

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

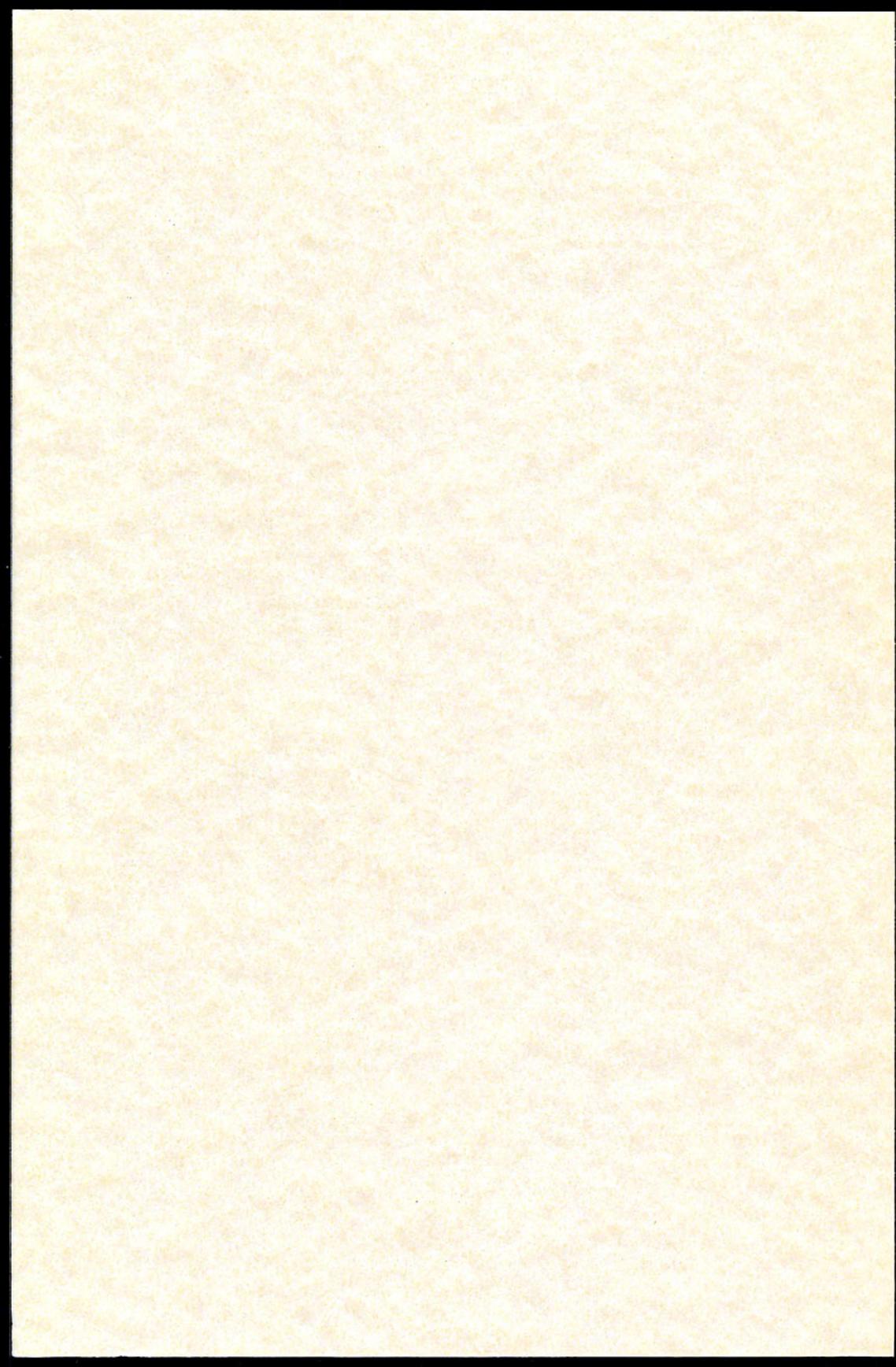


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MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

...אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם... (לוהשע ד:כא)

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

Joshua 4:21

Volume 22 June 1982 — Sivan 5742 No. 2

Philip Slomovitz, Editor and Publisher: A Tribute on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of <i>The Jewish News</i> Allen A. Warsen	3
The Lipsitz Families: Early Jewish Settlers in Detroit Devera Steinberg Stocker	6
Irving I. Edgar at Eighty	14
Book Reviews <i>Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910</i> by Uri D. Herscher, reviewed by Bette A. Roth <i>Liebman Adler: His Life Through His Letters</i> , Joan W. Saltzstein, editor, reviewed by Rochelle S. Elstein	16
In Memoriam: Henry Green	20
Necrology	21
New Members	22

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The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, founded in 1959, promotes the study and research of Michigan Jewish history, publishes periodicals, collects documents and records which are deposited in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, and commemorates sites of Jewish historical significance.

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PHILIP SLOMOVITZ, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER A Tribute on the occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Jewish News*

By Allen A. Warsen

"The *Jewish News* pledges itself to a program whose concern it becomes to keep Jews and non-Jews fully informed on facts relating to the Jewish position; whose chief interest it is to advance the morale of our people and to hold high the banner of democracy, religious freedom and goodwill among all faiths."

The above passage from the platform of the *Jewish News* appeared in its first issue on March 27, 1942. Founded, published and edited by Philip Slomovitz, the *Jewish News* has been America's foremost Anglo-Jewish weekly for more than 40 years. (Forty, it is well to remember, is a significant number in Jewish tradition. Among others, Moses lived three times forty years. Hence, the Yiddish saying *biz hunderd un tsvantsig yor.*)



Philip Slomovitz

Philip Slomovitz, the heart and soul of the *Jewish News*, was born in Russia in 1896 where he received his elementary school education. Early in this century, he and his family immigrated to the United States where he continued his education, first in New York and then at the University of Michigan. There, he edited the student publication, the *Michigan Daily*.

Upon completing his university studies, he continued his journalistic career, first at the *Detroit News* and later as editor of *Jewish Pictorial* (the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service), and the *Detroit Jewish Chronicle*. In 1942 he founded the *Jewish News*.

In 1945, Phil, as his friends call him affectionately, was a founder and first president of the American Jewish Press Association. He also served as president of the Detroit Zionist Organization and other groups. In 1954 the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit appointed him to organize and chair a committee to oversee the observance of the Tercentenary of American

ALLEN A. WARSEN is the founder of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He served as the Society's first president and was an editor of *Michigan Jewish History*.

* See also "Philip Slomovitz at 80," *Michigan Jewish History*, July 1977, pp.29-30, and "First Issue of The Jewish News" by Charlotte Dubin, *Michigan Jewish History*, July 1967, pp.20-22

Jewry. The committee was composed of 100 members who represented all religious, educational, cultural and social institutions and organizations of the Detroit Jewish community. (The author had the honor to serve as a member of this prestigious body.) The Tercentenary celebration was the most impressive observance in the history of Detroit Jewry.

In recognition of his leadership and communal services, Phil has been presented with numerous awards, including the first Smolar Award for Excellence in Journalism. In 1978 and again in 1980, his friends presented him with two anthologies of his writings, titled, respectively, *Without Malice* and *Purely Commentary*. In 1981, Bar Ilan University of Israel bestowed on him an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters and established in his name a Chair in Communications.

In conformity with his credo, Phil has been following in the footsteps of the builders of the Holy City and the Holy Temple, as recorded in the book of Nehemia (4:11): "They that builded the wall and they that bore burdens laded themselves, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held the weapon." Phil's weapon, naturally, has been the printed word.

The *Jewish News*, the pulse and chronicle of our times, reports in each of its issues the events occurring anywhere in the world that have bearing on the Jewish people. Thus, the issue of Friday, March 19, 1982 reported, *inter alia*, two events of comparable importance: (1) The confession of an eyewitness in the trumped-up Leo Frank case that took place 70 years ago, and the demand of the Jews of Atlanta, Georgia to reopen the case in order to clear Frank's name; (2) The decision of the Israeli cabinet to set up a commission to investigate the murder 49 years ago, of the Mapai leader, Haim Arlosoroff.

Phil, the commentator and author of the "Purely Commentary" column, interprets happenings of Jewish concern from the Judeo-Ethical viewpoint, as illustrated by his evaluation of the UNESCO publication *Birthright of Man*:

The wisdom of the ages and of the nations of the world is incorporated in this wonderful selection of texts which was prepared under the direction of Jeanne Hersch. Yet there are some gems that are so specifically ours, are so deeply rooted in Hebraic lore, in biblical teachings, in rabbinic interpretation that we take special pride in that which is our heritage. Therefore, we place emphasis on the Hebraic mortar that binds us to our tradition.¹

Similarly important is Phil's concern for the state of Israel. As a devoted and life-long Zionist, he dedicated the *Jewish News* to serve as an advocate of Israel's interests, security and existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that each issue of the weekly is replete with news and events occurring in the Jewish state. Neither is it surprising that Phil is forever ready to defend the Holy Land against its foes. A good example is the following:

¹ *Purely Commentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), p.44.

The area occupied by 22 existing Arab states, all members of the United Nations, are so vast that comparisons with the small territory presumed for Israel's existence are odious.

But even that small territory for 3,500,000 people—more than 500,000 of whom are Christians and Moslems who are not deprived of human rights in Israel—is begrudged by more than 100 million Arabs, whose sheiks keep threatening the very existence of the Jewish state.

It was believed that it would be necessary once again to organize defensively in support of Israel.²

Phil, the outstanding journalist and essayist, has distinguished himself also as a literary critic and book reviewer. His informative weekly book reviews on the paper's editorial page and his interpretive reviews have been popular with the readers of the *Jewish News*. Furthermore, Phil publishes book reviews by other authors that contribute added intellectual significance to the versatility of the *Jewish News* and enjoyment to their readers. (Therefore, a book consisting exclusively of selections of Phil's book reviews would be welcome and appreciated. Combined with the two volumes mentioned above, it would form an impressive trilogy of Phil's literary creativity.)

Finally, what does Philip Slomovitz think of the future of the Jewish people? In 1953, while president of the American Jewish Press Association, he was asked by the University of Iowa School of Journalism "for an augury to be placed in a time capsule, sealed in the university's then-new Communications Center Building to be opened in 100 years." His reply, in part, read:

We have drawn upon faith in evaluating the future, and in faith we believe that right will conquer might, that justice must prevail in the world. We have many examples in history to point to the contrary, but all of the ugly seasons, all of the cruel experiences, were passing phases in man's existence. The aftermath of each declining era has witnessed the resurgence of better days. So it will be in 2053—and so it will be a thousand years after that—in spite of threats from atomic or other outbursts.³

Philip Slomovitz's Judeo-Ethical philosophy and belief in a humane future have been his *Ani Maamin* throughout his distinguished journalistic and literary career.

² *Without Malice* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p.49.

³ *Without Malice*, p.37.

THE LIPSITZ FAMILIES: EARLY JEWISH SETTLERS IN DETROIT

By Devera Steinberg Stocker

This article will take a brief look at the lives and fortunes of the Isaac, Louis and Philip Lipsitz families, who came to Michigan as immigrants from Lithuania.¹

The first member of the Lipsitz family to settle in Michigan was Isaac Lipsitz, who came to Detroit in 1868. He was born on December 10, 1842, in Baisogala, Lithuania, a rural community 22 kilometers south of Radviliskis, near Kovno. His parents, Mordekhai and Dvora, who owned and operated the farm on which they lived, were educated people of comfortable means. Their six children, four sons and two daughters, were given their education in Hebrew and Yiddish by their mother (certainly unique in those times). Most of the Lipsitz children or their descendants immigrated to the United States, three of them to Detroit, Michigan.

Of the four sons, Isaac and Louis settled in Detroit. Their brother, Israel, went to Salt Lake City, Utah; Moshe died at an early age, subsequently, however, his son, Philip, joined his uncles in Detroit. Isaac and Louis' sister, Annie Lipsitz Morris, and her family settled in Rochester, New York. Their other sister, Rachel Lipsitz, married Isaac Oleiski, and her grandson, Jacob Oleiski, was the famed director of ORT in Kovno and Israel. Another grandchild of Rachel's, Lena Libman, settled with her family in Chicago, Illinois.

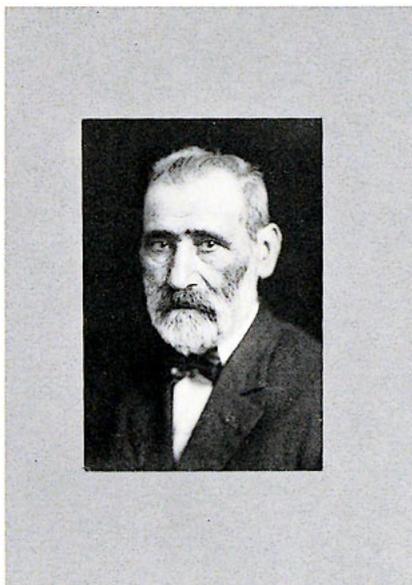
Isaac arrived in Detroit with his wife, Rebecca, and a large family group comprising Rebecca's parents, Yekheskel² and Gitl Mincer, her two older married brothers, Berel (Benjamin) and Yankel (Jacob), and her younger brother, Israel, 14 years of age. Among the children with them was Isaac and Rebecca's infant son, Moses, born in 1866. They had lost a child previously in a typhoid epidemic.

Work was available in cigar making and Isaac became a cigar maker. Berel and Yankel became opticians. They traveled the neighboring villages by horse and buggy fitting their customers with spectacles. In those days they ground their own lenses. In the mid-1880s, Berel, his wife Pauline, and

DEVERA STEINBERG STOCKER, born in Detroit and raised in Traverse City, Michigan, was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1922 with an AB degree and a teaching certificate. She earned a Master's degree in Social Work from the same institution in 1942. A member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, she has written extensively on her family history and on the history of the Jewish community of Traverse City.

¹ The author has written previously on the Lipsitz and Mincer families. See "When 'Bubie Gitel' Came to Detroit," *Michigan Jewish History*, November 1962, pp. 20-22.

² Yekheskel was translated to Charles.



Rebecca and Isaac Lipsitz, around 1915.

their several children moved to Chicago.³ Israel left home in 1871 at the age of 17 to join a circus on its way to Texas. (He had a juggling act.) It is doubtful he had permission from his parents. He kept in touch with the family, however, with letters and visits during the 65 years he lived in Texas. Those were the years when "cotton was king" and Israel eventually became a cotton broker. He married a Jewish girl named Sally from a small Texas community and settled in Waxahachie, not far from Dallas, where they raised their three children, Mamy, Clara and Sylvan.

Yankel remained in Detroit. His marriages were not successful. The first one ended in divorce, the second when his young wife died in childbirth.

In 1872, Isaac and Rebecca lived at 282 Macomb Street, a short distance from the Shaarey Zedek synagogue on Congress and St. Antoine. It was here, on October 23 of that year, that their daughter, Minnie (Mikhal), was born. At an early age she showed talent in music, and was given a good education in piano. She studied at the Detroit Conservatory of Music for many years, missing graduation by only three months. Music was her greatest interest. She had a lovely singing voice and often sang at the weddings of her friends. In 1892 she became engaged to Isaac Netzorg, member of a musical family.⁴ The engagement, however, did not hold up, and in 1896 she married Jake Steinberg, son of Julius and Mary Steinberg, early Jewish settlers in Traverse City, Michigan. Meanwhile, her brother, Mose,

³ Solomon Mincer, Berel's oldest son, returned to Detroit sometime later.

⁴ Isaac's son, Bendetson Netzorg, founded the Netzorg School of Piano in Detroit in 1915.



Gitl Mincer and her children, around 1900. (Sitting, left to right) Rebecca Mincer Lipsitz, Gitl Mincer, Berel Mincer. (Standing) Israel (left) and Yankel Mincer.

went into the men's clothing business. He started out with a small shop and later had a store, the National Clothing Company, located on Woodward Avenue in the Kern block. Around 1893 he married Hattie Sillman, daughter of Phillip Sillman, who had a bakery at 253 Hastings. (Phillip's son, Isaac, was in the business with him. Another son, Louis, had a grocery store on Russell Street.)⁵

Detroit Jewish youth, when Minnie and Mose were growing up, pursued their social interests and activities with the enthusiasm common to young people. The community provided some of their recreational pleasures such as Hanuka and Purim parties and other holiday events. Theater and concerts were important. Prestige was attached to having seen Sarah Bernhardt perform in a stage play, probably to be equated with the importance to a later generation of having seen Mary Pickford in a movie. Sports did not seem to figure in until the next generation. One of the young people's activities, the Frederick Warde Dramatic Club, was so unusually successful as to merit a detailed description.

⁵ Information on the Sillman family was received in a telephone interview with Maxine Fisher Rosen, granddaughter of Louis Sillman, December 23, 1981.

The club, a project of Detroit Jewish youth of the 1880s, presented their theatrical productions at Harmonie Hall on East Lafayette Street. The club made an impact beyond the Jewish community and drew audiences from all over the city. The members of the club were: Meyer Bing, Mattie Breitenbach, Max Cohen, Israel Cohn, Lena and Libby Grabowsky (sisters), Clara Greenthal, Frank Hamburger, Albert Kahn (who later became the well-known architect), Mose Lipsitz, Max Oppenheim. The club was well under way by 1885. Mose was 19 at the time and Minnie was only 13. Although Minnie was not a member, a juvenile was needed in one of the plays and she was given the role. In appreciation, she received a red plush autograph album containing the signatures of some of the members. The club probably lasted into the early 1890s. Harmonie Hall burned down in 1893; it was rebuilt in 1895, but by that time many of the original members of the club were probably already married and had other interests.⁶

Isaac Lipsitz was a scholarly man, who, in his youth, had planned to study for the rabbinate. His deep interest in learning led him into various fields, but mostly to studies of a philosophical and religious nature. A dedicated Zionist, he was a supporter of Theodore Herzl and followed closely the progress of the movement. His dedication to Zionism led him to buy a plot of land in Palestine. His main activities, however, were with Congregation Shaarey Zedek. In recognition of his many services to the synagogue, the members honored him with the gift of a gold watch. It was a unique watch. In place of the usual numerals, it had the letters of his name—Isaac Lipsitz—exactly 12 letters. He conducted services for the High Holy Days at Congregation Beth El in Traverse City where he and Rebecca spent the summers with their daughter and son-in-law.

Rebecca, Isaac's wife, was a big bodied, warm hearted, sociable woman who had a remarkable talent for asking her grandchildren impossible questions designed to produce *khokhmes* (bright sayings). She then had the double enjoyment of giving circulation to the *khokhmes* when she came together with her friends. An example of Rebecca's questioning technique has come down to us. She once said to her little granddaughter: "I like your face better than my face. Would you mind changing faces with me?" The little girl gave serious thought to the question, no doubt, for she replied, "No, because I think your face is nice for you and I think my face is nice for me."⁷

Isaac's brother, Louis Lipsitz, came to Detroit around 1875.⁸ Born in 1856, he was 19 or 20 years old when he arrived. Before long, he met and

⁶ On January 18, 1931, the *Detroit Free Press* published in its gravure supplement a group photograph of the club. The caption reads, "Frederick Warde Dramatic Club. Forty years ago, the club, named for Frederick Warde, tragedian, was an important factor in Detroit theatricals, combining dramatic presentations and social entertainment, mostly at Harmonie Hall."

⁷ As told to the author by Dora Buchhalter Ehrlich, around 1925.

⁸ Information on the Louis Lipsitz family was received in several telephone interviews with his daughter, Rose Lipsitz, January-February 1982.

married Rebecca Barkman, one of five sisters newly arrived with their parents from a village on the Polish-Russian border. Rebecca was the only one of the sisters who remained in Michigan.

Louis was a dealer in hides for the fur industry. He and Rebecca had seven children: Dora (born in 1881), Abram (1883), Moses (1885), Max (1887), Nathan (1890), Bertha (1891) and Rose (1901). Only three of their children remained in Michigan after they were grown. Dora married Jacob Klivans in 1904 and went to Youngstown, Ohio, where Jacob was in the jewelry business. A few years later, Nathan followed to make his home there, too. Abram settled in Indiana. Max was in the real estate business in Detroit until 1932 when he went on *aliya* (immigration) to Palestine with his wife, Sarah, a girl from Wales. They had met in Palestine when Max was there on a visit in 1929. When he returned to Detroit in 1930 he insisted that his father make a visit with him to Palestine, not telling anyone in the family that he planned to get married and wanted his father there for the occasion. When they returned to Detroit, Max and Sarah remained for two years while Max terminated his business before making the *aliya* permanent. Their first child, Ora, was born in Detroit.

Moses was the only son of Louis' who remained in Michigan. He was in the real estate business in Detroit for many years. On June 30, 1907 he married Tena Buchhalter, daughter of Hyman Buchhalter, principal of the Division Street Talmud Torah (forerunner of the United Hebrew Schools).⁹ Tena and Moses had two children, David and Betty (Elizabeth). In 1937 David married Edith Nathan of Utica, New York; their children are Roberta and Martin. Betty married Donald Cohn and today lives in Rochester, New York.

The three Lipsitz daughters were secretaries. Bertha and Rose were very active in the Hadassah organization, becoming life members. Bertha was a charter member and Rose is a past president of junior Hadassah. Both remained in Detroit.

Louis Lipsitz died in 1933 at the age of 77. His wife, Rebecca, passed away in 1921 at the age of 59.



Rebecca and Louis Lipsitz,
around the late 1880s.

⁹ Telephone interview with Naomi Buchhalter Floch (granddaughter of Hyman Buchhalter), February 15, 1982.



Berta and Philip Lipsitz,
around the late 1880s.

Philip Lipsitz, nephew of Isaac and Louis, came to Detroit in the early 1880s.¹⁰ He was born in Vilna, the son of their brother, Moshe. Moshe died quite young, and Philip remained at home with his mother until he was 17. Military service in the Czar's army threatened his plans to come to America; to avoid conscription, he went into hiding in the home of an aunt who lived in another village. Eventually he was able to arrange his escape and passage to the United States. He was married here to a woman whose first name was Berta. They had five children: Sadie (Sarah), Moe (Moses), Ted (Theodore), Charles and Leah.

Philip was an optician, and her daughter Sadie was a milliner. In the late 1940s, Sadie, Ted, Charles and Leah moved to Florida. Philip passed away in 1929, Berta in 1932, Moe in 1945. They, Sadie and Leah are all buried in Clover Hill Park Cemetery, burial ground of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, in Royal Oak, Michigan. The Philip Lipsitz family lived in Detroit for more than 60 years.*

Social life on the Sabbath was rather structured in the early years. In the afternoon, women went visiting or had company. The men slept. They did not have to get up until time to go to the synagogue for *maariv* (evening prayers). Among the families who were known to be close friends were the following: Isaac and Faiga Weinstein, Hyman and Rachel-Leah Buchhalter, Abba and Chana-Fraidl Keidan, Harry and Dessie Meyers and a Mrs. Levitt (remembered by the author as a lively, cheerful woman, well known in the Jewish community). When Rabbi Abraham Hershman came to Detroit in 1907 to be the spiritual leader of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, he was a young single man and lived with Mose and Hattie Lipsitz. After his marriage in 1909, he and Mrs. Hershman remained close friends of the family. Some of these families had marital connections. Mrs. Meyers was a Keidan,

¹⁰ Information on Philip Lipsitz was received in a letter to the author from Bertha Lipsitz (daughter of Louis Lipsitz), July 16, 1971.

* Since all the members of this family have passed away, there was no one from whom to get detailed information or confirmation of what was vaguely remembered.

Mrs. Keidan was a Weinstein, the Buchhalters' daughter, Tena, was married to Louis Lipsitz's son, Moses.¹¹

Rebecca Lipsitz's father, Yekheskel Mincer, died in February 1891 at the age of 83; her mother, Gitl, died in May 1903 at the age of 87. Her brother, Yankel, died in 1907 (age unknown). The date of death of her nephew, Solomon Mincer (Berel's son), is unclear. His wife, Anna (Chaya), died in 1914. They are all buried in Beth Olem Cemetery in Hamtramck, Michigan.¹²

Isaac Lipsitz began to fail noticeably after his grandsons, Harold and Charles (Mose's sons), were inducted into military service in World War I. He passed away on Armistice Day in 1918. His daughter, Minnie, and wife Rebecca tried to get the news to him that the war was over, but it was too late. He died without knowing that his grandsons had returned home safely.

Harold entered the University of Michigan, and after graduation, went to Hollywood, California where he became a script writer for the motion picture industry. Later he opened his own casting agency. Charles remained in Detroit in the real estate business. Meanwhile, their parents, Mose and Hattie, together with their sister, Ruth, moved to California in the mid-1920s. Mose passed away in 1943, Hattie in 1958, Harold in 1962 and Charles in 1963. They are all buried in Clover Hill Park Cemetery.

After Isaac's death, Rebecca lived with her daughter, Minnie, and family in Traverse City. Minnie and Jake had three children, Devera, Morton and Getelle. In 1922 Devera married Harry Stocker, a young physician. When he completed his hospital internship, they made their home in Detroit. Morton practiced law in Muskegon, Michigan for a few years. He became interested in politics and served in several departments of the federal government in a legal capacity before being named special assistant to the U.S. Attorney General. He lived in Washington and served in this capacity until his retirement in 1965. He passed away in 1974 at the age of 74. After college, Getelle worked as a social worker for a few years, but decided that she preferred kindergarten and nursery school teaching. In 1945 she moved to California to take a teaching position in a nursery school in San Francisco. Her home presently is in Menlo Park, California, where she has been a kindergaren teacher for many years.

Rebecca Mincer Lipsitz passed away in 1921 at the age of 72 and was buried next to Isaac in Machpelah Cemetery in Ferndale, Michigan. Her daughter, Minnie, was widowed in 1922. Minnie returned to Detroit and lived there until her death in 1959 at the age of 86. She was laid to rest in Machpelah Cemetery next to her husband, Jake Steinberg.

Of the Louis Lipsitz family, their son, Moses, passed away in 1970 at the age of 85. His sister, Bertha, passed away in 1977 at the age of 85. They and their parents are buried in Clover Hill Park Cemetery.

Remaining presently in Michigan are Louis' daughter, Rose Lipsitz, who lives in Southfield; Isaac's granddaughter, Devera Steinberg Stocker, who

¹¹ Telephone interviews with Julia Klein, Rose Lipsitz and Naomi B. Floch, February 1982.

¹² Shaarey Zedek records.

lives in Oak Park; Louis' grandson, David Lipton (Moses' son), and David's children and grandchildren. David lives in Southfield with his wife, Edith. Their daughter, Roberta Stulberg, lives in Southfield with her husband, Harold, and their children, Julie, Sharon and Wendy. David's son, Martin, lives in Ann Arbor with his wife, Janet, and their son, Joshua.

The Isaac and Louis Lipsitz families have lived in Michigan, in the vicinity of Detroit, for five generations, more than a hundred years.

Useful information for this article was received in two long-distance telephone interviews with Getelle Steinberg, daughter of Minnie Lipsitz Steinberg, February 1982.

The author wishes to thank Ben Stocker, who was born in Detroit in 1891, for valuable information on the early history of the Detroit Jewish community (telephone interview, February 1982).

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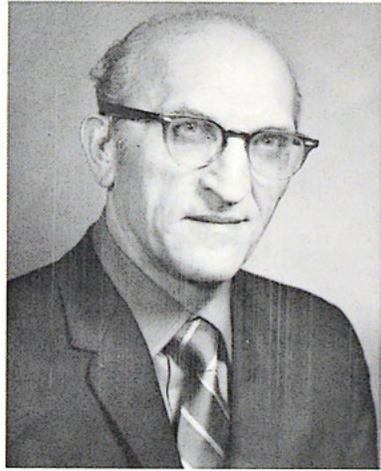
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IRVING I. EDGAR AT 80

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan salutes Irving I. Edgar on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. One of the early members of the Society, Irving has served in many posts, but he alone can claim the longest tenure of any JHSM President; he served from 1964 to 1973, having been elected and re-elected nine consecutive times. He also held the second longest tenure of any editor of *Michigan Jewish History*, and he continues to serve on the Editorial Board. His steadfast devotion to the goals of the Historical Society and his loyal generosity have been appreciated by the members for more than 20 years.



Irving I. Edgar

Irving was born on July 4, 1902 to Asher and Bella Gitl (Schlussel) Iskowitz in Rozwadow, Austrian Galicia (today Poland). The family later moved to the nearby town of Tarnobrzeg, but in 1910 they immigrated to the United States. Asher, Bella Gitl and their six children—Aaron, Sadie, Clara, Tillie, Irving and Rose—came to Detroit, where Bella Gitl's family, the Schlusssels, had previously settled. Although Asher had been a bank employee in Galicia, in Detroit he became a peddler. Later, however, he worked as an agent for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Irving attended the Detroit public schools, and later entered Detroit City College (today Wayne State University), from which he was graduated with a BA degree in 1925. He resolved to become a physician, and was accepted into the Detroit Medical College (today WSU School of Medicine), earning his MD degree in 1927. After ten years of general practice in Hamtramck, Michigan, he returned to school, earning an MS degree in psychiatry in 1942, after two years of study at the University of Michigan Neuro-psychiatric Institute. In 1943 he was certified as a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Irving's professional record shows a whirlwind of activity. He is, or has been, associated with a number of Detroit-area hospitals, including Sinai—where he was on the teaching staff for residents-in-training in the Department of Psychiatry—and St. Clair—where he was assistant medical director from 1958 to 1970. From 1972 to 1974 he was medical director of the Island View Adolescent Center in Detroit. He is also a member of numerous medical societies and associations. From 1935 to 1954 he was a special lecturer in the Department of Jurisprudence and Ethics at the WSU School of Medicine.

Irving comes from a strongly Jewish home. His father was a founder and secretary of Detroit's Chesed Shel Emes-Hebrew Benevolent Society, and

for many years, was the *shamess* of the *Galicianer Shul*—Congregation Beth Abraham (today Beth Abraham-Hillel-Moses). Irving's maternal grandfather, Zundl Dovid Schlusel, was a scholarly Hasid and a *sofer* (scribe). From his youth, Irving has been associated with Jewish endeavors. In his college days, he was active in the Philomatic Debating Club, and later became a member of Temple Beth El, where he was elected president of the Men's Club and served as editor of its bulletin.

He has long been interested in the history of Michigan Jewry, and has made the history of early Jewish physicians in the state his specialty. He has written numerous biographical profiles of Jewish doctors for *Michigan Jewish History*, and has also contributed several articles on the early sites of Temple Beth El, as well as on other subjects. In fact, Irving is our most prolific contributor, having more than two dozen articles published in the pages of *MJH* over the years.

Aside from medicine and history, writing and literature have been two of his great loves. He was so strongly motivated in these interests, that he returned to WSU and earned an MA degree in English literature in 1933. To date, he has published four books: *Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry* (1970), *Essays in English Literature and History* (1972), *The Origins of the Healing Art* (1978), and *Meditations in an Anatomy Laboratory and Other Poems* (1979).

He was first married in 1926 to Claire Stern, with whom he had three children: Joyce, David and Richard, who have given him eight grandchildren. His daughter, Joyce (Vronsky), a teacher, lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with her daughter, Kaela. David is an orthodontist and lives in Farmington Hills with his wife, Ruth, and their three children: Linda, Kenneth and Laurie. Richard is a certified public accountant and also lives in Farmington Hills with his wife, Myrna, and has four children: Cary, Julie (Weisberg), Marla and Joan.

Irving's second wife, Frieda Alpert, served as the Historical Society's Recording Secretary for many years until her death in 1969. His present wife, Gertrude (Baroff Forman), has been our Corresponding Secretary since 1974.

The Historical Society extends to Irving the heartiest of congratulations on attaining this milestone in his life, and offers the traditional Jewish wish:

עד מאה ועשרים!

BOOK REVIEWS

Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910. By Uri D. Herscher. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981. 197pp. illustrations. \$15.95.

Reviewed by **Bette A. Roth**

The 1880s in modern Jewish history serve as a turning point when masses of east European Jews started what was to become the Great Migration to the United States. An interesting chapter in this immigration is the establishment of Jewish agricultural communities throughout the country. Collective societies were founded upon either Socialist or Zionist ideology; some maintained group farming, others single farmsteads, but all met with dismal failure.

It was, quite simply, the wrong time, the wrong place, and the wrong perception by east European and assimilated American Jews of what would make these "foreigners" acceptable to an American culture they wished so desperately to please. For in eastern Europe, the Jew saw himself and was seen by others as "unproductive," a parasite unable to own land, yet blamed for living off of the work of the hands of others. Farming was the means by which this "pariah" would transform himself into an acceptable human being. But as Frederick Jackson Turner notes in his famous essay, the 1890s saw an end to the American Frontier. Industrialization was the defining force in American life, and the successful citizen was no longer the farmer, but the city dweller, who either worked in a factory or sold the goods now being mass produced. Jews quickly learned and accepted this new American formula for success, and moved, like their non-Jewish farming peers, to the cities.

Herscher develops this thesis in his interesting monograph, and while a descriptive depth is lacking, the book is highly readable, presenting an overview of the many Jewish farming communities in the '80s and '90s. Of special interest to Jews in Michigan is the discussion of the Zionist settlement near Bad Axe, the Palestine Colony.

Palestine Colony consisted of 12 contiguous parcels of land owned by 12 individual families. It was organized in 1891 by Hyman Lewenberg, who had lived in the United States for 11 years. The other colonists had been here for only four years. All had been peddlers before settling in the colony. After the first desperate winter, Levenberg turned to Martin Butzel, president at that time of the Beth El Relief Society in Detroit and a member of one of the most philanthropic Jewish families in Michigan. Butzel called upon his friend Emanuel Wodic,* a Jewish farmer from Bohemia who was "known at that time as the foremost farmer of Macomb County."

BETTE A. ROTH is a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. A doctoral candidate in American Studies at the University of Michigan, she co-authored with Eli Grad *Congregation Shaarey Zedek 5622-5742—1861-1981* (Wayne State University Press, 1982), and is working on an annotated edition of the unpublished letters of Emma Lazarus.

* Herscher misspells the name as Woodic.

Wodic gave freely of his time and talent, and both he and Butzel urged the Beth El Society to help the valiant little band of pioneer farmers in Bad Axe. Not only that, Butzel petitioned the newly organized Baron deHirsch Fund for financial assistance, and, on advice of Jacob Schiff, received it.

In 1892, during the festival of Sukkot, an exhibit of their own farm products was held by the Palestine Colony at Temple Beth El, the first exhibition of its kind to be held in the United States. And as the author notes, "As a memento, a small parcel of two potatoes was sent to each of the trustees of the Baron deHirsch Fund."

Unfortunately, the Palestine Colony met with repeated reverses and by 1900 only eight families remained. All soon left, "marking the end of the Palestine venture." Herscher states two reasons for the failure of this particular community: 1) The colonists were totally inexperienced as farmers, and 2) The Panic of 1893, the most severe depression this country had yet witnessed caused a depressed economic climate until the turn of the century. Non-Jewish farmers as well, were experiencing total failure.

After 1900, Jewish farming in the United States met with a more sustained success. But as Herscher says, "The success of these later ventures, however, to no degree diminishes the grit and exertion of the pioneers of Huron County's Palestine Colony."

Liebman Adler: His Life Through His Letters. Edited by Joan Weil Saltzstein. Privately published, 1975. x+ 130pp.

Reviewed by Rochelle S. Elstein

Letters and diaries are the most intimate and revealing sources of character, personality, and events. It is fortunate for historians when families preserve these vital materials and for the reading public when they appear in print. Joan Weil Saltzstein has compiled and edited the letters of her great-grandfather, Liebman Adler, in a book which will be of particular value to those who are interested in Michigan Jewish history. Rabbi Adler was an early spiritual leader of Detroit's pioneer congregation, Beth El, a post which he held from 1854 to 1861. This well-made volume is likely to be overlooked by the public and reviewers alike because it was privately published by Mrs. Saltzstein and is available only by writing to her (305 E. Acacia Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217).

Although the work of an amateur, it is not amateurish. The Latin root of amateur is *amare*—to love—and this is obviously a labor of love. In addition to the letters, written between 1842 and 1891, the work contains photographs, tributes from leading rabbis and is woven together with historical information which rounds out the rabbi's biography. There are some interesting asides on Dankmar Adler, Liebman's famous architect son

ROCHELLE S. ELSTEIN is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at Michigan State University and the author of "The Architecture of Dankmar Adler," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 26 (December 1967) 242-249.

(whose partnership with Louis Sullivan produced some of America's greatest buildings) and on Sara Eliel and Zerlina Picard, Liebman's wives. But, as the title of the book indicates, the focus of the work is Liebman Adler.

The portrait that emerges of Liebman Adler is that of a son of the Enlightenment—a man conversant with Hegel and Kant, but steeped in Jewish sources, a pious and very observant Jew who refrains from telling even those nearest to him how to behave. One particularly important letter from Liebman to his fiancée, Sara, in 1843 deals with the question of whether she will wear a *sheitl* (the wig customarily worn by many Orthodox married women). She has apparently expressed some ambivalence on the subject and he refuses to dictate to her. "Please judge on your own . . . I value tolerance as the first, the most important and necessary quality of an enlightened religious belief" (p. 51). Like Moses Mendelssohn, another German Jew who saw Judaism as a "universal" and "natural" religion, Adler was ideologically liberal and personally observant. Like Mendelssohn he tried to synthesize German and Jewish culture, establishing in Lengsfeld a *simultanschule* or secular school for both Jews and Christians, and later stressing the achievements of German culture to his American students as well.

Liebman Adler was born in 1812, the son of a rabbi and the pupil of one of the most radical reformers in the history of German Reform, Mendel Hess. The challenge of modernity is one of the dominant themes in Adler's life, as is evident in the letter cited earlier. He later came to Beth El as "preacher, cantor, *shochet*, and *mohel*"—all this for an annual salary of \$360—but education was his first love and he complained that he "cannot attend as fully as he desires to the functions of a teacher" (p. 87). He was praised by Isaac Mayer Wise for using the weekly Torah portion as an educational vehicle and for "omitting from the liturgy such prayers as belong to by-gone ages." Although observant of the halakha, he expressed surprise and mock horror at his young son, "Black" (Orthodox) Abraham: "He is an incarnate Orthodox and religious zealot" (p. 90) whose "amens" shake the ocean floor. Yet, Liebman was tolerant and proud even of his fanatic, and the Adler family—ultimately 11 children—escaped the assimilation and conversion which characterized the Mendelssohn family.

The first part of the book contains the letters of Liebman and Sara Eliel; they are love letters—warm and affectionate, yet filled with news of family life, local gossip and wedding preparations. Sara, daughter of a tanner (rather a lowly occupation) was intelligent, well-read, and charming. Her death after one year of marriage and within a few days after the birth of Dankmar must have been a great blow to her husband who had waited until he was over 30 to marry. With a young child to raise, Liebman could not long remain single. His second wife, Zerlina (whom he usually called "Linchchen"), was from a wealthier family than the Eliels but she was apparently less intelligent, less literate, and more practical. There are no letters from Zerlina but we learn from her husband's that she bore Liebman ten children and still found time to supplement the family income by working as a milliner. Her husband praises her "practical, sharp business sense."

Unfortunately, there are few letters in this volume from the Adlers' sojourn in Detroit, and disappointingly few from Liebman's 30 years in Chicago. Why this material is unavailable is never discussed. Mrs. Saltzstein does tell us that Sara Eliel and Liebman Adler's letters were donated to the American Jewish Archives by Sara Adler Weil (Mrs. Saltzstein's mother) and it seems fitting that the last letter in the book was written to this Sara by a proud and loving grandfather. Ever the teacher, Liebman teases her for not making even one mistake for him to catch and praises her for being a very good child.

Liebman Adler contributed much to the establishment of Reform Judaism and was rabbi of two of the most prominent congregations in the country. While still living in Germany he expressed concern about American life—its fast pace, neglect of education, and undue emphasis on success in business. Although conditions were getting worse, he expected to live out his life in Germany. But like thousands of other German Jews in the 1840s, '50s, and '60s, he soon found that the future in America held greater promise, and in 1854 the family moved. "Be happy in America," he had written to his brother Louis, two years before; indeed, happy in America was the fate of the Liebman Adler family as well. The patriarch was, as Emil Hirsch eulogized him, "a laughing philosopher who, contented with his own, passed through life happy himself, and making others happy" (p. 107). His life and letters indeed make for happy reading.

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*All inquiries will be handled
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IN MEMORIAM: HENRY GREEN



HENRY GREEN
1904-1982

הנודך בן הערשל ז"ל
תרס"ד-תשמ"ב

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan mourns the loss of past president Henry Green who died February 1, 1982. He served as the Society's sixth president, from 1975 to 1977.

Henry was born on January 11, 1904 in Chicago, Illinois to Harry and Sadie (Natow) Green, Hungarian Jewish immigrants. He spent much of his youth in Gary, Indiana, where his father found work as a tinsmith. The family subsequently moved to Detroit to join Mrs. Green's sister and two brothers. Shortly after his arrival, Henry entered Detroit City College (today Wayne State University); he later spent a year at Kalamazoo College. Having chosen a career in dentistry, he entered the University of Michigan Dental School in Ann Arbor, and was graduated in the class of 1929. Not long after, on June 22, 1930, he married fellow Detroit, Edna Sklar.

Henry stayed at practically the same east-side Detroit location for the 51 years of his practice. But his work in dentistry and history carried him far beyond the bounds of his office. He combined his interests by serving as historian to the Detroit District Dental Society and to the Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity (in which he had the distinction of serving as its first Jewish president). He was also a member of the Detroit District Dental Clinic, the Michigan State Dental Association, and the Perfection Lodge of the Masonic Order. He and Edna were members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek for over 40 years.

Henry is survived by his wife, Edna, of Southfield, Michigan; son and daughter-in-law, Howard L. and Betty Green, two grandsons, Harley and Scott—all of Midland, Michigan; a brother, Emanuel J. Green, DDS, of Southfield; and a sister, Dorothy (Mrs. Albert) Rood of Huntington Woods, Michigan. Burial was in Machpelah Cemetery, Ferndale, Michigan.

Henry Green was strongly devoted to the goals of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He was a gentle man of kindness and wit who will be sadly missed.

NECROLOGY

The Historical Society mourns the loss of two of its members:

Arthur L. Glazer, died September 1, 1979. Born in Kalkaska, Michigan, a profile of his family was included in the article, "The Jews of Kalkaska County, Michigan" in *Michigan Jewish History*, January 1979.

ת נ צ ב " ה

Bess Alper Dutsch, died February 9, 1982. A native of Traverse City, Michigan, she and co-authors, Devera S. Steinberg and Naomi B. Floch, wrote a two-part history of the Jewish community of Traverse City. The articles were published in *Michigan Jewish History*, June 1979 and January 1980.

ת נ צ ב " ה

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome our new members with the hope that their association with us will be fruitful and rewarding.

Helen Aminoff

Fannie Aronson

Marceline Bright

Carol A. Bromberg

Ceil Bruder

Judy Cantor

Bertha Chomsky

Mrs. Albert A. Colman

Charlotte and Harold Dubin

Ann and David Feinstein

Bernard A. Galler

Zvi Gitelman

Bernard Goldman

Mrs. Herbert Goldstein

Celia Goodman

Mrs. Israel Kaplansky

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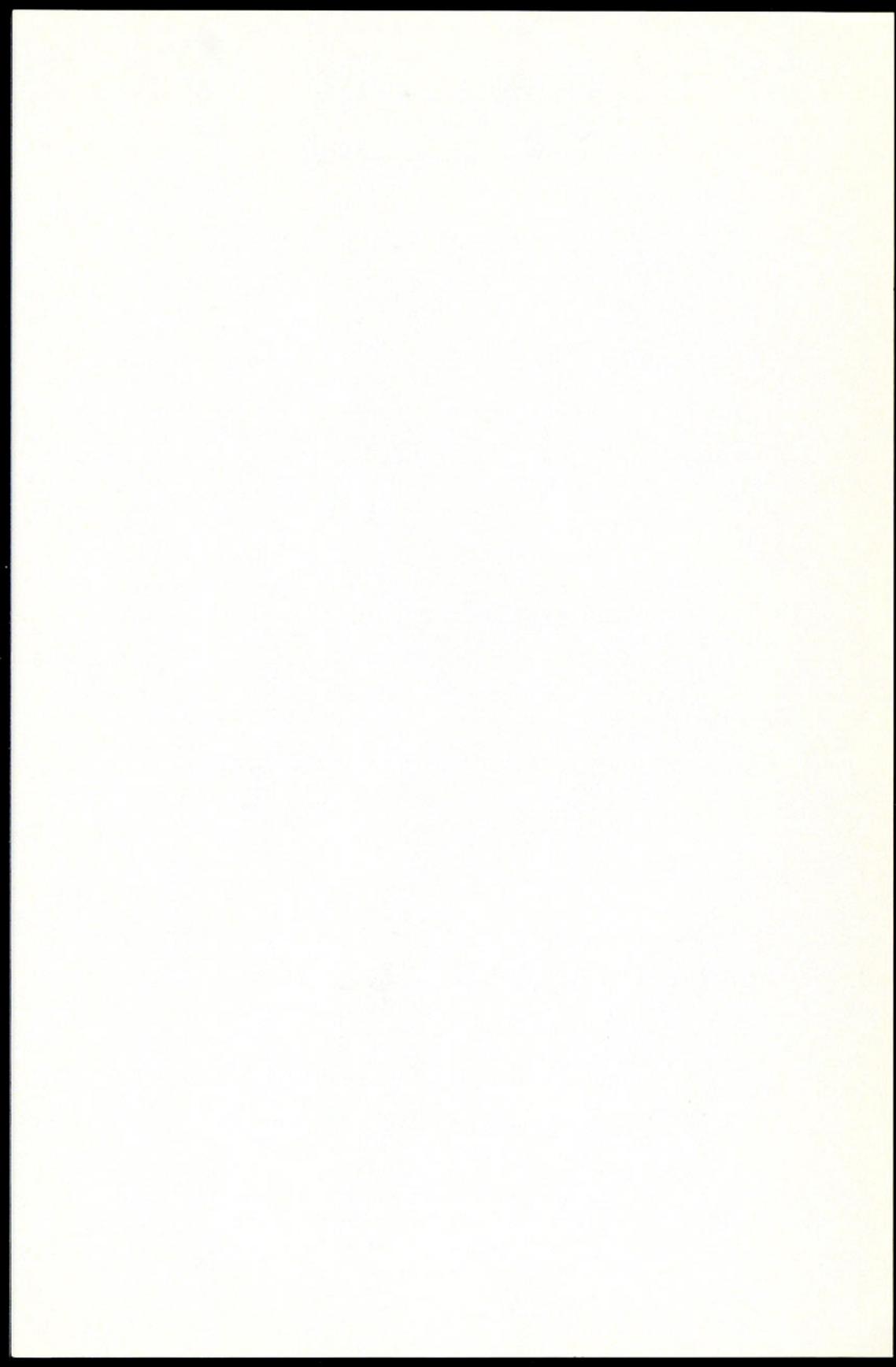
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