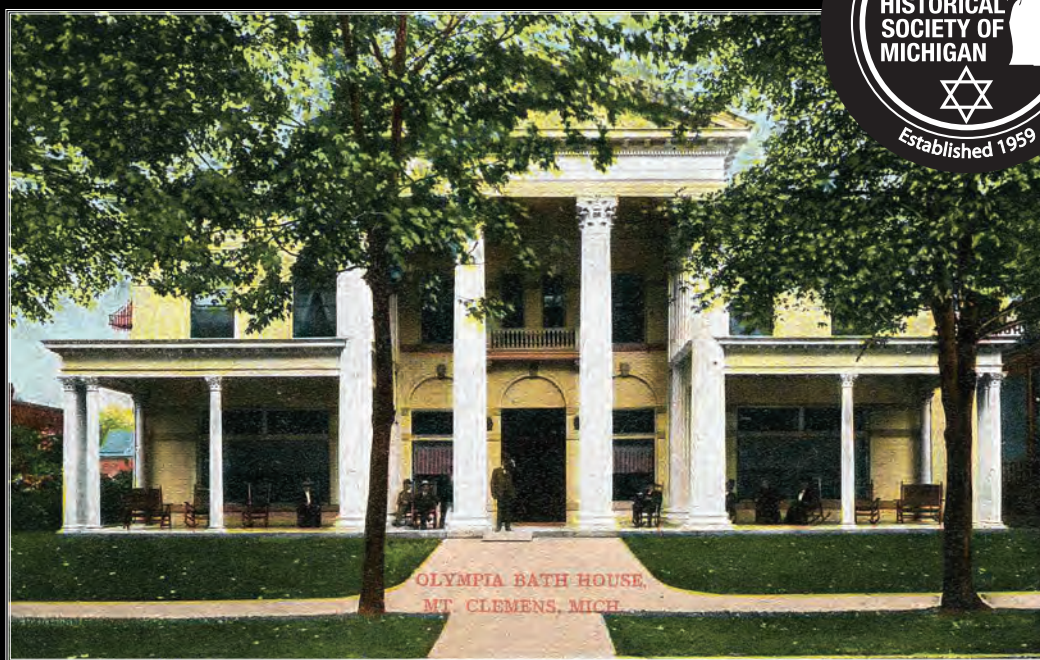


MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN
SHARES AND CELEBRATES THE EXPERIENCES
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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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MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

is published by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

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Michigan Jewish History is available online, one year following publication, at www.michjewishhistory.org.

Articles in this journal are indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and in *America: History & Life*. No reproduction, electronic or otherwise, may be distributed without the expressed written permission of the director or president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Copyright 2017 – The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan ISBN 0543-9833

COVER PHOTO:

(Top) Postcard titled "Mount Clemens, Michigan: Olympia Hotel"

Also known as the Olympia Bath House, the property was owned by father and son Samuel and Max Elkin. Courtesy of Ann Faulkner and Elana Elkin. (Bottom) Postcard: "Mendelson's Atlantic Hotel, South Haven, Michigan." Courtesy South Haven Historical Association.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

אִשֶּׁר יִשְׁאַלְךָ בְּיָמֵם מָחָר אֵם אֲבוֹתָם... יִדְעוּנָה דָּבָר

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

Joshua 4:21

THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 57

Fall 2017

Cheshvan 5778

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Editor's Letter

About to turn ten years old, I spent my summer of 1967 waiting eagerly for the twice-daily visits from the Good Humor man, running to and from our block's Best Friends Club house-of-the-week, and waiting ravenously for whatever dinner my mother was about to whip up. But there came a night in July when all of the action came to a complete stop and our normally busy street grew exceptionally quiet. Cautiously, at dusk, our family ventured out to our backyard lawn where we looked with curious wonder at the skies to our south, miles away but even farther in kid distance, darkening with smoke.

Growing up in the Detroit suburb of Oak Park, we were sheltered from the disturbances that were terrifying our parents and grandparents, whose friends and relatives lived in or near the heart of the city. I had no idea that there were Jewish men who, as Michael Maddin shares in his Creative Expressions essay on his 1967 experience, were on duty as part of an armed National Guard. Never did I wonder how the families who lived in the city fared or dealt with the aftermath. Fifty years later, the Weisfeld, Saperstein, Baum, Schenk, Shapiro, and Strauss families have penned those memories for this issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

In the 1980s, long after the remnants of the 1967 disturbances were cleaned up but not forgotten, I moved to the city of Detroit. My family feared for my safety, begging me to "come back to this side of the planet," back to the suburbs. I did. Now, three decades later, the number of Jewish adults living and working in the city, nurturing its growth and considering its future, is stunning. Having the opportunity to gather a group of five such pioneers to share their thoughts in this publication is an honor and a milestone never imagined by my predecessors.

Of course, there is much more in store for readers of this fifty-ninth volume of *MJH*. With winter approaching, visions of the South Haven resort era are sure to warm your spirit, as is the retelling of the life of Samuel Elkin, one of the Jewish Mount Clemens bathhouse proprietors.

In this issue, we proudly introduce a new feature, the Michigan Women Who Made a Difference section. This project began in 2014, and now the biographies of the women whose contributions helped to build and shape our communities will be shared on our website (www.michjewishhistory.org) as well as in this publication. This year, we meet union activist Matilda Rabinowitz, and we extend a special thank you to her granddaughter whose illustrations bring to life her incredible story.

This journal, JHSM's seasonal harvest, is brought to you by a team dedicated to carefully preserving and sharing our Jewish history. Please show off this book to your circle of family and friends. But don't let it go. Instead, encourage them to become members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Your and their support of our work will help ensure that these remarkable stories and accounts will be available for our children's children. Membership to JHSM, which makes for a wonderful holiday gift, begins at just \$36 a year. — Wendy Rose Bice, Editor

JEWISH DETROIT 1967 IN RETROSPECT AND REFLECTION



Introduction by Judy Lansky



I call myself a Detroiter by choice. As a native Memphian (that is how we from Memphis, Tennessee, refer to ourselves), I moved to Michigan in 2013 to become a Berman Fellow at the University of Michigan Hillel in Ann Arbor. I had never before been to Michigan, but I had heard great things about Ann Arbor and was ready for a

new adventure. The week I moved, the city of Detroit announced its bankruptcy. I knew little about Detroit at that time, but I remember feeling thankful that Ann Arbor was its own municipality.

Two years later, I accepted a position at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. I chose to move to the Detroit area to be closer to my job, but also to be a part of this community and the city's exciting growth. I did not grow up going to Detroit Tigers games or hearing stories of the 1967 riots; instead, I learned about the city in my adult life, and only through my choice to seek knowledge and gain understanding of the complex, historic, beautiful city I now call home.

This year, using 1967 as a milestone marker, *Michigan Jewish History* is highlighting how most – but not all – of the Jewish community transitioned from the city to the suburbs. The three articles that follow, “Leaving the City,” “Why We Stayed,” and “Why We Are Coming Back,” examine how those who live in this region continue to consider the impact of the disturbances, or riots, that happened half a century ago.

In “Why We Left,” Professor Howard Lupovitch does an excellent job of examining economic and social factors to explain the Jewish community’s departure from the city. He argues that the move was inevitable and that 1967 was only a small piece of the puzzle.

The “Why We Stayed” essays are fascinating. The authors write about why they didn’t leave their neighborhoods – the same neighborhoods to which my friends are now moving to raise their families. After reading these stories, I drove past some of the places the authors discussed, such as Chrysler Elementary School. Seeing these places – the locations, the neighborhoods, the buildings – brought history to life for me!

I had the honor of helping to coordinate and edit the series’ last article, “Why We Are Coming Back.” My contemporaries A.J. Aaron, Rachel Fine, Gabe Neistein, Zak Rosen, and Rabbi Ariana Silverman tackle tough questions about their Judaism and explain why they are excited to create their homes in the city of Detroit.

As our Jewish community continues to grow and transform, it thrills me to see that the city has become an integral part of our identity. I am inspired by these stories. I hope that fifty years from now Detroit’s Jewish community will be even more vibrant than it is today, and that members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will look back with surprise to learn that once, a long time ago, most of our Detroit Jewish community was based in the suburbs – and not within the city limits of our beautiful, thriving Detroit.

Judy Lansky is the Senior Philanthropic Advancement Associate of Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. She also serves on the board of directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.



Feature Article

THE DETROIT 1967 COLLECTION LEAVING THE CITY

1

By Professor Howard Lupovitch

For many of us who grew up in Detroit post-1967, the narrative of Jews leaving the city for the suburbs pivots around the events of the summer of '67, and typically goes something like this: A thriving Jewish community in the city was derailed by the riots and the ensuing white flight to the suburbs led to an irreversible decline and virtual disappearance of Jewish life there. Needless to say, this is an overly simplified version of a more complex story.

While the summer of '67 was certainly a seminal moment in the migration of Jews out of the city, this is actually a broader and more complicated episode. Typical of Jewish migration movements, whether from one part of a city to another or from one continent to another, Jewish migration out of the city of the Detroit, before and after the summer of '67, was driven by a push and pull; that is, there were factors that impelled Jews to leave older neighborhoods in the city and other factors that drew them toward new neighborhoods, in some cases within the city and in others to newly emerging suburbs such as Oak Park, Huntington Woods, Southfield, and even West Bloomfield. Identifying and enumerating these factors is the first step in understanding why Jews left the city.

In a sense, the movement of Jews out of the city during the years leading up to 1967 was nothing new. Rather, this was part of a more protracted north-west movement. Hitherto Jews had already migrated several times within the city, from Hastings to the North End, and then from the North End to the Dexter area – in some cases, to escape what they perceived to be escalating crime (which at mid-century was a euphemism for a growing African-American presence); in others, because of better housing opportunities. Senior U.S. District Judge Avern Cohn, in a 2017 interview with the *Detroit Jewish News*¹, noted a sharp contrast between the Jewish and the non-Jewish responses to black people moving in: “Jews did not demonstrate or burn crosses – they simply moved out.” However, Cohn is also quick to note that the need to escape was far outweighed by the allure of new opportunity: “The initial



The Pattern of Settlement map highlights the mid-nineteenth- and twentieth-century movement and expansion of metropolitan Detroit's Jewish population. Areas 1 and 2, the Hastings Street area (so called because of the main shopping street), was Detroit's earliest Jewish community, populated at a time when nearly the entire Jewish community lived within a short distance of one another. Leaving Hastings, Jewish residents settled slightly to the north in Areas 3 and 4, founding a new shtetl-of-sorts in the Oakland/North End area, and on the west side of Woodward, in more spacious homes, often with backyards. In the 1940s, the community began its shift to Northwest Detroit, Area 5; and soon, even farther to the north. The community has now dispersed to Oakland County and beyond.

movement from the Twelfth Street area was not racial. Families were living in two-family and four-family duplexes and apartment buildings. They were improving their housing stock." So, too, a generation later, Jews began to move again – this time from the Dexter area to Northwest Detroit and, for the first time in significant numbers, beyond the city limits to Oak Park and Southfield.

This was far from anomalous. Non-Jews were leaving the city, too, encouraged by the same constellation of push-and-pull factors. Moreover, similar circumstances were driving an out-migration of Jews from other major cities – Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and more.

Foremost among these factors in Detroit was a shift in the housing market in and outside of the city. In Detroit, housing development had favored single-family homes and smaller apartment buildings, leading to a shortage of space to construct new ones. The dearth of higher-density vertical development (i.e., larger multi-floor apartment complexes that could house more people), created

a lack of space to build more units. The fact that the city was bounded by the Detroit River to the south and Grosse Pointe (with its harsh discriminatory resistance against Jews and other minorities) to the east, and a state-delineated northern boundary (Eight Mile Road), further limited available housing in the city. Even for those Jews who wanted to remain in the city, housing was hard to find. Concurrently, in the post-WWII baby-boom years, newer and more spacious housing was becoming available in the suburbs, as were government mortgage programs that made it easier for lower- and middle-income families – and first-time homeowners – to buy rather than rent.



The Oak Park branch of the Jewish Community Center opened its doors in 1952, four years before the main branch of the JCC opened at Meyers Rd. and Curtis Rd. in Northwest Detroit.

Photo courtesy of Jewish Community Archives

This change in available housing complemented a growing perception – or, perhaps, fear – among Jewish and other white residents that the influx of African-American families meant a rise in the crime rate and a decline in the quality of public schools and housing prices. In retrospect, it is far from clear that this was the case (except for housing prices, which are generally driven up or down as much or more by perception than by reality). The perception that life in the “old neighborhood” was declining – a telling symptom of still-flourishing racism in the 1960s – overshadowed the reality on the ground, at the very least prior to 1967. If nothing else, Jews sold their houses and relocated if only to avoid a sudden drop in the value of their homes.

If by 1967 the trend northward was evident as growing numbers of Jewish families were leaving, it follows that so, too, were Jewish institutions beginning to relocate, albeit more gradually. Even though, in 1956, the Jewish Community Center opened a branch in Oak Park on Ten Mile Road, its main location at Meyers and Curtis remained in the city until 1975. The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, on the other hand, remained in its downtown location on Madison Avenue until 1991. Likewise, Temple Beth El remained in its Woodward Avenue at Gladstone building until 1973, but by 1967, most of the other congregations and institutions had left for the suburbs. Congregation

Shaarey Zedek, the state's second-largest congregation, had left its Chicago Boulevard location for Southfield in 1962. Interestingly, in 1962, there were still half a dozen synagogues within walking distance of Livernois and Curtis – the heart of the Bagley area in Northwest Detroit. All of these congregations left the city by 1967. These changes were well under way prior to 1967, to the periodic concern of communal leaders. One Adat Shalom Synagogue member, for example, recalls that, during weekly sermons leading up to 1967, the congregation's rabbi repeatedly urged his congregants to remain in the city².

Though the events of July 1967 did not set in motion Jewish migration out of the city, they were still a seminal event in this migration, for two reasons. First, even though few Jews lived anywhere near the area of the riots, there were many Jewish-owned stores in that region of the city. The disturbances of that summer cast an aura of fear and greater urgency, which helps explain why Jewish families, particularly those in the Bagley area who were not personally threatened by the riots, began to leave the city more frequently after 1967. There was a growing perception of a declining city life that, even in the absence of actual danger or decline, threatened to drive down property rates. This, along with the growing availability of housing in Oak Park and Southfield, and the prior relocation of synagogues and other communal institutions to these suburbs, quickened the pace of migration.

Second, after 1967 there was a growing sense in the city that whites – which in this instance generally included Jews – were becoming less welcome in city neighborhoods than they had been even a decade or two earlier. This atmosphere was cultivated, in no small part, by the new mayor, Coleman A. Young, in 1973 a harsh critic of his mayoral primary opponent Mel Ravitz, who was Jewish. Since 1962, Ravitz had been a leading liberal voice on the Detroit City Council, fighting for fair-housing legislation, encouraging interracial support, and advocating for labor unions. Prior to 1967, this was enough to win strong support from a liberal consensus that included most Jewish and African-American voters. In the mayoral primary, Ravitz faced the conservative white police commissioner, John Nichols, and Young, a state senator – both of whom were critical of Ravitz's "white liberalism." Many African Americans who had previously supported Ravitz voted for the new black candidate, who was narrowly elected in 1973.

The defeat of Mel Ravitz³ effectively curtailed direct Jewish participation in city politics, although Coleman Young maintained strong ties to Max Fisher and A. Alfred Taubman. Fisher and Taubman continued to support city commercial and real-estate ventures, such as the Renaissance Center. The perception, however, early in his tenure, that Mayor Young was "anti-white" may

have discouraged many Jews from returning and even from participating in the city's economy, and further accelerated the decline of a Jewish presence in the city.

In the end, the riots/rebellion of 1967 was a capstone event that galvanized and accelerated a longer trend of Jewish migration.

It is useful to conclude by comparing the impact of the 1943 riots on Jewish life in the city with that of the 1967 riots. The deadly 1943 riots, which are accepted as a racial riot spurred on by deep-seated racism against black residents who had been shut out of housing and employment, encouraged Jews to change neighborhoods; but, in 1943, living beyond the city borders was neither an attractive nor viable option for most Jews. Conversely, in 1967, leaving the city was not only an option, it was a highly attractive and feasible option, both in terms of housing and quality of life. Migrating Jewish families could move into flourishing "new" Jewish neighborhoods with Jewish communal and retail institutions nearby.

In retrospect, the flight of Jews from the city of Detroit was not a direct result of the events of the summer of 1967; rather, this flight was the result of a series of more gradual and incremental developments that dated back over a decade. Additionally, the northwest migration out of Detroit was not *sui generis* but the latest in a series of northwestern steps that Jews had taken over a span of nearly a half century. What is more remarkable, perhaps, is that, after a generation or two during which suburban Jews increasingly abandoned the possibility of moving back to the city, circumstances have made this return possible.



Howard Lupovitch is an associate professor of history and the director of the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University, and a fourth-generation Detroit. After graduating from the University of Michigan, he earned a PhD in Jewish history at Columbia University. He has taught at Cornell University, Colby College, the University of Western Ontario, and the University of Michigan, where he was also a fellow at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies.

Lupovitch is the author of Jews at the Crossroads: Tradition and Accommodation During the Golden Age of the Hungarian Nobility, 1729-1878 and Jews and Judaism in World History.

ENDNOTES

¹ "Outmigration to the Suburbs Started in the 1950s" 1/15/17, <https://thejewishnews.com/2017/01/25/migration-suburbs-started-1950s-now-returning-urban-core/>

² Interview with Professor Marty Herman, a Detroit resident since 1962.

³ Mel Ravitz was elected to Detroit City Council in 1981.

THE DETROIT 1967 COLLECTION

WHY WE STAYED

2

Curated By Carol Weisfeld and Harriet Saperstein

Before 1967, Detroit's Jewish community was once more on the move – this time to the north and west, beyond Detroit's Eight Mile Road border, and into the suburbs of Oak Park, Huntington Woods, Southfield, and even then-rural West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Hills. But while much of the community advanced in those directions, a number of Jewish residents chose to remain in the city. This collection of essays explores reasons why many chose to stay.



Students at Chrysler Elementary School in Detroit, circa 1969

Harriet and Alvin Saperstein, along with their two-year-old daughter, came to Detroit in 1963 after living in suburban Chicago. Alvin, a physicist, had accepted a position with Wayne State University. Colleagues had suggested Huntington Woods, or Detroit's University District, or Highland Park's Farrand Park street, where other WSU faculty members were living. The Sapersteins looked at those areas, but none felt right. Then the couple reconnected with old friends, Joyce and Leon Brown, who lived in Detroit's Lafayette Park. "It was clearly the right place for us," said Harriet, who was pregnant at the time of their move. "We wanted to bring our children up in a city environment and in an integrated setting. Lafayette Park

offered both those opportunities, and, as it turned out, many others.”

Carol and Glenn Weisfeld arrived in 1977, ten years after the disturbances of 1967. Glenn, a newly minted psychology professor, had been hired to teach at Wayne State University. They left their hometown of Chicago with mixed feelings – they loved the city’s muscle and fine architecture, but were dismayed by its segregated neighborhoods and fierce ethnic rivalries. On weekends, they drove to Detroit to house-hunt. Real-estate agents eagerly showed them homes in the suburbs, but getting the agents to show them homes within the city seemed impossible. “They told us, ‘You don’t want to live there. No one like you lives there,’” said Carol. “We suspected otherwise, as several of my husband’s WSU colleagues seemed very much like us.” Two of those colleagues, Larry Stettner and Francine Wehmer (both of blessed memory), invited the couple to their home in Lafayette Park. Like the Sapersteins, the Weisfelds were struck not just by the beauty of the community¹, but by its diversity: young families of all ethnicities living side by side, walking together, talking together, and their children playing together.

Both Harriet and Carol became intertwined in Detroit’s sustainability and cultural life, and in maintaining a Jewish presence in the city. Both were leaders with the Riverfront East Alliance, the community group that helped to save the Detroit Riverfront and which is now integrated into the work of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.

“It only took fifty years,” reflected Harriet, referring to the waterfront. “That was the first time I walked along the ancient industrial streets that ran from Lafayette Park to the riverfront. Standing beneath cement silos, sneezing from dust and dirt, I decided to write a letter to the Detroit Recreation Department asking why the area was so dirty and empty and seemed so underutilized.” Thus began the quest of working with community groups and city and other governmental agencies to get funding to build parks along the riverfront. The result is a nationally and internationally known area of “neutral turf,” where residents and visitors, old and young, of all races and ethnicities and from across the globe, enjoy their shared humanity and the beauty of Detroit’s international riverfront.

By the time the Weisfelds arrived in Detroit, there was but one Jewish synagogue in the city. Established in 1921, the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue functioned at the time primarily as a space for minyans and Conservative-oriented worship. There was little, if any, congregational life. In 1977, the Weisfelds were part of a *chavurah* (circle of friends) that founded Congregation T’chayah, a Detroit congregation that would later affiliate with the Reconstructionist Movement. First meeting in members’ homes, the congregation soon rented space in the St. Mary’s Community Center in Detroit’s Greektown. With the founding of T’chayah, families suddenly had a choice. “When our kids needed a Sunday school, we started one,”



The Detroit Riverfront, circa 1967. Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library

said Carol. “When we couldn’t easily find challah for Shabbat, we learned to bake challah ourselves.”

The Sapersteins were also founding members of Congregation T’chayah and, like the Weisfelds, are heavily involved with the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit², the surviving downtown-Detroit congregation after T’chayah moved to nearby Royal Oak. “After almost 150 years of Jewish synagogue presence in Detroit,” commented Saperstein, “it would be a *shonda* (shame) not to have active Jewish religious institutions in the city. We are committed to keeping an active and functioning Jewish institutional presence here.” Living a Jewish life in the city is getting easier, admits Saperstein. “This year Al and I almost felt we had to toss a coin to see which “second Seder” we would attend,” referring to the increasing Jewish presence in the city.

Choices. The choice to remain a Jewish resident in the city of Detroit after 1967 came with obstacles few others contemplated: where to pray, where to educate children, where to shop, how to lead. The following essays are the stories and reflections of families like the Sapersteins and Weisfelds who chose to remain in the city and become a part of its sustainability and vibrancy.



Essays

HARRIET AND ALVIN SAPERSTEIN CAME FROM CHICAGO TO DETROIT IN 1963.

AFTER SEARCHING SUBURBAN AREAS OF THE CITY, THEY CHOSE TO LIVE IN DETROIT, IN THE DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD OF LAFAYETTE PARK. THE SAPERSTEINS WERE AMONG DETROIT'S GREATEST CHAMPIONS, BECOMING INVOLVED IN MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE DETROIT RIVERFRONT CONSERVANCY.



The Saperstein family, circa 1970. Rina, Harriet, Shira, and Alvin.

Lafayette Park (and Chateaufort Place Co-op) was and has been a wonderful neighborhood, a wonderful “kibbutz” in which we felt (and feel) safe and protected by the caring people around us. Our kids could knock on any door and be welcomed in. Yes, there were some concerns about security issues as the middle-class flight continued out of the city after 1967, and certainly in the last ten to fifteen years, but we knew (and know) how to watch out for ourselves and watch out for our neighbors. We were willing to pay the price of carefulness in order to enjoy the richness and neighborliness we found in our community and in Detroit. In my career, I worked on Detroit issues of poverty and social justice. I felt committed to live in that same city. I knew that what I did or didn’t do directly affected my family and others in the community. It gave me a personal “edge” in my work, and strengthened my commitment to make a difference in the troubled and troubling city of Detroit.

It was hard, especially after 1967, to keep going when things were really difficult, and then again when recessions and bankruptcy hit the city. The fall of 1967 and spring of 1968 were the worst times I can remember. The fear was palpable! But, by mid-spring 1968, group after group began looking ahead, joining together to talk and, more importantly, to “do.” We found ways to make changes so that we could move on.

While neither Al nor I were religious, we were culturally committed to our Jewish heritage and its values – especially the commitment to *tikkun olam*. We found many

people in Lafayette Park who shared these values of social involvement and social action. When it came to our children's education, I chose to work to improve and change the schools, not only Chrysler Elementary School, but those in the nearby area connected with it. I could not opt out of being actively committed to improving schools for all children, not just our own. I could not opt out of being involved in improving the community for all people, not just our family.

There were challenges, to be sure. There was a time when shopping was very difficult. I resented that Kroger (the last national chain in Detroit) left the city. And, while there are still "food deserts" in Detroit without viable stores featuring fresh produce, there are three good locally owned supermarkets available to us, one within walking distance and the other two less than five minutes away by car. We also walk to Eastern Market on most Saturdays.

When I was asked why I live in the city, I learned to say, "I live in downtown Detroit and I love it" - and then I took that opportunity to talk about life in Detroit. Some acquaintances couldn't believe my positive attitude. The other side of this was and is the difficulty we have had explaining to people from other places - and other countries - why Detroit was (and I admit still is) having problems, and helping others to understand the structural constraints and governmental policies that led to the 1967 riot/rebellion and the difficulties afterward. We have had interesting discussions about recognizing and discussing the perceptions and realities of crime in the city, and, more recently, explaining the bankruptcy and its aftermath.

So, while at one time or another we considered moving elsewhere, for us, the suburban choices never matched the vibrancy and commitment we found among Lafayette Park residents or our desire to be part of the Detroit where I could contribute my skills to improve community life.

UNLIKE THE OTHER ESSAYISTS, CAROL CRONIN AND GLENN WEISFELD CHOSE TO MOVE TO THE CITY OF DETROIT IN 1977, TEN YEARS AFTER THE 1967 DISTURBANCES. THEIR DECISION RAISED EYEBROWS AMONG COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS, BUT THE COUPLE CHOSE TO FIND THE BEST OF WHAT THE CITY HAD TO OFFER, NOT ONLY PARTICIPATING IN ITS REVITALIZATION BUT HELPING TO FURTHER JEWISH LIFE IN THE CITY.

We were delighted by the new possibilities in Detroit, and did not have the burden of panic that many Detroiters carried with them after the fires of the earlier decade. We had our own burdens, from another segregated American city, with its own terrifying public disturbances, but were hopeful about Detroit. We made the conscious decision to have our children to grow up in a diverse community and environment. We bought our home in Lafayette Park, where we have remained for



Miriam Weisfeld and her grandmother, Norma Weisfeld, enjoy a snowy afternoon in the courtyard of Lafayette Park, circa 1984.



"Why would we leave? Our neighborhood was our kibbutz." - Carol Weisfeld

forty years. We raised our daughter here, and she attended the local public school, Chrysler Elementary, for as long as the public-school option was viable for her. We then made the choice to enroll her at the Roeper School in Bloomfield Hills.

All was not perfect. It was hard to persevere during Detroit's long recession. It was also hard for our friends who stayed in Corktown, in Indian Village, or in the University District. Like us, they wanted to stay in their racially integrated neighborhoods. It was hard to maintain the optimism, the energy, and the shared vision that, by working with neighbors, we would improve everyone's quality of life. But small successes keep you going, until one day you begin to see large successes accumulating, and you know that you've made the right choice.

We witnessed Detroit's rebuilding move two steps forward and two steps back with maddening regularity. Then something changed. Detroit moved three steps forward, then four steps forward. There is, at last, a steady stream of investment in the city, in terms of both financial and personal capital.

A few years ago, our daughter was on a business trip to Chicago, having a drink at the bar in the Drake Hotel. A young man nearby asked her where she was from. "Detroit," she said. "Which suburb?" he asked. "No. I grew up in downtown Detroit." A long silence followed, with a look of pity. He said sadly, "Oh, gee. Your parents couldn't get out, huh?" She nearly choked on her drink as she asked him, "What in the world are you talking about?"

She grew up walking with us to the opera, and benefitting from Belle Isle, great museums, and other cultural resources nearby. Most importantly, our Detroit community was always there for us – helping us when we were sick, celebrating when we were happy, and growing from the diversity we offered one another. I think we are the lucky ones, having benefited from this diverse and generous community for forty years. We knew it would happen. This Detroit community always seemed too beautiful and had too much potential for it not to happen.

BETTY AND ALAN SCHENK MOVED TO DETROIT FROM ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY, IN JULY 1966, AFTER HE ACCEPTED A TEACHING JOB AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S LAW SCHOOL. THEY RENTED AN APARTMENT AT 1300 LAFAYETTE EAST, A HIGH-RISE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING LOCATED TO THE IMMEDIATE EAST OF THE DOWNTOWN CORE, AND A TEN-MINUTE COMMUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY. BETTY ACCEPTED AN ASSIGNMENT IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHING SPECIAL EDUCATION. THE COUPLE'S THREE SONS, AS BETTY SHARES, THRIVED BECAUSE OF THE COMMUNITY. IN THIS ESSAY, BETTY DISCUSSES THE CHOICES THEY FACED IN THE WAKE OF THE 1967 DISTURBANCES.

When we moved to Lafayette Park in 1966, we were swept up in the culture of this living example of a successful Model Cities project. It was designed to be an integrated community, with housing that appealed not only to young families like ours, but to singles and the elderly. Walkways led from one end of the community to the other without crossing any streets. We enjoyed our own park and a shopping center with a bank, an A&P supermarket, a dry cleaner, and a "real" deli. Life was good. Our one-bedroom apartment faced the Detroit River and I loved to relax and watch the cargo ships and sailboats on the water.

Our first son was born on May 12, 1967. Two months later, on Sunday, July 23, 1967 – the night the civil disturbances began – Alan went to Chung's Chinese Restaurant on Cass Avenue to pick up dinner. On his drive home, he saw people walking with bloody heads. Into the early hours of Monday morning, we sat with friends who lived on the city side of the building, watching Detroit burn. The fires began on the west side and moved east, creating a ring of fire around the city. Sleep was not possible. When it was time to walk our dog, armed guards accompanied us.

While the "ring of fire" was my first visual of how the riot was affecting Detroit, the most bizarre sight involved the Playboy Club on Jefferson Avenue at Rivard. There was a large sign on the building that was a mosaic of pastel colors with a large Playboy bunny in the center. From our window, with the curfew in effect, I looked out onto Jefferson Avenue. There, against deserted streets and sidewalks, was an Army tank slowly moving past the Playboy Club sign. It was a contrast of the most vivid sort, and the vision is as clear today as it was that night.

The riots ended, but the city did not return to normal. There were investigations and debates on the future of Detroit. Some of the damaged areas were cleaned up, but there was not much rebuilding. As months and years passed, vacant land remained where businesses once thrived.

Alan and I decided it was time to move – but not out of the city. We were not deterred by the aftermath of the rebellion. We believed our Lafayette Park neighborhood was an ideal place to live and raise a family. Filled with friendly, caring, thoughtful neighbors, Lafayette Park was a place where kids could talk to adults and know that their voices and ideas would be heard and appreciated. They also knew that they could rely on adult neighbors if they needed help.

We tried to lease a two-bedroom apartment in our building, but then we expanded our search – all the way across the street to the mid-century townhouses designed by architect Mies van der Rohe. Of course, when things are bad they often get worse. The *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* went on strike at the same time. It became impossible for sellers to advertise homes for sale. These factors all came together to "prove" to many city dwellers that Detroit was no longer viable.



The Schenk brothers: Todd, CEO of Jewish Social Service Agency in Rockville, MD; Jeffrey, Assistant U.S. Attorney in San Jose, CA; and Matthew, partner, Ottenwess, Taweel and Schenk PLC in Detroit. Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Schenk

Over the years, we struggled with some of the consequences of our commitment to the city. Shopping mostly meant driving in one direction or another for fifteen to thirty minutes. We also

had to create some things that were missing. We were founding members of Congregation T'chayah, and later of the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit. As synagogue founders who held services just steps away from the site of Detroit's first Jewish congregation founded in 1850, we were honored to continue the Jewish presence in the city, and we learned many new skills, including how to conduct religious services.

Schools are one of the main challenges for families living in Detroit, and schools were the one issue that caused us to consider leaving the city. On rare occasions, we looked at houses in the suburbs. Each time, we returned home resolved to solve the schooling issue rather than move. Our sons attended Chrysler Elementary School. The educational inequity in the city led us to send our sons to University Liggett in Grosse Pointe for middle school. The education they received, in twelve-to-fifteen-student classes, was excellent. Friendships at Liggett were somewhat challenging. Some parents would not allow their children to come to Detroit even for a birthday party. They thought we lived in a ghetto. The parents who did allow their children to attend were more-than-pleasantly surprised when they dropped off or picked up their children and saw our neighborhood and home.

What could never be taught in the schools were the life lessons our sons gained by living and being educated in a culturally, racially, and economically diverse community. At Cass Technical High School, our sons were taught by some of the best – and worst – teachers in their educational experiences. At Cass they witnessed the struggles of their classmates, many of whom depended on an unreliable and inefficient public transportation system to get to and from school. Some of those classmates were responsible for the care of younger siblings, and some came from homes with deep family issues that complicated home life. Many families lost teens to drugs or violence. We found the students' frequently demonstrated determination to succeed to be truly inspiring.

Our sons faced challenges that helped them become caring and insightful adults. They grew up being in the minority, whether as white students in Detroit or as Jewish students in Grosse Pointe. Their classmates did not live nearby, and they did not have access to organized neighborhood sports. But they learned to be compassionate and understanding of the struggles faced by many families, and they are able to communicate effectively and easily with people from diverse backgrounds.

In spite of Detroit's negative (until recently) reputation, it was and is possible to raise a family in Detroit. Alan and I remain committed to a diverse America that educates its children in diverse environments. This education starts in the home and neighborhood and expands outward.

We are thrilled to see the changes that are happening in Detroit. The city is exciting and upbeat. Every week there are new restaurants, new businesses, and additional activities. Young families are moving into Lafayette Park, organizing play groups, and working together to solve educational issues for their children. The cycle is being repeated. Hopefully, this time, it will result in a true renaissance of Detroit.

MARCIA AND MARTIN BAUM MET IN 1964, AFTER THEIR GRADUATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND DURING MARTIN'S FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL AND MARCIA'S FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING. THEY MARRIED IN 1965 AND REMAINED IN ANN ARBOR, A COMMUNITY RICH IN INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION, ARTISTRY, CREATIVITY, POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY (BUT NOT RACIAL DIVERSITY, MARTIN ACKNOWLEDGES). IN 1966, THEY LEFT ANN ARBOR FOR DETROIT, ULTIMATELY SETTLING IN THE SHERWOOD FOREST SECTION. HERE IS THEIR STORY, WRITTEN BY MARTIN BAUM.

Fresh out of college we fell in love, and we are still in love. After our marriage, during my second year of law school, as Marcia had her new job as a researcher at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, and after the birth of our daughter Monica, we realized that Ann Arbor was a bit too idealistic and too far removed from the reality of how the world lived. We wanted to raise our children (our son Eric was born five years later) in a racially and ethnically diverse community, so we returned to our roots in Detroit.

We were both born in Detroit. I grew up in the Dexter-Davison neighborhood, and I attended McCullough Elementary and Durfee Junior High schools. Marcia lived in Northwest Detroit near Curtis and Meyers. She attended Schulze Elementary and spent a year at Mumford High School. Sometime around 1956, both of our families left the city for the suburbs. Marcia's parents got a great deal on a new house in Southfield. My family moved to Oak Park because "the neighborhood was changing." (My brother and I, at ages fourteen and twelve, were old enough to know what that meant; our younger brother Jack was only eight). The effects of that decision stayed with me, and as adults Marcia and I were determined not to go down that path.

In 1966, we moved to the St. Martins Cooperative Apartments in Northwest Detroit, near Outer Drive and Meyers, renting a small, two-bedroom apartment for ninety-five dollars a month. What a bargain! A year later, on July 23, the 1967 rebellion began. We heard tanks rumbling down Livernois, only a mile away. After succumbing to our parents' pleas, we reluctantly spent two nights at my in-laws' home, but that was enough. We returned to our apartment – it was where we belonged.

A year later, as we began looking to purchase a home, white flight was rampant. Home prices in the city were dropping like a hot knife through butter. Our parents begged us to buy a home in the suburbs where it was "safer," but we chose not to succumb to their fears. We were young and idealistic and determined to make our own way.

In November 1968, we bought a home in the Sherwood Forest³ neighborhood for \$31,000 on land contract. What a bargain! The house was built in 1927, and its 4,500 square feet included four bedrooms and two-and-a-half baths, plus a full attic and basement. This year Sherwood Forest is celebrating one hundred years since its incorporation as a subdivision, and we will have lived here for a year shy of half of it.

We were both raised as Conservative Jews, and were imbued with strong Jewish values and ethics. We brought that with us to Detroit. Living a Jewish life in Detroit was no longer as easy as it was for those who moved to Oak Park or Southfield. We had few Jewish neighbors, and we could not walk to shul or



to the kosher butcher or deli, but we found Congregation T'Chiyah, a Detroit Reconstructionist synagogue. Interestingly, by the time I left home for college, my father had joined the *baal teshuva* movement and had become an Orthodox Jew. You can imagine his surprise and disappointment over our affiliation with a Reconstructionist congregation. Looking back, I think maybe he thought Detroit did that to us. From our point of view, if it did, it did us a favor. In Reconstructionism, we found the values and ethics with which we were raised, only more streamlined, and with enough Hebrew content to keep me bound to our traditions.

While our main concerns were schools and crime, we quickly found that the best part about living in the city was, and is, the unifying concept of community. There are sidewalks to walk from door to door. Neighbors know each other and look out for each other, supplementing services that the city itself cannot provide. There is a connection between the people and the neighborhoods that I have been told does not exist in the suburbs. The term “that’s not my problem” is completely foreign to us.

We expected that we would send our children to private schools, and we did. Both children walked to a storefront bilingual French-English private school whose founder and principal was Jack Faxon, who was then a state senator. It was a wonderful experience. Eric stayed in the private-school system, but Monica graduated from Renaissance High School, then located in the former Catholic Central High School building.

As for crime, we took comfort in Sherwood Forest’s private security patrol. But we also paid a price, literally. Not only were our homeowners- and auto-insurance rates higher than those in the suburbs, we also paid higher taxes for fewer public services. We rationalized that the money we saved by moving into our home would somehow offset those expenses, and the beauty of the neighborhood would provide psychic income. Time has proven us right.

There were days when we struggled with our choice, but in the end, I believe we grew as a family from our diverse and generous community. We are the lucky ones. The recent revival of the city has encouraged investment, and young people are flocking to the neighborhoods. Like us half a century ago, they are seeking an urban experience while living in a caring, sharing, and involved community. The movement has snowballed and gained momentum. It is palpable. In one place can you both perform *tikkun olam* and reap its benefits.

KATHLEEN AND EVERT STRAUS MOVED TO DETROIT FROM NEW YORK IN 1952.

HE BEGAN WORK AT A CIGAR COMPANY WHILE KATHLEEN STAYED HOME WITH THE CHILDREN. IN TIME, BOTH BECAME INTRICATELY INVOLVED IN DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SHORTLY AFTER THE 1967 SUMMER DISTURBANCES, EVERT PASSED AWAY, LEAVING KATHLEEN WITH TWO CHILDREN AND DECISIONS TO MAKE ABOUT WHERE TO LIVE, WORK, AND RAISE HER FAMILY.

My late husband, Evert Straus, and I moved to Detroit in July 1952, along with our eighteen-month-old baby, Peter. Evert was recruited to the area by the DWG Cigar Corporation. We thought it would be an interesting experience, as Detroit was thriving thanks to the robust automotive industry. The population in the city then was close to two million.

As was common in the 1950s, I stayed home with Peter, while Evert went to work. We found it easy to make friends with our neighbors at the St. Martins Cooperative Apartments, located near Meyers Road and Outer Drive, in Northwest Detroit.

There were many young families who, like us, were new to the city. Since I knew very little about Detroit, I looked up the League of Women Voters in the phone book (remember those?) and learned of a meeting near where we lived. That meeting gave me my "Detroit start." I not only learned about Detroit history and government, but also made wonderful friends. I was a member of the urban affairs committee of the Jewish Community Council (now JCRC-AJC). Evert and I joined Temple Beth El where he became active in the Temple Beth El Brotherhood. I also became involved in public-school millage campaigns. One thing led to another and, in 1961, I became president of the Detroit League of Women Voters, which led to my meeting Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh after his surprise election that year⁴.

When Evert and I began looking to purchase a home, we wanted to stay in the city and we settled on a house on Sorrento, in Northwest Detroit, not far from our apartment. By then, I had given birth to our daughter Barbara, who was born in 1956. I became president of the Schulze School PTA and Evert was serving on the citizen-advisory committee to build a new junior high school on Wyoming Avenue. Beaubien Junior High School, which opened shortly after Evert's death, was a much-needed solution to the overcrowding at Mumford High School, which was serving grades nine to twelve.

Our involvement kept us close to city affairs, and even though some of our neighbors and friends had begun moving to the suburbs, primarily seeking larger homes to accommodate their growing families, we stayed. Before July 1967, our block had lost several white and Jewish families. By the end of the

next year, while most of our closest friends remained in Detroit, we were one of only two white families still on our block – the other was a non-Jewish family across the street.

It was quite a year for us: 1967 saw the uprising in the city, the war in Israel, and then, on Thanksgiving Day, the loss of my husband, who died of a heart attack. As you can imagine, Evert's death was a terrible shock to us, but I never



Kathleen Straus's daughter, Barbara with her then-boy-friend and now-husband, Scott Stanfield, circa 1975.

considered moving out of the city. Wanting to keep things as "normal" as possible for our children, we remained in our family home. Peter was a student at Mumford and Barbara was in elementary school.

In 1966, I ran the KIDS (Keep Improving Detroit Schools) campaign, which was the first successful millage campaign after previous attempts had been defeated. I felt deeply committed to Detroit.

Following Evert's death, Mayor Cavanagh offered me a position which I started in January 1968 (I had had a leadership role in his 1965 re-election campaign). About six months later, he appointed me director of the Model Neighborhoods Program, which was funded by President Lyndon B. Johnson's Model Cities Program, part of LBJ's war on poverty. In Detroit, it covered nine square miles of the inner city, including the area so badly affected by the devastation of the riot/rebellion. The program focused on education, housing, and job training, with a major emphasis on citizen involvement and empowerment of local residents.

My next position was with SEMCOG. Even though the job did not require me to live in Detroit, I stayed in my home on Sorrento. In 1975, with Peter teaching in San Francisco and Barbara away at college, I decided to sell my house. I chose to remain in the city, moving to an apartment near Outer Drive and Wyoming, and I stayed there for the next thirty years. During that time, I led a variety of campaigns, serving in various professional and civic capacities, including service to the Detroit Public Schools as director of a coalition of business, labor, and community groups, DPS staff, and parents to oversee the peaceful implementation of court-ordered desegregation – an effort that proved

worthwhile and successful. In 1992, I ran for and began serving on the State Board of Education.

Finally, in 2004, after friends – both white and black – urged me to leave, I succumbed. I moved to the suburb of Bloomfield Township, and felt like a fish out of water. In 2008, I married Walter Shapero, and was delighted to move back to Detroit. We live on Jefferson Avenue across from Belle Isle, and we both enjoy our view of the Detroit River, attending Detroit Symphony Orchestra concerts in the open-air spaces, and taking advantage of all that Detroit has to offer. I'm thrilled to be in this great city, where I belong.

THE HONORABLE WALTER SHAPERO, BORN IN 1930 TO HAROLD AND ETTA SHAPERO, HAS LIVED IN THE CITY OF DETROIT (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HIS YEARS IN LAW SCHOOL) HIS ENTIRE LIFE, EVEN, AS HE WROTE, WHEN HE WAS A "REVERSE COMMUTER," ONE WHO LIVED IN THE CITY WHILE WORKING IN THE SUBURBS. NOW RETIRED, JUDGE SHAPERO LOOKS BACK ON HIS DECISION TO STAY, WRITING THAT HE GAINED A LOT OF SATISFACTION BY STAYING IN THE CITY, ESPECIALLY WHEN MANY THOUGHT IT WAS "A SINKING SHIP"

In 1952, I was going into my second year of law school at the University of Virginia. A year later, I married Mary Einstein who, while she had been raised largely by her paternal grandparents in Western Pennsylvania, had deep ties to the city of Detroit by way of being the granddaughter of Rabbi Leo Franklin of Temple Beth El, Detroit's then-largest reform congregation.

We spent our first married summer in Detroit, living in the third-floor home of the Reverend Tracy Pullman of the Unitarian Church, on Longfellow in the Boston-Edison⁵ district. Pullman was a friend and neighbor of Rabbi Franklin, who lived around the block.

I was born in Detroit and grew up on Atkinson, the next street over, and some two-and-a-half blocks to the west of the now-famous or infamous intersection of 12th and Clairmount, the site of the start of the 1967 rebellions. Mary and I then lived in an apartment on Second Avenue, not far from Clairmount (from which I would usually take the Woodward streetcar to work downtown) and soon we were able to purchase a home in Green Acres, a beautiful residential section in Northwest Detroit, where we lived for around eight years. Then, in 1964, our family, which by then included two boys aged ten and seven, moved seven blocks south to Sherwood Forest, into a house I lived in until 2008.



The Shapero family stands in front of their Sherwood Forest home. Pictured are (l to r): Rick, Mary, Walter, Etta and Harold (parents of Walter), and David Shapero. Chaim, David Shapero's son, stands in front.

Mary became involved with both the Detroit League of Women Voters and Planned Parenthood of Michigan, eventually becoming Planned Parenthood's president. She loved to raise money for good causes. In pursuit of that skill, she served for a number of years as development director for the Friends of the Detroit Public Library. Later, together with her friend Paula Gordin, widow of the murdered Bert Gordin, executive director of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, she formed a fundraising business to assist nonprofit clients.

I initially practiced law with a small family firm that later merged with Butzel Long, established in 1854 and one of Michigan's oldest law firms. In 1968, I was appointed as a U.S. bankruptcy judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, where I served until my retirement in late 2016. During my judicial tenure I served mostly in Detroit, but for a number of years I presided in Bay City and Flint, and spent time as a visiting judge in Delaware, all the while maintaining my home in Detroit.

Our family often spent summers on Williams Lake in Oakland County, in our cottage that had been in the family since the mid-1940s. I would travel to my office in downtown Detroit early in the morning on a then-existing commuter train.

Mary and I gave little thought to leaving the city, both believing that living in and being a part of the city of Detroit was in our genes, notwithstanding the events of 1967. It is true that the substantial part of the Jewish community left during those years, requiring us to travel to go to our temple or to meetings, but the distance did not diminish our involvement. More significantly, however, our area friends, relatives, and Sherwood Forest neighbors, Jew and non-Jew, white and black, by and large believed that one of the answers was to stay put and make integration work by developing and maintaining a strong and active community.

In 1967, my parents were living in the city, in Palmer Woods, in a house they had owned since the 1940s. Mary's aunt Margot Fleischaker and her husband Stanley, a local architect, and Mary's uncle Leo Franklin, an attorney and one of my law partners, were also living in the city, less than a mile from us. My first cousin, E. Bryce Alpern, a pediatrician who made house calls, lived and had his medical office on Parkside at Seven Mile Road, a block and a half from our home. Many, if not most, of our close friends who lived in the city chose to stay.

In 2002, Mary passed away. Our family and the Straus family were long-time friends and I soon started dating Kathleen, who was also widowed. We married in 2008, and Kathleen and I chose to remain in the city. I sold my home in Northwest Detroit and together we moved to Jefferson Avenue, across from Belle Isle.

Considering all of the foregoing, our staying in Detroit was less the product of some liberal outlook or social conscience (though there was some of that) than it was the result of the facts that (1) the people we were close to and the services we availed ourselves of, stayed; (2) our neighborhood and its social and property values remained strong and stable; (3) we anticipated little or no change in the cultural aspects of our lives and the institutions and places we frequented; (4) our previously decided and in-place educational plan for our children (whose only school was and continued to be the Roeper School in Bloomfield Hills) needed no change; and (5) we were just happy and satisfied with our decision. Given these reasons, and the lack of any fear for our physical safety, there was simply no reason to seriously consider moving out of the city.

ENDNOTES

¹ Lafayette Park, a community that includes a number of housing cooperatives, or "co-ops," was conceived by one of the twentieth century's most influential modern architects, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who, together with developer Herbert Greenwald and landscape architect Alfred Caldwell, created one of the first planned urban-renewal projects in the country.

² In 1990, Congregation T'chayah moved to Royal Oak. Many of the Jewish families who lived in the city reorganized as the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit (RCD).

³ Sherwood Forest, located in the Seven Mile and Livernois area, near Palmer Park, is considered one of Detroit's gems. The neighborhood's winding, tree-lined streets have more than 400 architecturally distinctive homes, many of which date to the 1920s and 1930s.

⁴ At age thirty-three, Jerome Patrick Cavanagh entered the 1961 mayoral race, beating out a crowded slate of eleven candidates. He served as mayor for eight years, until 1970. Early on, many saw him as a John F. Kennedy-type rising star, but he was later blamed for mishandling the 1967 disturbances. He opted not to run again in 1969.

⁵ With homes dating to the early 1900s, the Boston-Edison Historic District is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, known for its impressive mansions. Many Jewish residents lived in the prestigious neighborhood, which consists of more than 900 homes built on four east-west streets: West Boston Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Longfellow Avenue, and Edison Avenue, stretching from Woodward Avenue on the east to Linwood Avenue on the west.

THE DETROIT 1967 COLLECTION

WHY WE CAME BACK

3

A Panel Discussion with Rachel Fine, AJ Aaron,
Gabe Neistein, and Rabbi Ariana Silverman

Moderated By Zak Rosen

“Do you feel safe there?” That was the most oft-asked question of me by family and friends when I moved to Detroit in 2007, after college. A close second was, “Where do you get your groceries?” Ten years later, the notion of a Jewish millennial raised in West Bloomfield moving to Detroit is no longer novel. I rarely get the safety question anymore, and the people who asked about my groceries are now increasingly aware that, in fact, Detroit is not a food desert. (There are around seventy-seven full-service grocery stores in Detroit, according to a 2015 *Detroit News* article). Rabbi Pinson of Chabad of Greater Downtown Detroit estimates between 800 and 1,000 Jews currently live in the city and between 2,000 and 3,000 now spend their working hours downtown. Around 500 Jewish students are enrolled at Wayne State University, according to Hillel of Metro Detroit.



*The panel (standing l to r) Rabbi Ariana Silverman, AJ Aaron, Zak Rosen, Judy Lansky.
Front (l to r) Gabe Neistein, Rachel Fine.*

My Detroit journey began after I graduated from Indiana University in Bloomington. Seeking to launch a career in radio, I got an internship at WDET-FM in Detroit. In 2006, Detroit wasn't inherently compelling to me, but my work at WDET gave me the chance to start meeting people. In 2007, I started a talk show called "Detroit Today," which enabled me to meet dozens of new people each week for two years. I discovered the city's fascinating political, artistic, and cultural history (which didn't get a passing mention during all my years in public school, not far from Detroit proper). After a bit of traveling and living abroad, in 2014, my wife Shira and I bought our home, which was built in 1916, on Detroit's east side.

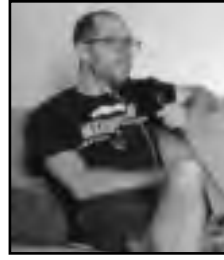
As we Jews continue to settle in Detroit, reversing the migration pattern of our parents or grandparents, we're met with a tangle of questions and contradictions to navigate. How did the white flight of previous generations impact the Detroit we now live in? How is our racial and class privilege bound up in the living conditions of native Detroiters? How can we "help" the city of Detroit and its people flourish without seeming paternalistic? These were among the many questions a group of us "millennials" collectively reckoned with in my living room in June 2017.

In talking about perceptions of Detroit that we heard or grew up with, I recalled my own great-grandfather, my dad's grandfather Henry, who started a scrap business in Detroit in 1927 and later welcomed his sons into the business. They lived on the lower east side of the city, in what was then referred to as the Hastings area, and they started picking up metal and copper and whatever else they could find and sell. From a horse-drawn cargo system they grew that company into what is now Great Lakes Recycling. My father, who was born and raised in Northwest Detroit, grew up without access to monetary wealth (his dad didn't remain in the family business); he was a poor white kid living in an affluent Jewish community.

As an adult, he worked hard to make sure that his children – my sister and I – didn't live the same existence he did. So, while I applaud him for how hard he worked to raise us in the comfort of West Bloomfield, I know that he was thrilled to know that this group of Detroiters sat together on an early summer afternoon to have a conversation about Detroit: its past, its present, and its future. While our opinions are our own and don't necessarily represent those of all young Jews in Detroit, I think they provide a good benchmark of where Jewish Detroiters are heading and the impact and legacy we hope to leave behind. Joining me that afternoon were:



AJ Aaron

Rabbi Arianna Silverman
& Gabe Neistein

Zak Rosen

AJ AARON, twenty-seven, who grew up in West Bloomfield and moved to Ann Arbor as a teenager. AJ's maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather were both born in Detroit, and by the time AJ's parents were born both families had decided to leave the city. After AJ attended school in Chicago, the decision to move back to Detroit was eased after witnessing a group of young Jewish women who lived in the city and who were deeply immersed in social-justice work. Following their lead, AJ moved to Detroit in 2013 and currently resides in Indian Village.

RACHEL FINE, twenty-five, who went to Groves High School and then attended Kalamazoo College. She came to Detroit in 2014 to serve as a fellow with Repair the World, a one-year program in which young adults ages twenty-one to twenty-six address social-justice issues through meaningful volunteering. After completing the fellowship, she chose to stay in the city. She is now employed by Repair the World and lives in Southwest Detroit.

GABE NEISTEIN, thirty, who moved with his family to West Bloomfield when he was in second grade. Since his family wasn't originally from this area, he always felt a disconnect from Detroit's generations-old Jewish families and institutions, but he became very "Detroit-conscious" while attending Michigan State University. He began spending more of his leisure time in the city, and then, after graduating from college, he moved downtown in 2011. He currently lives in Rivertown and plans on staying for the long haul.

RABBI ARIANA SILVERMAN, forty, who grew up in Chicago. She graduated from Harvard University and then from rabbinical school in New York City. She moved to Detroit in 2010 when her husband accepted a position at Wayne State University. They bought their home in 2012 and are raising their two children, both born in the city, in the Woodbridge area. She serves as rabbi at the Isaac M. Agree Downtown Synagogue, which has become a hub for young Detroiters seeking Jewish prayer, fellowship, and social connections.

ZAK: Let's begin with how you came to live in Detroit and when you realized that Detroit was a different kind of place.

ARIANA: We moved to Detroit in 2010 with no family connections or specific expectations, but it was very clear to us that we wanted to live in the city. We both grew up in inner cities; I grew up in the South Side of Chicago and my husband, Justin Long, in the city of Hartford. The Woodbridge area of Detroit reminded us of home. There was a lot of diversity, and it felt like a community. We knew that's where we wanted to be and felt welcomed and wanted.

As you can imagine, when we were moving here everybody thought we were crazy for living in the city. I was working at Temple Kol Ami in West Bloomfield and my congregants fell into one of two categories: They either thought I was really cool (which I had never been accused of before!) or they thought I was really nuts. The expectation, of course, was that we would move (out of the city) as soon as we had children. Our two kids were born in the city of Detroit. When our daughter was born our neighbors on our block included an interfaith family, an interracial family, devout Christians, a same-sex couple, people who depend on state assistance, and business owners. All of them cared about and for our daughter...that's the kind of community I wanted to be a part of, people I wanted her to see and understand as her neighbors.

GABE: Before I moved to the city, my story was cliché – I came downtown for Detroit Tigers games, concerts, and theater, but never really with the intention of staying longer. But, I fell in love with the city and the first opportunity I had to live on my own, I chose to move downtown. Living in the city has been an adventure, and I have grown to love it even more. I want to live here as long as I can, raise kids here.

My dad is from Brooklyn (three generations in Brooklyn) and my mother is from Shreveport, Louisiana, and (they) met in Los Angeles at Hebrew Union College. I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, and then we lived in Milwaukee for a while. But, I really consider myself to have grown up in Michigan, and Detroit is my home.

ZAK: Do you have any family connections to the city – did your parents and grandparents grow up in the city, or have a business here?

RACHEL: My great-grandparents moved to New York during the Holocaust, and then soon came to Detroit and ended up in Northwest Detroit. Both sets of my grandparents, who owned businesses in the city, left for Southfield in



the 1970s. My dad's family owned a furniture store called United Outfitting. I've been here for three years and didn't know where it was until just recently! My grandparents on my mother's side stayed in the city until the mid-1970s, running a wholesale accessory business. They moved to Troy because "their customers wouldn't come downtown anymore."

My relationship to Detroit while I was growing up is similar to Gabe's; I came for sports events. My perception of the city wasn't so much a negative, but more detached and uneducated. Detroit was just the place I said I was from when I was out of town.

I think the most impactful connection to what my family has had in the city is that I run a teen program called Peer Corps, through Repair the World. One of our partners is the Bethel Community Transformation Center and Breakers Covenant Church International (which is located in the historic Temple Beth El building at Woodward and Gladstone). Knowing that my mom and my grandparents spent time in that building while they were growing up is really impactful for me. My mom talks about how she remembers sneaking off into the library, which is now a room with a bunch of bunk beds that I help to fill with teens who stay in the city to do community service. Building relationships with the youth there – watching these teens understand the building that is historically Jewish and now a Christian space – is super interesting.

ZAK: You said you find working at the old Temple Beth El compelling. Can you elaborate?

RACHEL: Every week, after we've finished our community-service work, we gather with all of the teens (Jewish and non) and gather for a prayer, one week saying a Jewish prayer and the next a Christian prayer. We are building relationships that the Repair the World teens – and we talk about this a lot – see as a form of both community service and relationship building. Some of my Jewish youth go to Jewish day schools and may never interact with a person of color in their day-to-day interactions, so watching them create relationships that are interfaith, intercultural, and interracial is amazing. For myself, working with the church staff, I now feel comfortable as an outsider, but it took some time.

You know, being comfortable isn't when you learn the most. I've always learned that being in uncomfortable situations, like when we are having conversations about issues of food justice, education justice, and racial disparities – is hard, but that is what causes change. It is productive discomfort.

ZAK: Maybe we could do a productive discomfort go-around. Are there specific stories you can think of where you felt uncomfortable?

ARIANA: I am thinking a lot about education and schools. Not just schools for my kids, but the question of the impact of white people moving into the city on the school system. My spouse and I want to send our kids to the Detroit Public Schools system schools and we often get asked, “Don’t you want the best education possible for your children?”

Well, yes, every parent does. At the same time, a recent *New York Times* article examined how segregation in the schools is perpetuated by individual choices. If parents with privilege think, “I support public education, but when it comes to my kid, I need to make another choice,” that’s a big part of why some other children don’t get the education they deserve. The Detroit Public Schools need to be improved for all kids, and I want my family to be engaged in even a small part of that change, and not just from the outside, but as parents and students. Nonetheless, I am very aware of what it might mean for my kids. Some kids are more resilient than others, and I don’t know who my kids are going to be at five or ten or fifteen years old. And that is a major source of discomfort. What’s the most productive way for privileged, white, Jewish people to enter the education question in the city of Detroit?

AJ: For me, the discomfort primarily arises from moments of having to confront my whiteness, white privilege, and class background. My experience identifying as a Jew in Detroit has mostly been met with residents who share stories of their families who also live or lived in Northwest Detroit, or that they went to Central High School, the mostly Jewish high school back in the 1930s and the school my grandparents attended.

However, the point in these conversations that ask me to consider and reflect on why city resources are being heavily brought into the neighborhoods that are being populated by more white people than people of color – is uncomfortable. It is because they are talking about me, and my current role in Detroit’s revival. They are asking me why the white bodies they are seeing back in the city aren’t speaking up louder against this unjust division of resources.

I also feel discomfort related to the ways that I will or will not “show up” to support those who have been working for resiliency in this city for decades. By that, I mean I want to use my time and resources to support community organizations that are fighting to stop water shutoffs, to eliminate foreclosures, or to save Detroit Public Schools. I feel like to fight for the city involves confronting racism, and that feels so uncomfortable, but it’s what we are asked to do.

Growing up, I was taught that I was allowed to back out of things. If I was uncomfortable, I could walk away, that there was always an out. Here, Detroiters ask you to lean in; to not step away so fast.

GABE: I think (living here) you feel as an outsider, as somebody who came from the suburbs but now wants to make a life in the city. For me, there was always a sort of safety net, so (if I became uncomfortable) it would be totally normal for me to move to back to the suburbs and buy a house. It would be totally normal for me to say, this was very cool, I had a great experience, I can always come back to these restaurants. But what does it really mean to be a part of this city, to be a resident here? I think that what AJ said, and what Rabbi Silverman has said, comes to, "How do we enter this space and convince our counterparts and fellow residents in the city that we want to be here and make this a community together?" I think there's a distrust here – justifiably so – and we have to be extra-conscious of some of our own actions as a result of some actions of others as rules of thumb.

Is it enough for us to vote in the city, or to pay taxes in the city, or to pay the ridiculous auto insurance here? Do these things make us have shared experiences with people in the city? The issue of regional transit, for example, conceptualizes this and puts it into context for me. I know I could move somewhere, have my car, and transit won't matter so much. But for other people, those who don't have access to a car or don't have access to the services that are in the city, this is an issue that truly matters.

ZAK: I spent a lot of time reporting about a family in Detroit, whom I got to know well. In many ways, they are a typical Detroit family: three generations living together in relative poverty. One of the grandsons was trying to rob someone at gunpoint and that someone turned out to be an undercover police officer who also had a gun. The grandson was shot and killed by the officer. If you tell that story to a long-time Detroiters, they'd be sad but not necessarily surprised. When I hear that story, it's a tragedy I cannot comprehend.

I'm wondering how our lives, and how our grandparents' and parents' lives, are bound up with this family. We didn't make any of the granular decisions that led to this young man dying, but what do the macro-demographic shifts that began during our parents' and grandparents' generations have to do with the systemic cycle of violence and poverty that so many of our neighbors find themselves in? What's our responsibility to this community?

AJ: My heart's flooded with sadness hearing that story. As a kid, I asked my grandparents questions about where their parents immigrated from, but I don't recall asking them about their decision to raise their family in the suburbs. I think a lot about the decision by so many Jews to head north to the suburbs, which led to the emotional severing of our Jewish community's relationship to the people and land of the city of Detroit.

When a community decides that it can no longer withstand the uncertainty of the future of one place, leaving hundreds of thousands of people left to withstand the uncertainty on their own, we have to look back and wonder if caring for ourselves ultimately hurt people too. The loss of investment on many different levels is something I consider and try to think critically about with others in terms of organizing our parents and grandparents to redistribute wealth, if they're capable, back into the city, to invest in this community.

It's been special to meet the local elders who are Jewish who didn't move, who proudly raise their voices to share how "staying put" deeply enhanced their lives. They have been a source of security and inspiration for me on why it's so important to build community. Detroit is a model – Detroiters model the deepest form of connection that I've seen, to one another.

ZAK: One hundred years from now, historians will look at 2017 as a pivotal period, when Detroit Jews returned to the city not to save it, but to be part of its fabric. Today's Detroit Jews will be known as kind neighbors, creative collaborators, and trusted allies in a city striving to uplift all its residents. What do you hope historians write about the legacy of this generation?

GABE: What's always drawn me to Detroit is that it's a very big little town in a lot of ways. You can go to the same places and recognize and see people, like when you go to Eastern Market and see the same people every week. I think Zak's story has become normalized. People from the suburbs see senseless violence on TV and think that is what goes on in Detroit on a day-to-day basis. I hope that this doesn't continue to be normalized. If we want to leave a legacy in this city, maybe we should think about how can we change that for our own generation and people in the suburbs, and how can we start changing some of these systemic issues, like gun violence and poverty.

AJ: That we were patient enough to hear the stories told by our Jewish elders about their hopes and trepidations – and that we take all that wisdom, and feel brave enough to make the changes that we must make to truly build the inclusive, equitable, beloved community and region for Jews and non-Jews. That's the big vision! Maybe small steps that we can be known for include that our synagogue memberships include a stronger commitment to not only prayer but justice work around our region. I really appreciate what Gabe shared about violence – just people generally being hurt in any form being normalized – we have to start removing that cloak of apathy. I hope we are known for that.

ARIANA: It was important to me when we moved here to do things like buy my clothes from female-owned or minority-owned places. I'd buy my clothes from Rachel's Place in Corktown, or The Peacock Room, also owned by another Rachel (Lutz). We get our flowers for Shabbat from our neighbor Sarah's amazing flower farm, Fresh Cut Detroit. Those things matter and will shape Detroit's future. Ultimately, I hope my impact will be helping other families choose to stay in the city and be good partners with our neighbors. The narrative often is that the young people who are living in the city will leave when they are going to have children, and I don't want that to be the case. I want people to, if they choose to find a partner, choose to have that partner stay here. And choose to buy a home here. And if they choose to have children, raise their kids in the city. That's something I am very passionate about because I think that's what is going to change the story, the narrative of Jewish Detroit. Is this a time that people are coming because it's cool and they want to hang out in the city? Or is this a time when they're saying I want to make this my home, a home for my kids, and a home for every child raised in Detroit?

RACHEL: I hope my generation's legacy will be one that involves building connections and relationships with those who never left the city. I want people to know that we are here and invested in the city of Detroit and want it to succeed. This success doesn't mean we are creating our own communities, it means we are working with the people who are here and whose stories mean so much to create communities together.

Featured Article

SAMUEL ELKIN OF MOUNT CLEMENS

By Ann Faulkner and Elana Elkin

The story of Samuel Elkin, an immigrant who became one of the most successful businessmen in Mount Clemens, Michigan, begins in 1907, in Hartford, Connecticut. While delivering furniture with a horse and wagon, he was thrown from the wagon, severely injuring his hip. Hearing of the curative powers of the mineral waters of Mount Clemens, Elkin traveled there, opened a grocery store, and went on to open the Elkin House. In 1911, Sam Elkin became president of what would become Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses.

Samuel Elkes, son of Nachman Elkes,^{1,2} was born in Grodno, Russia, in approximately 1875. Grodno was originally a part of Lithuania, later annexed by Russia.³ While Samuel was still young, his parents moved to Warsaw, Poland, where he attended school through the seventh grade. At that time, Warsaw had the largest Jewish community in Europe.⁴

From Warsaw, the Elkes family moved to Lodz, in central Poland, which had a large Jewish population. When Samuel and his sister Esther were teenagers, their mother (name unknown) died. Their father married a second wife, Rachel, who bore him five more children. Seeking a better life for his family, Nachman took Samuel and Esther to New York City. Rachel and the rest of Nachman's young and growing second family remained behind in Europe. The three Elkeses immigrated to the United States, sailing from Hamburg in November 1890.⁵ Upon entry into the United States, the family's surname was changed from Elkes to Elkin. Nachman remained in the United States for approximately three years before returning to Europe to be with his wife and family.



Samuel Elkes, born in Russia, came to Mount Clemens, Michigan, in 1910 and opened his first rooming house. In 1911 he became one of the founders of Beth Tephilath Synagogue.



Samuel and his sister remained in the United States. Esther would marry Harry Chaimowitz and settle in Brooklyn, where she gave birth to eleven children between 1896 and 1914. Her youngest child, Eve Chaimowitz Lieberman, died on March 13, 2012, in West Bloomfield, Michigan, at the age of ninety-eight. Esther died on February 7, 1963, and is buried in Mt. Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, New York.



Gathered together in New York are Nachman Elkin (front left), his son Samuel (back middle), daughter Esther, and Esther's husband Harry Chaimowitz (back right). Circa 1890.

Samuel spent only four years in New York City, working as a shirt maker in the Gotham shirt shops.⁶ From New York, Samuel moved to Springfield, Massachusetts, where he most likely worked as an upholsterer with his uncle Louis Elkin.⁷ On January 12, 1896, Samuel married Yetta Adelson.⁸ Yetta, often called Etta, was born in March 1878 in Russia.⁹ Samuel was naturalized in October 1897, while living at 46 Emery Street in Springfield.¹⁰

A short time later, the family moved to Connecticut, settling in Hartford where, in June 1900, they were renting part of a three-family home.¹¹ Samuel, an upholsterer by trade, placed this advertisement in the 1899 Directory of Hartford: "S. Elkin, Practical Upholsterer. Parlor suits, couches, lounges etc. made to order. Furniture Re- Upholstered and Repaired. Cushion Work and Slip Covers a Specialty. Send postal and we will call to give an estimate. Orders called for and delivered free of charge within 10 miles. Rear 1077 Main St., Hartford, Conn."¹²

While living in Hartford, Samuel and Yetta had three sons: Max in 1898,¹³ Daniel in 1900,¹⁴ and Joseph in 1904.¹⁵ Sometime in 1907, while delivering furniture with a horse and wagon, his horse bolted and Samuel was thrown from the wagon seat. He hit his hip on a sharp piece of rock jutting out of the sand pile on which he landed,¹⁶ and the injury temporarily crippled him.

Having heard of the curative powers of the mineral waters of Mount Clemens, Michigan, Samuel sold his Hartford business and left for Mount Clemens and the baths.¹⁷ It was written that at the time he arrived in "Bath City," his injury was so bad that he was able to get around only on crutches or in a



Samuel Elkin with his wife Yetta and sons Max and Daniel, taken about 1901 in Hartford, Connecticut.

wheelchair. With only \$200 in his possession and a wife and three children to support, it was necessary that he go to work, so he opened a grocery store on South Avenue and waited on his customers from his wheelchair.¹⁸

The next year, for ten dollars a month, Elkin rented a ten-room house on South Broadway at the foot of Church Street. He opened it as a hotel, which he operated during the summer, and he worked for the People's Outfitting Company of Detroit during the winter.¹⁹ His business flourished, and by 1910 he had rented a larger home at 50 S. Gratiot, which he opened as the Elkin House.^{20,21} His fourth son, William Louis, was born in April of that year.^{22,23}



Catering to his Jewish patrons, Samuel Elkin's first hotel offered kosher food and comfortable surroundings.

BETH TEPHILATH MOSES

As tourism and the Jewish population grew in Mount Clemens, so did the demand for a synagogue. In 1908, a meeting was held to discuss the possibility of establishing a house of worship. Sam Elkin was one of twelve in attendance.²⁴ In 1911, Elkin and Max Fleischer began the process of chartering Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses.²⁵ Elkin served as its first president, and Fleischer as vice president. In 1912, the congregation purchased a house at 74 S. Walnut Street, with the intention of converting the building into a synagogue and a Hebrew school.²⁶ The services were held there until a new building was completed in 1921.

By 1913-1914, Elkin, loyal to his Jewish faith, had achieved a prominence that allowed him wide acquaintance and universal respect among the gentiles of his home city. His ability to mix with others was one of the assets that made him the successful hotel man that he was.²⁷ He moved his operation to 41 S. Gratiot and reopened it as the Elkin's Hotel.²⁸



Beth Tephilath Moses dates to 1909 when a group of Jewish residents began worshipping at a home on S. Walnut Street in Mount Clemens. In 1911, Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses was officially founded. This building was opened in 1921 to serve the congregation and is still in use today.

Elkin soon hit a period of difficult and troubling times. On March 18, 1915, his second son, Daniel, died at St. Joseph Sanitarium of acute peritonitis²⁹ and was buried at Machpelah Cemetery in Ferndale. The following year, on August 13, the same condition took his beloved Yetta, who died at Harper Hospital in Detroit.³⁰ Beth Tephilath Moses did not yet have a cemetery, so Yetta most likely was buried at the Beth David Cemetery on Van Dyke in Detroit. Yetta's obituary, published in the *Mount Clemens Monitor* on August 18, 1915, stated in part that "Mrs. Elkin was a most excellent woman whose friendships were widely distributed. She leaves a husband to whom she was a valuable help."

A NEW BEGINNING

Samuel later fell in love with Sarah Schlesinger, a hotel guest and divorcée who was fifteen years his junior. The couple married on March 3, 1919, before Samuel N. Young, a municipal judge in Lucas County, Ohio.³¹ Sarah had one child, Cecile, from a previous marriage, and Cecile assumed the Elkin surname.³² On June 23, 1920, Samuel and Sarah's only biological child together, Evelyn, was born.³³ Years later, Evelyn recalled her father as a loving and caring man who would do anything for his children. She recalled growing up in the

hotel where the family resided and her father throwing her elaborate birthday parties. Wanting only the best for his children, Samuel also was able to send at least two of his children to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His son William was a member of the Jewish fraternity Tau Delta Phi and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1933.³⁴

In April 1920, Samuel applied for a passport to travel to Poland to bring his father, step-mother, half-sisters, brothers-in-law, and niece from Lodz to Mount Clemens. At that time, Samuel was serving as a Macomb County Deputy Sheriff under William Caldwell, in addition to operating the Elkin's Hotel. As part of his passport application, no fewer than three prominent Mount Clemens citizens submitted affidavits attesting to his character. They included Macomb County Sheriff William Caldwell, Paul J. Ulrich of Ulrich Saving Bank, and Macomb County Treasurer Herman Behnke. In addition, Elkin submitted an affidavit explaining his reason for wanting a passport:

"Affiant says he is now operating two large hotels in the city of Mount Clemens: that he employs thirty-five people and his business is growing very fast; that he has for a long time been desirous of getting his people in the United States, and they have for a number of years been equally desirous of coming; that he has corresponded with them a good deal recently concerning their condition in life in Poland, and that he learns from them that they have suffered greatly in body and mind on account of lack of sufficient food and clothing and losses on account of the great war. That during the war, he sent ten to fifteen parcels to them containing clothing and food, and he has sent money to them at various times but little if any of money or clothing or food ever reached its destination."³⁵



*Evelyn Elkin (Heller) in
Mount Clemens, circa 1925.*

Elkin sailed from New York on September 4, 1920, on the *Coronia*.³⁶ Two months later, on November 11, Samuel and his parents, Nachman and Rachel Elkin, made the return trip from Copenhagen to New York, arriving on November 24. Thanks to Elkin's financial success, the three traveled in first class.³⁷ The rest of his family – two single half-sisters, Sonia and Ella; two married half-sisters, Senda and Anna, and their husbands, Isaak Rathaus and Max Botstein; and a niece, Anna – sailed in third class on a different ship, the *S.S. Lapland*, arriving a week earlier. They were met by their sister and brother-in-law Esther and Harry Chaimowitz. Reunited, the whole family traveled to Mount Clemens, intending to settle there. After only a short period of time, for

reasons unknown, all four of Samuel's half-sisters and their families decided to return to New York, where they remained throughout the rest of their lives. By taking the actions he did, Samuel Elkin likely saved nine people from the future horror of World War II in Europe.

Nachman Elkin, who had been a banker in Poland, died the following July after only six months in the United States, and he became one of the first to be laid to rest in the newly established Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery near Grosbeck and Cass in nearby Clinton Township. Following his death, Rachel returned to New York to be closer to her children. She died on January 4, 1931, and was buried in Mt. Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, New York.



A certificate signed by Herman Behnke, Macomb County treasurer, testifying to Elkin's good character.

ELKIN'S HOTEL

By 1921, Elkin's Hotel had expanded significantly, having taken over the properties of the Hotel Rudolph, operated by Mrs. Lena Lichtenstein at 33 S. Gratiot, and the former Wappner Hotel at 41 S. Gratiot. Elkin and his oldest son Max were listed as the proprietors.³⁸ Sam Elkin was considered a genial host who could speak eight languages: French, German, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Spanish, English, and Hebrew.³⁹ But Samuel Elkin wasn't done. His dream of owning one of the largest

hotels in the city became a reality in 1925, with his purchase of the prestigious Olympia Hotel and Bath House at 68-84 Cass Avenue from Thomas Matthews.⁴⁰ Proudly, Elkin moved his family residence from the Elkin's Hotel to the Olympia, with his uncle, Louis Elkin, remaining behind at the Elkin's Hotel as steward.⁴¹

After the purchase of the Olympia, the Elkin Hotel & Bath Company was incorporated with Samuel Elkin as president, his son Max Elkin as vice president, and another son, Joseph Elkin, as secretary-treasurer.⁴² Business was very good, and the number of guests staying at the Olympia increased dramatically each year. In 1928, Sam Elkin wrote that "we expect 1928 to be



(Left) Catering to Bath City USA's Jewish visitors, the strictly kosher Elkin's Hotel was known for personal service, and was also the scene of several notable boxing matches, with purses ranging from five to twenty-five dollars.

(Right) In 1925, Sam Elkin purchased the Olympia Hotel and Bath House.

the best season ever experienced in Olympia's history.⁴³

His success had to be attributed to his style of welcome. Elkin was fond of providing people with a good time, and he hosted many parties for his guests and others at the Olympia. Among the festivities were several wedding parties. On such occasions, nothing was too good for his guests.⁴⁴

But, in late 1928, Elkin began to experience stomach and throat problems. Troubled by his declining health for more than a year, he died of acute bronchitis in Mount Clemens on September 13, 1929.^{45,46} He was buried the same day near his father in Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery.⁴⁷

Following his death, Sarah Elkin inherited the business, but she soon clashed with Max, who also owned part of the business. Shortly thereafter, she took her two daughters and left Mount Clemens for New York City.⁴⁸ Max Elkin continued to work in the hotel business until he sold his last property, the Colonial Hotel, in May 1966, and moved out of the area, never to return. Max died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in February 1985.

Many of Samuel's relatives followed him to Mount Clemens to work in his hotels, remaining there throughout their lives. Those buried in Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery are Louis Elkin (d. Aug 24, 1932) and his daughters, Mary Elkin (d. April 17, 1952) and Dorothy Elkin Clepps (d. June 19, 1996), and first cousins Leon Mandell (d. July 14, 1994) and Dr. Jack Elkin (d. May 24, 1975).

From humble beginnings, Samuel Elkin built a series of successful hotel businesses and died a wealthy man. He is



Samuel Elkin's grave in Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery. The praying hands signify him as a descendent of the priestly class of Kohanim, whose gravestones usually bear the symbol of two hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread out in a priestly blessing.

remembered not only as a kind and generous man who employed many people including his own family, but as a beloved community member who cared deeply about his Mount Clemens neighbors and community.

On the day following his death, the *Mount Clemens Daily Leader* published a lengthy obituary and tribute that read, in part:

During his career as a hotel man Mr. Elkin had made a host of friends throughout the country and abroad as well. He was essentially a self-made man having started his business career on the basis of an education limited to working through the seventh grade in the Warsaw school system in Poland. Having climbed the ladder to success from the lowest rungs, he had a keen sympathy for the unfortunate and impoverished and was known for his charitable work among the Jewish people throughout the country but especially in the east.

The same dynamic energy that he brought to his own career, he gave to the promotion of civic projects. He always felt that the local hotel and bath industry was not properly appreciated and he travelled a good deal in Europe and through the United States investigating the curative powers of other places both in this country and abroad, arriving at the conviction that here in Mt. Clemens was a health center that offered advantages that none of the others possessed in such full measure. Wherever he went, he preached the gospel of the local bath industry and, in order to secure the appreciation of it by local residents, he offered free baths to any of them who desired to take them. That experiment was conducted over a period of weeks in 1927 and many local residents enjoyed their first mineral bath at that time.

Primarily he was a family man, giving the best of himself to his wife and children. He made a great deal of birthdays and always saw that the natal anniversaries of his children were properly celebrated regardless of where the children were when the holiday rolled around. His heart was big enough to include in full measure of his affection his stepdaughters, [sic] Evelyn and Cecile, to whom he was devoted. He was a great lover of children and put himself out to see that they enjoyed themselves. He was a prominent member of the Mt. Clemens Kiwanis club, of the Eagles, Elks, and Woodmen of the World. He is survived by Mrs. Elkins, her two daughters, and his three sons, Max, Joseph and William, the second of whom was joint manager of the Olympia with his father....



In this newspaper ad, proprietor Max Elkin proudly boasts of his hotel's amenities and of the curative power of the Mount Clemens mineral baths.

AUTHOR BIOS



*Growing up in a family that valued history, **Ann Faulkner** often accompanied her mother to the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit, and to cemeteries and courthouses. She graduated from Albion College, and worked for Macomb County government prior to her retirement in 2003. She is a charter member of the Macomb County Genealogy Group and has served as the chairperson since 2009, and is a volunteer with the Mount Clemens Public Library's Local History and Genealogy Room.*



***Elana Elkin** is thrilled to share the story of her relative, Samuel Elkin, whose story she memorized as a young child. Elana, interested in history and genealogy since age twelve, has compiled an extensive family tree and traced her Jewish roots back to eighteenth century Poland and Russia. Elana is pursuing her PhD in toxicology from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.*

ENDNOTES

¹ The date of his birth is in question. His 1896 marriage record indicates that he was born in 1873 as does his obituary. His 1897 naturalization record states that he was born on Sept 12 1874 Russia. The 1900 Census lists his birth as Jan 1877, and the 1910 census lists his age as 32 (abt 1878). Both his 1918 Draft Registration Card and his 1919 marriage license give the birthdate of Oct 16 1878, but his 1920 passport states that he was born Oct 16 1875 in Grodno, Russia. His death certificate states that he was born Sept 28 1875 in Lodz Poland. Births were recorded by the synagogues during this period in Russia with a copy going to the government. The records of the synagogues were burned during the war, but copies might be found housed in a governmental archives.

² Samuel Elkin passport application, Passport Applications, January 2 1906 – March 31 1925, NARA Series: M1490; Roll #: 1228 (Ancestry.com), #42020 May 24 1920.

³ JewishGen Belarus SIG, http://www.jewishgen.org/belarus/info_history_of_grodno.htm

⁴ Jewish Virtual Library, Lodz Ghetto History and Overview, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/lodz.html>

⁵ Samuel Elkin passport application, Passport Applications, 2 January 1906 – 31 March 1925, NARA Series: M1490; Roll #: 1228 (Ancestry.com), #42020 14 May 1920.

⁶ Op. cit., *Mount Clemens Daily Leader* 14 September 1929, pg.1-2.

⁷ Louis Elkin was a younger brother of Samuel's father Nachman Elkin. Louis was born 20 June 1873, in Grodno, Russia, and he died 24 August 1932, at a hospital in Detroit. He was buried in Grave 3, Lot 5, Section D of Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery.

⁸ Samuel Elkin and Ita Adelson marriage, Springfield Marriages 1896 p.688, Massachusetts Marriages 1841-1915 digital image (FamilySearch.org). Samuel Elkin 22 of Springfield, upholsterer b Russia son of Nathan and Rosa Elkin to Ita Adelson of Springfield 20 b Russia daughter of Schmae and Chane Adelson were married 12 January 1896, at Springfield, by Rabbi Harris Kopelman.

⁹ Samuel Elkin household, 1900 Census Hartford 2nd Ward, Hartford County, Connecticut

ED:149 SH:6B, digital image (Ancestry.com)

¹⁰ Samuel Elkin naturalization, U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes 1791-1992, digital image of index card, (Ancestry.com). Naturalization Certificate # 1544 25 October 1897 Springfield Mass Police Court Hampden County.

¹¹ Op. cit., 1900 Census Hartford 2nd Ward, Hartford County, Connecticut ED:149 SH:6B, digital image (Ancestry.com). Boarding with the family in 1900 was Israel Adelson, who may have been Yetta's brother.

¹² Geer's Hartford City Directory 1899, p.444; digital image (Ancestry.com)

¹³ Max Elkin World War I Draft Registration (Ancestry.com). Macomb Co. 1918. Max was born 13 June 1898.

¹⁴ Daniel Elkin death certificate, Michigan Certificate of Death (SeekingMichigan.org). Daniel Elkin born 13 June 1900, Connecticut, son of Samuel Elkin and Etta Adelson.

¹⁵ Samuel Elkin household, 1920 Census Mount Clemens, Macomb County Michigan ED:74 SH:13B (Ancestry.com), Joe Elkin 15 Conn. The obituary for Joseph published in the Macomb Daily, 28 January 1958 gives his age as 53.

¹⁶ Op. cit., *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, 14 September 1929, p. 1-2.

¹⁷ Geer's Hartford (CT) Directory Aug 1909 p.173. Elkins Upholstering Co furniture repr, 31 Church, Solomon Meyerson, Morris Wiener.

¹⁸ Op. cit., *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, 14 September 1929, p. 1-2.

¹⁹ "Sam Elkin Came to be Cured and Saw Advantages" Pageant of Progress, Section 4 p. 10, Nellis Newspapers, July 1928.

²⁰ Sim Elkins household, 1910 Census Macomb Co, Mount Clemens ED:69 SH:1B 16 April 1910 (FamilySearch.org). 50 S Gratiot, Sim Elkins age 31 m1-14y Russia-Polish "immig 1881 hotel keeper rents hotel, Yetta 31 m1-14y 8ch 3 alive Russia-Polish", Max 12 NY, Daniel 9 NY, Joseph 6(4?) NY.

²¹ Mount Clemens City Directory 1911-12, p.76. Elkin House, 50 S. Gratiot.

²² William Louis Elkin birth record, Macomb County Index & Record of Births E, p.5.

²³ Op. cit., 1910 Census Macomb Co, Mount Clemens ED:69 SH:1B 16 April 1910 (FamilySearch.org). Yetta had given birth to 8 children, 3 now alive.

²⁴ David Schwartz, *Mount Clemens and the Jewish People of Mount Clemens*, Paper submitted to the graduate council of Wayne State University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of education degree, 1959, p. 17. Mount Clemens Public Library.

²⁵ "Beth Tephilath Moses, Macomb County's Only Synagogue Remains Strong, Vibrant and Alive." *Michigan Jewish History* Vol.50 Fall 2010, p. 16-17.

²⁶ David Schwartz, *Mount Clemens and the Jewish People of Mount Clemens*, Paper submitted to the graduate council of Wayne State University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a master of education degree, 1959, p. 19. Mount Clemens Public Library.

²⁷ Op. cit., *Mount Clemens Daily Leader* 14 September 1929, p.1-2.

²⁸ Mount Clemens City Directory 1913-14, p.82. Samuel Elkin proprietor of the Elkins Hotel. p.29 33 S Gratiot The New National managed by I A Hartung, 34 S Gratiot The Wappner, 40 S Gratiot Dr. A Bertran Allen, Samuel Elkin, 41 S Gratiot Elkins Hotel.

²⁹ Daniel Elkin Death Certificate, Michigan Certificate of Death (SeekingMichigan.org). Daniel Elkin died March 18 1915 at St. Joseph Sanitarium in Mount Clemens of Acute Peritonitis, Born 13 June 1900 CT son of Samuel Elkin & Etta Adelson both born Russia, burial 18 March 1915 Detroit, informant Samuel Elkin.

³⁰ Michigan Certificate of Death (SeekingMichigan.org). Mrs Ethel (sic) Elkin died 13 August 1916 at Harper Hospital Detroit of General Peritonitis. Burial 13 August 1916 Beth David. Informant Samuel Elkin, Mount Clemens.

³¹ Samuel Elkin and Sara Schlesinger marriage, Ohio Marriages 1789-1994, digital image (FamilySearch.org). Sara was born 15 November 1890 New York City, the daughter of Gabriel Schlesinger and Rose Elbogen. Sara was divorced from Leo Stutzel. He was a hotelman and she a stenographer, the residence of both parties was recorded as Detroit. Samuel named his parents as Nathan Elkin and Rosa Elkin..

³² Cecile was born about 1914 in California, probably the daughter of Leo Stutzel. Strangely Evelyn was not born until 1921, well after Sam and Sarah were married, yet she is referred to as

her daughter and his stepdaughter.

³³ Elana Elkin visited Evelyn Elkin Heller at her home in Washington, D.C., in 2002 where she conducted an oral history with her.

³⁴ *Michiganensian*, 1933. Regents of the University of Michigan

³⁵ Samuel Elkin Passport 42020 24 May 1920, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; Passport Applications, 2 January 1906 – 31 March 1925, NARA Series: M1490; Roll #: 1228 (Ancestry.com).

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Samuel Elkin, Nachman Elkin, Rachel Elkin entry: SS Frederick VIII ship manifest sailing from Copenhagen 11 November 1920 arriving at New York 24 Nov 1920. Microfilm Serial: T715; Roll: 2879; New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 (Ancestry.com).

³⁸ Mount Clemens City Directory 1921-1922, p.90. Elkins Hotel 33-37-41 S. Gratiot Ave. p.27 33 S. Gratiot Elkins Hotel, 34 S Gratiot Wappner Hotel, 37 S Gratiot not listed; 40 S. Gratiot The Allenel;

³⁹ Op. Cit., Pageant of Progress, Section 4 p. 10, Nellis Newspapers, July 1928.

⁴⁰ Macomb County Register of Deeds SuperIndex, (<http://deeds.macombgov.org/>).

Liber 223 p. 396, Thomas & Madelyn C Matthews to Samuel & Max Elkin, 1925.

⁴¹ Mount Clemens City Directory 1926. p.104.

⁴² Macomb County Register of Deeds SuperIndex, (<http://deeds.macombgov.org/>). Liber 223 p. 399, Samuel & Max Elkin to Elkin Hotel & Bath Company, 1925; Liber 224 p. 604, Samuel Elkin, Sarah Elkin & Max Elkin to Elkin Hotel & Bath Company, 1925.

⁴³ "Mt. Clemens Hotel Men Predict A Banner Season For 1928," Pageant of Progress, Section 4 p. 2, Nellis Newspapers, July 1928.

⁴⁴ Beth Tephilath Moses, Macomb County's Only Synagogue Remains Strong, Vibrant and Alive. *Michigan Jewish History* Vol.50 Fall 2010, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Op. cit., Mount Clemens Daily Leader 14 September 1929, p.1-2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁷ Samuel Elkin death, Macomb County Index & Record of Deaths, Samuel died 13 September 1929 Mount Clemens of acute bronchitis, age 53y 11m 15d, son of Nachman Elkin.

⁴⁸ Samuel Elkin burial, Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery, Clinton Township, Michigan Burial Records, p.1, Mount Clemens Public Library. He died 13 July 1929 and buried in grave 4, lot D, Sec. 6.

Historical Tidbits

1907: Wolf Himelhoch opened the Himelhoch's department store on Woodward Avenue next to the J. L. Hudson Company department store, and across the street from B. Siegel, the largest women's ready-to-wear apparel store between Detroit and Chicago. By 1957, Himelhoch's had some 600 employees with multiple locations. In 1979, the Himelhoch's chain came to a close.

2007: In August, the Frankel Jewish Academy moved into a new 50,000-square-foot facility located on the upper level of the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield. The Jewish day high school planted its roots a decade earlier, in 1997, when a group of parents met to discuss the concept. Three years later, in 2000, the first class of ninth and tenth graders began taking classes in the basement of the JCC.

Feature Article

CLOVER HILL PARK CEMETERY: A HISTORY

By Sharon Lipton

In 2018, Clover Hill Park Cemetery will mark its 100th anniversary. The cemetery, located in Birmingham, was founded by the early leaders of Detroit's Congregation Shaarey Zedek. One of twenty-five Jewish cemeteries in the area, Clover Hill Park Cemetery connects more than three generations of metro Detroiters.

In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, seventeen followers of traditional Judaism withdrew from the Bet El Society, Detroit's first Jewish congregation, which had adopted the reform style of worship in 1860, to found the Shaarey Zedek Society. Soon after, as was the custom of Jewish congregations, land was acquired for a cemetery. The parcel, on Smith Street in Detroit¹, measured 2.2 acres and was deeded on February 5, 1862, to Samuel Fleishman and Issac Parchalsky, acting as agents for the Shaarey Zedek Society. One hundred fifty years later, the tales of the residents of Beth Olem Cemetery, often referred to as the Smith Street Cemetery, and of its successor, Clover Hill Park Cemetery, are important historical records of the story of Jewish Detroit.



At Clover Hill Park Cemetery's inception, a grand entrance was envisioned, as shown in this pen-and-ink drawing (left) distributed to members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in 1919. The contrasting present-day photograph shows the ornamental ironwork gates, designed with the twelve tribes of Israel, and the massive Indiana limestone pillars at the cemetery entrance.

Although the name of the first person interred in Beth Olem cemetery has been lost, the oldest documented burial was Harris Levy, who was born in 1825 and died in 1857. The oldest surviving tombstone is dated 1876, but the name on the headstone is unreadable. Sometime around 1881, Congregation B'nai Israel (founded at that time by a group of former Shaarey Zedek members), also referred to as the Mullet Street Synagogue, purchased an adjacent strip of land, and Shaarey Zedek added another parcel in 1896. The greatest number of burials at Beth Olem took place between 1890 and 1920. Of the 1,100 gravesites at Beth Olem, most were of Shaarey Zedek members, but since the cemetery was open to the community, some of those interred were not congregants.

As Congregation Shaarey Zedek (CSZ) grew, especially after the influx of immigrants in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it became clear that additional land was needed to accommodate the congregation's long-term needs. Two obstacles impeded this goal: First, the land surrounding the cemetery was sold to the Dodge Brothers Company, which in 1910 opened the Dodge Main factory; and second, a Hamtramck zoning change prohibited the usage of additional land for burials. Any chance of expanding the cemetery was gone².

SECURING CLOVER HILL

Unable to expand, and with a Jewish community migrating west and north, CSZ and other congregations used the Machpelah Cemetery in Ferndale, but disagreements on matters of cemetery policy led CSZ president David W. Simon in 1916 to task David S. Zemon, Isaac Shetzer, and Joseph H. Ehrlich to find land for a new cemetery. The property needed to be large enough to allow burials for two hundred years hence, and it should be in a location accessible to members of the local Jewish community.

They found the ideal property in what was then Troy Township and is now Birmingham. Fifty acres of undeveloped land, barren but for a few trees, was platted as the proposed Clover Hill residential subdivision, on the north side of Fourteen Mile Road just east of Woodward Avenue, the main artery between Detroit and Pontiac. On August 15, 1918, a special meeting was called by John Truesdell, the Troy Township chairman of the board of health, to consider the question of changing the property to Clover Hill Cemetery. The Troy Township board approved the change.

David S. Zemon, chairman of the cemetery board, immediately began to lead the monumental task of overseeing the work of John A. Wendorph, a landscape architect charged with creating the layout of the cemetery's roads and gravesite sections. Synagogue officers David W. Simons and Abraham Jacobs were ex-officio members of the cemetery board. The original board



*This is very much how the cemetery looked shortly after its 1919 opening.
The view is looking southward, across 14 Mile Road, which was then a dirt road.
The farmhouse is on the opposite side of 14 Mile Road.*

members were Joseph Wetsman, William Friedman, Joseph H. Ehrlich, David R. Stocker, Jacob Nathan, and Benjamin B. Jacob. Among their priorities was to plan for and plant a variety of hardwood trees, shrubs, and water features to ensure a peaceful, park-like atmosphere.

The original vision, as stated in 1918 by the founders of the cemetery, said in part:

It is the earnest aim and ambition of Congregation Shaarey Zedek to adequately provide what has long been recognized as a most pressing, even vital need – a modern, high grade cemetery that will provide a last resting place in the midst of beautiful surroundings, with assurance that it will for all time be maintained as a source of comfort and sacred attractiveness to those who are left behind. In this purpose, we believe that we shall succeed for we have bound ourselves, one and all to carrying out the ideas and ideals embraced by the creation of this cemetery....

Clover Hill Park Cemetery opened in 1919. The first burial, on July 10, 1919, was Adolph Blumberg. His brother, Morris Blumberg, had purchased the lot two days earlier. Adolph, aged sixty, was buried in Section 6, Lot 19. Meanwhile, although Beth Olem remained an active cemetery, burials became fewer and the cemetery fell into disrepair. The last burial was conducted in 1948.



On September 20, 1934, the board voted to purchase the southeast corner lot at Woodward and Fourteen Mile Road for \$1,250, for the purpose of erecting a directional sign pointing toward the cemetery. Although the property was sold in the late 1960s, the sale agreement included retaining the signage in perpetuity.

Clover Hill's general plan, as described in the 1919 Rules and Regulations, was that "the fifty acres comprising Clover Hill Park Cemetery contemplates a beautiful landscape scheme, with thousands of flowering bushes and shrubs, attractive boulevards and lawns. Trees have been planted in abundance and five acres have been devoted exclusively to entrance park purposes. The beautiful little lake, the artistic fountain, the footpaths skirted by shrubbery and beds of flowers, all combine in a most pleasing and enduring effect."

The cemetery's artesian wells provide the water for the grass and trees. Since it is untreated water, one can see the effects of natural chemicals on the gravestones. More than 300 trees are on the property. An arborist looks after the trees, ensures the health of the vegetation, plants additional trees as necessary, and prepares new sections with paths and trees.

A SEPARATE ENTITY SAFEGUARDED FOR THE FUTURE

Though CSZ is the deeded owner of the cemetery, synagogue leaders created a unique scenario for the management of the cemetery. The Clover Hill Park Cemetery board of trustees is empowered with the independent fiscal and operational responsibility of the cemetery. To ensure its independence, CSZ adopted an amendment to its by-laws:

Section 2, Article XIX: The construction, development, operation, management, and maintenance of said cemetery is vested in nine Cemetery Trustees.

It is interesting to note that no candidate or nominee for a seat on the board of trustees "shall be eligible for nomination if he shall have attained the age of

seventy-five years (Section 2,a).” The section further elaborates that any member who reaches the age of seventy-five must vacate his position as trustee, but “Each Trustee in office upon attaining the age of seventy-five shall be designated as Trustee Emeritus and shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges and duties of Trustees, except voting rights (Section 2,c).” Leonard Baruch, executive director emeritus of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, said, “The quality of the cemetery board members has always ensured the integrity of the cemetery.” The Days of Remembrance, a special prayer service, began under his tenure, to coincide with the High Holidays and the Days of Atonement when visiting loved ones was customary. This tradition continues and has been expanded to twice a year – once in the fall and once in the spring.

On September 27, 1923, the congregation passed a resolution establishing a Perpetual Trust Fund that seeks to “obtain an income to insure the perpetual upkeep and maintenance of the cemetery in a proper state of preservation and attractiveness.” The resolution calls for twenty-five percent of all sales of burial lots, from members and non-members (and twenty-five percent of the collections from the sold but unpaid burial lots), be deposited into a fund. The net income from the rigidly controlled Perpetual Trust Fund is used only for maintenance and care of the cemetery.

Other sections of the by-laws deal with matters of management and access:

- Section 12 provides for cemetery trustees to have broad discretion in the management and disposition of the property of the cemetery, including the right to permit the interment of poor and worthy deceased persons without requiring payment for burial lots or services.
- Section 20 states that the cemetery is operated as a traditional Jewish cemetery, specifically: “Clover Hill Park Cemetery shall be operated in accordance with the traditional Jewish faith.” The policy requires decedents have a taharah (ritual bath), be dressed in *takhrihim* (shrouds), and use a wooden casket. The rabbi of the synagogue has been designated the *mara d’atra*, the religious leader responsible for *halacha*, the entire body of Jewish law and traditions comprising the laws of the Bible (as transcribed in the legal portion of the Talmud and any legal codes amending or modifying traditional precepts to conform to contemporary conditions) and is responsible for all religious and halachic questions that may arise at the cemetery.

Prior to 1991, burials were restricted to Jews only. In 1991 the definition of who could be buried at Clover Hill was changed to include “Jews by choice,” i.e., those who have converted, thus making the cemetery more inclusive. To further react to the needs of the congregation and the community, in 2009,

after a conducting a two-year study and working with Rabbi Joseph Krakoff and Rabbi Eric Yanoff, the cemetery board voted to allow non-Jewish spouses to be buried next to Jewish spouses. The cemetery board also designated Section 27 as an interfaith religiously blended family section. This section responded to the needs of blended families in a way that maintains the traditional requirements of Jewish burial while allowing for the comfort of those who have suffered a loss. At the same time, they opened Section 2E for cremations. As executive director Ralph Zuckman stated in a *Detroit Jewish News* article, September 3, 2009, "The biggest issue was to preserve the holy ground of the cemetery and still accommodate those who feel part of our community."

From 1918 through the early 1990s, Clover Hill Park Cemetery lots could be sold only to CSZ members or those related to members. In the early 1990s the cemetery was opened to the community, and non-congregants also were welcome to purchase plots.

MAUSOLEUMS AND MONUMENTS

According to traditional Jewish burial practices, Jews must be buried with other Jews, and be buried in the ground. Adhering to this tradition is why most Detroit-area Jewish cemeteries did not – and do not – allow mausoleums. Clover Hill's original prospectus and regulations allowed for the construction of mausoleums, and two were built. Plans and specifications had to be submitted to the cemetery board for approval and the owners had to provide an endowment for the permanent care and maintenance of their structures. After these two structures were completed, Rabbi Abraham M. Hershman (who officiated beginning in 1907 and served for nearly four decades), with the consent of the board, decided that Clover Hill would not allow further mausoleum construction and would adhere to traditional Jewish burial practices.

The question of mausoleum construction was raised again in the 1990s. In a letter to Rabbi Irwin Groner, dated May 24, 1994, Andrew M. Phythian, then superintendent of Clover Hill, wrote, "Nowhere in the cemetery records does it indicate under whose authority these mausoleums were constructed. However, judging from the wording on the sales contract dated 4/21/27, a copy of which I have enclosed, would indicate that this lot was sold specifically for the erection of the mausoleum. To my knowledge this is the only contract written by the square foot rather than by burial site."

The history of the families and why and how they came to erect mausoleums has been lost. Max and Bluma Schreiber commissioned the first; it was completed in June of 1923. Cemetery records indicate that the remains of Max, Bluma, and Solomon Schreiber were disinterred from earth burials and entombed on May 28, 1924. Alex and Bluma Schreiber also purchased

approximately thirty-six traditional burial sites adjacent to the mausoleum; a great many of these sites are now occupied by Schreiber descendants. The Silberstein family erected the second mausoleum, which was completed on July 21, 1927. The building consists of eight crypts. Solomon Silberstein was disinterred and placed in the mausoleum on September 22, 1927.

The Hebrew word *matzevah*, meaning to guard or bear witness, can also refer to a grave marker, monument, headstone, or footstone, all of which are found at Clover Hill. How and where they are placed depends on the specific section in which the person is buried. Each monument, marker, or headstone includes the decedent's name and, depending on the family's choosing, may include dates, Hebrew names, and symbols. Cemetery regulations did specify that "Adult grave markers had to be of uniform dimensions: 12 inches above the ground level, 12 inches thick and 24 inches wide. Lot markers were designated to be 6X6 inches and set even with the lawn level."



This is the monument erected in memory of Rabbi Morris Adler, who served Congregation Shaarey Zedek from 1937 until his death in 1966. The rabbi and his wife, Goldie, are buried in front of the monument.

Family monuments also were subject to specifications. In family lots with four or more graves, the monument must be placed in the center of the lot. In lots of two and three graves, as in Rabbi Adler's, the monument was placed at the head of the lot. All monuments had to be granite or bronze; marble was not permitted because it could not withstand the local climate. The size and shape of the monument remain personal choices and must fall within the guidelines of the section.

THE CLOVER HILL PARK CEMETERY CHAPEL

Jewish law has specific guidelines for the care of a body from death until burial. In Detroit, from the mid-1800s until the early 1900s, Orthodox families relied upon the *chevra kadisha* (holy society) of their synagogue to prepare the body for burial. The ritual was conducted at the deceased person's home. The chevra kadisha performed *tahara* (purification), the ritual washing of the body and wrapping it in a shroud for burial, and would then follow the body as it was transported to the cemetery for burial.

Prior to the 1930s there were few Jewish funeral homes in the Detroit area, so each synagogue had its own chevra kadisha. In 1919, Clover Hill established a chevra kadisha, whose first presidents were Joseph Ehrlich and Isaac Saulson. It was an affiliate of the synagogue and was funded by the cemetery. In the 1970s, CSZ's chevra kadisha stopped performing tahara rituals when Cantor Sidney Ruby formed a community chevra kadisha.

In 1921, on Memorial Day, Clover Hill Park Cemetery's leaders gathered to lay the cornerstone for a cemetery chapel designed by noted Detroit architect George V. Pottle. The lower level contained a tahara room for the ritual preparation of a body, and, to provide for the mitzvah of *shemira*, in which a *shomer* – an observant Jew – stays with the body and recites *tehilem* (psalms) until burial, the chapel had a small apartment on the upper level with a portal that allowed viewing from upstairs. When looking at the back wall of the chapel today, one can see a small opening that allowed the shomer to see the deceased's casket. Since the Detroit area now has three Jewish funeral homes, there is no longer a need for the tahara room at the chapel, so it has been dismantled.

The main level of the chapel is where funeral services have been and continue to be held. Wooden pews allow for seating of up to 200, and leaded-glass windows shower light on the mourners. To the left of the podium is a plaque honoring six young men from Congregation Shaarey Zedek who gave their lives in World War II: Robert Blumberg, Mordechai Grossman, Lawrence Hertzberg, Myron Rosenthal, Morton A. Silverman, and Raymond Zussman. The inscription under the names reads, "Swifter than eagles they flew to their missions and stronger than lions they fought."

In 1993, to commemorate the cemetery's seventy-fifth anniversary, a rededication ceremony was held on September 12. Mandell Berman, Jacob Keidan, Kitty Shetzer Rudner, Judith Levin Cantor, and Miriam Levin Friedman, all descendants of the founders, participated in the event. Other distinguished descendants taking part in the program included Dr. Gertrude Zemon Gass, Dorothy Davidson Gerson, and Marjory Saulson. As was the founders' vision, Clover Hill Park Cemetery, with its 26,000 gravesites³, is destined to serve the



*(Top): Rabbi Judah P. Levin and David Simons preside over the cornerstone-laying ceremony, held on Memorial Day 1921.
(Middle): The 14 Mile Road entrance to Clover Hill Park Cemetery.
(Bottom): Congregation Shaarey Zedek's Boy Scout troop members were among those who participated in the chapel dedication.*



In the 1990s, Clover Hill Park Cemetery retained Robert Steinberg as its first executive director. Ralph Zuckman, pictured here, was hired in 2003 and remains in that position.

Jewish community for at least another hundred years. Recent upgrades and updates to the cemetery have only enhanced its beauty and function. In 2001, for example, an additional ten acres were purchased from the Grimaldi family to be used as a maintenance area, thus freeing up other parts of the cemetery for use as burial ground.

In 2006, an administration building was opened and named in honor of Mandell Berman, who served as a member of the Clover Hill Park Cemetery board of trustees from 1963 to 1993 (at which time he became a trustee emeritus). In 2007, the chapel at Clover Hill was rededicated as the Davidson-Hermelin chapel in honor of William Davidson and David Hermelin, former congregational presidents and cemetery board members.

In the spirit of the dedicated founders of nearly a century ago, Clover Hill remains a beautiful, park-like resting place for our forefathers and for future generations. With a commitment to Jewish tradition and openness to today's modern Jewish family, Clover Hill Park Cemetery continues to take seriously the mitzvah of *kavod hamet*, honoring the deceased.



Sharon Bader Lipton is the secretary of the Clover Hill Park Cemetery board of directors. She is a past president of National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section, and of the Jewish Community Relations Council. She is currently president of the Michigan Jewish Conference and vice president of National Council of Jewish Women, and she is on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, Women's Philanthropy, and Associates of the American Wing at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Although located in Detroit at the time, Smith Street would be incorporated into the city of Hamtramck.

² General Motors purchased the Dodge Main property from the Chrysler Corporation. Congregation Shaarey Zedek's leadership team of Mandell "Bill" Berman and Manuel Zeckman tirelessly worked to secure the sacred cemetery site. An agreement between General Motors, Mayor Coleman Young representing the City of Detroit, and Congregation Shaarey Zedek was reached that ensured the preservation and maintenance of the cemetery, with Congregation Shaarey Zedek assuming guardianship and responsibility. The cemetery is now a fenced-off area that lies in the center of an industrial complex. The grounds of Beth Olem are open twice a year for public visitation, before Rosh Hashanah and Passover. The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan assists at the openings and leads tours.

³ As of fall 2016, 14,200 of the 26,000 graves are used. 5,000 additional gravesites have been purchased, and 6,800 remain available for purchase.

Feature Article

SOUTH HAVEN: THE CATSKILLS OF THE MIDWEST HAS ITS ROOTS IN FARMING

By Sue Hale and James Ollgaard, Curators

*"One by one, we went away. It's the story of American farms and small towns in the latter half of the twentieth century: we went away." These are the words of Joyce Carol Oates, who, in her book *We Were the Mulvaney's*, shares the tale of a farming family who, from the pinnacle of happiness, slides into a downfall, but transforms and reunites. In many ways, the Mulvaney story provides a parallel for the farmers of South Haven who began with hopes of finding success in farming but discovered that their future, for the most part, lay in creating a series of resort hotels and inns.*

South Haven's first Jewish settlers arrived around 1910. Among them was Abraham Reznik, who had emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1880s from Vilna, Russia, to escape the oppressive Russian regime. Many other Eastern European immigrants arrived in the U.S. during the 1910s and 1920s, only to find themselves in American ghettos instead of cities whose streets were "paved



Abraham Reznik and family, circa early 1920s. Back row (l to r): Charlie Pierce, Meyer Reznik, Lou Cohen, and Dave Leavitt. Front row (l to r): Fannie Reznik Pierce, Hinda Reznik (holding baby), Phyllis Leavitt, Simon Reznik, Abraham Reznik holding Sidney Cohen, Ann Reznik Cohen, and Kate Reznik Leavitt.

with gold.” The Baron de Hirsch Fund had been established in New York in 1891 to assist Jewish immigrants who had an interest in farming, and while many of these immigrants had never farmed, the idea of owning land and being in control of their destiny was appealing, especially since Jews had been forbidden from owning land in Europe. In 1912, Abraham Reznik purchased a forty-acre South Haven farm with a handshake and fifty dollars down.



*Sam and Anna Margolin with their horse team in Wyoming, Michigan in 1910.
Their story epitomizes the Jewish farm-to-resort experience.*

By supporting the farms in their early stages, the Jewish Agricultural Society (JAS) played a major role in the eventual development of the Jewish resort era that began with farm resorts. The society extended loans for land and equipment, and JAS representatives who spoke the immigrants' languages aided the inexperienced farmers in enduring the early hardships they encountered in their new undertaking.

Among those who benefited were the Margolin family. Sam and Anna Margolin lived in Wyoming (near Grand Rapids) and responded to a newspaper ad for homesteading, likely placed by the Jewish Agricultural Society, in 1908. They lacked experience, but desperately wanted to be landowners. After ten years of struggling with a barren environment, the family moved to South Haven and purchased a farm on M-43. The Margolin family raised fruits and vegetables, and rented out rooms. Even though their farm was a success, after six years they traded their farm for a house close to Lake Michigan and they turned the house into a fourteen-room resort. Parents, children, and grandchildren all pitched in to make the Stone Lodge resort successful. Eventually the family moved to Chicago, but returned each summer to open the resort. Stone Lodge closed in 1964 and today is a private residence.

The 1920 United States Census lists statistics for twenty-eight Jewish farmers in South Haven, Casco, and Geneva townships. Local historians estimate that this figure is probably low, and that there may have been more than fifty working farms. Some of those farmers likely left the rural community to work in the city during the winter months. While many of these “agriculturists” developed outstanding orchards and berry and vegetable farms, the difficult farm work and the short growing season caused many of the new farmers to grow disillusioned within the first decade. While a good number of them abandoned or sold their farms, some recognized that changing from a working farm to a farm resort, providing paying guests with rooms and three meals a day, was a better way to make a living. When families from Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Indiana learned that they could vacation in the country for a modest weekly sum, the resort business was off and running, with South Haven at its center.

Abraham Reznik was among those who transitioned from farmer to resort owner. “We had a large farm house surrounded by flourishing orchards,” recalled his son Sy. “At first friends came to visit and left money on the sideboard because they knew we needed it. Later on we took in boarders for \$9.00 a week. We had cows and chickens and geese for ‘schmaltz’ (rendered fat). We made ‘perrines’ (quilts) with their feathers. We served our guests three full meals a day.”

In 1916, Solomon and Bessie Zlatkin bought the eleven-acre Plum Orchard Farm near South Haven. The farm was in poor condition, but Solomon, a brick-layer and laborer, restored the land. Eventually, the Zlatkins also saw opportunity in converting their farm, and in 1926 Zlatkin’s Resort opened with a single building. In 1928, they added a main building with a lobby, main dining room, dance hall, and sleeping rooms. At capacity, the resort could house 120 guests and thirty employees. The resort was home to a beauty contest each summer, sponsored by the B’nai B’rith of South Haven. Zlatkin’s Resort closed in 1955.

The farming region outside of the South Haven city limits was not the only area undergoing change. Just as the farm population recognized change with



*Simon Reznik, circa mid to late 1920s.
One of Sy's jobs at the resort was to lead guests to a swimming hole in the Black River. Another of his duties was to take the visitors to the barns where livestock were kept.*

Jews owning farm land and eventually becoming entrepreneurs, a gradual transformation was also taking place within the city limits. As the second decade of the twentieth century began, a Jewish presence took hold when aging gentile resort owners sold their properties to Jewish families. In addition to being wise entrepreneurial investments, these Jewish resorts provided much-needed vacation opportunities to a segment of society that had been excluded due to blatant (and legal) discrimination. From small beginnings – rooming houses with community kitchens, to comfortable hotels that catered three kosher meals a day, to lavish resorts with elegantly served food and professional entertainment – the heyday of the Jewish resort era was launched, and South Haven became known as the “Catskills of the Midwest.”

MT. PLEASANT LAKESHORE SUBDIVISION

The Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision, a summer-cottage area with individual family cottages located a few miles north of town, is essential to the accurate recording of the Jewish presence in South Haven. The subdivision traces its roots to the Landsmanschaften group, Workmen’s Circle of Chicago. Der Arbeter Ring, or Workmen’s Circle, was founded in New York in 1892 and reached Chicago by 1903. In 1924, Chicago-based Workmen’s Circle members Isadore Deemar, Alex Schwartz, Louis Kusnetz, and Philip Polonsky played a major role in the purchase of Simon Rosenzweig’s farm, located six miles north of South Haven, to build a summer camp for their children. With access to Lake Michigan, the area was chosen over other resort areas in Michigan City or Union Pier, because it was farther from Chicago and thus less costly.



Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision founders, circa 1925, included (l to r) Isadore Deemar, Matthew Vaughn, and Alex Schwartz. The property that became Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision was the Ogden Farm, which was purchased from Matthew Vaughn.

Kamp Kinderland could house 150 children at a time, for two-week sessions. Soon after the camp opened, a second building phase began. Besides a twelve-room building that was to be used by parents who came to visit their children, a series of small cabins was built surrounding the main lodge, forming a resort-like area that became known as The Colony. Within the year, a second expanse of adjacent property was purchased and developed by members of the Workmen's Circle organization, and it was subdivided and named the Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision. The first lots were sold for \$300 each, offered only to members of the Workmen's Circle group. Land-owners built modest summer cottages, and although most of the cottages have since been renovated and upgraded, many still belong to the founding families.



The children of the Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision gather around the flag pole for a flag dedication in front of the well house, circa 1940s.

THE RESORT ERA

During the resort era, which began around 1920 and ended in the 1960s, the population of South Haven consisted of approximately 6,000 permanent residents. In the early years, during the summer months, it was estimated that the population tripled, opening great opportunities for the first generation of Jews to enter the business arena. They became storekeepers, tradesmen, service providers, and restaurant owners who met the specific needs of both the Orthodox Jewish and gentile communities. The stamina and fortitude of these creative Jewish entrepreneurs who lived in and contributed to the community attest to their burning desire to succeed.

Resorts popped up quickly. It is estimated that, at the height of the era, there were between 130 and 140 Jewish-owned resorts, serving some 25,000 Jewish summer guests. Most were run by families, multiple generations



Samson's Resort, circa 1930s. Samson's Resort was originally owned by Max Richards and was purchased in the 1930s by Frank Samson. The resort became popular with "working-class" Jewish vacationers from Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit.

pitching in to make sure the resort stayed clean, efficient, and hospitable, hiring extra help as needed. Samson's Resort, in addition to the family, had a staff of twenty-five, plus their own in-house orchestra. Entertainment was one of the ways resort owners found unique offerings that would attract guests and develop a loyal following. In addition to its orchestra, Samson's hired outside performers through an agent and, in 1935, opened a cabaret with dancing. Each resort featured and heavily promoted their entertainment offerings.



When it opened in the 1880s, the Sea View Summer Hotel was one of the first resorts in the area. Over the years, the property changed ownership numerous times. In 1923, Messrs. Gold and Weissman purchased what had become known as the Angelus Hotel. In 1926, Irving Cohen purchased the hotel, followed by a few more owners until 1943, when Nathan Nudelman purchased the building and changed the name to Nudelman's Angelus Resort Hotel. It closed in the 1960s. Shown in the photo are Nathan and Jennie Nudelman with their daughter Irene, circa 1940s.

Martha Raye and David Rose were among those who performed at Mendelson's. The Michigan Beach Hotel hired a rumba teacher for its 1948 summer season. Dancing under a starlit sky at North Shore Valley every Wednesday and Saturday was the enticement the Yashenovsky family offered to prospective guests.

Some of the resorts, like Mendelson's, began small and expanded over time. David and Eva Mendelson moved from Chicago with their children in 1918 and soon established a rooming house which Eva and her daughters ran. When neighboring resort property became available, the Mendelsons took the leap and entered the resort business, opening what would eventually become Mendelson's Atlantic Resort. Later, the family purchased additional property, making way for a swimming pool and playhouse.



Mendelson's Atlantic Resort, operated by two generations of the Mendelson family for five decades, was among South Haven's most popular resort hotels. The property, sold in 1972, is now a parking lot and condominium complex. Pictured are founders Eva and David Mendelson.

And, of course, there was the allure of Lake Michigan. Access to the beach, whether it was just outside the door or a short walk away, was imperative. Glassman's Resort's pathway to the water was surrounded by stately shade trees, and the resort's golf links, tennis courts, and riding trails were all nearby.

The gradual decline of the resort era can be attributed to several factors. Most importantly, the social landscape changed. Many of the original resort owners' children and grandchildren left for college and never returned. With the help of the GI Bill, soldiers returning after World War II were able to purchase their own homes, so families were no longer stuck in stifling city tenements. When central air conditioning became available to city and suburban dwellers, they no longer found it necessary to run away to the country for cool lake breezes. Finally, in the early 1950s, air travel became increasingly accessible to the mainstream traveler, and the children and grandchildren of

the early resort guests chose other types of vacations, often in far-flung locales that would have been previously unavailable to them. The world had opened up, and a little community on the shores of Lake Michigan became too mundane.

SERVING THE RELIGIOUS NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

In the early years of farm development, even though the farmers and their families were Orthodox and likely gathered in homes for worship and prayer, there was no organized Jewish congregation or place of worship. The Farmer's Synagogue and Community Center, three-and-a-half miles east of town, served the needs of the area's earliest Jews as a place of worship and social activity. In 1922, a second Jewish group, the Hebrew Education Alliance, formed within the city limits. Its purpose was not only to provide a place of worship for permanent residents and resort visitors, but, as the *South Haven Daily Tribune* reported at the time, "...it will be a social and educational center for all people of the Hebrew race to instruct them on social and moral obligations and to teach the best principles of Americanism." A private home was purchased and remodeled to serve as the Alliance's headquarters. In 1923, the Alliance elected a new slate of officers who had the responsibility to oversee the operation of the Hebrew Free School, later adopting its official name, Hebrew Education Alliance. Rabbi Benjamin Jacobson was hired to teach and conduct High Holiday services.



Hebrew-school classes were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons, with Sunday-morning sessions so well attended that several teachers and assistants were needed in addition to the rabbi.

For six years, from 1922 to 1928, the Alliance operated concurrently with the Farmer's Synagogue. Each institution maintained its own building: the Hebrew Education Alliance building, which offered a larger space for social

gatherings, and the Jewish Farmer's Synagogue and Community Center. With farming still a prevalent occupation, the Jewish Agricultural Society held meetings in both places. In November 1927, 160 members of both institutions pooled their assets. Within a week, on July 21, 1929, amidst great excitement and anticipation, members of the newly formed First Hebrew Congregation joyously carried the Torah from the Jewish Farmer's Synagogue and Community Center to the newly built building on the corner of Broadway and Church streets.

The First Hebrew Congregation served and continues to serve as a house of worship, a house of education, and a gathering place for the Jews of South Haven. The congregation has survived the end of the resort era, world wars, and recessions. Rabbis came and went, some staying for a short, six-week period, while others, such as the young Rabbi David Rosenbloom, remained at the pulpit for more than a year. Rabbi Harold Richter arrived around 1954, leading a robust congregation whose Sunday-school classes were over capacity. He was a frequent guest and speaker at many of South Haven's church and community-organization gatherings. Seven years after arriving, Rabbi Richter handed in his resignation. So great were the cries for him to remain that he changed his mind and stayed.

Even though the synagogue never ceased to function, the years after the end of the resort era were hard on the congregation. With no funds to pay a rabbi or to update and maintain the synagogue, the building suffered. But in the early 1990s, the Jewish presence in South Haven increased, and so did interest in the synagogue being a center for Jewish life.

Ben Teitel served as general manager and co-owner (with his in-laws) of the Mendelson's Atlantic Resort. His wife, Harriett, was the gracious hostess who greeted guests in the dining room. After Harriett's death in 1964, Ben became involved in real-estate development in South Haven. The risky gamble paid off, and before his death in 1985, Teitel established the Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust to benefit thousands of Jewish elderly, children, and students in Michigan, Israel, and Ukraine.

That gift and others have allowed the beautiful First Hebrew Congregation to continue to function and even thrive. Summer Sabbath services have resumed, with Orthodox families conducting the services. High Holiday



First Hebrew Congregation remains an active synagogue. In 2014, Ben Teitel's nephew Gerald Cook, pictured, who serves as executor of the Teitel Trust, helped to fund First Hebrew Congregation's restoration of its social hall.

services are well attended by both permanent and summer residents, while Jews from across the country continue to support the synagogue.

The natural landscape of South Haven remains the same, but its man-made features have undergone a transformation. The beaches of white sand, the lake that occasionally acts more like an ocean, the breathtaking sunsets, and the Black River leading to the marinas are all still there for the enjoyment and renewal of weary urbanites. Today, condominiums have replaced the resorts, and bed-and-breakfast establishments attract visitors seeking a getaway. Summer cottages cater to families with children, and larger rentals accommodate multiple-family groups.

There continues to be a Jewish presence throughout South Haven. Though small in number, the community is still represented in the professional and business arenas of the city. During the past decade there has been a steady influx of Jews purchasing condos and buying property on which to renovate or build second homes. The Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision continues to boast a large number of cottages that are occupied by the heirs of that first generation who pioneered second-home ownership.

By the 1960s, the heyday of South Haven's resort era had ended. Many of the resorts had closed, were abandoned, or had even burned down. Then, in the 1980s, South Haven began its strong resurgence as a viable resort town.



Owned by Abe and Bessie Rosenson, Russian immigrants, the Lake Park Resort was considered one of the most beautifully landscaped resorts in the area. Broad, sweeping lawns led to the main building and majestic, old-growth trees dotted the property. Located on North Shore Drive, Lake Park Resort was known for its special attention to children's programs, headed up by son Leonard Rosenson, who as Mark Lenard became a well-known television and movie actor, eventually landing a role as Sarek, father of Mr. Spock (played by Jewish actor Leonard Nimoy), on the "Star Trek" television series.

A PARTIAL LISTING OF THE JEWISH RESORTS OF SOUTH HAVEN

The Hotel Janis	The Biltmore	Sleepy Hollow Resort
Zlatkin's Resort	The White Lodge	Baron's Resort
Zipperstein's Resort	The Kenilworth	Samson's Resort
Lazarowitz Resort	Steuben's Summer Hotel	Lake Park Resort
Colonial Hotel	Ambassador Resort	Lake View Modern Resort
Grand Park Hotel	Glassman's Resort	Weinstein's Resort
The Dewey	Sweet's Resort	Highland Resort
Silver Beach Hotel	Michigan Beach Hotel	Mt. Pleasant Lakeshore Subdivision
The Plaza	Roseline Cottages	Kellman's Resort
The Oakland	Nudelman's Angelus Resort	Gassin's Resort
Mendelson's Atlantic Hotel	Edgemere Park Hotel	Cohon's Koshers Resort
Mendelson's Cottages	North Shore Valley Resort	Reznik's Resort
The Florida Beach	Virginia Beach Hotel	Fidelman's Resort
Stone Lodge Resort	Ringwood Resort	Levin's Resort



Jim Ollgaard is a founding member of the Historical Association of South Haven (HASH) and has held several board positions, including a ten-year tenure as president. He was instrumental in procuring and rehabilitating Hartman School (HASH's present home), and leading the capital campaign to preserve South Haven's lighthouse. Ollgaard has helped curate numerous exhibitions for the Historical Association, the Catskills of the Midwest being one of the most popular and well-traveled.



Sue Hale joined the Historical Association of South Haven in 2003 after organizing the exhibit "From Boardwalks to Crosswalks." Hale has curated a number of exhibitions for the Historical Association and served on the board as vice president for five years. She now serves as administrative coordinator for the organization.

South Haven's Jewish resort community was a microcosm of the larger East Coast "Borscht Belt" phenomenon that included Grossinger's, Kutsher's, and the Pines. The Historical Association of South Haven's exhibit *Catskills of the Midwest - The Jewish Resort Era in South Haven*, which opened in 2016 and will remain on display through 2017, explored this microcosm, how it evolved and subsequently declined over five decades, and the legacy left by these determined, creative, hard-working entrepreneurs who laid the foundation of South Haven's contemporary second-home industry.

For directions and tour information contact the Historical Association of South Haven at hashlibrary@yahoo.com or 269-637-6424.

MICHIGAN WOMEN WHO MADE A Difference

BUILDERS OF THE DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY

MEET MATILDA RABINOWITZ:

A TITAN IN LABOR HISTORY
AND A MICHIGAN WOMAN
WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

BY DAVID ELSILA
INK DRAWINGS BY ROBBIN HENDERSON

In 1913, Matilda Rabinowitz, who later changed her name to Matilda Robbins, stood on a soap box and passionately spoke to Ford Motor Company workers about industrial unionism. Arrested and later released, Rabinowitz would go on to become one of the first women leaders in labor, and a Michigan Woman Who Made a Difference.



Matilda at her desk in Little Falls, her first strike. This drawing, by Robbin Legere Henderson, was taken from a photo in the Walter P. Reuther Library. Robbin Henderson recalls the picture hanging on a wall near Matilda's home-office desk.

On a spring day in 1913, twenty-six-year-old Matilda Rabinowitz stood before Justice L. J. Merique in Highland Park, Michigan, and declared: "I am going to speak to the motor car workers of Detroit if I rot in jail for it."¹

Rabinowitz, an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), was a familiar orator at Ford Motor Company's Highland Park factory, where she would passionately voice to workers her mission about industrial unionism, encouraging them to join the "great industrial band" of the I.W.W. With workers gathered around, Rabinowitz and others would literally mount soap



Matilda on Soap Box: Matilda addresses the workers at the Ford factory in Highland Park, 1913. Arrest: Taken from a photo published in the Detroit Free Press on April 29, 1913. Notice the misspelling of Matilda's surname.



*Eve of Departure. (Standing top left)
Matilda, Bertha, David, Morris.
(Seated front) Sam and Minnie. The
family in Litin, Ukraine, Russian Empire.*

boxes² outside the Ford plant and other auto factories. On April 28, 1913, Highland Park police arrested her while she was speaking on Manchester Street east of Woodward Avenue, next to the Ford factory.

Less than five feet tall and weighing only 112 pounds, this Jewish immigrant, whom the Detroit media described as “the young Russian beauty,”³ had come to America at the age of thirteen, the eldest of her four siblings (two more would be born in the U.S.).⁴ She learned English, and, in the days before sound amplification, strengthened her vocal power to speak out to workers and tell off police when they tried to stop her. Robbin Legere Henderson recalled her grandmother’s “high-pitched, very strong voice,” which

Rabinowitz learned to project while acting on stage in Connecticut.⁵ When Rabinowitz died in 1963, the I.W.W. remembered her as someone who “gave a cop a bitter view of his duties” when he tried to remove her from that soap box in Detroit.”⁶

THE I.W.W.

In 1905, delegates to a convention in Chicago founded the I.W.W., dedicated to building “one big union” in which all workers, regardless of occupation or skill level, could unite in solidarity, a contrast to the craft-based unions that described much of the U.S. labor movement.

Fiercely anti-capitalist, the I.W.W. took the class-conscious position that “the employing class and working class have nothing in common.” Rabinowitz and other I.W.W. organizers became increasingly active in Michigan in 1913 as labor troubles were happening on a number of fronts: 10,000 railroad workers were taking a strike vote, Detroit firefighters had gone to arbitration to win a raise, and the city’s kosher bakers, who served 25,000 Jewish families in Detroit, were on strike against ten bakeries to demand an eight-hour workday.⁷ Businesses and the media warned of the I.W.W.’s “gospel of destruction,” declaring “it is up to the workingmen of Detroit who value their present enviable condition to crush the first efforts of the I.W.W. to spread its hideous propaganda.”⁸

With some 60,000 men employed at Ford, Studebaker, Packard, and other auto companies in 1913, Detroit was well on the road to becoming the nation’s

motor city. Skilled workers like metal polishers and pattern makers were represented by the craft unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, but the majority of workers had no union, and were seen by the I.W.W. as ripe for organizing.

At Ford Motor Company, most workers earned no more than \$2.34 for a nine-hour workday.⁹ (Henry Ford would not announce his five-dollars-a-day plan until the following year.) Rabinowitz, who had been organizing for the I.W.W. in the East and South, and who could speak to workers in English, Russian, and Polish, was assigned to Detroit to help reach workers through the I.W.W.'s Automobile Workers Industrial Union Local 16. When she mounted a soap box at the Ford plant (at one such event denouncing Henry Ford as "the speed-up king"), hundreds (some estimates range up to 3,000) of workers would come out on their lunch hour to hear her and others on Manchester Street. On April 28, 1913, the union sent representatives to the Highland Park City Council to press their right to speak, but, according to the *Detroit Times*, they were ignored: "Police said I.W.W. workers may speak in vacant lots or other semi-public places but will not be allowed to block the streets, while the agitators claim the right of free speech is being invaded."¹⁰

Getting arrested was a nuisance, Rabinowitz felt, but was a small price to pay for trying to reach workers in what she called the "pious precinct of Highland Park."¹¹ Arrests often ended with no charges filed. "The idea was to keep us off Mr. Ford's sacred property and away from the factory gates," she wrote. "So they just locked us up for the night for safekeeping."¹²

Although she worked seven days a week for the union, she, like her contemporary activist Emma Goldman, found time for fun. One Sunday, after being released from jail on a day when the thermometer registered ninety degrees, she skipped a union function to take a ride on the Detroit River with Art, a fellow I.W.W. organizer whose hobby was repairing and painting his old boat. The river breezes were cooling, but the propeller broke and the boat had to be towed to Windsor for repairs, leaving Rabinowitz to return to Detroit by ferry.¹³

Seven weeks after Rabinowitz was arrested in Highland Park, and after leaving town for I.W.W. speaking duties elsewhere, she returned to Detroit. The *Detroit Free Press* of June 21, 1913, reported that "Matilda Rabinowitz, I.W.W. worker who attracted considerable attention because of her activity in Highland Park as an open-air speaker for her organization, arrived in Detroit Friday morning from Pittsburgh to take part in the Studebaker auto employees' strike."¹⁴

SIGHTS ON STUDEBAKER

The strike at Studebaker had erupted when a worker, Dale Schlosser, was fired for what the company said was an unexcused absence. Schlosser had spoken out on behalf of workers who wanted their weekly paychecks reinstated after the company began issuing biweekly checks, making it difficult for some workers to stretch their earnings between pay periods.¹⁵ On June 17, to protest Schlosser's firing, an estimated 3,500 workers left their jobs at the company's plant at the corner of West Jefferson Avenue and Clark Street on Detroit's west side. Several hundred workers marched seven miles to a second Studebaker plant that occupied the old Ford Model T factory at Piquette Avenue and Brush Street in Detroit. From there, they marched to a third Studebaker factory at Franklin and St. Aubin streets, near the Detroit riverfront.

Flushed by their success in mobilizing so many workers for what became the first auto strike in U.S. history, the strikers expanded their demand for a weekly paycheck to include an eight-hour workday. By June 20, hundreds had taken their fight to the Packard Motor Car Co. plant on East Grand Boulevard, where they were attacked by seven mounted police officers and several patrolmen wielding clubs. "The police did not parley with the men, but 'sailed in' and in a trice the men were flying in all directions by hundreds, with at least one I.W.W. officer injured," reported the *Detroit Free Press*.¹⁶

Arriving back in Detroit the next day, Rabinowitz, fresh from organizing pottery workers in East Liverpool, Ohio, and from speaking engagements in Youngstown, Toledo, and Akron, plunged into the Studebaker walkout. "There were never enough organizers, and women organizers were still a novelty," she wrote. "I was near enough to Detroit and I could mount a soap box in a pinch." As at Ford, she faced police efforts to keep her from speaking. "Speakers were pulled off soap boxes and jailed just long enough to disrupt meetings," she wrote; "All cases were dismissed."¹⁷

When Studebaker announced a policy to replace the biweekly paydays with a weekly "draw day" every Friday, where workers could get seventy percent of their wages and the balance later, support for the strike dwindled, and most workers returned to their jobs. Rabinowitz left Detroit shortly thereafter, and never returned. The I.W.W. auto local, she later reflected, "did not have the ability, nor even the comprehension of the magnitude of the job, to organize the masses of workers. And the speakers were not organizers with plans and discipline to help tackle the job. The strike dissipated."¹⁸

Meanwhile, at the Ford factory, three events impacted union activity: First, Henry Ford eliminated lunch-hour privileges so workers could no longer leave the plant to hear speakers; then, in January 1914, he announced a five-dollars-a-day pay plan that doubled the prevailing wage and led thousands of

workers to line up for jobs; finally, employers stepped up their anti-union activities, blacklisting potential union sympathizers from getting jobs. It would be more than twenty years before passage of the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed workers the right to organize unions, and before the United Auto Workers won bargaining rights and contracts at General Motors, Chrysler, and, finally, Ford.

The I.W.W. would not gain a foothold in the auto industry during those intervening years, but the agitation by Matilda Rabinowitz and other I.W.W. organizers for one big union “proved to the union movement that both skilled and unskilled workers in one industry could work together in one union to fight the boss,” asserted the I.W.W. years later.¹⁹

TAUBE GITEL

Matilda Rabinowitz’s strong-willed dedication to industrial unionism may have been forged by both her origins and her family. She was named Taube Gitel Rabinowitz²⁰ when she was born in 1887 in Litin, a Russian Ukraine town of 10,000 where Jews made up forty-one percent of the population.

“We lived on the edge of poverty,” she recalled. “Bread, potatoes, and beet soup were staple diet, all winter.”²¹ When she finished her elementary-school education, there was little to look forward to: Under the czarist regime, only ten percent of spaces in the gymnasia were allotted to Jews, and Jews were barred from the civil service and many professions. Many sought refuge overseas.

In 1895, when she was eight years old, her father, Jacob, a retail beer dealer, slipped out of Russia without a passport and made his way to London, where he worked in a candy factory for one pound a week, sending some money home. From London, he traveled to New York. Coming from a family of artisans, he had picked up some of the knowledge needed to get a job as a metal worker in New York. For the next four years, he saved enough money to pay half the travel costs for his wife and five children to join him, with his metalworkers’ lodge lending him the other half.

The journey for the family was difficult. The Russian government did not



Batchellor Brothers Corset Factory Workers, 1910. Matilda (front-row, middle-left) is wearing a dark dress with a cocked head.

want Jews emigrating. Matilda and her mother and siblings boarded a small boat in the dark of night that ferried them across the Dneiper River to Romania. From there they traveled to Amsterdam and then to Glasgow. Finally, they traveled in steerage on an old ship, the *State of Nebraska*, arriving in New York on December 25, 1900, where they were reunited with Jacob.

In New York, the family lived in a fifth-floor cold-water flat at Orchard and Rivington streets. When she was fourteen, Matilda got her first job, clipping threads off finished shirtwaists, working ten-hour days and half-days on Saturdays for \$2.50 a week. One day she found herself hiding in the bottom of a big packing case, loosely covered with shirtwaist material. Her boss had told her to duck out of sight to avoid being found by an inspector. Lacking the necessary working papers, she risked losing her job had she been found. During the next several years, she would work in a corset factory, in a millinery shop, and as a nurse. But the memories of garment sweatshops stayed with her and inspired her activism. “[In] thousands of tenements, cellars, dingy stores, and decayed lofts in firetrap buildings worked men, women and children all day and night. In bad light, in foul air, they cut and stitched and pressed and packed, and dragged bundles and boxes and pushcarts,” she recalled.²²

FAN THE FLAMES OF DISCONTENT

After the family moved to Connecticut, Matilda and her brother David joined the Socialist Party, which had a strong presence in Bridgeport where the family lived for a while. It was there that she became active with the I.W.W., volunteering in the 1912 “Bread and Roses” strike of women garment workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and later that year in Little Falls, New York, where women textile workers walked out after a wage cut.

Her work in that successful strike led the I.W.W. to hire her. She and fellow I.W.W. organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn became among the first of the union’s women organizers. Rabinowitz was the union’s version of a traveling salesperson, constantly on the road to southern textile mills, to plants in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and to Detroit, whenever and wherever there were signs of labor struggles. “Fan the flames of discontent,” the I.W.W. said on the cover of its *Little Red Song Book*,²³ and that became Matilda’s calling.

Matilda gave birth to her daughter, Vita, in 1919, and made the decision to raise her as a single mother. Because she needed a steady income, she learned typing and shorthand and worked for various employers, including the American Federation of Labor, a fierce rival of the I.W.W., where she edited a small newsletter. A bank, Guaranty Trust, hired her at around the time of the Russian Revolution, thinking that her knowledge of Russian might be useful for translation needs. She maintained her membership in the Socialist Party

and worked in the I.W.W.'s defense of the Boston anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were accused of murder and were facing the death sentence. ("She wasn't so sure about Sacco, but she liked Vanzetti," said granddaughter Henderson, "and Sacco didn't like her or the I.W.W. defense lawyer Fred Moore.")²⁴

Sometime around 1921, the entire family changed its name from Rabinowitz to Robbins. From then on Matilda would be known as Matilda Robbins, the name she used in her byline for the articles that she frequently wrote for the I.W.W.'s newspaper, the *Industrial Worker*, until shortly before her death in January 1963. "There was a great push to be 'Americans' around that time," recalled Henderson. "I don't think it was rejecting their Jewish heritage, but it was taking a name that would sound more 'American.'" Matilda had grown up in a Jewish community in Russia and then in the U.S., and "being exposed to traditions of Jewish dispute and debate probably influenced her a lot," Henderson said. "Her father had been a rabbinical scholar who read both Yiddish and Hebrew," and her mother was observant and kept a kosher home.

While Rabinowitz acknowledged her Jewish heritage, she also described herself as an internationalist. "I feel she would have said she was a pursuer of justice because she was human, not because she was Jewish," said Henderson. "She was not a supporter of Israel, and did not think there should be a theocracy anywhere."²⁵

In the mid-1920s, Rabinowitz moved to St. Louis, where she worked for a co-op organization, and then, with her daughter and I.W.W. counsel Fred Moore, drove to California. In the Los Angeles area, she kept up her work with the Socialist Party, editing its newsletter and serving as the branch's executive secretary. "She was very anti-Stalinist," Henderson said. "She really adhered to democratic socialism, but she didn't care that much about elections; political organizing, she felt, should be done through the workplace." Henderson remembers asking her in 1952 if she would vote for Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate for president. "'I'm voting for [Socialist Party candidate] Darlington Hoopes,' she replied." Rabinowitz described herself as a follower of Eugene Debs, the Socialist Party leader, and proudly identified herself as a Debsian.²⁶

"I HAVE KNOWN INTENSE AND TORMENTING LOVE..."

After settling in California in 1927, Matilda Robbins never moved from the state. She lived in the Los Angeles area, in Fresno, and, after her granddaughter enrolled at the University of California, in Berkeley. She enjoyed the company of university students, and she was visited by old I.W.W. veterans from time to time. She kept journals, wrote poetry, and composed

short stories. Approaching her fifty-ninth birthday, Matilda Robbins reflected on her life up to that point: "I have known intense and tormenting love and companionship and the bitterness of loss; a woman's loneliness; a mother's joy and a mother's grief. But I have not known marital advantages. Neither materially nor socially have I sought them. And because I did not seek these – had no need of them – the physical and emotional satisfaction was lost to me. I suppose that I am one of those undesirable women, from the male standpoint, who wants love and companionship and a child without the all too common enslavement of marriage. I fought a hostile, conventional world for my right to have these and I can claim modest victory."²⁷

Matilda Robbins died on her seventy-sixth birthday, January 9, 1963, from complications of an acute lung infection. "Mother died without suffering," wrote her daughter Vita, acknowledging the many condolences from friends. "There were two days of struggle for breath and finally a tracheotomy. This made breathing possible, but it stopped her voice, and communication became impossible. I grieve over this, especially. For, as all of you are so keenly aware, speech was my mother's life."²⁸

When she passed away, the I.W.W. paid tribute to her by recalling in the *Industrial Worker* the incident in Detroit fifty years earlier when she "gave a cop a bitter view of his duties when he tried unsuccessfully to order her off the soap box from which she was addressing Studebaker employees at a noon-day meeting." For the rest of her life, the I.W.W. said, she "continued 'telling-off' pretentious officials, obsequious and crooked labor leaders, and all others who tried to get between workers and their revolutionary goal." She "could spot a phony a mile away."²⁹

In May 2017, Matilda Robbins was honored in the same city where 104 years earlier she had mounted countless soap boxes to speak to workers. At ceremonies at the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources on the Detroit riverfront, not far from one of the old Studebaker factories in the 1913 strike, Labor's International Hall of Fame inducted her as a "feminist, fighter, writer, organizer." Robbin Legere Henderson was present at the ceremonies, and she was surrounded by five I.W.W. members, each of whom she embraced as a comrade carrying on her grandmother's legacy.



Matilda and her granddaughter Robbin, taken from a 1943 photo.

All images in this article are courtesy of Robbin Legere Henderson.

*Matilda's life story, drawn from the extensive journals on file at Wayne State University's Walter P. Reuther Library, will be published by Cornell University Press under the title *Immigrant Girl, Radical Woman*, and illustrated with 161 line drawings by her granddaughter, whose given name, Robbin, spelled with two b's, is in memory of her grandmother Matilda Robbins.*



David Elsila is a retired editor of UAW's *Solidarity* magazine, a former editor of the *Michigan Teacher* and *American Teacher*, and a contributing author of *The Color of Law*, a biography of attorney Ernest Goodman. A grandson of Finnish immigrants, Elsila lives with his wife, Katie (Deutch) Elsila, in Grosse Pointe Park, where they are members of the Grosse Pointe Jewish Council. He is a board member of the Michigan Labor History Society and the MotorCities National Heritage Area, and he helped coordinate the design and construction of the Labor Legacy Landmark at Detroit's Hart Plaza.



In 2015, JHSM began curating and collecting the biographies of Michigan's Jewish women who helped build and shape our communities. To date, JHSM has amassed some 200 biographies, short and long, of women in business, in education, in religion, in social services, and in leadership. Our collection, which is growing by the day and is being shared on our website (www.michjewishhistory.org), includes profiles of athletes, activists, attorneys, and bubbies. With this issue of *Michigan Jewish History*, we begin sharing some of the more comprehensive biographies with you, our readers.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Nine Arrested in Detroit," *Industrial Worker*, May 15, 1913, p. 1.
- ² Soap companies shipped their product in wooden crates, before development of corrugated cardboard containers. Street speakers used upturned empty crates as handy, portable platforms; hence the term "soap box" speaker.
- ³ See newspaper story quoted in Philip Foner, "History of the Labor Movement in the United States: The Industrial Workers of the World 1905-1917," New York: International Publishers, 1980. Other physical descriptions are in U.S. Citizenship Certificate, Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 2, Folder 2-31, and in *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 13, Chicago: Charles Kerr, July 1912, p. 459, where she is called "a dark-eyed, magnetic little girl."
- ⁴ Matilda's siblings born in Russia included David, Sam, Morris, and Minnie. Herman and Bob were born in the U.S. (all but David were anglicized from the original Jewish given names).
- ⁵ Author's interview with Robbin Legere Henderson, May 30, 2017.
- ⁶ "End of Matilda's Notebook," *Industrial Worker*, undated clipping, Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 2, Folder 2-34.
- ⁷ "Kosher Bakers Declare Strike," *Detroit Times*, April 29, 1913, p. 5, and "Arbitrators Give Firemen Pay Increase," *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1913.
- ⁸ "Preachers of the Gospel of Destruction," *Detroit Free Press*, May 1, 1913, p. 4.
- ⁹ "Why Did Henry Ford Double the Minimum Wage?," *Saturday Evening Post*, January 3, 1914.
- ¹⁰ "Highland Park Police Determine Agitators Shall Not Block Streets," *Detroit Times*, April 29, 1913, p. 7.
- ¹¹ "Notebook Frank Bohn," Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University Box 1, Folder 1-35.
- ¹² Ibid
- ¹³ Ibid
- ¹⁴ "Miss Rabinowitz Talks On Strike," *Detroit Free Press*, June 21, 1913, p. 8.
- ¹⁵ Babson, Steve, and others, "Working Detroit," Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, p. 33.
- ¹⁶ "Auto Strikers in Clash With Police," *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1913, p. 8.
- ¹⁷ "My Story," Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 2, Folder 2-5.
- ¹⁸ "My Story," op. cit. Box 2, Folder 2-3.
- ¹⁹ Autumn Gonzalez, Nicholas DeFilippis, and Donald Fallon, "Celebrating a Rich Tradition of Women in the IWW," *Industrial Worker*, March 13, p. 6.
- ²⁰ Some biographers have written that her given name was Tatiana, but Robbin Legere Henderson says she is listed as Taube on the manifest of the ship that brought her from Glasgow to New York.
- ²¹ "My Story," op. cit., Box 2, Folder 2-3.
- ²² Ibid
- ²³ Compiled by the I.W.W. and also known as *I.W.W. Songs* or *Songs of the Industrial Workers of the World*. The songbook, a compilation of tunes, hymns, and songs, was used to help build morale, promote solidarity, and lift the spirits of the working class.
- ²⁴ Author's interview with Robbin Legere Henderson, May 30, 2017.
- ²⁵ Author's interview with Robbin Legere Henderson, May 30, 2017.
- ²⁶ Author's interview with Robbin Legere Henderson, May 30, 2017.
- ²⁷ "Personal Reflections, 1919-1962," Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 1, Folder 1-35.
- ²⁸ Letter from Vita Robbins to friends, January 1963, Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 2, Folder 2-32.
- ²⁹ "End of Matilda's Notebook," *Industrial Worker*, undated clipping, 1963, Matilda Robbins Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Box 2, Folder 2-35.

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 (Meyers and Curtis in Detroit), and the Jewish Ensemble Theatre (in West Bloomfield). 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 multimedia 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.

VIOLINIST HUGO GOTTESMANN: EXILED VIRTUOSO

by Mary Jane Doerr

The Bay View Music Festival and Conservatory is the longest continuously operating chamber music festival in the United States and is located on the shores of Little Traverse Bay near Petoskey, in Emmet County, Michigan. After escaping Nazi Germany and living and performing in New York, Hugo Gottesmann began teaching in 1942 at Bay View, ultimately coming to love this national historic landmark and performing arts center.

The moment violinist Hugo Gottesmann walked on stage, the audience fell silent.

"You didn't dare make a sound or everyone would glare," remarked a concertgoer who attended the Bay View Music Festival. "People came from all over to hear him and didn't want distractions. You couldn't go anywhere and hear a musician as good as he was."

In Vienna, this Jewish virtuoso had been a superstar. Gottesmann was the first concertmaster and a permanent conductor of the Vienna Symphony. He



*Hugo Gottesmann, Vienna, 1927.
From Adolf Busch, the Life
of an Honest Musician.
The Tully Potter Collection*

taught at the Academy of Music¹ and was a conductor at Radio-Wien (RAVAG),² Vienna's regional radio station. The "city of music" held him in such esteem that he was asked to perform Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Minor for the Beethoven Centennial Celebration in 1927, and he performed it again with the Vienna Philharmonic³ on International Radio-Wien.⁴

In 1970, as the city of Vienna mourned his death, he was lauded "as a gifted artist who was a decisive influence on the musical life in Vienna."⁵ And yet, Herbert Neuchterlein, music critic at Indiana's *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* and friend of Gottesmann, said that when Gottesmann came to America he never talked about Vienna, because what had happened was too painful.⁶

DAS GOTTESMANN QUARTETT

Hugo Gottesmann was born April 8, 1896. His father, Leopold, was a sales representative and his mother, Anna, was a milliner with her own store. When Hugo showed talent at an early age, his parents arranged for music lessons. He excelled and was accepted at the Academy for Music where he studied with celebrated Otakar Ševčík⁷ and composer Richard Stöhr.⁸ In 1916, he graduated at the top of his class and received the Staatspreis, the highest possible honor.

Gottesmann then joined the army and served in the 7th Artillery Regiment in World War I, and fought on the Italian front. Smart and well educated, he was promoted from private to lieutenant within a few months.⁹ He received three medals for bravery in combat.

After the war, Gottesmann wasted no time in returning to his music. He formed Das Gottesmann Quartett in 1918 and began touring Europe. Over the years, the young and brilliant members of this quartet were among Vienna's finest musicians. One critic wrote that "they always bring a fresh interpretation to the classic works."¹⁰ Gottesmann made his solo debut on April 8, 1919, with the Wiener Tonkünstler Orchester in the Konzerthaus. That orchestra merged with another to form the Vienna Symphony, and Gottesmann became its first concertmaster in 1921.¹¹

He was appointed to a teaching position in 1920 at the Academy for Music,¹² teaching violin and chamber music, and he founded the school's

orchestra. He was also a permanent member of the international competition committee.¹³ In 1926, though, the school denied him the title of professor,¹⁴ with hints of anti-Semitism. Five days later the Austrian Minister of Education reversed that decision by granting him the title of "Professor of Music,"¹⁵ the only time in the academy's 200-year history that the ministry reversed the school's recommendation.¹⁶

In the meantime, Das Gottesmann Quartett was touring. In 1925, the group was featured in Vienna's New Year's Concert, an annual New Year's Day morning tradition, considered among the most important classical concerts worldwide.¹⁷ In 1928, the quartet captured the spotlight during New York's Schubert Festival when they performed the entire string-quartet cycle in the composer's home. The *New York Times* stated, "Schubert was never more alive than today."¹⁸ The *Chicago Tribune* reviewer called them "entrancing."¹⁹

Gottesmann's conducting career peaked in 1932 when he conducted Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the Konzerthaus, featuring the Vienna Symphony and the State Opera soloists and chorus. A reviewer wrote, "Gottesmann...rose to the occasion. The blessing of the moment lifted the young artist...beyond himself and he soared and strengthened his craft."²⁰ Later that year, the city celebrated the 200th anniversary of Haydn's birth, and Gottesmann conducted the opening concert in the Hofburg Palace.²¹

Gottesmann commanded so much respect that when Radio-Wien went on the air in October 1924, he was featured in a live broadcast three days later, the first of nearly 300 appearances between 1924 and 1934.²²

LEAVING AUSTRIA

In 1933, when Hitler came to power in Germany, Gottesmann was fired from his positions in Austria. One account exists of this moment, published in *Der Stürmer*, a then-illegal NDSAP (Nazi) publication:

...Gottesmann was let go to make room for the violinist, Wolfgang Schneiderhan. Now we know Schneiderhan plays three times better with one hand than Gottesmann with both hands. In addition he is Aryan, which makes his engagement all the more pleasant. The Viennese are happy to lose Mr. Gottesmann in the first chair of the orchestra. Appearance and creative ability of the Jew are not acceptable to the Aryan Viennese.²³

Gottesmann was offered guest conductorships in Rome and Sweden. He renewed his relationship with his sweetheart Lia and she followed him to Sweden.

What happened next changed the course of his life. Bishop Raymond J. Wade, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Europe and president of the Scandinavian Theological Seminary in Gothenburg, was able to obtain U.S.

visas for the couple.²⁴ Bishop Wade would later move to northern Michigan and become president of the Bay View Association, where Gottesmann would spend twenty-eight years on the music staff.

In 1936, Gottesmann was in New York performing with the NBC Symphony Orchestra when he was advised not to return to Europe. Lia stayed in Europe to secure an annulment of her marriage, then was able to join Gottesmann in 1937. They immediately married. In Vienna, Lia's brothers became Nazis and her ex-husband reneged on their property settlement because she had married a Jew.²⁵

Members of Gottesmann's quartet scattered. Marcel Dick, a renowned violist and composer, immigrated immediately to the U.S. when Gottesmann left. He became the principal violist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and later of the Cleveland Orchestra.²⁶

In March of 1938, Germany annexed Austria in the Anschluss, and almost immediately began its campaign against the Jews. Jewish members of the Philharmonic were banned. The Gestapo twice arrested Gottesmann's sister Erna, a Social Democrat. Then on Kristallnacht, November 9-10, when mobs destroyed the city's synagogues and more than 800 Jewish businesses, Gottesmann's mother's hat store was among those businesses and she died of shock that night.²⁷

A few days later, Erna and her husband and daughter returned to their apartment to learn the Gestapo had been there to arrest them. They left immediately for New York, thanks to Anna's brother Oscar, who had immigrated earlier to the U.S. and was a citizen. Hugo Gottesmann greeted his sister and her family as they arrived in New York. Their father, Leopold, who was denied passage initially because he had been born in Poland, and the U.S. Polish quota for 1938 was already filled, somehow hid for over a year, made his way to Italy, and booked passage to the U.S.

Life in New York was difficult. Gottesmann was part of the mass migration of musicians fleeing the Nazis. Noted for his ability to play without rehearsal, his concert attire was always ready. He found opportunities at Carnegie Hall, and the Metropolitan Opera House, and with the Stokowski Orchestra and the Busch Chamber Orchestra. At WQXR Radio, he formed another quartet and was hired as one of the conductors of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for its 1942-43 North American tour. Still, he never achieved the position he had enjoyed in Europe.²⁸



Hugo Gottesmann, 1896-1970



Picture of Bay View Ensemble with Hugo Gottesmann performing on his violin, 1950. Photograph by Ralph Bransby. Courtesy of the Bay View Association.

BAY VIEW ASSOCIATION

One day in 1942, Gottesmann met Robert Mann (who would later found the Juilliard String Quartet). Mann was trying to fill a vacancy with the Bay View Music Festival near Petoskey, Michigan, and he offered the position to Gottesmann.²⁹

Gottesmann quickly became a star with audiences who loved his stage presence and dazzling technique. Peter Sparling, lead dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company and a distinguished professor at the University of Michigan, remembered his style as emotional, fluent, and lyrical: "...he held his violin very close and his vibrato was loose. The sound of his violin was so sweet."³⁰

The Gottesmanns were initially unimpressed with their new home. Their accommodations were in a room in an old Victorian building with a double bed and no closets or chairs. The lone window didn't open. Bathrooms were down the hall and the kitchen was downstairs – hardly comparable to their Vienna apartment near the State Opera. "We put our clothes on the floor and sat on the bed helplessly disappointed and wanting to return home," Gottesmann wrote.³¹

Thankfully, Gottesmann's Detroit cousin, who had driven them to Petoskey, stayed and gave them a tour. They saw the scenery and the beaches, and ate meals at Jespersion's, Ernest Hemingway's former hangout. They quickly made friends and enjoyed countless social invitations. They met Sunny Hemingway, sister of the great author and harpist with the Memphis Symphony,³² and they socialized with William Reddick, then producer of the Toscanini and Stokowski

radio program. (Reddick was also former director of Bay View Music Festival and producer of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Ford Sunday Evening Hour.)

Gottesmann's reputation attracted many students, including Detroiters Daniel Majeske, who later became the Cleveland Orchestra concertmaster,³³ and Felix Resnick, who was principal second violinist with the DSO and later performed with Motown Records.

A SECOND CAREER

In 1946, celebrated German violinist Adolf Busch, who had been concertmaster for Gottesmann's 1919 debut, invited Gottesmann to join his quartet. Adolph Busch wanted Gottesmann to play viola. Busch explained to a perplexed Gottesmann, that the way Gottesmann played the violin, he wouldn't have any trouble.³⁴ Since Gottesmann did not own a viola, Busch's son-in-law Rudolph Serkin asked his friend, Austrian art collector Elisabeth Bondy, to lend him her Domenico Busan.³⁵ So it was that, at age fifty, Gottesmann changed instruments and spent six years touring Europe, the British Isles, and South America, performing concerts and radio broadcasts and making recordings.



Formed in 1946, the Adolf Busch Quartet included Adolph's brother, Hermann, who had been a member of Gottesmann's quartet; Rudolph Serkin, Adolph Busch's son-in-law; and Hugo Gottesmann on the far right. Courtesy of Max-Reger-Institut, Brüder Busch Archiv, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Recently, recordings have been re-released of this latter Busch Quartet, and reviews note the Gottesmann's performances as "exemplary" and "fine."^{36,37,38,39} In 1998, a re-issue of their 1951 Beethoven recording won the *Deutsche Schallplattenpreis*.⁴⁰

When the Busch brothers and Rudolph Serkin founded the Marlboro School of Music in 1950, Gottesmann was asked to join them. Fully committed to the

Bay View summer college program, and liking the area and his freedom to select his own repertoire and lead his own quartet, he declined. That summer, in the years after World War II and through the GI Bill of Rights, an influx of some 700 summer-school students were expected at Bay View.

In 1951, Gottesmann's father died, and Gottesmann was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Emergency surgery at Mayo Clinic was scheduled, but Gottesmann had no health insurance. Friends raised funds for the trip, which included chartering a plane piloted by Petoskey baritone Bertram Rowe, who flew him to Minnesota. Dr. Mayo personally performed the surgery and the cancer was arrested.⁴¹



Chris Dyer, grandson (seated) of Ruth and Robert Crist, two friends who helped pay Gottesmann's medical expenses. Gottesmann gave their grandson violin lessons in appreciation.

Even as he recovered from the surgery, Gottesmann began preparations for a European tour with the Busch Quartet. When they arrived in Switzerland, Adolph Busch died of a heart attack. The quartet was disbanded and forty-five concerts were canceled. It was all too much, and Gottesmann suffered what Lia called a "complete let-down."⁴²

The need to honor engagements in New York and the coming summer brought Gottesmann out of his despair and he began performing once more. In 1969, before a concert,

Gottesmann became critically ill but

insisted on performing. He collapsed after the performance and was taken to the hospital and diagnosed with cancer.⁴³ His friend, Dr. Blum, treated him without charge at Little Traverse Hospital in Petoskey. Others paid the hospital bill. By then, Gottesmann had been living in Fort Wayne, where, after recovering, he returned just before his death on January 22, 1970.

Gottesmanns' death was mourned throughout the world, but his legacy was soon forgotten. Lia was forced to sell Gottesmann's Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi violin to provide for her living expenses.⁴⁴ The Austrian National Library has nearly 2,000 newspaper references to Gottesmann but little else. The website for Wiener Sinfonie-Orchester, where he served as concertmaster for fourteen years and as permanent conductor for six years, does not list his name. Radio-Wien has no documents of any of his nearly three hundred recordings.

But, for thousands of admiring colleagues and friends, the music and teachings of Hugo Gottesmann will live on forever.



Mary Jane Doerr has been a freelance writer for the Petoskey News-Review since 1979, and for numerous newspapers throughout Michigan and the U.S. Her first book, *Bay View, An American Idea* came out in 2010 and won the State History Award from the Historical Society of Michigan. She is a graduate of Michigan State University and Wayne State University. As a child she knew Hugo Gottessmann personally.

ENDNOTES

¹ Hugo Gottessmann – Concert Violinist, Letter from Lia Gottessmann, *Bay View Archives*, Sept. 10, 1981.

² RAVAG is the Abbreviation for *Verkehrs AG*.

³ "Hugo Gottessmann Gestorben." *Wiener Kultur-Notizen*. Sonderdienst der Rathaus-Korrespondenz, Nummer 26, 1970.

⁴ <http://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/concerts/concert-detail/event-id/6243/from-search/True> Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016.

⁵ "Hugo Gottessmann Gerstorben" 1970.

⁶ Herbert Neuchterlein. Interview with Author. Music Critics' Association Conference, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Aug. 1996.

⁷ "Hugo Gottessmann Gestorben." 1970.

⁸ Sittner, Hans. *Robert Stöhr: Mensch, Musiker, Lehrer*. Verlag Doblinger, Wien-München, 1965. P. 64.

⁹ Hauptgrundbuchblatt. Kriegsarchiv, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. Wien, Austria. Translated by Carl Kotlarchik.

Researcher Jason Crouthamel mentioned the need for Jewish soldiers with the attrition of manpower. Crouthamel also mentioned Gottessmann's education level might have led to his promotions. Email to author, Dec. 12, 2015.

¹⁰ "Review", *Arbeiter Zeitung*, Jan. 5, 1927. Translation by Edda Sinz.

¹¹ Hugo Gottessmann – Concert Violinist, Letter from Lia Gottessmann, *Bay View Archives*, Sept. 10, 1981.

¹² "Hugo Gottessmann Gerstorben" This is not confirmed by the Academy of Music because of lack of records. Erwin Strouhal, Archivist, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Wien. Email to author, Feb. 15, 2016

¹³ "Hugo Gottessmann Gerstorben" 1970.

¹⁴ Strouhal. Feb. 15, 2016.

¹⁵ *Reischpost* Sept. 26, 1926, Seite 6.

¹⁶ Strouhal. Mar. 7, 2016.

¹⁷ Theis, Ernst. "History of the New Year's Concert." http://www.ernsttheis.com/FNCMSFiles/WPh_Theis_D.pdf?PHPSESSID=4d52k9sp3uks116s6cg2fmqfl0 Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016.

¹⁸ "Review," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1928.

¹⁹ "Review," *The Chicago Tribune*, July 28, 1928.

²⁰ "Review," *Die Neue Freie Presse*, Jan. 10, 1932. Translation by Horst Bussé.

²¹ "Review," *Tages-Post*, May 14, 1932. Translation by Martin Kaufmann.

²² Radio-Wien Schedules.

²³ Dr. F. B. "Hugo Gottessmann Goes to Court." *Der Stürmer*, Vienna ed. May 26, 1934.

²⁴ David Dykhous, interview with author, Bay View, Michigan. July 16, 2016,

²⁵ Letter from Attorney and Tax Adviser Dr. Hans Haider to Headquarters of the United States Forces in Austria. German Subsection, APO 777, US Army. April 16, 1947. Lia's marriage was annulled by verdict of the Land Court in Vienna in 1937. Prof. Hans Wagner-Schönkirch recognized at the time Lia's claim of ownership of property including a Bosendorfer grand piano, a Rast and Gasser sewing machine, an Astleitner safe, and four rugs of Smyrna, Iranian and Persian origin. The agreement was that he would have lifetime use of these assets but they were to be relinquished by his heirs upon his death. In 1947, his widow and his heirs refused to relinquish the assets stating that Lia had married a Jew in New York, which nullified the contract. Lia was required to return to Vienna to claim her belongings. It is unknown if she was successful. <https://www.fold3.com/image/311265951>

Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016.

²⁶ <http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/miskolc/Dick.html> http://org.awardees/marcel_dick.html

Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016.

²⁷ Susan Sariego, interview with author, April 20, 2015.

²⁸ Aaron Copland composed "Rodeo" for the season.

²⁹ Bay View dates to 1875 when a group of Michigan Methodists formed an association in Emmet County, on the shores of Little Traverse Bay, "for intellectual and scientific culture." By the end of the century, Bay View had become a noted summer destination for acclaimed musicians and students of music.

³⁰ Peter Sparling, telephone interview with author, Oct. 6, 2015.

³¹ Sariego, April 20, 2016.

³² Patty Mulligan. Telephone interview with author. October 7, 2015.

³³ *Bay View Bulletin*, Bay View, Michigan, 1949. "Daniel Majeske, 61, The Concertmaster For the Cleveland." By Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, Dec. 1, 1993. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/01/obituaries/daniel-majeske-61-the-concertmaster-for-the-cleveland.html>

Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016. Gottesmann was concertmaster with the Wiener Sinfonie-Orchester in 1920 under Conductor George Szell.

³⁴ Eloise Guy, telephone interview with author, May 13, 2015.

³⁵ Tully Potter. *Adolf Busch, Life of an Honest Musician*. Toccata Press, 2010. P. 1095.

³⁶ In a 2014 review, Jonathan Woolf of *Music Web International* called the January 1951 Frankfurt recording of Brahms Quartet No. 1 in C minor and the Beethoven's No. 14 in C sharp minor Op. 131 "exemplary." http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2014/Jul14/Brahms_Beethoven_quartets_MC4000.htm Downloaded Dec. 18, 2016.

³⁷ Lemco, Gary. *Audiophile Audition Classical Reissue Reviews*, Aug. 12, 2014. Lemco remarked that in the 1947 recording of Brahms A minor Quartet Op 51, No.2, "the fine viola work was courtesy of Hugo Gottesmann."

³⁸ Ibid. Lemco wrote that "Violist Gottesmann dominates the Agitato movement" in the Brahms B-flat Major Quartet 1949 recording,

³⁹ Potter. P. 862. Potter cited the 1949 recording as a fine example of the high quality of Gottesmann's playing.

⁴⁰ Concert was recorded live in 1951 at Ludwigsburg, Germany, the group's only post-war tour of Germany. Released Nov. 1, 1998. <http://arbiterrecords.org/catalog/the-busch-quartet-live/> Tully Potter@1998. Posted April 06, 1998 by Arbiterrecords | Category: Arbiter Records, Chamber Music.

⁴¹ Lia Gottesmann, Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Crist, Aug. 24, 1951. Used courtesy of Ruth Dyer.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Willard Pierce, interview with author, Sept. 10, 2015.

⁴⁴ Potter. P.1095.

THE POWER OF ART: MEET GAIL ROSENBLOOM KAPLAN

by Barbara Cohn

Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan is a working artist with a studio in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Her ceramics, mosaics, and sand-art sculptures have traveled the globe, but her heart is here in Michigan. She is especially passionate about community art, the power of art to heal and teach.

As the tour director of the Detroit Public Library, I first met artist Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan in 2014 when she was invited to provide input on enhancements to the library's children's room, a plain, uninspiring, white-walled room in great need of something artistically engaging for children. Over and over, people encouraged me to consult with Kaplan, as she was considered an "experienced artist with a community vision." Kaplan listened to the concerns, examined the room, and confidently declared that the room needed "...a community mosaic over the bookshelves made with the students from Detroit schools." Unfamiliar with this woman of the arts, I endeavored to get to know her a bit more.



Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan and a Coville Apartments resident work on a mosaic in 2005.

Wearing her signature blue smock, splattered with splotches of paint, sand, and clay built up over years of active use, artist Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan described her career and the evolution of her art to fifty Detroit Institute of Arts docents in her home studio in June 2017. The docents listened attentively as she discussed her philosophy about the power of art, the different mediums she has worked in, and how she managed to balance her career with her family life while working in her studio built above the garage.

Throughout that afternoon, Kaplan amazed those seasoned art lovers with photographs of clay tool boxes, glass mosaics, sand art, mezuzot, and prints.

She embodied the role of an experienced, capable, creative visionary whose work today resides in many private and public collections, from our hometown Detroit to exhibitions nationally and overseas.

THE PERSONAL FOUNDATION

Born and raised in Detroit by parents Essie and Itzie Rosenbloom, Kaplan demonstrated artistic ability at an early age. Encouraged by her aunt, Helen Kapan, a well-known art teacher in the Detroit Public Schools, Kaplan's parents enrolled her in workshops at Cranbrook Academy of Art at age seven, and later at the Detroit Institute of Arts. As an art student at the University of Michigan in the 1970s, she interned in the photography department at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Skirball Museum at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, and The Jewish Museum in New York City. It was while working at The Jewish Museum cataloguing a collection of Jewish ceremonial art objects from Danzig, Poland, that she had a pivotal moment that shaped her lifelong interest in Jewish history, the Holocaust, and Judaic art.

The collection had been shipped to New York in 1939 for safekeeping, with a stipulation that the objects be returned to Danzig following the war. Like so many other Jewish communities, Danzig was annihilated, so the objects never returned, remaining in New York instead. Kaplan recalls holding a Torah breastplate in her hand, and trembling as she realized she was touching a magnificent holy object from a lost community.

THE PROFESSIONAL EVOLUTION

In the thirty-plus years since, Kaplan has used a variety of mediums, and has won acclaim for her works, which have been displayed nationally and internationally in venues including the U.S. embassies in Norway, Brazil, and Barbados.



Sculptures made from clay, left, are Gail Kaplan's Tool Belt, which has been exhibited at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., and American Flag. Created after 9/11, American Flag has traveled to U.S. embassies in Barbados and Brazil as a part of the U.S. Department of State's Art in Embassies program.

She utilizes clay to create sculptures of everyday life. When speaking about her clay works she uses the French phrase *tromp l'oeil*, which means “to fool or trick the eye to make an object appear real.”

Her stellar work in glass mosaics began when she collaborated with artist Dani Katsir to create community installations that adorn the walls of schools, hospitals, community centers, senior residences, and synagogues. Their most recent and ongoing project is the eight-panel *Lighting Up Literacy & Learning* installation for the Detroit Public Library children’s room, a project that resulted from that 2014 meeting at the Detroit Public Library. The installation provides the perfect example of Kaplan’s vision of community art.

Kaplan believes that to create community art, an artist must extend beyond the creation of the artwork and engage in a process that involves detailed research, help in fundraising, building relationships, and – critically – working directly with students, teachers, principals, and parents. For the library project, she engaged Detroit Public Schools students, most of whom do not have access to art in their curriculum. Students submitted designs based on different themes (earth, under the sea, reading, music, sports, healthy living, and transportation) and then they worked side by side with Kaplan and Katsir in cutting glass strips and gluing them to complete the mosaic. “This opportunity was exciting for the students and, at the same time, was an opportunity for the teachers to use art in their teaching of the curriculum of the themed mosaics,” said Kaplan. At the completion of each mosaic, the students, their families, and the staff were invited to a dedication at the library to celebrate their achievements.



Community art, collaborative projects between an artist and a grassroots community, is showcased at the main branch of the Detroit Public Library in the youth reading room. Kaplan worked with Detroit Public Schools students to create this mosaic which incorporates a variety of themes and media.

Another notable set of mosaics was completed in 2016 – an eighteen-panel, nature-themed glass mosaic installation at the new Children’s Hospital of Michigan - Troy. Students from eighteen schools in Oakland and Macomb counties worked together to create art centered on learning and healing. Kaplan is also involved with pediatric patients at Children’s Hospital of

Michigan, working with patients both at their bedsides and in the activity room. Each child creates his or her own unique artwork, from painted T-shirts to sand art, giving the children an opportunity to use art as a diversion and an opportunity to create.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Harkening back to her graduate experience at New York's Jewish Museum, Kaplan's commitment to teach the history of the Holocaust extends to the next generation. She co-created the permanent installation of the Kindertransport Memory Quilts at the Holocaust Memorial Center, Zekelman Family Campus, in Farmington Hills, Michigan. The collection was created in 1988 as a vehicle for the public to learn the stories of the largest rescue of children in World War II, when approximately 10,000 Eastern European Jewish children, *kinder*, were taken by train and boat to Great Britain.

Survivor Hans Weinman asked Kaplan if she could find a permanent home for these quilts. The quilts, composed of sixty-five individual squares, document the organized rescue of approximately 10,000 Jewish youth, between the ages of seven months and seventeen years, who were rescued from Eastern Europe and taken in sealed trains and boats to Great Britain.

Since the quilts were created by survivors and their families, and were not direct artifacts from the Holocaust, Kaplan saw this as an important opportunity to use "the power of art to teach about the righteous who helped save the children." She and Weinman approached the Holocaust Memorial Center, which has a mission to not only preserve history but also to promote man's humanity to man. Although it was a huge undertaking to design the permanent exhibit and to raise the funds for the exhibition, Kaplan succeeded, in large part by recalling the words of her friend and mentor David Hermelin z"l, who always said, "If you are passionate about your cause, you can make it happen!"

In 2010, Kaplan founded Yada Yada Yad Judaic Art, a series of art workshops designed to teach Jewish customs. Using a treasure trove of unique



The Rolling Memory Sphere is one of many of Kaplan's works that connect to the Holocaust. In this piece, embedded railroad tracks represent the transport of six million men, women, and children to their final destination. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are carved in the clay, memorializing their names.

beads, nuts, bolts, metal rods, and hardware, individuals can design and assemble their own yads, mezuzot, kiddush cups, candlesticks, and menorahs. Kaplan brings the workshops to students in schools and synagogues, and she also offers workshops in her studio and through her website, which features do-it-yourself kits for religious schools and synagogues around the country.



This mosaic, Rise Before the Aged & Bring Beauty To Those Who Are Wise, commissioned by Nancy and Jeff Adler in 2003 for a bar-mitzvah project, is now on display at the entrance to the Jewish Senior Life Fleischman Residence in West Bloomfield.

REFLECTION

Throughout history, art has appeared in public spaces. Public artworks created by or with professional artists provide one of the most moving ways to experience art. Art builds self-esteem, creates jobs, expresses identity, and ignites conversation. Kaplan can enhance and personalize public venues and contribute to public improvement while engaging communities in the process. Her artwork plays a powerful role to inspire, teach, heal, and bring communities together. Working with Kaplan has been a great adventure and lesson in community activism for the arts. She has a personal connection with every project, and her passion is contagious. In their unique settings, her works of art will continue to reach and influence many lives.



Barbara Madgy Cohn has a B.A. in art history, and is a registered nurse. In 2013, she created *Discovery of Wonders*, an art and architectural tour of the Detroit Public Library, which led to the 2017 publication of her first book, “*The Detroit Public Library: An American Classic*,” published by Wayne State University Press. Barbara serves on the boards of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the DPL Friends Foundation, and American Technion Society. She is married to Sheldon and has two sons.

ARCHIVED 2017 TREASURES

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM

Founded in 1854, the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) is one of the oldest and largest cultural institutions in the state of Michigan. In 1971 the GRPM was one of a select group of U.S. museums to receive first-round accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, and it has maintained its accredited status ever since. Once part of the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and then a department of the city of Grand Rapids for nearly a century, the GRPM's roots in education and civic engagement run deep. The GRPM currently operates as an independent 501(c)3 organization that is supported by the citizens of Kent County.

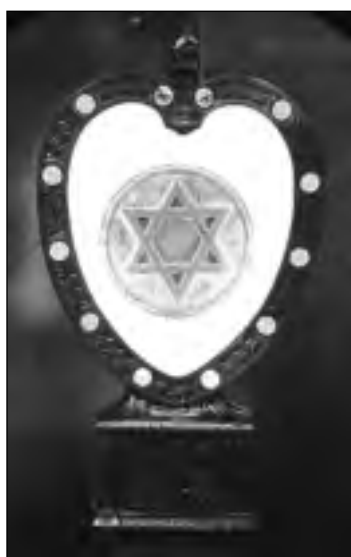
The museum acts as a trustee of the region's cultural and historical heritage, and its long record of innovative collecting and exhibition programs is valued by many diverse public sectors. The museum's permanent collections include more than 250,000 artifacts and specimens in areas such as archeology, anthropology, archives, decorative arts, and local history, as well as a diverse and significant holding of natural-history specimens.

Menorah, c. 1815

While the provenance of this menorah is only partially known, it was likely brought to Grand Rapids by Jewish immigrants from Poland and sold to Heffner's Jewelers of Grand Rapids. The donor bought it from Heffner's around 1980. It is a beautiful example of its type, with seven turned candle sockets and bobeches, which screw onto arms. The arms or brackets form a single piece beneath the sockets with a pierced design of intricate flowers and flourishes surrounding silhouettes of two lions and four rams. Gift of Dora and Leonard Rosenzweig #1999.69.1



The GRPM serves thousands of researchers each year at its state-of-the-art archival facility, and digitally through its online collections database at www.grpmcollections.org. For everyone from genealogists to journalists, scientists to students, the GRPM strives to make its collections as accessible as possible, in as many formats as possible. The museum's goal is to continue to grow, shape, and share its collections so audiences can see their own history reflected in the GRPM's collections and exhibits.



Star of David Funeral Light Box, 1925

This funeral light set, used by the Arsulowicz Brothers Mortuaries in Grand Rapids, consists of a black storage suitcase, telescoping steel tripod, and large bronze light box in the shape of a heart. The box is lined with white synthetic fur, and on the front is attached a gold-painted Star of David. Deep-blue glass stones are inset around the perimeter. When lit from within, the whole box glows brightly. In memory of John A. Arsulowicz and Stanley A. Arsulowicz Sr. #2004.15.2

ARCHIVED 2017 TREASURES

Portrait Doll, Dr. Jonas Salk, c. 1965

The subject of this portrait doll, one of twenty-six portrait dolls that were part of the national B'nai B'rith Women's Dolls for Democracy program, is Jonas Edward Salk (October 28, 1914 - June 23, 1995). Salk, a Jewish-American medical researcher and virologist, was best known for his discovery and development of the first safe and effective polio vaccine in 1955. Dolls for Democracy was a program for local school and community groups; it used dolls to educate about the worth and dignity of every human being and every individual's right to full and equal opportunity to develop to full potential. Gift of the Grand Rapids Chapter of B'nai B'rith Women #1995.46.6





Doris Cole Archival Collection, 1952-1954

The Doris Cole Archival Collection contains an assortment of photographs, invitations, and examples of yearbooks from this period, and includes eighteen party and evening dresses purchased at department stores and dress shops in downtown Grand Rapids between 1952 and 1955. The dresses were worn by Doris Cole and her sister Janice Cole to parties, dances, and other social events. The Cole family, including parents Helen and Louis Cole, were residents of Grand Rapids and East Grand Rapids for many years and were members of Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids. Louis was the owner of the Walltile Company in Grand Rapids. Janice graduated from Ottawa Hills High School in 1954, and Doris graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in 1955. Both daughters now live out of state. Gift of Janice E. Cole, Doris A. Cole, Louis and Helen Cole #2010.55.19

Trade Card, Houseman and Jones Clothing Company, c. 1900

Houseman's was founded in 1852 by German-Jewish immigrant cousins Julius and Joseph Houseman. The extremely long-lived clothing store had a presence in downtown Grand Rapids until it closed in 1986. The store was known in its early days for its extensive selection of men's clothing; they added women's lines in 1927. An early partner in the business was Abraham May, who eventually opened his own clothing store, May's, which competed with Houseman's. Gift of Mrs. Jennie Deglopper #175846

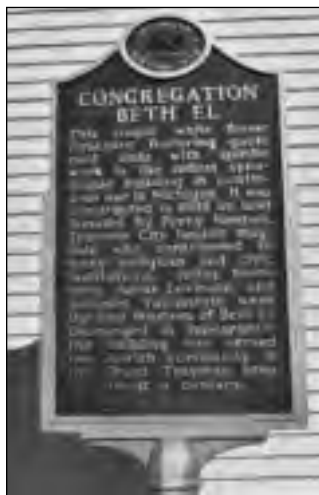


ARCHIVED 2017 TREASURES

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL 60TH!



HISTORIC MARKERS ARE FORTY!



On October 16, 1977, an official State of Michigan historical marker was dedicated at Congregation Beth El in Traverse City. The marker commemorates the fact that Beth El now occupies the oldest synagogue continuously used as such in Michigan. Looking much like a one-room school house, the structure was built in 1885 and has housed the congregation ever since. Although the JHSM had no direct hand in establishing the marker, JHSM members were invited to attend and participate in the dedication ceremonies.

Two weeks later, on October 30, 1977, JHSM had the pleasure of participating in the dedication of another State of Michigan historical marker, which in this case commemorated the first Jewish religious services held in the city of Detroit, in 1850. In that year, a group of German-Jewish immigrants gathered at the house of Isaac and Sarah Cozens, near the corner of Congress and St. Antoine, and formed the first minyan in the city, with services led by Marcus Cohen. That group later formed Congregation Beth El, still in existence and known as Temple Beth El. Participating in the service were leaders from JHSM, Temple Beth El, and Congregation T'chayah, which had been formed a few years earlier by Jews living in downtown Detroit. The marker was erected on the lawn of the Blue Cross Blue Shield building on E. Congress.



Friends and fans of Jewish history gathered together in October 1977 to celebrate the dedication of a State of Michigan historic marker commemorating Detroit's first Jewish religious services. Photo courtesy of the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University.

ALPENA'S TEMPLE BETH-EL HAS A MESSAGE FOR YOU: **WE ARE HERE!**

Mark Twain once wrote, upon learning that his obituary had been printed in America while he was in London, "The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated." So, too, was the rumor that Temple Beth-El of Alpena, Michigan, had closed its doors. Temple Beth-El is alive and thriving, with new leadership, new membership, and a soon-to-be repaired and restored 126-year-old synagogue.

The city of Alpena, like Temple Beth-El, is experiencing a kind of renaissance. New hotels and restaurants, a new health-care system established with the purchase of the hospital by the University of Michigan, new and unique curriculum offerings at Alpena Community College, the NOAA Center's Shipwreck Museum, and the Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary are some of the signs of growth in the area. This growth is attracting new employers and residents, some of whom have become members of Temple Beth-El.

At a Temple Beth-El board meeting in January 2017, Arthur Guren, Temple Beth-El's former president who had served for more than thirty years, submitted his resignation. The new president, Kathleen Lutes, joined Cecile Pizer, secretary, and Gregg Resnick, treasurer, in serving congregants. Lutes reached out to every member, including former members who live out of state, and also to prospective congregants, to update them on the transition and on highlights of what was happening at the synagogue. In February 2017, a successful Greet, Meet, and Eat gathering was held, introducing the new members to "old" members, some of whom came from as far as fifty miles.

Temple Beth-El's rich history dates to the late nineteenth century. It is believed that Julius Myers was among the early Jewish residents of Alpena,



Temple Beth-El's building, located at 125 White Street in Alpena and built in 1890, is the second-oldest synagogue building in Michigan in continuous use.

settling in the area sometime before 1867. The successful clothier would later serve as president of Alpena's Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded in 1875 for the purpose of "buying a burial ground." By 1887, there were some forty-five Jewish adults who had settled in the area, finding great opportunity in the booming lumbering trade. Like Myers, some twenty other Jewish males were identified as being engaged in the clothing business or related field, either as proprietors or as clerks¹.

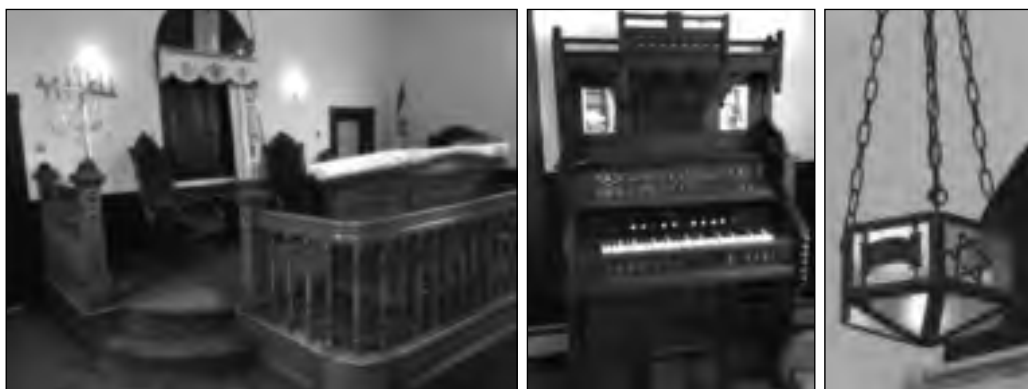
In addition to purchasing the cemetery, Alpena's Hebrew Benevolent Society was involved with caring for the sick and supporting others in need. In early 1877, the newly elected officers – Isaac Tumim, president; Jacob Levyn, vice president; William Rosenthal, secretary; Theodore Knoch, treasurer; and Julius Myers, Casper Alpern, and David Rodman, trustees – appointed committees charged with writing a formal charter and with securing "a room" in which to hold regular meetings, primarily for prayer and worship. Interestingly, meeting minutes dated March 24, 1877, disclose that there were violent disputes during the meeting. While the nature of the disputes was not put into writing, it is suspected that the conflict resulted from a difference in religious beliefs and practices. Records show that services initially were conducted by the officers and selected members, although in 1885 a cantor was engaged for the High Holy Day services. Rabbi Hyman Buchhalter, of Detroit, relocated to Alpena and served as rabbi from 1885 to 1888.

The Hebrew Benevolent Society began to organize for a synagogue, forming a congregation known as Beth Tefelol. Once that entity formally separated from the society and acquired a corporate existence, it adopted the name Temple Beth-El. The first organizational meeting of the new congregation was held on Sunday, October 19, 1890. It was at that meeting that arrangements were made for the purchase of a frame building on the north side of Hitchcock Street in Alpena, for a purchase price of \$1,100.



Alpena's Jewish cemetery, established in 1875, has been well maintained by the city of Alpena since 1989. Named the Hebrew Benevolent Cemetery, it sits centrally located in the much larger city cemetery located off of Washington Avenue. The Jewish section has its own entrance, clearly marked by two columns that are engraved with "Hebrew Benevolent Cemetery."

On February 13, 1891, the congregation successfully completed purchase negotiations for a piece of property on nearby White Street. They then moved the building to White Street², where it still stands. Thus, Temple Beth-El is one of America's relatively few surviving nineteenth-century synagogues (another being in Traverse City). Even though the building has been remarkably well maintained, it has come as no surprise that the structure, at more than one hundred years old, is in need of serious repair.



From left to right: Temple Beth-El's sanctuary; the original foot-pump organ, donated to the temple in the 1890s, remains in a back corner of the hall; the original iron and frosted-glass Ner Tamid (Eternal Light), illuminated by a red lightbulb.

To prevent further deterioration, in spring 2017 contractors began work on the exterior. Some congregation members with building experience also contributed to the work. Due to the extreme costs of renovation and repair, the congregation sought public and private grants to aid in funding. A community-based grant of \$1,000 was awarded by the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan, a grant of \$7,300 was received from the Ravitz Foundation, and a gift of \$1,000 came as a "good neighbor" gesture and tribute from one of the oldest congregations in Alpena, the First Congregational Church. Many in-kind donations also have helped with the expense, and further grants and in-kind donations are being pursued.

Congregation president Kathleen Lutes, working with a team of congregational leaders, has contacted historical societies and foundations in Michigan to seek grants to help with the synagogue's restoration and repair. "We were told several times, 'we didn't know there was a surviving synagogue in Alpena,' or 'we heard that TBE was closed.' It was a great pleasure to assure everyone that, like the Whos of Whoville yelling out to Horton, 'We are here, we are here!'"

The interior of this historic synagogue is still largely as it was when first

established. A stained-glass window of Moses dominates the back wall of the synagogue. Because of the fragile nature of this window and of the two gorgeous stained-glass side windows (all original to the building), sheets of plexiglass were installed to protect them from weathering and damage. Several beautiful one-hundred-year-old chairs are set near the bimah. The desk that serves as the bimah is original, and so are the small study and rabbi's quarters. Entering the shul is like taking a step back in time.

In addition to renovations, the congregation is actively attempting to document the history of the past sixty years. "We are still here, but a portion of our history is not," said Lutes. "We are concerned about the nearly sixty years of our history, from approximately 1958 to the present, that have been unrecorded." To help fill in that history, several long-time congregants have agreed to be interviewed.



Art Guren faithfully served as Temple Beth-El's president from 1983 through 2017, holding together the congregation during troubled times. In 2017, this long-time Alpena resident was honored for his service to the congregation.

Yes, Temple Beth-El is very much alive and thriving, with much going on and much to look forward to. As Lutes wrote in February 2017, "Temple Beth-El has a long history of serving the Jewish community in Alpena and the surrounding area. Our goal

is to continue that legacy and to be a vibrant part of our society. We sincerely welcome – and need – your participation, whether as a TBE member family or friend. We are, after all, joined in unity by our belief in the G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." - *By Tim Lutes*

To make a tax-deductible donation toward the restoration of Temple Beth-El, checks may be sent to TBE c/o P.O. Box 55, Presque Isle, MI 49777, noting "Restoration Project" on your check.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ *An American Shetl*, Robert Leyman, student rabbi, October 2, 1958, p. 10.
- ² *An American Shetl*, Robert Leyman, p. 18.

HISTORIC TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM HEADS TO MARQUETTE

At a time when many synagogues in rural areas are closing due to declining membership, one Michigan Upper Peninsula congregation is embarking on a move to bigger and better things.

On December 26, 2016, Ishpeming's Temple Beth Sholom announced its purchase of the former Christian Science Church in Marquette, about fifteen miles east, known locally as The Citadel. The purchase, made possible by an anonymous donation, helped the congregation to follow the eastward cross-county movement of the local Jewish community over the past sixty years.



The soon-to-be home of Temple Beth Sholom in Marquette. Photo courtesy of Shannon Ruiz.

The seeds of Temple Beth Sholom were planted and sown in the 1940s in the home of Willard Cohodas, when he began teaching a Torah-study class to five area children. Cohodas used a correspondence course offered by Rabbi Morris Adler of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Detroit, and his study group slowly grew in number. Eventually, the students' mothers began to meet each fall with Cohodas and a consultant from Minneapolis to write the coming year's curriculum.

In 1951, a young Howard Cohodas, nephew of Willard, remarked that their community lacked a house of worship like those attended by his churchgoing schoolmates. The Marquette County Jewish community took this as a call to action and began planning the first shul in their seventy-five-year history.

Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company answered the call, donating a plot of land for the new temple. This land donation was a tremendous boon for the community, as their High Holiday services had been moving from place to place, fluctuating among the Eagles Club, the American Legion Hall, and other locations.



The original synagogue building, located in Ishpeming at 2100 Prairie Avenue, was dedicated in 1953.

On June 29, 1952, a groundbreaking ceremony was held, bringing together 125 central Upper Peninsula Jews from Ishpeming, Marquette, Munising, and Negaunee. The dedication ceremony on June 7, 1953, included the attendance of a Catholic priest and several Protestant ministers. Two Torahs were presented – one each by the Fine and Lowenstein families as gifts to the new temple. Each Torah was more than a century old, and each had survived not only the arduous trans-Atlantic journey from Lithuania to the shores of the U.S., but also the many additional miles of travel to Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

In the absence of a regular rabbi, Willard Cohodas frequently conducted services at the shul, but the congregation also relied on student rabbis from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, who came on a monthly, bimonthly, or holiday basis. But near the time of Beth Sholom's first High Holy Days, all student rabbis had already been assigned elsewhere, so the college suggested that the congregation contact Professor Emeritus Rabbi Abraham Cronbach. An octogenarian, Rabbi Cronbach immediately agreed to the trek up north, just months after famously eulogizing Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who had been executed by the U.S. after being convicted of committing espionage for the Soviet Union.

Beth Sholom's partnership with Hebrew Union College continues today. Constance Arnold, past president of the temple, estimated that more than fifty rabbinical students have visited the congregation since its beginning. "They are a lively and changing part of the scene here," she said. "More recently, some have been bringing instruments and other talents to the congregation."

Bar- and bat-mitzvah preparations receive the highest priority of the rabbis' time during their visits, with some continuing through video conferences and digital recordings. The Saturday-morning adult-education sessions are also popular and provide an access point for congregation members who are more interested in the texts and philosophy than in worship services.

But Ishpeming, like many other small rural cities, has suffered the migration of much of its population to larger cities. Marquette General Hospital and Northern Michigan University have been the key drivers of a migration to Marquette. According to Arnold, a member since 1979, hospital personnel have largely accounted for a membership that has stayed consistent at around thirty families, but the newfound proximity to the NMU campus is equally important. "Over the last thirty years I've seen a thriving Hillel and then the Jewish Student Union," Arnold said, "but they weren't interested in coming to events in Ishpeming. It's been a barrier for years. Now it'll be less of a barrier and hopefully can become a meeting place."

A search committee considered numerous sites in Marquette prior to settling on the Citadel, which had been used for events for years before being converted into residential space. Arnold explained, "A number of people who were involved in building the synagogue in 1952 were in favor of the move, so that shows it's about the congregation, not the building."

On May 26, 2017, congregants of Temple Beth Sholom gathered in Ishpeming for a deconsecration service led by student rabbi Caroline Sim, who sermonized about moving the *aron kodesh* (the Torah ark). Once the final screw was removed from the mezuzah, the two Torahs were carried off to the Marquette synagogue, where they were greeted with a celebratory oneg.

Thus, the new home of Temple Beth Sholom, made possible by an anonymous donor, is a noted milestone in the history of the Jewish community of the Upper Peninsula. Rabbi Sam Stahl of San Antonio, Texas, nephew of Temple Beth Sholom co-founders Willard and Sylvia Cohodas, and also one of the very first student rabbis to visit from Hebrew Union College, will officiate at the new building's dedication service sometime in the near future.

— Noah Levinson

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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.

1927: November: Flint's Temple Beth El was founded. Services were held in the Patterson Building until 1935, when a building was purchased at Liberty and E. Second Street.

POETRY AND MEMOIR:
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN
Creative Expressions

DETROIT, 1967

By Michael Maddin

It was a pleasant summer evening in July. My wife Donna and I were dining at Sinbad's Restaurant, on the Detroit River near downtown Detroit. We were watching the freighters go by, enjoying the scenery, and eating a not-particularly memorable meal. Then, at around 9:00 p.m., there was an announcement: "Everyone please finish your meal, pay your bill, and leave." "Why?" I asked our waiter. He told us there was a "disturbance" nearby and they were closing the restaurant. "What kind of disturbance?" I asked. "Some fires have been set," he casually replied, and the police were requesting that Sinbad's close for the evening and urge their patrons to go directly home. We quickly complied. As we headed to our car, we saw, in the still-lit sky, smoke rising in the distance, billowing from a number of areas. This couldn't be good, we thought. Donna and I got into our car and made the short drive to our apartment in downtown Detroit.

On the radio, we heard some descriptions of incidents in the city, but, as we would later learn, nothing close to what was actually transpiring. We figured there was really nothing to be concerned about. We assumed that, whatever it was, it would soon pass.

At 3:30 in the morning our telephone rang. Who could it be? "Your unit has been called up. Report for duty at 0600." What? Report? Why? "Report for duty and you will be advised." I put on my uniform while Donna packed to go to her parents' house in the nearby suburb of Oak Park.



*Air National Guard Airman
Michael Maddin, circa 1967*

I flashed back to my final year of law school in 1964-65, when various members of my class filled out appeals to avoid being drafted and likely sent to Vietnam. I was healthy and expected to be drafted, so I thought I had better find a solution. Marriage alone did not qualify me for a deferment, and we had no children. Escaping to Canada was not an option, either. I decided to enlist in the Air National Guard. My active duty commenced immediately after I finished law school and completed the Michigan bar exam in 1965.

While I had escaped Vietnam, I was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, for basic training. I had only recently met Donna, and often thought to myself, "This is no way for a nice Jewish boy just out of law school to live!" But, the letters and cookies Donna sent me made basic training much easier.

After basic, I became an active duty Airman and was committed to six years of "call to duty" service with two weeks of summer camp training each year. Little did I ever expect that in July of 1967, after I'd finished basic training, passed



This Air National Guard aerial photo, taken in the days immediately after the 1967 events, shows two blocks of fire damage to homes. Courtesy Michael Maddin.

the bar, and launched myself into the practice of law, my unit would be called to serve. I had never contemplated being called to duty in my own city.

Within hours of that early morning call, I was in uniform and on the streets performing National Guard duties for eight chaotic, violent, disorderly days and nights.

My unit guarded utilities, including a Detroit Edison substation. We guarded buildings, streets, passageways, and prisoners. We provided support transportation for others. And, to answer what has often been asked, "Yes – we carried M1 carbine rifles with ammunition and, yes, we knew how to use them."

In many ways I remember this experience through the senses. I experienced perpetual darkness after sunset, as all streetlights were either shot out, burned out, or turned off. The smell of ash was mixed with the burning of electrical infrastructure and transformers. Gunfire was heard repeatedly. Prisoners were taken and, due to their sheer numbers, corralled in unconventional locations. My only injury came one night when I fell from a rooftop onto the lower rooftop of a building we had been guarding.

When those eight days and evenings were finally over, I went back to practicing law. I felt that, in many ways, life would never again be the quite the same. I was still a member of the National Guard service. Who knew what would be next?

It turned out that my Air National Guard unit would be called to duty nine months later, just after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. While we were called up for precautionary purposes, and the city remained calm, Detroit, like me, was changed forever.

Michael Maddin is the immediate past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He is also a founding member and president emeritus of the law firm Maddin Hauser. A graduate of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University Law School, Michael has been married to Donna for more than fifty years, and they are the parents of four children and the grandparents of four grandchildren.



JERUSALEM, 1967

By Yehuda Amichai

5

On Yom Kippur in 1967, the Year of Forgetting, I put on
my dark holiday clothes and walked to the Old City of Jerusalem.
For a long time I stood in front of an Arab's hole-in-the-wall shop,
not far from the Damascus Gate, a shop with
buttons and zippers and spools of thread
in every color and snaps and buckles.
A rare light and many colors, like an open Ark.

I told him in my heart that my father too
had a shop like this, with thread and buttons.
I explained to him in my heart about all the decades
and the causes and the events, why I am now here
and my father's shop was burned there and he is buried here.

When I finished, it was time for the Closing of the Gates prayer.
He too lowered the shutters and locked the gate
and I returned, with all the worshipers, home.



BROKEN FENCES

REVOLT, DETROIT 1967

By Joy Gaines-Friedler

On the roof that Sunday evening

I climbed to watch the distant plume of smoke rise
To see for myself what the news was saying
about a city on fire.

The sun in July is farthest away from earth,
but it's a matter of tilt – of slant.
Stifling hot with the bleeding city
my mother yelled for me to get inside.

Safe in my suburb I heard
two voices: One, like a trimmer cutting through trees.
The other, a cry of wild flowers stomped upon too long.
Both blamed the other – imagine that.

I watched the news with my father
whose Italian friend offered to guard my father's shop.
He had a gun and a pair of sturdy boots.
Who will guard against the guards? I asked.

When the police came, the ladies playing mahj
at Northland Mall were told they should leave.
Their might for good, was good indeed
Now, the ladies said—not until we're done.

The synagogues will turn into churches.
My father will move his shop to Livonia.
We will preen our flight feathers
and leave the city to curl like weeds
along broken fences.

TIMELINE

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

- 1862 February 5: The Shaarey Zedek Society purchases a parcel of land on Smith Street in Hamtramck for a cemetery. The Smith Street Cemetery would come to be known as the Beth Olem Cemetery.
- 1877 March 24: Minutes from the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Alpena, which was founded in 1875 for the purpose of buying a burial ground, indicate the congregation had begun the process of looking for a "room" in which to hold services and meetings.
- 1890 October 19: The first organizational meeting of Temple Beth-El in Alpena is held. Less than a year later, on February 13, 1891, the congregation purchases its building on White Street, a building that continues to be in use.
- 1908 Samuel Elkin opens a grocery store, shortly after his arrival in Mount Clemens. Soon after, he purchases a rooming house and converts it to a hotel.
- 1911 Beth Tephilath Moses is founded in Mount Clemens. Samuel Elkin is its first president. A short time later a building is rented on S. Walnut Street.
- 1912 Matilda Rabinowitz, a Russian immigrant, joins the Socialist Party and becomes an organizer with the Industrial Workers of the World.
- 1912 Abraham Reznick, a Russian immigrant, purchases forty acres in South Haven. Four years earlier, Sam and Anna Margolin purchased a farm in Wyoming, Michigan. The two families were among the first Jewish farmers in the area. By 1920, there would be as many as fifty Jewish families involved in farming on the west coast of Michigan.
- 1913 Sam Elkin moves his Mount Clemens hotel operation to larger quarters on S. Gratiot and renames it Elkin's Hotel. In 1925, Elkin would acquire the Olympia Hotel and Bath House.
- 1913 April 29: Matilda Rabinowitz stands on a soap box outside Ford Motor Company's Highland Park factory, urging workers to join "the great industrial band." She is arrested for her actions.
- 1918 August 15: Troy Township approves a zoning change allowing Congregation Shaarey Zedek to establish a cemetery on Fourteen Mile Road. Zoned as a future residential development, the parcel was called Clover Hill subdivision. Clover Hill Park Cemetery would open later that year.
- 1919 July 10: Adolph Blumberg is the first person buried at Clover Hill Park Cemetery.
- 1921 Isaac Agree Synagogue opens in Detroit for minyans and Conservative-oriented worship. In recent years, the synagogue has experienced a revitalization as many Jews are relocating back to the city.
- 1921 Memorial Day: A cornerstone-laying dedication event is held at Clover Hill Park Cemetery for the erection of a chapel where Jewish burial practices can be followed.

TIMELINE

- 1922 The Hebrew Education Alliance is founded in South Haven to provide a place of worship for residents and vacationers, and as a religious school. The Alliance operates concurrently with the previously established Farmer's Synagogue.
- 1926 Zlatkin's Resort opens in South Haven. Solomon and Bessie Zlatkin had initially tried their hand at farming, but like many others, this farming experiment failed and they converted their home into a guest lodge and eventually built a resort.
- 1929 Samuel Elkin dies from acute bronchitis. He is buried next to his father in Beth Tephilath Moses Cemetery.
- 1929 July 21: Members of South Haven's Jewish community carry the Torah from the Jewish Farmer's Synagogue to the newly formed First Hebrew Congregation.
- 1933 Conducting virtuoso Hugo Gottessmann is fired from his positions in Austria. Born in 1896, Gottessmann took up violin at a young age and rose to fame as the first concertmaster and permanent conductor of the Vienna Symphony.
- 1942 Hugo Gottessmann is offered a conducting position with the Bay View Music Festival near Petoskey. Gottessmann would adopt Petoskey as his second home and remain with the music festival for decades.
- 1956 The suburban Oak Park branch of the Jewish Community Center opens. The JCC's main branch, at Meyers and Curtis in Northwest Detroit, opened in 1960.
- 1957 1957: Oak Park High School celebrates its first graduating class, which numbered fewer than one hundred students.
- 1967 July 23: Detroit Police raid an after-hours club at the corner of 12th Street and Clairmount Avenue. Within hours the city is engulfed in a disturbance that would forever change its landscape and reputation.
- 1973 Mel Ravitz loses the Detroit mayoral election to Coleman A. Young. Ravitz was elected to Detroit City Council in 1962 and was considered a leading liberal voice.
- 1977 Congregation T'chayah is founded by a group of Jewish Detroiters seeking a house of worship in the city. The congregation would align with Reconstructionist Judaism.
- 1977 October: The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan participates in the placement of two State of Michigan historic markers: one in Traverse City, commemorating the oldest synagogue building in continuous use in Michigan, and the other commemorating Detroit's first Jewish religious services.
- 2016 Artist Gail Kaplan installs an eighteen-panel nature-themed glass mosaic at Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit. Kaplan's mosaics and sculptures can be seen throughout the community. She is especially interested in community art and using art as a means to educate others about the Holocaust.
- 2016 December 26: Ishpeming's Temple Beth Sholom announces that it has purchased a building in nearby Marquette and will soon relocate. Temple Beth Sholom dates to the 1940s when Willard Cohodas began a religious school in his home.

JHSM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NEIL GOROSH



Photo by Elayne Gross

In 1862, Abraham Lincoln observed that “we cannot escape history.” True, he had a lot on his mind at the time. But while we may not be able to avoid history, we are certainly capable of forgetting it. Sandy Hook. Ferguson. Charlottesville. What thoughts might those words conjure up fifty years from now when someone picks up this journal?

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is dedicated to educating, celebrating, and promoting the contributions of the Jews of Michigan to our state, our nation, and the world. With each new technological advance that serves mostly to distract us, that job seems to become

more difficult. How do we make turn-of-the-last-century immigration stories come alive to a ten-year-old who has been computer literate since toddlerhood? How do we engage millennials, who are rightfully preoccupied with career, relationship, and family matters? How do we make the case for relevance to any baby boomer who didn’t happen to be a history major? And how do we preserve and disseminate the wisdom of the Greatest Generation before those individuals and their wisdom are lost forever?

At JHSM, we think about questions like these all the time. Without an archive of original documents and artifacts, let alone a building in which to house them, we use every available means to further our mission. Much of 2017 was consumed with the re-imagining and relaunching of our website, www.michjewishhistory.org. Great care was taken in the construction of the website to ensure that all generations can access accurate and inspirational information about the experiences, contributions, and legacies of the Jews of Michigan. We believe that the website reflects the lively, event-driven nature of JHSM, and will engage both new audiences and existing members.

We encourage you to spend some time on the site. Wander into the two Gallery sections and explore the stories we’ve curated and made available to audiences worldwide. Don’t hesitate to explore further by clicking on the links provided in the Learn More sections. Use the digitized index to do your own research or exploration and to access every issue of our amazing journal,

Michigan Jewish History, with the click of a button.

I would be remiss if I did not also highlight our Traveling Trunk program. Targeted to fifth- and sixth-graders, last year more than 300 religious-school students and seventy-five day-school students took part. With memories of my own religious-school experience still surprisingly fresh in my mind, I attended a few of these classes. I saw children using games, activities, and an impressive, customized workbook to truly participate in the process, which culminates in a specially tailored Settlers to Citizens bus tour of historic Detroit. I'm fairly certain my own Hebrew school experience did not involve a single field trip. We were shown a film strip once, but that lesson was cut short when the bulb burned the film. Still, my observations made clear that it is possible to engage kids today despite the odds and all the distractions of life in the twenty-first century.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to say a few words about this publication, *Michigan Jewish History*. We've come a long way since our first issue was published in 1960. Yet, like that first issue, our journal today contains a nice balance of scholarly articles and lighter slice-of-life fare. This year's effort is no exception. Whether we call it a riot or a rebellion, the events of the summer of 1967 forever changed the city of Detroit and its suburbs. JHSM could not let the fiftieth anniversary of that summer pass without a serious exploration of the effects those events had on life in our community. We simply could not forget it.

Once again, JHSM is dedicated to using all means available in pursuit of our mission, be they old school (the journal), new school (the website), or religious school. But we need your help. Write an article or essay for inclusion in an upcoming issue of the journal. Click on the blue "Donate" button that appears at the top of each of our web pages. Help us permanently endow the Traveling Trunk program so that our kids will continue to "live" history and develop their own Jewish and Michigan identities. Attend one of our programs or events. Get involved with JHSM in any way that works for you so that we can continue to work together for our community. Since we can't escape it, please do your part to ensure that our very special local history will never be ignored.



G. AIMEE ERGAS

RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD



Photo by Elayne Gross

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines foot soldier as “a person likened to an infantryman especially in doing active and usually unglamorous work in support of an organization or movement.” Aimee Ergas, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan’s 2017 Leonard N. Simons History Award recipient, most certainly fits this definition, with one notable exception: She is an infantrywoman. To the selection committee, Ergas’s unceremonious dedication to preserving and recording the stories of Michigan’s Jewish men, women, and institutions was and is remarkable, notable, and worthy of this award.

Through her writing, research, public speaking, tour creation, and exhibition work, Ergas’s contributions have added to the enrichment, preservation, and dissemination of Michigan’s Jewish history. Her contributions will have meaning and impact for generations to come.

Ergas, born in Kansas City, Missouri, attended Wellesley College, during which time she met her husband-to-be, Dr. Tor Shwayder, a native Detroit. After receiving her master’s degree in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, she launched what became – and continues to be – an impressive career aimed at the arts and American and Jewish history, often with a focus on women.

In 1994, Ergas, who along with her husband and three children had by then re-located to the Detroit area, was recruited by Judith Levin Cantor, then editor of *Michigan Jewish History*. She began writing for the publication, documenting Michigan’s Jewish history. Ergas’s involvement with JHSM and the historical community intensified. In 1998 she became the journal’s editor, and she proceeded with professionalism and enthusiasm to publish a run of fascinating journals that appealed to JHSM’s membership and helped attract new members. In 2003, Ergas was retained as JHSM’s first director, a part-time position that she combined with her volunteer hours.

In that dual role, Ergas ushered in an era of sustained growth for JHSM, initiating numerous programs and leading major exhibition projects. She and several others, after meeting with William Davidson, founder of Guardian Industries, arranged for guided tours of an Israeli exhibit at the Guardian Industries corporate headquarters in Auburn Hills. The event was a leap forward for JHSM and put the organization in a position to undertake an enormous fiftieth-anniversary project, the 2009 *From Haven to Home* exhibition, which was housed at the Detroit Historical Museum. The national portion of the exhibition was created by the American Jewish Historical Society, from an original exhibit at the Library of Congress, and chronicled the American Jewish experience, focusing on America as both a “haven” and a “home.” The national story was punctuated by the exhibitions and artifacts related to the Michigan Jewish experience. Ergas led the entire effort, from fundraising to curatorial exhibition work.

Wishing to continue her education, in 2007 Ergas entered the archival administration program at Wayne State University, which led to her current position as archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at WSU. Her projects include archiving the papers of Judge Avern Cohn and Max M. Fisher, and she oversees the collections of the Jewish Community Archives, also housed at the Reuther Library. In 2012, Ergas officially stepped down from her JHSM directorship but remains active as a volunteer advisor. In 2014, she led the initial research for JHSM’s *Michigan Women Who Made a Difference* (MWWMD) project and authored the corresponding book.

“Finding documents, clippings, and stories of women who were active in the early days of Detroit’s communal history, the founders of some of our most important agencies, and activists who became involved with powerhouses such as NCJW, has been so revealing,” Ergas said. “These papers sit in the stacks decade after decade. These stories allow us to add an important layer of understanding to the life history of our community.”

Through her work, she has uncovered stories of Jewish female war veterans, teachers, artists, and women in business. In researching the biography of Ruth Reinheimer Rothschild, Ergas also found a family connection. Rothschild, who graduated from Detroit’s Northern High School in 1941, worked for her father, who founded Drake Incorporated, a ladies’ hat and accessory business. When her father died in 1947 at age twenty-three, the young woman and her brother ran the business. Drake Incorporated eventually leased hat departments in the big department stores such as Winkelman’s and Hudson’s in Detroit, and in more than ten other states. In the 1940s, Ruth Reinheimer married Kurt Rothschild, but the marriage was short

lived. While researching the story of this successful businesswoman, Ergas recognized the Rothschild name and did some more research. She discovered that Kurt Rothschild later married again, and that couple became dear friends of Ergas's parents, who at that time lived in Chicago. "He was like an uncle to me. But, I never knew (how would I have) that he had been previously married."

Most recently, Ergas worked as curator for the 2016 *Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American* exhibition, brought to the city of Detroit by JHSM. She also serves on several professional associations, including the Michigan Archival Association and Wayne State University President's Commission on the Status of Women, and she is a board member of the Michigan Women's Studies Association and the Farmington/Farmington Hills Education Foundation. Ergas lives in Farmington Hills with her husband. She is the mother of three and grandmother of one grandson.

LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD

The prestigious Leonard N. Simons History Award, 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 and promote awareness of outstanding Jews of Michigan. Like previous honorees, Ergas has made important contributions to furthering the mission of JHSM and has participated in many programs and initiatives that have had far-reaching impact.

1991 Philip Slomovitz	2005 Edith L. Resnick
1992 Avern L. Cohn	2006 Gerald S. Cook
1993 George M. Stutz	2007 Sharon L. Alterman
1994 Irwin Shaw	2008 George M. Zeltzer
1995 Emma Lazaroff Schaver	2009 Mandell L. Berman
1996 Leslie S. Hough and Philip P. Mason	2010 James D. Grey
1997 Mary Lou Simons Zieve	2011 Charlotte Dubin
1998 Judith Levin Cantor	2012 Michael O. Smith
1999 Michael W. Maddin	2013 Irwin J. Cohen
2000 Alan D. Kandel	2014 A. Alfred Taubman
2001 Sidney M. Bolkosky	2015 Carl Levin
2002 Adele W. Staller	2016 Jan Durecki
2003 Matilda Brandwine	2017 G. Aimee Ergas
2004 Susie Citrin	

IN MEMORIAM

MANDELL "BILL" BERMAN 1917-2016



When Mandell "Bill" Berman passed away on December 21, 2016, the Detroit and Michigan Jewish community came to a standstill. At age ninety-nine, this generous and gentle man, a man who helped to shape numerous Jewish organizations and institutions and who mentored untold numbers of young Jewish leaders, left a legacy matched by few.

The youngest of four children, Berman was born in Detroit in 1917 to Julius and Esther. Julius, a Russian immigrant, served as a U.S. soldier during WWI. Esther was born in Toledo. Early in their marriage the couple owned a small market, not far from Belle Isle, and became members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, where Berman's grandfather, Bernard, was a member.

In an oral history taken around 2015, Berman recalled his bar mitzvah, held at Congregation Shaarey Zedek on Brush at Willis, located just a few blocks from his family's home. "I walked with my grandfather and father to my bar mitzvah in my first suit. It probably cost eighteen dollars... I still have the book I was given that day by Rabbi Hershman. I use it for Friday night kiddush to this day." Berman remained a member of Congregation Shaarey Zedek for his entire life, serving in multiple leadership positions, beginning with his role as head of the Junior Congregation.

Berman attended Hutchins Intermediate School and graduated with distinction from Detroit's Central High School. He went on to earn his bachelor's degree, *magna cum laude*, from Harvard University in 1940, and his MBA in

1942 from Harvard Business School. He then served his country in the Pacific during WWII as an officer in the United States Navy.

Upon his return home, Berman joined his father in the housing construction business. Soon after, he was approached by a representative of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), formed after WWI to support relief projects in Palestine and Eastern Europe for fragile communities devastated by war. After WWII, the JDC began to aid Holocaust survivors. Berman, in his words, “wanted to get involved.” He helped plan a massive Detroit-area food drive, asking area residents to fill grocery bags with food to be shipped overseas. “There were eighteen thousand homes that we designated, and I had to organize three hundred trucks and at least three to four people per truck. That amounted to at least nine hundred volunteers.” The goal, to fill a freight car with food, was met. And the seeds of how this man would become a giant in the arena of community leadership were planted.



In 1980, Mandell Berman played a pivotal role in saving the historic Beth Olem Cemetery, Congregation Shaarey Zedek's first burial grounds established in 1862. When General Motors acquired the land to build an assembly plant, Berman negotiated an agreement between the City of Detroit, GM, and Shaarey Zedek, resulting in the construction of a brick wall protecting the cemetery and an access road to the cemetery gate. The cemetery opens twice a year for visitors, on the Sundays just before Passover and Rosh Hashanah.

One evening, when Berman was around twenty-seven, he took a beautiful, “smart as hell” young woman on a date. They went to see Zero Mostel, who was performing in a local Detroit theater. For the next four years the couple dated, and, in 1950, Mandell Berman married Madeleine Brodie – his Madge. Their marriage lasted sixty-six years, until the day Berman died.

Berman's ability to listen and respond thoughtfully led to his involvement in local, national, and international organizations. He served on the boards of dozens of organizations including the Jewish Agency for Israel, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Council of Jewish Federations, and Skillman Foundation. He accumulated numerous awards including the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's Butzel Award, an honorary doctor of laws degree from Wayne State University, and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's prestigious Leonard N. Simons History Award in 2009. In 2013, he became a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His prescience in identifying opportunities for funding and growth was astounding, and his commitment to strong Jewish values was inspiring. Berman, who served as one of JHSM's founding board members in 1959, became one of this organization's first large donors, and the family foundation he established consistently supported our mission.

Ensuring access to high-quality Jewish education was one of Berman's primary philanthropic interests. He provided funding for the development of JHSM's Traveling Trunk religious-school education curriculum; he generously supported the University of Michigan Hillel (whose building was renamed the Mandell Berman Center in 1988), and he endowed Jewish Experiences for Families (JEFF; now renamed JFamily) at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. In 2014, he and Madge established the Berman Center for Jewish Education at Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will miss this devoted and humble servant, survived by his wife Madeleine, his children Ann Berman Feld and Dr. Jon Berman, and three grandchildren.

Historical Tidbit

2007: On July 21, Rabbi Sherwin Wine (b. 1928) died in an automobile crash at the age of seventy-nine. In 1963, Wine founded the Birmingham Temple, which morphed into a Humanistic Judaism community, becoming one of the first congregations nationally to align with the Secular Humanistic Judaism movement, a non-theistic system of organized Jewish lifestyle and practice.

MARILYN KRAINEN 1932-2017



On May 28, 2017, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan lost a dear friend and loyal volunteer. Marilyn Goodman Krainen, eighty-four, served as associate editor of *Michigan Jewish History* for nearly a decade, working side by side with Wendy Bice, mentoring her and others in the fine art of documenting history.

Krainen first joined the JHSM advisory board in 2007 and almost immediately began putting pen to paper on the society's behalf. By then, she had built a career as a writer, initially as an instructor at Oakland University, and then as a corporate/technical writer for a national healthcare firm. She chose JHSM as a retirement project, but it quickly became a passion and new vocation.

Krainen was a careful writer, a skilled tactician and editor, and a beautiful storyteller. She could delete unnecessary adverbs as fast as quicker rapidly as a quick brown fox, and remove and add hyphens with absolute self-confidence. She considered the mission of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan to be a vital one for our community and took her role in helping to preserve the legacies of Michigan's Jewish residents, communities, and institutions seriously. As an editor, she tirelessly worked with authors to help them hone their message, clarify their thoughts, and convey true meaning in their words. It was she who began offering short abstracts at the beginning of each feature article in this journal, a tradition that continued even as she had to take a leave from her role due to failing health, and continues in her now-permanent absence.

In 2010, Krainen chronicled the history of the Trenton community for *Michigan Jewish History*, sharing the story of the Ellias family, who founded Mulias and Ellias, Trenton's long-time department store that "defined and embodied 20th century Trenton," as she wrote in that article.

Of course, there was more to Krainen than her skill as a writer. In 1951, during the early months of the Korean War, Marilyn married her sweetheart Fred, a master electrician, in the living room of her childhood home. The wedding came sooner than planned, as Fred was about to be called for military duty. Four months later, the couple left for Camp Gordon, Georgia, for his training in the Signal Corps. A year later, he was deployed to Korea. The couple wrote to each other daily, and then – finally – in the spring of 1954, Fred

Krainen returned home. Marilyn later credited their wartime separation as being one of the reasons for their profound and lasting love for one another.

At age forty, and with three children in tow, Marilyn began her professional career. To quench her insatiable quest for learning, she enrolled in college, first at Oakland Community College and then Oakland University, where in 1980 she received her master of arts in English. She attended the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning in 2005, and in 2011 stood on the bimah of Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield and became an adult bat mitzvah. In a 2005 *Detroit Jewish News* article, she described her passion this way: "We can always grow, always learn, always change; so even though I did not have a Jewish education as a child, I can go forth now as an adult."

Every JHSM volunteer brings many attributes and assets. Marilyn Krainen brought not only her love of language, but also her passion for Jewish identity, history, and culture. In 2011, when Krainen received JHSM's Volunteer of the Year Award, she proudly stood in front of a packed house to accept the honor. But, being "up in front" was not where Krainen preferred to be. She was most at home with a red pen in hand, behind a desk or at her kitchen table, reading, writing, and thinking. Krainen is survived by her husband Fred, her children Gordon, Leslie, and Cindy, her eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Historical Tidbit

1917: Citing Germany's violation of its pledge to suspend submarine warfare in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean, President Woodrow Wilson, on April 2, 1917, appeared before a joint session of Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany. On April 4 and 6, 1917, the U.S. Senate and then the House voted in support of the measure to declare war on Germany. The United States officially entered the war on December 7, 1917, declaring war on the German ally Austria-Hungary.

At the time, approximately 3.2% of the U.S. population was identified as being Jewish. The total number of Jewish men who served in the armed forces of the United States numbered about 250,000, which represented about 5.73% of the total enlistment. *Michigan Jewish History*, March 1961

ESTHER KARSON SHAPIRO 1918-2016



We are all safer consumers because of Esther. We are all better citizens because of Esther. We have a more equal society because of Esther. These are the words that come to mind as I think about the legacy of Esther K. Shapiro, the “courageous crusader” who spent her life as an activist concerned with social justice, and who passed away at her Lafayette Park home in Detroit on October 14, 2016. She was ninety-eight.

Esther served our community in many roles. She was the founding director of the City of Detroit Department of Consumer Affairs, serving from 1974 to 1990. She was president of the Consumer Federation of America, and she was a board member or official of numerous other consumer organizations. Esther’s many honors included the Anti-Defamation League’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000, and she was inducted into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame in 2015.

In the days before the internet and social media, Esther was like a foot soldier in her activism: She worked the phones like magic, and she used her car and her feet to meet with people face-to-face throughout the state and the country. Her goal was to create a better understanding of consumer rights and consumer responsibilities, and her mantra, “read the label,” applied to everyone, whether someone about to sign a contract, or a shopper examining a can of food before purchase. She was most passionate about encouraging voters to read and learn everything they could about a politician or ballot issue before they entered the voting booth.

Many remember Esther’s voice from her weekly WWJ-AM radio show, on which she answered consumer questions and offered consumer advice beginning in 1966. Others remember her long-running weekly *Detroit Free Press* column, from which she resigned in 1995 when the Detroit newspaper strike began. And many remember the political gatherings hosted by Esther and her husband, Harold Shapiro. Journalists, researchers, and national consumer organizations continued to call upon Esther for advice and information throughout the rest of her life.

Esther Karson was born in Chicago where her parents, both immigrants, ran a small grocery store. She claimed to have been a shy child, a sharp

contrast to her adult forcefulness. As a young woman, Esther moved to New York City and found a clerical job at Paris Decorators. She met Hal in New York while standing among striking workers at a sweat shop, and they were married on New Year's Day of 1940. During WWII, the couple moved to Vancouver, Washington, so that Hal could work in shipyards for the war effort, and where the couple challenged patterns of racial discrimination by inviting racially mixed groups of friends into their home. They then moved to Portland, Oregon, where their first child, daughter Andrea, was born. In 1944 the couple moved to Detroit, where Hal ran the Detroit local of the International Fur & Leather Workers Union, and where their son Mark was born. All the while, Esther was by her husband's side organizing, first in volunteer roles, and then beginning her active consumer career traveling throughout Michigan for the Michigan Credit Union.

Many remember Esther as a forceful activist working to ensure fair employment. Others think of her work on voting and civil rights, and how she helped to elect African Americans, including Congressman John Conyers and Mayor Coleman A. Young, to prominent political positions. Esther was a founder of the Michigan Friends of the South, an informal Detroit women's group that raised funds early and continually for the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and then for the Freedom Marchers.

I remember Esther as a neighbor, friend, and role model. She grew up with values typical of an immigrant Jewish family, honoring our heritage of social activism. But, as I remember Esther Shapiro, I think that her actions and her spirit have helped create a more equal and just society. Her words were her tools, her actions were her bullets, her target was social injustice, and she did not, and would not, ever give up.

Esther K. Shapiro, mother of two, grandmother of four, and great-grandmother of three, was predeceased by her husband Harold and son Mark. Her memory will live on through those of us who knew her, through those who have the opportunity to learn about her, and through all whose lives are made better by her work. - *Harriet B. Saperstein*

2016 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.

BRICKER TUNIS FURS

JHSM's 2016 article, "Celebrating a Century of Selling Furs to Fashionable Detroiters: Bricker-Tunis Furs" prompted a memory from long-time JHSM member, Rita Faudem. "My dad's fur store, Phil Bricker Furs, was next to the candy store which was next to the Dexter Theatre on Burlingame and Dexter (in Detroit). The store was very fashionable, with headless mannequins in the window and a huge, stuffed brown bear on a rolling platform that my dad put in the window every morning. When he modernized the store, the new mannequins had moddish short bobs and the poor bear had gone to a better place, I hope. There were two huge walk-in safes. He also fitted the modern, free-form coffee table with mink corners after too many folks bumped their knees. He made the fur coats the old-fashioned way, starting with taking a client's measurements, drawing sketches, sewing a canvas version of the product, and fitting it. He bought a bundle of skins, and a bolt of silk for the lining, embroidered with the name of the owner, who tried on the coat many times during the process." Furriers ran in this family; Phil Bricker was a cousin of Jack Bricker, owner of Bricker-Tunis Furs.

MUMFORD MUSIC

From Michael Salesin, we received this wonderful reminiscence: "I had a chance to look at Vol. 56 of *Michigan Jewish History*. I was impressed with the book...." Salesin then adds some personal memories to Harvey Ovshinsky's article, "Mumford Music: How I ran away...." Ovshinsky's mother and her husband, Adolph Marks, owned the Mumford Music record store in 1965.

"My parents, Lou and Betty Salesin, opened Mumford Music on Wyoming around 1954 and sold the store in the sixties. By then, they had opened a second Mumford Music in Oak Park, which my brother ran until my folks sold the Wyoming store. My parents then moved to the Oak Park store. Most Mumford Music customers fondly remember Mumford Music as the classic example of a fifties record store and remember my folks behind the counter, and not the new owners. The customers were bobby-soxed girls dancing in the aisles awaiting appearances of the stars of the day including Jerry Lee Lewis, Rosemary Clooney, and even the Four Freshmen. These were the days before

concert venues like Pine Knob, and before music videos. Instead, artists used these public appearances to promote their latest records. Stores like my folks' Mumford Music disappeared and were replaced by sales in grocery stores and ultimately by the internet."



Lou Salesin, Mumford Music proprietor. Courtesy of Michael Salesin.

As always, JHSM appreciates reader feedback.
Contact us at 248-432-5517 or info@michjewishhistory.org.

Historical Tidbit

1947: While in Russian government captivity, Raoul Wallenberg died of heart failure. Born in Sweden, the University of Michigan graduate became a successful architect and businessman, and the first secretary of the Swedish Legion in Budapest in 1944. Known for his diplomacy and humanitarian compassion, Wallenberg's tireless efforts and ability to provide protective passes, saved the lives of some 100,000 Hungarian Jews. The University of Michigan hosts an annual lecture in Wallenberg's memory.

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