

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



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## THE FIFTH ESTATE



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

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### COVER PHOTO:

*Cover of the Fifth Estate, Detroit's underground newspaper,  
April 1969.*

# 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 56

Fall 2016

Tishrei 5777

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# Editor's Letter

Spanning the bridge of time and place. Those are the words that come to me as I look at this, the 56th edition of *Michigan Jewish History*. Our travels begin in Detroit, in the 1960s, during the anything-but-halcyon days of the hippie counterculture, and traverse back to the dusty, difficult days of the Civil War, in Grand Rapids, where a handful of Civil War veterans settled and made Michigan their home.

As Harvey Ovshinsky shares in his article on the creation of the *Fifth Estate*, one of the earliest “underground” alternative newspapers, Jews cared deeply about the issues dividing our country: the Vietnam War, racism, social justice. Newspapers such as his *Fifth Estate* were important mouthpieces for a generation of young people wanting to change the world. Centuries earlier, Jewish men fought on both sides of the Civil War, willing to sacrifice their lives in hopes of unifying a divided nation. Some of their tales are retold by Margaret Finkelstein and Megan Yost in their look back at the early days of the Grand Rapids community.

The generations of men and women who preceded Ovshinsky and his fellow journalists, and who followed those Civil War soldiers, shaped our Michigan Jewish history. Critical organizations such as the Jewish Woman's Club were created to serve the underserved. The organization would evolve into the National Council of Jewish Women Greater Detroit Section, and, as author Bobbie Lewis writes, it would go on to become a powerhouse for women to hone their skills in community service and advocacy. Those who followed in the footsteps of those Civil War soldiers would eventually help found synagogues, such as Beth Israel in Ann Arbor, or institutions such as the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. The visionaries who led this organization are the reasons that the JFMD continues to exist today. Author Beth Robinson details the history of one such visionary, William Avrunin, whose training and background elevated the organization to a detail of professionalism not seen before.

This issue introduces us to Rabbi Richard Hertz, a WWII chaplain who would unify soldiers in prayer, and Jack and Arthur Bricker, furriers whose visions dressed some of America's most famous. We mine the creative talents of dancer Harriet Berg and book artist Lynne Avadenka. And, we ponder the question of name changing with author Kirsten Fermaglich.

Crossing this bridge is a delightful and inspiring journey. We encourage you to share these stories with your family and friends. Encourage them to become members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan so that they too can travel along with us. Better yet, pay their toll – membership begins at just \$36 a year, and makes a wonderful gift. – Wendy Rose Bice, *Editor*

# Feature Article

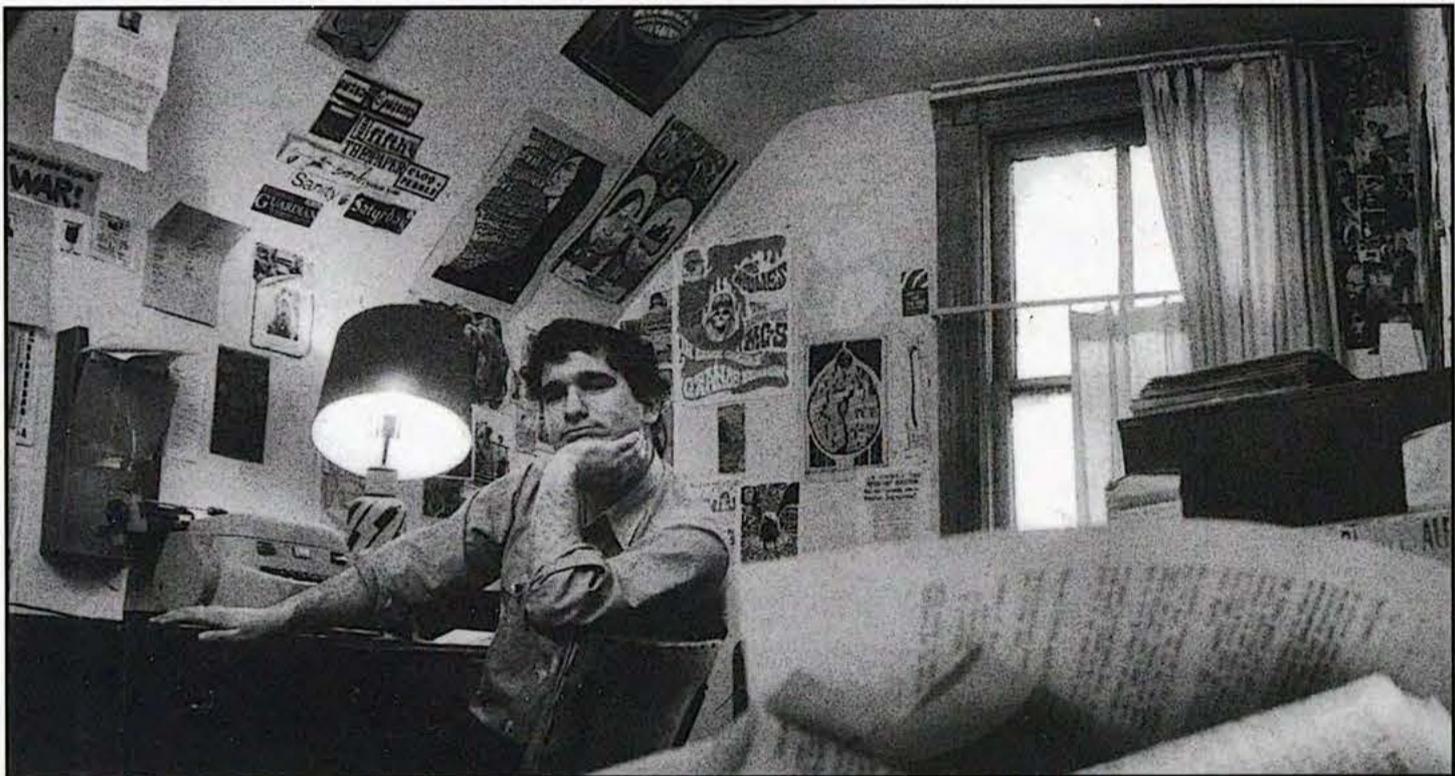
## “THERE’S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE”: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE FIFTH ESTATE

By *Tim Kiska, Harvey Ovshinsky, and Peter Werbe*

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*In 2015, the Fifth Estate, the oldest surviving sixties-era “underground” alternative newspaper, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. In a pair of articles, screenwriter and documentary producer Harvey Ovshinsky and his colleagues reveal the history of the publication, from its rocky start to its present-day, quarterly magazine format. Since his journalistic debut in 1965, Ovshinsky has served as an inspiration to Metro Detroit journalists and other urban storytellers. His five-decade career has straddled print, broadcast, digital, and social media and has extended to the classroom and the big screen.*

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*In November 1965, the Fifth Estate newspaper made its debut. Founded by Harvey Ovshinsky, pictured here in 1967, the paper was one of America’s first alternative, underground newspapers.*

*Courtesy Tony Spina/Detroit Free Press/Walter P. Reuther Library*

In the 1960s, long before the internet revolutionized how newspapers reported the news, alternative publications, then referred to as underground papers, were the original media disrupters. These were hip, exciting, angry, iconoclastic newspapers that gave full-throttle coverage to the growing counterculture, anti-Vietnam War, civil-rights, and gay- and women’s-rights movements.

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“Never again will we see anything like the underground press,” wrote John McMillian in his book, *Smoking Typewriters*. “Underground papers captured the zeitgeist of the sixties, speaking directly to the readers and reflecting the spirit of cultural and political protest.”

The *Fifth Estate* was born in the mind of seventeen-year-old Mumford High School graduate Harvey Ovshinsky, a creative but restless teenager, who moved to Los Angeles in 1965. “L.A. blew me away,” Ovshinsky recalls. “There was so much youthful energy and creative and political excitement, not unlike at Mumford which, for me, was the epicenter for high-school Jewish progressive activism in the early/mid-sixties.”

When he wasn’t working at L.A.’s underground paper, the *Los Angeles Free Press*, Ovshinsky hung out upstairs at the Fifth Estate coffeehouse, where he dreamed about returning to Detroit and publishing his own newspaper, which he would later name after his favorite coffeehouse.

But Detroit wasn’t Los Angeles. It wasn’t easy for the determined teenager to convince his high-school friends to help him launch the paper. “It was hard,” he recalled, “because they hadn’t seen the future, and at the *L.A. Free Press*, I did.” Ovshinsky went door-to-door seeking out members of area civil-rights and anti-war organizations, looking for material. Like his former classmates, those activists weren’t sure what Ovshinsky was talking about, but they were excited about the opportunity to have a newspaper print their press releases and help get their word out. That was a first!

Still, the paper had a rocky start.

The *Fifth Estate*’s first issue was delayed by a month when a commercial printer refused to print the paper because of its “unpatriotic” content. His primary objection was a political cartoon that portrayed an American flag with rifles and bayonets in place of the stripes. Finally, the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., a Black Nationalist minister, and his brother Henry, who published their own newspaper, agreed to print the issue. In November 1965, the *Fifth Estate* was born.



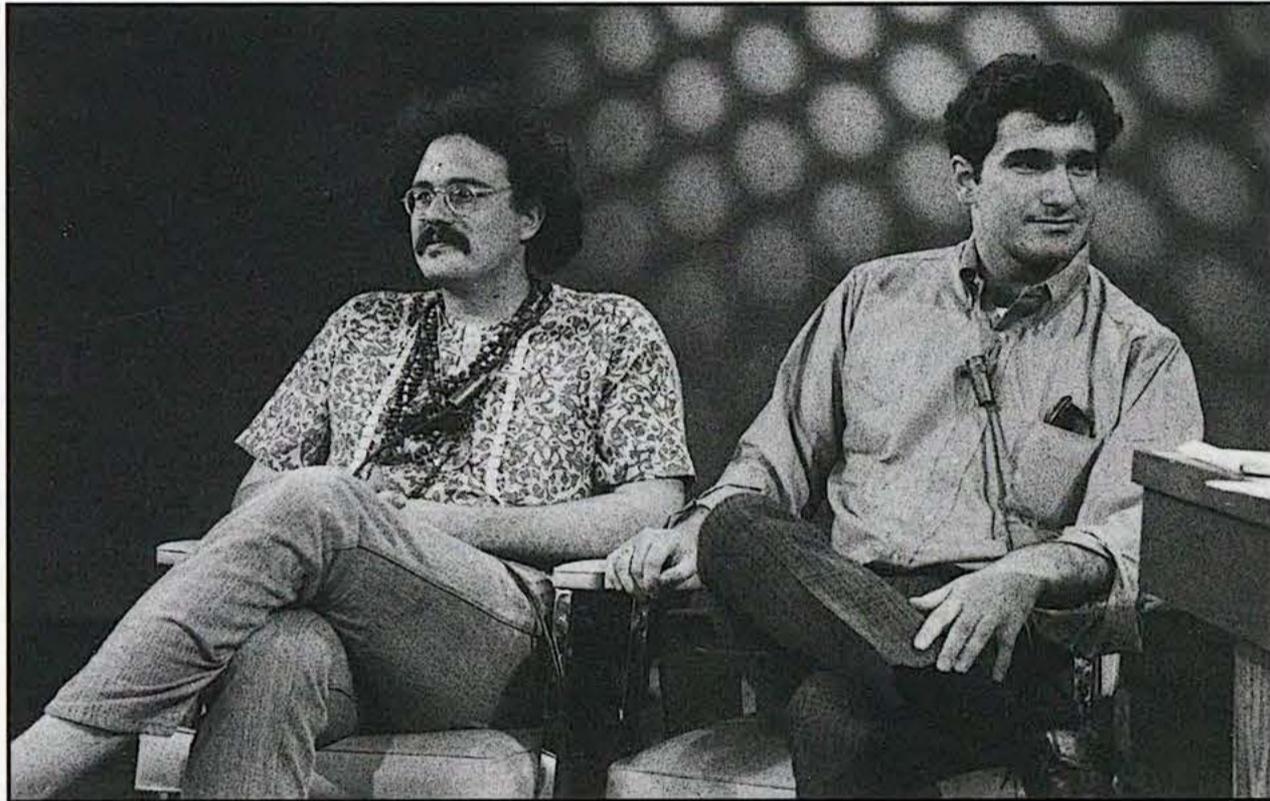
*The first edition of the Fifth Estate, Nov. 1965.*

## WRITING WITH PURPOSE AND PASSION

Young anti-war activists, and others in the vibrant arts, radical politics, and student communities centered around the Warren-Forest area of Wayne State University, soon discovered the paper. John and Leni Sinclair, founders of the

Detroit Artists Workshop, enthusiastically began to write and shoot photographs for the paper.

But it wasn't enough. Within six months, Ovshinsky, exhausted from the day-to-day grind of editing and publishing the paper, needed full-time help. Without it, he announced at a meeting of the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the paper's days were numbered. Enter Peter Werbe, who left Michigan State University to be a Detroit-based political activist and was an avid *Fifth Estate* reader. "I'll help," the 24-year-old Werbe told Ovshinsky. "What can I do?"



*John Sinclair (left) and Harvey Ovshinsky during a taping of the "Lou Gordon Program" in 1966 or 1967. Photo by Leni Sinclair*

"I may have started the paper," Ovshinsky is fond of saying, "but Peter saved it. There would be no fiftieth anniversary if Peter and his wife Marilyn hadn't stepped up." Werbe, still on staff of the paper, takes little of the credit. "It wasn't a hard decision," Werbe recently commented. "Considering the state of journalism at the time and especially the fragmented universe of the local peace, civil rights, youth and women's-rights movements, I realized the *Fifth Estate* had a role to play."

In 1966, the *New York Times* took notice of the paper's influence. "Our function is to serve the growing number of people who are alienated," commented Werbe, "who feel that America is becoming unlivable, people whose interests are not served by the established conservative press."<sup>1</sup>

The paper practiced what it called "engaged journalism." *Fifth Estate* writers would often write about anti-war demonstrations while nursing bruises from police truncheons and with tear gas still clinging to their clothes. Many of these

---



Marilyn and Peter Werbe (in foreground)  
and Harvey Ovshinsky, 1966

writers and “staffers,” some barely out of high school, also reported on local civil-rights protests and the growing feminist and sexual-liberation movements, and they provided on-scene coverage of the 1967 Detroit rebellion.

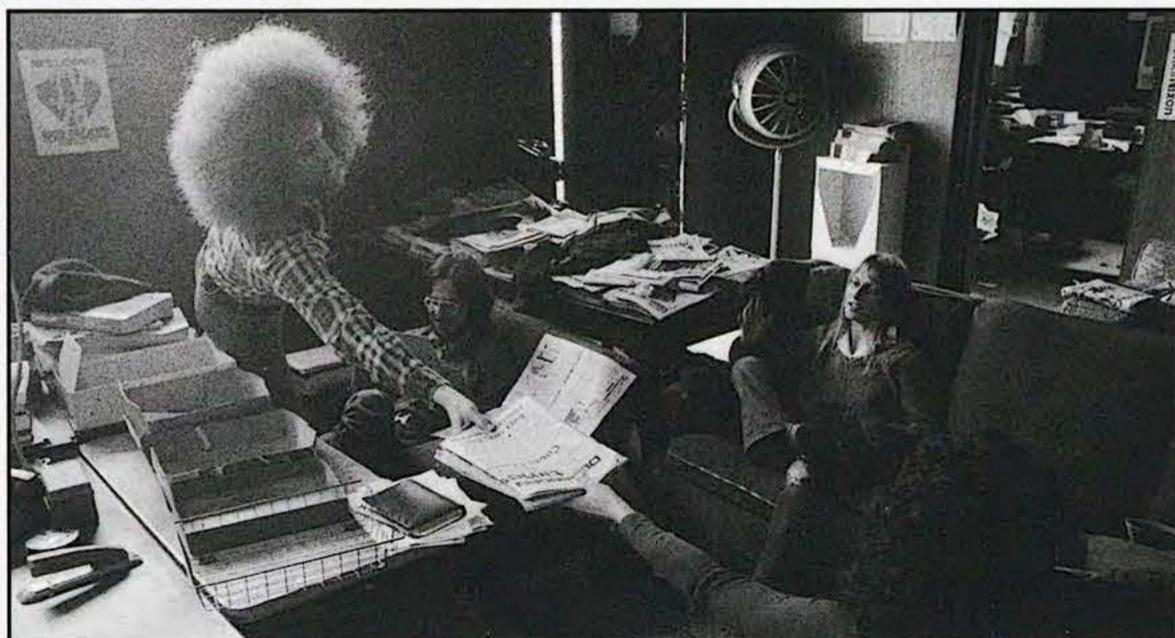
But the *Fifth Estate* wasn't only about politics. Compared to the so-called straight media's coverage, the paper's emphasis on Detroit's burgeoning arts and cultural scene was,

for its readers, like discovering light on the dark side of the moon. Among those who benefited from the paper's coverage were bands like the MC5 and Iggy and the Stooges, and Cass Corridor artists such as Gilda Snowden, Brenda Goodman, Nancy Mitchnik, Bradley Jones, and Ann Mikolowski.

“Before the underground press,” Ovshinsky told *Detroit Free Press* columnist Desiree Cooper<sup>2</sup>, “the mainstream media was like a hand mirror that only showed part of the body. And papers like the *Fifth Estate* insisted, ‘no, there's more!’ We were like this full-length mirror that wanted to see and show everything.”

And for Ovshinsky, Werbe, and their staff of volunteer reporters and photographers at the *Fifth Estate*, “everything” included reporting on:

- The existence of Detroit and Michigan State Police and FBI red-squad files detailing the use of informants in John Sinclair's Detroit Artists Workshop as well as in local civil-rights and anti-war organizations.
- Civil rights. Except for Detroit's *Michigan Chronicle*, the *Fifth Estate* was the only local newspaper to routinely cover and take seriously the years of discrimination against and harassment of black people by the police and others—



A Fifth Estate staff meeting, 1975. Photo by Millard Berry

treatment that led to the 1967 riots. The *Fifth Estate* was the first to report that the majority of those killed in the riots were not gun-toting, fire-bomb-throwing rioters and agitators, but innocent civilians, many shot by frightened, inexperienced National Guardsmen who had never set foot in a big city like Detroit.

- Napalm. On a national and international level, before the *Fifth Estate* and other underground newspapers wrote about this deadly inflammable liquid, few people cared about—or were even aware of—Dow Chemical's role in creating the napalm used against Vietnamese civilians and soldiers, and the herbicide Agent Orange, which also contaminated American troops.



Fifth Estate headline on August 7, 1967, during the Detroit riots.

## PLUM STREET AND THE RISE OF THE COUNTERCULTURE

In what marked a seismic shift for the fledgling paper, in 1966 the *Fifth Estate* moved from the Warren-Forest area near Wayne State University to nearby Plum Street, a new Haight-Ashbury-like community. Relocating the building to this counterculture haven, amidst the head and bead shops and incense and candle stores, accelerated the crossover appeal of the paper to thousands of new readers who visited the hippie shopping and entertainment district.

“We had to grow,” said Ovshinsky, “not just our circulation but also, and mainly, our advertising revenue. We were taking off, all right, but we were also broke and we had to do something.”

That “something” included moving to a seventy-five-year-old wooden house that became the paper’s home, and opening a store on the second floor that specialized in anti-war and anti-establishment buttons and bumper stickers, underground newspapers, and records.

The paper also benefited from a flood of new advertising paid for by many of the forty-two Plum Street head shops, art galleries, and craft-oriented retail stores. Major record labels purchased ad space to promote their artists to the growing readership. Between the success of the Plum Street store, increased circulation, and the new advertising revenue, the *Fifth Estate* was saved from certain bankruptcy.



*Bounded by Michigan Avenue and the Lodge and Fisher freeways, the Plum Street art community became a destination for counterculture young Detroiters in the late 1960s. Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs*



*923 Plum Street, home of the Fifth Estate offices and second-floor button and bumper-sticker store, 1967. Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs*

## THE ATTACK OF THE FOUR Ps

Despite its growing popularity, the paper found itself embattled in attacks from what it called the “Four Ps”—Parents, Police, Principals, and Priests—who were often horrified by the paper’s irreverent content and radical politics. The paper also came under the scrutiny of the FBI, which once reported that “the *Fifth Estate* supports the cause of revolution everywhere,” a charge the staff did not deny.

And, the revolution was spreading. Michael Kindman’s *The Paper* began publishing in East Lansing and Barry Kramer created his national rock-and-roll magazine, *Creem*.

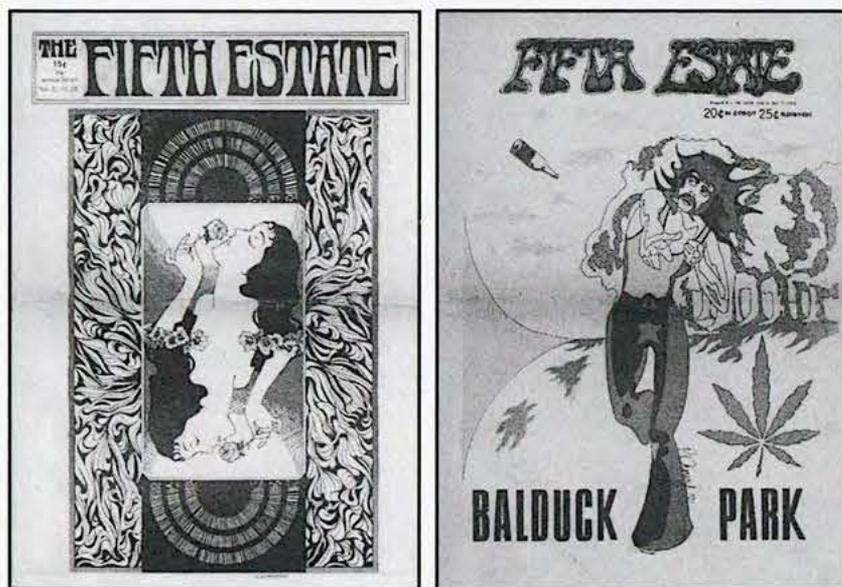
But you didn’t have to be Jewish to be a pioneer in the underground-press movement. Before producing his award-winning documentaries, Michael Moore published the *Flint Voice* (later renamed the *Michigan Voice*); Wayne State’s staid student newspaper, *The Daily Collegian*, reinvented itself as *The South End*; Ken Kelly started the *Ann Arbor Argus*; and *The Inner-City Voice*, a black-radical paper, soon joined Michigan’s burgeoning underground-press movement.

Michigan’s *Fifth Estate* and *The Paper* were among the founding members of the Underground Press Syndicate, a national informal grouping of similar papers started in 1966. National and international reporting was provided by Liberation News Service, which sent biweekly news packets to more than five hundred underground papers around the world. Inspired by the *Fifth Estate*,

young people by the dozens began publishing their own underground papers, as did anti-war GIs stationed in Vietnam and elsewhere.

### A REVOLUTION IN CONTENT AND DESIGN

The paper's coverage of local anti-war, civil-rights, and feminist issues, combined with its reporting on Detroit's youth and counterculture, soon became required reading for reporters at the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News*.



Two of the many Fifth Estate front pages designed by Gary Grimshaw and area illustrators.

*Detroit Free Press* editors took a cue from the *Fifth Estate* and hired rock writer Mike Gormley. The *Detroit News* even launched its own underground newspaper section aimed at young readers.

Under the art direction of the Grande Ballroom's Gary Grimshaw, and with additional contributions from area illustrators and artists, the *Fifth Estate* began to influence the

design of the city's two dailies. Eventually, both papers began printing stories with a combination of type styles and margins. Photographs were laid out in a variety of shapes (not just square or rectangular). Perhaps most radical of all, color was added to the press run.

Another early *Fifth Estate* innovation was its full-page calendar of events, a popular feature that became standard in both the alternative and mainstream press of the next decades.

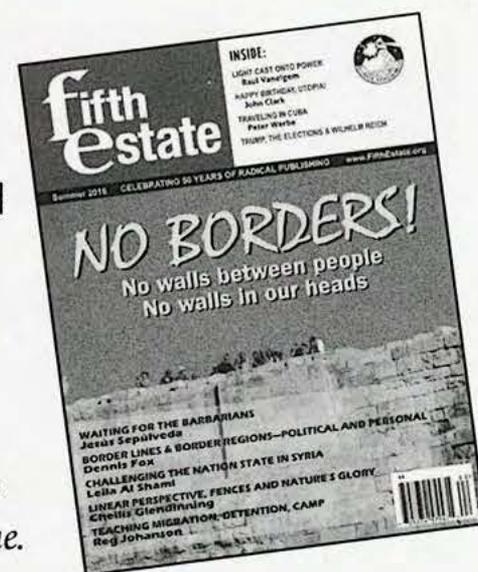
### REMEMBERING THE PAST, CHALLENGING THE FUTURE

Guitarist Paul Kantner of The Jefferson Airplane once famously said, "If you can remember anything about the sixties, you weren't really there."

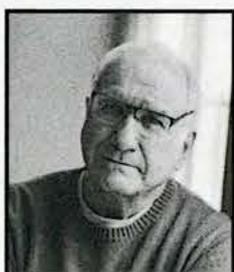
He was wrong. The remarkable history of the *Fifth Estate* reminds us why Detroit's first sixties-era underground paper—the country's oldest such publication—was so special. Fifty years after its creation, it is still remembered and revered. A half century after the paper was introduced as "Detroit's New Progressive Biweekly Newspaper," the *Fifth Estate* continues to be published,

engaging and provoking a new generation of readers and offering an anarchist perspective on such timeless subjects as the environment, technology, civilization, and industrialism.

Some underground papers lasted only a few months, others a few years. But Detroit's *Fifth Estate* still rolls.



*The Fifth Estate continues to be published as a quarterly magazine.*



**Harvey Ovshinsky** is an award-winning Michigan-based writer, teacher, and documentary producer, and the recipient of a national Emmy, a Peabody, and an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award. Detroit's Metro Times once referred to him as "Detroit's urban storyteller" and described his multiple career paths as a "colorful and fantastic voyage, at times brave and visionary." In 2015, Ovshinsky was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame.



**Peter Werbe** began working with the Fifth Estate in 1966 and continues today as a member of the group's editorial collective. In his successful, long-time radio-broadcasting career, he hosted shows for Greater Media-Detroit stations WRIF, WCSX, and WMGC. WRIF's Nightcall, which he took over from Harvey Ovshinsky in 1970, and which ended in 2016, was the longest-running live phone-in talk show in American radio history.



**Tim Kiska** earned his Ph.D. in history from Wayne State University in 2003. Prior to that, he worked in a variety of editorial positions at the Detroit Free Press (1970-1987) and the Detroit News (1987-2002), and later at WWJ-AM as a producer/reporter. He currently works as an associate professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He, Werbe, and Ovshinsky co-created the Detroit Historical Museum exhibit Start the Presses: 50 Years of the Fifth Estate.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 1, 1966

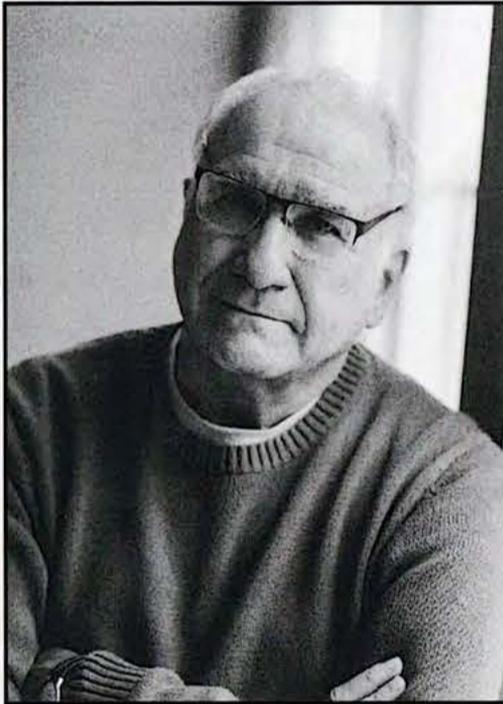
<sup>2</sup>Detroit Free Press, April 8, 2009

# Feature Article

## MUMFORD MUSIC: HOW I RAN AWAY FROM HOME TO START THE FIFTH ESTATE

*By Harvey Ovshinsky*

*The Fifth Estate newspaper was born in Detroit in November 1965, but it was conceived months before in Los Angeles. And it was a painful delivery, concedes founder Harvey Ovshinsky. Although much has been written about the paper's origins, this personal essay by Ovshinsky reflects on the creative, political, and youth cultures that led to the paper's creation.*



*Harvey Ovshinsky has been awarded broadcasting's highest honors, including a national Emmy, a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award, and the American Film Institute's Robert M. Bennett Award.*

Hillel was wrong. The rest isn't always commentary. In the first telling of this history of the *Fifth Estate's* conception, there is also the backstory.

It begins with what was supposed to be my graduation from Detroit's Mumford High School.

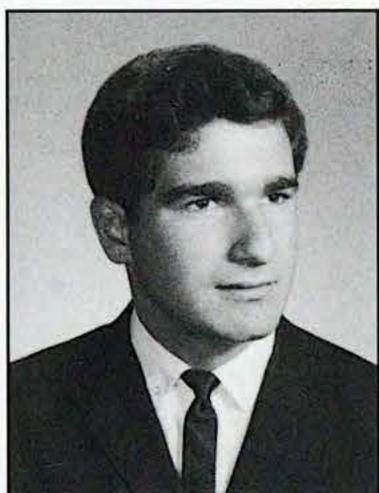
Before it was embossed on Eddie Murphy's T-shirt and used as the title of a Larry Kasdan movie, Mumford was one of this country's most-revered academic institutions, a public high school whose graduates included an entire generation of American baby boomers who, collectively, had an unprecedented impact on local, national, and international culture.

TV and movie producers Jerry Bruckheimer and Bob Shaye went to Mumford. So did comedian Gilda Radner, screenwriter Bruce Joel Rubin, and *Ordinary People* author Judith Guest. Other Mumford alumni include Grammy-winning songwriter Allee Willis, who wrote the theme song

to *Friends* and co-wrote the music and lyrics to the Broadway musical *The Color Purple*; Larry Brilliant, former director of Google's philanthropic arm Google.org; and New York real-estate magnate and philanthropist Stephen Ross. Also among its graduates was Ivan Boesky, whose family owned Boesky's restaurant in Detroit, and who was later known for his role in a Wall Street insider-trading scandal.

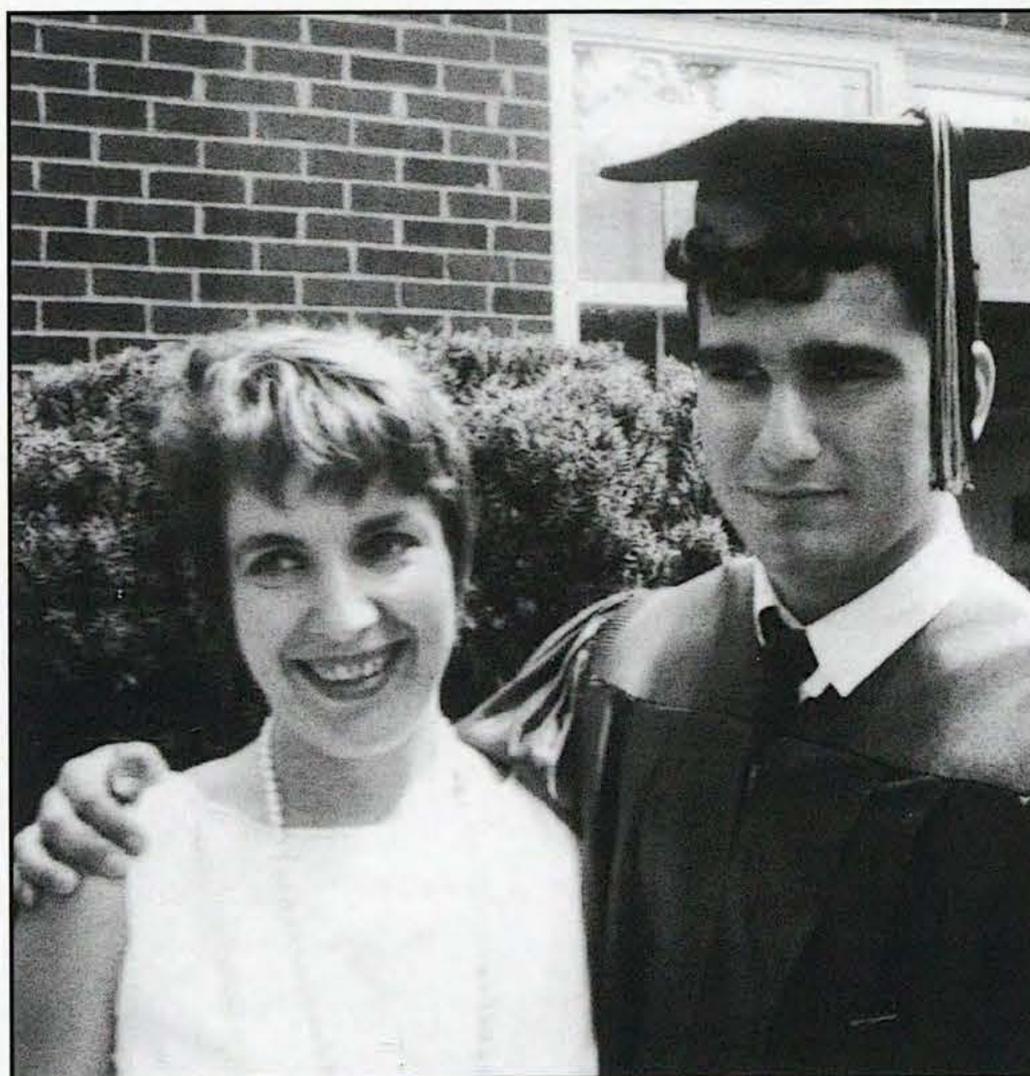
And me.

But in the spring of 1965, my mother and her new husband, Adolph Marks, who owned Mumford Music record store, decided they needed to leave Detroit. The newlyweds wanted to make a fresh start in Los Angeles, as far away as possible from the festering remnants of her long and embittered separation and divorce from my father.



*Harvey Ovshinsky,  
Mumford High School  
graduation photo,  
1965.*

The move was good news for them but a nightmare for me. My mother insisted that we leave Detroit that summer, six months before my January Mumford graduation. The thought of not graduating with my class was unimaginable, but I loved my mother. Isaac Bashevis Singer said that "every writer needs an address," and for this young writer, Detroit was my address and Mumford was my citadel. Three years earlier, I was probably the only white kid ever who left the shiny new, all-white Henry Ford High School to attend the infamous Mumford, where, rumor had it, all the Jewish kids were snobs and wore cashmere, and black students beat you up and flushed you down the toilet for your lunch money.



*Harvey Ovshinsky and his mother, Norma Marks,  
on his high-school graduation day.*

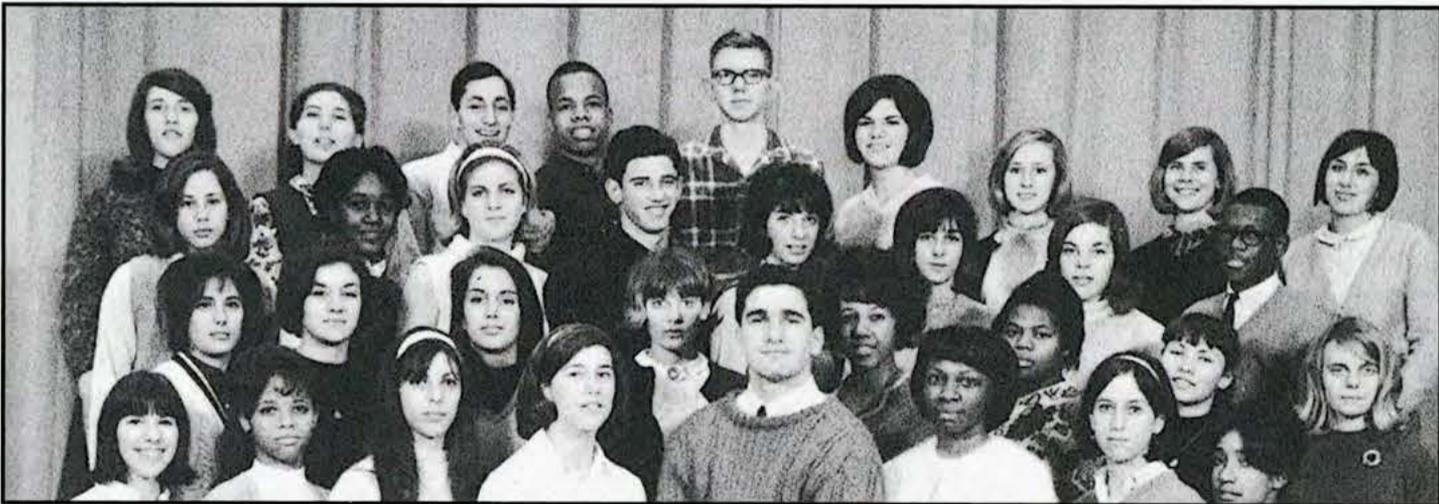
It was not true, of course. I flourished at Mumford where I felt free to write and stretch new creative muscles with new friends and collaborators.

While the Jewish kids spent time at neighborhood delicatessens like Fredson's and Moishe Pipik's, African-American students gathered at Cupid's Bow, a nearby diner. Mumford Music, on the other hand, was where students from both cultures felt comfortable enough with each other to hang out, kibbitz, and groove to each other's jams.

To this Dorothy, Mumford was Oz, but in my case, the Emerald City wasn't green. It was maroon and blue. A tad faded and more than a little worn and worse for wear, Mumford was where I belonged. not Los Angeles. At least, not now.

I tried to negotiate with my mother. Couldn't I live with my father until January and then join her in L.A.? Out of the question. How about a compromise? I would live with our next-door neighbors, Lanny Lesser and his parents. No, my mother insisted; she couldn't take the chance that I would change my mind after graduation. The decision was final. The "family" was moving to Los Angeles, and I had to promise not to share my opposition to the move with anyone, including, and especially, my father.

And so, in August 1965, this Mumford Mustang was gelded. I graduated from summer school with sixty-three strangers whose names and stories I did not know. Slinking away from my school was beyond sad; it was unbearable. I was a far cry from my halcyon days as an activist in the student council, president of the Human Relations Club, the lead in two school plays, and editor and publisher of *The IDiom*, an alternative literary and visual-arts magazine.



*Harvey Ovshinsky, center, as president of the Mumford High School Human Relations Club.*

The move also meant the loss of my dearest friends Lanny, Ben McFall, Del Appleby, Roby Cantow, Steve Simons, and, especially, my then-soulmate and girlfriend Susan DeGracia.

Although I was never really popular at Mumford, I was well liked. My only hope, the one straw I clung to, was that my karma would be portable and I

could take it with me.

So much for magical thinking.

I felt like a foreigner, a proverbial stranger adrift in the bizarro, alternative universe that was mid-1960s Los Angeles. At Mumford I was Joseph, but here, I was exiled among these tie-dyed, leather-fringe-booted, poncho-wearing Philistines. Without my powers, who would recognize me? Or need me? I was invisible. I had little hope and no opportunity in this alien universe to show what I was capable of or what I could bring to their table.

My mother thought college would help but the only school that would accept me on such short notice was the largely Latino East Los Angeles Junior College. I enrolled in a phys-ed class (I flunked rope-climbing) and studied the history of printing and the Gutenberg Bible. It didn't help.

I missed Sue. I missed my friends. I missed my life, my identity. In L.A., I was anonymous, a *le Juif errant*, condemned to roam Sunset Strip at all hours in search of someone who would take pity on a seventeen-year-old Motown fish out of water. I tried to fit in; I pretended to like the lukewarm espresso drinks served in the teen clubs and coffeehouses. Sipping overpriced organic lemonades at my tables for one, I discovered exactly what Marvin Gaye was talking about:

Can I get a witness?

Can I get a witness?

Can I get a witness?

Somebody!<sup>1</sup>

What made these months especially painful was that I had to suffer in silence. Whether out of a sense of duty or guilt, I kept my promise that I would not share my unhappiness or reveal my true feelings with my father. "You have to promise me you'll give this a chance to work," my mother insisted, "without any outside interference."

For a while, I was able to keep my side of the bargain. My mind was willing but in the end my body betrayed me. Secrets will do that to a person. I got headaches and severe stomach cramps. I lost sleep and ate my way through what was probably clinical depression. When I finally decided to let slip my suffering in letters to Sue, to my dismay even my words on paper didn't help.

I used to think that writing couldn't change anything, when actually it had the power to change *everything*. But that was in Detroit. That was Mumford talking.

Two months in Los Angeles cured me of that nonsense.

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I found some relief when I met Arthur Kunkin, the thirty-five-year-old editor and publisher of the *Los Angeles Free Press*. Like my father, Kunkin was a one-time machinist, a secular Jew, and a socialist. In 1964, Kunkin started the *Freep*, a weekly tabloid newspaper. The *Freep*, originally known as *The Faire Free Press*, got its name because it was sold exclusively at the popular Los Angeles Renaissance Pleasure Faire and May Market.

I owe my first meeting with Kunkin to insomnia. One restless night I tried to induce sleep by watching a late-night television talk program. But the *Joe Pyne Show* had the opposite effect. Pyne was an uber-argumentative and confrontational host, a combination of Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Detroit's own Lou Gordon. When he was irritated or upset it was not uncommon for Pyne to invite his guests to "go gargle with razor blades." During the 1965 Watts riots,

Pyne earned notoriety when he interrogated a controversial black-power activist. The exchange became heated and an exasperated Pyne tried to shock his guest by announcing that he was carrying a handgun. The activist didn't flinch. He opened his own coat and showed he was packing, too.

You had to be there. And fortunately for me, I was.

Kunkin was a guest on the night I was watching. He had infuriated Pyne by covering stories about young people protesting a proposed new Sunset Strip curfew; stories about demonstrations against the latest marijuana busts in Venice; stories about the adventures of a new group, Mothers for Peace, that protested war toys.

Who was this guy? What fourth dimension was this? In the mid-1960s, young people were largely invisible to the press unless they were in trouble. Stories about the anti-war movement were few and far between, and articles about women's issues were mainly quarantined to the feature section or the society pages. And the

only tabloids I'd ever heard of were the *National Enquirer* and the *Northwest Detroit Shopper*.

What really struck me about Kunkin's interview was that it ended with the editor's plea for help. There was a shortage of volunteers and Kunkin said he

**LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS**



**LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS**  
8226 SUNSET BOULEVARD  
HOLLYWOOD 46, CALIF.  
—◆ 654-4618 ◆—

PUBLISHER AND EDITOR . . . Art Kunkin  
BUSINESS MANAGER . . . . . Don Campbell  
DRAMA AND ARTS EDITOR . . . Clair Brush  
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PHOTOGRAPHY . Sharon Allen

STAFF: Charles Brittin, Jim Carroll, Ridgely Cummings, Claude Hayward, Robin Hirsch, Harvey Ovshinsky, Paul Jay Robbins, Doc Stanley, Mike Swartz, Miriam Tamir, Gary Taylor, Phyllis West.

Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Los Angeles, California. A weekly newspaper. Subscription: \$5 per year. Vol. 2, #42; Issue #65. October 15, 1965.

*The L.A. Free Press editorial staff,  
October 1965*

was in need of anyone who knew anything about putting out a newspaper.

I raised my hand. I couldn't help it. In that instant I knew that, in Art Kunkin, this Joseph had finally found his pharaoh, someone to whom I could offer my services and share my powers.

The next day, I skipped my rope-climbing class and drove to 8226 Sunset Boulevard, the offices of the *L.A. Free Press*. The atmosphere was best described by a reporter for *Esquire* magazine: "Kids, dogs, cats, barefoot waifs, teeny-boppers in see-through blouses, assorted losers, strangers, Indian chiefs wander in and out, while somewhere a radio plays endless rock music and people are loudly paged over an intercom system. It's all very friendly and rather charming and ferociously informal."

It was a zoo. But it was my kind of zoo, and for the first time since I was yanked away from my home planet, I felt right at home.

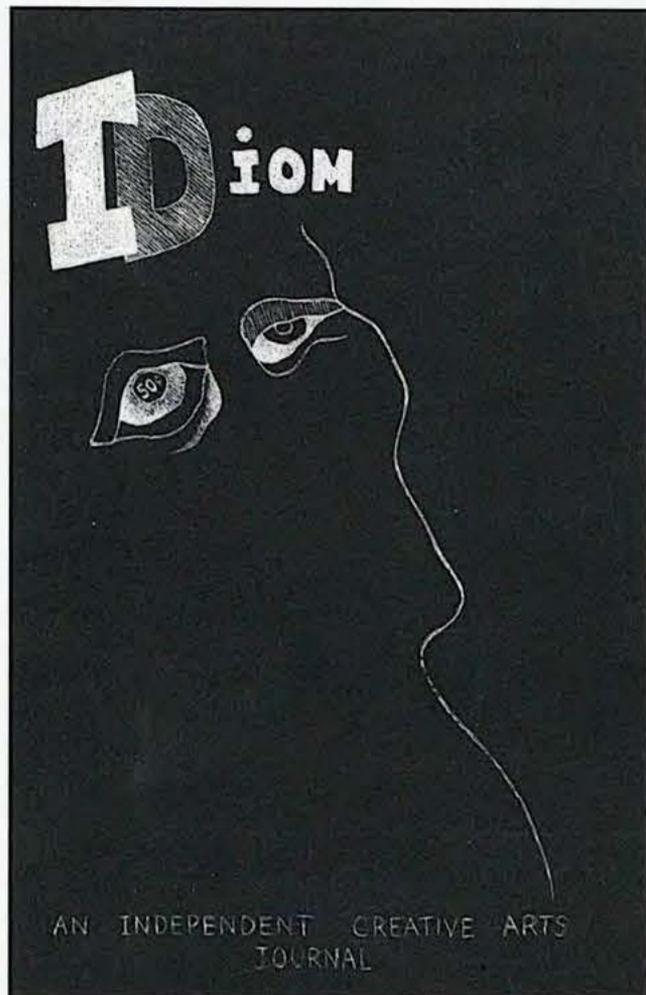
Despite my youth and inexperience, Kunkin put me to work typing up copy on the paper's ancient Varsityper machine, creating clever headlines for the reporters' stories, and helping lay out and paste up pages for the photo offset printer. The atmosphere was intoxicating and familiar, but also deliciously different from my memories of hanging out with my *Mumford Mercury* and *Capri* newspaper and yearbook friends. I had never smoked marijuana, but I thought that the sensation might be similar to the natural high I was getting from the *Freep's* own stash: the fresh aroma emitted by the photo-printing chemicals used in the Varsityper machine, the dried-out cans of Best-Test rubber cement, the half-used sheets of rub-on Letraset used to create headlines.

The staff embraced me. I developed a tremendous crush on Eve Babitz, who was an up-and-coming writer and artist. Eve was equally well known for her romantic escapades with local musicians and movie stars. I admit my infatuation may have been influenced by Julian Wasser's now-infamous nude portrait of Eve playing chess with the much-older artist and chess master Marcel Duchamp. I left out any mention of Eve in my letters to Sue—as I did my ongoing attempts to rebuke another staffer's expressions of his physical attraction to me. I didn't mind. It was all part of the adventure.

As gratifying as my work at the *Free Press* was, working there proved to be a Catch-22. I loved the camaraderie and collaboration, the feeling that I was contributing to something special. But I also felt like a visitor, an uninvited guest, a young, wide-eyed country mouse who was shown the ropes by the older, more-experienced, hipper city mice.

I longed for home, to be with my friends and my community. I wanted to be more than a name in a staff box. Every time I entertained even the possibility of returning to Detroit, my depression lifted and gave way to excitement and profound hope and resolve. In returning to Detroit, I convinced

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Cover of the IDiom, Harvey's alternative literary arts magazine at Mumford.

myself, I wouldn't be running away from home; I would be running to it.

And I would not return empty-handed. I was determined to bring back the best parts of what I had seen and learned and discovered in Los Angeles. I would share my vision/version of my hometown in the pages of the *Fifth Estate*. First, I needed an escape plan, what my scientist/entrepreneur father used to call a "war dance." Part manifesto, part to-do list, Stan Ovshinsky's war dances were famous for envisioning through free association new and exciting strategies to solve scientific problems and, when necessary (which was often), to rescue his company, Energy Conversion Devices, from certain bankruptcy.

My father and I shared many traits<sup>1</sup> but none was stronger than our ability to

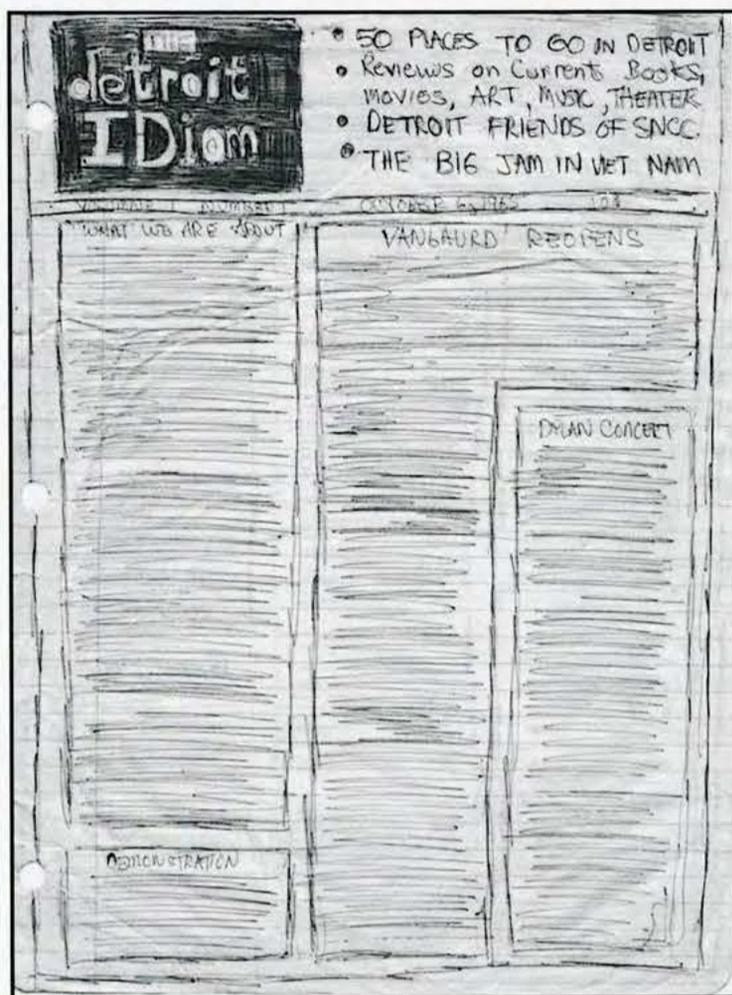
visualize our way out of a situation. One of the first steps in my own war dance was to create a mockup of what my new newspaper would look like. The second step was what the filmmaker Jim Jarmusch calls "authentic stealing." According to Jarmusch, "Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination....Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul."

Which is why the original mockup of my phantom newspaper looked strikingly similar to the *L.A. Free Press*. I christened my imaginary new paper *The Detroit Idiom*, but later settled on *The Fifth Estate*. It was not a reference to the four estates of democracy—I wasn't that smart; rather, it had been the name of the Sunset Strip coffeehouse and basement home to the *L.A. Free Press*.

I continued to juggle schoolwork with my real work at the *Free Press*. My mind raced with ideas for the first issue. I was on fire, imagining that I would recruit my fellow *Idiom* writers to bring to life stories I made up about the city's music stores being busted for selling Lenny Bruce records, a review of the upcoming Bob Dylan concert at Masonic Auditorium, and the possible reopening of George C. Scott's Vanguard Theater in downtown Detroit.

But first I had to tell my mother.

For her, any thought of my returning to Detroit was out of the question. My words did not come easily. I had never had the courage, either before the



*Ovshinsky's pencil sketch ideas for a Detroit-based alternative newspaper.*

move or after, to hold my ground, defend my voice, or fight for what I needed, regardless of the consequences.

In the end, I chickened out and left a note. The irony is that, for someone who prided himself on his writing, I had little access to words. What could I say? What difference would it make? I knew that my mother and Adolph would be deeply wounded by this betrayal, and furious with me. I wouldn't stay my hand. Not this time. "An unplanned abrupt finish," I wrote, "would be easier on you and better for me. I will write soon. Please don't feel bad — too much."

I called a cab and headed for the airport to grab a red-eye to Detroit. I spent most of the flight immersed in my war dances, dummy articles, and

mockups of what I fantasized the *Fifth Estate* would look like.

And suddenly, as the plane made its descent, my mood shifted. Out of the blue, I was overcome with a rush of intense and unexpected feelings. I was happy, of course, but I was also sad.

And excited!

And scared. Especially scared. Certainly I had experienced each of these feelings before but not all of them at once. What did this mean? What was going on?

And then I knew. I got it. The moment we touched down in Detroit, I understood exactly what was happening to me. And why.

"This must be," I thought to myself, "what graduation feels like."

*This article is excerpted from an upcoming memoir about Ovshinsky's life and work in Detroit media.*

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harvey Ovshinsky is the son of the prolific Michigan inventor and scientist Stanford Ovshinsky. Among the elder Ovshinsky's most notable inventions are an environmentally friendly nickel-metal hydride battery that has been widely used in laptop computers, digital cameras, and cell phones; electric and hybrid cars; flexible thin-film solar energy laminates and panels; rewritable CD and DVD discs; hydrogen fuel cells; and nonvolatile phase-change memory, a possible replacement for flash memory. "It's good to be an apple," says Ovshinsky about his place in the family tree.

## Feature Article

### NCJW/GREATER DETROIT CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF SERVICE

*By Bobbie Lewis, with editorial assistance from Jacqueline Elkus*

*The National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section celebrated 125 years of community service in 2016. When founded by a group of women from Temple Beth El in 1891, little could they have known that their Jewish Woman's Club would outlast just about every other women's volunteer organization in the country. Author Bobbie Lewis recounts some of the NCJW/Greater Detroit's most important contributions.*

At religious services on February 27 and 28, 1891, Dr. Louis Grossman, rabbi of Temple Beth El, issued an invitation to the women of the congregation to convene the following Tuesday at 4 p.m. "for the purpose of forming a society – to better the condition of numberless Jewish girls and women in our midst."<sup>1</sup>



*The Woman's Club, later the Jewish Woman's Club, the forerunner of the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section, was founded in 1891. Mrs. Henry Krolik, one of the founding members, became president in 1900.*

Three hundred women joined what would, that afternoon, become The Woman's Club of Temple Beth El. The organization's goals were "to promote kindness and helpfulness (sic) in general and to elevate the mental, moral and social stasis (sic) of young Jewish women in particular."

That organization eventually grew into what is known today as the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section (NCJW/Greater Detroit). One hundred twenty-five years later, it is the oldest still-functioning Jewish women's volunteer organization in the United States, with a mission of being a "grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms."

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



*Rabbi Louis Grossman,  
Temple Beth El, convened  
the first meeting of The Jewish  
Woman's Club in 1891.  
Courtesy Rabbi Leo M.  
Franklin Archives*



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

*Ida Ginsberg was a  
founding member of The  
Woman's Club of Temple Beth El.*

At that first club meeting, the women elected Mrs. Bernard (Ida) Ginsberg as president, Mrs. Henry A. Krolik as secretary, and Mrs. J. Finsterwald, Mrs. A. G. Schloss, Mrs. J. F. Teicher, Mrs. Eugene Sloman, and Mrs. Sam Karpel as "directresses." Monthly dues were to be ten cents.

In order to expand their "helpfulness" and reach beyond the core group of Temple Beth El members, The Woman's Club leaders in 1896 changed the organization's name to the Jewish Woman's Club. The Jewish Woman's Club met the first Sunday of every month "promptly" at 2:45 p.m., and also held Monday-evening programs. Meetings usually featured educational lectures or a musical presentation. The women also debated issues of the day, one of which

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was employment for women. In 1896, an employment service was established, but club members "Resolved, that women should not enter the professions." The work of the Jewish Woman's Club was noticed throughout the area. In 1898, the club was invited to join the Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs and the Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs. The *Detroit Free Press*, November 23, 1901, described the Jewish Woman's Club as "one of the most active organizations of its kind in the city, doing much good work."

### EARLY PROGRAMS

After the death of founding president Ida Ginsberg in 1902, the Jewish Woman's Club established the Ida E. Ginsburg School<sup>2</sup> Fund to help girls with their high-school or business education, fulfilling an idea that had been first discussed in 1895. Specifically, funds were used for the schooling of "worthy girls." In 1914, boys became eligible.

The scholarship program was an immediate success. The *Jewish Chronicle*, April 28, 1916, noted that fifty-nine students were helped between 1902 and 1916, adding "there has been no other organization in the city of Detroit, and few in any city in this country, that has done so much to level the artificial distinctions among women as the Jewish Woman's Club." The Ida E. Ginsberg School Fund scholarship program continues today, providing more than \$100,000 a year in loans and grants as part of the William Davidson Jewish College Loan Program.

Supporting and benefitting the educational enrichment of children was an early directive for NCJW. In 1911, club members began the Penny Lunch program, preparing and serving lunches for children at Detroit's Bishop School. Students who could afford a penny would drop the coin into a box to pay for their lunch; those who couldn't afford the penny were given one to put in the box. In 1914, members expanded Penny Lunch to the Clinton School, which club member Mildred Goldman noted was "in the heart of the crime center of the city and which has fifty percent of its children coming from Jewish homes."

By 1918, the program volunteers were dishing up some 600 lunches a day. Chair Anna G. Sterns noted in the club's 1918 annual report that "The lunch a day is not expected to be the cure all but it will go a long way toward counter-acting the influence of the other inadequate meals that the children receive at home."

That same year, club dues were raised to five dollars a year, not only to cover the cost of the growing Penny Lunch program, but also to raise funds to build a clubhouse.

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*The Penny Lunch program, which began in 1911, continued until 1925, when it was taken over by the Detroit Public Schools, thus becoming one of the first public-school lunch programs in the country. The Bishop School in Detroit, pictured here in 1922, was, at the time, one of the schools serviced by NCJW volunteers. Photo courtesy Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library*

## YWHA

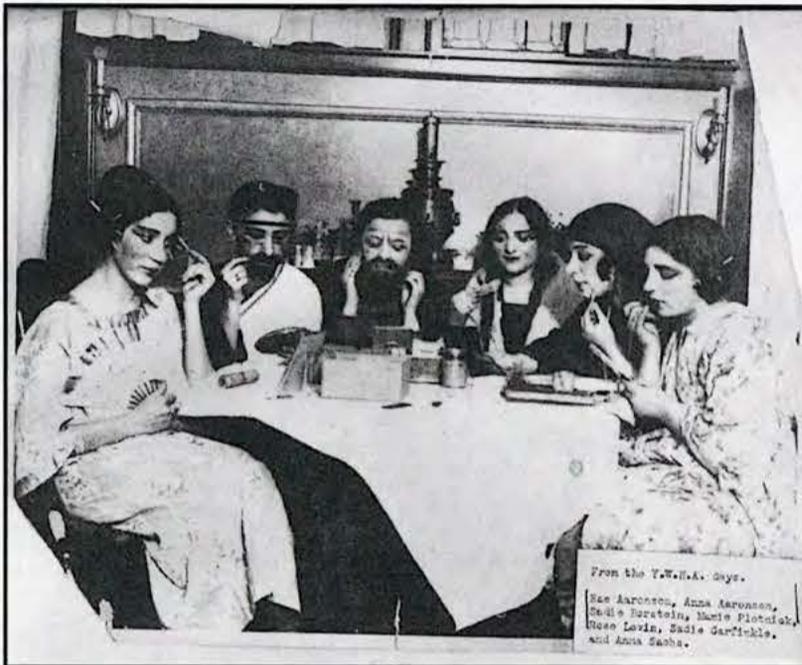
In 1919, the Jewish Woman's Club opened a residence for employed Jewish girls at 89 Rowena Street in Detroit. The women were young, usually in their twenties, and typically working in secretarial or teaching positions. The clubhouse, with five classrooms, a living room, and a dining room, also served as a center for social and educational activities. The garage was converted into the "Little Theatre."

Sixty-five clubs used the building. Recognizing the growing need for social and educational activities, the Jewish Woman's Club closed the residence and organized the Young Woman's Hebrew Association (YWHA) in 1921. Dues were one dollar a year.



*Organized in 1919 by the Jewish Woman's Club, 89 Rowena Street was a residence and gathering place for young women.*

"Have you ever considered how great a number of Jewish girls and young women there are in this dynamic Detroit of ours, or stopped to ask yourself what is offered these young people by our organizations to build them physically and equip them intellectually to wage the battle of life?" wrote Amy Robinson, chair of the YWHA, in the Jewish Woman's Club's yearbook. "Until this year we have done nothing."



*"YWHA Days" Preparing for a club show are Rae Aaronson, Anna Aaronson, Sadie Berstein, Mamie Plotnick, Rose Levin, Sadie Garfinkle and Anna Sachs. Date unknown*

The "Y" offered classes in dress-making, millinery, and business skills. Art classes at the School of Decorative Handicrafts cost thirty cents per lesson. The Y made use of the gym at Congregation Shaarey Zedek for gymnastics, and the pool at Balch School for swimming. Weekly Saturday-night dances at Temple Beth El were so popular they had to be limited to YWHA members and their invited male guests.

Classes and activities for young men were added; many programs were co-educational. The Y also

hosted well-attended Passover seders for young adults who were away from their families for the holiday.

Membership grew quickly, from 205 at the end of the Y's first year to more than 2,000 in 1931. In 1933, members opened the Council Kitchen at the Rowena Street clubhouse. Within a year, the kitchen provided 1,636 hours of work to women "who by this means were able to keep their families off the welfare lists." The women made and sold a variety of jellies, preserves, and pickles. They became known for their French dressing, which sold for forty cents a pint.

When the Jewish Welfare Federation was formed in 1926, the YWHA was invited to join Federation as a constituent agency, as was a new Jewish Centers Association (JCA). The JCA worked with the YWHA to organize activities at a building on Melbourne Avenue and later at a branch on Fenkell. Meanwhile, the Jewish Welfare Federation began raising funds and looking for a site that would serve as a cultural center and a meeting place for all ages. When a suitable site on Woodward at Holbrook was found in 1933, the YWHA and the Jewish Centers Association joined to become the Jewish Community Center of Detroit.

## **JOINING NCJW, INC.**

In 1893, a Jewish Women's Congress meeting was held as part of the World's Parliament of Religions at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Soon after, Hannah G. Solomon, a Chicago community activist, formed the National Council of Jewish Women. The Jewish Woman's Club, which had sent a delegation to the congress, was invited to join NCJW but declined.

"Their work is so big and grand along so many lines that affiliation with them would be splendid. But the dues asked is (sic) so great that the Board of Directors regretfully declined the invitation to join but expressed willingness to cooperate in its workings when possible," noted the board-meeting minutes for September 13, 1909.

They turned down yet another invitation in 1922, but in 1924, the club appointed a committee, consisting of Amy W. Robinson, Belle A. Welt, Emma Butzel, Julia B. Levy, Gertrude G. Glogower, Blanche L. Gilbert, and Hattie J. May, to consider reorganizing as a section of NCJW.

"We are strongly convinced that we are living in a generation of larger world outlook when no group can afford, nor has the right, to stand alone; that the broader interests of Jewish womankind demand the federation of all groups of Jewish women's organizations; and that affiliation with the council, which already numbers 50,000 members and 224 sections, seems the logical step toward such a desired goal," the committee reported.

The affiliation was approved by the club's membership at its annual meeting in May 1925.

The last meeting of the Jewish Woman's Club was May 26, 1925. The next day, its name was legally changed to the Detroit Section, National Council of Jewish Women. Mildred Welt served as the first president of the Detroit Section. Two dollars from every member's five-dollar dues were sent to the national NCJW office.

The local NCJW affiliate became the Greater Detroit Section in 1969 when its office moved to Southfield. In 2014, the group adopted the abbreviated name NCJW/Greater Detroit.

## **SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS**

Between 1922 and 1925, the YWHA rented a home, first in Mt. Clemens and then in Canada, to provide vacations for Jewish girls aged sixteen to twenty and of limited means. In May 1925, at the same annual meeting in which they voted to join NCJW, members of the Jewish Woman's Club approved the purchase of a permanent camp site in Jeddo, on the Lake Huron

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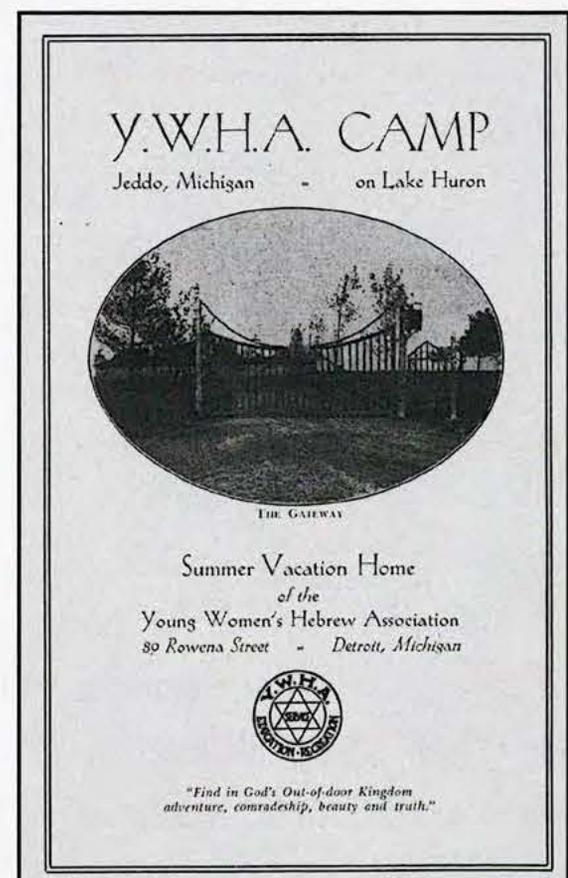
*Since its very beginnings, NCJW leadership has communicated to its members through bulletins and newsletters. Here are two publications: A 1932 edition of the Triennial Tatler and a 1936 newsletter featuring an invitation to the Junior Council dinner. Reservations for dinner cost ninety cents per person.*

shore about seventy-five miles north of Detroit.

The camp closed in 1933 during the depths of the Depression. By the time it reopened in 1934, the Y had merged into the Jewish Community Center and the property was renamed Council Camp, providing affordable vacations to hundreds of teenaged girls and young working women until about 1945, when the property was sold to a Methodist organization. Florence Kreger, president, wrote in the 1943-1945 yearbook, "This transaction marks the end of an era, and with it goes a piece of our heart."

The Detroit Section also ran summer day programs for underprivileged children in Detroit. That initiative began in 1928 when the National Child Study Association asked the women to set up a summer play school. The following year, a play center opened at the Breitmeyer School in Detroit for children aged five to eight. It ran every weekday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an average daily attendance of seventy-five. Those who could afford it paid ten cents per day. Fewer than half the children were Jewish.

Many of the children, from a range of ethnicities, were malnourished. The program provided basic dental care and vaccinations, but much of



*The YWHA Camp had three large buildings: a recreation hall with a stage and fireplace, and two dorms with twenty-four beds each. A third dorm was added in 1927.*

the focus was on nutrition. Children were offered morning and afternoon snacks and a hot lunch. They were weighed at the start and end of the program, and most showed progress. In 1931, the summer program was scaled back due to economic conditions, and was replaced by a half-day program that also offered a hot lunch.

## CHILD WELFARE

The Big Sister program, launched in the late 1920s, was designed to mentor and assist underprivileged and troubled young women. In NCJW's March 1929 bulletin, chair Gertrude F. Wineman described the program:

The Big Sister Committee attempts to assist non-problem and pre-delinquent girls in solving their problems and guiding them to lives of usefulness.

We work with the girl whose home surroundings are unhappy, girls out of employment or having school difficulties, many times showing physical disabilities. They are mal-adjusted and need assistance and guidance as well as a definite change in their attitude towards life. This means understanding the girl, her home and the particular environment to which she is reacting. Furthermore it means understanding her school and work history, her physical and mental limitations and possibilities, plus her reactions at school, in society and at work. After diagnosing her case, a plan is formulated to bring about her reconstruction. Sometimes it means removing her from her home. Or it may mean changing her place of work, adjusting her religious and social life, planning her recreation. It might even necessitate giving a new interpretation of the girl's conduct difficulties to the teacher in the case involved.

The program was reorganized in 1934, and the women started working with professional social workers from the Jewish Social Service Bureau, forerunner of Jewish Family Service. In the late 1940s, when there was no longer a need for Big Sister volunteers to be de facto social workers, NCJW/Greater Detroit volunteers began working with the Jewish Social Service Bureau.

NCJW/Greater Detroit members returned to hands-on child welfare work when, after surveying the community about unmet needs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they opened The Orchards, a residential home for emotionally disturbed boys aged six to twelve, in Livonia. Another home for boys opened in Southfield in 1981, followed by a residence for girls in 1982.

Orchards Children's Services (the name was changed in 1971) also

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provided non-residential individual and group therapy, latchkey programs, and a summer day camp, and helped start Silverman Village, for children with developmental disabilities, at Camp Tamarack. In 1986, it was licensed by the state as an adoption agency.

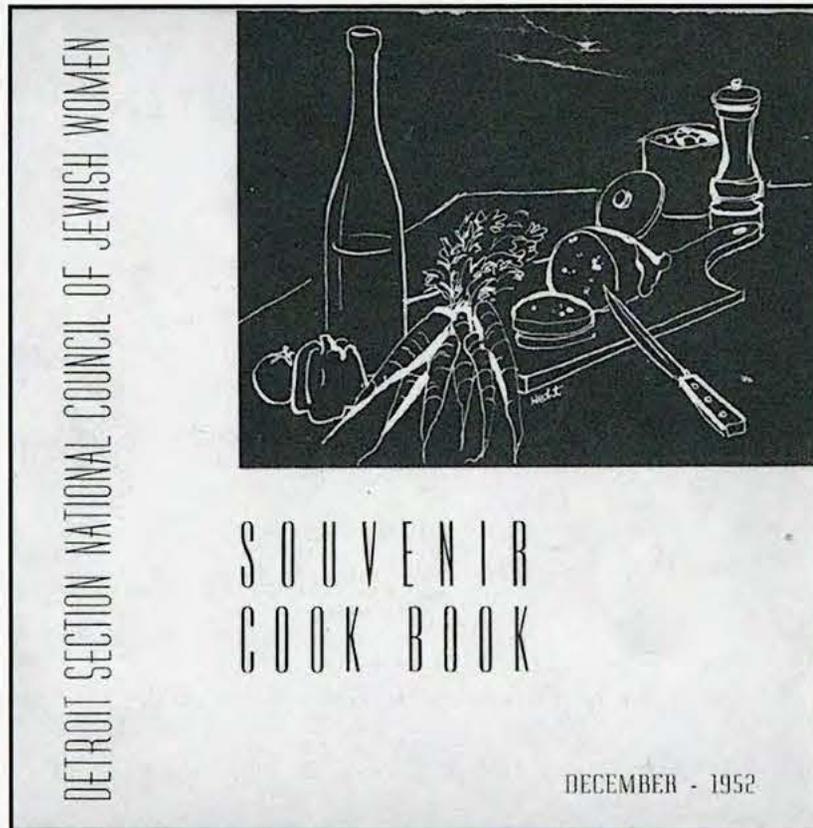
In 1987, Orchards Children's Services became an independent nonprofit agency with its own board. While it no longer provides residential care, Orchards continues to be a respected foster-care, adoption, and family-services agency.

## THE ELDERLY AND THE LESS ABLE

While the most basic of maternal instincts, to assist in the growth and development of children, is evident in dozens of NCJW programs, it is but one area of focus. In 1944, NCJW/Greater Detroit joined with the Jewish Community Center to open the Twelfth Street Council Center, one of the first times a community agency partnered with a volunteer membership organization to provide services for the entire community. The women reached out to elderly residents, urging them to make use of the Twelfth Street Center. The older group became known as the Golden Agers.

In 1951, following the trajectory of the Jewish community, NCJW Greater Detroit relocated its offices to W. McNichols Road in Northwest Detroit. Volunteers soon began working with Jewish Vocational Service to start a placement service for older workers and others who were having difficulty finding work. The project won first prize in a 1955 *Detroit News* contest for organizational community service activities.

Another valuable service was launched in 1957, when a senior center opened next door to the Council building. The program, which offered recreational and social services for the elderly, was adopted by the Jewish Community



*From the days of the Rowena Street residence, when women gathered to can and pickle fresh foods, cookbooks have been a staple of NCJW. This is a 1952 cookbook, part of the NCJW collection at the Walter P. Reuther Library.*

Center in 1960.

Also in 1960, the NCJW/Greater Detroit women joined in the statewide Operation Friendship program by starting a Monday Club for former patients of Ypsilanti State Hospital. The club provided games, crafts, and discussion groups. The women also helped start the Receiving Hospital Service League, which furnished a lounge in the men's psychiatric ward. NCJW's activities eventually grew into programming for Kadima, a mental-health organization.

NCJW/Greater Detroit also played an important role in the beginning of JARC, an agency that serves Jewish residents with developmental challenges. NCJW women helped advise JARC's forerunner, Parents Association for Jewish Residential Care, as the latter established a residential group home.

### HELP FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Since its earliest days, NCJW has assisted immigrants by providing educational and financial assistance and helping them to acclimate to their new home. In 1905, members took up a collection for the Russian Relief Fund, raising \$119.08. In 1906, the organization created the Service to Foreign Born committee, which existed for decades and was but one element of NCJW's activist focus. Members were recruited to lobby against the passage of the Alien Registration Act, which Congress passed in 1940, making it illegal for anyone in the U.S. to advocate or act toward overthrowing the government. It also required all immigrants to file a statement of their occupational status and record of their political beliefs. NCJW/Greater Detroit began to assist local foreign-born residents in becoming naturalized citizens.

NCJW volunteers also taught English classes. The Detroit Section clubhouse became a "veritable beehive of service – communal, cultural and religious," claimed a March 1935 *American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune* article. During WWII, NCJW volunteers served as friendly ambassadors in welcoming new Americans to the community, and helping families broken apart by the Holocaust to locate loved ones. While much of NCJW's refugee work was taken over in the late 1940s by the Jewish Federation's Resettlement Service (est. 1938), NCJW volunteers teamed up with the Resettlement Service through a joint program called Service to New Americans.

Local women also participated in national NCJW's Ship-a-Box program after the war. Longtime member Janet Moses remembered helping her mother, Margold Bing, pack boxes with clothing and toys for European Jewish children displaced by the war. In 1946, NCJW members from all over the country sent more than 50,000 boxes.

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*NCJW volunteers serve treats to servicemen at a Detroit-area USO function.*

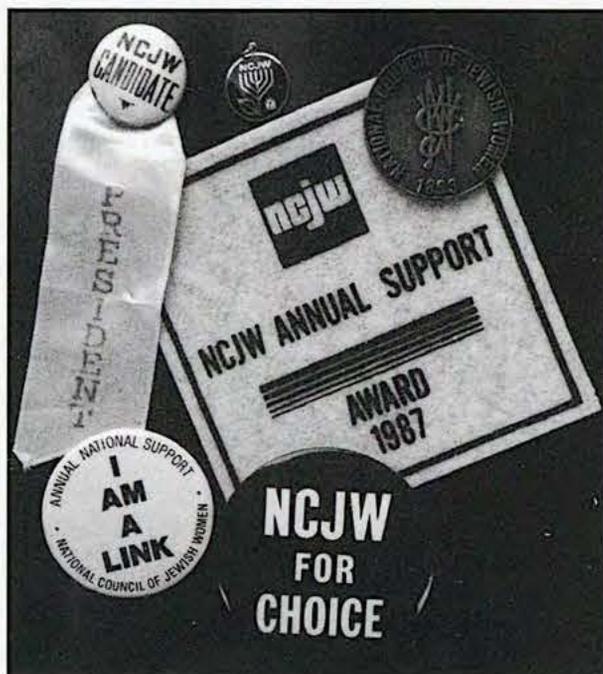
## ADVOCACY

NCJW members have long believed in advocating for better public policies as well as engaging in direct action to achieve social justice.

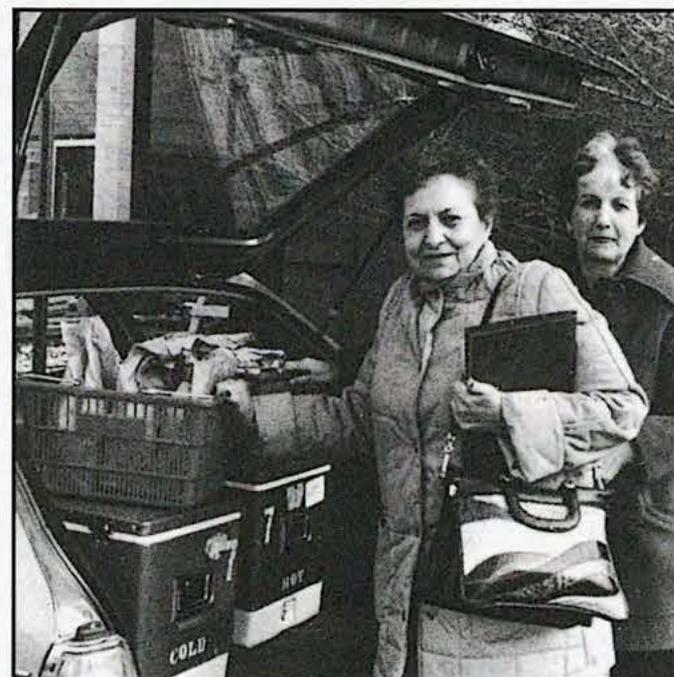
In 1923, members rallied for decent wage standards. In the 1930s, they supported Social Security, minimum-wage laws, civil-service reform, and

immigration reform. They were consistent supporters of civil rights and school integration, open housing, affordable child care, peace, and reproductive rights. But during the 1920s and 1930s, they disagreed with a proposed Equal Rights Amendment (worded differently from the one passed by Congress in 1972), believing that it would eliminate legislation that protected women.

A strong advocate for civil rights during the 1950s and 1960s, the NCJW also opposed nuclear weapons, McCarthyism, and the Vietnam War, positions that earned the organization an FBI file and unjustified suspicion that it was a communist front. The National Council of Jewish Women has had Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) status at the United Nations since the UN's founding.



*In recent years, the organization has focused on equal pay for women, reproductive rights, and raising awareness of domestic abuse and sex trafficking. These efforts continue at local, state, and federal levels in conjunction with the NCJW Washington office.*

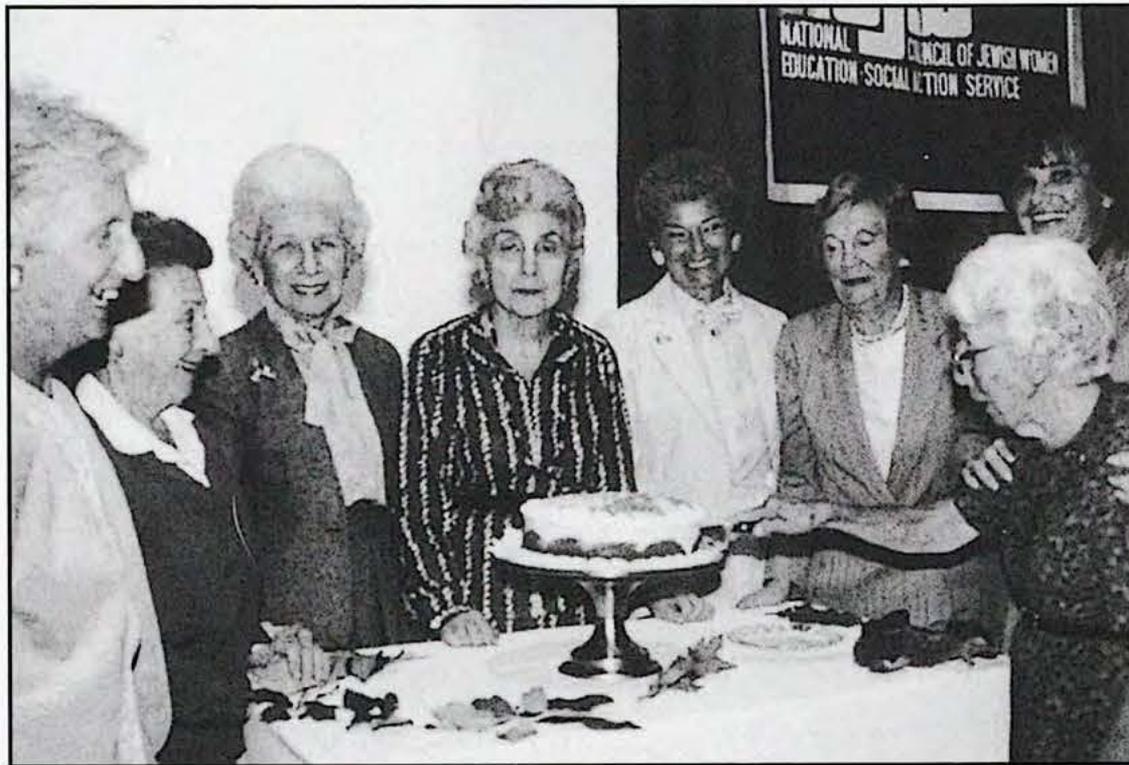


*Meals on Wheels. In 1973, NCJW/Greater Detroit leaders realized that many local Jews were not eating well because they were homebound or found it difficult to shop and/or cook. Thus began Kosher Meals on Wheels, a service still going strong with volunteers delivering 26,000 meals annually to homebound adults.*

## HELPING THROUGHOUT THE REGION

Today, with a membership roster of more than 1,500, NCJW/Greater Detroit is one of the nation's largest NCJW sections. Many of the community projects developed throughout NCJW/Greater Detroit's 125 years of service include:

- In the early 1900s, the Jewish Woman's Club coordinated with other local organizations to form traveling free libraries for local factory workers.
  - During the Depression, various NCJW/Greater Detroit programs helped adults who were struggling economically. An Industrial Workshop provided part-time work for five Jewish women who made garments that were sold at various agencies in the city. Jewish families living in Washington and Macomb counties were supported by the Farm and Rural Committee.
  - In the mid-1960s, the Detroit section invited other women's organizations to join them in Women in Community Services (WICS), part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The WICS program aimed to help young people cross racial, economic, and social barriers. Volunteers provided job training and support services and helped young adults find employment.
  - In 1977, members recognized the need for services for single, widowed, and divorced parents and their children. They started SPACE for Changing Families (SPACE originally stood for Single Parent Awareness Caring Exchange). The program continues to offer a variety of support groups and social programs.
  - NCJW/Greater Detroit supports Safe Place, a shelter for domestic-abuse victims. A program called Children's Advocates works with the courts to review guardian services for children.
  - In 1991, NCJW/Greater Detroit began making audio recordings of every issue of the *Detroit Jewish News* for the benefit of people with visual impairments.
  - In 2003, NCJW/Greater Detroit members built the first universally accessible playground in Oakland County.
  - For more than sixty years, NCJW/Greater Detroit has been a lead organization in supporting Israel, helping to lay groundwork for important social-change efforts. In particular, members focus on issues faced by Israeli women who are demanding their fair and equal rights amidst serious challenges to those rights. NCJW is committed to gender equality, religious pluralism, and women's empowerment through a strong civil society. Efforts such as the Israel Granting Program and NCJW's advocacy and coalition / work continue in the spirit of education and empowerment.
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*In 1976, NCJW/Greater Detroit celebrated its eighty-fifth anniversary. Those who gathered are considered some of the organization's most influential leaders and included Josephine Weiner, Ann Daniels, Ruth Klein, Regene Freund Cohane, Phyllis Welling, Freddy Shiffman, Sandra Nathan, and Golda Krolik (far right). Courtesy Michigan Jewish History, Vol. 32, Winter 1991.*

### FUNDING THE WORK

Funding has increased over the years as the number of NCJW/Greater Detroit service projects has grown. Numerous fundraising events have included the Franklin Hills Day, which focused on Service to Foreign Born, and the Angel Ball, held annually from 1955 through 1982. More recently, NCJW/Greater Detroit has hosted its yearly Women of Vision event.

Providing both a source of income and inexpensive clothing and household goods for those who were struggling financially, the Resale Shop has been in existence since its debut at the Rowena Street clubhouse in 1934. Initially, the volunteer-staffed shop provided funding for YWHA, the camp, and the clubhouse. After moving several times to increasingly larger quarters, in 1990 the Resale Shop settled on Twelve Mile Road in Berkley. A second location, a consignment shop for high-end used furniture and household décor, opened its doors on Woodward Avenue in Royal Oak in 2011. Proceeds from these stores supplement the work of the organization.

Programs are also supported by member dues, which are currently fifty dollars annually or \$350 for lifetime membership, and donors can make memorial or tribute gifts to restricted funds for specific programs. Dues and donations, along with grants and proceeds from fundraisers, are vital to furthering the organization's work.



*NCJW/Greater Detroit is one of the few chapters that employs an executive director. Susan Gertner (left) began in 2003 and remains in that position today. Sandi Matz (right) is the current NCJW/Greater Detroit Section president.*

### THE NEXT CENTURY OF SERVICE

The leadership roster of today's NCJW/Greater Detroit is not very different from the board of 1891. From its inception, NCJW/Greater Detroit has attracted dedicated, compassionate, pioneering women who work for social justice, maintaining the mission of improving the quality of life for women, children, and families. Together this team of volunteers, community partners, and donors works to make a difference in the lives of many.

To learn more about NCJW/Greater Detroit, visit [www.ncjwgds.org](http://www.ncjwgds.org) or call 248.355.3300.



**Barbara Lewis**, a writer and editor, worked for many years in communications for nonprofit organizations, including the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and Sinai Hospital. A Philadelphia native, she lives in Oak Park. She is a graduate of Antioch College and has master's degrees from Temple University and Central Michigan University.

### WORKS CITED:

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Interview with Janet Moses conducted on May 24, 2016.

*Jewish Women's Archive Encyclopedia* entry on National Council of Jewish Women by Faith Rogow, accessed May 24, 2016, via [www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/national-council-of-jewish-women](http://www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/national-council-of-jewish-women).

**AUTHORS NOTE:** Throughout the years, NCJW/Greater Detroit has had several name changes; for the reader's ease we use its current name: NCJW/Greater Detroit.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El, Louis Grossmann Collection.

<sup>2</sup> The name Ginsberg is often spelled Ginsburg.

## *Historical Tidbits*

**1886:** Frederick L. Hirschman, the first Jewish physician to have attended the Detroit College of Medicine (DCM) and to have practiced his entire life in Michigan, passed away at the young age of thirty-eight. Hirschman graduated from DCM in 1873, and in that same year was one of the many area physicians who responded to a call to help the city of Negaunee combat a smallpox epidemic. He remained in the Upper Peninsula and served as the surgeon for the Republic Mine Co. for ten years. (*From A History of Early Jewish Physicians in the State of Michigan, Irving I. Edgar, 1982, Philosophical Library, Inc. pp. 34-36.*)

**1886:** The Hebrew Congregation in Traverse City celebrated the opening of its building on land donated to the "Hebrews" by Perry Hannah, a Traverse City lumber magnate and philanthropist. The Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1882 by Julius Steinberg, the first Jew to settle in the area; and Julius Levinson and Solomon Yalomstein. The little white-frame synagogue is still in use and is the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Michigan.

**1936:** Camp Mehia opened on the shores of Wamplers Lake in Lenawee County. The camp was run by Movsas and Shulamith Berkovich. At its height, the camp accommodated some two hundred campers annually. The camp ceased operations around 1951.

## Feature Article

### TEMPLE EMANUEL, GRAND RAPIDS, AND THE CIVIL WAR

*By Margaret Finkelstein and Megan Yost*

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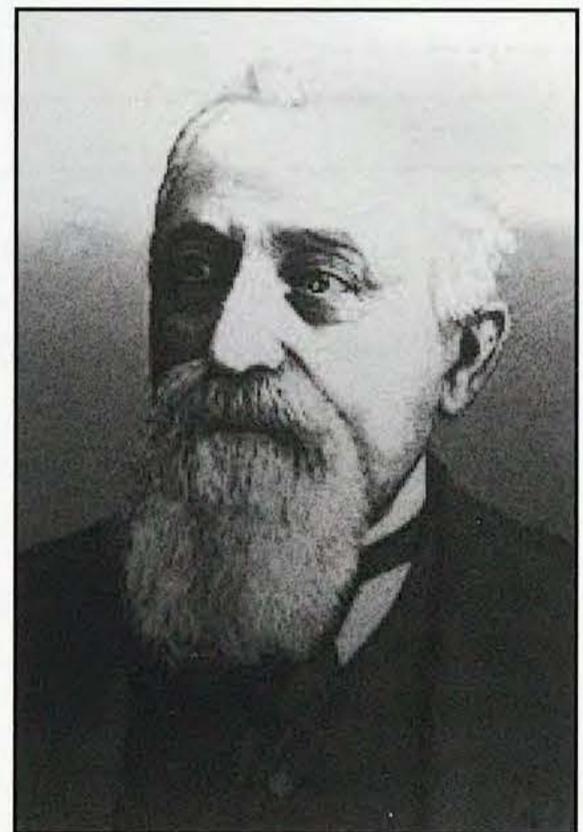
*In their research on the origins of Grand Rapids' Temple Emanuel, historian Margaret "Peg" Finkelstein and her daughter Megan Yost discovered the stories of a handful of Jewish Civil War soldiers whose contributions led to the creation of this Jewish congregation. These men served their adopted country, some wearing Union blue and others Confederate grey.*

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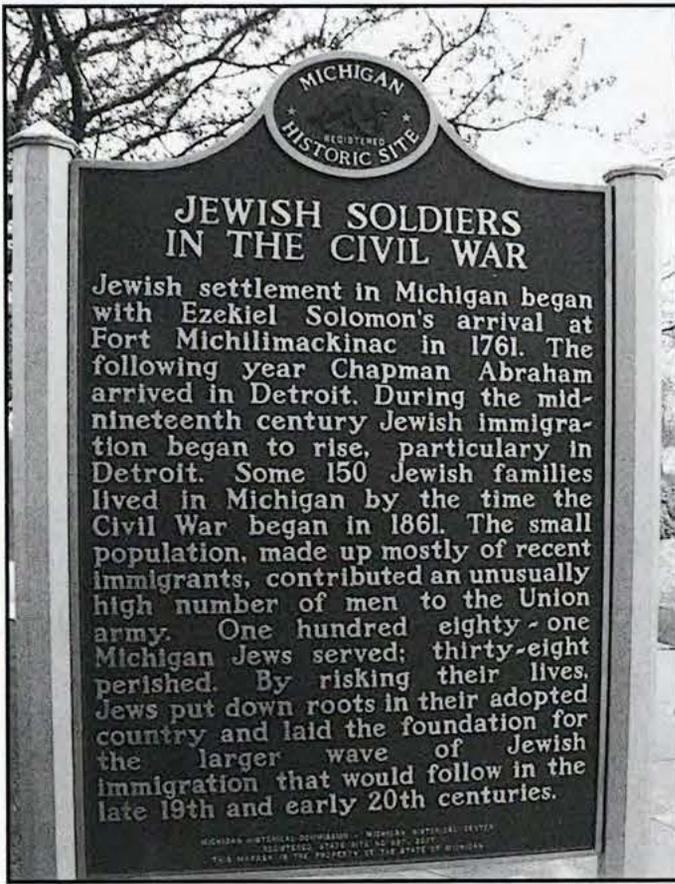
Julius Houseman settled in Grand Rapids in 1852. The Bavarian-born immigrant, considered the city's first Jewish settler, arrived two years after the city was established. The population of Grand Rapids at that time numbered fewer than 2,000.

Houseman emigrated in 1851 from Zeckendorf, Bavaria, Germany, where he was born in 1832. He first settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was a clerk in a clothing house, then moved to New Vienna, Ohio, where he continued to work as a clerk in a general store until March 1852. He then came to Battle Creek, Michigan, where he partnered with Isaac Amberg to begin a tailoring and clothing business that became the firm of Amberg & Houseman.

In August 1852, Houseman moved to Grand Rapids and opened a branch of the Battle Creek firm, becoming its sole proprietor in 1854. In 1864, Houseman organized a ready-made clothing store with Albert Alsberg, the husband of his sister Mary. Houseman, Alsberg & Co. had branch houses in New York, Baltimore, and Savannah, until the company dissolved in 1870. Houseman was also influential politically. He was elected mayor of Grand Rapids for the period of 1872-1873 and again for 1874-1875. In 1876, he turned his business over to his cousin, Joseph Houseman, and Joseph's partner, Moses May. The company became



*Julius Houseman is considered the father of Grand Rapids' Jewish community, first arriving in 1852.*



*When the Civil War began, there were 151 Jewish families living in Michigan. From those families, 181 men and boys were mustered into service. Thirty-eight never returned home.*

known as Houseman & May.

Houseman was a candidate for lieutenant governor of Michigan, after first refusing the governorship. From 1883 until 1885, he represented the fifth district of the State of Michigan in the 48th Congress of the United States. He was the first and only Jew in Congress at the time. When Jacob Levy, a French-born Jewish fur trader, died of consumption in Grand Rapids in 1857, Houseman and the rest of Grand Rapids' small Jewish community felt responsible for his burial. They purchased property at Oak Hill Cemetery, and Temple Emanuel was born. Temple Emanuel was officially organized as a religious institution in 1872, and Joseph Houseman served as its first president. His cousin, Julius Houseman, served as second president.

Within a decade of the temple's beginnings, this growing Jewish community would face the difficult task of sending its young men to the front during the Civil War, in numbers twice that of the non-Jewish community. Although Julius Houseman did not serve in the Civil War, records indicate that he had enlisted. The six men whose stories are included in this article each served in the Civil War and became members of Temple Emanuel. Most, like Houseman, were merchants, and one was a surgeon. Two became presidents of the congregation, five are buried in the Jewish section of Grand Rapids' Oak Hill Cemetery, and one, Sidney A. Hart, is buried in Detroit's Woodmere Cemetery.

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comprises all persons subject to do military duty between the ages of twenty and thirty-five years, and all unmarried persons subject to do military duty above the age of thirty-five years and under the age of forty-five. Class II comprises all other persons subject to do military duty.

EDULE I.—CONSOLIDATED LIST of all persons of CLASS I, subject to do military duty in the Fourth Congressional District, consisting of the Counties of Leont and 24 others State of Michigan, enumerated during the month of June & July, 1863, under direction of Orman Bailey, Provost Marshal.

RESIDENCE.	NAME.	DESCRIPTION.			PLACE OF BIRTH. (Naming the State, Territory, or County.)	FORMER MILITARY SERVICE.	REMARKS.
		AGE 1st July 1863.	WHITE OR COLORED.	PROFESSION, OCCUPATION, OR TRADE.			
First Ward	Leiswell, H. M.	26	White	Book Binder	Michigan		1
First " "	Houseman, Julius	31	"	Merchant	Germany		2

*Julius Houseman registered for the draft in 1863 but likely was never mustered into service. According to U.S. IRS tax-assessment records, he remained in Grand Rapids throughout the Civil War.*

## DAVID AND JULIUS AMBERG



*David Amberg, 1848-1939*

David M. Amberg was born on January 12, 1848, in Middletown, Ohio, and later moved with his family to Lafayette, Indiana. When he was fifteen, he spent a year studying at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana. During the Civil War, he was associated with the Union Army's supply service. Amberg was not a soldier, and there are no formal records of his service. What is known is that he was with the Army of the Cumberland, at the Battle of Nashville, on December 15-16, 1864, when General Thomas defeated General Hood at Nashville.

After the war he settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, and worked at the Season-Good Wholesale Grocery house. In 1868 he and Sidney Hart formed the wholesale liquor firm of Hart and Amberg in Grand Rapids. (Hart would later marry Amberg's sister, Fanny.) When Hart moved to Detroit in 1887, Amberg ran the business with his brother, Abraham M. Amberg, until 1916. Amberg had married Hattie Houseman, daughter of Julius Houseman, on June 18, 1876.

The youngest of the Amberg children, Julius H. Amberg, attended Harvard Law School. Upon graduation he returned to Grand Rapids to clerk for Butterfield & Kenney. He became a partner in the firm after his admission to the bar in 1916 and the firm expanded its name to Butterfield Kenney & Amberg. A year later, in 1917, during World War I, he worked for Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, to help with "legal work in connection with labor disputes" that were affecting war production. Julius Amberg enlisted in the Navy and was honorably discharged in 1918 with a Presidential Medal of Merit for his service.

Years later, Amberg would mentor another Navy veteran. They met when Gerald R. Ford Jr. joined Butterfield, Kenney & Amberg, and Amberg promised to train the young man "to be a good lawyer" and eventually make him a partner. When Ford won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1948 election, he relinquished his opportunity to be partner in the firm.

Houseman died in 1891, and his son-in-law David Amberg devoted most of his time to the administration of the large estate. He also filled many positions: he was director of the National City Bank and director and vice president of the Grand Rapids Chair Company and the Imperial Furniture Company. He was one of the incorporators of Temple Emanuel in 1871 and served for many years as its president. Amberg died in Grand Rapids in 1939 and was buried in the Houseman and Amberg mausoleum in the Jewish section of Oak Hill Cemetery.

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## SIDNEY HART



*Sidney Hart, 1841-1908*

Sidney A. Hart was born in New Orleans on October 25, 1841. His father, a local merchant, had become a shirt manufacturer in 1860. Hart joined the Confederate Army on March 5, 1862, and was assigned to Company H. Crescent Regiment of the Louisiana Infantry. One day after he reported for duty, the regiment was pressed into service. Within a month it had participated in the battle of Shiloh and was subsequently captured.

Hart's muster records state the following:

Hart, Sidney A., Private-Corporal, Company H. Crescent Regiment Louisiana Infantry. Entered March 5, 1862, New Orleans. Rolls for May and June, 1862, (Present). Rolls for July and Aug, 1862, (Present). Transferred from C.R.N.O. to Co. H. 18th Regiment Louisiana, Volunteers, July 30, 1862. Rolls from Nov.-Aug. 1863, (Present). On Rolls of Co. G, Consolidated Crescent Regiment Louisiana Infantry. As Hart, S. A., Private. Rolls for Jan.-Feb., 1864, (Present). Rolls of Prisoners of War, Paroled at Alexandria, Louisiana, June 7, 1865. Residence New Orleans, Louisiana.

Exact records of Sidney Hart's capture or where he was detained could not be found. However, records do indicate that he was present for a prison roll call in February 1864 and was not released until June 7, 1865.

After the war, Hart went to Detroit, but by 1868 he had moved to Grand Rapids. He and David Amberg founded Hart & Amberg, a wholesale liquor business. By 1870, according to U.S. census records, Hart, along with David M. Amberg and Julius Houseman, were all living at the Smith Hotel. It was here that David Amberg likely met Hattie Houseman. Her father, Julius, was a business partner of Amberg's uncle, Isaac Amberg. They were married on February 14, 1871, in Tippecanoe, Indiana. It is also likely that Sidney Hart met David's sister, Fanny Amberg, at the same time.

Sidney and Fanny lived in Grand Rapids for twenty



*After the Harts moved to Detroit around 1900, their daughter Blanche became a pivotal figure in the Detroit Jewish community. She founded the Fresh Air Society and was the first professional superintendent of the United Jewish Charities, predecessor to the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit.*

years. Sidney was one of Temple Emanuel's founders and was the fourth, seventh, and eleventh president of the congregation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, according to U.S. Census records, the couple moved to Detroit. Their children were Moses A., Walter M., Sidney A. Jr., and Blanche J. Once the family was established in Detroit, Hart served on the board of Temple Beth El. He died in Detroit on April 28, 1908, and was buried in Detroit's historic Woodmere Cemetery.

### DR. DANIEL LAUBENSTEIN



Daniel A. Laubenstein,  
1811-1896

Daniel A. Laubenstein was born to Esther and Isaac Laubenstein in Bota, Austria-Hungary, on September 3, 1811. At age fifteen, he left Bota and went to Vienna to pursue his literary education, graduating from college at eighteen. He went on to study medicine at the University of Vienna, earning his medical degree in 1845. He served as a surgeon in the Austrian-Italian War in 1846 and resigned from the military in 1848. The young physician emigrated to America in 1849, arriving in New York on August 25. He practiced in Trenton, New Jersey, for two years and married Rosa (Rosina) Strauss on May 10, 1851, in New York. Around 1853 the couple moved to Springfield,

Missouri, and lived there until 1859. According to the 1860 U.S. Census, the couple was living in Mascoutah, St. Clair, Illinois, with their daughters Emma, Lena, Bella, and Clementine, and son Jacob. Records indicate that Rosa died sometime in 1860.

When the Civil War began, Dr. Laubenstein may have been living in Missouri. According to extensive research done by Irving I. Edgar, M.D., *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 6, June 1966, no proof could be found of when or where Laubenstein enlisted. Within a short time, however, it was documented in the Grand Rapids city directory that Laubenstein had enlisted after the "first call for three-month men for the Union."

On April 15, 1861, at the start of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln called for a 75,000-man militia to serve for three months, following the bombardment and surrender of Fort Sumter. Without official records of his service, but based on Civil War history, it is believed that Laubenstein served as a contract doctor, as did many doctors, especially surgeons, during this time

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period. Contract doctors provided vital medical care, moving from camp to camp, receiving the same wages as a lieutenant.

Records from 1862 show that Dr. Laubenstein lived in Hancock, on Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. During that time he married Caroline (Baer) Strauss, and within a year the Laubensteins relocated to Detroit. The 1863 Detroit city directory indicated that Laubenstein had a medical practice from 1863 to sometime in 1865. A son, Frank Isaac, was born on March 17, 1866, and a daughter, Bertha, was born in April 1867 in Kalamazoo. Dr. Laubenstein was listed in the Kalamazoo city directories as a medical practitioner from 1867 until 1869.

The family then moved to Grand Rapids, where Laubenstein built a successful practice, especially among the city's wealthy German population. In 1874 he was named city physician, and in the fall of 1880 was elected coroner. Laubenstein moved to Milwaukee around 1889 and remained there until his death on January 14, 1896. His body was returned to Grand Rapids, where he was buried next to his second wife, Caroline, and his son Jacob in the Jewish section of Oak Hill Cemetery.

### SIGO TYROLER

Sigo Tyroler was born in St. Marton, Hungary, on June 11, 1836. It is uncertain when he emigrated to the United States and then settled in Grand Rapids since there are no available records. He enlisted in Company K of the Ohio 7th Infantry Regiment on August 25, 1862. He mustered out on October 31, 1864, transferring to Company G, Ohio 5th Infantry Regiment. He mustered out on June 1, 1865.

On August 16, 1866, Tyroler married Amelia (Matilda) Hoffman in Allen, Indiana. According to the U.S. Census of 1870, he was in Grand Rapids, where he worked with the Jacob Barth family (Jacob Barth was also a founding member of Temple Emanuel) in their Fancy Goods & Toy Store. A son, Sigo Tyroler Jr., was listed in the 1882 Grand Rapids city directory. He worked in the family's store, S. Tyroler & Co.

The name Matilda appears on Sigo's 1884 passport application. We can only assume that this is Amelia, because it states in later records, when he marries again, that he was married previously. Little else is known about Matilda other than the information found in a *Grand Rapids Press* obituary, which states that Matilda had "died in St. Louis, Mich. yesterday and was brought to the city for burial." The funeral was at the home of her sister, Eva Tyroler (Eva was married to Sigo's brother, Max). Temple Emanuel's records

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confirm that Matilda died on February 8, 1893, and was buried in the Jewish Section of Oak Hill Cemetery.

A year later, on September 1, 1894, Sigo married Rella Kornstein while living in St. Louis City, Gratiot, Michigan, Fourth Ward. Mary White, Rella's mother, lived with them. A son, Rudolf, was born in 1898 but died shortly afterward, on January 18, 1898, and was buried in the Jewish Section of Oak Hill Cemetery.

NAME OF SOLDIER: <i>Tyroler, Sigo</i>				
NAME OF DEPENDENT: <i>Widow, Tyroler, Rella</i>				
SERVICE: <i>G. S. &amp; 167, Ohio Inf.</i>				
DATE OF FILING:	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED.
<i>1891 Apr. 4</i>	<i>Invalid.</i>	<i>1011307</i>	<i>814166</i>	<i>Mich.</i>
<i>1916 Sept. 27</i>	<i>Widow, Minor,</i>	<i>1077719</i>	<i>831115</i>	<i>Mich.</i>
ATTORNEY: <i>G. D. Reeves</i>				
REMARKS: <i>Sigo</i>				

*After Sigo Tyroler's death in 1914, his widow, Rella, filed for widow's pension on September 27, 1916.*

Records from the U.S. National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866-1938, indicate that Tyroler was admitted in 1910 to Battle Mountain Sanitarium in South Dakota. He died four years later in St. Louis, Gratiot, Michigan, on April 12, 1914. Tyroler was buried in the Jewish Section of Oak Hill Cemetery, next to Matilda and his son Rudolf. Matilda died on June 9, 1921, and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery, Grand Rapids.

### CHARLES D. ROSE

Charles D. Rose was born in Germany on December 25, 1834. The date of his emigration to the United States is unknown. During the Civil War, he joined Company D of the 123rd Pennsylvania Infantry, which was organized in Allegheny City in August 1862. The company—with Rose on its roster—moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and then to Washington, D.C. Rose was next transferred to companies B & D of the 127th PA Infantry. After a lot more movement, Rose's regiment was also with the Army of the Cumberland until the end of the Civil War, as was David M. Amberg during the same time period.

In 1870 Charles Rose and his family were living in Joliet Ward 6, Will,

Illinois, according to U.S. Census records. They had three children: Herman, Leah, and Leola. Rose worked as a dyer of ladies' and gentlemen's clothes, laces, silks, cottons, and woolens. The process of dyeing clothes extended the life of items, making them appear fresh or almost new again. By 1880 there were two more children, William and Reuben. By this time the family had relocated to Grand Rapids. In 1881 Rose was listed in the city directory as being a "dyer & scourer," which indicates that he not only dyed garments and goods, but also cleaned and restored the items to good condition using various compounds. Today we would call this process dry cleaning.

Rose died on October 7, 1892, and was buried in the Jewish Section of Oak Hill Cemetery. According to the cemetery records of Temple Emanuel, the family paid ten dollars for the plot in the permit section. A reference in Find A Grave, posted by Pat Harney from the *Saline Observer*, Washtenaw County, Michigan, states, "Charles D. Rose, Grand Rapids, dyer, has died from the effects of a wound received in 1877 from a revolver shot fired by a crazy German tailor named Boschone."

### ABRAHAM LEVY

Abraham Levy was born about 1841 in Poland/Russia and first appeared in the Civil War records on February 19, 1864, in New York City, as a private in Company E of the 103rd New York Infantry. He was present for roll call in October 1864 and transferred to Co. A Battalion on March 14, 1865. He mustered out on December 7, 1865, at City Point, Virginia.

By 1867 Levy was living in Grand Rapids. The Grand Rapids 1867 city directory shows that Levy worked as a peddler. In the 1870 U.S. Census, Levy was listed as a tailor, living with his wife Dora. In 1873 the city directory stated

Mustered in									
NO.	YEAR	DATE	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE	COMP.	GRADE	REG'T	CO.
21	1864	19	Feb	1864	N.Y. city	3	19	Feb	103
LEFT THE ORGANIZATION									
NO.	YEAR	DATE	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE	EXPLANATION			
21	1865	7	Dec	1865	City Point Va.	Mustered out with Co. A. Battalion			
REMARKS present in roll call Oct. 64. Transferred to Co. A. Battalion March 14/65									
Born Poland Age years Occupation Tailor 7 Cong. Dist. Sub. Dist.									
Eyes Hazel Hair Dark Complexion fair 5 ft. 1 in. High. Cr.									

Charles Levy mustered out on December 7, 1865, at City Point, Virginia.

that he worked along with Joseph and Morritz Levy as proprietors of Levy Bros. Ladies and Gents' Furnishing Goods. In 1880, Abraham and Dora moved to Big Rapids to operate a fancy-goods store. In 1883, Levy returned to Grand Rapids and was listed as a merchant and tailor, along with Maximillian Levy, tailor. For the next two years he worked alongside the tailor. Abraham Levy died in 1886 and was buried in the Jewish Section of Oak Hill Cemetery. Dora applied for a pension on May 10, 1887.

The legacies of the Jewish Civil War soldiers who ultimately became members of Ahavas Achim, the conservative congregation in Grand Rapids, will be told in another volume of *Michigan Jewish History*.



**Margaret (Peg) Tracy-Finkelstein** was born in Manistee, Michigan, and raised in Scottville. Margaret serves as director of the Peg and Mort Finkelstein Archives at Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids. Established in 2002, the archives preserves the Jewish history of Grand Rapids and the surrounding communities. Margaret and her team also oversee the archives at Ahavas Israel Congregation in Grand Rapids, and they work with B'nai Israel in Muskegon.



**Megan Yost** is the daughter of Peg and Mort Finkelstein. Megan is researcher and associate director of the Temple Emanuel Archives. She has worked extensively on documenting all Jewish cemetery records within the Grand Rapids community and has added Jewish veterans' records for Temple Emanuel and Congregation Ahavas Israel in Grand Rapids, along with those for B'nai Israel of Muskegon.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. IRS tax-assessment records, 1862-1918.

<sup>2</sup> Because this census was recorded on Aug. 29, 1860, and Rosina Laubenstein was listed, she must have died after that date. No other documentation can be located.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Irving did not indicate that Laubenstein had been in Mascoutah, St. Clair, Illinois, during that time. Other than the 1860 U.S. Census record, the Mascoutah Historical Society had no other records of him or his family. Area lore is that Laubenstein entered the Civil War from that area by going to Missouri.

<sup>4</sup> Grand Rapids City, Chapman, 1881, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> Baxter, Albert, *History of the City of Grand Rapids*, p.,709.

<sup>6</sup> *Grand Rapids Press*, 02-07-189.3

<sup>7</sup> in the 1894 Census of State of Michigan which is found in a book of United States Soldiers of the Civil War on p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> We find her probated will in Sarasota, Florida, dated June 18, 1921. Her mother Mari Kornstein filed the claim for her estate.

<sup>9</sup> Pa-roots.com.

<sup>10</sup> The pension form filled out by Levy's widow showed his enlistment as Co. E 103rd NY Infantry Feb. 19, 1864, discharged on Dec. 7, 1865, at City Point, Virginia. Another card showed Co. A 103rd NY Infantry July 17, 1864, discharged on Dec. 7, 1865. We verified this information with New York State Archives: Index to the Civil War muster roll abstracts: microfilm 447.

## *Historical Tidbits*

**1889:** United Jewish Charities, the predecessor to Jewish Federation, was founded.

**1956:** Hank Greenberg was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. The first Jewish inductee compiled a lifetime batting average of .313, hit 331 home runs, and batted in 1,394 games.

**1976:** Myra Wolfgang, one of the labor movement's most influential leaders, passed away just before her sixty-second birthday. Leaving college early to help her family during the Depression, Wolfgang started as a waitress and became involved with Local 705 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union. By age twenty-three, she was leading strikes and organizing drives in local hotels and restaurants. She organized the pink-collar sit-down strike at the Woolworth store on Woodward at Grand River; the action lasted eight days. For forty years she remained a staunch fighter for labor legislation and women's rights.

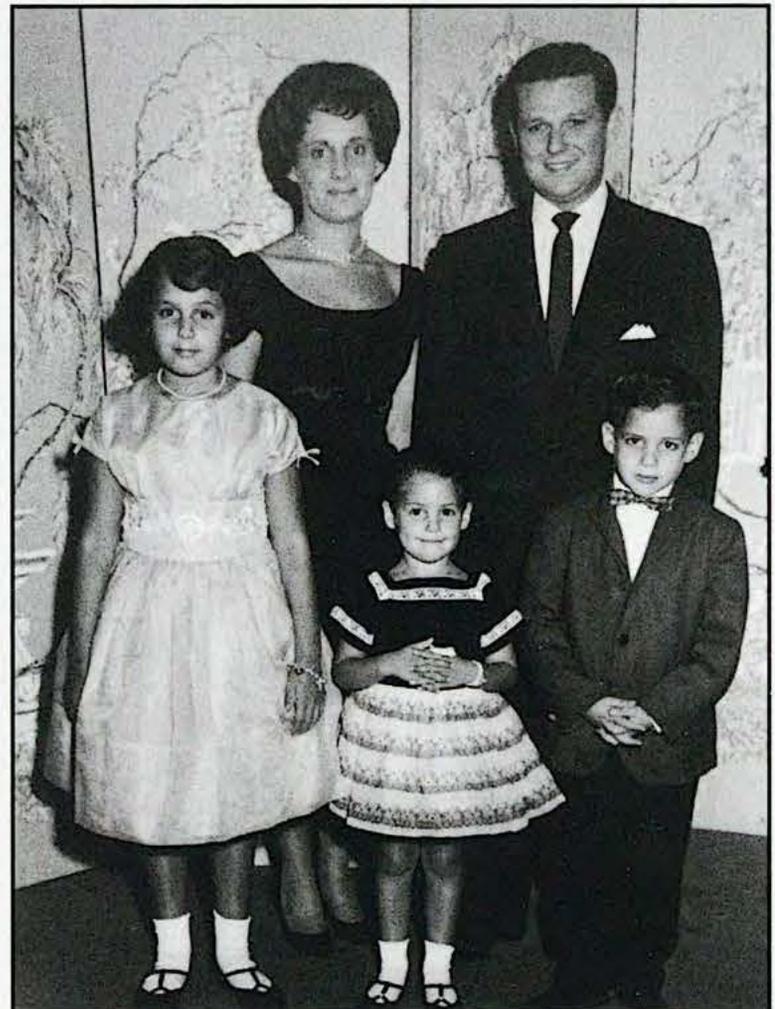
## Featured Article

### NAME CHANGING IN AMERICA: A CONVERSATION WITH KIRSTEN FERMAGLICH

*Kirsten Fermaglich is an educator, researcher, and author based in East Lansing. Her research covers topics ranging from American Jewish history to Holocaust and women's studies. She is in the process of finishing research for a soon-to-be-published book that explores the reasons behind name changing: why Jewish men and women changed their names, to be, in most cases, more American-sounding. Michigan Jewish History interviewed Fermaglich to discuss her findings.*

Meyer Leon Prensky was born on July 15, 1886. He came with his family to the United States sometime around 1893 and settled in St. Louis. He studied bookkeeping and then accounting. By 1914, Prensky was living in Detroit and working for the General Motors Company. The financial wiz was promoted to comptroller in 1917, and in 1919 was named treasurer. In 1923, Meyer Leon Prensky legally became Meyer Prentis. His professional colleagues called him M. L. The change of name was, at the time, not all that unusual. It is speculated he made the change in response to a suggestion from his employer to make his name sound less Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1950s, Saul Ginsberg was a hard-working sales representative for a corrugated box company. Like many who lived in Detroit at that time, his well-being was tied to the auto industry. Walking through the auto plants to see his clients, he was often taunted and harassed by factory workers who called him "kike" and "hymie." He wanted to go into business for himself, but feared the anti-Semitic culture of the trade. "He felt it would be more advantageous



*Saul and Adele (Karp) Gaines pictured with their children Ferne, Joy, and Robert, circa 1959.  
Courtesy Joy Gaines-Friedler.*

for him and his growing family to be less obvious," recalled his daughter, Joy Gaines-Friedler (co-editor of *Michigan Jewish History*). In 1954 he changed not only his and his wife Adele's last name, but also that of their two children. Joy, their third child, was born just after the name change, "I am the only one born a Gaines," she said.

These two stories reflect what was a larger movement among Jews in the twentieth century, a trend being explored by Kirsten Fermaglich, associate professor of history and Jewish studies at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on the history of name changing in New York City in the twentieth century and will soon be published in a book tentatively titled *A Rosenberg By Any Other Name*. Her research both confirms and dispels many myths: Yes, Jews in entertainment frequently changed their names to have more American-sounding screen appeal. And, no, most Jewish immigrants did not receive a change of name at Ellis Island.

**Q: The image many of us hold is that of the exhausted immigrant, stepping up to a metal desk on Ellis Island, anxiously waiting for his or her passport or papers to be stamped. The immigration officer asks for the frightened immigrant's name. Unable to fully comprehend the language or the question, the nervous traveler cannot answer. The officer blurts out a name and that is it. Rosenszweig becomes Rosen. Is this a myth?** Most genealogists and immigration historians, yes, consider this a myth. The process at Ellis Island generally required officials to check individuals' names off of an already-prepared ship manifest. The rules at Ellis Island demanded that no official change anyone's name. If immigrants' names were changed, it is more likely that names were changed when individuals bought tickets for ships before they got here, or after they immigrated to the United States, when teachers or employers might have demanded name changes. I cannot say categorically that no one's name was ever changed at Ellis Island, but in general, the circumstances prevented it, and there is little evidence to support its occurrence, other than second- and third-hand anecdotes long after the fact. Most importantly, all immigrants lived in a culture where they knew they could change their names freely—if an official changed an immigrant's name to something he didn't like, that immigrant knew he was free to take on a different name, or return to the old one.

**Q: You refer to name changing as one way a family looked toward upward mobility.** By looking at name-change petitions in the New York City Civil Court, I've uncovered a very different story of name changing, one that shows large numbers of second-generation Jews (children of immigrants)

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changing their names together as families in order to get jobs and an education. As Jews worked to enter or advance in the middle class in the years after World War I, they increasingly found their way blocked by anti-Semitic restrictions in college admissions offices and employment agencies. Jewish names easily identified them as Jews, and were the easiest aspect of their Jewish identities to eliminate in the hopes of attaining success.

**Q: What led you to begin this research?** The easy answer to this question is that my name is Kirsten Lise Fermaglich—why wouldn't I be interested in researching name changing? Maybe because I have an unusual name, I've always been fascinated by names, and I can talk about them for hours. But intellectually, the real reason is that I've always been interested in the boundaries of Jewishness—who are the people at the edge of those boundaries, what sends them over the edge (or does not send them over), and how firm are those boundaries anyway?

**Q: Your research was centered in New York City. Why?** To be honest, there were many practical reasons to choose New York. I'm from the New York area, and having family and friends in the region gave me a good base for my research. The New York City Civil Court also made its records available in a way that was open and very accessible to a researcher; the Wayne County Court's records are not archived in a way that makes them accessible to historical researchers.

The New York setting is a distinct one. Because New York was, and for the most part still is, such a heavily Jewish city, it is particularly striking that so many felt the need to change their names. One might think that Jews would have been more comfortable in New York than anywhere else in the country. Then, too, as the financial, banking, and cultural industries in New York took off, those fields in particular demanded the kind of white-collar workers who felt they needed to change their names to succeed. And New York's demographics and politics helped to make it the first state in the nation to pass a civil-rights act with teeth, in 1945. That act was significantly shaped by Jewish name changing.

Having said all this, however, there is evidence that name changing was taking place all over the country. Sociologists in Los Angeles and Minneapolis identified high numbers of Jewish name changers in those cities. I don't know about the statistics in Michigan, but I've been told several stories about Jews changing their names in Detroit. Moreover, name changing became a part of American popular culture by the post-World War II years in a way that affected Americans all over the country. The 1947 book *Gentleman's Agreement*, for

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example, featured an ugly portrait of a Jewish name changer traumatized by anti-Semitism, and even though it was set in New York City, it used the Detroit suburbs as an example of some of the ugliest anti-Semitism found by the main character. Moreover, I found letters from people in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek responding to Hobson's book by describing (and sometimes supporting!) anti-Semitism in their communities.

**Q: As in our example, the years between World War I and World War II were difficult because of a rampant culture of anti-Semitism. What about later, after World War II?** That's one of the very interesting elements of this story: Although most historical literature highlights the decline of anti-Semitism after World War II, World War II actually brought about the highest levels of name changing in New York throughout the entire century, and the levels stayed high throughout the 1940s, and even through the 1950s and 1960s. World War II did not erase anti-Semitism in the way we sometimes imagine.

**Q: Your work refers to "passing" and "hiding in plain sight."**

**Can you explain these phenomena?** "Passing" is a term used to describe individuals actually abandoning one community (usually African-American, but also Jewish), and passing themselves off as a member of the dominant community. The typical way in which this term was wielded in the Jewish media was to brand name changers as traitors, people moving outside the community altogether.

Although it is true that some name-changing Jews did indeed move out of the Jewish community altogether, finding new friends and abandoning family members, converting to Christianity, and disavowing their identities as Jews, many more name changers did not do any of these things. I would say that they "covered" (I am here using the language of sociologist Erving Goffman). And, by this I mean that they tried to hide only the most obtrusive part of their Jewishness (their name) so that it did not interfere with their daily interactions. It allowed them to continue to socialize with and be part of the Jewish world, yet avoid the stigma of Jewishness in the work world. The large majority of Jewish name changers interviewed by sociologists and journalists, in describing their decisions to change their names, fell into this latter category of "covering."

**Q: One aspect of your work addresses how the media dealt with Jewish name changing. You discuss how emotional the community became over the issue. A number of articles in the press indicted name changers as "self-hating." As you read these articles, what were your thoughts? Were you surprised?** I was not particularly surprised by these attacks/

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criticisms: When I talk to Jews in both public and private settings, I frequently find that that is still the unstated assumption about name changers. I think that there is still a stigma attached to name changing that is strong—even though it has been such a common part of American Jewish culture. (Indeed, I think the stigma is stronger now than it was before World War II.)

**Q: There is the sense that it was mostly men who initiated the name change. Did this pattern change over time?** In the early part of the twentieth century, men were the dominant name changers—they represented the vast majority of petitions. By the 1930s, women represented thirty percent of name changers; by the 1940s, they were roughly half of name changers; and by 2012, they were sixty-five percent of name changers.

**Q: What are some modern-day examples of name changing, and why is it still a practice?** Name changing has changed considerably since the mid-twentieth century, when middle-class Jews predominated in the New York City name-change petitions. Today, it is primarily poor and working-class African-American, Latino, and Asian people (large numbers of them women) who predominate in the petitions. They are not typically “covering” ethnically marked names to get ahead, however. Instead, changing family structure and increasing surveillance in a post-9/11 world has led poor people, especially women, to change their own and their children’s names to find jobs, receive government benefits, and stabilize their families.

Only about twenty percent of those changing names today are erasing their ethnic names. In many cases, petitioners are fixing bureaucratic mistakes or cementing family relationships.

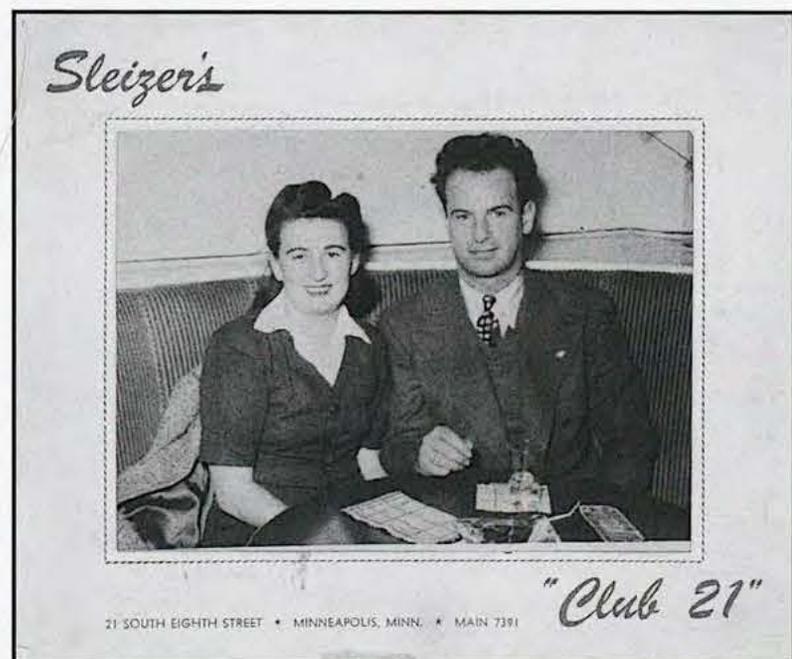
**Q: What lessons do you, as a historian, hope that readers of your work will learn?** I hope that readers will think about name changing as a more serious subject, not simply something that is a superficial topic for jokes (although I like a good name-changing joke as much as the next person!). I hope that readers will consider the context of name changing more carefully, thinking about it not simply as an automatic Americanization of immigrants, nor as the ugly betrayal of self-hating Jews, but instead as part of a complicated response that both immigrant and native-born American Jews found necessary in order to avoid anti-Semitism. Name changing was an integral part of American Jewish life in the twentieth century, not a repudiation of it.

Finally, I hope that readers will consider the complicated relationship between name changing and race for American Jews during this era. On the one hand, name changing illustrates Jews’ problematic racial status in the

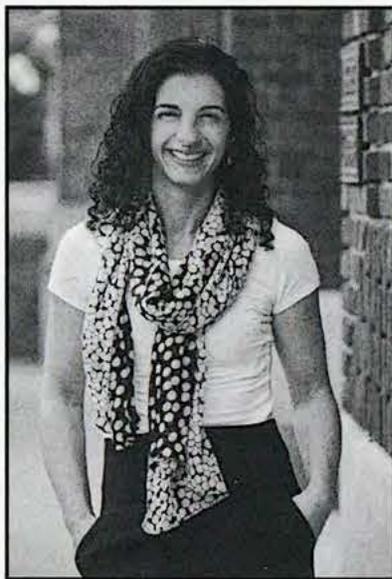
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their children by the late twentieth century, but only when they fit contemporary styles. Names that had become identified with Jews in the first half of the twentieth century—Milton, Irving, and Stanley, for example—were not reclaimed by the twenty-first century, and indeed, those names continue to be stigmatized as weak and effeminate.



*Florence and Harvey Goldfein, circa 1946.  
In 1954, the family changed their name to Gale.*



**Kirsten Fermaglich** is an educator, researcher, and author. Her book on American social scientists and Holocaust metaphors, *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965*, was published by Brandeis University Press in 2006. She also co-edited the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (2013), with her Michigan State University colleague Lisa Fine. She is currently co-editor of the journal *American Jewish History*, along with Daniel Soyer and

Adam Mendelsohn, and has published articles in several journals including the *Journal of American History*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, and the *Michigan Historical Review*. Fermaglich has won fellowships and grants from the Frankel Institute at the University of Michigan, YIVO, the Posen Foundation, and the Association for Jewish Studies. She also co-curated an MSU museum exhibit, *Uneasy Years: Michigan Jewry During Depression and War*, which was recognized by the Michigan Council for the Humanities as among the top thirty projects the Council had supported in thirty years.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The story of the career of Meyer Prentis, long-time General Motors financial architect and for many years the highest-ranking Jewish leader in the automotive industry, was featured in the 2013 edition of *Michigan Jewish History*.

<sup>2</sup> For the birth announcements in the *Detroit Jewish News*, see <https://dijnfoundation.org/the-archive/>.

## Feature Article

### BILL AVRUNIN, E.D.: THE PRINCIPAL PHILOSOPHER OF THE FEDERATION IDEA

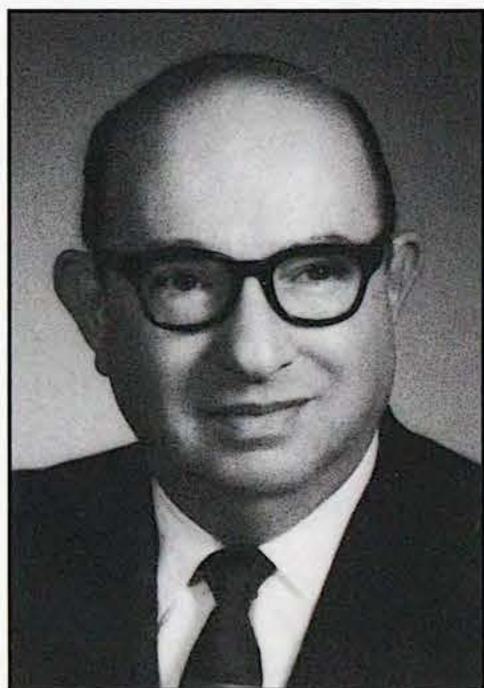
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*By Beth Robinson*

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*Every year, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit awards an Avrunin Fellowship to a staff member who exhibits excellence in his or her profession. The fellowship is named in memory of William Avrunin, who first came to Detroit's Jewish Federation in 1948. In 1976, he retired as Federation's executive director, leaving a permanent legacy of community leadership.*

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*Portrait of  
William Avrunin, 1968.*

A visitor to William Avrunin's Detroit office would very quickly have been able to assess his priorities and perspective. His walls were lined with books on social work, Israel, and the Jewish community, along with a collection of World Jewish Congress yearbooks that contained demographic information about the world's Jewish populations. Numerous photos included one of Avrunin with Golda Meir, and cherished memorabilia from his many trips to Israel featured an ancient Masada oil lamp that had been given to him by Israeli statesman and archaeologist Yigal Yadin.

William Avrunin served as associate director of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit from 1948 until 1964, and as executive director and then executive vice president from 1964 until his retirement in 1976. He is widely credited with helping to shape the post-war mission of the Federation, and with maintaining the high level of professionalism and inclusion that helped Federation provide support to members of the local and world Jewish communities.

Avrunin was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1911. During Avrunin's childhood, his Russian-born father had an agenda that could be summed up in a single

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word: Americanization. His father subscribed to *The Literary Digest* so he could own works by American authors such as Mark Twain and Michigan-born adventure writer James Oliver Curwood, and it was a proud moment for the family when Mr. Avrunin, who had learned mechanical skills working for a company that made electric car batteries, became a substitute night-school teacher in the Cleveland public-school district. The senior Avrunin wanted his son to become an engineer, but, for William, other influences and inclinations prevailed.

William Avrunin was deeply impressed by Walter Leo Solomon, director of Cleveland's Council Educational Alliance. Solomon was a cultured intellectual who went to the symphony, the opera, and the theater, and discussed the performances with interested youngsters. He took an interest in Avrunin, making him a club leader and, eventually, editor of the council's newsletter. One of Avrunin's English teachers steered him toward his high-school newspaper, where Avrunin won a contest run by Ohio State University. The award made a big impression on his father, and suddenly becoming a writer seemed just as American as becoming an engineer.

Avrunin went to the Ohio State University School of Journalism, where he became an editor and columnist for the Ohio State *Lantern*, and eventually he had the opportunity to work for the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. He graduated in 1933, at the height of the Depression, when journalism jobs were hard to come by. He had a brief and abysmally low-paying stint at an Anglo-Jewish publication called *Friday Magazine*, where he was introduced to the internecine conflict endemic to organized Jewish life. After the magazine folded in 1934, the only job Avrunin could find was as an investigator for the Cuyahoga County Relief Administration. Despite his excellent work, he was never promoted. His supervisor told him it was because he didn't have a master's degree.

So, Avrunin went to Western Reserve University<sup>1</sup> and earned a master's degree in applied social science, and then took a post with the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York, now known as the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. It was the perfect place for him to focus on his growing interest in professionalism in social work, a value that grew stronger and found increasingly organized expression throughout his career.

Avrunin was active in a number of professional organizations, including the International Conference of Social Work and the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service. He penned dozens of articles for publications such as *Jewish Social Service Quarterly* and *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*. His prolific work included "The Role of the Professional in Jewish Communal Organizations" and "Communal Services as Instruments for Jewish Identification and Survival."

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## **INDUCTION INTO THE JEWISH FEDERATION**

Avrunin enjoyed six years at the Jewish Board of Guardians, but he sensed that developing effective community organizations could be more valuable than helping one individual at a time. He reached out to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF) and was offered the position of executive director of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne.

With no fundraising experience, Avrunin spent the month before moving to Indiana learning what he could. He was a quick study. In his first fundraising campaign, he successfully applied what he'd learned. In addition to his fundraising success, he launched services such as child day care, and he used the Federation as a vehicle to bring together older settlers and newer immigrants. He liked the challenge that the Jewish Federation work presented, once telling an interviewer, "You couldn't stay long in that job if you weren't good. You had to be. It was almost like being reelected every year." Soon, Fort Wayne began to feel small to Avrunin; he wanted to help a larger number of people in a larger community.

In 1945, with the end of World War II, the Jewish community was faced with the task of supporting the remnants of Europe's Jewry, assisting with their resettlement in Palestine, and welcoming, supporting, and integrating traumatized Holocaust survivors arriving in America. That year, William Avrunin was appointed director of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds Central States Region.

Begun in Boston in 1895, the Jewish Federations were organized to provide support for local social-service agencies. Now, for the first time, they had to integrate a pressing set of international priorities. At a November 1945 CJFWF regional meeting titled "The Reconversion Period and Jewish Social Welfare: Setting our Post-War Sights," Federation representatives discussed planning for the post-war period. They established three basic tenets and goals: integration of local planning in the interest of the total community; building local Jewish programs (in addition to the traditional philanthropic services) to contribute to the development of American Jewish life; and establishment of a more-effective partnership between the local welfare funds and the regional, national, and overseas agencies.

Avrunin had joined the Council during a contentious time, as it was pushed by its member communities into a more-aggressive role in national budgeting. The Council was almost destroyed by the conflict, and afterward, Avrunin and his colleagues were challenged to rebuild the Council's role. The Council already had been instrumental in organizing communities and

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professionalizing the Jewish community, and the next step, in Avrunin's view, was to help the Jewish population act together on national causes.

During his two-year tenure with the CJFWF, Avrunin worked with numerous communities to build Federations that would strengthen their member agencies through effective fundraising and fluid responsiveness to a region's constantly evolving priorities. He believed that Federation leadership needed to be willing to both lead and respond, and that a successful Federation would be structured to support and strengthen whichever of its agencies might be taxed by the changing demographics, desires, and challenges of the community.

### WELCOME TO THE MOTOR CITY

In January of 1948, William Avrunin came to Detroit to assume the role of associate director of the Jewish Welfare Federation, under executive vice president Isidore Sobeloff. Five months later, on Friday, May 14, David Ben Gurion mounted a podium in the Tel Aviv Museum and announced the formation of the State of Israel. That Sunday, 22,000 Detroiters gathered on the athletic field of Central High School to celebrate. By then, the armies of Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Syria, and Iraq had already begun an assault on the new state, prompting a flurry of fundraising in Jewish communities across the U.S.



*In 1954, Avrunin (center) took his first of many trips to Israel, attending the Joint Distribution Committee with Max J. Zivian (left) and Max M. Fisher, whom he had known since they were both students at Ohio State University. In 1962, Avrunin was invited to work with leaders of the Jewish state on the first study on voluntary fundraising in Israel. The ten-month study was done under the auspices of the CJFWF, the Jewish Agency, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.*

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This period was also a time of internal conflict between the Jewish Welfare Federation and Detroit's Jewish Community Council, the latter founded in 1937 to bring together representatives from 155 organizations. Jewish Welfare Federation, founded in 1899 as United Jewish Charities, had historically provided care for the aged and infirm, vocational assistance, and family and children's services. The Council charged that the Federation was failing to support a sense of Jewish culture and identity, and Federation responded by changing its by-laws to include broader representation on its board, including organizations such as the Zionist Council of Detroit and the Synagogue Council.

### **FACING CHANGES AT HOME**

As great as the challenges were that faced the new Jewish state, demographic changes in Detroit also demanded new goals and strategies.

In the early 1950s, Detroit's Jewish population began to migrate out of the city and into the suburbs. Jews were living in Oak Park, Southfield, and Huntington Woods, but some were venturing farther north into the Bloomfields. At the time, Avrunin was staffing a new Capital Building Needs Committee, co-chaired by Max Fisher and Max Zivian. He counseled the leaders and helped them develop the committee's goals. Their efforts began a process that eventually resulted in the construction of the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, which replaced the Detroit JCC building. Additionally, with the 1953 opening of Sinai Hospital in Detroit, the community realized its goal of having a Jewish hospital. Avrunin's Federation tenure also saw the dedication of the Borman Hall residence for senior citizens and the Jewish community's acquisition of the Prentis Manor nursing home.

At the end of the 1950s, a conflict erupted over the Jewish Community Center's vote to open the center on Shabbat. Sides were drawn. Clergy and lay people objected, and center leaders were flooded with telegrams, mostly against. Many members left the JCC, which appointed a citizens' committee to discuss the issue. The situation seemed to touch the community's rawest nerve about what it meant to be Jewish.

The antagonism grew more virulent. In May of 1961, the JCC voted to open on Saturday afternoons. In June, a local individual filed suit against the center, seeking a restraining order against the opening. In August, Federation leaders, including William Avrunin, concerned about the conflict's effect on Jewish unity, interceded, calling a committee to suggest programming that would be acceptable on Saturday afternoons. In October, the JCC board accepted the committee's recommendation of a set of principles and specific rules that

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allowed for friendship circles, storytelling, individual swimming, and adult Yiddish and cultural programs, while prohibiting crafts, cooking, bus transportation, and any activities that would require money, such as the snack bar.



*William Avrunin and Isidore Sobeloff, 1964.*

In 1964, Isidore Sobeloff left Detroit for Los Angeles, and William Avrunin became executive director and eventually executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. He had much on his plate. In 1966, a committee was formed to evaluate the condition of the Detroit area's elderly Jewish population. The committee concluded that the region had a growing number of Jewish senior citizens who were relatively healthy and living on a modest budget, so Avrunin and his team recommended that Federation create a senior-housing project. Some leaders balked at the need for long-term construction loans through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, but they eventually got behind Avrunin, and the Federation Apartments opened on 10 Mile Road, next to the Oak Park Jewish Community Center, in 1971.

Avrunin, whom Max Fisher called "the principal philosopher of the Federation idea," wrote many papers about what the Federation was. In an interview shortly after his 1976 retirement, Avrunin defined the Federation as an instrument for doing those things that can best be done together. He explained that those group efforts had gone through three stages of development in becoming what was then the modern Federation: first, a concentration on the treatment of social problems; next, establishment of centers, camps, and other programs to help prevent social problems; and finally, a focus on the strengthening of Jewish identity.

The decades during which Avrunin served at JFMD were turbulent ones for

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Israel, for Detroit, and for Detroit's Jewish community. The challenges included refugee resettlement, war after war in the fledgling Jewish state, a community spreading from close-knit Detroit neighborhoods to the sprawl of the suburbs, an increasing elderly population, and the community's collective reckoning with its own identity. Avrunin kept the JFMD on course by focusing on what needed to be done and on what could be done. He provided support for his lay leaders, along with expertise and professionalism in creating an organization that could support fundraising, planning, and budgeting at a high level, and he always engaged those leaders with wisdom, warmth, and a sense of humor.

When Avrunin retired in 1976, he was presented with the Federation Medallion. It was an honor reserved for Allied Jewish Campaign chairmen, and this was the first time it would be given to a Federation chief executive.

After his retirement, Avrunin served as a consultant to the CJFWF and to a number of Federations, he conducted studies for the Detroit United Foundation, and he prepared reports for the Detroit Federation, including "What is Federation?" He also taught for a summer at the Institute for Leadership Development in Jerusalem.

William Avrunin passed away in 1992 at the age of eighty-one. In recognition of his many contributions to the Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit created the William Avrunin Federation Professional Development Fund, which supports the educational development of Jewish Federation professionals and awards Avrunin Fellowships to staff members who exhibit particular excellence.

*All photographs courtesy of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Michigan Jewish History wishes to thank Judge Avern Cohn for his support of this article.*



**Beth Robinson** has written for publications including the Michigan Jewish History, Oakland Press, Detroit Metro Times, Detroit Jewish News, and the New York Times. She currently serves as the communications specialist for the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit and as director of the Detroit Annual Jewish Book Fair and Lenore Marwil Detroit Jewish Film Festival for the Jewish Community Center.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Western Reserve University later became Case Western Reserve.

<sup>2</sup> In 1950, the Allied Jewish Campaign's annual fundraising drive raised 4.6 million dollars from 28,000 contributors, of which almost three million dollars was allocated for Israel and overseas assistance.

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# Feature Article

## REMEMBERING RABBI HERTZ

*By M.J. Billecke*

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*October 7, 2016, marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dr. Richard C. Hertz, senior rabbi at Temple Beth El from 1953 until his 1982 retirement and transition to rabbi emeritus. Hertz, the thirteenth senior rabbi to serve in the long history of Temple Beth El, was the second Beth El rabbi to reach emeritus status (Rabbi Leo M. Franklin was the first). This biography of Hertz takes a look back at his life and career.*

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As the rabbi of Michigan's oldest Reform synagogue, Dr. Richard C. Hertz filled many roles during his thirty years of service at Temple Beth El (now located in Bloomfield Hills). He was teacher, lecturer, and preacher, and he was the leader of what was then the largest Jewish congregation in the city of Detroit. His skills as an orator and his leadership in interfaith relations enabled him to reach beyond the Jewish community. He was prominent in the civil-



*Richard C. Hertz as a student at the Hebrew Union College, 1938.*

rights movement and he stood at the pulpits of every religious denomination. A gifted and dramatic speaker, he delivered hundreds of sermons and more than 1600 eulogies during his Detroit-area years.

Hertz was the author of six books and often contributed to newspapers and journals. He was a frequent guest on television and radio, and he served as host of the WDIV (NBC Detroit affiliate) television program *Open Doors*. Additionally, Hertz represented the Jewish community on *Voice of America*<sup>2</sup> and on the CNN television network, and was a regular contributor to the radio broadcast *Message of Israel*. Throughout his rabbinical career, he was a constant presence in the

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media. Hertz loved to travel, and he frequently served as ship chaplain on the Royal Viking and Holland America Line cruises.

After Hertz passed away in 1999, the tributes poured in, his body of work was re-examined, and recognition of his many legacies began to emerge. The print media declared him “a voice of hope for Jews behind the Iron Curtain and a voice for equality in Detroit race relations,”<sup>3</sup> “A Visionary and ‘Community Conscience,’”<sup>4</sup> and “a Rabbinical Giant,”<sup>5</sup> descriptions that reflect his work’s impact on Jews and non-Jews and on communities around the world.

Hertz’s rabbinical work is well documented, but little has been written about his early family life, or about his formative years in public school or in the religious schools where the seeds of his core beliefs were planted. Those early years were when his lifelong behaviors were established and his fears were overcome. It was when he began to hone his skills, and when he found his vocation. And it was during that time that he found his voice.

### EARLY LIFE

Richard Cornell Hertz was born in 1916 on October 7—Yom Kippur—in St. Paul, Minnesota, to attorney Abram Hertz and his wife, Nadine. Richard’s brother Fred was born in 1920. The family lived in a large, comfortable home in an affluent area of the city, just blocks from the Minnesota governor’s mansion.<sup>6</sup>

Hertz was a fourth-generation American. There were no rabbis in his family; he knew no Hebrew. He lived in an integrated area and had no connection to “the old country” or to organized Jewish life.<sup>7</sup> He “didn’t even know at that time what the word ‘Zionism’ meant.”<sup>8</sup> But by the time he was fifteen, he expressed interest in becoming a rabbi.<sup>9</sup>

In the fall of 1933, Hertz, a seventeen-year-old college freshman, wrote an essay about the effects of culture and environment on an individual’s choice of vocation. Simply titled “Autobiography,” the essay described how the experiences in his life had influenced his desire to become a rabbi and to develop the qualities necessary for a life in “the ministry.”

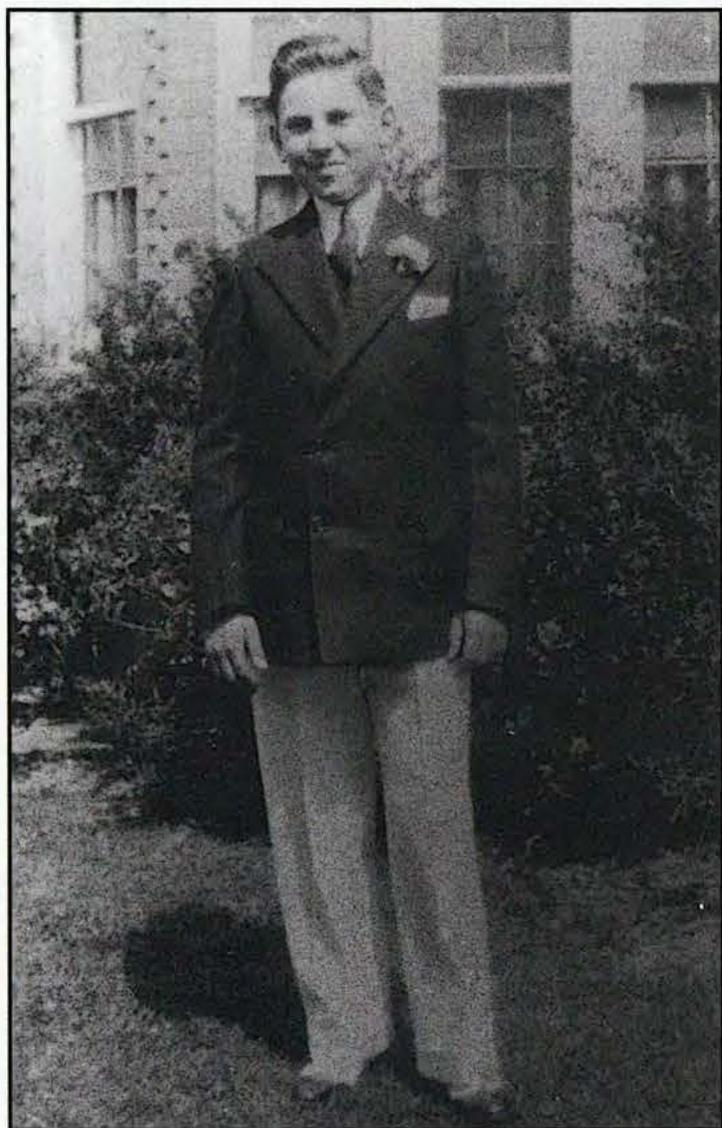
He wrote about his family life and how he was raised in “an atmosphere of refinement



*Richard Hertz, age three.*

and luxury. Proper manners and etiquette were demanded of [him] at all times, an injunction that was strictly enforced."<sup>10</sup> In describing himself as a little boy, he said he had been "the shyest youngster imaginable," walking around the block to avoid speaking to someone, or staring at the floor to avoid eye contact. He recalled that "this reticence gradually left me as I grew older, but it was not accomplished without a tremendous effort."<sup>11</sup>

Prompted initially by his mother's bribes of ice cream and candy, young Hertz began using the family's large home library, which led to his habit of reading each day.<sup>12</sup> After one year in a private school, he transferred to the



*Richard Hertz at his confirmation, May 24, 1931. "I have always been religious and deeply interested in subjects of a religious nature," he wrote.<sup>16</sup>*

public school system because his parents believed that "by coming into contact with so many different types and classes of other children, the child develops a democratic spirit that is of invaluable aid to him in later life."<sup>13</sup> He claimed that he was neither a "budding young genius" nor "a dunce," but his scholastic record allowed him to skip half of the first and sixth grades.<sup>14</sup> The family attended Mt. Zion Temple in St. Paul, where Hertz went to religious school.

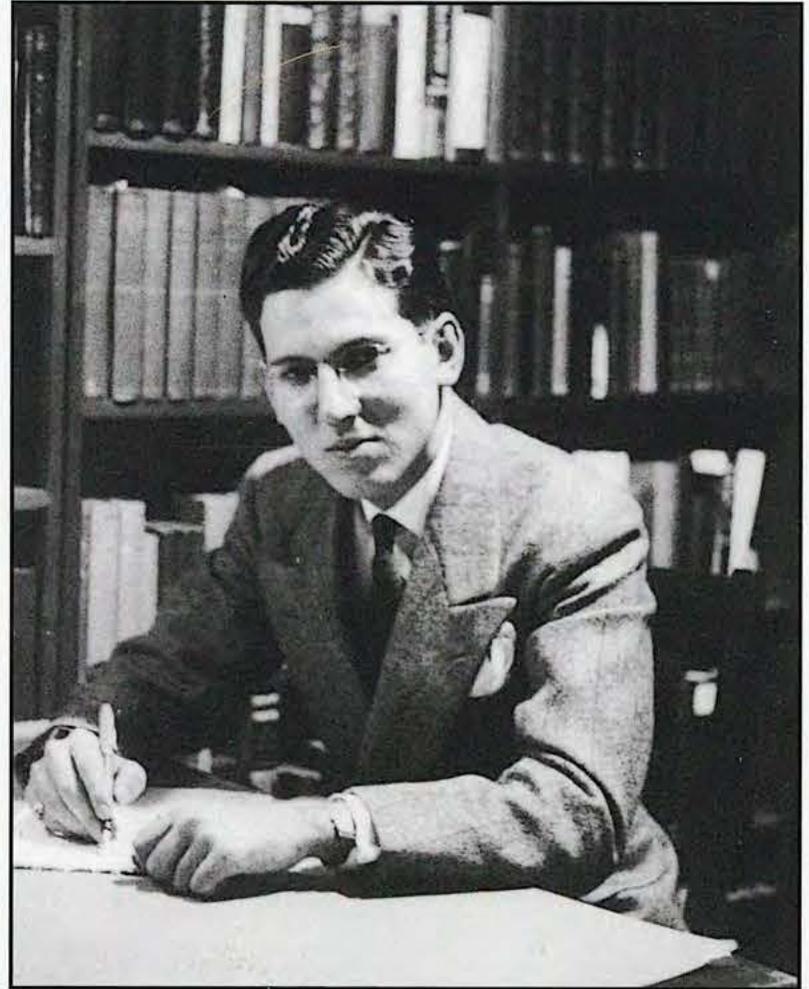
In 1929, when Hertz was thirteen, the family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. During this time of national unemployment and financial strife, his father managed an insurance agency.<sup>15</sup>

In high school Hertz wrote stories for the Riverside High School newspaper, and he also took on public speaking. He recalled that during a tryout for the debate team in a large empty auditorium, "my knees quivered,

my throat felt parched.... I was ready to run off and hide.... I would have to give the best bit of oratorical eloquence of my life if I ever expected to make that team."<sup>17</sup> Hertz not only made the debate team, but was also the lead in the senior play. These activities built self-confidence, rid him of his debilitating timidity, and helped him to develop poise.<sup>18</sup> In his writings, Hertz said he learned "the genteel art of diplomacy," and to be as sympathetic as possible with others.<sup>19</sup> He graduated in 1933 at the age of sixteen.

By then, Hertz had begun to pursue religious studies at Milwaukee's Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun. Years later, in a eulogy delivered at the funeral of Dr. Joseph L. Baron, his rabbi and mentor at Temple Emanu-El, Hertz recalled, "I attended post-confirmation classes at a time when Hitler took office as Chancellor and Nazi Germany was unleashing its assault on the Jews. The rising tide of anti-Semitism was no longer a myth: It was a hideous reality by the time I graduated (from) Riverside High School."<sup>20</sup>

"The Temple seemed like the only institution capable of stemming [sic] the tide engulfing the Jewish people.... I concluded that no career could better prepare me as a defender and protector of Jews and Judaism than the Rabbinate."<sup>21</sup> Baron encouraged the high-school student to communicate with the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati,<sup>22</sup> where Hertz was noticed by then-president Dr. Julien Morganstern, who also became Hertz's mentor.

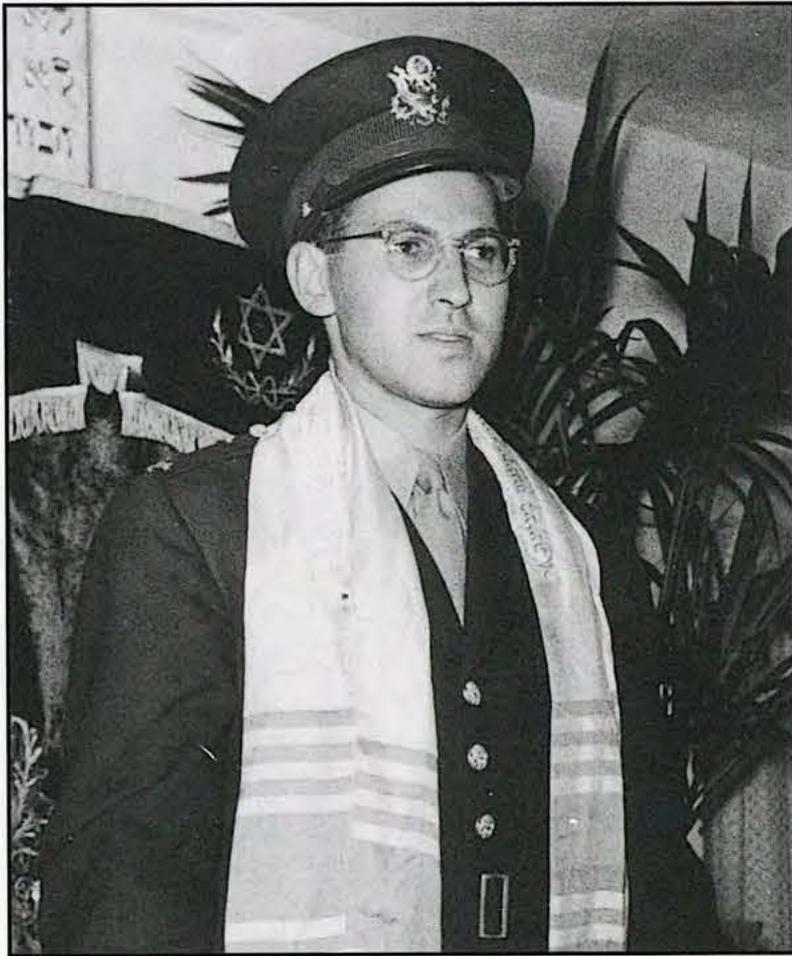


*Richard Hertz, studying at HUC in 1941.*

"He was like a father to me when I first came to Cincinnati to study and always seemed to take a special interest in my progress and development."<sup>23</sup> Hertz began studying at the University of Cincinnati in the fall of 1933, and took summer classes at the University of Wisconsin from 1933 until 1935. In 1934, he took classes at both UC and HUC<sup>24</sup> simultaneously. He graduated from UC in 1938 with a bachelor's degree in history and international relations, and in 1942 he earned a master of Hebrew letters degree, with honors, from HUC.<sup>25</sup> There were seven students in the 1942 graduating class and all were ordained by Dr. Morganstern. Hertz recalled, "I ascended that altar and stood before the Holy of Holies as Dr. Morganstern put his hands upon my head and ordained me, whispering solemnly the words of Ezekiel: 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel....' I'll never forget that moment of ordination."<sup>26</sup>

## CHAPLAINCY

After his ordination, Hertz served as wartime replacement rabbi at North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, Illinois.<sup>27</sup> He attended classes at the University of Chicago Divinity School and at Northwestern University<sup>28</sup> with the intention of working toward a doctorate in religious education. After a year,



*Rabbi Hertz serving as chaplain, U.S. Army, Fort Ord, California, 1943. All chaplains wore the same uniform, shared the same chapel, and worked side by side, ministering to the soldiers as needed.*

he interrupted his studies and his work in Glencoe to enlist in the U.S. Army. He explained in a letter to the North Shore congregation, "...each of us must serve our country's cause in the most effective way we can. I felt I had no choice but to offer my services as a military chaplain."<sup>29</sup>

He began his service as a Jewish chaplain in the fall of 1943 with the Army Service Forces, Ninth Service Command, stationed in Fort Ord, California,<sup>30</sup> about 125 miles south of San Francisco.<sup>31</sup> He described it as "the last 'terra firma' on which the men stand before embarking on convoys for overseas duty."<sup>32</sup> Hertz also served as religious leader at the Salinas Congregation<sup>33</sup> and ministered

to personnel at the U.S. Naval Training School in Del Monte, California.<sup>34</sup> On Thanksgiving Day 1943, he married his first wife, Mary Louise Mann.<sup>35</sup> Throughout this time, Hertz kept his Glencoe community informed of his activities in letters that were published in the *North Shore Congregation Israel Bulletin*.

Hertz's ministry during these wartime years was neither Conservative, Reform, nor Orthodox. He was a religious leader to the "unobservant orthodox, strictly reform, and 50-50 conservative Jews at one and the same time."<sup>36</sup> It was challenging but a privilege: "I have come to know many more viewpoints...I have been brought in contact with all facets of Jewish life—the whole gamut..."<sup>37</sup> Hertz offered his congregants an alternative to the traditional sermon, focusing instead on subjects of universal interest, such as fear, homesickness, the girlfriend back home, anti-Semitism, and family issues. He



*Improvisation often was needed in order to minister to the needs of the soldiers during World War II. Rabbi Hertz, 1944, conducting a Seder at the Hunter-Liggett Military Reservation (California). With "... a supply box for our altar and the open sky for our temple."<sup>39</sup>*



*An Army Jeep transporting matzos for the Seder, Hunter-Liggett Military Reservation, 1944.*

also discovered that "the greatest sermon [a rabbi] preaches is not in the pulpit, but in the mess hall, out in the field, and in the barracks."<sup>38</sup> He included Catholic and Protestant soldiers in his flock.

This immersion in interfaith relations was a life-changing experience for Hertz, and

it became the defining component of his rabbinical career. He spoke of brotherhood and civil rights, and developed alliances with the Jewish Chautauqua Society<sup>40</sup> and with the National Conference of Christians and Jews.<sup>41</sup> As director and host of *Chaplains Who Serve*, a weekly KDON radio program, Hertz interviewed chaplains and guests from different denominations<sup>42</sup> and faiths. It was the beginning of his lifelong work in interfaith relations and civil rights.

## BACK TO CHICAGO

In 1945, Hertz was promoted to the rank of captain, and a year later, when the war was over, he was sent to Fort Beale, California,<sup>43</sup> and separated from the Army. He returned to the North Shore congregation as assistant rabbi, and a year later left to join Chicago Sinai Congregation, working under Rabbi Louis L. Mann, who was also his father-in-law.<sup>44</sup> He returned to his doctoral studies at Northwestern and in 1948 earned a Ph.D. in religious education.<sup>45</sup> During this period, he and Mary Louise welcomed their daughters, Nadine and Ruth.

Hertz served on numerous committees and boards in the Chicago area. He was president of the Council of Hyde Park and Kenwood Churches and Synagogues,<sup>46</sup> a group of religious leaders working together to resolve problems within their community. He also served on the Chicago Mayor's Commission on Human Relations in Education.



*Rabbi Hertz, center, broadcasting on the weekly KDON radio program, Chaplains Who Serve, 1945.*

Using his oratory skills and recognizing the power of both radio and television broadcast in reaching broader audiences, Hertz served as a religious consultant and contributor to WNBQ-TV, a Chicago NBC affiliate. He also developed and hosted *The Pulpit*, a popular Sunday-morning television program of sermons and interfaith panel discussions.<sup>47</sup>

### **MAKING DETROIT HIS HOME**

Following the sudden death of Rabbi B. Benedict Glazer in May of 1952, Hertz was elected to fill the position of senior rabbi at Temple Beth El in Detroit. Through the work of his predecessors, especially Rabbi Leo M. Franklin and Rabbi Glazer, Temple Beth El had achieved a reputation for working with non-Jewish communities to assist with social-action efforts, such as providing services for the less fortunate and supporting civil-rights organizations. Like Franklin and Glazer, Hertz joined the Detroit Wranglers,<sup>48</sup> a group of distinguished bishops, rabbis, and ministers who met privately twice a month for fellowship and discussion.

At each meeting, one member would present a paper. The group then “wrangled” in frank talks about sensitive subjects and, in the process, they advanced understanding of each other’s religions, and developed solid, long-lasting friendships. Their mutual respect and understanding carried over into civic and community projects.

Hertz became a popular speaker and a frequent guest at area churches,

even filling in for vacationing pastors.<sup>49</sup> After Temple Beth El relocated to Bloomfield Hills, Hertz offered a soon-to-be-neighboring minister space to conduct services until construction of his own church was complete.<sup>50</sup> Schoolchildren and church groups regularly toured the temple and Madonna College, a Catholic university, held its graduation ceremonies at Beth El in the 1980s.<sup>51</sup>

Hertz lectured on Jewish subjects at several Catholic colleges and sat on the board of trustees of Marygrove College.<sup>52</sup> In 1970, through a joint sponsorship of the University of Detroit and the Jewish Chautauqua Society, Hertz was appointed an adjunct professor of Jewish studies at the Jesuit school.<sup>53</sup> His students were Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim, black and white, and included priests, nuns, and seminarians. Many had never before seen a rabbi, and most of them knew nothing about Judaism.<sup>54</sup> In 1980, an endowed chair for Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies was established at the University of Detroit in Hertz's honor.<sup>55</sup>

His efforts to improve interfaith relations did not end at the U.S. border. In 1963, through arrangements made by friends at the University of Detroit and the offices of the Archbishop of Detroit, Hertz and his family met with Pope Paul VI in a private audience at the Vatican. Hertz was the first rabbi to meet the pope, who had been installed only two days earlier. In their brief discussion, documented by Hertz for the *Detroit Free Press*, the rabbi expressed his hope for better relationships between Catholics and Jews. In response, Pope Paul acknowledged the need for greater friendship between the two faiths.<sup>56</sup>

In 1995, in recognition of his forty years of working to improve interfaith relations, Hertz was presented with the Dove Award at a dinner sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies.<sup>57</sup>

## RACIAL EQUALITY AND THE 1967 RIOTS

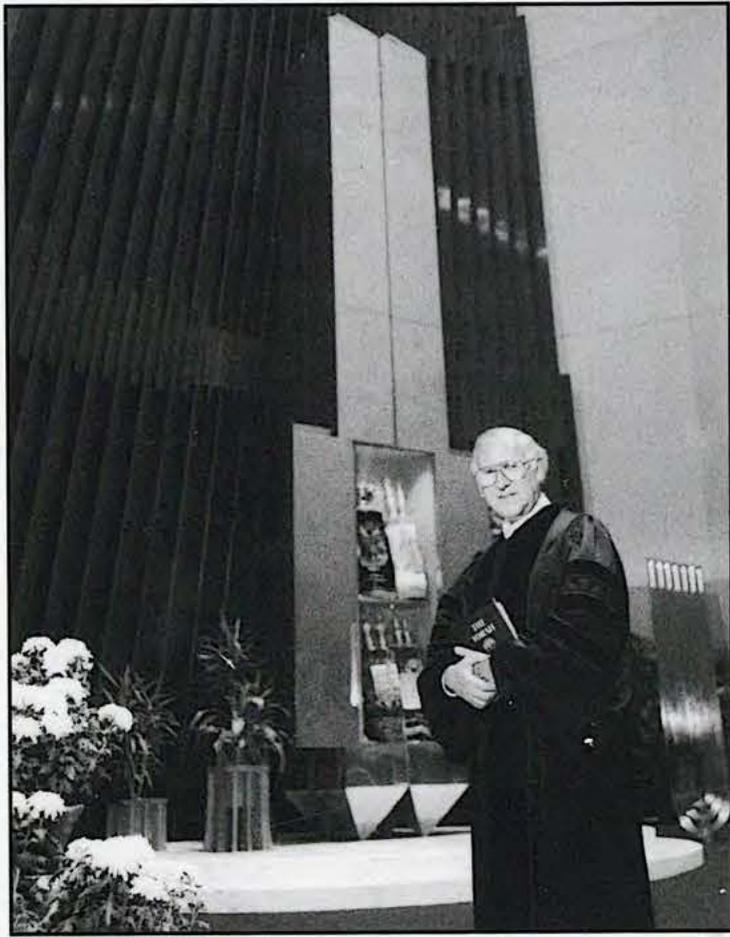
Throughout his career, Hertz, like his predecessors, used both the pulpit and his journalistic skills to speak on matters of equality. He was a vocal opponent of racial and economic discrimination. As one of the keynote speakers for the 1957 kick-off dinner for the United Negro College Fund, he explained. "I have come here tonight because everything in my soul as a rabbi and as a Jew cries out for justice for the Negro, for opportunity to under-privileged young, colored boys and girls hungering for what has been a precious privilege to the Jewish people—the privilege of learning"<sup>58</sup>

In January 1963, Hertz, along with a Catholic priest and a Presbyterian minister, spoke at the Metropolitan Conference on Open Occupancy in

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Detroit. Denouncing racial bigotry in housing, Hertz began his address: "The appearance on the same public platform of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders, white and Negro, exemplifies the American approach of religion in action, of brotherhood personified."<sup>59</sup>

As members of the U.S. Senate debated passage of the Civil Rights Bill in 1964, interreligious convocations assembled in Washington, D.C., and across



*In 1979, the United States Commission on Civil Rights appointed Hertz to the Michigan Advisory Committee, a group of citizen volunteers who were familiar with state and local civil-rights issues, and who assisted the commission through fact-finding and investigative work.<sup>64</sup> He is pictured here in the sanctuary of the newly built Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, c. 1970s.*

the nation. At Detroit's Wayne State University, where he spoke along with other religious leaders, Hertz expressed the widespread frustration over the delays, filibusters, and doubletalk surrounding the passage of the bill. "We want this bill passed and we want it passed—not sooner or later, not next summer, not next fall—but now.... This is not the Negroes' battle. This is the battle for the conscience and for the soul of America."<sup>60</sup>

All of this experience led to his quick response during the Detroit Riots of 1967. During that hot summer tensions ran high. There was segregation in housing and in schools. High unemployment among young black people added to the anger. Complaints of brutality escalated as a white police force antagonized the city's black population. On the morning of July 23, 1967, police raided a blind pig on Twelfth Street, close to the Temple Beth El neighborhood. Violence

erupted, and within hours fires and looting were spreading across the city.<sup>61</sup>

Hertz was on Cape Cod at the time, but immediately returned to Detroit fearing that his beloved temple, located at Woodward and Gladstone, would be in flames. Thankfully, Beth El was untouched. Hertz believed that the temple's preservation was the result of relationships that had been developed in the neighborhood by the congregation and its clergy.<sup>62</sup> The turmoil lasted five days. Within hours of the initial violence, Hertz and area church ministers set up an Interfaith Emergency Center to coordinate efforts to bring food and other necessities to victims of the riots.<sup>63</sup>

## SOVIET JEWRY

As a “defender and protector of Jews and Judaism,”<sup>65</sup> Hertz became an early activist in the grassroots movement to raise awareness of the dire conditions for Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

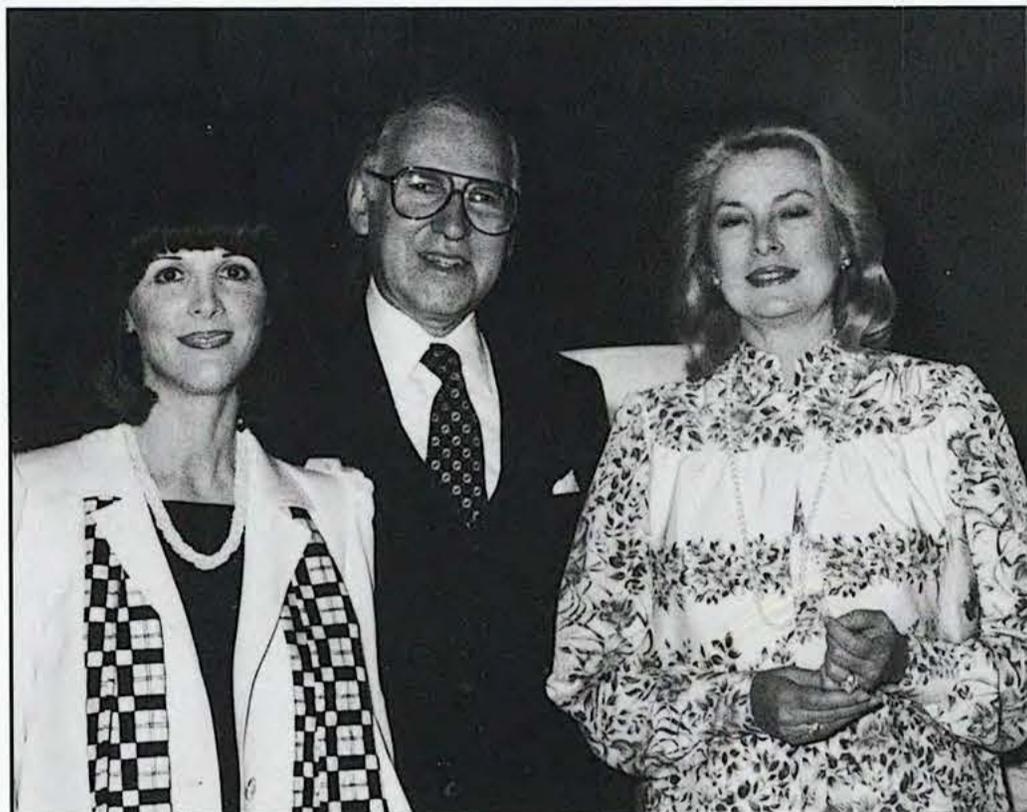
His campaign began in January 1957, when his close friend, Rabbi George Lieberman, returned from a 1956 mission to study Jews and Judaism in Russia and visited Hertz. Lieberman told Hertz of the deplorable conditions in the Soviet Union. Hertz quickly took to the pulpit, sharing the results of that mission: “It is not a happy report, but these facts should be known....<sup>66</sup> Only now are we beginning to get verification of what had always been surmised: that under the cloak of silence was going on the most systematic and ruthless anti-Semitism imaginable,” despite the official Kremlin pronouncement that anti-Semitism no longer existed.<sup>67</sup> Hertz prepared to travel to the Soviet Union to see the situation for himself. He contacted Robert E. Merriam, a deputy assistant at the White House and friend from Chicago, who suggested that Hertz share the results of his fact-finding trip with members of the Eisenhower administration, to better prepare the president for an upcoming Camp David summit meeting with Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>68</sup>

Hertz spent the summer of 1959 traveling throughout Russia, observing the living conditions of the country’s three million Jews. He concluded that “the [Russian] government is dedicated to the complete extinction of Jewishness and the liquidation of all Jewish culture.”<sup>69</sup> His *Memorandum to the White House* contained his findings, along with a ten-point program of his recommendations.<sup>70</sup> Stories of his travels appeared in a series of articles in the *Detroit Free Press*<sup>71</sup> and he reiterated his message in an interview with Frank Angelo over the *Message Of Israel* radio program on October 4, 1959.<sup>72</sup> Hertz used the pulpit to keep his congregation informed and aware of the situation in the Soviet Union. He lectured throughout the community, was quoted in print, and participated in interviews on radio and television. In 1987, twenty years after his historic trip behind the Iron Curtain, Hertz led a group of “1,000 Michiganians” to Washington, D.C., to participate in a national march for the freedom of the Soviet Jews.<sup>73</sup>

## RETIRED BUT NOT SILENT

Hertz left his mark on Temple Beth El in countless ways: He agreed to reinstate b’nai mitzvah after a lapse of fifty years — but only if they would be held for girls, as well. He began wearing a robe rather than the customary

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*In 1972, Richard Hertz married his second wife, Renda (left). A decade later, in June 1982, the couple traveled to Paris to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of USO. There the couple met Princess Grace of Monaco.*

cutaway (jacket) and striped pants commonly worn by Reform rabbis;<sup>74</sup> he initiated an annual “college homecoming” service for Beth El alumni, and he began family services. Hertz conducted early Friday evening services year-round and eliminated the late Friday night-service so clergy could enjoy Shabbat with their families. (He may have had another motive: There was no air conditioning in the Woodward building.) He began naming babies, introduced a group confirmation reception, and allowed all members of the congregation to use the main sanctuary for funerals, a privilege previously reserved for rabbis and past temple presidents. In 1968, as a matter of conscience, Hertz changed his twenty-five-year policy of refusing to perform mixed marriages, a policy he felt served to drive people away.<sup>75</sup>

Hertz led his congregation in its historic move from the city of Detroit to its present location on Telegraph Road at 14 Mile Road in Bloomfield Hills<sup>76</sup> He worked tirelessly in planning the new building and in fundraising to pay off the mortgage. Following his “retirement” in 1982, Hertz remained active, focusing on teaching, traveling, and expanding his work with many local and national organizations, until he suffered a stroke in the fall of 1997. Confined to a wheelchair, he passed away on July 3, 1999, at the age of eighty-two.<sup>77</sup>

In his closing remarks at Hertz’s funeral, Rabbi Daniel B. Syme (now Temple Beth El’s third rabbi emeritus) spoke from the heart: “So long as this sanctuary stands, so long as there is a Beth El, Rabbi Richard Hertz will never die. His memory will be a blessing and his spirit will pervade this sacred sanctuary, always, always.”<sup>78</sup>

All images courtesy of the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El.  
M.J. Wilson is an archivist and a volunteer at the Leo M. Franklin Archives.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Leonard N. Simons. Transcript of remarks (Rabbi Richard C. Hertz Retirement Service, Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI, June 4, 1982), p. 5, Box 8, Folder 72, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>2</sup> Around WWII, *Voice of America* went from a private to a government-funded news service that was broadcast around the world. Originally a radio broadcast, it later made use of television and the internet.
  - <sup>3</sup> Wayne Woolley, "Rabbi Hertz led fight for justice," *The Detroit News*, July 6, 1999, Box 1, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>4</sup> David Sachs, "Rabbi Hertz: A Visionary and 'Community Conscience,'" *Detroit Jewish News*, July 9, 1999, Box 1, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>5</sup> Judith Doner Berne, "'Rabbinical giant' Rabbi's accomplishments went further than his pulpit," *Observer and Eccentric* (Birmingham, MI), July 15, 1999, Box 1, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>6</sup> 1920 United States Federal Census, St. Paul Ward 11, Ramsey, Minnesota; p. 16A, family 355, dwelling 301, lines 24-27, Abe J. Hertz, January 15, 1920; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://ancestry.com>.
  - <sup>7</sup> Jeanne Whittaker, "Rabbi Richard C. Hertz retires: Time arrives to go out with all the flags flying," *Observer & Eccentric* (Birmingham), June 3, 1982, Box 8, Folder 64, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>8</sup> Hertz, "The Legacy of Joseph L. Baron—And the Pursuit of Excellence" (sermon, Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun, Milwaukee, WI, April 20, 1979), p. 2, Box 29, Folder 33, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>9</sup> Whittaker, "Rabbi Richard C. Hertz retires."
  - <sup>10</sup> Hertz, "Autobiography" (paper, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, November 20, 1933), p.1, Box 1, Folder 2, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 6.
  - <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 1.
  - <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 2.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 2.
  - <sup>15</sup> 1930 United States Federal Census, Milwaukee Ward 1 part, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; p. 2B, family 15, dwelling 3, lines 55-58, Abram J. Hertz, April 2, 1930; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://ancestry.com>.
  - <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 3.
  - <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 4.
  - <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 7.
  - <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 7.
  - <sup>20</sup> Hertz, "The Legacy of Joseph L. Baron," p. 1.
  - <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 1.
  - <sup>22</sup> General correspondence with Dr. Julien Morganstern, 1933-1947, Box 4, Folder 5, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>23</sup> Hertz, "Dr. Morgenstern at 90," Rabbi's Column, Temple Beth El *Bulletin* (Detroit, MI), May 21, 1971.
  - <sup>24</sup> HUC Coursework, 1934-1942, Box 4, Folders 6-33, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>25</sup> HUC Ordination/Graduation, June 6, 1942, Box 4, Folders 34-35, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>26</sup> Hertz, "What a Rabbi Learns After Twenty Years" (sermon, Temple Beth El, Detroit, MI, May 25, 1962), Box 28, Folder 7, p.1, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
  - <sup>27</sup> Correspondence with Dr. Julien Morganstern, June 22-September 8, 1942. These letters
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discuss developments relating to Hertz's placement at North Shore Congregation Israel.

<sup>28</sup> Northwestern; Correspondence, 1942-1943, Box 4, Folder 46, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>29</sup> "A Letter to the Congregation from Rabbi Hertz, September 19, 1943," *Bulletin*, North Shore Congregation Israel (Glencoe, IL), September 23, 1943, Box 13, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>30</sup> Post information is found on headquarters stationery masthead, 1944, Box 13, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>31</sup> "A Letter to the Congregation from Rabbi Hertz, October 27, 1943," *Bulletin*, North Shore Congregation Israel (Glencoe, IL), November 9, 1943, Box 13, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to Prof. Tracy E. Strevey, October 15, 1943, Box 13, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>33</sup> Temple Beth El (formerly known as Salinas Congregation), Salinas, CA; website, templebethelsalinas.org, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://templebethelsalinas.org/history/>. This website notes that Hertz of Fort Ord was the religious leader during WWII.

<sup>34</sup> *Chapel Bulletin*, 1944-1945, Box 13, Folders 18-19, Hertz Collection 1, FA. Announcements of upcoming events document Hertz's activities at the U.S. Naval Training School.

<sup>35</sup> "Miss Mann Becomes Bride of Chaplain," *Rockford Morning Star* (Rockford, IL), November 28, 1943, Box 1, Folder 36, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>36</sup> Hertz, "Unobservant, Orthodox, Strictly Reform and 50-50 Conservative" (sermon, Fourth St. Chapel, Fort Ord, CA, January 5, 1945), p.1, Box 26, Folder 6, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 1.

<sup>38</sup> Hertz, "The Effect of the Chaplaincy on the Rabbinate" (address, Conference of Jewish Chaplains, Los Angeles, CA, July 24, 1944), Box 1, Folder 5, Hertz Papers, AJA.

<sup>39</sup> Scrapbooks: Military, 1944, Hertz Collection 1, FA

<sup>40</sup> Jewish Chautauqua Society: Speaking Engagements, 1943-1946, Box 18, Folders 20-22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Palmer Van Gundy (NCCJ), January 30, 1946, Box 13, Folder 23, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>42</sup> "Ord Chaplains To Be Heard on Radio Program," *Monterey Trader* (Monterey, CA), July 13, 1944, Box 13, Folder 21, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>43</sup> "Letter from Rabbi Hertz, 28 February 1945," *Bulletin*, North Shore Congregation Israel (Glencoe, IL), n.d., Box 13, Folder 23, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Joseph Rosenberg (Pres., Chicago Sinai), June 13, 1947, Box 6, Folder 21, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>45</sup> Doctoral Degree, 1948, Box 5, Folder 8, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>46</sup> The Board of Trustees of Temple Beth El is Honored to Introduce Our New Senior Rabbi (in-house publication, Temple Beth El, Detroit, MI, January 20, 1953), Box 8, Folder 55, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>47</sup> Program planning, WNBQ-TV, 1951-1953, Box 22, Folder 34, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>48</sup> Adrian Fuller, "Clerics Debate—They Wrangle," *Detroit Free Press*, January 24, 1959; accessed May 25, 2016, <https://newspapers.com/image/97777145/>.

<sup>49</sup> General correspondence with non-Jewish Clergy, 1953-1994, Box 2, Folders 86-93, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>50</sup> Michelle Raquepau, "Easter services set in synagogue," *Observer and Eccentric* (Birmingham, MI), March 24, 1977, Box 8, Folder 6, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>51</sup> "Madonna College graduates 551 ... in Temple Beth El," *Observer and Eccentric* (Birmingham, MI), May 18, 1981, Box 8, Folder 6, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>52</sup> Marygrove Board of Trustees records, 1985-1993, Box 14, Folders 43-50, Box 15, Folders 1-5, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

<sup>53</sup> "Catholic University Appoints Our Rabbi," Temple Beth El *Bulletin* (Detroit, MI), September 18, 1970.

<sup>54</sup> Hertz, "About Teaching at the University of Detroit," Temple Beth El *Bulletin* (Bloomfield Hills, MI), February 2, 1979.

<sup>55</sup> "UD Establishes Chair for Jewish Studies," *The Michigan Catholic* (Detroit, MI), October 17, 1980, Box 15, Folder 20, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

- <sup>56</sup> Hertz, "Among Jews, Catholics: 'More Friendship,' Pope Tells Hertz," *Detroit Free Press*, August 17, 1963, Box 24, Folder 58, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>57</sup> Dove Award, 1955, Box 1, Folder 43, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>58</sup> Hertz, "Address of Dr. Richard C. Hertz, Senior Rabbi, Temple Beth El" (Kick-Off Dinner, United Negro College fund, Detroit, MI, May 8, 1957), pp. 2-3, Box 21, Folder 35, Hertz Collection 1, FA. This address was inserted into the House Section of the Congressional Record in its entirety on June 14, 1957 by Hon. John D. Dingle.
- <sup>59</sup> Hertz, "Open Occupancy – A Moral Imperative," (address, Metropolitan Conference on Open Occupancy, Detroit, MI, January 2, 1963), p. 1, Box 21, Folder 2, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>60</sup> Hertz, "Address of Rabbi Richard C. Hertz" (working paper, Interreligious Convocation on Civil Rights, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, April 28, 1964), p. 2, Box 20, Folder 67, Hertz Collection 1, FA. This address was inserted into the Senate Section of the Congressional Record in its entirety on June 9, 1964 by Hon. Philip Hart.
- <sup>61</sup> Bolkosky, 464.
- <sup>62</sup> Whittaker, "Rabbi Richard C. Hertz Retires."
- <sup>63</sup> "Riot Victims Offered Help," *Detroit Free Press*, July 27, 1967, Box 8, Folder 6, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>64</sup> "Rabbi Hertz Appointed to Michigan Civil Rights Committee" (press release, Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI, c. 1980), Box 20, Folder 8, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>65</sup> Hertz, "The Legacy of Joseph L. Baron."
- <sup>66</sup> Bolkowsky, Sidney M., *Harmony and Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit 1914-1967* (1991), Wayne State University, Detroit. 464
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 3.
- <sup>68</sup> Letter from Robert E. Merriam, June 7, 1957, Box 21, Folder 51, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>69</sup> Hertz, "The Future of Jews and Judaism in the USSR" (sermon, Temple Beth El, Detroit, MI, October 2, 1959), p. 4, Box 27, Folder 21, Hertz Collection 1, FA
- <sup>70</sup> Hertz, Memorandum to the White House on Jews and Judaism in the USSR, Washington, D.C., August 24, 1959, Box 21, Folder 58, Hertz Collection 1, FA. This memorandum was inserted into the House Section of the Congressional Record in its entirety by Hon. Alvin M. Bentley on January 19, 1960.
- <sup>71</sup> Hertz, "What you could learn behind the Iron Curtain" (series, *Detroit Free Press*, September 1-4, 1959), Box 24, Folder 29, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>72</sup> Hertz, Richard C., "Postscript to Khrushchev's visit—Truth about Judaism Behind the Iron Curtain," interview by Frank Angelo, transcript, *The Message of Israel*, coast-to-coast radio network and the Armed Forces radio network, October 4, 1959, Box 21, Folder 59, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>73</sup> Paul Antor, "Hertz leads delegation in march for Jewish freedom," *University of Detroit Varsity News*, Detroit, MI, December 16, 1987, Box 15, Folder 20, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>74</sup> Hertz, "Comments to the Ritual and Worship Committee" (report, Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI, October 14, 1981), p. 2, Box 10, Folder 8, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 6.
- <sup>76</sup> Lila Corwin Berman, in her book *Metropolitan Jews: Politics, Race and Religion in Post War Detroit* (2015), provides background. The TBE board began purchasing land in Oakland county as for investment purposes in the early 1960s. She wrote "Temple Beth El's leadership actively concealed elements of its ongoing relocation plans from the congregation so as to avoid the community upheaval that it believed would meet such an announcement." In 1965, a contract with architect Yamasaki was signed. But it would not be until 1969, after the 1967 riots, that members were told of the move to Fourteen Mile and Telegraph. Groundbreaking was in 1971, the first service was held in 1974.
- <sup>77</sup> Obituaries and Death Notices, Box 1, Folder 22, Hertz Collection 1, FA.
- <sup>78</sup> Daniel B. Syme, in A Tribute to Rabbi Richard C. Hertz (remarks, Temple Beth El, Bloomfield Hills, MI, July 6, 1999, p. 7, Box 1, Folder 21, Hertz Collection 1, FA.

## Feature Article

# CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF SELLING FURS TO FASHIONABLE DETROITERS: BRICKER-TUNIS FURS

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*By Charlene Mitchell*

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*Bricker-Tunis Furs is celebrating one hundred years of business. Founded by an immigrant fur trader, the company has been the furrier of choice for generations of Detroiters. Arthur Bricker, the son of founder Jack Bricker, shared his memories for this article.*

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When Jacob (Jack) Bricker arrived in America, he knew that life would not be easy. But he had a plan. He had escaped the dangers of being Jewish in Russia by walking, along with a neighbor, some 2,000 miles from his Russian hometown to Rotterdam, then boarding a ship to America. He was sixteen and the passage fee was forty dollars, a huge sum at the time. After his arrival at Ellis Island, Jack and his neighbor joined Jack's cousins as rabbit dealers in a fur business. Young Jack Bricker fit right in, having learned about fur skins from his father back home. He eventually headed west to Detroit, where his brothers had already settled, and in 1916 he opened a fur store.

During Detroit's founding years, fur trading was conducted along the shores of the Detroit River. Jack Bricker and his brother Willie would walk to Trapper's Alley, a complex of buildings located in Detroit on Monroe Street. Originally built in 1872, the complex was home to a massive tannery operation. It was in Trapper's Alley that Jack, and later his son Arthur, learned the differences among the various kinds of skins, and it was where Bricker Furs got its start.

### THE EARLY YEARS

At the suggestion of his sister-in-law, Jack Bricker traveled to New York to find a bride. He was introduced to Yetta, and the two hit it off. After a long-distance courtship, the couple married in 1935 and settled in Detroit, in a multi-family flat near Waverly and LaSalle streets. They raised their only son, Arthur

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(b. 1939), in a warm home filled with love, hope, determination, and a strong belief that hard work would pay off.

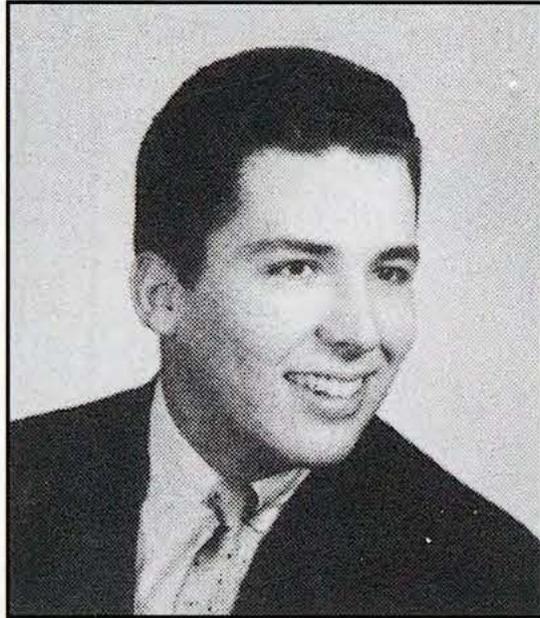
Arthur Bricker's childhood was not typical of the times for Jewish children. He attended Longfellow Elementary School, where he was one of only three white children in his class. His best friend, Mel Bircoll, lived only a few blocks away, but on the "other" side of the invisible boundary line that separated Bricker's school area from Bircoll's, which was mostly Jewish.

Living between the two communities taught Bricker to appreciate racial diversity at an early age.

At fourteen, Bricker was delivering newspapers, and he also worked at the family fur store on Farmer Street, taking two buses and a streetcar to get there. "At first I was the janitor. I cleaned the windows, floors, took out the trash, everything," recalled Bricker, now seventy-seven. He attributes his strong work ethic to his father.



*Jack and Yetta Bricker were married in 1935. They are pictured here with their son, Arthur.*



*Arthur Bricker graduated from Mumford High School in 1957.*



*Bricker Furs opened in 1916 on Farmer Street at Grand River in Detroit, near the back of the J.L. Hudson department store.*

"My dad used to say it could always be better, but should never be worse." The family held firm to their Jewish faith, attending the Tyler Street shul on Saturday mornings and high holidays. "We kept kosher, and I remember that my mother had two sets of dishes."

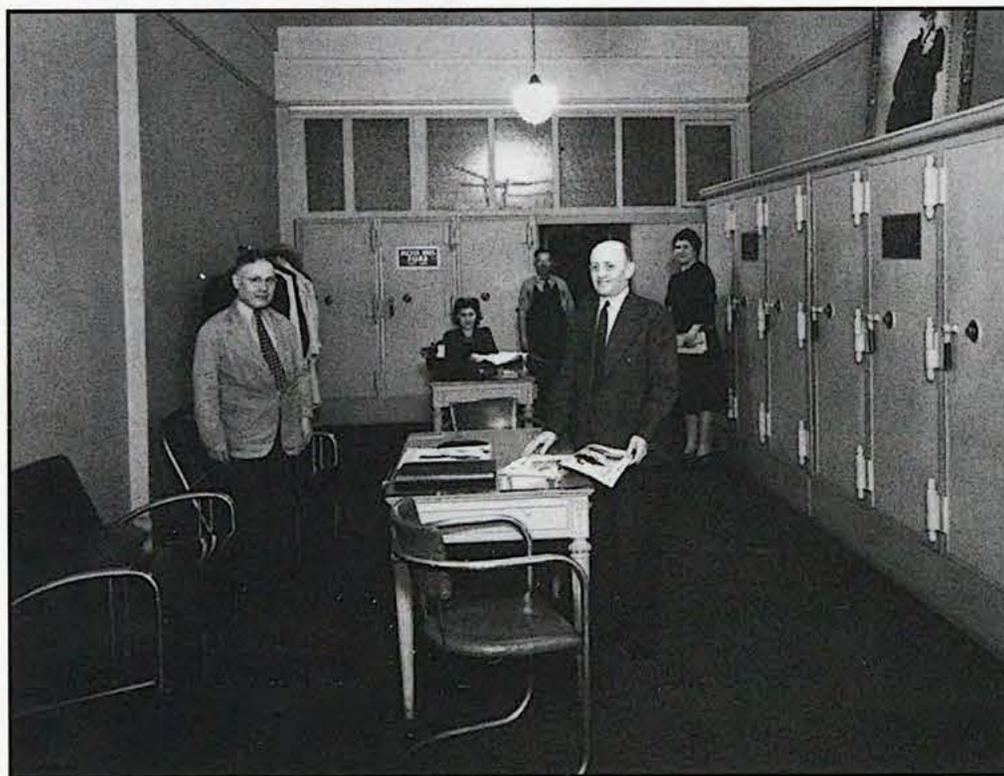
Business was thriving when the store was located downtown from 1916 to 1960. "My dad had a small inventory, so we would go back and forth to the

Merchants Building nearby where the fur wholesalers had shops. If a customer wanted a garment that we didn't have, we could get it in a hurry," recalled Bricker. In the 1950s, U.S. economic prosperity led to a luxury tax on furs. By then, the auto industry had blanketed Detroit with highly paid auto executives, and their wives were among Bricker's main clientele. Despite a four-percent Michigan sales tax, and a luxury tax of \$2,000 on a \$10,000 mink-cape jacket, those with means were undeterred.

Arthur Bricker had dreamed of becoming an attorney, but after his uncle Willie passed away, and Jack Bricker's health began to fail, Arthur stepped in to help his father run the business. In 1960, he dropped out of college and made the business his priority. Thanks to his father's tutelage, he was well prepared. Recognizing a shift in demographics and opportunity, in 1960 Bricker packed up the furs and moved the store to "The Avenue of Fashion"—Livernois near Seven Mile Road in northwest Detroit. It was a bold and emotional move, but Bricker felt it would propel Bricker Furs to a new level. It was the beginning of new era, a new location that would attract a different clientele, and it was a great decision.

### THE MOTOWN ERA

The 1960s were a pivotal time in American culture: an era of activism in politics, civil rights, equality, and social change. It was also an era of music in Detroit, and Arthur Bricker and his store were right in the mix. Business at the new location couldn't have been better. For nearly a decade Bricker grew his



*Bricker Brothers Fur store, located on Farmer at Grand River, behind the J.L Hudson Building, circa 1916. Pictured here are Jack Bricker, his brother Will Bricker, and three employees.*

customer base, in large part because Bricker Furs had become furrier #1 for the recording artists of Motown Records.

“It was a great time in Detroit,” said Bricker. “I got to know so many of the Motown artists personally. I made furs for Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Temptations, and others. I even let many of the stars borrow furs when they went on tour. They would always come back to buy something when they started making money.”

During Bricker’s association with Motown, he met young Tammi Terrell, who was performing at Detroit’s famous 20 Grand nightclub, which was owned by Bill Kabush and Marty Eisner, both friends of Bricker. “Tammi was a rising star who didn’t have an agent yet. I invested in purchasing her wardrobe and the three of us were working on a management contract with her.” It was during that time that she began singing with Marvin Gaye. Tragically, Terrell died of a brain tumor before reaching her full potential as a recording artist.

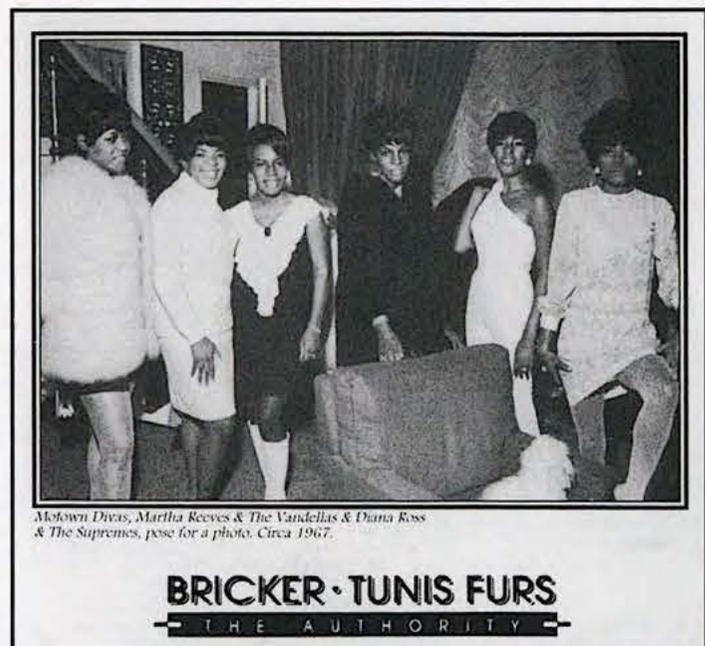
Bricker spent eight years in northwest Detroit, making lifelong friendships with Motown artists and area residents. He gained the trust of his neighbors and friends, and it was that trust that paved the way for the continued success of Bricker Furs.

## TEAMING WITH BUSINESS PARTNER GEORGE TUNIS

In the early 1960s, an extraordinary fur designer named George Tunis moved from New York to Detroit to become a partner in what would eventually become Bricker-Tunis Furs. The two men met during one of Bricker’s many trips to New York’s fur district. They became friends and then business partners



*Bricker-Tunis Furs was the go-to furrier for Motown’s artists. Pictured here, wearing the furs of the day, are singers Lois Reeves, Patti LaBelle, and Martha Reeves.*



Motown Divas, Martha Reeves & The Vandellas & Diana Ross & The Supremes, pose for a photo. Circa 1967.

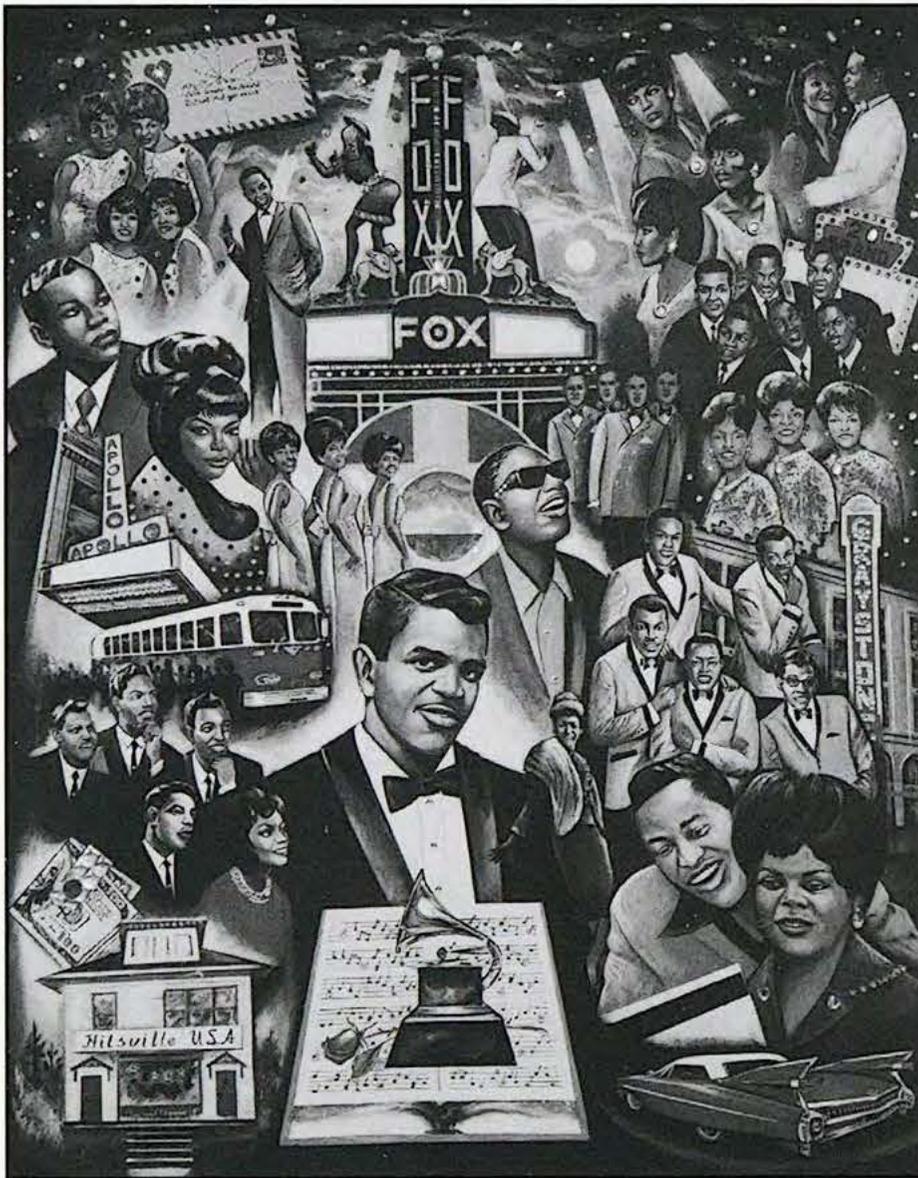
*The original caption to this iconic image says it all: “Motown Divas, Martha Reeves & the Vandellas & Diana Ross & the Supremes, pose for a photo. Circa 1967.*

who quickly raised the retail fur business to new heights. Tunis, a hard-nosed Greek with a New York attitude, was a man of superb talent. He could design, fit, cut, and sew. The two were a great match: Tunis ran the back end of the business while Bricker would light up the showroom with his outgoing personality and megawatt smile. Tunis remained in the business until his 2005 retirement, by which time the store had moved to its current location at the Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield. Tunis's son, John, also worked in the store as a sales consultant.

### THE RIOTS - THE AFTERMATH

As a Jewish man who grew up in the city, and whose father had escaped Czarist Russia with only the clothes on his back, Bricker understood Detroit's precarious racial imbalance. It was, he said, "an underlying powder keg." Like many Detroit-based businesses, Bricker-Tunis Furs was affected by the 1967 riots. The fires, the looting, and the aftermath of the riots that crisscrossed the city were devastating to many businesses, especially those owned by whites. Bricker was lucky. Several of his close friends and customers who were

black warned him of the impending trouble. They offered to go to his store and safely remove the furs, delivering the goods to Bricker's home before the riots spread to the Livernois shopping district. Bricker is certain that without their help, he would have lost everything. "I will always be very grateful for the kindness and love these men showed me. When you treat people right, you get respect back." Bricker also reflected on his reputation. "My father always told me that when good work goes out the door, good comes back. When bad walks out the door, God help you!" Bricker says that he truly believes in that mantra.



*Among Arthur Bricker's most prized possessions is this painting, Motown, by Curtis Lewis.*

"It has worked for me and helped to solidify my relationships with the thousands of customers that have walked through the door of my store over the years."

With much of Detroit in shambles, Bricker opened a new fur salon in a strip mall in the mostly Jewish suburb of Oak Park. The store was easy to get to from all parts of town. "I was afraid of perhaps losing some of my long-time Detroit customers, but they followed me, and I picked up a lot of new customers from the suburbs," said Bricker. In fact, the new space could not accommodate the influx of business. Needing additional space, Bricker tried to capture the vacant dry-cleaning store adjacent to his business, but the landlord would not agree to the expansion unless Bricker purchased all of the dry-cleaning



*Arthur Bricker and George Tunis featured in Metropolitan Detroit magazine, 1986.*

equipment. Bricker refused the deal. After twelve years in Oak Park, he put a deposit on a piece of land on Northwestern Highway in Southfield. That deal fell through when he learned that interest rates were at eighteen percent.

Instead, he took a gamble on a partially built shopping mall in West Bloomfield. At just four dollars per square foot, unfinished and with a dirt floor and no windows, the space was perfect. Bricker signed a twenty-year lease at Orchard Mall in 1971.

## **THE DYNASTY DAYS: BRICKER-TUNIS FURS GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**

The West Bloomfield location served well as a bridge between the city and the suburbs. Bricker planned a series of open-house events, largely targeted to the customers whose furs he still had in storage. Many customers objected to the long drive, but Bricker's reputation prevailed. The business prospered and Bricker set his sights on a new type of clientele. He began hosting fur fashion shows that were produced by Productions Plus co-founder Harriett Fuller and featured professional models.

When ABC's new television drama, *Dynasty*, needed fabulous furs for their actresses, all roads led to West Bloomfield, Michigan. *Dynasty*, which debuted in 1981, was the story of a wealthy Denver family whose bickering and backstabbing over money, love, and power became a national obsession. When

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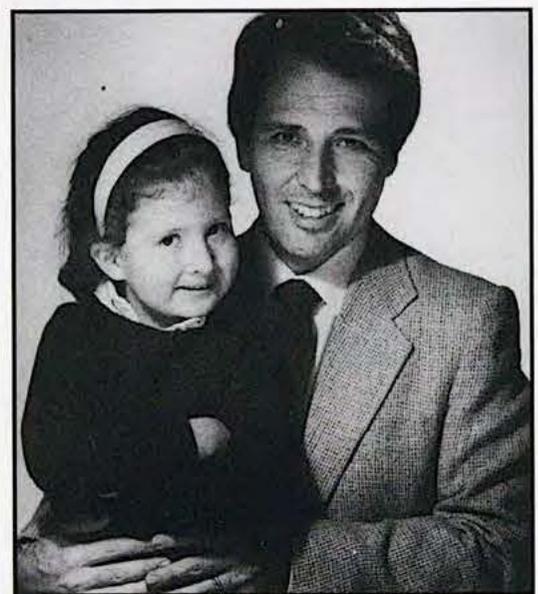
Dicker and Dicker Furriers of Beverly Hills could not accommodate *Dynasty's* request for costumes, they recommended Bricker-Tunis. It was a Hollywood moment, a golden opportunity. "This was very exciting for us. We provided furs for Joan Collins, Diahann Carroll, Linda Evans, and John Forsythe. These were the most well-dressed women and men on television, and it seemed unbelievable that we were a part of this very big hit show," said Bricker.

In 2015, Hollywood called again. Twelve of the *Dynasty* furs had been in cold storage in California for more than twenty-five years, and they were in perfect condition. The furs came home to Bricker-Tunis and were auctioned off in a benefit for the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit.

### CHANGING TRENDS: RE-INVENTING THE ROLE OF FURRIER

Arthur Bricker knows the ups and downs of the fur business. Furs are, without question, a luxury item, and the economy can easily dictate the ebb and flow of the business. In the early 1980s, when interest rates soared and the recession affected purchases of luxury items, Bricker had to be creative to remain profitable in the business. He offered financing; he promoted trading used furs for new ones. He used aggressive marketing techniques and built strong and lasting personal relationships with customers who never abandoned him, even as their spending decreased. He prevailed. "I have been very fortunate for a long time," said Bricker, with a humbleness that defines his soft-spoken demeanor. "I understand that when the market changes, I have to change with it in order to stay in business. It is not an easy business and I've watched a lot of furriers go under."

Arthur Bricker also knows that in fashion, nothing stays the same. Gone are the days when grandma's beautiful, ankle-length mink coat was passed down to a daughter or granddaughter. "They don't want it, even if it cost \$15,000." So what's to become of grandma's mink coat? Remodeling—taking a fur that is in good condition and updating the style—is one of the innovations on which Bricker's team of expert designers, tailors, and cutters focus their talents. Consignment and pre-owned furs also have new lives at Bricker-Tunis Furs. "We have a saying here: Everything old is new again."



*The third generation of Bricker furriers, Lauren Bricker, with her father, Arthur.*

## ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

The year 2016 marks a century of service for Bricker-Tunis Furs. The company celebrated the milestone with a series of television commercials that feature jazz recording artist Kimmie Horne, the grandniece of the legendary Lena Horne. The commercials were recorded at the Jazz Café at Detroit's famous Music Hall. More than fifty Bricker-Tunis customers appeared in the series, each wearing one of the company's fabulous furs.

Arthur Bricker laughs at the question of retirement. "What would I do?" He has worked in the business since he was fourteen, and the notion of playing golf or taking up a hobby doesn't excite him the way his work does. "My life has revolved around the fur industry. That's what I do. It's not just for the money. It's what I love. Plus, to quote my father again, 'Remember, Arthur, you're going to be dead a lot longer than you're alive, so live like hell while you're here. You never saw a Brink's truck following a hearse to the cemetery.'"

Bricker-Tunis Furs has been at the cutting edge of fur fashion since Jack Bricker purchased his first rabbit fur and opened his first store in Detroit in 1916. Since then, the company has cloaked the rich and famous and has given back to the community by hosting numerous charity fundraisers. One hundred years after its beginnings, the Bricker name and the traditions of old-fashioned customer service are still going strong.



**Charlene Mitchell-Rodgers** is an Emmy Award-winning television news broadcaster and president of Media Consultants, a full-service public-relations, marketing, and advertising agency.

### *Historical Tidbit*

**1899:** Isadore Carravallah, M.D., one of Michigan's first Jewish physicians, passed away at the age of eighty-seven. Born in Denmark in 1812, he came to the U.S. in 1870-1871 and settled in Detroit in 1872. In his obituary, *The Evening News* indicated that despite a successful career, he spent his last days in poverty, "having lost caste with the medical fraternity by going into the patent medicine business." Source, *A History of Early Jewish Physicians in the State of Michigan*, Irving I. Edgar. 1982, Philosophical Library, Inc. pp. 17-19.

# 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.*

## LYNNE AVADENKA: WOMAN OF THE BOOK

by Janice Morgan

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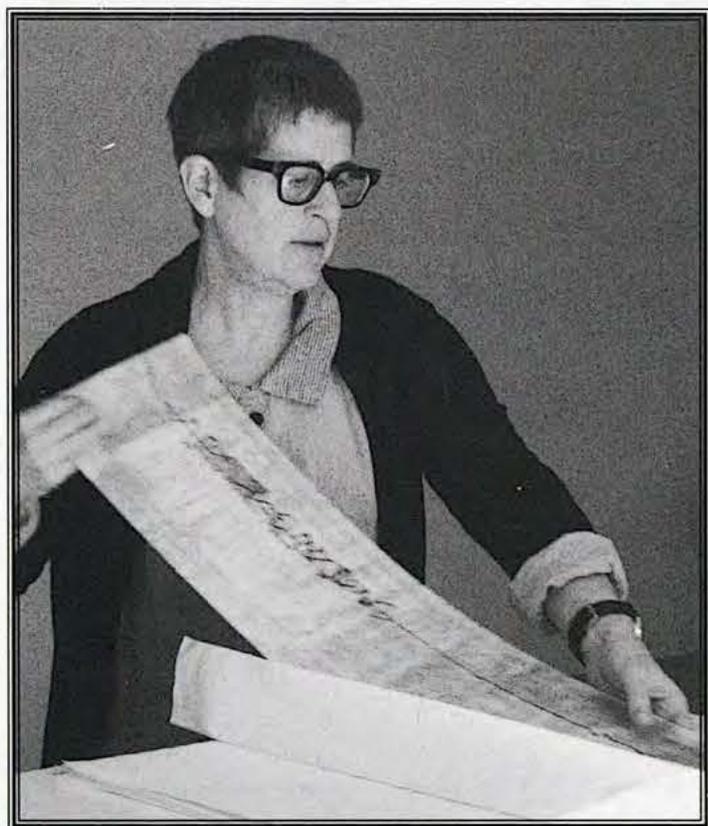
*Lynn Avadenka, printmaker and book artist, has become known throughout the world for her works on paper. Born in 1955 and raised in Pontiac, Avadenka is a second-generation American, with her maternal grandparents (Schlossel) coming from Germany and paternal grandparents (Avadenka) coming from Ukraine. Her mother, Beverly, was a public-school teacher, and her father, Judge Edward Avadenka (z"l), served on the 48th District Court, Oakland County. Her family belonged to B'nai Israel Synagogue in Pontiac.*

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Lynne Avadenka loves books, words, and text, but they are only the starting points for her artistic imagination. She casts them into space, making books into sculptures, illustrating and illuminating, and laying them out to suggest how words pass from the page into the imagination of the reader. Some of her works are abstract compositions on a simple text; her "Comes and Goes" plays with a single sentence of Ecclesiastes: "One generation goes, another comes, but the earth remains the same forever,"<sup>1</sup> making different compositions that are too abstract to be literally read but that suggest in

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different ways the feelings of loss in the passage. On the other hand, her “By a Thread” imagines a dialogue between Scheherazade of *The Thousand and One Nights* and Esther from the story of Purim, with readable text as well as illustrative graphic arts.



*Lynn Avadenka, printmaker and book artist, currently resides with her husband, attorney Marc Sussman, in Huntington Woods, where they raised their two children, Max and Eli Sussman.*

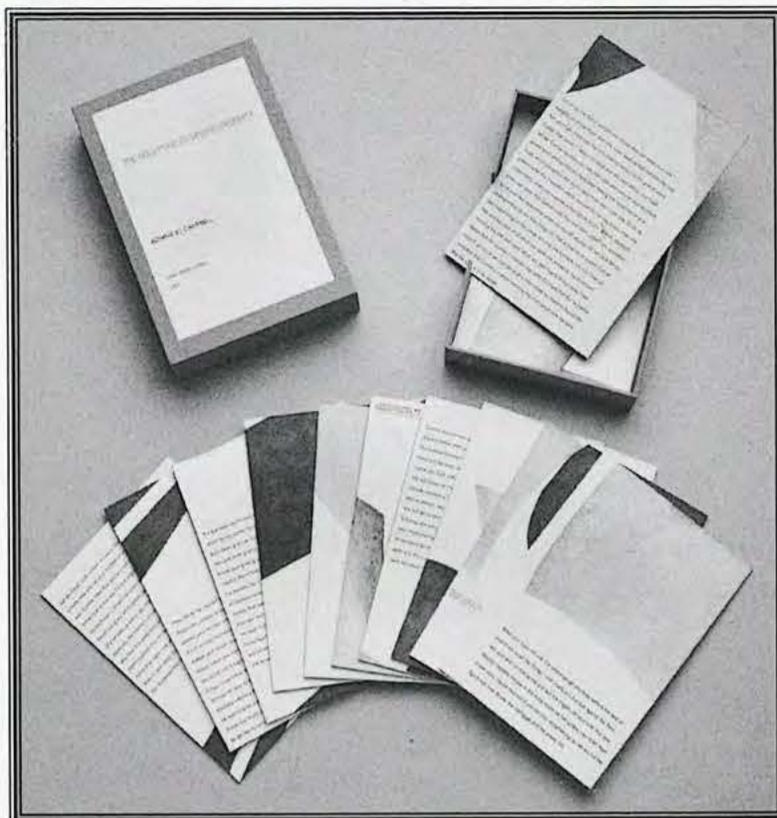
Avadenka attended Wayne State University with the intention of studying printmaking. Her first year of college left her so miserable that she decided to travel to Israel and remain there indefinitely. Her father convinced her to return, telling her, “You have to come home first, and if you want to go back, you’ll go back.”<sup>2</sup> She continued her studies at Wayne State, completing her B.A. in 1978 and M.A. in 1981. She has since returned to Israel a number of times for both work and pleasure, saying, “I just feel really connected to the place and the language.”<sup>3</sup>

While in college, she paid for her art materials by creating ketubot (printed marriage contracts). After college, she

taught a variety of classes as a guest artist in the Dearborn Public Schools and served as adjunct faculty at Wayne State University and College for Creative Studies. In 2006, inspired by the success of her handmade books, she decided to stop teaching and instead focus on making art.

Avadenka is proud to support her “art habit” with her income as an artist. Everything in her studio, all of her materials and equipment, was paid for with her artist income. A major element of her self-sufficiency has been through competitive grants and awards. Her list of grants, fellowships, residencies, and awards is impressive and far-reaching. In 1981, she received a Michigan Council for the Arts apprentice grant, which she shared with artist Douglas Semivan, to explore Japanese printmaking techniques. The following year the council awarded her a solo grant. Additionally, Avadenka has earned fellowships with the University of Michigan and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Among her particularly prestigious fellowships was a 2009 Kresge Foundation Kresge Arts in Detroit Award, based on her “demonstrated track record of artistic achievement and high quality work.”<sup>4</sup> The \$25,000 grant included a residency requirement of two years before and during the grant year with the intention of contributing to the Detroit-area art community. Avadenka’s



*A book such as those created by Avadenka is classified in the art world as an “artist’s book,” meaning a work of art that utilizes the form of a book. Pictured here is the limited-edition artist’s book *The Solutions to Brian’s Problem*, 2011, a short story by Michigan-based writer Bonnie Jo Campbell. The story was printed on a series of cards that readers would assemble like a puzzle. The design emphasizes the puzzling nature of the story.*

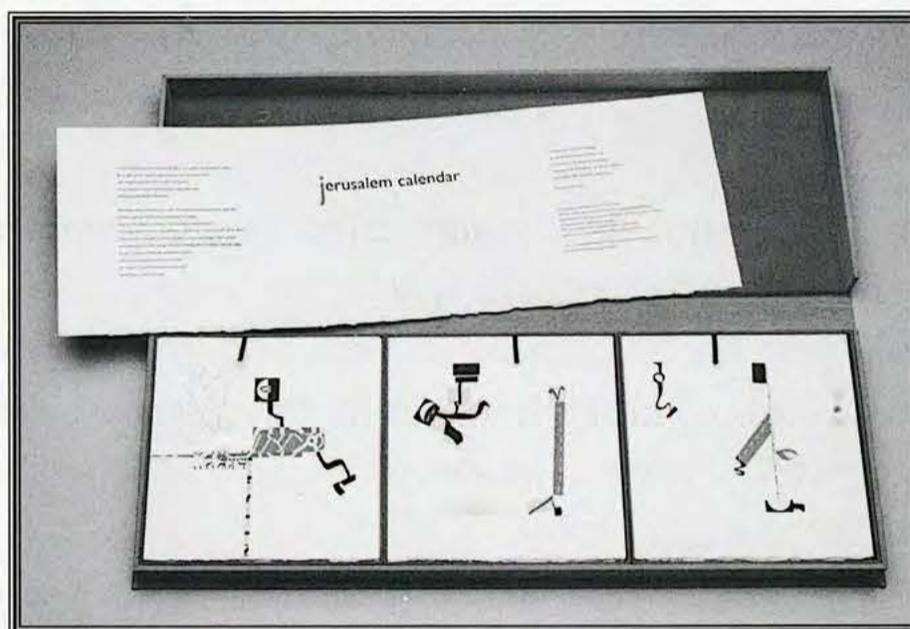
pieces were included in the Kresge Foundation’s *Art X Detroit* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2011.

Avadenka was one of only four inaugural fellows chosen from a pool of more than one hundred distinguished artists in 2011 when the Foundation for Jewish Culture in New York created the program “American Academy in Jerusalem.” The fellows were given nine weeks in Jerusalem to “just be an artist.” They were provided with apartments and a stipend for groceries, and the academy would sponsor a show at the end of their stay. Avadenka was scheduled to work at the Jerusalem Print Workshop, but, as she settled in, she couldn’t figure out what she wanted to do. Time was running out and she felt panicked, so she set up a studio in her apartment and started making small collages. Those were her backup plan if her prints didn’t work out. Happily, both projects were successful.<sup>5</sup>

The collages became a set entitled “Jerusalem Calendar,” inspired by and including pieces from a beautiful tear-off Jewish calendar she received from a friend. She made one collage each day. In her designs are snippets from Hebrew and Arabic newspapers and Hebrew and Arabic maps of Jerusalem. The resulting images are spare but bold with a pallet of black, white, and red, and touches of blue. The suite of monoprints that she created at the same time was inspired by an Arabic-English dictionary of algebraic definitions. Avadenka explains that the word “algebra” is an Arabic word that means “reunion of broken parts.” Noting this unexpected meaning, she said, “Oh, my God! Here I am in Jerusalem. Wouldn’t the reunion of broken parts be nice?”<sup>6</sup> She tore apart the dictionary to use some definitions that she found to be strongly suggestive of the idea of unity. The selections from the dictionary were collaged on top of images made from old printing plates from other artists. She used

these layers to reflect the layered nature of Jerusalem.

Like most artists, Avadenka showed a strong interest in art at a young age. She recalls a story from when she was younger than eight. She was home in bed with pneumonia and was given a children's magazine to distract her. She read about a contest to create something with Popsicle sticks. She entered and won. She also remembers happily receiving a Speedball calligraphy set for Hanukkah when she was in the fourth grade.<sup>7</sup> Her work as a book artist may even have been foreshadowed when, as a little girl, she made her own fairy-tale book with a wooden cover. "I made the binding," she said, "and I did all the drawings, the illustrations, and the text." She notes, "I always was an avid reader. ... I always had this interest in the physical object, the paper, and typefaces, and all those kinds of things."<sup>8</sup>



*During her two-month residency in Jerusalem in 2012, Avadenka created Jerusalem Calendar. Using Hebrew and Arabic language ephemera, each collage in the limited-edition piece includes some element of the moon as an acknowledgment that both Judaism and Islam use a lunar calendar.*

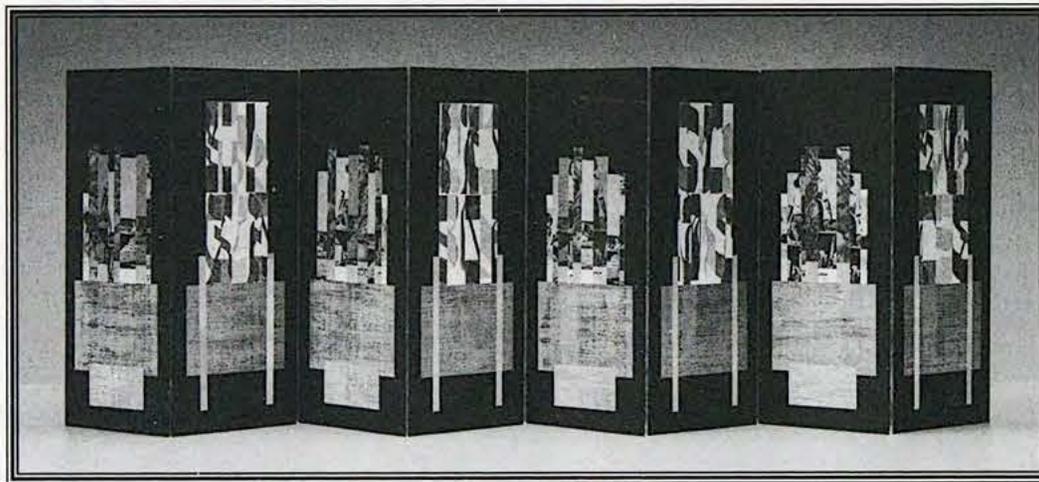
Since then, Avadenka has diligently explored and refined her print and artist's book-making techniques. Often working from a Jewish theme, and inspired by her love of literature, words, and typography, she crafts pieces with a conceptual grounding in a Jewish idea. Her work often includes text and letters in both English and Hebrew. They are imbued with meaning from the themes that inspire her. Her abstract style is well matched to the abstract concepts she illustrates.

Her prints are produced in an array of sizes, from a set of prints six inches by six inches to a scroll-sized triptych twenty-four inches by eighteen feet. Almost all of her projects incorporate some printmaking method such as etching, lithography, or letterpress, but she doesn't limit herself to a single technique. Her prints can be made up of images using not just multiple methods of printing but also added elements such as chine-collé, collage, pencil,

typewritten text, laser printing, and calligraphy. This layered effect creates an intricate interplay inviting viewers to look at the details and have their own responses. When asked what she hopes people will take away when they see one of her prints, she says, "I hope you'll pause long enough to look at it and bring something of yourself to it."<sup>9</sup>

Avadenka has carried many of the methods she uses in her prints to her artist's book projects, expanding our understanding of what makes a book. Although she has created a number of traditionally bound volumes, her works take on different shapes. She often uses a fanfold configuration in sizes from a regular book of five inches, to a sculptural six feet tall. Some of her books are created to tell an actual story or illustrate a poem (occasionally her own poetry) complete with text. Others are abstract compositions to suggest a theme or story.

Avadenka's works have been on display in such far-flung places as Slovenia, New Zealand, Bangkok, and Beijing. Within the United States she has exhibited from Oregon to Oklahoma to Wyoming to New York. Her art has been deemed significant enough to find homes in the permanent collections of major museums such as the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Jewish Museum in New York City, and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Her handmade interpretations of books reside in the collections of the Library of Congress, Yale University, and the New York Public Library. The University of Michigan has one of almost every artist's book she has published.



*All My Paths Twist, 2015. Folding screen incorporating letterpress printed materials and digital prints from vintage Hebrew-language grammar books*

Detroit can be proud to have nurtured such a talented and special artist, and the Jewish community especially so. As Mathew Baigell says in his *Jewish Art in America: An Introduction*, "A key aspect of Avadenka's sense of herself as an artist is that it both feeds and is fed by her sense of herself as a Jewish person. As with others, her serious and active commitment to her religion is an acknowledged basic formative element in the creation of her art. She cannot imagine one without the other."

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Vince Carducci, "Last Chance to See: 'Figuration' & Lynne Avadenka @ Lemberg Gallery." *Motown Review of Art*, 23 Feb. 2011. Web. 29 May 2016. <http://motownreviewofart.blogspot.com/2011/02/last-chance-to-see-figuration-lynne.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> Lynne Avadenka. Interview by author. Digital recording. Huntington Woods, Michigan, June 10, 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> Avadenka, Lynne. Interview by author.
- <sup>4</sup> "Kresge Artist Fellowships." Kresge Arts in Detroit. The Kresge Foundation, 2015. Web. 1 June 2016. <http://www.kresgeartsindetroit.org/apply/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Vivian Henoeh, "Lynne Avadenka, Artist in Jerusalem at Work in Detroit." *My Jewish Detroit*. 2012. Accessed May 25, 2016. <http://myjewishdetroit.org/2012/05/lynne-avadenka-artist-in-jerusalem/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Avadenka, Lynne. Interview by author.
- <sup>7</sup> Avadenka, Lynne. Interview by author.
- <sup>8</sup> Nick Sousanis, "Language Will Save Us: Lynne Avadenka's 'By A Thread' and the Power of Words." Tramp and Vamp, Booksellers, LLC. 3 June 2009. Web. 29 May 2016. <http://vampand-tramp.com/finepress//landmarkspress-interview.html>.
- <sup>9</sup> Matthew Baigell, *Jewish Art in America: An Introduction*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007 150.

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**Janice Morgan** is a lifelong Detroiter. She grew up in the Bagley neighborhood of Northwest Detroit and attended Cass Technical High School. An arts enthusiast, she enjoys exploring the Detroit area's art, poetry and theatre scene. She currently works as a freelance communications and marketing consultant. 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.

# DETROIT'S QUEEN OF MODERN DANCE: HARRIET BERG

by Barbara Cohn

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*Harriet Berg's contributions to the arts in Michigan include more than her remarkable dance career. She has been a choreographer, costume designer, and teacher, she has organized dance companies, and she has facilitated arts-related conferences and panel discussions. She also was a leading force in the development of the dance program at the Fresh Air Society's Camp Tamarack, where she served for many years as artist-in-residence, along with her late husband, Irving Berg.*

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*Harriet Berg, date unknown. Photo by Harvey Gage*

Walking into Harriett Berg's corner apartment on the ninth floor of the Park Shelton in Midtown Detroit, makes you feel you are in Paris. Original paintings, sculpture, and photography line the long entry hallway. Artwork reaching from ground to ceiling reminds you of the style of Gertrude Stein, while in the background you hear French music by Edith Piaf. The apartment, which overlooks the Detroit Institute of Arts, is filled with glimpses into Berg's life of love, family, teaching, and dance. Scattered throughout the main room are photographs of dancers and artists, books, and letters from former students. In a special area are Berg's most-prized possessions—some of the wood sculptures carved by her beloved husband Irving (z'l"). At ninety-two, this vivacious lady with soft

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white hair and a warm smile has been wife, mother, dance educator, choreographer, entrepreneur, and modern-dance advocate.

*What or who is the greatest love of your life?  
"My husband and dance; they come together."*

Born in 1924 at Harper-Grace Hospital in Detroit to parents Jacob Waratt and Helen Alink Waratt, Harriet was one of four sisters. Adeline and Lillian were older, and Marilyn was the youngest. They lived on Jefferson Street and later moved to Calvert and Wildemere. Her father founded Essential Food Products, a frozen-food distributor, and was a union organizer for the streetcar and milk-

man unions. Berg remembers having dinner in her home with Walter Reuther (1907-1970), the labor-union leader who made the United Automobile Workers (UAW) a major force in the auto industry, and Norman Thomas (1884-1968), a Presbyterian minister and pacifist who achieved fame as a six-time Socialist Party of America presidential candidate.



*Harriet Berg in 1968. She grew up with parents who taught the dancer to equate work with making the world a better place.  
Photo courtesy Jewish Community Archives*

Berg attended Roosevelt Elementary, Durfee Intermediate School and Central High schools and can still remember the names of every one of her high-school teachers. The family belonged to Congregation Shaarey Zedek, where Berg attended Sunday school. The curriculum focused on Jewish history and the Bible, and gave her a strong sense of Jewish identity. She fondly remembers Rabbi Morris Adler (1938-1966) and recalls seeing baseball great Hank Greenberg standing on the synagogue steps, wearing a camel-hair wrap-around coat, as he arrived for Yom Kippur services.

*"I want to be tied in to Jewish women that inspired me to carry on their work."*

Among Berg's heroes are Fanny Aronson, director of the Jewish Community Center dance program (Berg served as her assistant), and Blanche Shareran, a member of the New Dance Group of Detroit from 1930 to 1950. Berg learned from Tosia Mondstok, a German dancer who taught modern dance in her living room; Edith Freeman, the former chair of the Detroit Institute

of Art's music committee; and Ruth Murray, dance educator and then-director of physical education at Wayne State University.

Berg's interest in and exposure to dance began at a young age, when her older sister Adeline fell in love with ballet and their father set up a small dance studio in the basement. Unfortunately, Adeline developed a heart murmur and had to stop dancing. Later, in her teens, Berg responded to an Arthur Murray Dance Studio newspaper ad seeking instructors. She eagerly auditioned but was told she had no rhythm. The rejection only made her work harder and she soon got the job.

One way to describe Berg is "curious," and it was that trait that led her to hitchhike to Mexico with a group of girlfriends in 1944. They made the trek to study Mexican folk dance, and on their way back they stopped at Berea College in Kentucky to study Appalachian folk dance.

Berg attended Wayne State University, initially studying art education, but she became restless and began seeking a different direction. Her counselor encouraged her to attend one of Ruth Murray's dance workshops, and Berg immediately fell in love with movement as an art form. Murray recognized the talent of the energetic young lady and encouraged her to become a teacher. Berg made the decision to study creative-dance education, earning a bachelor of fine arts in 1947 and a master of fine arts in 1967.

*"My husband was my great inspiration and supporter."*

On a particularly enchanted 1943 evening, Harriet Waratt met Irving Berg, who would become the love of her life. The young soldier was on leave, and he joined Harriet and three of her girlfriends at the "Bolshoi" Ballet at Detroit's Masonic Temple. The two talked all night, fell in love, and corresponded throughout WWII, until Irving was wounded during the Battle of the Bulge and returned to the United States. They eloped in 1946. Irving was also an artist, an accomplished sculptor and photographer who taught generations of students at Cass Technical High School. The couple shared a passion for the arts, creativity, Jewish culture and heritage, and Detroit. They had two children, Leslie in 1947 and Martin in 1951. The Bergs raised their family on Snowden Street in Detroit, and moved to the historic Park Shelton apartment building in 1983.

With Irving as a supportive, nurturing husband, Harriet embraced the opportunity to study dance and to work with some of the best-known masters of the era, including Martha Graham, José Limón, Lucas Hoving, Merce Cunningham, Twyla Tharp, Theodore Smith, Doris Humphrey, and Christopher Flynn. She even met Diego Rivera. "I was born in the golden years of modern

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dance and I got to study with these wonderful people," she said. In 1950, she, Irving, and their daughter Leslie traveled to Mexico City. They were invited to Rivera's studio and spent the afternoon talking and observing him painting.

Her exploration in the world of modern dance continued, and in 1962 she founded and served as director of the Young Dancers Guild. In 1966, she founded the Festival Dancers, a company that still practices and performs. She was also instrumental in the creation of the Renaissance Dance Company



*Berg founded the Festival Dancers in 1966. They are pictured here in 1968. Photo courtesy Jewish Community Archives*

(1971), The Madame Cadillac Dance Theater (1981), and Belles and Bachelors of Fort Detroit Company (2007). In 1959, Berg began teaching dance at the Jewish Community Center, starting a program that continued for fifty years. The JCC program was among her favorites, as she was able to bring together local Jewish and international Israeli dances.

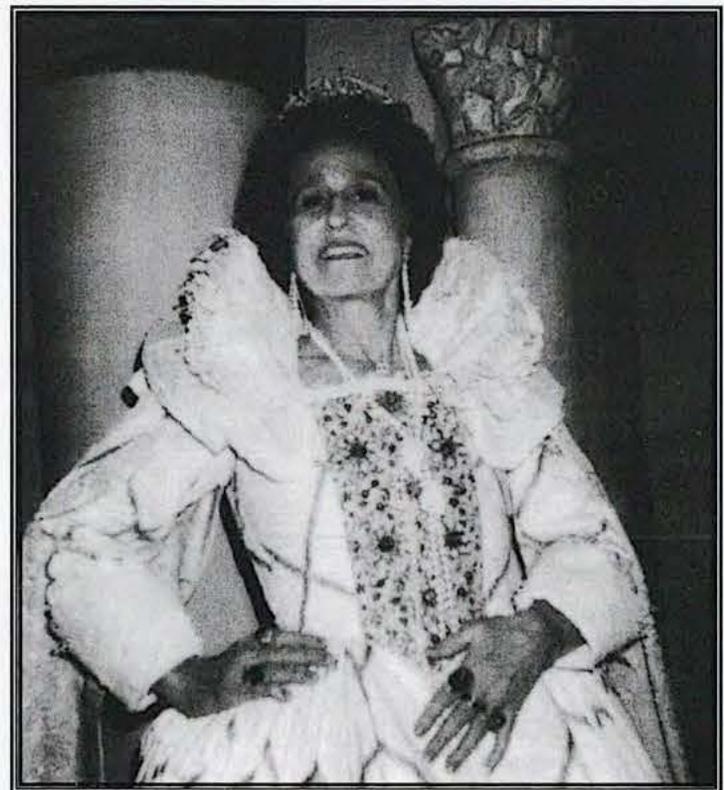
The beauty of dance is that no stage is needed. For thirteen years, Berg spent her summers creating dance programs for Camp B'nai B'rith in Pennsylvania, and then, in 1978, she and Irving began a more-than-twenty-year tenure as artists-in-residence at the Fresh Air Society's Camp Tamarack in Ortonville, Michigan. Irving came to

sculpt, Harriet to dance. "I said build me a dance barn where I can teach," Berg recalled in the book *A Timeless Treasure: 100 Years of Fresh Air Society Camp*. In addition to dance sessions for campers, Berg also created a four-week dance camp that immersed participants in jazz, modern, ballet, folk, and Israeli dance. Together, Harriet and Irving created for the camp a legacy of art that continues today.

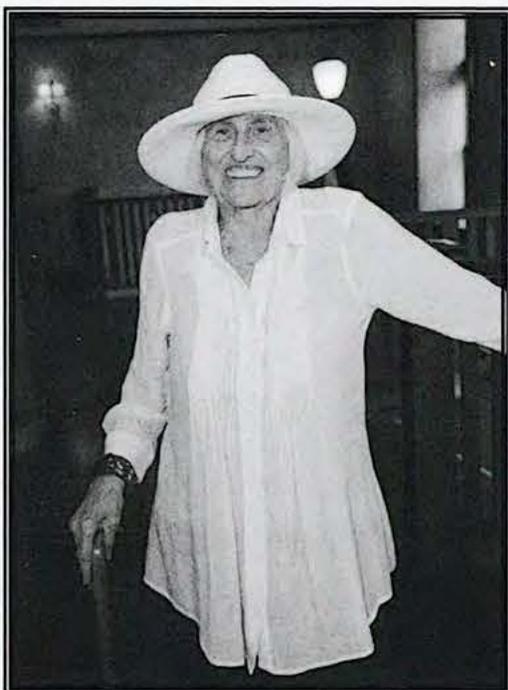
Close to Berg's heart is her creation *The Twins*, a modern-dance theater performance, which was choreographed by Sophie Maslow (1911-2006), American choreographer, modern dancer and teacher, and founding member of New Dance Group. *The Twins* shares the story of Irving's mother Edith, who was a twin, during WWII. Edith came to America in the 1920s, while her twin and the rest of her family remained in Poland and perished in the Holocaust. The dance focuses on their life together in the shtetl, then picks up years later when Edith returns to Poland to visit her sister's grave.

*Harriet on her legacy:  
"I opened up the beauty and  
importance of creative dance in  
people's lives...good health, quality  
of life, joy, and satisfaction.  
Dance is truly the mother  
of all the arts."*

Over the course of her career, Berg has enchanted thousands of fans with her modern- and folk-dance interpretations and performances. But her influence is felt far beyond the stage. She has been instrumental in introducing and promoting dance to individuals of all ages. Her programs recognize modern dance's ability to give dancers artistic individuality, a venue for personal expression with the freedom to use new forms and movements. Berg explains, "Dance is an important human activity and a vital part of everyday life....I see dance as a natural therapy, use your mind and body. Use it or lose it. It is psychological as well as physical. A multidimensional experience."



*From 1975 to 1999, Harriet Berg was a key figure in the annual Wassail Feast held in the Great Hall of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Each year, she played Queen Elizabeth I, while members of her Renaissance Dance Company were the featured performers along with acrobats, fire-eaters, and madrigal singers.*



*Harriet Berg at the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's annual meeting in 2015.*

Joanna Abramson, a West Bloomfield attorney and former student of Berg, describes her teacher in this way: "Harriet's fierce intelligence, deep sense of Jewish heritage...and irreverent sparkle in her large blue eyes and flashy smile are timeless."

Berg is also a self-described feminist and activist, staunchly supporting the arts and the city she calls home. In 2000, she founded the Jewish Women in the Arts Award, a Detroit-based project. When asked which historical figure she most identifies with, Berg replies, "(Queen) Elizabeth I; she fought for her right to be equal; women's rights." And just what is Berg doing now? Hold on to your hat. In the summer of 2016, Berg created "Conversations in Dance," a series of discussions

about aspects of American dance, inspired by the 2016 Detroit Institute of Arts exhibit *American Dance*. She also attended a ten-day workshop in California on New York Baroque Dance; worked on her Michigan Dance Archives at the Walter P. Reuther Library; delivered a lecture, without notes, on American modern-dance pioneer Isadora Duncan (1877-1927); and applied for a Knight Foundation grant to create a children's concert and Baroque dance routine with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Perhaps to relax a bit, Berg also attends weekly yoga classes with her daughter Leslie.

*What is her idea of perfect happiness?*

*Berg says, "Going on vacation and taking classes in dance."*

*Harriett, welcome to happiness!*

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

*Who is your favorite dancer?*

Isadora Duncan

*Who would you like to dance with?*

José Limón and Louis Falco

*Favorite movie?*

*Dance of Merce*

*Favorite actor?*

Daniel Day-Lewis

*Favorite poem?*

*A Psalm of Life* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



**Barbara Madgy Cohn** has a B.A. in art history, is a registered nurse, and is a docent at the DIA. In 2013, she created "Discover the Wonders," an art and architectural tour of the Detroit Public Library. She is a board member of the DPL Friends Foundation and of American Technion Society. She is married to Sheldon and has two sons, Jonathan and Jeremy.

# ARCHIVED 2016 TREASURES

## CHASING DREAMS

The greatest heroes in baseball did more than just play the game; they changed it. That is but one of the many themes behind *Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American*, presented to the community from September 9 through November 27, 2016, at the Detroit Historical Museum, and presented by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

First exhibited at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia in 2014, *Chasing Dreams* is the first large-scale exhibition to use the story of immigrants and minorities as an opportunity to highlight the ways in which our national pastime has served as a pathway for learning and understanding American values. *Chasing Dreams* celebrates the heroes and communities that reflect the best of America, while also showing how baseball has been a mirror for challenges the nation has faced, including racism, anti-Semitism, class stratification, and the challenges of urbanization.

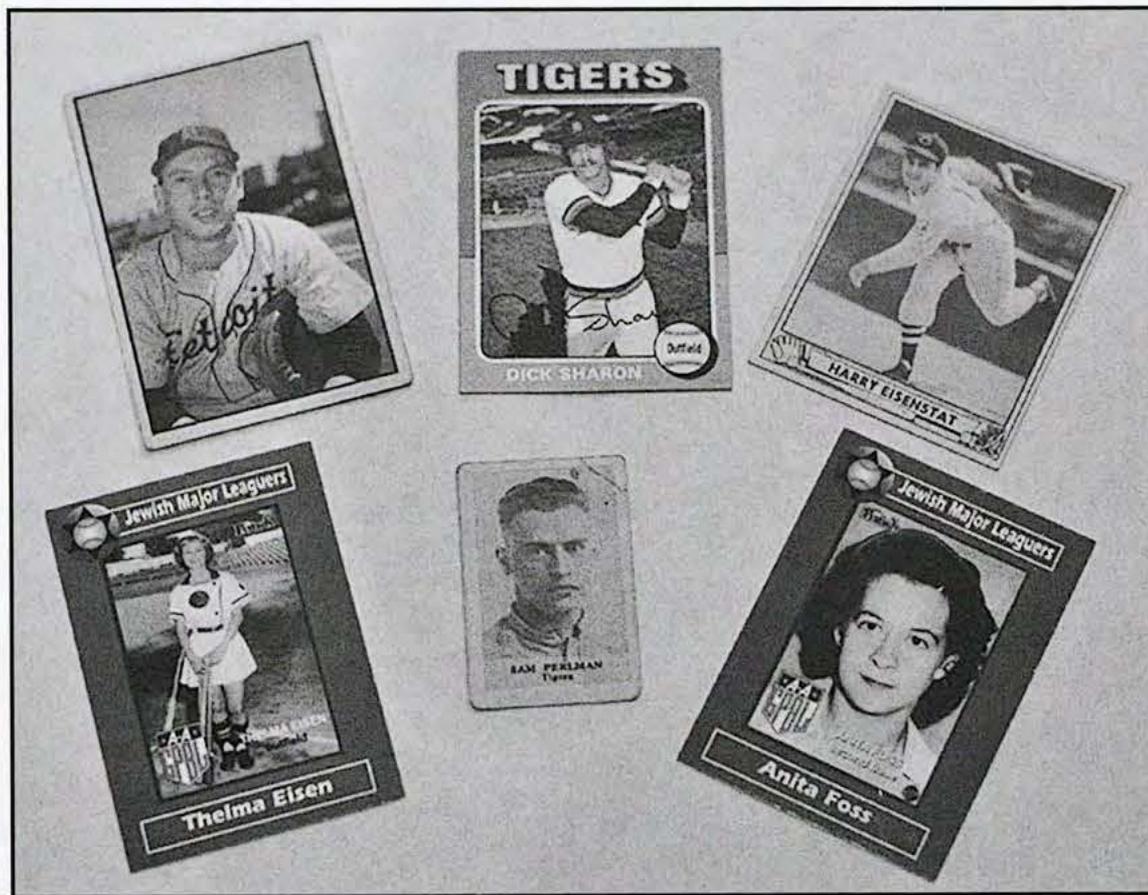
In bringing *Chasing Dreams* to Detroit, JHSM was able to add Michigan-based stories and artifacts. Curated locally by Aimee Ergas, JHSM research director, the exhibit focuses on how baseball has and continues to help many Americans shape their identity, overcome adversity, and connect to communities throughout the country.

The local exhibition project was chaired by Donna and Michael Maddin, and Cathy and James Deutchman. JHSM wishes to thank the Eugene & Marcia Applebaum Family Foundation, Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner, and Myrna and Spencer Partrich for their major support. JHSM also thanks the Detroit Tigers Foundation, Cathy and James Deutchman, Stanley and Judith Frankel Family Foundation, Charlene Handleman, Marjorie and Maxwell Jospey Foundation, Donna and Michael Maddin, Mendelson Kornblum Orthopedics & Spine Specialists, and the Michigan Jewish Sports Foundation.

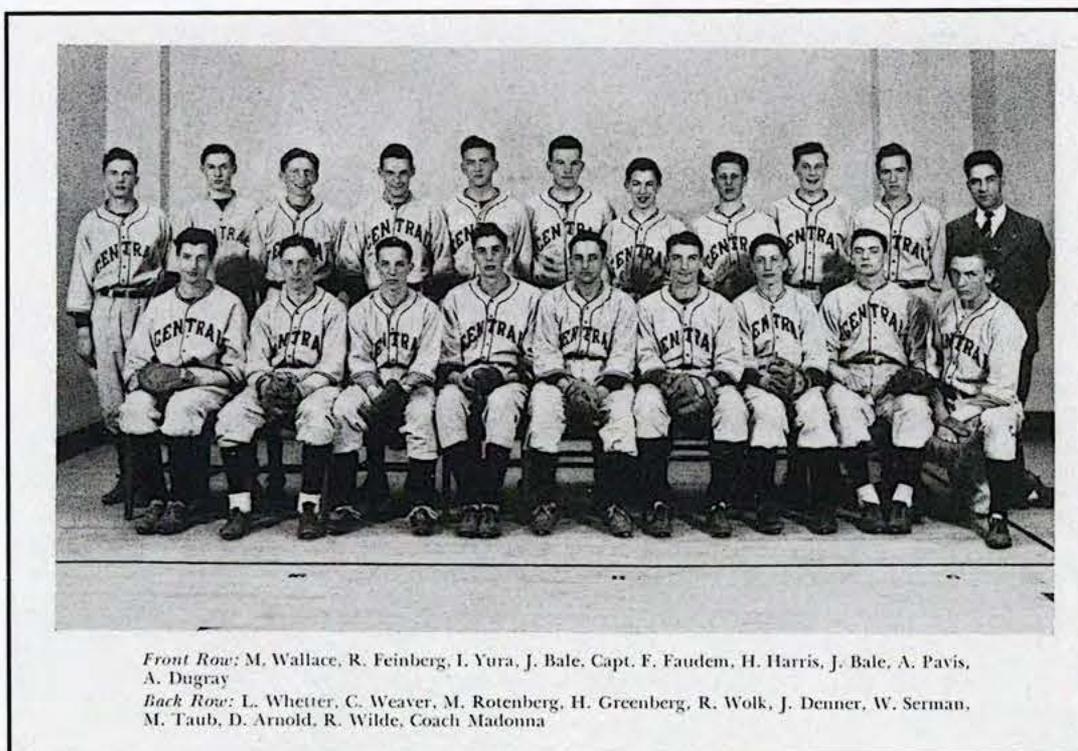
*The Chasing Dreams exhibition will be featured in the 2017 issue of the Michigan Jewish History Bulletin.*

# *Chasing Dreams*

BASEBALL & BECOMING AMERICAN



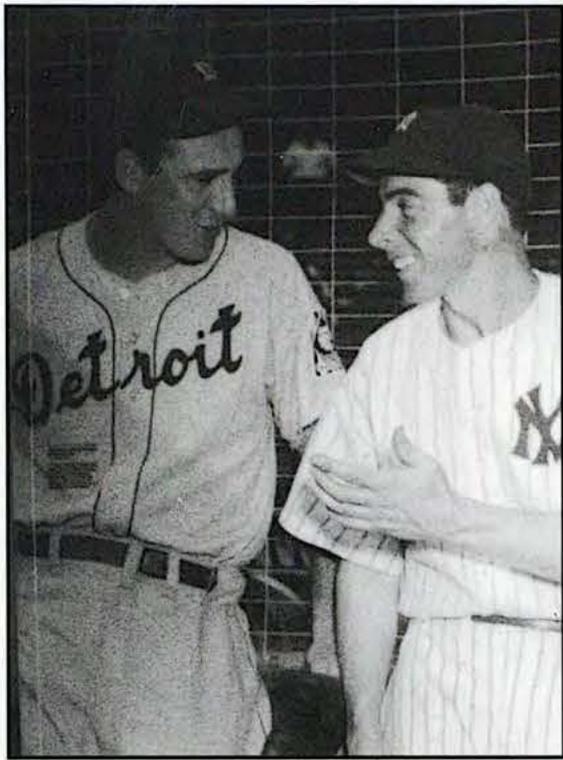
Baseball cards (clockwise from top left): Joe Ginsberg, 1952, catcher, played for the Tigers 1948-1953; Dick Sharon, 1975, outfielder, was Rookie of the Year while playing for the Tigers in 1973; Harry Eisenstat, 1940, pitcher, played for the Tigers 1938-1939, was inducted in 1993 into the Michigan Jewish Sports Hall of Fame; Anita Foss pitched and played second base for the Grand Rapids Chicks and Muskegon Lassies in the late 1940s, "had blazing speed on the base paths and mastered the art of hitting the curve"; Sam Perlman, c. 1927, on one of twenty-one cards issued by the Purity Ice Cream Company of Winnipeg, Canada, to promote its "Honey Boy Ice Cream"; Thelma Eisen played outfield with the Grand Rapids Chicks in 1945, was selected for the 1946 All-Star Team and that year tied for the league lead in triples and was second in stolen bases. From the collections of Irwin Cohen and Alan A. May.



Central High School Diamond Cutters, 1940. From the Yearbook Collection of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.



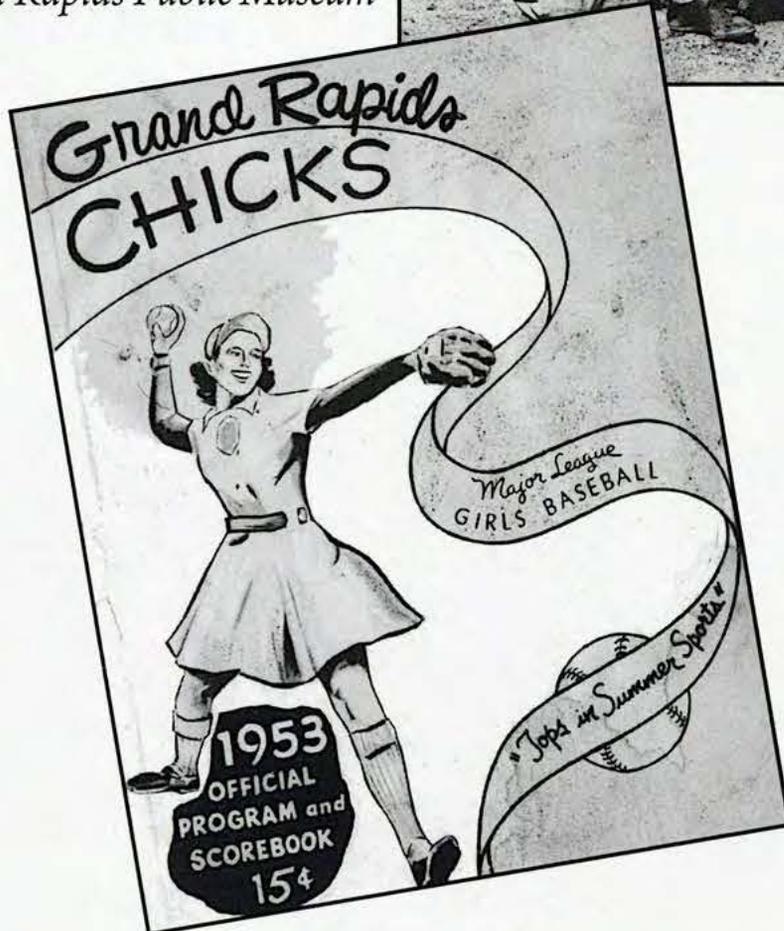
Go Go Tigers button, 1968. From the collection of Alan May.



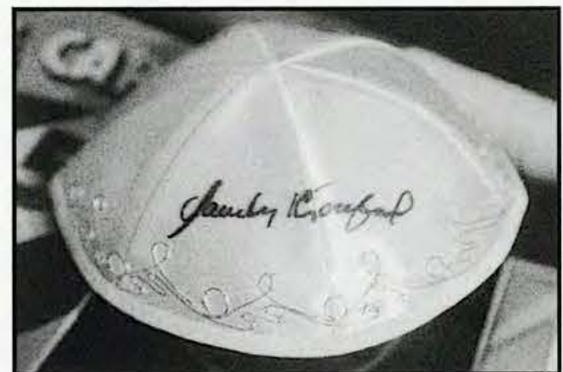
*Hammerin' Hank and Joltin' Joe. From the original National Museum of American Jewish History exhibition, this image of baseball greats Hank Greenberg and Joe DiMaggio depicts two players who withstood vitriolic religious discrimination. During WWII, both men traded the ball field for the battlefield, proving their patriotism.*

# ARCHIVED 2016 TREASURES

*Members of the Grand Rapids Black Sox of the Negro Leagues, c. 1948. From left: Reuben Smartt, Ted Rasberry, Olan "Jelly" Taylor, Henry Saverson. From the collections of the Grand Rapids Public Museum*



*With players in long skirts and petticoats, women's baseball started at Vassar College in 1866. During WWII, when men were overseas, women's baseball leagues flourished, among them the Grand Rapids Chicks and the Muskegon Lassies. Courtesy Ernie Harwell Sports Collection, Detroit Public Library.*



*This yarmulke was one of only about thirty-five signed by Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax, the youngest player ever elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, for an awards ceremony sometime around 1995. Like Hank Greenberg, Koufax declined to play a World Series game on Yom Kippur in 1965. From the collection of Dr. Robert Matthews. Photo by Elayne Gross.*

# HISTORIC NEWS OF NOTE FROM AROUND THE STATE

## PORTRAIT OF FRED MAGNUS BUTZEL IS RESTORED AND RESCUED



*Photo by John Hardwick*

Considered the “Dean of Detroit Jewry,” attorney Fred Butzel (1877-1948) was a passionate servant to his Detroit and Jewish communities. His unparalleled dedication is noted throughout the area, with buildings and awards named in his honor. A portrait of Butzel was discovered recently by Robbie Terman, director of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives. Through the cooperation of the archives and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and with the generosity of a group of private donors, funds were secured to restore the portrait, which now hangs in the Fred M. Butzel Conference Center in

the Max M. Fisher Federation Building on Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Hills.

In 1948, after Butzel’s death, the Jewish Welfare Federation commissioned Roy C. Gamble to paint the portrait, which was hung in the grand stairwell of the then-new Federation headquarters in the appropriately named Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building at 163 Madison Avenue in Detroit. For forty years, Fred Butzel “watched” over the people for whom he cared so deeply.

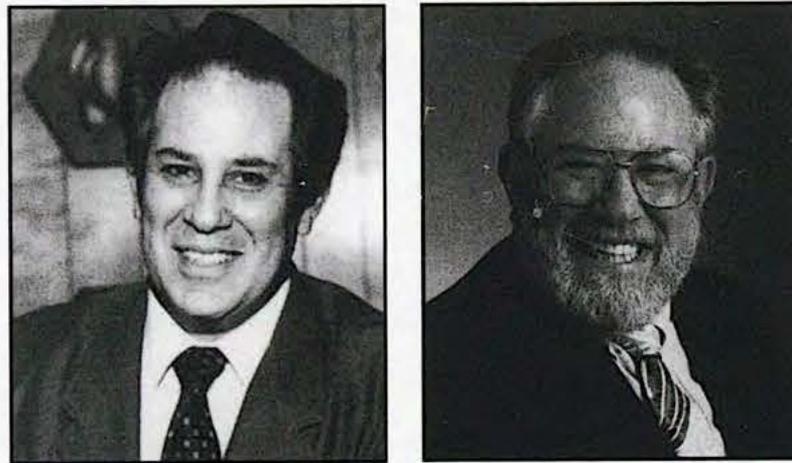
The portrait description reads: “He devoted a lifetime to furthering the programs of nearly every Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropic and social welfare group in the community. He was an early supporter of childcare/foster care, organized the Boy Scouts in Detroit, taught English to new immigrants, and held office in United Jewish Charities, Jewish Welfare Federation, Resettlement Service, and United Jewish Appeal. Butzel was a pioneer advocate for Israel, served on the Detroit Urban League, and helped found the Detroit Community Fund and the Legal Aid Bureau. The full breadth of his service makes it nearly impossible to list all the causes he supported. His contributions continue to impact this community today. Since 1951, the prestigious Butzel Award, named in his honor, is bestowed annually for distinguished service to the community.”

This portrait is an honored part of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives collection. - *Robbie Terman, JCA Director*

## TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL CELEBRATES ITS SESQUICENTENNIAL

The congregation of Temple B'nai Israel in Kalamazoo, Michigan, recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. The congregation enjoyed a series of celebratory events, recognizing all the while that reaching this milestone was quite the ride.

The journey began in 1865, when twenty Jewish settler families, in a small, southwest Michigan town, organized to secure property for a consecrated burial ground. On January 7, 1866, the settlers signed by-laws that brought Congregation B'nai Israel (Sons of Israel) officially into being. The congregation has seen many ups and downs in the decades since, but today, B'nai Israel, a founding member of the URJ (formerly the Union of American Hebrew Congregations – UAHC), is a thriving congregation celebrating its long, strong, and proud history.



*Rabbi Steven Forstein and Cantor Larry Charson (both of blessed memory) stood at the Temple B'nai Israel pulpit from 1998 to 2013. During that time, both men also ministered to members of Temple Beth El in Battle Creek, Michigan.*

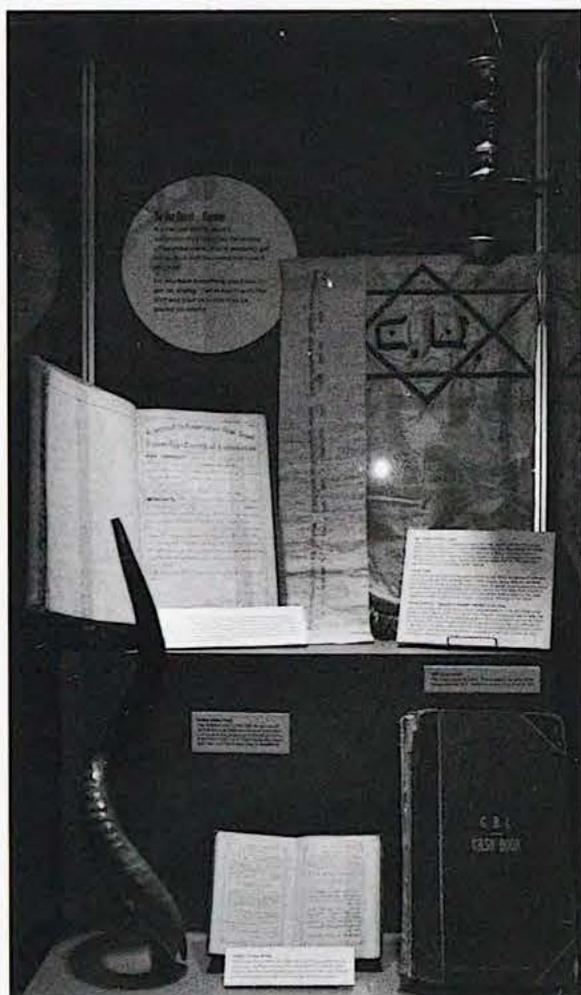
Among the commemorative events was the publication of an updated history that featured expanded stories of some of B'nai Israel's prominent founding members, including Magnus (Mannus) Israel, David Lilienfeld, and the Desenberg and Rosenbaum families. The history also included a biography of Samuel Foltz, who served as the congregation's secretary for many years, and brief biographies of recent former clergy Rabbi Steven Forstein (z'l") and Cantor Larry Charson (z'l").

The history detailed many other facets of B'nai Israel's spiritual life, including the addition of rabbinic aides, now called sh'liach k'hilah (liaison to the community), who have become an important part of the congregation. Over the years, especially during the many years when Temple B'nai Israel did not have a resident rabbi, these volunteer lay leaders led Shabbat services, assisted

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with High Holy Day services, and officiated at funerals, shiva minyan services, brit milah, baby namings, and Havdalah. They comforted the bereaved and taught in the religious school. Martin Gal, of blessed memory, was the congregation's first rabbinic aide, followed by Patricia Ressler-Billion and Michael Tanoff.

Anniversary events kicked off on December 3, 2015, with a community concert that included works by Haydn, Poulenc, Glick, Rabinovich, Clara Schumann, and Bartok. Organized by member William Stein, the concert fea-



*As part of the 150th anniversary celebration, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum displayed a showcase of the temple's historical artifacts. One of the cases is shown here. Clockwise from top: a Torah cover (date unknown), the Ner Tamid from the congregation's first synagogue, a wimple (dated 1894), and a cemetery ledger from the early 1900s. The case also included prayer books, a financial ledger, and a shofar (not shown). Another case shows photographs of the congregation's three buildings: South Street (1875-1911), Park Street (1911-1946), and Grand Prairie (1994-present). The display was curated by Henry Winter, TBI member, and Sarah Humes, Kalamazoo Valley Museum.*

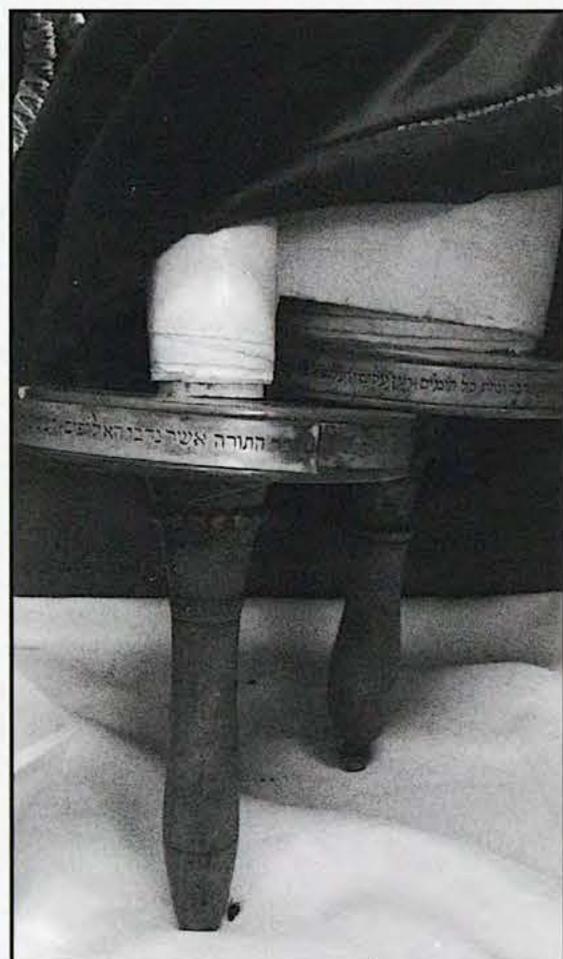
tured artists Diana Cohen, former concertmaster of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra; Franklin Cohen, recently retired principal clarinet of the Cleveland Orchestra; and Roman Rabinovich, winner of the 2008 Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition.

Rabbi Matthew Zerwekh, B'nai Israel's current rabbi and the first full-time spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Israel since 1969, led an Erev Shabbat Service on June 10, 2016, as part of the official celebration weekend. The service featured selections from four successive Reform prayer books used by the congregation: Minhag America, Union Prayer Book, Gates of Prayer, and Mishkan T'filah.

Joan Hawxhurst, TBI's current president, wrote a concluding note to the 150th anniversary history: "As we have been before and will no doubt be again in the future, Temple B'nai Israel is at a crossroads this anniversary year. We have opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of our congregation

and to enliven our region's Jewish community by working more closely with our Jewish neighbors. We will start our second 150 years by bringing together Temple B'nai Israel's religious school with that of Congregation of Moses (Conservative) to create a unified Jewish educational program for our children. We will continue to explore the possibility of creating a single campus for Kalamazoo's Jewish institutions, and look for ways to connect with other smaller congregations across Michigan. For 150 years, Temple B'nai Israel has been part of the fabric of Kalamazoo, and we look forward to continuing to contribute to the vibrancy of the local Jewish community far into the future."

- *Raye Ziring, Ad-Hoc History Committee, Temple B'nai Israel*



*Temple B'nai Israel is a proud guardian of Torah Scroll #1245, a Bucovice Torah, on permanent loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust, London, England. The Torah, which belonged to a congregation in Bucovice, Czechoslovakia, was inscribed in 1825 and was one of three owned by that Jewish community. Bucovice, with a Jewish population that dated back to 1454, was one of the oldest and most-important communities in Moravia, 125 miles southeast of Prague. In April 1942, the entire Jewish community, including those in surrounding areas, was deported to Terezin, and ultimately to either Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka. All three Torahs were rescued. Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El of Plantation, Florida, and Temple B'nai Sholom of Rockville Center, New York, are caring for the other two. Today there are no Jews left in Bucovice, and the Torah scrolls are all that survive to bear witness to the life of that Jewish community.*

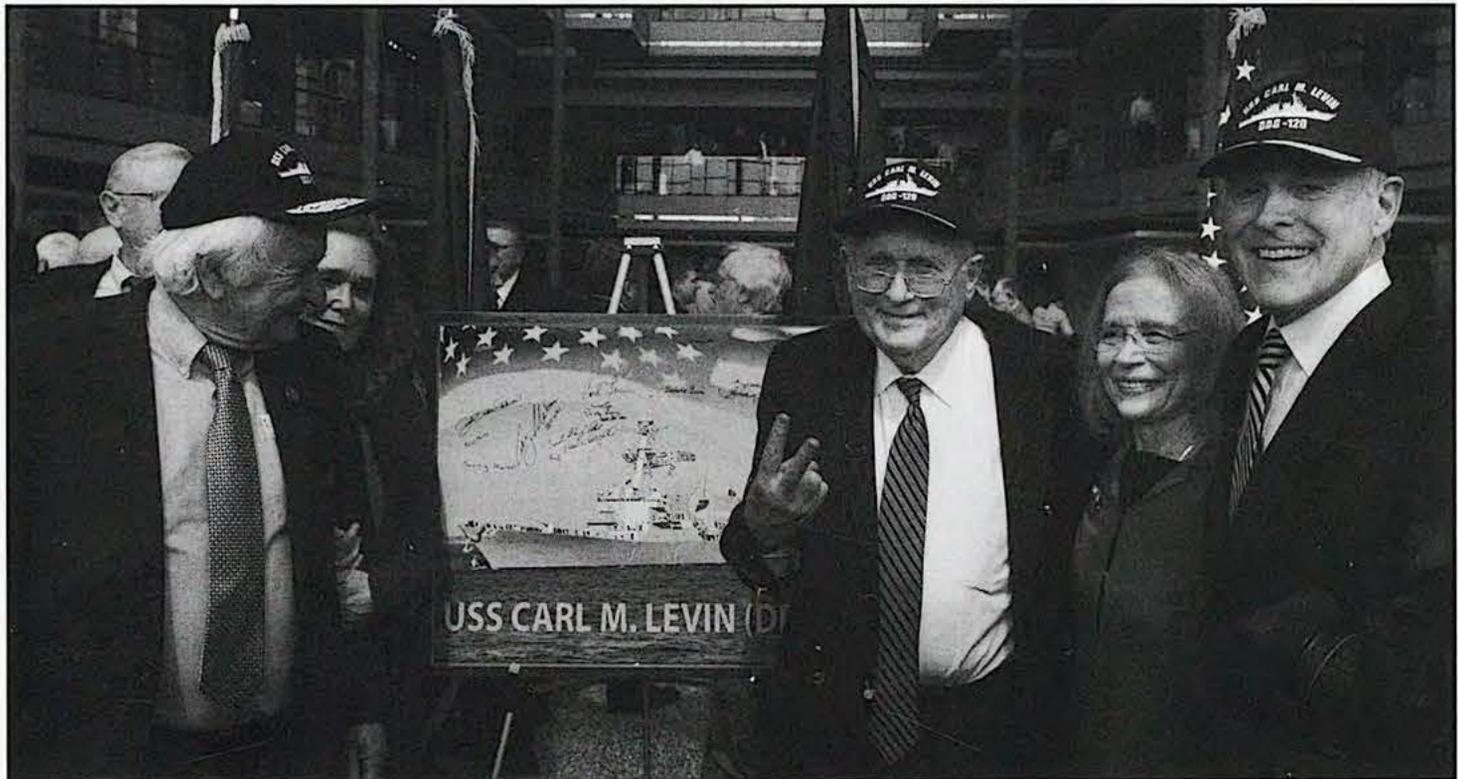
## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>An article titled "A Place to Call Home: Temple B'nai Israel's Long Journey," which appeared in *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 50, Fall 2010, tells some of that story.

<sup>2</sup>These men and others were documented in Tom Dietz's article "Kalamazoo's Jewish Community: An Overview of the First 75 Years" in *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 44, Fall 2004.

## THE USS CARL M. LEVIN AND THE USS DETROIT

On April 11, 2016, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced that the next Arleigh Burke class destroyer, DDG 120, would be named in honor of Carl M. Levin, the longest-serving U.S. senator in Michigan history.



*Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus (far right) poses for a group photo with (left to right) Sander Levin, Carl Levin, and Barbara Levin at the Renaissance Center in Detroit. The USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120) Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer will be launched in 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Sam Shavers/Released)*

It was an honor the eighty-one-year-old retired senator did not expect. During his thirty-six years in Congress, Levin served for eighteen years as a member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and was its chair for more than nine years. Additionally, Levin served as chair of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, he was a member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and he was a member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. He led the Senate in adoption of the Defense Authorization Acts from 2007 until he retired in January 2015.

The announcement ceremony, held at the Renaissance Center along the Detroit River, was attended by three hundred people, including Detroit Deputy Mayor Isaiah "Ike" McKinnon, Detroit City Council President Brenda Jones, and U.S. Representatives Brenda Lawrence (D-Southfield), Debbie Dingell (D-Dearborn), and John Conyers (D-Detroit). Levin's wife, Barbara, was at his side, along with his older brother, U.S. Representative Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak).

“My family and I are deeply moved by this singular honor and to be so wonderfully connected to the men and women of our great Navy,” said Levin. Arleigh Burke class destroyers conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The DDG 120 will be capable of fighting air, surface, and subsurface battles simultaneously, and will contain a combination of offensive and defensive weapon systems, including Integrated Air and Missile Defense and Vertical Launch capabilities, designed to support maritime warfare.

The ship will be constructed at Bath Iron Works in Maine. It will be 509 feet long, with a beam length of 59 feet, and will be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots. The ship is expected to enter the U.S. Navy fleet in 2020. On October 22, 2016, the littoral combat ship USS Detroit (LCS 7) was commissioned into the U.S. Navy by its sponsor, Barbara Levin. In a moving speech before some four thousand people gathered along the Detroit riverfront, Barbara Levin said, “This good ship Detroit will defend our nation and represent our values and our great city around the world. I wish you and all the crew Fair Winds and Following Seas as you go forth.”



*Carl Levin examines a rendering of the USS Carl Levin.*

The ceremony, whose historic proceedings date back to pre-American Revolution days, included Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Michigan Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, and admirals and other officers of the U.S. Navy. This is the sixth ship to carry the USS Detroit name; the original one defeated the British in the nearby Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812. The current ship, which carries a crew of seventy and utilizes the latest technologies, was built in Marinette, Wisconsin, and contains many parts proudly manufactured in Michigan plants. Flying the motto “Swift Vigilance,” it was christened by Barbara Levin upon its launching in Wisconsin.

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## BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION: THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS 1916-2016

The 1850 U.S. Census lists the Jewish population of Ann Arbor as at least two dozen, most of whom were members of the Weil family. After the Weils left in the early 1880s, there were no Jews in the area until 1895, when Philip Lansky arrived. Lansky was soon joined by other Jewish men and their families, among them Osias Zwerdling, who was employed by the furrier Mack and Co. The small Jewish community celebrated life cycles and held religious services in each other's homes, and they traveled to Detroit for High Holiday services and kosher foods.



*The founders of Beth Israel: (first row) David Friedman, Philip Lansky, Osias Zwerdling, and William Bittker; (second row) David Mordsky and Israel Friedman. In 1918, Osias Zwerdling was elected president; Israel Friedman, vice president; William Bittker, secretary-treasurer; and David Friedman, Philip Lansky, and David Mordsky, trustees.*

All this changed unexpectedly, albeit through tragic circumstances, in 1916. Rabbi Joseph Slomon and his son, both of Jerusalem, were traveling in the U.S. to raise funds for Palestine. While on their way from Chicago to Detroit, they were involved in a terrible accident that killed Slomon's son.

Rabbi Slomon was hospitalized in Ann Arbor, but he spoke no English and was unable to communicate with his doctors or nurses. The hospital reached out to Osias Zwerdling for help, asking him to visit the rabbi, translate, and provide kosher food. With Yom Kippur quickly approaching, and the rabbi unable to travel even to Detroit, Osias and Hannah Zwerdling opened up their home. That year, Yom Kippur services were held in the Zwerdling home, with Rabbi Sloman, Lansky, and other members of the Ann Arbor Jewish community attending. It is likely that Sloman left the area soon after.

Following the Yom Kippur fast, the group met to discuss and implement the

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establishment of a Jewish congregation in Ann Arbor. Two years later, in 1918, they adopted the name Beth Israel Congregation. Osias Zwerdling was elected president; Israel Friedman, vice president; and William Bittker, secretary-treasurer. David Friedman, Philip Lansky, and David Mordsky were voted in as trustees.

Since its establishment in 1916, Beth Israel Congregation has had a decisive influence on Jewish life in Washtenaw County. For a long time, it was the only Jewish congregation in Ann Arbor.

Initially, the group rented Schwaben Hall at 215 S. Ashley. In 1918 they moved into a building at 414 N. Main Street and remained there until 1924. During those years, the congregation employed the Reverend Pincos Grobstein as their spiritual leader. He also served as cantor, *shochet*, and Hebrew teacher from 1919 to 1921. After Grobstein and his wife left the area, the location of worship changed. In 1927, the congregation purchased the Henry Cornwell House at 538 N. Division, and the site became the first permanent synagogue for Ann Arbor's Jewish population of 150. By 1937, that population had increased to 200.

Throughout this period, when rabbis were not available, lay members conducted services. After Grobstein left, the Reverend Jacob Kamenetzky came to the synagogue in 1924 and served as *hazzan*, *shochet*, and Hebrew teacher. Neither Grobstein nor Kamenetzky was a rabbi, but, as was the custom at the time, both were graced with the honorific "reverend." The group's first ordained rabbi was Joshua Sperka, who served from 1932 to 1934.

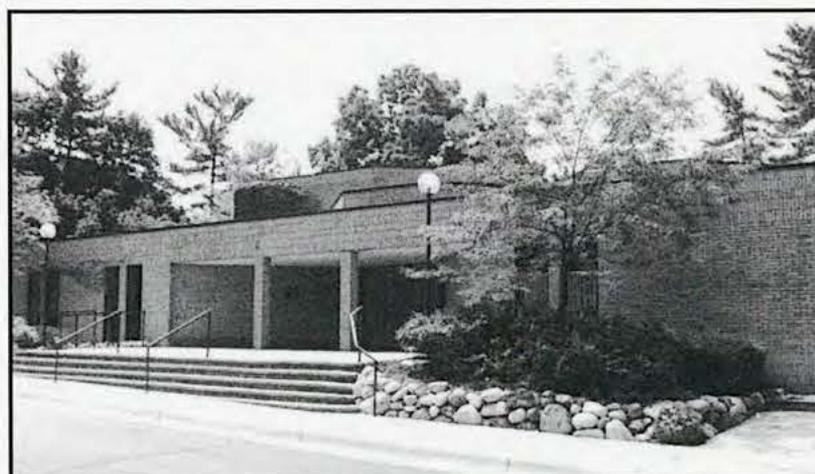
Beth Israel was again on the move in 1928, when it, along with the Hillel Foundation, relocated to the Patterson House at 2101 Hill Street. When the two organizations together dedicated a new location at 1429 Hill Street in 1952, the building's name was formally changed to Beth Israel Community Center to reflect the shared arrangement, which lasted until 1968.

In 1950, the *American Jewish Year Book* determined that there were 240 Jews in the Ann Arbor area. In the second half of the twentieth century, the Jewish population of Ann Arbor would increase twenty- to thirty-fold. With such growth, it was impossible for Beth Israel to satisfy the diverse needs of all of Ann Arbor's Jewish families. By the 1960s, a sufficient number wanted to establish a Reform congregation; these families became the nucleus of Temple Beth Emeth in 1966.

As Ann Arbor's Jewish community grew in size, so did its commitment to helping the greater Ann Arbor community of permanent residents and of students at the University of Michigan. The congregation organized a volunteer service for Jewish patients at Ypsilanti State Hospital in 1960, and Rabbi Kensky (who served from 1971 to 1988) created the Soviet Jewry Absorption

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Committee in 1979, whose purpose was to assist in the resettlement of newly arriving Soviet Jews. This committee evolved into a community-wide organization and eventually led to the establishment of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County.



*Beth Israel Congregation, located on Washtenaw Avenue in Ann Arbor.*

In the early 1970s, discussion began about finding a new location for Beth Israel. A building committee, chaired by Henry Gershowitz, and a finance committee, chaired by Victor Gallatin, were formed. Land was secured at 2000 Washtenaw Avenue and the architectural firm of Hobbs & Black was commissioned to design the building.

Groundbreaking occurred on June 26, 1977. On Erev Rosh Hashanah, October 1, 1978, the congregation held a joyous Torah procession up Washtenaw Avenue to officially move into its new home. A formal dedication followed on March 25, 1979.

In 1988, Rabbi Robert Dobrusin joined the clergy, and he remains in that position today. In 2008, Rabbi Kim Blumenthal joined the congregation, becoming the first associate and female rabbi in the congregation's history. Today, Beth Israel has more than 450 member families. The thriving religious school includes a service learning track that involves high-school students in social-action and community-service programs, and which is highlighted by an immersive alternative spring-break program. Beth Israel sponsors extensive adult-education programs of all types, including an array of adult Hebrew classes. Additionally, Beth Israel's Women's League (formerly known as Sisterhood), Men's Club, and Social Action Committee all support many important institutions and causes throughout the region. Beth Israel has a strong connection to Israel and is well known for its active involvement in the interfaith community in Ann Arbor.

### BETH ISRAEL'S MANY FIRSTS

In creating a document covering the history of Beth Israel Congregation's first one hundred years, the historical committee uncovered many "firsts":

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- Beth Israel was the first Conservative congregation in southeast Michigan to become egalitarian, allowing both men and women to participate in leading or chanting the service. This practice remains an important part of the synagogue's culture.
- Gerda Seligson served as president of Beth Israel Congregation from 1971 to 1973. She was the first woman president of a Conservative Jewish synagogue in the United States. The Beth Israel congregational museum has a tribute exhibit for Gerda, along with one for Osias Zwerdling. Zwerdling remained active in the Ann Arbor Jewish community until his death in 1977 at age ninety-nine.
- Beth Israel recently played a leading role within the Conservative movement in advocating for the ordination of gay and lesbian Jews as rabbis. This arose out of Beth Israel's long-standing commitment to the inclusion of all Jews, regardless of sexual orientation.

A year-long centennial celebration began in January with a kick-off Shabbat, and will conclude in December with a lecture by Rabbi Sharon Brous. Among the many highlights of the year was the February 2 opening of the Beth Israel Congregation "museum." The exhibits curated for this temporary museum were moved to the Jewish Community Center in Ann Arbor for the



*The Beth Israel centennial plaque*

month of March. Beth Israel's entire collection of records and documents will be preserved at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan and will be available for researchers.

The centennial plaque was installed near the entrance of Beth Israel Congregation, above the building's foundation stone. The installation ceremony was attended by nearly 175 people, including Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor, Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, Rabbi Kim Blumenthal, Beth Israel president Bob Carbeck, and Beth Israel executive director Elliot Sorkin.

- Fran Martin

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 23, January 1983. "The First Jews of Ann Arbor," Helen Aminoff.

<sup>2</sup> It is unknown how long Rabbi Slomon stayed in the area. The assumption is that he remained through his recuperation.

<sup>3</sup> Many Ann Arbor histories refer to Pincos Grobstein as Gropstein. An entry in the Ann Arbor City Directory, circa 1918, lists the name as Grobstein. The author has chosen to use the Grobstein spelling.

## JANICE CHARACH GALLERY CELEBRATES TWENTY-FIVE YEARS



*Janice Charach*

Janice Charach's paintings were filled with dazzling greens, purple thick as sweet wine, reds that popped, and yellows so warm they seemed to jump off the canvas. Like her art, Janice was bright and brave and full of life. She loved traveling, fashion, silver jewelry, and being with friends and family.

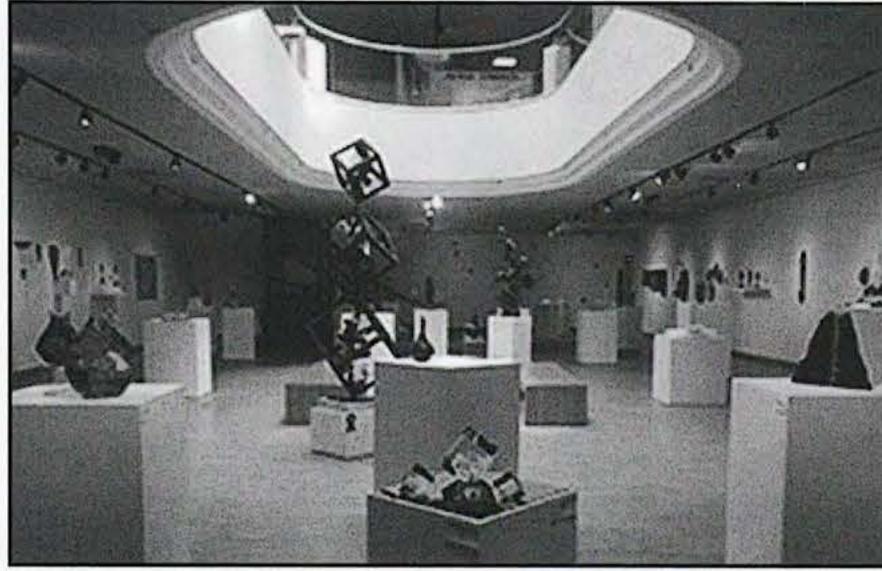
In 1989, Janice died of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She was thirty-eight years old.

In July 1991, in their daughter's memory, Natalie and Manny Charach, of West Bloomfield, established the Janice Charach Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit. In 2016, the gallery celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Over the past two-and-a-half decades, the Charach Gallery has presented some of Michigan's most original and memorable exhibits, including *PostSecret*, where visitors could write and illustrate a private wish, and *Israeli Posters*, which reflected the history and culture of the state from 1930 until 1960. *Kindness Can Make a Difference*, 2012, featured a collection of sculptures made of perishable food items, which were later donated to local pantries, *Bat Mitzvah Comes of Age* traced the evolution of the bat mitzvah from a private ceremony to its prominence today, and *Green Show* featured art objects ranging from jewelry to sculpture, all made from recycled material. *Let My People Go*, a national exhibit, told the story of the Soviet Jewry movement, while *Jews Who Rock* included photos and memorabilia that celebrated Jews in the music industry. A 2009 exhibition displayed a collection of bras designed by artists and leading entertainers, and also served as a fundraiser for breast-cancer research. *Project Runway: Detroit*, coordinated by designer Dana Keaton, featured one-of-a-kind dresses designed by local teens.

Under the direction of Kelly Kaatz, the gallery has curated more trendy exhibitions, including the twenty-fifth anniversary presentation *Corktown Studios Review*, which featured bright murals by artists who are helping to change the landscape of the city of Detroit.

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*The Janice Charach Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit in West Bloomfield, Michigan.*

In addition to hosting exhibits and shows that feature Jewish artists and content, the gallery has worked to fulfill Janice's dreams of exploring new genres and formats and making art accessible to everyone. This year, the gallery hosted its first-ever pop-up show.

Charach's passion for art was clear from the time she was a little girl, when her parents filled every bit of their home—even ceilings—with her paintings. After graduating from Oak Park High School, Janice attended what is now the College for Creative Studies, then continued with post-graduate work at the University of Michigan. She went on to win numerous awards for her work. According to her friend Silvio Benvenuti, Janice "was extremely creative and talented—a loving, giving person."

Today, the Janice Charach Gallery, which opened with *The Collectors Show*, includes two spacious floors for exhibits, a large skylight from which natural light seems to fall like a soft veil, and the Gallery Shop, with charming and fun gifts. There is also a Side Gallery, which hosts small, single-artist exhibits.

"It's hard to believe it has been twenty-five years since we opened the doors of the Janice Charach Gallery," said Manny Charach. "We are excited and pleased to celebrate this important milestone, and we thank the community for its loyal support over the years." - *Elizabeth Applebaum*

## AVIVA KEMPER'S FILM, **ROSENWALD**, IS SHOWN AT THE WHITE HOUSE

On May 16, 2016, film director Aviva Kempner had the honor of screening her newest film, *Rosenwald*, at the White House in celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month. Kempner, a proud Detroit native, is also the director of the well-received films *The Partisans of Vilna*, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, and *Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg*.

At the May screening, before the start of the film, Chanan Weissman made his first public remarks as the new White House Jewish Liaison. After the showing, Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Obama, commented on the film and her ties to the story. The gathering also featured a panel discussion with Kempner, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein, and Hilary Shelton, director of the Washington chapter of the NAACP. The panel was moderated by Samuel Freedman, columnist for the *New York Times* and a professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

*Rosenwald*, a feature-length historical documentary, tells the story of Julius Rosenwald, the son of German-Jewish immigrants, who rose to become one of the wealthiest men in America as well as a beloved humanitarian. Rosenwald bought into Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1895, serving as its president from 1908 to 1924 and as chairman from 1924 to 1932, and building it into the largest retailer in the U.S. in that era.

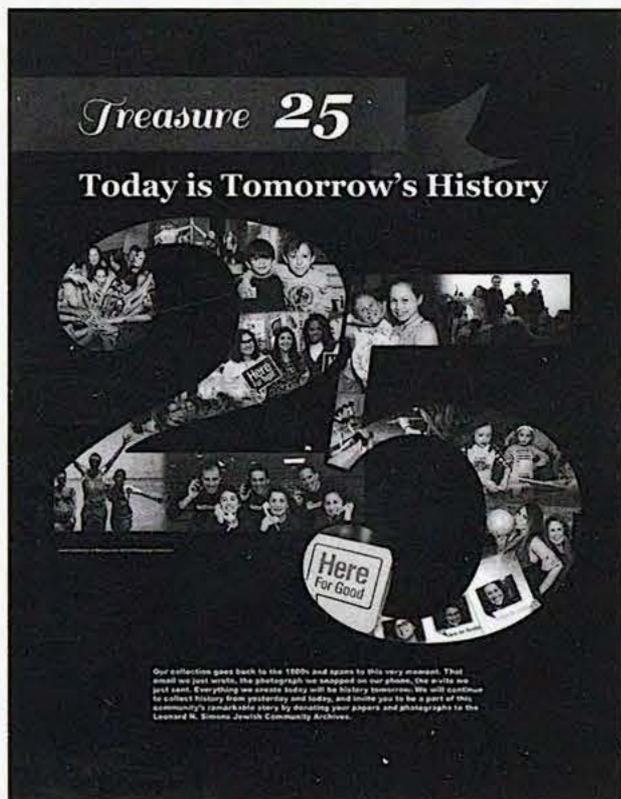
Influenced by Rabbi Emil Hirsch of Chicago Sinai Congregation, Rosenwald used his wealth and influence to take a leadership role in establishing social services for 100,000 impoverished Jewish immigrants in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century. Rosenwald's greatest accomplishment was the establishment of challenge grants for the creation of more than 5,000 schools for poor, rural African-American children in the Jim Crow South, at a time when few received any public education. From 1915 to 1932, 660,000 students benefited from the initiative. An important part of this story is the partnership between Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington. The film reveals this historic partnership, as well as modern-day attempts to restore the schools, in an inspiring story of philanthropy, *tikkun olam*, and self-determination.

The White House screening of *Rosenwald* was one of hundreds around the country since the film's premier in 2015. Kempner's next project is a film about Major League Baseball catcher and WWII-era U.S. spy Moe Berg. For more information, go to [www.rosenwaldfilm.org](http://www.rosenwaldfilm.org). - Aimee Ergas

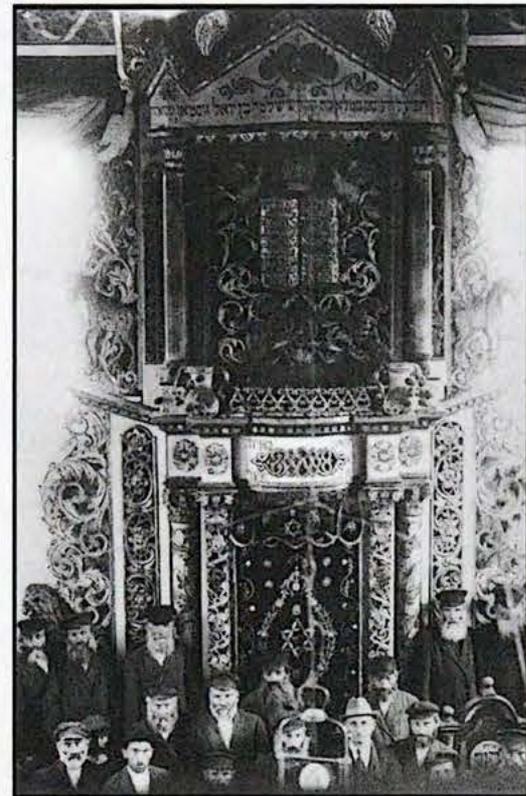
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## 25 YEARS, 25 TREASURES: THE LEONARD N. SIMONS JEWISH COMMUNITY ARCHIVES CELEBRATES A MILESTONE YEAR

In 1925, Celia Lakofsky left the small Ukranian *shtetl* of Kremenchuk and immigrated to the United States. At the time, there were nearly 30,000 Jews living in the town. By 1939, the number dropped to under 20,000. The Germans occupied Kremenchuk on September 9, 1941, and just weeks later Jews were moved into ghetto barracks. Within months, 8,000 Jews were murdered. More than ninety percent of the buildings were leveled during the war. In 1917, there were sixty synagogues in the city; in 1960, zero.



*25 Years, 25 Treasures, presented by Jewish Community Archives, as part of its twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. Curated by JCA director Robbie Terman, and designed by Kathryn Dowgiewicz, the exhibit ran from June 26 to August 5 and was hosted by the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.*



*The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives (JCA) possesses early 1900s Kremenchuk photographs that Lakofsky brought with her to America. They show a modest town of rustic wood buildings and dirt roads. In contrast, one interior image reveals an ornate, gilded synagogue, a place of both worship and reverence. These snapshots provide a window into Jewish life and culture in pre-WWII and all that was lost.*

The idea of a Jewish community archive dates back to discussions that began in the 1980s. Indeed, a collection of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's oldest papers had been deposited in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library years earlier. But professional staff and lay leaders of Federation, along with organizations like the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, saw the possibility of an archive greater than just Federation's organizational records. They envisioned a Jewish community archive.

The vision was solidified when, after nearly forty years headquartered at the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building in Detroit, Federation headed north to Bloomfield Hills. With an imminent move, many decisions had to be made, including what to do with the hundreds of boxes of historic records stored in the basement of the building.

The Jewish Community Archives was founded in 1991 and was renamed in 1998 to honor Leonard N. Simons; its mission was to collect the records of Jewish Detroit and papers of Detroit's Jewry.

One of the first decisions made was to partner with the Reuther Library to house the growing collection. The collection was transferred from the Burton to the Reuther and combined with the boxes of records pulled from the Butzel Building. Thus, the Jewish Community Archives had its first collection.

Over the next two decades, the collection grew exponentially, comprising over fifty-five manuscript and record collections that included more than two million documents, 25,000 photographs, and one hundred oral-history interviews.

Unlike a library that circulates mass-produced books, archives specialize in one-of-a-kind primary source documents. For safety and preservation reasons, most collections are rarely seen, except when used by a researcher. To mark its twenty-fifth anniversary, the *25 Years, 25 Treasures* exhibit displayed twenty-five of the JCA's most significant items.

Picking a handful of items out of such a vast collection proved nearly impossible. The chosen "treasures" represented more than just a single moment in time; collectively, they told the stories of the people and organizations that have shaped Jewish life in Detroit.

One object on display was the pattern book of Hattie Franklin, wife of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin. As persecuted Eastern European Jews fled their homes in the late 1800s, Detroit aid societies formed to help newly arrived immigrants. At Temple Beth El, choir girls began sewing items for the children of immigrants. When it was suggested that the immigrant children would benefit more if they were taught to sew, the Self-Help Circle was born. It would later become a domestic training school. Mrs. Franklin created the book of instructions and samplers to use during sewing lessons.

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*One of the twenty-five treasures was this photograph of Joseph Holtzman and Louis Berry at Dachau in February of 1948. This image represented more than just a somber reminder of the horrors that had taken place just a few years before; it depicts the strength, determination, and hope for a Jewish homeland.*

Other treasures addressed Detroit's position as an outstanding fundraising community. Still others addressed the strength of the voice, with one such voice being that of Lea Rubel. A widow, Rubel lived with family but advocated for housing where seniors could live independently and with dignity. Over five years, Rubel wrote more than a dozen letters to community leaders, urging them to build apartments for the Jewish elderly. Her persistence paid off in the summer of 1971 when the Federation Apartments were built in Oak Park. Rubel was one of the first tenants.

Although the exhibit is no longer on display, the full catalog with all twenty-five treasures is available on the JCA website at <http://jewishdetroit.org/archives>. - Robbie Terman

## THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MICHIGAN ARCHIVE ADDS TWENTY-FIVE WOMEN TO ITS JWA ENCYCLOPEDIA

Twenty-five biographies of Michigan Jewish women whose stories serve as an inspiration to others have been added to the Jewish Women's Archive website, [www.jwa.org](http://www.jwa.org). The Jewish Women's Archive (JWA) is a national organization dedicated to collecting and promoting the extraordinary stories of Jewish women. Its website holds the world's largest collection of information on Jewish women and includes *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by Paula Hyman and Dalia Ofer. The organization served as one of the inspirations for the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's *Michigan Women Who Made a Difference* project (MWWMD).



Working in collaboration with curators at JWA, JHSM submitted biographies of a wide range of pioneers, including Blanche Hart (1876-1949), a leader in establishing not only the Fresh Air Society but also United Jewish Charities; Emma Lazaroff Schaver (1905-2003), who was renowned for her work in performance arts; Flora Suhd Hommel (1928-2015), who brought natural childbirth methods to the U.S.; and Regene Freund Cohane (1899-1992), an attorney who broke barriers and was among the founders of the national sorority Sigma Delta Tau.

JWA explores the past as a framework for understanding the issues important to women today. It serves to motivate young people with remarkable role models, and uses Jewish women's stories to excite people into seeing themselves as agents of change. Its website, which draws more than one million users annually, offers blogs, podcasts, curated stories, and the *Encyclopedia*.

JHSM's *Michigan Women Who Made a Difference* project seeks to document, preserve, and share the stories and achievements of Michigan's Jewish women who have helped build and shape our communities, institutions, and organizations. These are the women who led community organizations, founded businesses, or were political and social-justice leaders. Many are those who stood in the background, but led with strength, dignity, and silence. Some have stories that are untold while others are more commonly known. But all of these women deserve to be remembered and honored for their leadership

and contributions that made our world a richer, bolder, and better place.

In 2017, JHSM will launch the online MWWMD database and will continue to collect and share biographies. If you are interested in submitting a biography,



*Dora Ehrlich (1882-1968) took on community leadership positions usually reserved for men. Noted for her tremendous career of community service, she is one of the twenty-five Michigan women recently added to the JWA Encyclopedia. In 1934, Ehrlich became the first woman to serve as president of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit. She remained in that position until 1937.*

visit the JHSM website at [www.michjewishhistory.org](http://www.michjewishhistory.org) to download a biography form, or call the JHSM office at (248) 432-5517 to request a mailed form. As part of a matching-grant program, JHSM is accepting donations toward the launch and maintenance of this project. - *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

## EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CREATES NEW CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

On March 20, 2016, Eastern Michigan University's president, provost, and dean of arts and sciences announced the creation of the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies. The center, housed in the Pray-Harrold classroom building, will function as a gathering place for EMU's numerous ethnic communities to learn more about Jews and Judaism, and as a space to build bridges and create new understandings between Jews and the many other groups that comprise the culture of Southeast Michigan. With more than 23,000 students, Eastern Michigan University is a diverse, comprehensive institution in the Detroit metropolitan area, with a long history of opening doors for minorities and the less privileged.

The Center for Jewish Studies is home to the university's twenty-one-credit Jewish studies interdisciplinary minor, introduced to the campus community in February 2012 by United States Senator Carl Levin. During its first four years, EMU Jewish Studies has achieved great success. The minor has expanded the university's commitment to inclusiveness and diversity by offering courses concerned with the history of the Jewish people, including the cultural and intellectual gifts Jews have given the world; explorations of the Jewish faith and its richness, intricacy, and demands; and Judaism's complex and fascinating relationships with other religions. Faculty have given presentations and written articles and books focusing on the Jewish experience. They have

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prepared innovative offerings such as “Jewish Children’s and Adolescent Literature,” the first college-level course of its kind in the U.S., and “Becoming Jewish in America,” a program that takes seventeen students (many of whom had never before left the state of Michigan) to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

The Center for Jewish Studies is also home to the EMU Jewish Studies Lecture Series, the online resource *Nineteenth-Century Jewish Life*, and the “Jewish Life and Language in Southeast Michigan” oral-history/linguistics project.

In collaboration with the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus in Farmington Hills, the center sponsors summer seminars for K-12 teachers, and, with the support of a Covenant Grant, holds classes in Modern Hebrew at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield. It also assists in providing on-campus worship space for Ann Arbor synagogues during the High Holy Days. The center works with Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the Michigan Israel Business Bridge, and multiple other local organizations. Among its many academic collaborators are Brandeis University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Grand Valley State University, University of Toledo, Wayne State University, and Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany. Gifts from friends and supporters have helped provide speakers who address topics such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire (Dr. Pamela Nadell, American University); Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews (Dr. Jonathan Sarna, Brandeis University); the implications of the BDS movement (Dr. Cary Nelson, University of Illinois); and Afro-Jewish cuisine (culinary historian Michael Twitty).

The center provides development opportunities for faculty and support to students in a wide realm of activities, including study-abroad classes and research, U.S. travel, internships, and engagement with Jewish community leaders throughout Michigan, the U.S., and the world. The EMU Center for Jewish Studies will also continue to forge alliances with other institutions, greatly enhancing opportunities for students and faculty. For more information about the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, please contact its director, Dr. Martin B. Shichtman, at [jewish.studies@emich.edu](mailto:jewish.studies@emich.edu).

- *Martin B. Shichtman, Director, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies*

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## GRAND RAPIDS JEWISH COMMUNITY'S CENTENARIAN CLUB



*Left to Right: Anne Wepman, June Horowitz and Lillian Klein.  
Photo courtesy of Cortland Richmond, Temple Emanuel*

*How many Michigan Jewish communities can boast of having two 103-year old women plus a third woman who will join them Jan. 23, 2017? As far as it is known, Grand Rapids is the community which can proudly make this claim.*

### JUNE HOROWITZ

June Horowitz, was born in Chicago, Illinois on Sept. 12, 1913 the second of two children of Abraham and Lena Warsaw (Newton, born in 1909, died of peritonitis at age eleven). At age twelve, Abe trained as an apprentice to a cigar-maker but wanted to learn a craft that would allow him to entertain soldiers during the Spanish American War. He purchased, "Magic in 10 Easy Lessons."

The family moved to Grand Rapids in 1918. Abe and Lena immediately joined Temple Emanuel, becoming active in temple life. The Warsaws had two more children, Elaine (1919) and Don (1924). June, in 1924, contracted tuberculosis, needing special care for a number of years. It was also in 1924, that Abe and his brother started Vulcanizing Material Co., later managed by Don Warsaw.

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June attended Ottawa Hills High School, was on the Honor Roll, served on student council, and played first violin in the orchestra. She joined and became secretary of the school science Chemphybio Club. She attended the University of Michigan, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree, studying violin, and also – it is assumed – a teaching certificate. Horowitz married Samuel Horowitz in Goshen, Indiana on Apr. 3, 1937. At the time, records show, she had been employed as a teacher.

Horowitz, along with her brothers and sisters all learned the craft of magic. She discovered that the community of magicians did not welcome women and most of the time referred to women as “musicians.” At first, she thought this to be a typo. It was a good old boys club, she once recalled. Regardless, she grew up in the company of famous magicians, including the Great Houdini, Thurston, and Blackstone the Magician.

“She broke the glass ceiling and went on to become the first president of the International Brotherhood of Magicians [serving in 1987 and 1988],” said Carole Ryal, a Colon, Michigan resident and friend. In honor of her one hundredth birthday a celebration was held at the FAB Magic Co. in Colon. Horowitz is also the 2013 STAR recipient in the Colon Magicians Walk of Fame. Among the other inductees that year were the Amazing Conklin’s, Percy Abbott, Bill Watson, Wilma Rench and Harry Blackstone Sr.

Horowitz achieved international recognition for her close-up prestidigitation, for the running patter that was her stock in trade, and for her sly sense of humor. Horowitz’s sons, Nathan and Steve, and her grandchildren followed in her magic-steps. Even her husband Sam became an ace magician.

After her marriage, Horowitz taught math at Ottawa High School for many years and would dazzle her students with her talent. Following in her mother’s footsteps, she was an active volunteer at Temple Emanuel, spending much of her time in the Peg & Mort Finkelstein Archives of Temple Emanuel.<sup>1</sup>

## LILLIAN KLEIN

Lillian’s Klein’s ancestors settled in Detroit in 1908. Her grandfather, Morris Gunsburg, an immigrant from Hungary, was among the nine founders of the Bait Eliyahu synagogue in Detroit, established in 1915. Years later, when faced with a shortage of funds, the congregation offered to sell the name of the congregation to the highest bidder. The sons of Moshe Gunsberg, (Gunsburg) raised the most money, and renamed the shul “B’nai Moshe,” the Sons of Moshe.”

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Lillian's father, Isaac, married Hermina Rubenstein, also a Hungarian immigrant. The Gunsburg family started the first kosher sausage company in Michigan. Their company slogan, "Eat with zest Gunsberg's best," became a community favorite. Lillian was born in Detroit on Sept. 16, 1913.

Lillian married William (Bill) Klein and the couple came to Grand Rapids after WWII. He opened the William Klein Men's Shop in the Pantlind Hotel (now the Amway Grand Plaza). Lillian worked in the shop, spotting several famous customers including Isaac Stern and Yehudhi Menuhin. Klein became active with both the Temple Emanuel Sisterhood and Hadassah, she volunteered for the Grand Valley Blood Center and Butterworth Hospital. She later moved to the Clark Retirement Community where she connects with the Jewish community which provides programs for area seniors.<sup>2</sup>

## ANNE WEPMAN

Abraham Hoffman, a Russian immigrant, settled in Grand Rapids in 1906 and in 1907 sent for his wife Sarah (Malishkevicz), and his two brothers, Hy and Sam. Abraham and Sarah had three children, Jack, Morris and Anne who was born on Jan. 23, 1914. Abraham was a peddler, selling fruits and vegetables. Later, he opened a second hand store on Ottawa NE in the heart of Grand Rapids' Jewish neighborhood. Anne married Joseph Wepman, a pharmacist, in 1939.

The couple had two children, Robert, born in 1941; and Barbara in 1944. The Wepmans belong to Ahavas Israel.

Active with her congregation, including its sisterhood and religious school, Anne was an active PTA leader in the 1950s, and later took a salesperson position at Hansen's Drug Store. She also sold Avon products. Anne was a member and volunteer with the local Hadassah and B'nai B'rith chapters. She also took an interest in community events, such as ushering at Circle Theater at John Ball Park, especially the productions directed by her daughter Barbara directs. She also volunteered for more than four decades at the Michigan Blood Bank, retiring in 2014.<sup>3</sup>

Anne Wepman passed away in November 2016.

- Peg Finkelstein

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Material for the June Horowitz article is attributed to a 1978 *Grand Rapids Press* article by Temple Emanuel member Howard Silbar; Ancestry.com; "A Kind Word for All" Lena Warsaw and Cathie Bloom; Peg & Mort Finkelstein Archives of Temple Emanuel; Jeff Rietsma, Mlive, Aug. 11, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Information for the Lillian Klein section was gathered from a letter written to the Grand Rapids Jewish Federation by Lillian Klein and modified for an article in *The Shofar*, publication of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids. The Gunsberg name is spelled both as Gunsburg and Gunsberg.

<sup>3</sup> Information for the Anne Wepman section was taken from an original article written in 2014 by Anne Wepman for *The Shofar*, publication of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

## Historical Tidbits

**1907:** Jewish Old Folks Home on Brush at Winder in Detroit opened, providing Kosher meals, socialization, and spiritual and cultural support for up to ninety residents. Thirty years later, in 1937, the Old Folks Home relocated to Petoskey in Detroit, and then in 1967 it became Jewish Home for the Aged, moving to the Borman Hall and Prentis Manor facilities in Detroit. In 2008, in collaboration with Jewish Apartments and Services, the agency became Jewish Senior Life of Metropolitan Detroit, with residential buildings at the Jewish Community Center campuses in Oak Park and West Bloomfield.

**1947:** The Russian government claimed that Raoul Wallenberg, the University of Michigan graduate who, as a successful Swedish architect and businessman, was able to travel throughout Europe freely and save tens of thousands of Jews, died of heart failure while in captivity. Wallenberg, known for his diplomacy and humanitarian compassion, became the first secretary of the Swedish Legion in Budapest in 1944. It is estimated that, through his tireless efforts and ability to provide protective passes, the lives of some 100,000 Hungarian Jews were saved.

POETRY AND MEMOIR:  
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN  
*Creative Expressions*

It is the personal experiences of individuals that spark our imagination and create bridges to history and culture. This year, we are excited to include in "Creative Expressions" a personal essay by Irving Steinberg, and a charming poem by Brenda Zales.

The genre of the personal essay or short memoir has grown in popularity with the emergence of personal and professional web-based "blog" sites. More and more, we are receiving information through these sites. Blog writing, along with the proliferation of creative-writing undergraduate and graduate programs, has revolutionized and vitalized the publishing of creative writing, including short memoirs and poetry.

Irving Steinberg, also known as "The Old Major," is a proud WWII veteran who served throughout Europe, including at the Utah Beach Invasion, the Normandy Campaign, and the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded a Bronze Star and five Battle Star citations. Steinberg, who lives in West Bloomfield, is the author of "War Veteran Posts," a wonderfully written series of poetry and short memoirs that he shares with friends and family. These stories, which span his years spent in service to our country, are preserved at the Jewish War Veterans - Department of Michigan Archives and at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. We selected the following section for its poetic beauty and detailed descriptions, and have left Steinberg's original grammar and sentence structure intact.

Born in Detroit, Brenda Zales attended Central High School and later earned her degree from Michigan State University. Her poem, "How We Met," will surely speak to countless adults who were involved in B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), which prepares teens for leadership positions and gives them a connection to their Jewish community. Zales's delightful poem offers us a window into how BBYO was (and still is) a catalyst for lifelong relationships and enduring love. – *Joy Gaines-Friedler*

# O MEMORY, THOU ART BITTERSWEET

*By Irving ("The Old Major") Steinberg*



*Major Irving Steinberg, WWII*

Life itself is not easy and along the way, there are many lessons in both humility and civility to be learned. No man has ever worked his passage in a calm sea, for obstacles and difficulties, not ease, [but rather] self-indulgence and possessions make the man. I shall never forget the insecurity fear, and bewilderment, that we young soldiers, after five years of service with two years or more overseas service experienced

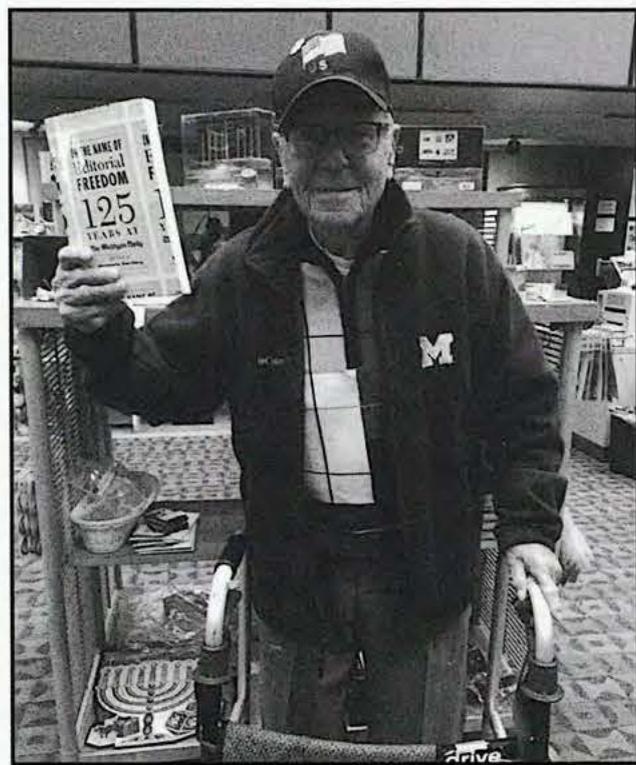
upon discharge. ...And now it can be said that almost all of those hardened vets who survived that debacle, wrestled and suffered with post-traumatic stress! My case was so typical of many of our young draftees, College degree in accounting, first job with General Motors in Acct'g [sic] Dept. with excellent promotion opportunities, only to see the bubble burst when my number was called for the first call-up of draftees.

Early in January of 1941, I was summoned to the American Lady Corset Factory on Fort Street, now turned into an Induction Center, there I was given a cursory physical exam, fed a hot dog and beans and hustled-off by bus to Camp Grant, Illinois, an old, shuttered WWI army post, now converted to a collection center. Can you believe all that confusion in one day? My poor Mom was devastated and it took all of my internal fortitude ...to hold back a flood of tears. The waiting families and their boys complained bitterly but only to deaf ears. This was the start of sacrifice by all including our valiant women, our wives, our mothers, our sisters, our girl friends who gave their support with the U.S.O., nursing, hospital aides, and even replaced the men as welders in industries producing war materials and weapons.

At training camps, we were issued WWI wool uniforms which had been packed away for over twenty years in moth balls (gagging us with pungent fumes) plus issuance of broom handles to assimilating rifles as the country had no guns to issue! We soon learned the army's creed, "keep your mouth shut and your bowels open." The poet [author Charles Caleb] Colton once wrote, "Men are born with two eyes, but only one tongue in order that they should see

twice as much as they say” and that describes the code of a soldier.

The Draft brought to the military a large volume of top-value recruits; educated, morally and physically sound, with the ability to adapt quickly to military life and its discipline. We recruits were paid \$21 per month. With the



*The memoirs written by “The Old Major” Irving Steinberg are preserved as part of the Michigan Jewish War Veteran Archives. He is pictured here at the Jewish Community Center Book Fair in 2015.*

eagerness of youth, having never owned or even fired a gun, with constant weapons training, tough field training and daily physical exercise, army life became our existence. ...Overseas in France, the first time we were baptized by German fire knocking our boys down like bowling pins, an abrupt metamorphosis changed those boys to men and sadly killers, with a loose trigger finger for anything in their path! At the end of hostilities, the military shipped thousands of these men, now gun crazy and [many] psychopaths of the worst order, back to rejoin Civilian communities where they were disruptive to many families.

It was truly a tough transformation for those returning Combat veterans and their families and I was no exception, as I, the decorated field officer, returned home to

live with my parents. How my Mom and my Dad even tolerated me, continued to support and love me, and refrained from getting on my back, is an unsolved puzzle as I was selfish, thoughtless... My thinking was so bad and mixed-up for no longer was I looked up to as a Commander of men, no longer a ward of the army..., no longer blessed with rank privileges. Later, my marriage to the love of my life, Shirley Ruth Weinberg, so precious, beautiful...the exciting births of my loving daughter, Margie, followed later by the birth of a great son, David, balanced for me that war, and the long hours and stress in building a business with all of its road blocks. In those days, times were tough, money scarce and we ran our small business with one hand on the steering wheel and the other hand on the desk of our local banker.

And so now that we old soldiers are more receptive to talk about that war, the horror, the sorrow, and revulsion that our generation endured, we can rest and be grateful that we can still love and be loved, for that feeling is the greatest happiness of our existence. - *The Old Major*

# HOW WE MET

*By Brenda Zales*

Across the crowded  
room our eyes  
met. Yes,  
it was just like that.  
Seemingly alone  
amid a mob  
of teenagers.  
Rising above  
tumult he  
stood. Tall.  
Handsome. Heart  
pounding, I moved  
through the maze  
of tables toward  
him and he to me.  
Jolson AZA is having  
a barn dance  
Saturday night . . . will you . . .  
The night a perfect  
Harvest Moon  
that lit the ripe  
wheat field.  
And us.

*Brenda Zales grew up on Glendale Avenue in Detroit and attended Central High School and Michigan State University, where she earned a B.A. in education. Her interests are wide, but include art history, tennis, and travel. She is now discovering the pleasure of studying memoir and creative writing. In 1963 Brenda married Neil Zales (z"l). She is the mother of Hilary Handler and Bruce Zales, and the proud grandmother of Jake and Nicolette.*

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# TIMELINE

A timeline of significant dates  
in Michigan Jewish history  
mentioned in this year's journal.

1866

January 7: Congregation B'nai Israel (Sons of Israel) of Kalamazoo is founded. The congregation began a year earlier when twenty Jewish settler families organized to secure property for a consecrated burial ground.

1868

David Amberg and Sidney Hart, both of whom had been Confederate soldiers, form the wholesale liquor firm of Hart and Amberg in Grand Rapids. In 1876, Amberg marries Hattie Houseman, daughter of Julius Houseman.

1872

Grand Rapids' Temple Emanuel is officially organized as a religious institution in 1872, and Joseph Houseman, Grand Rapids' first Jewish resident, served as its first president.

1880

Charles Rose, a Civil War veteran, moves to Grand Rapids and becomes a "dyer & scourer," which indicates that he not only dyed garments, but also cleaned and restored them. Today we would call this process dry cleaning.

1891

March 3: Dr. Louis Grossman, rabbi of Temple Beth El, convenes the first meeting of the Woman's Club of Temple Beth El.... "to better the condition of numberless Jewish girls and women in our midst." In 1896, the organization becomes the Jewish Woman's Club, and includes women from throughout the Detroit area.

1911

William Avrunin is born in Cleveland, Ohio. Avrunin, credited with helping to shape the post-war mission of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, served as its executive director and then executive vice president.

1916

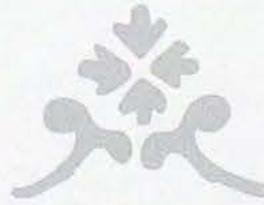
October 7: Richard C. Hertz is born. Hertz would become Temple Beth El's senior rabbi in 1953, serving until his retirement and transition to rabbi emeritus in 1982.

1916

Jacob (Jack) Bricker opens a fur store in Detroit. His company, Bricker-Tunis Furs, celebrated its centennial in 2016.

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# TIMELINE



- 1916 Congregation Beth Israel, Ann Arbor, is founded, although the name Beth Israel isn't adopted until 1918.
- 1923 Meyer Leon Prensky changes his name to Meyer Prentis. In 1917, he became treasurer of the General Motors Company.
- 1925 May 26: The last meeting of the Jewish Woman's Club is held. The next day, the organization legally changed its name to the Detroit Section, National Council of Jewish Women.
- 1947 The book *Gentleman's Agreement* is published. It featured an ugly portrait of a Jewish name changer traumatized by anti-Semitism. The Detroit suburbs were cited as locations of some of the ugliest anti-Semitism found by the main character.
- 1965 November: The first issue of the *Fifth Estate*, the oldest surviving sixties-era "underground" alternative newspaper, is released.
- 1989 Janice Charach, age thirty-eight, dies of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In July 1991, her parents established the Janice Charach Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit.
- 1991 The Jewish Community Archives is founded with a mission to collect the records of Jewish Detroit and papers of Detroit's Jewry.
- 2012 Approximately sixty-five percent of those who file petitions to change their name are women. In the 1930s, women represented thirty percent of name changers; by the 1940s, they were roughly half of name changers.

# JHSM PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## NEIL GOROSH

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If you are reading these words, you already know the special place occupied in our community by *Michigan Jewish History*, the annual publication of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Just as the Detroit Tigers opening day or the first sighting of a robin announce the arrival of spring, for me, fall is marked as much by baseball's World Series as it is by the arrival of *Michigan Jewish History*, or "the Journal," as we lovingly call it internally, and its distinctive blue cover, somewhere between azure and cerulean.

This year marks the fifty-sixth volume of our Journal, which continues to improve in both scope and content. This year is no exception. Thank you to all the authors who contributed. While we may all share a love of history, we don't all have the time, inclination, or skills to create this body of scholarly work. And make no mistake: *Michigan Jewish History* is truly an academic pursuit, as evidenced by the fact that more than two dozen libraries and other institutions nationwide subscribe. Thank you also to our editor, Wendy Rose Bice, and to our associate editor, Debbie Szobel Logan, who strive to maintain those high standards.

JHSM does not operate a museum. With the exception of an amazing collection of local high-school and college yearbooks, it neither owns nor controls an archive. Moreover, with fewer than three full-time employees, we need to constantly reinvent ways to further our mission of celebrating and sharing local Jewish history. We do this in the form of adult, youth, and private bus tours of past and present communities. We do this in the creation of content, examples of which include the Traveling Trunk history curriculum, our active speakers bureau, and programs such as the Michigan Women Who Made a Difference Jewish Voices Conference, which took place in Grand Rapids in July 2015. We accomplish our goals with timely and relevant programming, which includes large events such as the gala opening of *Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American*, enjoyed by more than 350 attendees at the Detroit Historical Museum, as well our smaller, more-intimate Nosh Gen events. We also accomplish our mission by making you sweat—literally. This summer, J-Cycle 6 enjoyed the company of more than 200 bicyclists who explored Detroit's New Center area, the Boston Edison District,

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the old Dexter-Davison neighborhood, and even Central High School.

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is a programming dynamo, and I am reminded each day of how fortunate we are to have the support of an incredibly active volunteer corps. Included in this list of docents, organizers, researchers, speakers, and office help are our board of directors and our advisory board who willingly organize and staff our many community events. We are also thankful for all our contributors who provide the financial support that permits us to pursue our mission.

JHSM now has more than 1,100 active members, each of whom receives a copy of this Journal. Our programming allows us to reach thousands more individuals each year. But without an actual archive and a building in which to house our artifacts, we need to constantly create new ways to further our mission. That's why we are so excited about our current efforts to recreate our website. Thanks to an incredibly generous gift from the William Davidson Foundation, JHSM has recently engaged a talented local company to envision, design, and develop a responsive website that will reflect the lively, event-driven nature of JHSM. The site will also present JHSM's digital archive initiatives in a fresh light, and will engage both new audiences and existing members. The website redesign is part of our broader vision to ensure that all generations can access accurate and inspirational information about the experiences, contributions, and legacies of the Jews of Michigan. As president of JHSM, I am honored to be a part of this exciting endeavor. As a history fan with a particular interest in local Jewish history, I look forward with great anticipation to our new website's launch. Stay tuned for further details.

I look forward to seeing you this year as we continue to share and celebrate history together.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Gorosh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Neil Gorosh, President

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**JAN DURECKI**

DIRECTOR OF THE RABBI LEO M. FRANKLIN ARCHIVES

**RECIPIENT OF THE 2016  
LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD***Photo by Elayne Gross*

Jan Durecki was always drawn to the field of social history, which studies the experiences of ordinary people and how they come together to form communal norms. She brought that natural curiosity, along with her expertise as a historian and researcher, when she was hired as director of the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills in 2006.

She has become a treasure to Southeast Michigan's Jewish community, going above and beyond the scope of merely collecting and preserving important historical documents. She has deeply delved into the legacy and impact of the lives of ordinary Jewish men and women and their contributions to community life in both Detroit and Michigan.

In May 2016, Durecki became the twenty-sixth recipient of the Leonard N. Simons History Award at the 56th annual meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Durecki led the evolution of the Franklin Archives from an obscure space on the second floor of Temple Beth El to a state-of-the-art, climate-controlled room. She has assisted dozens of researchers and community groups, and has added the archives of the Jewish War Veterans of Michigan and the Greater Detroit Chapter of Hadassah to the collection.

She also developed and launched the highly popular Jewish History Detectives Lecture Series, sponsored by Dr. Robert and Joan M. Jampel; and the Mary Einstein Shapero Memorial Lecture series, named in memory of the daughter of Rabbi Leo Franklin, one of the archives' earliest supporters and volunteers. The series, sponsored by the Honorable Walter Shapero, looks at Jewish history at the national and international levels and features prominent historians, such as the 2016 visit of author Hasia Diner.

A few of Durecki's many research topics include Jewish soldiers in the Civil War and WWII, and Jewish connections to the entertainment and commercial-film industries in Michigan, including surprising links to Berry Gordy and Motown Records. She has trained countless volunteers and student interns

who happily assist in the management of the archives.

The Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives, founded in 1981 using materials collected by Leo M. Franklin and Irving Katz, preserves the history of Temple Beth El, Michigan's first Jewish congregation, and also collects and preserves family records, manuscripts, photos, audio-visual materials, rare books, drawings, and other materials that record Southeast Michigan's Jewish history dating back to the mid-1800s. The collection, under Durecki's leadership, has been catalogued and made accessible to the community and the world online through the Temple Beth El website.

Durecki completed her undergraduate work in history and art history at Oakland University, and holds master's degrees from the University of Michigan in American culture, and from Wayne State University in library and information science with a specialization in archives management. In addition to her professional work, Durecki is a mother, a grandmother, and a runner, a hobby she took on less than a decade ago.

*To learn more about the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El, go to [www.tbeonline.org](http://www.tbeonline.org).*

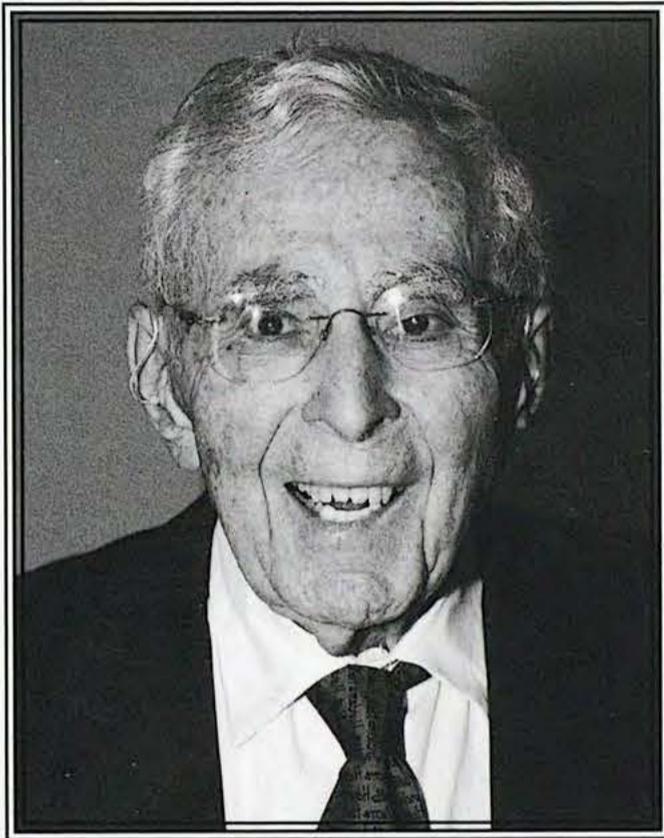
## LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD

*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, Durecki 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	2016 Jan Durecki

# IN MEMORIAM

## WILLARD L. "BILL" COHODAS 1914-2016



In the editor's forward to *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 16, January 1976, Irving I. Edgar, M.D., wrote that the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan "emphasized research dealing with the Jews of the smaller cities and towns outside of Detroit." Ishpeming, one of the many small cities and towns in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, was home for Willard L. "Bill" Cohodas, the dynamic Jewish leader of that city, as well as of the entire Upper Peninsula.

Cohodas, who spent most of his life in the U.P., was a historian, a successful businessman, and a civic leader. He was, without a doubt, a man of action, and a

man deeply committed and devoted to his community, his family, and his faith.

On Yom Kippur, October 1, 1914, Willard Cohodas was born in Menominee, Michigan, to Harry and Lillian Levine Cohodas. He was six when his mother died. To honor her and to better remember her, he adopted the middle initial "L" for Lillian. The Cohodas family name was and continues to be familiar to those in the U.P. As Willard himself wrote in *Michigan Jewish History* in 1988, the first Michigan Cohodases date to the turn of the twentieth century, settling in Menominee and Iron Mountain.

For years, Cohodas and his father and siblings attended religious services at Temple Jacob in Hancock. When Cohodas and his wife Lois (nee Wenk) moved to Ishpeming, Jewish services were held in rented rooms. Finally, in 1952, with Cohodas in the lead, Temple Beth Sholom, the first synagogue in Ishpeming, was founded. Cohodas was the de facto leader of the Jewish community in Ishpeming, Marquette, and the surrounding areas.

From the time of its founding, Temple Beth Sholom employed student rabbis who usually came to Ishpeming on a monthly basis. These student rabbis looked to Cohodas as their mentor. In fact, on the weekends when there was no student rabbi in Ishpeming, Cohodas led services for the congregation's

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thirty families. Throughout the years, he taught religious-school classes and he officiated at funerals, baby namings, and other life-cycle events. Cohodas edited the congregation bulletin, directed the choir, and managed the finances of the synagogue. He brought together Upper Peninsula Jewish youth in conclaves so that young Jews would marry endogenously, and he inspired at least one of those young people to become a rabbi.

Bill Cutler, one of Cohodas's student rabbis, remembers his Michigan mentor as "a successful businessman who loved intellectual matters, among them history."

The list of Cohodas' contributions to Michigan's Jewish history and Jewish identity is long. He was especially proud of the implementation of a Holocaust curriculum in all U.P. public high schools, and of Northern Michigan University's annual interfaith program of Holocaust study with noted scholars. Both programs began after Cohodas discovered that the majority of students attending a Northern Michigan University class were unaware of the Shoah.

Cohodas authored two articles for *Michigan Jewish History*: "Early Jews in Michigan's Upper Peninsula" (Vol 42, Fall 2002) and "The Beginnings of Temple Beth Shalom in Marquette County" (Vol. 43, Fall 2003). He also had an extensive Haggadah collection, with books from around the world. Additionally, Cohodas had a passion for archeology. Whenever he and Lois would travel to Jerusalem to attend the American Friends of The Hebrew University's annual board-of-governors meeting, he would meet with Israel's noted archaeologists to see and discuss their latest findings.

Cohodas is survived by Lois, his wife of seventy-six years; his children, Lynn and Rabbi Sam Stahl and Nancy and Paul Oberman; and seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

There is no better model of an outstanding Jewish leader in a small town than Bill Cohodas. His death at age 101 leaves a gaping void. He built a Jewish community. He influenced Jewish life. He leaves the legacy of his good deeds and of his good name. He will live on in the annals of Michigan Jewish history. - Herbert A. Yoskowitz is a rabbi at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, and he is a member of the Jewish Historical Society Advisory Board.

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## SYLVIA BABCOCK 1913-2016



Sylvia Babcock, local historian and long-time JHSM friend, passed away on September 3, 2016, at the beautiful age of 103. Babcock first became involved with JHSM in 1993, when she and several other volunteers, among them Alan Kandel (z'l"), began archiving the papers of Philip Slomovitz for placement in the Jewish Community Archives at the Reuther Library at Wayne State University. In 1996, she and her daughter, Nancy Grosfeld, co-hosted a reception for the Detroit Historical Museum's exhibit *Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in Michigan*, a JHSM project that

featured the stories of dozens of immigrant Jewish women who made Michigan their home. (Much of that collection is now being integrated into JHSM's *Michigan Women Who Made a Difference* archives). That same year, Babcock joined the JHSM advisory board, a position she held for more than a decade.

In 1997, Babcock was awarded JHSM's Lifetime Dedication Award, an honor afforded to only three others in the organization's history, among them Max Fisher. In 1998, Babcock preserved her memories in a booklet she titled *Early Memories of Jewish Life and Memories by Sylvia Barnett Babcock at Eighty-Five*. In 2006, she wrote a lovely tribute to her late husband, Samuel Babcock, on his induction into the Michigan Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

Sylvia Babcock also lent her talents to other organizations. She served as vice president of the Jewish Community Center, where she was involved with Book Fair; she was involved with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's women's philanthropy division, the Federation's annual campaign, and the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives; and she was active with the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El. Born in Pontiac, Babcock was the thirteenth and youngest child of Joseph and Rachel Barnett, founders of Temple Beth Jacob in Pontiac.

Sylvia Babcock is survived by her daughter Nancy (Jim) Grosfeld, son Robert Babcock, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

- *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

## JOAN BRAUN 1927-2016



JHSM past president Joan Braun passed away on September 14, 2016. Born in Detroit to Betty and Charles Goldstein, she was raised on Blaine Street and attended Thirkell Elementary, Hutchins Intermediate, and Central High schools. She graduated from the University of Michigan and went on to receive a master of library science from Wayne State University.

Perhaps that MLS degree is how she became involved with the work of JHSM in 1997, when she served on both the editorial committee of *Michigan Jewish History* and the JHSM

advisory board. In 1998, she was elected to the board of directors, serving as vice president, and then becoming president in 2000. In 2001, she and Harriet Siden served as co-presidents, the first time in JHSM history that the position was shared. Braun oversaw a particularly important period in JHSM's history, the organization's participation in the 2001 celebrations of Detroit's 300th anniversary.

Braun helped curate and stage two exhibitions: In 2001, she worked with JHSM Yearbook Project chairperson Marc Manson to present an exhibition of yearbooks and related memorabilia at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills and then at the West Bloomfield Public Library. She was also involved with JHSM's 1999 co-sponsorship of *Becoming American Women in Michigan: The Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920*, which appeared at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing. Originally shown at the Detroit Historical Museum in 1996, the exhibit included historical artifacts, period clothing, and photographs documenting Jewish women's experiences as new residents of the state, and it featured an album of more than 150 photographs gathered from families around the state showing their mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Michigan.

Braun was the wife of the late Dr. Charles Braun, and was the mother of the late James and the late Robert Braun. She is survived by her son Laurence (Inge), daughters Susan (Randy Benson) Braun and Mimi (Alan) Braun-Quinn, and six grandchildren. - *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

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## PHILLIP LEVINE, AMERICA'S POET LAUREATE 1928-2015

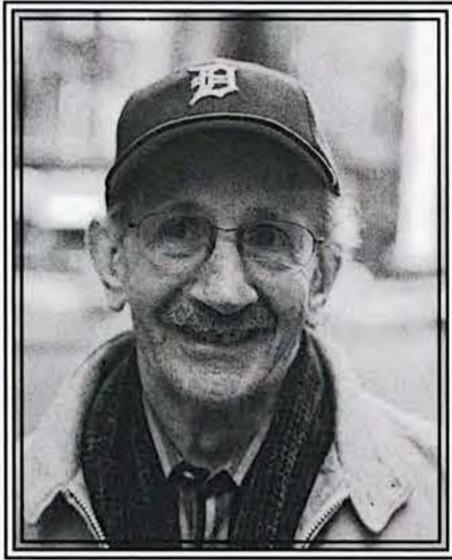


Photo by Matt Valentine

Born in Detroit in 1928, Philip Levine grew up on Pingree in Detroit, and later in Highland Park. He and his twin brother Edward attended Roosevelt Elementary, Durfee Intermediate, and Central High schools. The two began doing factory work when they were only fourteen years old, and that experience led to Levine's sense of social justice, a theme that became a mainstay of his poetry.

Levine discovered poetry as a young college student at the school. He once recalled how, while waiting in a line to enroll at Wayne State University, a member of the staff asked him, "Can I help you?" "I'd like to go to college," he said. "Do you want a bachelor's?" she asked. "I already have a place to live," answered Levine, who at that time believed that a "bachelor's" was a small apartment. Instead of laughing at him, the woman explained to him his options. "They were used to us shlumps" he said, and it was "there, at Wayne, I encountered modern poetry. And I loved it. Loved it."

Levine went on to become one of the leading poetic voices of his generation. Known for his ironic Whitmanesque voice of the industrial heartland, Levine, the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, went on to publish more than twenty books of poetry. He would win two National Book Awards, two National Book Critics Circle Awards, The Wallace Stevens Award, The Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize, and a 1995 Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Simple Truth*. In August 2011, Philip Levine was named United States Poet Laureate—the eighteenth poet to be thus honored.

As a young boy in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Levine became fascinated by the events of the Spanish Civil War. He found heroes in the ordinary folk who worked at hopeless jobs to stave off poverty. He resolved "to find a voice for the voiceless," and later explained in a *Detroit Magazine* article, "I took this foolish vow that I would speak for them and that's what my life would be. And sure enough I've gone and done it. Or I've tried anyway." Levine died on February 14, 2015, in Fresno, California, where he lived with his beloved wife Franny. At the time of his death, he was an emeritus professor of English at California State University, Fresno, where he had taught from 1958 to 1992. — Joy Gaines-Friedler

## ALAN ABRAMS 1940-2015

Alan Abrams, the founding press officer and publicist for Motown Records, died on October 3, 2015, following a battle with cancer. He was seventy-four.

Abrams, born in Detroit and a 1957 graduate of Central High School, became Motown's first "official" employee. An avid rhythm-and-blues fan, at age eighteen he learned about a possible job opening with Motown Records. He secured the position and went on to serve as Motown's national promotion director, eventually becoming the label's director of public relations. Abrams and Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr. had a close relationship, referring to each other as brothers. Gordy even learned a few Yiddish phrases so he could communicate with Abrams's mother. Abrams is credited with coining the Motown slogans "The Detroit Sound" and "The Sound of Young America." He worked tirelessly to promote the Motown label.

Abrams is survived by his wife Nancy, a daughter, and two grandchildren. To learn more about Alan Abrams's career with Motown Records, see *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 52, Fall 2012.

## STANLEY ROSENTHAL 1942-2015

Stanley L. Rosenthal, professor of printmaking at Wayne State University, passed away on November 22, 2015, at the age of seventy-three. Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Rosenthal attended Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and then came to Wayne State University to earn his MFA; he remained at WSU for the rest of his career. In 1969, he began full-time teaching at WSU, progressing through the academic ranks to become a full professor in 2006. Rosenthal is remembered by his WSU colleagues as "a tenacious advocate for the arts, a warm and genuine colleague, and a dedicated teacher."

Rosenthal won numerous regional and national awards as a printmaker and painter. He twice earned the top award in Watercolor USA, he twice earned the State of the Art National Watercolor Invitational, and he received many top awards in the Michigan Water Color Society's annual exhibitions. In 2001 Stanley received the WSU President's Award for Excellence in Teaching. A retrospective highlighting his extensive body of work coincided with his Murray E. Jackson Scholar in the Arts Award in 2013, and culminated in a solo exhibition held in November 2014 at the WSU Art Department Gallery. He served as president of the Michigan Association of Printmakers, and as artist/advisor to the Graphic Arts Council of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Rosenthal is survived by his wife Kathy.

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# 2015 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.*

Please be sure to see Page 1 of this issue of *Michigan Jewish History*. We updated the dedication section and included photos of Bessie and Joseph Wetsman and Sarah and Ralph Davidson, the grandparents and parents of William Davidson. First appearing in 2015, the photos were incorrectly labeled. We also omitted a photography credit to Elayne Gross for the photograph of Sander and Carl Levin, which appeared on page 82 of the 2015 issue of MJH.

## READER COMMENTS

Erwin Posner, a JHSM member and past president of Akiva Hebrew Day School wrote to share a memory inspired by the 2015 *Michigan Jewish History* article "The History of Congregation Beth Achim," written Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz.

"In 1974, my wife Esther and I moved near the Bet Achim Synagogue, located on 10 Mile Rd., in Oak Park. At that time, Henry Sperber was the exclusive caterer to the synagogue. One week I went to pick up food from Sperber for Shabbat. While parking my car, I noticed someone painting the outside bricks of the shul. I asked Henry what that was all about.

"Henry told me the management of the shul was so particular about the look and perfection of the building that they hired a painter to meticulously paint shadows on each-and-every brick on the outside walls. Wow, I thought, and it explained too how careful synagogue leaders were in selecting furniture and art for the building. The artistry of the *Ner Tamid* fixture and the beautiful stained glass windows in the sanctuary stood as perfect examples. The windows were commissioned with selected Jewish themes.

"After Bet Achim merged with Adat Shalom the building was redesigned to use as a school for Akiva (now the Farber Hebrew Day School). Akiva retained the main sanctuary and small chapel and students had the cultural benefit of being surrounded by the beautiful windows and art of the 1970s."

*The former Beth Achim building is scheduled for demolition and will be replaced by a new school building. It is the hope of the institution to find the means to rescue the stained-glass windows.*

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Reader John Coumoundouros wrote to us about the 2013 article written by Esther Ingber Alweis on Jewish-owned gas stations: "I just read your article about gas stations in *Michigan Jewish History*. I worked for Sol Begel from 1966 to 1968 at his Standard Oil station on Wyoming and Chalfonte. Sol was such a patient and kind individual and was a mentor at my young age of 16. Some of Sol's lines: "Hello Youngster!" "Why don't you give your child contraceptives!" (when a child came into the station with a toy gun). I deeply regret losing track of him."

## *Historical Tidbits*

**1907:** Jewish Old Folks Home on Brush at Winder in Detroit opened, providing Kosher meals, socialization, and spiritual and cultural support for up to ninety residents. Thirty years later, in 1937, the Old Folks Home relocated to Petoskey in Detroit, and then in 1967 it became Jewish Home for the Aged, moving to the Borman Hall and Prentis Manor facilities in Detroit. In 2008, in collaboration with Jewish Apartments and Services, the agency became Jewish Senior Life of Metropolitan Detroit, with residential buildings at the Jewish Community Center campuses in Oak Park and West Bloomfield.

**1908:** Detroit-born Max Grabowsky and Bernard Ginsberg formed the Grabowsky Power Wagon Company. They built a four-story plant in Detroit, designed by Albert Kahn, with hopes of great success. The company went bankrupt in 1912. Max and his brother Morris had previously founded the Rapid Motor Vehicle Co. in 1904. General Motors acquired Rapid Motor Vehicle in 1909.

**1928:** Maurice Sendack, children's author and illustrator, and Vidal Sassoon, hairstylist and businessman, were born to Jewish immigrants. Each became highly successful and philanthropic. Both died in 2012.

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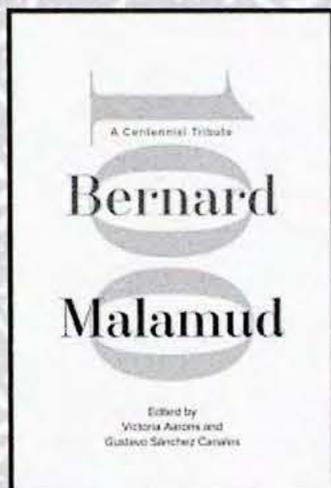
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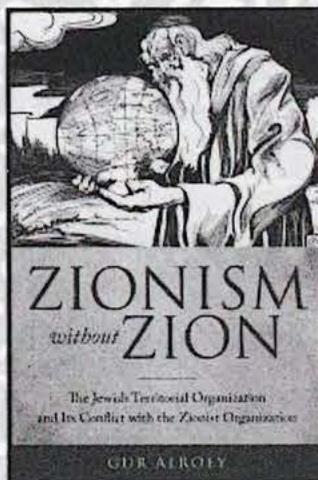
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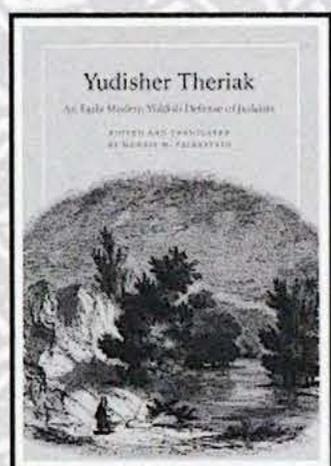
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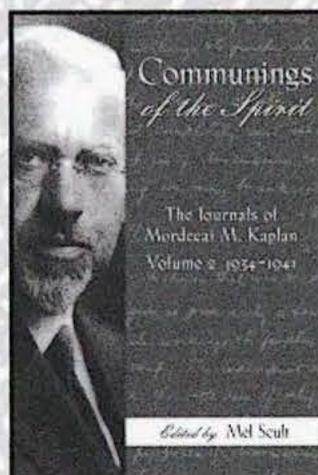
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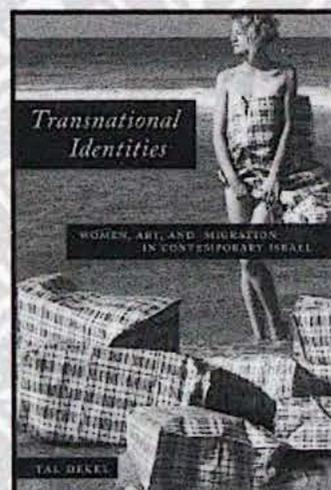
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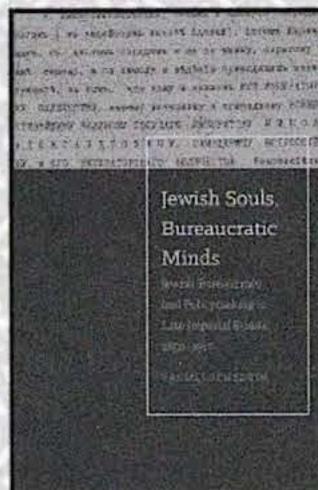
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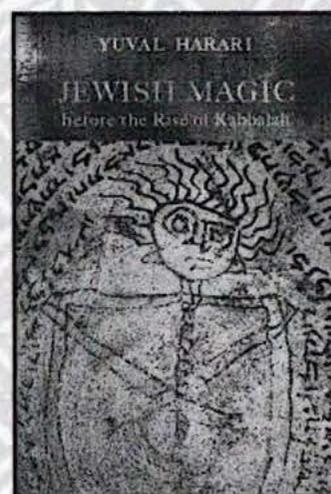
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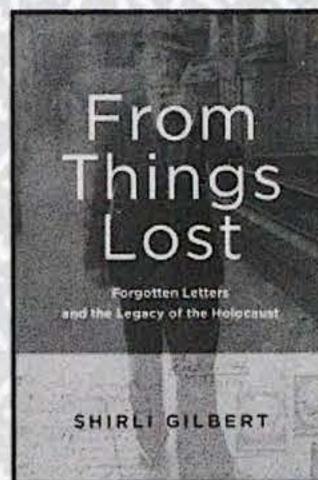
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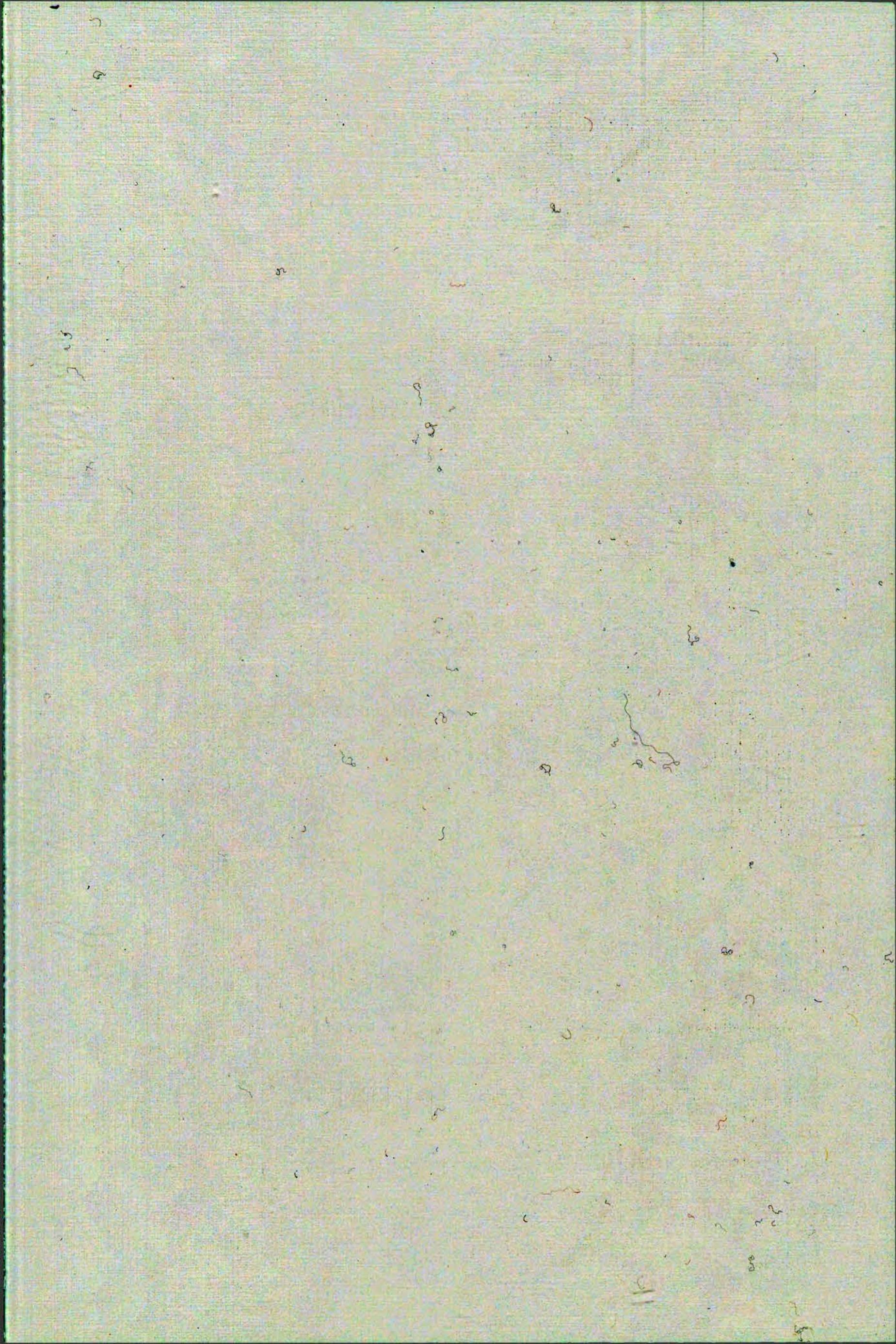
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