

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
הביטו אל-צור הצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

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CHICAGO JEWISH *History*

Adler: The Rabbi's Son Who Designed the Auditorium Theatre

*Fame of Partner Sullivan Unjustly Overshadows
Achievement of Local Architectural Genius*

by William O. Petersen

The life and work of Dankmar Adler was an interest in the back of my mind for a number of years through my involvement with the Auditorium. It was a passion of mine which started years ago, due to my having been brought up in a family where every performance of opera brought a later comment from my grandmother and mother: "If it had only been in the Auditorium!" A flood of reminiscence would then follow, ending with the time that Mother and her close high school friend Hester Wentworth climbed to their fifty-cent gallery seats to see and hear Mary Garden as Melisande.

In my school years I thought I would be an architect until I realized that drawing, calculus and analytical geometry had eluded me. Yet I spent the then princely sum of five dollars I had won as an academic prize on the first book to come out on Louis Sullivan—Hugh Morrison's *Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture*. Morrison and every writer on Sullivan since that time paid tribute to Adler for his engineering and business ability and then promptly left him behind.

Christian-Jewish Relationships among Immigrants

However, when I started on Adler, another phase of my boyhood opened up: the Chicago of my grandparents and great-grandparents who emigrated from Germany after the 1848 revolutions. As I went through the Adler papers there appeared the names I was brought up with—very much a part of the liberal and philanthropic group in which the Adler family and the Schmidt family (to which I belong) participated. Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch spoke both at Dankmar Adler's and my great-grandfather's funerals. I have been told by Walter Roth that my grandfather was a pupil at the school of Adler's father, Rabbi Liebman Adler. (Walter also reported that Grandfather liked the school because he was given both the

continued on page 4

Reprinting Underway On Landmark Local Jewish History Book

Lavish 850-Page Volume

By Meites Due Out in Fall

Reprinting by the Society of a long unavailable classic of local Jewish history is currently under way, according to President Walter Roth.

By fall, it is expected that *The History of the Jews of Chicago*, a voluminous, lavishly illustrated and surprisingly complete history of the Chicago Jewish community during its first eighty years will be generally available for the first time in half a century. Members of the Society will be permitted to buy copies at a discount.

continued on page 2

Dankmar Adler, distinguished son of a distinguished father, has been cast in the shadow by his more famous and more fascinating partner, Louis Sullivan. Yet, as this article clearly proves, the architectural genius of Adler was basic to all of Sullivan's major achievements and was patently evident when Adler worked on his own. Adler's life as a son, soldier, husband, father and Jew are also of interest to students of local Jewish history. Both his career and his life are treated in this article by Chicago Attorney William O. Petersen, like its subject a member of an old Chicago family. The article is an amplification of the address given by Mr. Petersen at the March CJHS meeting.

President's Message

The Interwoven Web Of Jewish History

*Seemingly Separate Events
Relate to Each Other*

The current exhibit, "A House Divided," at the Chicago Historical Society is a splendid presentation of the U.S. years before and during the Civil War. The exhibit concentrates upon the issue of slavery, and, contrary to some historians, takes the position that the abolition of slavery was the dominant cause of the Civil War. There are many original documents and artifacts on display. Chicago, of course, was the home of Senator Stephen Douglas; and it was here that the Republicans nominated Lincoln as their nominee for president in 1860, meeting in a large wooden building located at Lake and Market (now Wacker Drive) Streets and known as the Wigwam.

The exhibit makes no mention of Chicago Jews who were active in the abolitionist cause prior to and during the War although there were many. The only mention of a Jewish involvement in the entire exhibit comes in a display case near the end in a program listing Chicago organizations that participated in the parade that accompanied Lincoln's body after it had arrived by train from Washington on its way to Springfield for burial. The two listed organizations are the "Hebrew *Caha Ubecur Chaulin*" (sic) and the Hebrew Benevolent Association. (The actual names of these organizations were the *Chevra Kaddisha Ubikkur Cholim* and the Hebrew Benevolent Society.) The funeral march took the marchers from the railroad station west on Lake Street to LaSalle Street and then to the Court House square at Randolph Street.

The two Chicago Jewish fraternal organizations that participated in the funeral march originated in true Civil War fashion: one represented a schism from the other. The members of the Hebrew Benevolent Society were of the same group that created K.A.M., the first Chicago synagogue, then also known as the *Bayerische* [Bavarian] Shul. The other group, mainly of Prussian extraction, had seceded from the Society and would later form another synagogue.

Unfortunately, the exhibit organizers did not include in their story the role

of some K.A.M. members in the Union cause. In 1861, there had come to the pulpit of K.A.M. a forceful personality and great orator, Rabbi Liebman Adler. Born in a small town in Germany in 1812, he had emigrated to Detroit in 1854, already a prominent scholar. His new rabbinical position at K.A.M. enabled him to deliver passionate patriotic sermons, abolitionist in nature, which are contained in a publication, *Five Addresses to the K.A.M.*. Rabbi Adler's oldest son enlisted in the Union Army at the age of eighteen and fought in many battles of the war before being wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga.

The president of K.A.M. at this time, Abraham Kohn, was also a staunch abolitionist and supporter of Lincoln. He was appointed City Clerk of Chicago in 1860 and is well-remembered by Civil War buffs because of the satin American flag containing in Hebrew lettering verses 4 through 9 from the first chapter of Joshua which he sent to Lincoln in 1861 just before Lincoln left his home in Springfield to go to Washington. Kohn's daughter later married Rabbi Adler's oldest son. As you may have surmised, the oldest son of Rabbi Adler, the Civil War hero and husband of the daughter of the president of K.A.M., was Dankmar Adler, who would go on to become the renowned architect and the subject of our March 4 program at the Auditorium Theater. Such as always are the inter-twinings of history and our people.

Walter Roth
President

Reprinting Underway

continued from page 1

The monumental volume, edited by Hyman L. Meites and published by an earlier version of the Society known as the Jewish Historical Society of Illinois, was printed in an elaborate, limited edition and has been impossible to find, even in used bookstores, for decades. Occasionally a copy surfaces in the used book market and is quickly sold for hundreds of dollars.

The history, an oversized nine-by-twelve-inch volume of some 850 double-columned pages, contains literally thousands of brief biographies of individual Chicago Jews, usually illustrated with a photo and listing immediate family members by name.

Original Printing Lavish

The biographies are inserted in



President
Walter Roth

appropriate pages otherwise devoted to a narrative history of Jews in Chicago, a record of Jewish participation in the various arts, professions and businesses, and the histories of Jewish communal institutions including individual congregations, clubs and charities. Remarkably in a book published over sixty-five years ago, a noticeably large percentage of the biographies are of women. There is also an index of names and organizations.

No expense was spared in the preparation of the original printing, and there are several inserted plates—some in full color—and specially designed large artistic initial letters at the start of each chapter.

New Price Kept Low

The current printing, a full-sized facsimile edition, will not be quite so lavish but will be well-produced with a heavy paperback cover so that it can be sold at a reasonable price to our members and at a higher, yet still modest, price to the general public.

Although the book naturally pays major attention to the achievements of German-born Jews and their families during the early years, careful attention was paid to the rise of Jews from Eastern Europe beginning in the 1880's and biographies of hundreds of them are included. Meites himself was a Russian-born printing executive who published *The Lawndale Press*, *The Jewish Record* and, later, *The Chicago Jewish Chronicle*. He was active in the Jewish Peoples Institute and Zionist circles. His associate editor was David E. Hirsch, son of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch of Sinai Congregation.

Gift Made Printing Possible

The republication of the history was made possible by a generous donation from the Meites family and particularly from Thomas and Jerry Meites, following in the tradition of their grandfather by contributing to the diffusion of Chicago Jewish history to newer generations.

Details concerning the actual publication date, the cost of copies to members

and procedures for placing orders will be announced at a later date. The Society has arranged for the Wellington Publishing Company to handle sales and warehousing of the book, but sales proceeds will go to the Society for use in furthering its activities and projects. I.J.S.□

Secure UIC Campus Space for Research, Educational Use

CJHS Gets Use of Quarters In New Hillel House

The Society has acquired space for a historical research center on the campus of the University of Illinois—Chicago. An office with computer accessibility, and the use of display space have been generously provided CJHS by the UIC Hillel Foundation in its newly-built quarters, the William and Mildred Levine Hillel Center at 929 South Morgan Street.

“Using this space as a base, we hope to forge links with faculty and students which will result in meaningful historical research and publication concerning our local Jewish past,” said Society President Walter Roth. “We also hope to attract the grants and other support which will make such projects possible.”

The Society has currently installed the Maxwell Street Exhibit in Hillel’s display space as a means of acquainting university circles with our organization. The CJHS administrative office will continue to be at its Spertus College location at 618 South Michigan Avenue.

President Roth expressed his gratitude to Rabbi Richard Marker, director of the Jewish Federation’s Hillel and College-Age Youth Services, and UIC Hillel Director Elliot Zashin for their assistance and cooperation in securing this additional outpost for Society activity.

The Hillel Center building was made possible by a gift from William and Mildred Levine. Mr. Levine is an area businessman active in Jewish philanthropic endeavors. The modern facility, dedicated this winter, permits a major expansion of campus Hillel activities.

Hillel houses are Jewish community, religious and study centers on American university campuses. The Hillel Foundation concept was created and implemented by Chicago leadership, which also

oversaw its initial expansion on a national basis. See “How Chicagoans Started the Hillel Foundations,” in *Society News*, September, 1983. □

Chairman Releases Preliminary Plans For Summer Tours

Society Tours Chairman Leah Axelrod is busily at work arranging for our fourteenth summer series of escorted tours devoted to area Jewish history. As usual, all members in good standing will receive a special mailing concerning the popular Sunday tour series.

While this year’s series has not yet been completely finalized, Mrs. Axelrod is able to confirm that Dr. Irving Cutler’s tour of Chicago’s Jewish West Side will be repeated early in July, probably July 1. She also expects a tour on July 22 to deal with *landsmanshaften*, *vereins* and their Jewish cemeteries under Sidney Sorkin’s direction.

The August tour will visit exurban Jewish communities located in the Elgin and far Northwest area. Details will be announced later.

The tours, usually one-half day long, are in an air-conditioned bus and are filled on a first-come-first-served basis after the membership mailing is sent. Members attend tours at a discount; but once the mailing is received, prompt reservations are advised as the tours frequently sell out quickly. □

Members Brunch June 10 Features Singing Comedienne

Asinging comedienne will provide entertainment at the annual members only brunch scheduled for Sunday, June 10, according to preliminary plans released by Vice-President and Program Chairman Burt Robin. Nettie Silver, who has appeared on programs with Buddy Hackett, Jackie Mason and Alan King, will perform accompanied by a pianist.

The location of the brunch, the cost of which is partially subsidized by the Society as a gesture of gratitude to its members, has not been finalized at the time of this writing. It is, however, expected to be at an easily accessible North Side location.

As usual, the brunch will also feature a brief annual meeting at which members will be elected to the Society board of directors.

Attendance will be by prepaid reservation only and is limited to members in good standing and their spouses. Save the date, June 10, and watch your mail for full details and reservation instructions. □

Nine Nominated To Serve on Board of Directors

The names of nine members will be presented for election to the CJHS board of directors at the June annual meeting, according to Nominating Committee Chairman Sol Brandzel. They include seven current board members eligible for reslating and two who would be serving their first three-year terms.

The newcomers will be Herbert Krause and Stanley Rosen. Reslated for another term are Leah Axelrod, Irving Cutler, Marian Cutler, Janet Hagerup, Elsie Orlinsky, Shirley Sorkin and Sidney Sorkin.

If elected, these nine would join sixteen directors whose terms continue beyond this year and three past presidents in the direction of Society activities and from among whom officers are elected. □

Berman Play and Reception To Aid Society’s Work

Society members are looking forward to seeing Shelley Berman’s own play, *First Is Supper*, and meeting the Chicago-born and raised comedian on Sunday, April 29. The performance, at the National Jewish Theater in Skokie, a benefit for CJHS, was made possible through Berman’s generosity and his own interest in Chicago Jewish history.

Described as a heartwarming memoir of growing up on the city’s West Side, the play will be followed by an intimate reception with its author.

Arrangements for the evening were made for the Society by Clare Greenberg, an old friend of Berman; Daniel Beederman; Janet Hagerup and Burt Robin. Tickets are \$35.00 each. □

Adler, The Rabbi's Son

continued from page 1

Christian and the Jewish holidays.)

As we were closing my mother's apartment a year ago, I ran into a book kept by my grandmother in the 1920's and 30's in which she listed her guests and menus. Nearly every name one found was in the Adler circle. The connection continued with Mother's settlement work in later years.

Obviously then there has been a very special personal involvement as I worked on this project.

Adler Unjustly Overshadowed

Time has relegated Dankmar Adler to a role secondary to that of Louis Sullivan whenever Adler and Sullivan's work is being considered. Yet it was Adler who employed Sullivan; and it was Adler who later asked Sullivan to join him as a partner in Adler's firm, which became Adler and Sullivan. Adler was the man whom Frank Lloyd Wright always referred to as the "chief" when reminiscing about his early association with the firm. It was Wright, when appraising Adler's relationship to Sullivan, who wrote, "Sullivan went to school not to the Ecole Des Beaux Arts but to Dankmar Adler." It was Adler to whom the clients came, and it was Adler who was recognized as head of the firm by the profession. Yet not long ago I saw a reference in the *Opera News*, published by the Metropolitan Opera Guild, to "Louis Sullivan's Grand Auditorium."

A Nineteenth Century Phenomenon

Dankmar Adler's life in many ways portrays the story of what was best in the development of the United States during the last half of the Nineteenth Century. Rabbi Hirsch described him as "a German by birth, a proud American by consecration." It was indeed a life of consecration to his profession, his religion, his family and the community at large. As one becomes familiar with his life, one realizes that he gave of himself generously to each of these sectors. It is also the story of one who rose to leadership in his profession from a family of modest resources but of solid intellectual attainment coupled with great self discipline. All through his life Dankmar Adler was devout and proud in his faith but was also a completely accepted and respected participant in the non-Jewish Anglo-American community. For example, he belonged to the Union League Club as well as the Standard.

Adler was born in the small German town of Lengsfeld near Eisenach on July 3, 1844. His mother, Sara, who came from a cultured family, died in childbirth. Hence he was given the name Dankmar, a fusion of thanks expressed in German and bitterness in Hebrew. His father, Rabbi Liebman Adler, himself the son of a rabbi, was educated in Weimar and Frankfurt early in the Reform movement.

Family Comes to America

When Adler was two, his father remarried and, unlike the classic tale, Adler's stepmother, Zerlina Picard, and her stepson adored each other throughout life. He had at least ten half-brothers and -sisters as time went on but remained her acknowledged favorite. In 1854 the family immigrated to Detroit, passing through Cincinnati on the way. A Detroit position was obtained through the good offices of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. Liebman Adler became rabbi to a small congregation of twenty-five male members at a salary of \$360 per year. His wife turned to her former skills as a milliner to help supplement the family income.

Adler went through the Detroit and Ann Arbor public schools. An interesting notebook retained from high school years shows a daily record and allocations of time to complete on schedule the work that he felt necessary. But not all was success. He failed his oral entrance exams to the University of Michigan. In retrospect Adler commented, "I undertook to prove to the examining professor that his use of fractional and negative exponents was altogether erroneous and not in accordance with my matured ideas of mathematical proprieties."

Early Employment History

For a brief period he was apprenticed to family friends in a banking, exchange and shipping establishment, a pursuit for which he later stated he was unfit. His father then arranged for instruction in draftsmanship with a local architect, John Schaefer, based on aptitude shown in an earlier drawing course. He was given by him a heavy background of Romanesque and Byzantine style as well as architectural history. Adler reported that he also taught "glorification of self and indiscriminate denunciation and vituperation of every other claimant for professional honor or position." From there he went as apprentice draftsman to another architectural firm, Smith and Bancroft, later reminiscing that the standard apprentice's day was from twelve to sixteen hours. However, fast friendships were born of that period; he considered it the "foundation of whatever knowledge of the profession I acquired."

In 1861 Liebman Adler was called as rabbi to Congregation Anshe Maariv, later known as KAM, the oldest Jewish congregation in Chicago. His congregation soon learned that he was a staunch Abolitionist but was equally strong on the need for reconciliation after the Civil War. Liebman Adler served that congregation until his death in 1892. The move to Chicago brought his compensation to \$1,200 per year. Gradually he became less involved in pastoral service and headed the congregation's day or parochial school.

Enlists in Union Army

Not yet seventeen, Dankmar Adler obtained work as a draftsman in the office of Augustus Bauer. He was most fortunate, as Chicago was suffering a reces-

sion. Bauer was considered a good manager, distinctive as a designer and thorough in his construction work. However, on his eighteenth birthday Adler enlisted in the Union army as a private and served in some of the worst battles of the war. Dankmar Adler confessed later to liberating "scientific and historical books" during his tour of duty, somewhat sheepishly explaining they would have been burned if he had not stolen them.

The last nine months in the service was as a draftsman in the topographical engineer's office under Milo Burke, who later had a distinguish career as a civil engineer. This was really the only technical engineering training Adler ever had, an interesting episode because of his later preoccupation with engineering and practical problems and his later efforts as a chief protagonist for legislation requiring the examination and licensing of architects although himself the product of an apprenticeship system.

Resumes Architectural Career

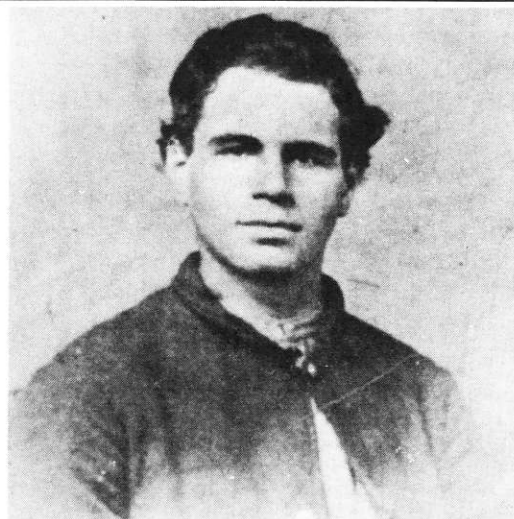
He went back to the Bauer office after the war but did not find it compatible. His next job was with a well-known architect of the time, A. J. Kinney, a successful designer of churches, schools and courthouses. He became foreman of the office and after Kinney's death remained with Kinney's son for a year through 1870. Draftsmen were then working ten hours, six days a week, except during the summer when baseball was the calling of the young architects on Saturday afternoons at Prairie Avenue and Thirtieth Street. Sunday was for sketching and teaching geometry and algebra to the young apprentices. I mention "sketching" because so little attention is paid to the artistic side of Adler's work.

In January of 1871, leaving Kinney's son, who had personal problems, Adler became head draftsman and later a partner of Edward Burling. The Chicago fire came soon after and in one year that firm was responsible for building over a mile of frontage. Among Burling's clients were the First National Bank, the *Chicago Tribune* and a host of prominent Chicago families with names such as Ryerson, DeKoven, Ogden, Blatchford, Dexter and Borden, all later to become Adler and Sullivan clients.

Among the major structures built while Adler was in the office were the buildings of the University of Wooster in Ohio, the First Presbyterian Church in Freeport, the Oak Park Congregational Church, other churches in Kalamazoo and LaPorte and the Opera House in Freeport—all in a gothic style, which was ubiquitous throughout the Midwest. Some later examples still standing in Chicago and in which Adler had a part are the Scottish Rite Cathedral at Walton and Dearborn (then Unity Church) and St. James Episcopal Cathedral. Our Water Tower and the Water Works opposite, though Adler had no part in them, are typical of that style.

Marriage and Acquiring Clients

1872 was the year of his marriage to Dila Kohn, daughter of the president of his father's synagogue. It



A rare photo of the young Dankmar Adler as a Civil War soldier.

was during the Burling years that "auditoriums" as such entered his practice. I mentioned Unity Church, which was built in 1873; it was there that Adler first applied the "Russell Curve," the basis of acoustical design in the theaters he was responsible for over the years and which were among his greatest successes. That year also saw the completion of Kingsbury Hall on Randolph Street with a capacity of 1,800, opened by concerts of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra. Adler was primarily responsible for its design and style.

His own personal clientele began to develop with the Greenebaum family being his first clients, and with the building of Sinai Temple (in 1876 at Indiana and 21st Street) of which Emil Hirsch was rabbi and a devoted friend. Adler mentions in a draft biography that he felt at that time that Burling shirked work and unloaded it on Adler, but in retrospect Adler realized that Burling placed confidence in Adler and respected him accordingly. He met the public and he met Burling's clients. In 1879 Adler left Burling, who was in some sort of a professional scrape over the Chicago Courthouse. He went on his own as D. Adler Architect and so practiced until 1882.

The Central Music Hall

His firm's first commission established his reputation as a major Chicago architect and was characteristic of those which made the next twelve years his great ones. This was the Central Music Hall Building. Adler often mentioned it as his greatest personal achievement, though it had a short life, being torn down in 1900 and replaced by the Marshall Field store on State Street. A young, well-known and well-connected entrepreneur and a good friend, George B. Carpenter, put together a corporation sponsored by prominent Chicagoans to provide in one building a commercially feasible concert hall, smaller recital halls, shops and offices. The concert hall was to double on Sundays as Central Church for the recently ousted pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church, David Swing, who had a large and prominent following.

The building was the first of many projects Adler participated in that included an effort to provide a commercial basis for a cultural venture that couldn't sustain itself. It was the predecessor of the Auditorium, the Schiller Theatre, the Pueblo Opera House and the planned Seattle Opera House. Ironically, it would be the aging of the commercial facilities in many of these developments rather than their cultural quarters that led to their destruction in so many instances.

Theatres a Specialty

Commission after commission followed. The commercial course of the firm followed with specialties in theatre design, convention hall design and general commercial hotel, store and office buildings leading to the early skyscrapers. Residences played a minor part though a number were built for firm clients. In May of 1880 Adler hired Louis Sullivan, ten years his junior, as chief draftsman on the recommendation of his departing chief draftsman and Sullivan's intellectual mentor, Paul Edelman. In May of 1882 Sullivan became a junior partner and in 1883 an equal partner, with the firm changing its name to Adler and Sullivan.

We forget that in those days cities like Chicago had at least twenty theatres of a type of which the Schubert is the only functioning survivor. Every town of any consequence in the Midwest had at least one. Most of the theatres that Adler and Sullivan worked on are now only names in Chicago history with the exception of the Auditorium. Some may recollect names such as Hooley's, the Grand Opera House, the Apollo, McVickers, Peoples and finally the Schiller (later the Garrick), which was destroyed in the 1950's. All were known for their splendid acoustics and use of the latest technological advances of the time in terms of heating, lighting and audience comfort. Adler was acoustical consultant when the Pabst Theatre in Milwaukee had problems and is listed as a consultant for Carnegie Hall.

Temporary Auditoriums Common

Triumphs of the time were the great temporary convention halls which were erected within sheds. There was a great exposition hall on the then lakefront, where the Art Institute now stands, designed by W. W. Boyington. The space was some 800 feet long and 260 feet wide. In 1882 and again in 1884 a temporary festival hall was built within it for music festivals, with a second use of the 1884 hall both for the Republican and Democratic conventions. In 1885, within the same building, a 6,000-seat temporary opera house was built within a three-month period for a festival that began April 6 and ended April 18. The festival and the structure were a great success; and the two principal sponsors of the festival, Ferdinand Peck and N. K. Fairbank, two of Chicago's wealthiest and most prominent citizens, saw in it the foundation for a permanent large festival hall to provide Chicago with what New York had in the Metropolitan Opera House completed in 1882. In 1885 a temporary structure seating 12,000 people was erected within a sim-

ilar exposition building in Milwaukee to accommodate the North American *Sangerverein* Festival. In 1892 the temporary Republican Convention Hall in Minneapolis was designed by Adler as was that for St. Louis in 1896.

Building the Auditorium Building

As a result of the temporary 1885 Opera Festival Hall, the Chicago Auditorium Association was formed at the instigation of Peck and Fairbank. Adler and Sullivan were engaged as architects. It was the largest architectural commission in the United States at the time. Construction started in June of 1887, and the theatre was opened on December 9, 1889. The sheer complexity of the venture—theatre, hotel and office building— was, and still is, mindboggling. That was at a time when the engineering of tall buildings was in its infancy as was the use of electric lights, electric motors and mechanical ventilation. The building alone had twenty-two elevators, fourteen power fans and 16,000 lights, all operated from one power plant. Adler was responsible for all of the engineering and layout.

Today we blanch at change orders in construction. In the course of construction of the Auditorium, the hotel's main dining room (now Roosevelt University's library) and kitchens were moved to the top floor, and a recital hall seating 400 people and a banquet hall were added over the theatre stage. Two stories were added to the building's tower during construction. Caisson construction to bed rock had not been tried, and Adler and one of his few consultants, William Smith, had to devise foundations to hold this uneven pile with ground water only fourteen feet below Michigan Avenue.

An Acoustical Triumph

But it was the theatre with its acoustics and sight lines that was the building's greatest triumph. Every generation of singers from Adelina Patti, who opened the house, to Pavarotti has considered it his favorite hall. Wright called it "Adlers Hall." Whom did the clients look to? In a letter from Peck to Adler in January of 1888 Peck mentioned "my personal recognition of your genius and services."

Major theatre commissions continued with a splendid multiple-purpose opera house in Pueblo, Colorado, the Schiller Theatre and designs for a Seattle opera house in 1890. But aside from these commissions there was a continuing commercial practice of factories, offices and hotels. The Ryerson family, the Crane Company, the Illinois Central Railroad, the Standard Club and many of Chicago's great Jewish families were clients. 1891 saw completion of the Wainwright Building in St. Louis. 1892 the completion of the Illinois Central Terminal in New Orleans. Most spectacular of all designs was the proposed thirty-one-story building for the Oddfellows Fraternity in Chicago, which explored the use of setbacks for the first time in American architecture. 1892 was the year of the Schiller Building and Theatre, completion of the Chicago Stock Exchange Building for Boston interests, the St. Nicholas Hotel in

St. Louis and the designs for the Transportation Building for the Chicago World's Fair. There were many other commissions during the same period.

Depression Ruins Practice

Then came the aftermath of the 1893 depression, with but one major commission, a great one, the Guaranty Building in Buffalo, which was completed in 1895. That year Adler withdrew from the partnership and accepted an offer under a ten-year contract to become chief engineer for the Hydraulic Elevator Division of the Crane Company. With his established practice in collapse and a family to support, the \$25,000-a-year salary was a sound refuge. It was more than he had ever made in private practice.

That withdrawal signified the end of a great architectural firm, one of the two biggest in the city—it had fifty draftsmen; the other was Burnham and Root, a firm similar to Adler and Sullivan in many ways. It consisted of Daniel Burnham, the administrator and leader, and John Root, the brilliant designer and close friend of Sullivan. Sullivan considered John Root's death just before the 1893 fair as the death knell of his own work. The classic revival characterized by the Great White City, splendid as it was, made the Beaux Arts tradition of the Eastern establishment, represented by Richard Morris Hunt, dominant and set the standard for commercial architecture for the next thirty years.

Returns to Architectural Practice

Adler's position with the Crane Company lasted only six months. Crane Company never did permit a vital executive to develop within its management structure and Adler was no exception. He recommenced his practice in partnership with his son in modest offices in the Auditorium Building while Sullivan retained the original tower offices where his practice was crumbling. Each highly respected the other's abilities, but never again were they together as a force in American architecture.

The four years from 1895 through 1899 were indeed meager. Only five buildings were completed during that time, with an aggregate value of \$172,000. Buildings for the Morgan Park Military Academy and several large factories, including one for the Chicago Dock Company, were the products of 1897. More buildings for Morgan Park and minor commercial buildings were the result of 1898. Temple Isaiah (at Vincennes and 45th Street) and minor works were completed in 1899.

His Early Death

On April 16, 1900, at the age of fifty-five, Adler suffered a stroke and he died ten days later. The printed program commemorating his memorial service was designed by Sullivan. Sullivan fared no better than did Adler after the breakup of the partnership until his death in 1924.

When one follows the chronology of Adler's



Adler the successful architect with his wife, the former Dila Kohn

professional work, one might not realize he was one of the leaders of his profession, so recognized and so respected by his contemporaries. He was one of the founders and first officers of the Western Association of Architects in 1884. He was president of the Illinois State Association of Architects in 1886 and 1887. As a member of the American Institute of Architects and on many of its committees he was in close association with men such as H. H. Richardson, Richard Morris Hunt and George Post, the leading eastern architects.

In 1885 he was the drafter and later protagonist for legislation establishing a board of architectural examiners. It took twelve years to pass that legislation in Illinois, but it served as a model for most of the other states of the Union. In 1890 with compatriots such as John Root and Edward Sillsbee, a major architect of the time, he was involved with the merger of the Illinois State Association of Architects and the Chicago Chapter of the AIA. In October, 1891 he wrote his wife from Boston that he hoped he would not be nominated as president of the AIA as it would be too demanding under his then present circumstances; fortunately from Adler's point of view, the incumbent continued in office.

Adler-Sullivan Relationship

The combination of Adler and Sullivan was one of men with tremendous respect for each other. There would have been no Auditorium without Adler. It would not have looked as it does without Sullivan. That was their strength in everything they did. They were intimate friends in the early years of the partnership. Members of the Adler family write of how Sullivan came weekly for dinner during his bachelor years, the exquisite taste of the gifts he chose for the family and his participation in family musical events. The Adler children frequently went to his apartment.

Adler himself wrote, "Of late years owing to the preeminence in the artistic field of my partner, Mr. Sullivan, I have directed my efforts to the study and solution

of the engineering problems which are so important in the design of modern buildings." In another instance he stated, "While conducting our business as architects I have attended to the mechanical part of this work while Mr. Sullivan looked after the artistic and supervised the construction."

Glimpses of the Man Himself

In the Newberry Library collection of Adler's papers, there are a few personal letters from Adler to his wife which give insight into his personal life and why, as one publisher wrote, "His biography would not be particularly interesting because his life was not particularly tumultuous." He did his work superbly and his domestic life was that of a devoted son and husband. Rabbi Hirsch stated, "His family life was as a poem."

There is an 1891 letter that he sent his wife from New York which would hardly be considered a flight of fancy or a keen observance of the socio-economic forces about him. Instead he reported that he had spent a pleasant evening with the Schiffs and dinner consisted of barley soup, chicken, potatoes, cauliflower, pickles, charlotte russe, pears, grapes, cider and coffee. Charlotte russe was also served at a dinner at the Coolidge home in Boston the same year, according to a letter to Dila. Mr. Coolidge was a partner in Shepley, Ruttan and Coolidge, the successor firm to H. H. Richardson and architects of the main Art Institute building.

An 1896 letter is interesting as it refers to an art exhibit that he attended in New York while on a business trip. Taking for granted his wife's interest and knowledge of the field, it reflects on his artistic interests, which have been so often overlooked. He mentions Daubigny, Corot, Schreyers, Kowalski, Breton, Fromentus, among others, as the artists. Some are names that one knows, and some are not. But he also spoke of Rousseau, Rubens, Rembrandt and Courbet. He also mentioned Daniel Chester French, the sculptor. Art was obviously very much a part of his and his family's life.

And there is comment in the family that in the Adler house children were heard as well as seen and each encouraged to develop his or her capabilities. There were three Adler children. One daughter, Sara, married Julius Weil in 1897 and presented Adler with a grandson, Edward Weil, in 1899. One of his sons was also an engineer and joined him in his architectural endeavor when he returned from the Crane Company.

His Reputation Through The Years

Adler's position was probably best recognized by his contemporaries. There is a wonderful fulmination by Frank Lloyd Wright in a 1935 review of Hugh Morrison's book *Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture*. Wright wrote, "Form follows function. Has it occurred to no one, then, that Dankmar Adler, not Louis Sullivan, deserves the credit on that dogma? It was Adler's contribution to his young partner when he was teaching him practically all that the young man knew

about architecture. As an architect Louis Sullivan went to school not to the Beaux Arts but to Dankmar Adler."

John Root, Daniel Burnham's partner and the designing genius of that firm, who was a close friend of Sullivan's wrote:

Among the highest in all the profession stands Mr. Adler, for some time after the fire a partner of Mr. Burling and the "designing" member of the firm.

Of late Mr. Adler has passed the artistic crayon to Mr. Sullivan, but works designed by him in early days show a strength, simplicity, and straightforwardness, together with a certain refinement, which reveal the true architect. No professional man has possessed a more consistent and dignified course than he, and no man is more respected by his confreres. The Auditorium, a really wonderful building, stands as a monument to his and Sullivan's ideal.

In 1924 Arthur Woltersdorf, a prominent architect of the time, wrote his reminiscences of the *Inland Architect* of some of the major Chicago architects he had known. Of Adler he wrote:

Dankmar Adler, progressive, open minded and far sighted as always, took Sullivan in and gave him scope that permitted the development of his genius. Sullivan's personality was not such as to attract clients, and all the clients were Adler's and remained Adler's. Confidence of clients in Adler was unbounded and well deserved, since no effort was too great or time devoted to a problem too much to tire Adler in his efforts to achieve the best results.

Adler and Sullivan resulted in the creation of buildings that were distinctive, revolutionary, strove to advance the cause of architecture as a science and an art.

Woltersdorf goes on to speak of Adler's fairness in dealing with contractors and how contractors knew that, unlike many other architects, if Adler thought the contractor was right Adler did not hesitate to challenge the client.

When all is said and done, one can only conclude that Adler was the foundation on which Sullivan built. Whether Sullivan's aesthetic genius would have been able to express itself without Adler is conjectural. Adler gave him the vehicles and Sullivan used them. What Adler would have done without Sullivan is, of course, only speculation. An immense practice was started by Adler in the Eighties without Sullivan; and his firm, much like Burnham's after Root died, might well have prospered following the trend of the times rather than trying to lead it. When the trend toward originality in commercial buildings was destroyed by the Columbian Exposition, Burnham, Holabird and my own uncle Richard Schmidt, with his partner Hugh Garden, adapted to fashion and survived very well. I suspect it was Sullivan the created aesthete, who went out of current fashion and may well have brought down the firm. Today we should recognize each for what he did, and in retrospect we are dependent on each of them. As Wright said, "To honor Adler is not to disparage Sullivan." True recognition of Adler's contribution has yet to come. □



Featured at the January Society meeting on *landmanshaften* (l. to r.) were Dr. Adele Hast, Mildred Mentzer, Sidney Sorkin and David Passman (Story below)

Photos by Moselle Schwartz

Society Members Hear Speakers on *Landmanshaften*

Exhibit-Related Meeting Held at Spertus College

The many vivid images and mementos featured in the Society's *landmanshaften* exhibit at Spertus College became even more vivid at the January 14 CJHS meeting as three speakers recalled aspects of *landmanshaften* in the Chicago area. The meeting, held on the same floor as the exhibit at Spertus, featured addresses by Mildred Mentzer of the Czechoslovakian Society of America, David Passman of the Mariampoler Aid Society and Sidney Sorkin, noted researcher of local *landmanshaften*.

Ms. Mentzer discussed primarily the activities of the Czechoslovakian Society, an umbrella organization both of individuals and of the many *landmanshaften*-type organizations created by Gentile immigrants to Chicago from Bohemia. Their similarities to the Jewish organizations were striking.

Speaker Discusses Aims, Activities

Mr. Sorkin, currently working on a book about *landmanshaften* and *vereins*, presented an overview of these organizations, stressing their mutual aid aspects, their auxiliary activities, their membership

policies and the huge number of groups that once existed. He also discussed their inevitable decline, touching upon the reasons for it.

Mr. Passman, a Society board member who comes from a family whose connection with the Mariampoler Aid Society goes back several generations, provided an intimate look into the functioning and survival to this day of one of the most influential of the *landmanshaften*. He traced the engrossing yet sad history of Mariampole, the *shtetl* in Lithuania from which Mariampolers came, and told of the rescue work in Europe done by the group after two world wars had devastated the area.

Exhibit Adjoined Meeting Hall

A large crowd gathered early to view or review the exhibit and share in a social hour before gathering at 2:00 PM that Sunday afternoon to hear the presentations in Bederman Hall. Past President Adele Hast, who was instrumental in assembling both the exhibit and the program, introduced the speakers.

Landmanshaften or *vereins* are the Yiddish (and German) terms applied to the various aid and mutual benefit societies created by immigrants of most nationalities and religions to serve as sources of comfort, camaraderie and support for the strangers in a strange land. Later integration into American society has resulted in a dwindling away of these once necessary and important aspects of immigrant life. □

Society Makes Its First Videotape of Stashover Memoirs

A first venture into videotaping for archival purposes has just been completed by the Society under the direction of CJHS Boardmember Sol Brandzel. A session of reminiscences by local Holocaust survivors was recently professionally videotaped and will be preserved by the Society.

The group, with the exception of Brandzel, who moderated, were residents of the Stashover area in Poland at the time of the Nazi invasion but managed to survive and later come to Chicago. Among the reminiscences recorded were those of their experiences as they later became Americans in the Chicago area.

Brandzel, prominent labor leader and past president of the Chicago Board of Education, was himself born in Stashover. After coming to this country as a child he became active in the *Stashover Unterstiezung Verein*, an organization instrumental in assisting the integration of these survivors into American life.

The idea for the videotaping developed from a recent visit to the Chicago area by a Yale University unit which is recording experiences of Holocaust survivors nationwide. Society Past President Adele Hast, Ed Mazur and Past President Norman Schwartz assisted Brandzel in the Stashover project. □

Membership Cut-off Date Approaches

Those members who have not yet paid their 1990 dues are reminded that the cutoff date approaches and that they can enjoy the benefits of continuous membership only by renewing within the next month.

"By the end of May we must remove the names of non-renewers from our mailing list," said Membership Chairman Marian Cutler. "That means no *Chicago Jewish History*, no meeting notices, no members brunch and no discounts on summer tours or on copies of the Meites book when it appears this fall."

Reminder letters were sent out last month to those who had neglected to renew membership when first contacted but there is, as Mrs. Cutler recently stated, still time to remain part of a vital and enjoyable organization that delivers major satisfactions at very minor cost.

If you need a dues envelope, phone (312) 663-5634. □

Society's Spertus Exhibit Concludes Successful Run

Popularity Results in One-Month Extension

For some it was the sighs that accompany reminiscences of bygone days. For others it was a glimpse into an unknown or almost forgotten corner of local Jewish history. For all who viewed it, it was a rewarding experience.

"It" was the exhibit, "Our Second Home," the CJHS display devoted to *landsmanshaften*, which closed in March after more than three months in Spertus College's second floor exhibit gallery.

Seen by Thousands

Thousands of people saw the maps, photographs, insignia, records and other memorabilia concerning those institutions, both Jewish and Gentile, which were started for the mutual assistance of immigrants arriving in Chicago from particular communities in the old country.

The *landsmanshaft* or *verein*, as the Jews called it, in many instances prospered and grew into a permanent institution

such as a synagogue, a cemetery or a charitable organization; but eventually, as social security replaced mutual aid and immigration dwindled to a trickle, they faded from the scene.

Speakers Enhance Exhibit

Both at the exhibit's opening reception and at the Society's January 19 meeting, various speakers elaborated on the history and the contributions of *landsmanshaften*. Wide interest resulted in the exhibit's being extended for more than one month beyond its original closing date.

Society Exhibit Chairman Janet Hagerup expressed her gratitude to the many individuals and organizations who assisted, particularly the Czechoslovakian Heritage Museum, which contributed a number of items to the display; and the Illinois Humanities Council and the National Endowment for Humanities, whose financial assistance made the exhibit possible.

I. J. S. □

Acquire History of Congregation for Society's Archives

A history of Beth Tikvah Congregation of Hoffman Estates is the latest to be added to the Society's collection of local Jewish institutional histories. The history, an impressive compilation written and published on the occasion of the northwest suburban congregation's twenty-fifth anniversary, was secured for the Society by Past President Norman Schwartz.

"We are always looking for histories of local Jewish organizations to add to our collection," said Mr. Schwartz. "They are often of great value to researchers in local Jewish history; but frequently in the past these histories have been lost or widely scattered, especially as institutions move, merge or discontinue operations. Give them to us and we will see that they are preserved."

Anyone with an institutional history they are willing to donate to the Society should get into contact with Mr. Schwartz, (312) 944-4444, or the Society office.

Histories do not have to be up-to-date to be valuable research tools. Indeed, it is those which dig into the virtually forgotten earliest years that seem to be in greatest demand. □

Photo of Orphans Was For Confirmation

Readers of the last issue of *Chicago Jewish History* will recall seeing a photo of a group of youngsters from the Chicago Home for Jewish Orphans dating from about 1921. We asked for help in identifying individuals in the photo, which was recently donated to the Society for preservation by Carolyn Wollner.

While so far no identifications have arrived (the people pictured would be well into their eighties today), the Society did learn that the photograph was, in all probability, a confirmation class at the home. Such a photo was made for each year's confirmation group.

This information was volunteered by Florence Kraeckmann, herself a one-time "aitchkay" or home kid, as residents of the home were called. Mrs. Kraeckmann, now eighty years old, was in the home, located at 61st Street and Drexel Avenue, when she was graduated from Fiske Elementary School in 1923.

We are still interested in individual identifications for that photo. Anyone with information should contact the editor or the Society office. □

New Life, Regular Members Welcomed

New Life Members are among the several individuals who have become new members of the Society in the last few months. They are all welcomed to the ranks of those who insure that the achievements and travails of those who have trod local streets before us do not go unrecorded and unremembered.

Our new Life Members are Norman and Moselle Schwartz and Sylvia Graber Foley. We are grateful for their dedication and generosity. New members are:

Amy Berk	Joe Kraus
Rabbi Ellen W. Dreyfuss	Sandra Krugman
Carolyn Eastwood	Beth C. Lisberg
Bernard Ebstein	Harry S. Miller
Gayola G. Epstein	Marilyn & Roger Price
Ann Gerber	Lottie Rosenson
Myron Glickman	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Schwartz
Ivan R. Greenhut	Sandra Schwartz
Richard J. Harris	Marilyn W. Silin
James A. Hermes	Albert H. Wolff
Janet R. Kern	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Zemel

Marian Cutler
Membership Chairman □



In Ganz Hall: March Speaker William O. Petersen and three Adler great-grandchildren (story below)

Photos by Moselle Schwartz

Auditorium Designer Lauded At March 4 Meeting

Speaker Notes Adler's Neglected Achievements

Some overdue credit was paid at the Society's March 4 meeting to the talent of Dankmar Adler, designer-architect of Chicago's famed Auditorium Building and its even more famous Theatre. Attorney William O. Petersen, an amateur Adler historian, paid tribute to the Jewish engineering genius, whose skills resulted in a theatre as sound and workable today as when it was built just one hundred years ago.

Petersen, most of whose address appears elsewhere in this publication, made the point that although the beauty and decoration throughout the structure were essentially the contribution of Adler's more famous partner, Louis Sullivan, the building would never have been built if the commission had not been secured by Adler, the principal partner, and would not have survived had not the theatre's superior sightlines and acoustics, both Adler's contributions, rendered the theatre essentially

irreplaceable.

His Life, Achievements

In his address Petersen sketched the bittersweet life story of Adler, the eldest son of an early rabbi of KAM Temple, the Civil War hero, the successful but never very financially secure architect and the father early separated from his family by an untimely death.

Present at the meeting and introduced to the large audience were three great-grandsons of Dankmar Adler: Daniel E. Weil, Edward Weil III and Robert T. Weil. A grandson, Edward S. Weil, Jr., was also present as was a great-granddaughter, Cynthia Weil.

One of the great-grandsons, Daniel Weil, shared with the meeting some results of his own recent research into the technical advances made use of by his great-grandfather.

Conducted Tour of Theatre

Through the courtesy of Roosevelt University, the Society's meeting was held in Ganz Recital Hall in the Auditorium Building, which currently houses the university. Another highlight of the meeting was a one-hour tour of the Auditorium Theatre, conducted by Barbara Corrigan, assistant to the theatre's executive

director.

As usual, a social hour with refreshments, graciously provided this time by Roosevelt University, preceded the program. Mr. Petersen was introduced by Society President Walter Roth. □

Daughter Seeks Info On Benny Goodman

Members who have knowledge of incidents or events in the life of jazzman Benny Goodman during his early years in Chicago are asked to contact the researcher listed below who is working with Goodman's daughter, Rachel Goodman Edelson, on a book about her father. He is also interested in pertinent photographs, posters and advertisements. These would be carefully handled and returned after copying.

Goodman, of course, grew up on Chicago's old West Side and, according to tradition, learned to play musical instruments at Hull House classes for immigrants and their families.

Items and/or information should be addressed to: Robert B. McPherson, KCS Group, 3769 Thornall Street, Edison, New Jersey 18837. McPherson may be reached by phone at (201) 632-1770. □