

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



*From a frontier outpost to an urban metropolis,
Detroit celebrates 300 years.*

Letters from Detroit 1900; Flint's Jewish Community; Early Jewish Professors; Synagogues of Detroit; Fresh Air Society; Index to Volume 40

Volume 41

Fall 2001, Tishrei 5762

Michigan Jewish History
is dedicated to the memory of
Sarah and Ralph Davidson
and
Bessie and Joseph Wetsman
The parents and grandparents of
William Davidson and Dorothy Davidson Gerson

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Cover photos: Two views of Detroit, 300 years apart: a model of the settlement of Detroit in 1701, from the Detroit Historical Museum, and a view of the cityscape in 2001. Photos from the collection of Irwin Cohen.

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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 41

Fall 2001

Tishrei 5762

The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

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Detroit 300 Century Box

Three Letters from the Jewish Community of 1900

On New Year's Eve in 1900, Detroit Mayor William C. Maybury and the Common Council sealed a small copper box, which contained "papers relating to the history of Detroit in its social, religious, commercial, professional and political character, prepared by men and women prominent in those several walks of life." A small plate on the top of the box gave instructions that it was not to be opened until New Year's 2001 by the Detroit Mayor and the Council, and it remained unopened throughout the twentieth century in the vault of the City Treasurer.

The Detroit Century Box was opened on December 31, 2000, at the festive inauguration of Detroit's Tricentennial celebration at Orchestra Hall. In an impressive ceremony following the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Gala New Year's Eve concert, Mayor Dennis Archer and Edsel Ford, chairman of the Detroit 300 Tricentennial, accompanied by some members of the Detroit City Council, opened the small copper box.

The historic opening revealed that three of these fascinating letters were written by prominent members of the Detroit Jewish community of 1900, reporting on the state of the community at that time. The three correspondents were David W. Simons, Mrs. Jacob Teichner, and Louis Blitz. The Century Box is now on display at the Detroit Historical Museum, which holds the original letters as well as transcriptions for public viewing. *Michigan Jewish History* is proud to publish the text of those three letters here.

About the Letter Writers

David W. Simons became the first president of the newly formed United Jewish Charities in 1899. An immigrant from Russia in 1870, he was a real estate developer and bought and sold railroad supplies. In 1915 he was elected a member of Detroit's first nine-man City Council. From 1908 to 1920, he served as president of Congregation Shaarey Zedek. His younger son, Seymour, was a nationally known songwriter, while the eldest, Charles, was appointed Chief Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. Although most of the letters in the Century Box were written with pen and ink in splendid handwriting, it is interesting that Simons's letter was typewritten—high tech for its day.

Mrs. Jacob Teichner (née Fannie Friedman) was the wife of the owner of one of the largest tobacco houses in the country and one of the major cigar manufacturers in the city. She was active in the Temple Beth El women's charitable groups, while her husband was the vice president of the Phoenix Social Club.

Louis Blitz was a manufacturer who established this area's first glass plant in the Delray area. He was the president of Temple Beth El at the time of this letter, and on the Board of Directors of the Jewish social club, the Phoenix Club. One of the trustees of the United Jewish Charities, he had served on the Board of Appeals of Detroit's Chamber of Commerce in 1893.

—Judith Levin Cantor

DETROIT 300 CENTURY BOX



701-702 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BLDG.

D. W. SIMONS & COMPANY,

PURCHASING AND SELLING AGENTS

IRON, STEEL, METAL.

RAILROAD SUPPLIES A SPECIALTY.

DETROIT, MICH.,

*THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN MERCANTILE, SOCIAL, and PROFESSIONAL LIFE in DETROIT.

To the Jewish People of the year two thousand,
Greeting.

As the nineteenth century closes, the life of the

THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN MERCANTILE, SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE IN DETROIT.

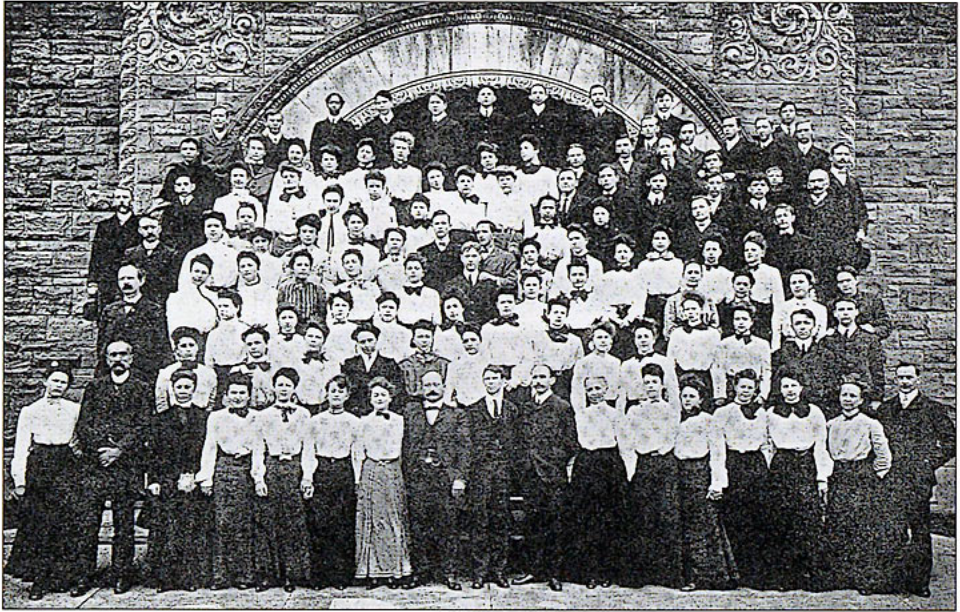
To the Jewish People of the year two thousand,
Greeting.

As the nineteenth century closes, the life of the Jew of Detroit as regards business and the professions is marked by no peculiar phenomena. In his choice of a pursuit, there is little to distinguish the Jew of today from other citizens of the community. There has been a decided breaking away from the old trend which led so many of the race into the same fields of industry. In almost every branch of trade and commerce the Jew is represented, and in most of them he has taken a very high place. A prominent bank is controlled exclusively by Jews, and the Jews are represented upon the Board of Directors of a number of other large banking institutions. One of the largest tobacco houses in the country, located here, is a Jewish institution. Jews control large manufacturing plants here in clothing, brushes, matches, corsets, liquor, cigars, potato flour, evaporated vegetables and drugs. The wholesale trade is the field of operation for many Jewish firms, notably in tobacco, liquors, clothing, dry goods, paper, paper stock, iron and steel. Many of the very large retail establishments of the city are operated by Jews, though not the largest as is true of some cities, and every branch of the retail trade of the city is the legitimate field for larger or smaller Jewish merchants. Real estate, and Insurance claims the attention of a number of active Jewish young men.

In the professions the Jew is everywhere, though in most of them his entrance has been comparatively recent. Detroit has about fifteen Jewish lawyers, most of them still young men and almost an equal number of physicians, several of them of high rank in the profession. Two or three dentists have large practices. One of the leading firms of architects is headed by a Jew. The most clever of the caricaturists on the local newspapers is a Jew. There are many Jewish musicians of great promise, a few of the young men have achieved success in engineering, and the teaching staff of the public schools included a large representation of Jewish young women.

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Socially, the influence of religious exclusiveness of the Jew is still strongly felt, and in his social relations the Jew confines himself almost strictly to association with his



Class photo from the January 1904 graduating class of Detroit Central High School. Faculty members are shown in the front rows. "...the teaching staff of the public schools included a large representation of Jewish young women." From the collection of the Yearbook Project of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

own people. There are a great many active social organizations both among the men and women, some of which are composed primarily of the reformed Jews, while the membership in others is largely Orthodox. During the last decade or two there has been a tendency among the younger men and women to mingle more or less with gentiles in a social way and if we may judge of the future by the trend of the present, it would seem that in time many of the social barriers will be swept away as have been those of mercantile, professional and political life.

It would seem to us here that at the end of the century about to dawn there will be almost nothing to distinguish the Jew of that day from the non-Jew. True, the Jew has maintained his social and religious exclusiveness for over three thousand years, but more has been done to abolish that same exclusiveness in the last fifty years in the more enlightened countries than was accomplished in all of the rest of the thirty centuries put together.

In behalf of the Jew of today I greet the Jew of two thousand.
David W. Simons.

[Transcribed by Ann Rock]



David W. Simons

Courtesy Archives of
Congregation Shaarey Zedek

"Hebrew Homes and Charities in Detroit"

The closing of this nineteenth century finds the Hebrew charities of Detroit established in such form that any and all cases of need and suffering find those who can minister, counsel and alleviate the distress that seeks relief. We need only to recognize that charity is duty, and our highest ideal should be the fulfillment of that duty which brings its own reward.

It was in 1863 that a few benevolent ladies banded themselves together and incorporated the first Jewish charitable organization in Detroit. The charter members of this Society were: Mesdames Fanny Heineman, Rosalie Frankel, Betty Butzel, Fanny Lambert and Caroline Friedman (my beloved mother).

Its name "The Detroit Ladies Society for the support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans." Its object is obvious from its name. This society has lived and thrived, has succored the poor widow when in her darkest hour she was almost in despair and today it numbers a membership of one hundred and eighty ladies from whose dues of four dollars each per year together with interest on its invested endowment fund of twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) the relief work is carried on. This gradually acquired endowment represents chiefly the result of annual entertainments formerly given by the Society.

Its present officers are:-
 Mrs. Fanny Heineman -
President.
 Mrs. J. Selling -
Vice-President
 Mrs. F. Marrymont -
Finan. Sec'y.
 Mrs. J.F. Teichner -
Rec. and Cor. Sec'y.
 Mrs. A. Engass -
Treasurer.



These portraits appeared in the *Sunday News-Tribune*, June 12, 1898, in an article entitled "To Help the Needy," which reviewed Jewish aid organizations in Detroit. Top left: Mrs. E. H. Heineman, President, Jewish Woman's Society for Relief of Widows and Orphans. Top right: Mrs. Z. Selling, Vice President. Center: Mrs. Seligman Schloss, President, Jewish Woman's Sewing Society. Bottom Left: Mrs. Adolph Sloman, Sec. & Treas. Bottom right: Mrs. Martin Butzel, Vice President.

Courtesy Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives, Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

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...
A few years after the ladies Society had started in its good work, the "Hebrew-Bethel Relief Society" was formed by gentlemen who for many years carried on systematic and efficient rendering of assistance to the destitute and needy. The funds required being contributed by the Jewish citizens of the city.

Later a second Relief society was established and each in its way cared for the poor and suffering. Prominent among the early charitable organizations was the "Ladies Sewing Society," its aim & object the supplying of garments and household goods. From the first gathering of a few earnest workers meeting weekly to sew for the poor, this Society has grown to have one of the largest memberships of any and this past year eighty five applicants were supplied most of whom were mothers of large families. The number of garments distributed were 1394 - dry goods 1716 yards - shoes 338 pair - bed linen 336 pieces - comforters 59....[A]n average of fifty ladies industriously fashion the garments for distribution.

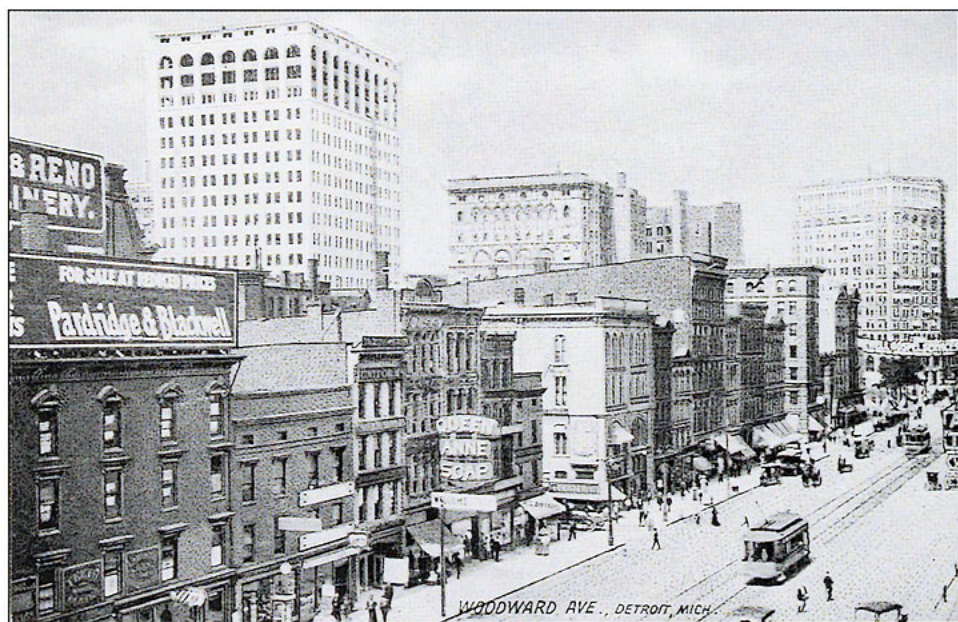
The present officers are,
Mrs. Sarah Berger - Pres.
Mrs. L. Wineman - 1st Vice-Pres.
Mrs. J. Wurzburger, 2nd Vice-Pres.
Mrs. A. Sloman - Sec'y and Treas.

In 1889 Mrs. Sarah Krolik founded the Self Help Circle ably assisted by Mrs. Sarah Berger. The object of the Society was educational more than charitable and always teaching the children the value of independence. Beginning with only five pupils, the enrollment this year numbered one hundred and eighty three. In the sewing classes the girls are taught plain sewing, patching and darning by a regular system. The kitchen garden instructs them in housework, cleanliness and the beautifying of every day life, while in the kindergarten the younger ones enjoy their songs and games and come with their elder sisters on Saturday afternoon to attend the library class - three hundred volumes with the necessary book cases being the generous gift of Mrs. Henry Krolik. The boys have various evening classes and receive the benefits of manual training in several branches.

The officers are
Mrs. Alfred Rothschild - President
Mrs. M. Rosenfield - Vice- Pres.
Miss I.V. Kopple - Sec'y
Mrs. L. M. Franklin - Treasurer

...
Through the untiring efforts of Rabbi Franklin this past year saw the uniting of various charities under the name of the "United Jewish Charities" combining all with the exception of the "Ladies Hebrew Widows and Orphans" which felt that its work should be done as heretofore by women for women, maintaining that poverty caused by the death of the bread winner is different from that caused by shiftlessness, and to prove that the lot of the widow and her children is not nearly so hard when special

DETROIT 300 CENTURY BOX



From the collection of Irwin Cohen.

A turn-of-the-nineteenth-century view of Woodward Avenue, Detroit.

and permanent provision exists for them, when mothers can come for counsel as well as for cash, so that they can rear their children to better destinies. The united charities is supported entirely by contributions and the results of its first year's work has been most gratifying, showing plainly how much was accomplished. Total receipts from two hundred and forty five subscribers - \$4283.85 - disbursements by the Ladies Sewing Society \$567.80 - by the Self Help Circle \$116.62 - General Expenses \$462.14 - Assisted seventy four families \$2498.72 - transportation to eighty five persons \$312.44 - donations to fifty eight persons \$148.90 - Expense for recent arrived Roumanians \$97.43 - Total expenditures \$4204.05....

The officers are -

D. W. Simons - President

Samuel Heavenrich - 1st Vice-Pres.

Mrs. Sarah Berger- 2nd Vice-Pres.

A. Benjamin - Sec'y.

E. H. Van Baalen - Treas.

Joseph Wertheimer - Supt.

The "Gemilas Chasodim" Society deserves mention, an admirable system of charity that preserves character and obviates the stigma of receiving alms. One who still possesses pride and yet is in need of immediate assistance is permitted to return a loan without interest in small installments and thus cancel his obligations has been aided at no sacrifice of his personal character, provided such a system is carried on in strict confidence.

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With the great increase in foreign immigration a larger field for systematically organized Hebrew charity is being opened, nor is it distinctively sectarian charity for so long as a Society enables poor people of any race or creed to assist themselves, while it keeps them and their children from street begging or from the poor master's door, it cannot be said to be doing special but rather communal charity.

Hebrew charitable Homes or Institutions have as yet found no place in this city, yet most of the Jews of Detroit contribute to the support of the "Cleveland Orphan Asylum" and "Old Folk Home."

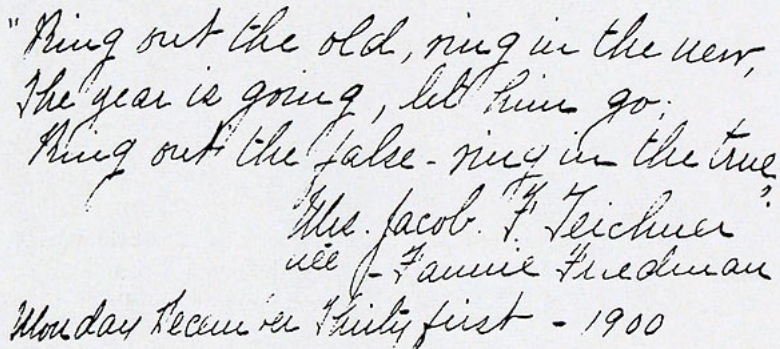
The betterment of the quarters now occupied by the poor is a problem to be solved, we trust in the near future & the erection of suitable tenements will do much to improve the condition of the destitute.

The enormous possibilities spreading out in this new century brings with it the promise that the "naked shall be clothed and the hungry shall be fed" in the truest way, the best methods yet undreamed of. Then welcome to this New Year and Century -

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false - ring in the true."

Mrs. Jacob F. Teichner
née - Fannie Friedman
Monday December Thirty first - 1900

[Transcribed by Judy Cantor and members of the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit]



"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false - ring in the true."
Mrs. Jacob F. Teichner
née - Fannie Friedman
Monday December Thirty first - 1900

LOUIS BLITZ
WORKS AT DEL REY.
ESTABLISHED 1875.

OFFICE OF
DETROIT CITY GLASS WORKS
Louis Blitz & Co.
PROPRIETORS.
97, 99 & 101 WOODBRIDGE ST. WEST.

MANUFACTURERS AND IMPORTERS
WINDOW GLASS,
FRENCH PLATE,
ENAMELED, COLORED,
GROUND & FIGURED
GLASS, &c. &c.

Detroit, Mich. December 31st 1900

*His Honor, the Mayor, having performed a request, that I pre-
pare a paper on "the Jewish People in Detroit, in the 19th"*

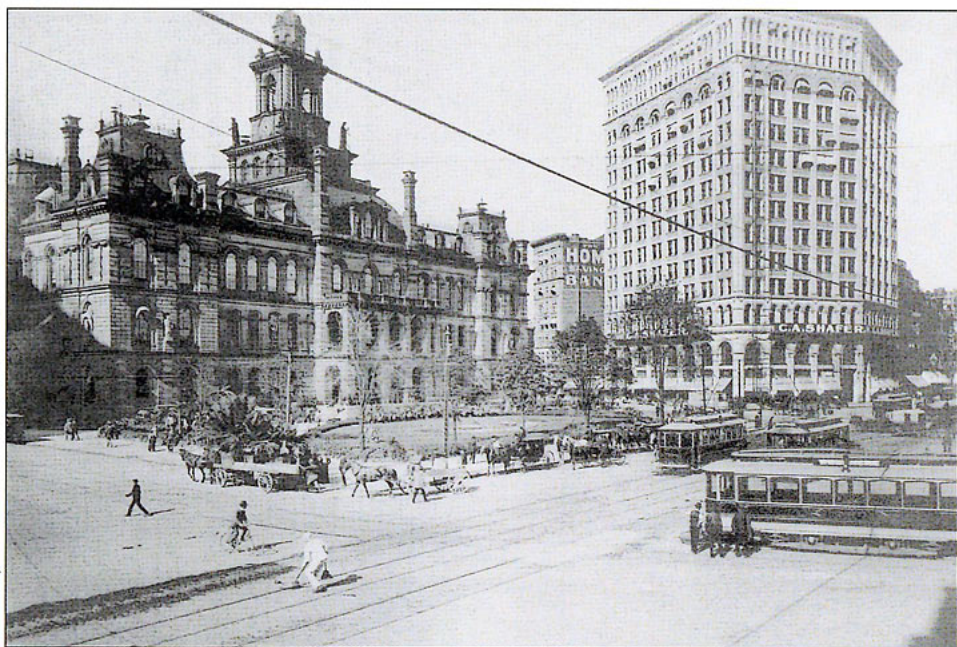
Office of Detroit Glass Works
Louis Blitz and Co.
Proprietors
97, 99 & 101 Woodbridge St. West
Detroit, Mich
December 31, 1900

His Honor, the Mayor, having performed a request, that I prepare a paper on "the Jewish People in Detroit, in the 19th Century and their relations to Social, Commercial and religious life" I feel that so far as their communal activity and denominational activity and usefulness is concerned, I cannot do better, than to attach to this letter, a copy of the Souvenir History of Congregation Beth-El, published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of said — the leading Jewish congregation of our City, and State, which faithfully reflects not alone its growth spiritually and materially, But is also a fair index of the individual growth and civic standing, of the representative Citizens of the Jewish faith, that compose its membership. The XIX Century has been an eventful one, not alone in the local history of the Jews of our fair city, but throughout the nation and the world. It was ushered in by the ringing declarations for civil and religious liberty, Equality and Fraternity, that have immortalized both the American and French revolutions — Centuries of Persecution — of oppression and repression, had been Israel's hard lot, until the yoke of tyranny and the barriers of fanaticism and bigotry were first thrown down, and hence it is, with undying gratitude and affection, that we the descendants of "the People of the Book" cling to lands and communities, that have given them the opportunities to found permanent homes and endowed them with equal privileges — Thus fitting them for the highest duties of responsible citizenship.

How well we have made use of this great boon, the honorable records of our co-religionists in every walk of life attest and wherever and whenever, public duties, Patriotic devotion and private sacrifices for the common good have been called for, we have not been found wanting; Hence it is with confidence, that I may be

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Courtesy Detroit Historical Museum.



Cadillac Square, the central business area of Detroit, in the fall of 1900. Detroit City Hall is the building on the left. The photo was taken from a window of the Russell Hotel by C.M. Hayes & Co., a firm engaged in general photography.

permitted to bespeak for them an honorable participation in all that may tend to the future welfare and greatness of our beloved City and country in and throughout the coming century and that in all the different walks of life, In their social, commercial and religious status, they will harmoniously blend their lives, with those of their fellow citizens of every station and denomination — mingling and fraternizing in their respective homes, lodges, churches, public and private charities, commercial organizations. Each added year will bear witness to a closer affiliation with our fellow citizens and may God keep watch and ward over this our fair city and exalted nation and when these plain but grateful lines are read at the dawn of the 21st century, may there have indeed arrived that era of “Peace on earth and goodwill to men” that shall have made possible, that common fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man that will have beaten the sword into ploughshares, the spear into pruning hook and nations shall have unlearned war — Amen.



Courtesy Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives
Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Louis B. Blitz
#26 Woodward Avenue Terrace

Louis Blitz

Jewish Life in Postwar Flint

By Nora Faires and Nancy Hanflik

In 1859 Henry Brown arrived in the growing lumber town of Flint, Michigan.¹ Originally named Heinrich Braun, this Bavarian immigrant seems to have been the Flint community's first influential Jewish settler. By 1872 Brown, a prosperous merchant who later served on the city council, had been joined in the retail clothing trade by at least nine other Jewish men. Relations among these men seem to have been close, with several working as employees of the others' shops and five living in the same two boarding houses. Yet despite the city having enough Jewish men to support a minyan, organized Jewish life did not emerge during these years. Only after 1900, as the town evolved from a center of carriage making to a burgeoning site of automobile manufacturing, would a significant Jewish religious and community life be established.

Throughout the twentieth century, the auto industry dominated Flint's economy, with the city's fortunes tied closely to that of its premier firm, General Motors (GM).

“The lives of Flint Jewry were shaped by the booms and busts of the city's auto manufacturing.”

Few of Flint's Jewish residents found jobs, either as workers or managers, in the industry itself. Like Brown and the other early settlers, many undertook retail trade, following the dominant pattern of Jewish immigrants elsewhere in America.² By mid-century, again mirroring a pattern throughout the United States, many moved into the professions.³ Yet, like those of their non-Jewish counterparts in this GM citadel, the lives of Flint Jewry were

shaped by the booms and busts of the city's auto manufacturing.⁴

Jewish Institutions Develop Slowly

Some of the mid-nineteenth-century German settlers in Flint stayed, but most left to build lives in other communities. During the same period, large numbers of non-Jewish immigrants from the British Empire and Canada arrived in the Flint area to work in farming and lumbering. Flint was atypical of most cities in the United States; its German immigrants, both Jewish and non-Jewish, did not settle in numbers sufficient to sustain a culture that would attract other German-Jewish immigrants. Thus Flint lacked a support network, such as those created by German Jews in many of America's cities, to benefit future generations of Jewish immigrants.

The absence of this essential religious, social, and economic framework presented challenges to the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who began to arrive in Flint about 1895 and who struggled to build a community. Consequently, Jewish institutions in Flint developed later than those in cities like Ann Arbor and Saginaw, where German Jews had permanently settled in the 1840s and 1850s. A faltering economy and fluctuating migration both in and out of Flint during the nineteenth century further contributed to the delay in development of a Jewish community in Flint.

Despite these obstacles, by 1918 the Jewish community in Flint boasted a small but active congregation that later became Congregation Beth Israel, a Conservative

synagogue. The community also supported a Hebrew school, a cemetery, a kosher meat market, and several philanthropic organizations. In 1927 Temple Beth El, a Reform congregation, was organized. Sixty years later, Chabad House Lubavitch of Eastern Michigan established a presence in Flint.

Population Rise and Fall

Between 1920 and 1945, Flint's growing Jewish population created a need for new organizations, such as the Federation of Flint Jewish Charities in 1936, and the expansion of existing ones. Both Congregation Beth Israel and Temple Beth El constructed or purchased buildings to accommodate their numerous activities during this time. In 1940, the general population of Flint hovered around 151,000. While it is difficult to approximate the Jewish population of Flint during the 1940s because little historical data is available, a figure of about 1,500 seems to be a reasonable estimate. This number continued to grow in post-war Flint. By 1957 Flint boasted twenty-five institutions and organizations that served approximately 2,300 Jewish residents. Several of these institutions and a number of individuals were instrumental in the resettlement of dozens of Holocaust survivors and Jewish families displaced by events in Europe.

At its peak during the early 1970s, Flint's Jewish population reached nearly 3,000, while the city's total population peaked at approximately 200,000. By that time, many of Flint's Jewish residents had migrated to neighboring suburbs in Genesee County. Currently, the Jewish population in the Greater Flint area is estimated at 1,400; the city's overall population has declined to 125,000, while Genesee County's population has dropped from a high of 450,000 in 1980 to 436,000. Several hundred Jewish residents of the Flint area are from the Soviet Union, part of the five hundred individuals resettled by the Flint Jewish community between the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s.

The Golden Age of Flint and Its Jews

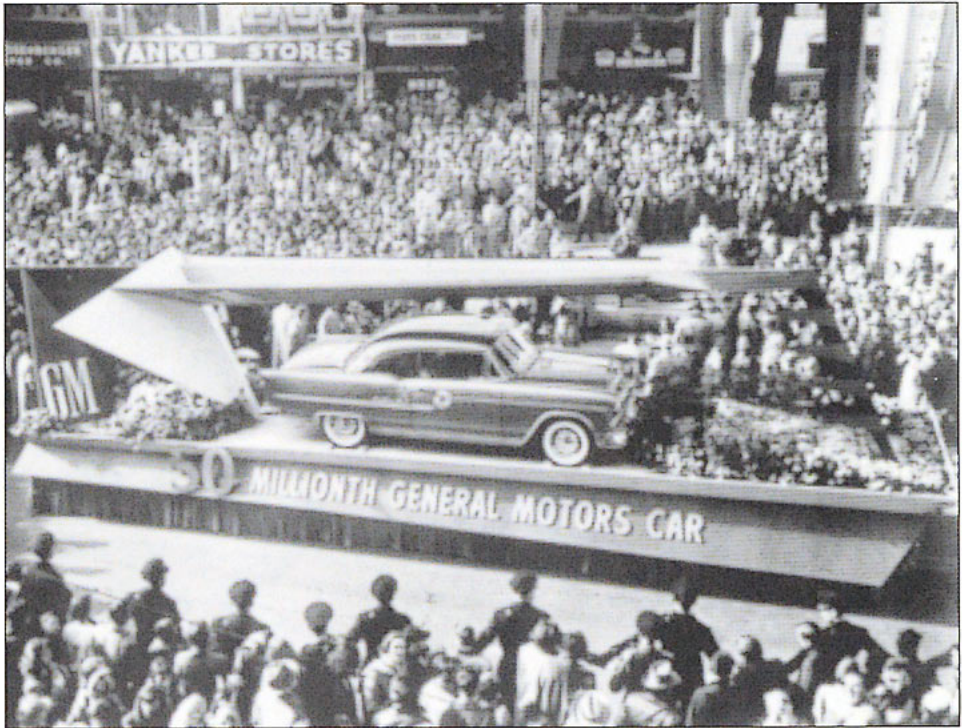
This article examines life in what some Jewish residents of Flint deem a "golden age," the period from the end of World War II until the early 1970s. This quarter century witnessed the most extensive elaboration of Jewish institutional life and saw political concerns become more important to the community. The concerns included both international events, such as the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 and the freeing of "Iron Curtain" Jewry, and local issues, such as the city's active civil rights movement. Jewish leaders in Flint and its rapidly growing suburbs launched their own interfaith and interracial efforts, in addition to participating in area-wide programs to promote tolerance.

This expansive period in the history of Flint Jewry coincided with the heyday of Flint's industrial might. During these years the city became a symbol of American prosperity, with its major product—the car—representing freedom, success, and the dawning of a distinctive American pattern of consumption and, according to some analysts, a new way of life. Flint Jewry participated in these heady days, experiencing the economic upward mobility and population growth of these baby boom years. But by the early 1970s, cultural observers and economic forecasters could see signs that all was not well in Flint or in the American auto industry: automotive profits had begun to slide, and plummeted with the oil embargo of the mid-1970s. Flint's main street, home to many Jewish-owned businesses, suffered as city residents rushed to the sub-

JEWISH LIFE IN POSTWAR FLINT

urbs, and jobs began to move out of town and out of state. Flint's postwar bubble burst in the mid-1970s, and a decade later the city once again became a symbol, this time of economic despair and urban decay.

Our examination focuses on the postwar boom time. It takes the form of an extended photo-essay, with images drawn from an exhibition held in the fall of 2001 at Flint's Sloan Museum, entitled "A Century of Jewish Life in Flint." The genesis of this exhibit is itself part of this Jewish community's saga. In October 1997, members of the community, under the auspices of the Flint Jewish Federation, began a photograph and artifact collection project in conjunction with the Sloan Museum. In the four years of the collection process, more than one hundred persons participated, lending photographs, helping to track down artifacts, and telling their own and their relatives' stories. Their dedication testifies to the continued vibrancy of Jewish life in the Flint area; but that chapter in the city's Jewish history is another tale.



Flint Journal Photograph.

Downtown Flint Celebrates Production of the 50-Millionth General Motors Car, 1955. Parade watchers line Detroit Street (now Martin Luther King Avenue) to cheer this glittering emblem of Flint's postwar economic boom. Several dozen Jewish businesses were downtown mainstays, including Yankee Stores (in background), owned by Joe Megdell and Wilbert Roberts.

A Year in the Life

We begin with two notable events in 1955. That summer, Flint held a giant parade to celebrate General Motors' production of its 50-millionth car. Several months later, William Attwood, the national affairs editor of popular *Look* magazine,

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chose Flint as the site for his journalistic inquiry into "The Position of Jews in America Today."⁶ After surveying national patterns, Atwood, who identified himself as "an inquisitive Gentile reporter,"⁷ focused on one family in Flint. Atwood's introduction to this case study merits quoting at length:

Flint, Mich., is a good place for Americans to live. It is a prosperous automobile-manufacturing town of 165,000. Among its people are 800 Jewish families such as the Hurands. Art Hurand was born, raised, and educated in Flint. He married a local girl, Bess Bryer; they have five children. Art came home after five years in the Army to continue his father's bakery business. Now, he operates ten Buttercup Bakery shops, and his father, a Russian-Jewish immigrant in 1911, is semiretired. While excluding Jews from its country-club social life, Flint welcomes them in its civic life. Bess Hurand is a Cub Scout den mother. Art is in Civil Defense and the Chamber of Commerce.⁸



*Look Magazine Profiles Flint Jewry, 1955. The same year as the parade, William Atwood of *Look* magazine profiled Jewish life in Flint, focusing on the family of bakery owner Art Hurand.*

Atwood concluded that the Hurands, and American Jews generally, had attained civic, but not social assimilation; he also found them strongly committed to Judaism. Though condescending and clinical, Atwood proved an astute analyst of some key

JEWISH LIFE IN POSTWAR FLINT

patterns of Jewish life in Flint, particularly their patriotism and public service, as well their continued exclusion from social intimacy with non-Jews. He failed to see that they also remained outside the main corridors of economic and cultural power. His explicitly outsider view also left him disinterested in many of the day-to-day facets of Jewish community life that proved most rewarding to community members. Nor could Attwood—or the downtown parade watchers—imagine in 1955 how much the city would change in two decades, and with it the contours of Jewish experience. We trace the lineaments of this story through the photographs below. They were taken between 1948 and 1970, a time of optimism and affluence for Flint's Jewish community.



Clubhouse, Willowood Country Club, c. 1957. Founded in the late 1950s when most area country clubs still excluded Jews, Willowood provided middle-class and upper-class Jews with an array of recreational facilities. It was a place to socialize for members of both the Reform and Conservative congregations. The flourishing of Willowood provides an example of the limits of assimilation of area Jews in the post-World War II era.



Jewish Girl Scouts, 1952. At a program held at Temple Beth El, the local Reform congregation, these Jewish Girl Scouts pledge allegiance to the American flag. Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops were organized in many Flint public schools. Through such troops, many local Jewish youth participated in civic life with their non-Jewish neighbors.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



Cousins Dress Up for Purim Party, c. 1952. Four Queen Esthers celebrate Purim at Congregation Beth Israel, a Conservative synagogue. Wearing paper crowns and dresses made by their immigrant grandmother, these cousins assume the mantle of this heroine of her people. L. to r., Eileen Parnes [Brenner], Linda Miller [Hanflik], Diana Berg [Levinson], Florence Koenig [Berner].



Passover in Korea, 1954. Dr. Arnold Schaffer, I., and friend receive matzah while stationed in Korea. During the Korean War (1950-53) Flint Jews continued their long record of service to their country, demonstrating once again that American patriotism and Jewish identity could go hand in hand.

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B. F. Krasner Jewelry, c.1948. Retail trade was a major enterprise for many Jewish families. Stores such as Krasner Jewelers on Flint's main business artery, catered to Jews and non-Jews, as evidenced by the store's billboard. Such stores sold their wares to an established middle class and a growing class of unionized auto workers hungry for the fruits of the "good life" that American victory in World War II had promised.



A Shiny New Car Signifies Success, 1948. The most important symbol of "making it" in postwar America was Flint's own product: a spanking new car. Henry Hanflik, age four, stands beside the family's Pontiac, parked in front of the Hanflik's first grocery store, where he lived on the second floor with his immigrant parents.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



Flint Journal Photograph

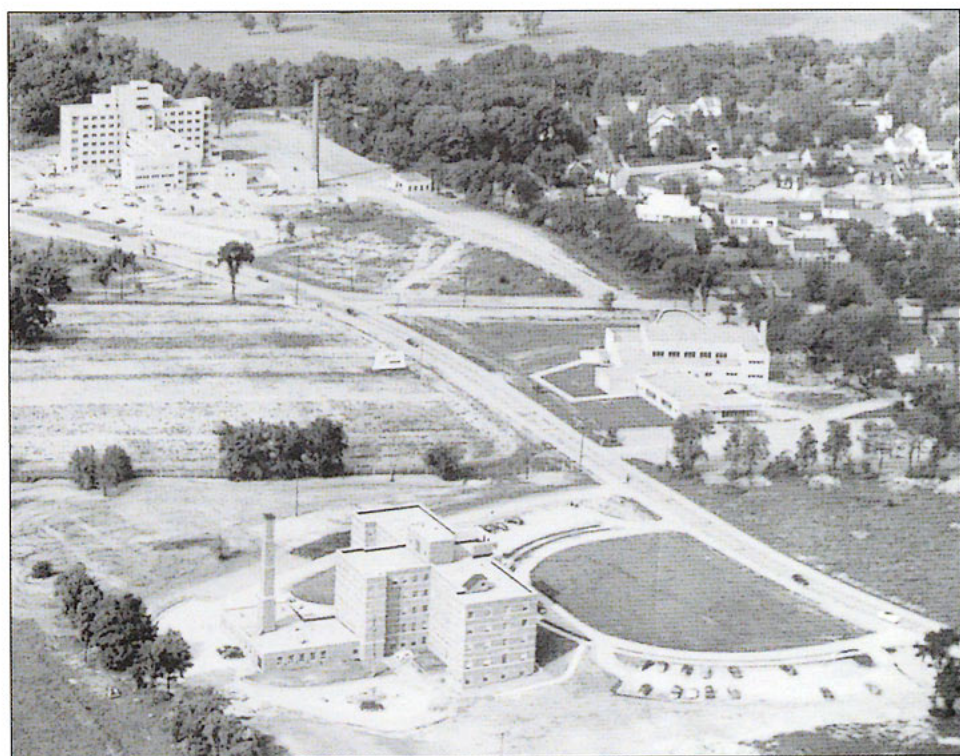
Interior of Yankee Stores, 1961.

Community activist Joe Megdell inside his new suburban store. Megdell and a partner began the business in 1948, purchasing a downtown U.S. army supply store and renaming it "Yankee Stores." Megdell stands on flooring that incorporates Uncle Sam's hat, the emblem of the New York Yankees baseball team.

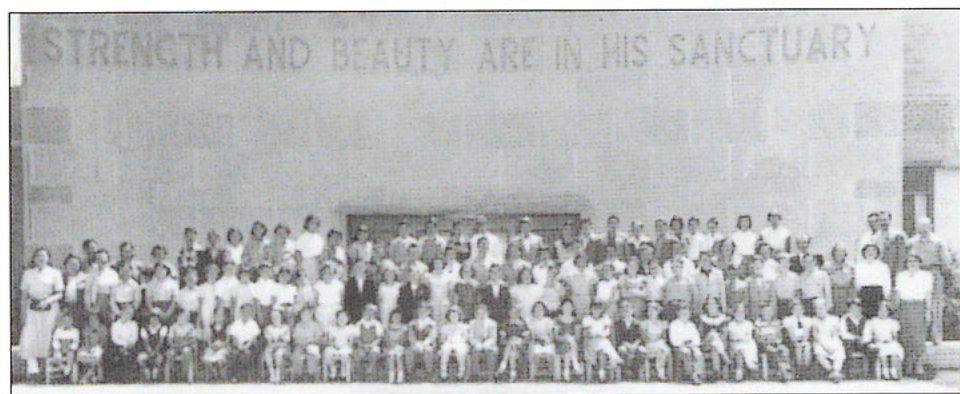


Delivering Product to the Auto Industry, late 1940s. Standard Cotton was one of the few manufacturing firms in Flint owned in part by a Jewish entrepreneur. It specialized in selling upholstery material to car makers and mattresses to furniture stores. Founded in 1920, Standard Cotton was owned by civic leader Ellis Warren. Parked beside the factory, the company's trucks gleam in the winter sun.

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Institution Building in the Suburbs, 1950. As the area's Jewish population grew and more community members moved away from the center city after World War II, Jewish institutions joined the suburban construction boom. This aerial view of the western edge of Flint shows Temple Beth El's recently erected building (center), flanked by two new health care facilities.



Temple Beth El Religious School, 1952. The rows of girls and boys attending the religious school of Temple Beth El testify to the baby boom that expanded the ranks of Flint's Jewish community from the late 1940s through the early 1970s.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



A Bat Mitzvah Party, 1961. Young women celebrate their coming of age in one of the first bat mitzvah parties held in Flint. The five honorees are, l. to r., Debbie Lovitky, Andrea Wolin, Lee Bernstein, Julie Colish, and Nancy Leavitt.



Choosing Faith over Fame, 1968. This all-Jewish team, with both Conservative and Reform members, excelled at the all-American sport of basketball, as the trophies they hold attest. The young men declined to participate in the 1967-68 YMCA state championships because their game was scheduled for a Friday evening.

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Women Rally for Resettlement, 1959. With the Cold War raging and the "Iron Curtain" firmly closed, Jewish women in Flint led campaigns to help their sisters and brothers overseas find a new life in Israel. Hatted and wearing shirtdresses popular during the Eisenhower years, these proud and hopeful UJA supporters stand by a plaque depicting Romanian Jews' escape from oppression.



Flint Journal Photograph

Planning Flint's Cultural Center, 1954. Industrial and financial leaders meet to chart the development of the "Cultural Center," Flint's ambitious project to construct a complex consisting of an art institute, auditorium, library, museum, music hall, and planetarium. Numbering among the prominent men who carried out this plan was Ellis Warren, fifth from left, the only Jewish member of this elite body.



Fighting for Social Justice, 1947. B. Morris Pelavin, representing Flint B'nai Brith, addresses an interfaith rally against bigotry. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Flint Jewry participated in pioneering programs to promote racial and religious understanding. In 1951 they organized city-wide discussions on how to end discrimination in jobs and housing. A year later they joined the effort to establish the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations.



Downtown Business Moves to the Mall, 1970. The Vogue, a Jewish-owned retail clothing store, was among dozens of local businesses that relocated to the suburbs. As early as the mid-1950s, resources began to shift away from a once-thriving downtown, spurring development in outlying districts. By 1970 the center city's decline had undercut the livelihoods of many Jewish households who relied on retail trade.

JEWISH LIFE IN POSTWAR FLINT

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the evidence for this article is drawn from Nancy Hanflik, "150 Years of Jewish Life in Flint, 1850-2000," Master's thesis, University of Michigan-Flint, 2000.

² See, for example, the discussion in Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820-1880*, vol. II of *The Jewish People in America*, gen. ed., Henry L. Feingold (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), esp. 76-81.

³ See the overview in Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, vol. IV of *The Jewish People in America*, gen. ed., Feingold (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 125-30.

⁴ Of the numerous community studies of Jewish life, two provide especially interesting comparisons to the experience in Flint: Ewa Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small-Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), which focuses on Jews in Johnstown and other small steel towns in western Pennsylvania, and Dan Rottenberg, ed., *Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), which examines Jews in Muncie, Indiana, whose largest employer was the Ball Company, known especially for its glass jars.

⁵ We served as guest curators of this exhibit. We wish to thank all those community members who participated in the collection project, as well as the staff of the Sloan Museum, especially museum director Tim Shickles and curator Jeff Taylor, and the director of the Flint Jewish Federation, Gary Alter.

⁶ William Attwood, "The Position of Jews in America Today," *Look* 19 (November 29, 1955): 27-34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Nora Faires is an associate professor of history at Western Michigan University and a scholar of ethnicity and gender. Her most recent publication is "Poor Women, Proximate Border: Migrants from Ontario to Detroit in the Late Nineteenth Century," published in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*.



Nancy Hanflik received her master's degree in American Culture from the University of Michigan-Flint in 2000, writing her thesis on the history of Flint Jewry. A past president of the Flint Jewish Federation, she chaired the Federation's committee to gather photographs and artifacts on local Jewish history for the exhibit held at the Sloan Museum.

Two Early Jewish Professors at Michigan Universities

Editor's Note: In our occasional series on Jews in education in Michigan, we present profiles of two early Jewish professors at state universities. Moses Gomberg and Samuel Levin made major contributions to their fields. We hope to follow these profiles with others in future issues. Readers with suggestions on notable educators are encouraged to submit them.

Moses Gomberg: The Man Who Stabilized Organic Free Radicals

By Elliot H. Gertel

To say now, 'I had organic chemistry from Gomberg is the same as saying, 'I studied violin with Kreisler'¹—there is none greater.' —Selma L. Bandemer, student of Moses Gomberg, 1916-1917, in a letter to Gomberg, dated January 7, 1936, from collection of letters presented to Gomberg on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, February 8, 1936, in *Moses Gomberg Papers, 1890-1947*.

The discoverer of chemical reactants that opened new vistas in science, a man of gentle and modest demeanor, an inspiring teacher, a man of great scientific intellect and strong convictions, straightforward, a wry wit, universally admired—these are some of the attributes of Moses Gomberg (1866-1947), longtime professor of organic chemistry at the University of Michigan. Gomberg became the first-known Jew to teach at the University, as an assistant in organic chemistry in 1888.²



Professor Moses Gomberg.

A Refugee from Tsarist Russia

Moses Gomberg was born in Yelisavetgrad, Russia (now Kirovohrad, Ukraine) on February 8, 1866, into a well-to-do family. In 1881, following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, a series of brutal pogroms was unleashed on Jews in the Russian Empire. In 1884, Gomberg's father was accused of participating in anti-tsarist activities, and young Gomberg was held under similar suspicion. The Russian government confiscated the family's property and other assets, and they fled to Chicago with the help of friends.

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Gomberg completed his high school education in Chicago and made his way to Ann Arbor, followed by his younger sister, Sonia. He enrolled at the University of Michigan in 1886. As an undergraduate, he became an assistant in the chemistry department in 1888 and completed his B.S. two years later. In 1892, he earned an M.S. and served as an instructor beginning in 1893. He earned a Doctor of Science degree in 1894 and became assistant professor in 1899. He attained the rank of professor in 1904.

Discoveries and Applications

The dominant scientific conviction in the nineteenth century was that carbon atoms could only be tetravalent, that is containing four electrons to make four chemical bonds. Gomberg believed that trivalent carbon (with three bonds) capable of forming stable organic free radicals could be produced under the right conditions. His experiments at the University of Michigan resulted in such a trivalent carbon molecule when in 1900 he synthesized triphenylmethyl.

As many of his predecessors had failed to produce such results, Gomberg's discovery did not gain acceptance until about a decade later. It was not until the 1930s, however, that his findings were applied on a practical level, when organic free radicals in combination with other elements were used to produce a host of industrial plastics, rubber, plexiglass, polyethylene, and other polymers.

Although forever linked with the discovery of organic free radicals, Moses Gomberg contributed many other innovations including automobile antifreeze, high explosives, and, during World War I, a compound for the production of wartime mustard gas. Gomberg received numerous awards including honorary doctorates from the University of Chicago, the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, and the University of Michigan, and the Chandler Gold Medal from Columbia University. In 1931, Moses Gomberg was president of the American Chemical Society. He was chairman of the U-M Chemistry Department from 1926 until he retired in 1937.

Brother and Sister Together

Gomberg devoted his life to research and teaching and to the University of Michigan. A series of photos in his collected papers (probably taken in the 1930s) showing him on a camping, canoeing, and fishing trip indicated that he enjoyed the outdoor life. There is an allusion to their mother in Sonia Gomberg's will of May 27,



Moses Gomberg in laboratory in the old Chemistry Building at the University of Michigan as a graduate student in 1890.

1948 (*Proceedings of the Board of Regents*, 1945-48, p.1332), wherein she bequeathed a portion of the earnings from her estate to Fannie Biggs "in appreciation of the kindness which Fannie B. Biggs' mother has shown me, my brother, and my mother in our early days in Ann Arbor...."

Other than that, there seems to be little or no information about where the rest of the Gomberg family resided or about their activities or fate. Neither Moses Gomberg nor his sister ever married. They lived together from their early days in Ann Arbor. Following Gomberg's retirement, he took care of his ailing sister, who died a couple of years after he passed away in Ann Arbor, on February 12, 1947. Except as noted above, the assets of their estate were left to the University.



Gomberg in later years.

A Most Distinguished Faculty Member

Last year, to mark the centennial of Gomberg's discovery of free radicals, a symposium, "Gomberg 2000: A Century of Organic Free Radical Chemistry," was held at the University of Michigan. Daryle H. Busch, president of the American Chemical Society, presented a plaque commemorating Gomberg's achievement. Joseph P. Marino, chair of the U-M Department of Chemistry, stated, "We are particularly proud of this citation because it marked the first major discovery in organic chemistry in the United States, and was accomplished by one of Michigan's most distinguished faculty members."

¹ Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), Austrian-born American violinist and composer, was considered the most gifted violinist of his generation.

² Moritz Levi (1857-1942), an instructor in French from 1890-1896, and Max Winkler (1866-1930), an instructor in German in 1890, became the first-known Jewish faculty members at the University of Michigan. In 1895, Winkler, as assistant professor, apparently became the first Jewish professor at the University, and Levi, the second, one year later. (*Proceedings of the Board of Regents*, University of Michigan, 1886-91, pp. 413,496; 1891-96, pp. 456, 610).

Photos appearing in this article are from *Moses Gomberg Photograph Series*, 1891-1935, *Moses Gomberg Papers, 1890-1947*, courtesy of Bentley Historical Museum, University of Michigan.

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Elliot H. Gertel became the first Irving M. Hermelin Curator of Judaica in 1999, the first-ever endowed position in the University Library at the University of Michigan. Gertel conceived of, coordinated, and moderated a series of cooperative programs jointly sponsored by the Association of Jewish Libraries and the American Library Association's Jewish Information Committee, of which he is a past chair. In addition to positions as reference librarian at California State University, Fullerton, and Judaica librarian at Florida Atlantic University, he taught Yiddish at the University of Kentucky.

Meaning For Our Times: Samuel M. Levin's Life as Educator to Detroit

By Daniel Golodner

In Washington, DC, on December 29, 1931, the city awoke to a cool, dry, winter morning, a seemingly perfect day. However, the country was in the midst of the Great Depression. By the end of 1931, there were 12 million Americans out of work, 32,000 businesses bankrupt, and 5,000 banks had failed since 1929. In the rest of the world, Mohandas Gandhi had just returned to India from Great Britain, hoping for a dialogue that would be created to bring independence to India; Japan was marching through Manchuria; and Hitler was gaining political power in Germany.

Dr. Samuel Levin, of the College of the City of Detroit, was sitting in a hotel conference room in Washington that day as a participant in a roundtable discussion at the joint meeting of the American Economic Association, the Association of Labor Legislation, and the American Statistical Association. The paper Levin presented was a criticism of Henry Ford's labor policies during the grave days of the Great Depression. Levin stated that the "tragedy of Ford Unemployment is being countered not by deed, but by an outpouring of words, a turgid flood, abounding in moral exhortations and noble ideas." According to Levin, the Ford Motor Company failed to cooperate with the unemployment agencies of Detroit while thousands of his workers stood on soup lines. Ford also had not adopted the five-day workweek that he advertised in 1922, but continued to hold a seven-day workweek with part-time workers.



Samuel Levin, c. 1920s

Economic Justice for All

Newspapers throughout the country picked up Levin's statements about Henry Ford and his labor policies. Here was an economics professor from Detroit criticizing one of the greatest entrepreneurs of the time, suggesting to the conference that Mr. Ford cared nothing of the workers and the unemployed who helped build the auto industry of Detroit. Ford's attitude toward his employees engendered tragedy just a few months later. On March 7, 1932, hundreds of unemployed Ford workers marched on the company's River Rouge plant pleading for help with employment. They were met with water cannons and a volley of bullets from Ford's security personnel; five men died and dozens were injured by bullets or clubs.

Dr. Levin was a truly respected academic and admired economist who championed the values of economic justice for all. He was the teacher of conscience to the workers, politicians, and the Jewish community of Detroit during the twentieth

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century. He taught many of Michigan's future leaders, spoke out against injustice, and expressed the need for religious tolerance.

Early Years: Hastings Street and Ann Arbor

Samuel Levin was born June 6, 1888, in the village of Liskovo, Poland. He arrived in the United States five years later to join his father, Rabbi Judah L. Levin, then the rabbi in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1898 the family moved to Detroit, where Rabbi Levin served the Detroit Orthodox community as the first permanent spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Israel. Rabbi Levin was one of the organizers of the Mizrahi movement and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of America.

Samuel grew up on 404 Ferry Avenue, in the Jewish district of the Hastings Street neighborhood. Hastings Street was an area that consisted of the Gratiot Street area, bounded by Rivard, E. Grand Boulevard, and Woodward. Within a half-mile radius, you could buy a good bagel, stop by the local delicatessen for some kosher meat, and walk to one of twelve nearby synagogues on Sabbath.

Following his graduation from Detroit's Central High School in 1906, Samuel Levin attended the University of Michigan. While there, he corresponded with his father in scriptural Hebrew describing his life in Ann Arbor, which was difficult for a Jew who observed the Sabbath. Sometimes he survived on cookies left by his landlady; other times he went without even a loaf of bread on Sunday because all the shops closed. As a student, Levin founded the second Society for Jewish Students in the country—the only other was at Harvard—as well as the Menorah Society of Michigan. He earned a B.A. degree with a major in the social sciences in 1912. He returned to Detroit to teach at Central High School in 1913, making \$110 a month from September to June. On August 25, 1914, Levin married Lillian Keidan. The next year, their first child, Joseph, was born, followed by Mariam, Herbert, and finally Judith in 1928.



Levin at his graduation from the University of Michigan, 1912.

Progressive Education

In 1915 Samuel Levin was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the history and economics classes of Central High School. By 1919, he was notified that he would be chairman of the social science department of both Central High School and the Detroit Junior College.

Between 1900 and 1920, Detroit grew to be a city of seventy-nine square miles with a population close to a million. People arrived from all over the country as well as from Europe to work in the auto industry. With these new workers also came their children. By 1920, there were 115,000 children enrolled in the public school system of Detroit. With the leadership and knowledge of various progressive educational reformers, Detroit schools became known as the most progressive educational system

in the country. The school board increased English and vocational classes, and instituted many curriculum changes. Samuel Levin contributed to these changes by adjusting the textbooks and the classes for history in 1919. By 1922, as chair of the History Committee, he restructured the history requirements, discarding inadequate texts that were "found wanting" and "laying a sure foundation in all social sciences, a foundation indispensable nowadays in the lives of citizens, workers." He considered an education rich with history to be pivotal in developing citizenship for the students. To fulfill the great mission of democracy for secondary students in the growing United States, education was a necessary good for all. Levin's recommendations were unanimously approved by all of the high school principals of Detroit.

During this time of progressive growth in the educational system of Detroit, Levin completed the formal requirements for a master's degree in political economy at the University of Chicago in 1925. He did not obtain a Ph.D. due to the fact that his family was growing and that he really did not need one for promotion or to further his appointments within his field.

Professor and Reformer

More importantly, Levin believed he could contribute more to the field of economics with independent research and that the group that make up the Ph.D. holders were some sort of "dogmatic scholastic army." Upon completion of his work with the University of Chicago, Levin was named professor and head of the Social Science Department of the College of the City of Detroit (CCD). This new assignment required that Levin supervise and direct all the social sciences at CCD. It was a huge department, which Levin realized would serve the student body even more if changes were made.

During the next ten years, Levin helped restructure CCD, which subsequently became Wayne State University. Part of the restructuring was the breaking apart of the Social Science Department into multiple departments, so that history, economics, political science, sociology, government, and social work each became a separate entity. In 1932 Levin was chosen to head the Committee on Faculty Participation. Through surveys, interviews, and formal hearings compiled by the committee, a report that represented the expression of faculty sentiment about CCD was produced. This report, presented to the College in 1933, was a way for the

“Levin was dedicated to economic fairness for working men and women.”

administration and the faculty to realize the "ideals of both efficiency and democracy." In the following years, faculty participation in the governance of the college was established, a constitution was written, and with amendments added, was still functioning intact up to the time of Levin's retirement from Wayne State University as chairman of the Economics Department in 1953. For his accomplishments in academic circles within economics, Levin's name was included in the first edition of the Directory of American Scholars, published in 1942, and in all subsequent editions.

A Local and National Voice

Levin helped establish a work environment at Wayne State University that continues today, and he also provided his knowledge and experience to committees and boards that dealt with Detroit's social and labor issues. In 1931, Levin was named a member of Detroit Mayor Frank Murphy's Unemployment Committee. That was where Levin obtained first-hand knowledge of Ford's apprehension toward the Depression-related problems of Detroit, which he exposed in Washington, DC. He also served on the Committee on Labor for Detroit in 1936, which led to his becoming a member of the labor panel of the American Arbitration Association in 1943.

Levin was dedicated to economic fairness for working men and women, ensuring their equality in America as best he could. One of his students was Walter P. Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers from 1946-1970. Levin remembered Reuther as a student who was very interested in social problems and who kept up a constant line of questioning in his economic classes. He praised Reuther's "share-the-profits" concept because, "roused by a crusading spirit, dissatisfied with conventional patterns in the collective bargaining field, and spurred by his previous successes, he is endeavoring to mark out a new path."¹

It was not only within academia and the labor community that Levin was admired, but also among the Jewish citizens of Detroit. He lectured and sat on numerous boards and committees that contributed to the Jewish community in the Detroit metropolitan area. Some of Levin's many lectures were about a new anti-Semitism that was growing during the 1930s. He recognized that the new technologies—especially radio—were spreading hate far more easily and much more widely than ever before. He saw hate groups utilizing the press and radio as a way of spreading fear against Jews. He cited the newspaper *The Dearborn Independent*, with a readership of 700,000, owned by Henry Ford, which published ninety-one consecutive articles titled "The International Jew: The World's Problem." Another example was the Catholic priest Father Charles Coughlin, based in Royal Oak, Michigan, whose radio program at its peak spread anti-Semitic messages to three million listeners.

Speaking at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Detroit during the mid-1930s, Levin called for a militant action by Jews and the American labor movement against fascism. He wanted Jewish cooperation with the American Federation of Labor, to lead the cause against fascism in Europe as well as at home, sighting the dangers of the speed with which hate was spreading.

Zionism and the Birth of Israel

Zionism was a necessary good for young people to become more interested in the Jewish religion as well as to solidify Jewish belief, Levin believed. At a lecture in Pittsburgh in June 1918, he explained that Jews had moved throughout the world for centuries, being dislocated from country to country with anti-Semitic populations. Because of this mobility, Jews were never able to develop an indispensable, concrete culture of their own. Zionism could create a structure full of possibilities for building Judaism up to protect the future of the Jewish people. He saw Zionism as a strong force for development, and its solid growth would help young Jews develop their spirituality.



At the presentation of the Jewish National Fund Gold Book Certification, part of the Brandeis Centennial Celebration, November 14, 1956. From left to right: Ben Harold, William Hordes, Henry D. Brown, George W. Stark, Levin, Leonard Simons.

As a part of a European tour to study labor and economic problems in Europe, Levin visited Israel in 1951. During his two-week visit, he noticed that population growth was strengthening the young country, but that there was an acute shortage of goods for construction as well as of food. Perhaps the greatest concern Levin expressed during his trip was the creation of a theocracy, a government led by officials who are considered divinely guided. "Israel must be careful in handling religion and education, making certain to do nothing at all prejudicial to fundamental democratic

principles. If Israel's democracy is to be patterned after the United States, it is necessary to remember the First amendment."²² Levin saw great things developing economically and socially for Israel, that it was on the right road to becoming a prosperous country. At the same time though, he cautioned Israel that the whole world was watching.

Levin was a frequent speaker at important gatherings such as the Forum of the Jewish Youth Council and the National Conference of Jewish Social Studies. In 1956, he was the main speaker at the Detroit Historical Museum for the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Justice Louis D. Brandeis, the first Jewish member of the United States Supreme Court. Levin also served as president of the Jewish Social Services Bureau (now the Jewish Family and Children's Service) from 1936-1939, chairman of the Detroit Resettlement Organization in Behalf of Refugees, and president of the Jewish National Fund in 1958-1960. He continued giving weekly lectures during his retirement years.

A Productive Retirement

Professor Levin retired from Wayne State in June 1953 as chairman of the Economics Department with plans of world travel with his wife, Lillian, and more research. Within five years of his retirement, the department created the Samuel M. Levin Economics Award in his honor. He continued lecturing and writing, and during the 1960s, became known as a vocal critic of the Vietnam War. He wrote often about the "irresponsible, immoral, futile and seemingly unconstitutional" war. He produced two books during retirement. The first, published in 1967, was entitled *Malthus and the Conduct of Life*. The second, *Essays on American Industrialism*, was a collection of his essays that reflected Levin's general theory of labor and work in the U.S.

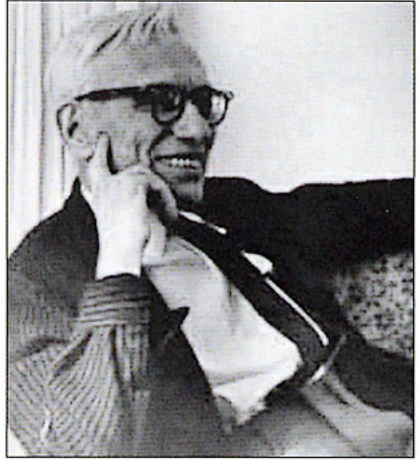
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Upon the publication of this book in 1973, the WSU Economics Department honored its former professor with a party for his eighty-fifth birthday.

Plans to travel around the world were put on hold due to his wife's death on May 4, 1971. But by 1975, Levin was ready for travel and to see the world that he had not seen since his last world tour in 1936. During travels in Dublin, Ireland, Levin died on October 2, 1975.

The Educator of Detroit

Samuel Levin educated Detroit, and in doing so he helped educate the world. His students went on to lead trade unions, business, and community organizations. He instilled in his students the idea that there is much more to life than the bottom-line, that there is a certain gratification from knowing that you have done good for a stranger or your neighbor. Levin insisted that those who toil deserve economic equality and fair justice for their labor; economic justice for all was the only way to have a true democracy. He spread the knowledge to everyone that being Jewish requires the understanding that religion and life are not for one person but for the whole community, whether that is your neighborhood or the world. Levin admired the philosopher and educator John Dewey as someone who was well ahead of his times, someone representing meaning to the present time that will only be understood later. Professor Levin should also be admired as such a foresighted and inspiring educator.



Levin in March 1964.

All quotes unless otherwise noted are from the Samuel Levin Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Box 3.

¹ *Bus Ad Digest*, Volume II, No. 3. Spring 1958.

² *The Jewish News*, Friday, March 30, 1951.



Daniel Golodner is the archivist for the American Federation of Teachers Union at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Wayne State University, Detroit. He has presented workshops and conferences on a wide range of topics. Currently he is teaching "The Social History of the United States."

The Synagogues of Detroit — Lost and Found

By Gerald S. Cook

While navigating a new website recently, I was reminded of an old book I was given several years ago, and this intersection of new and traditional “technologies” have revived my interest in the old synagogues of Detroit. The website, “The Lost Synagogues of Detroit,” at <http://atdetroit.com/shul>, features photos and facts about the synagogues. It was created by Lowell Boileau of Farmington, Michigan, the author of another website called “The Fabulous Ruins of Detroit.” The book, published in 1940, bears a cumbersome name: *Inventory of the Church and Synagogue Archives of Michigan: Jewish Bodies*. It gives substantial information about every Jewish congregation and cemetery then existing in the whole state of Michigan, and each defunct congregation. Of course, the majority were Detroit congregations, many not yet included on the new website.

A Forgotten WPA Project

Michigan Jewish History published an article in a 1979 issue (vol. 19/2) reporting on a 1920s survey of congregations, and the journal’s index to volumes 1 through 39 lists many articles about specific congregations, but this 1940 book seems to have slipped through the research cracks. Detroit’s 300th birthday in 2001 seems a good time to focus on this volume, since the book provides facts on Detroit’s synagogues and Jewish cemeteries from 1850 to 1940.

The “Inventory” was compiled by the Michigan Historical Records Surveys Project, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Work Projects Administration. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Work Projects Administration or WPA was a federal agency providing work to the unemployed. In this case, unemployed writers and historians were put to work surveying the archives of churches and synagogues in Michigan. We are fortunate to be the beneficiaries of that project, for it brings important historical information together in one seventy-page book.

Tracing a Synagogue’s Past

For example, under Orthodox congregations, I find a listing for Ahavas Achim. According to the survey, Ahavas Achim was organized in 1916 at 9244 Delmar Avenue (in the Oakland-Westminster neighborhood on Detroit’s East Side), where it still existed in 1940. The brick building erected in 1916 had been remodeled in 1918. The first clergyman (1916-25) was Rabbi Elias Horowitz, followed by Rabbi Abraham Schechter, who began in 1925 and was still there when the book was being researched. At that time the congregation consisted of only thirty-five families. Minutes, register of members and deaths, and financial records were in the hands of the secretary, Raymond Katz,



Congregation Beth David, later B'nai David, on Winder Street near St. Antoine, Detroit, December 1922.

who resided at 9550 Goodwin Avenue in Detroit. The names and addresses of the other officers were also given.

Ahavas Achim's Delmar Street building and the smaller UHS building across the street are often included on bus tours of Jewish Detroit, sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Ahavas Achim later moved to Schaefer Road, north of Seven Mile Road. Both the Delmar and Schaefer buildings are now churches. Ahavas Achim became Conservative and merged with Beth Aaron to form Beth Achim in Southfield, now merged into Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills. The name "Beth Achim" is preserved in the name of the congregation's religious school.

Across the City and the State

As of 1940, there were sixty-five Jewish congregations in Michigan, nine Reform, four Conservative, and fifty-two Orthodox. The same kind of information is provided for each of them as is reported above for Ahavas Achim, and also for eleven Orthodox congregations listed as obsolete. It is evident from the Inventory how small the membership was in many of the congregations. Many had no paid clergy, or they shared clergy with other congregations. There is also a list of forty defunct congregations, with no details other than name and city, and street locations for some.

Besides synagogues, substantial information is also provided about Detroit's Jewish Home for the Aged (organized in 1907), Yeshiva Beth Yehuda (organized 1916), the United Hebrew Schools (organized 1919, with ten schools and 1700 pupils in 1940), and thirty-one Jewish cemeteries throughout Michigan.

“One striking fact... is the widespread dispersal of Jews...throughout Michigan.”

One striking fact this book reveals is the widespread dispersal of Jews throughout the Detroit area and throughout Michigan. Back in 1940, there were congregations or cemeteries in twenty-nine cities besides Detroit, most of them far from the Detroit metropolitan area, in places as far away as Alpena, Au Sable,

Hancock, Iron Mountain, Ludington, Petoskey, and Traverse City. I was amazed to see Detroit congregations listed far from the core Jewish neighborhoods, and I went to see former synagogues in Delray, at Michigan Avenue and 29th Street, and near Mack Avenue, east of E. Grand Boulevard.

Also noteworthy are the frequent moves of many of the congregations, and the short span of time most stayed at any given location. Using the dates set forth in the WPA book and information from other sources, I believe the longest synagogue use of any building in Detroit was the Temple Beth El on Woodward Avenue and Gladstone. This beautiful Albert Kahn-designed structure, resembling an ancient Greek temple, served the Beth El congregation for fifty-one years, from 1922 to 1973. The next longest use of one building may have been Beth El's at Washington Boulevard and Clifford Street in downtown Detroit, used for thirty-six years, from 1867 to 1903. Much more typical were terms from ten to thirty years, reflecting rapid abandonment of neighborhoods.

Some of today's synagogues will soon match Temple Beth El's fifty-one years on Woodward at Gladstone. Oak Park's Temple Emanu-El recently renovated its one and only building, erected in 1955. Likewise, Congregation Beth Shalom built its first and only building in Oak Park in 1956, and recently completed a massive renovation. Young Israel has occupied its current building on 10 Mile Road in Oak Park since 1959, and it too has just expanded and remodeled. I believe the Mt. Clemens and Trenton synagogues have also been used for many years.

Population Trends

It is interesting to note that the number of Detroit area synagogues in 1940 is almost exactly the same as it is now, as is the approximate Jewish population of the metropolitan area. There were thirty-nine congregations in 1940, all Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Today there are also thirty-nine congregations in those three movements, plus one Independent, two Reconstructionist, one Sephardic, one Traditional, and four Secular Humanistic groups. The total number of families claimed as members by those Detroit area congregations in 1940 was 5,135 families. I have no statistics for the congregations now functioning here.

SYNAGOGUES OF DETROIT – LOST AND FOUND

In *Harmony & Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967* (Wayne State University Press, 1991), Sidney Bolkosky estimates that Detroit's Jewish population in the mid-1930's ranged from 82,000 (1935) to 94,000 (1936). If we assume it remained in that range in 1940, when the WPA survey was done, then it is almost the same as the 96,000 estimated in the 1990 demographic study by the Jewish Federation



Photo by Gerald S. Cook.

Congregation Shaarey Zedek building on Chicago Boulevard at Lawton, Detroit, now used as a church.

of Metropolitan Detroit. We might have predicted that with minimal population growth, the number of congregations would be fewer considering mergers, fewer specifically ethnic congregations, fewer observant Jews requiring a synagogue within walking distance, and the huge memberships of some of today's congregations. Yet the numbers don't show much change.

In the 1940 WPA survey, there was only one Detroit Reform Temple, Beth El, with eleven hundred families; Beth Jacob in Pontiac, also Reform, had seventy-eight families. Today, *The Detroit Jewish News* lists eight Detroit area Reform Temples, none of them within the Detroit city limits.

Shaarey Zedek was the only Conservative congregation in Detroit in 1940, with 750 families, and there were no others in what is now regarded as the Detroit metropolitan area. *The Detroit Jewish News* now lists nine Detroit area Conservative congregations, including some which were then Orthodox, like B'nai Moshe, Beth Abraham and Beth Moses (now merged into Beth Ahm), and Ahavas Achim (now merged into Adat Shalom). Among the Conservative congregations, only the Downtown Synagogue is inside the Detroit city limits.

The 1940 WPA survey showed thirty-two Orthodox congregations functioning in Detroit, with a combined membership of 2,977 families, and four Orthodox congregations in what is now regarded as part of the Detroit metro area (Mt. Clemens, Pontiac, Wyandotte, and River Rouge), with a combined membership of 230 families. The current list of Orthodox congregations in *The Detroit Jewish News* shows twenty-two congregations, none inside Detroit.

Beyond the Survey

The foreword, preface, comments, and historical introduction to the Inventory provide much useful information. The foreword was written by Rabbi Max J. Wohlgelernter, secretary of the Michigan Synagogue Conference, an Orthodox organization founded in 1939. He laments the absence of such a collection of information before the researching of this book and says the Michigan Synagogue Conference cooperated with the staff in obtaining materials and facts. The preface gives credit to Rabbis Franklin, Fram, Hershman, Wohlgelernter, Fischer, and Sperka, as well as the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (Phil Slomovitz) and the executive director of the Jewish Community Council (William Boxerman). The introduction gives an extensive history of Detroit's two oldest congregations, Beth El and Shaarey Zedek. It mentions the creation of out-state congregations and the Detroit area's Jewish cemeteries, schools, the Jewish Community Center, and the Jewish Community Council. Researchers will be pleased to see an extensive bibliography, alphabetical index, geographical index, and chronological index.

Creating a Larger Inventory

I received the Inventory from Joe Kramer, of blessed memory, a photographer and active member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He photographed many of the former synagogue buildings of Detroit, and after an exhibit at the Jewish Community Center in 1994, donated the photographs to the JHSM. Kramer had copied the book from the Midrasha Library at the UHS (later AJE) Building on Twelve Mile Road in Southfield. What remains of that library is now in storage, pending its relocation. I understand Shaarey Zedek's archives contain a copy of the Inventory, and there is a copy in the Jewish Genealogical Society library at Temple Beth El. Other Jewish and general libraries may also include the book. Unfortunately, there is no catalogue giving the holdings of all of Detroit's Jewish libraries.

I would be willing to provide copies of the Inventory to interested researchers. Taking advantage of new information technology and gathering all the work of researchers from the past, I hope that we can create a wonderful new archive and inventory of the synagogues of Detroit.



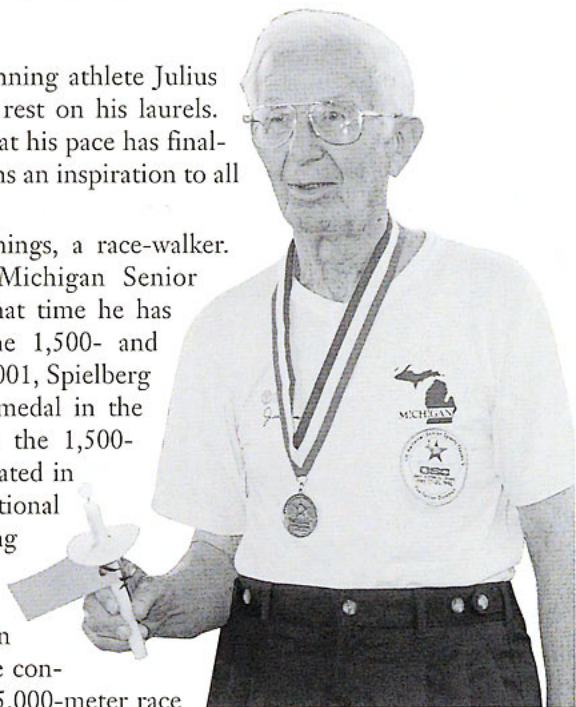
Gerald S. Cook is a partner in the Detroit-based law firm of Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn and a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Julius Spielberg: A Senior on the Run

By Neil Gorosh

At the age of 99, award-winning athlete Julius Spielberg is not about to rest on his laurels. While he acknowledges that his pace has finally begun to slow, Spielberg remains an inspiration to all who know him.

Spielberg is, among other things, a race-walker. He has participated in every Michigan Senior Olympics since 1986. During that time he has collected ten gold medals in the 1,500- and 5,000-meter race-walks. In July 2001, Spielberg earned his eighth national gold medal in the 2001 National Senior Games in the 1,500-meter race-walk. He has participated in all but one of the bi-annual National Senior Games since 1987, including competitions in St. Louis in 1987 and 1989, Baton Rouge in 1993 and 2001, San Antonio in 1995, and Tucson in 1997, and he continues to hold the record for the 5,000-meter race walk in the 90+ category, which he set in 1995. In July 1999, Spielberg traveled to Gateshead, England, where he competed in his first International Senior Olympics, receiving a silver medal in the 5,000-meter event. That same year, Spielberg's athletic endeavors were recognized locally when he was installed in the Michigan Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.



Julius Spielberg lighting the Olympic torch at the Michigan Senior Olympics in Warren, MI, May 1996.

A Strict Regimen

Yet Spielberg was not always an athlete. As a young man he was always too busy raising a family and making a living to get involved in competitive athletics. In fact, he did not get serious about his health until he reached the age of seventy, when prompted by some circulation problems, he enrolled in a two-week Pritikin diet program. For the first time in his life, Spielberg started to think about nutrition and the effect an individual can have on his own mortality. As a direct result of adopting a new diet and exercise regimen, he was able to take himself off anti-arrhythmic medication. He continues on his strict regimen to this day.

Revolutionizing the Drug Store

Julius Spielberg's father came to the U.S. from Russia around 1906, and eventually moved from Boston to Detroit to take advantage of the growing opportunities in the auto industry. Julius arrived in Detroit in 1921. Like so many immigrants, he spoke little English. By 1924, he had successfully graduated from grammar school and high school, and obtained a degree in pharmacy from the Detroit College of Pharmacy (now Wayne State University). He immediately obtained a job with a local pharmacy chain at the handsome salary of \$37.50 per week. In 1926, he opened his first drug store: Spiel's Drugs, on the corner of Fenkell and Birwood. Continuously licensed as a pharmacist for over sixty years, Spielberg was recently awarded an Honorary Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from Wayne State.



Julius and his wife, Anna, in his pharmacy, c. 1930.

It was just after World War II that Spielberg began building his reputation as an innovator in the drugstore business. He traveled to Portland, Oregon, to investigate a new concept there: placing a drugstore next to a supermarket, thus creating, in effect, the first strip mall. He approached Wrigley Supermarkets in Detroit with the idea, and in 1948, Spielberg opened Wrigley Drug, the first self-serve drugstore in the Midwest on Seven Mile Road in Detroit, next to Wrigley's Supermarket and Darby's Restaurant. In this age of huge, chain-owned drugstores on every corner, it is easy to miss the significance of that other innovative idea: self-service. In those days, almost all items available in drugstores were located behind the counter. Embarrassing as it may have been, one had to ask a clerk or, more likely, the pharmacist/owner for particular items. Self-service heralded a dramatic change in shopping habits.

Moving into Real Estate

By 1960, Spielberg owned several drugstores in the Detroit area, which evolved into small, discount department stores. He sums up his second career this way. "Times were good. With the help of my son-in-law, Larry Gorosh, we owned about five Community Discount Centers in small towns like Trenton and Monroe. I'll never forget the day that Alfred Cunningham from Kresge walked through my Royal Oak store. I'm not saying he stole my idea, but the next year, the first Kmart store opened in Detroit." Seeing the "handwriting on the wall" for independent storeowners like himself, Spielberg moved on to his third and last career, real estate development.

During the mid-1960s, Spielberg built some office buildings, strip centers, and apartments in the Detroit-Ann Arbor area, which he continues to own and manage along with several of his grandchildren. Driving around the city with him is always informative. He remembers the days when Hastings Street was the center of the Jewish community, when there was nothing but fields beyond his two-family flat on Broadstreet, and when a drive to a cottage on Cass Lake seemed like a day trip. "You see that land?" he says, pointing. "I remember when you could buy all of that for \$10,000 an acre." When asked whether he might want to buy anything today, he shrugs and says, "Now it's too late."



Spiel's Drugs at the corner of Wyoming and Schoolcraft in Detroit, c. 1935.

Family and Charity

Regardless of success or even an occasional failure, family always came first. In 1926, Spielberg married Anna Grenadier. They spent seventy-one wonderful years together, until Anna's death in early 1998. They raised two daughters, Norma and Ruth, and were blessed with seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Julius continues to live completely independently in West Bloomfield, only a short walk from his daughter, Norma Gorosh. He gave up driving only a few months ago.

After family, charitable causes have been an important focus of Spielberg's life. Until the age of 97, virtually every Monday, he delivered Meals on Wheels to those invariably younger than himself. For twenty years, without the benefit of local support, he raised money for the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF). In his quiet and deliberate manner, he personally collected in excess of \$50,000, more or less \$100 at a time. "I did well. I would drive to someone's office and ask for an amount of money I knew they could afford. I was 90 years old. Asking for money—not for myself—but for a worthy cause. Who could say 'No'?" It wasn't until 1996 that a Michigan Chapter of the FIDF was established. For his efforts, Spielberg was the honoree at the second annual FIDF dinner held at the Palace of Auburn Hills in 1997 and attended by nearly a thousand people. Currently, Spielberg has turned his attention to raising money for prescription loan subsidies for the needy.

Old Age as a State of Mind

If you see Spielberg race-walking at the Jewish Center in West Bloomfield, introduce yourself to him. Just wait until he finishes his workout—he may be in training for his next competition. When asked if he intends to compete in the 2003 Senior National Games, Spielberg replied, "At my age, you take things one day at a time." Of course, he has ambitions for his descendants: "I want my great-grandchildren to assume that they will participate in athletics until they are over 100 years old." Julius Spielberg, a senior on the run, reminds us that we are all potential athletes, and that old age is only a state of mind.



Neil Gorosh, a grandson of Julius Spielberg, is a commercial mortgage banker in the Detroit area and serves as vice-president of the Jewish Apartments and Services.

Celebrities & Celebrations



Detroit Celebrates 300 Years Historic Past, Proud People, Shining Future

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and the entire Jewish community were proud to sponsor and participate in many of the celebratory events marking Detroit's 300th birthday in 2001. A summary of the yearlong tricentennial events gives only a partial picture of the community's many festivities.

On New Year's Eve 2000 at Detroit's Orchestra Hall, the city's mayor and dignitaries opened the Century Box, a "time capsule" sealed in December 1900 by then-mayor William Maybury. Marc Manson, a dedicated JHSM member, was instrumental in locating the hundred-year-old box and arranging for its opening. Three letters from that box are published in this issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

At a Recognition Breakfast for over two thousand participants at Cobo Hall in January 2001, Temple Beth El, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Brith, and the United Jewish Foundation were honored as Detroit 300 Heritage Organizations. In acknowledgment of their history of 100 years or more, Pewabic tile plaques were awarded to them, as well as to a number of Jewish-owned businesses also dating back to before 1900. Another category of awards recognized many Jewish organizations and businesses with histories of fifty years or more. The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is proud that our printer, Goodwill Printing, founded in 1931, was included in that honor. The names of all the community organizations and businesses of over fifty years are engraved on a huge silver Detroit Tricentennial Cup, on display at the Detroit Historical Museum.

Also in January, Temple Emanu-El in Oak Park, an official Detroit 300 Partner, hosted a series of panels and lectures on "Detroit Jewish Perspectives." The panel included Professor Kenneth Waltzer of Michigan State University, Professor Sidney Bolkosky of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and historian Judith Cantor Levin, past president of JHSM and past editor of *Michigan Jewish History*. The moderator for that program was Professor Frederic Pearson, director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Wayne State University. Later in the spring, Professor Robert Rockaway of Tel Aviv University delivered the Detroit Jewish Perspectives lecture.

At the annual meeting of the Jewish Historical Society in June, Maud Lyon, executive director of Detroit 300, energized the large audience with her overview of the forthcoming celebrations and her tribute to the Jewish contribution to the city's history. Actor Robert Grossman transported the group to an earlier day with his portrayal of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin. Even as early as the 2000 annual meeting, anticipating the forthcoming anniversary, Rabbi Sherwin Wine focused on the history of the Jews of Detroit, painting a lively picture of that story.



At the July 24 re-enactment of Cadillac's landing, a statue of the French founder of Detroit was unveiled at Hart Plaza. Participants in the festivities included Harriet Berg, to the left of the statue, and Maggie Allesee, to the left of Berg.

The Detroit 300 Festival in July brought an entire week of gala celebrations. Tigers' first baseman Hank Greenberg was one of the ten historic athletes honored at the Comerica Park celebration on the evening of July 18. On July 22, the Ford Parade of Tall Ships sailed on the Detroit River, watched by a huge crowd including three busloads of JHSM members and guests. Two days later, thousands of Detroiters witnessed a re-enactment of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac's landing on the shore of the river, with costumed voyageurs and French marines, as well as the Mme. Cadillac Dancers, led by Harriet Berg (profiled in *Michigan Jewish History* last year). The pageant in Hart Plaza recognized Detroit's various ethnic groups in a maxi-screen presentation, which prominently featured Chapman Abraham, Detroit's first Jew, who arrived in 1762.

On Spiritual Day, July 25, people of all religions, representing more than 3,300 congregations, gathered at Chene Park for an interfaith gathering. Rabbi Marla Feldman and David Gad-Harf, executive director of the Jewish Community Council, were important leaders in this event. The preceding evening, Rabbi David Nelson of Congregation Beth Shalom in Oak Park was the keynote speaker at Ste. Anne de Detroit Church, Detroit's oldest organization, celebrating its own 300th anniversary at a special worship service and dinner.

In two special issues during the Detroit anniversary in July, the *Detroit Jewish News* featured mini-biographies of some of the many Jews who contributed to the history of Detroit.

A gala black-tie dinner on December 15 at the General Motors Renaissance Center's new Wintergarden will present "Beacon Leadership Awards" to outstanding organizations and "Tomorrow Awards" to the best of businesses. Finally, the Tricentennial Time Capsule will be installed at a public event on New Year's Eve 2001, winding up a memorable celebration of Detroit's "Historic Past, Proud People, and Shining Future." —*Judy Cantor*

Temple Beth El Celebrates Commemorative Marker, Historic Cornerstone, and Sisterhood Centennial

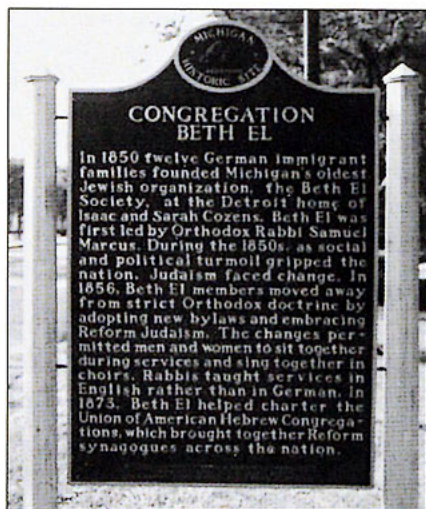
After marking its 150th anniversary in 2000 (see *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 40, p. 58), Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills has continued to celebrate during 2001.

To commemorate the Temple's anniversary, Beth El was granted a Michigan Historical Marker, which was dedicated on October 7, 2001. This two-sided marker describes on the north side the founding of the Beth El Society in 1850. The south side describes the importance of the current temple building, built in 1973 by internationally acclaimed architect Minoru Yamasaki, and the previous temples in Detroit (at Woodward Avenue and Gladstone, and at Woodward Ave. and Elliot) designed by Albert Kahn. Two Michigan historical markers have been dedicated to Temple Beth El previously, one on the corner of St. Antoine and Congress in Detroit at the site of the Cozens house, the original meeting place of the Beth El Society, and the other at the Lafayette Street Cemetery (previously known as the Champlain Street Cemetery), which is the oldest Jewish Cemetery in Michigan.

Earlier in the year, Temple Beth El put on permanent display a historic cornerstone recently recovered from a collection of 300 boxes of documents donated to the Burton Historical Collection in 1955. The stone, from Beth El's second building at Washington Boulevard and Clifford Street, dates from 1867. It is now on display at the Nate and Ruth Shapero Judaic Museum inside Temple Beth El.

In addition, the Temple Beth El Sisterhood celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2001. Since its founding, there have been women of Congregation Beth El who were active in charities dedicated to the Jewish community of Detroit. The Sisterly Love Society (Ahabas Achjaus) was an auxiliary society of Congregation Beth El. No records exist from before 1874, so it is unknown when the society was dissolved. In 1891, Rabbi Louis Grossmann organized The Woman's Club of Temple Beth El. Later the name was changed to The Jewish Woman's Club of Detroit and out of this organization, the Greater Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women was established in 1925. When Rabbi Leo M. Franklin came to Temple Beth El in 1899, there was no woman's auxiliary at the Temple. On November 26, 1901, he organized The Women's Auxiliary of Temple Beth El, which in 1922 changed its name to the Sisterhood of Temple Beth El. Mrs. Adolph (Lottie) Sloman was the first president.

Throughout its 100 years, the Sisterhood has supported the Temple and the community through a variety programs and functions. In response to WWII, the Sisterhood organized a





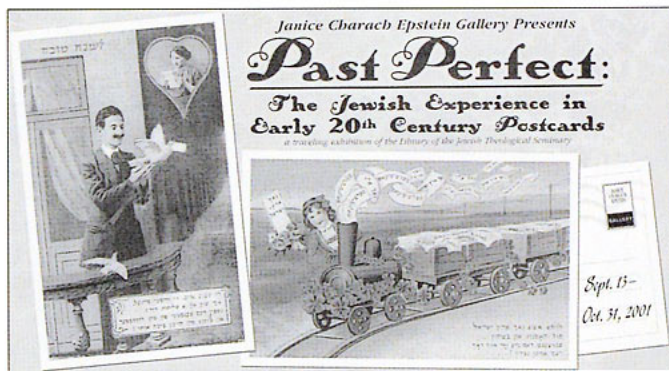
Temple Beth El Sisterhood Red Cross unit during WWII.

Red Cross unit, which became the largest congregational unit in Detroit during the war. The Braille Bindery was started in 1959 and is still a functioning auxiliary of the Sisterhood. Profits of the Gift Shop (started in 1953) are used to support various philanthropic activities. Since January of this year, Sisterhood has had exhibits showcasing its history through photographs, documents, and ephemera from the Franklin Archives Collection. —*Holly Teasdale, Archivist, and Stacie Guzzo, Archival Intern, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives.*

Past Perfect Postcards

An unusual exhibit delighted viewers in September and October 2001 at the Janice Charach Epstein of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit. “Past Perfect: The Jewish Experience in Early 20th Century Postcards” showcased over two hundred picture postcards from the height of the “postcard craze” from 1898 to 1918. The displays included Jewish New Year’s cards, many quite colorful and whimsical, postcard views of synagogues (some no longer standing) from the U.S. and around the world, and cards showing Jewish individuals and groups in ethnic costumes from Eastern Europe, Russia, North Africa, and the Middle East. Their greetings are printed in a variety of languages, including English, Hebrew, and Yiddish. During the “craze years,” millions of postcards were produced and mailed, but some cards in this exhibit represent the only examples left of their kind.

Accompanying this major exhibit, on loan from the Library of the



Jewish Theological Seminary, was an exhibit of art postcards and other small artworks created by well-known Michigan artists. These were auctioned at a special reception to celebrate the beginning of the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery's tenth anniversary. "Past Perfect" was sponsored by Star Lincoln/Mercury, Franklin Bank, and The Denver Foundation-Joe & Kathy Neustadt-Hankin, in cooperation with the Detroit Board of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

International Conference on Jews in Medicine

Over 250 people attended the opening session of "An International Conference on Jews and Medicine" on May 6, 2001, presented by the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies and the School of Medicine at Wayne State University. The conference aimed to explore various themes that define the Jews' historic encounter with medicine and healing, from religious, scientific, and social viewpoints. It presented a comprehensive overview of the medical contributions that the small and often-oppressed Jewish minority has made to humankind. Professor David Ruderman, of the University of Pennsylvania, presented the keynote address, "The Jewish Doctor as Cultural Mediator: Reflections on the Place of Medicine in Jewish History," at Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield. Ruderman is a professor of Modern Jewish History and director of the University's Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

During the full day of working sessions on May 7 at Wayne State University, prominent experts from American and Israeli universities spoke to attendees from throughout the U.S. Three professors, including Efraim Lev of Bar Ilan University, spoke on aspects of healing and health in the biblical, medieval, and early modern periods. The contrast between the medical philosophy of Jewish and Christian physicians during the medieval period was discussed, emphasizing that the advocacy and practice of scientific or empirical medicine was a major contribution of Jewish physicians and scientists. Afternoon sessions were presented on the topic

*An International Conference on Jews and Medicine:
Religious Thought, Cultural Patterns,
and Practical Applications
May 6-7, 2001*

Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies
and Wayne State University
School of Medicine



The Doctor's Hour, Antonino Campi, Museo, Biblioteca Universitaria, Bologna, Italy
CREDIT: Scala/Art Resource, NY

**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

"Modern Jewish Responses to Prejudice, Persecution, and Disease." Elliot N. Dorff, from the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, spoke on "Jewish Approaches to the Distribution of Health Care." Miriam Offer, of Bar Ilan University, addressed "Jewish Medicine during the Shoah."

The Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies plans to publish a collection of the papers presented at this conference. Audiotapes of the working sessions and a videotape of Elliot Dorff's presentation will also be made available. —*Dr. Robert S. Jampel*

Visas for Life: Two Courageous Diplomats

A documentary exhibit commemorating the lives of two diplomats who rescued Jews in Europe during World War II was presented in the fall of 2000 at the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit.

Chiune Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat stationed in Kovno, the capital of Lithuania, when WWII began. As the number of Jewish refugees from Poland grew in Kovno, Sugihara resolved that, despite orders from his government not to get involved, he needed to help these people who had nowhere to go. Assisted by his wife, Yukiko, he issued over 2,100 visas allowing emigration to Japan, before his consulate was closed. Another man of courage, Dr. Feng Shan Ho, was the Chinese Consul in Vienna after

the annex of Austria by the Nazis in 1938. He created visas for entry into Shanghai and issued them to Jews so that they could leave Austria. Both diplomats took great risks in aiding the Jewish populations in the cities where they were stationed.

The exhibit followed their stories, including photographs of the men's families, homes and work places, as well as artifacts of their careers. The opening night lecture featured Hiroki Sugihara, Chiune's son, and Manli Ho, daughter of Feng Shan Ho. They spoke about their fathers and narrated a slide show. The overflow

crowd was greatly moved by the little-known stories of these heroes. Several individuals who had been saved by Sugihara or Ho, or who had family members who were saved, were present that evening. Hiroki Sugihara, along with co-translator Anne Hoshiko Akabori, signed copies of the book, *Visas for Life*, written by his mother, Yukiko Sugihara.

The exhibit, curated by Holocaust Education Traveling Exhibits of San Francisco, and the opening night event were sponsored by Panasonic Automotive Electronics Company and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Photo by Jim Grey.



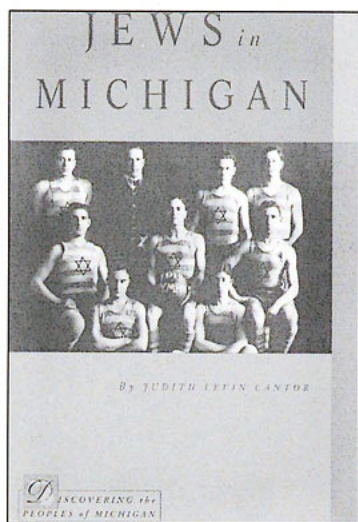
Manli Ho, left, daughter of Chinese consul and rescuer Feng Shan Ho, shown at the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery with Manny and Natalie Charach in October 2000. The photographs behind them portray aspects of the life of Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara.

Seferim/Books

Jews in Michigan

by Judith Levin Cantor

Michigan State University Press, 2001, 93 pages



In writing *Jews in Michigan*, Judith Levin Cantor has made a significant contribution to the public's understanding of the role Jews have played in the history of our state. And the timing couldn't have been better, given the current focus on Michigan's history during the tricentennial of Detroit. This volume is one in the series "Discovering the Peoples of Michigan," published by the MSU Press.

What struck me about *Jews in Michigan* is its accessibility. In less than one hundred pages, Cantor presents a thorough, but not overwhelming, portrayal of the Jewish experience in our state. For the many who will want to dig deeper into some facet of that history, she supplies ample footnotes and a comprehensive bibliography.

The volume is divided into five sections. The first, "Opportunities and Challenges," describes the earliest Jewish pioneers and institutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, beginning with fur traders Ezekiel Solomon and Chapman Abraham. The attractions of the territory to Jewish pioneers and the establishment of the first congregations and social institutions are discussed. "A Statewide Presence" reveals that Jewish settlement spanned the entire state, from Houghton-Hancock in the Upper Peninsula to Benton Harbor in southwest Michigan. Cantor gives us profiles of wonderful individuals, such as Helen Padnos of Muskegon and Julius Steinberg of Traverse City. The third chapter, "The New Era of Industry," describes the relationship between the Jewish community and the automobile industry and the labor movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers are introduced to some of the prominent names in the auto industry and in the AFL-CIO, UAW, and other unions. "World War I and Its Aftermath" describes a maturing Jewish community, one that experienced significant growth in numbers, prosperity and infrastructure. This chapter also discusses the isolationist, anti-Semitic atmosphere of the inter-war period, when Michigan Jews were faced with the hateful discourse of Henry Ford and Father Charles Coughlin. The final chapter, "The Second World War and Its Legacy," chronicles the expanded involvement of Jews in all facets of society and the challenges of establishing a Jewish identity in the modern world. The author makes her case for the importance of Jews in the "overall tapestry of the extraordinary American experience."

This work will be fascinating and informative for students of history of high school age and above, for Jews who want to learn more about their heritage, and for anyone with an interest in how a religious or ethnic group made its mark in America. *Jews in Michigan* promotes both Jewish pride and an understanding in the wider community of the Jewish experience in Michigan.

Reviewed by David Gad-Harf, Executive Director, Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

A Life in the Balance: The Memoirs of Stanley J. Winkelman

By Stanley J. Winkelman

Wayne State University Press, 2000, 290 pages

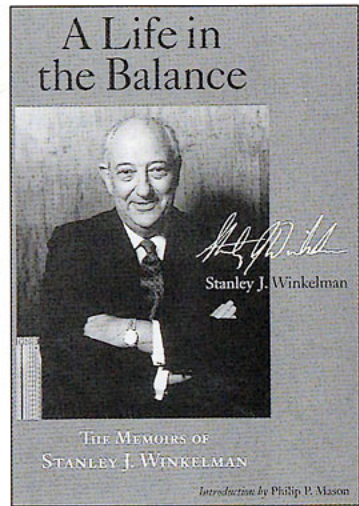
Stan Winkelman always seemed to me one of the very best of Detroit's merchant princes. He was a retailer with a sense of style and possibilities. He was an insightful manager and marketer. His sense of civic obligation was strong and productive. His love for Detroit was infectious. His commitment to being a good husband and father was admirable and earthy. And with it all, he had a sense of beauty and of culture that made him a delightful companion and friend.

His memoirs, published after his death in 1999, are an important contribution to the business and civic history of Detroit. It is a history of an opportunity he and his family seized—an opportunity based on their sense of what women needed in order to dress well at reasonable prices. Stan Winkelman's intuitive sense of fashion provided much of the drive that made his women's apparel shops such an important part of the retailing scene for so many years.

Winkelman was much more than a merchant, though. His sense of civic obligation led him to vital roles in such civic undertakings as New Detroit, Inc. (the urban coalition begun following the 1967 riots in Detroit). His impatience with pretense and with prejudice made him a force to be taken seriously. Reading this memoir, I could feel again the force of his personality as he demanded accountability of himself and of others. He had a passion for fairness and justice that I found important in Detroit's struggles over race and civic failure.

What set Winkelman apart—and what comes through in this memoir—were his honesty, his creativity and his sense of what it means to be a part of a community. I felt the challenge of his sharp mind and the inspiration of his civic commitment. Stanley Winkelman's memoir offers a rich perspective on the struggles Detroit has faced and on the contributions made by this remarkable man.

Reviewed by Joe H. Stroud, retired editor of the Detroit Free Press, now serving as the director of the Gerald R. Ford Institute for Public Policy and Service at Albion College in Albion, MI.



A Timeless Treasure: 100 Years of Fresh Air

By Wendy Rose Bice

Fresh Air Society, November 2001, 248 pages

A historic photograph from October 1947 shows long lines of men and women standing under umbrellas in the rain outside the Jewish Community Center at Woodward Avenue and Holbrook Street in Detroit. They were waiting patiently at 7:00 in the morning for the Center to open its doors so they could enroll their children in summer camp. Such was the attraction and reputation of the Fresh Air Society in those days. In her exciting book, *A Timeless Treasure: 100 Years of Fresh Air*, Wendy Rose Bice has captured the achievements, successes, and history of F.A.S., the second oldest social service agency in the Detroit Jewish community.

Thousands of Detroiters have passed through the doors of F.A.S. during its long history. What gives this book a special flavor are the hundreds of photographs depicting campers at play. Grandparents will be looking through the book seeking themselves, their children, and grandchildren. Campers who met, became engaged, and in some cases got married because of camp will be retracing their past.

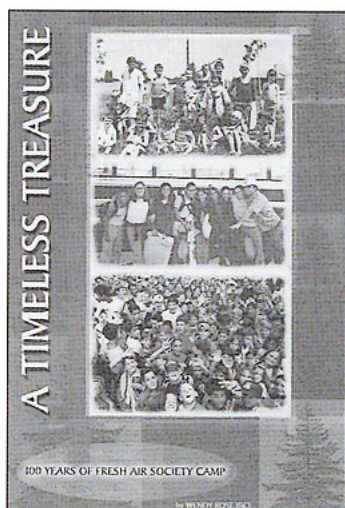
In her book, author Rose Bice has traced the moves of F.A.S. from its early days on Belle Isle to the far-flung camp sites in Canada and Alaska. She has also focused on the changing patterns of Jewish communal life in Detroit as it moved from immigrant-newcomer status in the Hastings Street area to greater Detroit suburbia. Special attention is given to the camp staff, whose imagination and creativity brought strength to camp programs. The camp directors are singled out for their unique contributions. Blanche Hart in the early 1900s pioneered the movement to get children off the hot streets of Detroit. Irwin Shaw acquired the Ortonville property for the camp in the 1940s. Sam Marcus expanded camp facilities in the 1970s and developed specialized programs, including Silverman Village for youngsters with special needs and a program of modern dance. Toward the 1980s, Michael Zaks was responsible for intensifying the Jewish content of camp programming. Harvey Finkelberg, the current executive, has upgraded facilities and brought the camp into modern times.

Rose Bice does not ignore the crucial role played by lay leaders who responded with time and devotion to the needs of F.A.S. She also recognizes the philanthropic generosity of Detroiters who have been responsible for the expansion of camp sites, new buildings, and programs. These contributions are recognized in the book.

A Timeless Treasure is more than just a history of a Jewish camp. It embraces many facets of the Detroit Jewish community and will be a timeless contribution to its recorded history.

Reviewed by Alan Kandel, a member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and recipient of its 2000 Leonard N. Simons History Award.

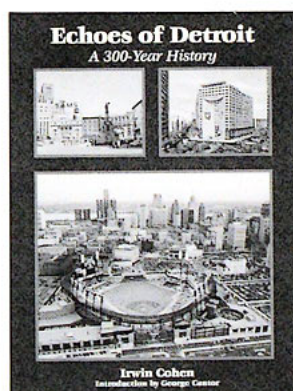
Editor's Note: A Timeless Treasure will be available beginning in November 2001 at the Jewish Book Fair in West Bloomfield, MI, and subsequently from the publisher and selected retailers.



Echoes of Detroit: A 300-Year History

By Irwin Cohen

City Vision Publishing, 2000, 134 pages



Who was Detroit's meanest man? Who introduced Joe DiMaggio to Marilyn Monroe? How did the Jewish magician Harry Houdini meet his tragic fate in Detroit? Who served as Detroit's mayor and Michigan's governor at the same time? The answer to these and other intriguing questions can be found in Irwin Cohen's book, *Echoes of Detroit: A 300-Year History*.

Cohen, a long-time and active member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, published his book to coincide with Detroit's 300th birthday in 2001. Its large, soft-cover format should appeal to young readers as well as adults. *Echoes of Detroit* sweeps the reader along decade by decade, capturing major events in each time frame. History will be learned and memories stirred beginning with a 1701 portrait of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac and ending with a portrait of the brand-new Comerica Park from 2000.

Echoes of Detroit does not recount the history of the Detroit Jewish community, though it does make mention of Chapman Abraham, the first Jew to set foot in Detroit in 1751, Sarah and Isaac Cozens who founded the Bet El Society in 1850, architect Albert Kahn, and of course, Hank Greenberg. Attention is also given to the anti-Semitic views of Henry Ford and Father Charles Coughlin, together with reactions from the Jewish community.

Cohen does not hide his enthusiasm for Detroit, but neither does he gloss over the city's troubled history. Its economic cycles and population growth and decline are documented. Race relations and civil rights are a consistent theme throughout. Known in the community as "Mr. Baseball," Cohen unsurprisingly gives Tigers' baseball and sports in general an important place in this history.

The volume opens with a praiseworthy introduction by Cohen's long-time colleague George Cantor and closes with comments from twelve prominent Detroiters, who voice their love of the city and hopes for its future. *Echoes of Detroit* is a welcome contribution to Detroit's tricentennial celebration.

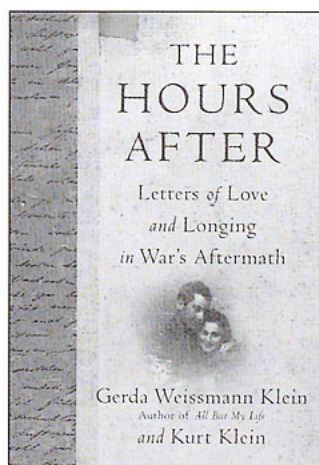
Reviewed by Alan Kandel, a member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and recipient of its 2000 Leonard N. Simons History Award.

The Hours After: Letters of Love and Longing in War's Aftermath

By Gerda Weissmann Klein and Kurt Klein

St. Martin's Press, 2000, 276 pages

In the waning days of World War II, an American unit sweeping through Czechoslovakia found a small group of starving and sick Jewish girls. Victims of a



Nazi death march, they had been left in an abandoned factory. As Lt. Kurt Klein approached, the first girl he encountered was Gerda Weissmann. He was so intrigued by her poise and intelligence under such devastating circumstances that he visited her during the many weeks she spent in the American hospital. Shortly after, they fell in love, but were separated just hours after they became engaged. This book is a compilation of their letters, written over a period of a year, until they could be married.

More than just billets-doux, these letters are interwoven with biography, history, and insightful comments about the postwar world of Europe and America. Fans of Gerda Klein's classic book, *All But My Life*, will appreciate this sequel.

Gerda and Kurt Klein were the keynote speakers at the World War II exhibit, "Michigan Jews Remember," of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in 1995, and were featured speakers at the 2000 Jewish Book Fair in West Bloomfield, Michigan.

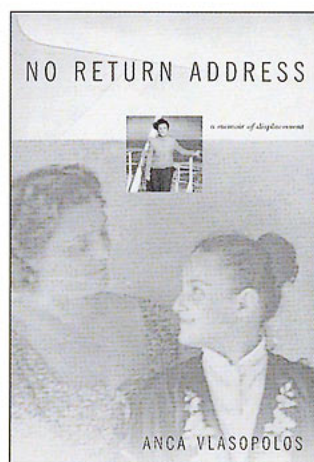
Reviewed by Harriet Siden, Vice President of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and a member of its Heritage Council.

No Return Address: A Memoir of Displacement

By Anca Vlasopolos

Columbia University Press, 2000, 220 pages

Anca Vlasopolos is a novelist and professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit. As a young teenager in the early 1960s, she came to Detroit with her mother, a political refugee from Romania, and her stepfather. This memoir—no dull, chronological autobiography—is a Cold War coming-of-age story and a loving tribute to her mother, who survived Auschwitz and the Communist regime of Romania in the 1950s. Hermina Grunberg Vlasopolos brought her daughter to America, but only found true freedom after her death when her ashes were scattered in Israel. Her daughter, Anca, preserves the memories—bitter and sweet—of her family's journey.



Vlasopolos's eloquent prose draws the reader into the compelling story of her family. She weaves her childhood memories in and out of the stories of her parents' lives. Time and again, her anecdotes of innocent, often-humorous childhood events end up with a punch right to the reader's heart. We read about her family's silence about Judaism and the pull of her father's Greek-Orthodox family; about the survival techniques of children in 1950s Bucharest; and about her father's imprisonment and

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death. Vlasopolos states that her “personal history took shape concomitantly with that of Bucharest.” We see her story unwind in the problems she faces due to poverty, scarcity, religion, and state-sanctioned discrimination.

These are aspects of life she brings with her to the Detroit of the 1960s, and her fresh-eyed, but not naïve, view of the city will, of course, be of interest to readers of *Michigan Jewish History*, as will her experiences in a small rural community in the Thumb area. Vlasopolos relates her discovery of Detroit—the Wayne State area and the public library, Greektown and the DIA—as well as her assimilation into American society at Northern High School. Most remarkable are the reactions of Anca and her mother to the state of race relations in Detroit. Vlasopolos tells a satisfying immigrant-success story, but *No Return Address* is much more than that. The experiences leading to her success form a compelling story of a strong, intelligent woman and the daughter she raised against many odds. It is a wider story of the human condition in the second half of the twentieth century.

Reviewed by Aimée Ergas.



Webliography

As we move farther into the twenty-first century, the availability of information to historians and researchers is becoming remarkable. In this new section of *Michigan Jewish History*, we will provide information about websites that might be of interest to our readers. This is intended to be a work in progress, and we welcome suggestions from readers for websites worthy of inclusion. Thanks to Heidi Christein, Director of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, for her help in compiling this webliography.



www.ajhs.org

The American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Waltham, MA, with reference service, research resources, and a directory of Jewish historical organizations.



www.hsofmich.org

The Historical Society of Michigan, including Michigan History Links to organizations, libraries, media sources, and other resources.



www.thisisfederation.org

The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, with many links to sites for Jewish history and genealogy, and the Irwin I. Cohn Michigan Jewish Cemetery Index.



www.reuther.wayne.edu

The Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University, Detroit, home of the manuscript collections of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and other archival collections.



www.detroitjewishnews.com

The *Detroit Jewish News*, with back issues available on-line.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



www.jgsmi.org

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan, with links to library resources, including map and newsletter collections.



www.holocaustcenter.org

The Holocaust Memorial Center, West Bloomfield, MI, including the Morris and Emma Schaver Library Archive, the John J. Mames Oral History Department, and links to Holocaust-related, Jewish, museum, and archival websites.



www.atdetroit.com/shul/

The Lost Synagogues of Detroit.



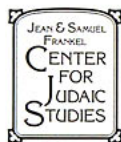
www.jewishhistory.huji.ac.il/

The Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



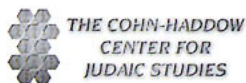
www.msu.edu/user/jewishst/

The Jewish Studies Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.



www.umich.edu/~judstud/

The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.



www.research.wayne.edu/cohn-haddow/

The Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.



www.sos.state.mi.us/history

The Michigan Historical Center, Lansing, MI, with links to the State Archives, State Historic Preservation Office, and Office of the State Archaeologist.

In Memoriam

David Hermelin

1936-2000

An Enduring Legacy

No one tribute can pay justice to the dynamic, unforgettable personality and incredible list of accomplishments of the late David Hermelin, who passed away on November 22, 2000, at age 63 after a plucky battle with brain cancer. In loving memory of our friend and advocate of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, *Michigan Jewish History* presents a few excerpts from the hundreds of tributes that were paid to Hermelin—United States Ambassador to Norway



In 1991, David Hermelin hosted, with his wife Doreen, the first Jewish Historical Society Leonard N. Simons History Award, presented to editor Philip Slomovitz.

Left to right: Hermelin, Simons, JHSM president Gilbert Borman, Slomovitz, and Walter Field.

from 1997 to 2000; international chairman of State of Israel Bonds; 1996 Fred M. Butzel Awardee of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit; leader of its first Miracle Mission to Israel; past president of Congregation Shaarey Zedek; Detroit native and promoter; political activist; husband to Doreen and youthful patriarch of a large family.

President Bill Clinton "I will always remember...his devotion to family, faith, country and the common good.... David gave exceptional service and he left the world a better place than he found it."

Jon Gundersen, deputy chief of the American Embassy in Oslo, Norway "The entire diplomatic corps of Norway never had experienced an ambassador like David Hermelin. The entire nation will miss you and you will be in our hearts forever."

Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer "He was a believer in the city of Detroit."

Rabbi Irwin Groner, Congregation Shaarey Zedek "He was a joy to God and to humanity.... When you met David, you laughed more, you cared more, you felt more, you gave more."

President of Israel Bonds International, David Bar-On "He set an exemplary standard of dedication to the finest traditions and highest values of public service and community involvement."

Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit CEO, Robert Aronson "He was the ultimate consensus builder. What he brought to every conversation was how to put conflict behind you and how to move forward."

Arthur Horwitz, publisher of the Detroit Jewish News "David, you inspired at least three generations of Detroiters, and others, to want to be like David Hermelin. Thank you for showing us the path."

Dr. Mark Rosenblum, Hermelin's physician and chief of neurosurgery at Henry Ford Hospital "David, whose slogan was 'Make Cancer Fail' was my poster child for positive mental attitude."

Brian Hermelin, one of his five children "To be his child was the very best place to be, to have a front-row seat to the greatest show on earth."

Hermelin himself frequently had expressed his own values.

"I am from the, what I call, 'Roots and Wings' school. Give a child roots to know who they are...and then give them wings so they can experience life. They then can go out into the world...and they're going to be a success."

"I'm in love with living Jewishly.... There is excitement in the beauty and joy of being Jewish. I wish all of our people could see how rewarding...and just plain fun living Jewishly could be. To be part of the never-ending drama of Jewish history is truly a gift."

David Hermelin's life was a blessing. He left a legacy to all of us that will endure from generation to generation. — *Judy Cantor*



Courtesy Butzel Family.

Rosalie Kahn Butzel 1912-2000

Preservationist of All Things Beautiful

Rosalie Kahn Butzel, known affectionately as Rickey, was the embodiment of a gracious lady, whose sparkling blue eyes captivated everyone she met. Keenly aware of the rich architectural legacy left by her father, Albert Kahn, she worked hard to help preserve that legacy.

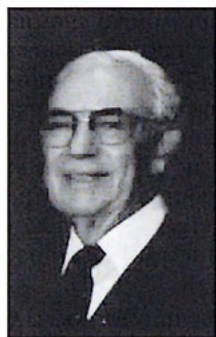
Following Butzel's death on October 4, 2000, her three sons, Leo, Albert and John, spoke eloquently at a memorial service about their mother's devotion to nature, to charitable causes, to liberal ideas, and to family affairs. A native Detroit, she was born in 1912 when her father was engaged in building the Ford assembly plant called the "Crystal Palace," in Highland Park, MI. She attended Vassar College and married attorney Martin Butzel in 1936. Rickey Butzel was active in Vassar alumnae affairs and in various charitable and social programs, including Planned Parenthood, Franklin Settlement, and the United Way. In 1960, the Butzels built a home, designed by Albert Kahn and Rickey Butzel, on Walnut Lake, next to the "Farm" where she had spent her summer as a child. After her husband's death in 1982, Butzel embarked on a project of cataloging the hundreds of fine drawings that her father had made on his trips abroad. These skillful renderings of details of palaces, temples, arches, and gardens had been donated to the University of Michigan, and Butzel wrote the detailed descriptions of each drawing. She was the perfect archivist

to accomplish this task, but unfortunately her health prevented its completion. She eventually moved to Seattle to live near her son, Leo, and his family.

Rickey Butzel grew up in the modest family home at the corner of Mack and John R in Detroit, now the Urban League. In 1996, she agreed to participate in a tour of Albert Kahn architecture sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the Detroit Historical Society, and Preservation Wayne. She led the tour inside the family home and spoke in the "Music Room" addition to the home (1916) about how she had enjoyed the Saturday opera with her father in that room, listened to him play the piano there, and was courted by and married to Martin Butzel in that room with its windows looking out on the garden designed by her mother. Her own love of gardening and nature were important throughout Butzel's life, and she helped create a lasting legacy of nature at Detroit's Belle Isle and other locations. She knew how to appreciate nature, architecture, and beauty, and was a preservationist of all things beautiful. —*Norma Goldman*

Lester Morris 1915-2000

Philanthropist and Community Leader



Lester Morris, a Dean of the Heritage Society of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, passed away on October 20, 2000, at the age of eighty-five. Tributes throughout the Jewish community of Detroit praised him as a generous philanthropist, devoted family man, and dedicated community leader.

Lester Morris joined the Detroit Jewish community in 1946 when he married Jewell Prentis, daughter of General Motors Corporation treasurer Meyer Prentis. He owned a successful Buick dealership for more than forty years, and devoted his time and financial support to many causes. Morris served on the boards of Temple Beth El, Sinai Hospital, the Jewish Home and Aging Services, the Jewish Apartments and Services, and the Michigan Cancer fund. In addition, he filled important offices in the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, including president of the Prentis-Morris Family Support Fund.

The Jewish community has benefited for more than thirty years from the facilities and programs of the Jimmy Prentis Morris Building of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit. It was named after the son of Lester and Jewell Morris who died in an automobile accident in 1965.

Morris's private acts of charity were numerous and often anonymous. The Prentis-Morris Family Foundation supported many projects in Israel, including a high school for Russian and Moroccan immigrants, a day care center, and a recreation facility. Quoted in the *Detroit Jewish News*, former JCC Executive Director Mort Plotnick said that Lester Morris "had a good global view of what his responsibilities were to Jewish life." He is missed by his many family and friends, but his good works in the community will continue for future generations.



Ira G. Kaufman 1909-2000

Probate Judge and Civic Leader

“From his legal training at NYU in his native New York, to his early years of legal practice in Detroit, from his 26 years on the bench as a probate judge to his countless associations with causes helping the sick and the indigent, to his tireless work for the Jewish State and for local Jewish causes, Judge Ira Kaufman packed in the accomplishments of many lifetimes into his 91 years.” This is how Rabbi Daniel Nevins of Adat Shalom Synagogue eulogized the life of Ira G. Kaufman, who passed away on September 29, 2000. He was a man deeply devoted to his community.

Ira Kaufman served as a Wayne County probate judge for 27 years, from 1959 to 1986. In the Jewish community he was respected and admired as a founder of Adat Shalom Synagogue, originally the Northwest Hebrew Congregation. Its first meetings were held in the basement of the home of Kaufman and his first wife, Lillian. He was active at Adat Shalom throughout his life, serving two terms as president, founding its Men’s Club, and being instrumental in establishing the Adat Shalom Memorial Park.

In addition, Kaufman was a founder of the Agency for Jewish Education and served as president of the metropolitan Detroit district of the Zionist Organization of America. He was active for the Society for the Blind, the Michigan Cancer Foundation, and other civic organizations. He was a loyal friend and a supporter of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. As a judge and community leader, according to Rabbi Nevins, Kaufman was always eager “to help people settle their differences...an agent of peace between people.”

Rabbi Yitschak Meir Kagan 1942-2001

Lubavitcher Rabbi

In the late spring of 2001, Detroit Jewry mourned the death of Rabbi Yitschak Meir Kagan, one of the community’s best-known rabbis. Rabbi Kagan was killed tragically on May 13, in an automobile accident in Queens, New York, while returning home from a visit to the grave of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

Although Rabbi Kagan had been a member of the Detroit community for almost four decades, he was not a Michigan native. He was born in London, England, on April 29, 1942, the second of four sons of Esther Rivka Rubin and



Rabbi Yosef Avraham Kagan, emigrants from the anti-religious persecution of the Soviet regime. In London, the young Kagan attended Yeshivas Eitz Chaim and pursued further studies at the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Lod, Israel, and at the Central Lubavitch Yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York. He then attended Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim (Rabbinical College of Canada) in Montreal, from which he earned rabbinical ordination, granted by Rabbi Pinchas Herschsprung. Following his marriage to Montreal native, Rochel Nelken, Rabbi Kagan became one of the founding members of the Montreal Lubavitch Kollel, a seminary for married scholars.

In 1965, Rabbi Kagan and his wife came to Detroit, settling in Oak Park, near the Lubavitcher synagogue, Congregation Mishkan Israel-Nusach Hari. Initially, he was active in college-outreach programs, in the Lubavitch afternoon school, and in summer camp. Later, he became editor of the internationally distributed *A Thought for the Week*, English translations of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's commentaries in Yiddish. He also translated into English *Hayom Yom/From Day to Day* (1988), a book of 365 thoughts and commentaries of the Rebbe. For several years, Rabbi Kagan was the host of a weekly radio program.

For much of his career, he served as the chief Lubavitch public-relations professional in Michigan. Rabbi Kagan became known for his ability to communicate with persons throughout the Jewish and general communities. He was part of the team that helped put together the most ambitious Lubavitch project ever in Michigan—the Campus of Living Judaism, a 40-acre religious and educational center in West Bloomfield. Rabbi Kagan was the best known Lubavitcher chasid in the greater Detroit area, and he cultivated friends, admirers, and supporters from the entire spectrum of the community. —*Phillip Applebaum*

Footnote from the Editor

By Aimée Ergas

In this issue we include an index to last year's *Michigan Jewish History* (volume 40). Along with the 39-year index published last year, the full range of our contributions to the historical record published since 1960 are accessible. We are proud of those contributions and thankful for the support we receive from scholars, archivists, writers, photographers, and others who donate their expertise, advice, and energy. The contributors to this issue, as well as many behind-the-scenes individuals, have earned our highest regard and thanks.



•

The horrible tragedy inflicted on America as we went to press this fall has made us all stop and reflect on life, good and evil, and remembrance. Our task at the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is to preserve history and remembrance for "when your children shall ask their parents in time to come." We reconfirm our duty to that task and dedicate this issue to all the victims, now gone or with us as wounded souls, of September 11, 2001.

Fifteen Years of Historical Bus Tours

Since 1986, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has been offering bus tours of important neighborhoods and landmarks in the history of Jewish Detroit. The popularity of these tours has grown over the years, and in 2001 the tours continued in conjunction with the celebration of Detroit's 300th anniversary.

The first JHSM tour of Historic Jewish Detroit was given during the 1986-1988 presidency of Evelyn Noveck. With Noveck's assistance, Dr. Aaron Lupovitch, a long-time JHSM member, planned a tour with sites and historical information that he thought were particularly noteworthy. The tour concept was so well received that a second bus was added to accommodate all of the people eager to re-visit the "old neighborhoods." Dr. Lupovitch was the guide on the lead bus, and popular speaker and raconteur Max Sosin led the second.



Photo by Jim Grey.

Enjoying a recent JHSM bus tour, from left to right, Adele Staller, JHSM Advisory Board member Suzanne Shifman, and JHSM President Joan Braun.

The tour was a great success. Lupovitch agreed to repeat the tour in following years, and he developed a consistent script so that additional guides could be trained. Adele Staller was invited to be the guide on the second bus. Staller, a native Detroiter and teacher in the Detroit public schools, was JHSM president from 1988 to 1990.

In 1995 Lupovitch and Staller edited and updated the tour, and Lupovitch gave the copyright of the tour script to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. In following years, he willingly handed over the leadership of the tours to Staller, who has continued to add information and adjust the route as the streets of Detroit have changed. The most outstanding feature of the tour, according to Staller, is the Beth Olem Cemetery, now over 150 years old and located in the middle of the parking lot of General Motors' Poletown Cadillac plant.

In recent years, many organizations have arranged for the bus tour as a special event for their members. They include Temple Israel, Temple Emanu-El, Jewish Women's International, the Jewish Vocational Service, National Council of Jewish Women Up and Out Program, Jewish Experience for Families (JEFF), Kadima, and Jewish Apartments and Services. JHSM is fortunate to have many capable people who have participated as guides and contributed to the success of our historic tours, including Carol Roberts, Suzanne and Burton Shifman, Judy Levin Cantor, and Jerry Cook.

Jewish Historical Society President's Report 2000-2001

by Joan Braun

The year 2000-2001 has been an active one for the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, especially with our participation in the celebrations of Detroit's 300th anniversary. We continue to follow the precepts set down in our mission statement and our by-laws: To foster the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the history of the Jews in Detroit and Michigan. We have promoted tours, lectures, meetings and publications that inform the community about Michigan Jewish history and activities.

In October 2000, we co-sponsored with the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, an unusual and moving program: "Visas for Life: The stories of Chuine Sugihara & Dr. Feng Shan Ho." This event is detailed in the Celebrities & Celebrations section of this *Michigan Jewish History*.

In October 2000, we co-sponsored with the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, an unusual and moving program: "Visas for Life: The stories of Chuine Sugihara & Dr. Feng Shan Ho." This event is detailed in the Celebrities & Celebrations section of this *Michigan Jewish History*.



Photo by Jim Grey.

At the November 2000 Jewish Book Fair, left to right: Joan Braun, JHSM president; Kurt Klein and Gerda Weissmann Klein, featured authors; Harriet Siden, JHSM vice-president; Irwin Shaw.

Once again, the JHSM co-sponsored at the 2001 Jewish Book Fair in November, Gerda and Kurt Klein, authors of *The Hours After*. Kurt Klein was an American soldier who freed Gerda and others after the Holocaust. They fell in love, corresponded for a year and a half, and then were married. Their book is a rich and heartwarming tale of their love story in letters. In 2001, our past president Judith Levin Cantor will be our featured author at the



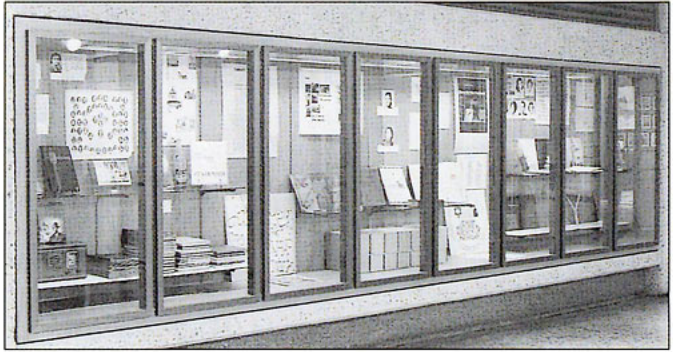
JHSM vice-president Harriet Siden with the poster of Jewish synagogues at the Boston/Edison neighborhood reunion.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

Book Fair. Her new book, *The Jews of Michigan*, is a must-have. Both of these books are reviewed in this issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

Adele Staller directed another successful tour of Old Detroit and Beth Olem cemetery. She and Michelle Goldstein also arranged a reunion/homecoming at Voight Park in Detroit for the Historic Boston/Edison district. This event was part of the Detroit 300 celebrations.

Our yearbook project, co-chaired by Mark Manson, Jerry Cook, Jim Grey, and Robert Kaplow, has proved most successful. We have accumulated over 500 yearbooks to date and will be up on our website soon. Marc Manson installed an exhibition of the yearbooks and related memorabilia at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills. It will be exhibited beginning in the fall at the West Bloomfield Public Library.



The JHSM Yearbook Project exhibit at Adat Shalom Synagogue.

Photo by Jim Grey.

Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills was the site of our annual meeting in June. Professor Sidney Bolkosky was presented with the 2001 Leonard N. Simons Award



At the 2001 Jewish Historical Society of Michigan annual meeting, from left: Robert Kaplow, meeting co-chair and secretary; Joan Braun, president; Maude Lyons, Detroit 300 chair; Professor Sidney Bolkosky, Simons Award recipient; Judith Cantor, author and past president; Jim Grey, meeting co-chair and past president.

for outstanding historical scholarship. Actor Robert Grossman performed a splendid soliloquy as Rabbi Leo Franklin. Grossman was one of several actors who performed as famous Detroiters for Detroit 300. Maude Lyons, chairperson of Detroit 300, gave us an overview of the impressive activities of the city's 300th anniversary celebration in July. In addition, Judy Cantor made available copies of her

new book and signed them, a sneak preview before the formal presentation at the November Jewish Book Fair.

We traveled by bus to view the Tall Ships sailing on the Detroit River during the tricentennial celebration in July. Despite the heat, it was an impressive site. The

Photo by Jim Grey.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has been an integral part of this year's Detroit 300 commemorations. Our contribution to the historical record of Detroit and Michigan continues with our publication in this journal of three letters from the 1900 Century Box, which was opened last New Year's Eve at Detroit Orchestra Hall. The box itself was tracked down by our own active member, Marc Manson. We hope you find the letters an interesting look at the Jewish past.



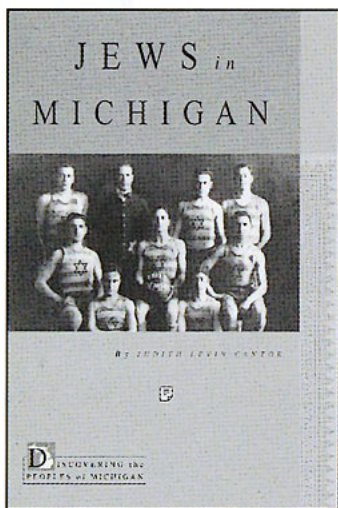
Members of the Historical Society and more than 18,000 others watched the Tall Ships sail on the Detroit River to commemorate Detroit's 300th birthday.



The Officers and Board of Directors, 2000-2001

Those gathered in September 2001, standing, left to right: Alan Kandel, Jerry Cook, Marc Manson, Judy Cantor, Robert Kaplow, Bob Feldman, Eveleen Budnitzky, Sue Shifman, Myrle Leland, Sharon Alterman, Irwin Shaw, Jim Grey. Seated, left to right: Bette Schein, Sylvia Babcock, Ida Levine, President Joan Braun, Adele Staller, Harriet Siden, Charlotte Dubin.

Photo by Jim Grey.



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Corrections

Please note the following corrections to the Index to *Michigan Jewish History*, Vols. 1-39 (1960-1999). These corrections will be made to the index available at www.MichJewishHistory.org.

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