.

The Bagel continued to prosper and grow as the 1970s turned into the 80s. In 1987, a second location, The Bagel—Old Orchard, Skokie, welcomed suburban and North Shore diners. Michael and his wife, Haya, assumed primary responsibility for its management, while Danny supervised the Devon Avenue restaurant.

On March 24, 1990, Danny honored his dearest friend and confidante with a special gift: a gold "Toby" necklace, custom-made from Marshall Field's. It marked not only Toby's 75th birthday, but also 40 years of continuous service at The Bagel. The necklace featured Toby's name in a semicircle atop a bagel. Danny placed the necklace around Toby's neck that late evening, witnessed only by other waitresses, busboys, and a few night-owl customers.

It took "Bagel history" 15 years to repeat itself. In 1992, the Devon restaurant faced the same challenges it had experienced on Kedzie Avenue: a migrating customer base, lack of reliable parking, outdated facilities, and need for a more cosmopolitan atmosphere. Danny, ever the astute restaurateur, found an ideal location in East Lakeview. But this move, unlike the past one, entailed major life changes for all of the store's employees, especially Toby and Sara.

Sara, after 36 years of serving 6 a.m. omelets and lox platters to The Bagel's faithful, decided to retire at the age of 73. She would visit the new restaurant often, but now as an honored guest.

With Sara, her closest waitress buddy and sidekick retiring, Toby confronted a difficult decision. She was 77 years old, with failing eyesight and other medical issues. She feared the computer, which would now be an integral part of The Bagel's operation. Her commute would be longer. Squarely facing these facts, Toby made the only decision possible: She was definitely going to work at the new location. There would be a third act in Toby's Bagel odyssey!

## The End 1992–2022

George H.W. Bush was President of the United States in 1992, the year The Bagel moved to its current location at 3107 N. Broadway.

The restaurant was an immediate hit on Broadway. On its opening day, 1,150 customers came for mile-high corned beef sandwiches, enormous bowls of matzoh ball soup, complete dinners, and, of course, complimentary pickles and challah bread.

Celebrities eventually made their way to The Bagel, too. Danny welcomed Jackie Mason, Steve Stone, Rahm Emanuel, the Smashing Pumpkins, and others through its doors. Toby waited on them. As she often remarked with a smile, "Danny seats the biggest tippers and famous people at my station."

They worked as a team at The Bagel—and not entirely on restaurant business. When Toby's granddaughter, Victoria Rose, was selling Girl Scout cookies, Danny allowed the 9-year-old to set up a display in the back

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Danny assists Toby with the placement of her bagel necklace.

## Toby, Danny, and The Bagel

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of the store. He encouraged every customer to "Please see Toby's granddaughter and support the Girl Scouts." Vicki sold hundreds of boxes of cookies through her Bagel "connection."

Toby never conquered the computer, but she did negotiate a truce with it. When it persisted in causing her problems, Danny was nearby. New Year's Day 2001 found the team at its peak. Danny had arranged for a CBS television news crew to visit The Bagel on the occasion of Toby's 50th anniversary with the restaurant.

Now 85 years old, Toby was filmed greeting and waiting on customers. Danny described her as the "best of the best." Viewers saw her flawlessly placing orders on the computer. Toby talked about baking banana cake and honey cake for Danny. When asked her New Year's resolution, she replied, "To keep working and add a few more hours."

The largest cake Danny ever bought was for Toby's 90th birthday party in 2005. Many people attended the afternoon celebration. Danny regifted the gold necklace by adding precious stones to it. Photos were taken, cards and presents opened, and hugs and kisses exchanged. After the party, Toby resumed working.

In her 55th year of service at The Bagel, seven months after her 90th birthday, Toby didn't report for work. Everyone knew what had transpired. For the waitress who was always there, her shift had finally ended. Condolence calls were held at The Bagel in Old Orchard. Toby would have wanted it that way: family and friends gathered to talk, eat, laugh, cry, and remember.

As devastating as losing Toby was, it was only a sad harbinger of losses to come. Within six years of Toby's death, Barbara, Ruth, and Michael would all be gone. In 2018, The Bagel in Old Orchard closed due to a lease dispute. Danny kept The Bagel in full operation in East Lakeview despite these personal tragedies. People relied on him for their livelihoods, and he did not fail them. He was a mensch.



Toby's granddaughter, Victoria Rose Levin Sniegowski, seated with her husband, Steven, now wears the bagel necklace.

granddaughter, Victoria Rose Levin Sniegowski, and her husband, Steven. It remains a forever remembrance of Toby and Danny and their Bagel Story.



Toby and her Bagel colleagues, including Sara Leff (far left)

Throughout these heart-rending personal losses, Danny was supported by his husband, Mitch Kaufman, his Aunt Haya, and his own innate goodness and strength.

In July 2022, in his 71st year of service at The Bagel and at the age of 77, Danny didn't report for work. Again, everyone knew what had occurred. For the little boy who swept floors at The Bagel and rose to become its owner, his shift had ended. As with Toby, condolence calls for Danny were held at The Bagel.

All the cast members of the original 1950s, 34-seat storefront restaurant are now a part of its proud 73-year history. Today, The Bagel lives on, delighting old and new customers alike with its Jewish-style food and family-style hospitality.

And the gold necklace that Danny gave Toby in 1990? It lives on, too, in the loving possession of Toby's

## Profiles in Courage: Jewish Servicemen from Chicago

By Chaim Rosenberg, M.D., Ph.D.

The following profiles were originally published in Dr. Rosenberg's most recent book, "Shield of David: A History of Jewish Servicemen in America's Armed Forces" (2022), and they are reprinted with the author's permission.

### Abel Davis

Abel Davis was the second-highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Illinois National Guard and one of the highest-ranking Jewish officers in the United States Army. Abel Davis was born in 1874 in the city of Konigsberg, Prussia. His parents were Pesach Davis and Keile (neé Lipshitz). Abel had eight siblings: four brothers and four sisters. When Abel was 17, the family moved to Chicago. His first job was as errand boy in a State Street department store. Still in his teens, he enlisted in the First Illinois Volunteer Infantry and served in Cuba as a private in the Spanish-American War.

Returning to Chicago, he studied law at night and received his law degree from Northwestern University. In 1902, he was admitted to the Illinois State Bar Association and continued to serve in the Illinois National Guard.

In World War I, Colonel Davis commanded the 132nd US Infantry of Illinois to serve alongside the British Fourth Army. The 132nd took part in the Battle of the Somme and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The 132nd Infantry was tasked with breaking through the enemy positions and capturing the Bois de Forges. Three days before the armistice, Davis's unit was attacked at St. Hilare. Repulsing the enemy attack, Abel Davis showed "extraordinary heroism" when his regiment was under intense enemy attack. "Disregarding the heavy shell and machinegun fire, Colonel Davis personally assumed command and by his fearless leadership and courage the enemy was drawn back.<sup>1</sup> For his heroism and leadership, Davis was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal.

Abel Davis served as president of the Jewish Council of Youth Affairs (1911–1912). After the war, he was active in Jewish and general charities in Illinois. He worked to help immigrants settle in Chicago. He was president of the Chicago Title and Trust Company. He became brigadier general in command of the Sixty-Sixth Infantry Brigade of the Illinois National Guard. He retired from the National Guard with the rank of major general. In 1930, Northwestern University awarded him an honorary LLD.<sup>2</sup> Abel Davis, one of Chicago's foremost citizens, died in 1937 at the age of 63.

### Barney Ross

Barney Ross (born in 1909 as Dov-Ber "Beryl" David Rosofsky) was a professional boxer who, in the 1930s, was the world champion in three weight divisions—lightweight, light heavyweight, and welterweight. Dov was born in New York City to Isidore "Itchik" Rosofsky and Sarah Epstein Rosofsky. In his native Brest-Litovsk, Itchik was a Talmudic scholar. One afternoon, a mob stormed the synagogue, smashing the windows, breaking the doors, desecrating the Torah scrolls, and yelling: "Death to the Jews." It was time to leave Russia. The family arrived in New York in 1903 to occupy a dingy basement apartment on Rivington Street in the Lower East Side, where Dov was born in 1909. Two years later, hoping for a better life, the Rosofsky family took the train to Chicago. Itchik ran a small grocery store on Maxwell Street, the teeming center of immigrant Jewish life. In 1889, Jane Addams founded Hull Settlement House a few blocks north of Maxwell to help bedraggled immigrants settle to American ways.

Ambitious youngsters, like future clarinetist Benny Goodman, Admiral Hyman Rickover, Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg, actor Paul Muni, and founding president of Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) William Paley, had their start in the rough-and-tumble of Chicago's West Side. Dov Rosofsky moved in a different direction. His father wanted him to become a teacher or a rabbi. Instead, he became a street-tough guy. On December 12, 1922, Itchik was shot dead in his store resisting a robbery. Sarah suffered a nervous breakdown, and the younger children were placed in an orphanage. At age 14, Dov was left to his own devices. He dropped out of school, ran with a local gang, and served briefly as a messenger boy for the Al Capone gang during the Prohibition years. With his quick movements, stamina, and punching power, he found his true vocation in the boxing ring. Under the name Barney Ross, he turned professional at age 19 to fight another Jewish boxer from Chicago's West Side, Harry Garbell. Barney Ross pummeled his opponent in a featherweight (126 pounds) fight at the Chicago Coliseum in front of a crowd of 9,000. By the time he retired from boxing in 1938, Barney Ross collected 72



COMPANY COMMANDERS OF THE 132ND INFANTRY  
Front row  
Captain William J. Maister; Norman B. Wood; Robert G. Haze; Captain G. H. Madson; Ernest V. Dickson; H. B. Glancy  
Captain Robert Wightman; Captain John F. Murphy; Captain James T. Bunting; Captain Charles H. Criss; Oscar J. Turner; G. T. Adel

Abel Davis, front row center

**continued on next page**

## Profiles in Courage

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wins (22 by knockout), four losses, and three draws. During this period of mounting antisemitism in the United States and Europe, Barney Ross showed that a Jew could fight back; and he became a beacon of Jewish pride.

"Barney Ross, former world lightweight boxing champion, was sworn into the United States Marines today," announced the *New York Times* on April 22, 1942. "He will serve as a boxing instructor." The Army wanted to keep him stateside, but Barney insisted on fighting for his country. After finishing boot camp in October 1942, he boarded SS Missouri to take part in the epic battle on the volcanic island of Guadalcanal. On November 19, Ross volunteered for a four-man patrol to scout ahead of an Army regiment. The patrol ran into Japanese machine-gun fire, which wounded them all. Despite shrapnel wounds to his side and limbs, Ross alone was able to fight on. In his foxhole, he gathered all the Browning automatic rifles and grenades and single-handedly fought two dozen Japanese soldiers, shooting 350 rounds and throwing grenades, over a period of 13 hours, killing them all. Two of his fellow marines died. "I never expected to get out. I was crying, and praying and shooting and throwing grenades, and half the time, I guess, I was out of my head."<sup>3</sup> He calmed himself by repeating the Sh'ma Israel—Hear O Israel, the Lord is One. Ross, weighing 140 pounds, carried the injured marine, weighing 215 pounds, to safety. Ross's actions in destroying Japanese machine-gun nests saved many Americans from injury or death. For his conspicuous gallantry in action against the enemy at Guadalcanal, Ross was awarded the Silver Star, America's third-highest military award. After he recovered from his wounds, Ross returned to frontline action five more times, helping to drive the Japanese northwards through the jungle.

Suffering from malaria, Barney Ross returned to America on February 26, 1943. Stepping ashore he "kneeled humbly...and kissed the ground."<sup>4</sup> On April 14, 1944, Barney Ross was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps for medical disabilities. The severe pain from his war wounds led to an addiction to morphine and heroin. Barney Ross died in Chicago of throat cancer at the age of 57.

### Albert Abraham Michelson

Albert Abraham Michelson was born in 1852 in the small town of Strzelno (then in Germany, now Poland), the son of a merchant Abraham Michelson and his wife Rosalia. When Albert was aged 2 years, the family left Europe for America, where Abraham operated department stores in mining towns in California and then Nevada. Early on, "the whole Michelson family had broken away from the religion of their race. [Though] both Albert Michelson's father and mother were born of Jewish parents, theirs was not a religious family."<sup>5</sup> Albert's sister Miriam recalled that the children "had no religious training whatever. Nor can I recall a religious discussion among us, nor a religious inhibition or compulsion."



A gifted child, Albert was sent to San Francisco to attend high school. Upon graduation, he took the examination to enter the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Tying with another resident from Nevada, the determined young Michelson took the transcontinental train to Washington to appeal personally to the President. Impressed by the young fellow, Ulysses Grant awarded Michelson a special appointment to the Naval Academy. His record during his four years as a midshipman at the academy was not "in any way notable."<sup>6</sup> Graduating in 1873, he was ordered to the USS Monongahela and then to USS Minnesota. In 1874, he transferred to the North Atlantic Squadron, joining USS Colorado and then USS Worcester. In 1877, he returned to the Naval Academy to teach physics and chemistry. In 1880, Michelson received leave to further his studies in European universities. Returning to the United States, he was appointed professor of physics at the Case School of Applied Science in Cleveland. Albert Michelson made his reputation for his studies on the speed of light and for his Michelson-Morley experiment. In 1892, he was appointed a professor of physics at the newly established University of Chicago, where he spent the rest of his academic career. He carried out many ingenious experiments, and in 1907, he was the first American to receive the Nobel Prize in the sciences "for his optical precision instruments and the spectroscopic and metrological investigations carried out with their aid." Albert Abraham Michelson received many awards before his death in 1932.

<sup>1</sup> Jim Craig, "Under Every Stone: One of the Highest Ranking Jewish Officers in the US Army--General Abel Davis." Online, April 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Estelle Frances Ward, "The Story of Northwestern University." New York: Dodd, Mead, 1924, pp. 277-278.

<sup>3</sup> Sergeant Barney Ross Discharged, *New York Times*, April 15, 1944.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Century. "Barney Ross: The Life of a Jewish Fighter." New York: Schocken, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Mulliken. "Biographical Memoir of Alfred Abraham Michelson." Biographical Memoirs, Volume XIX. National Academy of Sciences, 1931, pp.121-126.

<sup>6</sup> Mulliken

## From Stock Boy to Lawyer

continued from front page

My next job was at Kitty Kelly on Madison Street, just west of Crawford Avenue, selling women's shoes. This was a prime business area, with Baer Brothers and Prodive Department Store at 4122 West Madison, along with a bank, the Balaban and Katz Marbro theater, and the Paradise theater. Balaban and Katz also operated the Central Park theater at 3531-39 12th Street — now Roosevelt Road — that was the first in their chain of movie houses around the country. The historic building was also the first in the world to include mechanical air conditioning.

I worked at Kitty Kelly on Mondays and Thursdays after school, until 9 p.m., and on Saturdays. I was paid a dollar an hour, as well as a 10 percent commission on shoe sales. If we sold a "postmortem," or outdated, shoe or shoe polish, we received an additional 10 percent on shoes and five percent on polish.

On a Thursday evening in 1956, when I was 17 years old, I was closing up the store with the assistant manager, Jimmy. We had a bank deposit bag with the day's receipts to drop in the bank slot across the street. As we started walking toward the bank, a man behind me said, "Keep on walking." I turned around, and he pulled a gun out of his coat pocket. He told Jimmy and me to get in the back of a green Ford convertible. I lay across the back seat, my long legs almost out the door; Jimmy was scrunched between the seats. The man pointing the gun at us got in the back and sat on me. He then said, "Keep quiet. My friends are coming." Both doors opened, and two men got in. They started up the car and began driving.

During this period, there were four boys who had been murdered: two in a forest preserve, two in a sewer. That's all I was thinking about until the man sitting on me took the cash from Jimmy and the bank bag I was holding. He then asked me for my wallet. I said, "My wallet is in my back pocket. I have \$2 in it. I'm a student." One of the men in the front said, "Let him keep it." That was the first time I felt we might get out alive.

**"As we started walking toward the bank, a man behind me said, 'Keep on walking.' I turned around, and he pulled a gun out of his coat pocket."**

It seemed like we had been driving for hours, but only five or 10 minutes had elapsed. The car stopped on the Congress Expressway — now the Eisenhower — at Hamlin Avenue, and we were told to get out and not look back. I ran up the dirt embankment with my hand on the middle of my back to stop a bullet if they shot at us, and I jumped over a chain link fence. Jimmy, who was a little chubby, was waiting for me. He used the stairs and the gate. We flagged down a car, and we were driven to Madison Street. We ran to the Garfield Gold Dome Field House by the Garfield Park Lagoon, which was where the police station was located.

In those days, the newspapers reporting an incident would list the name and address of the victims. They got my name and address right—but listed my age as 71, not 17. For several weeks, every morning before I left for school, I would look out the window to see if anyone was waiting for me.

I graduated from Austin High School in 1957 and attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I became a member of Tau Delta Phi Jewish fraternity. I held various jobs in college, since my parents couldn't afford to pay both tuition and fraternity room and board.

During my summer vacation from school, I worked for the famous Brach's Candy factory on Chicago's West Side from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Part of the factory was "blown up" during the filming of "The Dark Knight," when the character of the Joker sets off a bomb.



The almost 70-year-old newspaper clipping shows the author (back to camera) landing a shot during a basketball game at the Jewish People's Institute.

continued on next page

## From Stock Boy to Lawyer

continued from previous page

After college, I attended John Marshall Law School in the afternoons, since I worked in the mornings. I graduated in February 1965 and got married to Barbara Dvorson in March of that year. I was hired by the law firm of Fisk and Kart, which specialized in property tax assessments and litigation.

My brother-in-law introduced me to a group of men who had dinner together once a month. They had grown up, like me, on Chicago's West Side.

Eventually, we formed The Great Vest Side (GVS) Club of Chicago. Many of our parents and grandparents came from Eastern Europe and couldn't pronounce the "w" in "West" so, in their honor, we dubbed it "Vest." Eventually, West Side women and spouses became members.

The GVS decided to have two dinners a year to raise money for various charities. One of our members, Bud Solk, suggested we start contributing to the American Friends of Magen David Adom (AFMDA), the Israeli organization that operates emergency vehicles and provides lifesaving services, including blood supplies. We continue to support AFMDA to this day, along with other worthy causes.



The author is a proud graduate of Chicago's Austin High School and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The New York Times recently published a letter written by CJHS member Michael Ebner that was a follow-up to the newspaper's article "How the Spoken Word Shapes the Written Word." Ebner, an emeritus professor of American history at Lake Forest College, recounted his advice to his students in relation to their written assignments: "I urged them ... to print out their drafts, then step away from the desk. Next, mindfully self-edit — pen in hand — from start to finish. Then the moment would be opportune to read aloud the draft under construction." Failure to do so, Ebner added, "might very well result in the dreaded C+ range!" Ebner taught at Lake Forest from 1974 to 2007. He was also a visiting professor of American history at the University of Chicago. A past president of Congregation Solel, now Makom Solel Lakeside, in Highland Park, he is a frequent contributor of opinion essays to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Crain's Chicago Business*. As to his longtime membership in the CJHS, Ebner said, "My wife and I look forward to the arrival of each and every issue of the newsletter. We consider them as treasures."

## CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

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

*Morasha*, the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, was the co-recipient of the 2022 Outstanding Publication Award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJCS). Its editor is CJHS member Dale Amdur. In bestowing honors upon *Morasha*, the IAJCS said, in part, "The Illinois society was recognized for its outstanding efforts to encourage engagement in research and educate its members."

CJHS member John Blew presented a Zoom program for the Caxton Club this past January on Chicago artist Miklos Gaspar's 1935 vast mural cycle in the Boys Club Room of the Union League Club of Chicago. "The murals depict in 28 scenes the activities at two Chicago boys clubs and a Wisconsin summer camp then operated by an affiliate of the Union League Club," the Caxton Club reported in its promotional materials about the presentation.

CJHS member Erez Cohen, the executive director of Hillel at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, co-chaired Hillel International's recent Global Assembly, which brought hundreds of Hillel

professionals from across the globe to Dallas for a special meeting that marked Hillel's centennial celebration. The Hillel Jewish student movement started in 1923 at the Illinois flagship campus.

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CJHS Co-President Dr. Rachelle Gold was the special guest speaker at the December meeting of the Sephardic Congregation's sisterhood. Dr. Gold's

address was entitled “Outstanding Chicago Jewish Women You Haven’t Heard Of.”

CJHS member **Dr. Jessica Kirzane** presented “Translating American Yiddish Feminism: Miriam Karpilove, Authoress,” a January 2023 Zoom talk sponsored by the Chicago YIVO Society. Kirzane also published the article “Yiddish Newspaperwoman Miriam Karpilove’s Sharp Pen” in the fall 2022 issue of *Pakn Treger*, the magazine of the Yiddish Book Center. An assistant instructional professor of Yiddish at the University of Chicago, Kirzane translated Karpilove’s novel *“Diary of a Young Girl, or the Battle Against Free Love,”* which was published by Syracuse University Press in 2020. She is also editor-in-chief of *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies.*

CJHS member **Shelley Riskin**, the president of the Jewish Library Network of Metropolitan Chicago, responded to the *Chicago Tribune* op-ed “Old things for the new year. Bring back paper maps, pay phones,” in which the author, David McGrath, solicited from

readers suggestions for the restoration of particular items and ideas that have fallen into obsolescence. In a follow-up, the paper reported the following: “Shelley Riskin thinks memorization belongs back in school. She fondly recalled how memorizing the prologue to Geoffrey Chaucer’s *‘The Canterbury Tales’* led to her appreciation of ‘cadence, storytelling, and the evolution and beauty of language.’”

CJHS member **Beverly Siegel** authored the opinion piece “The history of West Rogers Park Inspires me today,” which was published this past November in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Siegel, a filmmaker, is the president of the Jewish Neighborhood Development Council of Chicago.

CJHS Board member **Alissa Zeffren** was one of the panelists for the lunchtime discussion “Torah Learning Today: Where Tradition Meets Innovation” at this past January’s Mid-Winter Yarchei Kallah Women’s Learning Conference, which was held at the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel in Skokie.

## This and That

### Additions

*CJH* wishes to note the 2011 historical novel *“Beyond the Scent of Olives,”* written by CJHS member **Alice Solovy**, which we failed to list in our fall 2022 book issue.

We also want to acknowledge Society-commissioned *“Romance of a People: The First Hundred Years of Jewish Life in Chicago, 1833–1933,”* an award-winning film by CJHS member **Beverly Siegel.**

### Thank You, Members

The Society thanks our hundreds of friends and supporters who have renewed their memberships for the 2023 year. Many of you have contributed above the \$40 basic membership fee, and we are very grateful for your generosity and the trust you have placed in us. We will continue to endeavor earning your support, and we look forward to providing you with dynamic programs and compelling issues of *CJH* this year ... and in years to come.

If you have not renewed your membership, please note that you must do so by May 2023 to continue receiving *CJH* throughout the year. You can renew your membership online at [www.chicagogjewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagogjewishhistory.org) or mail your check to: CJHS, P.O. Box 597004, Chicago, IL 60659-7004.

### There’s Still Time

The “Then and Now: 10 Decades of Jewish Community in West Rogers Park” photo exhibition at the Northtown Branch of the Chicago Public Library is running indefinitely. It may be seen during the library’s regular business hours. The show is a partnership between the CJHS and the Jewish Neighborhood Development Council of Chicago.



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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-six 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.

**Back issues of *Chicago Jewish History*** cost \$8 apiece. To request back issues, please email the Society at [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)

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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  
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Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron	65
Member	40
Student (with I.D.)	10



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