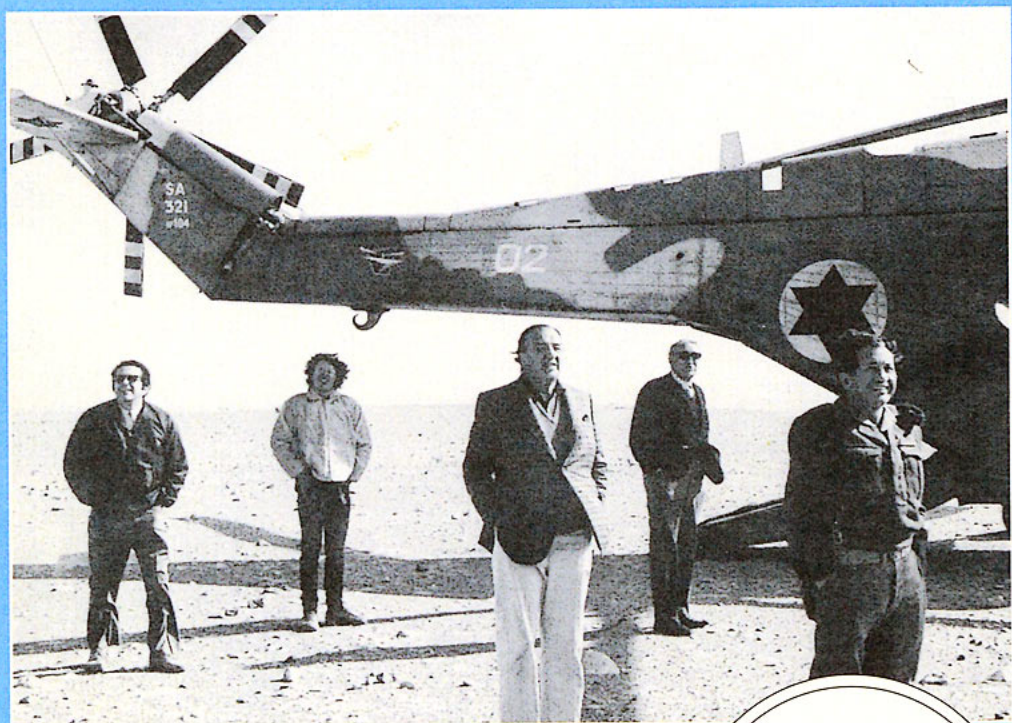


# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



*Henry Ford II (center) with Max Fisher  
and party in the Sinai Desert, 1972*



*Local Jews in Politics by Judge Cohn; Sports in the Depression; Ford and Israel; Jewish Historical Society 40th Anniversary; Tauber, Barak & Gold*

Volume 39

Fall 1999, Kislev 5760

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Cover photo from Irving Bernstein, *Living UJA History* (Jewish Publication Society, 1997). From left: Irving Bernstein, his son Bob, Henry Ford, Max Fisher, and their Israeli army escort wait for a rescue helicopter in the desert, 1972. See "Ford and Israel."



# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם... יהושע ד:כא

*When your children shall ask their parents in time to come...*

Joshua 4:21

Volume 39

Fall 1999

Kislev 5760

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## The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

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# A Century of Local Jews in Politics: 1850s to 1950s

By the Honorable Avern Cohn

*Editor's Note: This is an abridged version of a speech delivered by Judge Cohn for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in Birmingham, Michigan, on October 27, 1998, celebrating the centennial of the organized Jewish community of Detroit.*

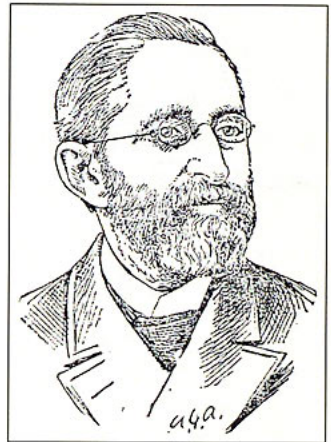
Jews in Detroit have always been a small part of the voting population, and until the 1930s, there was no well-formed Jewish political agenda in Michigan as there is today. Robert Rockaway, discussing the pre-civil war history of Jews in politics, writes: "During the 1850's Detroit Jews were too busy earning a living and establishing themselves to spend much time in politics." This could be said for all the years up to the 1930s. So the history I have to trace here is largely anecdotal.

## Early Political Actors

The 1850s was the first decade in which we see signs of political activity in the Jewish community and a Jew holding a political office in Detroit. Between 1854 and 1861 Rabbi Leibman Adler of Temple Beth El openly declared for the Republican Party because it shared his strongly held abolitionist views. In 1857, Edward Kanter, a local banker and merchant and a member of Temple Beth El, was elected to the state legislature as a Democrat after a campaign filled with anti-Semitic attacks on him. Later, Kanter was twice a candidate for state treasurer and an activist in the Democratic Party.

In the 1880s Edward Kanter, along with Simon Heavenrich and Magnes Butzel, founders of Jewish families of note, served as officers in the Democratic Party. In those years, Jews, mostly of German descent, held a variety of civic and political positions and engaged in political activity, as Rockaway tells us, as a display of good citizenship. However, the community appeared to be splintered politically and did not vote as a bloc.

The first Jew following Kanter to hold elected office, as far as my research discloses, was Joseph Weiss, who was elected a circuit court commissioner in Wayne County in 1884 following a short stint as Chippewa County prosecutor. Weiss went on to a notable career in public office. He was elected a state senator as a Republican in 1891, serving until 1894, and then was elected a state



Edward Kanter

## A CENTURY OF LOCAL JEWS IN POLITICS

representative in 1907-1908. He also ran for sheriff in 1908 and circuit judge in 1918, but was defeated both times. What is important to remember about Joseph Weiss is what Rabbi Leo Franklin of Temple Beth El said in his eulogy on Weiss's death in 1936:

He was a good American. He loved his country and all that it stood for. He was a loyal citizen of Detroit and he was a good Jew. He recognized the fact that the better Jew one is the better American he is bound to be, and conversely, the more loyal a Jew is in his American citizenship, the more faithful will he be in the service of his religion.

This dichotomy of being a Jew and an American played a large role in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in assessing Jewish involvement in politics. Rockaway says there were admonishments regarding Jews allowing anything that appeared to segregate Jewish practices for political purposes. That would have been viewed as arousing anti-Semitism.

The German Jews felt threatened by the manner in which the newly arrived Eastern European Jews involved themselves in local politics. The latter held political rallies, formed political clubs, and bargained with politicians seeking their votes. Nonetheless, the German Jews, particularly Temple Beth El members, began to increase their involvement. The Butzel family, for example, was divided, with one brother, Fred, working for Democrats and another, Henry, for Republicans. Most Temple Beth El members identified with the Republican Party as the more respectable because it was aligned with their economic interests.

Another personality of significance was Samuel Goldwater, one-time president of the Detroit Council of Trades and an organizer of the Michigan Federation of Labor. Goldwater was an alderman in Detroit in 1891 and ran for mayor against Hazen Pingree on the Democratic ticket in 1895. Many Democrats declined to support him because he was too radical. He was reelected to the Detroit City Council in 1896, and when he died in 1898 an official day of mourning was declared.

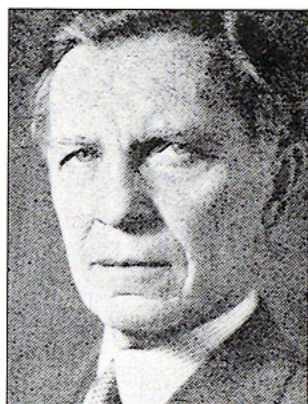


David Heineman

Following Goldwater, the next Jewish politician of note was David Heineman, a Butzel family member and a lawyer. Heineman served in the state legislature in 1889 and 1890, on the Detroit City Council from 1902 to 1909, and was city controller between 1910 and 1913. He is particularly remembered as the designer of the Detroit flag and founder of the Detroit Public Library. He died in 1935. [See the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's plaque at the Detroit Historical Museum commemorating David Heineman.]

The last Jewish political figure worthy of note in pre-World War I days is Charles Simons, who went on to be named a federal judge in Detroit in 1923, the first Jewish federal judge in Michigan. Simons was the son of

David W. Simons, described in a 1923 Detroit Times article as the leader in all enterprises of philanthropic and community service. "D. W." Simons was a public lighting commissioner and a member of the first nine-person city council in Detroit in 1918. I went to Sunday School in the 1930s at Shaarey Zedek in the D.W. Simons Building at Chicago Boulevard and Lawton, and attended Hebrew School in the David W. Simons Building at Tuxedo and Holmur.



Charles Simons

Charles Simons had a long career in public life. It began with his election to the state senate in 1903. In 1905-06, he was a Wayne County circuit court commissioner and in 1908 a delegate to the state constitutional convention. In 1923 President Harding appointed him to the district court, and in 1929 President Hoover appointed him to the court of appeals. The late Philip Slomovitz, in a letter to me, described Charles Simons's appointment to the district court. He said Simons was Townsend's re-election campaign at a time when Townsend was in trouble for voting against the expulsion of Truman Newberry from the senate for excessive campaign spending. Senator Townsend recommended Simons's appointment to President Harding. I personally recall Charles Simons. Charles Levin clerked for him, and he used to lunch at the Standard Club in the Book-Cadillac Hotel, of blessed memory.

### Judges Take the Lead

The story following World War I up to the 1950s is largely one of successful judges and unsuccessful efforts at elective office by Jews. James I. Ellman was prominent first as a judge and then as mayor of Highland Park. His son, Erwin, is a prominent labor arbitrator in Detroit, while his son, William, is a lawyer in Detroit.



James I. Ellman



Harry Keidan

The first of the Jewish judges following Joseph Weiss was Harry Keidan, a regular in my youth at services at Shaarey Zedek. Keidan began his political career in 1912 as an assistant prosecutor in Wayne County. After leaving that position, he was twice an unsuccessful candidate for judgeship and in 1920 was appointed to the recorder's court bench. In 1927 he was appointed to the Wayne County circuit court bench, where he served until his death in 1943. He was a highly regarded trial judge. In a story of his career, a Detroit



Henry Butzel

newspaper said of him: "A fair-minded clear-thinking man whose stiff sentences to criminals were at variance with the warmth and humanity of his heart. Judge Keidan was recognized as a judge in whose hands the institution of society were safe." Judge Keidan was a deeply religious man. In the 1920s, when Saturday morning court sessions were a regular occurrence, he would walk from his home on Chicago Boulevard to and from the courthouse.

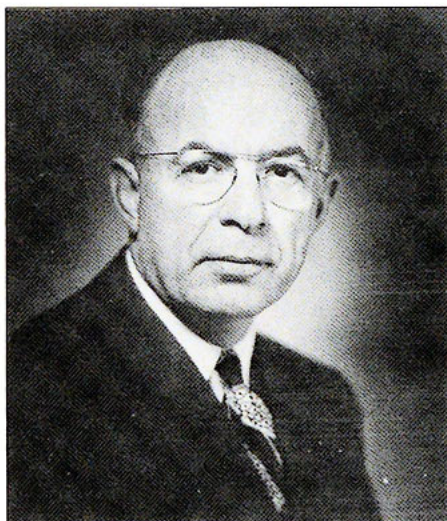
After Keidan's death, William Friedman, senior partner of Friedman Meyer & Keyes, then Detroit's pre-eminent Jewish law firm and counsel to Federation, was appointed to the Wayne circuit bench — a Jew following a Jew, clearly. Friedman was defeated when he stood for election in 1944 against Frank Ferguson, brother of Senator Homer Ferguson, in a campaign marked by overt anti-Semitism. Of particular interest is the fact that Ferguson in 1939 had defeated Charles Rubiner, then an incumbent common pleas court judge in Detroit, whom I will discuss below.

Following Keidan's ascent to the bench, Henry Butzel, then a prominent Detroit lawyer of the distinguished Butzel family, was appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court in 1929 by Governor Fred Green, where he served with distinction until 1960. While not active in politics, Justice Butzel was a Republican and what we would call today an enlightened moderate.

### Political Activity Heats Up

Through the 1920s, the situation remained similar to that of the 1850s — Jews were too busy earning a living to spend much time on politics. In the 1930s, the presence of Gerald K. Smith, Father Coughlin, and of Hitler abroad began to change Jewish attitudes and actions. Roosevelt's social action programs appealed to many Jews hit particularly hard by the Depression. Political parties and candidates began to court Jews both for their votes and their contributions. Elections ads began to appear signed by "Jewish Friends" or phrases were used like "my Jewish staff members." We began to see ads and articles in the *Jewish Chronicle* endorsing candidates for office as "friends of the Jews."

The 1930s gave us two Jewish judges on the common pleas court: Charles



Charles Rubiner

Rubiner, appointed in 1931 by Governor William Brucker from his position as an assistant attorney general, and the little-known Joseph Sanders, appointed in 1933 by Governor William Comstock. Rubiner served until 1939 and, at the time of his appointment and later, was a highly respected member and worker in the Jewish community. I remember as a young child the excitement I felt when my parents told me we were going to have a judge at a dinner party at our house on Fullerton. The judge was Rubiner.

The 1930s were marked by occasions of Jewish lawyers running unsuccessfully for such offices as county clerk, state representative, and judge. However, Henry Behrendt, a member of Temple Beth El, who appeared to move between the Republican and Democratic parties with ease and who began his career in public life as chief of police in Lansing, was several times elected Wayne County sheriff.

I have located the first ad for a presidential campaign in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1936 in the form of a pitch for Alfred Landon as a friend of the Jews in contrast to Roosevelt, paid for by the Wayne County Republican Committee. I contrast that to a story in the same paper about Harry Schumer urging the re-election of President Roosevelt in 1940. Schumer was a spokesman for the Jewish National Workers Alliance. Incidentally, William Hordes also placed a personal ad in 1940 endorsing Roosevelt. He also did this in 1942 for John Dingell for Congress and in 1954 for Philip Hart for U.S. Senate.

## Party Politics

Looking further than Jewish candidates for office, who obviously could not expect to be elected on the basis of the Jewish vote in Detroit, we began to see, as Sidney Bolkosky describes it in *Harmony & Dissonance*,<sup>2</sup> a coalescence of Jewish interests around parties and candidates. Between 1914 and 1926, Jewish secularists associated

# To My Friends—

**And To All Voters In The  
15th Congressional District:**

This is the time to show appreciation for genuine loyalty and devoted service by a great Congressman.

I urge all of you to cast your ballots for Congressman John D. Dingell who should be re-elected by an overwhelming majority as a tribute for his great services to this country.

Congressman Dingell is a true democrat. He is the most consistent supporter of President Roosevelt's program in Congress. He is a friend of Palestine, a defender of labor, a lover of freedom and a man with a passionate disapproval of intolerance.

Please do not fail to vote on Tuesday for

**Congressman  
John D. Dingell**

**DEMOCRAT. 15th DISTRICT**

*Sincerely yours,*  
**William Hordes**

A political advertisement from the  
*Jewish Chronicle*, October 30, 1942



## A CENTURY OF LOCAL JEWS IN POLITICS

with the *landsmanshaften* identified with parties of the left, while Jewish establishment leaders were Republican. In 1924, the threat of a Klan mayor in Detroit resulted in a collaborative effort among blacks and ethnic groups including Jews to elect John Smith.

In the 1930s, political liberalism began to attract young people. Liberalism, one author has written, offered an answer to anti-Semitism and other problems that the Jews faced. It has been said that liberal party policies substituted for the observance of religious tradition from which Jews believed their liberal values derived. Again, more financially successful Jews assumed a politically conservative Republican image. This difference in association extends to today in my experience, with exceptions. Minutes of the organizational meetings of the Jewish Community Council in 1937 reflect a concern regarding eligibility for membership of Jewish "political groups," meaning left-leaning.

Also in the 1930s, we began to see Jewish support for candidates who opposed Nazism. For example, in 1936 George W. Welsh, Democratic candidate for governor, asked for Jewish voter support on the basis of his opposition to anti-Semitism as a legislator. In 1940, Clarence J. McLeod's reelection to Congress was urged by the Jewish War Veterans on the basis of his support for Jewish interests in Palestine. David Zack urged the election of Frank Fitzgerald in 1940 to the United States Senate on the basis of his opposition to intolerance.

Two anecdotes of significance illustrating Jewish support for friends involve Congressman John Dingell, father of the current congressman. Dingell was elected to Congress in 1934 from a district that included Northwest Detroit. He gave enormous help to those bringing Jewish family members from Eastern Europe into this country. The late Theodore Levin was then a lawyer specializing in immigration matters. Philip Slomovitz, then editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, wrote Dingell that "an outstanding Detroit Jewish lawyer" should be appointed to a newly created federal judgeship on the grounds that "not a single Jewish appointment of importance has thus far been made in Michigan by the Democratic administration." Slomovitz then went on to recommend Levin. Dingell graciously rejected the suggestion on the grounds he had too many friends in the race and if he took a definite stand, he said, "I am afraid I would make a lot of enemies and lose friends." Dingell, in his letter, pointed out a number of Jews holding appointee positions in state government. His list included at least one person with a Jewish-sounding name whose obituary suggests he was a long-time Lutheran. Of interest to me was Dingell's statement:

I think the chances of Mr. Levin for this appointment are very slender because there are too many men of good qualifications who have Party service records of from twenty to thirty years and the Party leaders here in Washington will certainly take that into consideration along with qualifications for Judicial service.

Things haven't changed.

Another chapter in the Dingell experience occurred in 1940 when Samuel Lieb challenged Dingell for the Democratic nomination for Congress in 1940. This caused



Charles Blondy

an outrage among many Jewish leaders, including my late father, who believed Lieb betrayed the Jews of Detroit by challenging one of their champions.

In 1940 a Jew served in the legislature in the person of Charles Blondy, who was elected a state senator. Blondy is described in a biographical account as an advocate for Jewish interests in the legislature. He sponsored resolutions opposing Arab interference with the rights of Americans in Arab league countries, supporting the Jewish Tercentenary, confronting opposition to humane slaughtering legislation, providing absentee ballots for Jews unable to vote on Jewish holidays, and notice to the

Hebrew Benevolent Society when a deceased person was determined to be of the Jewish faith and no one claimed the body. He came from a traditional Jewish family and served through 1964. At one time he was one of only four Democrats in the state senate. During Blondy's term in the legislature, legislators worked only part-time and were poorly paid. I remember Blondy as a Wayne County Court bailiff whose job it was to serve papers. In 1953, Alan Blondy, Charles's brother, was elected to one term in the legislature.



Theodore Levin

In 1946 Theodore Levin finally got his judgeship from President Truman, but not without a good deal of opposition from within the Democratic Party. He was accused of being a Republican. His appointment began the long and distinguished career in public office of members of the Levin family [including retired Justice Charles Levin, whose portrait was recently unveiled at the Michigan Supreme Court. See below.] Also in the 1940s, a Jew was elected circuit court commissioner in Wayne County in the person of John Schneider.

### Appointments to Important Offices

The 1950s marked a change for Jews in politics. G. Mennen Williams as governor gained strong support from Jews because he was considered a liberal. There was strong support for Adlai Stevenson for president in 1952 and 1956, as you can see from ads in the *Jewish News*. Governor G. Mennen Williams appointed Jews to local judgeships: Victor Baum to the Wayne County Circuit Court and Nathan Kaufman to the Wayne County Probate Court. There is a view that Governor Williams was not all that disposed toward appointing Jewish judges, believing that they could not get elected once appointed. Kaufman's television program gave prominence to the Kaufman name and contributed to the election of Ira Kaufman to the probate court and of Charles Kaufman as common pleas court judge. The election of Charles

## A CENTURY OF LOCAL JEWS IN POLITICS

Kaufman in 1959 to the common pleas bench reflects the potency of the Kaufman name at the time; one of the candidates he defeated was Thomas J. Brennan, who went on to be elected to the Michigan Supreme Court. Richard Kaufman, Charles's son, served as a circuit judge from 1981 until quite recently.

Both Baum's and Kaufman's appointments by Governor Williams had their own set of difficulties. Baum's appointment was opposed by Alfred Meyers, then a powerful leader of the 17th congressional district, in which



Ira Kaufman

Baum lived. Victor had to move into the adjacent 15th district to get clearance so that Williams could go ahead with the appointment. Meyers, a Detroit schoolteacher, was a formative power, almost a boss, in the 1940s and 1950s. As to Kaufman, powerful UAW support enabled him to get his appointment. Nate had begun his working life in a factory where he became active in UAW affairs. He maintained that interest when he went on to law school and called on it when he sought a judgeship.

Candidates for judgeship received extensive support from fellow Jews in the way of money, endorsements, envelope stuffing, postcard writing, and the like. In 1954, I personally recall working very hard, along with Jewish friends, to get Charles Diggs, Jr., elected to Congress from a district in Northwest Detroit. An important piece of the Jewish agenda was strongly supporting African-American aspirations for political office. We thought it the right thing to do and that it would be good for the Jews.

Leonard Kasle served on the Detroit Board of Education in the 1950s, for a time as president, the only Jew ever to hold that position on the board. In 1958 Jason Honigman ran for attorney general on the Republican ticket, and an ad supporting him in the *Jewish News* was signed by a number of Jews as the "Committee for Honigman." This brought a response from the *Jewish Daily Forward*, which was critical of "well known Jewish community leaders" who asked for votes to support Honigman because he was Jewish. The *Forward* said that this engendered religious intolerance. No similar criticism had been seen in earlier years when non-Jews asked for support because they employed Jews in the departments they headed or had "Jewish friends."

Benjamin Burdick was appointed to the Wayne County circuit bench in 1963 by Governor George Romney. Irwin, his brother, was appointed to the same bench in 1975.

No account of Jews in politics would be complete without mention of Emanuel Seidler, a Detroit lawyer who had offices in the Hammond Building. He was a friend of my father and was the father of Professor Murray Seidler of Wayne State University, a high school classmate of mine. Seidler was a socialist who did not

abandon the party as did the Reuther brothers and others who supported Roosevelt in 1936. At various times Seidler was the Socialist Party nominee for governor, attorney general, and state Supreme Court justice. He was a true believer.

## A Jewish Agenda Takes Shape

My years of intense involvement, the 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential races, are reflected in the ads in the *Jewish News*, which were signed by many of us in the community. We were involved for a variety of reasons. We had partisan feelings and strong convictions. It was fun working with friends in a common cause for which we felt deeply. The cause was a better America in the form of less discrimination, more money for the poor, and important support for Israel. Beyond the association with a successful candidate, basking in the reflected glory of the office holder gave one a sense of personal satisfaction. As an example, my reward for my efforts for Lyndon Johnson in 1964 was an invitation to a state lunch, along with Mike Zeltzer, and a state dinner at the White House. These were experiences that will live with me forever, experiences that money could not buy (at least in a spiritual sense). And I must mention the fact that Stuart Hertzberg, for many years treasurer of the State Democratic Party, was the one who pushed Mike and me to the level of activities that brought us to the attention of the White House social secretary.

The 1960s began the modern era of local Jews in politics as I see it. When Sander Levin ran for governor on the Democratic ticket in 1970, when a Jew was nominated by a major political party to run for the highest political office in Michigan, it marked the point in time when Jews became fully integrated into the political life of our community. Sander, of course, ran again in 1974 and has been a Representative to Congress for some years from a largely non-Jewish district. That his brother, Carl, is now serving his fourth term as a U.S. Senator is further evidence of our complete integration. This could be the subject of a future article.

What I believe I have related to you was, in the beginning, a story of a now-and-then thing. Since 1850, a local Jew occasionally entered the political arena and had some success, mostly as a judge. Now it is a commonplace thing; a Jew contesting for political office is of no special significance and winning or losing comes from a variety of reasons, none of which relate to Jewishness.

I quoted earlier Rabbi Franklin's words in eulogizing Joseph Weiss. Let me rephrase them in concluding. It can be said of almost every Jew I have known who has gained public office, judge or legislator: He is a good American. He loves his country and all that it stands for. He is a loyal citizen and he is a good Jew. He recognizes the fact that the better a Jew one is, the better American he is bound to be, and conversely, the more loyal a Jew is in his American citizenship, the more faithful will he be in the service of the Jewish people.

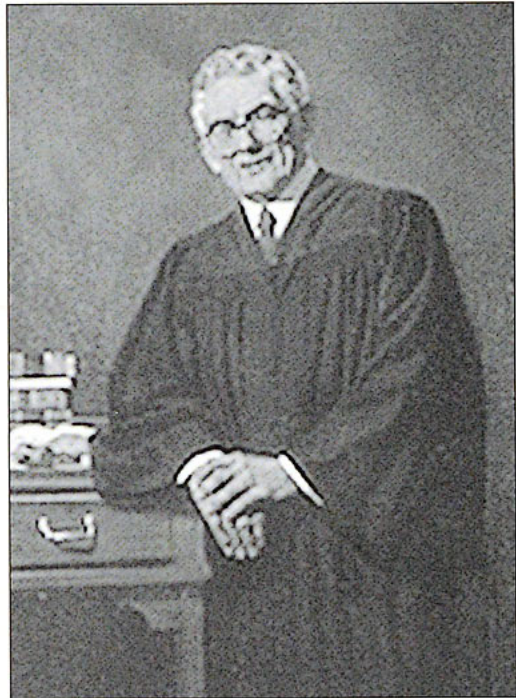
## Justice Charles Levin Portrait Unveiled in Supreme Court

*Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a talk given by the Hon. Avern Cohn, a colleague, friend, and cousin of retired Supreme Court Justice Charles Levin, at the unveiling of Levin's portrait at the Court in Lansing, May 6, 1999.*

This occasion marks a permanent remembrance of Justice Charles Levin's twenty-four years of service as one of the justices of this high court — the final arbiter of disputes among the people of Michigan. We are here today to honor a great justice, the son of a great judge, his late father, Theodore Levin. Theodore Levin was a long-time member of the court on which I now sit, and the patriarch of the Levin family, which has contributed so much to the political life of this state.

Today also marks the sixtieth anniversary of the day Justice Charles Levin "became a man" and received his first fountain pen. It was sixty years ago today that Charles Levin of LaSalle Boulevard in Detroit became a Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Shaarey Zedek at the corner of Lawton and West Chicago. For those of you of a biblical bent, the Torah portion that day came from Leviticus, and the prophetic portion, which the Bar Mitzvah boy personally recited, came from the writings of the prophet Ezekiel. In that Torah portion, the people of Israel are commanded to keep the light continually burning in the tabernacle. It is the light of truth, shining to illuminate the darkness of injustice and discrimination. I believe there is something prophetic in the link between what was recited then and Charles Levin's career as a judge.

In his 1966 campaign to win a seat on the Michigan Court of Appeals for the First District, Levin made capital of the outstanding rating he received from the merit rating program of the Detroit Bar Association, then newly formed by the late Richard VanDusen and George Bushnell. Also noteworthy is the manner in which Levin campaigned to be elected to the Michigan Supreme Court in 1972 as the nominee of the short-lived Non-Partisan Judicial Party. By the way, Professor Maurice Kelman describes in his



Portrait of Justice Charles Levin  
at Supreme Court in Lansing.

article, "A Tale of Two Parties" (*Wayne Law Review*, Vol. 19, p. 253), a 1972 lawsuit in the federal court in Detroit stemming from Levin's unique efforts to gain a seat on the high court. In my opinion, Justice Levin's judicial career suggests that voters do sometimes exercise good judgment in voting in judicial elections.

From Levin's first published opinion in volume 7 of *Michigan Appeals Reports* to his last five dissents on December 30, 1996, in volume 453 of the *Michigan Reports*, he displayed scholarship, pragmatism, insight, honesty, courage, and humanity as demonstrated by his willingness to admit he has sometimes made a mistake. More importantly, on numerous occasions he voted, many times alone, in favor of review of a court of appeals decision when a majority of his colleagues turned aside the application for leave to appeal. Levin's back-of-the-volume writings merit particular attention.

Throughout his thirty years on the bench, Justice Charles Levin has demonstrated an understanding of the reality of the other fellow's predicament. This, in essence, is his contribution to the people of Michigan and will be the aura surrounding the portrait unveiled today. This portrait is a worthy addition to those already hanging in the Supreme Court, particularly in the company of the nineteenth-century greats Campbell, Graves, Cooley, and Christiancy. Justice Levin ranks with each of them.

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1. Robert Rockaway, *The Jews of Detroit: From the Beginning, 1762-1914*. Wayne State University Press, 1986.

2. Sidney Bolkosky, *Harmony & Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967*. Wayne State University Press, 1991.

Further References: *Detroit Free Press*. *Detroit News*. *Detroit Times*. *The Jewish Chronicle*. *The Jewish News*. *Michigan Jewish History*.

*The author would like to thank Judy Cantor for her research efforts; Michael Kroll, a freelance researcher at the Reuther Library, for his efforts in collecting the materials; and his secretary, Nancy Lippert, who processed many drafts of this paper.*



*The Honorable Avern Cohn is judge of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan.*

# Ford and Israel

by Alan D. Kandel

A remarkable friendship developed in the early 1950s between Henry Ford II, the "original" Ford's grandson, and the legendary Jewish philanthropist Max M. Fisher. The two met when their wives were co-chairs of the Metropolitan Opera during its Detroit visit. Their friendship lasted until Ford's death in 1987.

The contrast between the two Fords was especially appreciated by the Detroit Jewish community, which remembered the anti-Semitic views of Henry Ford I. During the 1920s, the American Jewish community was shocked and dismayed at his attitudes. Sidney Bolkosky in his history, *Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967*, notes that Ford published his infamous *Dearborn Independent* ninety-one times between 1920 and 1922, spreading the worst kind of anti-Semitism to its readers.

## The First to Help

Even before assuming the presidency of the Ford Motor Company in 1950, Henry Ford II took steps to remove the shadow cast by his grandfather over relations with the Jewish community. When Chaim Weizmann was elected the first president

of Israel in 1948, Ford sent him a Lincoln, one of the only two in existence (the other went to President Harry Truman). In 1950 Ford met Weizmann in New York City and learned about Israel's acute transport problems. Showing his concern for the fledgling state, Ford announced a departure from usual company policy on sales to foreign governments. "In this case," he said, "our purchase agreements with Israel will specify that

an immediate payment of forty per cent will be made in dollars from the Export-Import Bank. The company will extend credit on the sixty per cent balance."

In a 1950 address, Israel's Ambassador to the United States Eliahu Elath stated that the seriousness of Israel's economic problems, "old to the world but new to one of its youngest nations, had been lessened somewhat. The Ford Motor Company was FIRST to provide help...and in 1949 agreed to provide Israel with approximately 1800 vehicles."

The Ford Motor Company had enjoyed a fruitful business relationship for many years with Palestine before it became Israel. In 1930 Ford franchised the Palestine Automobile Company (later to become the Israel Automotive Company), with Dr.

From Peter Golden,  
Quiet Diplomat: Max M. Fisher.



John Bugas, Max Fisher, Henry Ford II, at Bugas's Wyoming ranch.

Saul Lipschitz as president. Reorganized in 1936, the company had dealers in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem and, according to records in the Ford Motor Company Archives, it was selling 25,000 cars per year.

### Trucks and Credit

In the years that followed, the idea for the development of a Ford assembly plant in Israel was put forward by Israeli automobile leaders. The Philip Slomovitz Collection at Wayne State University's Reuther Archives contains a 1950 letter from Ford executive Graeme K. Howard to Robert Nathan, director of the Economic Department at the Jewish Agency for Palestine in New York. The letter outlined Ford discussions with Israeli officials leading to the possibility of establishing an assembly plant. It mentioned a potential contract under which Ford would accept orders for vehicles up to \$7 million on liberal credit terms. The letter emphasized that, due to its familiarity with local economic and employment conditions, the Palestine Auto Company would assume major responsibilities for the proposed plant. Ford would extend a revolving credit of \$1 million to cover purchase of truck components and, at company expense, would provide technical personnel to assist with machinery installation. While consideration was given, the letter stated, to the possibility of the plant becoming an "entrepot" center for supplying the logical neighborhood area, Israeli Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan "cautioned against any practical consideration of such a possibility at this time." By 1966, however, the contract was yet to be fulfilled, and it was indicated that the proposed plant would be restricted to truck assembly.

In 1967, with war clouds on the horizon in the Middle East, Max Fisher left a yacht on which he was cruising with Henry Ford II in the Mediterranean and flew to Israel on emergency United Jewish Appeal business. When Fisher arrived home he found a hand-written note from Ford saying, "I'm sending this check because I believe in the cause." The donation of \$100,000 was to be repeated in future years.

### Ford Visits Israel

Ford first visited Israel in 1972. In his book, *Living UJA History*, Irving Bernstein, former executive vice chairman of the UJA, described the trip, which included Ford and his wife Cristina, Fisher and his wife Marjorie, and Bernstein and his wife Judy. Ford had the opportunity to meet with leading Israeli officials including Prime Minister Golda Meir; Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir; Teddy Kollek, mayor of Jerusalem; Shimon Peres, minister of communications; and former Foreign Minister Abba Eban. During his visit he also met with former Prime Minister



Henry Ford II and Golda Meir in Tel Aviv.

From Walter Hayes, *Henry: A Life of Henry Ford II.*



David Ben-Gurion, who expressed his belief that five million more immigrants would come to Israel.

Crucial to the 1972 trip was Ford's meeting with Joe Boxenbaum, an Israeli entrepreneur, who headed the Automobile Industries Limited, successor to the Israel Automobile Company. Boxenbaum's long-held vision was of a major Ford assembly plant in Nazareth. As told by Walter Hayes, Ford biographer and public relations director, "the Israeli economy...made it unreasonably expensive to import finished cars...from Britain.... Joe Boxenbaum...asked for cars to come out as components, in what carmakers call KD, or knock-down form so that he could assemble them in Nazareth."

Ford, however, had doubts about Israel's ability to mount such a project. As described by Bernstein, "Ford's assessment of Israel's attempts to build automobiles was straight and direct. He told them it was a waste of labor and capital to begin an automobile industry because Israel could purchase the same cars overseas for less than what they would cost to manufacture. Since Israel had virtually no railroad and was dependent on trucking, Ford advised Israelis to invest in assembling trucks and buses." According to Hayes, "there was to be no direct Ford investment in Israel." Minister Sapir agreed but asked if the Ford Motor Company could provide engineering consultants, and within two weeks, Ford's people were in Israel.

Both Bernstein and Hayes recorded an anecdote relating to that 1972 trip. Ford and Fisher were flying to the Suez Canal when their helicopter suffered mechanical problems and was forced to land in the Sinai. When a second copter arrived with a new pilot, Ford demanded that the pilot of the damaged copter fly them back because he was wearing a yarmulke. Said Ford to Bernstein, "I am not flying with the new pilot, only with the one who saved our lives, as it just might be that he has a straighter line to God."

### Standing Against the Boycott

It was during the 1972 trip that the Arab boycott took effect, and the Arab League threatened the pending Ford-Israel deal. As reported by Bernstein, "the boycott lasted fifteen years and I will never forget what Ford told me.... Although he, like any other corporate leader, did not relish losing customers and income, he said that the real hurt was the human factor, since most Ford franchises were owned by families who passed the franchise down from generation to generation. That bothered Ford greatly, but it did not stop him from doing what he thought was right." According to Ford biographer Boonton Herndon, Ford told his close friend Max M. Fisher, "Nobody's gonna tell me what to do."



At the campus of the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, in the 1960s, from left: Henry Ford II, Technion president Alexander Goldberg, Max Fisher.

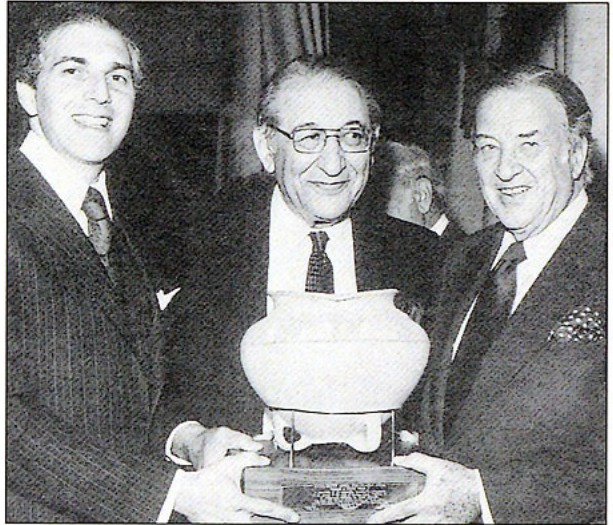
Courtesy The Technion, Detroit Chapter

Ford later delivered a number of speeches, notably one before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council (c. 1975-1977), attacking the Arab boycott. In a 1975 press conference, asked when Ford Motor Company might be lifted from the boycott list, Ford replied, "I don't have any idea.... We've been on the boycott list since 1966 and we're not changing our relationship with Israel in any way." In 1976, the American Jewish Congress removed from Ford's annual meeting agenda a stockholder resolution on the Arab boycott. As Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, president of the congress, stated, "we are gratified by the declaration of Henry Ford II and we hope it will induce other companies doing business in the Middle East to follow the splendid example of the Ford Motor Company."

Ford's second trip to Israel in 1973 focused on business and economic matters. On May 30, 1973, he joined Joe Boxenbaum at the official launching of the Ford commercial vehicle plant at Nazareth, which would supplement its output of passenger cars from England. "The first Jewish Ford trucks in history" was how Ford described trucks coming off the assembly line. The new models to be assembled at the plant, which employed 600 Jewish and Arab workers, were to be Ford Escort vans, the Ford Transit-medium range, and the Ford D series medium trucks.

### Ford Executives in Israel

Among Ford executives who traveled to Israel was Frank Theyleg, international principal staff engineer, who had made his way from Germany to China in 1939 and then to Detroit where he joined the Ford Motor Company. Theyleg first went to Israel in 1968 as a private individual at the invitation of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. Representing Ford, he later made repeated trips to Israel to consult with the Israel Automobile Company, which was importing vehicles from England. At the time there was a small auto assembly plant owned by South American investors (probably Argentinean) that was building bodies for ambulances. Theyleg was involved in discussions on a proposal to import from England the first Ford Escort K D in boxes, or kits, to be assembled at the plant. He also consulted on the Escort assembly launching.



From Irving Bernstein, *Living UJA History*.

From left, Irwin Field, national president of UJA, and Max Fisher present Henry Ford II with an award for distinguished leadership in New York, 1978.

He took part in the implementation of a viable industrial operation in support of, and creditable to, the Israeli Export.

Ed Baumgartner, a specialist in truck product development, was another Ford executive who made several trips to Israel. His tasks were to work with Boxenbaum defining truck products suitable for Israel and to help identify potential made-in-Israel parts for U.S. and European truck makers. Julius Harwood, a Ford research manager, was invited to Israel in 1968 and 1971 by the Robert Szold Center of Applied Science, a joint activity of the Hebrew University and the Palestine Endowment Fund. Harwood, who later became a laboratory research director, scientific research staff, was the co-author of two technical reports leading to the development of a School of Applied Science and Technology at the Hebrew University.

It may be difficult to separate the contributions of Henry Ford II and the Ford Motor Company. Suffice it to say that in Henry Ford II, Israel found a warm supporter and in the Ford Motor Company it found a consistent provider of automobiles, parts, and services over a long stretch of time.

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Photo by Buz Holzman.



*Alan D. Kandel retired in 1984 from the executive staff of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. He is a founding member of the Institute for Retired Professionals of the Jewish Community Center. Kandel has also helped to arrange a number of important archival collections and is a member of Federation's History and Archives Committee. This is his fourth article for Michigan Jewish History. Kandel reports that the theme for this article was suggested by Stanley N. Meretsky, former president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.*

# Some Rays of Light in a Darkened World:

## Sports and the Jewish Community in Depression-Era Detroit

by Bob Greene

**O**n a recent visit back to my hometown, Detroit, I headed in the direction of Michigan Avenue and Trumbull, site of the people's shrine: Tiger Stadium. I had spent some of the best times of my young life there, watching the Tigers, and later Lions' football games.

There the old ballpark still stood, a vital link to my past. I first knew it as Navin Field. In 1912, businessman Frank Navin bought it from Charlie Bennett, who had it built in 1896 and won an American League pennant in 1908. Navin tore down the original park and put his name on its successor. Thus it remained until 1938, when millionaire auto-body manufacturer Walter O. Briggs bought it and named it after himself. In the 1950s, an ailing Briggs sold the club to John Fetzer, who changed the name to Tiger Stadium. It retains that name in its dotage until a new, fancier ballpark,



Briggs Stadium in the 1940s.

"Comerica Park," opens soon off Woodward Avenue at Witherell and Montcalm. Imagine, we Tigers and Lions fans have had the same ballpark for almost a century!

Many thousands of Detroiters have thought of the ballpark as a temple or shrine. It could be said that between 3 p.m. and about 5 p.m. approximately 77 afternoons a year (in the old days the season was 154 games, all in daytime) more devout prayers were offered within the block bounded by Trumbull, Michigan Avenue, Cherry (now Al Kaline Drive), and National (now Cochrane, after Gordon Stanley "Mickey" Cochrane, player and manager in the 1930s) than in some other houses of worship in Detroit. The fans' frenzy increased when the Tigers made it to the World Series, as they did in 1908, '34, '35, '40, and '45, and tickets to the then-25,000 seat stadium were much harder to get.

### The Rays of Light

I have called this recollection of the late 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, "Some Rays of Light in a Darkened World." America was a darkened world between 1929 and 1945, especially for Jews who observed with growing anxiety the rise of Nazism in Germany and later throughout Europe. Increasing anti-Semitism in the U.S. raised fears about personal and community security, while the economic setbacks of the Depression brought at best frustration, if not grave crises, to those immigrant or first-generation Jews who were just beginning to experience economic successes. For Detroit Jews, the "rays of light" were the exceptional successes of their baseball, football, and hockey teams during that era, and the emergence of Joe Louis Barrow, a young boxer from the Brewster Recreation Center in Detroit. Today I still marvel at how we were sustained and uplifted by the teams and by the successes of baseball's Hank Greenberg. Joe Louis's fights — especially his defeat of the champion James Braddock in 1937 and his two fights with Max Schmeling, "the German," in 1936 and 1938 — were emotional events for the entire community. Many Detroiters, especially Jews and African-Americans (Negroes, as they were called in those days), were helped through the Depression because sports, more than the struggling family budget, became the dominant theme of their lives. It was the great joiner in civic life among Detroiters who could not agree on much else.

Detroit's Jewish community had grown quickly in the first decades of the twentieth century, due in part to Henry Ford's 1914 announcement of raised wages (\$5 for an eight-hour day!). Thousands of job seekers came to Detroit, including my paternal grandparents from Czarist Russia and their sons from Manhattan's Lower East side. They prospered in the 1920s with a lot of hard work, but like many, their fortune collapsed between 1928 and 1931. There were many pathetic scenes in those Depression years that shaped the economic and psychological framework of those who lived through them. Several still leave me shuddering when I recall them. Driving with my parents one Sunday, we reached the corner of Linwood and West Chicago Boulevard, when a well-dressed man approached our car selling flowers. My father recognized him and asked him what he was doing. "I am trying to make some money for my family." My dad knew of an opening for an agent in his insurance office and arranged for his friend to be hired.

Many of my strongest memories of my father and of our extended family in this period relate to sports. Animated sports discussions often occupied our dining room table, even at the holidays. One Passover incident remains clear in my mind. One year, my Uncle Benje Edelson, a member of a rather "fruhm" Yiddish-English family, used the near concurrence of the baseball season with the arrival of Passover to offer a prayer for the Tigers' success. It was not well received by the assembled family.

With six men to contend with, my mother and her sister had to make a choice. They could endure the period from mid-February to early October (baseball season) in a barren, conversationless setting, or they could study up on the game. Both chose the latter, and could argue with the best of us. They remained sports fans to the end. In 1994, two weeks before my mother's death, I visited her in the Hebrew Home. At age 92, she was frail and did not always recognize visitors. On that day I arrived wearing my Tiger cap with its distinctive Old-English  $\text{A}$  on the front. I asked her if she recognized it; she did not. "Mother," I said loudly. "Baseball!" She responded, "Tigers." It was our last chat.

### **Pleasant Memories, in a Clean Shirt**

Prices were cheap in those days. If you had \$640 you could buy a 1937 Pontiac, as my father did with a bank loan. Seeded rye bread (which my family called "corn bread") was 9 cents a loaf, and I got to keep the penny from the dime to buy candy. A seat in the bleachers, my usual vantage point, for the baseball game was 55 cents, including tax. General grandstand seats were \$1.10, and those closer to the playing field were \$1.40. It took three streetcars to get home from the ballpark. The fare was 6 cents, plus a penny for a transfer. I was always fortified for a double header with two egg salad sandwiches prepared by my mother on moist Silvercup bread.

During the 1930s, there were intense divisions and rivalries within the Jewish community of Detroit. But Navin Field was a neutral ground of pleasure for many kinds of Jews and many other people too. In the thirties, there were seventy-seven home games a season, all day games until 1948 when owner Briggs reluctantly agreed to join the trend toward lighted night games. He stated that he "preferred his games in natural sunlight," thus disregarding the interests of his workers and thousands of others who could not get to a day game. In 1938, Briggs greatly expanded the ballpark, adding double deck stands in left, center, and right field, bringing its capacity to 55,000. In the mid-thirties, there was only a ten- or twelve-foot wall in left field, except for World Series games when temporary seats were installed there. Beyond that wall was a parking lot, and beyond that the fabled Cherry Street. Hank Greenberg hit many a home run over that wall until the stadium was enlarged in 1938. Then he hit them into the new grandstand.

The most pleasant memories of my youth are the occasional weekday games to which my father took me. His life insurance work, door-to-door as a salesman, could be frustrating when it was not sheer drudgery, but he had some flexibility with his hours. Several times each summer, he would phone my mother midday and tell her to "have Robert put on a clean shirt. I'm coming home to take him to the ballpark."

The most desired section was in the lower deck, section 17, between home and third base, behind the Tigers' dugout. Arriving early to watch batting practice was always a thrill, especially when I got to see my idol, Hank Greenberg, play a warm-up game of catch with the much-envied batboy, Joe Roggin. One day we had a supreme opportunity. During the pregame, the Tigers' director of scouting, suitably named "Wish" (Aloyious) Egan, was sitting with a friend just a few rows in front of us. It was fairly early in the season and Egan was providing his visitor with a rundown on the comparative abilities of prospective young Tigers. We "eavesdropped" on the inside story. What more could a ten-year-old baseball fan ask for?

### Radio Days

When I was not at the game, there was always the reassuring voice of Ty Tyson, who broadcast on the local NBC station, WWJ. His sometime competitor was former Tiger outfield star Harry Heilmann, who broadcast for several years on WXYZ, remembered as the first station in the country to broadcast "The Lone Ranger." Tyson's voice gave me great pleasure as he created the game in words. But one of his signature lines left increasing doubt in my mind as I grew. Along about the sixth inning of each home game, Tyson would announce calmly, "Here comes the milkmaid." For many years I believed it was in fact milk she was bringing. As I grew older, I came to think Ty had taken me in!

Road games were more difficult for Tyson and others to broadcast. During the thirties and through World War II, radio broadcasters did not accompany the teams on road games. Such was the economics of the times. Instead, sitting in a studio, local announcers relied on what was euphemistically called "telegraphic reconstruction." This was the relay over telegraph lines from a Western Union Morse-code operator watching the game in a distant city and telegraphing the action to the local studio. Tyson and other announcers then attempted to give body and color to what they were getting from the distant telegrapher. It really didn't work too well. My friends and I would listen for the number of clicks coming over the air. If we heard only a few, we figured it was a simple out. If there were more clicks, we speculated on what important play had just taken place.

During the thirties and early forties, Mrs. Harry (Hyman) Altman broadcast on the Sunday Yiddish radio program started by her late husband. Being a motherly sort, she took to Hank Greenberg like a much-adored son. She discussed him frequently on her broadcasts and *kvelled* at his accomplishments. Yiddish listeners learned to share her adoration and joined the rest of the Jewish community in its pride. Altman was a *doyenne* for the Tigers.

### This Close to Hammering Henry!

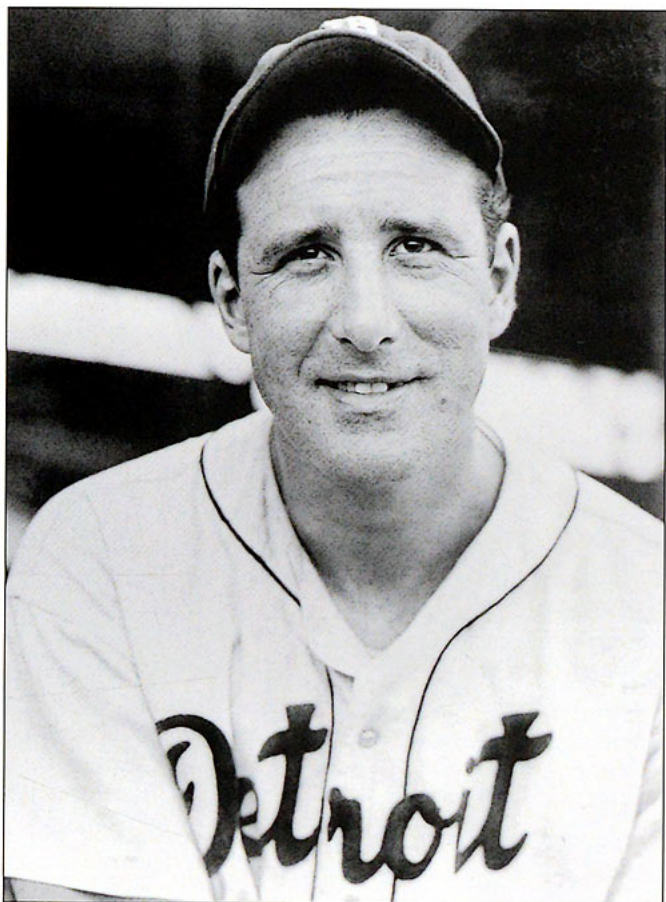
It would be hard for those not alive in those days to appreciate how much of a cult figure Hank Greenberg was, how he was a symbolic antidote to Nazism. In the fall of 1934, much of Detroit, Jews and non-Jews alike, agonized with Greenberg about whether he should play for the Tigers in a crucial game on Yom Kippur.

When he decided against playing and walked into services instead, the congregants' behavior caused the rabbi to suspend services briefly. Edgar A. Guest, the folksy versifier of the *Detroit Free Press*, responded with these lines: "We shall miss him in the field, and we shall miss him at the bat. But he's true to his religion, and I honor him for that." Despite the open-mindedness of Guest, Greenberg did not always have an easy time of it. As a Jew in major league baseball, he was something of a rarity. He often had to endure anti-Semitic slurs from players, fans, and the press.

In 1933, just up from the Tigers' Beaumont, Texas, farm team, Greenberg set about meeting his new teammates. One, center fielder Joyner "Jo Jo" White, was a country boy. As native-Detroiter Aviva Kempner recounts in her award-winning film, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* (Ciesla Foundation, 1999),

White approached Greenberg warily with a puzzled expression on his face. Haltingly he asked, "Where are your horns?" He had always been told that Jews had horns!

How close did I get to my idol Greenberg during those years? Seventy-five feet from my seat in section 17 behind the Tigers' dugout. Did Hank and I ever talk? Once, however briefly, as he was finishing up pregame practice with the batboy whom I envied so much. I approached the rail and asked Greenberg some probably insipid question. His response was, "I can't talk to you or any fan before or during the game or the commissioner [retired federal judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis] will fine me fifty dollars." Fifty dollars? Today some sports stars wouldn't bend down to pick up a \$50 bill off the ground! Judge Landis had been brought into baseball to reestablish the



Hank Greenberg

Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY.



## SOME RAYS OF LIGHT IN A DARKENED WORLD

integrity of the game after the 1919 "Black Sox" scandal, and he ruled with an iron hand for almost forty years.

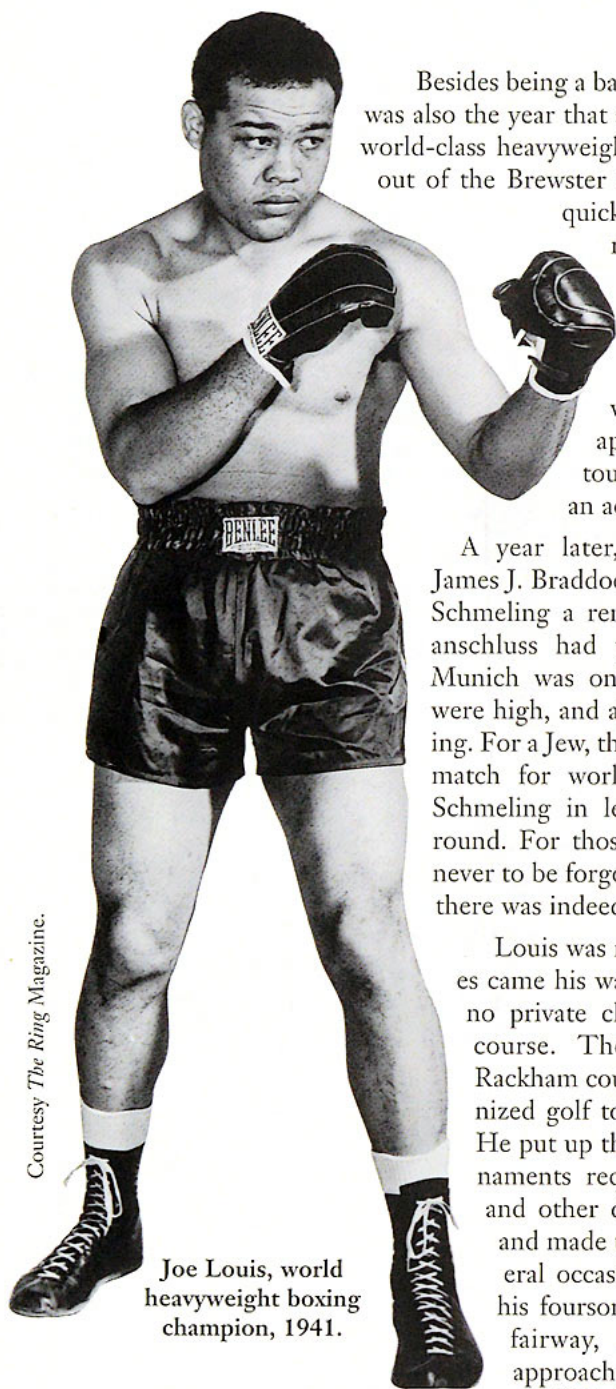
Sometime in the mid-thirties, those of us in Miss Gerhardt's fourth-grade class at McCulloch Elementary School gained a wonderful source of news about our beloved Tigers. Miss Gerhardt became engaged to Tiger third baseman Marvin Owen. She kept a scrapbook of clippings about the team and periodically would call a recess in class when we could all gather around to peruse the latest stories, especially about our favorite "Hammering Henry" Greenberg.

In 1940, Greenberg was drafted into the Army, one of the first stars to enter military service (the pay was \$21 a month). He returned to the team for the 1941 season, but with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December he immediately re-enlisted and served until the summer of 1945. In that first game back, he hit a late-inning homer against the New York Yankees in Yankee Stadium. I had the good fortune to be there to see it.

Today we think of major league baseball as an international game, with players from around the world — Japan, Korea, the Caribbean islands, Central and Latin America. Few people remember what "the national pastime" was like a half-century ago. It was the virtual preserve of Anglo-Saxon white men, with a few Irish Catholics included, such as "Wish" Egan, Eddie Mayo, Steve O'Neil, Barney McCosky, and John McHale, Sr. An examination of the Tigers' roster from 1930 to 1950 would prove this point. By 1957 the Tigers organization was one of only two major league teams without an African-American on the roster (Boston was the other). Criticism and pressure mounted, and finally owner Walter Briggs consented to hire catcher Ozzie Virgil, who was a native of the Dominican Republic. According to the recent book *Home, Sweet Home: Memories of Tiger Stadium*, published by the *Detroit News* (Sports Publishing Inc., 1999), Briggs "chose Virgil because of his light coloring" (p. 120). How the Tigers grew to include Gates Brown, Frank Catalanotto, Tony Clark, Devi Cruz, Damion Easley, Juan Encarnacion, Willie Horton, and Aurelio Lopez, as well as two Jews, Brad Ausmus and Gabe Kapler, is worthy of another article.

### More Than Just Baseball

During the thirties and forties, professional sports were active almost year-round. The Lions moved to Detroit from Portsmouth, Ohio, and the football season overlapped the baseball season. Detroit began to emerge from the Depression-era fog in 1935, the year that all three sports teams, Tigers, Lions, and hockey Red Wings, won world championships. Detroit proclaimed itself the "City of Champions." On the evening after the final World Series game, my parents and their friends left our house to go downtown and join the huge street celebration. They refused to let me join them, for which I was a long time forgiving them. On their return, they reported that several quick-thinking vendors were hawking papier-mâché ducks on wheels with a string attached. This was to honor left-fielder Leon "Goose" Goslin, who had singled home the catcher Mickey Cochrane for the winning run.



Courtesy The Ring Magazine.

Joe Louis, world heavyweight boxing champion, 1941.

Besides being a banner year for the three teams, 1935 was also the year that a young “Negro” blossomed into a world-class heavyweight fighter. Joe Louis Barrow came out of the Brewster Recreation Center in Detroit and quickly was among the half-dozen top-rated boxers. In a non-title fight in 1936, Louis lost to “the German,” Max Schmeling. Tensions with Germany were already high enough that Schmeling’s name was always accompanied by the appellation “the German.” Hitler touted Schmeling’s win over Louis as an achievement of the Aryan race.

A year later, Louis defeated then-champion James J. Braddock for the title, and in 1938 offered Schmeling a rematch. By this time, the Austrian Anschluss had taken place and the debacle at Munich was only three months away. Emotions were high, and almost the whole world was watching. For a Jew, this could not be other than a grudge match for world humanity. Louis knocked out Schmeling in less than one minute of the first round. For those around then, this was an event never to be forgotten. “Our guy beat the Nazi” and there was indeed hope for the human race.

Louis was now the world champion and riches came his way, but he was still “a Negro,” and no private club would allow him on its golf course. The City of Detroit owned the Rackham course in Royal Oak, and Louis organized golf tournaments on that public course. He put up the prize money himself. Golf tournaments require marshals for crowd control and other duties. My dad became a marshal and made the acquaintance of Louis. On several occasions, I caddied for my father and his foursome, and as we walked on the first fairway, Joe Louis and his foursome approached from the second. Louis called out, “Hi, Mike,” and my father responded,

“Hello, Joe.” There was no greater pride for a teenager in those days than having his father be on a first-name basis with the champion!

## Pride and Prejudice

In November each year, the Red Wings hockey season began. Some vivid memories from their history stay with me: The longest hockey playoff game ever played ended at 2:00 a.m. on March 24, 1936, when Red Wing Mud Bruneteau scored the only and game-winning goal. Quarantined with scarlet fever, I listened from my bed with my father draped across the bottom of it until the very end. I remember also skipping half a day of high school to stand in line to buy a ticket for a playoff game, to watch the Wings' "production line" of Gordie Howe, Sid Abel, and Ted Lindsay. Price: \$1.10. During the wartime winters, my friends and I played our own version of hockey on Art Staff's open air ice rink at the corner of Davison and Dexter.



Red Wings Gordie Howe, Sid Abel, and Ted Lindsay

Courtesy Imperial Oil-Turofsky/Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto.

In 1940 Fred Mandel, a Jew and heir to the Chicago Mandel Department Store fortune, bought the Detroit Lions football club, featuring the triple-threat All-American captain and quarterback Earl "Dutch" Clark, for \$250,000. The seller was George Richards, then owner of the Detroit CBS station WJR. Richards was in trouble with the Federal Communications Commission over alleged manipulation of the news and associated prejudices. The Detroit Jewish Community Council, through then-director Boris Joffe and ADL-Detroit office director Oscar Cohen, filed a complaint with the FCC alleging bias.

Mandel soon found that playing the team in the 22,000-seat University of Detroit football and track field, he could not long survive financially. At this time, Briggs Stadium had been expanded to accommodate 55,000, and Mandel sought to rent it for the eleven-game football season. Tigers owner Briggs indirectly responded that he would not rent the stadium to Mandel. Faced with this refusal, Mandel could only sell out — for the same price he paid for the club. The new owner, a non-Jew, approached Briggs and forthwith was rented the stadium for the Lions' games.

## What Follows?

Over the years since World War II, Detroit has had sports highs and lows, slumps and championships. But the sports world never had to serve as a "savior" to the community as it did in the thirties and forties. The Jewish community, as

others, saw sports as a release from difficult times. So many Jewish families struggled economically, and these struggles were shared because most of us lived in the same neighborhood, an area bounded approximately by Twelfth Street, West Philadelphia, Broadstreet, and Oakman Boulevard. I knew a Detroit where a c.b. (corned beef sandwich) in the deli in the Broadway Central Market cost fifteen cents and a glass of Vernors was five cents, of Zukin's and Bernstein's pharmacy at Dexter and Fullerton, and where we all listened to the Tigers' games on the radio. That world no longer exists. We have now a generally prosperous and geographically wide Jewish community with many interests, cooperative and competing.

I have been told that there is a "Tiger-mania" among area Jews, but in my travels and talks around the area I have not found much of it. I found as much indifference among suburban Detroiters about the new Comerica Park as anything. The Tigers, again, are floundering, and a new ballpark will not transmit its energy to human beings. I am reminded of the story about the college dean who called his faculty together and exhorted them, "We've got to build a university that the football team can be proud of!" Similarly, Tiger management must put together a team that Comerica Park (and Detroit) can be proud of.



Sosins Pharmacy/Soda Shoppe, Detroit c. 1940s.

Courtesy Simons Jewish Community Archives



*A native Detroit and graduate of Central High School and the University of Michigan, Bob Greene began his career as a newspaper carrier for the Detroit News at three cents a day, ten cents on Sunday. He worked for the Detroit Welfare Department, was on the original staff of the Michigan Fair Employment Practices Commission (1956-59), and served as a race relations advisor for the Housing and Home Finance Agency (now HUD) and as an official in the employment and training unit of the U.S. Department of Labor. Greene also was an organizer for the Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring and the American Jewish Committee. Living in semi-retirement in Maryland, he occupies his time with non-fiction writing.*

# Documenting the Past for Future Generations

## Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

by Judith Levin Cantor

**T**he year was 1959 — almost two hundred years after the arrival in British Michigan of the first Jews, fur traders Ezekiel Solomon in 1761 at Michilimackinac, and shortly afterward, Chapman Abraham at Fort Detroit. It was more than a century since the first minyan, the traditional “Bet El” congregation, was formed in Detroit in 1852, from which ten years later, when Bet El voted to adopt reforms in the service, seventeen men broke away to form the traditional “Shaarey Zedeck” congregation. And 1959 was sixty years after the United Jewish Charities of Detroit had organized in 1899 to give invaluable assistance to the rapidly expanding Eastern European immigration, which eventually grew to 30,000 Jews in Detroit in 1920 from only 1,000 in 1880.

### **Jewish Historical Society Established in 1959**

In 1959 the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was born to collect, preserve and disseminate the proud story of the Jews of the state of Michigan. This small visionary group realized the pressing need to fulfill this mission or there would be no record for future generations. Under the leadership of Irving Katz and Allen Warsen, the first president, the original board of trustees included Rabbi Morris Adler, Rabbi Emanuel Applebaum, now on the faculty at Bar Ilan University in Israel, Mandell Berman, Dr. Irving I. Edgar, Rabbi Leon Fram, Richard Leland, Maxwell Nadis, and Rabbi Robert Syme.

### **The Journal: *Michigan Jewish History***

The journal *Michigan Jewish History* was launched when the Society was first established. Its prophetic motto was taken from Joshua 4:21: “When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come....” After close to forty years of publication, it is now one of the longest continuously published journals of local Jewish history in America and one of the internationally respected resources of information on the American Jewish experience. Subscribers have included the New York Public Library, Harvard University Library, the Library of Congress, the British Library, and Hebrew University.

Focusing on Jews in Michigan, the journal has included documentation about more than forty Jewish communities throughout the state, from the Upper Peninsula

to the metropolitan Detroit area. See the accompanying map and the index for this impressive overview. Heroes of World War I and II, both women and men; pioneer Zionist leaders; plucky immigrants and builders of our community have all been spotlighted. Books have been reviewed, and community celebrations highlighted. An invaluable record has been established.

The range of articles in *Michigan Jewish History* continues to be stimulating and significant: an overview of fifty years of Zionism in Detroit before the state of Israel; early Jewish physicians in Michigan; Jews as leaders in education; the Sephardic community here; Prof. Ralph Raimi's study on the Philomathic Debating Society. Academic authors have included Robert Rockaway of Tel Aviv University; Bernard Goldman of Wayne State University; Rochelle Elstein of Northwestern University; Mark Slobin of Wesleyan University; and professional writers Aimée Ergas, Maynard Gordon, and Shirlee Iden, to name only a few. Mathilde Brandwine and Milton Marwil have researched and contributed unique and valuable articles on Jewish cemeteries; Alan Kandel focused on Mark Twain's Jewish connection to Detroit; Benno Levi wrote about his resettlement here as a child from Germany. While a student of Judaic studies at the University of Michigan, Joshua Krut researched the crisis years of anti-Semitism in Detroit and adapted his thesis for the journal. The broad scope of diverse subjects in *Michigan Jewish History*, apparent in the forthcoming index, continues to fascinate new readers and to illuminate our past.

### **Reaching Into the Future: the Index and Website**

The contents of *Michigan Jewish History* now have been compiled into a professional index. As a recipient of a grant from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, Max M. Fisher Foundation, and utilizing the latest technology, the Society will soon be putting the journals and the index on a website. When completed, both school children and scholars around the world will be able to use the articles as a resource for research, and the special story of the Jews of Michigan will become available into the twenty-first century.

### **The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives**

The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, a vital key to historic preservation for the future, has been established at the Walter Reuther Library of Urban Affairs at Wayne State University by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Society. Invaluable historic resource material is thus being preserved for use by researchers and scholars, including the extensive Philip Slomovitz Collection archived by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. The archives opened in 1992 and continues to receive additional material from many sources.

To further fulfill its mission, the Society sponsors tours, exhibits, programs, and has erected historic plaques around the state.

## DOCUMENTING THE PAST

A display of past presidents of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan from 1959-1999 at the Kahn Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield.

Top row:  
Allen Warsen,  
Irving Katz,  
Emanuel  
Applebaum,  
Irving Edgar,  
Abraham  
Rogoff.

Second row:  
Henry Green,  
Doris Easton,  
Jeffrey Borin,  
Phillip  
Applebaum,  
Bette Roth.

Third row:  
Stanley  
Meretsky,  
Evelyn Noveck,  
Adele Staller,  
Gilbert  
Borman, Judith  
Cantor.

Fourth row:  
James Grey.



Photo by Bob Benyas.

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

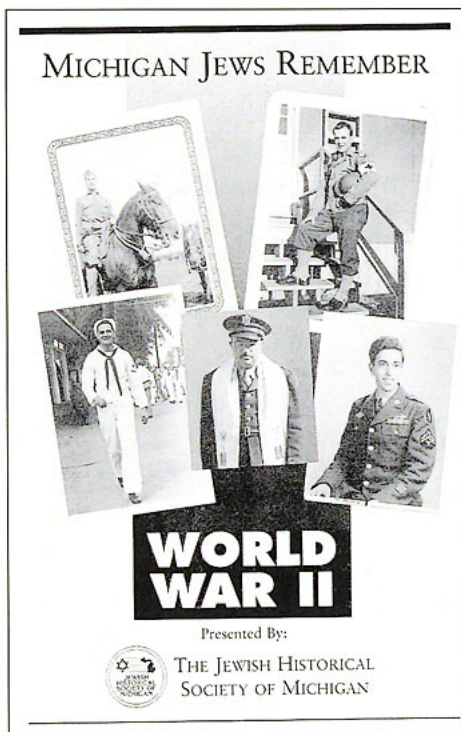


Map prepared by B. Goldman.

### Tours...

A popular tour of historic Jewish Detroit features the plaque at the location of the first synagogue in 1850 in downtown Detroit, as well as significant synagogues which have been adapted for reuse. The tour also includes renowned architectural sites such as the Fisher Building and the General Motors Building designed by the late architect Albert Kahn, and locations of urban revitalization, especially those in which Jews are involved in positions of leadership, such as Orchestra Hall, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and Wayne State University. Historic cemeteries also have been the focus of J.H.S. of M. tours, as well as Tiger Stadium. Other tours have included a well-attended trip to the state park at Fort Michilimackinac, where a historic plaque marks the extensively restored house of the first Jew in Michigan in 1761, Ezekiel Solomon. Tours have also been conducted to Chicago's Spertus Museum and to the Michigan Historical Center, as well as to the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing.





“Michigan Jews Remember World War II” was a blockbuster exhibit in 1995-96.

### Exhibits...

In winter 1995-96, the highly acclaimed blockbuster exhibit chaired by Stephen Rosman “Michigan Jews Remember World War II” featured photos of literally hundreds of Michigan servicemen and women in World War II. This exhibit paid special tribute to the Congressional Medal of Honor awardee Raymond Zussman. It also displayed the profoundly moving Jewish War Veterans memorial photo exhibit of the 222 local young men who gave their lives in the service of our country in World War II.

In addition, “Becoming American Women in Michigan: The Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920” at the Detroit Historical Society in 1997-98 and at the Michigan Women’s Historical Center in Lansing in 1999 drew record crowds to both institutions. Earlier, we hosted the traveling exhibit “Voyages to Freedom” and also “World Jewish Monuments,” which enlightened us about Jewish synagogues around the world.

### Programs...

Cooperation with other institutions has been the watchword of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Speakers for the annual luncheon and for other programs, as well as many authors for the journal, have come from the leading universities and historic institutions in the state and nation. Professors Sidney Fine, Zvi Gitelman, and Judith Laikin Elkin from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; Sidney Bolkosky from the University of Michigan-Dearborn; Kenneth Waltzer from Michigan State University; Stephen Whitfield from Brandeis; and Norma Goldman from Wayne State University, all have shared their scholarship with us in memorable programs. To name only a few others, Senator Carl Levin reflected on his two decades in Congress, Bernard Wax reported on the American



U.S. Senator Carl Levin was the guest speaker at the twentieth Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in 1979.

Jewish Historical Society; and labor historian Irving Bluestone discussed the Jewish involvement in the development of the local labor movement.

The Jewish Historical Society also works in cooperation with existing local Jewish agencies and institutions to add to the success of Book Fair, the Film Festival, Jewish Heritage Week, and other community events. Moreover, six of the state's leading historical institutions cooperated in the exhibit "Becoming American Women," contributing greatly to its unique success.

### The Simons History Award at the Annual Luncheon

The prestigious Leonard N. Simons History Award was named in Simons's lifetime to honor a leading promoter of the preservation of Jewish history. Since 1991, this award has been presented to those who have given outstanding service to the preservation and dissemination of Michigan Jewish history. Awardees have included Philip Slomovitz, Hon. Avern Cohn, Irwin Shaw, George Stutz, Emma Lazaroff Schaver, Prof. Philip Mason and Leslie Hough, Mary Lou Zieve, Judith Levin Cantor, and Michael Maddin.



The first Leonard N. Simons Award was presented to distinguished journalist Philip Slomovitz in 1991. From left: David Hermelin, Leonard Simons, Historical Society President Gilbert Borman, Slomovitz, Walter Field.

### Historical Markers

From Fort Michilimackinac to downtown Detroit, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has erected markers around the state commemorating special events in our history. These special plaques help to tell the public about our participation in the Michigan experience, as well as to establish the record for the future. The names and locations of these plaques are:

1. "Michigan's First Jewish Settler" — Ezekiel Solomon, 1761, at Fort Michilimackinac.
2. "Chapman Abraham - Detroit's First Known Jewish Resident, 1763" — in the Henry and Delia Meyers Library at the Betty and Daniel Kahn Jewish Community Center, West Bloomfield.
3. "Michigan's First Jewish Cemetery" — 1848, Ann Arbor, on the east lawn of the Rackham Building on the University of Michigan campus.
4. "First Jewish Religious Services" — 1850, at the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building on Congress and St. Antoine Streets in downtown Detroit.
5. "Detroit's first Jewish cemetery," — 1851, now in a section of the Lafayette Street Cemetery in Detroit.
6. "Bonstelle Theater" — Temple Beth El of 1903, designed by architect Albert Kahn, in Detroit.

7. "The Detroit Flag" — 1907, designed by David Heineman, at the Detroit Historical Museum.
8. "Bernard Isaacs, Founder and Superintendent, United Hebrew Schools, 1919" — in Akiva Hebrew Day School, Southfield.
9. "Congregation Shaarey Zedek," — awarded by the Michigan Historical Commission on the state sesquicentennial, at Shaarey Zedek, Southfield.
10. "Congregation Beth El" — 1885, the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Michigan, awarded by the Michigan Historical Commission in 1977, Traverse City.

## Making History for the Twenty-First Century

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan includes all those who have come to Michigan, whether long ago or only yesterday — young people arriving now to pursue careers, Russian émigrés who have come here to be new Americans, Holocaust survivors who sought freedom in our midst. Together we will continue "making history" for the new millennium. In our future, we hope to see the realization of the vision for a local museum of the American Jewish experience. As we move not only into a new century but indeed into a new millennium, the current generation of JHS leadership is already using the twenty-first-century technologies of websites and digitized information to preserve our past for the future — certainly unbelievable to the founders of the Society only forty years ago.

The potential of what lies ahead technologically for making history come alive in the future is not yet imaginable, but what has been accomplished over the past four decades by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is truly fulfilling the goal of its foresighted founders of "documenting the past for future generations."



*Judith Levin Cantor is a former president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and a former editor of Michigan Jewish History. She has curated many exhibitions, including "Becoming American Women in Michigan," "The Sinai Heritage," and "Blacks and Jews: The Michigan Experience."*



The first historical plaque dedicated by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan honored pioneer Ezekiel Solomon. At the dedication ceremony in 1964 were (left) Walter J. Murray, chair, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, and (right) Allen Warsen, president, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

# Livonia Congregation Celebrates Fortieth Anniversary

by Phyllis Lewkowicz

**O**n May 2, 1999, Congregation Beit Kodesh celebrated its fortieth anniversary at the synagogue in Livonia. The theme of the celebration was to remember the congregation's history, learn from it, and prepare for the future.

## Popular Demand

In 1958, when Livonia was a budding community, a group of visionaries new to the area began holding Shabbat services at the Clarenceville Central Elementary School. They included Asher and Sarah Smith, Nate Weiser, Jerry Friedman, Richard and Helen Bayles, and Steve and Phyllis Lewkowicz. As word got out, more people became interested, and services were then held in individual homes. High Holiday services that year were held at the historic Botsford Inn in Farmington. The number of people in attendance, approximately 200, was proof that there was a need for a permanent organization. In 1959, the Livonia Jewish Congregation was officially organized, and a board of directors and officers were elected.

In 1990 the congregation changed its name to Beit Kodesh to better reflect the scope of its membership, which is drawn from throughout the Detroit area including Canton, Farmington Hills, Milford, Northville, Novi, Oak Park, Redford, Southfield, Wayne, Westland, West Bloomfield, and White Lake. Beit Kodesh is the only conservative synagogue in western Wayne County. It has always operated on a volunteer basis and on a very modest budget. Beit Kodesh was the first conservative congregation in the area to elect a woman president, Helen Bayles in 1978.

Over the years, the congregation has held services in many locations: a farmhouse on Seven Mile Road, a tent on the grounds of the Botsford Inn, Carpenter's Hall in Redford, and a church on Six Mile Road. Finally in 1971, it moved to the Mally & Samuel Cohn Building on West Seven Mile Road in Livonia, its home ever since.

Since 1959, the congregation has had three rabbis. Rabbi Steinberg served in the 1960s. Rabbi Martin Gordon served for 22 years, from 1967 to 1989. For over seven years, from late 1990 to 1998, Rabbi Craig Allen presided. In between and since Rabbi Allen's tenure, lay members have conducted services for the congregation. Beit Kodesh has operated a Sunday school, sisterhood, youth group, men's club, adult education classes, Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes, social events, and many other activities, and continues to do so.



Congregation Beit Kodesh

## House of Miracles

Despite many obstacles and little recognition or assistance from the Detroit Jewish community, Beit Kodesh is after forty years a viable and active congregation. Over the years the synagogue has been robbed of silver breastplates, and it was defaced with swastikas in 1984. The congregation has been often without a rabbi and has faced financial difficulties. Remaining constant in the face of all this, members refer to themselves as the "House of Miracles." They are proud to be family oriented and reminiscent of the "shuls" in the old neighborhoods.

Like many synagogues, Beit Kodesh faces the challenge of an aging membership and looks to younger members for strength and new input. They are committed to continuing to work together, to teaching their young people, and above all to observing their Jewish religion, faith, traditions, and values.



*Phyllis Lewkowicz is a native Detroiter who has lived in Livonia since 1958. She and her late husband, Steve, were founding members of Congregation Beit Kodesh, and she has served in many leadership positions in the congregation, including twice as president.*

# Another Community Honor:

## Louis Tendler Elementary School

by Shirlee Rose Iden

*Editor's Note: This article is in response to a letter received by the author following our article in Volume 38 (November 1998), "A Community Honor: Michigan Public Schools Named for Leading Jewish Citizens," which dealt with nine public schools in Michigan named after Jewish men. Correspondence was received from RoseAnna Tendler Worth, daughter of Louis Tendler, after whom the school was named. The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan continues to welcome information on other public schools in the state named for Jewish individuals.*

If Detroit public schools are named for businessmen, attorneys, judges, and clergymen, why not for an "honest journalist?" In 1962, Betty Becker, then president of the Detroit Board of Education, asked that question and suggested that the Board name a school for Louis Tendler of the *Detroit News*, "a respected and honest journalist." It was not surprising that a unanimous vote was followed by enthusiastic applause for the well-known and respected Tendler.

### A Teacher's Inspiration

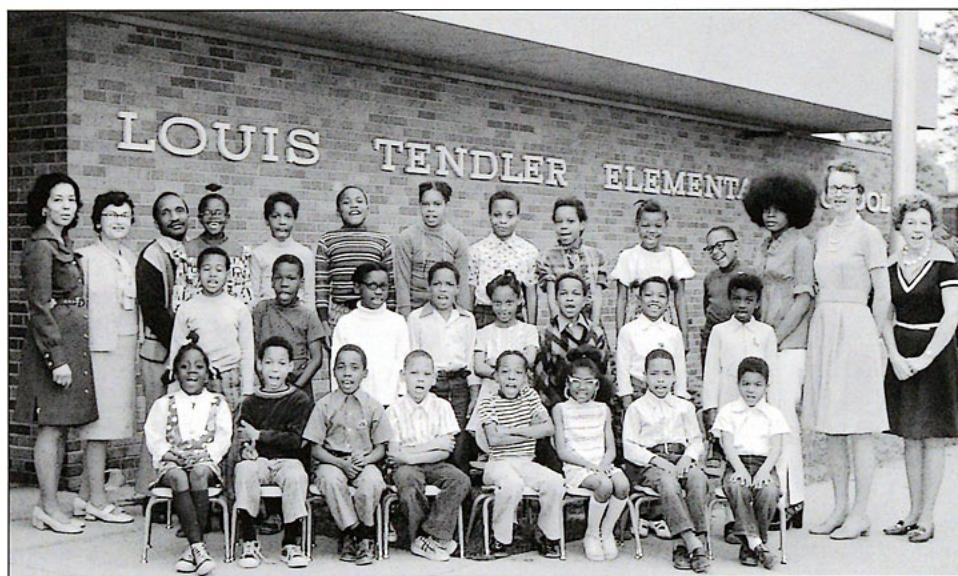
Tendler, who died on November 28, 1956, was born in Russia in 1902 and came to the U.S. at the age of four. He attended Detroit Central High School, and it was there that a teacher, Charlotte Raleigh Heubner, told him he had "a facility for writing." This encouraged him to write and he said later: "The thrill of seeing words and ideas flow from my mind, through my fingertips and across a typewriter keyboard onto the paper fixed the pattern of my life for all time." He won a scholarship to the University of Michigan, where he studied journalism and then embarked on a newspaper career. Later, while reporting on the court system, he decided to study law at the University of Detroit, acquiring his law degree in 1937.

In his thirty-year career at the *Detroit News*, Tendler wrote about social security, unemployment compensation, the Liquor Control Commission, income taxes, and the county poorhouses. A series of articles entitled "Detroit and the Negro" won him and his newspaper a citation from the East Side Merchants Association in 1950. The next year he was awarded the Fourth Annual Amity Award from the Detroit Women's



Louis Tendler in 1956.

Photo by RoseAnna Tendler Worth.



Tendler Elementary School in June 1973. Back row, second from left, Mrs. Louis (Mollie Medow) Tendler.

Division of the American Jewish Congress, a tribute given to the newspaper writer judged to have made the greatest contribution toward improving interracial relations in Detroit.

### Unusual Architecture

The Louis Tendler Elementary School was opened in January 1962 and dedicated on June 4, 1962, at the corner of Vernor and St. Jean. It served as a kindergarten through second grade feeder school for the Lillibridge School. Its unusual, functional design was featured at the architectural exhibit of the American Association of School Administrators in February 1962. Tendler's wife, Mollie Medow Tendler, was closely involved in the school's activities during its tenure. After her death in 1976, the Tendlers' daughters and granddaughters continued their interest in the school, with pride in their own "honest journalist."

Tendler Elementary School, along with eighteen other Detroit schools, was closed in the early 1980s.



*A former editor of the Southfield Eccentric, Shirlee Rose Iden has taught history at MCCC and OCCC and has received numerous awards. She is a long-time member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and a frequent contributor to Michigan Jewish History.*

## Celebrities & Celebrations

### United Jewish Communities Elects Joel Tauber First National Chairman

Joel D. Tauber recently was elected chairman of the Executive Committee of the United Jewish Communities, the new organization that incorporates the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the United Israel Appeal. These three organizations merged in order to make the national institutions more efficient and to confront the changing issues of Jewish life in the next century.



Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Joel Tauber and his wife, Shelley, and Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Dore Gold, at a United Jewish Communities meeting.

Involved in Jewish philanthropy for over forty years, Tauber has been campaign chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and of the Jewish Community Center, and co-chairman of the greater Detroit Interfaith Round Table. On the international level, he has greeted planeloads of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants arriving in Israel and was present at the signing of peace agreements between the Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the Jordanians and Israelis. Tauber, president of Tauber Enterprises in Southfield, has set up a joint venture with kibbutzim in Israel to manufacture plastic water containers. He holds law and business degrees from the University of Michigan and recently endowed the U-M's Joint Manufacturing Institute, which will grant degrees from the business and engineering schools.

### Community Marks 100 Years with Exhibit

Several thousand lovers of local Jewish history — as well as those who simply have fond memories of the “old neighborhood” — viewed the exhibit “Memory and Vision: A Celebration of Jewish Community 1899-1999,” from November 1998 through March 1999. It was sponsored by the Jewish Federation and the United Jewish



Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit, in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

The exhibit of photographs and artifacts marking one hundred years of the organized Jewish community of Detroit was on display at the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Building of the Jewish Community Center. Visitors of all ages, from school-children to nursing home residents, reviewed the history of the community, from the founding of the first central organization, the United Jewish Charities, through today's multi-faceted community and a vision of the future. Under the directorship of Sharon Alterman, the exhibit was produced by the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives and chaired by Cheryl Guyer.



Photo by Jim Grey.

Sharon Alterman, Director of the Jewish Community Archives, with Dorothy Kaufman, Cindy Mandelbaum, Joan Braun, and Jim Grey of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan at the "Memory and Vision" exhibit.

## "Becoming American Women" in Michigan

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was proud to be a cosponsor of the very popular exhibit "Becoming American Women in Michigan: The Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920" at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing from March through mid-September this year. The exhibit was originally shown at the Detroit Historical



The Weinstein sisters, early settlers in Alpena, from "Becoming American Women in Michigan."

Museum in 1996-97. Displaying historic artifacts, period clothing, and photographs documenting Jewish women's experience as new residents of the state, the exhibit also included an album of over 150 photographs gathered from families around the state showing their mothers, grandmothers, and great grandmothers in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Michigan. The curator for this exhibit was Judith Levin Cantor. Other sponsors included the Detroit Historical Society, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Leo M. Franklin Archives, the Michigan Historical Center, and the Michigan State University Museum.

## Redstones Celebrate Milestones

Setting: Detroit, 1938, a Histradrut Meeting. Characters: Ruth Rosenbaum, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Saint Lawrence University, graduate student at the School for Jewish Social Work. Occupation: Jewish Social Service Bureau Caseworker. Louis Redstone, Graduate of the University of Michigan School of Architecture, Master's degree in urban planning from Cranbrook Academy. Occupation: Architect.

Action: Louis, who is single, is looking for an attractive girl on whom he can practice his palm reading skills. He spots Ruth; the strategy succeeds. They have much in common, and are married in June 1939 at the home of Rabbi Abraham Hershman.



Ruth and Louis Redstone  
on their wedding day,  
June 25, 1939.

Sixty years later, the drama continues. In 1999 the Redstones celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary and Louis's ninety-sixth birthday, with two sons, grandchildren, a major architectural firm, several books, and numerous honors and awards to their credit. Throughout those years, Ruth has continued her vigorous participation and leadership in socially oriented civic groups locally and statewide. Louis and his staff have designed a veritable encyclopedia of structures: homes, synagogues, schools, libraries, office buildings, shopping malls, community centers, high rises, and an airport terminal. A consistent theme runs through all their activities, as stated in Louis's memoirs, *Louis G. Redstone: From Israeli Pioneer to American Architect* (1989): to advance the belief in the importance of humanizing and improving our living environment.

Together, the Redstones have been welcomed on every continent, yet maintain unwavering roots in the Detroit area. A great number of Redstone's structures dot the landscape of southeast Michigan: the Michael Berry International Terminal at Detroit Metro Airport, Beth Achim Synagogue (now the Akiva Hebrew Day School), Manufacturer's National Operations Center, Krolik Elementary School, and Somerset Mall. His works also rise as far away as Tel Aviv, a reminder of his youth as an apprentice stone cutter in Palestine. The Redstone architectural firm is now directed by son Daniel Redstone.



Louis and Ruth Redstone, 1999.

Louis and Ruth maintain many of the common interests they discovered in that palm reading in 1938. They still swim together at the Jewish Community Center and have shared authorship of two books: *Public Art, New Directions* (1980) and *Masonry in Architecture* (1984). They continue to contribute as unique members of our community. *Bernard Goldman.*

## American Technion Society Selects Larry Jackier National Chairman

Larry Jackier, attorney and Jewish community leader, was elected the national president of the American Technion Society-Israel Institute of Technology and will be leading the national mission to Israel in May. Son of the late attorney Joseph Jackier, who had served on the national board of Technion, Larry continues the family tradition. His mother, Edythe, currently sits on the Detroit Executive Committee. Industrialist Morris Rochlin is the president of the Detroit chapter. In addressing the national board meetings held here in Detroit last fall, Larry said: "I am firmly convinced that the Technion is critical to the economic independence and future progress of the State of Israel."



Larry Jackier, his wife, Eleanor, and his mother, Edythe Jackier Mulivor, at Shabbat dinner during national board meetings of the Technion, held in Detroit in October 1998.

## Peggy Daitch Elected First Woman President of Adcraft Club

Photo by Bob Benyas.



Peggy Daitch is the first woman to be elected president of the Adcraft Club of Detroit in the 94-year history of that four thousand-member local organization. Daitch is vice president of corporate sales and marketing/Detroit for Condé Nast Publications. She serves on the board of the Hebrew Free Loan Association and is a former board member of the Jewish Ensemble Theater.

In her speech this September at Adcraft's opening meeting of the season at Cobo Hall, Daitch made a historical reference to her grandfather, Professor Samuel M. Levin, who had been chair of the Department of Economics at Wayne State University. It was he who, in 1925, first established the connection between the Adcraft Club and the university by hiring Adcraft executive director Gordon Kingsbury to teach the first course in advertising, anticipating the later establishment of WSU's School of Business Administration. In a spirited toast, Daitch also acknowledged the dedicated work of the numerous women professionals who had preceded her and saluted their many accomplishments.

## Detroit Historical Museum Features “Furs to Factories”

The new updated exhibit “Furs to Factories: Detroiters at Work, 1701-1901” at the Detroit Historical Museum incorporates local Jewish history into the story of the first two hundred years of Detroit’s history. M. Jacob and Sons, a bottle business started by Jewish entrepreneur Max Jacob in the 1880s, is prominently featured, along with Stroh’s, Parke-Davis, Sanders, and Kresge’s, all Detroit institutions that came to prominence in post-Civil War Detroit. “In Business for a Century” is a display devoted to fifty Detroit businesses that have been in continuous operation for one hundred years or more. It includes seven additional businesses that have Jewish roots: the Butzel Long law firm, Detroit Store Fixture Co., the Albert Kahn Inc. architectural firm, Lachman and Co., Lowenstein Poultry, Salasnek Fisheries, and Henry the Hatter. An interactive video exhibit utilizes actors to tell the stories of six working men and women of different ethnic groups and how they earned a living in Detroit. One of the featured workers is the Jewish storekeeper Abba Keidan of Keidan’s Store on Gratiot Avenue. According to exhibit curator Michael Smith, “the use of interactive elements and the latest technologies makes it enjoyable for children and others to learn the dynamic story of Detroiters, the many people from many lands who, with their ideas and labor, built an industrial city that became the great Motor City.”



Photo by Jim Grey.

M. Jacob and Sons is one of the hundred-year-old companies featured in a diorama of significant businesses at the Detroit Historical Museum.

## Jewish Community Council Celebrates Sixtieth Year

“Separate Not Yourself from the Community” was one of the guiding quotations used to highlight the mission of the Jewish Community Council in its sixtieth anniversary exhibit this year. Mounted at the Detroit Historical Museum in the spring and at the Jewish Community Center Campus and the Henry Ford Museum this fall, the exhibit celebrates the Council’s years of service as a coalition of Jewish agencies and organizations in the Detroit community and its interaction and cooperation with the general community.

An exhibit committee, chaired by former Council president Allen Zemmol, supervised the design of the exhibit, which included documents, photographs, and

other artifacts from the Council's archives at the Reuther Library. Committee members were Sidney Bolkosky, Alan Kandel, Irwin Shaw, and Jeannie Weiner.

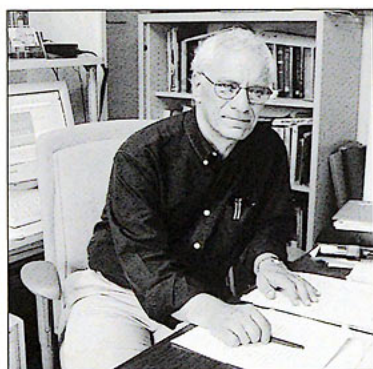
A variety of the Jewish Community Council's traditional missions were presented including community building, confronting anti-Semitism, promoting human rights and civil rights, and building strong U.S.-Israel ties. Recent work of the Council was highlighted in the sections on its political lobbying activities in Michigan. Displays ranged from materials dating from Father Coughlin's tenure in Royal Oak to information about current Council work with the Multicultural Coalition and Focus:Hope.



Council joined in a Holiday Peace Walk to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

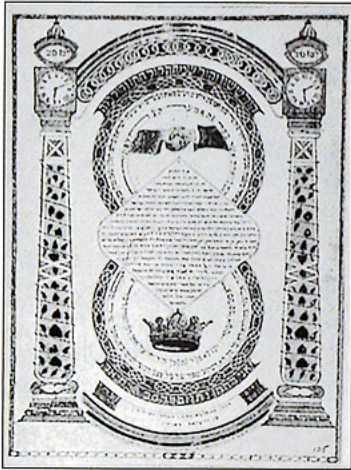
The archival researcher for this sixtieth anniversary exhibit was Diane Rockall, under the supervision of Federation archivist Sharon Alterman. The exhibit, sponsored in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, was underwritten by the Ford Motor Company Fund.

## Bolkosky Honored by U-M Dearborn



Professor Sidney Bolkosky recently received the highest honor for faculty members at the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus when he was appointed by the regents of the university to the William A. Stirton Professorship. He will serve in this post for five years. Bolkosky heads the honors program at U-M Dearborn and has received distinguished faculty awards for teaching and research. He presently is director of an oral history project, "Voice Vision," which is establishing an archive of voice memoirs of Holocaust survivors. Professor Bolkosky, a long-time supporter of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, is the author of the seminal book on Detroit Jewry, *Harmony & Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967* (Wayne State University Press, 1991).

## DIA Honors Centennial of United Jewish Foundation



American Ketubbah, marriage contract, from 1863, from "Treasures of Jewish Cultural Heritage."

Visitors to the Detroit Institute of Arts last spring were able to view rare and beautiful objects of Jewish culture in the exhibition "Treasures of Jewish Cultural Heritage from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary." The exhibition was organized to honor the centennial of the United Jewish Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit. Located in the Marianne and Alan F. Schwartz Gallery, it consisted of three parts: The first, entitled "Towards the Eternal Center: Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple," presented eighty-one medieval manuscripts, prints, maps, and other printed materials that highlighted the history of Jerusalem and its central place in Jewish history. The second part of the exhibition featured two illuminated manuscripts: the Spanish "Prato Haggadah" (c. 1300) and the "Rothschild Mahzor," an Italian work from the 15th century. This was the first time the Jewish Theological Seminary had lent out the illuminated manuscripts

for a travelling exhibit. Finally there was a collection of twenty-seven ketubbot, decorative marriage contracts, dating from the 17th to 19th centuries originating in many countries, from India to Portugal. Curators for this exhibit were Ellen Sharp, curator of graphic arts, and Michael Kan, curator of African, Oceanic and New World Cultures.

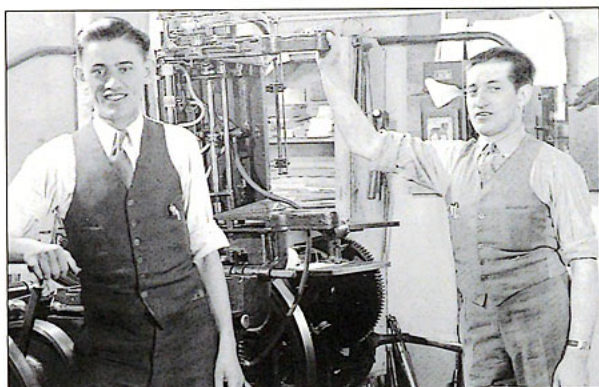
## Changes at Archives

Sharon Alterman recently retired as director of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Over the eight years of her stewardship, Alterman helped establish and develop the archives into a vital community resource. She is succeeded as director by Heidi Christein, who formerly was director of the Leo M. Franklin Archive at Temple Beth El. Christein was also archivist with the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University. The new archivist at Temple Beth El as of July is Leslie Gowan, formerly with the General Motors Media Archives and the Ford Motor Company Archives. She earned a master's degree in library and information sciences and a certificate of archival administration from Wayne State University.

## Goodwill Printing Celebrates Three Generations of Family Tradition

Goodwill Printing Company has been a Jewish family-owned business since Ben Fishman, a committed Labor Zionist, opened a letterpress job shop on Detroit's Twelfth Street in 1931. Ben's personal involvement with the labor movement and with his friend and neighbor, Walter Reuther, were the sources of business relationships that continue to this day.

Edward (Eddy) Fishman, Ben's brother, joined him as a partner in 1936, and persuaded his wife, Rena, to help them out part-time. By the late 1940s her brother, Michael Bromberg, had joined the firm as well. Eddy took over leadership upon Ben's retirement in 1951, relocating the busy shop to larger quarters on Hamilton Avenue in Highland Park, in 1962.



Eddy and Ben Fishman, 1935

Eddy and Rena (now full-time) were joined by their son Marvin, in 1963. Marv introduced state-of-the-art technology to the company's unionized workforce, later assuming control of the business when his father became ill. Marv's cousin, Irving Fishman (Ben's son), was hired in 1989, the same year the company moved a few miles north to Eight Mile Road in Ferndale.

Today, more than ever, Goodwill remains a family concern. Marv's children, Steve, Brian, and Debbie Bienstock, have all taken key roles in helping him manage the day-to-day operations of the thriving business of fifty-plus employees.

And yes, Rena Fishman, now well into her eighties, and her brother Mike, now 90, are still working, part of a strong family company tradition looking ahead to its seventieth year. *Albert Frank.*

Readers having any information about the members or activities of the Home Relief Society are asked to contact Heidi Christein, Director, Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, (248) 642-4260.

**The Home Relief Society** was a charitable organization that operated in Detroit from at least the 1940s into the 1970s.

Photos, printed materials, or any other information are sought.

# Seferim/Books

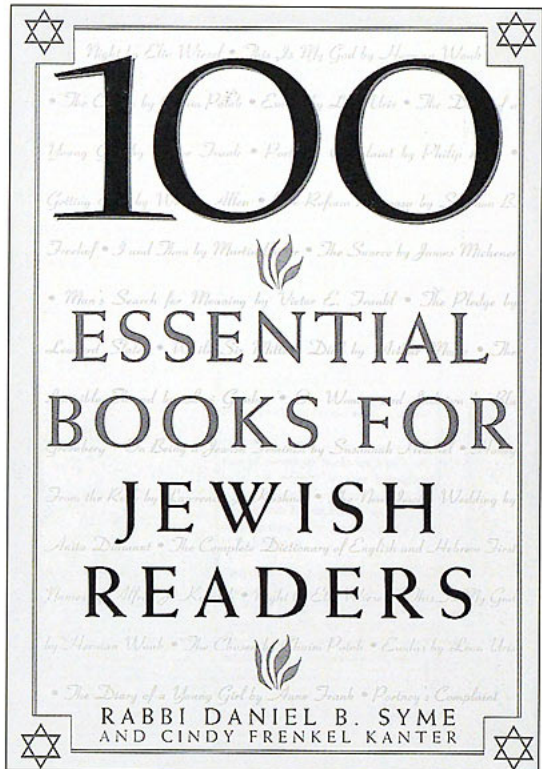
## The Creation and Impact of 100 Essential Books for Jewish Readers

by Cindy Frenkel Kanter

*Editor's Introduction: Recall the scene in the fairy tale "Rumpelstiltskin" when the miller's daughter is locked in a room until she can spin all the straw into gold. In my mind's eye, I see Rabbi Daniel Syme, of Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, MI, and Cindy Frenkel Kanter locked in a huge room with thousands of texts on topics of Judaism and Jewishness, and they can't come out until they've chosen the 100 essential books for Jewish readers. It didn't happen that way, of course, but what a daunting task to choose those works. It depended on great knowledge, wisdom, and personal judgment.*

100 Essential Books for Jewish Readers by Rabbi Daniel B. Syme and Cindy Frenkel Kanter (Citadel Press/Carol Publishing Group, 1998) is a guide to some of the most important fiction and nonfiction writings of Jewish interest. The hundred works were chosen through a process of surveying readers' top-ten lists and narrowing those choices to one hundred. Those hundred are organized into six categories: Jewish Texts of Belief and Thought and Their Interpretation, Jewish Observance and Jewish Values, Jewish Philosophy and Theology, Jewish History and Anti-Semitism, Israel and the Holocaust, Fiction and General Works on Jewish Themes.

In their preface, Syme and Kanter comment that these are personal selections based on judging that a work was "valuable for an introduction to Jewish literature, values, customs and accomplishments." Individual reviews are short (two to four pages) and highly readable. They summarize a work's contents and often provide information about the author. Where





important, they discuss a book's "impact...at a particular time in history." From the Hebrew Bible to *The Joys of Yiddish*, from Martin Buber's *I and Thou* to Anita Diamant's *The New Jewish Wedding*, this is a wide-ranging source book that should itself become essential to Jewish libraries and the libraries of well-read individuals.

In the following essay, Cindy Frenkel Kanter writes of the impact that being immersed in Jewish writings had on her, and she reviews some works among the "100 Essentials" that became especially meaningful to her.

Judaism has so much diverse richness that one could compare it to seeing a ray of light pass through a prism, leaving us with an astonishing array of components in all their colors. A fulfilling lifetime can be spent studying Judaism as an intellectual pursuit, delving into the history of a remarkable people and religion. The practice of Judaism is much more a matter of the heart, physically immersing oneself into a cyclical spiritual world. Cultural aspects of Judaism manifest themselves everywhere in American secular life. We can trace them from the influence of Jewish humor in our culture, to the popularity of the bagel, once peddled in the Old Country and identified solely with Jews, to the use of Yiddish words everywhere from the movies to the staid *New York Times*.

Studying books on all these facets of Judaism made the religion more meaningful to me, as I grew increasingly impressed with its tenets and rituals. It helped connect me to past generations of my family — my grandparents' parents, distant relatives in faraway lands. At the same time, I developed a deeper connection to the local Jewish community and to the global one. Several books gave me a greater understanding of the effects of the Holocaust on individuals and on the Jews as a people.



Rabbi Daniel B.  
Syme

Coauthoring *100 Essential Books for Jewish Readers* with Rabbi Daniel B. Syme was an invaluable experience. His vision was essential to the success of the project, and I'm forever grateful to him for including me. *100 Essential Books* is no definitive list; that would be an impossibility. We apologize in the introduction for our omissions, then move on freely, reporting mainly on books by Jews about Jewish themes.

### An Impact on Daily Life

This work permeated my life completely. In between gatherings for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, for example, I read recipes from Joan Nathan's *Jewish Cooking in America*, a wonderful book, densely packed with an array of photographs, illustrations, and anecdotes about Jewish life. On a family vacation in Florida, I sat on a balcony overlooking the Atlantic, reading the horrifying *Maus* books. The juxtaposition between my vacation's idyllic setting and concentration camps portrayed in Art Spiegelman's books made me painfully aware of my precarious existence, as well as that of Jews everywhere.

A variety of scenes, characters, and events come to mind when I reflect on the books we reviewed: a prisoner in Eli Weisel's *Night*, who confesses he had more faith in Hitler than anyone else because Hitler was the only one to keep all his promises; the amazing families in Stephen Birmingham's *Our Crowd*, which chronicles the German-Jewish elite in the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century. Birmingham tells us of men who made staggering amounts of money (a butler became a millionaire on tips alone!), including Jacob Schiff, whose generous philanthropy was often given anonymously and who began the "matching gifts" concept so common in fund raising today. I delighted in reading about a Polish prince's fascination with and admiration for Jewish bankers. He appreciated their business acumen, but marveled more at how little money itself meant to them and how important the arts and culture, charity, and especially their families were to them.

It was fascinating and useful to discover what revisionists are teaching and who they're targeting in the volume, *Antisemitism in America Today*. I fell under Cynthia Ozick's spell in *The Shawl*, a novella about a woman named Rosa. We get to know Rosa, a crazy-looking, bedraggled resident of a seedy Miami hotel, and discover she was once a charming young woman from a refined family with a beautiful baby girl — before World War II shattered her life forever.

The books' subjects were as varied as life itself, and what I read constantly influenced my perception of daily life. Because of *The Shawl*, I looked at people more compassionately and also asked more questions, hoping to understand how they came to be the way they are. I felt I had been given permission to be a public voyeur after reading *A Bintel Brief*, a collection of letters to the *Jewish Daily Forward* from new immigrants in the first half of this century. During loud family conversations over dinner in my parents' home, I often thought of Harold Kushner's *To Life!*, a terrific, easy-to-read general book about Judaism.

Many concepts in *To Life!* were enlightening, but two in particular remain with me. The first is that Judaism is about elevating the ordinary into the holy — not waiting for a grand moment of revelation to occur, but savoring the often pedestrian details of everyday life and admiring their wonder. As Abraham Heschel might say about wonder, we can understand scientifically how a lilac tree blooms, but we still delight in its blooming and are awed by its splendor. The second of Kushner's ideas I found important is that Judaism is about belonging to a community, a people, even if the people aren't of like minds. It's easy to understand, for example, how Jews can say Kaddish, each differing in his or her own interpretation of the prayer, yet chanting it together in Hebrew (Hebrew, Kushner points out, makes it easier!).

## Two Notable Works

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* books provided unexpected insights into Holocaust experiences and forever changed me. Although these books have become classics, many people still don't know of them, and many once familiar with Frankl's work may have forgotten it by now. It deserves a

reintroduction. Frankl was a psychiatrist in Europe before World War II; during the war he was a prisoner in the camps. His perspective is daunting. He viewed himself not only as a prisoner, but also with the objectivity of a psychiatrist. Describing techniques that helped him survive, Frankl refers to his *fondlest* moments as a prisoner. This alone surprised me. It was essential to his survival; amid the horror, there still was beauty. He tells about looking past the lice-ridden corpses nearby, focusing on the flowering hills of Bavaria beyond. A favorite memory was when he roasted pilfered potatoes over stolen charcoal one night alone in the hospital. Another of Frankl's survival techniques was envisioning himself in peaceful times using his war experiences to help others. He believed that once you assign personal meaning to any experience — no matter how traumatic — it can be transformed into something that can benefit others. He pictured himself on a podium, well dressed, speaking about his camp experience to a respectable audience. His vision and courage will forever inspire me.

As a concentration camp prisoner, Frankl made a friend memorize his last will. "What does a prisoner have to will," I wondered. As I read what he bequeathed to his wife, I burst into tears; he spoke of the love he had for her and its transformative power. Ultimately, the impact of others' actions and their love are the finest, most enduring legacy. Nowhere have I read anything as poignant, ever.

Art Spiegelman's *Maus I* and *Maus II* are riveting. Formerly an underground cartoonist, Spiegelman is the child of two Holocaust survivors. His mother eventually committed suicide. His books are about surviving his parents and trying to unravel the history of their lives in order to understand himself and his family. It surprises many people that these books, which are non-fiction, are presented in cartoon format, with anthropomorphic characters (Nazis as cats, Jews as mice, and the Swiss as reindeer — obviously created before recent knowledge of Swiss involvement). The format brings to life and reinforces the stories. *Maus I* was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize.

Although Spiegelman's intent was probably to have some kind of catharsis, it's as if he took Viktor Frankl's advice. Using art as his medium, he transformed his family's painful unresolved history into amazingly powerful books. A key scene for me, my epiphany, occurs when Spiegelman is speaking with his psychiatrist, also a survivor. He explains that he simply can't comprehend what it was like to have been in the camps. The therapist suddenly jumps forward and yells, "BOO!" startling Spiegelman (and the reader). "It felt like that. But always!" This brief encounter made me feel the horrific edge of life in the camps, explaining it in a potent experiential way I had never expected.

The books that have stayed with me most from the *100 Essential Books* were those related to the Holocaust. I keep remembering Eli Weisel's *Night*, how, when early news of Nazi atrocities leaked out, there was simply disbelief. Reading about the atrocities, I was reminded that evil multiplies once it begins, which is why in the Bible one frog appears first in the plagues. Once it sees that it's permitted, others follow. I also remember Viktor Frankl telling of a prison guard who spent his own money on medicine for sick prisoners. After the war, the prisoners hid him in the woods, refusing

to tell an American commander of his whereabouts until they were assured of his safety. "Averah Goreret Averah," one transgression leads to another; "Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah," one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah. Although evil acts multiply exponentially, fortunately the same is true for good deeds. They grow and multiply in wonderful, unforeseen ways.



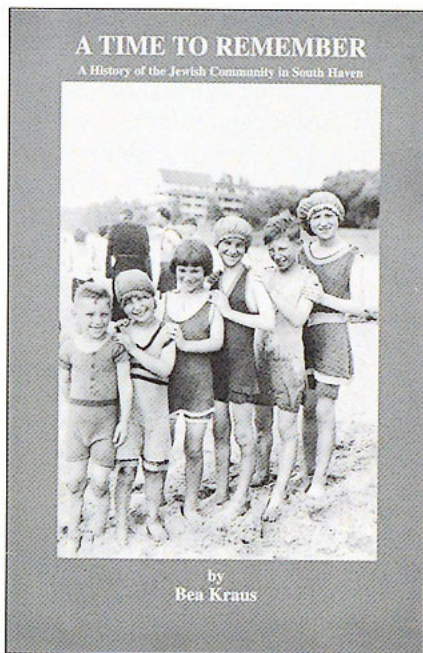
*Cindy Frenkel Kanter's writing has appeared in numerous publications ranging from Vanity Fair to the New York Observer, where she was a regular columnist. She served on the editorial staff of The New Yorker for over five years. Upon returning to Michigan, Frenkel Kanter was writer/editor of the Detroit Institute of Arts magazine and currently is a freelance writer in the Detroit area.*

## **A Time to Remember: A History of the Jewish Community in South Haven**

by Bea Kraus,  
287 pp., Priscilla Press,  
Allegan Forest, MI, 1999

Most of us who vacationed in the summer resorts or cottages in South Haven, Michigan, or who worked in the resorts there never knew how and why this small city on the Lake Michigan shore became the leading vacation center for Jews throughout the Midwest from the 1920s through the 1950s. Now we have the explanation in a new book, *A Time to Remember*, published by South Haven's First Hebrew Congregation. Author Bea Kraus has collected wonderful stories, photos, and other memorabilia, with the assistance of the congregation's History Committee, to give us a compelling history of a unique era and community.

*A Time to Remember* had its genesis in a 1994 article by Kraus about South Haven's resorts published in *Michigan Jewish History* ("South Haven's Jewish Resorts," Vol. 35, p. 20). Interest generated by the article helped obtain financing for the book-length



history, whose timely publication celebrates the First Hebrew Congregation's seventieth anniversary. Judith Levin Cantor, a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, notes in her excellent foreword to the book, that this is "the culmination of a long term and eminently worthwhile project for the community."

### **Farmers and City People**

Kraus traces the Jewish community in South Haven from its beginnings in the 1910s, when Jewish families established farms on the outskirts of the city. Because farming was a difficult way to try to support a family, South Haven's Jewish farmers quickly found a way to supplement their meager farm incomes by offering Jews from the cities vacations in the country. The old photos included in the book show happy vacationers at the "farm resorts." Jewish vacationers found no signs there declaring "NO JEWS OR DOGS," as were common else where, because the owners and all the guests were Jews.

### **The Catskills of the Midwest**

By 1921, with the growth of farm resorts like Fidelman's ("Where Vacation Dreams Come True"), Reznik's ("electric lights and all conveniences"), Weinstein's ("When summer winds blow, to Weinstein's you'll go"), and Levin's ("A Little Bit of Heaven"), South Haven became "the Catskills of the Midwest." Gradually, "city resorts" inside South Haven proper, with names like Zipperstein's, Nudelman's, and Steubens' Biltmore, replaced the resorts among the farms, with the notable exception of Fidelman's, which remained open until 1986. Former guests in these and other places will treasure the photos of the old places, now gone, in *A Time to Remember*.

Kraus also gives us a history of the Jewish community within South Haven itself. The First Hebrew Congregation was established in 1928 as a merger of a city group and the Jewish Farmers' Synagogue and Community Center. Growth continued with the support of summer guests and resort owners.

### **Lively Social Life**

South Haven was a lively town in the summers by day and by night. Many marriages can be traced to acquaintances begun at South Haven's beaches and resort. Indeed, my late uncle Ben Teitel met his beloved wife Harriett Mendelson there. Her family owned Mendelson's Atlantic Resort; he was vacationing from Detroit. After Ben's military service in World War II, Ben and Harriett moved to South Haven to work at the resort. Ben became general manager, and Harriett was the gracious dining room hostess, warmly welcoming guests. In the off-season Ben worked on adding many new buildings. The social life of South Haven is amusingly and warmly portrayed here through the reminiscences of many residents and former vacationers.

### **Times Change**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the South Haven resorts closed one-by-one, victims of new vacation spots opened up by the expressways, commercial airlines, and the lifting of restrictions against Jews. Ben Teitel began what he called "private urban

renewal" on North Shore Drive when he built the first modern apartments there in the early '60s. Kraus tells us that beautiful condos now prevail on North Shore Drive and the Black River's banks. Bed and breakfast establishments attract tourists today. While these serve mainly non-Jews, there are still about fifty Jewish families living in South Haven.

### A Special Spirit Captured

*A Time To Remember* includes a fascinating chapter about the Workmen's Circle's property north of town, which began with a children's camp in 1924 and later included the Mt. Pleasant Lake Shore Subdivision of summer cottages. An excellent index, bibliography, and list of people buried in the South Haven Jewish cemetery complete the volume.

Judith Levin Cantor's foreword sums up what Bea Kraus has accomplished in this book: "The reader senses the ethnic homogeneity, the togetherness, the warmth, the tastes and smells of the food, the jokes, the matchmaking, the fun of the beach and the natural beauty of the place that all added up to the special spirit of the South Haven vacation."

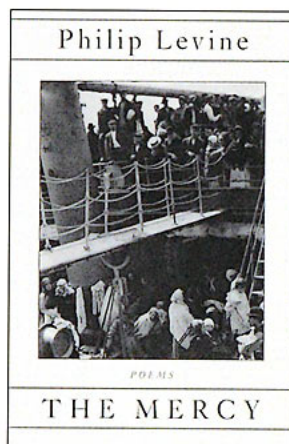
*A Time To Remember* will be available for purchase at the Detroit area's Jewish Book Fair in November 1999. It can also be ordered by mail, with checks payable to the History Committee and sent to "Book," First Hebrew Congregation, 263 Broadway, South Haven, Michigan 49090. Price: \$30 hardcover, \$20 paperback, add \$3 per book for shipping. The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is sponsoring author Bea Kraus's talk about South Haven at the Jewish Book Fair, Monday evening, November 8, at the Jimmy Prentis Morris branch of the Jewish Community Center on Ten Mile Road in Oak Park.

*Reviewed by Gerald S. Cook. A board member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and active in many other Jewish community organizations, Gerald Cook is a partner in the law firm of Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn in Detroit and is the Trustee of the Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust.*

## The Mercy: Poems by Philip Levine

Alfred A. Knopf, 1999

Anyone can walk the streets of Paris and sense poetry in the air. To transform the gritty, everyday working life of early twentieth century Detroit into a vivid, complex, and sensual world requires more creative gifts. So it is that Philip Levine's newest collection of poems, a linked series of free-verse narratives through his past, may seem



especially charged and affecting to those familiar with the Detroit landscape he so often describes.

Levine is a 71-year-old poet, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants who settled first on Detroit's east side. He graduated from Central High School and Wayne State University and then left the Detroit area, first for New York, and later for California, where he taught for many years at Fresno State University. Levine's eighteen volumes of poetry have won him a sure place in the canon of twentieth century American poets and two of the nation's major literary awards: the Pulitzer Prize for "The Simple Truth" and a National Book Award for "What Work Is."

Although Levine left Detroit as a young man on a quest for a literary career, his memories of an immigrant, lower middle class, Jewish world maintain a powerful hold on him — although the attachment is not a sentimental one.

So I was 18 once, 50 years ago,  
 a kid from a small town with big ideas.  
 Gatsby said if Detroit is your idea  
 of a small town, you need another idea,  
 and I needed several.

The world he remembers and recasts in *The Mercy* is charged with specific detail of boyhood and coming of age. Of a 1948 Communist Party meeting on Detroit's near east side, he recalls "a bottle of pink Michigan wine, a plate of stale Saltines, the cheese long gone, one bruised apple, a soda and nothing more." It is the "nothing more" that lingers, the loneliness and emptiness of the political meeting "in that sad little clubhouse for college kids."

He writes with a kind of piercing affection about relatives, among them his Aunt Tshipie, who "could roll strudel dough so fine even the blind could see through it," and whose powerful spirituality was possessed of a certain irony. The grandfather who peddled fruit could "outshout the Tigers of Wrath or the factory whistles along the river," aspiring to the American Dream even though the life was hard, "the women were gaunt...the place was Russia with another name."

Levine's eye captures the urban landscape, in both its desolation and its sweetness. "Ahead the slap heaps burning at all hours, and the great stacks blackening the sky, and nothing in between," he writes, and contrasts that dark view with "the few pale tulips and irises that bloomed in the yard," of Mrs. Strempek. He writes of journeys across the continent and into Spain, and always, always circles back to his birthplace. "How ordinary it all was," he writes. "Why can't I ever let it go?"

*Reviewed by Laura Berman. Laura Berman is a columnist for the Detroit News and a member of the Michigan Jewish History Editorial Committee.*

## In Memoriam



**Rabbi  
Richard C.  
Hertz  
1916-1999**

**Rabbi, Temple Beth El,  
1953-1999**

The entire Jewish community lost an important leader, activist, and scholar on July 3, 1999, upon the death

of Rabbi Richard C. Hertz. He served Judaism on the local, state, national, and international levels for more than fifty years.

At Hertz's memorial service, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, President of Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, spoke of Rabbi Hertz as a builder of bridges, "bridges of understanding and commitment, whether it was with families, parents and children, [or] different Jewish communities.... He loved to build bridges between the American Jewish community and Israel. He loved to build bridges between unaffiliated Jews and those who were members of congregations, and between different faith communities-as a noble teacher of Torah to generations of Christian students at the University of Detroit, through interfaith activities and work with clergy in this community and nationally." In addition, Rabbi Hertz also worked on the international scene, serving as a special envoy to the Soviet Union, sent by President Eisenhower in 1959 to report about the Jewish community there.

A native of Minnesota, Rabbi Hertz came to Detroit in 1952 after serving as a chaplain in World War II and later at a congregation in the Chicago area. He served as Senior Rabbi at Temple Beth El from 1953 until 1982, when he became Rabbi Emeritus. The University of Detroit-Mercy appointed Hertz Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and an endowed chair was established there in his name.

Rabbi Hertz was an enthusiastic supporter of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. In his student days at Hebrew Union College after World War II, Rabbi Hertz served as a summer rabbi at Temple B'nai Israel in Petoskey, Michigan. He always cherished that experience in Petoskey, where he developed an interest in the long history of Jewish communities in Michigan. Rabbi Hertz was an enthusiastic participant in the Jewish Historical Society's trip to Petoskey in 1996 to celebrate the centennial of B'nai Israel. As a guest speaker, he paid high tribute to the congregation's endurance and its continuing contribution to American Jewish life. He also



accompanied the Society that weekend to Fort Michilimackinac on its tour of the home of Michigan's first Jewish settler, Ezekiel Solomon. His encouragement and support of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan continued to strengthen us. The Society has lost a stalwart friend.



## Stanley Winkelman, 1922-1999

### A Man with a Vision of History

As a stellar Detroit community leader and one of the greats in Jewish communal life here, as well as a leader in the world of retailing and fashion, Stanley Winkelman made Detroit history throughout his lifetime as well as leading the way to its documentation.

In April 1980, Winkelman was included in a group of twenty "Detroit Leaders" featured in an article in *Fortune* magazine, which also included Henry Ford II, Max Fisher, Joseph Hudson, Alan Schwartz, and Alfred Taubman. After the 1967 Detroit riots which profoundly affected him, Winkelman had become a founding member of the nation's first urban coalition, New Detroit Inc. He played a key leadership role, serving as its chairman in 1971.

Winkelman's continuing social concern was evident also in his service as president of the Jewish Community Council, as a director of the Jewish Welfare Federation, the United Foundation, the Detroit Interfaith Round Table, the Detroit Institute of Arts, as well as in his many other significant leadership positions. The Stanley and Margaret Winkelman Fund for Social Justice, established by the family at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit to honor Mr. Winkelman's memory, is designed to continue this mission into future generations.

Stanley Winkelman was deeply rooted in Michigan history. His immigrant grandparents had married in the 1890s in Manistique, Michigan, in the Upper Peninsula, where they opened the first Winkelman's store and made their home the center of Jewish tradition for the four local families. By 1976, Stanley Winkelman became chairman and chief executive officer of Winkelman's, a chain of women's fashion stores founded in Detroit by his father Leon and uncle Isadore, which grew to nearly one hundred stores under Stanley's leadership. His family's history and his personal experiences were included in two recent exhibitions, "Becoming American Women in Michigan: The Jewish Immigrant Experience" and "Michigan Jews Remember World War II."

Honored with many prestigious awards himself, including the Butzel Award and the American Jewish Congress Amity Award, Winkelman presented the significant Leonard N. Simons History Award of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in 1996 to Wayne State University Distinguished Professor Philip P. Mason, for his work in establishing the Jewish Community Archives at the Reuther Library. Professor Mason writes: "For the past two years, Stanley, with Peggy Winkelman's assistance, wrote an autobiographical study...which was submitted to the Wayne State University Press in August, along with a magnificent collection of photographs. Friends of Stanley as well as those interested in Detroit's history during the past seventy years will welcome this delightful and informative study."

Stanley Winkelman consistently emphasized the long-term importance and significance of the work of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. His vision and work in his lifetime leave us with a precious legacy for the future.

### **Alfred Berkowitz 1915-1999**

#### **Founder of U-M Dearborn Gallery**

The Alfred Berkowitz Gallery at the University of Michigan-Dearborn is a hidden cultural gem of the Detroit area honoring a man who did much for the educational community of Southeast Michigan. Alfred Berkowitz, who died at the age of 83 in a car accident last February, was a prolific benefactor of Wayne State University and UM-Dearborn. One of his projects was the establishment of the gallery to which he donated his 400-piece collection of crystal objects. The gallery has since attracted contributions of more than 800 additional crystal pieces. According to Gallery Director Ken Gross, Berkowitz's generosity over seventeen years provided not only the working capital to establish and maintain gallery operations, but also the vision to develop one of the largest collections in the United States. The gallery is involved in many outreach programs with the university and the community and serves as a venue for other events such as lectures and video programs.

Alfred Berkowitz was raised in Detroit, his family having immigrated from Russia. He attended Northern High School and the Detroit Institute of Technology. He was a registered pharmacist and served in the army in the Pacific and in the U.S. during World War II. Berkowitz was in business with his father and brother at the Michigan Bag and Barrel Company and in 1951 founded Enterprise Industrial Sales, a vendor of steel to suppliers in the automotive industry. In addition to endowing the Berkowitz Gallery, he established a pharmacy scholarship and a student travel fund at Wayne State University. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters from WSU several years ago.

## Footnote from the Editor

by Aimée Ergas



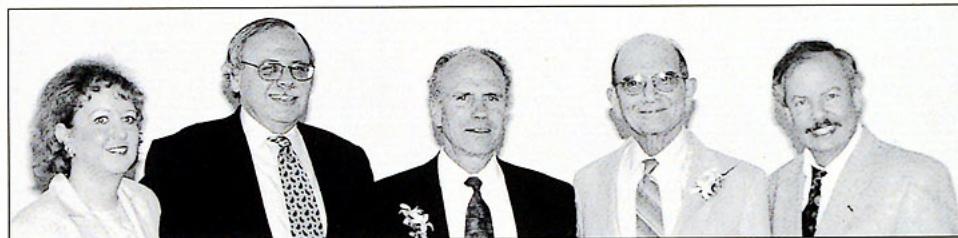
It was an honor to be asked to serve as editor for this volume of *Michigan Jewish History* after several years of association with the journal as a writer. The journal is an amazing publication considering that it is put together through the knowledge, wisdom, time, and effort of volunteer writers, historians, and aficionados of local Jewish history. Feedback from readers of previous volumes has been gratifying; they have noted the breadth and depth of the articles, book notes, and notices of interesting current events. I hope you will find the same to be true of this volume.

Many people were of help in putting together this issue. First and very importantly, the writers gave their professional time and expertise with great good will. On their behalf, I thank the experts, librarians, family members of historical individuals, and others who were consulted in the course of research for their articles. This journal would not be possible without their generosity. Jim Grey of the Jewish Historical Society was a great help in acquiring and taking many of the photographs in this volume. Steve Fishman of Goodwill Printing is ever supportive and understanding. Finally, personal and professional thanks go to Judy Cantor for her support, guidance, and vision in my debut work here. This journal and much other important historical work wouldn't happen without her. She is an invaluable resource to our community.

Congratulations to the Jewish Historical Society on its fortieth anniversary. I hope *Michigan Jewish History* will continue to document the Society's work and our local history for another forty years and beyond.

## Simons Award Presented to Michael Maddin

The prestigious Leonard N. Simons History Award was presented at this year's annual meeting to Michael "Mickey" Maddin, for his work as chair of the centennial celebration of the United Jewish Foundation/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and his distinguished work in community service and philanthropy. He was introduced by Robert Naftaly, representing Federation. Dr. Sidney Fine, Andrew Dickson White Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Michigan, was the keynote speaker, discussing "The United States' Reaction to the Holocaust."



Michael Maddin received the 1999 Leonard Simons History Award. From left: Marilyn Natchez, program chair; Robert Naftaly, presenter of the award; Maddin; Professor Sidney Fine, featured speaker; and Society President James Grey.

Photo by Jim Grey.

# Jewish Historical Society President's Report, 1998-99

by James D. Grey

During 1998-99, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has continued to be a very active group, fulfilling our purpose as stated in the bylaws: to foster the collection, preservation, and publication of all materials on the history of the Jews in Michigan and to encourage all projects, celebrations, and other activities that tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish history.

## Tours and Events

Under the leadership of Program Vice-President Joan Braun, our activities were many and varied. A breakfast and slide show on the Jewish-oriented history of the Detroit Tigers by Irwin "Mr. Baseball" Cohen was followed by a chartered bus trip and insider's tour of Tiger Stadium. First held in June 1998, this program was repeated by popular demand in July 1999.



Photo by Jim Grey.

Baseball fans at the tour of Tiger Stadium in July were, from left, Stan Meretsky, Joan Braun, Alan Kandel, Irwin "Mr. Baseball" Cohen, Phyllis Strome, and Jim Grey.

Other tours this past year included a chartered bus ride, walking and riding tour of historic Woodmere Cemetery, including a photo stop by the grave of Rabbi Leo Franklin from Temple Beth El. A tour of the exhibit honoring the centennial of Rabbi Franklin's birth was coordinated by Harriet Siden, and Phyllis Strome chaired a tour of the historic B. Siegel home in Detroit.

Our participation in the annual Jewish Book Fair continued with sponsorship of author Thomas Cahill, where discussion of his book *The Gifts of the Jews* drew at least four hundred guests. The Society participated with Temple Beth El in screening the classic film "The Imported Bridegroom." Another film program, coordinated with the Jewish War Veterans, included viewing "Jewish American Patriots," and a tour of the Memorial Home. We also cosponsored the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival in June 1999.

## Conferences and Exhibitions

The Jewish Historical Society was again a presence at the annual Local History Conference at Wayne State University and at the Michigan Archival Association

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Conference at the Reuther Archives at Wayne State. We also participated with the Agency for Jewish Education in a special event at Barnes & Noble, "Still Dancing: 100 Years of Jewish Detroit," in which storyteller Corinne Stavish created a fictional character who told a personal story reflecting the lives of American Jews.

This past year produced a bumper crop of exhibitions in which the Historical Society was involved along with other history organizations in the state. "Becoming American Women in Michigan," curated by Judy Cantor, was displayed at the Michigan Women's Historical Center in Lansing. Dorothy Kaufman organized a private viewing of the Jewish Federation's "Memory & Vision," celebrating one hundred years of the organized Jewish community in Detroit. Sue Shifman chaired a tour to the DIA for the exhibit "Treasures of Jewish Cultural Heritage from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary."

### Future Plans

The busy year just past bodes well for the future of the Jewish Historical Society. We enter the new year and the new millennium with continuing projects, including establishment of a website, and new ventures, such as collecting "historic" Detroit high school yearbooks, a project to be coordinated by Gerald Cook and Marc Manson. As we celebrate our fortieth anniversary of "Documenting the past for future generations," we look forward to the next forty years with excitement as we document, preserve, and live history.

### The Officers and Board of Directors, 1999-2000



Photo by Jim Grey.

Standing, left to right: Benno Levi, Harriet Siden, Bette Schein, Betsy Moss, Robert Feldman, Adele Staller, Phyllis Strome, Eveleen Budnitzky, James Grey. Seated, left to right: Cynthia Brody, Ida Levine, Gerald Cook, President Joan Braun, Alan Kandel, Cynthia Mandelbaum, Judy Cantor.

# AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

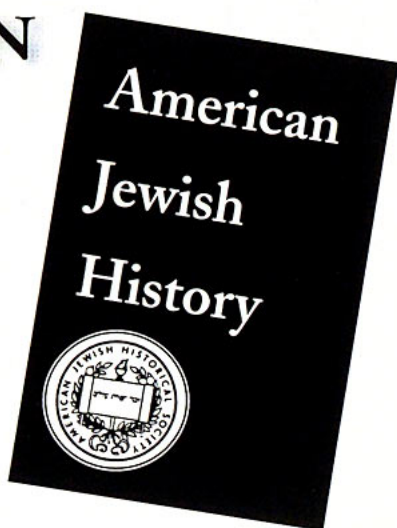
Marc Lee Raphael, Editor  
*College of William and Mary*

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