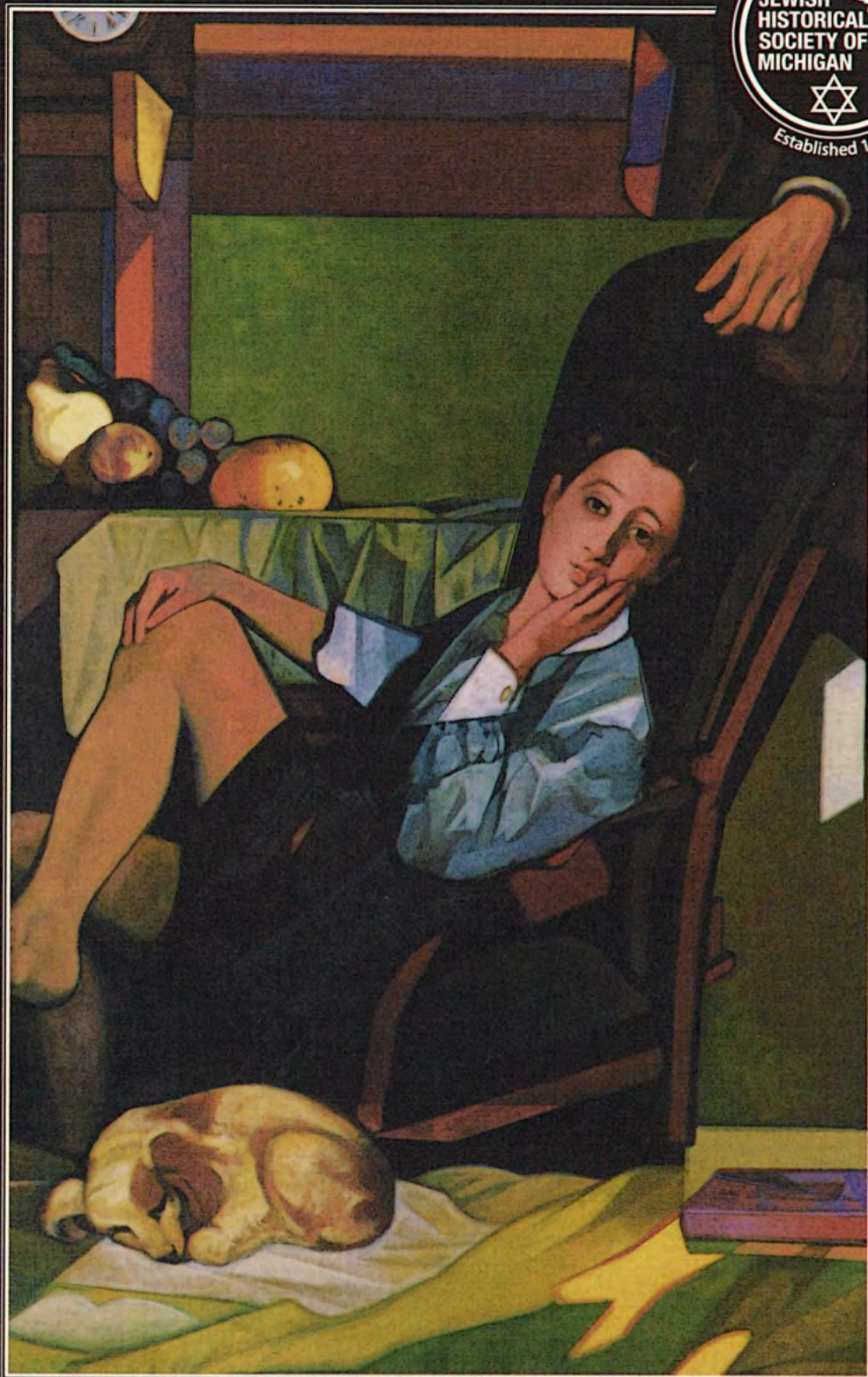


MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



VOLUME 55 | FALL 2015 | HESHVAN 5776

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN
SHARES AND CELEBRATES THE EXPERIENCES
AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE,
COMMUNITIES, AND INSTITUTIONS OF MICHIGAN.





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, of blessed
memory, and DOROTHY DAVIDSON GERSON.

(Top) Sarah & Ralph Davidson; (Bottom) Bessie & Joseph Wetsman

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COVER PHOTO:

*Carol Wald (1935-2000) was a Detroit artist whose passionate
curiosity led her to explore a variety of forms and styles, including
fine-art painting, illustration, and collage. The 1979 painting on
the cover of Michigan Jewish History is entitled The Dream.*

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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

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

Joshua 4:21

THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 55

Fall 2015

Tishrei 5776

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

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PATENTS AWARDED TO MICHIGAN JEWISH INVENTORS

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JEWS IN THE CIVIL WAR

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Editor's Letter

Dear Readers,

The intricacies of publishing this journal of American Jewish history pale in comparison to the laser-focused concentration and time devotion of the Jewish who created the intricate, hand-drawn sketches necessary to obtain their patents, profiled in Bernard Cantor's article. Yet, as this book reaches its final stage of publication, I can't help but wonder how many times those inventors wrung their hands, shook their heads, and wondered if their detailed drawings, their "baby," would ever be done.

The 2015 edition of *Michigan Jewish History* was sort of like that. This baby was not an easy delivery and its birth was well overdue. But, indeed it was well worth the wait. Our authors and contributors have proven once again that their passion for exploring our state's history and their talent for telling Michigan's Jewish stories are creating a legacy that will remain an invaluable resource for our children and generations beyond.

Decades from now, when our descendants read this journal, they will be amazed to learn that before computers – or whatever type of machine has been created by then to perform mathematical functions – clunky adding machines existed, and that they can thank a Michigan inventor for that advancement. They will read with wonder Arnold Collens's article depicting life at the time of the Civil War – and the Jewish sacrifices and contributions made during that time. Did you know, for example, that merchants minted their own currency?

Readers of the future – and those who hold this book in their hands today – will read with absolute delight the story penned by Frances Driker who, years ago, shared tales of her journey to America in the early 1900s and how she made a home in Detroit with her family. We thank her son, Eugene, for allowing us to preserve her wit and wisdom. We also think readers will get a nostalgic kick when they read about the origins of the iconic Dexter-Davison Market, where "good friends came to shop" and where kosher foods were found in abundance. Would you believe that in 1939 two pounds of asparagus cost twenty-five cents?

We hope you enjoy *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 55. While there is no need to feed this book or help it learn to walk, please nurture it and share it with friends. But, because this is your copy, your friends have to give it back to you. So, encourage them to become a member of JHSM and get a book of their very own! - Wendy Rose Bice

Feature Article

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: PATENTS AWARDED TO MICHIGAN JEWISH INVENTORS

By Bernard J. Cantor

Since the early days of the industrial revolution, Jews have participated in Michigan's growing industrial and technological economy. In a number of instances, Jewish engineers, technicians, scientists, and medical doctors have contributed to Michigan's various industrial and commercial activities for which U.S. patents have been awarded. This article, and the sidebars which follow, describes a few of those patents.

U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 8:

"To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries."

The founders of our country specifically provided in the U.S. Constitution for the granting of patents or exclusive rights for limited-time monopolies. They did this for good reasons. The purposes of patents are first, to encourage people to innovate and invent new products and industrial methods; second, to publish information about inventions for ultimate use by the public; and third, to encourage and help entrepreneurs to invest money, time, and effort to commercialize new inventions, and consequently grow the economy, provide jobs, and otherwise benefit the public.

The first U.S. patent was granted, and personally signed, on July 3, 1790, by President George Washington, following the examination and approval of the patent application by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Thus, Jefferson was the country's first patent examiner. The patent they awarded was to inventor Samuel Hopkins, who invented a process for making potash. Potash was used in making fertilizers, soaps, and dyes, and was vitally important to the early American farmers and settlers. Since then, about eight million more patents have been issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office handles all patent applications, which must provide detailed descriptions of the claimed invention, and be examined by a trained patent examiner who conducts a search to determine

whether the claimed invention is new and qualifies for patent protection. The examiner then approves or denies the application, a process that can take a year or more to complete. Once approved, the patent runs for twenty years from the date of application. After that time, the patent expires. Patents are "property" and can be licensed, sold, or owned by an employer of the inventor or even inherited. Once expired, the patent cannot be renewed or its invention re-patented by anyone else, and is freely available to anyone. Copies of all issued patents are now available online.

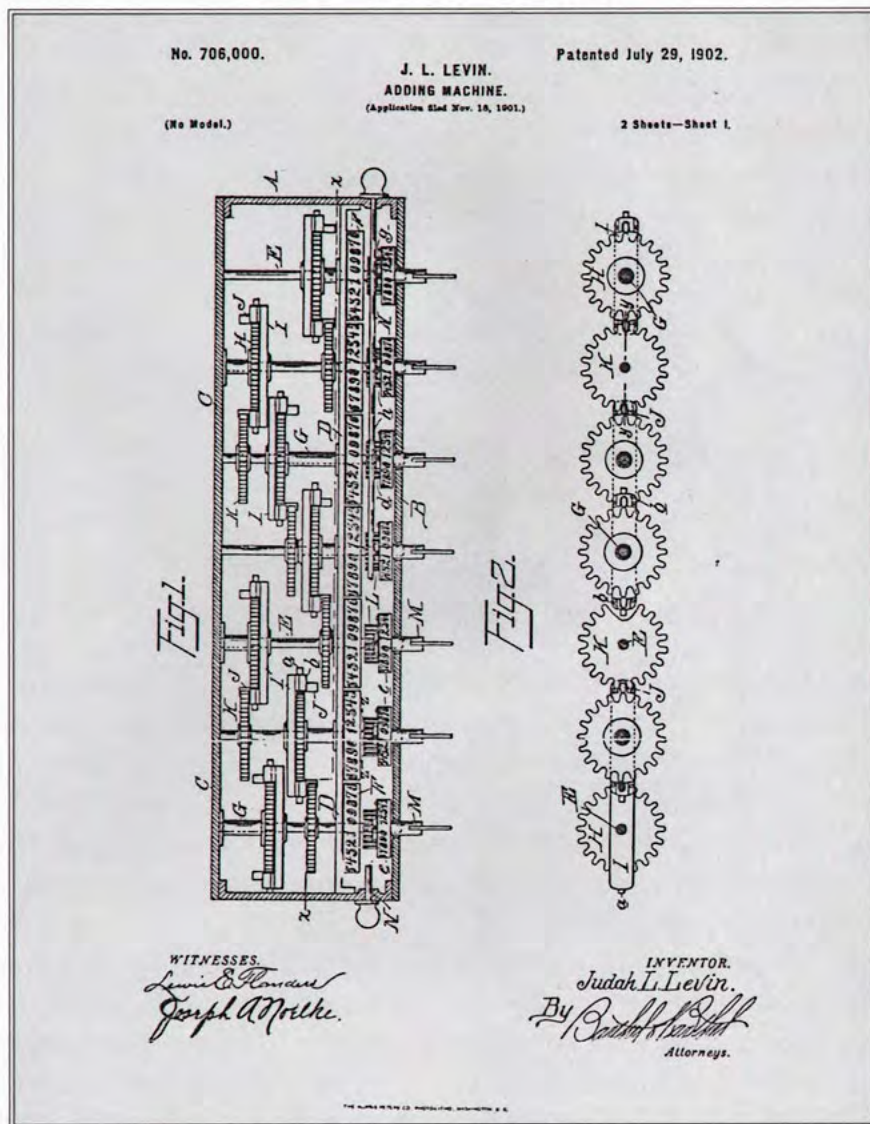
This article describes a few patents that were awarded for inventions made by Jewish residents of Michigan. These inventions include an adding and calculator machine; a reinforced-concrete construction beam; an improved automobile engine; a railroad car with a better suspension system; a fiber-optic surgical instrument; and a scrap-metal recycling process.

RABBI JUDAH LEIB LEVIN'S ADDING AND CALCULATOR MACHINE

Joining the wave of American inventiveness at the turn of the twentieth century, Rabbi Levin (1863-1926) invented an adding machine and later a calculator that added and subtracted numbers that had a decimal point. For that invention, he was awarded U.S. Patent 706,000 issued July 29, 1902, and also patents in 1903 and 1906, as well as patents in Britain and Japan. A model of the calculator machine is in the mathematics collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Judah Leib Levin was born in Traby, Belarus, in the Vilna Province of what was then the Russian Empire – which later became part of Poland and then Lithuania. He was educated in Talmud at the famed Volozhin Yeshivah, where he received rabbinical ordination. Later, he immigrated to the United States, and served as a rabbi – first in Rochester, New York, and later in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1897, he was invited to accept the position of rabbi for Detroit's Congregation Shaarey Zedek, at the time an Orthodox congregation (now Conservative). For the remainder of his life, he stayed in Detroit as a leader during the period of tremendous immigration and growth of the Jewish community. An esteemed scholar, he was fluent in several languages, published two books in Hebrew, and was interested in and studied mathematics.

Rabbi Levin also served as chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Detroit. He encouraged Jewish studies for young people, founding Detroit's Yeshivah Beth Yehudah, more than a century ago, in 1914. Rabbi Levin was an early supporter in America of Zionism and organized the first national Mizrahi meeting in Detroit at Shaarey Zedek.



J.L. Levin Adding Machine, July 1902

JULIUS KAHN'S REINFORCED CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION BEAM

Concrete beams and columns have long been staples of architecture. Concrete is very strong in compression – for example, in supporting the heavy weight of floors, roofs, and walls. But, without reinforcement, a concrete beam or column is weak in handling bending forces or tension, and could easily crack or break apart from the pressure of heavy loads.

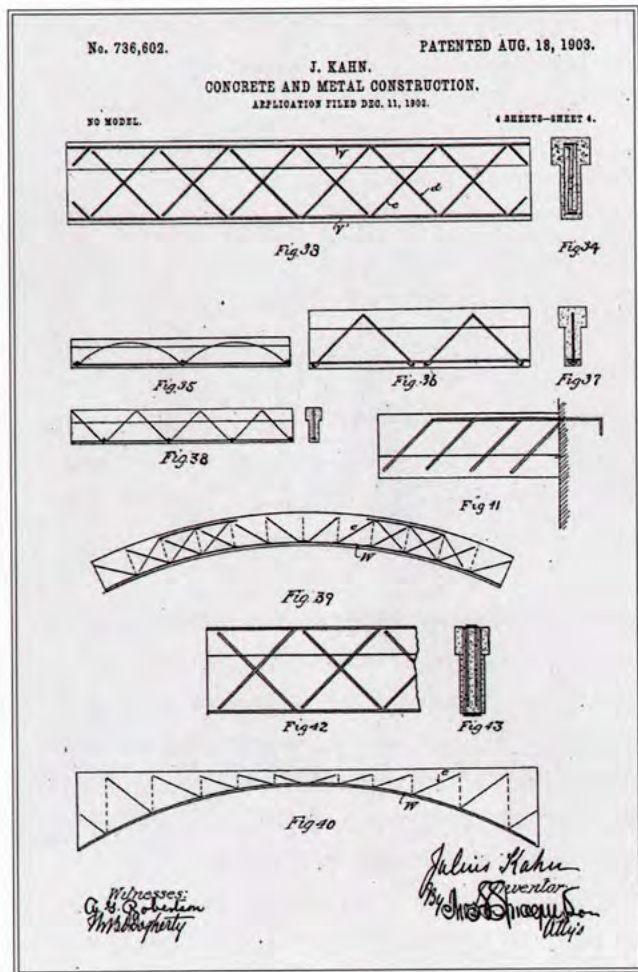
On August 18, 1903, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office awarded Julius Kahn (brother of the famed architect Albert Kahn) U.S. Patent 736,602 for his “Concrete and Metal” construction beam. The patented reinforced

beams made possible the construction of expansive spaces that could support heavy machinery and other loads. Kahn's innovation revolutionized the building of modern factories and large buildings in the United States and in many foreign countries.

Kahn, who immigrated to Detroit with his family at age six in 1875, graduated from the University of Michigan in 1895 with a bachelor of science in civil engineering. He conceived the idea of embedding long metal rods within the concrete and attaching steel strips along the sides of the long rod, like the spine and ribs of a fish. This fish-like skeleton, combined with the concrete, produced a strong reinforced-concrete beam structure, ideal for supporting floors, ceilings, and roofs for modern factories and commercial buildings, all of which had to support heavy machinery and other loads on large open spaces. It also allowed for the construction of multi-floor office buildings, bridges, and other large, modern structures. This beam was called the "Kahn Bar" or "Kahn System."

In 1902, Julius joined his brother Albert's architectural firm, which by then had become highly regarded throughout the area. Albert used Julius's invention in designing first the automotive Packard Plant in Detroit, as well as a four-story plant for the Grabowsky Power Wagon Company, owned by Jewish brothers Max and Morris. But it was Albert's Ford Highland Park Plant, built in 1910 to produce the Model T, that revolutionized the design of industrial factories worldwide. Julius Kahn's reinforced concrete allowed the Highland Park Plant to have four floors of wide open areas to accommodate the heavy production machinery that formed this early moving assembly line; the design also allowed for the inclusion of expansive windows to let in light. The assembly line reduced the time of producing one Model T from 728 minutes to 93 minutes, turning out a car every minute – and cutting the price in half from \$700 to \$350. The Ford Highland Park Plant was thus the birthplace of the moving assembly line and set the new worldwide standard for factory design.

Kahn formed a separate company, Trussed Concrete Steel Company (later called Truscon Steel Company), and manufactured reinforced-concrete products for many years. In 1939, his company became part of Republic Steel. Kahn died on November 4, 1942. Many of the factories and office buildings using his reinforced concrete still stand. In 1978, the Ford Model T Assembly Plant in Highland Park, Michigan, which was designed by Albert Kahn and which used the Julius Kahn reinforced-concrete beam, was named a National Historic Landmark.

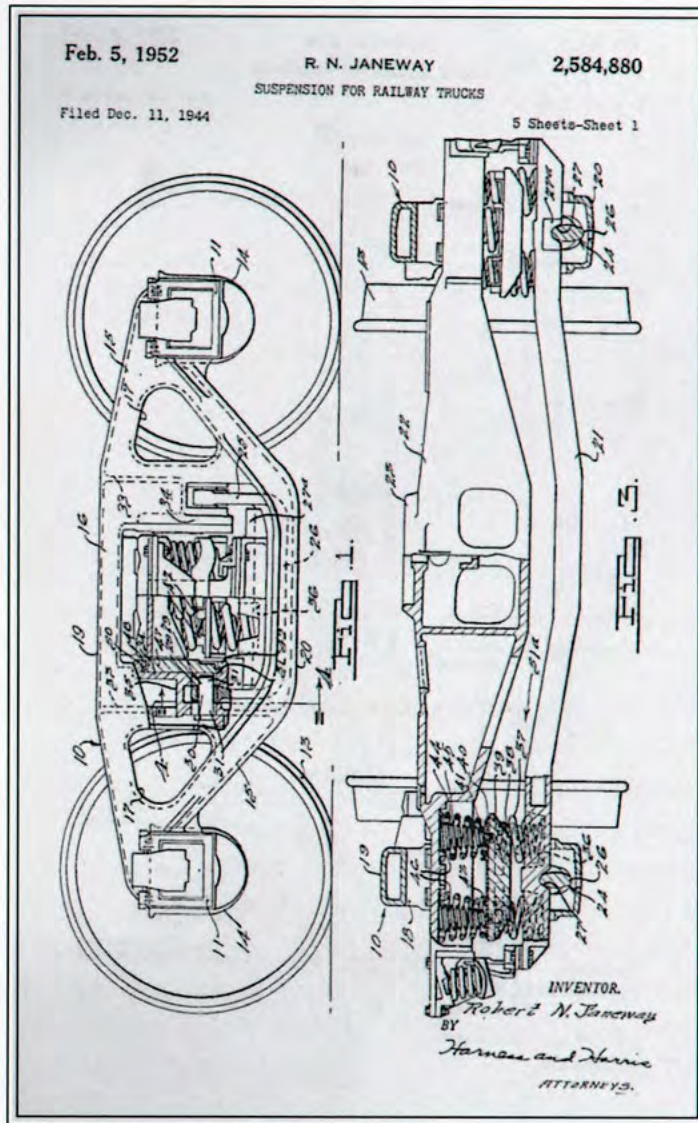


U.S. Patent 736,602, dated August 18, 1903. Julius Kahn's drawing of his concrete and metal construction beams, which would revolutionize the automotive industry by enabling the construction of large, expansive factories and buildings.

ROBERT N. JANEWAY'S L-HEAD AUTOMOBILE ENGINE AND RAILROAD-CAR WHEEL SUSPENSION

Robert Janeway, a graduate engineer from Cornell University, while employed by the Chrysler Corporation in the 1930s invented the L-head engine, which became a standard engine in the automobile industry for many years. In essence, he provided an extension on the top of each of the engine's cylinders within which the gasoline-air mixture exploded and pushed the pistons down in the cylinder. That produced a more efficient and powerful engine than existed previously. He was awarded U.S. Patent 2,151,428, on March 21, 1939.

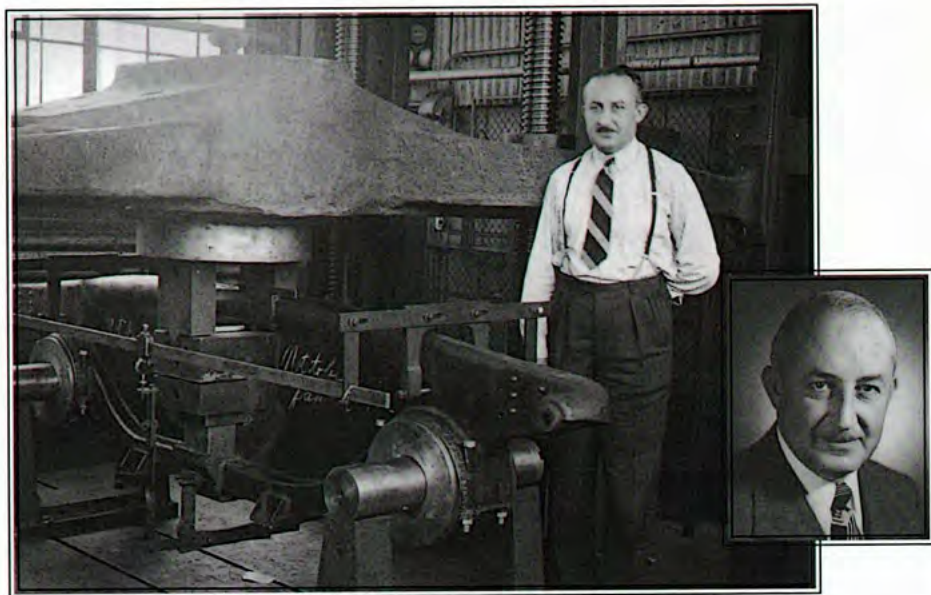
Later, still at Chrysler, Janeway developed a mathematics-based system for connecting the wheels to the bottom of a railroad freight car. This was a revolutionary improved suspension system. Previously, railroad freight cars gave a bumpy, jerky, vibrating ride that damaged the cargo, a costly loss. Similarly, passenger cars gave an uncomfortable bumpy ride.



This hand-drawn design was submitted by Robert Janeway as part of a package of drawings and documents for U.S. Patent 2,584,880, Suspension for Railway Trucks.

The first paragraph of the detailed, twelve-page description of the patent reads, "This application relates to railway car trucks and more specifically to an improved suspension means suitable for use in a freight car truck design for high speed service by which vertical and horizontal shocks occasioned by irregularity of track, road bed, switches, crossovers, etc. are substantially dissipated."

Janeway's invention of a better suspension system resulted in a softer, less-bumpy or vibration-free ride, which prevented breakage of cargo and discomfort to passengers. This invention on freight-car construction was awarded U.S. Patent 2,834,880 on February 8, 1942, and U.S. Patents 2,578,534 on



Chrysler Corporation photo of Robert Janeway standing beside one of his railway truck suspension working models.

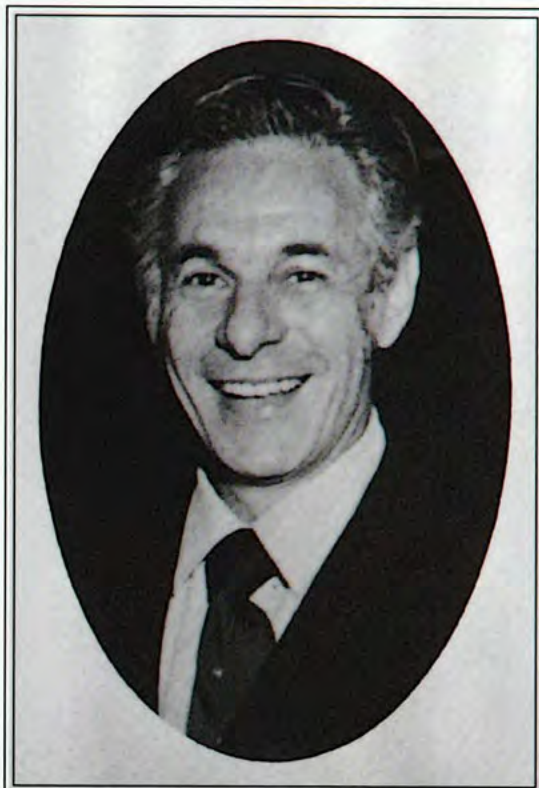
December 11, 1951, and 2,572,788 on November 13, 1951, for passenger-car construction.

There is no doubt that Janeway was a brilliant engineer. He was awarded a total of thirty-seven patents. After retirement from Chrysler, he established Janeway Engineering with his son, Cornell Janeway, also an engineer. During his career, "Bob" Janeway served as chairman of the Detroit Chapter of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), was active in several professional engineering societies, served for many years on the board of Detroit's Jewish Vocational Service, and was a consultant to the U.S. government on transportation matters.

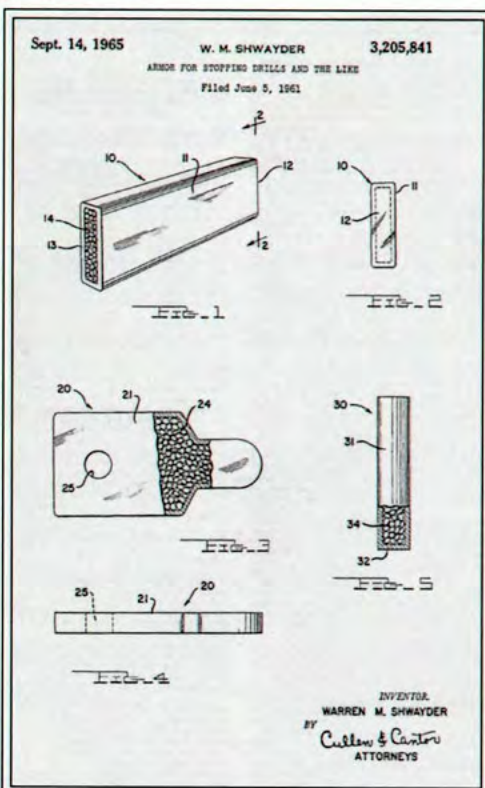
DR. BASIL ISAAC HIRSCHOWITZ'S FIBER-OPTIC ENDOSCOPE

Dr. Basil Hirschowitz, son of a progressive Jewish farming family, was born and educated in South Africa, where he received his medical degree. In the early 1950s, he came to the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, where he focused his research on gastroenterology. He became involved in the study of ileitis, a malady of the human small intestine, specifically the duodenum (the beginning portion of the small intestine, starting at the lower end of the J-shaped stomach).

Hirschowitz was frustrated because the only way to look into the small intestine or duodenum to examine ulcers or cancers would be to surgically cut



Warren Shwayder was born in Denver in 1924 and came to Detroit with his parents as a child. Considered a Renaissance man, Shwayder also was interested in aviation, music, literature, soaring, and ballooning. He was one of the founders of the Detroit Science Center.



W.M. Shwayder's 1965 drawing of "Armor for Stopping Drills and the Like," U.S. Patent No. 3,205,841 (a drill-proof metallic protector).

tungsten carbide to make security plates for use in safes and bank-vault doors. They remain in use, in high-security safes and filing cabinets for top-secret documents in U.S. government facilities and embassies around the world. Nuclear weapons stored on board U.S. Navy aircraft carriers are protected in maximum security vaults behind doors equipped with these security plates. He also made longer-wearing landing skids for military helicopters.

Long before "reuse and recycle" became household words, Shwayder's inventions resulted in converting a waste material into numerous valuable industrial products.

CONCLUSION

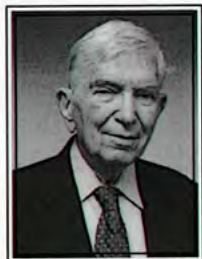
This was but a brief look at only some of the significant inventions for which Michigan Jews were awarded patents. There are also many important innovations that are not patented but warrant further examination. Among them are:

The brothers **Max and Morris Grabowsky** developed a motor-vehicle truck and established the Grabowsky Motor Vehicle Company in 1902. That company was purchased by Will Durant and became part of General Motors Truck Division.

University of Detroit's Professor **Abraham Nemeth's** "Nemeth Code" is a mathematical system for blind mathematicians. Developed in the 1950s, it is now used worldwide.

Wayne State University's **Dr. Jerome Horwitz** is credited with the creation of AZT, the first drug to combat the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

Michigan can indeed take pride in the technological contributions of its Jewish citizens who contributed to the progress of our state.



Bernard J. Cantor is a retired patent attorney from the law firm of Harness, Dickey & Pierce and was listed in "Best Lawyers of America" for more than twenty years. In 2012, Cantor received the "Eight Over Eighty" award from Detroit's Jewish Senior Life and the Distinguished Jewish Community Service Award from the American Jewish Committee. He presently serves on the board of the American Technion Society.

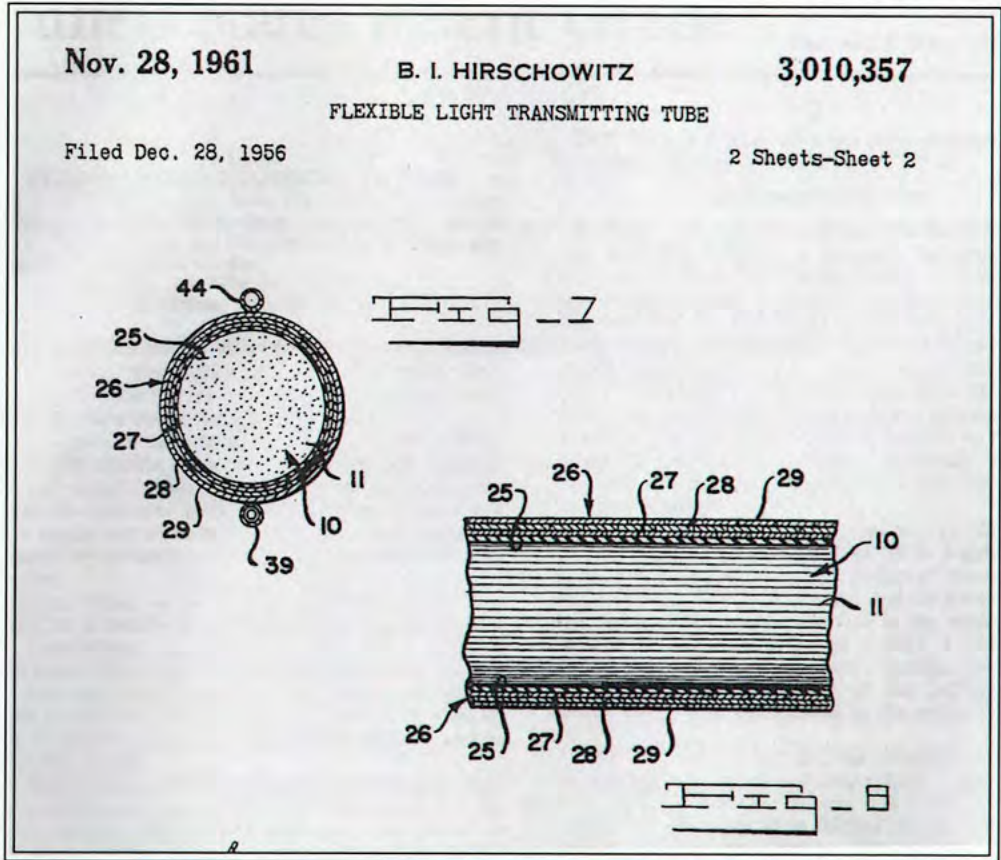
Historical Tidbit

1885: Edward E. Sloman, the son of Mark and Amelia Sloman, graduated from the Michigan College of Medicine, the first Detroit-born Jewish student to enter the school. Born in 1863, Dr. Sloman practiced for two years in Detroit, then spent two years in Hancock, Michigan, as the staff surgeon for the Qunicy Mines. He moved to Omaha, Nebraska, at some point during this time and died accidentally in 1892.

open the patient. The procedure posed a risk to which the patient would naturally object. To solve this problem, he invented a Flexible Light Transmitting Tube – a meter-long device that a patient could swallow and that could look into the small intestine or duodenum. He called it an endoscope.

This endoscope was a long, thin, highly flexible, rope-like tube made up of a large number of full-length, thin, hair-like strands of glass fibers, a special thin coating covering each strand. The spaghetti-like bundle of fibers was held together by a thin outside membrane. The tube was extremely flexible so that it easily could be bent around the J-shaped stomach. Light could travel through these fibers and through the patient's stomach without dissipating. A lens at each end and a light at the lower end enabled one to see into the stomach and the small intestine without surgery.

For this invention, Hirschowitz was awarded U.S. Patent 3,010,357 on November 20, 1961. The fiber-optic endoscope revolutionized the practice of gastroenterology. But the scope had far greater uses, enabling surgeons to



A portion of Dr. Basil Isaac Hirschowitz's U.S. Patent 3,010,357 drawing for a Flexible Light Transmitting Tube, "a long, thin, highly flexible, rope-like tube for use in transmitting light and visual images from one end of the tube to the other."

perform a wide range of noninvasive surgical procedures. Fiber-optic technology would become useful in multiple industries and eventually would lead to the optical fiber communications industry. Examples of how fiber optics can examine normally inaccessible places include radioactive chambers, and reading inaccessibly located instruments.

Not only is Hirschowitz's original endoscope in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution, he also received worldwide recognition for his contributions to medicine. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for the invention of his revolutionary endoscope

WARREN M. SHWAYDER'S RECYCLING OF USED TUNGSTEN CARBIDE METAL

Tungsten carbide is an extremely hard and very expensive metal that is commonly used in factories, in small pieces, to form a cutting edge on tools that cut through steel and other metal. These "tool bits" are an invaluable asset for the manufacturing industry.

The tool bit is like the replaceable razor blade fastened in a hand-held shaving holder. When the sharp edge of a razor blade becomes worn, it must be replaced with a new blade. The same is done with a tungsten carbide tool bit when it is worn. With worn edges, the used tungsten carbide metal tool bits were deemed worthless and thrown away. Machine operators replaced the old bits with expensive new bits.

Detroit's Warren Shwayder changed that. He invented a method to take worn, useless tool bits and recycle the expensive, tungsten carbide metal into new cutting bits, as well as other products.

After graduating from Central High School, Shwayder became a U.S. naval officer, serving on a U.S. Navy warship during World War II. Later, he received a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Michigan, and a master's degree in chemical engineering from Columbia University. He founded and operated the Shwayder Company in Detroit for work in metallurgy.

Shwayder first invented a method for disintegrating hard tungsten carbide objects into smaller particle sizes resulting in U.S. Patent 3,438,730 awarded on April 16, 1969. His continuing work on improving his recycling method resulted in his inventive improvements in producing hard tungsten carbide products from worthless scrap metal. That became U.S. Patent 3,635,674 on June 18, 1972.

Shwayder realized that he had an affordable source – the large number of tungsten carbide tool bits thrown away by every machine shop that was cutting steel and other metals – to make other products. For this, he was awarded U.S. Patent 3,205,841 on September 14, 1965. He used this recovered drill-proof

SOL PANUSH, AN INVENTOR AND AUTHORITY ON AUTOMOTIVE PAINTS

By Robbie Terman

"Color is life, for a world without color appears to us dead."

Sol Panush, *The Splice of Moments*

With more than 318 patents issued in the field of pigments and color, Sol Panush (1919-2014) was not only an inventor but also arguably the foremost authority on automotive paints.

Sol was born Zalman Panush in the small Polish village called Szczuczyn. Realizing that Poland at the time was not the best place to raise a young, Jewish family, Panush's father traveled to America seeking a better life for his wife and four sons. He settled in Detroit and began teaching at the United Hebrew Schools. Five years later, in 1929, the family was reunited. Their fate, had they not left Poland, became horrifyingly clear years later, when they lost eighty-three relatives to the Nazis.

Panush's interest in chemistry began in childhood, when he'd experiment with chemicals he found in the basement. His mother encouraged his curiosity, even if an experiment occasionally resulted in an explosion. Panush received a degree in chemical engineering from Wayne State University, and shortly after served as a "flying tiger" in the U.S. Air Force during WWII. After the war, he went to work for Acme Color & Paint (a division of Sherwin Williams), specializing in color science and color-pigment chemistry.

Panush married Sylvia Logan in Detroit in 1942 and together they had four children: Sharon, Daniel, Gigi, and Illana. In 1990, he retired from BASF. Among his many inventions is the use of mica and micro TiO₂ in the automotive industry.

In addition to his career as a chemical engineer, Panush worked for forty-five years as a Hebrew teacher, mainly at Congregation Shaarey Zedek. His Jewish education began as a child in Poland, where he attended the Hebrew Gymnasium – a leading all-Hebrew academy in Bialystock. But it was at the Byron-Philadelphia branch of United Hebrew Schools where the thrill of intellectual exploration of Hebrew and Judaism was instilled in him.

Combining his expertise in automotive coloring and Judaism, Panush authored numerous books, including *Automotive Pigments-Color*, *The Theology of Color* (Color in the Bible), and an autobiography, *The Splice of Moments*.

SOLOMON HEINEMAN, AWARDED FOUR U.S. PATENTS BEGINNING IN 1891

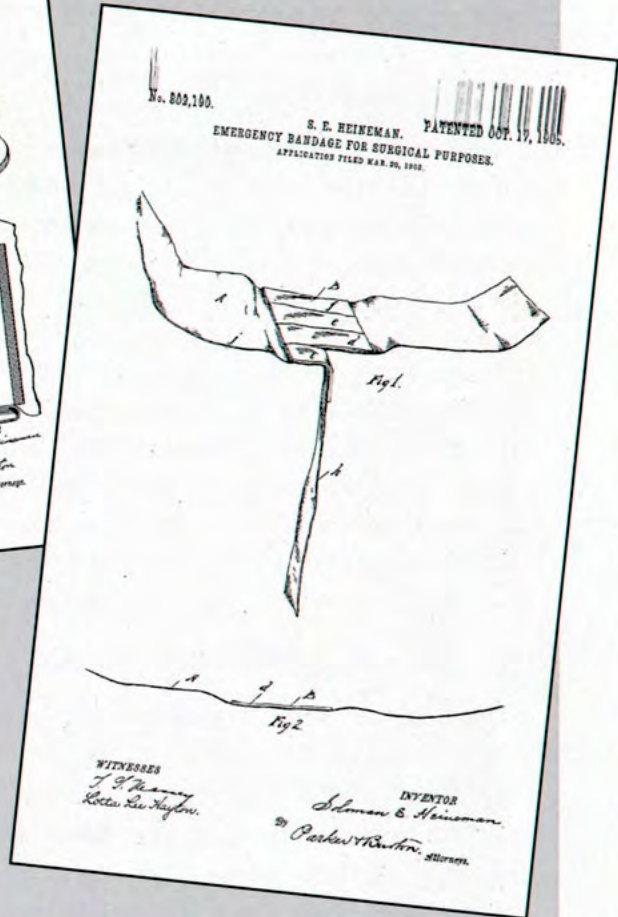
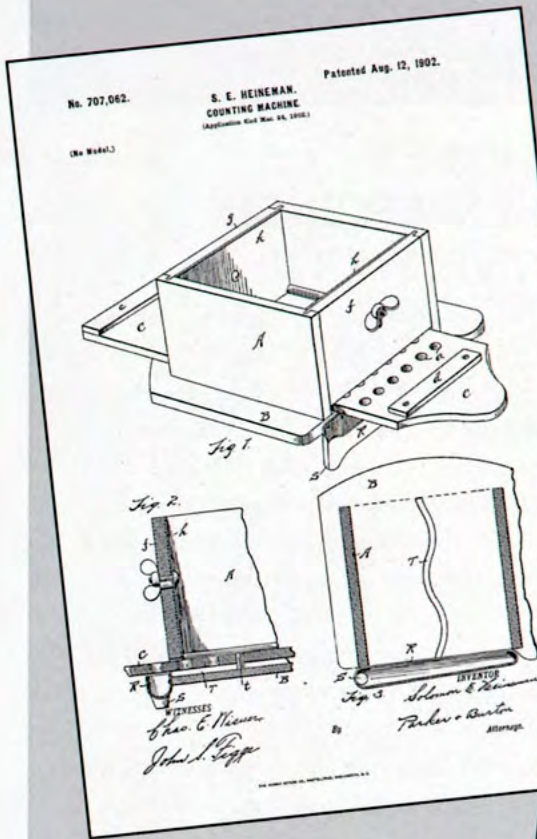
By Barbara Cohn

Solomon E. Heineman was born in Detroit in 1862 to Emil and Fanny Butzel Heineman. Emil and Fanny came to the city around 1851, at a time when the Jewish population of Detroit numbered about sixty among a population of 21,000. They were entrepreneurs in the clothing-manufacturing business, and supplied uniforms for Civil War soldiers and clothing for slaves escaping along the Underground Railroad. They were also pillars in the Jewish and local communities. Solomon attended Detroit High School and later married Beatrice Mayer of Ohio, with whom he had two children, Emil and Clara. Solomon's younger brother, David, was responsible for designing the flag of Detroit.

Between 1890 and 1903, Heineman was awarded four U.S. patents in Detroit. The first was "Capsule," U.S. Patent 464,121, issued on December 1, 1891. This "new and useful improvement on Capsules" innovated the way liquid medicines, which were sometimes disagreeable in taste and harmful to the teeth, could be ingested. Heineman created a new way to take an empty gelatin capsule, with a projecting tubular neck, and let it be filled with "liquid medicine by a physician or pharmacist and sealed later. Each capsule can be specifically filled with any dose and addresses the specific needs of the individual."

Heineman's next patent was U.S. Patent 499,542, issued on June 13, 1893, for "method of and apparatus for manufacturing pills." The apparatus enabled pills and tablets to be produced with a "perfect and remarkable uniform gelatin coating. In addition, the rapid production is done expeditiously and cheaply." The "Counting Machine" patent, issued August 12, 1902, was U.S. Patent 707,062. Although the original assignee was Mertz Capsule Company, Heineman is listed as the creator. This product was a new and useful improvement in how pills were withdrawn from a receptacle.

The counting machine delivered the pills down a "raceway" and then to another receptacle. "With this counter an operator can count and bottle a definite number of pills with a single forward and backward movement of the slide, accurately counting twenty-four or thirty-six or one hundred pills, according to the dimensions of the machine, with a single movement."



The final patent awarded to Solomon Heineman was U.S. Patent 802,190A, issued on October 17, 1905, for an "Emergency-Bandage for Surgical Purposes." This bandage featured an antiseptic dressing that could be utilized in wrapping a specific area and contained a small composition of gelatin and glycerin which, when heated for a few seconds, would soften the dressing to enable easier placement on the wound. Heineman, in writing the description, noted that "the special use of this bandage is in place where workmen are liable to be injured."

Feature Article

THEY QUIETLY CAME HOME: THE DETROIT JEWISH EXPERIENCE AT THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR

By Arnold Collens

In April 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered and the American Civil War came to a close. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, the author revisits the history of that great rebellion, focusing on the circumstances and conditions of life in Detroit between the years of 1861 and 1865. Michigan's small number of Jews played a role in history by taking part in every major battle of the war and by serving in forty of Michigan's forty-six regiments. During the rebellion, Michigan provided 90,747 troops: 85,000 were volunteers and 181 were Jewish. (Nationally, approximately 6,000 Jews served in the Union Army, and 2,300 fought for the Confederacy. Six Jews received the Congressional Medal of Honor.) Thirty-eight Michigan Jews would perish from wounds, disease, or the conditions experienced in prison, camp or hospitals. This article examines the contributions of Detroit's Jews as the war progressed, not only militarily, but in civilian life.

A PORTRAIT OF CIVIL WAR DETROIT

The U.S. Census conducted in 1860 ranked Detroit as the nation's eighteenth largest city. One year later, on April 12, 1861, Confederate forces around Charleston Harbor opened fire on the Union forces holding Fort Sumter. The attack launched the Civil War. Most people predicted the uprising would end quickly, certainly within ninety days.

In the years just prior to the start of the Civil War, cows and clutter filled some of Detroit's dingy, dimly lit, dirt streets, while in the commercial district Detroiters walked planked sidewalks, enjoying the beauty of the area and the distinctive homes of the city's elite. Horses pulled wagons on Jefferson and Woodward, filling the streets with the sounds of horseshoes clomping on hard-packed dirt. The city's tallest buildings stood four stories high. Residents shopped for produce at the Detroit Farmers Market located at the east end of Campus Martius on Cadillac Square. Straw and wood could be bought there or at markets farther from downtown. The Michigan and Trumbull Market served the west side while the east side depended on the Eastern Market at Russell and High Street. The waterfront was dotted with small factories and warehouses. Detroit was a commercial town and industry was yet to come.



Detroit was a "walking city" in the early 1860s.

Most roads were made from compacted dirt, gravel, and stone, although cobblestone and plank were also part of the city landscape. The city limits began at the warehouses and docks along the Detroit River and continued north to the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk railroad tracks (below today's Grand Boulevard). The limit roughly jogged southeast to its final eastern edge

along Mt. Elliott. Belle Isle, privately owned, did not belong to the city. Outside the city proper, the main roads became toll roads, run by state-chartered private companies.

THE EARLY 1860S: THE WAR AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

The Civil War spurred an increase in Detroit's population, housing needs, commerce, and industry. The changes had effects on most areas of civilian life, some positive, others negative.

When the war began, there were only around 8,000 houses within the city. High rents were indicative of high housing demand. Home building soon escalated as did associated industries. The white-pine lumber industry became a magnet for workers. They, along with added civilians and military personnel, quickly filled Detroit homes. Many of those who lived in modest wooden houses added entrances for boarders or extended family.

By 1861, the city had more than its share of bars and recreational facilities dedicated to serving every desire of its growing population, which included military men and out-of-town visitors. A billiards room was built at Woodward and Edmund, and a year earlier, an ice-skating rink opened off High Street. Over time, various military training camps dotted the city landscape, adding men and conflict to the expanding city. In addition to Detroit's Fort Wayne (located west of downtown, on the Detroit River), Camp Lyon (located on a horseracing track three miles east of downtown, off the Detroit River and today called Indian Village) was built to train the Michigan First Cavalry. In 1862, on the city's east side, Camp Backus opened. It sat on the Joseph Campau Farm at Clinton Street, off of Elmwood, and provided the training grounds for the Michigan Fifth Cavalry. The 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment became one of the war's most famous regiments as part of the Iron Brigade. It mustered into service at Camp Banks on the city's west side. People in the city knew the area as the Ladies Riding Park, which was once the site of the State

Fair Grounds west of Woodward, east of Cass, between Alexandrine and Canfield.

At the war's start, the finest hotel in Detroit and Michigan, the Russell House, or "the Russell," stood in Campus Martius at Woodward. Detroit's wealthiest citizens lived north of this hub, in residential housing on Woodward. The Campau family, originally from Montreal, was one of Detroit's first French families. By 1863, Joseph Campau had become the city's largest landowner and wealthiest citizen. His grandfather, Jacques Campau, was an officer and secretary to Detroit founder Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. His land assets were valued at over \$3.4 million. By comparison, Lewis Cass, the well-loved politician and general who had run for president in 1848, held \$1.2 million in land assets and had an annual income of \$22,700. Shipping, iron, and transit magnate Eber B. Ward had \$1 million in land holdings and earned \$91,037 yearly, while lumber merchant Charles Merrill owned land worth \$409,923 and earned \$11,026 per year.

During the 1860s, Edmund A. Brush subdivided the family farm that sat north of Grand Circus Park and east of Woodward. Edmund named the subdivided streets after himself and his friends Watson and Colonel John Winder. Erskine Street was named for his grandfather's family back in Scotland. He also named a street for his brother Alfred and his mother Adelaide. Edmund's father, Elijah Brush, served as Detroit's second mayor. Edmund was aware of his family history. Before moving to Detroit, Adelaide's father, John Askin, married a Metis (Ottawa/French) woman, Marie Archange Barthe. Her parents were ribbon-farm owners related to Joseph Campau. John also spent time at Fort Michilimackinac where he, along with Michigan's first recognized Jewish settler, Ezekiel Solomon, were fur traders. Both Askin and Solomon were victims of Pontiac's uprising in 1763.

When troops began returning home in 1862, they found drinking fountains installed on main streets, and houses, buildings, and structures decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and American flags. They also saw newly introduced Detroit uniformed police officers walking the streets, the obvious intent to deter the crime brought about by Detroit's growing population. The war years saw a dramatic increase in the number of homeless and unemployed wandering the streets. Pickpockets, prostitutes, robbers, drunkards, thug activity, and fights created real fears. Many feared an attack by southerners who were believed to be organizing raids from Canada. Citizen concern was further magnified by racial tension after the 1863 riot.

When the Confederate navy destroyed New England's Atlantic whaling fleet, Detroit's street lamps were converted from whale-oil fuel to the less-clean-burning kerosene oil. Yet, with no traffic laws to speak of, pedestrians

and wagons were free to travel in any direction on either side of the muddied roads, and horse-and-wagon teams often blocked streets for extended periods of time. The result was plenty of noise and chaos. Other issues needing policing resulted from use of carioles, which were pony-drawn, two-wheeled carts. The unstable carioles were known to frequently drop their cargo, which often included all manner of fruits and vegetables, as well as people.

In 1864, a robust iron industry – spearheaded by Eureka Iron Works in Wyandotte and its use of the newly introduced Bessemer process (the mass-production of steel from molten pig iron prior to the open-hearth furnace) – engendered more jobs and business. Commerce emerged to support stove makers such as the Detroit Stove Works, maker of Garland stoves, and rail carmaker Michigan Car Company, which made railroad cars for the Union army. That was also the year when wounded soldiers began to receive medical care in one of the eleven new buildings that formed the Harper Hospital complex, which was originally established as a military hospital in 1863.



Horse-drawn streetcars, an important mode of transportation that would become a major spark for the city's growth, were introduced on Detroit's main streets in 1863. The sound of bells attached to a horse's collar warned pedestrians of an approaching streetcar.

CHANGES IN UNITED STATES MAIL AND CURRENCY

The practice of sending letters addressed with only a name and city stopped with the advent of home delivery. Citizens no longer needed to stand in post-office lines to receive mail. Under the Free City Delivery system, street addresses became mandatory on all letters and the city was required to install

both sidewalks and crosswalks. Still, soldiers could send letters home without postage by writing "Soldier Letter" on the envelope. Families were happy to see the letters and gladly paid the postage due.

Widespread hoarding of gold and silver coins, and the need to divert metals for the war effort, created a desperate shortage of small change as metal currency all but disappeared during the war. Storekeepers and customers addressed the need to "make change" in two ways: They privately minted token coins called "store cards" or they used postage stamps. Since stamps frequently stuck together, soaking pans became standard fixtures in most stores. Eventually non-adhesive government-backed postal currency, also called "factional currency," became available. The Coinage Act of April 1864 rendered Civil War tokens impractical, then illegal, but introduced Detroiters to a new phrase: "In God We Trust."



These token coins were privately minted and used in lieu of cash by merchants. Shown here are tokens from Detroit Jewish merchant Edward Kanter, newspaper dealer L.S. Freeman, and Russell House retail clothing merchant E.S. Heineman.

NEWSPAPERS AND SPEAKERS PAINTED THE WAR IN WORDS

Talk on Detroit streets after the attack on Fort Sumter centered on preserving the union. Detroit citizens bought newspapers from publishers that made no pretense as to which political party their paper represented.

At the time, Detroit's mainstream thinking was dominated by the Democratic Party. Its advertised representative, the *Detroit Free Press*, the leading exponent in the Midwest, stood for allowing states to decide on the issue of slavery. Its editorial position was anti-"colored" people (as African Americans were commonly referred to in the 1860s), planting seeds of fear in poor whites – in particular the Irish – who felt that they would lose their jobs and receive lower wages if the Republicans prevailed. The German-language paper, the *Michigan Volksblatt*, also represented Democratic Party philosophies, and went a step further. The *Volksblatt's* anti-Semitic editorials were as strong against Jews as the *Free Press's* position against colored people.

Among the eight other newspapers listed in the Detroit Directory during the

war, two – *The Detroit Advertiser and Tribune* and the German-language *Michigan Journal* – aligned themselves with Lincoln and Republican thinking. Their editorials favored reunification of the union. The less-read *Detroit Commercial Advertiser* overlooked the fact that most Jews were Republicans. It published an 1863 article depicting Jews as “hooked nose wretches” who speculated on disaster and gold. After the fallout over the article settled, the Jewish citizenry enjoyed community peace and harmony. No other negative articles appeared in print for the remainder of the war, and Jefferson – the main business street for Jewish merchants – thrived.

The ring of fire bells signaled that there was word from the front. Large crowds of Detroiters gathered in front of the Russell House to listen to the latest reports from the battlefields. They also listened and reacted to passionate stump speeches given by politicians and other influential city leaders. The long-winded Democrat General Lewis Cass urged citizens to pledge money and volunteer to fight, and Republican Governor Austin Blair of Jackson supported the supremacy of the U.S. Constitution. Blair died almost destitute from supporting the war effort.

Another influential speaker was Edward Kantor, Michigan’s first Jewish state legislator, first Jewish banker, and former vice president of Temple Beth El (1855). His speech increased morale and funding, and stimulated the recruitment efforts for the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment – The Iron Brigade, which included three Jewish soldiers.

In the summer of 1862, after the Confederate victory in the Peninsula Campaign (the first large-scale Union offensive intended to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia) the reality of war took root in Detroit. Briefings held at Fireman’s Hall, in the streets, and in front of the Biddle House and Russell House continued to perpetuate patriotism and inform Detroit’s citizens of battlefield activity. On July 15, 1862, an anti-war mob, fearing a draft, chased the speakers from the Russell



*Recruiting Michigan First Volunteers at the
Federal Post Office, April 20, 1861.*

House speakers stand and into the Russell's interior. The result, at the briefing a week later: An even larger group of union sympathizers, abhorring what they considered an act of treason, formed to support the union and cheered their community leadership.

A DEVELOPING JEWISH DETROIT

The 1850s – just prior to the great rebellion – witnessed the establishment of Detroit's and Michigan's first Jewish communities (the first Jewish residents of the state were the fur traders one hundred years prior). In 1837, when Michigan gained statehood, the Bill of Rights guaranteed by the Northwest Ordinance (drafted in 1787) drew Jewish immigrant attention. The ordinance protected religious practices and provided for free education. Accordingly, Jews came to live in Michigan. Although their numbers were small, Jews settled in Jackson, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, and Detroit. These established communities offered communal support including a place to worship and burial societies. For mostly economic reasons, Detroit's Jewish population was the largest in the state and continued to grow the fastest. As they did in Germany, Jews plied their old-world skills by working in the businesses that were open to them. Some came to Detroit after first trying to make a living in smaller communities, such as Ann Arbor, where they found their crafts overcrowded or under-needed. Peddlers could easily purchase a horse for their cart thanks to the busy streetcar system. The horses used to pull streetcars had a useful work-life of about seven years. When fresh horses arrived, the old horses were often sold to peddlers for next to nothing. Jews became managers, sales clerks, and owners in businesses that provided groceries, clothing, tobacco, newsprint, liquor, lumber, hardware, and more.

In 1860, approximately 375 people made up the 75 to 80 Jewish families that lived in Detroit, truly a minority among the city's 45,619 citizens. Most were of German descent and were part of the greater-than-44-percent immigrant population that spoke a foreign tongue. Because of the city's large German population, these Jewish immigrants had the advantage of working in German areas while they learned English. Yet, even a limited knowledge of English allowed them to work in more than just the German neighborhood. This was especially true for peddlers.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM JEWISH CITIZENS

Silas Farmer offers descriptions of only two Jewish Detroit merchants, Samuel Heavenrich and Emil Heineman, in his landmark book, *History of Detroit and Michigan*. This is not by coincidence. It's also not by coincidence

that these two Bavarian Jews came to Detroit at almost the same time. The German Revolution of 1848 had unsuccessfully tried to address social change, human-rights issues, and reform democratic government. The many Germans who possessed skills, education, and wealth and who cherished these liberal values became known as the Forty-Eighters (as in 1848). A good number of these revolutionaries left the country, including the Heineman and Heavenrich families. Their parallel success stories reflect their resolve.

In 1853, fourteen-year-old Samuel Heavenrich came from Bavaria. Benefiting his brother-in-law Samuel Sykes, who was also his employer at S. Sykes & Company, Heavenrich went to school at night to study bookkeeping and English. By 1862, the second year of the Civil War, Heavenrich owned S. Sykes & Company, and in 1863 brought his brother Simon H. into the retail, wholesale, and manufacturing clothing business as partner. As Heavenrich Brothers, they employed more than 350 people. They utilized the most modern machinery west of New York in their six-story building that extended from 138 and 140 Jefferson Avenue to Woodbridge. Heavenrich became the president of the Phoenix Club, a Jewish social club, and was a strong supporter of Temple Beth El.

In 1862, Jewish clothing merchant Emil S. Heineman ran an advertisement in the *City Directory*. It read that his company "Employs 300 workers. The Largest



Samuel Heavenrich

*Courtesy Rabbi Leo M. Franklin
Archives at Temple Beth El*

Establishment in the City." (Coincidentally, at the same time, Samuel Heavenrich's Sykes company claimed to employ "about 300 hands, and is the largest anywhere west of New York.")

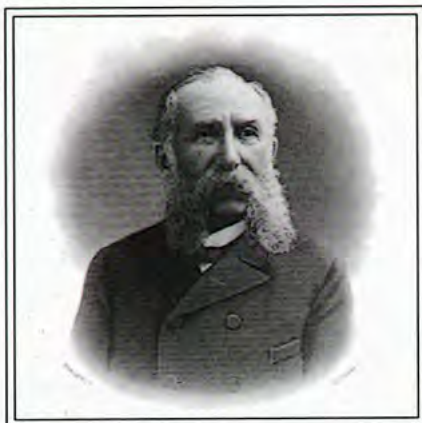
Emil Heineman's father, Solomon, moved the family from Bavaria to the port town of Neuhaus on the Oste near Hamburg, Germany, to avoid religious intolerance. Rewarded by hard work, Solomon became the town's foremost wealthy merchant. With the failure of the 1848 revolution, Emil asked his father's permission to come to America – and his father reluctantly granted it. Heineman immigrated to New York, then to Cincinnati for a short time, finally arriving at

the age of twenty-seven in Detroit, where he became a clerk at David Amberg's clothing store. Two years later in 1853, using the English and commercial training he acquired in Germany, Heineman opened his own store. After the Civil War started, he left the retail trade and went into the manufacture of military clothing for the state militia and Union army. In 1862, Magnus and Martin Butzel, brothers of Emil's wife Fanny, came into the business. The business moved

to the upper floors of the McMillan's store and became known as Heineman, Butzel & Company.

Although he never ran for political office, Heineman, a Republican, was recognized as an influential Detroit. He also was a leading member of Temple Beth El. Prior to the war, he had worked with Rabbi Liebman Adler to aid the Underground Railroad movement.

Many other Jewish families found success during the war year. Among them were the Bavarian-born Schloss brothers, Seligman and Emanuel. Successful as retail merchants from their arrival in 1851, they flourished as wholesale dry-goods merchants.



Emil Heineman

*Courtesy Rabbi Leo M. Franklin
Archives at Temple Beth El*

JEWISH INVOLVEMENT IN MAKING UNIFORMS FOR UNION VOLUNTEERS

During the first year of the war, Union volunteer infantry units were trained and clothed, and received munitions from their sponsoring states. In Michigan, the state treasury needed the assistance of many to raise the \$100,000 to outfit the First Michigan units. Half the money was to come from outstate, while the City of Detroit pledged the other half. In Detroit, \$23,000 was immediately funded by an assortment of citizens, including \$500 from Jewish merchant

Joseph Freedman of S. Freedman & Brothers. Marcus Cohen, Temple Beth El's first minyan leader, did what he could by donating \$25.

To outfit the Michigan First Regiment with uniforms, Colonel Henry M. Whitlesey was given \$20,000 to purchase uniform material at A.T. Stewart's department store in New York City. He returned with grey petersham wool for overcoats (which may not have been used), navy blue (probably) petersham for coats, and navy-blue flannel for pants. Each man was issued a jacket, shirt, pair of pants, and an overcoat. Three key



Emil and Fannie Heineman lived in this elegant home on the northeast corner of Woodward and Adelaide. They purchased it for \$20,000 (\$465,116 in 2014 dollars).

Detroit merchant tailoring firms were contracted to make one hundred uniforms per day: James McGarth & Company, Samuel Sykes & Company, and E. S. Heineman & Company. Sykes also provided blankets, undershirts, and stockings.

According to an April 1861 *Detroit Free Press* article, tailors arrived at one of Detroit's training camps to measure the volunteers. The required uniforms were produced and, when ready, brought back to the camps complete with nine gilt buttons. Staff officer uniforms included buttons that sported the Michigan state seal.



First Michigan Volunteer Infantry gathers in Campus Martius before departing for Washington City, circa 1861.

The State of Michigan procured \$226,000 worth of clothing and blankets for the war effort in 1861. Over that same period, Sykes and Heineman's combined company revenues for filled orders of uniforms and blankets was \$180,000. By comparison, A.T. Stewart, who sold wholesale and retail dry goods, was one of the nation's wealthiest men. In 1861, his firm sold the State of New York \$60,000 worth of blankets and clothing.

When the troops left Detroit in their blue uniforms, they carried a red-flannel-covered canteen and wore white gloves. The distinctive uniforms set the men of the First Michigan Three Month Regiment apart from other volunteer units. At the battle of Bull Run, the stand-out blue jackets they wore prompted their southern captors to call the Michigan men "Blue Jackets." By the time they returned to Michigan, their gloves were gone, the red flannel had worn off the

canteens, and their flannel pants had holes. Yet, they dressed for their homecoming parade by inserting green oak sprigs in their caps. Most of the three-month units signed on for three more years of service.

The nation's first women's volunteer organization dedicated to soldiers' aid formed in Detroit on November 7, 1861. Using templates, the Ladies' Soldiers Aid Societies volunteered and made shirts. Interdenominational in scope, its organizers included Temple Beth El members Mrs. Isaac Altman, Mrs. Isidore Frankel, and Mrs. Simon Freedman. Not only did they sew, they provided supplies for the sick and wounded, participated in group meetings, and supported private hospitals.

PLANTING OF NEW DIRECTIONS

As the war came to a close, Detroit's Jewish volunteers quietly headed home with their regiments. They came back to a city gripped by inflation yet fueled for growth. The war had served as a catalyst for population growth, new business development, and transition from a commercial economy to one of industrialization. Perhaps residents were not immediately cognizant of these seeds of change, but the foundation and structure for new directions had been planted for Detroit and its Jewish citizens. The children of these early Jewish families later made an enormous difference in the development and enduring legacy of Detroit Jewish communal life and its institutions.

Historical Tidbit

1945: The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit agrees to accept "not more than thirty" survivors of the Holocaust who had been rescued by the National Refugee Board. Those individuals, who had spent at least a year in a camp in rural New York, came to call Detroit home. By 1949, Detroit had taken in two hundred families from displaced persons camps.

WHAT THEY SAW OF THE REVOLUTION REGIMENTAL STATISTICS

- *The First Michigan Volunteer Infantry was the first regiment to reach Washington from the West after President Lincoln's initial call for volunteers. They were mustered into service on May 2, 1861, and eleven days later left for Washington. Of the ten Jewish infantrymen who were part of the First, seven would survive and take part in almost every major battle of the war, including Bull Run (Manassas), the Peninsular campaign, Antietam, Gettysburg, The Wilderness, The Siege at Petersburg, and Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse.*
- *The Fifth Michigan Volunteer Infantry is recognized by military men for conducting the most brilliant bayonet charge of the entire Civil War when they attacked the rebel rifle pit at Williamsburg, Virginia. Then, after a forced march, the Fifth reached the field at Gettysburg and the regiment immediately found themselves in battle. Within their first hour on the battlefield, 105 men were killed or wounded. Seven Jewish troopers, including Sgt. Adolph Barlow, Capt. Solomon Lyon, and Julius Joseph, made it through the war unharmed.*
- *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Michigan Volunteer infantries fought with General Ulysses S. Grant, commander of the military's administrative "department" of Tennessee (consisting of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi). They joined General Sherman on his Atlanta campaign and the March to the Sea. The move to Sherman's regiments might have been because of General Order No. 11.*

The background of General Order No. 11 is that New England's cotton mills operated using cotton from the south throughout the war. Cotton traders were regulated and limited by the U.S. Treasury and the U.S. Army. With fear that black-market cotton was supporting southern munitions purchases, General Grant issued General Order No. 11, which read:

"The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order. Post commanders will see to it that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners, unless furnished with permit from headquarters." Under Jewish protest, President Lincoln had the order rescinded.

- *The Twenty-Fourth Michigan Volunteer Infantry was mustered into service August 15, 1862. As part of Brigadier General Solomon Meredith's Iron Brigade, the Twenty-Fourth was among the first commands engaged at the Battle of Gettysburg, losing over eighty percent of its men. General Meredith, who had been severely wounded at the battle, wrote from his hospital bed: "No troops ever fought with more bravery than did those of the 24th Michigan." At war's end the Twenty-Fourth was part of the funeral honor guard that escorted President Abraham Lincoln to his final place of rest in Springfield, Illinois.*
- *Michigan had eleven Cavalry units, a Light Artillery unit, eight Battery units, and one Engineers and Mechanics unit – all had at least one Jewish member. Michigan's Fourth Cavalry unit included two Jewish men. Near the war's end on May 10, 1865, the Fourth was credited with helping to capture Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederate States, at Irwinsville, Georgia.*

Author's Notes: When I began this project I was curious to learn what city life was like for Jews in Detroit at the time of the war with the South. Today's rich wealth of available data provided me with in-depth information never before available. I am grateful to the many Detroit historians, Civil War writers, and analysts for their foresight, and am acutely aware that this article could not have been written without them. Where data conflicted as to date, numbers, or descriptive detail, I presented the consensus.

The impetus for this project came from my reading of the work of Irving Katz (president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan 1961-1963, author, and executive secretary of Temple Beth El 1939-1979). For the American Civil War's centennial, he explored the role of Detroit's Jewish community and soldiers in his book, *The Jewish Soldier from Michigan in the Civil War*. Katz's approach introduced community members who contributed to the war effort in Detroit and he outlined the stories of the men who fought on the front lines. I'm indebted to him for building that foundation.



Arnold Collens, a Detroit history enthusiast, grew up in Detroit where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Wayne State University. Arnie and his wife Dorothy have had the privilege of visiting almost every major Civil War site across America. Arnold is a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

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Historical Tidbit

1975: On November 10, the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald, one of the largest freighters on the Great Lakes, sank a day following a massive winter storm. Twenty-nine crew members were aboard including David Weiss, a Jewish cadet at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City.

Feature Article

THE JOSEPHSON FAMILY: JEWISH MERCHANTS IN ROGERS CITY

By Jacob DeWitt

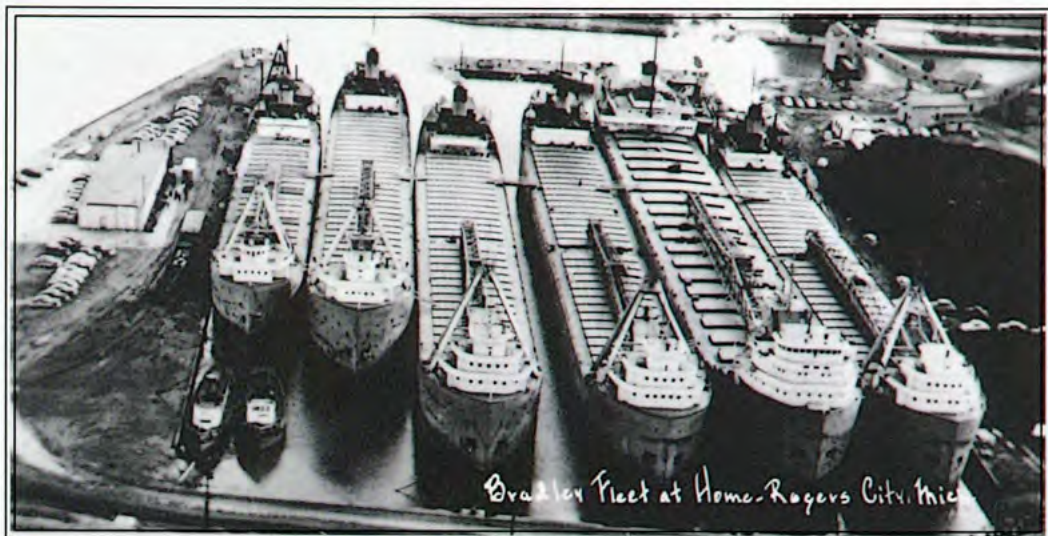
The story of Isaac Josephson and his son Arthur is a narrative of the Jewish-American experience. Isaac's journey began when he was a nineteenth-century Jewish immigrant from Latvia, and went on to land him in the sparsely populated northern frontier of Michigan where he built and maintained a successful business. Josephson's story provides an interesting view into the people of a forgotten period of Michigan history prior to the automobile, when the lakes were the livelihood of coastal towns and an integral part in the mining, logging, cement, commercial fishing, and transport industries that stretched from Detroit to Duluth, Marquette to Chicago.

There isn't much to see of Rogers City from the passenger seat of an automobile. A few gas stations, a McDonald's, and a grocery store are all that are visible from US-23 at the Highway 68 junction. You could blink and almost miss it. If you didn't stop, you'd never know how much of the city is hidden from view. Likewise, the history of the town and some of its citizens seems unremarkable until given a closer glance.

To go back just a few generations reveals somewhere unfamiliar to Michiganders today. Settlements along northern Lake Huron, such as Rogers City, often made their living on the flow of limestone and the harvest of commercial fishermen. Beside an occasional historical plaque or nautical-themed business, there are few reminders of these islands that once stood in the deep expanses of Michigan forests. These days freighters come less often to the calcite quarry where limestone is harvested. Rogers City has become a much quieter place.

Michigan has seen a number of boom-and-bust industries, including copper and limestone mining, lumber, and fishing; Detroit's auto industry has had its own turbulent story in recent years. Michigan can be a difficult place in which to make a living. That's what makes success stories such as that of Isaac Josephson, a store owner and prominent Rogers City citizen, so interesting. His story, if you look carefully, can be found along the streets even though the general store he owned was demolished long ago, and the marine-supply store that his son Arthur bought and ran is now an apartment building.

The Josephson family story is a multi-generational odyssey that took one



Rogers City, situated on Michigan's Lake Huron, was home to one of the largest calcite quarries in the country. The famous Bradley fleet, owned by the quarry, is now gone.

young man thousands of miles from Latvia to Northeast Michigan, and continued with his son, a first-generation American, veteran, and business owner who, like his father, faced a rapidly changing world and persevered in the face of adversity.

EXODUS TO AMERICA

Although the majority of Michigan's Latvian immigrants arrived after World War II, Isaac Josephson's journey began in the late nineteenth century. Fleeing anti-Semitic persecution at home, he headed for an America that might have seemed impossibly distant. His homeland of Latvia had weathered centuries of occupation: twelfth-century Teutonic knights, Poles and Lithuanians of the sixteenth century, and finally the Russian Empire, where anti-Semitism was an integral part of state policy.¹ Russian anti-Semitism clashed with Russian imperialism during the three Partitions of Poland in the 1790s, creating an intolerable situation for Jews living there. Until this point there had been a successful campaign of ethnic cleansing against Jews in the Russian Empire. With the acquisition of large areas of Poland, Russia unwittingly acquired a sizeable Jewish population. Confined to an area of land covering present-day Belarus, Poland, and the Ukraine, and living in abject poverty, Russian Jews were trapped in rural shtetls, restricted from many trades and occupations. Pogroms made life within the "Pale of Settlement" even more unbearable; one of the most widespread and violent occurred when Isaac Josephson was ten years old, during the backlash from Czar Alexander II's 1881 assassination.²



Isaac Josephson came to America from Latvia in the late nineteenth century.

Isaac Josephson was born in Sassmachien, Latvia, on March 15, 1871, to David and Lena. The family made their living manufacturing combs and buttons carved from cow horn. When his father died, sixteen-year-old Isaac began working with his grandfather, transporting meat from the butchers in Sassmachien to Riga. Courland, the area of Latvia from which Josephson hailed, was outside of the Pale of Settlement but not exempt from excessive attempts at the Russification of Jews and other ethnic minorities. By law, all culture, religion, education, and business were to be conducted in Russian. Conscription, often for periods in excess of twenty-five years, was common for Jewish males age twelve and up. Conscripts were prohibited from becoming officers or serving in any branch of the service aside from the infantry. Many of the younger recruits suffered forced conversions.

When given the chance to escape, Josephson, like many young men from all over the continent, boarded a ship for New York, immigrating over 4,000 miles to the United States, leaving behind everything he knew.³

Of the twenty million immigrants who entered the country between 1880 and 1920, more than a tenth were Jews fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe. Fearing that he would be turned away upon arrival for being a potential welfare case, Josephson borrowed twenty dollars from a friend and made his way to Bay City, Michigan, where a boy from his village was living. Lumber, at the time the mainstay of the Bay City-Saginaw area, employed more than 25,000 people at some 105 sawmills and 800 lumber camps.⁴ Josephson saw an opportunity to start his first business as a peddler supplying workers, many of them also immigrants, with necessary items and supplies. Although the work was hard, it gave him ample opportunity to earn money for his family in Latvia. Within a few years Isaac was productive enough to expand his business to a horse-drawn wagon store.⁵

By 1898, Josephson was co-owner of a store in Kingston and it proved lucrative enough for expansion to a second location in Minden City. Josephson took on the position of manager, all the while sending money to support his family in Latvia and saving for their passages to America. Eventually, he would

sell his share of the partnership and open a store in the new and remote town of Legrand, in Cheboygan County.⁶

The year 1905 would prove to be a good one for Josephson; he would marry Rose Kahn, and the last members of his family would arrive in Michigan. Rose also was from Latvia, having emigrated from Riga to the Bay City area with her parents in 1901. Although happily married, Legrand proved too isolated for Rose. The couple sold their store to purchase another in the more populous Alcona County town of Gustin.



Isaac and Rose made their first home together in the remote town of Legrand, Michigan. Later they would settle in Rogers City.

Josephson wore a number of different hats during his time in Gustin. He served as postmaster and as station agent for the railroad, and he ran a cedar yard and a grain elevator. Despite this success, Isaac and Rose's lives were marked by tragedy as they suffered the loss of three babies, each living only a few days after birth. Rose blamed the country doctor, whom she considered inept, and believed their only chance at having a family lay in moving to a location with better medical facilities. When a fire consumed most of their livelihood in 1914, they packed up and moved south to Detroit, where Josephson opened a clothing store and Rose gave birth to a son, Arthur, in 1916.⁷

America's entry into World War I created shortages at home, taking a toll on Josephson's business and forcing him to close his store in 1918. He made

ends meet working at the American Car and Foundry Company, camouflaging gun carriages. Josephson, who preferred the informality of living and working in the country to the noisy bustle of an industrial city, soon began looking to start up a new business. In August 1919, the Josephsons moved north again, this time settling in Rogers City.

NORTHWARD BOUND

At the time, Rogers City's burgeoning limestone industry was drawing people from all over Michigan. The lumber industry had been in decline for years, but early surveyors had noted that the limestone deposits had great potential for anyone willing to put the capital into mining. The Michigan Limestone and Chemical Company, founded in 1910, sought to combine rich deposits of limestone with a close proximity to the lake to create a profitable business. The initial investment included, on top of expensive industrial excavating and limestone processing equipment, a fourteen-mile railroad spur line that was completed in 1911. Despite these efforts, the business was foundering under construction delays, leading the owners to bring in Carl D. Bradley, a successful businessman from the iron industry, to help get production moving.



June 26, 1912. Boats being loaded with calcite from the Rogers City's quarry.

On Sunday, June 23, 1912, townspeople watching from the railroad coach "Rogers City and Calcite Limited" saw the official opening of the quarry, which would eventually would become one of the world's largest producers of aggregate limestone. Aside from the purity and thickness of deposits, one of the factors key to making this type of operation profitable was its proximity to marine transport. Rogers City's quarry was a stone's throw away from Lake Huron. Blasted out of the bedrock, the limestone debris was sent to a crusher and on to a screening house before finally being packed onto a waiting freighter.⁸

Limestone is a byproduct of the Devonian period around four hundred million years ago, when Michigan lay under a shallow saltwater sea. A sedimentary rock, limestone is composed of the calcium carbonate shells of ancient marine life, both corals and foraminifera. Known as the Michigan Basin, this limestone layer stretches underneath the Lower Peninsula. Although it's not as thick in the Rogers City area as in its center near Clare, the overburden is also a hundredth the thickness, ranging from seven to thirty yards.⁹ Limestone has a number of industrial uses such as roofing materials, cement, sugar, windshields, roads, and, of course, antacid tablets. The aggregate shipped out of the Rogers City Quarry was primarily used as a flux for the manufacture of steel and chemicals, with the major recipient being United States Steel, which purchased a controlling share of the company in 1920 and eventually acquired the entire company after Carl D. Bradley's death in 1928.¹⁰

The Josephson family settled in Rogers City and rented the rear living quarters of a tailor shop on Erie street. When the tailor relocated, Josephson took over the commercial space to open a general store with his nephew, Sidney Kahn. Extensive renovations removed the downstairs living quarters in 1925, replacing it with shelving and a new furnace. When his son Arthur came of age, the two worked side-by-side running the store. As a first-generation American, Arthur grew up in "Small Town, America," where everyone knew each other and the telephone operator knew every extension. Arthur graduated from Rogers City High School in 1934, and four years later from Olivet University, where he studied history and economics.^{11,12}



*In 1920 the Josephsons purchased and moved into the house next to the store.
They rented out the apartments above the store.*

Arthur served in the Army Air Corps as a chief clerk for a combat replacement and training center, supervising more than eighteen clerks in the plotting platoon of a signal aircraft warning unit handling flight records, processed reports, and correspondence for the Far East Air Force (later renamed the Fifth Air Force). His unit was active during the campaigns on New Guinea, Guadalcanal, the Northern Solomons, and the Philippines. During the last year of the war he was in charge of a training records section. According to his discharge papers, he left the service as a master sergeant, having earned the Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Service Ribbon, the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with a Silver Service Star, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with a Bronze Service Star, and five Overseas Service Bars. Arthur served from one end of the Pacific to the other, and bore witness to some of the largest and most important campaigns of the Pacific Theater.



Like so many of his generation, Arthur enlisted, serving from June 1941 to September 1945, in the Army Air Corps.

Upon his return home, he went back to work with his father. In 1952, seeing opportunity for growth, he purchased Gapske's Market on First Street, between Ontario and Erie streets. Built in 1873, the building was originally the First Lutheran Church, converted into a business by Thomas Yarch in 1907. Yarch, working with his sons Louis and Leon, expanded the business, named The Public Market, in 1915 to accommodate a meat and groceries department that would fulfill the needs of crew members coming ashore from the calcite freighters. This was a massive undertaking, and would often require Yarch to work around the clock, seven days a week, to meet demand. In April 1921 the store, under new ownership, was renamed Marine Supply. William Gapske, a butcher and World War I veteran who had lost his son in France during fighting in 1944, purchased Marine Supply in 1948. Four



*Arthur and Ike Josephson worked side-by-side for many years.
Courtesy Presque Isle Advance, 1971*

years later the veteran was forced to sell the business due to pancreatitis and cirrhosis of the liver. He died in January 1952, one week after selling the business to Arthur Josephson.^{13,14}

In the years following World War II, as his father quietly entered his twilight years, Arthur's life began an upward trajectory. In 1949 he met Alice Magidson on a blind date. Growing up in Bay City, her life had been marked by the early death of her mother and brother, and of her first husband, who died in World War II. Soon after they met, she and Arthur married. They would have three daughters: Rae Louise (1950), Marilyn Frances (1952), and Lisa Jane (1960). Isaac's wife Rose Josephson passed away on April 19, 1950, only a short time after the birth of her first granddaughter. Although he would continue running the store until 1955, advancing age and competition led Josephson to finally retire at age eighty-four. He led a quiet life living above his son's business, and was close to his family until he passed away in February 1962, a month before his ninety-first birthday.^{15,16}



Isaac and Rose Josephson. Ike Josephson was a charter member of Rogers City Masonic Lodge in 1920.

Arthur continued to provide wholesale food and housekeeping supplies to the freighters coming in and out of the calcite port. He routinely communicated with the ship's captains and cooks to prepare orders in advance of a ship's arrival. Often this included communicating with the boats of the fleet by radio, and being available to deliver supplies when the boats docked. He had a personal and professional connection to the crews, and knew many of those who were aboard the SS Carl D. Bradley when it sank in a 1958 November gale. Of the thirty-five crew members aboard the Great Lakes freighter,

thirty-three died. Twenty-three were from the port town of Rogers City. Likewise, when the Cedarville sank in a collision in 1965, many of those who perished were people Arthur had worked with on a daily basis.

Josephson was proud of his community and was active with many organizations. He served a term as secretary of the chamber of commerce, was a past master of the Masonic Temple, and was president of the local chapter of the American Field Service. His Jewish heritage remained important to both him and Alice, and they were always eager and willing to share their

culture with those who were curious. Being so far from any sizeable Jewish population, they often drove to Alpena to attend services officiated by a traveling rabbi who served the entirety of northeast Michigan.

The seventies marked the beginning of a long decline for U.S. Steel, and the effects would be felt throughout the region, but especially in Rogers City. Over the decade, sales would drop by half as foreign and domestic competition for steel and limestone would combine with more efficient processes that required less limestone. Although Josephson worked hard, his business evaporated as freighters changed their routes, ports, and methods of resupply. In 1973 Josephson sold Marine Supply. His daughter Marilyn remembered that, after spending the majority of his life in Rogers City and devoting himself to his work and community, to lose it all was devastating.

The building would go on to be reopened as the Marine Market Party Store and the Game Room in 1980, and then the Painter's Cove School of Art. Later it was converted to a private residence, which it remains today.¹⁷

Josephson relocated to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he spent three years working as a purchasing agent for Miami Wholesale Grocer Company, meeting the diverse grocery needs of cruise ships. An avid cruise fan, he brought his experience with the freighters to bear, but could not make this new business profitable. Not yet ready to retire, he decided to head back to Michigan. Settling in Detroit, he worked for Lewis Products and other companies that sold food, paper, and janitorial products to restaurants. His last



Arthur D. Josephson, Vice-Chairman

During Rogers City's centennial celebration in 1971, Art Josephson served as vice chairman of the committee overseeing history and pageantry, and edited the Centennial Book.

position before retirement was for a travel agency, delivering airline tickets to corporations.

Josephson died on May 26, 2000, at the age of eighty-four. Alice died four years later (she is interred at the Adat Shalom cemetery in Livonia). The odyssey of the Josephson family demonstrates how pragmatism and industriousness, along with the confidence to succeed, helped define a generation. Today there are no Josephsons in Rogers City. It remains a sleepy little town on the coast of Lake Huron.

FOOTNOTES

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¹⁰ Gerald F. Micketti, Mark Thompson, *Calcite and the Bradley Boats* (Rogers City: Presque Isle Historical Museum, 2012)

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¹² James Hopp, Mark Thompson, Gerald Micketti, *Baby Boomer's Guide to Rogers City*, (Rogers City: Presque Isle Historical Museum, 2007), 111.

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¹⁴ Harry Whitely, "Lake Ships stocked from Rogers City Marine Supply firm for many years," *Presque Isle Advance*, July 30, 1971.

¹⁵ Whitely, "Ike Josephson."

¹⁶ Whitely, "Lake Ships stocked from Rogers City."

¹⁷ Micketti, *Baby Boomers II*, 22.



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Feature Article

WHERE OLD FRIENDS MEET TO SHOP AND SAVE: NORMAN COTTLER'S DEXTER-DAVISON MARKET

By Jeannie Weiner with assistance from Sylvia Cohen

The original Dexter-Davison Market, named for its location, was unique in Detroit. It was the first Detroit "supermarket" that catered specifically to Jews in a Jewish neighborhood. Unlike its early competitors and the large chain supermarkets that became prominent years later, Norm Cottler's goal was to provide fresh foods and to serve his Jewish neighbors — Jews who kept kosher and who had specific food needs in order to celebrate Jewish holidays.

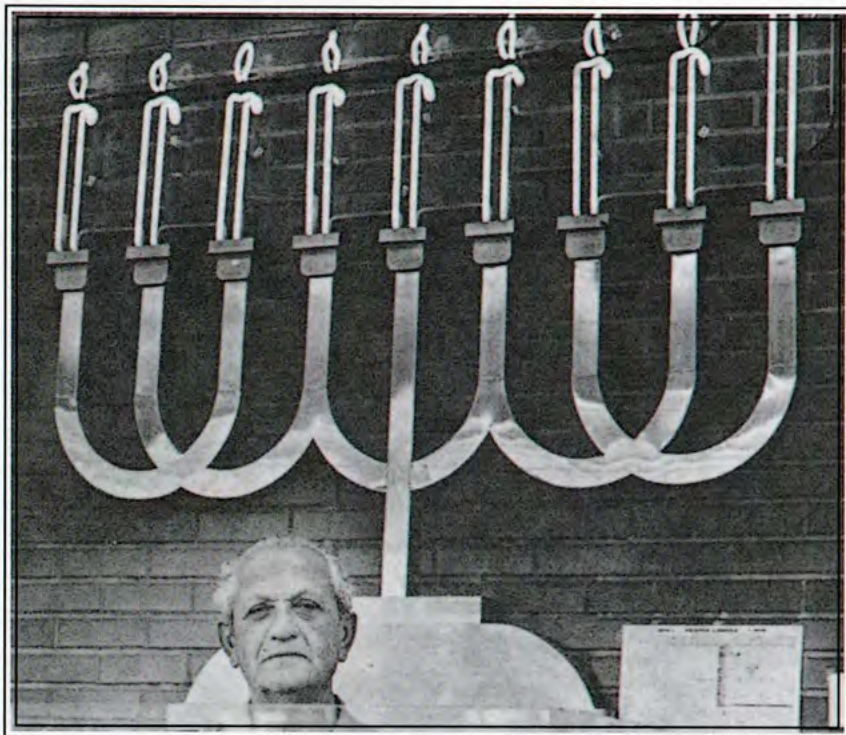
INTRODUCTION

Sylvia Cohen, age ninety, is an enthusiastic, vigorous, beautiful woman with a captivating smile. Cohen is the sole survivor of the founding family of Dexter-Davison Markets, the grocery-market business her father, Norman Cottler, began in an empty lot in the 1930s. Her eyes brighten and her smile widens when she speaks about the early days with her father and her brother, Rueben "Ruby" Cottler.

Norman Cottler was born in Kiev, Ukraine, in 1896. He immigrated to Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, Canada, to be with an aunt who sponsored him and his brother. In Moosejaw, Cottler fell in love with Sarah, whom he married in 1920.

An ardent Zionist, Cottler was recruited in Canada and served in the British Army during World War I. His unit was sent to Palestine to serve with the Jewish Legion. Ben Gurion, Ben Zvi, and a few men from Detroit were among those serving in his unit. The Legion's emblem, a menorah that they wore on their uniform, became the inspiration for the logo Cottler adopted and used on all the shopping bags and delivery trucks for his market.

Norman and Sarah made their way to Detroit in 1916. Cottler initially worked on an assembly line, manufacturing electric cars. He joined his brother, Haskel, who was already in the city. The two brothers began saving money, working assorted jobs until they saved enough to buy a horse and wagon. It



Cottler, pictured here, circa 1968, said the menorah was his idea. "When I opened the first market in 1932, I took the symbol...to show what kind of market this would be."

took a few more years for them to earn enough money to open businesses of their own and sell the horse and wagon. By then, Norman and Sarah had given birth to Rueben, "Ruby" (1921), and Sylvia (1925).

THE BEGINNING OF A LEGEND

In the early 1930s, following the trajectory of the Jewish community to neighborhoods farther north and west within the city, Norman and Sarah began selling groceries to the residents of these areas. Dexter-Davison Markets began as a twenty-four-hour, open-air fruit-and-vegetable stand at the corner of Dexter and Davison. As the Jewish population expanded in both numbers and geography in the early 1940s, the vegetable stand gave way to an enclosed market, part of a small strip mall that included a pharmacy, a furrier, a kosher butcher shop, a bakery, a delicatessen, and the "supermarket."

Sylvia and Ruby worked in the store after school. Cohen recalled the store was not a self-serve operation. It was filled with "extensive fruit and vegetable displays and a deli counter held all varieties of cheeses, smoked fish, lox, and kippers." In the rear of the store were "two barrels filled with pickled herrings and schmaltz herrings, while other barrels contained delicious dill pickles."

In those early years, no frozen foods were available. Kosher meat products



"Back in 1939, when asparagus cost 25c for two bunches...." Pictured are Norman, second from left, and his son Rueben, next to him on the right.

were separated from the dairy counter and salamis hung in abundance from the ceiling. Cottler sold quantities of kosher corned beef, bologna, pastrami, and hot dogs. During World War II, butter, sugar, coffee, oils, and flour were paid for with stamps due to the rationing of those items and many other products.

Not only were Dexter-Davison's customers friendly with the Cottler family, they also embraced their long-time employees: Johnny Vagrant, a young man who worked for the family for many years, began his career delivering groceries on his bike; and George Kolarchick, who also began as a young delivery boy. Both eventually became managers.

The war years took Ruby, Johnny, and George away from the store. All three left for military service, and – as in many family-run businesses of the era – women filled in. It was a busy time for Sarah Cottler and her daughter Sylvia. Once the men returned, not only did the store's customer volume increase, but the store became known as "a place to meet an old friend, exchange recipes or chat." Norman Cottler was the face of the business, taking time to greet each customer personally. He was proud of the many close relationships he had with his customers. In 1948, Cottler was one of the first to buy an entire load of imported Jaffa oranges and other produce as soon as they became available from Israel. His customers were thrilled!

ON THE MOVE

Cottler was known throughout the community as a welcoming and friendly man, but he was also an outstanding businessman. He had the ability to recognize trends and respond to changes in the needs and desires of his customers.

As his primary customer base began moving farther northwest, he opened a second store on Wyoming and Curtis in 1950. This store carried an even more extensive line of kosher foods and Israeli products. Cottler shared a corner with Daring Drugs, the Kaplan brothers' kosher butcher shop, and Mertz Bakery.

The Jewish community was once again on the move, this time to the suburbs of Oak Park, Huntington Woods, and Southfield. According to Sidney Bolkosky, in his book *Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967*, in 1955, 28,000 people lived in Oak Park, and 9,000 of them were Jews.



Cottler took great pride in delivering top-notch products to his customers.

Cottler spotted an empty lot at the corner of Ten Mile Road and Coolidge in Oak Park. In 1959, Cottler fulfilled his dream to build a small strip mall of his own. The corner mall included a large and modern Dexter-Davison Market, which served as the mall's anchor. It was flanked by a kosher butcher, a bakery, a bagel shop, Barton's Chocolates, and Horenstein's Deli. The mall also featured a shoe store, a men's clothing store, and a Chinese restaurant.

The bustling third location of Dexter-Davison was well-stocked to serve its customer base. According to a 1970 *Detroit Free Press* article, the store "is above all a showcase for the Jewish culinary arts. In the freezer section are kosher egg rolls, chopped liver, blintzes, knishes and even kosher pizza."

His dairy cases continued to be filled with smoked fishes and the store provided everything for Sunday brunches and celebrations. The week before Passover, lines of women stood and chatted by the fish department waiting for the fresh, prepared fish for their gefilte fish. Even with the added space, Cottler insisted on maintaining the personal touch and sense of community.

MEMORIES LINGER ON

Customers came from all over Michigan to stock up on kosher products, especially for Jewish holidays. Norman and Ruby, and Johnny, George, and Tony Salvia, the produce manager, were always available to offer personal attention.

But when Ruby died at the age of fifty-five in 1976, Norman's "heart went out of the business." Eventually, Norman closed the store and was glad to see the Borman family take over and convert it to a Farmer Jack market. Norman had long been friendly with other grocers in the city, and was grateful that the owners of the booming chain not only continued operating on the corner of Ten Mile Road and Coolidge, but retained the name of the store and continued offering many of the same products that Norman Cottler, corner grocer, had become known for.

According to Sylvia Cohen, her father had a way with people, often greeting them with humor, "Hello, my best below-cost customer," he would josh. All shoppers felt welcome – and were welcomed – in the store. Norman died in 1986, ten years after the death of Ruby. He was eighty-nine.

Cohen, reflecting on the legacy of her family's store, said, "The Jewish community experienced something unique in being part of the Cottler family — a corner grocery store on a larger scale. It was an ongoing, never-ending 'class reunion.' As the store's motto said, it was 'Where 'Old Friends Meet to Shop and Save.'"



Dexter Davison at Ten Mile Road and Coolidge in Oak Park



Sylvia Cohen was born in Detroit, Michigan. She attended Roosevelt Elementary, Durfee Intermediate, and Central High schools and was a long-time volunteer who once worked at the Curtis and Meyers Jewish Community Center. Many thanks to her son, Robert, for the photographs used in this article.



Jeannie Weiner is the past president of the Jewish Community Relations Council and a local freelance writer. She also presently serves as a vice president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.



(Left) In 1950, Cottler opened a store on the corner of Wyoming and Curtis, in the heart of Northwest Detroit. By the end of the decade, the Wyoming store had closed.

(Below) Cottler's Ten Mile Road and Coolidge supermarket would go serve generations of Jewish – and non-Jewish – patrons who enjoyed the personal service and warmth demonstrated by the Cottlers.



(Left) A towering display of Blue Diamond walnuts provides a regal backdrop for the store manager (left) who stands with Norman and Ruby, circa 1960.



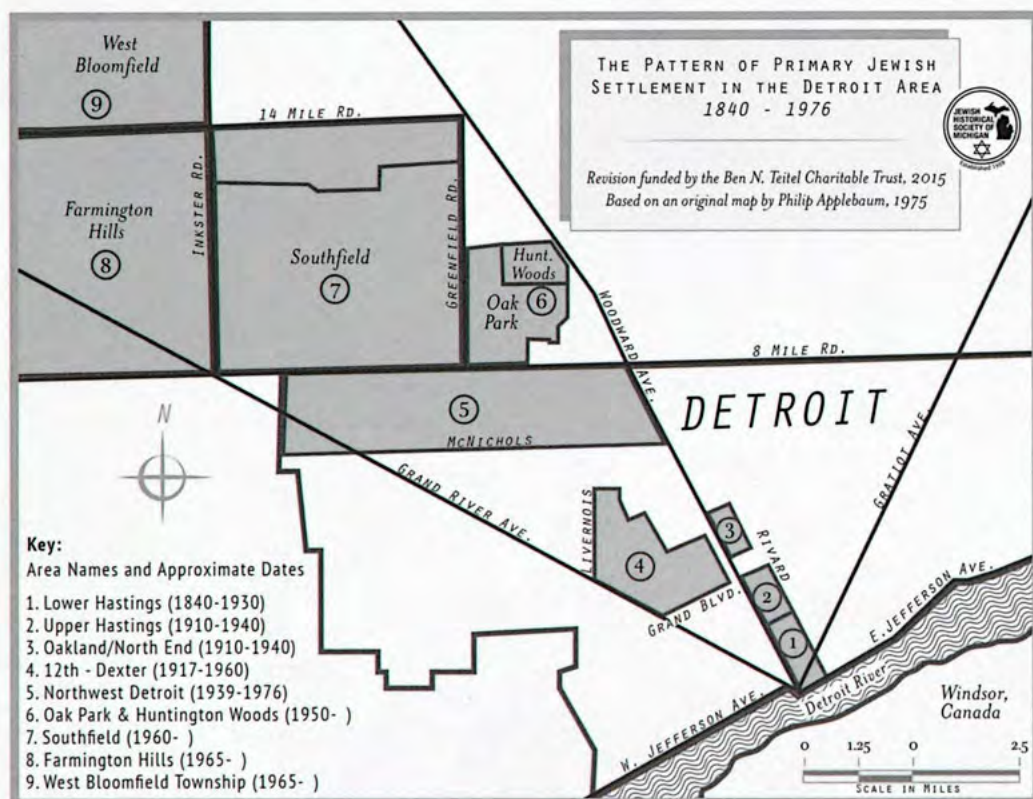
Rueben standing at the check-out counter of the Wyoming store, sometime around 1959.

Featured Article

DETROIT'S OAKLAND AVENUE: NORTH END JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD

By Gerald S. Cook

The North End neighborhood of Detroit, also called the Oakland area, began to attract a working-class populace in the 1910s. Many Hastings Street-area Jewish residents moved to this neighborhood which offered access to greater opportunity and larger homes. As the population moved, many cultural, religious, medical, and social institutions soon followed. This article explores the life and culture of the North End of Detroit and chronicles some of the institutions and businesses that were in the area.



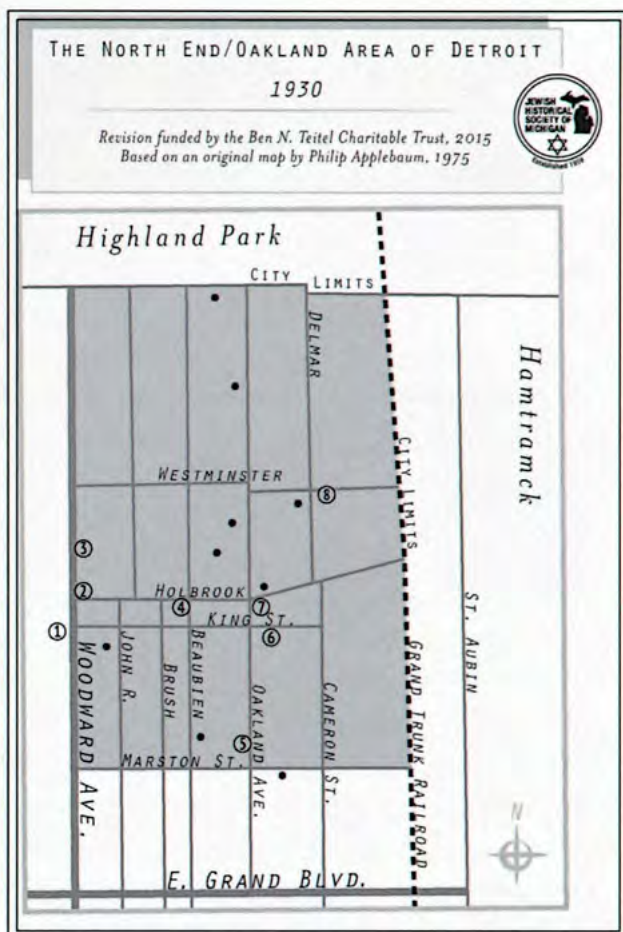
This map shows the locations of Detroit's Jewish neighborhoods and the dates for each, with the North End marked Area 3.¹ Map courtesy of JHSM, made possible thanks to funding from the Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust.

Detroit's Oakland/North End Jewish neighborhood, which began about one hundred years ago, was situated between the Hastings Street and 12th Street neighborhoods. In the 1910s, Jewish Detroiters began moving north from the Hastings Street neighborhood, where Jewish life had been centered (areas #1 and #2 on map on left) to a new area, the North End/Oakland Avenue neighborhood (area #3). By 1930, the North End became the new center of Jewish life, with a second area of concentration west of there around 12th Street (area #4).² By 1940, most Jewish residents had left the North End.

The neighborhood was referred to by some as "the North End" because it was the city's most northerly section when first developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Others called the North End

"Oakland," since its main shopping street was Oakland Avenue. Most of Detroit's earliest auto factories – the Ford Motor Company headquarters and factory, and the Dodge factory, were located close by, below Grand Boulevard in the area called Milwaukee Junction. These factories were easily accessible to auto workers by streetcar or bus or on foot. Most of those living in this largely working-class neighborhood could not afford automobiles.

Two prominent buildings on Woodward Avenue defined this area as a center of Jewish life: the Jewish Community Center, at Holbrook, and Temple Beth El, across the street, on the west side of Woodward at Gladstone.



The Jewish section of the North End (circa 1930) was a small neighborhood of less than two square miles (shaded section).

Key:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Temple Beth El at Gladstone | 5. Schvitz/Oakland Bath House |
| 2. Jewish Community Center | 6. Congregation B'nai Jacob |
| 3. Northern High School | 7. North End Clinic |
| 4. Ahavas Zion Synagogue | 8. Ahavas Achim Synagogue |
| • Other synagogues | |



Northern High School, built in 1915 at Woodward and Owen, served the new northern neighborhoods and became predominantly Jewish, drawing from both the North End and other heavily Jewish residential areas west of Woodward. Photo taken from the JHSM Yearbook Collection.

Jewish students attending nearby Northern High School could easily walk the one block to the JCC to enjoy after-school activities. The building included a swimming pool and gym. Many Jewish community agencies and dozens of clubs utilized JCC space, or were located elsewhere in the neighborhood; one of the most important and best remembered is the North End Clinic, a medical clinic providing a range of services.



The Schvitz, a public bathhouse, was also a hangout for many North End Jewish Detroiters. Courtesy Gary Sosnick

Within this small area were concentrated at least a dozen Orthodox Jewish congregations, each no more than a few blocks from one another. A single rabbi often served several congregations. Orthodox Jews lived within walking distance of their synagogues, since members

were prohibited by Jewish law from driving on the Sabbath and holidays. During the High Holidays, religious services were also conducted in homes and stores, nicknamed "mushroom synagogues" because they appeared and then disappeared quickly.³ The Oakland Avenue Bathhouse, commonly referred to as "The Schvitz," provided a public bathhouse, a social center for Jews at

various economic levels, and a mikveh (ritual bath). Kosher butchers, poultry stores, bakeries, and other shops sold all the products needed to observe Jewish rituals, holidays, and daily life.

When the Jewish community left the North End, most families moved to the Central High School area west of Woodward (area #4). Others moved to the eastern part of Northwest Detroit (area #5). Many Jewish business owners retained their businesses on Oakland or Westminster when their families moved out of the neighborhood.⁴ Likewise, many Jewish entrepreneurs continued to own businesses in nearby Highland Park and Hamtramck.

Today, the North End of Detroit shows the results of decades of abandonment.⁵ Although vacant lots and buildings abound, the area was recommended for renovation and preservation in the Detroit Future City Report issued January 2013.⁶ Some new housing has been built, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan says he sees "real potential to come back." The M-1 Rail Line being constructed along Woodward may make the North End attractive to new residents and businesses, as noted in a 2014 *New York Times* series.⁷

The following lists provide an inventory of former Jewish communal agencies and synagogues of the North End, and current businesses with Jewish connections. All the synagogues were Orthodox, except Temple Beth El. Translations of Hebrew names appear in parentheses. These buildings are included on some of the bus tours offered by JHSM.

FORMER JEWISH COMMUNITY AGENCIES WHOSE BUILDINGS REMAIN

Jewish Child Care Council Home, 581 Holbrook. This home and the council itself were part of the Jewish Social Service Bureau, dating to the early 1900s. The home functioned as an orphanage or shelter for children transitioning to foster care and received funding from both the Community Fund (now United Way) and the Jewish Welfare Federation (now Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit). Ida Lieberman was the caretaker in 1939.⁸

Jewish Community Center (JCC), now the Considine Little Rock Family Life Center, 8904 Woodward at Holbrook. Before the JCC constructed this building in 1933, the agency used rented facilities in the North End, first on E. Philadelphia and then on Melbourne. In 1929, there were approximately 100,000 visits to the JCC on Melbourne, proving the need for better facilities.⁹ Being on Woodward was practical, since those who could not walk to the JCC usually arrived by public transit, many using the Woodward streetcars.

The JCC building was substantially expanded in 1939, when it was dedicated in memory of Aaron DeRoy, Detroit's first Jewish auto-dealership owner, and included the addition of a swimming pool and other amenities.



Each spring, hundreds of parents would line up along Woodward Avenue to enter the Aaron DeRoy Jewish Community Center, where they would register their children for Fresh Air Camp. Courtesy Jewish Community Archives

Many other Jewish agencies had offices at this JCC, including the community's camping agency, the Fresh Air Society (now Tamarack Camps). A few years after the opening of the JCC on W. Davison in 1950, the Woodward JCC was sold to the City of Detroit for use as the Considine Recreational Center.¹⁰

The Kinder Theater & Umpartaishe Folkshule Gesellschaft (Nonpartisan People's School Society), 539 Kenilworth. The school functioned in 1926 and 1927 in this two-story house on Kenilworth and another nearby, educating the children of members of various Yiddishist labor groups. The principal was Shloime Bercovich.¹¹

United Hebrew Schools (UHS) branch, now St. John the Great Baptist Church, 9243 Delmar, at Westminster. Located directly across from Ahavas Achim synagogue, this UHS branch provided Jewish education to many North End children. UHS offered weekday afternoon and Sunday morning classes, funded both by the Jewish Welfare Federation and tuition payments. In 1930, nine UHS branches educated 1,700 Detroit Jewish students.¹² The small brick building retains a large Star of David over the front door.

FORMER JEWISH AGENCIES WHOSE BUILDINGS NO LONGER REMAIN

Jewish House of Shelter, 77 Alger. This facility opened in 1931 to provide transients a place to live. By 1939, this agency had moved from the North End to Taylor Street, west of Woodward.

Jewish Social Service Bureau, 8549 Oakland. This was a branch office of an agency whose main office was at the Jewish Welfare Federation's head-

quarters at 51 W. Warren. The Bureau, funded by the Federation, provided services later assumed by Jewish Family Service and other communal agencies.

North End Clinic, 936 Holbrook near Oakland Avenue. This building was constructed in 1926 to replace the medical clinic opened four years earlier in a former poultry store on Westminster Avenue. Golda Krolik served as its first director. Funded by the Jewish Welfare Federation, the clinic came to be regarded as one of Detroit's finest outpatient facilities.¹³

Yeshiva Beth Yehuda, Rosedale Court near Oakland. This school functioned in rented rooms here from 1923 through 1925. Later it was located on Elmhurst, and then on Dexter. Today Yeshiva Beth Yehuda operates schools in Oak Park and Southfield.



The North End Clinic provided many Jewish and non-Jewish patients with free or highly subsidized medical care, as previously provided at the Hannah Schloss Building in the old Hastings Street neighborhood. Courtesy Jewish Community Archives

FORMER SYNAGOGUES WHOSE BUILDINGS REMAIN

Ahavas Achim (The Love of Brothers), 9244 Delmar, south of Westminster, now Pentecostal Church of God. Professor Sidney Bolkosky wrote: "At the heart of the [North End] neighborhood, Ahavas Achim stood for years as Orthodox Jewry's best known congregation."¹⁴ This congregation was formed in July 1912 by men living in this new neighborhood, who met in each other's homes until they could afford to erect a building.¹⁵ The synagogue they built in 1916 was narrow, with a small women's section in a balcony. After only two years, as more Jews moved to the area, Ahavas Achim attracted enough

new members to widen the building, creating substantially more space for men and women.¹⁶ The Christian congregation that purchased the building in 1939 retained many Stars of David on the façade and above the altar.

Ahavas Zion (Love of Zion), 446 Holbrook Street at Beaubien, now Alpha and Omega Spiritual Church of Christ. Dedicated in 1921, this large brick building was designed by Detroit architects Kohnes and Surles, and built for about \$50,000.¹⁷ Members were mostly immigrants from southeastern Poland, and Rabbi Samuel M. Fine served the congregation for most of its duration. The building housed a branch of the United Hebrew Schools.¹⁸ The congregation declined in membership and could not afford the building, so they relocated to smaller quarters at 9321 Oakland and then disbanded in 1939. The last officers were president Abraham Spelkin and treasurer Louis Diskin.

Ateret Zvi (Assembly of Zvi), 520 Mount Vernon near Cameron, now Cyrene Temple Baptist Church. The congregation was organized in 1921 and met in a home on Cameron near Mount Vernon until they built their small synagogue in 1928.

Beth Aaron v'Israel (House of Aaron and Israel), 9550 Oakland, north of Westminster. This appears to have been the synagogue of the Stoliner chassidim, whose later synagogue with this same name was located on Elmhurst just east of Linwood. They may have used a Yiddish name for their synagogue, Bais Aharon v'Yisroel.

Beth Moses (House of Moses), 546 Owen, west of Oakland, now Greater New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church.

The members were from Romania. The congregation's original rabbi was Ezekiel Aishiskin, who served from 1903 to 1905. The synagogue was purchased in 1941 by the current Christian congregation. In the mid-1960s they tore the building down and built a large church, reportedly incorporating part of the synagogue foundation.¹⁹ Beth Moses ultimately became part of Beth Ahm Synagogue in West Bloomfield, a result of the merger of three congregations.

B'nei Jacob (Sons of Jacob), 944 King, east of Oakland. This small synagogue on a residential street was built in 1925 by a congregation served by Rabbi Joseph Eisenman. The congregation had been organized in 1913 in the Hastings Street area, and moved to the North End from 938 Illinois Street.



Jewish symbols still visible on the façade of the former Ahavas Zion Synagogue include the menorah (candelabrum) over the front door and Stars of David between the windows. Above the main doorway, Hebrew letters spell out the English word 'Congregation,' followed by Hebrew letters spelling out Ahavas Zion. Courtesy Mike Kasky



B'nei Jacob was often called the King Street Shul, because of its location.

Temple Beth El (House of the Lord), 8801 Woodward at Gladstone, now Breakers Covenant Church International. The cornerstone includes the year 1850, when German-Jewish immigrant families formed the Beth El Society, Detroit's first Jewish congregation. Designed by architect Albert Kahn, this building was opened in 1922 for what was then Detroit's only Reform Jewish congregation, and served the congregation for fifty-one years, until it moved to its current location in Bloomfield Hills. Kahn modeled the structure after the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens. All words on the exterior walls are in English; there is not a single Hebrew letter, unlike the Orthodox synagogues in the North End. Inscribed on the south exterior wall is the biblical quotation "My House Shall Be a House of Prayer for All People." Kahn had also designed Beth El's prior building, on Woodward south of Mack (now the Bonstelle Theater), to resemble the Pantheon in Rome.²⁰

The temple had many members who lived in the western and northern sections of the North End, where homes were situated on larger lots than elsewhere in that neighborhood. For example, the Barlow family lived at 362 Woodland; Myron Barlow was the artist who created the murals that still grace the sanctuary ceiling.²¹ The most beautiful streets with the largest homes, Arden Park and Boston Boulevard east of Woodward, were deed-restricted against Jews.



*Congregants entering Temple Beth El from Woodward Avenue.
Courtesy Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El*

Tifereth Israel (Glory of Israel), 9231 Cameron, south of Westminster.

This frame building was erected in 1917. The rabbi from 1921 until 1929 was Isidore Strauss. A later rabbi was Abraham Schechter. A 1951 *Detroit Jewish News* article reported that Tifereth Israel merged with another congregation in 1924 to form Beth Aaron v'Israel. A 1939 list of synagogues refers to this synagogue as Ateres Israel.²² The building was sold to a Christian congregation in 1940.

Turover Temple, 1000 Marston at Melrose, now Christian Love Tabernacle. The synagogue opened in 1925. The full name of the Jewish congregation was Congregation Ezras Achim (Help for Brothers) -Turover Aid Society. The founders came from a city named Turov in the Russian Empire, now in southern Belarus. The congregation was both a religious group and a landsmanshaft, a mutual-aid society created by people from the same town. When they sold this building, they relocated to the southwest corner of Linwood and Richton, and then to the west side of Dexter near Blaine.

FORMER SYNAGOGUES WHOSE BUILDINGS NO LONGER REMAIN

Beth David (House of David), located on Owen near John R and Brush.

This congregation built a branch at this location in 1924 when its main building was on Winder Street in the Hastings Street neighborhood. In 1925, the Winder synagogue was sold. The Owen synagogue was used until 1928, when the congregation completed its new synagogue on Elmhurst and 14th, later renamed B'nai David (Sons of David).

Beth Isaac (House of Isaac), 649 Belmont. Organized in 1908 and formerly housed at 675 Benton in the Hastings Street area, this congregation's North End services were held on the ground floor of a two-story frame building. Abraham Schechter served as one of its rabbis.²³



*Beth Isaac Ladies' Auxiliary members stand in front of the building during World War I.
Courtesy Jewish Community Archives*

Etz Haim (Tree of Life), 341 Engelwood, west of Brush. Etz Haim was established here in 1924, with Samuel Fine as the rabbi from then until 1938. Later, Moses Silver served as visiting rabbi.

Isaac Agree Memorial Synagogue, 121 Rosedale Court, east of Woodward. The Isaac Agree Memorial Society purchased a house at this location in November 1921 for religious services and for free religious education for boys and girls. The synagogue remained at this location until 1939, when the congregation relocated to rented quarters in downtown Detroit. In 1961, leaders purchased the current building at 1457 Griswold, south of Clifford, which still serves this vibrant congregation. It is often referred to as "The Downtown Synagogue."²⁴

Machziki Hadath (The Assembly of Those Who Adhere to the Law), 655 Alger. From 1918 until 1938, this congregation existed in a frame building built as a home. Isaac Strauss was the only rabbi. It disbanded in 1938.

Young Israel. Young Israel is a national modern Orthodox movement, whose first Detroit services were held in 1925 in a room at the JCC's rented quarters on Melbourne Street. Solomon Cohn, Abe Rosenshine, David Berris, and Irving Schlussel were among the early leaders.²⁵ Young Israel members also prayed at Tifereth Israel synagogue on Cameron Street.

CURRENT BUSINESSES OWNED OR MANAGED BY JEWS

Greenfield Noodle and Specialties, 600 Custer. This business was begun as a biscuit company by Ernest Greenfield and his two brothers in the 1930s after they emigrated from Hungary. Excess dough was rolled into noodles, which became the company's best-selling products. In the 1970s, the Greenfields sold the business to Jack Pelz, who later sold to the family of Kenneth Michaels.

Red Door Digital, 7500 Oakland. This graphic design and printing business has been at its current location since 1980. Owner Roger Robinson chose the area because he liked the neighborhood and predicted it would once again become successful, given its proximity to major freeways and Woodward Avenue. Robinson's building houses the Oakland Avenue Artists Coalition. He serves as president of the North End Woodward Community Organization and has helped secure grants for improvement of a park to celebrate the cultural legacy of the neighborhood and for art festivals, an art gallery, and leadership training for youth.

Schvitz Health Club, 8295 Oakland at Melbourne. Built in 1930 by Charles Meltzer as the Oakland Avenue Bathhouse, this business served neighborhood residents who lived in homes or apartments without bathtubs or showers. It was one of about a dozen such establishments in Detroit during the 1930s. The bathhouse featured a ritual bath facility (*mikveh*) used by observant Jews. Many of the Jewish residents in the neighborhood were immigrants from Eastern Europe, and Meltzer catered to their needs by including features popular overseas: a sauna and a massage room offering *plaitzas* (rubdowns with soapy oak leaf brooms). The site became known as the Schvitz, which is Yiddish for steam bath, and served as a meeting place for many members of the Jewish community, including members of the Purple Gang, Jewish gangsters who imported substantial quantities of liquor from Canada to the USA during the Prohibition era.²⁶

Charles Meltzer's son Harry ran the business until 1976 or 1977. Today it is managed by Daniel Vayse, a Jewish track-and-field star and athletic trainer from St. Petersburg, Russia. He was hired in 1981 to provide massages and *plaitzas*.

If your family owned or currently operates a business in the North End, or you have memories or memorabilia about that neighborhood, please contact the editor. Your stories, photos, and other documents may provide material for future JHSM articles or lectures.

Author's Notes: I first explored the North End neighborhood on a JHSM bus tour, and later learned that most of my father's family resided there from 1931 to 1939. All young adult family members lived with their parents and contributed to the payments for the purchase of the building, as did a brother who lived with his wife and daughter in another apartment in the same building. My bachelor uncles slept on an unheated enclosed porch. After the family moved away, the home was rented to tenants for many years.

In preparing this article, I referenced numerous sources and spoke with many people whose memories were essential to recording this history. Many of the facts cited on specific buildings came from a list prepared by the WPA during the Depression. This list is used frequently as a primary-source document and was used in my fall 2001 article in *Michigan Jewish History*, "The Synagogues of Detroit—Lost and Found" (pp. 34-38). I also referenced Lowell Boileau's excellent website, www.shtetlhood.com, to examine recent photos of existing buildings, a map showing their locations, and some facts about each. I express great appreciation to Barbara Cook, Max Fertel, Michael Kasky, Kevin Michaels, Roger Robinson, and Daniel Vayse for their invaluable assistance.



Gerald S. Cook, immediate past president of JHSM, retired from partnership in the law firm Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn. Cook has helped plan and conduct JHSM bus tours and a bicycle tour that included the North End.

Historical Tidbit

1905: Born in Russia, Emma Shaver (1905-2003) came to the United States and attended Detroit's Northern High School. She would become one of Michigan's greatest artists. The soprano performed with several opera companies and orchestras. She spent six months traveling to displaced persons camps in the American zone in Germany, performing for Holocaust survivors.

MEMORIES OF THE NORTH END ALMOST A CENTURY AGO MILTON J. ("JACK") MILLER (z"l)

Born in 1912, Jack Miller's earliest recollections begin around 1916, when his family lived in a small wooden two-family flat on Mount Vernon near Oakland Avenue.

"We had electric light bulbs, but some of the homes used gas jets with cones for lighting. Clothes were washed and/or boiled in big tin receptacles, rubbed on washboards, wrung out in a hand wringer, and hung out to dry in the backyard. Carpets were cleaned by hanging them in the backyard and beating them with a wire beater. I know, because when I was a little older, I was the wire beater.

"Commercial radio didn't come in until I was eight [1920], when WWJ became the first commercial broadcaster in the United States. The worst flu epidemic in history came when I was five years old [1918], and millions of people died. In 1916 I stood on the corner of Oakland and Mt. Vernon waving an American flag as the Armistice Day parade marched by. I was dressed in knickers and long black stockings. We had a wood-fired range in the kitchen, and my mother baked her own bread. Our refrigerator was an ice box, the major part of which held two big blocks of ice. As the ice melted it dripped down through the bottom to a pan, which had to be emptied fairly frequently. Our house was heated by a gravity coal stove in the basement. At night someone had to bank the fire, and by the time I was nine or ten that was one of my chores. I hated to go to the basement, which was unlit and had an open stairway."

After his mother returned to New York City, Miller and his father roomed in an attic garret "so small that when my father came to bed, he'd have to bend to get into the room. A tiny little staircase [led] up there, and I slept in a cot. The landlady – because I was kind of young at that point, six, seven years old – provided me with food. I remember them paving our street with blocks of wood set in tar. We [children] used to steal the tar and use it for chewing gum. My father never owned an auto; only millionaires owned them. I had an uncle who I thought was a millionaire... he had a Model T Ford. He worked in the body shop of Ford in Highland Park and made five dollars a day. Fire trucks were drawn by horses, as was the milk wagon and the ice wagon. The fruit peddler came by daily with his horse and wagon shouting out his specials of the day. In those early years of my life, almost half of the homes in Detroit had outdoor toilets, and the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogues in those toilets had dual uses; one was for reading."

Miller's oral history is preserved at the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives. Portions are also from a 2002 letter to employees and partners of his law firm, Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn.

MEMORIES OF THE NORTH END MAX FERTEL

"My father, Israel Fertel, was working on the assembly line at the Highland Park Ford factory when he and his brother Harry decided to go into business. They rented a store at 8428 Oakland Avenue near Philadelphia Street. Fertel Brothers Second Hand Goods began as a used-furniture store, but soon added new hardware items and also repaired room heaters, then called base burners. My dad and Uncle Harry could converse with customers in English, Yiddish, Polish, Russian, or Italian. When Uncle Harry died, my cousin Eddie came to work in the store.

"The store's success funded the purchase of other stores on the block and some nearby residential rental property. Epstein Candy and Notions rented the store at the corner of Oakland and Philadelphia. With the income from the store and the rental properties, Dad was able to buy an Essex automobile.

"Tom Holt, an African-American man, was an employee for many years. He and his wife Agnes, who worked for my family as our cleaning lady, rented one of the apartments owned by my parents. During WWII my father gave Tom a pay increase to match what he could have earned in a factory making military equipment. Tom stood alongside my father during the Detroit riots in 1943 to keep our family's properties safe.

"My mother often took my brother and me downtown to the huge J. L. Hudson department store, riding on the Oakland streetcar. She bought eight streetcar tickets for a quarter. At the store, for a nickel, she bought us orange drinks. Whatever items she purchased would be delivered by J. L. Hudson to our home, C.O.D.

On Shabbas, we walked to shul, located on Belmont and Oakland. It did not have a social hall, so my bar mitzvah ceremony and party were held at a larger synagogue, Beth Moses on Owen. At the party, guests ate food and baked goods prepared by my mother and her friend, and drank my father's homemade wine.

"In the early 1940s, our family left our rented flat on Westminster in the North End. We moved to a home my parents bought on the other side of Woodward, on Taylor near my new school, Hutchins Intermediate School. Our family lived in the upstairs flat, and rented the first-floor flat to another family. We attended services at the Taylor Shul, on Taylor at Woodrow Wilson. After the 1943 riot, my father sold his store."

Max Fertel shared his memories with Jerry Cook in July 2015.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The maps featured were adapted from maps created by Phillip Applebaum, "A Tour of Jewish Detroit, Southeast Michigan Regional Ethnic Heritage Studies Center" (1975). Mr. Applebaum is a past president of JHSM.

² Sidney Bolkosky, *Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967*, Wayne State University Press, 1991, pp. 76, 97-98.

³ Bolkosky, p. 98.

⁴ Bolkosky, p. 185.

⁵ In August 2015, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's NEXTGen Detroit raised funds for the renovation of the North End's Bradby Park at their Pitch for Detroit athletic tournament.

⁶ Testing Ground for a New Detroit, NYT Now, July 6, 2014; Detroiters' Good Intentions Are Tested by Blight, *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 2014, pp. A1 and 13.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Bolkosky, p. 98

⁹ Bolkowsky, page 134

¹⁰ Milton Tambor, The Historical Development of the Detroit Jewish Community Center, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 3, No.3, June 1963, pp. 15-17.

¹¹ Morris Garvett, The Development of Jewish Education in Detroit, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol.5, No. 2, May 1965,p. 8 and Bolkosky, pp. 128, 153-154.

¹² Garvett, p. 6.

¹³ A fine description of the North End Clinic appeared in Judith Levin Cantor's, Before Sinai: A Medical History, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 40, Fall 2000, p.18. The North End Clinic closed in 1953 upon the opening of Sinai Hospital in northwest Detroit.

¹⁴ Bolkosky, p. 98.

¹⁵ Rabbi Herbert A. Yoskowitz, The Histories of Congregation Ahavas Achim and Congregation Beth Aaron, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 52, Fall 2012, pp. 12- 25. Ahavas Achim's moves and mergers are detailed in Yoskowitz's article.

¹⁶ This was explained to the author on a tour led by one of the church's lay leaders.

¹⁷ The congregation that purchased the building after Ahavas Zion celebrated its 80th anniversary in Dec. 2012. Michael Kasky delivered congratulations on behalf of the Jewish community.

¹⁸ Bolkosky, p. 98.

¹⁹ Pastor Kenneth Flowers, one of several Detroit clergymen traveled to Africa and Israel with a group of Detroit area rabbis in 2002. The World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation for Detroit area youth was held at this church in January 2012, and included a klezmer band.

²⁰ Perhaps Kahn used Greek and Roman styles of architecture to remind people that Judaism was one of the foundations of Western civilization, along with ancient Athens and Rome.

²¹ All three Christian congregations that have owned the building since 1973 have maintained the building's murals and Judaica, and have warmly welcomed JHSM's youth and adult bus tours.

²² Irwin J. Cohen, *Echoes of Detroit's Jewish Communities: A History*, City Vision Publishing, 2003, p. 154.

²³ A 1939 synagogue list calls this the Stollman Isaac Synagogue. Cohen, p. 154. Perhaps that means it was named Beth Isaac to honor Rabbi Isaac Stollman.

²⁴ Leor Barak and Martin Herman, Situated in the Heart of Detroit, the Downtown Synagogue Perseveres, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 49, Fall 2009, pp. 37-42.

²⁵ Cohen, pp. 105-106. Currently, there are Young Israel synagogues in Oak Park and Southfield.

²⁶ Another North End site associated with Jewish gangsters was the Oakland Sugar House, 8634 Oakland at Alger, where corn sugar and brewing supplies were sold to bootleggers and alley brewers. The Oakland Sugar House Gang later joined forces with the Purple Gang. Robert A. Rockaway, But He Was Good To His Mother, 19__, Geffen Publishing House, Ltd., p. 76. www.garysosnick.com/OABH1930/.

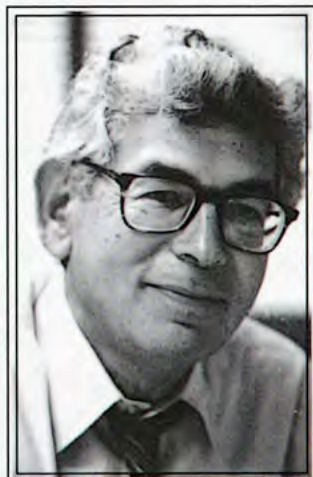
Feature Article

SAM FISHMAN: LABOR LEADER

By Michael Smith

Archivist Michael Smith spotlights the life of Sam Fishman, a Detroit labor leader who made an indelible impact on the union movement in Michigan, the United States, and Israel.

Thanks to Michigan's long industrial heritage, some of America's most notable labor leaders have come from this state. Walter Reuther, Douglas Fraser, Irv Bluestone, and Leonard Woodcock, for example, all achieved national and international fame. Others, like Jimmy Hoffa, became both famous and infamous. Yet another Michigan labor leader was inspired by and learned from all of them, though his name does not have the same common recognition: Sam Fishman.



Sam Fishman (1924-1986) was a Detroit-based national labor-movement leader.

Sam Fishman's long and distinguished career began when he walked his first picket line in New York at the age of twelve. By the time he died in 1986 at the age of sixty-two, Fishman had served as president of the Michigan AFL-CIO. During the fifty years in between, he not only built a career as a unionist, but became recognized as one of the nation's best labor leaders. Depending upon one's perspective, Fishman was either a brash, defiant rabble-rouser or an honest, outspoken, staunch defender of the rights of labor. "Bland" was a term never used to describe Sam Fishman.

Fishman was born in New York on January 24, 1924, to parents who were strong unionists. His parents' influence and his youthful picket-line experience were part of the reason he moved to Detroit at age sixteen. In an interview just before his passing, Fishman recalled his father's advice just before the move: "If you are going to go to work in the plant, remember that the union is the most important thing in a worker's life."¹

Once in Detroit, Fishman found work as an assembler at Ford Motor Company's Highland Park factory. He also joined UAW Local 400. Over the years, Fishman not only moved off the assembly line and became a skilled tradesman and a machinist; he slowly and steadily built a career in the union movement, holding numerous official positions within Local 400. Fishman then moved to UAW Local 99 at the Fruehauf Trailer Company's Detroit facility. There, he was elected a vice-president of Local 99.

When Ford Motor Co. built a new automobile assembly plant in Wixom, Michigan, in 1957, the UAW formed Local 36, which consisted of members who had transferred to Wixom from other, older Ford facilities. Fishman transferred there as well, and was elected the first president of Local 36, a position he held from 1957 through 1962. While president of Local 36, he demonstrated excellent administrative skills and untiring efforts on behalf of workers' rights. Fishman also was notable within the International UAW for his support of civil rights and women's rights. As evidence of this, Fishman was the UAW member who, at the 1962 UAW Constitutional Convention, nominated and secured votes for Nelson Jack Edwards, the first African-American member of the union's International Executive Board.

During Fishman's time in the UAW, the union grew into the most powerful industrial union in the world and boasted over one million members in the United States and Canada. The UAW was also blessed with great leaders, such as Walter Reuther (president, 1946-1970), one of the most significant labor leaders in history. He was followed by Leonard Woodcock (president, 1970-1977), Douglas Fraser (president, 1977-1983), and Jewish labor leader Irv Bluestone (international vice president, 1972-1980). While Fishman would not become president or VP of the UAW, these labor leaders, the most respected in America during their time in office, recognized that he was a great administrator and a brilliant strategist.

In 1971, UAW president Woodcock appointed Fishman director of the UAW's Community Action Program (CAP). This was the political arm of the union, and this appointment immediately placed Fishman in a position of influence. Fishman soon became a power broker within the Michigan polity and the national Democratic Party. He held the CAP directorship for twelve years. This was during the heyday of the UAW, when it boasted about 1.5 million members. And, the UAW was not only a powerful force in American industry, but also a leader in the promotion of civil rights, women's rights, safety in the workplace, the environment, and a host of other progressive causes. To say the least, Fishman was a vital contributor to the UAW's accomplishments in the industrial and civic arenas.

Before and beyond his work as director of CAP, Fishman was a firm believer in the American brand of democratic politics. He recognized the importance of supporting that system. He stated, "I think every election in a democracy is important... a democracy is the kind of system that just doesn't exist like oxygen in the air. Democracy is a system that flourishes or is weakened to the extent that people participate in it." Fishman could have been speaking about politics in America today when he said, "When people get alienated from the political process in a democratic society, that's very harmful to the system."²

In this respect, Fishman had been involved in the Michigan and national Democratic parties from the time he was old enough to vote. He held numerous positions within the state party, and served as a member of the executive committee of the National Democratic Party.



Elected in 1983 as president of the Michigan AFL-CIO, Fishman used his office as a bully pulpit to promote the cause of labor.

In 1982, Fishman was elected a vice president of the Michigan American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Established in 1886, the AFL was the first successful umbrella organization for American unions. It was formed around craft unions, each based on trades like shoemaking, carpentry, or cigar rolling, and was led by the legendary Samuel Gompers until his death in 1924. The CIO was formed in 1935 as a coordinating body for industrial unions, which organized workers in such sectors as automobile manufacturing, steel, and rubber. The two organizations merged in 1955, and each state had a chapter of the new AFL-CIO, a practice that continues today.

In 1983, Fishman was elected president of the Michigan AFL-CIO, taking the reins at a difficult time. In the 1980s, union membership began a slow decline that continues today. This is especially apparent in manufacturing, both nationally and locally. Over the last forty years, many manufacturing jobs have gone to other nations that have substantially lower wage rates (as well as lower living standards). In Michigan, auto manufacturing, the backbone of the state's economy, has been hit hard. Along with the outsourcing of jobs, computers and robotics have replaced workers. Today, for example, an auto-assembly plant can produce the same number of cars that it could in the 1970s and 1980s with about thirty percent fewer workers. Fishman was president of the Michigan AFL-CIO when this phenomenon began.

During his short tenure, Fishman fought hard to retain American jobs. He did not mince words when speaking about the state of labor: "I'm disdainful of some idiots within the American business community who, unlike their counterparts in any other democratic country in the world, continue to want to live by the old rules... that they would like to destroy the American labor movement."³ Fishman also sought negotiated settlements that benefited both worker and company, but he believed the role of politics was critical: "... the labor movement understands that what we did politically and legislatively has more of an impact, is more significant than anything we can do in collective bargaining."

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL

Fishman never forgot that, while representing the labor movement, he was also representing the Jewish community. "I meet many people in the Detroit Jewish community," he said in 1986, "who tell me they remember their dad telling stories about [union] organizing, or about their grandfather and great-grandfather organizing." Fishman was also an active participant and leader in the Michigan and national chapters of the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC), which was formed by Yiddish-speaking union leaders in 1934 in response to the rise of Nazism. The JLC still exists today as "an independent secular organization, [that] is the voice of the Jewish community in the labor movement." To be sure, in his work as a Jew in the labor movement,⁴ Fishman followed in the footsteps of prominent Jewish labor pioneers, such as Sidney Hillman in the New York needle trades, and Irv Bluestone and Nat Weinberg in the UAW.

Fishman was also a staunch supporter of Israel and of its labor movement. He developed strong ties with Histadrut, Israel's main labor organization, the "General Organization of Workers in the Land of Israel."⁵ During his career, he promoted many events in Detroit featuring members of Histadrut, connecting Israel's unions to the American labor movement.

While visiting his daughter in Washington, D.C., in 1986, Fishman fell ill and died during emergency heart surgery. He was sixty-two and in the prime of his career as a labor-union member and activist. Fishman was deeply mourned by Detroit's labor movement and Jewish community. Perhaps Michigan Governor James J. Blanchard's eulogy summed up the essence of Sam Fishman: "Michigan has lost an energetic public citizen, labor has lost an outstanding leader, and Democrats everywhere have lost a loyal friend."⁶

Bibliographic Essay: There is neither a single source for historical information nor a published biography on Sam Fishman, but primary and secondary sources, including a range of books on various labor topics and the UAW, provide insight. The best history of the UAW's formative years is Nelson Lichtenstein's "The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor" (1995). Researchers may also consult JHSM's journal, *Michigan Jewish History* (see www.michjewishhistory.org for more information and a digitized Journal index). Two archives have primary sources with content on Fishman: The William Davidson Digital Archive of Jewish Detroit History (<http://dijnfoundation.org>) and the esteemed Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, located at Wayne State University (<http://reuther.wayne.edu>). The Reuther Library is the repository of hundreds of collections related to the UAW, the Jewish Labor Committee, Walter Reuther, unions, and other people and related organizations. It is also the home of the Sam Fishman Collection, original documents he collected. The Reuther Library administers the Sam Fishman Travel Grant Program that awards grants to students, teachers, and labor-union members to enable them to travel to the Reuther to study labor history.

FOOTNOTES

¹Final Thoughts," *Detroit Jewish News*, December 5, 1986. This was an extensive interview conducted by the *Detroit Jewish News* a few days before Fishman's death.

²Final Thoughts," *Detroit Jewish News*, December 5, 1986.

³Ibid

⁴See "Who We Are," <http://www.jewishlaborcommittee.org>
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/histadrut.html>

⁵"Labor mourns death of Sam Fishman," United Press International Archives,

⁶November 29, 1986, <http://www.upi.com/Archives/1986/11/29/Labor-mourns-death-of-Sam-Fishman/2152533624400/>



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Feature Article

THE HISTORY OF CONGREGATION BETH ACHIM: 1968-1998

By Rabbi Herbert A. Yoskowitz

In recounting the thirty-year history of Beth Achim, a religious community formed from the 1968 merger of two Conservative synagogues — Ahavim Achim and Beth Aaron, Rabbi Herbert A. Yoskowitz, who served as rabbi at Beth Achim from 1994 until 1998, explores the union and how the two synagogues overcame the fault lines of their separate origins to become one united entity. As this article will disclose, Beth Achim was not in the mainstream of Conservative congregations, and in fact, during its thirty-year history, two of Beth Achim's three rabbis were leaders of the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism — a splinter group of United Synagogue — which adhered to more traditional observance for the Conservative movement. The leadership and most of the membership were determined to be true to their definition of traditional Conservative Judaism, and Beth Achim earned accolades for the important role it played in members' lives and the community. Data for this article was obtained through individual and group oral interviews, a written survey, and a review of more than two thousand pages of synagogue bulletins, personal correspondence, and other relevant documents.

BACKGROUND: CHANGES IN CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

In the decade immediately following World War I, a vibrant Conservative Jewish presence existed in Detroit, although there was only one Conservative synagogue for Detroit's 75,000 Jews. Congregation Shaarey Zedek, formed in 1861, strongly identified with the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and with the United Synagogue. Rabbi Abraham Hershman, an advocate for Conservative Judaism and ordained by the seminary in 1906, came to Shaarey Zedek (1907) which he led until 1946 when he became rabbi emeritus.

Both Congregation Ahavas Achim and Congregation Beth Aaron, which merged to become Congregation Beth Achim in 1968, picked the middle of the twentieth century to affiliate with Conservative Judaism and with the United Synagogue. This was not a coincidence. In 1945, 350 congregations affiliated

with the United Synagogue; by 1965, the organization's membership leaped to 800. Ahavas Achim became affiliated in 1952, forty years after it was founded as an Orthodox congregation. In 1943, Beth Aaron and the Northwest Hebrew Congregation (now the Adat Shalom Synagogue) were founded as one Conservative synagogue. Due to differences of opinion about the congregation's location, they split into two congregations, both affiliated with the Conservative movement.

When Ahavas Achim and Beth Aaron merged to become Beth Achim, the congregation remained a part of the Conservative movement and of the United Synagogue.



This plaque, commemorating the merger of Ahavas Achim and Beth Aaron, now hangs in Adat Shalom, in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

In the Midrash, the rabbis observed: "*Kol hatchalot kashot*" (All beginnings are difficult), and the beginnings of Beth Achim rang true to this dictum. The merger between the two congregations was initially problematic. Beth Aaron past president Bill Liberson noted the members' lack of enthusiasm: "The issue of merger...was based on survival. Older members were either retiring or dying off." There was also a deep emotional connection to the building Beth Aaron had owned and occupied for twenty-three years. Even a few months before the merger, members still thought they could move to a suburban location without needing a merger.

Beth Aaron congregant and religious-school educator Annie Guyer Friedman noted that, after the merger, Beth Aaron congregants were "disillusioned." In the newly formed merged congregation, their beloved rabbi

did not become the senior rabbi, and, in her view, the Ahavas Achim congregation members became "the dominant force." Adele Staller, past president of Beth Achim Sisterhood (1990-1998) and JHSM past president, remembered Beth Aaron Sisterhood members coming to Beth Achim with "regrets and anger."



*Dr. Manny Feldman (left) and Sidney Silverman (right)
served as Beth Achim's first and second presidents respectively.*

The first president of the merged entity, Dr. Manny Feldman, who hailed from Ahavas Achim, and Sidney Silverman, who was originally from Beth Aaron and who became Beth Achim's second president, labored diligently to guide the congregants toward becoming a single community. By example of their harmonious, across-the-aisle co-leadership, they gradually succeeded.

PORTENTS FOR BETH ACHIM'S SUCCESS

Renovation and Expansion of the Synagogue and Services

In addition to fashioning one community from two discrete entities, the united congregation of Beth Achim had to focus on expanding its physical plant. From 1968 through 1975, the congregation made vast improvements to its Southfield building, a former church. They transformed the relatively small, plain-looking church into a larger and more-impressive synagogue edifice. Louis G. Redstone Associates were the architects and engineers, with Silverman serving as chairman of its building development program. Groundbreaking for expansion of the building was held on November 19, 1970.

In its first five years, Beth Achim members had much to be proud of: the remarkable growth of the physical plant, youth programs, adult education offerings, and well-attended Shabbat services. Membership reached 750

families. By the time of the synagogue's formal dedication on Sunday, February 16, 1975, Beth Achim members felt confident about its future. Another milestone was reached in 1984: The mortgage retirement celebrating the repayment of loans taken to purchase, expand, and improve the building.



Less than a decade after its formal dedication, Beth Achim congregants gathered to celebrate full payment of the building's mortgage.

BETH ACHIM ESTABLISHES THE FIRST CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL MIKVAH

In 1976, Beth Achim became the first Conservative synagogue in the United States to build a *mikveh* (ritual bath) on its premises. For all non-Jews who convert to Judaism under Orthodox, Conservative, and, in some cases,



Rabbi Milton Arm

Reform supervision, immersion in the mikvah is a requirement.

In December 1977, Rabbi Milton Arm lauded the progress of the *mikvah* in the congregational newsletter, *The Beacon*. He wrote: "In the first six months following its completion, more than 50 people made use of the facility, and in 1977, more than 100 have used it." Rabbi Arm further explained that "adopted children who require immersion, proselytes, brides and women observant of the laws of Jewish family purity make use of this *mikvah* which was built in accordance with the requirements of *halacha* (Jewish law)."

The Beth Achim *mikvah* earned praise and commendation from leaders of the wider Jewish community. Harry Laker, Beth Achim president and patriarch of a family of Jewish community leaders noted: "Congregation Beth Achim has

rendered a great service to the Jewish community by the opening of a *mikveh* (ritual bath) on its premises. The Conservative rabbinate of Detroit now can use this facility for the candidates for conversion who have been barred from using the *mikvah* functioning under Orthodox auspices. This is the first of its kind in a contemporary Conservative synagogue building in the United States. The Orthodox *mikvaot* (ritual baths) were not made available for Conservative or Reform conversions."

Beth Achim demonstrated that a *mikvah* could be part of a synagogue complex and could also be beneficial beyond the precincts of that synagogue. Rabbi Daniel Nevins, of Adat Shalom Synagogue, wrote: "Because Beth Achim housed the *mikvah* that the non-Orthodox community could use for conversions, I was a fairly frequent visitor to the building in Southfield." Beth Achim became a national model for many congregations – both Conservative and Reform. *Mikvaot* are now part of Temple Israel, Metropolitan Detroit's preeminent Reform congregation, and Beth El Congregation, Baltimore's largest liberal Conservative synagogue. The *mikvaot* of both congregations following the Beth Achim model serve the entire Jewish community.

CHALLENGES TO BETH ACHIM'S SUCCESS AND ATTEMPTED MERGERS

In a December 1985 *Beacon* column, Rabbi Arm noted with some dismay the rapid changes occurring in the Jewish community of Southfield. He was referring to the exodus of many Jewish families from Southfield and the shrinking number of non-Orthodox Jewish families moving into Southfield. A subsequent 1989 Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit survey showed Southfield's Jewish population as 26,600, a substantial portion of the estimated 77,100 Jews who resided in the core area of Jewish settlement in southern Oakland County. The study noted that Southfield's Jewish population would diminish over time. Phil Jacobs, managing editor of the *Detroit Jewish News*, wrote in a March 1, 1991, article that "forty percent of the Jews in Southfield are planning to move. About half are moving elsewhere within Southfield, but the other half are leaving the city," citing this statistic from the 1989 Detroit-area population study. Jacobs added, "Southfield is home to an aging population and Southfield has to bring more Jewish families in so that there is not only a one-way street."

Although Beth Achim leaders took note of the demographic shift, other factors were contributing to a steep decline in the congregation's membership. In April 1991 congregation president Abe Gamer called attention to Beth Achim's dire membership and financial conditions in The Beacon's monthly president's column. Gamer wrote, "We have an aging and declining

membership, the combination of which places the synagogue in serious financial difficulties. When a member reaches the age of 65, the dues drop drastically...the make-up of our congregation is approaching 60% over the age of 65. We need to take appropriate actions to safeguard the financial health of the congregation. We have not planned for the future...we are all guilty." There was still another factor that led to the congregation's financial and membership difficulties.

ISSUE OF WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS RITUAL

In 1972, four years after the founding of Beth Achim, younger Conservative Jews in Detroit and elsewhere agitated for women's equality in all aspects of Jewish life and helped to set the stage for the Conservative movement's 1983 decision to ordain women as rabbis beginning in 1985. Some older and more traditional Conservative congregants felt betrayed. For them, changes in the status of women cast doubt in their minds on the movement's fidelity to Jewish law.

Beth Achim was, by far, the most traditional Conservative congregation in Detroit, according to Tobi Fox, a former Beth Achim officer. The congregation rabbis, Rabbi Milton Arm (1968-1990) and Rabbi Martin Berman (1990-1994), urged the congregation not to change its religious ritual and even to join the small Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism, which eventually dropped the word "Conservative" from its name. The rabbis looked askance as one Conservative congregation after another permitted women and adolescent girls becoming bat mitzvah to lead worship services and to read from the Torah on a par with men. Conservative congregations became sensitized to language issues and changed prayers: God was addressed in neutral terms rather than in male terms, gender-sensitive prayers were included in worship services, and life-cycle ceremonies became egalitarian. All these changes in the Conservative movement were rejected by Beth Achim rabbis and by most of the members.

Rabbi Arm stood as the lone Detroit rabbi active in the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism and withdrawn from the United Synagogue. "It is an honor," he wrote in the December 1988 *Beacon*, "to have been elected recently as a member of its National Board." Seven months earlier, Rabbi Arm criticized the Conservative movement for being motivated in making its many innovations "not by its philosophy, but rather by its pragmatism."

Rabbi Arm's successor, Rabbi Martin Berman, wrote in the July 1990 *Beacon* that the Conservative movement was "losing its way...the Conservative Judaism of the founders was a conserving movement in the face of wide-ranging reforms introduced by the Reform movement. But in recent years that

had changed. Now the push was on to make Conservative Judaism merely the traditional wing of Reform. To offset these forces the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism was founded." Strong language was used to express as a matter of principle that Conservative Judaism at Beth Achim should remain true to its traditional Judaism origins and not yield to the trends of the day. For advice on matters of Jewish law and custom, congregants were advised by their rabbis to consult the Union of Traditional Conservative Judaism and not the United Synagogue or other Conservative institutions.

Clearly, this was a brave and principled stand, a stand to be respected and admired for its passionate and principled advocacy. But taking this stand - as the only Conservative Congregation in Detroit to buck the trends of Conservative Judaism - had its consequences.

"Friction developed between those proposing and those opposing this issue to the point that a considerable number of lay leaders left the congregation," noted Bill Liberson, Beth Aaron Congregation past president. Synagogue officer Tobi Fox, who knew Beth Achim as a congregation "to be with people who cared about each other and to learn about our heritage," lamented that due to the congregation's policy of non-egalitarianism, "the era of families with young children no longer surrounded Beth Achim."

When a definitive history of Conservative Judaism in Detroit is written, Beth Achim will be included, if for no other reason than that it was the most traditional Conservative congregation in Detroit. Alone among Detroit's Conservative congregations, Beth Achim did not permit gender equality either in holding the office of congregation president or in religious-service participation. The leadership and most of the membership were determined to be true to what they imagined traditional Conservative Judaism to be — even though that led to the loss of members to other Conservative congregations.

MERGER TALKS

As early as 1985, congregation leaders engaged in merger talks with their counterparts at B'nai David, an unaffiliated congregation. They discussed becoming a merged congregation that would relocate to the area of Jewish migration, farther west in the Farmington Hills/West Bloomfield area. They agreed on ritual issues, but Beth Achim's inflexible demand to affiliate with the Conservative movement's United Synagogue of America became the deal breaker. B'nai David, led by Rabbi Morton Yolkut, ended the merger discussions. Five years later, in 1990, Beth Achim and B'nai David again tried to merge. This attempt was short-lived and ended in failure.

There were discussions of mergers with other congregations, the first being with B'nai Moshe, a 500-family congregation. One discussion almost



Located on 12 Mile Road in Southfield, Beth Achim enjoyed many years of success before a decline in membership led to the merger of the congregation and the sale of the building, in 1998, to Akiva Hebrew Day School.

succeeded. On July 5, 1991, The *Detroit Jewish News* reported a story with this bold headline: "Beth Achim, B'nai Moshe Boards Approve Merger." Both boards of directors overwhelmingly voted on June 27, 1991, in favor of proceeding with the merger and of the construction of a new building on land B'nai Moshe had purchased in West Bloomfield. The Beth Achim board of directors approved the agreement, 20-7. The B'nai Moshe board voted 26-1 in favor.

In the Jewish and secular press, arguments about the viable future of a Jewish community in Southfield centered on the strength of Southfield, with or without Beth Achim, and on the thorny decision confronting Beth Achim: to stay or to leave Southfield. A retired *Southfield Eccentric* reporter issued a public complaint: "It doesn't appear that either the Jewish community or the Jewish Federation itself are fighting hard enough for survival and preservation of tradition in Southfield." The issue was ultimately resolved by the membership of both Beth Achim and B'nai Moshe, each of which rejected a merger with the other, with results described as "overwhelming." The headline in the *Southfield Eccentric* of November 18, 1991, was: "Synagogue Opts Not to Follow in Suburban Flight: Beth Achim Stays Put in Southfield." The Beth Achim vote, reported staff writer Valerie Olander, was 380-131 to remain on 12 Mile Road and not to merge with Congregation B'nai Moshe. It appeared that members wanted Beth Achim to remain independent and to maintain its Southfield location without understanding the financial and demographic factors that would make this independence impossible. In the summer of 1994, Rabbi Berman accepted an invitation to be the spiritual leader of a Toronto congregation. He was succeeded by Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz, the writer of

this history.

Throughout the last eight years of Beth Achim's history, under Rabbi Berman's and Rabbi Yoskowitz's leadership, the congregation discussed whether to expand the role of women in ritual. However, no ritual changes were made. The growing trend in the Conservative movement was to invite women to read from the Torah. Beth Achim's stand of barring women from reading from the Torah or chanting an aliyah during bat mitzvah and other life-cycle celebrations at Beth Achim — a stand that Rabbi Yoskowitz wished to see changed — became untenable for many families with young daughters. They left to join other congregations.

The last bat mitzvah at Beth Achim, on June 5, 1998, was celebrated in front of an overflowing sanctuary. Cantor Max Shamansky (1981-1998) intoned the liturgy movingly. Not allowed to chant from the Torah or receive an aliyah at Beth Achim on the Shabbat of her bat mitzvah, the celebrant had instead chanted from the Torah on the previous Thursday morning at the Conservative Solomon Schechter Hillel Day School, where she was a seventh-grade student. To the end of its journey as a traditional Conservative congregation, Beth Achim maintained its principled stand. This was evident from its demonstrating interest in merging with B'nai David, its voting down attempted mergers with B'nai Moshe, and its continuing to prohibit a bat mitzvah from chanting from the Torah or leading services.

In June 1997, merger discussions began with Adat Shalom, a Conservative synagogue located in Farmington Hills, about seven miles northwest of Beth Achim. In 1998, a church offered to pay cash for the Beth Achim building and purchase the property. That offer was refused. The goal



Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz (left) holds Beth Achim's Torah in one hand while holding the hand of Rabbi Daniel Nevins, of Adat Shalom, in the other. The photo was taken on the day of the celebration of the merger, July 1, 1998. Courtesy of Rabbi Yoskowitz

was to keep the building in Jewish hands, so as to strengthen and not diminish the Jewish presence in Southfield. Maintaining the building under Jewish auspices was accomplished with the help of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, which purchased the Beth Achim building for the Akiva Hebrew Day School.

On July 1, 1998, Beth Achim and Adat Shalom merged. Beth Achim and Adat Shalom each appointed a merger team of three leaders who worked to satisfy all of the items on the Beth Achim checklist: continuity of name and ritual, decorum, socio-economic compatibility, a welcoming nature, and the ability to comment on the important issues. Part of the agreement was to name its educational institution "The Beth Achim Religious School" so as to preserve the Beth Achim name, and to locate the synagogue and school on the Adat Shalom campus in Farmington Hills. All of Beth Achim's wall plaques were moved to prominent positions at Adat Shalom, as were the photographs of past presidents, which included the plaques and presidential photos from Beth Aaron (1943-1968) and from Ahavas Achim (1912-1968).

Tobi Fox, a Beth Achim member throughout its thirty-year history, wrote that "Adat Shalom understood what the members of Beth Achim had to offer and what we needed... a new home that felt comfortable, welcoming – where we could take our treasures and [where] they would respect what we brought with us, i.e., our observances and history."

Each congregation was happy with the merger, and each had something to offer that the other did not: Congregation Beth Achim was known for its active and involved leadership and a high percentage of its members attending religious services regularly; Adat Shalom Synagogue was located geographically near the Jewish population and was blessed with an excellent religious school and large enrollment. Although financially strong, Adat Shalom welcomed the infusion of money that came with the sale of Beth Achim's building. Both congregations were served by clergy who were committed to following halacha, Jewish law, as interpreted by the Conservative movement—which included full egalitarianism in religious services. Those who did not feel comfortable with these practices did not join Adat Shalom.

CONCLUSION

Beth Achim was not in the mainstream of Conservative congregations; nevertheless, in 1975, with its 750 member families, it earned the accolade of "being one of the best Conservative congregations in the Midwest," because of its excellent reputation as a communal and educational institution. Beth Achim members attested in writing and in oral interviews, as recently as May 2014, that Beth Achim was important in their lives and in those of their families.

For many members, the Beth Achim Synagogue community provided support, as they tried to balance their religious and educational commitments with the demands of American life. The Beth Achim Synagogue amply fulfilled what Samuel Heilman, a renowned sociologist, noted: "When it works best, the synagogue gives its members a sense of empowerment, a feeling of competence, an experience of community, and opportunities for spirituality."

Tobi Fox considered the congregation a success: "we were never a wealthy synagogue but did maintain a 'good house'...people were warm, caring, and truly were a 'house of brothers' [the English translation of Beth Achim]. Former Beth Achim congregants who shared their memories were enthusiastic, remembering how they felt they belonged "...to a house of brothers and sisters." They carried that communal sense of warmth with them as they became active members and leaders at Adat Shalom and at other congregations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Much appreciation to Marilyn Krainen for her assistance on this article.

HISTORY OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

The fountainhead of Conservative Judaism was The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) founded in the United States in 1886. JTS pre-dated the Conservative movement. Its leaders erected the infrastructure of the Conservative movement in order to raise money for JTS, with the help of JTS rabbinic graduates and of synagogues that these rabbis led. On July 4, 1901, rabbinic graduates of JTS formed the Alumni Association of JTS, renamed in 1919 The Rabbinical Assembly of JTS.

The seminary was a worldwide central institution of Jewish learning and rabbinic training. By 1913, the institutional leaders identified a need to go beyond rabbinic training and to reach out to lay people who needed to attain higher levels of Jewish learning, Jewish leadership, and financial support of JTS. Thus, in 1913, under the leadership of JTS president Dr. Solomon Schechter, JTS launched the United Synagogue of America to prepare lay people to assume leadership in synagogues.

Among the founders of the United Synagogue, there were different visions of its purpose, including in the words of historian Jack Wertheimer: "unifying all traditional Jews in a common struggle against Reform (or) as an instrument for bringing a third religious movement between Orthodoxy and Reform." Dr. Solomon Schechter, the president of the seminary from 1902 until 1915, dreamed of seeing Conservative Judaism emerge as the established faith of American Jews. That hope was never realized. Instead, the fast-growing United Synagogue became, over time, the synagogue body of a separate centrist movement, a status belatedly confirmed in 1991 when the organization was renamed the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The United Synagogue umbrella encompassed Conservative synagogues that represented the gamut of practice from strongly traditional to very liberal. Conservative synagogues with this range of ritual practice identified with both JTS and the United Synagogue and had mixed seating, allowed the use of a microphone during Sabbath and Jewish holiday services, and followed Conservative liturgy.

Historical Tidbit

1975: Bernard Isaacs (b. 1882), one of the founders and the first superintendent of United Hebrew Schools, passes away. Isaacs came to Detroit in 1919 to organize and direct UHS, a position he held for the next thirty-five years.

Feature Article

L'DOR V'DOR: CARL AND SANDER LEVIN REFLECT ON FAMILY, DETROIT, AND HISTORY

By Wendy Rose Bice with Carl and Sander Levin

Sander and Carl Levin, the first Jewish brothers to serve in Congress and the longest-serving congressional siblings in U.S. history, were the featured guests at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in May 2015. Joining them were Andrew Levin, Sander's son, and Kate Markel Levin, Carl's daughter. Their conversation is partially recounted in this article which also delves deeper into the family's history and background.



Sander and Carl Levin were joined by two of their children, Andy Levin (far left) and Kate Levin Markel (far right) at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

As public servants, Carl and Sander Levin have been witness to many milestones, changes, and historic events not only in their careers, but also as devoted Detroiters and champions of the city and the state of Michigan. Their involvement in and commitment to our area's stability, evolution, and promise have been a driving force in their lives for over half a century. But, for many of their admirers, the brothers are most memorable for their unabashed love for and devotion to each other and to their large extended family.

Hannah (1928-2001), Sander (September 6, 1931), and Carl (June 28, 1934) Levin are the children of Saul and Bess Levin, first-generation Americans who lived what they believed: that all people should be treated with equality, dignity, and respect. Through their careers and leadership experiences they demonstrated to their children and grandchildren the value of hard work and the importance of family and community. They also taught them to appreciate the bounty of America, to stand up for the underdog, and to fight for justice.

THE LEVINSON CLAN

It is very possible that Bess Levinson (born January 17, 1898) was the only Jewish person ever actually "born" in Birmingham, Michigan. Her parents, Morris and Gittelle, and their three sons, were the only known Jewish family living in Birmingham at the time of Bess's birth. Bess was born in the family home on Brown Street.



*Morris and Gittelle Levinson,
maternal grandparents of
Hannah, Sander, and Carl Levin.*

Morris and Gittelle were Eastern European immigrants. Little is known about how or where they met, but their story – a story of love and perseverance – inspires both Levin brothers to this day. At age fifteen, Gittelle left her home in the Pale of Settlement (Europe) to join relatives in Michigan. At the time, she spoke only Polish and Yiddish, not a word of English. "Imagine what it was like for a girl of fifteen to come on a boat for ten or fifteen days, alone," said Sander of his maternal grandmother. "Imagine what it was like for her parents to send their daughter to the United States of America. She never saw her parents again."

Morris Levinson began his American adventure as a peddler selling notions in the mostly rural section of central Oakland County. With his savings, he opened Levinson's General Store at the corner of Maple Road and Woodward. Over time, Levinson's expanded and he added a five-and-dime and a hardware store. However busy he was, as he told his grandsons, Morris boarded the interurban streetcar every Thursday and headed to Hastings Street to purchase kosher meat for the Sabbath.

Morris and Gittelle's life experiences and work were not lost on Bess. She attended the University of Michigan at a time when few women were afforded such opportunities.

Sometime along the way, young Bess met a gent by the name of Saul Levin, the second oldest of Joseph and Ida Levin, also immigrants from the Pale of Settlement who came to Detroit by way of Chicago and London, Ontario.



Morris Levinson, the maternal grandfather of Sander and Carl Levin, opened a general store at the corner of Maple and Woodward. Courtesy of the Birmingham Historical Society

THE LEVINS

Joseph Levin immigrated to the United States and began his American career as a cigar-factory worker in Chicago. While there, he joined in forming a cigar-makers union. The effort was opposed by his employers. Soon after, Joe and his wife Ida moved to London, Ontario, with five children in tow (three other children would be born while in London). They lived frugally in a small house. After high school, Saul and Ted left London to attend law school in Detroit.



Joseph and Ida Levin lived in London, Ontario, before coming to Detroit.

When they could, the entire family returned to the United States, this time to Detroit. Ida ensured that her children respected and loved each other while Joseph passed along his sensitivity and sense of social and economic justice.

Three of their sons, Ted, Saul, and Bayre, became attorneys. Later, the three brothers became partners in a law practice, where they achieved prominence. The oldest two, Ted and Saul, moved to Detroit to attend law school and developed a special bond. Indeed, noted Sander and Carl, there was a special bond between all of the siblings, a deep love for each other that was carried forward in their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. "Having this sense of family is

a large part of our existence," remarked Carl. He and Sander have numerous first cousins who were a constant in their lives, often gathering together for family dinners and events.



Theodore Levin, the oldest son of Joseph and Ida Levin, was appointed by President Harry Truman to the federal district court in 1946. He rose to chief judge and retired in 1967.



Saul Levin, the second oldest of Joe and Ida's eight children, met his bride-to-be, Bess Levinson, in Detroit.

Saul and Bess met in Detroit, and they were married in 1927. They were introduced by Bess's cousin, Irwin Cohn, the father of Judge Avern Cohn (see MJH, Vol. 54). They raised their children on LaSalle Boulevard in Detroit, near Grand Boulevard. Later they moved to Boston Boulevard, in Detroit's Boston-Edison District. Bess and Saul were staunch Zionists, and were also active volunteers with several Jewish and non-Jewish causes: Bess at Hadassah (Carl remarked that they referred to themselves as "Hadassah orphans") and Saul offering pro-bono legal services while helping to improve the conditions of migrant farm workers. Saul was also appointed to the Michigan Corrections Commission by Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams. They raised their family to have a strong sense of Jewish community, morals, and ethics. The family attended Congregation Shaarey Zedek, where Hannah was confirmed and both Sander and Carl became b'nai mitzvah.

Hannah, Sander, and Carl attended Central High School and all three carried forward their father's passion for progressive, social-justice causes. Sander first entered politics when he was elected president of the Central High School senior class. Carl was elected as his class treasurer. Hannah, who later assisted both of her brothers in their political careers, volunteered with the Democratic Party and with the Anti-Defamation League (her husband, William



Sander (left) and Carl stand with their grandmother, Ida.



Sander (left), age thirteen, and Carl, age ten, in 1944.



Both Sander and Carl graduated from Detroit's Central High School; both served as class officers. Sander (left) was president of his class while Carl (right) was treasurer. These photos are from the Central High School Yearbook Collection of JHSM.

Gladstone, served as Democratic chairman of the 17th District).

Sander attended the University of Chicago and then Columbia University, where he received a master's degree in international relations. He received his law degree in 1957 from Harvard University. In 1964, he successfully ran for the Michigan State Senate, with Carl playing a key role in managing his campaign. Later, in 1971, Sander Levin traveled to Mississippi to join John Lewis and other civil-rights activists in the continuing challenge to register African-American voters.

Sander became the Senate minority leader and chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. In 1970, he ran for governor, losing very narrowly, and ran again in 1974. He was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1982 and is now the ranking member. He previously served as chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, which many consider the most powerful body in Congress.

Carl attended Swarthmore College and then joined his brother at Harvard Law School. He was named assistant attorney general and the first general



Sander (left) and Carl stand beside their sister Hannah on her wedding day in 1954.

counsel of the newly formed Michigan Civil Rights Commission in 1964. His first case in that position was against Dearborn Mayor Orville Hubbard, a segregationist who used his influence to vilify African Americans and stifle integration. The 1967 riots in Detroit changed Carl's career track when he was tapped by local leaders to run for a seat on the Detroit Common Council in 1969. He became president of the council in 1974 and, in a 1978 upset, celebrated his first U.S. Senate victory. He was re-elected in 1984, 1990, 1996, 2002, and 2008. Upon his retirement in 2015, Senator Levin was the longest-serving U.S. senator in Michigan history. He also served as chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

WATCHING AND MAKING HISTORY: THE LEVINS' UNIQUE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"It is not a coincidence that I worked with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission fighting discrimination and Sandy traveled to Mississippi to register voters," said Carl. "Our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents understood what it was like to be an underdog, to be poor, to be kicked around, to be discriminated against."

Sander picked up on the theme, saying: "We saw that we were part of something larger, something beyond ourselves. We learned the importance of community."

The U.S. entered WWII when Sander was ten and Carl seven. The boys, like others in their generation, pitched in to help. They roamed the streets looking for cigarette and gum wrappers. They would collect cans and flatten them. They'd pull the foil from the gum wrappers, the label off the cans, and take them to school, "by the box. An ounce became a pound, and a pound became ten, etc." remembered Carl. Foil was used to make weapons. "Those

were very formative years. We felt that we played a small role in winning the war." In 1944 and 1945, Carl and Sandy went to summer camp in Maine. "We picked beans because all of the pickers were engaged in the war effort."

After the war, when they were in college, both men spent their summers working in auto factories and driving cabs. They worked hard, an ethic passed to them by their parents. And, from behind the wheel of a cab, they saw how economic disparities divide people and communities. They met and worked beside men and women from all walks of life: immigrants, widows, students, orphans.

THE LEVINS' JEWISH HERITAGE PLAYS A ROLE IN HOW THEY VIEW THE WORLD

"It was the immigrant sense of appreciation," reflected Carl. "As Jews, we have a responsibility to our country and community. We are so lucky to live in this country and be a part of a people who have made extraordinary contributions to mankind and who have been in the forefront of the fight for justice around the world. That is a part of the reason why I think preserving our history, our Jewish story, is important. It helps us understand who we are, where we are, and how we got here, and helps us achieve our potential."

The entire L'Dor V'Dor conversation is available on JHSM's YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and search Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.



Sander and Vicki Levin were married in 1957 and had four children. Vicki passed away in 2008. In 2012, Levin married Pamela Cole.



Carl and Barbara Levin were married in 1961 and have three daughters, three sons-in-law, and six grandchildren.

REMARKABLE ARTISTS

REMARKABLE ARTISTS FOCUSES ON THE CAREERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF JEWISH ARTISTS WITH A MICHIGAN CONNECTION

This section is dedicated to Melba and Sidney Winer, long-time patrons of the visual and performing arts.

Melba and Sidney Winer's love of the arts served as an inspiration and led to their participation in the establishment of the Jewish Community Center's Center Theater (at the Meyers and Curtis building in Detroit), and the Jewish Ensemble Theater (JET). Their dedication to promoting the arts throughout the community is furthered through scholarships in their name at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, and their continued funding of multi-media and arts programs at Camp Tamarack. This dedication is a gift from their children, Susan, Harry and Jan Winer, and the family of Marvin (z"l) and Esther Mintz.

CYRIL ARONSON MILES: AN ARTIST OF DETROIT AND THE WORLD

by Aimée Ergas

During her long career, Cyril Aronson Miles created in and taught a variety of media including painting, collage/assemblage, filmmaking, and poetry. She ran a gallery, promoted the arts and artists, taught and influenced a generation of artists and art lovers, and created colorful works full of joy and modernity that were influenced by Jewish history and culture, the folk art of many countries, and the styles of twentieth-century art.

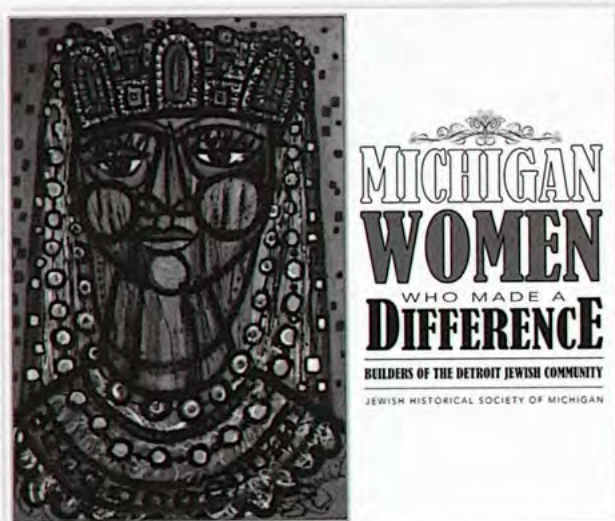


Cyril Aronson Miles

"She was a strong and outspoken woman, to be sure.... Human, first and foremost, then artist and teacher." This description of Cyril Aronson Miles (1918-1993) was written by her nephew, Scott Silverman, who maintains an online gallery of her art. According to Silverman, Miles's career began "in a job wherein she painted cookie jars for twelve cents a piece."

Born in Boston of progressive/socialist parents, Cyril Ar-

onson came to Detroit as a child, graduating from Cass Technical High School and earning a bachelor's degree in art education from Wayne University in 1942 and a master's degree in 1943. She also did graduate work in New York City, Mexico, Italy, and England. Almost from the beginning, her work garnered recognition. The 1941 *Wayne University Yearbook* notes that during her senior year, three of Aronson's watercolors were displayed in a National Art Week exhibit and that she won the 1941 Society Prize of the Detroit Society of Women Painters and Sculptors. A long series of awards and citations followed throughout her fifty-year career, including the Arts Achievement Award from Wayne State University in 1976, Michigan Art Education Association Higher Education Educator of the Year in 1978, Michigan Women's Foundation Award Arts Citation in 1988, and Volunteer of the Year Award from the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit in multiple years.



The cover of JHSM's 2015 publication, Michigan Women Who Made a Difference, featured this Miles painting, Queen Esther, circa 1965. Courtesy Scott Silverman

Cyril and her life partner, Arnold Miles, were married in 1949. Arnold was an optometrist who supported her talent and every undertaking, often handling the more mechanical aspects of the works or their installation. It was also in the late 1940s that Miles opened the Studio Gallery, on West Davison Street in Detroit, which became a gathering place for the arts community. It was pioneering at the time for a woman to own her own business and more so to bring the work of Picasso and the Expressionist artists Georges Rouault and Max Beckmann to Detroit. Among the gallery's many innovative exhibits and events was the presentation in late 1947 of the cutting-edge work of Hungarian painter and photographer László Moholy-Nagy.

During that same period, Miles and her good friend, Detroit city councilman Mel Ravitz, launched an arts magazine called *Contemporary*. After her death, at her memorial service, Ravitz recalled their friendship and the short-lived publishing venture. He said that "her graphic ideas were striking and ahead of her time. Where else...would you find in 1946 a centerfold of Picasso's [painting] *Guernica*, reprinted with the permission of the Museum of Modern Art?"

Miles's paintings evoke joyfulness and colorful celebration. The influence of styles and artists – from Cubism to Expressionism, and from Picasso to Chagall to Rouault – is apparent. Miles's work was in the corporate collections of Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit (now Comerica) and IBM; it is on display at the University of Morelos in Cuernavaca, Mexico; and is a part of private collections around the U.S. and around the world.



Marionette, circa 1950. Miles painted in vivid color, especially red, and subjects range from Biblical figures like King David, to musicians and puppets, and even geometric aliens.

Described by Silverman as a teacher, mentor, and cheerleader, Aronson's "philanthropy, along with that of her husband Arnold, most often took the form of direct involvement in the lives of others. If somebody were in need of something, especially if it was driven by a personal passion pursuit or project, the mere mention would spark concrete action. If she found out about a project you were working on, you would probably be invited to their dynamically curated home on Hamilton Street in the Palmer Park neighborhood of Detroit. Two weeks later, while you are thinking that she was probably the most vivacious, colorful, knowledgeable, eccentric person you ever met – a cross between Katharine Hepburn and Dorothy Parker – a package would arrive. Cyril was thinking about your project...and had a few ideas. In that box, in addition to concrete research sources and notes for you, she may have decided to trace the role of giving or the concept of charity or how arts sustain a culture throughout time in Judaism...and beyond. Your project became her project – the student appears, so the mentor kicks it into high gear. And if she had discovered other personal connections with you (and she would have), say, you had mentioned loving both tea and the color purple, inside the box, you'd also find a lovely purple tea set, with a note that said it was a gift from some visiting Chinese dignitary, but she hoped it

concept of charity or how arts sustain a culture throughout time in Judaism...and beyond. Your project became her project – the student appears, so the mentor kicks it into high gear. And if she had discovered other personal connections with you (and she would have), say, you had mentioned loving both tea and the color purple, inside the box, you'd also find a lovely purple tea set, with a note that said it was a gift from some visiting Chinese dignitary, but she hoped it

would help fuel your long nights of reading. Did she sleep at all for the past two weeks? Probably not."

As an educator, she worked with students at the Detroit Institute of Arts from 1941 to 1967. She also taught at Central High School, Highland Park Community College, and, perhaps most influentially, the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, where she began teaching in 1944 and remained associated until her death. She founded the Institute's Ethnic Enrichment Experience programs and served as its folk-art curator. Her lessons, exhibits, and programs included multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual aspects, incorporating textiles, dolls and puppets, food, games, crafts, and dances.

In 1979, as part of the Ethnic Enrichment Experience, Miles arranged, in cooperation with the Detroit Zionist Federation and the Jewish Community Council, a puppet program about King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, and a poster display entitled "Children of the World Paint Jerusalem." She gathered displays of Israeli art and history including amulets, mosaics, oil lamps, paper

cuttings, books, and an Israeli-Christian nativity scene. Many local artists and community members loaned artifacts and contributed to the project.

Cyril and Arnold often served as cultural ambassadors to foreign visitors through the International Institute. The lobby of the International Institute building is dedicated to the couple. A plaque remembers Cyril as "a beloved friend and teacher, [who] had the unique ability to bring her art, her experience and her focus to every project she undertook. ...Through her all-encompassing sense of humanity, Cyril was able to showcase the common thread of universal expression that, through the arts, binds together the diverse cultures of the world."

In the 1960s, the Mileses turned their creativity to film, creating cutting-edge experimental films and sponsoring film festivals and showings around the city.

In 1966, they curated an evening featuring the experimental films of Cyril and her students at Highland Park College. In all, Miles directed, edited and/or designed twenty-five films from 1963 to the early 1970s, such as *Katchina Creation*, *Honda Poem*, and *Italian Happenings*.



The films produced by the Mileses were featured in showings such as the one here, but also in Rochester, New York, St. Louis, several California cities, and Mexico City.

Miles sought to bring the world of art to Detroit; whatever was happening on the New York art scene was an impetus. Throughout the 1970s, she worked alongside many well-known names in the Detroit arts community, among them: Harriet and Irving Berg, Charles Rubiner, Louis Redstone, Evelyn and Jerry Ackerman, Susan Bolt, and Sherry Schrut. During this time, she created *The African Arts Coloring Book*, a project she completed at Highland Park Community College, in response to the changing demographics of the area. The coloring book was a means to reach her students by introducing a more relevant narrative – that of African art, as opposed to the classical, Western tradition. Silverman recalled that his aunt, a “‘crazy Jewish lady’ turned so many on to not just their own history and not just to art, but to themselves and to their own capabilities.”

That project inspired her to dig deeper into her love of folk and ethnic art and do the same for the Jewish community. Encouraged by friends, even though she had never learned to read or write Hebrew, she created the *Hebrew Aleph Beth Art Coloring Book*, published with Rose Levine in 1973. The book features Hebrew letterforms, biblical stories, and cultural motifs.

“What impressed me so much was Cyril’s great interest in other cultures. She was an intense scholar who brought us the beautiful art and customs of Africa long before its popularity.”

Irving Berg, artist and teacher, Detroit News, October 6, 1993

At a celebration of Cyril Aronson Miles’s life held at the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit after her death in 1993, the roster of speakers testified to the respect and admiration that the community held for her: Mel Ravitz, State Senator Jack Faxon, Dr. Bernard Goldman of Wayne State University’s Department of Art and Art History, and Harriet Berg, dean of the Detroit dance community, to name a few. Another tribute held at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1985 included Senator Carl Levin, Governor James Blanchard, Wayne State University president Dr. Arthur Johnson, and architect Louis Redstone.

Miles, the “crazy Jewish lady” known for her colorful clothing, love of folk art, knowledge of art and art history, and “all-encompassing compassion,” pushed the envelope in her time with her unique painting style, her avant-garde poetry, her *Felliniesque* films. Her overwhelming number of awards and recognitions by art and civic associations were well deserved, but her legacy is no doubt inside the many students and artists she inspired during her long and colorful career.

Our deepest appreciation to Scott Silverman for his inspiration and contributions to this article. His gallery of Cyril Miles’s art is at:
<http://articulatedbrands.com/fun-stuff/cyril-miles-art-gallery/>

CAROL WALD: FROM DETROIT TO EUROPE AND BACK AGAIN

by Janice Morgan

Carol Wald (1935-2000) was a Detroit artist whose passionate curiosity led her to explore a variety of forms and styles, including fine-art painting, illustration, and collage. Her vast range of work can suggest the lonely claustrophobia of Hopper, or Balthus's sensual surrealism.

A little girl in a blue smock looks out of the canvas. Her expression is serious, maybe a little surprised or a little apprehensive. In the background a woman looms, her finger in a "come here" gesture that the girl won't see until she turns around. A man's face and a strange bird lurk in the shadows. In the center of the picture is an embedded still life: a table with a white tablecloth, a pitcher, a loaf of bread, and an egg standing on end in a bowl. The elements of Carol Wald's 1989 painting *Nocturne* are simple and naturalistic, figurative and not abstract, but put together they create a sense of dreamlike juxtaposition, an arrangement of images that seem to represent important relationships we sense but can't quite know.



Nocturne, Carol Wald, 1989



Carol Wald

At age three, Carol Wald proclaimed herself an artist. At eight, she decided to work on her first masterpiece. She spent a year shaping it, adding lines, trying to perfect her picture, already developing the artistic skills and discipline she would use throughout her career. In a later interview, she said, "You don't become an artist; you are an artist."¹

Wald was born in Detroit to Peter Barry and Rose Ida Wald and began her art education at Cass Technical High School. Her already-evident talent earned her a four-year scholarship at The School of the Society of Arts and Crafts (now the College for Creative Studies) in Detroit. She later pursued graduate work at The Cranbrook Academy of Art.

EARLY YEARS

Wald's fascination with images began young. At six, she began cutting out pictures she liked and storing them in scrapbooks and shoe boxes, a practice she continued into adulthood. She was enchanted by all things graphic. She collected and sorted any image she found interesting, including postage stamps, matchbook covers, movie pin-ups, magazine reproductions of great paintings, Norman Rockwell covers, and early advertisements. Some of these pieces would later be incorporated into her collages and used in her 1975 book *Myth America: Picturing Women 1865-1945*.²

Her work reflects the effects of her difficult childhood, which included an emotionally distant father and a mother hospitalized shortly after Wald was born and whom Wald did not get to know until later in life. She and her older (by eighteen months) sister Leone grew up with very little parental attention. Her introverted nature intensified her sense of isolation. No wonder her works often express sadness and loneliness. Art proved not only to be a haven from her troubles, but also a source of income. By fourteen, she was on her own financially and had obtained a job using her artistic skills. "Gracy's, an art store on Seven Mile Road," she told the *Detroit News* in 1986, "allowed me to draw portraits in their window on Tuesdays. I charged one dollar, and the store took part of the profits. Since I could do twenty portraits an evening, I sat outside the store on other days so I could keep all the money myself. The neighborhood lined up for likenesses, and I did rather well."³

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Early in her career, Wald spent her summers boarding at farms in Michigan and Wisconsin to develop her landscape techniques. During this period, she made the regional art-show circuit where her winnings served as a valuable source of support, allowing her to paint for months at a time.⁴ In 1969, she lived in England and Holland, where she studied the rich artistic traditions of northern Europe. In 1971, on what was supposed to be a brief stopover in New York, Wald decided to stay.

In New York, she established a career as an illustrator and began exploring and experimenting with collage, marrying her fascination with commercial illustration to her fine-art talents. Her collages were to become a major portion of her portfolio. After being "discovered" by a major illustrator's agent, her works



*Published in 1975, Wald's book, *Myth America*, is an exploration of the use of stereotypical images of women in print media from 1865 through 1945. Wald was fascinated by both the sociological and the aesthetic elements found in these mass-produced pictures, how they reflected the attitudes and prejudices of their time.*

began appearing in magazines worldwide, including *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Life*, *Saturday Review*, and *Fortune*. She was commissioned for book covers for luminaries such as Gore Vidal and Erica Jong. Her art was also used in posters for Broadway shows and for the Michigan Opera Theater. In 1975 she received a gold medal from the Society of Illustrators.

Even while busy as a commercial illustrator, Wald continued to develop her serious artistic work. In fact, she said, "Illustration has given me the freedom to paint again."⁵ She had never regarded art and illustration as totally separate categories. She had one-person exhibitions in New York and Detroit and was included in group exhibitions in New York, Detroit, and Allentown, Pennsylvania. In 1978, First Federal Savings and Loan of Detroit commissioned two murals for the new Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit.

In the early 1980s, Wald returned her focus to painting, her preferred medium.⁶ Her images, all oil paintings on canvas, have the fragmented, overlapped look of collage. Heads pop out of walls, objects balance precariously, and interiors melt into landscapes.⁷ Her renown brought her many commissions, including two in 1981: *The Life of Ronald Reagan* portfolio



In 1978, Wald won a national competition to create the official U.S. bicentennial painting, The New Spirit of '76, a companion piece to the original The Spirit of '76. This painting landed her a feature story in People magazine and is currently on display at Grand Valley State University.

for *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" issue, and the *Towers of Grain* series for *Fortune* magazine, sketches and paintings of iconic Midwestern grain elevators. Wald called upon her summers spent painting on farms and her familiarity with the rural landscape to create ten oils and twenty-two studies for the portfolio that ran across ten pages in *Fortune* magazine.

CAROL WALD, THE PERSON

Wald seemed to always live for her art. Her talents earned her fellowships at the Skowhegan School of Painting in Maine; the McDowell colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire; Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York; and the Huntington-Hartford Foundation in Pacific Palisades, California. She also studied photography with Sam Sarkis in Michigan. She taught at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts and at the Flint Institute of Arts. In East Jordan, Michigan, she taught in the Artists in the Schools program under the auspices of the Michigan

Council for the Arts.

Wald was living and working in New York in 1979 when she reconnected by phone with Detroit filmmaker Hermann Tauchert, a friend from her high-school days at Cass Tech. Their shared interest in the arts led to a twenty-year love affair. They maintained a long distance relationship until 1985, when she moved back to Detroit to be with him.

Back in the city, she secured a studio at the Scarab Club, where she often worked late into the night. In 1990, disillusioned by the deterioration of the city,



Ruby Tear collage, Carol Wald, 1988

she and Tauchert moved to Burlington, Ontario, where they had friends. She set up a small studio where she "undertook her most evocative series of psychoanalytical works until her untimely death at the age of sixty-five."⁸ She was invited to show at the prestigious private Kennedy Galleries in Manhattan, one of only a handful of living artists the gallery has ever represented. She created twenty-four large paintings for the 1995 show. The Gevik Gallery in Toronto became her local representative and still has several of her works for sale.

Wald's art was an important release for her grief from her neglect-filled childhood, with images of that sadness appearing

throughout her work. Even though she gained tremendous success as an illustrator and was a "wiz-bang" at collages, her real love was painting. Wald's canvases can be recognized by her style of magical realism, presenting her viewers with strong imagery that evokes deep feelings.

Wald's talent has earned respect and appreciation. Her works appear in the collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Cranbrook Art Museum, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art in Loretto, Pennsylvania, and the Museum of American Illustration in New York City.

FOOTNOTES

¹ A Conversation with Carol Wald and Bill Withrow. Produced by Hermann Tauchert. 1991. Tauchert and Associates, 1991 VHS.

² Carol Wald, *Myth America: Picturing Women, 1865-1945*. New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

³ Joy Hakanson, "You Can't Go Home Again? Don't Tell That to Carol Wald." *The Detroit News*, August 31, 1986, Lively Arts sec.

⁴ Richard Calhoun, "Wald, Carol 1935-." *Contemporary Graphic Artists*. Vol. 3. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1988.

⁵Hakanson, Joy. "You Can't Go Home Again?"

⁶Hermann Tauchert, Interview by author. Digital Recording. Burlington, Ontario, July 2, 2015.

⁷"Carol Wald (1935-2000)." Gallery Gevik. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.gevik.com/wald/>.

⁸Tauchert, Hermann. Interview by author.

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Janice Morgan has lived all her life in the Metro Detroit area and has been a member of Temple Kol Ami and Congregation Beth Shalom. After raising her family, she worked as a development officer for Judson Center, a statewide family-service agency, where she engaged in communications as well as fundraising activities. She currently has her own business in website development and marketing. Janice has a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Michigan - Dearborn. She and her husband, Alexander, have two children, Abraham and Julia.

Images courtesy of Hermann Tauchert

ARCHIVED 2015 TREASURES

THE BURTON COLLECTION

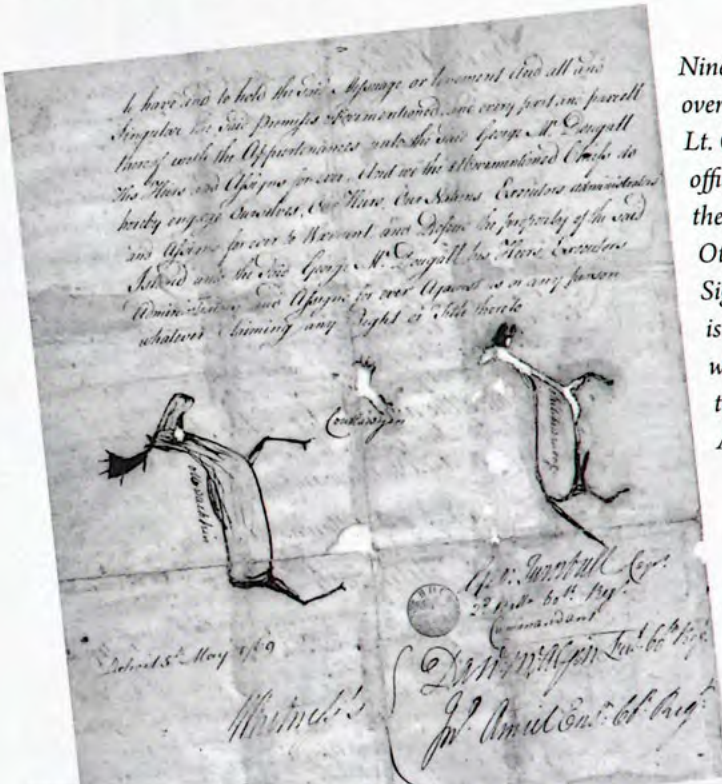
A century ago, on September 25, 1915, the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library opened to the public. Clarence Monroe Burton (1852-1933) donated his voluminous collection of historical materials to the DPL in 1914. Burton was an attorney and owner of the Burton Abstract & Title Company. He received his law degree from the University of Michigan where he was inspired by a professor to have an avocation. Burton chose to collect a book on American history every day. He became a tireless collector, rooting through basements, attics, out buildings, even the archives of London and Paris, looking to document the early history of Detroit. He wrote a number of books on various aspects of Detroit's history and became known as Detroit's historian.

The primary focus of the BHC is the history of Detroit, Michigan, the Old Northwest, the Great Lakes, and Upper Canada. Burton, however, had collected materials on virtually every aspect of American history. Fundamentally, the BHC is an Americana collection covering such events as the Salem Witch Trials, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and the California Gold Rush. The state of Michigan designated the BHC as the repository for City of Detroit municipal records. The BHC houses records from the Detroit Police Department, Rapid Transit Commission, and Detroit House of Corrections, and the mayor's papers. The BHC also serves as a genealogical collection and has resources for nearly every state, Canada, and most European countries, as well as for nearly every ethnic group. Types of records include U.S. federal censuses; church and military records; obituaries and family histories; and birth, marriage, and death indexes.

The BHC has grown to include more than 500,000 books (including Detroit high-school yearbooks and city directories dating back to 1837); 700 newspaper titles; hundreds of maps and atlases; more than 4,000 manuscripts that are the personal papers of individuals or the records of businesses,



churches, government agencies, or organizations; and nearly 300,000 photographs and postcards of Detroit and Michigan. Some of these photographs can be accessed at the DPL's digital collections site at www.digitalcollections.detroitpubliclibrary.org. BHC users include genealogists, scholars, authors, reporters, and students researching their family history, a neighborhood, event, street, building, or business. Moving forward, the BHC remains dedicated to Burton's passion for collecting and preserving our shared history for all to access. To learn more, please visit www.detroitpubliclibrary.org.



Nine years after the British took over Detroit from the French, Lt. George McDougall, an English officer, purchased Belle Isle – then called Hog Island – from the Ottawa and Chippewa nations. Signed on May 5, 1769, the deed is accompanied by a wampum belt and shows the totems of the Native American chiefs.



Exterior of Winkelman's store, next to Beck Shoes store. Designed by Charles N. Agree, 1948.

HISTORIC NEWS OF NOTE FROM AROUND THE STATE

THE PAPERS OF KATHLEEN STRAUS PRESERVED AT THE WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY

The Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs recently opened to researchers the papers of activist Kathleen Straus. Straus, who in 2000 was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, made impressive contributions to both the Michigan education and civil-rights movements. After arriving in Michigan in the 1950s, she began her dedication to activism with her involvement in the PTA and the League of Women Voters, of which she became the president in 1961. Straus was involved with Keep Improving Detroit Schools (KIDS), PRO-Detroit, and the Michigan Association of School Boards. She fiercely fought for safe desegregation of schools, earning national recognition, and went on to work as a consultant for school districts in Delaware, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Straus continued her activism through her work for the Michigan Senate Education Committee, as a lobbyist for the Michigan Association for School Boards, and as a representative on the state board of education, of which she was elected president in 1997. Additionally, Straus co-founded the Michigan Tax Information Council, which was designed to inform citizens about Michigan tax policies and their real-world application. She served as the president of the Center for Creative Studies and on the advisory board of the American Jewish Committee's Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion. She is a past president of the American Jewish Committee and of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

The Reuther collection reflects Straus's participation in numerous battles surrounding civil rights and education, and includes information about Detroit desegregation, the Michigan Women's Studies Association, and Michigan tax proposals in the 1970s and 1980s and their potential effect on schools.

- *Meghan McGowan, archival technician at the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University*

SENATOR LEVIN'S VISIT TO PETOSKEY



On October 19, 2014, more than thirty people – parents, grandparents, and school-age children – gathered in the Victorian-style Petoskey home of Dr. Josh and Mary Jean Meyerson to meet and greet Carl Levin, the state's first Jewish U.S. senator.

Members of Petoskey's small, rural Jewish community and congregants of the town's 118-year-old reform synagogue, Temple B'nai Israel, gathered to thank Levin for forty-plus years of public service. The senator mingled with the crowd in his *heymische* (friendly) fashion, speaking with each family individually before addressing the group. As the soon-to-be-eighty-year-old husband, father and grandfather explained, his plans included continued service with no intention of slowing down. When asked what he would miss most about leaving the senate, he didn't miss a beat when he replied, "the constituents!" Those present knew the famously bespectacled public servant would return, for the Petoskey Jewish community always has a friend in Carl Levin.

- Pam Ovshinsky

Historical Tidbit

1885: Charles Rothstein is born in New Haven, Connecticut. His family moved to Detroit when he was a boy. By age eight, he was hawking newspapers on street corners, at fourteen he was serving as page in the Michigan state senate and by age 35 had become Detroit's king of burlesque. Rothstein and his partner, Arthur Clamage owned several burlesque theaters in and around Detroit. He died in 1949.

FIRST HEBREW CONGREGATION NAMES SOCIAL HALL FOR BEN AND HARRIETT TEITEL



Restoration work was done to maintain the original style of the building, built in 1928.

Ben Teitel, a pioneer in the development of resorts and apartments along Lake Michigan's west coast, and his wife, Harriett, were honored on July 19, 2015, when the social hall at the First Hebrew Congregation in South Haven was dedicated in their memory. Rabbi Alan Cohen presided over the ceremony, which included the ritual setting of the mezuzah on the social hall's door post. About one hundred fifty attended the dedication and reception.

Teitel served as general manager and co-owner (with his in-laws) of the famed Mendelson's Atlantic Resort in South Haven. Harriett was the gracious hostess, warmly greeting guests in the dining room and serving as a surrogate mom to hundreds of students who got their first work experience at the resort. After Harriett's death in 1964, Ben developed apartment units in southwest Michigan, many of which were purchased by tourists who wanted a more permanent base in South Haven. The first project, Lakecrest Towers at 222 North Shore Drive, built in 1966, spearheaded what Teitel called a "...one-man urban-renewal program for the beach area in South Haven," a risky venture at



Ben and Harriett Teitel were co-owners of the popular Mendelson's Atlantic Resort in South Haven.

the time. Many developers have since built upon Teitel's visionary success. Before his death in 1985, Ben Teitel established the Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust to benefit thousands of Jewish elderly, children, and students in Michigan, Israel, and Ukraine.

"While many small synagogues in Michigan are struggling or closing, the First Hebrew Congregation thrives," said Jerry Cook, Teitel's nephew and executor of the Teitel Trust. "For this reason, it was decided to aid the synagogue's ongoing restoration program with funds to improve the social hall, where key ritual and community activities take place."

Funds were used to remove old carpeting and refinish the hardwood floors underneath, install a new HVAC system, repair walls, add period lighting and window coverings, and reframe historic photos and images to ensure their preservation.

Cook said that his uncle wanted to write a book about his life entitled, *Live Each Day As If It Were Saturday Night*. Although the book was never written, the donated funds from the Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust have built an ever-growing living legacy, a legacy appropriately enhanced by restoring the synagogue social hall, where Ben and Harriet enjoyed many joyous occasions.

— Gerald Cook

THE CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES - THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

The year 2015 marks a historic milestone for the Wayne State University Center for Peace and Conflict Studies as it celebrates its first half-century of academic programming and community service. The center originated in 1965 during the tumultuous Vietnam years as the Center for Teaching about War and Peace, when a group of Wayne State faculty, led by political scientists and Holocaust survivors Max Mark and Otto Feinstein, realized that organized curricula in the U.S. seldom addressed the causes and consequences of war.

Initially, the center aimed to introduce peace education in schools, with most of its programming geared to teachers. Its first director was Russell Broadhead of the School of Education. Houston grocery businessman Joseph Weingarten provided the center's first external support. Weingarten aimed to make Detroit the site of the first of a series of peace-education centers throughout the country, directed at fostering Arab-Israeli peace.



Lillian Genser, the second director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Oregon Peace Institute for her activism in the peace movement and work in conflict resolution.

Second director Lillian Mellen Genser preserved and built the organization over the next twenty years. Among her many accomplishments, she established a full undergraduate co-major; pioneered the first conflict-resolution-training-and-service programs in K-12 schools; organized Detroit's first citizen delegation to the People's Republic of China; and created Visions of Peace and Artist as Peacemaker programs for youth and public art. Genser also collaborated with faculty such as Distinguished Professor Guy Stern in premiering Detroit's performance of the children's Holocaust opera *Brundibar*; formed the Great Lakes Women's Peace Network in the U.S. and Canada; and established the Max Mark lecture series and awards, featuring Nobel laureates and world-renowned peacemakers. Genser's collaborators included Marjorie Katz,

director of the Detroit Council for World Affairs, librarian Helga Herz of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Mildred Jeffrey. She and Jeffrey engaged the United Auto Workers to develop a children's peace-literature collection in the WSU Purdy Library.

Dr. Fred Pearson, a Middle East, international, and ethnic-conflict expert, succeeded Genser in 1990, returning to his native Detroit and carrying on many of Genser's initiatives, while extending the curriculum to the graduate-studies level. The center gained national prominence through Vice President Al Gore's recognition of its Harmony Project, under the auspices of the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan and the Hudson Webber Foundation, which brought Detroit food stores and urban residents into productive negotiated agreements for mutual support and safety. During the 1990s the center and its Mediating Theory and Democratic Systems program was also one of eighteen national theory-to-practice programs supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Conflict-resolution and immigration delegations from Northern Ireland, the European Union, Central Asia, and South Asia visited Detroit to study community peacemaking through the center. More recently, the center hosted university students from throughout the Arab world through the state department's Middle East Partnership initiative, introducing them to American civic life, the history of the civil-rights movement, and institutions such as the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills.

A new public-policy dispute resolution collaborative has been launched with a major conference on urban finance, race, water, and community-police relations, again with the support of the Community Foundation. Under the auspices of the United States-Japan Foundation, the center has twice taken Detroit-area teachers to Japan, first to connect urban Michigan and Japan and ameliorate misunderstandings in the auto industry, and now to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of peace in the Pacific.

Committed faculty, many of them from and in touch with the Jewish community, have pioneered exciting perspectives and programs on all aspects of domestic and international peace, social justice, and understanding. Two examples are the Norma and Bernard Goldman Scholarship in Conflict Resolution, and the Robert and Beverly Hacker internships for students overcoming disabilities. Thanks to a unique gift from Professor Alvin and Harriet Saperstein, the center has extended its analyses and programs to the important fields of science, technology, and peace, including an annual Eugene Perrin Memorial Lecture/Scholarship in Health Science and Peace, supported by the Perrin family. With community support, the center will continue to study and promote innovative and timely perspectives. — *Dr. Fred Pearson, Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University*

YESHIVA BETH YEHUDAH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

In August of 1914, Rabbi Judah Leib Levin (Judah can also be spelled as Yehudah) launched a neighborhood Hebrew-study school in the Talmud Torah of the Farnsworth Street Synagogue. Eventually, the school – under the name Yeshiva Beth Yehudah – would become the largest Jewish school system in Michigan, providing quality Torah-based and secular educational programs.

The Talmud Torah movement began in the nineteenth century as a way to provide religious education for children of the poor. In America, the Talmud Torahs became semi-communal institutions whose leadership was drawn from the neighborhood and the wider community. These community-supported schools attracted enlightened and learned people as teachers and lay leaders.

Rabbi Levin's first classes met after school five days a week. In 1923, the Yeshiva moved its thirty-five students to Beth Tefilo Emanuel Synagogue on Twelfth Street and instituted a full curriculum. In 1925, upon the death of Rabbi Levin, the school was renamed Yeshiva Beth Yehudah in his memory.

By 1940, more than 160 children were enrolled at six grade levels. The Beth Jacob School for Girls was established in 1943. The school continued to flourish, and in 1964 it relocated to its current location in Southfield. Several renowned leaders and educators held positions with the Yeshiva, including Rabbi S. P. Wohlgelernter, who succeeded his brother as the school's president; Rabbi Leib Bakst, who served as Rosh Yeshiva until 1989; and Rabbi Joseph Elias, who served as principal from 1951 through 1963.

In 1976, Yeshiva Beth Yehudah purchased a building in Beverly Hills to house the Beth Jacob School for Girls which later moved to the renovated B'nai Moshe Synagogue in Oak Park, central to the community of its students. A 1999 gift from Edward and Norma Jean Meer enabled the construction of a new preschool building adjacent to the Boys School.

In 1999, Partners Detroit, an adult-education and community-outreach division, was founded and later re-named the Jean and Theodore Weiss Partners Detroit. In 2008, the Bais Yehudah Kollel was founded with eight young scholars devoting all their time to Torah study. Yeshiva's active preschool program and the Girls High School both relocated in 1993 to a new building in Oak Park.

Centennial celebrations included a gala honoring Dr. and Mrs. George and Vivian Dean for dedicating the Bais Yaakov Elementary building through a generous endowment fund, and the creation of a short film documenting the history and spirit of Yeshiva Beth Yehudah. Today, nearly 1,000 students attend preschool through grade 12, and post-secondary and adult-education programs are offered as well. – JHSM

BETH ISAAC SYNAGOGUE IN TRENTON, MICHIGAN, CLOSES ITS DOORS

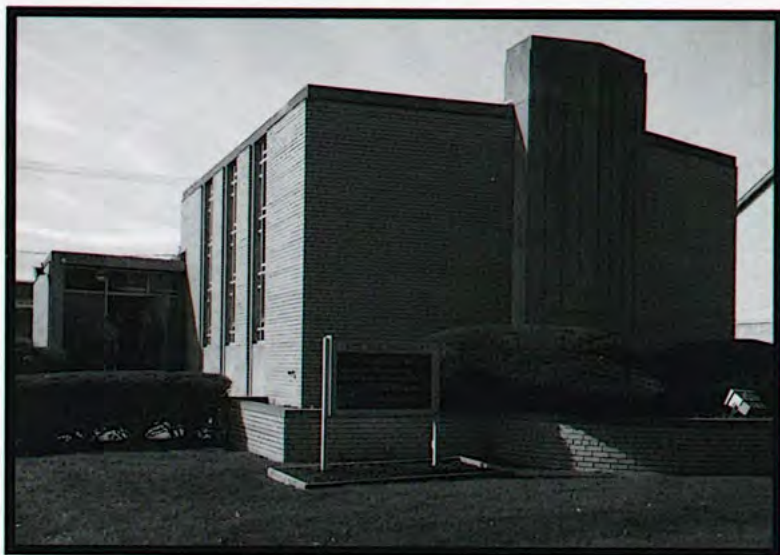
On Saturday, May 2, 2015, an assembly of close to one hundred gathered to attend the final service of Beth Isaac Synagogue, the spiritual home of the Downriver Jewish community for more than fifty years. Congregants shared memories and photographs and listened to long-time president Ray Clement, who urged them not to be sad but to celebrate the life and legacy of Beth Isaac. "We have had a great run," he said.

Although there never was a large Jewish population in the cities that run along the Detroit River, the seeds of what would become a modest Jewish presence were planted early in the twentieth century, when ambitious young pioneers from a Jewish agricultural community in Bad Axe purchased a small general store in Trenton. Other members of their families joined them, started businesses of their own, and wove themselves into the community. Meanwhile, the tiny, one-room general store, Mulias and Ellias, expanded over the decades to become Downriver's largest department store.

As the community grew, a number of Jewish merchants, doctors, chemists, dentists, and other professionals followed, not only to Trenton, but to other Downriver cities, and families came as well. In 1952, a group of about fifty Jewish residents and others met in Wyandotte's Odd Fellows Hall to discuss the establishment of a Jewish community center. They formed the Downriver Jewish Community Center which met in various venues. A Sunday and religious school was organized and services were conducted by lay leaders. In 1955, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Ellias of Trenton donated land on Edsel, a residential street in Trenton, for a synagogue building, to be named in memory of the Ellias family patriarch.

Members worked tirelessly throughout the remainder of the 1950s and into the 1960s to grow their building fund through events and activities. Ground was broken in 1963. Beth Isaac – the only synagogue in Wayne County's Downriver area – was dedicated on October 4, 1964.

Although Beth Isaac was originally affiliated with the Conservative movement, it became Reform in 1988, in order to secure the services of student rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. The first student rabbi arrived a year later and one would come every year thereafter. The synagogue maintained an open-door, open-heart "personality" toward all – attracting, inviting, and welcoming individuals and families from all faiths. Beth Isaac stood as a leader in interfaith community outreach and education programs and was accorded respect and support from the various denominations of local clergy.



Never was that support more evident than in 1967, after an aberrant act of anti-Semitic arson and vandalism destroyed the interior of the building, including its Torahs and prayer books, and defaced the exterior. The crime elicited outrage from Trenton's citizens. Local Christian clergy and residents of all denominations, as well as persons from across the country who had heard about the crime through national news reports, offered help and worked together until the synagogue was restored and rededicated. A wooden Star of David, charred but intact, remained on the wall as a symbol of resilience and survival.

Steadily dwindling membership numbers, due to economic downturns, job changes, out-of-state moves, retirement, and death – and, especially, a decline in the number of young Jewish people moving to the area – led to the difficult decision to dissolve the congregation. In preparation for closing, Beth Isaac worked with the Jewish Community Legacy Project to help inventory the synagogue's assets, organize its endowment ideas into a workable plan, find homes for its artifacts and four Torahs, and archive individual and congregational histories so that the stories live on in perpetuity.

The large crowd that gathered to commemorate Beth Isaac's past paid tribute to a place that was a treasured and respected part of the community, and expressed gratitude for what the synagogue meant to them as they lived, worked, and raised their families in the Downriver area.

– Marilyn Krainen

POETRY AND MEMOIR:
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN
Creative Expressions

Essayist and professor of non-fiction at Ohio University, Dinty W. Moore reminds us that "the best writing also provokes an emotional reaction," and that "what we are looking for, in the exchange between writer and reader, is resonance."

This year, *Michigan Jewish History's Creative Expressions* includes a poem by Detroit native Cindy Frenkel, whose poetry has been featured in diverse publications such as *Ellipsis*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The New York Observer*. She wrote articles for and edited the Detroit Institute of Arts magazine and co-authored *100 Essential Books for Jewish Readers*. Frenkel's poem, "The Need," allows us into the experience of brutality, survival, immigration, and transcendence through acts of love and kindness. Hers is a beautiful poem about her grandfather who wants for his granddaughter not material wealth but the wealth of tradition and family. In four short stanzas we come to know this man, these values.

Frances Driker's memoir, *Live and Be Well*, published for her family in 1985, covers the years 1922 to 1985. With the charm and warmth of a loving and grateful wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Driker shares the story of her journey of emigration which began in Topy, Russia, and ended in Detroit during the summer of 1922. In Detroit, she connected with her "landsleit" and hundreds of other Jewish immigrants who arrived during this same era. Her writing is delightful and expressive and offers a rare and personal glimpse into what life was like in Detroit for a young immigrant during one of the greatest periods of growth in U.S. history.

We hope you enjoy this year's selections. *Creative Expressions* is a collection of poems and memoirs that reflect upon the Jewish experience in Michigan. We welcome submissions for this section: childhood escapades, falling in love, letters from camp, getting married, raising children, a first job, family holiday gatherings, and so on. Submissions should be sent to the editor or to Joy Gaines-Friedler (wrbice@michjewishhistory.org or caboti@yahoo.com). You can also mail your writings to JHSM, Creative Expressions, 6600 West Maple Rd., West Bloomfield, Michigan 48322.

With gratitude,
Joy Gaines-Friedler, Editor, Creative Expressions

THE NEED

By Cindy Frenkel, for Joe Frenkel

In the French restaurant, my grandfather
whispers to me, This food is not for me.

I like de Jewish food,
and smiles disarmingly at my mother.
In Pogrebische, when he was a boy,
he hid in the pharmacist's attic,

heard Cossacks below killing his brothers.
His filmy eyes shine
as he tells of coming to Detroit,
peddling thimbles, colored thread, hosiery,
always securing orders
before buying, sleeping

in the narrow bed in his first store.
The bum he let sleep below kept
his cigarette lit—the whole place
caught fire. His German neighbor
offered all his money just so

You don't cry, Joe, don't cry...
Get married, bubbela, he tells me;
his warm hands, shriveled as apricots,
rub mine. A sigh heaves his body.
He stares at the china,
pink freesia, linen cloth.
It's too much. No one needs so much.

Cindy Frenkel of Detroit earned her M.F.A. from Columbia University while working as a member of the editorial staff of The New Yorker. She served as a writer-in-residence for four years with InsideOut Literary Arts Project, which brings working poets into Detroit Public Schools, and is an adjunct professor at Oakland Community College, Lawrence Technological University, Wayne State University, and the Art Institute of Michigan.

LIVE AND BE WELL

By Frances Driker, z"l

INTRODUCTION

Born in 1905, Faygel Hoffman came to America in 1922. Two years later, she married Charles Driker, also an immigrant who arrived the same year as she. Driker penned the stories of how she and Charles met, how they raised their family, and how the two of them committed much of their time to volunteering with numerous agencies and institutions. Frances, who never received any formal education, details the early development of many of Detroit's most important Jewish communal organizations. The Drikers were active or founding members of organizations such as The Odessa Progressive Aid Society (see Michigan Jewish History, 1976) Sholem Aleichem Institute, Jewish Community Council, Pioneer Women, and the Senior Adults of the Jewish Community Center in Oak Park, among others.

Frances Driker's memoir is the story of a deep and abiding love for family and community. Michigan Jewish History is thrilled to include a few passages from this fascinating memoir.

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan would like to thank Eugene Driker for submitting his mother's manuscript, and for allowing us to published parts of it here.



Faygel Hoffman (third from left) sailed to America aboard the S.S. Mauritania at age seventeen.

Page 62: April 5, 1984

To write about sixty years of married life is not an easy task, especially for me. I don't like long speeches and I don't like to repeat myself.

After I lost my parents and lived through pogroms, hunger and poverty in Russia it took me eighteen months to come to America in 1922. I stayed with my brother Joseph. My sister Rose got me a job at the Dittrich Fur Co. They paid me seven dollars a week of which I paid four dollars a week for room and board.

I attended night classes at the Dwyer School on Cardoni and Oakland. There I met Charles. He also came to America in 1922 with his mother and sister. His father came to America in 1914. Charles worked in a steam laundry. He made thirty-five dollars a week. He also had to pay for room and board. We kept company for two years and we decided to get married April 6, 1924.

Charles wanted to buy a hand laundry before we got married....The laundry was on Beaubien Street and Eliot. But Charles only had \$900 and he needed a thousand dollars to buy the laundry. By that time I already made fifteen dollars a week and I saved up a hundred dollars. I offered my one hundred dollars to Charles so he could buy the laundry.



Frances offered Charles her savings so he could purchase a laundry. "That one hundred dollars kept us together for sixty years... we lived in the back of the store two years," she wrote. This is the Drikers in 1974, on their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Charles was active in organizations all through the years. He was President of the Odessa Society and the Landsmanshaften. At the Sholem Aleichem Institute he was President of Chapter One. In 1937 Charles was one of the founders of The Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit. Now he is the President of the Yiddish Culture Club of the Jewish Center on Ten Mile Road.

It is not always easy to be the wife of a very active man in the community, but I am proud to say that Charles preserved the name "Driker" for his family with dignity and honor. For that our children and I love and respect him.

I was active in the Sholem Aleichem Institute, the Women's Division, the Reading Group, and the Pioneer Women. Now, I belong to The Writers Corner and For Women Only at the [Jewish Community] Center.

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We lived on West Lafayette upstairs from the hand laundry. We had three rooms and a little kitchen. There was a stove, a small ice box and no sink. I had to carry water from the bathroom.

While we lived there the city began building the Ambassador Bridge. Our street was not paved, it had wooden bricks. They started to break up the street and all the people from that neighborhood took the little bricks for the furnace. We had a big nickel stove in the dining room, and that heated the house. So Charles and I took our wagon (it was sold to us with the laundry and it was used to deliver some laundry because we did not have a car yet) and we too piled up the store with wooden bricks that lasted for the winter to heat the house.

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When Charles and I got married forty-four years ago, my brother Joe introduced us to two things that played an important role in our lives. One was to subscribe to *Der Tog* (The Day,) a Yiddish paper from New York. At that time it cost five dollars a year, now we pay thirty dollars a year.

My brother worked in a factory, he worked at Chryslers. He was interested in Yiddish literature and Yiddish music. With every subscription of *The Day* they gave books as a premium. We have a fine collection of books. Now they don't give such premium, but we still subscribe to the paper.

Charles was young, full of energy, and he wanted to do things. At that time the *Landsmanshaften*, as they were called, did wonderful work. They called themselves sisters and brothers. They had a Free Loan Association and helped their members if one needed money for business or anything else. They also gave money for the Old Folks Home and to the Hebrew Benevolent Society, for Jewish schools and all kinds of organizations that needed money.

I must tell of an interesting incident that happened in Detroit. Cantor Mogill, who did not belong to the Odessa Society, had a young son, to whom something terrible happened. He ate chicken and swallowed a bone, that is, the bone was in his throat. It could not come out and it could not go down. The doctors could not do anything for the boy. They suggested taking him to Rochester. So, Mr. Mogill came to the Odessa Society and asked for help, and they gave him one hundred dollars. He took the boy to Rochester and they made him well, now he (the boy) is a doctor himself.

To do all that the organization had to raise money. They used to have an annual banquet in the most beautiful hotels such as the Book Cadillac or the

Statler (in Detroit). We still have a huge picture from a banquet like that. All this had to be planned and there were more meetings than I care to remember. Charles was the recording secretary and he had good ideas so they wanted him on all the committees.

In the summertime they had the annual picnic. To make money they had to get all the food free...so everybody donated food.

Mr. Weinman was in the wholesale smoked fish business, so he gave fish, hot dogs, and all the trimmings. Mr. Brusk had a fruit store, so he gave all the vegetables and fruit. The women volunteered to cook and bake all the good things. Frances Shayne took care of that.

Now, there was a problem to find a good place on Belle Isle, so a group of members had an idea to go to Belle Isle Saturday night and look around. They found a perfect place with lots of tables and stoves, but how can they be sure when they go home somebody else won't come and take that place? So they decided to stay there all night.

In the morning some of them came home and some stayed there. They put up a sign, "Odessa Picnic." When we got there everything was set up. The women brought in all kinds of food and the fire was going in the stoves. Everybody was busy and dressed very casual. Mr. Kanter sold checks for the bar. The members brought checks and paid for the food that they donated. Only Mr. Shayne was walking around dressed up like a movie star; tall and slim, in white flannel slacks, white shoes, white silk shirt with cuff links and tie.

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You probably wonder what happened to the watch that the Odessa Society gave to Charles. How come you never see it? Well we have to go back to the last war. Everybody was very patriotic. Everybody wanted to do their share. The government asked the people that stayed home to do all kinds of things for the defense. The homemakers were asked to save all the fat from their kitchens, so we saved every bit of dripping from food, put it in jars and had it ready for the truck to pick up. Then they asked the homemakers to save all the cans from coffee or fruit. We had to take off the labels, wash the cans clean, open the other side, flatten the can and save them in big boxes. Then a truck



From the Driker family scrapbook, this is Charles and Frances with their son, Eugene, circa 1940.

used to come and take that away.

The Defense Department asked the people for all kinds of copper. They let the people know when they would collect them.

When we were in Chicago, we bought a few pieces of furniture, one was a bench with copper legs....I am known to save things for years, but this was not a time to save, this was my country asking me to help. We did not have it too good since we came here, but I love America, it is the best country in the world, so besides the bench with the copper legs, I got together all my silver trays that were given to us when we were married. Everything was ready for the truck to pick up.

Then we hear a special request on the radio. Some soldiers needed watches and those that could spare one should give it. We just looked at each other. Without a word Charles took off his only watch that was given to him and put it in a little box and had it ready. We both knew that nothing was too good for our country. I wonder what the soldier thought when that watch was given to him.

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Referring to the occasion of their forty-fifth wedding anniversary

I know how much my grandchildren like to hear the stories about our lives, so I will tell you about our wedding.

My sister-in-law Goldie, my brother Joe's wife, made my wedding dress and veil. After the wedding I bought some Tintex in the dime store and dyed the dress green and wore it for a long time. Our wedding took place at the Hannah Shloss Building, on High Street and Hastings.

That building was something like The Jewish Center. At the same time there was a lecture upstairs by a great Yiddish poet, Peretz Hirshbein. But nobody could hear him talk because of the music at our wedding, so every once in a while somebody would come down and ask that the music not be played too loud. All the Landsleit of my brother and sister-in-law were there and also all the Landsleit of Grandpa's (Charles) parents were there.

Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary we celebrated at the Sholem Aleichem Institute on Monterey near Dexter. We were so happy at the Sholem Aleichem Institute that we could not think of a more important place or to be with other people than the chaverim [friends] from the shul. So we celebrated on a Friday night at an Oneg Shabbat. Moishe Haar presented a beautiful cultural program. It began with proper songs. Sarah Freedman read poetry, Moishe Haar read from the Bible "The Song of Songs."

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April 22, 1974, Two o'clock Monday morning

Why can't I sleep now? Last night I could not fall asleep because I was excited about the celebration, the golden wedding anniversary our dear children are giving in our honor. I went to bed before midnight, to be sure that I have a good night's sleep, so I will look good the next day at our party. I knew that I should not let even one thought come to my mind. One thought brings another, and another, and then it is no use to try to fall asleep. The best thing is to have the mind blank. But how can I have a blank mind before such an occasion? The first thought came to my mind, [was] when Charles told Eugene, in case they plan to make a party for our fiftieth anniversary, they should not do it because we really don't go for those big parties.

We made plans to go to Florida for the month of March. We hope to be back for Pesach so we will celebrate with the family at the Seder.

We had a wonderful vacation in Florida. Before we left for home we received mail. In one of the envelopes was the invitation to our Golden Wedding Anniversary. As I looked at it I began to cry. Charles was not at the hotel, so I walked over to the ocean. I love to watch the ocean, the water relaxes my nerves. I love to watch the waves, the way they chase one another.

All through the dinner there was beautiful music, Yiddish melodies. Then they played the anniversary waltz. Charles and I danced, but not the waltz. Charles does not dance the waltz, but it really does not matter, we have our own step, whatever the music plays is fine with us.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Levin were among the guests. Carl Levin is the President of the Common Council of the City of Detroit. He presented us with a certificate of recognition for outstanding contribution to the enrichment of our community's cultural life. When Mr. Levin read the certificate, I did not know what to think. I looked at Mr. Levin's face. He has such a good face that I believed everything he said.



Frances Driker (1905-1999) celebrated her ninetieth birthday in June 1995 surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and in the shadow of an original Dexter-Davison street sign, a marker of the neighborhood where she and Charles raised their family.

JHSM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MICHAEL W. MADDIN



This has been an incredible year for the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. We have implemented many new programs, repeated some of our favorites, and enjoyed record turnouts at all. We also hit an important milestone this year, a goal that our board of directors set in motion twelve months ago: JHSM now has 1,100 active members! This is quite an accomplishment when you consider that, less than a decade ago, we had half that many.

To accommodate this growth both in our programming and membership, JHSM now has expanded our staff to three (each works part-time but accomplishes a tremendous amount in that time); and we have updated our by-laws and modernized our systems. One of our most important accomplishments in the past year was the creation and adoption of JHSM's first-ever strategic plan, which outlines our focus and growth for the next five years.

The strategic planning committee worked very hard to craft this important road map. I'd like to share with you a few of the initiatives and highlights. We began by updating our mission statement and creating a vision statement:

Our mission: "The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan shares and celebrates the experiences and contributions of the Jewish people, communities, and institutions of Michigan."

Our vision: "The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan ensures that all generations can access accurate and inspirational information about the experiences, contributions, and legacies of the Jews of Michigan."

The committee also looked at the values that we, as an organization, hold dear. These are words and phrases that remind us of our roots and purpose:

Integrity: to provide reliable and well-researched information for authentic experiences;

Expertise: to produce high-quality, distinctive, and accurate programming and materials;

Community: that we respect the diversity within our community;

Inspiration: we seek to develop pride in Michigan Jewish history and heritage;

Appreciation: that we recognize and value the support of our members, volunteers, and staff.

While strategic plans are rarely exciting to read, their importance is clear. The document is a tool that helps our leadership ensure that we remain focused on our mission; that we remain "on task." If our mission statement is our target, then the four strategic plan priority areas are our arrows: strategies on how we will aim to hit the bullseye.

The four identified strategic focus areas were:

- To build our infrastructure/capacity by developing new leaders, engaging volunteers, and looking to increase our revenue sources and collaborative partnerships.
- To update and recreate our website, www.michjewishhistory.org, to be an invaluable community resource that supports JHSM's mission, and to function as an interactive "virtual museum" of Michigan's Jewish history with relevant and reliable information, visuals, and data.
- To continue to provide programming (tours, collections, programs, exhibits, publications) that is engaging, interactive, and directly supportive of the JHSM mission and vision, and that contains accurate, well-prepared information.
- To continue to value our donors and members, including an effort to reach out beyond the Detroit area and engage new members throughout the state, and to inspire our members and donors to continue and increase their support.

As president, I could not have been more pleased with this outcome. Each member of the committee was focused on crafting a plan that contained realistic goals and objectives, maximized our leadership and staff, and continued to ensure that JHSM would remain a well-managed, efficient entity. Implementation, which already has begun, will be important to our future sustainability and growth. I am grateful to our strategic planning committee, staff, and board for allowing and approving the entire process and for their willingness to engage their conclusions for the future.

Breaking with the tradition of providing a detailed annual report in this journal, I urge you to read our new bulletin available on our website (www.michjewishhistory.org) for my recent annual meeting remarks. In the meantime, it has been a pleasure to serve as JHSM's president during this exciting period of growth. It is heartening to know that with our foundation strengthened, we will continue to look forward to great things for our future.

See you all during this next year.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Maddin, President

FORMER U.S. SENATOR CARL LEVIN

RECIPIENT OF THE 2015 LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD



Although the date when Carl Levin first became involved with the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is unknown, photographic evidence suggests it was in October 1977, when the young president of Detroit's City Council stood on the corner of East Congress and St. Antoine to help dedicate a historic marker identifying the location of Michigan's first Jewish religious services. Two years later, U.S. Senator Carl Levin, Michigan's first Jewish U.S. senator, stood at the lectern addressing the 20th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

It was with great honor that in May 2015 the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan presented its Leonard N. Simons History Award to Senator Carl Levin.

Throughout his forty-five-year career of distinguished service, Senator Levin played a prominent role in telling Michigan's Jewish story. His demonstrated stewardship of that history includes the adventurous rescue of a rare 1920s stained-glass window from the former Mogan Abraham Synagogue on Farnsworth in Detroit; his preface for the children's activity book, *Early Jewish Days in Michigan*; and his frequent appearances at JHSM events, including the dedication of the Chapman Abraham/Jewish Soldiers in Civil War historical marker in Milliken State Park; and J-Cycle. He also appeared in the locally produced documentary, *Detroit Remember When: The Jewish Community*; and both Carl and his brother, U.S. Congressman Sander Levin, were featured in the highly acclaimed documentary, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, by Aviva Kempner.

Throughout his political career, Levin remained a staunch supporter of the United States auto industry and its collaboration with the military vehicle industry, fought against Pentagon overspending, was a leading protector of the Great Lakes, and led in the creation of a national park and a national marine

sanctuary in Michigan. Upon his retirement in January 2015, Senator Levin was one of the longest-serving U.S. senators in the nation's history.

Levin has joined Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn as senior counsel and is on the faculty of Wayne State University Law School where, together with Eugene Driker, he has established the Levin Center. Through academic programming, scholarship, and training, the center will focus on the understanding of how effective legislative oversight can lead to significant and meaningful changes in public policy and institutional behavior.

Like the award's namesake, Levin's demonstrated passion for preserving, sharing, and celebrating Michigan's Jewish history was why the Leonard N. Simons Award committee unanimously chose to honor this Michigan hero.

LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD

The prestigious Leonard N. Simons History Award, first established in 1991, honors those who have made outstanding contributions to the enrichment, preservation, and dissemination of Michigan Jewish history. Presented by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the award supports the organization's mission to educate, celebrate, and promote awareness of outstanding Jews of Michigan. Like previous honorees, Levin has a deep interest in and has made important contributions to furthering the mission of the JHSM and has participated in many programs and initiatives that have had far-reaching impact.

1991 Philip Slomovitz	2004 Susie Citrin
1992 Avern L. Cohn	2005 Edith L. Resnick
1993 George M. Stutz	2006 Gerald S. Cook
1994 Irwin Shaw	2007 Sharon L. Alterman
1995 Emma Lazaroff Schaver	2008 George M. Zeltzer
1996 Leslie S. Hough and Philip P. Mason	2009 Mandell L. Berman
1997 Mary Lou Simons Zieve	2010 James D. Grey
1998 Judith Levin Cantor	2011 Charlotte Dubin
1999 Michael W. Maddin	2012 Michael O. Smith
2000 Alan D. Kandel	2013 Irwin J. Cohen
2001 Sidney M. Bolkosky	2014 A. Alfred Taubman
2002 Adele W. Staller	2015 Carl Levin
2003 Matilda Brandwine	



(l to r) JHSM president Michael Maddin and Leonard N. Simons History Award chairperson Mary Lou Zieve presented Eugene Applebaum with the JHSM Lifetime Achievement Award in June 2015.

JHSM LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD *Eugene Applebaum*

For only the second time in its history, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to an individual whose distinguished service deserves special recognition. Eugene Applebaum was honored with this award in the summer of 2015 for his leadership, philanthropy, and unequalled dedication to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and to the Jewish community of Detroit.

In 2004, this award was presented to Max M. Fisher.

Mary Lou Zieve, chair of the JHSM Leonard N. Simons History Award committee, said that "Eugene's life exemplifies the commitment we have to preserving Michigan's Jewish history, and his dedication to philanthropy demonstrates the important impact one individual can have on his community."

Applebaum, founder of Arbor Drugs, Inc., was born and raised in Detroit, and has remained in the area throughout his life. From his childhood experiences as a Fresh Air Camp camper, to his years at Central High School and his studies at Wayne State University, Applebaum has remained invested and interested in preserving Detroit's – and Michigan's – unique Jewish story.

Eugene and Marcia Applebaum have dedicated their lives to philanthropy, focusing on education, health care, the arts, and the Jewish community, particularly in Detroit and in Michigan. In addition to their financial support of JHSM for more than a decade, the Applebaums have been generous donors to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Mayo Clinic, Beaumont Health System, and Wayne State University, which holds the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Applebaum's career began in 1963 when he opened his first drugstore, Civic Drugs, in Dearborn. Through hard work and determination, Applebaum expanded the business and, in 1974, he brought together six drugstores in the Detroit area to form Arbor Drugs, Inc. Arbor Drugs grew to become the nation's eighth-largest drugstore chain with more than 200 stores. In 1998, the CVS Corporation acquired Arbor Drugs, Inc. Applebaum currently serves as founder and chairman of Arbor Investments Group, LLC.

IN MEMORIAM

A. ALFRED TAUBMAN 1924-2015



Adolph Alfred Taubman was a man gifted with energy, vision, and the drive to accomplish. His career vaulted him from early success as a Detroit-area builder into the international worlds of real estate and retail, art, and philanthropy, but he never, ever forgot southeastern Michigan, his home.

Only a year before his April 17, 2015 death at age ninety, he accepted JHSM's Leonard N. Simons History Award, sharing a stage with Scott Kaufman,

CEO of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, and reminiscing about his early memories.

The fourth child of Philip and Fannie Taubman, immigrants from Russia, Adolph Alfred Taubman grew up in Pontiac, part of a small Jewish community. At the Simons award ceremony, he remembered studying for his bar mitzvah in a simple room above a Pontiac store – a sight he said inspired his father, a custom home builder, to build the city's only Conservative synagogue, Congregation B'nai Israel, a decade later.

At age eleven, in the depths of the Depression, Taubman worked at a Pontiac store on nights and weekends, acquiring a solid work ethic and the first glimmerings of an understanding of retail, from customer psychology to the rudiments of merchandising – early lessons he would later apply to business and philanthropy.

Taubman admired, and advanced, his father's entrepreneurial nature and risk-taking spirit. After studying architecture and art at the University of Michigan and Lawrence Institute of Technology, and marrying his first wife, Reva Kolodney, Taubman supervised construction sites for the Charles Agree Company. In 1950, with a \$5,000 loan from Manufacturers Bank, he launched his own commercial construction firm.

In the late 1950s, entrepreneur Max Fisher hired Taubman to build Speedway gas stations. Fisher quickly recognized the young man's unusual drive and vision. "I saw something other people didn't see in him," Fisher later said, explaining that he could envision him going "all the way to the top."

Fisher, sixteen years his senior, became Taubman's mentor, his guide into the spheres of finance, politics, and philanthropy, and one of his closest friends. Their relationship flourished over the years as Taubman became a shopping-mall pioneer, recognized for his ambitious and meticulously designed centers that defined late-twentieth-century suburban landscapes. "If Victor Gruen invented the shopping mall, Alfred Taubman perfected it," author Malcolm Gladwell wrote in a *New Yorker* article.

Later, Taubman brought Fisher into some of his most important ventures, including the purchase, and profitable sale, of a large swath of California's Orange County, and the purchase of Sotheby Parke Bernet, a failing art-auction house he reinvented as Sotheby's, using his retail savvy to restore glamour and sales. (For a time, the venerable British auction house's official address was listed as the Taubman Company headquarters in Bloomfield Hills.) The two men also joined forces in the building of Detroit's Riverfront Towers, a downtown riverfront apartment project.

Both Fisher and Taubman took philanthropy seriously. Taubman was a generous and exacting giver but he could also be a spontaneous one – even when he was a fledgling builder. He gave from his head and his heart, regardless of who was looking or whether a tax deduction was involved.

That's how he reached out to a couple trying to build a Frank Lloyd Wright house in Bloomfield Hills.

The house was the dream of Sara and Melvyn Smith, a Jewish couple who had convinced the famous architect to help them build an affordable house of his design. Taubman, then a young married man with a new company, saw that the project was in trouble; with winter approaching, the Smiths lacked money for windows. Taubman ordered the windows and had them promptly installed. To Taubman, community service was part family and part Jewish tradition, a yoke that he willfully carried on. His own father had helped build and fund the construction of Pontiac's synagogue, instructing his son in the importance of community giving. Today, Taubman's children, Robert S., Richard, and Gayle Taubman Kalisman, carry on their father's commitment to philanthropy and community involvement.

Why, for example, was he spending \$20 million to politically advance stem-cell research?

"I don't do these good works to please anybody but myself," he answered in 2008. At eighty-four, he still had flair; he was wearing a three-piece suit brightened by a copper-colored shirt and red socks – a combination that magically worked. "I learned a long time ago that when you do something good for society, you're the beneficiary," he said.

In his final years, he lived that philosophy with increasing enthusiasm,

donating \$142 million to the University of Michigan alone, and making what he called “a strong bet” on curing diseases with stem-cell research. But he continued to give thoughtfully and with discipline to many smaller organizations, including JHSM.

In 2008, rather than making an outright donation to JHSM, for example, he offered a challenge grant: He would donate up to an annual total of \$40,000, for four years, as a way to encourage others to give.

“Each year, we reported our fundraising success to Taubman and promptly received his \$40,000 check, which was deposited to our endowment fund,” Jerry Cook and Mary Lou Zieve recalled when they nominated him for the Simons Award in 2014. The impact on the organization – \$160,000 over four years – was transformational.

The Taubman name adorns many buildings, including the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, while JHSM named its major donor list, the Heritage Council, in his honor. This was meant not only as a tribute but also as a model of philanthropic success that others might follow.

Taubman had a unique presence. He could be brusque, witty, extraordinarily kind, imaginative, critical, and spontaneous, all within the space of a few minutes. As a powerful businessman with perfectionist standards, he inspired trepidation and sometimes fear in employees and associates. But he was also deeply admired and beloved by those who knew him.

Perhaps his most graceful and illuminating moments came after his 2001 conviction for his role in a price-fixing scheme, when a jury decided that he and an auction house competitor had colluded. He always spoke of his nine months in prison with humor and acceptance, despite his belief in his innocence. His 2008 memoir, *Threshold Resistance*, offers an engaging look at his life. “I wrote it for my grandchildren,” he said.

Taubman was a builder by profession; constructing his life like a skyscraper, always reaching higher. He once aptly described his own creative drive, saying “I see the way things are and see how they can be not only different, but better.”

Two years before Taubman's death, his eldest son Robert S., CEO of the Taubman Company, gracefully echoed that view in a speech. “My father never stopped learning and dreaming,” he said. Alfred Taubman's legacy, in memory and in the continuing fruits of his philanthropy, is about the power of aspiration – to learn, dream, achieve – and, ultimately, to return home and give back.

Taubman is survived by his wife, Judith Rounick Taubman (a former Miss Israel whom he married in 1982), his children Robert, Richard, and Gayle, two step-children, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. – *Laura Berman is a Detroit News columnist and former JHSM Advisory Board member.*

FLORA HOMMEL

1928-2015



Flora Hommel, a passionate pioneer of the Lamaze method of painless childbirth, died May 15, 2015, at the age of eighty-seven. Inspired by the birth of her daughter Claudia in January 1950, Hommel transformed the childbirth experience for more than 18,000 women and their families in Detroit and beyond.

Born Flora Nadine Suhd in 1928 to Morris and Rae Albaum Suhd, she and her older brother Melvin grew up in Detroit. At fifteen, Flora met her brother's friend, Central High School senior Bernard Hommel, developing a bond that deepened while they corresponded during his World War II enlistment. In August 1946, eighteen-year-old Flora married Hommel. They sailed to Paris where Bernard studied music and Flora took odd jobs before translating French and teaching English.

While there, Flora became pregnant and, although frightened by the thought of a painful labor, she marveled at her own easy delivery. Determined to dedicate her life to helping other women experience pain-free childbirth, she began hearing about Dr. Ferdinand Lamaze's work to ease labor. Through a magnificent set of circumstances, Flora began training at the Metal Workers' Hospital in Paris where Dr. Lamaze and his assistant, Dr. Pierre Vellay, used a method called psychoprophylaxis, which translates to mind (psycho) and prevention (prophylaxis) of pain.

Flora's determination to provide women with choices in childbirth strengthened when she and Bernard returned to Detroit in 1953. In 1958, she graduated from Wayne State University's nursing program and began teaching Lamaze techniques from her home on Pierson Street in Detroit. Over the objections of hospital administrators, Flora persisted in assisting mothers as a monitrice (coach) during birth, fought for husbands to stay in the delivery room, and empowered women from all socio-economic backgrounds to experience childbirth on their own terms.

In 1960, Hommel and a group of her supporters founded the Childbirth Without Pain Association, which in 1964 became the non-profit Childbirth Without Pain Education Association (CWPEA). She served as executive director of the organization, supervising and coordinating activities such as

training teachers and monitrices and providing programs and workshops for a growing number of families. Women and their partners learned about labor and delivery, relaxation exercises, and proper breathing techniques. Expectant parents were encouraged to eliminate unnecessary medical treatments and procedures, bring fathers into the delivery room, and create home-like settings. Working with similar organizations around the country and internationally, Hommel's efforts to prepare women emotionally and physically for a pain-free labor became an accepted practice. CWPEA dissolved in the mid-1990s as more women began working, depleting the organization's volunteer force.

Hommel's passion to change the world extended beyond championing painless childbirth. She actively promoted women's rights, served as a city public health commissioner working to improve health care for families, served on the national board of the Gray Panthers, and promoted peaceful conflict resolutions through involvement in city politics. As a civil-rights and peace activist, she worked alongside Dr. Charles Wright, translated for Paul Robeson in France, and demonstrated against the war on both sides of the Atlantic.

Flora Hommel was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1994; her papers and the history of CWPEA are housed at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University. Hommel is survived by her daughter Claudia Hommel, son-in-law Cappy Kidd, and thousands of families whose babies entered the world joyfully and painlessly. – *Susan Brohman*

A full profile of Flora Hommel can be found in MJH, Vol. 51, 2011

JOAN ISRAEL 1930-2014



The often over-used term “woman warrior” can lose its gravitas, but Joan Israel deserves the title. Israel, who served as the second president of the Detroit chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1971, passed away in December 2014.

I met Israel at that time, during the “second wave” of the women’s movement and the struggle for equality and justice. Although NOW focused on multiple issues, Israel focused much of her early attention on active campaigns for affordable, accessible child care, which put her squarely in place as a target for conservatives who were sure Israel hated children (she had two), wanted to destroy the sanctity of marriage (she married Ken Israel in the late 1960s and remained married to him until her passing), or was a Communist. This didn’t deter Israel’s fervor. When her committee asked for the Detroit City Council to help address the issue, they were ignored. That was just the impetus needed for Israel to stage a sit-in at the council offices. Committee members happily brought their babies, letting them crawl and squeal! Their persistence resulted in the Child Care Coordinating Council which still exists today.

Joan Israel was born in New York in 1930. After obtaining her master’s degree in social work from Smith College in 1954, she came to Detroit with her first husband, Irving Torgoff, and worked for Jewish Family and Children’s Service in Detroit. She then became director of Operation Friendship, funded by the National Council of Jewish Women, from 1960 to 1968.

Israel became involved with NOW in the early 1970s. Although the organization’s membership numbers were modest, NOW worked in coalition with unions and other organizations to tackle women’s equality and justice issues. We were learning to be leaders by relying on role models from two generations past, the Suffragists. We ran our board meetings as non-hierarchical and inclusive. Unfortunately, this meant the meetings lasted for hours. At one point we tried to avoid using Robert’s Rules of Order because they were composed by a man.

Among Israel’s many successful efforts was a challenge to the Federal Communications Commission license of WXYZ-TV (Detroit’s ABC affiliate) for the station’s lack of female on-air newscasters and its poor coverage of women’s issues. The challenge resulted in a committee of women who met with station executives to monitor progress. It also led to Israel being named a host

of the program "Free for All," which was moderated by anchor Mort Crim and dealt with opinions about current issues. Israel was in her element.

By the time affirmative action became law in 1973, NOW's Detroit leadership team had gained expertise in the complexities of writing and implementing a business plan. Israel, together with six other NOW Detroit leaders, created New Options, Inc., to address issues of women in the workplace. Later, Israel helped establish New Options Personnel, Inc. to recruit and counsel women and minorities seeking jobs. As the sole source for recruitment of women, New Options Personnel contracted with the City of Detroit's Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) to place women in non-traditional jobs (defined as any job paying more than \$10,000 per year).

It was a heady time. We would be job developing in the morning, running to Kennedy Square for a rally at noon, and attending NOW meetings in the evening. One evening in 1975, Israel received a call from Detroit City Council member Maryann Mahaffey. Mahaffey was at the Detroit Athletic Club to attend a meeting to which she had been invited, but she had been refused front-door admittance (female visitors were required to use a side door). Mahaffey was fuming. By morning, we drafted a resolution that berated the injustice of the policy, and Israel rallied a group of activists to meet in front of the DAC. We marched through the front door and up the grand staircase and read the resolution. When finished, we were greeted by stunned silence. Israel's instinct kicked in. She nudged me in the arm and said "Sing, Gerry!" I belted out "I Am Woman," and together we marched out of the club with panache.

In 1982, New Options Personnel closed. Israel worked in a private practice as a feminist psychotherapist. Later she called upon her team of "veteran feminists," including me and Carol King, to produce a film about Michigan's second-wave feminist movement. "Passing The Torch" debuted on WTVS, Detroit's local PBS affiliate. A guide for teachers was also designed and distributed, with more than 1,000 DVDs going to schools, libraries, and organizations.

Throughout her life, Israel remained engaged in fighting for equality and astutely watching political wrangling. She probably knew the phone numbers of every Michigan congressman and senator. Her daughter Rachel reflected that Israel was never afraid to express her frustration or support. "Equality was in her backbone; her parents encouraged her to never hold back, to grab the bull by the horns." To me, Joan reflected that she saw her life as a jigsaw puzzle – and all the years she worked for women's equality were a big part of that puzzle. – *Geraldine Barrons worked as a partner in New Options Personnel, Inc., was CEO of the Women's Economic Club, and was founding president of the National Association of Women Business Owners. Now retired, she volunteers with several community organizations.*

EVELYN NOVECK 1920-2015

Evelyn Noveck, who served as the twelfth president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan from 1986 to 1988, passed away in January 2015, at the age of 95. During her tenure, she hosted various programs including the launch of an archives project, which ultimately led to the creation of the Jewish Community Archives. She married Harold Noveck (z"l) in 1944. He served as attorney for Berry Gordy (Motown Records) for some thirty years. The couple attended multiple high-profile Motown events and concerts, and amassed a priceless collection of memorabilia which she donated to the Motown Museum in Detroit. Noveck is survived by her children Daniel (Carol) and Morton (Deborah), four grandchildren, and brother, Paul Sislin.

BENNO LEVI 1923-2014

Benno Levi was neither loud nor boisterous, but he was never quiet about his impressive past. Levi, a frequent contributor to Michigan Jewish History, served on JHSM's board of directors for many years, beginning in 1985. In 1987, he was appointed treasurer, a volunteer position he held for seventeen years. Levi passed away in August 2014, at the age of ninety-one.

Born and raised in Germany, Levi, his sister Ruth, and brother Ernest escaped the Nazi regime and came to the United States in the care of the German-Jewish Children's Aid Society. His vivid and emotional memories of that difficult departure from his home and family were shared by Levi in several books and articles, including *Michigan Jewish History*. He arrived in Detroit in 1934 at age eleven. He knew four English words. Within a few months, he had mastered the language.

Levi recalled that special time in MJH, "By early summer, when the baseball season was in full swing, we began to avidly follow the game as Hank Greenberg paced the Tigers into the World Series." Levi graduated from Central High School in 1941. That summer, he had a job with the newly created *Detroit Jewish News*. In 1943, he was proudly called to serve with the U.S. Army. He was sent to the Pacific and was on Guam when the Americans first secured the island after a round of heavy fighting. When U.S. aircraft mistakenly began bombing American troops, Levi ran out waving the American signal flags, risking his own life, and alerted the planes to fly away. His action saved countless lives. For that act of bravery, he was awarded the Silver Star.

Levi eventually graduated from Wayne State University and became comptroller of Detroit's Sinai Hospital, and then of St. Joseph's Hospital in Mt. Clemens. He retired in 1985. Levi is survived by his wife Ruth, six children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

2014 CORRECTIONS

The editors of Michigan Jewish History make every attempt to present accurate information. We are grateful when readers contact us to point out errors or omissions.

Apologies are in order to two of our authors: to Gerald Cook, whose name was inadvertently left off as author of the 2014 memoriam of David Page; and to Peg Padnos, the poet who penned *Eshkalot Anavim*, the poetry selection printed in Creative Reflections. Her name was misspelled in two places (pages 99 and 100) as was the dedication. *Eshkalot Anavim* is dedicated to Judeth.

We asked readers to help identify the women in the picture below and received a few names. The caption now reads:



"The Annual Jewish Book Fair's success is dependent upon the resources of volunteers. These women (l to r) unknown, Pauline Jackson, unknown and Lina Small were volunteers for the 1953 event."

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: THE EARLY JEWISH PRESENCE ON THE DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

Thank you to Gerald Cook for clarification on several items. The article abstract incorrectly states that six Jews were on the first library commission. It should have read that there were six Jews who served on the commission from the late 1880s until the mid-1950s. In addition, one of the early commission members identified in the article is Levi Lewis Barbour. Cook's research suggests that Barbour was not Jewish. Cook and several others also pointed to an incorrect statement on page 26, which says that Henry Meyers was succeeded by Rabbi Leon Fram of Congregation Shaarey Zedek. Rabbi Leon Fram served as the rabbi for Temple Israel.

BOWLING IN SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

When we publish articles that recount the businesses in a certain area or of a certain type, we often hear from readers eager to add more context to our research. We learned that JHSM member Ruby Kushner's father owned a bowling center on Dexter, and Asher Tilchin owns a bowling alley in Port Huron, Michigan. Also, the names in the caption on page 42 were reversed. The correct caption, with the photos, is below:



Harry Roth's (l) knowledge of the bowling business coupled with Joe Friedman's (r) construction expertise made for a perfect partnership. They had a deep mutual respect and fondness for each other and never had a business contract but instead relied on trust and a handshake. Both men were devoted to the business, working long and hard hours. The two families developed a friendship and trust that endures to this day.

JEWISH FEDERAL JUDGES IN MICHIGAN

Judge Theodore Levin did not leave the bench in 1967, as the article states. 1967 was the year he ended his tenure as chief judge. He continued to serve until his death at the end of 1970. Also, many thanks to JHSM member Rudy Simons, who sent in this article he found while going through some of his family records. Rudy is the nephew of Judge Charles Simons, one of the eleven federal judges profiled by author Robert Davidow in this 2014 journal article.

The article, published in 1925, refers to a case Judge Simons presided over. The accused stole an automobile belonging to Judge Simons's brother. He pleaded guilty and Judge Simons sentenced him to two years in the federal penitentiary. Rudy Simons pointed out the seemingly obvious conflict of interest.

**COURT AVENGES
BROKEN PLEDGE**
1925

**Sentences Auto Thief, Who
Failed To Keep Faith, to
2 Years' Imprisonment.**

"You can't break your word to Uncle Sam and get away with it." With these words Judge Charles C. Simons, in the Federal Court, today sentenced Thomas Cleary, 29 years old, of Chicago, to two years in the Federal Penitentiary at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

Cleary pleaded guilty Dec. 20, 1924, to violating the Dyer Act in that he stole an automobile in Detroit and drove it out of the State. Judge Simons stole the car, property of the Addison Garage, George, out of 17-year-old wife, Loretta Ott Cleary, who was dancing in the Addison Hotel, chorus to the music of an orchestra led by Judge Simons' other brother, Seymour.

TRACED CAR.
Federal agents traced the car to Chicago, Houston, Tex., New Orleans, La., and finally to Marked Tree, Ark., where Cleary was arrested.

On his plea of guilty, Judge Simons, at the urging of Mr. Cleary, deferred sentence until Feb. 20. But on that date, and failed again when he was given a week's adjournment. He was arrested again a week ago while driving a taxi-cab in Chicago and using the name of Sullivan.

His mother, Mrs. Margaret Cleary, pleaded with Judge Simons for leniency on the grounds Cleary had been led to commit the crime by a man much older than himself, R. E. Long, his alleged accomplice, who was recently sentenced to serve six months in prison by the Federal Court in Chicago for impersonating a secret service officer.

WIFE BLAMES SELF.

REMARKABLE ARTISTS: HARRY JORDAN

The caption for the photo below, left, of the Yiddish-theater actor Harry Jordan, identified his character as Little Lord Fauntleroy. Rather, the costume is most likely from a performance of Jacob Gordin's "God, Man and Devil." In addition, the caption for the photo at right, of a Yiddish theater acting company, did not identify Harry Jordan, who is in the top row at far right. The photo appeared on page 82.



AN UPDATE TO THE MEMORIAM OF DR. ABRAHAM NEMETH

Abe Pasternak and his daughter Judy contacted JHSM to offer a personal story about the *siddur* (prayer book) Abraham Nemeth used during services at Adat Shalom Synagogue. Nemeth, who was blind from birth, knew many of the prayers by heart, but, in 2004, began a project to translate a *siddur* into Braille. Pasternak was a volunteer for Detroit's Kosher Meals on Wheels and was delivering meals to Nemeth. During one of the deliveries, the men got to talking. Nemeth realized Pasternak's expertise in Hebrew and asked if he would help. Pasternak worked alongside Nemeth as a proofreader for the Hebrew vowels on *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, edited by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, that Nemeth was translating into Braille. So began a partnership and friendship that went on to last many years.

THE JOSHUA SOCIETY

***“When your children shall ask their
parents in time to come...” Joshua 4:21***

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L'Dor V'Dor

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Norma Goldman, Stanley Meretsky

The Joshua Society gratefully recognizes and honors as Charter Members those who this year make a bequest in their will to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. By performing this mitzvah, your bequest for the future will be matched at this time by the A. Alfred Taubman Challenge Fund. All bequests to the JHSM in your estate will be credited for membership at the appropriate level in the JHSM Heritage Council.*

___ Please enroll me as a Charter Member of the Joshua Society.

I am making a testamentary bequest in the amount of \$ _____
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in my will to be part of the JHSM Heritage Council Endowment or
(specific purpose) _____

(*Minimum \$1000)

Name _____

Address _____

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The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan profoundly appreciates your support.

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info@michjewishhistory.org

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I hereby join the Heritage Council at the following level:

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- ☐ \$ 5,000 Dean of the Heritage Council
- ☐ \$ 1,000 Fellow
- ☐ \$ 500 Collector



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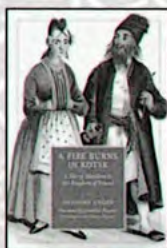
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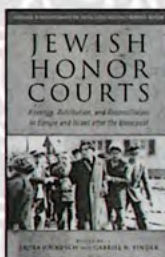
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