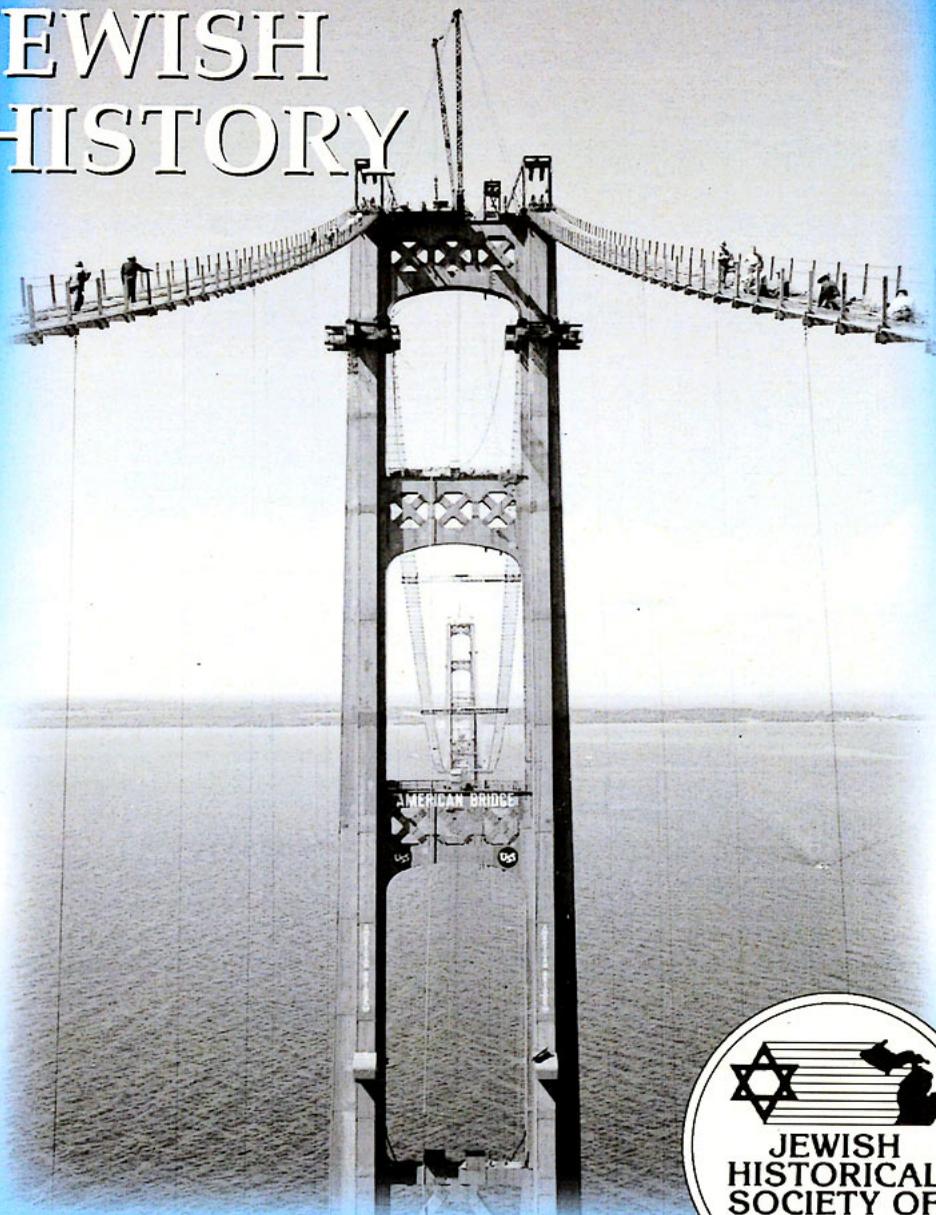


# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



*The State of Historic Synagogues In Michigan*  
*The Man Who Controlled the Mackinac Bridge*  
*Grand Rapids' Temple Emanuel*  
*The Beginnings of Hillel at Wayne State University*  
*Detroit's Jewish Indians*  
*Ambulances for Israel*

**Volume 47**

**Fall 2007, Tishrei 5768**



**The mission of the  
Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
is to educate, celebrate and promote  
awareness of the contributions  
of the Jews of Michigan to our state,  
our nation and the world.**

---

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

---

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**COVER PHOTO**

*The Mighty Mac: With much anticipation and grandeur, the Mackinac Bridge  
opened to the public on November 1, 1957. Two Jewish men, architect  
David Steinman and the Bridge Authority's first director, Larry B. Rubin,  
played integral roles in the development of this national treasure.*

Designed by Laurie Blume, *BlumeDesign*

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# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

אשר ישאלון בנכם מהר אח אבוחם... יהושע ד:כא

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

Joshua 4:21

## THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 47

Fall 2007

Tishrei 5768

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# Editor's Letter

**T**his is the year I turn 50.

How can that be? I remember being a young child and believing 50-year-olds were ancient. Later, as a young adult heavily involved in my public relations career, 50 was a milestone beyond my imagination. When I became a parent, 50 seemed to be a time far, far away when life would be simpler. By then, my children would be teenagers and I'd be \_\_\_\_\_.

I wasn't sure how I'd fill in that blank. Maybe I'd be a famous author or a director of a highly-regarded non-profit agency. I wouldn't be retired, but I'd be thinking about it.

Well, now that I am facing 50 in the face (and mirror), it's time to fill in that blank. What do I want to be when I grow up? Well, like so many of life's conundrums, the answer isn't exactly clear. I am a myriad of beings: a mother, a wife, a friend. I am a taxi driver, a professional, a writer.

It also occurred to me that I am a caretaker, and not in the sense normally associated with that profession. As editor of this journal, I am one of a group of individuals who have taken the responsibility for the care and preservation of our community's history. What an amazing privilege! A blessing, I believe.

Of course, most of you reading this little essay are probably well past this timeless milestone and are laughing at my childish behavior. "Get over it," you are most likely thinking. Ok, indulge me one more minute.

The answer to my fill-in-the-blank question has been staring at me right in the face (and mirror): not enough 50-year-olds are reading the work I am helping to produce. They are missing the chance to understand that the history of our community and the people who have helped shape that history is not only fascinating, but provides a basis for understanding our present and acts as a window into the future.

And, there in is my answer. No more pondering. At 50, I will become a missionary, a field recruiter seeking to find the newest AARP members and get them excited about Michigan Jewish history. It will be a hard job because us baby boomers believe we are not the age we are – we are perpetually 35. However, I know there is an army of others eager to help in this recruitment effort. I encourage you to join my brigade by seeking out innocent 50-year-olds (give or take a decade) and forcing them to read just one article in this journal. Hand them the membership application and demand they write a check.

It's time to get tough, for it is we, the baby boom generation, who now must step up and take responsibility for the care and preservation of our heritage and our stories. - **Wendy Rose Bice**

*Editor's note: Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, founder of Humanistic Judaism and the Birmingham Temple, passed away in July, 2007. Michigan Jewish History will feature a fitting memorial to this classic individual in the 2008 issue.*

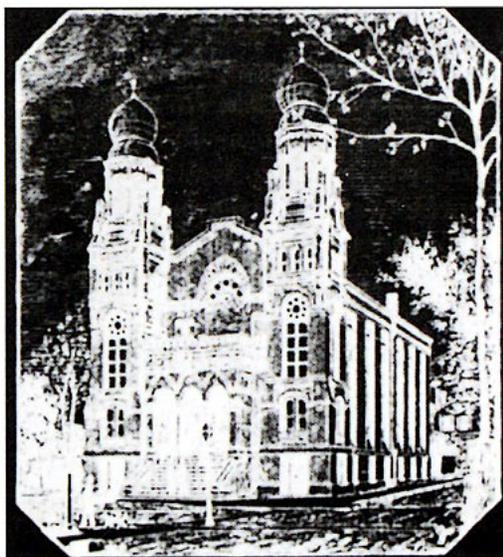
# Featured Articles

## THE STATE OF HISTORIC SYNAGOGUES IN MICHIGAN

◆  
By Barry Stiefel

Jews have lived in Michigan since 1761 (Ezekiel Solomon at Fort Michilimackinac); they established their first community and congregation in the state in 1845 (Ann Arbor Jews Society).<sup>1</sup> While these are landmark events in Michigan Jewish history, the synagogue – the house of worship that Jews and non-Jews identify as the center of a Jewish community – is the primary landmark of a Jewish cultural landscape.

In 1877 Congregation Shaarey Zedek of Detroit erected the first synagogue in Michigan, located at the corner of Congress and St. Antoine Streets.<sup>2</sup> Since then, scores of synagogues have been built across the state and have been used by Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Humanistic congregations. However, within the state, very few of



*The first synagogue in Michigan was built in 1877 by Shaarey Zedek. This is probably a reproduced architectural rendering of the building. The actual structure did not have the tall towers shown. Photo courtesy of Congregation Shaarey Zedek.*

these historic buildings remain in use by their Jewish communities and congregations. Many synagogues have been lost due to their congregation's relocation to newer facilities. With this comes a loss of cultural heritage and history.

*The Lost Synagogues of Detroit Project*, by Lowell Boileau, has compiled the most comprehensive database to date on the historic synagogue buildings of the Detroit area. Today, most of these buildings are used as churches. Boileau, a Detroiter, has taken an interest in these historic synagogues among other historic buildings in the metropolitan area. Astonishingly, Boileau is not Jewish and should be commended for taking such an interest in our cultural heritage. As of January 2007, Boileau's database has recorded nearly 40 historic synagogue buildings.<sup>3</sup> This does not include historic synagogue buildings outside of the Detroit city limits or historic synagogues that no longer exist, such as the original 1877 Shaarey Zedek building.

### **What is the state of historic synagogues in Michigan?**

The answer to this question provides an assessment of what is taking place in Michigan Jewish communal history, specifically the Jewish cultural landscape landmark – the synagogue.

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) within the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries, is the government agency responsible for providing technical assistance to local communities in their efforts to identify, evaluate, designate and protect Michigan's historic resources. The SHPO was created in response to the U.S. Congress' passing of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966. The NHPA also established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a program that recognizes historic buildings, structures, sites and landscapes of exceptional historical significance.<sup>4</sup>

The Michigan SHPO, in partnership with the National Park Service, administers this program and other historic preservation programs within the state. In order to be eligible for the NRHP a building or place must be at least 50 years of age (though exceptions are made for extraordinary places), have a high level of integrity and have at least one of the following criteria:

- are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the state's history; or
- are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

- have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>5</sup>

The SHPO also administers its own State Register of Historic Places for sites that may not have sufficient historical significance for the national register but are important in Michigan history and deserve some recognition. The eligibility criteria for the State Register (SRHP) is similar to the national register and places listed on the NRHP are also listed on the SRHP.

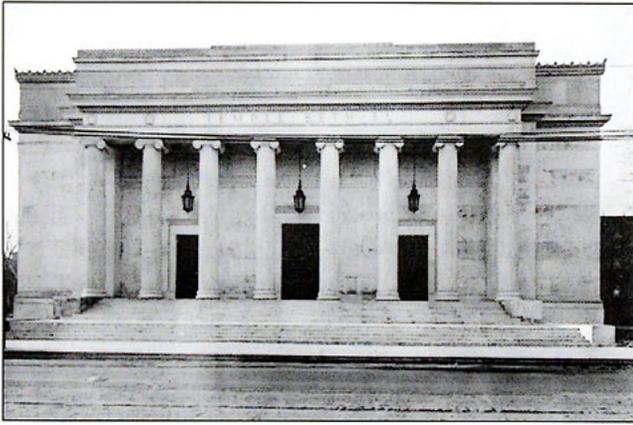
Besides being recognized as officially historic, listing on the NRHP and/or SRHP can make a designated building eligible for various preservation assistance programs offered by government and non-profit preservation institutions and programs. Surprisingly, considering the long history of Jewish life in Michigan and the construction of scores of synagogues across the state, very few have been officially recognized as historic on the NRHP or the SRHP.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Michigan historic preservation office, Temple Jacob of Hancock in the Upper Peninsula is the only active synagogue in the state that is listed on the NRHP. The synagogue, built in 1912 by the Temple Jacob Congregation (*MJH Vol. 38, 1998; MJH Vol. 42, 2002*), is listed as *Contributing* within the East Hancock Neighborhood National Register Historic District. "Contributing" signifies that the synagogue is one of several buildings that form a cohesive historic district that is listed on the NRHP.

As of this writing there are no active Michigan synagogues that are listed by themselves on the NRHP. The former Temple Beth El building locations at 3424 Woodward Avenue and 8801 Woodward Avenue are both listed on the NRHP but they no longer serve as Jewish houses of



*Temple Jacob, located in Hancock, Michigan, is the only active synagogue in the state that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*



*No longer a house of worship, this building – designed by Albert Kahn – was the home of Detroit's Temple Beth El from 1922-1973. Courtesy of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El.*



*The oldest son of a rabbi, the renowned architect Albert Kahn designed two of Temple Beth El's buildings. Courtesy of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El.*

worship. Renowned Detroit Jewish architect Albert Kahn designed both buildings in 1902-03 and 1921-22, respectively. Kahn was also a member of Congregation Beth El. The present day Temple Beth El at 7400 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills is listed on the SRHP. This is exceptional because the building is less than the standard 50-year-old criterion. It qualified because the building was designed by world-renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki in the early 1970s. Yamasaki is more famously known as the architect for the New York World Trade Center, which was destroyed on September 11, 2001.



*The oldest remaining synagogue in Michigan, Temple Beth El of Traverse City was built in 1885.*

Congregation Shaarey Zedek, at 27375 Bell Road, Southfield, is another synagogue listed on the SRHP that is presently less than 50 years old. Architect Percival Goodman designed this building in 1962. Considering that both of these synagogues are less than 50 years old and have already been listed on the SRHP, they have the potential to be listed on the NRHP when they come of age (or possibly earlier).

Traverse City's Temple Beth El is also listed on the SRHP because it is the oldest remaining synagogue in Michigan. Built in 1885, just eight years after the construction of the Congress and St. Antoine Streets location of Shaarey Zedek, Traverse City's synagogue is still used by its congregation and remains as Michigan's oldest synagogue building still in use as a Jewish

house of worship.<sup>7</sup> These are the only synagogues and former synagogues that are designated as historic on the NRHP and SRHP in Michigan out of the scores built since 1877.

There are many Michigan synagogue buildings eligible for the SRHP and/or the NRHP. This generally means that these buildings are over 50-years of age, have some form of historic significance, and the Michigan SHPO could be approached in order to coordinate a nomination for the SRHP and/or NRHP. Examples of these synagogue buildings include Temple Beth El in Battle Creek, Temple Emanuel of Grand Rapids, Temple Beth Sholom, Marquette and the Downtown Synagogue in Detroit. There are scores more that no longer serve as Jewish houses of worship that also are eligible, such as the majority of those listed in the *Lost Synagogues of Detroit*.

While not every synagogue in Michigan over the age of 50 years may be significant enough for listing on the NRHP and SRHP, some of them certainly are. Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids, for example, is



*Architect Eric Mendelsohn designed Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids.*

architecturally significant because it was designed by Eric Mendelsohn in 1952, a Jewish architect originally of German origin. Mendelsohn immigrated to the United Kingdom during the 1930's to escape Nazi persecution and settled in the United States in 1941. Shortly after arriving in the United States he reestablished his practice in architecture, which he continued until his death in 1953. Mendelsohn was considered one of the foremost modern style architects in the world and several of his buildings are already listed on the NRHP, such as B'nai Amoona Synagogue in University City, Missouri. Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids was the last building Mendelsohn designed before his death and, in a certain sense, represents the culmination of his style (see page 32).

### **The Process of Being Deemed a Historic Site**

Nominating a building to the NRHP or SRHP can be done by anyone - including private individuals, congregations, non-profit organizations, local governments, and private companies that specialize in this type of work. However, permission generally needs to be obtained from the property owner (in the event that the nominator is not the owner). The property owner has the legal right to object to having his historic place listed on the NRHP and SRHP.

The nomination process begins by completing and submitting a Preliminary Questionnaire created by the Michigan SHPO. Based upon the findings, the applicant will receive feedback on how to proceed (either ineligible for the NRHP and the SRHP, or eligible for the SRHP, or the NRHP). The next step in nominating the building requires an additional form for the NRHP and the SRHP. If the site is being considered for the state register, then only the Michigan SHPO is involved. In order to be added to the national register, the National Park Service will become involved. The nomination forms and process can be very lengthy and often requires in-depth research on the historical significance of the place, photographs, and architectural drawings. The entire process can take several months to a year from start to completion. Often nominations onto the NRHP coincide with special anniversary events related to the historical significance of the place.

If the nomination is accepted, a ceremony is usually organized to commemorate the event. A plaque containing basic historical information is often placed at the site.

For synagogues, the primary benefit of being listed on the NRHP is the attention and prestige of being recognized as an exceptional part of American history. Listing on the NRHP also makes the synagogue building eligible for historic preservation grant programs offered by some local governments and historic preservation non-profit organizations. There are also significant tax credits available for substantial rehabilitation projects on buildings listed on the NRHP. However, these can only be used by income producing owners, which congregations are often not since they are typically listed as non-profit organizations.

Contrary to what many believe, being listed on the NRHP does not prevent the property owner from making additions, alterations or even demolishing of a historic building (although there is an exception if federal money is involved with the project but this is very rare for a house of worship). Inappropriate alterations or demolition can result in a historic place being removed from the NRHP.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Preservation Taskforce**

For an organization such as the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, participating in listing historic synagogues onto the NRHP or SRHP is a means of executing its mission statement through celebrating and promoting awareness of Michigan Jewish history. In 2006, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan established a Preservation Taskforce to promote the preservation of Michigan's Jewish historic sites. These sites not only include synagogues, but also cemeteries, *mikvahs*, community centers and buildings designed by Jewish architects of Michigan origin.

The Preservation Taskforce is seeking to do more than nominate historic Jewish buildings to the NRHP and SRHP. The goal is to promote the physical

preservation and restoration of these buildings by disseminating helpful information. The taskforce is also creating a Michigan Historic Jewish Site Register as a tool for educating Michigan's Jewish communities on the importance of preserving this physical heritage. Eligibility for listing on the Michigan Historic Jewish Site Register is 36 years of age, "double-chai." It is hoped that by promoting preservation awareness more of Michigan's Jewish sites will be appreciated and remain part of the cultural landscape.

### Addendum

The following is the list of Lost Synagogues of Detroit  
compiled by Lowell Boileau<sup>10</sup>

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. AARON ISRAEL [STOLINER] | 20. BETH TICHVAH [PETOSKEY]      |
| 2. ADAS YESHURN [TYLER]    | 21. BETH YEHUDA                  |
| 3. ADAT SHALOM             | 22. B'NAI DAVID                  |
| 4. AHAVATH ZION            | 23. B'NAI ISRAEL                 |
| 5. AMARATH TEMPLE          | 24. B'NAI ISRAEL 2               |
| 6. AVAS ACHIM [DELMAR]     | 25. B'NAI JACOB                  |
| 7. AVAS ACHIM 2            | 26. B'NAI MOSHE                  |
| 8. BETH AARON              | 27. B'NAI ZION [HUMPHREY]        |
| 9. BETH AARON V ISRAEL     | 28. DOWNTOWN SYNAGOGUE           |
| 10. BETH ABRAHAM           | 29. EL MOSHE                     |
| 11. BETH ABRAHAM 2         | 30. EZRAS ACHIM TUROVER          |
| 12. BETH EL [BONSTELLE]    | 31. HERES ISRAEL                 |
| 13. BETH EL                | 32. MISHKAN YISROEL              |
| 14. BETH EMMANUEL [TAYLOR] | 33. NUSACH HARI                  |
| 15. BETH ITZCHOCK          | 34. SHAAREY SHOMAYIM [FENKELL]   |
| 16. BETH MOSES             | 35. SHAAREY TORAH                |
| 17. BETH MOSES 2           | 36. SHAAREY ZEDEK                |
| 18. BETH MOSES [OWEN]      | 37. SHAAREY ZION [PIGGLY WIGGLY] |
| 19. BETH SCHMUEL           | 38. TEMPLE ISRAEL                |



*A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Barry Stiefel is a Ph.D. student in the Historic Preservation program at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he is studying the preservation of historic Jewish sites. Some of his past experiences include the 2005 Sid and Ruth Lapidus Fellowship at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York and the 2002 Student Scholarship Program with the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Auschwitz, Poland. He is presently the Senior Architectural Historian for the cultural resource management firm ASM Affiliates Inc. located in Pasadena, California.*

### Endnotes

- 1 Cantor, J.L. (2001) Jews in Michigan. East Lansing, MI.: Michigan State University Press.
- 2 Weisfeld, C.C. (2004) Early Jewish Days in Michigan, Coloring and Activity Book. Detroit, MI.: Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit.
- 3 Boileau, L. (2006) The Lost Synagogues of Detroit. Detroit, MI.: <<http://shtetlhood.com/>> (accessed on 26 December 2006)
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# SITES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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◆  
**By Wendy R. Bice**

**T**here is nothing new about erecting markers to memorialize important events, places and people. In fact, Jacob set up a pillar at the site known as the Tomb of Rachel. The small gravesite, outside of the town of Bethlehem, stands even today.

Throughout the state of Michigan, more than 2,500 sites are listed in the state's register of historic places and more than 1,500 markers have been erected denoting historically significant sites and events. Established in 1955, the historic marker program's first official marker was placed at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Today, the program is one of the largest privately funded historical marker programs in the nation.

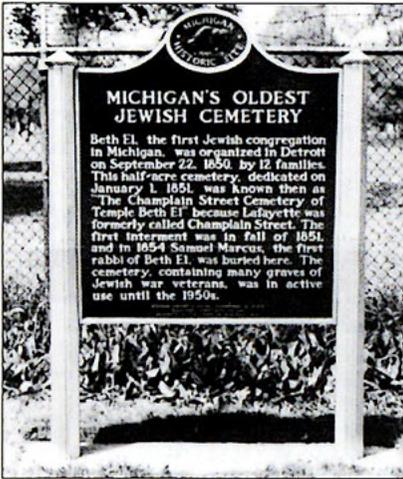
Within the myriad of sites are several that denote significant events in Michigan's Jewish history and important contributions by our state's Jewish citizens. The following is a list of markers within the state, followed by a list of sites designated on the national historic register. The markers are paid for with donations from sponsors, including the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

## **Michigan Historic Markers**

### **Congregation Beth El**

*312 South Park Street, Traverse City - Grand Traverse County  
Marker erected February, 1977*

Constructed in 1885 on land donated by Perry Hannah, this simple white frame structure featuring gable roof ends with spindle work is the oldest synagogue building in continuous use in Michigan. Hannah, a Traverse City lumber magnate, contributed to many religious and civic institutions. Julius Steinberg, Julius Levinson, and Solomon Yalomstein were the first trustees of Beth El. Looking today as it did more than a century ago, the building continues to serve the Grand Traverse area Jewish community.



**Detroit's First Jewish Cemetery**  
**Lafayette Street Cemetery**  
*Bounded by Elmwood and Mt. Elliot*  
*avenues, Lafayette and Waterloo streets,*  
*Detroit - Wayne County*  
*National Register listed December, 1982*  
*Marker erected May 1973*

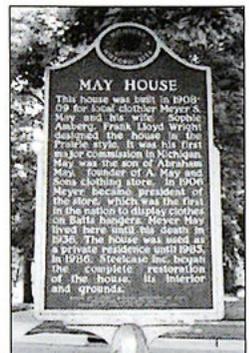
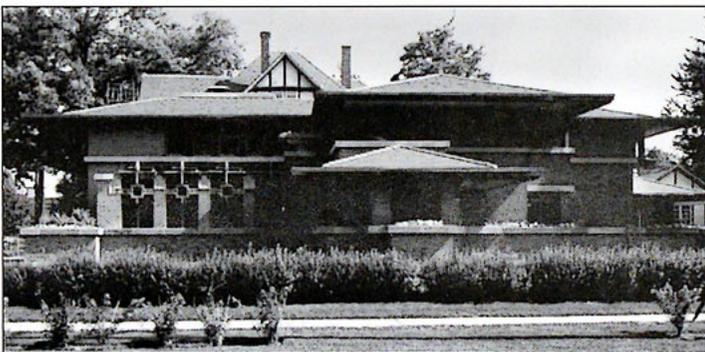
The Eastside Historic Cemetery District is significant for containing the oldest cemeteries in Detroit and the oldest Jewish burial ground in Michigan. The area contains three contiguous, 19<sup>th</sup> Century cemeteries: the Catholic Mount Elliott Cemetery, the Protestant Elmwood

Cemetery and the Jewish Lafayette Street Cemetery. These grounds are the final resting places of many prominent persons active in the political, religious and cultural history of the state and the City of Detroit. The Lafayette Street Cemetery contains 19<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> century monuments representative of contemporary trends in American funerary art.

### May House

*450 Madison Avenue SE, Grand Rapids - Kent County*  
*Marker erected August, 1987*

This house was built in 1908-1909 for local clothier Meyer S. May and his wife, Sophie Amberg. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, it was Wright's first major commission in Michigan. May was the son of Abraham May, founder of A. May and Sons clothing store. Meyer May lived in the home until his death in 1936. The house was used as a private residence until 1985. In 1986 Steelcase Incorporated began the complete restoration of the house, its interior and grounds.



### **Congregation Beth El/Temple Beth El**

*7400 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills - Oakland County*

*Marker erected 2001*

In 1850, 12 German immigrant families met at the home of Isaac and Sarah Cozens and founded the Beth El Society. At that time, there were 60 Jewish residents in the city of Detroit who gathered for religious services in homes and storefronts until the congregation purchased its first house of worship on Rivard Street in 1861. In 1856, Beth El adopted new bylaws and embraced Reform Judaism, changes that permitted men and women to sit together during services and sing together in choirs. Rabbis taught services in English rather than in German.



Photo courtesy of Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El

Temple Beth El's current home, located on Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Hills, is one of two synagogues designed by internationally acclaimed architect Minoru Yamasaki, who designed New York City's World Trade Center. Yamasaki designed the soaring temple to represent the meeting tents of the ancient Israelites. The 200 panels, created by steel cables dissecting the concrete walls, symbolize the number of times per day Jews are to thank God.

### **Temple Beth El**

*3424 Woodward Avenue, Detroit - Wayne County*

*Bonstelle Theater/Temple Beth El, May 1975, at Bonstelle on Woodward*

*National Register listed 08/03/1982*

Designed by architect Albert Kahn, this Beaux Arts style synagogue, dedicated on September 18, 1903, remained in use by the congregation

until 1922. Kahn used the Pantheon in Rome as his model in designing this all-encompassing building. In 1925, noted theater architect C. Howard Crane purchased and remodeled the former synagogue, naming it after Jessie Bonstelle, managing director of the Garrick Theater. The building served as the Bonstelle Playhouse until 1932 when it became the Mayfair motion picture theater. Wayne State University rented the building in 1951, purchased it five years later and has restored it to again accommodate live theater.



Photo courtesy of Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El

### Michigan's First Jewish Cemetery

*SW corner of E. Huron and Fletcher streets (east lawn of Rackham Building on the campus of the University of Michigan), Ann Arbor - Washtenaw County  
Marker erected 03/16/1983*

In 1848-1849, the Jews Society of Ann Arbor acquired burial rights to this land adjacent to what was then the public cemetery, making it the first Jewish cemetery in the state. Several years earlier, German and Austrian immigrants had begun holding religious services in the homes of the five Weil brothers in the vicinity of the family tannery, J. Weil and Brothers. By the 1880s, the Jewish community no longer existed, and in 1900, the remains of those buried on the site were reinterred in Ann Arbor's Forest Hill Cemetery.



Photo courtesy of Tor Shwayder

### **First Jewish Religious Services**

*Corner of St. Antoine and East Congress (lawn of Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building),  
Detroit - Wayne County*

*Marker erected 09/14/1977*

In 1850, near what is now the home of the high rise Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building, a small group of German-Jewish immigrants gathered at the home of Isaac and Sarah Cozens and formed the Beth El Society. Marcus Cohen, a layman, conducted the service. The following year, at the urging of Sarah Cozens, the Society was incorporated under the name of "Beth El," meaning "House of God," and thus became the first Jewish congregation in Michigan, which is still in existence and is known today as Temple Beth El.

### **Congregation Shaarey Zedek**

*27375 Bell Road, Southfield*

*Marker erected 04/1987*

In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, 17 Beth El Society members, seeking a more Orthodox religious home, left the congregation to found the "Shaarey Zedek Society." In 1877, the membership constructed the first building in Michigan to be erected specifically as a synagogue, at Congress and St. Antoine. Congregation Shaarey Zedek has worshipped in six different structures since its founding and continues to transmit its heritage from generation to generation. The congregation moved to Southfield in 1962.

### **Michigan's First Jewish Settler**

*Marker erected 04/29/1964*

*Fort Michilimackinac, Mackinac, MI*

Ezekiel Solomon, a native of Berlin who had served with the British army, arrived at Michilimackinac in the summer of 1761, thus becoming Michigan's first known Jewish resident. Considered among the most active of the Mackinac fur traders, Solomon teamed up with several other traders during the Revolutionary War to form a general store and became a member of a committee of eight formed in 1784, to regulate the Mackinac area trade. He often traveled to Montreal where he was a member of Canada's first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel.

### **Edward Israel, Arctic Pioneer**

*Mountain Home Cemetery, bounded by Main St., Ingleside Terrace, and Forbes St., Kalamazoo - Kalamazoo County*

*Marker erected 05/16/1972*

Edward Israel, 22, a scientist on Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely's polar expedition team, the nation's first, is laid to rest in this cemetery in Kalamazoo County. The team set out in 1881 for Ellesmere Island in

the Arctic Ocean. Israel collected valuable astronomical information and assisted Greely in many administrative chores. Disaster struck in 1883 when the relief ship was sunk en route. After a severe winter, 18 of the 25 expedition members died, including Israel. The entire city of Kalamazoo, with mixed sorrow and pride, honored Israel when the body was returned in August of that year.

**Chapman Abraham/Jewish Soldiers in Civil War** *see page 106 for the article*  
*TriCentennial Park at the riverfront, Detroit*  
*Marker erected April 2007*

## **National Register**

### **Boston-Edison Historic District**

*State Register listed 12/11/1973*

This 45-block area in Detroit, bounded by Linwood, Atkinson, Woodward and Glynn Court, is known as the Boston-Edison District and is one of the city's early suburbs. Various factors helped shape the district including the construction of Henry Ford Hospital in 1915 (23 physicians built homes in the western part of the district) and the lack of discriminatory measures against Jewish people. Rabbi Leo Franklin, organizer of the United Jewish Charities and rabbi at Temple Beth El, lived at 26 Edison Avenue. B. Siegel, one of the many noted retailers with stores on Woodward Ave., also lived in the area.

### **East Hancock Neighborhood Historic District**

*Roughly bounded by Front, Dunston and Vivian streets, Mason and Cooper avenues, Hancock - Houghton County*

*National Register listed 06/23/1980*

The East Hancock Neighborhood Historic District is significant for its role in the growth of Hancock, its relationship to changing local business opportunities and its regional architectural heritage. The first prominent residents were generally mine employees and managers. As the mine declined in the early 1900s, the inhabitants of the district were more likely to be Hancock merchants and businessmen among whom were several prominent Jewish families. These families established Temple Jacob in 1912, dedicating the building in memory of Jacob Gartner.

### **Bernard Ginsburg House**

*236 Adelaide, Detroit - Wayne County*

*National Register listed 08/19/1991*

The home of Bernard Ginsburg, an important figure in philanthropy, civic service and the Jewish community during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, was a very early work of the well-known architect Albert Kahn.

### **Haymarket Historic District**

*Michigan Avenue between Portage Street and the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, Kalamazoo - Kalamazoo County*  
*National Register listed 05/27/1983*

The Haymarket Historic District is significant for containing the best preserved concentration of historic commercial buildings in Kalamazoo, including many structures significant in architectural terms in their own right as notable examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles. The district is also notable in the ethnic history of Kalamazoo as the business focal point of the city's large German and German-Jewish community.

### **Jewish Colony (Demolished)**

*5 miles NE of Bad Axe, Verona Township - Huron County*  
*State Register listed 02/11/1972*

A part of the Baron Hirsch plan, this Jewish colony was formed in 1891 as one of the first Jewish agricultural experiments in the state. The colony lasted until about 1900. The colony's schoolhouse, the last surviving structure associated with the colony, was demolished in 1972.

### **Joseph Joseph House**

*105 North Eighth Avenue, Iron River - Iron County*  
*National Register listed 12/22/1983*

Joseph Joseph was one of the early Jewish settlers in Iron County arriving in 1914 to open his own clothing and millinery shop in the Minkler Building on Genesee Street. The Joseph House is the only Spanish-style house in Iron County and is currently a private residence. Joseph sold his retail business in 1932 and became a traveling representative for a Chicago clothing firm.

### **David Lilienfeld House**

*447 West South Street, Kalamazoo - Kalamazoo County*  
*National Register listed 01/23/1986*

David Lilienfeld, a prominent member of Kalamazoo's large 19<sup>th</sup> century German-Jewish merchant community, built this elaborate late Victorian house to replace an earlier residence on the same site. Born in 1836 in Hanover, Germany, Lilienfeld arrived in Kalamazoo in 1860, opened Lilienfeld's, a cigar and wine shop, then later founded the Lilies Cigar Company.

**Emanuel Schloss House***234 Winder, Detroit - Wayne County**State Register listed 08/18/1988*

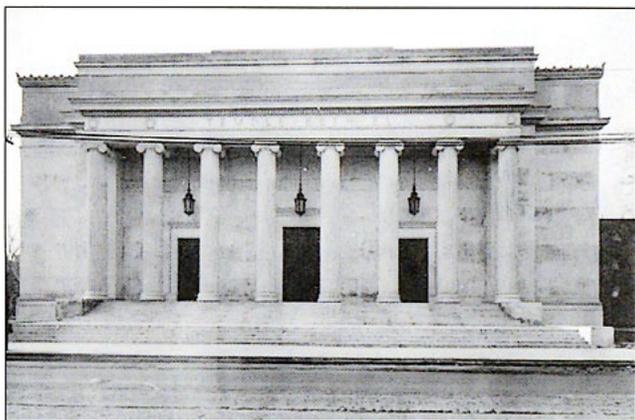
Emanuel Schloss, a German immigrant who owned a dry goods and ready-made clothing store with his brother, was very involved in the Jewish community. The home has architectural note as a vernacular example of Second Empire residential design.

**Stuber-Stone Building***4229 Cass Avenue, Detroit - Wayne County**National Register listed 04/04/1996*

Originally home to the automobile dealership of Stuber-Stone & Company, this building reflects the design and construction methods typical of new dealership and showroom buildings built throughout the United States in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Built on Cass Avenue in 1916, one of the first streets paved for use by automobiles while Woodward Avenue was still used for carriages, the Stuber-Stone Building was located in Detroit's first streetcar suburb known as the Cass Corridor. The structure was built for David W. Simons, a developer, contractor and Jewish philanthropist by the A.J. Smith Construction Company. The building saw a series of automotive industry tenants as the industry's fortunes rose and fell on Cass Avenue and in Detroit and is currently undergoing renovation.

**Temple Beth-El***8801 Woodward Avenue, Detroit - Wayne County**National Register listed 08/03/1982*

Albert Kahn designed the third Temple Beth-El for his Reform Jewish congregation to replace the earlier temple located closer to the downtown area. The temple cornerstone was laid on October 5, 1921. This monumental structure remained the house of worship for Michigan's oldest Jewish congregation until 1974



when a new temple was constructed. The former temple was then sold to Lighthouse Tabernacle. This third Temple Beth-El is notable as a major monument of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical Revival synagogue architecture in the United States.

**Other Markers...**  
**Donated by JHS to Commemorate Significant Contributions  
of Jewish Citizens of Michigan**

**Chapman Abraham, *Detroit's First Known Jewish Resident***  
Jewish Community Center (Maple/Drake), June 1977

Chapman Abraham arrived in Detroit in 1763, a fur trader who came here seeking an opportunity for fruitful trading. The plaque, presented by the JHS of Michigan to the Jewish Community Center on Maple and Drake in 1977, remains in the library.

**Bernard Isaacs, *Founder and First Superintendent of the United Hebrew Schools of Detroit.***

Although its whereabouts are currently unknown, this plaque – and attached sculpture – were presented by United Hebrew Schools and the JHS of Michigan in October, 1981 in memory of Mr. Isaacs, who passed away in 1975. A pioneer in education of American Jewry, Mr. Isaacs encouraged the teaching of Hebrew as a modern language thereby helping untold thousands of youngsters learn the language of our faith.

**The Detroit Flag marker**

*Detroit Historical Museum, Oct. 1983*

A little known fact is that David Emil Heineman, president of the Detroit Common Council and an important figure in Detroit Jewish history, designed the official flag of the city of Detroit. A marker, presented by the JHS, stands in his honor at the Detroit Historical Museum.

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# THE MAN WHO CONTROLLED THE MACKINAC BRIDGE

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◆  
By Edie L. Resnick

Those of us who occasionally make the trip across the bridge that spans the four miles of deep water between Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas never give a thought to who was responsible for its construction. We just know that it is an easy, fast and safe way to get from the mitten to its upper partner.

On November 7, 2007, the "Mighty Mac" will be 50 years old, and what is of interest to us is that the bridge was designed by the foremost bridge builder of his time, David B. Steinman, a Jew born in Brooklyn of immigrant parents from Belarus. Even more interesting is the man who was a prime mover in the financing, construction and maintenance of the entire project. His name is Lawrence A. Rubin, and he, too, is Jewish. A Detroit Central High School 1930 graduate, Rubin played defensive center on the football team the year it won the metropolitan league title in the 1929 season. In 1950, he became "executive secretary of the Mackinac Bridge Authority,"



*Standing at the top of south Mackinac Bridge tower is  
Lawrence Rubin, the man behind the Mighty Mac (1959).*

© State of Michigan - Michigan Dept. of Transportation - Photography Unit

a position he held until his 1983 retirement. He also served as secretary/treasurer of the International Bridge Authority, which completed a bridge in 1962 that connected Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan with Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

The story of Rubin's leadership and development of the bridge is a remarkable story. First we have to look at the history behind the construction at that site.

### **Building Demand**

About 12,000 years ago, during the period of the last ice age in Michigan, a retreating glacier destroyed the land link between the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. Early on, the aborigines in that area dug copper and traded it to far flung places in the continent. Their trails ended at the waters' edge and the only way they could transport the materials was through what is now Wisconsin or Canada or they had to brave the treacherous deep waters of the strait in their dugouts. Copper in those days was a very highly-prized commodity, so most likely it was transported by land, as were any other goods that were traded or exchanged.

When the Indians took the place of the prehistoric peoples, the Algonquins became dominant in the northern Michigan area and the Ottawas lived to the south of the Straits.

They called the region bordering both sides of the water "Michilimackinac," or great road of departure. It is said to mean "the jumping-off place" in our speech. Roads and trails led people east/west for centuries. Jean Nicolet, a Frenchman, is said to be the first white man to see Lake Michigan. He traveled through the Straits along the south shore of the Upper Peninsula but never stopped to look at the lower one. Thirty-five years later, Europeans visited the Lower Peninsula and the area soon became an important trade route between the East and the westward expansion. The waterways became an essential element of the trade route. Since the center of the fur trade was located on Mackinac Island, the whole of Michilimackinac became an important economic center. Later, the area would be fought over by the French, British and Americans. Still, the direction of travel remained east/west and there was no mention of crossing the waters by bridge or ferry.

The beauty of the area – the clean air, the plentiful lumber and the wealth of copper and iron ore that was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – helped make a political case for both peninsulas to be considered as one vast state. Southern Michiganders saw little value in joining with the wild territory that was so inaccessible; they wanted some of Ohio instead. A compromise was reached, and in 1837 Andrew Jackson signed Michigan into statehood. The lack of easy access to the north forced northern trade and commerce to go to Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Chicago. Business and cordiality suffered because of this and the fact that transportation across the straits

by boat became impossible at certain times of the year. People who dared to cross the ice in winter often didn't make it back.

In 1881, a ferry service began but it ran infrequently. Railroads reached the straits and stopped like the trails at the water's edge. When the Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883, an enterprising merchant from St. Ignace named William Saulson (*MJH Jan. 1962 Vol. II*) placed ads in

**THE PEOPLE'S STORE**  
**WILLIAM SAULSON**

DRY GOODS

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

Proposed Bridge across the Straits

CLOTHING.

Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Cans and Oil Cloths.  
**ST. IGNACE and MICH.**

the local St. Ignace newspaper proposing a bridge across the Straits of Mackinac. A year later, *The Grand Traverse Herald* editorial stated that the ferry service was a failure and a bridge or tunnel was needed. In 1887, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt built the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island and pleaded for a bridge across the Straits. Nothing more was said about a bridge for 50 years.

After World War I, people began touring in automobiles. Highways replaced trails and railroads as a means of transporting vacationers from place to place, but the highways always ended at the waters' edge. Railroad ferries transported cars on an irregular basis and the trip

across the straits was expensive and took many hours. Later, car ferries began transporting visitors, but these took from an hour and a half to five hours to cross if the lineup of cars was long or the weather turned nasty.

In the 1920s there was some talk of a "floating tunnel" or a bridge that would connect by hopping the islands in the Straits. Nothing came of these ideas, and the state of Michigan arranged to have eight car ferries to handle the traffic. Traffic became so heavy that the late Governor Fred Green ordered the same agency to make a study of bridge feasibility. The report was favorable and its cost was estimated at 30 million dollars. By 1933, hunting and weather changes resulted in the revival of interest in a bridge. The state created the Mackinac Straits Bridge Authority of Michigan and hired Leon Solomon Moisseiff, designer of the George Washington, the Delaware, the Golden Gate and many other bridges to study the area and the feasibility of a bridge. Moisseiff, born in Riga, Latvia in 1872 immigrated to the U.S. in 1892, graduated as an engineer from Columbia University in

*Jewish businessman William Saulson was one of the bridge's earliest advocates. Referring to the bridge as "a glimpse of the future," Saulson took this ad out in a local paper.*

1895. He approved of the idea but passed away before the bridge project became a reality. By 1941, a location for the bridge had been selected, funds were approved and a causeway was built on the north side of the Straits. All thought that the project would finally become a reality.

If World War II had not occurred, the bridge would probably have been a reality and the management of the bridge would have been up to someone other than Larry Rubin.

### **Building Bridges with the Public**

From the onset of World War II until the actual construction, there was a great deal of apprehension concerning the expense, feasibility and safety of building what would be the longest suspension bridge in the world. The politics involved, related to the financing and economic value of the project, were convoluted and too complicated to explain at this time. One of Mr. Rubin's two books, *Bridging the Straits*, explains this in great detail and in an engaging fashion.

Among the influential people who were able to sway public opinion in favor of the bridge construction were: Senator Prentiss M. Brown who devoted much time and energy over the years to making the bridge a reality; George Osborn, publisher of the *Sault Ste. Marie Evening News*; former Highway Commissioner Murray D. Van Wagoner; and W. Stewart Woodfill, manager of the prestigious Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. They were the key people with whom Larry Rubin worked to resolve the legislation and obtain the finances needed. Mr. Woodfill closed his hotel at the end of the season in 1949 and spent the winter in Lansing fighting for the bridge against very strong opposition. In 1950, he finally convinced the legislature to create a new Mackinac Bridge Authority (the old one had been disbanded in 1947) and token funds were appropriated to pay for preliminary studies and surveys. Prentiss M. Brown has been called "the father of the Mackinac Bridge", but without the support of the then governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams the bridge might not have become a reality.

Lawrence A. Rubin was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts in 1912. His family moved to Detroit in 1928. He played defensive center on Central High School's football team when the school won the league championship. After his graduation in 1930, he attended the University of Michigan and was active in school affairs until his graduation with a business major in 1934. He entered the job field during the Depression and joined his older brother in an advertising business for two or three years where he spent most of his time visiting what he hoped would be potential customers.

He began to create brochures and to write short, catchy dramatic ads for radio. In those days, people running for office would read lengthy speeches that bored listeners, and Rubin's style of advertising attracted a Republican candidate who hired him to write his broadcasted speeches.

Rubin's reputation grew and, in 1937, he was recruited to work on the public relations campaign for the highway department where he remained until the war broke out. During that time, he learned to ski and to fly. He got his pilot's license right after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

Like many young men of the time, he quit his job and enlisted in the army as a private. He was stationed in Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Through a strange circumstance involving a suspected communist, he was suddenly transferred out of camp and sent to Chicago where he became an intelligence officer. He had to sit in a bar in civilian clothes and look for spies. Ironically, he didn't drink at that time, so it was a tough job for him. After that, he was sent back to Detroit in civilian clothes and was instructed to tell people that he was doing public relations for the Detroit Ordinance plant. In reality, he was to set up informants who were to report any spies in the plant. Apparently, they never found any, and he was sent overseas in Counter Intelligence. He spent part of his two and a half years of service in the South Pacific in New Guinea and the western part of the East Indies at Macarthur Headquarters. He was on a 30-day leave when Japan surrendered.

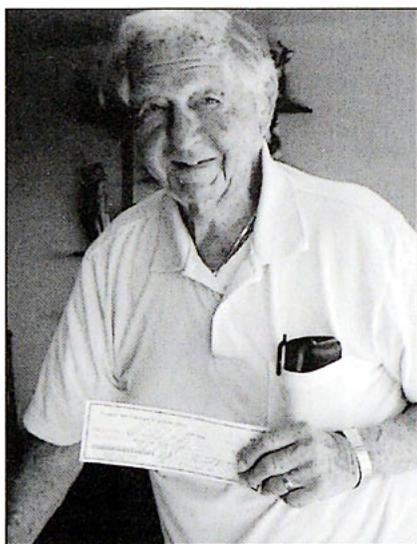
At the end of the war, Rubin was entitled to return to his old job as an assistant director of the State Highway Department. However, the public relations section had been abolished and the people in control of hiring kept putting him off. He decided to open a small advertising agency, Lawrence A. Rubin Advertising, in Flint, Michigan. He also became the editor and publisher of the *Genessee Sportsman*. In 1948 Rubin was offered and accepted the position of executive director of the Michigan Good Roads Federation. Largely an advocacy and public relations position, Rubin was charged with winning public support for legislation that would meet the needs of Michigan's highways. In 1950, while in Lansing, Governor Williams signed the bill creating a new Bridge Authority. Rubin knew that the members of the committee were about to convene their first meeting, and he decided to stay and watch the event. The project was familiar to him because he had helped draft a presentation to President Roosevelt in 1940 for his support and some New Deal money for a bridge. He had gone to Washington with the then State Highway Commissioner to plead the request.

Governor Williams wanted to keep the bridge as apolitical as possible. He appointed three Republicans and three Democrats to the Bridge Authority. Prentiss M. Brown was elected temporary chairman, a job he kept until 1973. The next order of business was to appoint an executive secretary. To offset a squabble between the members, Brown appointed a committee of two to investigate and recommend a secretary at the next meeting. After the meeting, Mr. Rubin approached both men individually and offered to serve as secretary. He even offered to work without pay because he felt that the contacts on the committee would "do a lot of good" for his Michigan

Good Roads Commission. Although the two men disliked each other and usually disagreed, they knew him well and both recommended that he be appointed. The rest of the members agreed unanimously.

From that day in 1950, until the end of his employment career on December 31, 1983, the bridge became Lawrence Rubin's life's work. At the time he was appointed, the governor was a Democrat and the legislature was predominately Republican. Funding and maintenance issues were of vital concern and were tied in with an important tax bill. If the bill didn't pass, the Mackinac Bridge wouldn't be built. The political machinations that went on were dizzying. Larry Rubin spent much time and energy working to influence people to vote for the bridge. The appropriation finally went through allocating \$417,000 annually from the highway funds budget toward the Mackinac Bridge Authority for the maintenance, operation and repair of the bridge once it was built. The big catch was that it had to be financed completely by the end of that year, and getting the bonds sold on time proved challenging.

By Armistice Day, 1953, only 50 days before the legislation was to expire, no bonds had been sold. Rubin joined Prentiss M. Brown and Charles T. Fisher, Jr., the two committee members with strong Wall Street connections, in a meeting with the representative of an insurance company willing to guarantee the sale of the bonds before the end of the year. James Abrams of Allen and Company was as good as his word. His financing



*Lawrence Rubin today holding the \$96,400,033.33 check from the proceeds of the sale of Mackinac Bridge bonds.*



*Dr. David B. Steinman, architect of the Mighty Mac, considered this beautiful suspension bridge his crowning jewel.*

*Photo courtesy of MDOT.*



*Proudly standing at the center of the bridge at a pre-opening inspection are (l to r): John Mackie, state highway commissioner; Dr. David B. Steinman, bridge designer; Governor G. Mennen Williams; Bridge Authority members Prentiss M. Brown, George A. Osborn and William G. Cochran; Lawrence Rubin and an unidentified dignitary. Photo courtesy of MDOT.*

procedure worked and the bonds sold. On February 17, 1954, the chairman of the Bridge Authority was handed a check for \$96,400,033.33. After pictures were taken, he handed the check to Larry Rubin to deposit with the trustee. It was endorsed by both the state treasurer and Larry who figured that during the fifteen minutes he held it in his pocket it had earned \$125 in interest. Some years later, Larry was allowed to keep the check as a souvenir, a memento that he treasures to this day.

With money in the bank, construction officially began on May 7, 1954 with dual ceremonies in St. Ignace to the north and Mackinaw City to the south. When it opened for traffic on November 1, 1957 the Mighty Mac was the world's longest suspension bridge, a record the bridge held until 1998.

Shortly after the project began, Rubin left the Highway Commission to work full time on the bridge project. He became involved with every aspect of the construction working extremely closely with architect David Steinman, whose booming voice and self-assured attitude belied his 5'6" height. Like Moisseff, Steinman was considered a master in the field. By the time he came to Michigan, he and his firm were responsible for the design and construction of more than 400 bridges on five continents including the



*November 1 1957. Gov. Williams and members of Mackinac Bridge Authority leading pre-opening inspection cavalcade on bridge.*

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Florianopolis Bridge in Brazil, the Mt. Hope Bridge in New York and the Thousands Islands Bridge. Steinman, son of a Jewish immigrant factory worker in New York's East Side, would come to regard the Mackinaw Bridge as his crowning achievement.

Rubin also worked closely with the engineers responsible for the actual construction and the crewmen. He was involved with the photographer who documented everything in photos and movies, with the press, the politicians and the public. Once the bridge was completed, Ruben became responsible for the operation of the bridge detailing everything from maintenance to crossing fares. Amazingly, the bridge was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. The last of the Mackinac Bridge Bonds were retired on July 1, 1986. Revenues from fares are now used to maintain and to operate the bridge and to repay the State of Michigan for monies advanced to the Bridge Authority since 1957.

Larry Rubin worked for the Mackinac Bridge Authority for 32 years until his retirement on the last day of December 1982. He was elected to the Michigan Transportation Hall of Honor in 1988. To honor his service to the State of Michigan and to the Mackinac Bridge Authority, the Lawrence A. Ruben Conference Center in the administration building was dedicated.

### **Meeting the great man behind the Mighty Mac**

On a lovely afternoon in mid-August, 2006, my husband and I drove to St. Ignace to pay a visit to Larry Rubin. He was 93 years young. No longer the robust man pictured in the conference room named in his honor, he walked slowly with the help of a cane, his mind and his memories were

still clear and concise. He and his wife, Elma, share a home tucked away on a side road, where, in the distance but in plain sight, was his bridge. In that sunny living room, I listened to the story of his life and looked out the picture window across an unbroken expanse of trees that lead down to the Straits and the bridge Rubin nursed from its conception until his retirement. He still watches it every day.

He had many interesting tales to tell. His greatest regret was that, at age 90, he no longer had the leg strength to ski with his friends. He was still actively involved with many activities. He had recently spearheaded a fund raising campaign for the new library in St. Ignace and was one of its major donors. He had written two wonderful books telling about the bridge that were the sources for much of this article.

His stories about the bridge were mostly humorous. He spoke of big, burly truck drivers who, out of sheer fright, couldn't drive their semis across the bridge. They lay quivering in the back of their cabs while a Bridge



*Larry and Elma Rubin are seen here in 2006 standing in their St. Ignace backyard overlooking the Straits of Mackinac and the Mighty Mackinac Bridge.*

Authority staff member would maneuver their rig across the expanse. In fact, the Bridge Authority is always ready to help drivers with what is known as "gephyrophobia," fear of bridges (gephyra is Greek for bridge). Whether it is getting behind the wheel and driving the car themselves, or escorting vehicles by driving next to the car on the waterside so a driver can't see the water far below, a member of the Bridge Authority staff will assist. This customer relations part of the business has always been "just part of the job."

Rubin told of numerous times when drivers have unknowingly left

behind bikes, snowmobiles and trailers that have become unhitched. Occasionally, wives or children have been left behind on one side of the bridge and not missed until the driver reached the other side. There have been a few accidents, a suicide who left his van in the middle of the bridge with the motor running and was never found; a private plane that crashed into the bridge in a fog killing the passengers.

There were other stories too: stories about construction challenges and the many hard workers who toiled to build the mighty structure, stories about the Labor Day Annual Bridge Walk and the governors and celebrities who have participated in it, and the delightful story of why the lights on the bridge at night are amber and blue. It was Rubin's suggestion that lights be installed on the cables of the bridge. When it came time to choose between clear and amber colored lamps, this University of Michigan alumnus decided that since the lights on the bridge deck gave off a blue glow, amber would work best for the cables.

The rest of the story, as they say, is history. Today, the Mackinac Bridge is as splendid and awe-inspiring as it was the very first day it opened. It provides a year-round, vital link between north and south and is used by millions of drivers, and pedestrians, each year.



*When asked of his fondest memories, standing with "the president's wife, Lady Bird Johnson," ranked among the highest of honors for Larry Rubin.*

*He is pictured here with Mrs. Johnson on June 24, 1964. ©*

State of Michigan - Michigan Dept. of Transportation - Photography Unit

So, the next time you pay your \$2.50 to cross the Straits into northern Michigan, remember the remarkable man who helped to make the crossing so easy. He is still there in St. Ignace spending the last days of his life looking out at the beauty surrounding the impressive structure he helped to create and perpetuate.

The statistics of construction are mind boggling to this day:

- The total length with approaches is 26,444 ft.
- The main tower is 552 ft. above the water and 210 ft down to bedrock
- The under clearance at midspan for ships is 155 ft
- The diameter of each cable is 24 1/2 inches, almost as wide as a sidewalk.
- 5 million rivets and over one million bolts hold the bridge together.
- 350 engineers and 11,000 workers were employed during construction, 2,500 at the bridge site and 8,500 in quarries and other places.
- 85,000 blueprints and 4,000 engineering drawings were used.
- Only 5 workers were killed during construction. They are memorialized on a plaque on Pier I.



*Author: Edie L. Resnick (pictured standing in front of the photo of Larry Rubin that hangs at the St. Ignace Welcome Center). The 2005 Leonard N. Simons History Award winner is once again contributing an article to Michigan Jewish History. Resnick is a retired educational consultant.*

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# 150 YEARS YOUNG...

GRAND RAPIDS' TEMPLE EMANUEL'S  
HISTORY IS A PROUD TRADITION OF  
CONVICTION AND LEADERSHIP

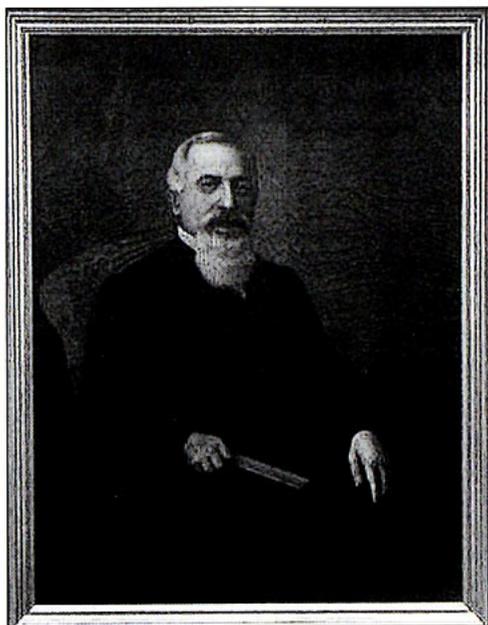
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◆  
**By Barbara Robinson**

**T**emple Emanuel has a long history of 150 years as a Reform Temple in western Michigan. Its members have been active citizens in the growth of the city as well as its promotion of Judaism in a predominantly Christian environment. As the members of Temple Emanuel celebrate this milestone, we honor the memories of our founders.

### **First Jews in Grand Rapids**

Julius Houseman was born in 1832 in Zeckendorf in the Kingdom of Bavaria, the son of a successful manufacturer of silk and cotton goods. After finishing school and working as a dry goods clerk, the young man chose to come to the United States, the land of opportunity. His father



*Considered the founder of Temple Emanuel, Julius Houseman was an active politician, community and congregational leader.*

agreed to pay his way, but planned for him to return. Houseman never did although he always maintained relationships with his German family.

Young Julius first went to Cincinnati where he met the Amberg family. There, he teamed up with Isaac Amberg and moved to Battle Creek where they set up a clothing store in 1851. Seeking to branch out further, Julius brought the store to Grand Rapids, which at the time, was a small city of about 1,800 on the rapids of the Grand River. Houseman is considered the first Jew to settle in Grand Rapids.

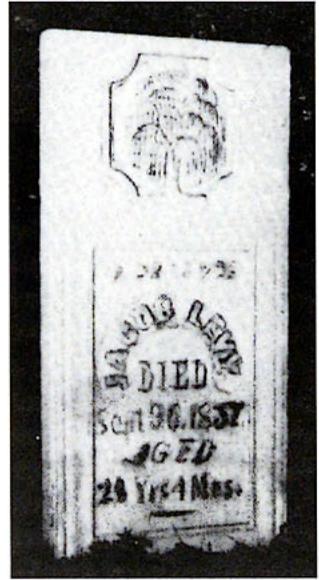
### **Temple Emanuel's beginnings**

A few years later, in 1857, Houseman together with a few other Jewish residents bought cemetery property in Oak Hill Cemetery to bury a young fur trapper, Jacob Levy, who died of tuberculosis. It is this benchmark event that established the founding of Temple Emanuel.

Most of the original Grand Rapids Jewish settlers were immigrants from Germany and were familiar with the Reform movement. They began by meeting in homes for Sabbath services and the High Holidays. The congregation was officially organized as a religious institution in 1872 when members drafted a complete constitution as well as cemetery rules and regulations. Their first written minutes, carefully preserved and held in the archives of Temple Emanuel are in perfect English handwritten in beautiful penmanship.

Board members carefully followed Roberts Rules of Order, the bible of parliamentary procedure for organizational meetings. It is interesting to note that, at the time, the guidebook was in its infancy, having first been published in 1876.<sup>1</sup> Several of Temple Emanuel's early founders, David Amberg, the Levi brothers and Jacob Barth, according to the 1880 Census, had been born and educated in this country, their parents being first-generation German immigrants.

At first, the small group hired a hall for meetings and sought the services of a rabbi, referred to as Reverend Mister. Wolf Weinstein filled the position at \$1,200 per year. He was expected to lead services, organize the choir and manage the religious school. In fact, the Board of Trustees found it necessary to chastise him at one point for his improper language with the children.



*The first Jewish gravesite in Grand Rapids is that of Jacob Levy, a young fur trapper who died of tuberculosis.*



DAVID M. AMBERG.

*David Amberg served as president of Temple Emanuel from 1889-1891*

During this early period Temple Emanuel affiliated with the newly formed Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, the dues being 25 cents per member. Temple Emanuel is honored to be one of the 28 founding members of the Hebrew Union College, established in 1875 to help new congregations develop consistency in their services and to provide rabbinical training for clergy. Temple members supported Rabbi Isaac Wise's efforts through his work called Minhag America.

Early Temple Emanuel minutes reveal how important the establishment of the religious school, the music at services and the Ladies Aid Society were to the members. The latter group always provided financial assistance with refurbishing and other needs not covered by membership dues.

It is also interesting to note the establishment of the Grand Rapids Lodge #238 of B'nai B'rith in June of 1875. Julius Houseman was the first president. When Houseman died in 1891, the organization was renamed Julius Houseman Lodge as a tribute to his memory.

### **A Permanent Home**

As early as April, 1874 the president was asked to appoint a committee of three to look for a more suitable place of worship. The leaders began talking about and planning to build their own synagogue. The Ladies Aid Society raised \$3,000 toward the construction of the new temple by sponsoring a city-wide fair which was a resounding success.

Wheels turn slowly though. It wasn't until March, 1881 that Julius Houseman reported that a site was purchased on the corner of Ransom and Fountain for \$3,500. David Sprague Hopkins, a local architect, and Fred G. Sheppard, contractor, were chosen to oversee the construction of the building which would measure 42 X 72 feet in size. It was primarily white brick trimmed with colored brick and stone. F.L. Ferbish contributed to the design of the beautiful pulpit and ark. A broad stairway at the front door led up to the second level which housed the sanctuary, and at the back of the main auditorium, a choir loft was built over the vestibule. Three hundred congregants could sit on wooden pews in the sanctuary and

*Architect Eric Mendelsohn*

the basement contained two meeting rooms, a vestry room and rooms for the Sunday School.

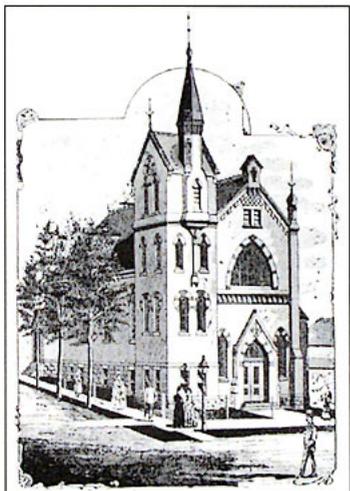
On October 11, 1881 a cornerstone for the new synagogue was laid and on August 21, 1882 the congregation took possession. Official dedication ceremonies took place on September 8, 1882 with the local paper, *The Grand Rapids Eagle*, claiming much praise for the building's beauty. Today, the structure still stands although altered on the exterior despite its designation as a national treasure.

### **The Founders of Temple Emanuel**

Who were these men, these pioneers of the Grand Rapids Jewish community?

Julius Houseman became the sole proprietor of his clothing store in 1854. Later his brother-in-law, Albert Alsberg, joined the business. The firm continued until 1876 when Julius disposed of his share to his cousin, Joseph Houseman. By then Julius had developed an active interest in politics along with other lines of business and investments, notably in timber lands and manufacture of pine lumber. He was one of the largest holders of real estate in Grand Rapids and also as far north as the Upper Peninsula. He became a stockholder in City National Bank in 1870, was chosen a director in 1874 and eventually a vice-president of the bank in 1882. He was one of the founders and directors of the Michigan Trust Co.

Houseman was also active politically, becoming an alderman from 1863-1870, representative to the Michigan House from 1871-1872, and served as mayor of the city from 1872-1875. Houseman's political career continued when he became Michigan's 5<sup>th</sup> District state representative,



*Temple Emanuel's first home built in 1881.*



*David "D.A." and Hattie Amberg's home on Cherry Street became the site of many social gatherings.*

serving from 1883-1885. In 1885, Houseman built a very large building on Ottawa NE across the street from the Water's Building, aptly named the Houseman Building. It was razed in the urban renewal of the 1960s. Sadly, Houseman's life was cut short when, in 1891 at the age of 61, he died of a heart attack.

David M. Amberg, nephew of Isaac Amberg came to Grand Rapids from Ohio in the late 1860s. He entered a partnership with Sidney Hart, an early Temple founder, and sold wines and liquors. He continued in this business until the death of his father-in-law, Julius Houseman. Amberg married Houseman's only daughter, Hattie. David, known as D.M., sold his part of the business to his brother Abraham Amberg. D.M. spent the rest of his very long life managing his wife's inheritance. D.M. and Hattie played an active role in the social life of Grand Rapids, first building a large home on Cherry St. which was eventually bought by St. Mary's Hospital and then torn down for the Barkwell Buick automotive dealership. Their next house, down the street from the Meyer May house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, was designed similar to the Wright style. Their last home, on College Avenue South, is presently owned by Tom Logan who wrote a very fine history of Grand Rapids Heritage Hill.

Joseph Houseman was also born in Zeckendorf and joined his cousin, Julius, in Grand Rapids in the 1860s. He continued to manage the Houseman store passing it on to his sons and grandsons until its final closing in the 1970s. He was also very active in the larger community. His life was characterized by his concern and interest in the welfare of the working man.



JOSEPH HOUSEMAN.

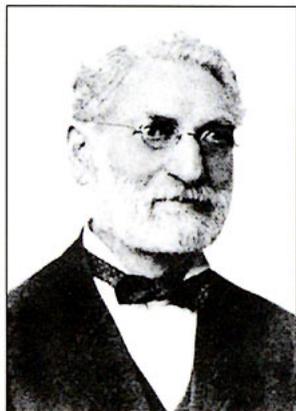
*Joseph Houseman served as president of Temple Emanuel from 1857-1870.*

The Housemans and Ambergs were very active in the running of Temple Emanuel as well as providing financial support. They were presidents, treasurers, secretaries through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another early founder of Temple Emanuel, Moses May, arrived in the area from Chicago in the 1870s and joined Houseman in the clothing store. After his brother Abraham joined him, they separated from Housemans and started their own clothing store under the name of A. May & Sons, The Giant Store. After Moses' death the store remained in the

Abraham May family. Meyer May gained public notice by having built a house on College at Logan designed by the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. He was married to Sophie, the daughter of D.M. Amberg. Sadly, she died prematurely at age 39 leaving two small children. He remarried, but the marriage did not last long.

G.A. Wolf (Gustav) was part of Temple Emanuel's first confirmation



*Gustav G.A. Wolf served as president of Temple Emanuel from 1909 -1914*



*This beautiful Tiffany window, rescued from the very first Temple Emanuel building, was a gift to the Temple from Estelle Wolf.*

class in 1873, served as president 25 years and as warden of the cemetery for 40 years. At the time of his death in 1948, the 93 year-old, University of Michigan Law School alumnus, was the oldest in age practicing attorney in the city. The stunning Tiffany window that is located in the front foyer of the current Temple Emanuel building was a gift from Gustav and his two brothers, Benjamin and David, in memory of their parents, Jacob and Clara Wolf.

Isaac Levy and his brother Jacob both had been born in upper New York state and came to Grand Rapids in 1868 to open a clothing store they named Star Clothing Store. The brothers were successful businessmen and were involved in the early success of the small Temple Emanuel.

### **Growing**

Growth of Temple Emanuel was sporadic, often depending a great deal on the leadership of the rabbi and a small core of the original founders. The Jewish population had expanded greatly by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the influx of families from Eastern Europe. In 1893 several families left the congregation to form an orthodox synagogue.

In the early years, most of Temple Emanuel's rabbis were not ordained by the Hebrew Union College and stayed just a short time. The board of trustees relied on Hebrew Union College students to conduct high holiday services. The first Hebrew Union College graduate to come to Grand Rapids was Moise Bergman in 1901 and he stayed until 1904. His enthusiasm sparked a revival, but as typically happened with young rabbis, he left.

Arriving in 1916, Rabbi Charles J. Freund carried the Temple through the tumultuous years of World War I. He left in 1921. In the gap between this Rabbi leaving and the hiring of a replacement, Temple attendance suffered. Some members even attended a nearby liberal Christian sect. When the Christian minister



*Owner of a retail clothing store, Meyer May retained Frank Lloyd Wright to design and build this home which still stands today.*

proposed that the two groups merge and become a liberal Christian church, Samuel Braudy, a long time member, arose and said, "The Lion of Judea is great enough for all of us. We invite all of you to become Jews."

Rabbi Philip Waterman, described as scholarly and gentlemanly, followed Rabbi Freund. Waterman was in demand as a lecturer and gained renown with his publications such as "The Story of Superstition". He led the congregation through the difficult 1920s and '30s. In 1936 he retired from the rabbinate living out his years in Grand Rapids. During his tenure, there was a more general participation of the membership of the congregation and the Board of Trustees expanded from 10 to 15 members.

Temple Emanuel's Sisterhood had been active since the very beginning under its earlier names Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society and Ladies Auxiliary. Its work was primarily charitable, although the members were always involved in teaching Sunday school classes. After becoming affiliated with the National Federation of Sisterhoods in 1924, the mission became service to the congregation. In 1923, Sisterhood adopted its first major fund raising project, the purchase of an organ. The entire amount of \$3,275 was raised and paid off in 10 months. During the Depression the women extended their service into the community volunteering at community baby clinics and child welfare departments. Achievement luncheons did not begin formally until 1939.

Rabbi Jerome Folkman came to Temple Emanuel in 1937. During his tenure he recreated and reinvigorated the Grand Rapids Jewish community through his dedication to a Jewish life. He returned services to Friday evening from Sunday morning, added additional congregational auxiliaries, formed a lay choir and introduced summer worship. Rabbi Folkman's own exemplary family was an outstanding factor in the success of his recommendation for a "systematic incubation of Jewish traditions in homes of members." He made it clear that he wanted more than lip service to traditions from the congregants. Within one year, Temple membership increased from 63 families to 150.

### A New Home

During the war years, 1941-1945, Temple membership increased to "standing room only" at High Holiday services. Five Sunday school classes were forced to meet in the Vestry Room, which was what we would call today a social hall. By 1943, it was clear the Temple had outgrown its quarters. In 1945 the Board authorized a campaign to raise \$100,000 for the purchase of a site and construction of a new building. Temple families also recognized this need and responded generously. A site at Fulton St. E. and Holmdene was purchased.

Rabbi Harry Essrig followed Rabbi Folkman in 1948, building on Folkman's firm foundation. Not only did Essrig have to lead the building of the new Temple, but he also carefully managed the many tasks facing a rapidly growing congregation. Temple Emanuel's devoted congregants and clergy underwent months of careful planning and significant money raising to successfully build the congregation's present day building designed by the world-renowned architect, Eric Mendelsohn. Sisterhood actively participated, adding more than \$17,000 to the building fund, one part specifically earmarked for the kitchen.

In the seven years that Rabbi Essrig was the spiritual leader, he also contributed to the larger community serving as president of the Child Guidance Clinic, first vice-president of Kent County Council of Social Agencies and as officer of many other organizations. He also encouraged congregants in civic involvement.

The congregation bade farewell to the old Temple in a special service on May 23, 1952. The first meeting in the still incomplete new building was the annual meeting: a basket dinner amidst the scaffolding and piles of rubble. Three months later, the office was moved from the Houseman



*Designed by Eric Mendelsohn, the present day Temple Emanuel represents a proud tradition of Jewish leadership and faith.*

Building to the new Temple, thus beginning what might be referred to as the "modern" era in Jewish Grand Rapids.

In 1937 Rabbi Folkman set a goal of 200 member families. That goal was met in January of 1953. Today at 150 years young Temple Emanuel has a vibrant congregation of 276 families. The new handsome building served not only as the building block but as the impetus for the growth of the Reform movement as newcomers came into Grand Rapids.

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### Endnotes

- 1 [www.Robertsrules.com/history.html](http://www.Robertsrules.com/history.html)

*Photos courtesy of Temple Emanuel.*



*Barbara Robinson has lived in Grand Rapids her entire life. For 30 years, she taught in the Forest Hills Public school system teaching elementary school. When she retired, she became involved in the Archives of Temple Emanuel. With collections spanning 150 years, the work of organizing and systemizing the collections so they would be available for public use became nearly a full-time commitment. It is a labor of love though and Barbara is proud to have been an active part of this project.*

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# THE BEGINNINGS OF HILLEL AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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◆  
By Gerry Corlin and Paul Rochlen

**A**t Wayne State University's renowned Walter P. Reuther Library, the collection of Labor and Urban Affairs, the earliest known mention of a Hillel Foundation at Wayne University (Wayne University became Wayne State University in 1956) exists in the form of a series of 1944 letters between Mr. Joseph P. Seldon, chairman and counselor of religious activities at Wayne University; Dr. Leo M. Franklin, rabbi emeritus of Temple Beth El in Detroit; and Abram L. Sachar, national director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations at American Universities.

Continuing until December 1945, their notes and letters show consensus among these esteemed leaders that a Hillel Foundation at Wayne University should be established. They also acknowledged a shortage of personnel for staffing the organization. The solution would be found in the soon-to-be released Jewish chaplains serving in the armed forces.

In April 1946, a Hillel Foundation was formally established at Wayne University as evidenced by a piece of stationery from the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Wayne University showing Rabbi Milton Aron as director. Little is known of Rabbi Aron's tenure other than it was short-lived, as were the tours of some of his successors. Rabbi Aron was present for the June 9, 1946 dedication of the first Hillel house at the university, then located at 4841 Second Avenue. Following Rabbi Aron was Rabbi Irwin Gordon who came to Detroit from Saskatchewan (Canada) and who also had a short tenure serving as director for only one year.



*Rabbi Irwin Gordon served  
as director for one year, 1947.*

Rabbi Gordon did leave behind a valuable memento, however, in the form of a 1947 article for an ad book written for the celebration of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pisgah Lodge of B'nai B'rith (Pisgah was formed in 1857, and for many years was the only B'nai B'rith Lodge in the Detroit area). According to Rabbi Gordon, at its inception, the Hillel Foundation at Wayne University was then one of nearly 200 foundations in the United

States, Canada, and Cuba:

*"...Hillel at Wayne, like its sister foundations, is dedicated to the promotion of the religious, cultural and social heritage of the Jewish people...Sabbath and holidays are observed in appropriate fashion with a range of traditional customs. Jewish interest discussions and lectures on literature, history and practices are conducted at Hillel House.*

*Activities such as dances, mixers, parties and more make up the social aspect of the activities. Interfaith and intercultural activity at the university and in the general community enter into the Hillel picture. In addition to the scheduled activities, the Director is always available to the students for personal counseling...*

*Because Hillel has its own house, it helps lend the friendly touch to activities. The first floor lounge, the music room and the library are the most popular. Within Hillel there is room for all – no matter which shade of Jewish opinion they prefer."*



*Shirley Reider, Hillel Queen of 1948, is shown in a newspaper article ready to recruit new members to the Hillel House.*

In 1948, Rabbi Max Kapustin followed Rabbi Gordon as Wayne University's Hillel director. Far more is known about Kapustin. A native of Germany, Kapustin and his wife fled to America in January 1938. By then, he had received his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg in 1933 at the age of 22, and in 1937, was ordained at the Hildisheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin. After arriving in America, he accepted a pulpit in Danville, Virginia, where he remained until taking the position as Hillel director at

Wayne University. Kapustin remained in this position until he retired in 1976. Afterward, he maintained a presence at WSU by both teaching and lecturing. Kapustin's name appears on a 1979 Hillel Student Board installation as delivering the benediction.



*Rabbi Max Kapustin served as Director of Hillel at Wayne University from 1948 until his retirement in 1976. He believed that he had been brought to Hillel at Wayne "by design, not accident."*

Rabbi Howard A. Addison

followed Kapustin in 1976 and stayed two years until 1978. During his tenure, Hillel at WSU reached out to the growing suburbs, establishing the Jewish Student Organization of Oakland University. A part-time staff person filled the position of director of this small office, spending a few hours a week with students.

It was also under Addison's stewardship, together with the support of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, that an off-campus Hillel House on 10 Mile Road in Oak Park, just west of the former Congregation B'nai Moshe building, was established. While only open for a few short years, this too became the site of many social functions and student activities. One of the most memorable, recounted Rabbi Addison recently from his home near Philadelphia, was a visit and speech by the wife of the then Soviet refusnik, Natan Sharansky. A crowd of more than 150 people packed the small Hillel House to hear her fascinating comments.

Rabbi Louis 'Eli' Finkelman assumed the directorship in 1978 where he remained for 14 years until 1992 leaving to take a pulpit at Congregation Beth Israel in Berkeley, California. Finkelman, a Bronx native, attended Yeshiva College and received his rabbinic ordination at Yeshiva University, New York.

Miriam Starkman succeeded Rabbi Finkelman and remains executive director of Hillel of Metro Detroit (HMD), as the organization is now known. As the first non-rabbi and first female to lead the organization, Starkman implemented the Board's goal of making Hillel a more inclusive place. Jewish students of all opinions would be welcome

whether they wore a kippah or not. Also, young adults in the Metro Detroit area not necessarily attending college would also be included in the Hillel constituency.

Culled from numerous resumes, Miriam Starkman was found during summer 1992 working as the Assistant Director at Camp Ramah in Utterson, Ontario, Canada, where she had previously served as a counselor and



*Miriam Starkman is the current Executive Director of Hillel of Metro Detroit.*

teacher. Hired sight-unseen over the telephone after several conference calls, Paul Rochlen and then-Board President Kurt Singer (z"l) flew to the camp in a four-seat airplane to meet her – a story Miriam still likes to tell. Miriam's background includes a BA and an MSW from the University of Michigan along with a Project Star Certificate in Jewish Communal Service. She is the 1998 recipient of the very prestigious Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's Mandel and Madeline H. Berman Award for Distinguished Community Service.

Today, Hillel of Metro Detroit defines its service area to include Wayne State University's undergraduate and professional schools, Oakland University, Lawrence Technological University, University of Michigan—Dearborn, Oakland Community College, and any other Jewish college students in the area who can be reached. Until July 2007, the Hillel at Eastern Michigan University was also under Miriam's supervision.

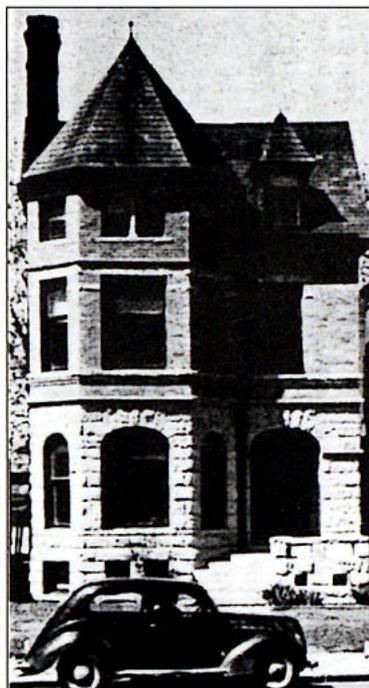
### The Hillel House

The Harry B. Keidan Lodge of B'nai B'rith was organized in 1945 and, under the leadership of its first president, Sidney J. Karbel, embarked on a program for the new Wayne University Hillel. Following a conference with Dr. Abram Sachar, national director of Hillel, Keidan Lodge undertook the founding of a new Hillel House at Wayne State University.

The lodge arranged for the purchase and renovation of a home located at 4841 Second Avenue, opposite the University campus, at a cost of over \$15,000. Funds were raised by Keidan members and the project was completed the following year under the lodge's second president, Harry Rott.

This first Hillel House was one of many similar houses located on or near the campus. The building had two floors of useable rooms plus a basement and an outside wooden stairway leading up to a usable attic.

The rabbi's office, an office for his secretary, and a few small rooms for studying, meetings or just socializing were located on the second floor. The first contained two adjoining rooms that typically had to be used together as one room to accommodate larger meetings or parties. There was a large archway



*Hillel House at Wayne University,  
located on Second Ave.,  
as it was in 1947.*

between them that made it much easier. There was also a kitchen and another room.

The basement might be described as a recreation room, provided that the students weren't too tall. There was enough space for a ping pong table, but since some of the furnace ductwork crossed part of the ping pong playing field, the space wasn't exactly ideal.

The first attempts at a kosher lunch program featured tuna fish or egg salad sandwiches - EVERY DAY. The only variations were veggies that could be grabbed with fingers, and lettuce and tomato. The lack of variety did not seem to discourage the lunchers - they kept coming.

One of the other attractions of the Hillel building was a parking lot for about 15 or 16 cars usable for registered Hillel members only and on a first-come-first-served basis. Since parking spaces so near to the main campus were at a premium, these spaces were golden. Many Hillel members became active because of their daily trek through the building after parking in the back, and they stayed for the socializing.

As it should, the Hillel House was often the meeting place in the evenings for Jewish sororities, fraternities and similar organizations that felt comfortable there, and were happy with no rental costs for their limited budgets.

### **Milton M. Weinstein**

On the wall behind the desk of Hillel of Metro Detroit Executive Director Miriam Starkman is a large portrait of Milton M. Weinstein. Under the portrait is an engraved metal plaque that reads: "President of the Wayne State B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and President of the Charles Grosberg Religious Center, whose untiring efforts for over 17 years made this dream come true: All religious faiths at Wayne University under one roof."

The plaque, presented by the Greater Detroit B'nai B'rith Council May 26, 1968, only hints at how significant Weinstein's contributions were to the success of Hillel. If there is one person who could be considered the father of the Hillel movement at Wayne University, and in all of Metro Detroit, it would have to be Milton Weinstein. In fact, his influence was so far reaching that Michigan State University's Hillel house was dedicated as the Milton M. Weinstein Hillel Center.

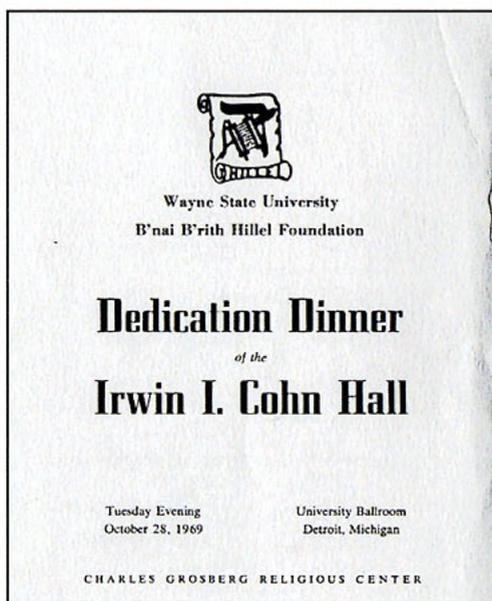
Weinstein devoted himself passionately to all of the university Hillels in the state and to the



*Milton Weinstein was a devoted benefactor and advocate for the Hillel movement in Michigan and worldwide.*

whole Hillel movement. For a number of years, he was treasurer of the International Hillel Commission, the governing body for all college and university Hillels. He also served as president of the WSU Hillel Foundation for more than 17 years and served as treasurer of the Hillel Foundation at University of Michigan for 12 years.

This highly respected attorney, who was in a practice with his brother Louis Weinstein for many years and passed away in 1984, received numerous honors for his work not only with Hillel, but with B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and a number of other charitable organizations. In 1977, on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Weinstein was presented with the National B'nai B'rith Youth Fellowship Award.



*The list of contributors to the new home of the Wayne State University B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation (as it was called in 1969) demonstrates the level of commitment the community of Metropolitan Detroit made to this effort. Notable last names among the donors include Simons, Berman, Borman, Fisher, Frankel, Gershenson, Hamburger, Honigman, Jospey, Schwartz, Stollman and Weinstein to name a few.*

### **Grosberg Religious Center**

Weinstein's dream of "All religious faiths at Wayne University under one roof" really began to take shape in July 1961, when, as president of the Religious Center Board at Wayne, he accepted a check for \$96,000 from the (Methodist) Wesley Foundation toward the proposed campus theology building.

The ground breaking took place in the spring of 1962 with an expected building cost of \$900,000. By June of that year, the estimated cost had risen

to \$ 1,277,000. Contributors had already pledged close to half that amount, \$467,000.

James Lyons, assistant counselor of religious affairs at Wayne State University, commented in a November 1964 memo that the building program for the University Center Building had received funds from 14 campus religious groups totaling \$1,005,200. The funds were to be used for the facilities of each religious organization and were arranged so that there would be no breach of the separation of church and state. Wayne State University receives federal and state funds.

It was also in November 1964, that Charles Grosberg, a businessman and philanthropist, presented \$175,000 in Israel Bonds to Dr. Clarence Hillberry, then President of Wayne State University. The following year, the lodges and chapters of B'nai B'rith throughout the Detroit area announced their own fund raising drive to ensure the completion of the project. These funds were used in the construction of the religious center at the university which would be named the Charles Grosberg Religious Center.

Nathan Rubenstein, a future chairman of the Wayne State University Hillel Foundation Governing Board, was chairman of the Hillel Special Gifts Campaign for Detroit Lodge, which donated more than any other in the area. The B'nai B'rith Women's chapter's contributions were led by the Detroit Chapter, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Harold Robinson.

The formal dedication of the Irwin I. Cohn Hall in the Grosberg Religious Center at Wayne State University, the new home of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, was held on October 28, 1969. At this dedication ceremony, Wayne State University President William R. Keast presented Milton Weinstein with the University Distinguished Service Award citing his "decisive effort in bringing to fruition the plans for the religious center building at Wayne State University and his contribution toward a united religious leadership on the campus."

The Grosberg Religious Center actually occupied only the top three floors of the seven-story University Building which included the student center. By the 1980s, many of the original 14 religious organizations had closed due to lack of funds. This placed hardships on the remaining organizations because they had to pay maintenance expenses to the University without sufficient income to offset these costs.

At the same time, Wayne State University was in need of more space. Some of the religious organizations closed, sold their unused space to the University, who over the years, made use of these funds to sponsor events and to help pay some of the expenses of the remaining organizations. A 1995 pamphlet shows only eight religious organizations remaining.

The University intends to tear down the student center which houses the Grosberg Religious Center requiring Hillel of Metro Detroit to relocate.

The move will undoubtedly open a new chapter for Hillel of Metro Detroit. The organization is flourishing as its leaders continue to engage

students and gain new and expanded respect and support from the community and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

Unlike most other Hillels with a residential (and captive) audience, such as in Ann Arbor and East Lansing, HMD serves mostly commuter students – and the task of finding them is often daunting. One way HMD attracts students is by not only being one of the few remaining Jewish organizations in the city but the only one with a Kosher kitchen. Under the supervision of Miriam Starkman, innovative and cooperative programming such as Israel trips involving students from all of the Hillel organizations throughout Michigan was introduced and continues today.

Changes are coming to the Wayne State University campus and, thus to Hillel of Metro Detroit.



*Gerry Corlin has a life-long bond with B'nai B'rith and its associated organizations. At Wayne University he was an officer on the student Hillel board, and president of Xi Chapter of AEPi fraternity. He was president of Centennial Lodge of B'nai B'rith, then joined the governing board of the Hillel at Wayne State University, later becoming its president.*



*Paul E. Rochlen is a past president of Hillel of Metro Detroit where he has been active for over 26 years, a co-founder of Hillel at Eastern Michigan University and former member of its board, current president of the Michigan B'nai B'rith Hillel Fund, a member of the Michigan Hillel Consortium, and former commissioner for BBYO Michigan.*

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# DETROIT'S JEWISH INDIANS

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◆  
By Jan Durecki

**D**id your grandfather wear a loincloth? If so, he may have belonged to a now obscure group of Jewish men who were members of the Improved Order of Red Men (IORM). In 1916 Detroit was home to Cherokee Tribe Number One – the IORM's only Jewish *tribe*. The IORM, a still-viable fraternal society, traces its beginnings to the Revolutionary War. During its long existence, members of the Improved Order of Red Men have had philosophical, pragmatic and patriotic motivations for joining that secret society. This essay will explore those reasons in the national and local context, and discuss their attraction to a group of 87 Jewish men who lived in Detroit during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

From its inception, Native Americans have been one of the United States' unique identifiers. Indians played an important role in the country's history, and usurping their identity became an ingrained part of American life.<sup>1</sup> One of the most famous adult impersonations of Native Peoples took place during the Boston Tea Party. Disguised as Indians, members of a patriot society named the Sons of Liberty boarded a British ship, and threw its cargo of expensive teas overboard. At the War's conclusion, many of the secret groups stayed active as "brotherhoods and fraternities."<sup>2</sup> One of them was the Sons of Saint Tammany, named after Chief Tammany of the Delaware (Lenape) Nation – a man of "wisdom, virtue...charity [and] affability..."<sup>3</sup> After the War of 1812 the Tammany membership dwindled and remnants of the group were found only in New York State. The following year, many of its members formed the Society of Red Men.<sup>4</sup>

By 1816, the Red Men were recruiting members in other states, and had formed a nationwide organization "of purely American birth and growth."<sup>5</sup> Their initial objective was to practice benevolence and charity,



*Abraham Tigay, a member of the Detroit chapter of the Improved Order of Red Men arrived in this country from the Ukraine in 1912. He came to Detroit in 1913 and began a varied career that included operating a dairy, an industrial laundry and finally a jewelry store. This photo shows Tigay at age 20. Courtesy of the Tigay Family*

care for widows and orphans, and cultivate friendly relations among men.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the Red Men became a little too "friendly," left behind their lofty idealism, and degenerated into a working-class drinking society.<sup>7</sup> As immigration increased during the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the "better class" fled the group, and in 1834 a pro-temperance faction in Baltimore restructured the society as *Improved Order of Red Men*.<sup>8</sup> They chartered a more sober course for the group, committing themselves to their original goals of American fraternalism and benevolence.<sup>9</sup>

The IORM grew slowly but steadily. After the Civil War its members developed intricate ceremonies that appealed to many American men, and as a result their numbers grew dramatically. Initiates pronounced the Red Men's ceremonies unique, impressive and "superior to that of many of the older [fraternal] orders."<sup>10</sup> During the Red Men's initiation ritual, the candidate (a brave) was given a bow and arrow with instructions to shoot an imaginary eagle and bring it back to the tribe. He might also have been tied to a stake and threatened with knives and war clubs, as the tribal members debated the "paleface's" fate.<sup>11</sup> Once deemed worthy, the candidate participated in the final initiation rite in which Indian name was conferred.<sup>12</sup>

The IORM's group structure was patterned after those of Native American tribes.<sup>13</sup> Each tribal leader was called the Chief or Sachem, the Chaplain was termed the Prophet, the Treasurer was identified as the Keeper of the Wampum, and so on. Native American terminology such as hunting grounds and long talks (speeches) was utilized, as well as iconographic items such as wigwams and tomahawks. Membership was conferred in degrees: adoption (paleface initiation), hunter, warrior, and ultimately chief.<sup>14</sup>

The Improved Order of Red Men implemented a *white* idea of Indian-ness. While they abstractly admired the indigenous peoples' "savage freedom," they had no interest in "querying Indian people about their customs or recruiting them into the society."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, American Indians were barred from membership.

Members of the IORM were "expected to plant the seeds of the Order wherever [they] went."<sup>16</sup> By 1877 there were tribes in 21 different states with a nationwide constituency of 150,000.<sup>17</sup> IORM continued to expand, and by 1916 it numbered 372,614 tribal members.<sup>18</sup>

Interest in fraternal organizations did not originate with the Red Men.<sup>19</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> Century's first wave of immigration was the catalyst for the explosive growth of these organizations. From 1820-1840, over 516,000 new immigrants poured into the United States; many of them were Irish Catholics and German Jews.<sup>20</sup> Many Americans feared the new arrivals and felt that their livelihoods, and national ideologies and traditions were threatened.<sup>21</sup> In response, there was an increase in the number of fraternal societies with nationalistic themes such as the Junior Order of United

American Mechanics and the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner.<sup>22</sup> In the following decades, these societies became the locus of a class identity<sup>23</sup> that linked democratic values with shared goals and experiences.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, over 70,000 such groups existed nationwide with memberships that totaled over 5,500,000 men.<sup>25</sup>

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eastern European and Russian Jews made up the greatest number of immigrants. Following the assassination of Czar Alexander II (1881), tens of thousands of Russian Jews were killed or suffered persecution.<sup>26</sup> In the 30 years after the Czar's death, one third of the Jewish population left Eastern Europe, with the majority coming to America.<sup>27</sup> As a result Detroit's Jewish population soared from 10, 300 (1900) to 34,000 (1919).<sup>28</sup> Twelve orthodox synagogues were constructed in Detroit after 1900,<sup>29</sup> creating a new demographic among the largely German Reform population of the city.<sup>30</sup>



*Sam Ghinasin, born in Russia, was a clothing and shoe salesman who lived at 437 Hastings St.*

Their German Jewish predecessors, who had worked to become a part of Detroit's mainstream, often viewed the new arrivals with apprehension.<sup>31</sup> They looked askance at the immigrants who "heightened their feelings of insecurity regarding their own position in the general community."<sup>32</sup> As a result, the city's German Jewish elite socially distanced themselves from the new arrivals.<sup>33</sup> Temple Beth El's Rabbi Leo M. Franklin urged empathy for the recent immigrants, but cautioned that "Every un-Americanized Jew...is grist for the mill of those who claim that the Jew

will not assimilate..."<sup>34</sup> He urged the new immigrants to quickly accept the rights, responsibilities and loyalties of American citizenship.<sup>35</sup> Rabbi Franklin editorialized that the Jews of the United States could not hold divided loyalty and that they were "Americans first."<sup>36</sup>

During this period, many Jewish lodges of general fraternal organizations began to develop. Non-discriminatory societies that admitted Jews to membership found that others quickly joined. The non-Jews departed, and the lodge soon became entirely Jewish. A 1923 survey noted this phenomenon among the Knights of Pythias, the Jerico Lodge of Oddfellows, the Perfection Lodge of the Masons, the Order of the Eastern Star "and a Detroit Lodge of Red Men."<sup>37</sup>

In 1916, membership in a Detroit fraternal organization was a status symbol. Each Sunday, the *Detroit News Tribune* published hundreds of

announcements for the upcoming events of local fraternal societies - both male and female. News concerning Jewish organizations was covered, though not to the same extent as non-Jewish organizations. Thus new immigrants seeking to assimilate would have understood the status afforded to members of Detroit's fraternal societies.

### **A Pragmatic Attraction: Insurance**

With the Eastern European and Russian Jews feeling pressure to assimilate, an interest in the Improved Order of Red Men was not surprising. The organization idealized the country's first inhabitants - the American Indians. It also represented fraternalism and benevolence, and had a long and honorable history. However, membership might also have held a more pragmatic attraction: insurance benefits. As the country industrialized, American workers were subject to frequent and severe workplace accidents. With a focus upon speed and mass production, the Industrial Revolution was more dangerous in the United States than in other countries.<sup>38</sup> With few government safety regulations in place, manufacturers had little incentive to safeguard their employees. A study conducted in 1900 showed that only one half of the families of fatally injured workers recovered any damages, and that "amounted to about half a year's pay. Because accidents were so "cheap," American industrial methods developed with little reference to workers' safety."<sup>39</sup> As a result many fraternal groups began to combine patriotic motivators with practicality, and offered death and disability insurance benefits to provide a financial safety net to their members.

The Improved Order of Red Men, which had started as a benevolent and social organization, took up the sale of life insurance which had become prevalent with many secret societies.<sup>40</sup>

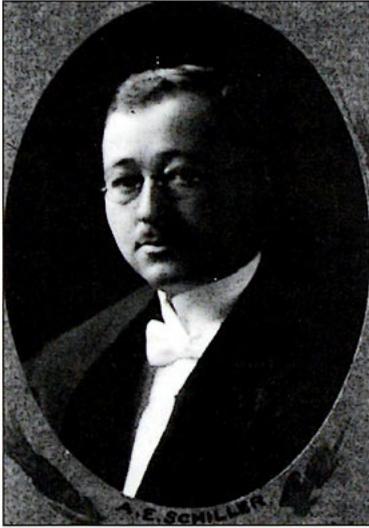
The Detroit Jewish Society Book of 1916 lists 87 names and addresses for Cherokee Tribe Number One members. The book noted that "This [was] the first and only Jewish Tribe in the United States, as it is composed entirely of Jews. During the short time of its existence, it is progressing very rapidly and has a membership of nearly one hundred and fifty."<sup>41</sup>

David Lintz, the current director of the Red Men Museum and Library in Waco, Texas, said that the organization's national records from the 1911 to 1920 period are non-existent.<sup>42</sup> He noted that five active tribes in Michigan were recorded in the 1922 directory; however there is no listing for Cherokee Tribe Number One. In the February, 1916 *News From Headquarters* newsletter, Mr. Lintz found a notation that a new tribe had formed in Detroit the previous month. Unfortunately, the tribe's name and number were not recorded.<sup>43</sup>

### **A Butcher, a Baker and an Accountant**

The 1916 Detroit City Directory's Societies, Secret, Etc. section listed five IORM tribes and three councils - without mention of Cherokee Tribe

Number One.<sup>44</sup> The *Directory's* general register of the names and addresses of city residents frequently included their occupation. The information from the *Directory* was combined with Federal Census records from 1917 and 1918, and Draft Registration cards to ascertain the demographic data of 37 of the 87 Cherokee tribesmen. Among the group there were two Americans, one Canadian, and one member from England and Turkey respectively. The Canadian, and one of the Americans, had Russian-born parents. The country of birth for the remaining "Indians" was Russia. Thus an association with Russia was the group's largest common dominator.



*Dr. A.E. Schiller was one of two tribesmen who were enrolled at the Detroit College of Medicine in 1916.*

Courtesy of the Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

The average amount of time the immigrants had spent in the United States ranged from three to 11 years. The majority of them were married and under the age of 30. The Cherokee Tribesmen's occupations covered a broad spectrum. In 1916 two of the men were students at the Detroit College of Medicine.<sup>45</sup> The majority of their fellow Red Men were self employed, and a small number were employed as skilled tradesmen or clerical workers.<sup>46</sup> The membership pattern of Detroit's Jewish Indians is consistent with that of the Masons. The Cherokee Tribesmen were predominantly a group of small business proprietors, and low level, white collar, working men.<sup>47</sup>

Most of the Cherokee Tribe Number One's members lived within Detroit's densely populated old Jewish Quarter bounded roughly by "Monroe, Watson, Brush, and Orleans Streets."<sup>48</sup>

Twenty-seven of Detroit's 87 Jewish tribe members lived on either Hastings or High Streets (present E. Vernor). The Hannah Schloss Memorial Building (the Jewish Institute), located on High Street near the corner of Hastings, was in close proximity to a majority of the Red Men's living quarters and is a candidate as their possible meeting place. The Institute's mission was to welcome new Jewish immigrants, to teach them English and a trade and to "Americanize them."<sup>49</sup> What would have been more "American" than adopting the persona of the nation's first inhabitants?

### **A Yearning to Learn More**

From 1925 to 1940 the Improved Order of Red Men lost over 300,000 members.<sup>50</sup> The reasons for its decline were symptomatic of all fraternal organizations of the period: the Great Depression, mediocre rituals and

Americans were turning to recreational clubs for their social interactions.<sup>51</sup> It is unknown when Cherokee Tribe Number One disbanded, but Michigan's Improved Order of Red Men gave up their state charter in 1939.

The investigation of Michigan's Jewish Indians leads to more questions than answers. Their interest in fraternalism may have grown from "a need to find friendship, cultural expression and material benefits in an environment of communality."<sup>52</sup> As with their non-Jewish fraternal counterparts, Detroit's Cherokee Tribesmen could also have been drawn to the Red Men by the fantasy of its premise, and the allure of brotherhood and camaraderie. What is clear is that the Jewish Indians adopted Indian personas, and in so doing made a direct connection with the country's past and at the same time perhaps, a statement about their futures as full participants in American society.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her gratitude to David Lintz, director of the Red Men Museum and Library in Waco, Texas, for his exceptional assistance with this article.

### Endnotes

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- 8 Deloria, Philip. Playing Indian. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, 89.
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- 14 Ibid.
- 15 DeLoria, 90.
- 16 Davis, 90.
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- 18 Davis, 860.
- 19 [www.linshaw.caomto/voll.html](http://www.linshaw.caomto/voll.html) Retrieved April 19, 2006. American first such group was the Freemasons which had been transplanted from England in 1730.
- 20 [www.linshaw.ca/omto/vol14noll.html](http://www.linshaw.ca/omto/vol14noll.html), Retrieved April 19, 2006.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Deloria, 48.
- 24 <http://www.linshaw.ca/omtp/voll4no11.html>
- 25 Carnes, 2. to

### Listing of Detroit's Cherokee Tribe No. One

Members as shown in the 1916 issue of the  
Detroit Jewish Society Book.

*Please contact Jan Durecki, Archivist at the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El if you have any information concerning the Cherokee Tribesmen. 248-851-1100, ext. 3137.*

Asner, Jack	Goldhaber, Jack	Rosenberg, Abe E.
Abrams, Jacob	Ghinasin, Sam	Rapport, Max
Blakowitz, J.	Geller, Joseph	Rosenblum, Morris
Berris, Dr. M.	Gelphea, Harry	Rosinow, Abe
Bachman, Abe	Gintzer, Max	Strauss, Isadore
Bluidier, Max	Hopper, Louis	Schiller, Dr. A.E.
Baff, Jacob	Halpern, Morris	Shofer, Sam
Berkowitz, Joe	Harnman, Harris	Shaffer, Ben
Berner, Harry	Hack, Jack	Stein, Harry
Brook, Abe C.	Harrison, Morris	Spector, Sam
Baileis, Hyman	Jaffe, Daniel	Sarver, Isadore
Baileis, Wm.	Jaffe, Henry	Schwartz, Elias
Bolosky, Max	Jaffe, Abraham	Summit, Hyman
Choen, Arthur G.	Jager, Harry	Sojwar, Isaac
Dubin, Philip	Klaiff, Morris	Sidman, Max
Deskin, Sam	Kantor, Louis	Schindler, Harry
Dlurium, Hyman	Krivoshea, Hyman	Sheinbaum, Jack
Eizen, Morris	Krause, George	Singer, Ben
Epstein, Sam	Levine, Isadore	Shuler, Rubin
Erlich, Harry	Levinson, Sam	Strauss, Alexander
Escoff, A.	Lavan, P.	Shanovsky, Max
Frankel, Sam	Mandell, Harris	Tarnoff, Jacob
Farbman, Joseph	Myers, Al	Tigay, Abe
Feinsilver, Jack	Miller, Albert	Tanzman, Selig S.
Gordenber, Sam	Polous, Max	Weinberg, Ralph
Goldstein, Sam	Pohl, Abe	Wirmansky, Essak
Galshinsky, Rubin	Rubin, Herman B.	Weissman, Jack
Greenberg, Benjamin	Rosenberg, Gedolia	Yorsh, Louis
Graber, Sydney	Rubin, Jacob	Ziskund, Albert

- 26 "Jewish Immigration" essay, no author, no date, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, FC7, 10.
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- 29 Rockaway, Robert A. The Jews of Detroit: From the Beginning, 1762-1914. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, 70.
- 30 Ibid., 45.
- 31 Ibid., 54.
- 32 Ibid, 97.
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- 39 Ibid.
- 40 <http://www.hti.umich.edu/cache/b/a/d/bad1138.0001001/00000278.tifs.gif>, Retrieved April 28, 2006.
- 41 Polachek, Arthur A. (compiler and arranger). Detroit Jewish Society Book. Detroit: The Detroit Jewish Society Book, 1916, 193.
- 42 Telephone conversation with David Lintz Director of the Museum and Library of the Improved Order of Red Men. March 8, 2006. Mr. Lintz noted that the IORM had incorporated in Michigan in 1875.
- 43 Email correspondence from David Lintz, March 9, 2006.
- 44 The tribes were: Iroquois Number 2, Red Cloud Tribe Number 5, Pontiac Tribe Number 23, Calumet Tribe Number 48, and Hiawatha Tribe Number 52. The Great Council of Michigan, Owana Council, and Waunita Council were also listed. Councils were associated with the IORM's women's auxiliary, the Degree of Pocahontas. (David Lintz, March 9, 2006.)
- 45 Canadian-born Dr. Jacob M. Berris graduated in 1916, and American-born Dr. A.E. Schiller graduated in 1918.
- 46 The entrepreneurs included a dairy owner, barber, confectioner, grocer, picture frame merchant, plasterer, mason, tailor, painter, clothing and footwear, and trucking company owner. The skilled tradesmen were machinists and vulcanizers.
- 47 Dumenil, Lynn. Free Masonary and American Culture, New Jersey: Princeton, unknown, p. 12.
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- 49 Henry M. Butzel's Address at the Dedication of the Hannah Schloss Memorial Building, October 1, 1903. The Hannah Schloss Collection, Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Container 1 file four.
- 50 Carnes, 151.
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*Jan Durecki completed her master's degree in library and information science with graduate certificate in archival administration at Wayne State University in Detroit. Durecki serves as archivist for the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills.*

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# AMBULANCES FOR ISRAEL

DR. JOHN MAMES BUILT A LEGACY FOR ALL  
OF MICHIGAN TO BE PROUD

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◆  
By Ronit Pinto



*Natalie Charach and Eva Mames stand in front of an ambulance donated by the Charachs in memory of Dr. Mames. The Charachs have donated a record 31 ambulances to American Red Magen David for Israel.*

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the John J. Mames Chapter of American Red Magen David for Israel (ARMDI.) Dr. Mames, of blessed memory, dedicated his life to the welfare of the Jewish people worldwide and launched the Michigan chapter of ARMDI in the aftermath of the Six Day War.

A Polish survivor of the Russian labor camps, Dr. Mames, DDS, understood better than most the importance of a secure Jewish state. Watching the news reports from the battlefield of that defining war in the summer of 1967, Dr. Mames struggled to find the best way to respond from afar to the unfolding crisis in no more immediate way than to help ensure that the brave young soldiers of the IDF and all of the war-wounded in Israel had access to a first-rate medical system. It was this desire that led to the birth of the area's first chapter of ARMDI, in support of whose critical mission Dr. Mames worked tirelessly to raise awareness and funding.

In the four decades since, the Michigan chapter has raised millions of dollars and sent a total of 200 ambulances to Israel. And, in what is perhaps the most meaningful testament to the vision and dreams of Dr. Mames' humanitarian spirit, the striking state-of-the-art Natalie and Manny Charach Emergency Medical Center in Ashdod, Israel was dedicated in 2007, on the eve of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Dr. John J. Mames Chapter of ARMDI. This stunning facility is more than an architectural wonder, it is a medical haven desperately needed to deliver life-saving care to Ashdod's exponentially growing population, a population that like the rest of the country is under constant siege of terror and violence.

There could be no more fitting tribute to Dr. Mames' inspiring legacy than the opening of this high-tech marvel.

### Never Again

Perhaps the words 'Never Again' rang through Dr. Mames' mind that evening in 1967 as he sat watching news reports of the Six Day War. He knew he wanted to do something, he wanted to help. Already active within the local Jewish community, the man with a reputation of being a gentle humanitarian called the local holocaust survivor's group, *Shaarit Haplaytah* (Survivors of the Holocaust) of which he was president. They quickly raised \$4,000 to pay for an ambulance for Magen David Adom (Red Shield of David), Israel's equivalent of the American Red Cross.

Noting the success of Dr. Mames' efforts, the New York headquarters of American Red Magen David Adom for Israel (ARMDI) asked Dr. Mames to launch a Michigan ARMDI chapter. His acceptance marked the beginning of what recently became American Friends of Magen David



*"Presented to the People of Israel in Honor of Steven Spielberg for his Contributions to Mankind..." Judy Grant Granader, Eva Mames, Sheri Kaufman, Larry Charlupski and Natalie and Manny Charach stand in front of this ambulance donated in 1994.*

Adom (AFMDA), the Michigan Region of the American Red Magen David for Israel, and the start of a life-time commitment that along with raising millions of dollars and providing hundreds of ambulances, has funded over 225 paramedic training scholarships, assisted in research and the building of technologically advanced medical facilities and blood banks.

Eva, Dr. Mames' beloved wife and biggest supporter, also began her evolution into a full-time volunteer, an unpaid profession she has tirelessly worked at for the past 40 years, even after her husband's painful death in 1989, when the Michigan chapter was renamed the Dr. John J. Mames Chapter Michigan Region.

"It was hard in the beginning," said Eva. "Mr. Philip Slomovitz (editor and owner of the *Jewish News*) was a very supportive close friend of John's who helped us a lot. He generated a lot of publicity by featuring us in the *Jewish News* headlines in 1973. He purchased one of our first ambulances and even contacted individuals in our community and asked them to be honorees" (for the annual ARMDI fundraising events)

From the onset, Eva worked as John's most devoted assistant. "Every time the children would come home from school for Rosh Hashanah I was busy with Red Magen David," she said. She tried to resign, but Slomovitz pointed out that they would need to hire a full staff to take her place, leaving nothing to send to Israel.

"This way we have very little expenses, I do it from my home, we don't pay rent, insurance or office expenses," Eva said. After John passed away she thought about resigning again, but her brother encouraged her not to, telling her "how good it was for her to continue John's legacy, and also how good it was for the organization."

So, Eva's phone continues to ring from morning to night, six days a week (with the exception of Shabbat). Several volunteers help Eva when there are large mailings. The chapter maintains an unbelievable low administrative cost of four to five percent. While the office is in the Mames' home, the annual dinner is held at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills and parlor meetings at various homes.

Perhaps Eva's load is lightened because she is surrounded by committed, generous contributors and friends. Dr. Lawrence and Libby Newman's family, as well as Miriam and Fred Ferber have been involved since the group's inception. The Ferbers held one of the first parlor meetings in their home. The Newmans' son-in-law, Alex Goldis, a Jewish man of Russian decent, coordinated with other community Russians to donate an ambulance. Manny Charach, current chairman of the Michigan Chapter and his wife, Natalie, the vice president, have donated a record 31 ambulances since their involvement in 1977.

"We wanted to buy an ambulance; at the time they were about \$14,000. We called the Federation and we were told to call Betty Starkman. She

called Eva and John and that's how it started," said Natalie.

In 2005, the Charach's were honored with the Distinguished Humanitarian Service Award for their dedication and support of ARMDI. "Most of the time we gave anonymously," said Natalie. "We'd still like to, but people say if you do announce it, others will follow."

Funds are raised for ambulances in a variety of ways. Some have been the result of active fundraising, while others, such as those donated by the Charachs, are gifts. In May 2007, a West Bloomfield woman contacted Eva about donating a second ambulance. In 2000, this anonymous donor donated an ambulance in her husband's memory. Now, her estate plan includes a second ambulance that will be dedicated to her daughter and two grandsons who were killed in a horrific accident. The dedication will include the words "In memory of those who died too young."

### **The History of Magen David Adom**

The idea of Magen David Adom was born at an October 1918 meeting in Philadelphia attended by David Ben Gurion, Golda Meir and Henrietta Szold. The group was greatly concerned that the Jewish Legion of Palestine, otherwise known as the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers of the British Army during World War I, who was fighting to liberate Eretz Yisrael from Turkish rule, needed medical help. They founded the Magen David Adom organization to aid both the Jewish Legion and the settlers in Palestine. It was disbanded at the end of the war.

A decade later, Magen David Adom (MDA) was officially founded in Tel Aviv by a group of seven Israeli doctors, as a one-room emergency medical service in a dilapidated hut in what was then the center of town. It was just after the murderous riots of 1929, when Jewish settlements were attacked by the Arab population. The doctors were horrified to discover that these settlements lacked even the most elementary first aid services.

A second MDA group formed in Haifa in 1931 and a third in Jerusalem in 1934. In 1935, a national organization was formed to provide medical services to the public and to the Hebrew defense force, the *Haganah*. Their resources consisted of a small truck converted into an ambulance and several dozen dedicated volunteers.

In the years that followed the group grew, especially in the wake of a second wave of anti-Jewish riots that broke out in April 1936 and lasted until the beginning of 1939. During that period, MDA gave first-aid training to the Haganah and the auxiliary police and medical aid to the wounded.

During World War II, MDA worked within the general framework of Israel's Civil Defense Organization, as an arm of the Jewish Legion of the British Forces. Magen David Adom members administered first aid alongside the Haganah fighters throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In July 1950, the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) ratified the Magen David Adom Law,

which states that Magen David Adom will function as Israel's National Red Cross Society, acting in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

MDA's acceptance into the Red Cross did not come overnight, but after decades of pleading and petitioning over the use of the Star of David as MDA's emblem. Finally, after more than 56 years of exclusion, they gained entry June 21, 2006 at the 29th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva.

ARMDI, American Red Magen David for Israel, began in 1940, when a dedicated group of Americans realized the importance of Magen David Adom in Palestine. Under the auspices of the B'nai Zion organization, and, particularly the leadership of Herman Z. Quittman and Dr. Harris Levine, ARMDI was incorporated in the state of New York.

The group affiliated with Magen David Adom in Israel and worked to upgrade MDA's emergency medical and blood services. The assistance provided to MDA by ARMDI in those first years was crucial in the latter years in the British Mandate of Palestine and in the struggle with the Arabs.

Since 2001, ARMDI has raised more that \$90 million working with MDA to provide Israel's pre-hospital emergency needs. The MDANational Blood Service Center, in Ramat Gan, provides 100% of the blood requirements of the IDF and 97% of the blood needs of Israeli hospitals and the rest of the population. It was this record of outstanding work that Dr. Mames' became attracted to and decided to devote his life to.

### **Dr. John J. Mames the Man**

John Mames was born in 1922, near Krakow, Poland to a prominent family of architects and builders. Following in his forefathers' footsteps, he took his studies seriously at the Hebrew Gymnasium. In 1938, his mother realized Krakow was becoming very dangerous for the Jews and she insisted the family leave. They did. Shortly after, the Germans came and his remaining family was murdered.

Constantly on the run from the Nazis, the family ended up on the Volga River in the middle of Russia near Czuwaska Republica, where John worked in the forest. He became a foreman and was sent to the lumber factories on the Volga until the Jews were liberated in 1945. John, his parents and sister all survived.

After the war, John attended dental school in Heidelberg, Germany, then lived in Israel for a year, where he wanted to stay, but decided to come to the United States to be near his sister. He met his wife Eva through a cousin in New York in March 1954 and they married that August. After a visit to Eva's brother in Detroit in 1955, the newlyweds decided to relocate to Ann Arbor where John attended and graduated from dental school at the University of Michigan.

As soon as he and Eva were settled, John became involved in Jewish organizations.

"He always had meetings in the community; every year he organized a city-wide memorial where they honored the righteous gentiles," said Eva.

Dr. Mames was a member of the Alpha Omega dental fraternity Detroit Chapter, and active at his congregation, B'nai Moshe. He participated in the B'nai B'rith Albert Einstein Lodge, the Zionist Organization of America, the Friends of Israel Cancer Association, and the Jewish Association for Retarded Citizens. He also took part in the Friends of Soviet Jewry Education and Information Center and the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish Christian Studies. He organized the first Israel bond dinner for the local dentists, and was honored by Israel Bonds. He served on the board of the Polish Americans and Jewish Americans Interfaith Roundtable.

As a member of the Jewish Community Council's committee on the Holocaust, Dr. Mames regularly recruited survivors to speak before members of the Interfaith Youth Symposium on the Holocaust. He also coordinated the committee on the Holocaust for the Greater Detroit Interfaith Round Table of the National Conference for Christians and Jews.

John's devotion to preserving the memory of the tragedy of the Holocaust came from his deep love for Eva and the Jewish people.

While Eva does not often speak of her past, it is known she is a survivor of both Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz, where her parents, grandparents and two brothers were exterminated. "That's why I believe John became very involved with the Holocaust," Eva said. "Because of me."

After the war, Eva returned to her homeland to look for her family. "When I visited my old house," she said, "people were living there, using our furniture and wearing our clothes."

Perhaps Eva's dark experiences motivated John to join *Shaarit Haplaytah*, a group of survivors who spoke at schools. Known to be a great writer, he also authored several essays on the Holocaust and was one of the founders of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. In 1989, at the age of 67 – just weeks before his death – Dr. Mames received the Holocaust Memorial Center's first Leadership Award for pioneering the center's oral history project, an effort launched before Steven Spielberg brought national attention to the need for preserving these stories while preparing for his film, *Schindler's List*. Today the department is called the John J. Mames Oral History Department.

Those who had the honor to work beside him and be his friend will tell you that to have known John was to have loved him. He was a man that people had a hard time telling "no."

"I used to say his dentistry was a hobby," said Eva. "If he had a meeting, he would cancel his appointments. He was a humanitarian."

"He was a dear, dear person that gave up mostly everything just to keep Magen David alive. He gave a lot of himself," Natalie Charach recalled.

Judy Grant Granader began working with the Mameses 15 years ago. Today she is vice chairman and chairperson of the dinner dance annual event, where ARMDI annually honors individuals in the community who



*Married in 1954, Eva and Dr. John Mames tirelessly devoted their lives to Israel. Although Dr. Mames passed away in 1989, the groundwork he laid is responsible for providing hundreds of ambulances, funding over 225 paramedic training scholarships and assisting in research and the building of technologically advanced medical facilities and blood banks.*

have been involved in MDA's lifesaving ideals. Most honorees have donated an ambulance. Each year the event draws crowds of up to 500 and earmarks their fundraising efforts to paramedic training scholarships, stem cell research, blood banks or ambulances.

"When you spoke to John, he made you feel you were the most important person in the world," Granader said. "He was very concerned for the well-being of others and the safety of his beloved Israel. He was the finest individual I have ever met."

Betty Starkman and her late husband, Dr. Morris Starkman, began working with the Mameses in the early 1970's after the two couples met at demonstration, organized by the Starkmans, protesting the killing of young Jewish boys in Iraq.

"We had busses pick up the children from the local Jewish day schools and bring them to the demonstration. Even though it was a freezing day, over 1,000 people showed up," remembered Betty, a genealogist who helped found the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan. She remembered how she and her husband couldn't

refuse Dr. Mames' request to get involved in his fledgling ARMDI chapter. They were, "two bleeding hearts to whom could never say no. We went to the first meeting. Even though we said we couldn't, we got involved. John was very intellectual and intelligent," Starkman recalled.

"John was really very kind," Eva said in her endearing Hungarian accent. "Only once in his life he raised his voice at the children and he never forgave himself. He was gentle, but he was also very ambitious. It's because of John's involvement with MDA, his lifesaving work that I follow in his footsteps to continue and carry on his work that he loved so much. I know that's what he would want me to do."



*This stunning bright red brick medical emergency station, one of the largest in Israel, was made possible by Dr. John J. Mames Chapter Michigan Region in honor of the philanthropy and dedication of Natalie and Manny Charach. Pictured are Dr. Phillip Shipco, Roselyn Shipco, Eva Mames and her daughter Andrea, Moshe Noyoviach and Drs. Margo and Douglas Woll at the May, 2007 dedication.*

### **Natalie and Manny Charach Emergency Station in Ashdod**

In honor of the Charachs, who are responsible for funding 31 ambulances, the Dr. John J. Mames Chapter Michigan Region established the Magen David Adom Natalie and Manny Charach Emergency Station in Ashdod, Israel. The new facility, one of the largest MDA regional stations in the country, includes a room for ambulance drivers, a volunteers' recreation room, blood services and treatment room and a reinforced dispatching center. It serves the Mediterranean coast including Mitzanim, where many Gaza residents have been relocated. Eva, her daughter Roselyn Shipco and Roselyn's son and Drs. Margo and Douglas Woll, their daughters Samantha and Monica, mother Elsie Yellen and sister Ruchel Broadman, were present at the May, 2007 dedication in Israel.

### **A New Generation Keeping the Dream Alive**

Oakland county residents Nancy Adler, Sheri Stav and Jodi Tobin are among a group of younger volunteers now keeping the chapter active by organizing special events, fundraising efforts and auctions. They began 'Project Life Line' in 2006 which enlisted local religious schools to fund raise so they could join together to purchase an ambulance. The group



*(l to r) In 1987, Philip Slomovitz, former publisher of the Detroit Jewish News, Dr. John Mames, Ethea Davidson and his father, Bill Davidson posed for a photograph in front of the basic life support ambulance funded by the Davidsons in memory of Bill's parents, Ralph and Sarah.*

also collaborated with the Jewish day schools to stuff teddy bears for a teddy bear sale with proceeds going to MDA. Additional stuffed teddy bears were sent to Israel to give comfort to Israeli children who have to ride in ambulances.

"MDA is a worthwhile humanitarian cause and I'm so proud to be involved," said Tobin. "Eva is the paragon of selflessness, loyalty and dedication. I have been extremely fortunate to have worked under her dynamic leadership. Eva's tireless efforts have resulted in our chapter's great success in provide lifesaving equipment and assistance to our beloved brethren in Israel. Whenever there is a problem in Israel, MDA is always there. It takes seconds to arrive at an emergency, be it during wartime crises or for civilians. The paramedics are such fine people, many so young, and very well trained, and completely devoted. Many are volunteers involved in lifesaving efforts that strengthen the state of Israel."

"Of the approximately 100 chapters around the country, Detroit is particularly active and has a long tradition of raising a variety of dollars for ambulances and paramedic scholarships. They are significantly active," said Daniel Allen, executive vice president of AFMDA in New York City, who has a special connection to Michigan as the former director of Hillel at Michigan State University.

Indeed, with the support of AFMDA, Magen David Adom and its team of trained volunteer and professional medical responders provides the entire nation's pre-hospital emergency medical needs, including medical disaster, ambulance and blood service. It is work that will likely be needed for many years to come, and thanks to the vision of a kind and devoted soul, will surely continue.



*Ronit Pinto has been a traveling reporter for the past six years. Getting her start at The Jerusalem Post in Tel Aviv, she has since worked as a columnist for the Detroit Jewish News, as a beauty writer for Allure Magazine, and has been published in several local and national publications. In her spare time she enjoys traveling and learning about art.*

# ARCHIVED TREASURES

## Federation Favorites

### The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives

#### **What's** in *your* attic?

The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives can claim more than two million documents – plus thousands of photographs, video and tape recordings, film and artifacts – among its holdings that relate the history of Detroit Jewry.

Established in 1991 by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Archives is named for the late communal leader and historical preservationist Leonard Simons, whose advocacy of a Jewish archives was instrumental in its creation. Beyond its mission to collect, preserve and make available for research the records of Federation and its member agencies, the Archives has grown to include the collections of more than 50 local Jewish organizations and individuals, including its most recent acquisition the massive collection of Sinai Hospital from its birth in the early 1900s to its closing in 1996.

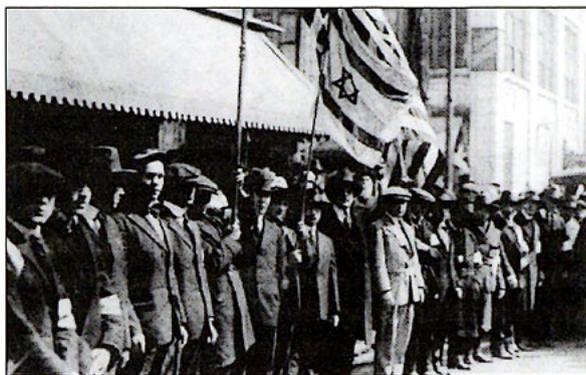
Documents are organized with the assistance of trained volunteers in the Archives headquarters at the Max M. Fisher Jewish Federation Building. When collections are complete and ready to be opened to researchers, they are placed for safe-keeping in the state-of-the-art Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs on the campus of Wayne State University.

In 1999, the Detroit Jewish community celebrated its 100th anniversary, dating from the founding of the United Jewish Charities. Some items from the centennial exhibit, which was shown at the Jewish Community Center, are shown here.

*Ostrovizer Friendly Society of  
Detroit tribute book, 1932*

*Trophy won by Trysquares  
Club, a teen boys club, at the  
Hannah Schloss community  
center building, 1917*





Photos from the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives - Sharon Alterman, founding director, Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives



Clockwise from upper left:

Operation Solomon, 1991

Recruiting for the Palestine Legion, 1917

Der Stürmer, anti-Semitic German newspaper sold in Detroit, 1937

First baby born at Sinai Hospital

Junior Division appeal for survivors, 1947

Kosher restaurant on Hastings Street, Detroit's Jewish neighborhood, c. 1915



# Photo Archives

# Celebrities & Celebrations

## Jewish Home and Aging Services Celebrates Century of Caring

**F**or the Jewish Home and Aging Services, it's been a 100-year journey since the founding of the Jewish Old Folks' Home in 1907.

2007 marks the centennial of the venerable Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit agency, founded to comfort and care for aged members of the community in a Jewish – and kosher – environment.

A series of events, culminating in a musical evening at the Detroit Opera House on Sept. 30, was organized around the centennial theme, "Celebrating the Journey."

The "journey" alludes to several changes in the Home's location: from Brush Street in Detroit's old Jewish neighborhood, to Petoskey Street in the 1930s, to Borman Hall and Prentis Manor in Northwest Detroit in the '60s and '70s, to the current Fleischman Residence/Blumberg Plaza on the Eugene and Marcia Applebaum Jewish Community Campus in West Bloomfield, in the 1980s.

In that 100-year span, the agency has known 20 presidents. Four executives served 10 years or more: Dr. Otto Hirsch (1937-47), Ira Sonnenblick (1947-75), Charles Wolfe (1975-86) and Margot Parr (1994 - 2005).

The journey also lies in the evolution in aged care that's taken place over the past century, particularly in recent years. In 1997, the Home was renamed Jewish Home & Aging Services, reflecting a new emphasis on outreach.

Carol Rosenberg, JHAS executive director and honoree at the September event, explains that with the growing number of older adults in the Detroit Jewish community, services have become increasingly important.

"Advances in geriatric care have brought about many changes in the kinds of services we provide," she said.

Before Fleischman Residence, the agency focused on providing skilled nursing to its frail residents. As needs shifted, Fleischman Residence/Blumberg Plaza began offering "assistance...above and beyond" and developing support services for Jewish older adults throughout the Detroit metropolitan area.

"The evolution in care reflects what we've learned – and are still learning – about caring for older adults with a multitude of interests, abilities and needs," continued Rosenberg.

Over time, many programs have been added. Among them are the

Dorothy and Peter D. Brown Memory Care Pavilion, an adult day care center for those with Alzheimer's or dementia-related disorders. Guardianship and chaplaincy services have been created for vulnerable Jewish elders living in non-Jewish health care facilities elsewhere in metropolitan Detroit. Volunteers of all ages are playing a significant role in the agency's programs.

Activities surrounding the centennial celebration also are contributing to the broad range of services. A new Gimelut Chasadim (Acts of Loving-kindness) Fund, for example, will help Fleischman residents who are on their own and without financial resources.

"I like to think that we're keeping the age-old promise Jews have made to honor our parents," said Rosenberg. "From the beginning, the Jewish part of our journey has been a critical part of who we are, what we do and how we do it. We call it the art of Jewish caregiving." – Charlotte Dubin



### Presidents – Jewish Home and Aging Services

Jacob Levin	1907 -1943*	Paul Borman	1985 -1986
Myron A. Keys	1944 -1953*	Daniel M. Clark	1987 -1990
Gus D. Newman	1954 -1959*	David B. Hermelin	1990 -1991*
Edward I. Fleischman	1960 -1965*	Jack Schon	1991 -1993*
Jack O. Lefton	1966 -1970*	Robert H. Naftaly	1993 -1995
Milton K. Mahler	1971 -1973*	Janice B. Shatzman	1995 -1997
David M. Miro	1974 -1976*	Dan G. Guyer, M.D.	1997 - 2000
Herbert A. Aronsson	1977 -1979	Mitchell A. Kantor	2000 - 2003
Marvin H. Fleischman	1980 -1982	Leo S. Eisenberg	2003 - 2005
Robert A. Steinberg	1983 -1984	Cindy Schwartz	2005 - 2007

\* Deceased

#### Break Ground for Jewish Aged Home



JACOB LEVIN, for 30 years head of the Jewish Old Folks Home, breaks ground for the organization's new building, to cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Shown with him (left to right) are Max J. Kogan, vice chairman of the building committee; Alec Bearl, contractor's representative; Levin; Mrs. Kate Levett, head of ladies' auxiliary of the home, and David Oppenheim, vice president of the home. (International News Service photo by the Times.)

Caption (printed as part of the Times photo caption): Jacob Levin, for 30 years head of the Jewish Old Folks Home, breaks ground for the organization's new building, to cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Shown with him (left to right) are Max J. Kogan, vice chairman of the building committee; Alec Bearl, contractor's representative; Levin; Mrs. Kate Levett, head of ladies' auxiliary of the home, and David Oppenheim, vice president of the home. Detroit Times photograph, courtesy of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives (International News Service photo by the Times).

# The Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies

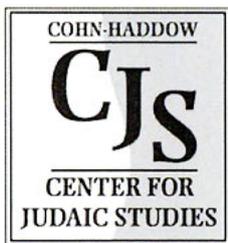
## A "Jewel" on the Wayne State University Campus

People have often described the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies as a "jewel" in the midst of Detroit. Established in 1987 as a cooperative venture between Wayne State University and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Cohn-Haddow Center embodies the strong and historic relationship between the campus and the Jewish community.

With the encouragement of its founders, including George M. Zeltzer and Evelyn Hoffman Kasle; the guidance of faculty members such as Sanford N. Cohen, M.D., and professors Marvin S. Schindler (z"l), and Martin M. Herman; and with the generous support of the Avern Cohn family, John M. (z"l) and Rita Haddow, the United Jewish Foundation, and Wayne State University, the Cohn-Haddow Center has become the local "address" in Detroit for quality programming and research in the field of Jewish studies. Under the leadership of its former director Jacob Lassner and the current director David Weinberg, the Center has sponsored a broad array of programs and activities, including biannual international conferences, faculty symposia, scholarly lectures, musical concerts and dramatic presentations. At its recently opened Judaica Resource Center, visitors can come and view videos and DVDs on Jewish topics, do research on-line or by using standard reference works, read current scholarly journals, check genealogical sources and atlases, or simply relax with a good book.

Among the renowned scholars who have spoken in the community and campus under the aegis of the Center over the last two decades are Tikvah Frymer-Kensky (z"l), the first Pearl A. and George M. Zeltzer Annual Lecturer on Women and Judaism; the historian of the Holocaust Yehudah Bauer; the American sociologist Nathan Glazer; and the biblical scholar James M. Kugel. Artists who have performed on the Center's behalf include Shuly Nathan, Adrienne Cooper and Zalmen Mlotek of Ghetto Tango, the jazz pianist Ben Sidran, the Judeo-Spanish ensemble Alhambra, and Frank London and his group *Niggunim*.

During the academic year 2007-2008, the Center will continue to demonstrate its strong commitment to Jewish scholarship and culture. Among the programs being considered are lectures on child survivors, new translations of the Bible, the present status of *kibbutzim* in Israel, and Jews in American sports. The Center is also planning to sponsor an exciting musical concert.



The highlight of the year will be the publication of the Cohn Haddow Center's first volume with the Wayne State University Press. Based on papers given at the Center's international conference held on campus in 2004, *Women Remaking American Judaism* promises to be a great success. The paperback fills a vital need in the field of Jewish Women's Studies. Several professors of Jewish Studies have already announced their intention to adopt the book in their courses.

*Women Remaking American Judaism* is dedicated to Pearl Zeltzer who passed away in April, 2007. Pearl was an enthusiastic supporter for the project from the beginning and was so looking forward to seeing the work in print. May her memory be a blessing.

The Cohn-Haddow Center has accomplished much in its two decades of existence. Like a jewel, it will continue to shine brightly as it contributes to the cultural and intellectual life of the campus and the Detroit metropolitan area.

For further information on the activities of the Cohn-Haddow Center, visit its website: [www.judaicstudies.wayne.edu](http://www.judaicstudies.wayne.edu) or contact the center at 313-577-2679. – David Weinberg and Sandy Loeffler

## **Am Echad/Sefer Echad:** **A Community Book Club for Girls,** **ages 11-13, and their FVPs** **(Female Valuable Persons)**

**L**ike all good things, *Am Echad/Sefer Echad* grew from an idea. The concept, to develop a community-wide book club program for young girls and the women who are their role models, was funded by a grant from the Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit. And, based on its success, this is the beginning of something wonderful for the Detroit area community.

The brainchild of Temple Beth El's librarian, Eileen Polk; education director, Keren Alpert and Rita Soltan, children's librarian and literature consultant, all Reform and Conservative congregations in the Detroit area, the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Parent's Institute and Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring were invited to participate. Each "group" would participate by reading the same first book, come together to meet the author and hear he or she speak. *Confessions of a Closet Catholic* by Sarah Darer Littman, the 2006 winner of the Sydney Taylor Award for Older Readers, given annually by the Association of Jewish Libraries, was the book chosen for the inaugural event.

As the time for the program approached, all 11 of the facilitators attended an informational workshop run by Rita Soltan who provided information on how to initiate and direct discussion, sample questions and a bibliography of suitable books to choose from. In the meantime, facilitators were busy promoting *Am Echad/Sefer Echad* to their own organizations and signing up participating girls and women.

*Am Echad/Sefer Echad: A Community Book Club for Girls, ages 11-13, and their Female Valuable Persons* met for the first time on Tuesday, November 14, 2006 at a Chocolate Extravaganza held at Temple Beth El. Approximately 100 girls and women from Adat Shalom Congregation, Congregation Beth Shalom, Congregation B'nai Moshe, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Temple Beth El, Temple Emanu El, Temple Israel, Temple Kol Ami and the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit/Jewish Parent's Institute attended.

Over the din of voices, it became clear that the girls and their FVPs enjoyed meeting each other while sharing fabulous chocolate treats and bonding through entertaining games directed by Keren Alpert. Each girl received her complimentary copy of *Confessions of a Closet Catholic* and enjoyed door prizes donated by the Book Beat book store in Oak Park.

Two months later, on January 9, 2007, Darer came to Temple Beth El to speak to more than 120 girls and women. The girls also met in their groups to discuss the book before the formal presentation, which was open to the public. Throughout the rest of the school year the groups met at least twice to discuss books of their own choosing.

As envisioned, it appears that the seed of Jewish literacy has taken root among the girls of our community and that they will enjoy discussing good books and exchanging ideas for years to come.

– Eileen Polk, M.L.I.S., Prentis Memorial Library - Temple Beth El

## **Jewish + Women = Athlete Exhibit at Western Michigan University**

**O**verwhelming." "Awestruck." "Surreal." These are words that came up as historians, anthropologists and sports enthusiasts browsed images and information on significant sportswomen from the past and present from around the globe in an exhibition titled. *Jewish + Female = Athlete: Portraits of Strength from Around the World*. *Jewish + Female = Athlete*, the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute's newest traveling exhibition, the display hit Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo on February 12 and continued through March 2, 2007.

The exhibition explored the rich history of Jewish women in sports. From traditional sports—tennis, soccer, and basketball—to the cutting-edge—windsurfing, kite surfing, and saber-fencing—Jewish women have had an extraordinary effect on the history and development of sports around the world. The women featured in the exhibit exemplify both the broad spectrum of Jewish women's athletic participation and the global Jewish community, with 14 sports represented and athletes from 13 countries.

Dr. Linda J. Borish, from the Department of History and Gender/Women's Studies Program, Western Michigan University served as the historical consultant and researcher for this significant exhibit that has traveled throughout the United States. Dr. Borish was aided by Keena Graham, a graduate assistant in the Public History Program at Western Michigan University.

The opening night was followed by a catered reception on February 15, 2007 in the Edwin and Mary Meader Room located on the third floor of the Waldo Library. The exhibit was co-sponsored by the Department of History, University Libraries, and Office of the President, Office of the Provost, College of Arts and Sciences, the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education, the Department of Comparative Religion, the Department of Anthropology, Kercher Family and Department of Sociology, Gender and

Women's Studies Program, the Sports Medicine Clinic, Sindecuse Health Center, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Division of Multicultural Affairs.

Dr. Marion Gray, chair of the Department of History, graciously opened the event, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinarity and multimedia uses in historical scholarship. Dr. Gray praised Dr. Borish's commitment to these values specifically in her work with *Jewish + Female = Athlete* exhibit and her 2006 documentary film, "Jewish Women in American Sport: Settlement Houses to the Olympics" where Dr. Borish served as both executive producer and historian.

Dr. Borish, who also helped produce the 2006 documentary film, "Jewish Women in American Sport: Settlement Houses to the Olympics," was one of the featured speakers at the opening reception reflecting on the importance in celebrating the accomplishments of Jewish female Olympians and world champions, current competitors, and those who made sports history.

– Stacey L. Moore



*A portion of the display is shown here.*

## Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives Celebrates 25 Years

To touch and feel the raw materials of our past is to be given the chance to truly understand history. Imagine holding the yellowing pages of a WWII soldier's handwritten letter to his rabbi. He describes his fears, his longing to be among family back at home. His words live in your hand, his heart beats along with yours. Gather a dozen of these letters and the rabbi's responses, and suddenly you have a broader understanding of how the community reacted to these young men's struggles.

This is the stuff of archives, organized collections of papers and documents that may have otherwise disappeared had not someone seen fit to save and properly preserve them.

The Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by honoring Aid and Miriam Kushner, an enthusiastic couple who ensured the safekeeping and accessibility of that history by establishing these archives. Named in memory of the highly esteemed Dr. Leo M. Franklin, who served as the congregation's rabbi from 1898 until 1941, the archives were formally established in 1981. Rabbi Franklin, together with Irving Katz, noted historian and Temple Beth El's executive director from 1939 until his death in 1974, helped collect and preserve much of the temple's early history.

Now considered among the most comprehensive in the country, the Franklin Archives has holdings dating back to the mid-1800s and preserves not only Beth El's story, but that of its clergy and congregation, and the greater Detroit Jewish community. The archives maintains many collections that pertain to family life within the Temple Beth El community including comprehensive cemetery records, conversions, baby namings and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. In addition to the congregational records (names of members, their occupations, etc.), there are also complete collections of the papers, sermons and writings of the temple's past rabbis and scholars. All of these are rich sources of information for students, genealogists, and researchers.

There are some 800 family collections containing various papers, mementos and documents collected and preserved by many contemporary and historic family leaders. The archives also houses the records of Temple Beth Jacob, once located in Pontiac, and has the most complete collection of the *Dearborn Independent*, the anti-Semitic newspaper published by Henry Ford.

Two of the most interesting holdings include the marriage license collection and the war collection, according to Leo M. Franklin Archives archivist, Jan Durecki. "When you work with these records, they start speaking to you," said Durecki, who has been at the helm of the archives

since 2006. "You can see shifts in demographics and culture, and you start to sense strong social patterns."

The war collection features rare photographs, uniforms and documents that help illustrate how congregants supported its soldiers. Irving Katz, one of this community's most passionate historians, has writings on the early fur traders and the Civil War. Among the most prized possessions of this collection are the letters of WWII era service personnel written to Rabbi B. Benedict Glazer (1941-1952). Rabbi Richard C. Hertz, who followed Rabbi Glazer after his untimely death in 1952, was a chaplain during the Second World War. Rabbi Hertz spent much time counseling returning soldiers and providing helpful writings on how these young men could best re-acclimate to life at home.

*The index of the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives can be accessed on-line at [www.tbeonline.org](http://www.tbeonline.org). Documents can be viewed directly by contacting the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El, 248-851-1100.*



*Pictured left to right: Kathleen Straus, Jan Durecki, Honorable Walter Shapero, Wendy Bice, Peggy Frank, and Marcia Harris*



*Various photos from the 1982 archives dedication. Photos from the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives*

## Celebration of Jewish Community Archives Anniversary

In 1991 Philip Slomovitz, then 95 years old, donated his papers, collected over a 70-year career as a journalist and community leader, to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. The collection was housed at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Wayne State University and became the keystone of a large archive of historic papers and documents of many local Jewish individuals and organizations. In 1998 the collection was renamed the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, named in honor of the late civic and community leader who spearheaded support of the collection and preservation of the archive.

In November, 2006, the Simons Jewish Community Archives, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, held an anniversary celebration with a program and tour of its state-of-the-art facilities. Charlotte Dubin, chair of the Federation Archives Committee, and Irvin Reid, president of Wayne State University, welcomed friends and supporters. Mary Lou Zieve, chair of the Archives Endowment Committee and daughter of Leonard N. Simons, introduced Robert Aronson, Federation's chief executive officer, who praised the establishment of the archives and recalled key individuals who believed it would strengthen the Jewish community and its ties to the wider community.

The director of the Archives, Sharon Alterman, introduced Mike Smith, Director of the Reuther Library. He noted that the Simons Archives is one of the premier collections within the library, which itself is considered one of the premier collections in the United States. He also spoke about new challenges of archival preservation in the digital age. Douglas Frasier, former president of the United Auto Workers union, remembered Leonard Simons as an inspiration and a leader dedicated to community service. After the program, guests were treated to a tour of the impressive facilities, guided by Reuther Library archivists.

*Mary Lou Zieve, chair of the Archives Endowment Committee and daughter of Leonard N. Simons introduces Robert Aronson, Federation's chief executive officer at the anniversary celebration.*



## RCD Dedicates New Sanctuary In Detroit

**“S**ure, a bird could marry a fish. But where would they live?”

This Yiddish saying provided the theme for the dedication of the new sanctuary for the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit (RCD), at 1300 East Lafayette in Detroit on Sunday, April 29. RCD, which was incorporated in the year 2000, relocated to this new location when its former home at Sibley House (Christ Church, Detroit) began an extensive restoration project. RCD is a small, participatory synagogue in which members take turns leading services and organizing other events.

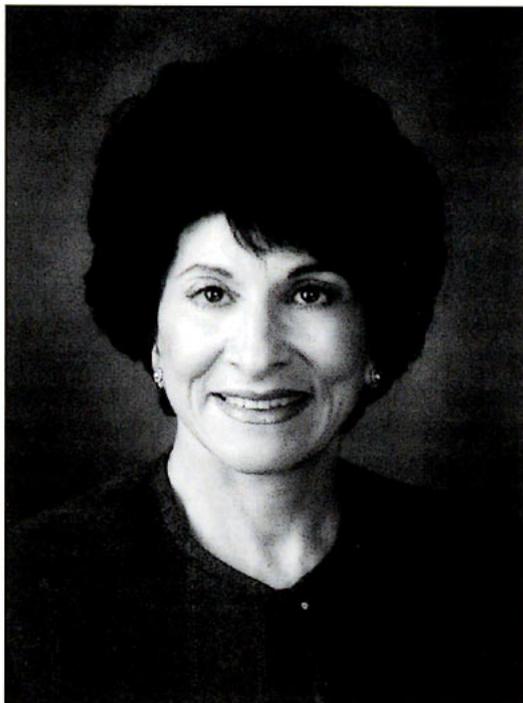
U.S. Senator Carl Levin, who is a founding member with his wife Barbara, provided the keynote address at the dedication ceremony and stressed the importance of family life at RCD, one of two synagogues located within the City of Detroit today. Senator Levin mentioned specifically RCD's children's Sunday School, and RCD's providing yearly services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – thus guaranteeing that High Holiday services are offered in Detroit in an unbroken line of continuity since 1851.

Wayne State University Law Professor Alan Schenk, who introduced Senator Levin, spoke to the importance of RCD's home in Detroit: “While RCD is our spiritual home, we promote in our secular lives the pursuit of justice – social justice, economic justice, and political justice – for non-Jews as well as for Jews.”

Professor Schenk stressed that, while the bird and the fish are happy to be at 1300, they still seek a permanent home. The members of RCD have a commitment to preserve and enliven Jewish history in the City of Detroit. That mission is carried out in part by acquiring and restoring artifacts from former Jewish synagogues in Michigan. The 50-some visitors at the dedication ceremony viewed several of those artifacts, including a magnificent stained-glass window from the former Farnsworth *shul*, which Senator Levin rescued from an unauthorized salvager when he was president of the Detroit City Council. Visitors also sat in 90-year-old restored pews from this former synagogue, and they examined a 100-year-old hand-carved ark from Manistique in the Upper Peninsula.

RCD's commitment to Jewish history is also seen in its continuing participation in tours of historic Jewish Detroit sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, in RCD's publication of the children's activity book *Early Jewish Days in Michigan*, and in RCD's sponsorship of a book club which meets to discuss Jewish themes. For more information, visit the website, [jrf.org/recondetroit](http://jrf.org/recondetroit). – Carol Weisfeld

## **Congratulations to Doreen Hermelin** **On Being Named the First** **ORT National President**



**I**n April, Doreen Hermelin became the first ORT America National President at a gala installation in Washington D.C. On January 1, 2007 American ORT and Women's American ORT officially united in a move to provide more support to the ORT global network of schools and programs. Also elected to the National Board of Directors were Craig Singer of Bloomfield Hills, Vice President, Rob Colburn and Dr. Conrad Giles of Bloomfield Hills and Nicole Kovacs of West Bloomfield.

*ORT America, Inc. supports a global network of schools and training programs that boast more than 3 million graduates to date. ORT educates 270,000 students in 56 countries annually.*



## **Yeshiva Chochmei Lublin** **Is Rededicated in Poland**

**T**he historic events occurring in Poland since the fall of Communism have tremendous impact on world Jewry. Detroit is directly connected to many of the developments. Many members of the Detroit Jewish community have their roots in the very places which are subject of much attention in Poland.

On the weekend of February 9 – 11, 2007, the Jewish community of Warsaw rededicated the famous Yeshiva Chochmei Lublin as a study center and gathering place. The building was occupied as a medical school for many years until its recent return to the Jewish community of Warsaw which takes responsibility for this sector of Poland. The yeshiva, once one of the great rabbinic academies of the world, was built by Rabbi Meir Shapiro in 1930.

By 1939, the Germans attacked from the west and the Soviets from the east. Less than two years later, in June 1941, the Germans attacked the Soviets and invaded the Lublin district. The students who survived ultimately found their way to Shanghai, and it was these stragglers who were welcomed at the Michigan Central station on October 11, 1946. An article which appeared in the Detroit Jewish News noted that the remaining few students would leave Shanghai the next day.

In Detroit, Yeshiva Chochmei Lublin was located at the northwest corner of Linwood and Elmhurst. Ultimately in the mid-1960's, it relocated to Israel. During those years the original Yeshiva building stood in Lublin as a sad reminder of the exterminated Jewish community. A few visitors from abroad stopped by from time to time. When the Soviet hegemony was removed, the local medical school used the building.

On a freezing cold Sunday afternoon, approximately 1,500 people assembled to watch the rededication. A hydraulic lift raised three rabbis from the lower platform to the mantle of the building where they unveiled the Hebrew letters proclaiming Yeshiva Chochmei Lublin. The crowd of Jews and Poles applauded enthusiastically as a procession led by a sefer torah and followed by the Israeli ambassador, rabbis and priests and the mayor proceeded into the building, only to pause at the portico to affix the first mezuzah since the Germans destroyed the Jewish world of Lublin. The crowd followed this procession to the first floor where another mezuzah was attached to the portals.

The mayor of Lublin delivered a brief but scholarly history of Jewish Lublin. Other speakers were the president of the Polish Union of Jewish Communities and Rabbi Michal Schudrich whose heroic work over decades made Jewish life here possible once again.

In a dramatic moment, Father Wexler ascended the bimah. Only a few years ago the priest discovered he was born to two Jewish parents who placed him in the arms of a Polish Catholic woman before they perished in the Shoah. Always feeling he was different, he was raised as a religious Catholic, studied for the priesthood and today is a respected Catholic priest in Lublin. The room was hushed and all eyes were on the bimah and this priest with Jewish eyes.

"I carry the love of both my Jewish and Polish parents," he said. "We will do all necessary to make this a living house. This is not a phantom synagogue. We hear the words of John Paul II: 'There is no place for anti-Semitism. It is a sin which must be cut out.' "

The building today is back in Jewish hands. It represents one more piece of the ongoing process of restitution of communal property.

– Michael H. Traison



*Piotr Kudlcik, president of the Union of Jewish Communities, and an American rabbi begin the ceremony unveiling the name on the building as it was once written.*



*A photo of the original building.*



*The interior of the synagogue as it stands today.*

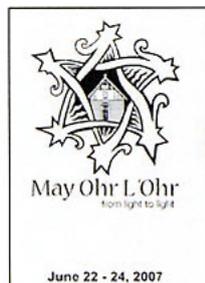
# Traverse City's Temple Beth El Anniversary

**T**raverse City's Congregation Beth El celebrated the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its religious home, the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Michigan, the weekend of June 22-24, 2007. The white frame building is the spiritual home to 50 families in the Great Traverse Bay area.

Julius Steinberg was the first Jew to arrive, in 1868. He was joined the same year by Julius Levinson and, in 1881, by Solomon Yalomstein. The three men established the Hebrew Congregation in Traverse City in 1882; two years later Steinberg purchased five acres for a cemetery. Just as he had donated land for area churches, Perry Hannah, lumber magnate and philanthropist, donated land to the "Hebrews" for a synagogue. The building, 22 X 30', was completed in 1886.

"*May Ohr L'Ohr...From Light to Light*" celebrated the congregational anniversary with a weekend of activities. Three rabbis participated in the three days of events, Rabbi Albert Lewis of Grand Rapids, the congregation's current rabbi; Dr. Jonathan V. Plant, rabbi emeritus, and Rabbi Arnie Sleutelberg of Congregation Shir Tikvah in Troy who in the 1980's served as student rabbi.

Festivities began with a Friday evening Jazz Shabbat Service and Reception at Northwestern Michigan College's Hagerty Center. The program featured Jeff Haas, jazz pianist, and the Jeff Haas Trio in a musical service. Guests returned to the Hagerty Center Saturday evening for a gala dinner. The Neptune Quartet performed an eclectic mix of folk, jazz and traditional string music. A video history was shown and the evening culminated in a moving *Havdalah* service on a dock on Grand Traverse Bay.



Each participant was given a small bag of cloves and a flower. As the children looked skyward in search of the evening's first star, Rabbi Lewis recited the prayers, after which everyone tossed their flowers into the Bay to mark the end of Shabbat. It was a spiritual experience, keeping the good of the earth in mind.

On Sunday afternoon the synagogue itself was open for touring. The Rededication Ceremony was held in the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice which is adjacent to the building. A commissioned work donated by artist Glenn Wolff was unveiled.

The honorary committee for the celebration included U.S. Senator Carl Levin and Governor and Mrs. William Milliken. Co-chairs of the event were Ellen Fivenson, Carole Simon, Terry Tarnow and Wendy Weckstein, congregation president. – **Diane Pomish**

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## *Reflections: Auschwitz, Memory, and a Life Recreated*

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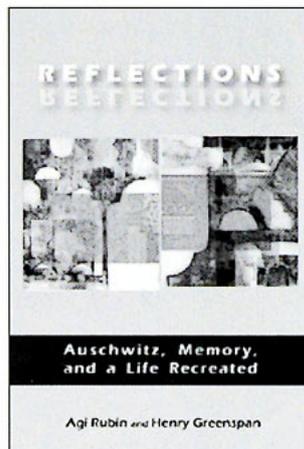
by Agi Rubin and Henry Greenspan  
**Paragon House, 2006; 226 pages**

**A**gi Rubin's diary and story started shortly after liberation in 1945 when she was 16 years old, surviving the death march in January 1945. She returned to her diary periodically, one year later, five years later, and 20 years later. Unlike other survivors her emphasis was the reverse as she explains in her book *Reflections: Auschwitz, Memory, and a Life Recreated*. "New experiences reflect old ones. They put time in a different light or a different darkness."

She began collaboration on the memoir shortly after she met Henry Greenspan, Holocaust scholar, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1979. She began meeting with him regularly, the conversations prodding her memories. Sidney Bolkosky, professor of history and director, Voice-Vision Holocaust Archives, University of Michigan-Dearborn, wrote "The authors are the perfect team: Greenspan, a psychologist and playwright whose writing on survivors is internationally renowned; and Rubin, a diarist whose sensitivity and poetry teach us new and essential things about living through and after such destruction. Their twenty five year collaboration has yielded a stark, exquisite result."

To Rubin, photos are an outsider's way of remembering Auschwitz. She recalls not only the sights but the smells, sounds, and feelings. In Michigan, where Rubin lives now, a tree stirs up memories of the tree back in Munkacs where she and her friend Marika used to go to solve the problems of their world.

She moved to Detroit in 1950 living in the Dexter Boulevard neighborhood. She mentions conversations with her future husband in front of Hudson's downtown, her tuberculosis infection returning, and isolation from her new family while staying at the Henry Ford hospital in 1966.



It was she who warned her surviving relatives to leave Europe after liberation. She was frustrated that life didn't take her to Israel then. She does arrive in Israel many years later at the reunion of her school class where again conversations are a way of bringing her memories back.

Each short chapter edges the reader closer to Rubin as her life is now. She remained close to her father, and her Aunt Margitka who represented her mother whom she had lost. She remembers her mother's last words in Auschwitz, "Go, my child, go. We will see each other tomorrow." This is how Rubin ends her story, "Go, my beloved children and grandchildren. Go, my dear comrades and friends. Go, my kind listeners and readers. Go." An appendix at the end includes information for teachers and students.

– **Francine Menken**, MLIS, *Head Librarian of the Henry & Delia Meyers Library at the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Building of the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, Michigan.*

## *Confessions of a Closet Catholic*

by Sarah Darer Littman

**Dutton Children's Books: New York, 2005; 176 pp.**

There are few characters in Jewish children's literature as charming as Justine (Jussy) Silver. Her family is Jewish, but "not too Jewish," and she wants to know where she fits in. Jussy's best friend is Catholic and that seems appealing, so she tries being Catholic too. Exploring Catholicism leads Jussy into all kinds of dilemmas. She gives up Judaism for Lent and then gets in trouble for setting up a confessional in her closet.



However, it is through the advice of a young priest that she begins to explore her Judaism. Her closeness to her observant grandmother and her encounter with Rabbi Freeman at the Center for Jewish Understanding helps her start finding the answers to her questions about who she is and what she believes.

This book is thoughtful and funny, one that children in grades 4–7 will thoroughly enjoy, but that will also appeal to adults. It is easy to understand why it won the 2006 Sydney Taylor Book Award for Older Readers from the Association of Jewish Libraries. It proved also to be a wonderful choice for the very first *Am Echad/Sefer Echad: A Community Book Club for Girls, ages 11–13, and Their FVPs (Female Valuable Persons)*, a book club launched in 2006 through a grant from the Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit.

– **Eileen Polk**, *Librarian, Prentis Memorial Library, Temple Beth El*

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# *Threshold Resistance: The Extraordinary Career of a Luxury Retailing Pioneer*

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by A. Alfred Taubman  
**Collins 2007; 224 pages**

**A.** Alfred Taubman can best be described as a man for all seasons. The jacket of his new book perhaps says it best, "In this candid memoir Mr. Taubman explains how a dyslexic Jewish kid from Detroit grew up to be a billionaire retailing pioneer, an intimate of European aristocrats and Palm Beach socialites, a respected philanthropist and, at age 78, a federal prisoner."

The title of his book, *Threshold Resistance*, gives emphasis to the author's driving philosophy of life which was applied to his manifold interests. Malcolm Gladwell, writing in *The New Yorker*, defined the term as follows: "Threshold resistance is the physical and psychological barrier that stands between a shopper and the inside of a store." *Publishers Weekly* had this to say: "Threshold Resistance. Understanding and defeating that force – breaking down the barriers between art and commerce, between shoppers and merchandise, between high culture and popular taste has been [the author's] life's work."

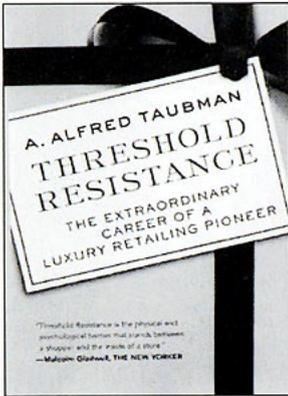
The book was planned as a personal memoir but it can also be seen as a history of retailing. Taubman describes the evolution of retailing as it spread from urban centers into America's suburbs. His efforts and imagination resulted in a company that includes 23 shopping malls which "transformed the nature and experience of luxury retailing and created tens of thousands of jobs."

Taubman's adventures in retailing make for riveting reading. Along the way, names of famous retailers that Taubman acquired come into view, such as the John Wanamaker stores in Philadelphia and Woodward & Lothrop in Washington, D.C. Other acquisitions in real estate and retailing are highlighted in the book such as the famous Irvine Ranch in California and A & W Restaurants. The latter provided a note of humor as the author described his trip to Budapest in quest of the best sausage in the world for the restaurants. Was such a trip worthwhile for a busy executive, he asked? You bet it, he answered. "Why should your customer be excited about your business and its offerings if you're not?"

As Taubman's mall conglomerate, Taubman Centers, grew in numbers and success, Taubman began to pursue other interests. One was art, a passion he enjoyed from early days. This led him to the Detroit Institute of

Arts which he supported for years and where he spear-headed the ongoing building renovations. His world-wide pursuit of art to further his collection brought him, in 1983, to the attention of Sotheby's which he acquired and transformed into a "dynamic, profitable art world player."

Taubman in no way disguises the problems he experienced as Sotheby's owner. He was charged with price-fixing schemes, found guilty and sentenced to prison. But, he remains convinced of his innocence and regrets that he followed his legal team's advice not to take the stand in his own defense.



Taubman must have a large rolodex filled with names of notables around the world with whom he has done business. The book contains 22 references to philanthropist Max Fisher and nine to Henry Ford, both of whom were long-time friends and business partners. Messrs. Taubman and Fisher constructed the Riverfront Apartments in Detroit. When Rosa Parks was attacked in her Detroit residence they arranged for her to spend her remaining years in the security of the apartments.

A long-time interest of Taubman was education, K-12, teacher training and public schools. This interest was forged out of his belief that in order to prosper, business needs well-trained employees. The record of Taubman's philanthropic endeavors in these areas is extensive and includes in part the Michigan Partnership for Education; Leona Group (sponsoring over 50 charter schools in Michigan); College of Architecture and Urban Planning at University of Michigan; Taubman Center for State and Local Government at Harvard University; Brown University and University of Michigan interdisciplinary programs; and the A. Alfred Taubman Student Services Center at Lawrence Institute of Technology, Southfield, Michigan.

Mr. Taubman was also interested in medical research and provided support for the medical library and health care center at the University of Michigan. He also provided for a fully equipped laboratory floor at the Detroit Medical Center which became the A. Alfred Taubman Facility for Environmental Carcinogenesis Research.

Throughout the book are numerous references to the City of Detroit. After the 1967 riots, wishing to help, Mr. Taubman joined Detroit Renaissance. He displays hope for the future of the city and applauds the riverfront developments.

Mr. Taubman wrote his book as a memoir for his nine grandchildren, ages 3 – 27. He felt they needed to know a whole lot more about "Pops." They have, indeed, inherited a remarkable tale of an unusual man.

– Alan D. Kandel

# 2007 Leonard N. Simons History Award



## Recipient Sharon Alterman

**S**haron Alterman, founding director of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, is the recipient of the 2007 Leonard N. Simons History Award presented at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Established in 1991, the Leonard N. Simons History Award each year honors an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the Jewish Historical Society's mission to educate, celebrate and promote awareness of the outstanding contributions of the Jews of Michigan. Simons, who founded the advertising agency Simons Michelson Zieve in 1929, was an active leader of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and it was his passion and love of preserving the history of the Jewish community that made him a beloved mentor of the Jewish Historical Society.

In her remarks at the presentation, Alterman spoke with fondness of the man who served as her mentor in establishing and directing the archives and recalled her "Wednesdays with Leonard" as they undertook the organization of his huge collection of artifacts, books and papers.



*Sharon Alterman receives the JHS Leonard N. Simons History Award from Mary Lou Zieve, daughter of the award's namesake.*

Leading her team of volunteers, in her role as archivist, Alterman has been the creative force in bringing together, organizing and retaining the archives of materials that occupies 3,000 linear feet, preserved in the Max M. Fisher Federation Building and in the Reuther Library at Wayne State University. She has worked with various organizations to document and exhibit their historic record. Her department has participated in numerous commemorative events including the Centennial Exhibit of United Jewish Charities, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jewish Community Council, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Council of Jewish Women, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Department of Jewish Federation, and most recently, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jewish Home and Aging Services.

In November 2006, Alterman was the recipient of the Mandell and Madeleine Berman Award for Outstanding Professional Service which recognizes outstanding contributions of communal professionals employed by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and other Detroit-area Jewish social service organizations. She has been an active participant in the Jewish community, serving as president of Congregation Beth Shalom and JARC and as a board member of the Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit.

Alterman is also incoming chair of the Florence Melton Adult Mini School advisory board and is an advisory board member of NORC and Shalom Street. She and her husband Mickey reside in Franklin; they are the parents of Aaron and Eddie who is married to Kari Grosinger and grandparents of Noa and Adina. -- Gloria B. Ellis

## Leonard N. Simons

### History Award Winners, 1991-2007:

<b>Philip Slomovitz</b>	<b>Michael W. Maddin</b>
<b>Hon. Avern L. Cohn</b>	<b>Alan D. Kandel</b>
<b>George M. Stutz</b>	<b>Prof. Sidney M. Bolkosky</b>
<b>Irwin Shaw</b>	<b>Adele W. Staller</b>
<b>Dr. Leslie Hough</b>	<b>Matilda Brandwine</b>
<b>Dr. Philip Mason</b>	<b>Susan Citrin</b>
<b>Mary Lou Zieve</b>	<b>Edith Feinberg Resnick</b>
<b>Judith Levin Cantor</b>	<b>Gerald Cook</b>
<b>Sharon Alterman</b>	

# InMemoriam

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## DAVID LEWIS BITTKER

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1931-2005

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by Arline Zaft Bittker

*"The distance that the dead have gone  
Does not at first appear-  
Their coming back seems possible  
For many an ardent year"  
-Emily Dickinson*

**A**s I sat in the front row of the Ira Kaufman Chapel on March 1, 2005 and waited for my husband David's funeral service to begin, my granddaughter nuzzled next to me, her warm sweater reminding me of her long ago "blankie." I remembered how David laughed when she whipped this pink blanket over his head as he read her Winnie the Poo. That loveable laughter was so characteristic of my husband.



Most people remember David Bittker as a philanthropist and leader, a man who "got things done" in a way that didn't offend. He was supportive and constructive; he had the ability to bring out the best in people, to build coalitions and find solutions. It is also clear that he will be remembered as someone who cared deeply and passionately about the organizations he was devoted to.

Closely identified with B'nai B'rith, David was especially devoted to its programs which served young people. David always credited attorney Milton Weinstein for mentoring him and getting him involved in B'nai B'rith and Hillel. David served as president of the Metropolitan Detroit B'nai B'rith Council in 1975-76 and went on to serve the organization on the international level as chair of the B'nai B'rith Foundation, chair of the Board of Overseers and as member of several Board of Governors committees. He played a key role in the

separation of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization from B'nai Birth to create BBYO, Inc. and was vice chair of the national board. Earlier he had been instrumental in the separation of Hillel from its parent organization and in founding Hillel Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. David chaired the committee which raised \$3.3 million to build the new Michigan State University Hillel House and sat on the Hillel boards at the three major university campuses in Michigan. He also chaired the Michigan regional board of the Anti Defamation League. But for us, his family, we will always remember him as the man who unconditionally loved us, who loved life and filled ours with joy.

David's life began in Wyandotte, Michigan on December 3, 1931, the son of Belle and Barney and brother of Lorraine. Their lives centered on extended family: the Wyandotte Synagogue, Barney's Dry Goods Store and his Uncle Bernard's and Belle's women's clothing store, The Fashionette Shop. It was here, under his father's guidance that David, at age 10, learned to shorten men's pants. His biggest childhood thrill, recalled Lorraine, "happened each year during Wyandotte's Street Sale. It was then that David was allowed to become a "salesperson" and sell items from our Dad's store."

Rabbi Greenfield from the Wyandotte Synagogue officiated at David's Bar Mitzvah in 1944 and David graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1949. David's managerial talent emerged as editor of the high school's yearbook. I understand that he sang in the high school choir, but other than eventually singing lullabies to his children, his singing stayed in our shower. Wyandotte was special to David. Annually, he'd don an imaginary tour guide cap and drive us around to revisit the shops on Biddle and his favorite houses: 155 Cedar where his parents, sister, Grandma Anna Bittker and the Franks all lived together, then, to 2504 -23<sup>rd</sup> street where his immediate family moved.

In 1949 David entered the University of Michigan and joined Tau Delta Phi Fraternity in 1950. He was the only person elected president of the fraternity for two consecutive terms, recalled his old friend and Tau Delt, Hanley Gurwin. Gurwin chuckled as he remembered how they dubbed David "BOOM BOOM" because when he called a meeting to order David's voice was clear and loud! David graduated U of M in 1953 then served in the Army from 1953 to 1955 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia in the Accounting Department.

After his discharge, David sold real estate for a short time. His first ad announced, "You'll love it on LOVITT." He then joined Standard Building Products as credit manager just before I, Arline Zaft Bittker, met him in 1955. We were married on November 11, 1956 in Adat Shalom Synagogue, by Rabbi Jacob Segal.

David later joined National Lumber Company in Warren, Michigan as credit manager/treasurer, where he remained as partner with Marvin



*Bittker was one of three partners in the National Lumber Company.  
He's pictured here at a Portland, OR lumber museum.*

Rosenthal and Irving Strickstein. Our younger son, Ronald, joined David after graduating from Michigan State University and continues as partner.

The very best thing David and I produced were our three children, Alan, Jodi and Ronald who gave us seven grandchildren; Daniel, JJ, Bradley, Rayna, Ethan, Shoshie and Hallie.

At the funeral, Ron introduced himself, "I'm Ron Bittker, or as my Dad called me, B'nai B'rith Member 50036. My Dad never said he expected us to follow his philanthropic footsteps, but maybe because of his example another generation of Bittker/Tobin continues a legacy."

Our son Alan, is active with Michigan Region B'nai B'rith Youth Organization Commission and Stem Cell Research International. Ron sits on the MSU Hillel Board and B'nai B'rith and our daughter Jodi continues to sit as Vice Chair on the BBYO board she shared with David.

Another example that demonstrates David's dedication to the future of Jewish youth is the David L. Bittker Conference Center in Ortonville. In a Detroit Free Press article about the new conference center, Michele Siegal, then chair of the Michigan Region BBYO Board, remembered how David influenced her 25 years earlier when she was a teenager and nisiah (president) of B'nai B'rith Girls. She remembered David as a man with a booming voice and a powerful presence who inspired her and so many other Jewish teens. Siegal said she hopes one of those teens will one day be able to "fill the shoes of David Bittker."

Richard Joel, Yeshiva University President and former international

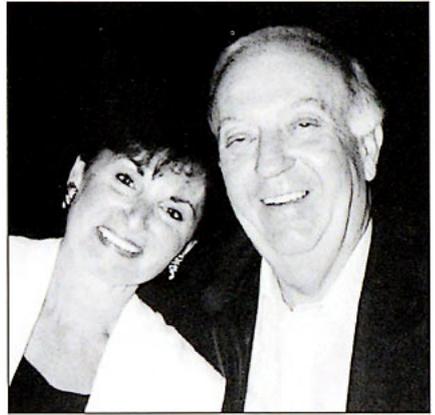
Hillel director recalled David's leadership and innovativeness. "I called David and told him about an idea I had for Graduate fellows." David asked me about it, laughed his good laugh, and said he'd take care of it. It became known as the Arline and David L. Bittker Fellowship.

"David made things happen. I traveled with him to Bloomington, Indiana. He loved the new Hillel building and made certain one like it was built in East Lansing. Hillel needed a new headquarters in D.C.; David made that happen. BBYO needed to come of age; David helped give it life. Whenever I came to Detroit he'd be waiting at the airport. If I visited at the house, his face lit up as he showed me his children's and grandchildren's pictures. David's humility was larger than life; he so embodied the classic aspiration of the Jew; to do justice, act kindly and walk humbly."

My husband David was a man of enormous energy and the word "can't" wasn't part of his vocabulary; neither was "don't" as in don't have time. His mantra was, "get up earlier and go to bed later." But, he wasn't a madman about time; he was balanced. The emphasis David placed on cherishing family and friends, maintaining a balance in one's life, and the importance of tzedakah are what we treasure about him and will carry on.



*One of many awards Bittker received over his years of community service was an Outstanding Service Award from Hillel. Richard Joel, former international Hillel director, shares a happy moment with David while presenting the award.*



*Arline and David Bittker*

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# MILTON J. ("JACK") MILLER

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1912-2007

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**G**randpa told me that monetary success was only the lowest level of success." That's how grandson Zack Miller eulogized Milton J. ("Jack") Miller, who died March 6, 2007 at age 94. "What mattered to Grandpa was the legacy of influence and relationships he was to leave behind, his way with love, reason and an innate respect for humanity to come to a win-win solution and bring people closer to one another."

Together with Jason Honigman, Miller founded the prominent Detroit-based law firm Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP in 1948. He told his son Douglas that his greatest professional accomplishment was creating the firm culture, "the atmosphere, the environment, that the lawyers cared about each other, that they liked each other, that they respected each other."

"Jack was the heart and soul of our firm and the fierce protector of its culture," said the firm's chairman Alan S. Schwartz. "He treated us all as his children and the firm as his family. We could not be the firm we've become had we not had Jack as our leader."

Born 1912 in Baltimore, Md., Miller came to Detroit as a child, living for years with his father in an attic garret in a wooden two-family flat on Mt. Vernon Street, east of Oakland Avenue. The room was so small they shared the one small bed. Miller met his wife-to-be Jeanette Rabinowitz at Central High School in Detroit, when they were both 14. According to Miller's book of memoirs, their marriage in 1935 was the high point of his life. Together they raised three sons, along with their many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They also shared a love of classical music throughout their 72-year marriage.

Miller earned both his undergraduate degree in 1933 and his law degree with honors in 1935 from the University of Michigan. Before Jason Honigman hired Miller in 1936, one of Miller's U of M Law School professors wrote: "He seems to me to have that rather rare combination of a subtle and penetrating mind...and a practical capacity for quick decision and action. I would trust Miller to the limit for I know that he is more than honest, he is generous and loyal. I can hardly go too far in praise of my subject."

In addition to his business practice, Miller represented many of Detroit's socially elite in high-profile divorce cases. During his law firm's formative decades, he played the key role in hiring attorneys and staff and administering the firm, always insisting on excellence in client service. By



the time of his final illness, Miller's firm had indeed flourished. Nearly 600 employees, including more than 200 attorneys work for the firm which has offices in Detroit, Oakland County, Lansing and Ann Arbor.

Miller also gave much to the community. He served as president of both United Jewish Charities and the Jewish Community Center, and was active on the boards and committees of Sinai Hospital and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. He proudly encouraged others at the firm to provide community service; for almost six decades Honigman Miller attorneys have provided top-level leadership to the Jewish community and to agencies serving all Detroit area residents.

Jack Miller never forgot his own humble beginnings. His son Douglas said "he treated everyone with dignity and respect, and touched people's lives in ways unimaginable." A gifted story teller, Miller used his warm sense of humor and incomparable charm to teach, entertain and bridge gaps between people.

The outpouring of love for him expressed during his lifetime and after his death included everyone from the parking garage attendants to many of the area's best known leaders. All have memories of his special caring and attention, his generosity, inspiration, wisdom and humor.

– by Gerald S. Cook, a partner in the firm for more than 30 years

# JEWELL PRENTIS MORRIS

1919-2007



## *Granddaughter of Pioneer Jewish Family in Michigan*

**J**ewell Prentis Morris, as her mother Anna Steinberg Prentis before her, was known for her verve, her pep and her enthusiasm. Moreover, she and her late husband, Lester Morris (1915-2000; MJH Vol. 41), also carried on the strong tradition of community service and philanthropy initiated by her father, Meyer Prentis, the first Jewish officer of General Motors.



Jewell Prentis, attired in a Red Cross Molyneux Corp emergency "Jeep suit," handing a gas mask to Mrs. Einar Olson (left).

*During World War II, Jewell Prentis volunteered with the Civil Defense and with the American Red Cross.*

In her lifetime of more than eight decades, Jewell Morris truly made a difference - to her family and friends, and certainly to her community. The contributions of the Morris and Prentis families are legendary and far reaching. Founding members as Deans of the Heritage Council of the Jewish Historical Society, the Morrises took pride in their Michigan roots and in the Society's role in disseminating the history of the Jewish people in Michigan. A memorable 1910 photo of Jewell's mother, Anna, in her then-stylish calf-length bathing attire, was a popular feature in the "Becoming American Women in Michigan" 1997 exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum. Numerous articles on the Steinberg, Prentis and Morris families, documenting their Michigan stories, have appeared in earlier issues of this journal, Michigan Jewish History, and are easily accessible on the website, [michjewishhistory.org](http://michjewishhistory.org) (click journal, click index). The family is prominently mentioned in the book, *Jews in Michigan*.

In recent years, the MSU Hillel in East Lansing was dedicated in the name of Lester Morris. Jewell's smiling photo shown breaking ground was typical of her high spirits. The Prentis Court at the Detroit Institute of Art, The Meyer Prentis Comprehensive Cancer Center, The Jimmy Prentis Morris Jewish Community Center in Oak Park, the former Meyer Prentis assisted living facility in Southfield, The Meyer and Anna Prentis Apartments in Oak Park, and the Beverly Wagner and Jewell Morris wing of the Fleischman Apartments in West Bloomfield are significant testaments to Jewell's and the family's philanthropic activism.



*Jewell and Lester Morris*

Jewell was the daughter of Anna (Steinberg) and Meyer Prentis, an immigrant bookkeeper who rose to the position of treasurer of General Motors. Her maternal grandparents, Jacob and Hannah Steinberg, immigrated to Detroit from Suvalki, Russia in 1892 and established a business in Delray. Jacob's brother, her uncle, Julius Steinberg, had earlier immigrated to Traverse City in 1867. Starting out as a peddler, he eventually built a prosperous dry goods store, above which he opened the "Steinberg's Grand Opera House," which inscription can still be seen. In 1887, Uncle Julius was one of the founders of the recently re-dedicated 120-year old Beth El synagogue in Traverse City.

Jewell was the beloved wife of the late Lester Morris and the mother of the late Jimmy Prentis Morris, who tragically lost his life in an auto accident at the age of 13. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law Patrice and Dr. Eric Phillips of West Bloomfield and son and daughter-in-law Robert Morris and JoAnn Ross of Colorado, granddaughter Jennifer and Rachel Phillips, sister Beverly Wagner, and innumerable close family and friends.



*Helen Vera Prentis Lande, First Lady Patricia Nixon, Anna Prentis, Cindy Frenkel (print dress), Lester Morris, Patti Morris Phillips, Jewell Prentis Morris. Taken at the dedication of the Meyer L. Prentis Cancer Center in Detroit.*

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# JUDGE MEYER WARSHAWSKY

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1922-2006

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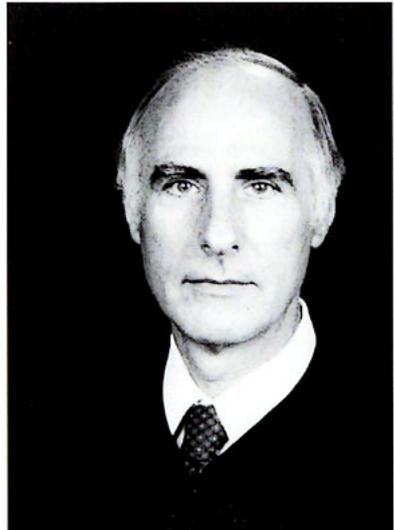
There were many brilliant facets to the man known as Meyer Warshawsky. Throughout his life, G-d was his constant companion. Meyer was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 23, 1922 to Louis and Goldie (Sipperstein) Warshawsky. He died on August 19, 2006 in South Haven, Michigan where he resided with his wife Esther.

"My brother was equally loved by nieces and nephews with whom he shared not only his knowledge of life but his guidance for their future, when asked," recalled his brother, Hyman. "At each family gathering, whether for a few or more than 30, Meyer was 'guest speaker' whose talk was of sermon quality."

Judge Warshawsky was always conscientious about the task at hand, whether officiating at weddings, simply meeting with a family who needed guidance, or leading his annual commemoration of Pearl Harbor Day which was so important to the community in which he lived. His tenacious work to have the Paw Paw, Michigan courthouse documented as an historical site brought him great satisfaction and pride in accomplishment.

A kind, gentle man with a strong handshake and high morals, Warshawsky's legacy lives on in the lives of the people he touched. After serving as a captain in the Marine Corps in World War II, he worked in Michigan's Van Buren County judicial system as a prosecutor. He later was appointed a Circuit Court judge and held that position for over 20 years before retiring. Judge Warshawsky is also remembered as a teacher and a mentor to men and women just entering the profession of law.

"I learned a lot about the law, helping others, family and life while working as a law clerk with Judge Warshawsky," wrote Philip Botwinik. Hon. Donald E. Shelton recalled, "I appeared as a practicing attorney and later as a judicial colleague. In both capacities I had the greatest respect not only for his intellect but more importantly for his compassion. He brought a humanity to the bench that we should emulate." Colleagues who shared their remembrances of Judge



Meyer Warshawsky were impressed with the dignity and composure he brought to his "elegant courtroom," where he displayed a formal but friendly demeanor.

Family and friends scattered around the world and the South Haven community recognize that they were privileged to have known Warshawsky. May his memory be a blessing for them. Warshawsky was the consummate family man and was treasured by his wife, his two children Lois [Marc] Shulman of West Bloomfield, and Paul W. (Ilene) Warshawsky of Northfield, Illinois.

– by **Bea Kraus**

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## **JANIS WAXENBERG**

1926-2007

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**T**all, stately were adjectives often used in describing Janis Waxenberg. Within her vast world of friends and family, she was known as a people person, one who was warm, friendly and caring. Within a few weeks of being diagnosed with a recurrence of cancer, Janis died on March 13, 2007.

A native Detroiter, Janis graduated from Central High School in 1943 and earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, followed by master's degrees in education and counseling from Wayne State University.

She taught in the Detroit public school system, and when she returned to teaching after the births of her children, it was in the Oak Park schools that she found her niche. She spent 15 years as a social studies teacher and then department head at Frost Junior High School, and spent another 15 years as a counselor. She took great pride in the visits of her former students who returned to share their successes with the woman they credited as having a significant role in their lives.

An excellent listener, she never stopped teaching or learning. In his eulogy, her son, Ben, cited her ability to collect friends who remained her friends for life. If they became ill, if they needed a helping hand, she was there to visit, to offer cheer. Ben also listed her many interests: art, music,



history, politics, education, cinema, theater, travel and gardening.

Her retirement years were active ones. She was a member of the Adult Learning Institute at Oakland Community College and the Society of Active Retirees at Wayne State University. At the time of her death she was the program vice president of the Institute for Retired Professionals and co-facilitator of its Biographies discussion group. A member of Congregation Beth Shalom since its early years, she was actively involved in both Sisterhood and congregational activities. A favorite commitment for her was the synagogue's Circle of Friends, a program for newcomers; she led its Third Sunday program, a discussion of current events.

Waxenburg belonged to several book groups and was much in demand for her insightful book reviews. She was considered an expert in leading Great Decisions, the program of the Foreign Policy Association; her classes in this for various organizations were always filled and she was often called upon to offer guidance in setting up new Great Decisions groups. She was gifted both as a writer and as a historian, skills which are evident in the article she co-authored with her friend Alan Kandel for the 2003 (Vol. 43) Michigan Jewish History journal, "Memories of Broadway."

Janis is survived by her husband, David Hoptman; daughter and son-in-law, Abby Waxenberg and Frank Kelly; son and daughter-in-law, Benjamin and Vicki Waxenberg; her grandchildren: Rivky, Shmuel, Moshe, Devora and Miriam Waxenberg. She was beloved wife of the late Stanley Waxenberg and the beloved mother of the late Miriam Waxenberg.

– by **Gloria B. Ellis**, *who felt privileged to be part of the world of Janis' friends.*

# PEARL ZELTZER

1926-2007



**P**earl Zeltzer, who passed away on April 11, 2007, was a true *ayshet hayil* – a woman of signal accomplishments.

Together with her husband Mike, the Zeltzers supported numerous Jewish organizations and activities in Detroit and throughout the United States. The couple were early advocates of the creation of the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at his alma mater, Wayne State University. Pearl assisted Mike (who presently serves as chair

of the Center's Advisory Board) in making the Cohn-Haddow Center what it is today--a widely respected and internationally known institute in the field of Jewish scholarship.

In 1998, Pearl and Mike were honored by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture for their support of a wide variety of Jewish cultural activities, including the Jewish Cultural Achievement Awards in Scholarship and the creation of the Pearl Zeltzer Jewish Choreography Endowment. The couple donated generously to Brandeis University, helping to create its Library Technology Fund and served as Fellows of the University. In the general Detroit community, Pearl and Mike inspired many others with their devotion and gifts to the Michigan Opera Theatre.

A devoted mother of four sons (David, Gary, Elliot, and Jeremy), and grandmother of eight, Pearl Zeltzer was also a major force in the Jewish and the greater Detroit communities in her own right. At a young age, her membership in *Hashomer Hatza'ir* helped to feed her hunger for Jewish communal service. Pearl was a former nursing supervisor at the Detroit Osteopathic Hospital and a gerontology nurse at the Jewish Home for the Aged. Over the years, she was affiliated with the *Sholem Aleichem Institute*, National Council for Jewish Women, Meals on Wheels, the Oakland County Department of Social Services for the Aging, the Women's Division of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Detroit Institute of Arts Founders Society (at which she served as an associate fellow), the Brandeis University National Women's Committee (of which Pearl was President from 1990-92), Hadassah, and Women's American ORT. She also served as a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre's Board of Trustees.

May Pearl's memory be a blessing.

– by **David Weinberg**, *Director and Sandy Loeffler*, *Assistant to the Director, Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University*

# President's Report

By Ellen Cole



*At the November 2006 celebration of the Jewish Community Archives, Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives endowment chair Mary Lou Zieve shared memories and laughs with former UAW president Douglas Fraser.*

This year was extremely busy as well as productive. We moved our office twice in six months. It is now located in the new addition at the Jewish Community Center D. Dan & Betty Kahn Building in West Bloomfield. Our executive administrator, Aimee Ergas, and office assistant, Elaine Garfield, helped transfer everything into our new facility. They had us up and running within 24 hours.

JHS played an active role in the community. Last August author Bea Krause joined us at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield and gave a book talk on South Haven. This was a complement to the exhibit, "Catskills of the Midwest: The Jewish Resort Era in South Haven." Memories and stories were shared and participants had the opportunity to observe this highly lauded exhibit.

At the Jewish Book Fair in November, we co-sponsored Janna Malamud Smith, daughter of author Bernard Malamud, and author of "My Father is a Book." In addition, we sponsored a pre-glow with YAD before the appearance of Harry Shearer, creator of several voices of The Simpson's, writer for Saturday Night Live and the author of "Not Enough Indians."

Linda Yellin did an excellent job chairing this event.

In December, Merle Leland and Harriet Siden organized an afternoon program at the Jewish Ensemble Theater (JET) for members to see the play, *"Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris."* An afterglow allowed participants to meet the performers while enjoying the delicious refreshments.

Snowbirds were still in the South when we brought a touch of the South to our frozen North in March. *"Bagels and Grits"* explored life in the Deep South. Beth Kander from the Institute of Southern Jewish Life discussed the photo exhibit by Bill Aaron, which was on display. The slide show and talk helped us to better understand Jewish life in the South.

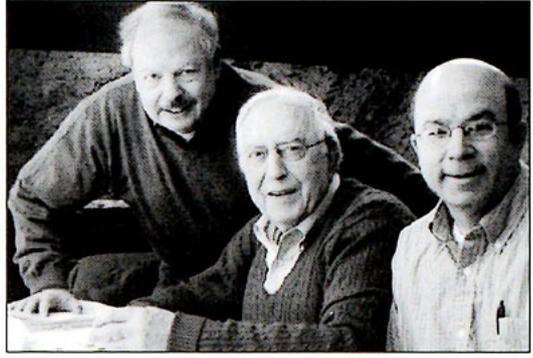
We sponsored *"From Shetl to Swing: A Musical Odyssey"* an unforgettable documentary film on the history of American Jewish music, as part of the Jewish Community Center Jewish MusicFest. We were able to appreciate the many talented individuals who made tremendous contributions to the story and progress of music in America.

Professor Linda Borish presented her documentary (made with filmmaker Shuli Eshel), *"Jewish Women in American Sport,"* at the Commerce Theater as part of the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival in April. A question-and-answer session following the film added to the interesting historic information learned from the film. This dovetailed nicely with Borish's article in the 2006 edition of Michigan Jewish History.

Our Jewish community now has a presence in the new TriCentennial State Park on the Detroit River with the newest Michigan Historic Marker dedicated on April 29. We give thanks to Judy Cantor for her



*Dr. Phillip Mason, 1996 Simons History Award recipient stands next to this year's recipient, Sharon Alterman. Her friend and current president of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, Charlotte Dubin, stands on the far left.*



### **Michigan Heritage Foundation Investment Committee**

Pictured here are members of the JHS of Michigan Heritage Foundation Investment Committee. Chair of the committee, Ann J. Conrad, CFA (former chief investment officer and Director of Equity Research for various investment management firms) and Jim Grey, MBA, CPA (president, Grey & Co., PC), Bill Hirschhorn (CFO, Detroit Medical Center) and Benno Levi (former CFO, Sinai Hospital). The committee is charged with managing a portion of the assets of the Foundation and is responsible for identifying policy target asset allocations to offer broad asset diversification. The asset allocation includes the JHS of Michigan Heritage Foundation funds managed by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

The primary objectives regarding the investment of the Foundation assets are: (1) to maximize returns within reasonable and prudent levels of risk; (2) to focus on an appropriate asset allocation to generate returns sufficient to meet spending requirements as well as add to the Foundation investment pool on a real basis; (3) to maintain adequate liquidity to meet spending requirements on a timely basis; and (4) to control the cost of administering the assets and managing the investments.

Investment activity is reviewed on an ongoing basis and performance reports are provided to the Board of Directors of the Foundation periodically, but at least once annually. Questions are welcomed and should be directed to Ann J. Conrad at [2conrad@sbcglobal.net](mailto:2conrad@sbcglobal.net).



*Current JHS president Ellen Cole (2nd from left) joined Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives' Director Sharon Alterman (center) and three former JHS presidents (from left to right) Jim Grey, Adele Staller and Judy Cantor.*

unfailing determination to make this happen, along with the support of so many others in the Jewish Community, the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan. This marker creates a permanent record of the active participation and commitment of Michigan Jews during the Civil War and of Chapman Abraham, a fur trader and first Jewish settler in Detroit, and his contributions to the growth of this area. Many members of our community attended the ceremony along the river on a perfect spring day. The DSO Civic Jazz Ensemble entertained, Boy Scout Troop #364 presented the flag and Tamarack canoes re-enacted the landing of Chapman Abraham.

We are continuing to collect yearbooks from many local schools. Please join this effort by donating yearbooks from your high school and middle school. The collection will soon be accessible on line thanks to Marc Manson who has set up a web site where one can look up relatives and friends. Funding is still needed for this project. Wouldn't it be nice to have your grandchild or great grandchild discover your high school photo?

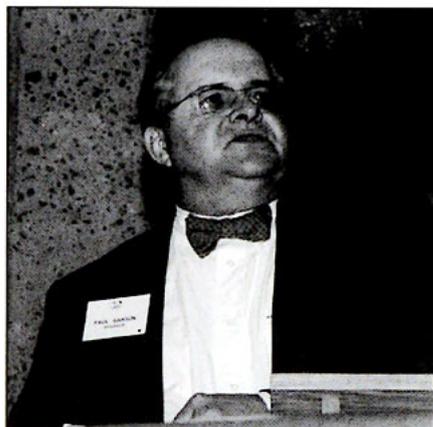
The educational bus tour programs for our youth continue to grow. We thank the members of our community for their continuing support.

### **Bill Davidson's Generosity Is Worldwide**

Bill and Karen Davidson, two of Michigan Jewish History's most generous benefactors, contributed \$75 million towards the building of a new tower at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. The facility will be named the Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower, in honor and memory of Davidson's mother, one of the early founders of Michigan's Hadassah chapter. This journal is also supported by a Davidson gift in honor of Sarah Wetsman Davidson and her husband, Ralph. Davidson's gift is believed to be the second-largest single gift made to a Jewish charity.



*Sylvia Babcock, recipient of JHS  
Lifetime Dedication Award.  
Photo courtesy of Bob Benyas*



*Paul Ganson, featured speaker, Detroit  
Symphony Orchestra Historian.  
Photo courtesy of Bob Benyas*

Free tours are provided to fifth graders and older through the local day schools, temples and *shuls* as well as youth organizations. Several local docents volunteer their time. The experience helps connect the history of our people in Michigan to the general community. Tours are also offered to adult groups, both organizations and families, for a fee and can be "custom designed" to meet the needs of the audience.

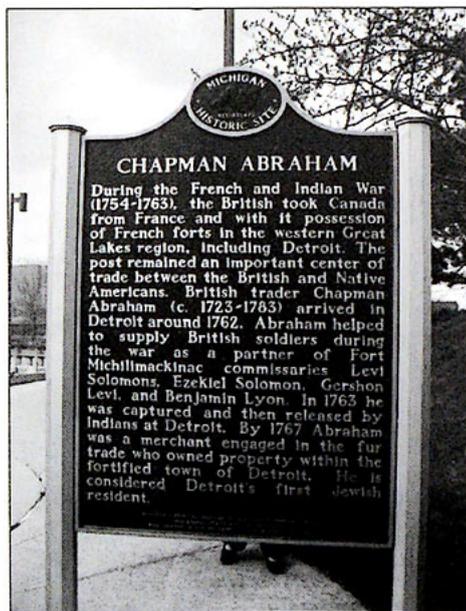
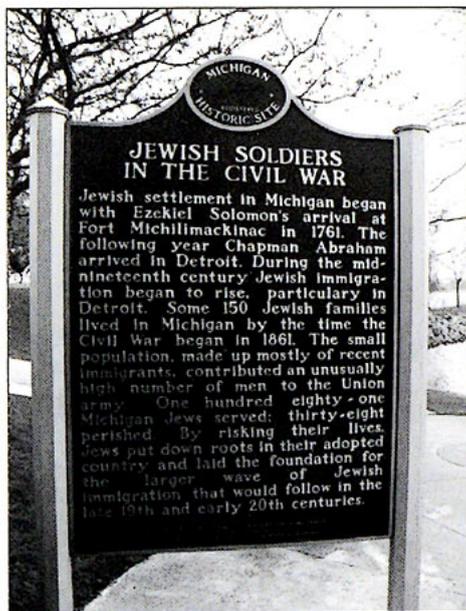
The Landmarks committee is collecting data on many of the buildings within our community. Under the direction of Arnie Collins and Carole Weisfeld, we are beginning to collect information that will help us to document the many historic buildings and sites that have had a tie in to the Jewish community. We don't want the memories to vanish.

The Jewish Historical Society's presence within Michigan continues to grow. We appreciate the assistance of our officers, the board of directors, and advisory board as well as the many individuals and groups within the state who work with us.

# Michigan Celebrates the Contributions of Detroit's Early Jews

**D**uring the Civil War, 150 Jewish families called Michigan their home. From this small pack of pioneers, 181 young men and boys chose to fight for the North, to fight against slavery, to fight for emancipation. Anxious to prove themselves “real Americans,” these immigrants joined the Union Army in record numbers. This incredible statistic – more than one soldier per Jewish family – is commemorated on one side of Michigan’s newest historic marker located at the TriCentennial State Park and Harbor along the shores of the Detroit River. That same side of the sign also highlights the contributions of Jews who helped fugitive slaves escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

On the other side of the marker, the contributions of Chapman Abraham, Detroit’s first Jewish settler, are memorialized. “Fifteen years before the Revolutionary War, Chapman Abraham arrived on this riverfront,” commented David Page, vice chair of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, one of several speakers who participated in the April 29 dedication



Photos courtesy of Bob Benyas



*Various speakers and dignitaries stand in front of the Detroit riverfront marker, from left: Karen Alpiner, Judy Cantor, Senator Carl Levin, Honorable Judge Avern Cohn, Samuel Logan, Jr., David Page, Hannan Lis.*

ceremony. Page also served on the "Celebrate 350 – Jewish Life in America: 1654-2004" committee, which initiated the idea of erecting a marker. "The trip took 75 days from Montreal; he was one of five fur traders to trade in this British territory (Detroit was, at the time, a British-controlled fort)." Abraham later settled in the area, returning annually to Montreal for the High Holidays.

Three incredible contributions. Three facts that will be forever linked for future generations to ponder and learn. "I love the fact that on one side is the story of the first Jewish resident of Detroit and on the other the stories of the Jews who contributed to the Civil War and who helped the black community," said Senator Carl Levin, another participant at the ceremony.

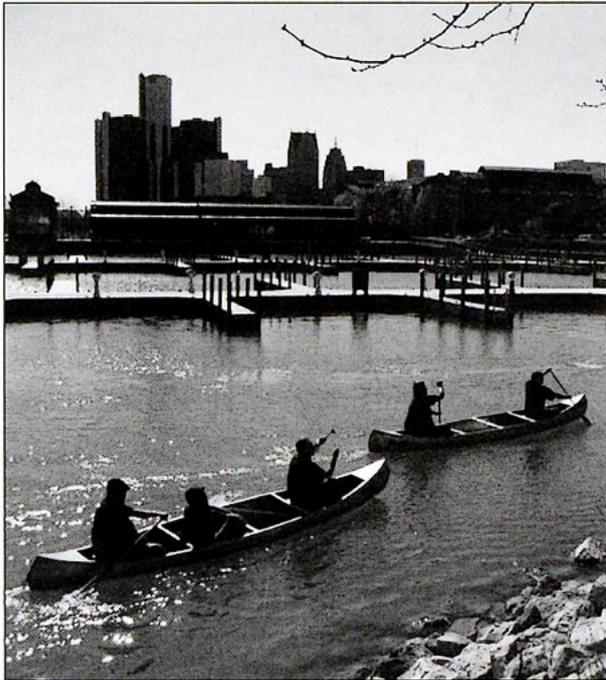
On a perfectly warm, sunny spring day, a crowd of more than 200 came to participate in the unveiling ceremony. It was the culmination of a project that began nearly two years earlier, said Judy Levin Cantor, past president of JHS, who co-chaired the marker project with Judge Avern Cohn. The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and the American Jewish Committee in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit were sponsoring organizations. Representatives from city, state and federal government attended, as did the media and members of many Jewish organizations.

"This is the legacy we are leaving for our children and grandchildren," beamed a very proud Judy Cantor.

The process involved a team of volunteers who researched, lobbied and labored to ensure that all t's were crossed and i's dotted in order to satisfy the strict requirements of the Michigan Historical Commission. Samuel Logan Jr., publisher of the *Michigan Chronicle*, represented the Commission at the April 29 ceremony. The committee had to provide historical documentation and exact wording for the marker text to the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Cantor noted that the most important piece of documentation came from the American Jewish Archives located in Cincinnati, where Chapman Abraham's original documents, including his will signed in Hebrew, are held. The papers also included the treaty giving Abraham the rights to his land in Detroit.

"If there had been no original documents, there would be no marker," said Cantor.

Chaired by Hannan Lis and Karen Alpiner, the marker dedication committee included: Bob Benyas, Joan Braun, Bernard Cantor, Arnold Collens, Peggy Daitch, Charlotte Dubin, Jan Durecki, Aimee Ergas, Lois Freeman, Elaine Garfield, Margery Jablin, Robert Kaplow, Michael Kasky, Robert Naftaly, Dr. Tor Shwayder, Harriet Siden, Sidney Simon, Debra Silver, Holly Teasdale, Carol Weisfeld, Linda Yellin and Corey Young.



*Some members of the Fresh Air Society summer staff took time to recreate the landing of Chapman Abraham, Detroit's first Jewish resident, upon the shores of Fort Detroit. This landing was made at the TriCentennial Park, along Detroit's Riverwalk in the summer of 2007.*

# Donation/Information

We invite you to share our journey...

**The Heritage Council**, an endowment society, seeks to insure the future of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan through large gifts and bequests. The Guardian's name will appear as the endower of the journal. Trustees, Chancellors, Deans, Fellows and Collectors become life members. The Heritage Council will continue to be listed in Michigan Jewish History, which circulates to members, libraries and universities around the world.

I hereby join the Heritage Council at the following level:

- \$100,000 Guardian of the Heritage Council
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Check enclosed for my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- I am pledging a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid over \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- I am making a testamentary bequest to the Society in my will and will forward documentation.
- Please contact me regarding the Heritage Council.

*The Society profoundly appreciates the support of the Heritage Council.*

## Membership

Support the ongoing work of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

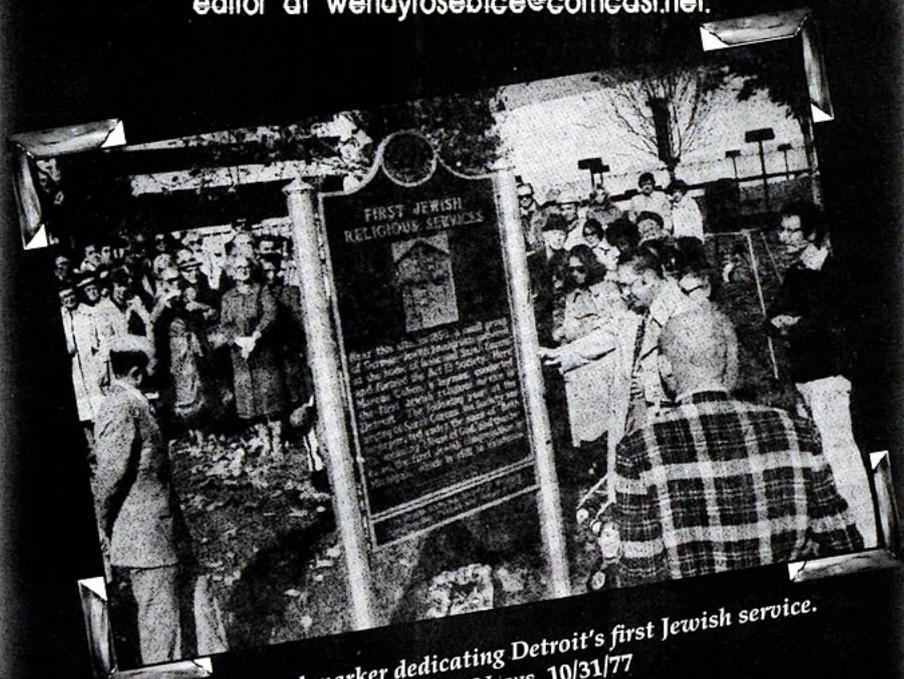
Categories of membership include: \$36 Individual/Family; \$20 Institutions/Organizations; \$100 Corporate/Foundations; \$360 Life Member.

Tribute Cards will be sent upon request for contributions received (minimum \$10)

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# THE SCRAPBOOK

Welcome to The Scrapbook, a new feature of Michigan Jewish History. On these pages, we're going to toss in whatever fun items come our way...photos, trivia, ticket stubs, memories, etc. You are invited to share some of your fun stuff with us. If you want to submit an item for the scrapbook, mail it to the JHS of Michigan office or email the editor at [wendyrosebice@comcast.net](mailto:wendyrosebice@comcast.net).



Historical marker dedicating Detroit's first Jewish service.  
Detroit News, 10/31/77

*From Wendy Rose Bice  
Boy Scout Troop No. 369*

*My grandfather, Louis Rubin, was one of the Boy Scout Troop 369 leaders of the Dexter-Davidson Branch of the Jewish Community Center. Upon his retirement, his scouts handed him a scrapbook of photos. Most were taken in the early 1950s.*



*Square Dance Night. Troop members include Stan "Ho Hum" Brown, Bob Greenburger, Sy Gold, Shell Goldman, Bob Maizer, Paul Newman, Herb Schwartz and Normie Weiss. Their dates are not named.*



*Leaders. I can only identify my grandfather, Louis Rubin, on the far left.*

# Notes

# the Heritage Council

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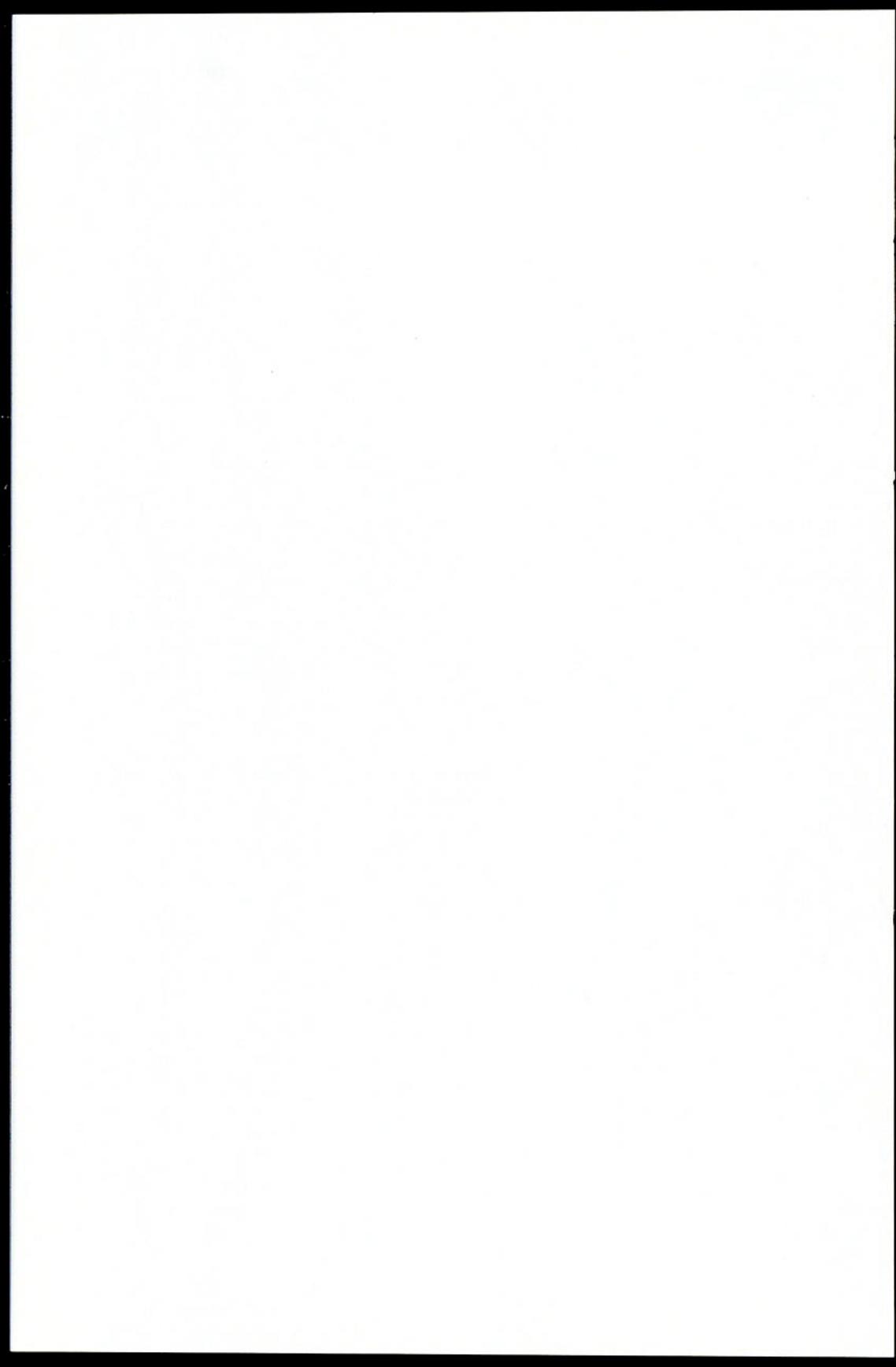
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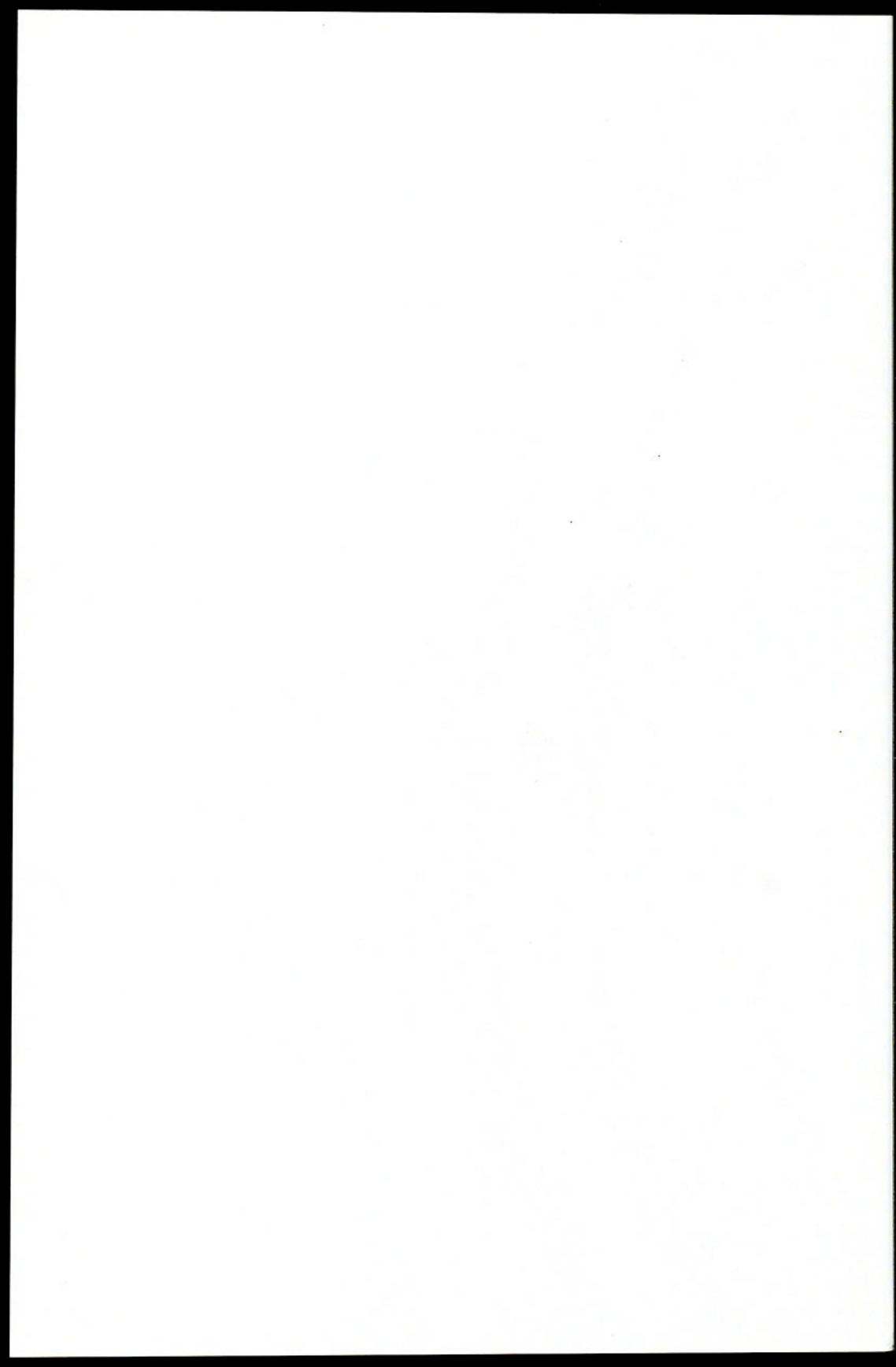
## **New Chroniclers**

*(annual members, as of May 1, 2007)*  
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## **New Life Members**

Dennis and Peggy Frank

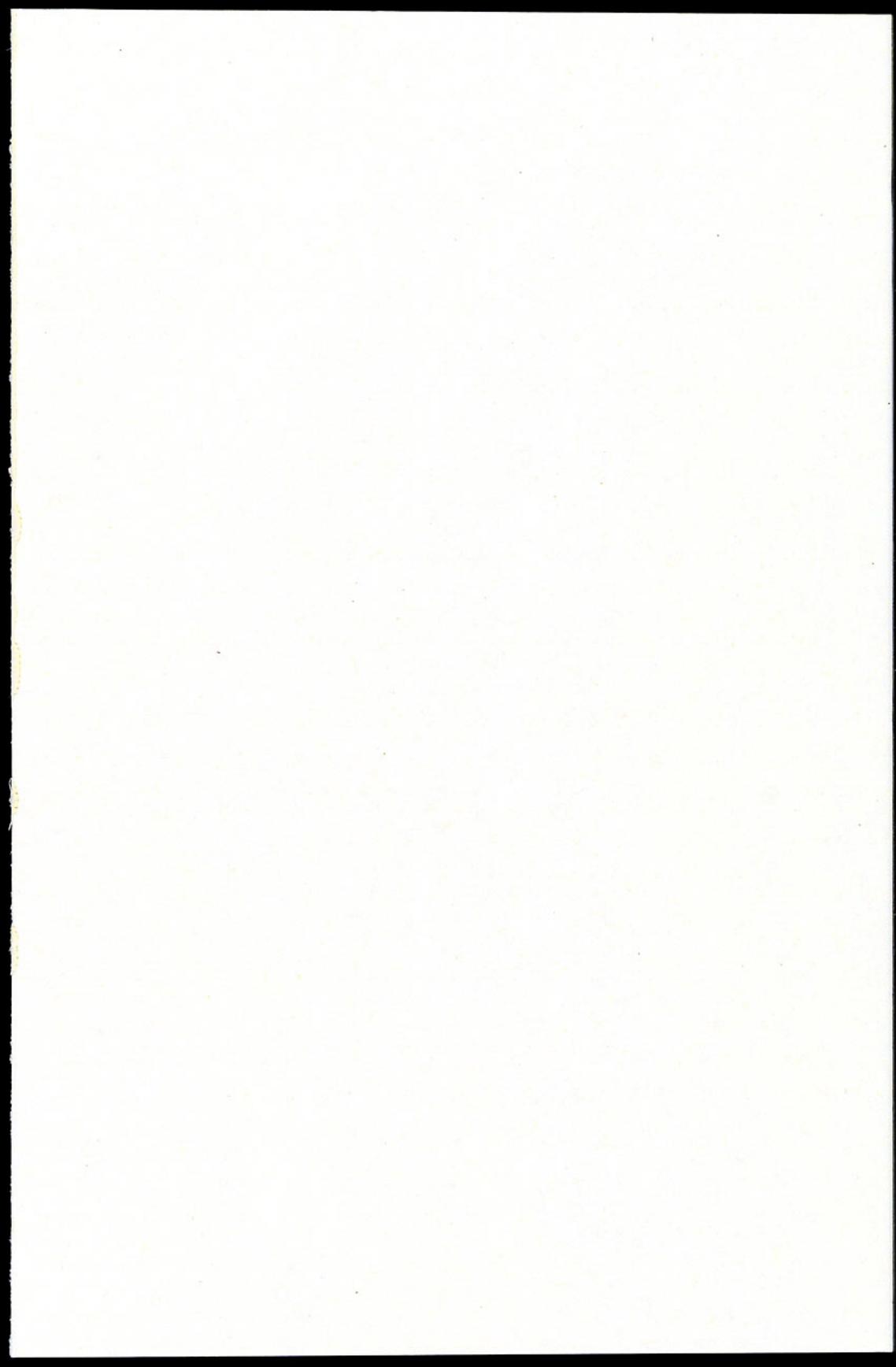




The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The document provides a detailed explanation of how to categorize these transactions and how to use a double-entry system to maintain the accounting equation.

The second part of the document focuses on the preparation of financial statements. It outlines the steps involved in creating a balance sheet, an income statement, and a statement of cash flows. Each statement is explained in detail, including the components that make up each one and how they are derived from the accounting records. The document also discusses the importance of reconciling the accounts and ensuring that the financial statements are accurate and up-to-date.

The final part of the document covers the topic of auditing. It explains the role of an auditor and the different types of audits that can be performed. It also discusses the importance of internal controls and how they can be used to prevent errors and fraud. The document provides a comprehensive overview of the auditing process and the standards that must be followed.



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## Jewish Historical Society of Michigan • 2007-2008

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