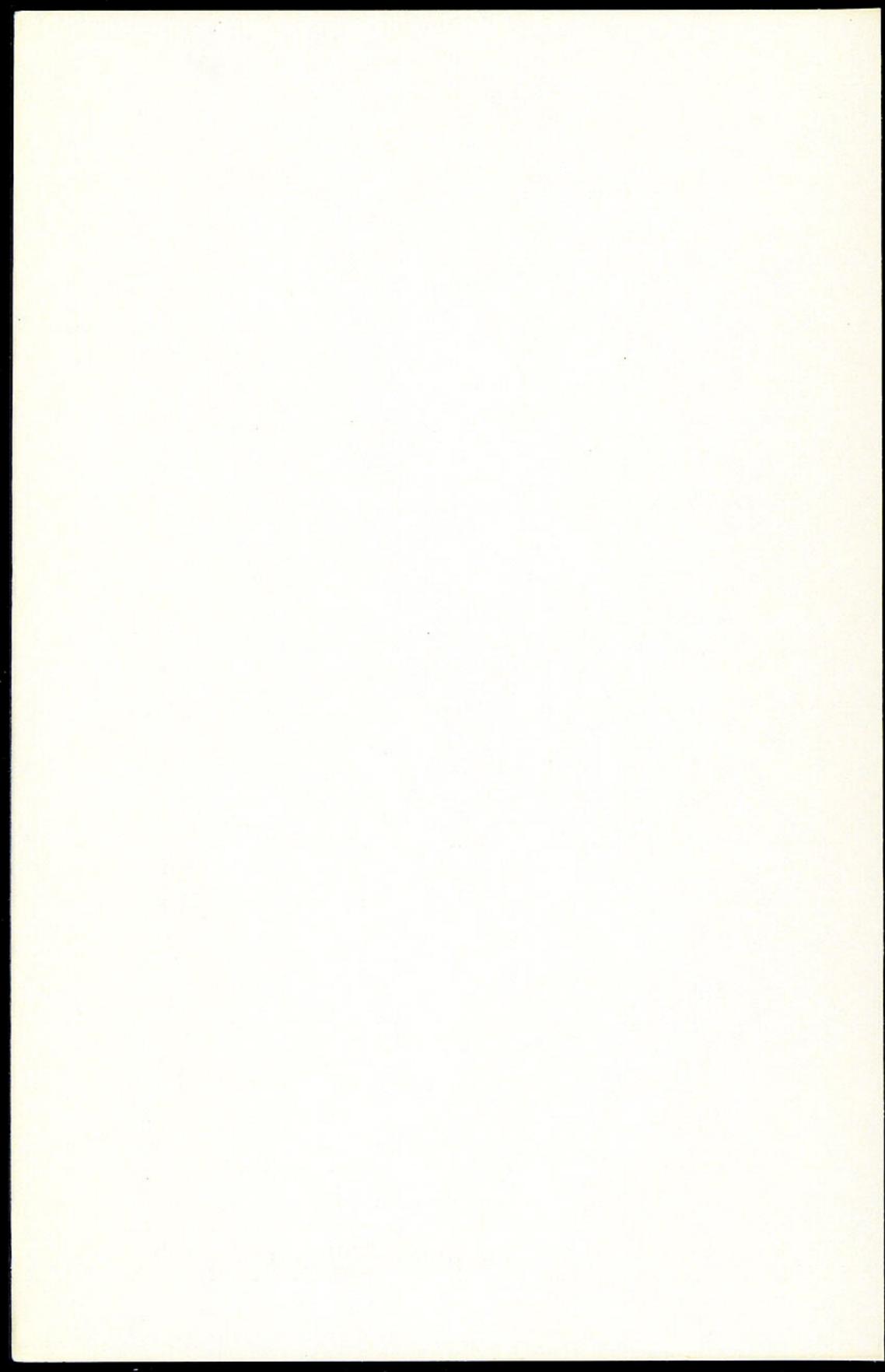


MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



Volume 31

December 1990, Kislev 5751





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

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The Jewish Woman's Club of Detroit, Michigan

"On Saturday and Sunday February 27 and 28th, 1891, Dr. Louis Grossman, Rabbi of Temple Beth El, Detroit, urgently invited from his pulpit, all young Jewish Women to meet in the Temple Vestry Rooms on the following Tuesday afternoon at 4 o'clock for the purpose of forming a society—to better the condition of numberless Jewish girls and women in our midst. In response to this earnest appeal, a number of ladies met Dr. Grossman at the place and time above stated.

"Dr. Grossman there spoke at length of the great need there existed of womanly assistance to women and girls, in the way of womanly advice and encouragement and the mutual interchange of ideas, that would be instructive and so gradually lead to nobler and better womanhood.

"After an informal discussion of how to interest all young Jewish women, t'was finally decided to organize The Women's Club of Temple Beth El.

"The aims of this club, to promote kindness and helpfulness in general and to elevate the mental, moral and social status of young Jewish women in particular.

"Each lady present promised to do all in her power for furthering the mission of this very worthy cause.

"An organization was then formed by electing;

President: Mrs. Bernard Ginsberg,

Secretary: Mrs. Henry A. Krolik,

And the following directresses:

Mrs. J. Finsterwald

Mrs. A. G. Schloss

Mrs. J. F. Teicher

Mrs. Eugene Sloman

Mrs. Sam Karpelas

"Moved and carried that the President and Secretary be also members of the board of directresses, and also that the monthly dues be ten (10) cents.



*Mrs. Ida E. Goldman Ginsberg
Founder & President
1891-1893
1894-1898*



National Council of Jewish Women,
Greater Detroit Section,
will celebrate its centennial year
in 1991!

★ ★ ★

Watch for the full story in the coming issue
of Michigan Jewish History.

★ ★ ★

*The above invitation to form the
Jewish Woman's Club in 1891 is the
first known document in the NCJW Archives.*

PONTIAC'S FIRST JEWISH RESIDENTS

Joseph and Rachel Regufsky Barnett and family

MY MEMOIRS: by Sidney Barnett



Sidney Barnett
author of
"My Memoirs"

Editor's note: The author of these memoirs, Sidney Barnett, born in Pontiac in 1900, like his parents was an active leader in communal and Jewish life there. He ran Barnett's Clothing Store, and served as president of the Pontiac Better Business Bureau. Among other activities, he was president of Pontiac's Temple Beth Jacob, where his parents had been founders. Shortly after Sidney's death in 1988, these papers, written by him in 1978, were given to the editor of this Journal by his son, Donald, who is a Professor at California State University.

Joseph Barnett had come to the United States in 1882 at the age of 16. He and his wife Rachel were the first Jews in the town of Pontiac, purchasing the Pontiac Clothing Company and settling there in the 1890's. It is said that the townspeople thought they would last there about six months. . . but before six months were over they were asked to join the "Lodge," the center of social life at that time.

In addition to being charter members of Temple Beth Jacob, Rachel served as first president of the Sisterhood.¹ She also served on the Boards of the Parent-Teachers Association, the St. Joseph and General Hospital Women's Guilds, the Republican Women's Association, the Visiting Nurses Association, the Needlework Guild, and the Oakland County Girl Scouts - "a pioneer in Pontiac's early development"; according to the Pontiac Press.²

I was born June 7, 1900, the sixth child of Joseph Herman Barnett (1866-1933) and Rachel Gertrude (Regufsky) Barnett (1870-1959). My parents came to the United States from Virbalis in Lithuania. They first settled on the East Coast, and came west to Michigan about 1895. I was born in an ordinary frame house on the corner of Florence and Willow Avenue (now Cass Avenue), Pontiac, Michigan. My earliest recollection is when I was about three years old, a tottering youngster, just barely able to look over the window sill, watching the children at recess across the street at the Florence Avenue Schoolhouse. At the age of five, I entered the kindergarten at that school. For the first week I cried so much that they sent me into the third grade to sit with my older sister. I was there just one semester.

The following year we moved into a large fourteen-room house at the corner of State and Prall Streets. The lot was 200 feet deep and 350 feet wide, but Dad soon sold off the south 50 feet. These were to be the happiest years of our childhood growing up. Seven more sisters and brothers were born from then to 1913. I entered kindergarten again at the "New Crofoot School" in 1906. (Crofoot School and our large house on State Street were torn down in the '70s to make way for Pontiac Central High School.)

There was a large barn in the rear of the house. We had our own cow, a horse, and chickens. There were about 30 fruit trees — pears, apples, plums and about 30 berry bushes — raspberry, blueberries. I do not recall the rest. We had a large garden where we raised produce — radishes, corn, carrots, lettuce, potatoes, celery, and cantaloupe. We had a cistern from which we pulled up pails of rain water by hand to water the plants, the produce, and the large lawn, a job we did for several hours every night during the growing season. The cold well water was not good for the growing produce.

As I grew older, I started mowing the lawn, and that was a real job. Of course, Dad did it also, as did my older brother and eventually my two younger brothers. In winter I also shoveled the snow from the large sidewalk, not only in front but also down the long walk on the Prall Street side. When the snow froze into ice, it remained until the sun started thawing it enough so I could chop it away. This occurred many times each season.

PONTIAC'S FIRST JEWISH RESIDENTS

Cow Pasture in Pontiac

Our pasture for the cow was in what is now the northern end of downtown Pontiac. At that time there were no buildings there, and it had a flowing creek, so that the cow could get a drink whenever it wanted. In the morning and again at 6 p.m., I would take the cow to our home on State Street (about 1-1/2 miles) to feed and to milk it. Then I returned the cow to the pasture. Usually I would ride the horse. It was a Western horse, and I rode it bareback. The horse was so intelligent it would not go ahead of the cow, but rather stayed right behind it all the way. We had to cross two sets of railroad tracks, and the horse watched out to see that the cow, which was dumb, would not cross the tracks if a train was coming. The horse also stayed in the same pasture as the cow when we were not using it.

We always had Jersey cows which gave rich milk. Dad fed them special foods which helped to make the milk rich. From the milk, Mother made cottage cheese, sometimes butter, sometimes ice-cream on Sunday. We sold some milk to our neighbors, one of whom only bought half a pint every morning, and I would deliver it to her house for two cents a day.

Father always arose early, 5 a.m. or earlier, to take care of the cow and horse, work the garden, and then open the store at 6 a.m. The working men started work at the factories in those days at 6 a.m. and worked until late at night. There were no unions at that time, and the men were on a piecework basis, paid for each thing they did. They could work as long as they wanted so they could earn more pay. Boy, they really put in hard work and long hours and were always dead tired when they came in the store to buy or to cash their paychecks. The store was open from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. every day, until 11 p.m. on Saturdays, and from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Sundays. The store closed only three days a year, for the Jewish Holidays. In 1925, we finally closed on Sundays. So you can see that Dad put in long hours, as did the help, including me after I started full-time.

Many nights and on Saturdays, after I returned the cow to the pasture, I would sneak into the store. When I was about 8, I naturally went to work there, dusting the boxes, running to the tailor shop, and performing other errands. I started working full-time there when I was 16.

We had a most happy childhood. In those days, of course, there was no TV, and inasmuch as we were a large family (eventually 13 children), we made our own entertainment at home. Many friends gathered at the Barnetts'. My oldest sister played the piano, and we sang. After my older sisters went to work, they would always come home with large bags of popcorn, and we all joined in popcorn festivities. Much of our entertainment consisted of games we played outside. We played hide-and-seek and Pon Pon Pull-away and with toys galore.



Rachel Barnett



Joseph Barnett

PONTIAC'S FIRST JEWISH RESIDENTS



*An early picture of the first five Barnett children:
Frances, Rose, Bea, Dorothy, and Archie,
circa 1898.*

Our Dad always had time for his children. After he closed on Sunday at 2 p.m., he stopped at the local fruit and candy store and bought plenty of fruit, bananas, oranges, nuts, peaches in season, rock candy and other kinds. When he finished with his lunch (Dad always had three meals a day at home), he played with his youngsters. He would get down on the carpet, put the nuts in a row, and we each took turns rolling marbles to knock out the nuts from the row — and then we ate the nuts.

On summer Sundays, when it was nice, Dad would hitch up the horse and a two-seated surrey. We would all pile in, and he would drive all over, mostly to the Military Academy which was located on Commerce Road and is now St. Mary's Seminary. That was the focal point for all society in those days — to go see the prep students parade their march routines with the band. It was very exciting, and everyone was thrilled.

In winter, Dad took the wheels off the surrey, put on runners, and he took us riding over the snow. We all had bobsleds which we hitched to the surrey, and it was quite a sight to see the whole gang sleighing and singing "Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go. . ." A simple country life.

Our home on State Street was high up on a hill, and we used to get on our sleds in winter and slide down the hill, crossing State Street, all the way down Sandeson Street almost to Norton Avenue. We took turns watching for traffic on State Street so we could go across safely. I remember vividly our best fun was when we flooded the hill in front of the house. When it froze over, we would get into a large pan and slide down the hill on the ice. Most of the time I slid on the seat of my pants, so when I finally went in the house I was one cold, wet mess, but thrilled and happy and hungry, and I would sleep soundly that night. This occurred very often during the winter season. Of course, many of my school buddies joined me.

Incidentally, the population of Pontiac in those days was just 4,000. The main industry was two buggy carriage plants, Beaudette's and Scott's. Beaudette's made bodies for Ford and was later bought by Fisher Brothers. This was the nucleus of the Fisher Brothers' bodies for General Motors. I hardly remember Scott's, but I do remember it burned down about 1912, putting many men out of work, and was never rebuilt. Later there were several automobile companies that started up — Welch, Carter Car, Olympia. All failed. They could not stand the competition from General Motors that was getting organized by Will Durant at about that time. Durant himself was a brilliant man, a mechanic and automotive genius. Durant made the Durant car in Flint, and he bought out Buick, Olds in Lansing, and General Trucks that were made in Pontiac on Rapid Street. That was the nucleus of today's General Motors.

Oakland Motors, named after Oakland County, became Pontiac Motors in 1927 when Harry Klinger became manager and put new life in a dying plant with a new name and a new vitality, as well as a new product.

PONTIAC'S FIRST JEWISH RESIDENTS

Keeping Kosher

Mother and Dad kept a kosher home, and procuring kosher meats was a real chore for Dad. Every Wednesday the farmers would bring in six chickens or ducks. Dad had told the farmers to fatten up the poultry so they weighed more, and he would pay them more. He wanted the fat. Mother would use the fat for frying and cooking the fowl and meats. In those days the streetcars to Detroit left every hour. Dad would put the six chickens into two cap boxes, three to a box. A cap box was a cardboard box about 24" long, 15" wide, and 10" deep. He would cut holes in the top of the box so the chickens would stick out their heads. He tied up the boxes with a heavy rope and hopped the 6 a.m. car to Detroit. It was about a two-hour ride to downtown Detroit, where he transferred to another streetcar which took him to the Jewish District. He would stop at the Jewish meat market (Ball's) where he was well-known and would make that store his headquarters. He would then take the chickens to another place where a man killed them in the kosher tradition; then women there cleaned off the feathers.

While the chickens were being prepared, Dad went to a fish market where he bought 40 to 50 pounds of fish, then on to a bakery where he bought about 10 loaves of rye bread and bagels (Mother baked her own white bread most every day), and then in season he bought a box of grapes. He took all these things back to the meat market. There he bought 50 to 60 pounds of meat. Then he would go to the wholesale men's stores nearby to order his merchandise needs for the store. Sometimes he took some items with him, but most of the merchandise was shipped out. In those days, he purchased much of the store's needs from jobbers in Detroit; only clothing, suits and coats came from manufacturers in New York.

Finally, after tying everything up in heavy paper and ropes, which he brought with him, he headed for the corner to catch a streetcar. Streetcars then were the main means of transportation; few people had cars, and the streetcars were usually loaded. He had to wait awhile until one came along that had enough space to take on his packages. That car took him about 10 blocks north, where he transferred to a car that took him to Woodward Avenue. The streetcars going to Pontiac were double-headers and ran every hour. They were usually loaded too. Many passengers would take the streetcars from Pontiac to do their purchasing in the "Big City." Dad usually had to wait several more hours on the corner, until a streetcar came along that would take his packages. You can imagine that he had a large load. Finally he would arrive in Pontiac, usually at midnight or 1 a.m. Then he had to carry the load home, about 1-1/2 miles, on his back. So you can see that my Father really endured a hardship for his family. That was the problem of keeping kosher in those days.

Dad's routine continued until 1916, when he bought his first automobile, an eight-cylinder Oakland. His labors were reduced, but driving to Detroit was not easy. There were no paved roads at that time, just a double lane dirt road. The speed limit was 25 miles per hour, with plenty of stops for traffic. Horses were still frightened by the newfangled autos, and that created problems. By then, however, my older brother and I were grown up enough that we could drive and help Dad with his packages. In fact, we carried the merchandise he bought for the store in the car, which saved having it shipped.

When several of my sisters married Flint boys and set up housekeeping there, we started visiting them often. By this time, Flint became a second headquarters for the Barnetts, and after 1916 we would drive there in the Oakland. The road to Flint was just a sandy

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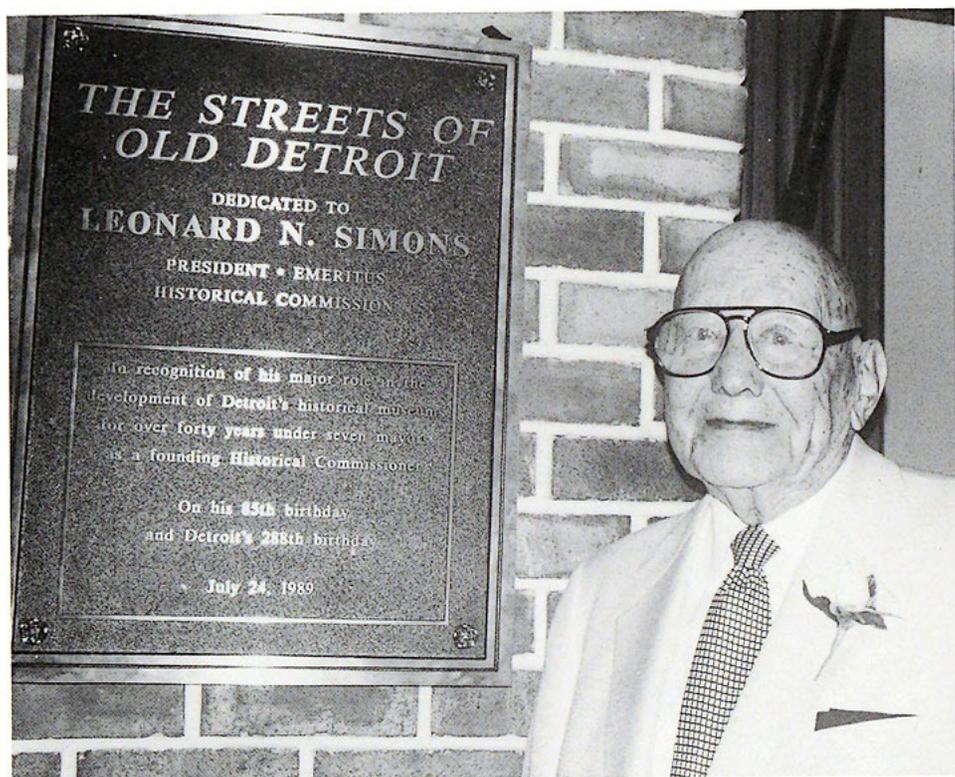
trail, one lane, and the trip there was an all-day and dusty project. The speed limit was 25 miles per hour. We all wore long, light tan-colored coats ("dusters") and goggles to keep out the dust. The car had open sides. When it rained, we had to put up isinglass enclosures, but we usually got wet before they were completely up. Isinglass was a plastic before the new vinyls were invented. There were no air conditioners at that time, so the inside of the car was hot and humid. But we all piled in and enjoyed the frequent excursions to Flint. The new sons-in-law all loved our Mother and Dad very much, and they also came to Pontiac very, very often. They would bring many bags of fruit and nuts, and they would play poker or pinochle with Dad. Mother, as usual, cooked and baked and baked and cooked all day in the kitchen, preparing big dinners for the hungry gang. This was a time of happy memories.



Eleven of the 13 Barnett children, circa 1908; Archie on the left, Sidney on the right.

¹ *Michigan Jewish History*, vol. 17, July, 1977, "History of the Jewish Community of Pontiac, Michigan", by Abe Lapidés, introduction by George Stutz, page 6.

² *Pontiac Press*, Nov. 25, 1959, editorial.



**The Streets of
Old Detroit
Dedicated to**

**LEONARD N. SIMONS
President-Emeritus
Historical Commission**

**In recognition of his major role in the
development of Detroit's historical museums
for over forty years under seven mayors
as a founding Historical Commissioner
on his 85th birthday
and Detroit's 288 birthday
July 24, 1989**

“STREETS OF OLD DETROIT”

Dedicated to
LEONARD N. SIMONS

The Detroit Historical Museum dedicated its most popular exhibit, the Streets of Old Detroit, to our very own Leonard N. Simons last year on the occasion of his 85th birthday and the 288th birthday of the City of Detroit. Simons, an ardent fan of history, is an Advisory Board member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and was the editor of the 1989 journal, *Michigan Jewish History*, a distinguished issue.

President emeritus of the Detroit Historical Commission, Simons conceived the idea for the Streets while visiting – with his late wife, Harriet – an indoor streetscape in the York Castle Museum in England. “The first such museum exhibit in the United States, the Streets of Old Detroit became a sensation that spawned imitators all over the country,” said Barry Dressel, former director of the Detroit Historical Department at the dedication.

“Leonard Simons is a man who has devoted more than half of his life to the preservation and dissemination of Detroit history,” declared Dressel. “For more than four decades Simons has lent his considerable expertise and experience to the development and growth of the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.” Dressel continued that without Simons we would not have had these Museums in Detroit.

As a past board member of the Jewish Welfare Federation, Simons served as the primary catalyst for Federation’s sponsorship of the publication of the two volumes of Detroit Jewish history by the Wayne State University Press, one already in print, the second scheduled for release next year. The first volume, *The Jews of Detroit, From the Beginning, 1762-1914*, by Robert A. Rockaway was published in 1986. The second part in the series, *Conflict in Unity - Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967*, By Dr. Sidney Bolkosky has a publication date of Fall, 1991. Simons has also stated that he is committed to encouraging the establishment at this time of professional archives of Detroit Jewish community history.

Simons has served as a past president of Temple Beth El, a past president of Franklin Hills Country Club, as a Board Member of Sinai Hospital, the Home for the Aged, and the Detroit Round table of Christians and Jews, as well as the United Negro College Fund, and in numerous other community activities. The founder in 1929 of Simons-Michelson Company Advertising Agency, he has been honored by the U.S. Army, the Treasury Department, and the French government. He has had an extensive association with Wayne State University. The full list of his honors, plaques, and charitable and fundraising efforts for the community, for Judaism, and for education would itself fill a book.

Author of, *Simons Says, Faith, Fun, and Foible*, witty and insightful personal recollections and reminiscences, Simons states that he was inspired by his grandparents, who taught him that a shroud has no pockets. “I really try to place service to my fellow man on as high and universal a plane as I can attain. *Zedakah is basic to our religious beliefs – our noblest tradition*. Life’s biggest thrills are secured from deeds of kindness and goodwill,” Simons says.

Indeed, Simons truly fits his own definition from his book of both a maverick (“people with ideas and strong minds of their own”) and a macher (“a doer”). The Jewish Historical Society congratulates our beloved Macher and Maverick on the beautiful recognition at the Detroit Historical Museum – and for his years of creative efforts in years past and in years to come. We are all his beneficiaries.

THE PHILOMATHIC DEBATING CLUB

by Prof. Ralph A. Raimi

Ralph A. Raimi is Professor of Mathematics and chairman of the Department at the University of Rochester. Born in Detroit, he was a student at Central High School, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan, and is married to Detroitier Sonya Drews. He is the author of "Vested Interests, Essays & Fantasies." He and his two brothers were members of Philomathic.



Prof. Ralph A. Raimi

Introduction: Origins

From 1898 to 1950 there flourished in Detroit an unusual organization of Jewish boys between 14 and 21 years of age. The founders were Meyer Cohen, Spencer S. Fishbaine, Ira Friedenberg, Jacob Gordon, Saul Hartz, Nathan P. Levin, Samuel M. Levin, Saul H. Meister, Benjamin Saltzstein, Louis Smilansky, Morris Smilansky, and Louis Wine. They were probably all students at the Detroit Central High School, in its new building at Cass and Warren – but it is possible that one or two were not, for even among Jewish boys not all attended the academic high school.

It was not at school, but at the United Jewish Charities Headquarters at Brush and Montcalm Streets, that The Philomathic Debating Club was organized. Within a few weeks it secured a room at the Talmud Torah building at 47 Division Street, where it met for the next twenty-one years.

Later homes trace the northwest moves of the Jewish community: the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, the Farnsworth Synagogue, a Talmud Torah on 12th Street and Atkinson, the Kirby Center of the United Hebrew Schools on Kirby at St. Antoine (1920-1924), The Byron Center at Byron and Philadelphia (in late 1924), the Y.W.H.A. Club Rooms at 89 Rowena St. (in 1926-27 or more), the Congregation Shaarey Zedek (temporary home at 9125 12th Street in 1928, then on Lawton and Chicago Blvd. in the 1930s), then (about 1940) the United Hebrew Schools building on Holmur and Tuxedo, and finally, in its last years, a Sunday School classroom (Room 202) of Congregation Shaarey Zedek again.

Debating clubs were popular in the schools of that time, but Central's lone debating society, The House of Representatives, excluded all Jews. Yet there is more to the founding of Philomathic than a simple response to prejudice at Central High School. Within a few years these barriers had largely disappeared; Louis Wine himself became a member of central's House of Representatives in 1900. Philomathic from the first took on a life of its own, owning no connection with any school or college, nor with any Jewish religious congregation, Volksverein or Zionist group. (It paid the Division Street Talmud Torah \$1.50 per month, in 1908, for its weekly meeting place; though Shaarey Zedek, in the 1930s, did grant the use of Room 202 without charge.)

It met each Sunday for three hours to conduct a program that typically included a formal debate on some topic of moral or political interest, sometimes but not usually of specifically Jewish import. The audience for these debates were the members themselves, and sometimes one or more of their own alumni or an invited speaker. Twice a year the Club put itself on display for its friends and relatives, with a public program of debate or oratory; and it treated itself to a banquet or a "social" from time to time.

Besides the weekly debate or other exercise in oratory, there would be a business meeting and not much more. It would seem a dull enough enterprise for boys of high school and college age, and yet the Club endured for half a century, and numbered in its rolls some of what became the most prominent men in the Detroit Jewish community: professors,

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doctors, tycoons, and innumerable attorneys, including several judges. [A complete historical membership list is appended to this article.] Most striking was (and still is) the love invariably expressed by alumni for their days at Philomathic, and their memory of it as an influence on their intellectual and moral growth unequalled by any other single formative experience.

Modus Operandi

The Constitution of the Philomathic Debating Club, as published in 1931, was descriptive of its practices over most of its lifetime:

The purposes of this club shall be: to develop in the members proficiency in the art of oratory and debate; to train them in the science of parliamentary law and practice; and to promote intelligent discussion on all the leading Jewish and other topics of the day.

and

Any young man between the ages of fourteen (14) and twenty-one (21) years shall be eligible for membership, provided he is of good moral character and of Jewish birth.

The weekly three-hour meetings were held on Sundays at 7:30 p.m. until about 1935, when the time was changed to Sunday afternoons at 3:00.

The Board of Directors consisted of the four officers (Speaker, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms) and two other elected members. It admitted new members, audited the books and authorized expenditures, which were mainly for the "outside affairs" (annual Oratorical Contests, Model Meetings and banquets, to which friends and relatives were invited, and the "socials"). Other expenses were for membership pins, gavels and other prizes, postage, stationery and rent. The Board also supervised the committees, very particularly approving the topics chosen for the Model Meeting debates, and the annual public Oratorical Contests, though the contestants were elected by the membership. It met immediately before each regular meeting of the Club for a half-hour or less.

The standing committees dealt with recruiting new members, scheduling the programs of meetings, dealing with the press (i.e. advertising Philomathic events), and inviting outside speakers to regular meetings. (This last was done by the so-called B.U.M. Committee. The initials, standing for "Bringing Up Men," were forever a source of merriment, but survived all constitutional revisions.)

An echo of the origins of Philomathic was the division of its year into semesters coinciding with those of the schools, and of Wayne University; a new set of officers was elected for each term. The rule that members must be at least 14 years old derived from its being the usual age for a 9th grade freshman in high school. Becoming a Philomathian was a process of some formality, involving a probationary semester and a "probationer's speech," which most members later remembered as a terrifying occasion. However, the Board never refused membership on the grounds of an inept performance, if earnestly given, and everyone improved with time and instruction. The oath of membership was given during meetings, under "New Business."

That one could remain a member until age 21 distinguished Philomathic from a high school organization enormously, for it was the older members, after the first few years, who served as the "adult" guides for the younger, a role that in high school clubs could only be filled by teachers. And just as important as the older members, as the years went

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by, were the alumni, some of them now distinguished members of the Detroit Jewish community, proud of their part in the organization, and ever anxious to instill into the current membership a proper sense of their traditions.

Size of the Club: Attendance

Though there were only twelve founding members in 1898, the membership varied from 25 to 35 over most of the lifetime of the organization, with a corresponding 10 to 25 usually present at a meeting. But attendance was a recurrent problem. There were times when a quorum could not be found and business was suspended while the remaining members engaged in some impromptu exercise, most popular of which was "hat speeches." The dues books often record, next to a member's name, a string of perhaps four absences followed by the notation "dropped," or "expelled."

In 1911 the Club voted a rule requiring payment of a 5 cent fine for absence, but it didn't last: In the Minutes for March 19, 1911 we read, "S. Barnett moved that all action taken in regard to fining 5 cents for absence be rescinded. Carried. M. Moscovitz moved that any member absent two consecutive meetings without excuse be fined 5 cents. A. Levin amended that 3 weeks be substituted for 2 weeks. Amendment lost. Motion lost."

Again, on January 27, 1924, "Mr. Koffman moved that a 25 cent fine be placed on those absent." With the amendment to add "unless excused," the motion was passed. Then, on February 10, a Mr. Kaufman moved that a 50 cent fine be levied on a person absent from an Oratorical Contest (apparently at an ordinary meeting, not the annual public contest), and it too passed, though amended to add "unless excused." And on the same day was passed a motion denying any member the right to vote on the outcome of a debate who had been absent during any part of it, i.e. who had come late to the meeting.

1911 was a year when membership was small (25 or less) and it sometimes happened that members scheduled for a debate at a regular meeting simply did not appear. (In this case a "volunteer" would take the empty place extemporaneously.) In 1924, however, the club had at least 35 members, and meager attendance seemed no threat to the life of the Club. Probably it was seen rather as an affront to the dignity of Philomathic. The 1924 legislation on fines evidently was repealed, since a similar motion was again passed in 1926; however, the 1940s had no such rules. The problem of absences did recur, of course, with or without fines, and in 1950 it was fatal.

Philomathic is remembered so fondly by former members that it is sometimes forgotten that the weekly attendance, plus preparation for committee work or the program of the day, or the Oratorical Contest or Model Meeting, or solicitation of funds, were a hard discipline for a young man, a boy, who had no reward and no necessity but his own desire to excel. Members sometimes walked long distances to attend meetings, or took a streetcar (6 cents each way, in the 1930s) – and the winter could be cold. Sundays could offer other attractions. Philomathic had to maintain its own discipline because there was no one else to do it. Perhaps more important, however, is the fact that demanding discipline for the common good was not regarded, in the first half of this century, as oppression, nor submitting to it, shameful.

The Programs in Regular Meetings – Formal Debates

The program of the day was in the early years almost invariably a debate on a formally stated proposition ("Resolved, that...), usually some political question of the time. Two speakers were appointed (by the Program Committee) to argue for the motion

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("Affirmative") and two against ("Negative"). The order of speech was Aff.#1, Neg.#1, Aff.#2, Neg.#2, these being the "constructive arguments," i.e. prepared (but by no means memorized) speeches, which the teams had to work on at home in the weeks preceding the performance. Then, after a brief pause for consultation, there would be four "rebuttal" speeches, in opposite order: the negative first and the affirmative having the last word.

Rebuttals were necessarily extemporaneous, since they addressed themselves strictly to commentary on the errors in what the other side had actually said; new material was not to be introduced. For an ordinary program, the prepared speeches would be ten minutes each and the rebuttal speeches five. If a speech ran overtime, the chairman would stop the speaker and call on the next. The "prepared" speeches were also, to an extent, extemporaneous, unlike a recitation or an oration in an oratorical contest; but a good speaker always knew in detail what he intended to say.

May 12, 1912	
Resolved, that U. S. pass a federal income tax.	
Aff.	Neg.
S. Meyers	G. Lewis (absent)
C. Goldstein	H. Stelter
	H. P. Epstein (absent)
Rost - 10-1.	
General discussion.	
S. Meyers	H. P. Epstein
G. Lewis	H. Stelter
H. P. Epstein	G. Lewis

Program Debate from Clerk's Minutes, 1912

Anyone familiar with courtroom procedure will recognize that this form of debate mimics the order of argument in a trial. Judges of a debate, like a jury in a courtroom trial, then vote a winner; but the criterion of success in a debate is not "beyond reasonable doubt," nor even "preponderance of the evidence," but rather a judgment as to which side presented its case best. In the high school debating leagues of the 1920s, when Varsity debating teams competed like football teams (sometimes with cheering sections, yelling "Fight, Fight!"), judges were constrained by elaborate point systems, so many for skill in speaking per se, so many for logic, so many for having established a point that was (whether valid or not) not successfully refuted by the other side, and so on.

These rules were known to many Philomathians but not much observed; members simply voted by a show of hands at the end of the debate. Except for the Critic (who was a member or visiting alumnus appointed ad hoc at each meeting to deliver a commentary at the end of the program), members seldom took notes. But the spirit of such rules was inviolate: the one rule, common to formal debate and courtroom trial judgments alike, that Philomathians did strictly follow was that judgment was to be made only on the evidence presented.

If (and this was the case in the 1913 Model Meeting) the Affirmative advocates Free Trade (the Negative therefore advocating a protective tariff), and the Minutes record the vote as (5-14), this means that the side advocating tariffs has won the debate by a nearly three-to-one margin, but it does not mean that the voters (i.e. the Club) advocate tariffs.

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It only means that based on the evidence presented that day in that debate, and on the persuasiveness of those speakers, fourteen out of twenty-one members found themselves compelled to announce that the negative had made the better case.

As is written in the Constitution, "The decision as to the winning team is to be given in the usual manner by the organization. The members are to listen carefully to the debate and upon their honor as gentlemen give an absolutely just and unbiased decision."

Similarly, when it came to criteria for "Best Speaker," who in the case of the Annual Model Meetings received a gold medal, the Constitution prescribed: "The man who shall deserve a favorable decision shall be the one who excelled in the following: (a) Team Work...25%; (b) Construction and Argument...50%; (c) Oratory and delivery...25%." It was nowhere required that the gold medal winner be on the right side of the question, or even the winning side.

Hat Speeches

But the rigid format of the formal debate, week after week, was either boring or limiting, and sometimes impossible, as at the beginning of the fall semester, when programs had not yet had time to be prepared. Or, as was not unknown, if the speakers of the evening did not appear. Something impromptu had to be developed, but something that was not mere conversation.

One such format was called "hat speeches." Each member present would write an essay topic on a slip of paper, fold it and place it in a hat passed around for the purpose (Until about 1940 almost everyone wore hats, winter and summer.) The hat was placed on the Speaker's lectern and a member, called forward at the Speaker's whim, would select a topic from the hat and read it silently. If he liked it he would speak on it for the allotted time (five minutes was common). If he did not like the topic he returned it to the hat and selected another, which he was now constrained to use. This made a nice problem: whether to content himself with the first topic selected, or to risk a second choice.

The topics that turned up under Hat Speeches were often familiar issues of the day, but sometimes they were oddities that would never turn up on a formal debate program: "Art," perhaps, "Justice," or "Dostoyevsky." If the second topic chosen from the hat was one the speaker knew absolutely nothing about, the problem would be, how to give a speech that starts out as if it is on the subject named, but segues into something the speaker does know something about, in such a way that the transition is hardly noticeable, and in any case entertaining.

There was a case in 1940 when the subject was "Art," and the speaker began, "The only Art I know anything about is Art Shires, who played first base for the Chicago White Sox in 1928..." Of course this went beyond segue, but the transition was so flamboyantly outrageous that the speaker had the admiration of the house. He got away with it.

Mock Trials

Hat speeches endured as a type of program (with the House voting a Best Speaker, and the Critic giving his commentary as with other sorts of programs) until Philomathic's last days. An earlier alternative to the formal debate was called a Mock Trial. The Minutes for January 13, 1917 record:

Mock Trial. Reuben Levine claims exemption from military service on grounds of being an alien. Prosecution: N. Goldstick, S. Rubiner; Defense: J. Liburt, I.

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Rosenstein. Vote: Guilty ...6; Not Guilty ...6. Judge (Charles Rubiner) delivers verdict: "The prisoner goes free."

(Charles Rubiner later became a Judge, of the Detroit Court of Common Pleas, and Nate Goldstick became Corporation Counsel to the City of Detroit.)

Old-timers questioned about it (including Reuben Levine himself) no longer remember the precise rules governing a mock trial, and since Mock Trials were no longer a feature of Philomathic programs in the 1930s and later, it is hard to recover their rationale. Obviously they could not have been completely free of rules, or the trial would lose coherence. Furthermore, it is recorded that at least one of Philomathic's regular meetings was devoted to a rehearsal for a mock trial, presumably one to be put on display at a future date. (Philomathic sometimes did entertain Jewish organizations with a display of some sort, usually a debate or forum on some Jewish theme, but as this example shows, mock trials too. Organizations named in some of the existing Minutes are the Pisgah Lodge of Bnai B'rith, The Warsaw Club, The Knights of Pythias, and the Pinsker Verein.) One more example:

January 1, 1910. Mock Trial. The People VS one I. Harris charged with maliciously deserting his wife and five children. . . Jury Disagreed. No verdict.

(This text is taken from the "Sergeant-at-Arms Book." One of the duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms, in the early years, was to record the bare results of the program of the day, while the Clerk, a higher officer, took the more formal Minutes of the whole meeting. The Sgt.-at-Arms also brought in the coals for the fire and took out the ashes.)

The mock trials of Mr. Levine and Mr. Harris were prepared programs; more often a mock trial was as impromptu as hat speeches. The Sergeant-at-Arms book records, "October 2, 1910. No program was arranged for the evening. A mock trial was held." And on another date, "A mock trial was held in which all members present participated." These are the complete entries for those meetings. There is no telling how an impromptu mock trial was put together.

Variety Speeches, Oratorical Contests, and others

Another sort of program, at first called ESSAYS, and later, PAPERS, evolved into two different types of program: the Oratorical Contest, and Variety Speeches. What was earlier called an "oratorical contest," on the other hand, later came to be known as Declamations. Here, each speaker memorized a speech, or a poem or other piece of literature, and presented it as a dramatic reading. Famous orations were the most usual model, with speeches from Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln and the like; but Shakespeare too has orations (in Julius Caesar, for example, and Henry V), and from Shakespeare it is a short step to other kinds of literature. Declamation contests were infrequent in the later years.

Oratorical contests in which members wrote and memorized their own lines were the more usual thing at Philomathic, and they were held in public as well. Such a performance is an exercise in writing as well as in declamation, and it was one of the more difficult assignments. The program for April 9, 1911 was summarized: "Oratorical Contest. Zionism (C. Goldstein, H. Meyers), Defense of Corporations (J. Berkovitz), Socialism (S. Barnett), Women Suffrage (I. Schlissel), Child Labor (A. Levin). J. Berkovitz won medal." There was no medal, actually; it was only the Sergeant-at-Arms' way of saying Berkovitz was elected best speaker. In later years, when Oratorical Contests were added to Model Meetings as annual public events, real medals were given to the winners.

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“Variety topics” became very common in the last years of Philomathic, and probably represent a certain loss of discipline. These could be essays or lectures on anything, and a Philomathian with some scholarly expertise, or even a hobby like photography or tropical fish, could simply lecture on it without much preparation. A formal debate requires planning and teamwork, and an oratorical contest requires considerable formality in composition, and strict memorization of the result, both more congenial to the American culture in 1900 than in 1940.

There were, finally, variants on the formal debate, such as the “cross-question debate,” the panel discussion, and the “heckling debate.” These variants had little importance, except as examples of the Club’s search for alternatives; as with any evolution, some survived and others did not. In 1940 the Club voted down a seriously proposed motion to have the next Model Meeting feature a cross-question debate instead of the traditional one. In the end, The Debate and The Oratorical Contest were the only two styles that were annually exhibited in public.

Good of the House

In some ways the most distinctive feature of a Philomathic meeting was the last parcel of time, whatever was left before adjournment: Good of the House. The Philomathic constitution left the term entirely undefined, as if so ancient a tradition needed none; and it appeared as an agenda item in the earliest known Minutes (1907).

For whatever time remained at the end of any meeting, following the program and all other business, the Speaker could, under that rubric, recognize and give the floor to any member or Honorary Alumnus present, to speak on any topic he chose, provided it was for the good of the house (i.e. the Club). Sometimes four or five people would have time to speak before the members called for adjournment, and sometimes the discussions grew so absorbing that adjournment was delayed a half hour beyond the usual time.

The origin of the phrase, “Good of the House,” is unknown to this writer, but, the form it took at Philomathic is a legacy of Philomathic just the same.

For to Philomathic, created for nothing but words, all topics were relevant, and Good of the House was turned into an art form. It was under Good of the House that an elder of the Club, or an Honorary Alumnus present, would speak on the quality of the Program just finished, criticizing the speakers and the arguments presented. But ordinary members, naturally, were the main users of Good of the House. It might seem to take considerable courage, not to say arrogance, to volunteer a speech with the announced purpose of doing the House some Good, but Philomathians had it: In some of the earliest Minutes it is written that “Every member present spoke under Good of the House,” while in 1939-1940 ten or eleven such speeches on a given day were sometimes recorded, and six or seven was common.

Phil Nusholtz was famous for speaking often, volubly and with great good humor on sex, a topic much more daring in 1939 than today. Some, like Abraham Raimi, never tired of lecturing the club on free trade or Keynesian economics. These were from a time when I was present; alas, the existing Minutes never record the subject of Good of the House lectures, so that my own time is all I can describe.

The Program of the day was instructive, sure, but Good of the House was more far-ranging, less formal, sometimes serious and sometimes facetious, or both serious and witty in the same breath. It was a point of pride to have something to say, something to display.

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Feuds too were conducted under that heading, some intellectual enemies continuing their disputes week after week. Good of the House was so popular that it sometimes seemed that all the rest of the meeting was but prelude.

Parliamentary Procedure

But it wasn't. The second art form cultivated by a true Philomathian was the manipulation of Robert's Rules of Order. As the weekly meetings of Philomathic did not ordinarily have much real business, and as many of the committees were (at best) "functioning," one would suppose that the members would get on to the program of the day with little delay, without more than nominal use of Robert's rules. One would be wrong. Philomathians took to its logic with enthusiasm. For nothing more than the fun of it a member might move that New Business be scheduled before the program of the day. From this beginning, there might be amendments moved, other motions with higher precedence proposed, other amendments moved and perhaps tabled. There might also be motions of The Previous Question, interrupted by Points of Order and of Personal Privilege and the like, to so convoluted a degree that the Speaker was sometimes hard put to keep track of the current state of affairs, to keep the membership from disorder, and to provide time later for Good of the House. He therefore had the authority to fine a member who was unruly or engaged in the making of frivolous motions. The fine might be three cents, or five or ten, but the principle was more important than the amount. The victim of the fine might then appeal the Speaker's decision to the house, which could override it but seldom did. (The Constitution permitted fines as high as 25 cents for indecorous behavior, but fines of that size were unheard of during the Depression.)

Robert's Rules were of course designed to facilitate debate, not complicate it, and the many niceties of procedure are detailed, as Robert himself put it in the Introduction, so that "...there should be a rule to go by, that there may be a uniformity of proceeding in business, not subject to the caprice of the chairman, or captiousness of the members." Robert certainly did not intend that the whole book be used at every meeting, but Philomathians tried; they revelled in the possibilities.

Philomathic was not alone in its interest in parliamentary procedure for its own sake. In the early years of the century the subject was taught formally in the schools as a branch of rhetoric, and the debating societies would sometimes put on exhibitions of parliamentary procedure for other students to observe. While Model Meetings did not have time for such displays, Philomathic did sometimes get its chance to exhibit its virtuosity in public.

On February 18, 1924, the Philomathic put on a special meeting as part of a "Fathers and Sons" evening at the Pisgah Lodge of B'nai B'rith. Samuel Rhodes was President of the Pisgah Lodge, and gave the chair to the Speaker of Philomathic, who conducted a species of model meeting, but this one with special attention to procedure. The Minutes contain this delicious bit: "Under New Business a motion was made to extend to the Pisgah Lodge a vote of thanks and an invitation to come to our meetings. After a great deal of parliamentary procedure, the first part of the motion, to give thanks, was lost, and the second part, to extend an invitation, was laid on the table."

One can imagine, and it is attested to by Isadore Berger, who was there, that the Club pulled out all the stops. When the Clerk wrote "a great deal of parliamentary procedure," compared to what went on during ordinary meetings when there was procedure to burn, he meant that there was hardly a footnote in Robert's Rules that went unused. That all

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this should be attached to a perfectly innocuous motion of thanks, which was moreover defeated (in part, the rest being delayed to a time indefinite), added to the charm. Of course the whole thing was prearranged.

The Outside Affairs: Model Meetings and Oratorical Contests

Friends and relatives of the membership were invited to the annual Model Meetings and Oratorical contests, usually held in some auditorium of a synagogue or Jewish Community Center, or in the Central or Northern High School. Programs were printed, medals (Gold, Silver, and in later years Bronze) awarded to the winning participants, and there were other ceremonies; preparation for these events was what constituted much of the "business" of the club's meetings, and of its committees.

These annual Model Meetings began in 1903, early in the history of the Club, and were the principal showcase for Philomathic until 1915, when the Oratorical Contests were added to the public agenda. The main event at a Model Meeting was always a debate, quite formal and better prepared than most Philomathic programs. What with the vestigial "business meeting," the Judge's report on presentation of the medals, and (until about 1930) music, this made for a long program. In 1929 there was even, at the end, "Adjournment to dance," but the Depression seems to have put an end to such irrelevant merriment.

The two debate teams, elected by the Club some months before the contest, chose the topic themselves. The propositions were pretty much whatever was currently being debated in the debating societies in the high schools, in the newspapers, and at Philomathic itself: Prohibition (1916), arbitration of labor disputes (1917), disarmament (1921 and 1930), child labor legislation (1925), socialism (1932), independence for India (1943), outlawing the Communist Party (1948) -- but rarely anything with a particularly Jewish orientation.

At each Model Meeting and Oratorical Contest, though not before about 1920, there would also be on the program a ceremonial Presentation of the Gavel, to the outgoing Speaker. This was a new gavel with a silver band on which the name of that Speaker and his dates were engraved, and it is now a souvenir much cherished in the homes, about fifty-five in all, of former Speakers of the period after 1920. In earlier times the outgoing Speaker seems to have merely taken his gavel home with him when he retired, because there was a "Gavel Committee" as early as 1910, buying two a year.

Gavels cost \$1.25 in 1910, but the silver band, engraved, brought the price up to \$4.00, according to the accounts books of the 1920s.

Oratorical Contests

The titles of the six orations presented at the Thirtieth Annual Oratorical Contest, held in January of 1944 and judged by Norman Leemon, Dr. A.M. Hershman, and Hon. William Friedman, were: 1. Foul is Fair; 2. And We Shall Live; 3. America; 4. Hate in War; Hate in Peace; 5. Free Speech -- Weapon of Fascism; and 6. The Unborn Child and The Word.

In a personal letter describing this contest, Phillip Nusholtz, who attended, wrote to a friend in the Army: "There were six speeches, five of them were about the persecution of the Jews and the sixth was also on a dry subject." The 'dry subject' part was only an example of the Nusholtz humor, but the lesson was that titles of orations don't explain much. The Nusholtz letter included a copy of the Program, but he knew that his characterization of the subject matter could not really conflict with the titles as printed.

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Hon. Homer Ferguson (1930), Hon. Harry B. Keidan, Judge John J. Maher (1936), Judge W. McKay Skillman (1937), Hon. Lila M. Neuenfelt (1942), Rabbi Morris Adler (1942), Hon. William Friedman (1944), and of course a host of Philomathic alumni, among them the honorary alumna Mrs. F. V. Martin. Frank Murphy, later Mayor of Detroit, Governor of Michigan, and U. S. Supreme Court Justice, was listed on the program for February 9, 1922, but was replaced at the last minute.

Medals

Gold and silver medals were for many years donated by Herman A. August and Maurice Morse for the Oratorical Contests, and by Louis Smilansky and Mrs. Frank V. Martin for the Model Meetings, for example. The tradition of such donations from former Philomathians, or their families, went back to the very first gold medal, that of the 1909 Model Meeting, which was donated by Louis Smilansky and won by Isadore Levin. (Mrs. Martin's late husband, Jacob G. Brown, had been the donor of the first silver medals.)

Beginning in 1936 the Cavanaugh Jewelry Company, donated bronze medals.

The silver loving cup presented to the winning team at each Model Meeting, to be displayed in rotation in the homes of the members of that team, before coming to rest with its captain, was donated beginning in 1919 by Judge Harry J. Dingeman, who had not been a Philomathian (and was not a Jew). He had been invited to judge one of the Model Meetings, and it impressed him so greatly, he wrote later, that he asked to attend a couple more. Then, on a suggestion by Reuben S. Levine, who was quite good at this sort of thing, he made the donation. He was of course made an Honorary Member, and took a friendly interest in Philomathic for the rest of his life. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Rosenthal donated the annual cup in 1947 and 1948, in memory of their son, Myron Rosenthal (Philomathian, 1941-1943), who was killed in the Second World War.

The other Philomathian killed in that war was Lawrence J. Hertzberg; the 1946 Oratorical contest's silver medal was presented in memory of both Rosenthal and Hertzberg.

The Older Generation – B.U.M. Committee

That the Philomathic survived its earliest years is probably explained by the Bringing Up Men Committee, since an organization of boys so young needs instruction and a little steadying. In the earliest surviving Minutes of the Club it is recorded that the program of December 6, 1908 consisted of a set of "papers on the following subjects: Aim and purpose of Zionism (C. Barnett), Accomplishments of Zionism (H. Gordon), Prospects of Zionism (B. Robinson), and Trade Unions (I. Levin)," followed by an address on Zionism by Rabbi Abraham M. Hershman, of Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

Visiting speakers, men "brought up" by the B.U.M. Committee to judge the weekly debates or speak to the club under Good of the House, were teachers and professors of speech, Rabbis, lawyers -- anyone who cherished oratory and ideas. Rabbi Morris Adler addressed the club in March, 1940, on the subject of (curiously enough) speech technique, and a month later Theodore Baruch, Debate Coach at Pershing High School spoke to the Club on "Trends in Debating;" but mostly the "outsiders" at ordinary meetings were Philomathic alumni.

By 1940 however, at the rate of two speakers a year, the B.U.M. Committee mainly did nothing. Yet at each week's meeting, when called on for his report, the Chairman of the B.U.M. Committee would solemnly stand up and announce that his Committee was

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“functioning.” This announcement became a Philomathic tradition, and “functioning” a humorous synonym for inactivity.

Honorary Alumni

Philomathians resigning in good standing or superannuated at age 22 were sometimes elected Honorary Alumni and thereby privileged to participate in the regular business of the meetings, though without vote. The Constitution provided for their election and their privileges, and it was customary to elect to that status any winner of a gold medal, and any former Speaker.

Philomathians will agree that the alumni, especially the Honorary Alumni, were the life of the organization. They not only came to be judges and speakers at ordinary meetings, but served often as judges for the outside affairs. They were in effect Philomathic's teachers and older brothers (often literally). Every time an honorary alumnus came to a meeting and gave a critic's report, or lectured under Good of the House on Zionism, oratory or the national debt, the membership would be impressed at the fluency of his speech, the ease of his wit, the depth of his ideas. He may have been a law student twenty-two years old, but to anyone five years younger he was already a model; and without a model, even one he later discards, a youngster cannot learn. And even when they were not present, they were a source of pride to the membership; they could be named as “one of ours.”

Advertisements in Programs

In addition to their service as instructors, the Philomathic alumni were the main source of financing for the Model Meetings and Oratorical Contests, in that they bought “advertisements” printed in the programs, often in the form “Compliments of A Friend,” but sometimes urging the reader to be buried by the Lewis Brothers Funeral Directors on John R. Non-Philomathians also advertised: for example, Harry Boesky's restaurant on Hastings at Farnsworth (later on 12th Street). Either way, it was pure goodwill, not business; the outside affairs never drew more than a hundred people or so.

It was the task of the Program Committee for a given affair to solicit for these donations, and I remember how terrified I was in 1940 when I sat in outer office of the famed attorney Samuel Rhodes mentally rehearsing what I could say to induce him to part with three dollars. Fortunately, Ernest J. Schwartz was with me. When we secured admittance I was tongue-tied, and Schwartz and Rhodes did all the talking. It was a revelation to see how enthusiastic Mr. Rhodes was about the continued prosperity of Philomathic. Our request was not a burden at all: He reminisced about old times, and seemed more honored to be remembered by us than the other way around. I believe that while we only dared ask him for three dollars, he gave us five.

The Outside Affairs: Banquets and Socials

The financial report for the June, 1909 “Banquet” lists expenses for “bread; tables; lemons; oranges; bananas; strawberries; napkins; cakes; ice cream; fancy cakes; gingerale; cocoa; sugar; mustard; kisses and other candies; janitor; woman; postage; cheese; milk and cream;” for a total expense of \$16.43 (31 members -- the entire membership -- attended), so that these affairs could be quite informal. Since it is not clear what the mustard was for, one suspects there must have been some corned beef or salami, perhaps donated, even if not listed on this particular report. The item “tables” referred to three 8-foot tables rented for the occasion (for \$1.05, including delivery and later pick-up), from Walker Bros. Catering Co. at 29 Farmer Street; the “banquet” was held at the Division

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Street Talmud Torah, where Philomathic regularly met.

A banquet that took place ten years later was quite another affair. A newspaper article (probably from *The Jewish Chronicle*) of January, 1920 reported,

Tuesday evening, December 30, 1919, at the Carmel Kosher restaurant, the Philomathic Debating Club held its seventeenth annual banquet, which was by far one of the most successful events of the season in Detroit. Rabbi Harry Z. Gordon gave the blessing. Mr. S. Rhodes, a prominent attorney of the city, acted as toastmaster. Among those who addressed the organization were some of the most prominent men of the city, Messrs. Fred Butzel, Louis Cohane, A. Levin, M. Friedland, H. August, N.S. Goldstick and H. Meyers. Miss I. Starikoff entertained with the piano. Mr. H. Gurovitch played the violin, accompanied by Miss Kraus at the piano. Mrs. J.C. Brown also addressed the organization.

The 1919 Banquet was more typical of the times than the simple feasts of 1909 and 1913. Elaborate banquets were an essential feature of almost every club, lodge, religious or charitable organization of the period preceding the Depression, and they were even held by clubs -- including debating clubs -- at Central High School, where many Philomathians were students, just as they were held by adult organizations.

The other sort of banquet-- the kind with rented tables held in 1909 and 1913 -- metamorphosed into what in later years were called "socials," a summer social and a winter social. In the 1920s Mrs. F. V. Martin, widow of Jacob G. Brown and donor of an annual silver medal, often invited the club to her house for such a social. (She was even elected an Honorary Alumna, the only one Philomathic ever had, and was often a judge at Model Meetings and Oratorical Contests, or a speaker at banquets.) Other alumni were also hosts of this sort, but more usually the club rented a room or used a park or some member's summer cottage. In the 1930s the winter social featured poker and hot dogs, and the summer social featured hot dogs and baseball.

In the case of Philomathic, some notable banquets, such as those celebrating the 25th, 30th and 50th anniversaries of the Club (1923, 1928, and 1948), printed lengthy Programs, almost magazines, entitled *The Philomathian*. Besides the order of events, and advertisements, these articles written by members and alumni, often historical resumes, providing inspiration to the membership and continuity of the tradition. After the 1928, banquets became sporadic. There was a 38th Anniversary Banquet in 1936 at Lachar's Banquet Hall, dedicated to the ailing Judge Harry J. Dingeman, a benefactor of Philomathic. Charles Rubiner, Louis Wine (one of the founding members of Philomathic) and Melvin Gerson were the featured speakers, though "everyone" was invited to speak under Good of the House. Isadore Berger was toastmaster for the 1940 banquet.

After that, there seems to have been a hiatus until 1948, when the grandest banquet of all, held at the Book Cadillac Hotel on February 28, celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Philomathic Debating Club, under the chairmanship of Morton Zieve.

The club had but twenty members and three probationers on that day, but there must have been at least 32 former Speakers present, since that number posed for the photograph printed in *The Detroit Jewish News*. The Invocation was given by one of them, Rabbi Harold N. Rosenthal; and Phillip Nusholtz (honorary alumnus, but never Speaker) was the Toastmaster. That was Philomathic's last Banquet. *The Jewish News* commented: "Fifty years of Detroit Jewish history is encompassed. . . by this forensic society for Jewish youths whose former members are now among the major figures in the Jewish community."

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THE 50-YEAR BANQUET OF THE PHILOMATHIC
February 28, 1948

Left to right: (row 1) Wilbur DeYoung, Louis Starfield Cohane, Dr. Irving Edgar, Albert Williams, Jack Alspector; (row 2) Paul Goldstein, Reuben Levine, Sol J. Schwartz, Isadore Berger, Norval Slobin, Marcus Simon; (row 3) Hyman A. Keidan, William Gordon, Jack Behrmann, Isadore G. Stone, Sol Rosenman, Harry Jacobs; (row 4) Max D. Lipsitz, Howard P. Berger, Rabbi Harold Rosenthal, David Levin, Bernard Sharkey, Jack Driker, Samuel Sternberg; (row 5) Morton Zieve, chairman of the banquet; Norman Leemon, Philmore Leemon, Sidney DeYoung, Sam Schwartz, Albert Silber, Max Chomsky, Dr. Saul Barnett.



Photo by Isadore Arnold Berger, Courtesy of Mrs. Irving Edgar

Alphabetical List of Members of Philomathic 1898-1950

Aaron, Irwin	1925-27	Brenner, Morry	1910-13	Fink, D	1909
Abramoff, Morris	1920-23	Broder, Hyman C.	1912-16	Fink, S	1910-12
Abramson, Roy	1910-11	Broner, Paul	1927-29	Fink, M	pre 1923
Ackerman, Irving	1927-29	Brown, David S.	1947-48	Fink, William	1922-25
Adelson, William	1912-16	Brown, David A. (Honorary)	1917-	Finkelstein, Sam	1931-32
Aishiskin, Peter C.	1914-15	Brown, Harry Z.	pre 1923	Finn, Marvin	1937-39
Albert, Jack	1918-19	Brown, Jacob G.	1900-04	Fishbaine, Spencer S.	1898-1902
Alpert, Bernard	1922-24	Brown, Jerome	1945-48	Fisher, Michael	1908-09
Alspector, Jack I.	1944-48	Brown, Joseph	1927-27	Frank, Seymour	1910-12
Applebaum, Gilbert	1921-23	Brown, Stanley H.	1944-48	Freed, Zangwill	1933-35
Applebaum, H	pre 1923	Brown, William H.	1927-27	Freedman, Isadore	1916-17
Arden, Lawrence	1940-43	Budnitzky, Daniel	1919-23	Freedman, Max N.	1911-13
Aronstam, Ralph G.	1919-20	Budnitzky, David	-22	Friedenber, Ira	1898-1902
August, Harry E.	1912-16	Burak, J. (I?)	1911-12	Friedgood, Charles	1934-38
August, Herman A.	1911-16	Bush, Sam	1912-	Friedland, M.	1906-08
Babbin, Fred	1934-35	Caplan, Julian	1932-36	Friedman, Aaron	1940-40
Balter, Harold G.	1919-21	Caplan, Seymour	1928-30	Friedman, Joe B.	1914
Barack, Benjamin		Carpol, Louis	1919-22	Friedman, Leon	pre 1928
Barack, David E.	pre 1923	Charlip, Eliot	1945-47	Frosh, Murray	1936-38
Barahal, George	1934-34	Chomsky Max	1928-34	Gantz, Benjamin	1925-27
Barahal, Hyman S	1921-26	Coggan, Maurice	1936-38	Gantz, George	1930-32
Barahal, Max M	1925-27	Cohane, Louis S.	1903-12	Gantz, Isadore	1926-27
Barcus, H. H.	1905-09	Cohen, David	1932-32	Garnett, B	pre 1922
Barcus, N.	19??-24	Cohen, Hy	1923	Genzler, Emanuel M.	1938-39
Barnett, Charles	1905-09	Cohen, Melvyn	1942-42	Gerber, Marvin	1948-50
Barnett, Saul E.	1908-13	Cohen, Meyer	1898-1901	Gerson, Melvin	1931-39
Baron, Morris	1919-20	Cohen, Raymond	1931-31	Gilbert, Gerald G.	1943-44
Baron, Sidney	1939-41	Cohl, Robert	1934-37	Gittleman, A.	1906-08
Baruch, Alex	1930-33	Colten, Oscar	1929-32	Glass, N.	1914-17
Baum, Victor J.	1940-41	Cooper, David	1910-14	Glovinsky, Arnold	1941-42
Bauman, Morton	1928-29	Coven, Maxwell	1919-22	Goldberg, Abraham	1917-19
Beckerman, Joseph	1935-35	Crohn, David	1937-39	Goldberg, Adolph	1930-32
Beckman, Irving C.	1924-26	Danto, Benjamin	1905-07	Goldberg, Benjamin	1910-14
Behrmann, Jack	1931-38	Davidow, Larry	1913-14	Goldberg, Morris	1904-07
Beitner, Elliot I.	1947-48	Davidson, Gerald	1936-39	Golden, Hyman	1924-27
Bennett, H.	1915-16	Davidson, Norman	1930-30	Golden, Irving	1929-29
Berent, Max	1919-20	Davis, Abe	1909-11	Goldman, Morse	1904-09
Berg, Al	1930-33	Davis, Abe	1930-34	Goldsmith, Maurice	1933-35
Berg, Leon	1940-41	Devin, Simon	1915	Goldstein, Alan	1941-41
Berger, Howard P.	1925-28	De Young, Sidney	1919-24	Goldstein, Benjamin W.	1913-15
Berger, Isadore Arnold	1920-25	De Young, Wilbur	1918-23	Goldstein, Bernard pre	1923
Berk, Nathan	1928-29	Dincin, Emanuel	1914-16	Goldstein, Charles L.	1910-14
Berke, Jacob	1909-12	Dingeman, Harry J. (Honorary)	1919-	Goldstein, Julius L.	1914-16
Berkowitz, Jacob H.	1909-12	Drasnin, Akivah	1933-34	Goldstein, Paul	1916-20
Berman, Louis	1930-30	Drasnin, Samuel		Goldstein, S.	1910-14
Berman, Mandel L.		Driker, Jack C.	1944-48	Goldstein, T.	pre 1923
Bernstein, Marvin S.	1946-50	Dushkin, Max	1906-09	Goldstick, Hilliard W.	1908-11
Bernstein, Peter M.	1906-07	Dworkin, Louis	1918-20	Goldstick, Maurice	1915-17
Bernstein, Robert N.	1921-26	Eder, Samuel	1908-11	Goldstick, Nathaniel H.	1907-11
Bernstein, Sander	1942-44	Edgar, Aaron E.	pre 1923	Goodman, Ernest	1923-25
Bernstein, Victor	1916-18	Edgar, Irving	1918-21	Goodman, Gilbert	1926-27
Berris, David	1921-24	Elkind, Louis	1933-39	Goodman, Harold	1927-29
Berris, Morris H.	1928-31	Enfeld, Louis	1922-26	Gooze, Hyman	pre 1923
Berry, Harold	1942-44	Epel, Joseph	1937-38	Gooze, Louis	1919-20
Bessman, Joseph C.	1916-18	Epstein, Nathan	1934-39	Gordon, Harry Z.	1907-10
Bigelman, L.	1915-15	Faber, D.	pre 1923	Gordon, Herman J.	1910-12
Biller, D.	1908-10	Faber, Morris	pre 1928	Gordon, Hyman	1909-10
Bittker, Irving	1909-11	Faigin, Henry	1931-33	Gordon, Jacob	1898-1903
Blumberg, Herman	1912-13	Falk, Isadore	pre 1928	Gordon, A. Louis	pre 1921
Blumberg, Morris H.	1904-06	Farber, Walter	1923-25	Gordon, Maynard	1943-47
Blumberg, Oscar R	1903-07	Farbman, Aaron	pre 1923	Gordon, Samuel	1908-11
Blumrosen, Joseph	1908-10	Feinberg, Benjamin	pre 1923	Gordon, William	1906-09
Blumrosen, Nathan	1910-11	Fetter, Abraham	1940-40	Goren, Jack	1931-32
Bookstein, Joseph	1946-	Field, Bernard	1932-32	Gornetzky, Benjamin	1914-15
Borocoff, Leslie	1926-27	Fine, Harold	1945-47	Gottesman, Arthur	1914-16
Borodawkin, David	1937-39	Fineman, Joseph	1920-21	Gottesman, Clarence	1913-16
Borovitz, Harry	1922-25			Gottlieb, Louis A.	1920-23
Brasch, Al R.	1917-19			Gottlieb, Raymond S.	1946-50

PHILOMATHIC

Green, Isaac	1940-44		
Green, Martin	1937-39		
Green, Morris A.	1936-42		
Green, Paul			
Greenbaum, Saul	1904-06		
Greenberg, Isaac	1926-31		
Greenberg, Saul	1933-35		
Gross, William	1938-40		
Grynder, H.	pre 1922		
Gumbiner, M.	1910-11		
Gumm, L.	pre 1928		
Gurko, Leo	1928-30		
Gurovitch, Harry	1917-20		
Gurwin, Abraham	1916-17		
Gurwin, Martin	1936-37		
Gurwin, Samuel	1920-24		
Gutentag, Joseph	1946-48?		
Hamburger, A.	pre 1923		
Harriss, J.	pre 1922		
Harris, I.	1909-11		
Harris, Maurice	1910-13		
Hartz, Saul	1898-1904		
Hertz, Benjamin	1937-39		
Hertzberg, Lawrence	1939-43		
Hertzberg, Samuel E.	1936-39		
Himelston, Alfred	1945-47		
Hoffman, Max	1929-31		
Honigman, Daniel	1948-		
Honigman, Jason L.	1921-22		
Horwitz, J. Shurly	1919-21		
Horwitz, L.	1917-21		
Hyman, S.	pre 1922		
Immerman, I.	1910-12		
Immerman, Sidney	1910		
Isaacs, Irving	1932-36		
Isenberg, I.	1917-18		
Jacob, Edwin	1943-43		
Jacobs, Harry Leo	1936-40		
Jacobs, N.	1908-09		
Jacobson, S. Herman	1943-45		
Jacobson, Oscar	1930-32		
Jaffe, Joseph	pre 1923		
Jaslow, Max B.	1916-17		
Jatovsky, L.	1909-11		
Jay, J. Israel	1903-06		
Jay, Philip	pre 1921		
Kabaker, Samuel	1913-17		
Kadushin, Jacob	pre 1923		
Kallman, Leo	1917-20		
Kallman, Rueben R.	1917-21		
Kaminer, Roland	1947-48		
Kapetansky, Abe	1919-20		
Kapetansky, Nathan	1919-21		
Kaplan, Ben	1927-27		
Katz, Alex	1928-28		
Kaufman, Israel	1913-14		
Kaufman, Oscar	1924		
Keidan, Hyman	1903-08		
Keidan, Max	1914-18		
Kellman, Samuel	1924-27		
Kelman, Jerome	1938-41		
Kelter, T.	1911-12		
Keys, Myron A.	1910-13		
Kimche, C.	1915-16		
Kirschbaum, H.	1916-16		
Kirschbaum, Harry M.	1922-26		
Klar, Irvin			
Klegon, Robert			
Klein, Cyrus	1933-35		
Klein, Maurice	1913-17		
Klein, Victor	pre 1923		
Klimist, Sheldon	1946-		
Kluniver, L.	pre 1923		
Knoppow, Max	1906-07		
Knoppow, William	1921-24		
Koffman, Barney	1922-24		
Koffman, David	1918-21		
Kohlenberg, Norman	1937-39		
Koretz, David	1924-26		
Koretz, Harold	1925-27		
Koretz, Louis	1930-32		
Koretz, Morris	1932-32		
Koretz, Sidney S.	1922-25		
Kosmensky, Samuel H.	1917		
Kramer, Albert	1939-43		
Kramer, Richard B.	1934-40		
Krause, Sheldon	1944-45		
Krawetz, Sam	1927-27		
Krell, Benjamin	1918-19		
Krolik, Julian H.	1900-02		
Kruger, Louis	1921-25		
Kuhel, Eli	1943-44		
Kurtzman, Benjamin	1922-27		
Kuschinsky, Leo	1913-16		
Landis, Harold	1940-41		
Lax, Morris	1939-40		
Layne, Maurice	1919-22		
Leach, David W.	1926-28		
Leach, Saul	1928-29		
Leach, Sheldon	1927-29		
Leemon, Norman I.	1935-42		
Leemon, Philmore	1934-38		
Leet, Cecil	-15		
Leib, Samuel	1920-23		
Levin, Abraham J.	1910-13		
Levin, A.	1907-12		
Levin, David B.	1931-35		
Levin, Ezra	pre 1921		
Levin, Henry Lewis	1935-40		
Levin, Isadore	1907-10		
Levin, Nathan P.	1898-1906		
Levin, Oscar	1906-07		
Levin, Samuel M.	1898-1905		
Levin, Simon	1915-17		
Levin Yale	pre 1928		
Levine, Reuben S.	1916-21		
Lewis, Daniel	1907-11		
Lewis, Hyman	1910-13		
Lewis, Karl J.	1943-48		
Liburt, Joseph	1916-18		
Liebergott, Stanley	1935-36		
Lieberman, Nathan	1920-21		
Lightstone, J.	1915-19		
Lipkin, Ezra	1914-16		
Lipschinsky, A.	1904-09		
Lipsitz, David	1928-31		
Lipsitz, Louis	1932-34		
Lipsitz, Louis	1934-35		
Lipsitz, M.	-06		
Loomis, Joseph	1918-20		
Madison, Leo	1921-22		
Madison, Maxwell	1916-16		
Madorsky, Melvin	1947-		
Mandell, Leo	1921-22		
Manila, Carl	1925-25		
Margolis, Jack H.	1920-23		
Margolis, Marvin	1944-45		
Margulies, Irving	1946-		
Martin, Mrs. Frank V. (Honorary) formerly Mrs. Jacob G. Brown	1928-44		
Marwil, Milton	1927-28		
May, Herbert	1935-37		
Mayburn, Angelo L.	1914-17		
Meister, Saul H.	1898-1903		
Melinoff, Joseph	pre 1923		
Mendelssohn, Reuben J.	1918-19		
Metzger, H.	pre 1923		
Metzger, Nathan D.	1916-18		
Meyers, Henry (Hyman)	1907-12		
Meyers, Maurice P.	1917-20		
Meyers, Solomon G.	1912-16		
Meyerson, Miles	1939-42		
Michaelson, Benjamin M.	1912		
Milin, Norman	1940-43		
Milinsky, Sam	1925-25		
Miller, Darwin	1940-42		
Miller, Elias	1926-26		
Miller, Harry	1916-17		
Miller, J.	1908-10		
Miller, Jack M.	1928-31		
Miller L.	pre 1923		
Miller, Peter A.	pre 1923		
Miller, Samuel Louis	1914-16		
Miller, William I.	1914		
Molonon, Sherman	1940-41		
Morris, Joseph	1914-18		
Morse, Maurice	1908-12		
Morse, Peter	1934-37		
Muskovitz, Irvin	1919-20		
Muscovitz, Nathan	1918-19		
Netzorg, Morton	1909-12		
Newman, Gus	pre 1923		
Nichamin, Samuel J.	1920-23		
Nusholtz, Donald	1940-41		
Nusholtz, Phillip	1935-39		
Olander, Philip	1920-21		
Oppenheim, Jack J.	1941-47		
Ornstein, Edward E.	1914		
Ornstein, Edward	1916-16		
Ornstein, Charles	1919-22		
Pallman, Isadore	pre 1928		
Paul, Lester C.	pre 1923		
Pearl, Albert	1923-28		
Pearlman, Israel	pre 1923		
Pelavin, Alvin	1940-42		
Pelavin, Morris	1922-26		
Peltz, Morris	1943-47		
Pevos, Edward	1932-34		
Philips, Harry	1921-23		
Platler, S.	1909		
Platt, Harry H.	1919-22		
Plotler, M.	pre 1921		
Portnoy, Robert	1949-50		
Porvin, David R.	1914-16		
Raimi, Abraham	1936-40		
Raimi, Ralph A.	1939-41		
Raimi, Shepherd	1945-48		
Ratner, Manuel	1928-28		
Ratner, Manuel	1930-31		
Reisman, B.	1911-12		
Reisman, H.	1921-23		
Reiss, J.	pre 1923		
Reiss, S.	1910-12		
Rembaum, George	1941-44		
Resnick, M.	1914-15		
Rhodes, Ben	pre 1923		
Rhodes, Irving			
Rhodes, Samuel J.	1908-11		
Rice, Henry	1921-22		
Rightman, Jack	1920-21		
Risman, Emil	1908-09		
Roberts, Eugene	1936-38		
Robinson, Benjamin	1907-10		

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Robinson, Charles	1908-11		
Robinson, Joseph	1911-12		
Robinson, Martin	1911-12		
Robinson, N.	pre 1923	Schulman, Louis	1919-22
Robinson, Richard	1911-11	Schulman, Samuel	1922-24
Rogvoy, Jacob	1916-19	Schuster, Max D.	1918-20
Rogvoy, Theodore	1919-20	Schwartz, Ernest J.	1939-42
Rom, Jack	1927-32	Schwartz, Harry R.	1924-26
Rom, Norman	1924-27	Schwartz, Joseph	1916-19
Romer, Samuel	1928-29	Schwartz, Oscar D.	1926-27
Rosen, L.	1915-17	Schwartz, Samuel J.	1940-44
Rosen, Robert	pre 1923	Schwartz, Sol J.	1934-40
Rosenberg, Bernard J.	1941-44	Seel, Gellert A.	1942-43
Rosenberg, Harold	1942-43	Segal, Jonas B.	1930-31
Rosenman, Sol I.	1924-29	Selesnick, Sheldon T.	1942-44
Rosenstein, Herebert	1924-26	Seligman, Henry	1938-41
Rosenstein, Israel	1914-18	Selik, Louis	1937-
Rosenthal, Ervin A.	1925-27	Selik, Sol	1933-33
Rosenthal, Harold N.	1916-19	Seltzer, Lawrence	1914-16
Rosenthal, Jacob J.	1919-21	Shapero, Martin	1938-42
Rosenthal, Myron	1941-43	Shapiro, Nathan	1907-08
Rosenthal, S.	1909-10	Shapiro, William	1935-40
Rosenzweig, C.	1917-18	Sharkey, Arnold	1932-35
Rosenzweig, Leonard	1920-22	Sharkey, Bernard	1929-34
Rosenzweig, Louis	1920-22	Sharkey, Jack	
Roth, Joseph R.	1937-38	Sharkey, Ray	1932-33
Rothman, Bernard	1930-35	Shaw, Irwin	1926-26
Rothman, Emil	1914-17	Shetzer, Simon	1914-17
Rothman, Morris	1917-19	Shevitz, Abe D.	1918-20
Rothman, Robert	1917-18	Shevitz, Irving	1926-26
Rouff, M	pre 1921	Shevitz, Sydney M.	1922-25
Rovetch, Warren	1943-44	Shcifman, Saul H.	1932-35
Rubenstein, Sidney	1922-24	Shieneman, H.	1909-10
Rubin, Bernard	1931-33	Shlain, Ben	1915-16
Rubin, Nathaniel	1929-31	Shulman, I. Irwin	1941-44
Rubiner, Arthur	1943-45	Shur, Herzel B.	1921-25
Rubiner, Charles	1913-17	Shur, Nathan E.	1926-30
Rubiner, Julius	191?	Shur, Saul E.	1932-35
Rubiner, Samuel H.	1915-18	Shusterman, Marvin	1936-36
Rubiner, Walter	1945-46	Siden, Franklin	1939-40
Rubinstein, Lawrence	1928-31	Siden, Irving	1936-43
Safir, Benjamin J.	1920-23	Siegel, Albert B	1938-41
Safran, David	1934-35	Silber, Albert J.	1926-31
Saltzstein, Benjamin F.	1898-1900	Silver, William	1938-40
Saltzstein, Saul		Silverblatt, Aaron	
Sandelman, Stuart P.	1941-44	Silverman, Lester	1931-36
Sander (Sanders?), Abe	pre 1921	Silverstein, Louis	1940-44
Sandweiss, Bertrand	1945-46	Simon, Markus	1926-30
Sandweiss, David J.	1913-16	Singerman, Isadore	1921
Saretsky, Theodore	1934-34	Sitkce, Isadore	
Saulson, S.	1906-07	Skolnek, Oscar	1913-19
Saulson, Saul	1916-18	Slavin, Harry	1910-14
Schechter, Harry	1924-26	Sloan, Bernard	1945-47
Schechter, Daniel E.	-50	Slobin, Norval	1927-32
Scheinman, Harry	1909-11	Slobin, Sidney	1928-31
Schieder, J.	1919-21	Slovitch, Maxwell	1913-15
Schiff, Donald W.	1943	Slutzky, G.	1920
Schlissel, A.	1914-15	Smerling, Morton D.	1940-41
Schlissel, Hyman	1906-09	Smilansky, Louis	1898-1902
Schlissel, Meyer	1910-13	Smilansky, Morris	1898-1905
Schlissel, I.	1910-11	Smiley, Harold H.	1903-05
Schlissel, N.	1910-11	Smith, Charles A.	1905-07
Schlusssel, E.	pre 1923	Smith, F.	1906-08
Schlusssel, Harold M.	1912-14	Smith, Sydney	1929-30
Schlusssel, Irving	1923-26	Snyder, Arthur	1927-27
Schlusssel, Maurice		Snyder, Arthur	1928-31
Schmier, Herman A.	1914-18	Snyder, H.	1907-08
Schneider, Jack	1920-21	Snyder, Leopold J. (I)	1932-37
Schreiber, George	1930-35	Snyder, Leopold J. (II)	1932-37
Schubiner, Arthur	1927-28	Snyder, Norman	1938-40
Schubiner, Max	1926-27	Sobin, David J.	1927-30
Schulman, Jack F.	1921-24	Sobin, Sidney	1929-31
		Sobin, S. Sidney	1928-29
		Soloman, M.	1909-10
		Solovich, Maxwell D.	1913-15
		Starr, Isadore	1917-20
		Stein, Leonard	1923-24
		Steinberg, A.	1915-16
		Sternberg, George T.	1922-25
		Sternberg, Samuel	1914-18
		Stier, Simon	1923-25
		Stockler, Ben	1911-15
		Stockler, Nelson	1922-23
		Stone, Ira	1923-28
		Stone, Isadore G.	1921-24
		Storchan, Alan	1931-31
		Strom, Max Michael	1938-41
		Sumetz, Aaron	1933-33
		Tauber, Benjamin	1924-25
		Taylor, George	1908-10
		Tenenbaum, Harry	1936-37
		Tepperman, Zola	-50
		Terris, C.	1919-
		Thumin, Henry	1924-27
		Thumin, Jack	1920-24
		Thumin, Martin	1933-35
		Thurswell, Harry	1927-27
		Thurswell, Henry	1926-26
		Travis, Samuel	1928-29
		Ulrich, Roy D.	
		Veleck, Harry A.	1907-09
		Victor, Mitchell	1907-08
		Wachs, William	
		Wagman, Human	1930-31
		Waldhorn, Emanuel	1914
		Weil, Rolfe	1935-36
		Weinberg, Morris	pre 1921
		Weinstein, Jack	1923-26
		Weintrobe, Herbert	1939-41
		Weisberg, G.	1919-21
		Weisberg, Sam	1919-21
		Weisenfeld, David	1930-32
		Weisenfeld, Louis	1925-26
		Weisenfeld, Meyer	1922-26
		Weisman, P.	1913-15
		Weisman, Ralph	1903-08
		Weiss, Arthur	1930-30
		Weiss, Arthur	1930-31
		Weiss, Edward	1921-25
		Weiss, George S.	1915-19
		Weiss, Lester	1933-33
		Weiss, Louis	1917-19
		Weiss, Otto A.	1918-19
		Weiss, William	1913-15
		Weissman, Jacob	1929-30
		Weisswasser, Aaron	1919-23
		Weitz, Leon	1939-41
		Weitzman, Louis J.	
		Wetsman, Louis J.	1927-28
		Wexler, Norman	1942-45
		Williams, Albert A.	1927-30
		Wine, Louis	1898-1902
		Wine, Sherwin	1944-46
		Wise, Nathan	1926-28
		Wolfgang, Sidney	1917-18
		Wolner, Manuel	
		Wolok, Emil	1937-39
		Yanover, Robert	1914-16
		Yolles, William	1939-40
		Zackheim, Herschel	1931-32
		Zeldis, Hyram M.	1944
		Zemon, Julian	pre 1923
		Zieve, Morton	1941-45
		Zilber, Sidney S.	1942-45
		Zweig, Raymond I.	1943-48

IN MEMORIAM:

Dr. Irving I. Edgar

1902-1990



Dr. Irving Edgar

Dr. Irving I. Edgar, who died August 17, 1990 at his Southfield home, was a remarkable man. A truly Renaissance man. Born in Austria-Hungary, he came to this country in 1910. He and his family settled in Detroit.

History, especially Jewish history, was his special love. He helped found the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and served as its president from 1964-1973. He wrote numerous articles for its bulletin, and was its editor for many years.

His career as a psychiatrist, writer, historian, poet, and music lover spanned over fifty years. As a youth, he studied medicine. At the same time he had earned a B.A. and M.A. degree in English Literature at Wayne State University. But medicine was his calling. He entered the Neuro-Psychiatric Institute at the University of Michigan in 1942 and began his own practice as a psychiatrist in 1943. He served on the psychiatric staffs at Sinai Hospital, Crittenton, Grace, Jennings, Detroit Memorial, and South Macomb Hospitals, and served from 1972-1974 as Director of Clinical Services at the Islandview Adolescent Center in Detroit. He was highly regarded in the medical profession as well as by his patients.

Dr. Edgar's interest in English Literature carried over from his college days. He authored a collection of essays on various playwrights and novelists including, "Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry" (1970).

Dr. Edgar was a member of Temple Beth El. He served as president of The Brotherhood of Temple Beth El from 1962-1963, and was a member of its board of trustees. Through the historical interests of his friend Irving I. Katz, executive secretary of Temple Beth El, he became interested in the history of Temple Beth El in Michigan. In the last years of his life, he began a history of Temple Beth El, though it was never published.

Dr. Edgar was a man of great integrity, a gentle man who loved his family and his work. He loved art, music, and the beauty of Judaism. He had a deep faith in the Almighty.

In 1969 he met a lovely widow at the Sholem Aleichem Institute. He and Gertrude were happily married for the last twenty years of his life. Gertrude was a source of inspiration to him, assisting him in his research and writing, and sharing his interests in Jewish history.

He liked to remember his grandfather, a Sopher, whom he watched as a child writing manuscripts in the old country. He was devoted to his own grandchildren, as well as his wife and children. One day his grandchild's teacher told him on a visiting day at school, "You must be a wonderful grandpa, because he talks about you in 'show and tell' so often."

Irving Edgar was a mild person, a loving person, from whom you never heard an unkind word. May his memory be a blessing throughout all time.



Dr. Irving Edgar, center, with Doris (Mrs. Robert) Easton and Dr. Abraham Rogoff, at the 1977 dedication of the plaque by The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan honoring Chapman Abraham. Chapman Abraham was the first Jewish settler in Detroit. This plaque is at the Jewish Community Center.

— Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Beth El

THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Dr. Sidney Bolkosky

This article is excerpted from a longer paper which Dr. Bolkosky delivered at the annual conference of the American Jewish Historical Society and at the 1990 annual meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. It is based on material from his forthcoming book, co-authored with Dr. Matthew Schwartz, Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967, sponsored by The Jewish Welfare Federation and to be published by Wayne State University Press next year.

Dr. Sidney Bolkosky is a professor of history at the UofM-Dearborn.

In 1946 the Weintraubs arrived in Detroit. There were three of them—all teenagers. They were alone. Ruth, Jack and Larry had survived the Lodz ghetto, Auschwitz and several slave labor camps. Jack had been shot in the final days of the war and regained consciousness in an Allied field hospital. Ruth struggled with nightmares, haunted by memories of her mother, her cousin, songs, death, typhus and starvation. When Ruth returned to her family home in Lodz to search for her brothers—for anyone—she was invited in by non-Jewish neighbors and served tea on her own family's china.

There could be no choice about leaving, only a choice about where to go: Palestine or America. They came to Detroit because, while working for the Army in Germany, Larry had met American soldiers from Detroit who told him it was a decent place to live and find work, a city similar to Lodz with its industry and city college, and because in Poland, from a family of some eighty relatives, they were three of nine cousins who survived the Holocaust.



Courtesy: Mrs. Ruth Weintraub Kent

Larry, Ruth, and Jack Weintraub - June 1946
"Atlantic Crossing - AMERICA - My Great Country"

In Detroit, the Resettlement Service and the Jewish Family and Children's Service grappled with questions about procedures and appropriate actions that would serve the best interest of survivors like the Weintraubs. At first, the three found themselves separated and placed in foster homes volunteered by Jewish families like the Gellers with whom the brothers lived and Goldie Goldstein, with whom Ruth lived. Unaware of the full nature of the Holocaust experience, social workers tended to treat such new arrivals with professional demeanors that proved insensitive in many cases. Separation may have been the worst decision for those who clung tenaciously and fearfully to the remnants of their families.

Detroit's Jewish agencies demonstrated interlocking cooperation as they tried to minister to the apparent needs of new immigrants like the Weintraubs. Resettlement Service, after some discussion about the advisability of allowing three immigrant, traumatized youngsters their independence—a discussion intensified by some agitation, especially from Ruth—saw to it that they remained united. The agency decided to allow them to live together and found the three Weintraubs a flat, provided them regular domestic help, allowances and spending money. The Jewish Vocational Service in conjunction with the Jewish Bakers'

THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Union found Larry a job and he supported the family while Jack and Ruth attended Central High School. As a teenager, Ruth kept house for her two brothers while attending Central High School. Eventually Jack and Larry attended Wayne State University. As students, their experience heightened their gratitude to their adopted city and they changed their name from Weintraub to Wayne. All that mattered to them, however, was staying together.

Before victims of the Holocaust who survived could come to the United States, they faced legal complications of immense proportions. Federal regulations demanded affidavits from sponsors in America. In Detroit, small groups of lawyers, judges and leaders of various segments of the Jewish population began to meet in order to provide sponsorship for survivors--even those without relatives in Detroit. They undertook to cajole, persuade or bargain with Jews in Detroit to sign affidavits for distant relatives or even strangers whose names appeared on survivor lists from the Joint Distribution Committee and HIAS.

According to Nathan Milstein, a lawyer actively engaged in alleviating immigration red tape, a "complicated web of activities" involving governmental, JSSB and Federation cooperation surreptitiously emerged. Julian Krolik, described by Isidore Sobeloff, executive director of Detroit's Jewish Welfare Federation, as "one of the most able presidents of Federation, an understanding man with a feeling for other elements of the community," led a network of individuals in placing "psychological and other pressure" on individuals from government officials in the state apparatus to Jewish citizens of Detroit. This assiduous volunteer enterprise, passionately undertaken by committed men and women like the Kroliks and Fred Butzel (Detroit's premier philanthropist) and professionals like Milstein and Judge Theodore Levin, proceeded as a first step alongside the more public efforts.



*Israel & Paula Elpern
in front of ORT office*

As a result, survivors arrived in Detroit, usually under the auspices of a family sponsor. Israel and Paula Elpern, cousin of the Meyers and Keidan families, arrived from the displaced persons camp, sponsored by attorney Henry Meyers. Many of those first arrivals, like the Weintraubs, had suffered interrupted childhoods that would never be recaptured. Simultaneously old and young, they received stipends from the Jewish Social Service Bureau, assistance from the Jewish Vocational Service, guidance from social workers, friendship through the Jewish Center and other forms of outreach from Yiddish groups like the Sholom Aleichem Institute, the landsmanshaftn and the Workmen's Circle. The Children's Service placed some of the younger survivors.¹

All this if and when they could reach out themselves, through those lost childhoods, stark memories, parentless lives in which everything had been torn away. Troubled youngsters like Martin Adler, who arrived in Detroit as a fifteen year old with no family, having survived the death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the slave-labor camp of Dora and the concentration camp at Bergen Belsen, wrestled with the task of striving, silently, for a new life. Placed first in the Cleveland Jewish Children's Home, Bellefaire, with which Detroit maintained a reciprocal arrangement, Adler came to Detroit with his friend, Jack Weinberger. The Children's Service placed him with a family and

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shortly after that, relocated him to be with his friend in another Jewish household. He received a regular stipend from the JSSB, even after he obtained a job working as a stock boy for Norman Naimark. Like the Weintraubs, he began to create a new life; unlike them, he resembled the majority of survivors who had no close family left.

Newly elected president of Congregation B'nai Moshe, Samuel Friedman, left the first board meeting over which he presided to meet his twenty-three year old nephew, Abraham Pasternak, when he arrived from New York. After being torn from his home in Betlan, Transylvania in 1944 by Hungarian fascists, Abe endured Auschwitz, the infamous death marches and slave-labor camps. He came to Detroit in 1947 where he lived in a room in his uncle's home on Chicago Blvd. Americans reacted to him, as they reacted to most survivors, with a mixture of incomprehension, pity, condescension, fear and even contempt. People seemed to feel it necessary to explain how to turn on lights, flush toilets, use money, even speak.

Pasternak recalled conflicting feelings: longing to talk about his lost family and his experiences, to have people understand his confusion and fears; anguish over the thought of speaking and the prospect of encountering indifferent listeners; determination to proceed independently, make a new life; hoping for some kind hand reaching out to facilitate a new beginning. Employed first at Grunt's Market at \$25 a week, he was able to pay back the \$25 loan to the Hebrew Free Loan and began to pay his uncle rent when he got a job as a stock clerk in Federal Department Store for \$45 a week. There, a co-worker



*Abe Pasternak
U.S. Army, 1951*



*Abe Pasternak
Acting Chaplain,
U.S. Army - circa 1950-51*

struck a patronizing pose and told him that "when you laugh the world laughs with you; cry and you cry alone." A clear message. "If we had only been able to tell someone how we felt," Pasternak said years later, "we could have relieved some of our burden." He recalled that Federation sponsored Saturday night dances for the survivors at the Jewish Community Center, but there was no talk of group meetings to offer sympathetic ears or opportunities to relieve, if only in a

small way, the onus of the recent past. By 1950 he was drafted into the Army as an acting chaplain.

Jewish organizations, and a few Jewish individuals who were affiliated with them, took these wary and tormented people into their homes and lives. Just as with the earlier twentieth-century Jewish immigration, when the immigrants stopped coming to America, they continued to come to Detroit, moving there from other cities where they had located first. By the mid-fifties, Detroit's survivor population numbered between 3,500 and 4,000 people and others came even into the seventies in search of work or new lives. From Beregcsasz or Kapusanyi, Velky Beresny, Lodz, Crakow, Betlan and towns from Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland and Hungary they had moved to Montreal or Galveston, Toronto or Indianapolis, Topeka or Minneapolis, New York or Cleveland. Now they came to Detroit. Approximately one-third came from Hungary, Eastern Czechoslovakia and Rumania. Many of these, like Nathan and Edith Roth, arrived in Detroit from far-flung

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places like Dallas, Texas and small cities in Ohio because remnants of their communities had chosen Detroit for its prospective economic possibilities. They were drawn to B'nai Moshe, the Hungarian Shul, and accepted there as they reconstituted shattered lives with substitute families.

First among the institutions to give aid, the Resettlement Service, founded in 1937, continued its work to find and to resettle these new immigrants. In September, 1945, the Federation board discussed with the Resettlement Office the prospects for Detroit's accepting responsibility for a number of Jews who had been connected with the Oswego Project since 1944.² After two years of struggle, the National Refugee Board established a camp in Oswego, New York for one thousand rescued Jews. In 1945 nine hundred of the "internees" might be "released" if private Jewish agencies would assume responsibility "for support and adjustment" of the survivors. Federation agreed to accept "not more than thirty" of these, many of whom had been chosen by American agents for their professions.³ Those thirty, many snatched from the clutches of the SS then placed behind wires in a camp in rural New York state, found themselves in the strange city of Detroit.

In 1947 the Resettlement Service claimed responsibility for forty-two families and five children. Its budget had grown from \$16,208 in 1945 to \$121,865 in 1947. By 1950, approximately 10% of the new immigrants were receiving help from the Resettlement Service. In 1949, Detroit had taken in two hundred families from displaced persons camps and Harold Silver, executive director of the Service, declared that "90% . . . have no problem that cannot be solved by permanent housing and a job. . . . Their health, both mental and physical, is surprisingly good. . . . They only need initial community boosts to become self-supporting, constructive residents." The 1949-50 budget for the Resettlement Service soared to \$340,000 and fell to \$316,429 in 1950-51.⁴

Part of that agency soon included an Indemnification Service through which assistance was given to Holocaust victims to process requests for restitution for damage to "health, life and liberty under the Nazi regime." A Migration Service quickly established a center to assist in finding and bringing relatives from Europe. Beginning in 1945, that service had names of Detroit Jews searching for surviving relatives published regularly in the Jewish News. Photographs of children reading, playing, laughing and smiling, reunited families in such remote places as Oklahoma, Texas, New York or Tel Aviv appeared throughout its pages. Such photographs, although soothing American Jewish sensibilities and worries, rarely reflected the dispositions of survivors.

The number of families sponsored by the Resettlement Service peaked in 1949 at 198. Yet, in 1953 it brought eleven more families and in 1957 the number had risen to thirty-five. Harold Silver wrote that "we defined our responsibility to the newcomers as material assistance at minimum levels and casework help in becoming adjusted to their new life."⁵ To achieve those goals, other agencies cooperated: the Jewish Vocational Service trained new Detroiters and found jobs for them; the Jewish Community Center offered recreational, social and educational programs like the dances Abe Pasternak recollected; the North End Clinic and then Sinai Hospital offered health services; the Hebrew Free Loan Association provided its services; and so it went.

In the winter of 1949, the JSSB and the Jewish Vocational Service recommended special English classes for practical goals. With the cooperation of the Twelfth Street branch of the Jewish Center, the Detroit Board of Education and volunteers from the National Council of Jewish Women, the classes were initiated. The teacher and supervisor,

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Mrs. Valerie Komives, received assistance from the NCJW. The first three week course attracted seventy-five students and specialized in industrial English for the primarily male class. Because of its success, the Center and the JSSB recommended a second course, this one for ten weeks, that drew 120 students. A member of the Center staff coordinated the classes, a consulting committee of the Jewish Center board, the National Council of Jewish Women, the JVS and the JSSB assisted. By 1950, the classes in industrial English were supplemented by classes in English that would prove useful to women--teaching shopping phrases, household words and the like. When students stopped attending, the staff coordinator commented, the staff knew the classes were succeeding. This educational endeavor served as a model for the cooperative work of different Jewish agencies in Detroit.⁶



Ruth Weintraub, Detroit, August 1948

Courtesy: Mrs Ruth Weintraub Kent

Victims who survived elicited good intentions, professional social work skills, funding and sympathy. Yet, so unprecedented a catastrophe could not easily be mediated by routine procedures whose standards emerged from earlier experiences with immigrants. Much later, some survivors would reveal that they felt intimidated or patronized. In some cases, agencies did not offer them work or education that matched their own competencies. One survivor recalled that the Jewish Vocational Service offered him menial jobs working for Jewish businesses at the minimum wage of \$.75 per hour. Still others, like Pasternak, remember being explicitly told not to speak of their experiences: "Don't tell me or your co-workers about the terrible things you saw. That was then - this is now." And another woman, when asked about life in the ghetto, described standing in long lines for hours to obtain stale bread or rotten vegetables. The response from her Jewish co-worker: "We had to wait in lines, too, for stockings and things." Among the most competent directors of social services in the country, even Harold Silver seemed unaware that mental and

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physical health had become elusive and that these Jews would be forever marked by their experiences.

As awareness of the magnitude of the European catastrophe increased, it seemed as if the diverse elements of the Jews of Detroit drew together to give aid to the new immigrants. Yet, an odd amalgam of apprehension, guilt, uncertainty and incomprehension pervaded those who became involved with the survivors. For their part, the survivors found speaking about their trials difficult, quickly realizing how impossible any real communication about the Holocaust would be. They remained separated by that abyss, a chasm filled with confused emotions for both Detroit and European Jews who soon identified themselves as Detroiters. It would take thirty-five to forty years before they would begin to bear witness to the Holocaust--and even then only fragments of their stories filtered through the difficulties of speaking.

Their arrival provided an opportunity for rival agencies and organizations to cooperate in their attempts at resettlement. The deeper needs of the survivors would come to light years later--too late, in many cases, to make a difference. Many survivors believed that rarely did social workers offer psychological counseling or lend sympathetic and understanding ears. In general, they encouraged "new beginnings" which meant forgetting the past--or trying. Few grasped the enormity of the event and fewer still the impediments to speaking about it. If fewer immigrants came than had come in the first part of the century, the accompanying problems bore immensely more complicated consequences. Where insensitivities or misconceptions on the part of social workers in the 1920's produced one sort of aftermath, lack of information or of awareness of the unprecedented nature of the experiences of the new immigrants left an aftermath nearly impossible to overcome later. Good intentions, the most professional skills and proficiency could not have adequately countered the consequences of the Holocaust. If those who worked for the Resettlement Service and other agencies did not know that, they shared that naivete with virtually every Jewish American. Such consequences, however, often forced those victims who survived further into themselves and an indescribable loneliness.

Nevertheless, the survivors would become an integral, contributing portion of Detroit Jewry, gravitating to all the various Jewish communities from the religious, Orthodox to the secular organizations. By the mid-1950's, many contributed regularly to the Allied Jewish Campaign, and by the 1960's many identified with the leadership of Federation, with Zionist supporters, especially regarding Israel bond drives, Jewish Community Council and other groups. From their ranks would emerge successful businessmen, loving parents, forceful voices in the Jewish population of Detroit. Many would overcome religious ambivalence to lead large congregations like Shaarey Zedek and B'nai Moshe and Temple Beth El, become members of the boards of Federation and other agencies and even chairmen of the Allied Jewish Campaign. They would participate prominently in organizations like the Council, Workmen's Circle, United Hebrew Schools, and every aspect of Detroit Jewish life.



Like the American government, Detroit Jewry's reaction to the plight of the Jews of

THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Europe during the Holocaust seemed too little too late. Had they devoted every ounce of energy and strength to the rescue, had they been fully aware of the catastrophe (which few were), had they had the complete cooperation of the Federal Government, Roosevelt, the Departments of State and War, they probably would have been able to achieve little more. British Lord Moyné's comment after a failed attempt to follow up on what surely was an insincere offer by Eichmann to save one million Jews, harsh and dripping with Realpolitik, sums up the official positions: "What was I to do with one million Jews?" Guilt or responsibility seem inappropriate here; frustration and sadness remain. And, finally, those good intentions of Jewish agencies and individuals, the cooperative work undertaken in some circumstances, coupled with the remarkable abilities of the victims themselves to rebuild their lives while simultaneously containing and remembering the ruins within them, have shown the best qualities of Jewish life.

¹ Anna Chapin, A History of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit, typescript (Jewish Welfare Federation: Detroit, 1949).

² David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: American and the Holocaust, 1941-1944 (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 260-276; Ruth Gruber, Haven: The Unknown Story of One Hundred World War II Refugees (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1983); Zosa Szajkowski, "The Attitude of American Jews to Refugees from Germany in the 1930's," American Jewish Historical Quarterly, LXI (December, 1971), 101-143.

³ Report from Fred Butzel on the meeting of the Resettlement Service of September 6, 1945; Federation Minutes, September 11, 1945.

⁴ Samuel Lerner, "Historical Development and Current Program of Resettlement Service, 1937-1983," internal document; Detroit Jewish News, March 31, 1950.

⁵ Memorandum from Harold Silver to Esther Appelman, March 13, 1963.

⁶ DJN, April 28, 1950.

J.H.S. SALUTES BICENTENNIAL OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS



Amendment I: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

“We are now celebrating the Bicentennial of the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights is a two hundred year old document. What meaning does it have for us today? Those amendments to the constitution are essential limits on governmental power, directing the government to treat its citizens fairly when exercising the power that the people have granted. The first ten amendments to the constitution curtail government power.

Between 1789 and 1791, the question of whether we would even have a Bill of Rights was one of the most hotly debated issues of the day. Legislatures discussed it; newspapers wrote about it; and people were passionate in their opinions on the subject. Why? Because the idea behind the Bill of Rights was so revolutionary. Proponents for the Bill of Rights argued that people could set limits on what the government and the majority were empowered to do to an individual.

The Bill of Rights is of enduring significance. It is a part of our Constitution — the pact that was devised by the founders to include a structure and a set of principles that have been and will continue to be applied to new situations and new contexts that were not contemplated in 1789. The first ten amendments signify the expansion of the Constitution so that its ideals could more readily embrace us all.

For me, the Bicentennial of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights requires the celebration of a living document. The ideals which established the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the 1780's remain revolutionary ideals as we face the challenges of the 1990's.”



The Honorable Damon J. Keith; Chairman of the U.S. Committee on the Bicentennial of the Constitution; Judge of the United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit

“The Bill of Rights sends the clear message to Jews and other religious minorities that we are welcome to participate fully in American life, without fear of intrusion or domination by the government. For centuries, Jews were barred from most aspects of social, economic and political life wherever we lived. The United States was and is seen as the land of opportunity, where Jews and others can work together to make real the promises of the Bill of Rights.”



Paul D. Borman, President, Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit

PRESIDENTS OF THE HEBREW FREE LOAN ASSOCIATION



Michael Davis
1898-1901



Isaac Shetzer
1907-08, 13-17, 44-45



Selig Koploy
1901-07, 08-13



Morris Friedberg
1917-20



David W. Simons
1923



Jacob Nathan
1923-24



David S. Zemon
1925-43



Morris Blumberg
1946-48



George M. Stutz
1949-51



Robert R. Marwil
1952-54



Julian L. Zemon
1955-56



Maurice Klein
1957-60



Samuel Lieberman
1961-64 & 66 & 70



Jack Tobin
1965



Henry Auslander
1966 & 71



Lawrence Crohn
1967-69



Jacob L. Keidan
1972-73



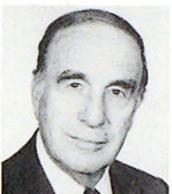
William Wetsman
1974-76



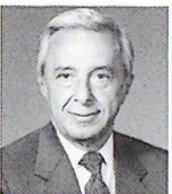
Henry Leopold
1976-79



Graham Landau
1979-83



Milton Marwil
1983-86



Emery I. Klein
1986-88



Sherwin A. Behrmann
1988-90



Irwin L. Kahn
1990-

OLDEST FEDERATION AGENCY MARKS 95TH ANNIVERSARY

Hebrew Free Loan Association Members Pay Five Cents Weekly Dues to Finance Loans to Immigrants in 1895

Compiled from historical reviews written over the years by Myron Schiffman; Arthur Lipsitt; Henry Leopold; interne, Lana Sobolnitsky; and from the Minute Books in the Archives of the Hebrew Free Loan - edited by Judith Cantor.

In November of 1895, in the office of the Clerk of Wayne County, Selig Koploy, David Meister, Moses Rubenstine, Michael Davis, William Roth, Julius Rosenthal, Joseph Beisman, Jacob Burnstine, Jacob Levin, and Jacob Lasky formed the "Gmilith Chasudim Association (meaning in English) True Favor Association". . . "to be in . . . Detroit . . . at no. 289 Hastings Street." The purpose of the corporation was "to provide for the relief of Distressed Members and other needy persons, the visiting of the sick, the burial of the dead, and such other benevolent and worthy purposes. . ."

To provide for loans, the early membership dues were *five cents weekly* solicited among all persons of good moral character and Jewish persuasion. Business meetings were held *daily!* The organization was capitalized at \$500.

Help for the Early Peddlers

By 1907, the Association, operating from the Jewish Community's Hannah Schloss Building, was helping to launch the new immigrants with loans from \$5.00 to \$25. Even such a small loan in those early years could go a long way towards helping a new arrival get started: -to pay for merchandise to sell or towards the purchase of a horse and wagon for the peddler. Peddling fruits and vegetables, clothing and sundries, or any salvage with commercial value such as junk, metals, rags or bottles was frequently the immigrant's first step to self-sufficiency, and the Hebrew Free Loan Association helped to carry such families from dependence to independence.

In the early years, loans were made keeping as collateral a piece of jewelry - the watch or ring owned even by most immigrants - after having it appraised on the spot. Even in the early years, however, David W. Simons encouraged a policy of using promissory notes, signed by a responsible member of the community - a policy which eventually was adopted and is still followed.

As the Association expanded its membership, it continued to extend its help with these small but essential loans - and the near-perfect record of repayment by the borrower allowed Hebrew Free Loan to continue to help the newest-comer. In 1917, however, the first substantial fund was raised by forward-looking community leaders through Life Memberships, the beginning of a more secure financial foundation for the agency.

Founding Member of Jewish Welfare Federation

Hebrew Free Loan was one of the founding member agencies of the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1924. Now the Association could provide for loans of up to \$200, and for a greater variety of needs, while covering all its expenses from the income on its own corpus. Again, the Jewish community was moving north, and at this time the expanded Hebrew Free Loan moved to the Kirby Center, the large new building at 609 East Kirby used by the United Hebrew Schools.

Although the policy of promissory notes was in use at this time, jewelry was still being held as collateral in hardship cases. But the minutes of November 9, 1925 show the calling of a special emergency meeting: - Over the weekend the safe was blown open and all of

HEBREW FREE LOAN

HEBREW FREE LOAN ASSOCIATION MEMORIALS, BEQUESTS and DONATIONS \$250 and up	
<i>Abram Kattasky</i>	\$ 9321. ⁰⁰
<i>David W. Simons Memorial Loan Fund</i>	6000. ⁰⁰
<i>Mrs. J. B. Lasky</i>	2000. ⁰⁰
<i>Jacob Friedberg</i>	1000. ⁰⁰
<i>McGregor Institute</i>	1000. ⁰⁰
<i>Sarah Goldberg</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Wolf Kaplan</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Morris B. Shapiro</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Samuel Wilkus</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Louis Wolbransky</i>	300. ⁰⁰
<i>Y. M. O. Girls</i>	275. ⁰⁰
<i>Jacob B. Brown</i>	250. ⁰⁰
<i>Magnus Butzel</i>	250. ⁰⁰
<i>Leslie Gunn</i>	250. ⁰⁰
<i>Harry Lieberman</i>	250. ⁰⁰
<i>Harry Hirschberg</i>	1000. ⁰⁰
<i>Louis Weiner</i>	4700. ⁰⁰
<i>Joseph Wetsman Memorial Loan Fund</i>	5000. ⁰⁰
<i>Abram Kattasky - Additional</i>	450. ⁰⁰
<i>Berney B. Wetsman Memorial Loan Fund</i>	5000. ⁰⁰
<i>Mrs. Bessie Goldfarb</i>	250. ⁰⁰
<i>Louis Granet</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Max and Mrs. A. B. Kaufmann</i>	379. ³⁰
<i>Max and Mrs. Lazarus Rosenthal</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Isaac Shetzer</i>	500. ⁰⁰
<i>Abraham Olender</i>	580. ⁰⁰

LIFE MEMBERS \$250 and up	
<i>Joseph Boisman</i>	<i>Harman Marks</i>
<i>Julius Berman</i>	<i>Max May</i>
<i>David A. Brown</i>	<i>Al Mitteldorf</i>
<i>Fred M. Butzel</i>	<i>Minnie Mitteldorf</i>
<i>Henry M. Butzel</i>	<i>Samuel Rabinowitch</i>
<i>Leo M. Butzel</i>	<i>Bernard Reichstein</i>
<i>Alfred Dworkin</i>	<i>Harry Rosenberg</i>
<i>Max Ehrlich</i>	<i>Sol Sallan</i>
<i>Samuel Feldman</i>	<i>Samuel Sarasohn</i>
<i>Adolph Finsterwald</i>	<i>Louis Savage</i>
<i>Jerome Freud</i>	<i>I. L. Scheinman</i>
<i>Jacob Friedberg</i>	<i>Joseph L. Solling</i>
<i>Morris Friedberg</i>	<i>Isaac Shetzer</i>
<i>William Friedberg</i>	<i>Abe Shoffman</i>
<i>Louis Granet</i>	<i>Joseph Sillman</i>
<i>Harry Grant</i>	<i>David W. Simons</i>
<i>Wolf Himmelhoch</i>	<i>Jacob Singer</i>
<i>Ben D. Jacob</i>	<i>Eugene Stoman</i>
<i>Abram Jacobs</i>	<i>Bess M. Steinberg</i>
<i>Albert Kahn</i>	<i>Louis Stoll</i>
<i>Aaron Klein</i>	<i>Max Stotter</i>
<i>Michael Krell</i>	<i>Ben Tannenholz</i>
<i>Julian H. Krolik</i>	<i>M. C. Weil</i>
<i>J. B. Lasky</i>	<i>Joseph Wetsman</i>
<i>Max Lieberman</i>	<i>Samuel Wetsman</i>
<i>Jacob & Emil Lowenberg</i>	<i>Louis Winkelman</i>
<i>Joseph H. Ehrlich</i>	<i>David S. Zemon</i>
<i>William Friedman</i>	

Original Life Membership Plaques, circa 1917

the pledged jewelry was stolen! It was never to be recovered. What a shock to the Association and its clients! Nevertheless, a fund was established using the insurance money to make reparations to the clients, and the work of the Association continued.

During the 30's, many individuals turned to the Association after the stock market crash – in the time of the Depression. Loans were made for basic needs like clothing, food, and utility bills – avoiding the necessity of paying high interest rates to banks. These were the busiest years of the Association. By then the office of the Hebrew Free Loan Association had moved to the west side of town, and continued to move north and west following the moves of the Jewish population.

In the late 30's and early 40's, the Association made loans to many of the German Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution who resettled in Michigan. The restrictive immigration policies of the government, however, tragically constricted the number making use of these loans. Later, Hebrew Free Loan turned its attention to the many displaced persons who came after World War II. . . and in the '50's, to the refugees from Hungary. . . and in the 60's, to those arriving from Poland and Iran.

Again responding to the needs of the times, HFL took immediate action to help the victims of the Detroit riots in the late 1960's. A special fund was set up to help victims of destruction rebuild their businesses or resettle in new homes.

Loans of Hope to Resettle Soviet Jews

In the late 70's, new immigrants from Soviet Russia and the Eastern Bloc headed toward

HEBREW FREE LOAN

the Detroit area. As before, Hebrew Free Loan came through to help. The New Americans needed loans to get started . . . to get used cars for transportation to jobs . . . to go for further training . . . to pursue advanced educational degrees.

Educational loans increased in the 80's, the age of technology and education. HFL worked jointly with the Jewish Vocational Service to provide loans for those students who wanted advance training. As with all the loans of the Association, the students pay no interest and do not start paying back until they find employment.

And now in the 1990's – 95 years after its inception – with the historic opportunity of resettling many more Jews from Soviet Russia in the Detroit area – just as in its earliest days, the loans of the Hebrew Free Loan Association once more help new arrivals to start a good life here.

Today second and third generation members of the families of the early leaders who served on previous Boards are still active. Administered by an executive director Ruth M. Marcus, the 32-member current Board is directly involved, taking regular turns interviewing prospective borrowers and approving loans. There has never been a charge for carrying, financing, or interest. The principle of “Gemilut Chasidim” that prompted HFL's organization in 1895 – and that will carry it into the next century – embodies the highest form of charity: helping people today so they will be able to help themselves in the future.

Detroit Free Press

Detroit Michigan

Sunday, September 27, 1903

HELPS MEN TO
HELP THEMSELVES.

Detroit Society That Loans Money to Deserving
Hebrews Without Interest.

If the average man knew where he could go in Detroit and borrow \$500 without paying any interest

Article about Gemiluth Chasadim society in Detroit Free Press, Sunday, September 27, 1903.

Editor's note: In 1986, under the leadership of its executive director Ruth M. Marcus – in anticipation of its 95th anniversary and its centennial in 1995 – the Hebrew Free Loan Association asked me as a consultant for a plan to assemble their Archives. Board members and internes in the course of the next few years, with occasional reviews, carried out the recommended steps of this plan. Miriam Friedman pursued with vigor the detective job of locating the pictures of the past presidents. The present condition of this small Archives is exemplary – a great legacy of history to the Jews of Detroit, and to the Jewish Welfare Federation. Mazel tov to the Association for recognizing the importance of organizing these Archives and for a job well done!

FIELD HISTORY QUIZ



Photo by Leo Knight

Walter and Lea Field, founders and benefactors of the Annual Field History Quiz



Photo by Benyas-Kaufman Photographers, Inc.

Harriet Siden, chairperson of the Field History Quiz, announcing the winners.



Proud prizewinners from Temple Israel, with their teachers.

Photo by Benyas-Kaufman Photographers, Inc.

FIELD HISTORY QUIZ:

Inspires Young Students to Explore Jewish History

Over 400 sixth graders from ten different Hebrew schools participated in the Jewish Historical Society's citywide 1989 Second Annual Walter and Lea Field Jewish History Quiz. Twenty-one first and second place winners, listed below, received cash prizes and a personalized certificate for framing from the Chairperson, Ms. Harriet Siden.

Ms. Siden, Librarian at the firm of D'arcy Masius Benton and Bowles, and a vice-president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, also awarded Certificates of Honorable Mention to an additional eighteen students at the Purim awards assembly for the Quiz held at Congregation Shaarey Zedek. All who entered the contest received a copy of Walter Field's book, *A People's Epic*, an overview of Jewish history in verse.

Walter and Lea Field, in founding the Quiz, have focused their own creative energies on encouraging an interest in Jewish history among young people. Mr. Field, a retired business executive who founded the Mac-O-Lac Paint Company, a philanthropist, and the author of several books, is himself a student and fan of Jewish history. He is the founder at Congregation Shaarey Zedek of the Cultural Commission, which for over twenty years has brought to the community at no charge distinguished authors, scholars, concerts, and other cultural events.

In founding the Quiz, Mr. Field worked with the Jewish Educator's Council of Greater Detroit; in consultation with Honorary Committee members Rabbi Irwin Groner, Philip Slomovitz, and Leonard Simons; and in cooperation with Adele Staller, past president of the Jewish Historical Society. Janis Waxenburg, a teacher in the Oak Park Schools, developed the questions of the quiz. Gilbert Borman, new president of the Jewish Historical Society, at the first Board meeting of his term, pledged to continue cooperation between the Society and the Field History Quiz for this significant educational event.

In conversation with chairperson Harriet Siden after the ceremony, one parent commented: "You cannot imagine what winning this prize for achievement meant to our youngster. He really became very turned on about Jewish history by his participation and by this recognition. I want to personally thank Walter and Lea Field for creating this contest and giving him this opportunity to excel."

Such an apt statement of appreciation! The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan salutes Walter and Lea Field for this landmark contest which serves to excite and inspire young people to examine their heritage of Jewish history.

First and Second Prize Winners of the Jewish Historical Society 1989 2nd Annual Walter and Lea Field Jewish History Quiz:

1st Prize: Lori Baron, Mathew Daniels, Jaime Garelik, Michael Fienman, Josh Herman, Jeremie Kass, Amy Marks, Noah Monroe, Eric L. Slaim, David Salama, Jama Wolok,
2nd Prize: Tracye Bello, Andy Kirschner, Julie Kates, Steve Linden, Rebecca Maltz, Stephanie Panush, Mathew Stoffer, Lora Weberman, Adam Wolfson, Mitchell Zeff

Certificates of Honorable Mention:

Jamie Burnstein, Emily Dubb, Kim Eder, Tovah Feinberg, Steven Finn, Aaron Fidler, Kevin Grant, Melissa Greener, Adam Mordecai, Meredith Pierce, Jared Rosenbaum, Corey Slutsky, Kevin Schwartz, Samara Shlom, Adam Schwartz, Mark Tarica, David Weeks, Erin Weiser.

AN HISTORIC EVENT

Rabbi Irwin Groner – First Michigan President of The Rabbinical Assembly

The Rabbinical Assembly, Conservative Judaism's international 1300-member central body of rabbis, this year elected as president Rabbi Irwin Groner of Congregation Shaarey Zedek. Representing 1.5 million congregational members, the 90-year old association speaks for the largest branch of Judaism in North America at this time.

The first Michigan rabbi to be elected Rabbinical Assembly president, Rabbi Groner's installation took place at the five-day annual convention held this May at the Concord Hotel in upstate New York. A half century earlier, in 1940, Shaarey Zedek was the host congregation for the 40th annual convention of the Rabbinical Assembly here in Detroit.

Congregation Shaarey Zedek, founded in 1861, was one of the first congregations in the nation to become associated with the Conservative movement in 1913. The Congregation named Rabbi Groner Senior Rabbi in 1967, and Rabbi for Life in 1978. He had come to the Shaarey Zedek in 1959 from his first pulpit in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Appointed by Governor James Blanchard, Rabbi Groner was the first clergyman to serve on the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission. For the past ten years within the Rabbinical Assembly, he has served in leadership positions as secretary, treasurer, and vice-president. He holds degrees from the University of Chicago and the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago, where he was ordained.

As the representative spokesman of one of the major movements in Judaism today, The Rabbinical Assembly wields broad influence in this country and abroad, responding to the historic events of our time with communications to the Israeli government, to the United Nations, and to the President and representatives of our American government.

Furthermore, Rabbi Groner states that he intends to use the position to work toward improved relations between Catholics and Jews, "to renew and deepen the dialogue between the Catholic and Jewish community." Additional priorities, according to Rabbi Groner, include a "renewal of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, . . . a grave concern for the rise of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. . . and a support for a non-fundamentalist alternative life for the Israeli."

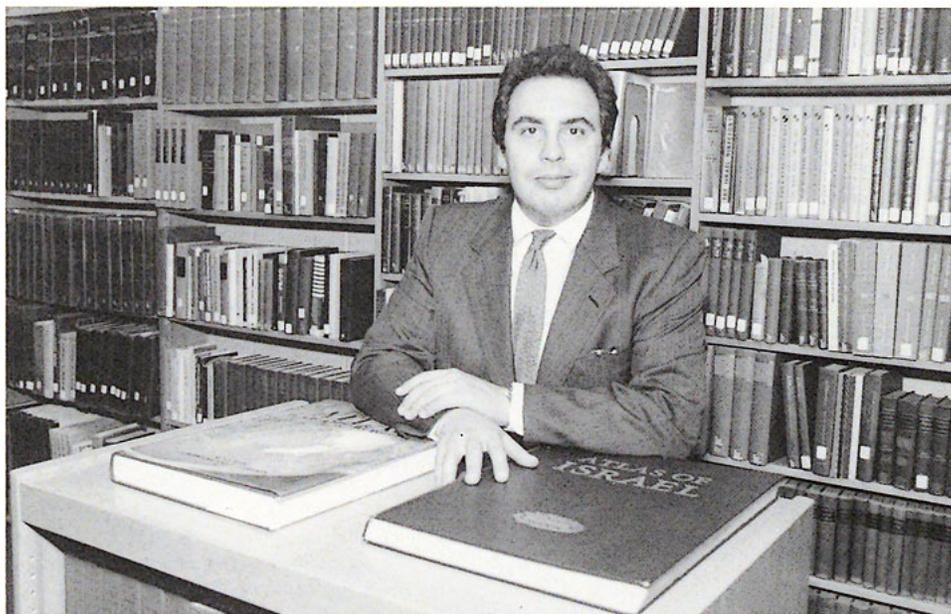
In his installation speech, Rabbi Groner declared: "I believe we are on the threshold of new beginnings. . . that we can bring about a renewal of Jewish life in our time. We need to become more knowledgeable about moral values and apply the teachings to our lives."



Photo by Glenn Triest, Courtesy of "The Detroit Jewish News".

Rabbi Groner, newly installed president of Rabbinical Assembly, in lobby of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, with sculptor Arthur Schnieder's Processional. "We can bring about a renewal of Jewish life in our time."

GILBERT BORMAN ELECTED 14TH PRESIDENT OF SOCIETY



"Each day we are making history; each day presents an opportunity to record history. I will work diligently towards building and strengthening our organization...to expand our membership through Michigan...to establish a permanent Michigan Jewish Historical Archive...to continue our cooperation with the Field History Quiz...to expand awareness of our organization and what we do and expand the Society's base through fundraising.

I will need your help and wise counsel, your commitment and support for the Jewish Historical Society. I look forward to a great year for the Society."

Gilbert Borman

EXCERPTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT AT THE 30TH ANNUAL MEETING

Adele W. Staller, President - June, 1989

Under the leadership of Leonard Simons, editor, a sparkling and informative 30th Anniversary issue of the journal *Michigan Jewish History* was published. This anniversary issue served as the stimulus for a successful membership campaign, personalized by direct notes from Leonard and other Board members, which produced over 100 new members and many upgrades in membership.

Furthermore, Leonard Simons made arrangements with the Wayne State Press for the Society to sell books published by them not only at a 20% discount to our membership, but also including a commission for our treasury. The offer includes the landmark new American Jewish history *United States Jewry*, by Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, director of the American Jewish Archives.

Although we show our address in the Jewish Vocational Service in Southfield, we are urgently looking for new facilities because the JVS now needs its space back, due to the large influx of Russian Jews into the Detroit area.

30TH ANNUAL MEETING

Last Fall we again participated in the Annual Book Fair at the Jewish Community Center, sponsoring in cooperation with the Jewish War Veterans one of our own members, Louis G. Redstone. Redstone spoke about his new autobiography, *From Israel Pioneer to American Architect*, a book which marked the recent 50-year anniversary of his own architectural firm.

The Second Annual Walter and Lea Field History Quiz awards ceremony was held at Purim. Approximately 400 sixth grade students participated in the contest and over 60 checks and certificates were awarded. Hopefully this program will create a closer relationship between our Society with its emphasis on Jewish history and our youth.

The Honorable Avern Cohn was the featured speaker in March, giving a dynamic review of Jewish Judges of Michigan.

The Jewish Historical Society is working in cooperation with Federation, the Hillel Foundation at Wayne, and Jewish Experience for Families in planning an exhibit for next year on Detroit Jewish history. This exhibit is to highlight the Jewish Welfare Federation publication in 1991 of the second volume of the history of the Jews of Detroit from 1914-1967 by Dr. Sidney Bolkosky, and Dr. Matthew Schwartz.

At the annual conference of the American Jewish Historical Association in Omaha, Nebraska in May, focusing on Jews of the Midwest, our Jewish Historical Society of Michigan displayed an exhibit featuring interesting articles from 30 years of our Journals. This display brought compliments and attention to our organization. Furthermore, we annually make a display for the Local History Conference held in April at Wayne State University – thus maintaining an awareness of Jewish contributions to the history and development of Michigan.

Among our immediate goals, we look forward to continuing to publish the journal, *Michigan Jewish History*. Among our long range goals, we look forward some day to the establishment of a local Jewish Archive – so that the records of Detroit Jewish organizations and groups can be preserved and catalogued in an organized and controlled environment. This is so needed – and the sooner the better! Hopefully, with the cooperation of our Federation and the United Jewish Charities, some day there even will be an exhibit hall with regular public exhibitions.

I wish to express my thanks for the cooperation I have received and for this opportunity to serve. These past two years have been a learning experience, much work, and again “a labor of love”.



Officers and Board of Directors, 1990: Left to Right: Oscar Schwartz, Judy Cantor, Sarah Bell, Esther Klein, Wilma Sugar, Gilbert Borman, Dr. Saul Sugar, Gertrude Edgar, Benno Levi, Adele Staller, Stanley Meretsky. Not pictured: Harriet Siden, Joel Jacob, Sidney Bolkosky, Levi Frank Smith, Robert E. Steinberg, Lee Waldbott.

TRIBUTES TO . . .
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>In Memory of Marilyn Gonte</i>
by The Jewish Historical Society | <i>65th Wedding Anniversary of Mr & Mrs. Phil Slomovitz</i>
Adele Staller |
| <i>In Memory of Tobi Satovsky</i>
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James new office*

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*In memory of the beloved brother of
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Noah Levi, son of Benno Levi*

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Edgar's brother*

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*In honor of Leonard N. Simons being
honored by the Detroit Historical
Society on the occasion of his 85th
birthday.*

Harriet & Irving Berg

*In honor of 85th birthday of Leonard
N. Simons*

Bernard & Judy Cantor

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N. Simons*

Adele Staller

In memory of Rae Kelman

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*In honor of the 60th wedding
anniversary of Walter & Leah Field*

Adele Staller

*In honor of Mrs. Adele Staller -
Wishing you continued success as
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Cheryl, Dan, Sara, Erica,
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*In honor of Adele Staller's grandson -
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*60th wedding anniversary of Walter
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Get well Irwin Shaw

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Applebaum and Elizabeth Kaplan*

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*In honor of the forthcoming marriage
of Elizabeth Kaplan and Phillip
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Oscar & Lillian Schwartz

In memory of Abraham Schmier

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*In honor of Dr. A. Rogoff's 90th
birthday*

Adele Staller

*In honor of Dr. A. Rogoff's 90th
birthday*

Evelyn Noveck

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Doris Easton

In honor of Dr. A. Rogoff's 90th birthday

Oscar and Lillian Schwartz

55th wedding anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. William Gorelik

Gertrude and Irving Edgar

In memory of your dear father and friend Martin Venier

Gertrude & Irving Edgar

Get well Irving Edgar

Adele Staller

Get well Harold Noveck

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In honor of Leonard Simons

Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Daniels

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Cindi Brody & Rob Starkman

In honor of Gertrude Edgar's 75th birthday

Harold & Evelyn Noveck

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Adele & Mara Staller

In memory of Sophie Sislin

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In memory of Sophie Sislin - mother of Evelyn Noveck

Harriet & Franklin Siden

In memory of beloved father Abraham Edelstein

Norma & Bernard Goldman

In memory of Sophie Sislin, mother of Evelyn Noveck

Adele & Mara Staller

In memory of Sophie Sislin - mother of Evelyn Noveck

Sarah Bell

In memory of Sophie Sislin - mother of Evelyn Noveck

Wilma & Saul Sugar

You may make checks payable to Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and mail to the Tribute Chairman:

Adele W. Staller
27056 Fairfax
Southfield, Michigan 48076

Contributions are tax deductible.

MICS 2013

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

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Membership, tributes, and endowments to The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, founded in 1959, support the collection, commemoration, and publication of the history of the Jews of Michigan. *Michigan Jewish History* is the oldest continuously published journal of local Jewish history in America.

For MEMBERSHIP information, please contact SARAH BELL, Membership Chairperson, 29699 Southfield Road, Suite 217, Southfield, Michigan 48076. Phone (313) 547-3047.

