MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN
Established 1959

VOLUME 58 | FALL 2018 | CHESHVAN 5779

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

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY is dedicated to the memory of SARAH AND RALPH DAVIDSON and BESSIE AND JOSEPH WETSMAN, the parents and grandparents of WILLIAM DAVIDSON, of blessed memory, and DOROTHY DAVIDSON GERSON.

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

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*MICHIGAN **JEWISH** HISTORY*
is published by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan
6600 West Maple Rd., West Bloomfield, MI 48322
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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*. ISBN 0543-9833

COVER PHOTO:
Julius Spielberg opened Spiel Pharmacy at Fenkell and Birwood in 1926, just five years after arriving in Detroit from Boston. Born in Russia in 1906, Spielberg's pharmacy is credited with being one of the first to offer self-service, heralding a dramatic change in America's shopping habits.

MICHIGAN **JEWISH** HISTORY

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

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

THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 58 | Fall 2018 | Cheshvan 5779

FEATURE ARTICLES

Editor's Letter

Sixteen years ago, in 2002, I was asked to stand in as editor of *Michigan Jewish History* for then-editor Aimee Ergas, who had taken a sabbatical. One year later, Aimee became the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's first executive director, and I became editor of this fine publication.

Each volume became a unique journey, some more treacherous than others. Still, every fall, on the day the journal landed safely in the hands of JHSM members and on the shelves of libraries across the nation, the tribulations of publication were replaced by the pride of knowing that, together with an army of volunteers, we had produced something wonderful.

In 2010, Aimee stepped down as executive director, and I was selected for that position. My dual role as both editor and executive director allowed me to connect the stories of Michigan's Jewish community in a unique and valuable way.

This past July, I resigned my position with JHSM. Now, with the publication of the fifty-ninth volume of *Michigan Jewish History*, my time as editor of this amazing journal has also come to an end.

What You Will Discover in This Issue of MJH

As always, this volume contains a fascinating array of information. We are honored to share a brief history of the Jewish communities of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; and the story of an attempt by the Detroit Public Schools to incorporate bible readings into the classroom—in the late 1800s. We also learn about a group of non-Jewish nurses at the North End Clinic who learned Yiddish so they could better communicate with their patients.

We are pleased to introduce readers to author Patricia Polacco, whose children's books are as much a delight for parents as they are for their intended audience; and to Ezra Korman, a renowned Yiddish poet and publisher who made his home in Detroit.

I am honored to conclude my tenure as editor with the publication of two long-awaited collections. First, we offer a close look at the Detroit-area *landsmanschaftn*, mutual-aid societies that were abundant throughout the mid-twentieth century. Many thanks to our authors who created a record so the work of these societies will not be forgotten.

The landsmanschaftn series is followed by a collection of essays that re-discover the era of the corner druggist. Beginning with an overview of the industry and of why Jewish men found opportunity in the pharmacy profession, the section concludes with a set of delightful recollections from family members whose fathers and grandfathers proudly donned those white coats.

What We Have Discovered in Past Issues of MJH

The corner-druggist collection reminds me of our 2005 "Detroit's Food Distribution Markets," compiled by Diane Pomish. Beginning with an overview of Detroit's early, open-air Eastern and Gratiot markets, it included a series of short

reminiscences by market business owners and their family members, who, wrote Pomish, described the “richness of the Market and its multi-ethnic experience.”

MJH employed this template several times. In 2013, Esther Ingber tuned-up a terrific series that looked back at Detroit’s mid-century, Jewish-owned gas stations, and, in 2014, Mark Voight and Sandy Hansell teamed up for a series on Jewish-owned bowling centers.

Like flipping through the pages of a family photo album, looking back upon these past sixteen issues has been an emotional journey for me, to say the least. Turning the pages of *MJH* evokes memories of those we’ve lost, like Bernard and Norma Goldman, of blessed memory. This dynamic duo not only wrote many important articles for *MJH*, but also served as trusted advisors and editors during those early years. Benno Levi, z”l, a long-time JHSM board member, wrote about his childhood summers at Camp Mehia and shared his WWII stories and images. It was his desire to write his story, in his own words, that led to the creation of our memoir-based section, Creative Reflections. And, I think of Marilyn Krainen, z”l, our co-editor for so many years, whose red pen did more than edit. She understood how to craft a cogent narrative and worked with authors to help them organize and clarify their articles.

The stack of iconic blue books atop my desk holds only a portion of the wealth of Michigan’s Jewish history preserved by JHSM. Looking back, I see so many vital articles that truly embodied JSHM’s mission, from the histories of small, often-overlooked Jewish communities, to the profiles of Jewish men and women whose impact cannot be forgotten. Then there were the stories that were just plain amazing: the tragic tale of David Weiss, the Jewish crew member aboard the ill-fated Edmund Fitzgerald; the history of the Belle Isle Aquarium, both past and present; the careful documentation of Central High School, its graduates, and its importance to our community; Jewish inventors; Motown’s Jewish connections; and last year’s fascinating series on pre- and post-1967 Detroit.

I could go on forever, but it is time to say, “Thank you.” Thank you to every author, editor, photographer, graphic designer, and envelope stuffer who was a part of the team that produced this book year after year. Thank you to my predecessors for their prescience and to my mentors for their passionate support. Thank you to the Davidson family, who endowed the journal many years ago, and to our recent funders who recognize the value of this publication and have pledged to support it financially in the years to come through the establishment of the Judge Avern and Lois Cohen and the Prentis Family Foundation MJH Writer’s Fund.
The establishment of this fund, which will debut in 2019, is truly a dream come true.

To you, JHSM members and friends, thank you for your loyalty, interest, accolades, ideas, corrections, and fan mail. I loved each and every encounter.
It is comforting to know that, in the years to come, this body of work will remain a cherished treasure.

Thank you all and so long for now,

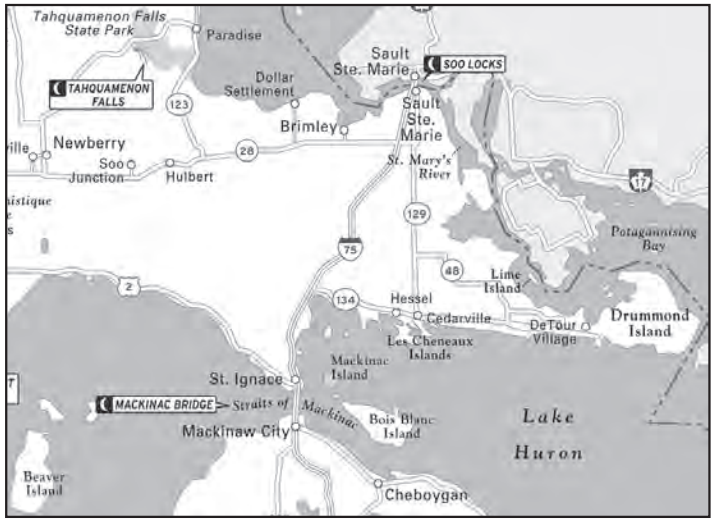
Wendy Rose Bice

Feature Article

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CHIPPEWA COUNTY
THE HEBREW BURIALS AT RIVERSIDE'S ST. MARY CEMETERY

By Sandy Robbins & Kathleen Hendricks

When members of the Chippewa County Genealogical Society discovered the existence of the original books of entry for the Riverside Cemetery's Protestant and Catholic burials dating to the 1890s, they also discovered that a portion of land was set aside on the Catholic side for burial of "Hebrews." With but one exception, all of the burial records were entered into the Protestant record book. Although most of the burials were infants or young children who died between 1904 and 1914, several adults were interred in the cemetery, as well. Sadly, only five of the twenty-five burials appeared to have markers: Mose Mezerow, Jean Bernard Elmann, Baby Cohen (the son of Isaac and Ida Cohen), Esther Yetta Sheer (shown as Baby Sheer in the cemetery records), and Robert Sugar. This discovery led to a season of research that we now proudly share with readers of Michigan Jewish History.



While on the map, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, separated by the St. Mary's River, are different communities in two countries, they are united in many aspects. Even though the Michigan side of the river has a larger population, the only synagogue in the region resides in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Map from Moon Michigan, *fifth edition.*

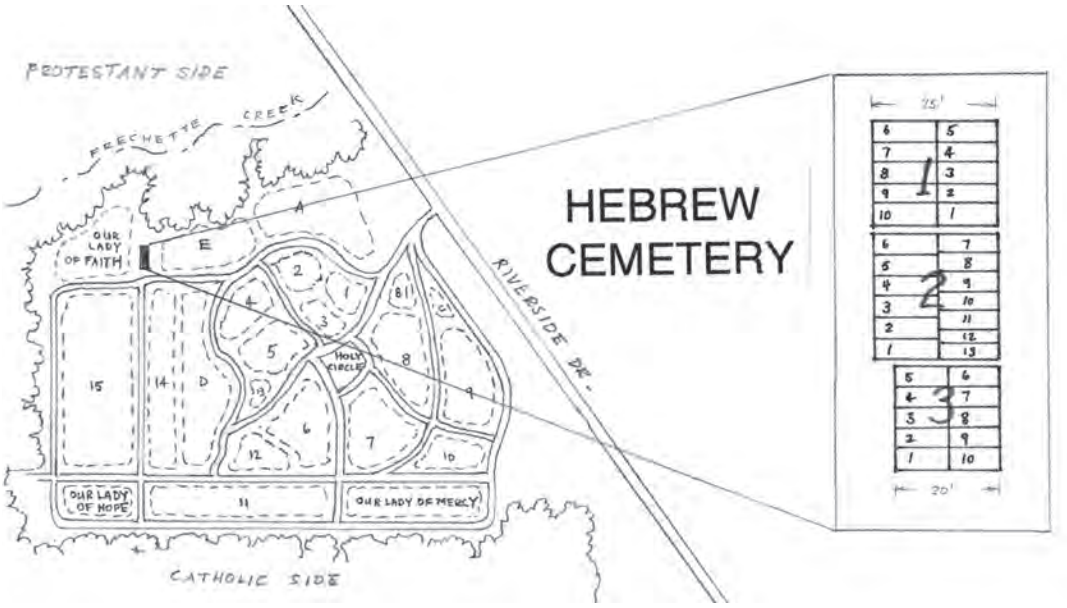
Sault Ste. Marie in Chippewa County, Michigan, has been a permanent place of settlement since 1668, when the Jesuit priest and explorer Jacques Marquette came to the area from New France. The Jesuits brought the Christian religion to the Native Ojibwe population who had used this Bahweting "area by the rapids" as a gathering place each summer for thousands of years. Father Marquette established the Mission Sainte-Marie and named the place Le Sault de Sainte-Marie.

Anishinaabe peoples, including Ojibwes, had a long history in the area where they fished, gathered berries, and traded with other tribes before moving to winter hunting grounds farther west. Intermarriage between Native populations and fur-trading French voyageurs soon began. Through the years the area came under rule of France and Britain, until finally after the War of 1812 it became part of the United States. Because the border between Canada and the U.S. was not formalized until 1817, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, were one settlement for almost one hundred and fifty years. Early settlers of note were Jean-Baptiste Cadotte, Alexander Henry, John Johnston, and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.

As the only entry to Lake Superior from the lower lakes, the St. Mary's River became an important portal in opening trade between the eastern and western parts of the North American continent. Initially, canoes were portaged around the St. Mary's Rapids, but by 1855 a lock was built and larger ships began to move through the lakes with greater speed. In the early years of Michigan's statehood in 1837 the population was sparse, but by the early 1870s, when land grants were offered, an influx of settlers, especially Scots, Irish, and English, came to Michigan from Canada.

By the early 1890s, "the Soo," as the Michigan side became known, become a bustling city, its settlers representing a melting pot of ethnicity. They came from the Scandinavian countries and from politically fluctuating Europe (Russia, Poland, Germany, France, Italy) for work in lumbering, railroads, mining, factories, and the trades. At this time several Jewish families migrated from Russia and Poland. Most of the Jewish settlers first found employment as traveling peddlers and soon saw the benefit of opening storefronts.

The names of families featured in this article, Prenzlauer, Barish, Oberman, Caden, Mezerow, Blumrosen, Freedman, Kozlow, and Davis, composed the majority of this population, but there were others, perhaps less well known, who also made their mark in the area. Although the only Jewish synagogue was then and is now across the St. Mary's River in the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie, some Jewish residents continue to live on the Michigan side. By the 1920s, when other cities began to outpace the Soo, many of the early Jewish families moved on to other, more-populated areas, especially Detroit.



Grave	Surname	Forename	Birthplace	Age	death	Deathplace	Cause
P-1-1	Silverbourg	Abraham	Sault Ste. Marie, M	21 days	Feb. 20,1908	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Dermatitis
P-1-1	Silverbourg	Saul	Michigan	1mo, 5 da	April 18,1904	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Progressive Septicæmia
P-1-2	Levine	Gertie	Sault Ste. Marie, C	1mo, 7 da	October 8,1904	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Intestinal Obstruction
P-1-3	Sugar	Robert	Brimley, MI	1 yr,27 mo	Feb. 9, 1905	Brimley MI	Accidental scalding
P-1-4	Cohen	Male Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, M	0	March 16,1905	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Stillborn
P-1-5	Kohn	Male Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, M	0	Jan. 8,1906	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Stillborn
P-1-6	Goldman	Male Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, M	0	Jan. 27,1906	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Stillborn
P-1-7	Davis*	P.H.	Poland	57 yr, 9 mo	Aug. 11,1906	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Heart Failure
P-1-8	Davis	P.H., Mrs.					
P-1-9	Rosenthal	Bella/Della	Sault Ste. Marie, C	2 yr	Sept. 14, 1907	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Shock from streetcar
P-1-10	Cohen	Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, M	0	June 29,1908	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Stillborn
P-1-11	Booman*	Samuel	Sault Ste. Marie, C	8 mo, 3 da	Aug. 26,1914	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Diarrhea
P-2-1	Winkleman	Female Baby	Manistique, MI	0	Mar. 22, 1907	Manistique, MI	Stillborn
P-2-2	Sheer	Female Baby	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
P-2-3	Caden	Baby (Bessie)	Sault Ste. Marie, M	1 mo, 21 dy	July 13,1909	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Malnutrition
P-2-4	Zuggot/Zuggat	Baby (Justin/Justo	Sault Ste. Marie, C	N/A	Aug. 30,1909	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Summer diarrhea
P-2-5	Sandleman	Charles	Sault Ste. Marie, M	4 mo	July 11,1910	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Pneumonia
P-2-6	Kohn	Male Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, M	0	Nov. 19,1911	Sault Ste. Marie, MI	Stillborn
P-2-7	Atinsky*	Male Baby	Kincheloe AFB, M	0	Oct. 21,1966	Kincheloe AFB,	Interuterine death, cause unknown
P-2-8	Cadzen	Female Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, C	0	Aug. 12,1914	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Stillborn
P-2-9	Bowman	Sady	Toronto, ONT	9 months	May 31,1914	Sault Ste. Marie, Onta	Convulsions
P-2-10	Cohen	Male Baby	Algoma, ONT	N/A	Jan. 12,1925	Algoma, Ont.	Asphixia Lurdia
P-2-11	Elmann*	Joseph B./Jaen Be	Grand Rapids, MI	16 yr, 7 mo	Oct. 5,1926	Brimley, MI	Accidental gunshot wound
P-2-12	Davis	Baby	Sault Ste. Marie, C	1 day	Feb. 6,1928	Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario	
P-2-13	Fragin/Frazin*	Female Baby	N/A	7 wk	June 15,1937	N/A	Premature birth
P-2-14	Mezerow*	Mose		83 years	Aug. 8,1955		Arterioschlerotic heart dise
NOTES:							
Davis: Given name Philip per death record on Seeking Michigan.							
Atinsky: Chippewa County death record was complete, cemetery card had name only.							
Elmann: Jean Bernard on gravestone, Mother's maiden name is Sugar.							
Fragin/Frazin: Cemetery book retired in 1937, Frazin on county death record and cause shown as stillborn (Note: name may be Frazer.)							
Mose Mezerow is shown as P-2-14 but there is no grave 14. Samuel Booman is shown as P-1-1, but there is no such grave.							

AN INTRODUCTION TO SAULT STE. MARIE'S JEWISH RESIDENTS
PHILLIP H. DAVIS & MOSE MEZEROW

One of two adults buried in the St. Mary's Cemetery, Mr. Phillip H. Davis, a local clothing merchant, lived with his wife, Rachel, at 402 Carrie Street at the time of the 1900 census. Though a place was reserved for her next to her husband, there is no record of Rachel being buried at Riverside. However, cemetery records indicate that on June 8, 1898, her left arm was buried in Block 14 on the Protestant side of the cemetery.

A 1922 advertisement for The Hub, owned by Mose Yalomstein.

This fact was suggestive of an underlying story, so the genealogical society team put on their detective hats. First, they turned to the *Soo Democrat* and learned that on May 30, 1898, Mrs. P. H. Davis had suffered a compound fracture of her arm from a fall while attempting to ride a bicycle. The fractures were set, but within the week must have become infected, for she "had to submit to removal of the member at the shoulder" on June 8. Looking further, the team found her Chippewa County marriage record, from which they learned that, subsequent to her husband's 1906 death, Mrs. Rachel Davis and Sergeant Thomas E. Brower were united in marriage on May 16, 1909, by the Rev. J. A. Kennedy of the Presbyterian Church. The bride had recently sold a cigar-store business that she had been conducting in the Adams building for a number of years, and her groom was stationed at Fort Brady with the hospital corps. Following their marriage they transferred to Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, D.C.

The other Jewish adult interred in the cemetery is Mose Mezerow, a retired clothing merchant, who resided at 319 Ashmun at the time of his death in 1955. His wife, Harriet (daughter of Daniel Campbell and Anne McKernan), predeceased him on December 2, 1944, and is buried in Block 8, Lot 1, in the Catholic section of the cemetery, where she rests with her parents and a sister. Per his obituary, Mr. Mezerow was born in Russia on June 26, 1872, and worked for

Mose Mezerow is one of the few adults buried in the Hebrew section of the Riverside Cemetery.

Blumrosen Sandleman and operated the Boston Store and Fashion Press Shop in the Soo. His funeral service was conducted by the Rev. B. Fishman, rabbi of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

THE BARISH AND OBERMAN FAMILIES

Missing from the list of names of Jewish burials at Riverside's St. Mary Cemetery were Barish and Oberman — both long associated in the region with clothing sales. Bill Oberman, the third-generation owner of Barish Brothers of Sault Ste. Marie, provided some insight into the mystery: Bill's grandfather, Ben Oberman, immigrated to the United States from Latvia, first stopping in New York City, then moving on to Bemidji, Minnesota, where he owned a pool hall. He found that business "too rough," particularly on Saturday nights, so he sold the hall and went to Pickford, Michigan.

While in New York, Ben Oberman met and married Florence (Flossie). Flossie's sister married a man by the name of Max Barish. The two men, along with Max's brother, Joe, came to Michigan and opened the original Barish Brothers store in Pickford (Joe sold his share to his partners in 1917 and moved to California).

Ben Oberman liked the rural life of the Upper Peninsula, so he and Flossie moved to the Soo. In 1913, the three business partners sold the Pickford store and re-opened in Sault Ste. Marie. Flossie, however, preferred big-city life and soon returned to New York City. They divorced in 1947. During their separation and after their divorce, their two sons spent summers in Michigan with their father and the remainder of the year in New York with their mother.

Son Lester eventually returned to live full time in Sault Ste. Marie, where he joined Ben and Max in the Barish Brothers partnership in 1946. Lester's wife Ruth was raised in a very observant Orthodox family in Detroit and, thanks to Beth Jacob Synagogue, the Orthodox congregation in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, she was able to raise their children in the Hebrew faith.

As to the question of where the family members are buried, Florence Oberman is buried in Miami, Florida. Ben, who died in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1972 at age eighty-nine, is buried at Oaklawn Chapel Gardens, south of the Soo. Max Barish, the last of the original pioneer merchant partners, died at age ninety-three in 1979. His wife Nancy died in 1994 at the age of ninety-seven. Both are buried in Miami, where they had resided since 1959. Mr. and Mrs. Lester Oberman are also buried beside each other in Miami.

PRENZLAUER FAMILY: PIONEER MERCHANTS OF SAULT STE. MARIE

In 1869, Joseph Prenzlauer (b. July 15, 1829) of Posen, Prussia, and his wife, Minnie Strauss, opened a merchandise store on Water Street in Sault

Ste. Marie. Joseph and Minnie had at least ten children, seven of them boys, and split their time between Detroit and Sault Ste. Marie. Minnie was known to enjoy her summers in the Upper Peninsula, where she was active in several different societies and had many friends.

Joseph opened his store in a simple building at the intersection of Water and Cross streets. When Joseph died in 1874, Minnie and her sons carried on the business. The two oldest, Herman and Albert, renamed the business Prenzlauer Bros. Later, brothers Abraham and David took over. The Prenzlauer Bros. business interests ended in 1918, having helped the Soo grow for almost fifty years. It was recognized as one of the finest stores in Sault Ste. Marie. In 1918 the firm was sold to Cowan & Hunt.

BERNARD BLUMROSEN (1863-1932)

Bernard Blumrosen came to Sault Ste. Marie in 1895, his arrival representing the end of a long trek that began in Suvalki, Poland, with his parents Samuel and Reta (Shapero). The couple left their homeland in late 1865, first settling near Alpena and then, in 1875, in Detroit, where Samuel opened a clothing business that he ran until his death in 1900. Bernard, one of four children born to Samuel and Reta, left home at age fifteen, heading north to Manistique where he and his older brother, Moses, opened a business and erected the first brick block building in Schoolcraft County. In 1895, Bernard found himself lured to Sault Ste. Marie, where he opened a mercantile business that he operated until his retirement in 1908.

Over the years, Blumrosen acquired several important real-estate holdings, including the Odd Fellows Hall, constructed in 1908. Blumrosen was very much involved with the Odd Fellows organization, and he was responsible for bringing the 1909 Interstate Convention of Odd Fellows to Sault Ste. Marie. He and his wife, Leah, whom he had married in London, had two sons, Samuel and Solomon.

THE EARLY JEWISH MERCHANTS OF SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

Barish Bros.: *In 1913, Joseph and Max Barish purchased the clothing stand of Wolf Kozloff. In 1916 Max Barish and Benjamin Oberman purchased the interest of Joseph Barish and continued to do business as Barish Bros. The store remains in operation and is owned by Barish and Oberman descendant Bill Oberman.*

Kremen's People Store: *J. Kremen, proprietor.*

Blumrosen Bros.: *Begun in 1895 by Bernard Blumrosen. The Blumrosen brothers, Mose and Bernard, founded a store in Manistique in 1882. In 1888 they opened another store in Ashland, Wisconsin. In 1903, Mose closed the store in Manistique and came to Sault Ste. Marie.*

The Model: *Opened in 1904; Max Schoeneman, proprietor.*

The Hub: Mose Yalomstein, proprietor. (His brothers were Lew Yalomstein of Manistique and Dave Yalomstein of St. Ignace. His sister was Mrs. Louis Winkelman of St. Ignace).

Koslow & Mezerow: *1905; Wolf Koslow and Mose Mezerow, dry goods and clothing.*

Love & Freedman Clothing Store: *Closed 1902; Max Love and Ben Friedman, proprietors.*

Freedman & Sitherwood Furniture: *1900-1904; H. M. Sitherwood and Mamie Freedman, partners.*

Morris Caden Second Hand Store.

Freedman's Bazaar: *1905-date unknown.*

Prenzlauer Bros: *1869-1918; founded by Joseph Prenzlauer and his wife Minnie Strauss in 1869, continued by Minnie and her sons Albert and Herman, and later by her sons Abraham and David. Bought out by Cowan & Hunt in January 1918.*

H. Freedman, Second Hand Machinery Store: *1906-date unknown.*

Soo Furniture Store: *Abe and H. A. Freedman, proprietors.*

Winkleman Style Shop: *1921-date unknown; Leon Winkleman, proprietor. He married Josephine Rosenblum in Delta County in 1920.*

The Fair Store: *J. L. Sandleman, proprietor. Retired from the store in 1914.*

Soo Furniture, Love & Freedman, and The Fair *consolidated in August 1903; dissolved a few years later.*

The Boston Store: *Founded in 1900 by Hugh McKenzie of Manistee. In 1901 purchased by B. M. Morris, in 1903 managed by Max Schoeneman. In the 1920s Mose Mezerow and Elmer Fleming were proprietors.*

Soo Bankrupt Store Company: *1912; A. Freedman, manager.*

P. H. Davis, Cigar Store & News Stand: *P. H. Davis and wife Rachel, proprietors.*

Compiled by K.M. Henedricks, editor, Chippewa GenTalk. *This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of businesses operated by members of the Jewish community. The information presented was culled primarily from old newspapers.*

WOLF AND ROSA KOZLOW

Just about one year after they were married, Wolf and Rosa Kozlow left their home in Kiev (Russia) in 1891, first coming to New York, and then moving to Philadelphia where their first child, Sara, was born in 1893. Soon after, they moved to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Family lore says Wolf, who loved trapping furs, and Rosa wanted a climate similar to what they were used to back in Russia. They lived in Sault Ste. Marie from 1894 to 1913, and four of their five other children, Samuel, Edward, Dorothy, and Pearl, were born there.

Wolf and Rosa Kozlow with their infant daughter, Sara.

Wolf, at six feet tall, listed his profession as "peddler" in the city directory, but his true work, at least early on, was fur trapping and trading with the Native Americans. This led to his becoming a peddler, working in a dry goods store (see list of Jewish-owned businesses), and finally, around 1912, opening The People's Store in the Soo. For reasons unknown, a year later they moved to Detroit, possibly to ensure better educational opportunities for their boys. In the Delray section of Detroit, Wolf owned a store called Zolkower's.

With thanks to Abby Gruber for this section and photograph.

CONGREGATION BETH JACOB

Contrary to the myth that immigrant Jews in Canada stayed mainly in the major cities, many chose other parts of the country, including northern Ontario. In the late 1800s, large numbers of men came from Eastern Europe or Russia, found work, and, once they had saved enough money, sent for their families. In the remote area of Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, they found opportunity in lumbering or fur trading, or as peddlers. One of the first Jewish men to settle in the area, and one of the founding members of Congregation Beth Jacob, was Ben Cohen, originally from Russia, who became a scrap dealer. The company he founded, Traders Metal, continues to operate under a third generation of Cohens. In 1901, according to the Canadian Federal Bureau of Statistics (now StatsCan), Cohen and seven others lived in the town. By 1911, the population had grown to around eighty Jewish residents. Soon after, the community established Congregation Beth Jacob.

Most of the Canadian Jewish residents operated their businesses on Queen Street, the main street of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. "A walk along Queen today reveals hints of what things were like 'back then,'" wrote Jeff Arbus, a member

Congregation Beth Jacob, located in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, serves both the Jewish communities of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The Yiddish inscription over the entrance reads, "Congregation Beth Jacob. 1945 18 October."

of Beth Jacob, in an article for the publication *Townies*. "The names, and the families that ran the businesses, will be familiar to many. There was Allen's Ladies Wear, run by the Torgov family. On the site where the arena now stands was the Algoma Hotel (Cohen family). Across the street was Friedman's Department Store, and at the comer of Bruce and Queen was Davis Clothing."

From the earliest days, Jewish families enmeshed themselves in civic and religious life. Jewish men and women were involved in Kiwanis, Rotary, the Masons, the Shriners, the Odd Fellows, and Rebekahs. Nathan Himmel served on the board of the Children's Aid Society and was a president of Rotary. The Hadassah chapter held art auctions, fashion shows, and a popular rummage sale to raise funds for their programs and services. The men served their country – and hemisphere – as soldiers in World War II. Mr. Wiseman was a colonel with the United States Army Air Corps, while more than a dozen others served with the Canadian military. Jack Cohen served with the Canadian Armed Forces for twenty years, five of which were during WWII. Cohen would go on to be decorated with the Silver Star by the United States government "for gallant service in action," one of only five Canadians to be so honored.

Central to the Jewish community, which peaked in 1962 with 142 Jewish residents, was their spiritual life. For many years, visiting rabbis came to the Soo to conduct services for Jewish families. Those who lived on the Michigan side of the St. Mary's River made what often was not an easy trip across the water to join their neighbors in worship. Prior to 1962, the year the International Bridge was opened, traveling to and from the congregation involved using a personal watercraft or taking the ferry. One resident of Sault Ste. Marie, Ruth Oberman, would often share her tale of the struggle to get her three boys across for Hebrew school and bar-mitzvah preparation.

In 1945, community members from both sides of the border joined together and raised the funds to build a synagogue of their own, which remains in operation today. Designed to be a testament to the vision of earlier generations, the inscription over the main door is in Yiddish, not Hebrew, as would befit the European and Russian origins of the founders. In recounting the history of both the American and Canadian cities of Sault Ste. Marie, certain ethnic groups are

The interior of Congregation Beth Jacob in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, reflects the architecture of the Mediterranean Jews. Covered in velvet, the inscription reads: "In honour of Andrew Cymbalist on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah, August 8, 1985. Presented by his grandparents." Photo courtesy of Ginny Cymbalist.

often credited with different aspects of development. The French and the Ojibwes built the early trading business, the Italians the power canal, the Irish the locks, and the Polish the Soo's tannery business. The history is not complete without giving credit to the Jewish immigrants for their great contribution to the growth of business, an enterprise that not only provided work and retail goods, but also fostered optimism about the future, which in turn helped the population grow and prosper.

It is our hope that our research and the preceding article provide a distinctive picture of how the early Jewish families helped shape Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.
- Sandy Robbins and Kathleen Hendricks

AUTHORS

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Feature Article

THE LANDSMANSCHAFTN OF DETROIT

Introduction by Neil Gorosh

The Russian Empire was home to more than five million Jews in 1897, roughly half of the world's entire Jewish population. Nearly all (94%) lived in an area known as the Pale of Settlement, which comprised the twenty-five westernmost provinces of the Russian Empire (now including all or part of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Moldova, and Latvia). Between 1881 and 1914, 1.5 million Jewish immigrants came to the United States from this area. This series of articles explores the creation of the Detroit-area landsmanschaftn*, social-support organizations formed by residents of a community who left their homeland and resettled in the United States. Most of the landsmanschaftn are gone, but three authors share their stories of groups that continue to exist to this day.*

In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, it is difficult to imagine the shock and dislocation our ancestors must have felt when they immigrated to the United States from Eastern Europe in the early decades of the last century. They knew no English. They had no knowledge of American customs. Their once-insular life was now multicultural. The pastoral life they had known in the Pale of Settlement was now faster-paced and urban. It was only natural, then, that these Jewish immigrants would settle in places where family and friends from the old country had already begun to establish themselves. They not only needed monetary help in making the transition to the New World, and help finding a balance between the old ways and the new, they also needed social and support structures for those without family or the right kind of skills. As a result, in an attempt to re-create the comforts of home, these immigrants formed *landsmanschaftn*—mutual-aid societies made up of Jews from the same town or region.

Not unique to Detroit, the earliest landsmanschaftn (pre-1880) acted as immigrant synagogues and were organized around orthodox religious life[1]. Later, their purpose became more secular as they helped immigrants transition from Europe to America. Fellow members helped new arrivals find places to work and live, many times bringing them into their homes temporarily as boarders. Landsmanschaftn aided financially distressed members with stipends or interest-free loans. They paid "sick benefits" and also provided "hospitalers," members who would sit and visit with the sick in hospitals. They paid "life-insurance benefits" to

Now a library, this building was once the home of Sipora and Shalom Mishalov, who lived in the village of David-Horodok and remained there throughout the Holocaust. In 2010, when members of the David-Horodok landsmanschaft visited the community, one man remembered the home, which he had visited when he was a child. He commented that the front-door hardware had not changed.

widows of deceased members and, at times, covered funeral and burial expenses.

In Detroit, caring for the deceased was vital. In May 1916, ten men founded the Detroit Jewish Free Burial Society, a.k.a. Chesed Shel Emes (later the Hebrew Benevolent Society), which translates to "true loving kindness." Thirteen acres of land were purchased in Clinton Township in Macomb County for $5,000, with a capacity for approximately 27,000 gravesites. As prescribed by tradition, the land was away from the city. The concept was to have a burial place where small congregations, lodges, and landsmanschaft societies could bury their members. Workmen's Circle purchased a large section in 1919 and sold off some of that section to other landsmanschaftn. In all, more than twenty organizations purchased sections within the acreage. At one time each section was separately fenced. With the exception of the Workmen's Circle section, which has its own entrance and remains fenced in, most of the fences have been removed. The cemetery is known now as Hebrew Memorial Park.

As a member of a landsmanschaft one felt at home, and had the comfort of knowing there was a place to be with others in a space free of ambition and the

The Workmen's Circle section of Hebrew Memorial Park has its own entrance on Gratiot, north of 15 Mile Road and just north of the cemetery's main entrance. To walk the rows of graves there is to trace the history of early Jewish Detroit.

stresses of acculturation. Landsmanschaftn provided a sanctuary from the hardships of everyday life, a respite from the external pressure to assimilate and from the fear of losing one's Jewish identity. Yiddish could be spoken freely. Yet, though landsmanschaftn functioned as an extension of the social and cultural life left behind, they also served as an introduction to life in America. Veterans helped fellow members become American citizens and provided them with a real introduction to American democracy. Almost universally, formal constitutions were adopted. Officers were elected and rules of parliamentary procedure were followed during meetings. At the time, immigrants who had lived in the United States for five years were eligible to apply for citizenship. Thus, many of these immigrants who could barely yet communicate in English were experiencing democracy firsthand, long before they could become citizens.

At the outset, membership was limited to adult males, most of whom were tailors, laborers, peddlers, and others in the working fields. Initially, at least, there were very few businessmen and even fewer accountants, doctors, or other professionals. This correlates with general statistics that show that, at this point in local Jewish history, professional men were quite rare. Women, who were excluded from full membership, formed auxiliary societies.

The year 1905 brought an attempted revolution in Russia and a huge increase in violence toward Jews. More than one thousand Jewish citizens were killed in pogroms in at least three hundred cities and towns. Periodic waves of violence continued until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The resulting spike in Jewish immigration caused a rapid increase in the number of landsmanschaftn during World War I. By the 1920s, as individuals were doing better financially, the landsmanschaftn to which they belonged also thrived. This allowed some of the money being raised to finance overseas relief efforts carried out by the Joint Distribution Committee, Hadassah, and others. Thus, while the needs of the recipients changed over time, *tzedakah* (charity) remained a major purpose of the landsmanschaftn.

Landsmanschaftn were not exclusive to the United States. They also were formed in Latin America and Israel, but most of those groups did not survive past the original immigrant generations.

The total number of landsmanschaftn in the United States probably peaked a little after 1930. This is because, as in Latin America, the original generation of immigrants was dying off and the need or desire to continue dwindled. Most landsmanschaftn were based in New York City for the obvious reason of a significant Jewish immigrant population. In 1938, the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) published a comprehensive study of landsmanschaftn. In it, approximately 2,500 landsmanschaftn, totaling half a million members, were identified in New York City alone. At that time, total landsmanschaftn membership in the rest of the country was approximately 250,000[2].

No comprehensive review exists of the history of landsmanschaftn in Detroit. The number of Detroit landsmanschaftn likely reached its zenith in the 1920s and '30s with approximately one hundred groups[3]. Today there are but three. Still, the final chapter on these local organizations may not yet have been written. Dr. Richard Stoler, a former member of the Bereznitzer Aid Society, in cooperation with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan, is leading an effort to encourage individuals to reactivate their landsmanschaftn.

The reasons for the decline of landsmanschaftn are well documented: The European immigrants' American-born children, now referred to as the Greatest Generation, felt less of a connection to Europe. While they understood and might even have been able to speak Yiddish, English was their first language. Most attended public schools and were fully integrated into American society. The social benefits of membership, so important to their parents, had much less meaning for them. Moreover, New Deal programs provided the relief that previously was available only through landsmanschaftn. While landsmanschaftn did experience a minor revival after World War II, because of the need to aid both Holocaust survivors and Israel, the die had been cast. For instance, Chicago was home to approximately six hundred landsmanschaftn with 40,000 members in 1948, but by 1961 only sixty landsmanschaftn remained.

In 1956, The Hebrew Benevolent Society of Detroit published a *40th Anniversary Jubilee Journal*, which identified the following then-existing landsmanschaftn organizations:

Bereznitzer Aid Society
Berditchever Progressive Aid Society
Bialistoker Aid Society
Brisker Progressive Umgegend Society
Bobroysker Ladies' Society
Brezner Aid Society
Chenstochover Rajoner Verein
Chernigover & Loyever Aid Society
Chodorkover Chabna Progressive Verein
David-Horodoker Benevolent Society
David-Horodoker Independent Ladies Society
Ekaterinoslaw Relief Association
First Galician Society of Detroit
First Galician Society Ladies' Auxiliary
Gombener Society
Kovler-Volyner Society
Kasaner Horodoker Society
Keshenever Bessarabier Unterstitzung Verein

Kiev Progressive Society
Korostishever Aid Society
Lachaowitcher Aid Society
Lachver Aid Society
Lutzker Voliner Society
Mazirer Society
Meseritcher Progressive Benefit Society
Mlaver Umgegend Verein
Mogliover Progressive Aid Society
Odessa Progressive Aid Society
Ostrowitzer Friendship Society
Pogrebishtcher Progressive Society
Pogrebishtcher Ladies Society
Radomer Aid Society
Radomer Ladies Auxiliary
Radomer Friendly Society
Rovner Progressive Verein
Ruzhiner Progressive Verein
Rubliner Society
Sokolivker Progressive Verein
Sosnowicer Bendiner Verein
Suwalker Progressive Association
Stepener Aid Society
Turover Ladies Aid Society
Turover Aid Verein
Vienietzer Progressive Umgegend Verein
Vladimiretzer Young Helper's Club
Warsaw Club of Detroit
Wilner Relief Organization
Zamosc Tomashever Progressive Society

By the mid-1950s, fewer than half of the original landsmanschaftn in the Detroit area were still in existence. By 1982 there were only five: the Radomers, the Gombiners, and the Mezritchers from Poland, and the Pinskers and David-Horodokers from Belarus.

In 1981, *Detroit Jewish News* editor Phillip Slomovitz commented on the dissolution of the local Turover Aid Society:

> "The landsmanschaftn are disappearing; the landsleit of a long era of solidarity among immigrant Jews is nearing an end. . . .
>
> Let it be recorded that the landsmanschaftn had a vital role in the

glorification of the Yiddish language. As long as there were landsmanschaftn there were Yiddish conversants and literary and cultural programs were conducted in Yiddish. As long as the landsmanschaftn functioned, the Yiddish press had a basis for support. The demise of the landsmanschaftn ends many of the devotional roles in the American Jewish community. . . .

The landsmanschaftn are not ending their many years of existence in vain. The record of their notable contributions is a lengthy and imperishable one.

It is with respect that this record is being accounted for and their existence will always occupy a page of glory in Jewish history."

What follows are profiles of three Detroit-area landsmanschaftn, two of which are still in operation: Workmen's Circle, the Pinsker Progressive Aid Society, and the David-Horodoker Organization. Technically, Workmen's Circle is not a landsmanschaft because its members do not come from a particular town or even region. It is included here because it continues to survive and function in many respects as a landsmanschaft. The Pinsker society was formed in March 1927. While it celebrated its fiftieth golden jubilee in 1977, its calendar of meetings and events has been substantially cut back and membership is down to about seventy individuals. The David-Horodoker Organization is clearly the exception to the rule, as it not only continues to operate, but is thriving with active chapters in both Detroit and Tel Aviv. – *Neil Gorosh*

ENDNOTES

[1]As early as 1892 there were eighty-seven Eastern European landsmanshaftn, and by 1910 there were more than two thousand, representing more than one hundred European cities and towns and embracing virtually every Jewish family in New York City. Source: MyJewishLearning.com, Howard Sachar,.

[2]Rontach, Isaac (ed.). Di idishe landsmanshaftn fun Nyu York (The Jewish Landsmanschaften of New York). New York: I.L. Peretz Yiddish Writers' Union, 1938.

[3] Philip Slomovitz quote. *Detroit Jewish News*, December 4, 1981.

Historical Tidbit

1848: Five brothers, Leopold, Solomon, Moses, Jacob, and Marcus Weil, immigrated to the United States from their homeland in Bohemia, Czech Republic. They settled in Ann Arbor and, together with the few other Jewish families in the area, they formed a burial society and began worshipping together.

Landsmanschaftn

THE PINSKER PROGRESSIVE AID SOCIETY: ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING LANDSMANSHAFTN IN DETROIT

The year was 1927. Charles Lindbergh completed the first solo flight across the Atlantic; *The Jazz Singer* opened, ending the era of silent films; work began on Mount Rushmore; and the Pinsker Progressive Aid Society (PPAS) was founded by a group of men and women who had immigrated to Detroit from the city of Pinsk in Belarus. They called themselves the Pinskers, and this is their story.

Pinsk, Belarus - From Whence They Came

Located southwest of Minsk, now the capital of Belarus, Pinsk is a moderate-sized regional center that, unlike many other towns and villages, was not once a small, poor shtetl. Instead, Pinsk was noted as one of the foremost Jewish communities in the area. According to the 1897 Russian census, the population of Pinsk was 28,400. Seventy-four percent of that population was Jewish, making Pinsk one of the most heavily Jewish-populated cities in Eastern Europe. As Pinsk was also a commercial and industrial center, it follows that most businesses not only were Jewish-owned, but also that most of the workers were Jewish. For primarily local economic reasons, there were very few pogroms in Pinsk in the late 1800s, and Jewish comfort and security in Pinsk were at an all-time high. Jewish residents enjoyed an active social life, attended religious services freely, and played important roles as entrepreneurs and workers, though very few were permitted to participate in local government. The main industries were flour mills, match factories, candle factories, and the building of railroad cars. There were also six banks. Among those born in Pinsk were Golda Meir, Chaim Weizmann, Jennie Gitlitz (mother of American television host Larry King), and Frieda (Cutler) and Frank Lifshitz, parents of fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

In the early 1880s, a small group of Pinsk Jewish students with revolutionary economic and political ideas began clashing with law enforcement. By 1906, the atmosphere for Jews had clearly changed and a period of oppression and reaction ensued and lasted until 1914. Curfews were imposed, Yiddish lectures and performances were banned, and the economic situation worsened. During WWI and well into the 1920s, as in the rest of the Pale of Settlement, the situation continued to deteriorate, with the Cossacks periodically pillaging and plundering Jewish homes and setting the city on fire. It was during this time that many Jews immigrated to America.

Pinsker Progressive Aid Society

In the spring of 1927, with Morris Sklar presiding, twenty-five families who were originally from Pinsk founded the Pinsker Progressive Untersitzung Veriein "support society." They met at Congregation Ezras Achim, "Help for Brothers," founded by the Turover Aid Society (another landsmanshaft) two years earlier at 1000 Marsten Avenue in Detroit. Among the founding members were Dave and Jennie Weiner, Abraham Paull, Morris Schwartz, Ida Kutnick, Peter Portnoy, and Sam and Rose Dworkin. The purpose of the organization, as outlined in its constitution, was "to promote education, culture and friendship among its members; to provide relief for distressed and sick members; visitation of the sick, burial of the dead, and the payment of the voluntary sick or burial benefit to or for members and all things incidental thereto." There is a dedicated Pinsker section in the Hebrew Memorial Park cemetery in Clinton Township.

Pinsker Progressive Aid Society took the extra step to ensure their members would have a place to be buried. Founders paid an extra fee that assured them a plot inside this cemetery. Pictured are Dave Weiner (left), Harry Laker, and unknown.

From the start, the Pinskers not only helped their fellow landsleit, but were extremely philanthropic toward local and national charities and causes. During WWII, the Pinskers bought an airplane for the U.S. armed forces, and sold an astonishing $2.5 million worth of U.S. savings bonds. In 1977, they established the Pinsker Clinic in Herzliya, Israel, which provided care to injured soldiers and civilians. In West Bloomfield, they purchased an apartment at the Fleischman Residence to be occupied by an in-need senior tenant free of charge.

In the 1950s, at the height of the Pinksers' popularity, membership stood at more than 150 families. For these members, particularly during the early years, the group was the center of their social life. Dave and Jennie Weiner remodeled the lower level of their house on Strathmore in Northwest Detroit so they could host Pinsker parties. Weekly Tuesday night meetings were noted for

heated discussions on how to accomplish the organization's goals, and afterward the men would play poker. The Pinsker annual ball and picnic were so popular that many nonmembers also attended. On June 2, 1962, the organization changed its name to the Pinsker Progressive Aid Society.

The memories of these Pinsker get-togethers are vivid for members such as Fran Kagen White, who recalls members getting dressed up for the New Year's Eve parties, and the annual picnics held first at Lola Valley Park in Detroit and then later in Oak Park. Arnie and Bev Weiss remember the Kagen and Oleinick families going to dinner every Sunday at Paul's Restaurant at Telegraph and Plymouth roads. Jerry Gilman recalls the pride that members felt for the great work their organization did for the Jewish community. Most of all, he and others remember how tightly knit the group was, and how that closeness was passed on to younger generations. Gilman's father, Hyman, and his uncle, Bill Lite, both served as presidents of the organization.

Pinsker Progressive Aid Society Today

As the years passed, Pinsker membership dwindled to an all-time low in 2010. At that time, several grandchildren of original members decided that the organization was too important, and the kinship between the landsman too strong, to simply let the society perish without their making a serious effort to reinvigorate it. Those efforts have been successful. The Pinsker Progressive Aid Society continues to hold quarterly meetings and social get-togethers, including an annual brunch that has replaced the Pinsker picnics. Membership has stabilized at more than seventy, and new friendships have formed. Even though the days when the Pinskers were primarily concerned with helping their own are long since gone, the members today prioritize tzedakah, supporting a dozen local and national charities.

The Pinskers have been able to survive as an active organization because they have never stopped working at maintaining a strong bond from generation to generation, and they continue to honor their original mission and commitment to help those in need.

Suzanne Shawn's grandfather, Dave Weiner, came to Detroit from Pinsk, Russia, in 1914. He was one of the founding members of the Pinsker Progressive Aid Society. She is currently the treasurer of the Pinskers. Suzanne lives in Farmington Hills with her husband, Marshall Solomon. For more information about PPAS, please contact suzanneshawn9@aol.com.

Landsmanschaftn

THE DAVID-HORODOKER ORGANIZATION

by Neil Gorosh

David-Horodok, "David's Little Village" is located approximately fifty miles east of Pinsk, in what is now Belarus. It was, in its halcyon days, a typical shtetl in the Pale of Settlement. With a population of about ten thousand (30 to 40 percent of whom were Jewish), all but a very few experienced a hardscrabble, subsistence life—picture the town of Anatevka in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Those lucky enough to leave prior to 1921 went to America. That was the year the United States passed the Emergency Quota Act aimed at restricting the number of Eastern and Southern Europeans allowed to enter the U.S. Thereafter, for the most part, Jews leaving David-Horodok went to Palestine. It is not surprising that those emigres set up landsmanschaftn in both the United States and Israel. What is truly amazing is that both of these social clubs not only continue to exist today, but thrive. Still,

Villagers in David-Horodok standing outside of a sukkah, sometime after 1921. The photo excludes four members of the Grenadier family who left before 1921 for the U.S., and includes two of the four Grenadier siblings and their parents who left for Palestine after 1921. Only one of the Grenadier siblings remained in David-Horodok, the oldest and most established, who, with her husband and three children, perished when the Nazis came through. Photo courtesy of Neil Gorosh.

particularly with respect to the American group, this result was not always assured.

In 1995, the twenty or so surviving daughters of the original Detroit-based David-Horodoker landsmanschaft, all in their eighties, were overwhelmed by the work necessary to sustain their seventy-five-year-old organization. The time seemed right to put together a farewell dinner while these original "juniors" were still in relatively good health. They organized what was intended to be the last annual dinner of the David-Horodok landsmanschaft. Then something happened that no one had predicted: The 350 men and women who attended the event had such a good time that, with the support of their baby-boomer kids, a decision was made to keep the organization going. Today, membership exceeds 575 families, and the David-Horodoker Organization recently held its eighty-first gala dinner.

The first David-Horodok landsmanschaft organization was incorporated as the David Horodoker Progressive Society in New York City shortly after the turn of the last century. As was common in those days, one of its first orders of business was to raise money to establish a cemetery. Later, a second cemetery was added. While this New York landsmanschaft, like so many of its sister societies, eventually disbanded, at least one of those cemeteries is still in operation today.

The David-Horodok landsmanschaft in Detroit traces its roots to 1908 or 1909, when an all-male group formed the David-Horodoker Benevolent Society. It was a common practice at that time for women to organize ladies' auxiliaries, but the proud women who came from this particular shtetl would have none of that. In 1922, these wives and mothers formed the David-Horodoker Independent Ladies Society. Then, in 1937, the women encouraged their daughters to get involved and the group they formed eventually became the David-Horodoker Juniors. The original men's benevolent organization most likely did not survive past the first immigrant generation.

Over time, the David-Horodoker Juniors became the David-Horodoker Young Women's Organization, and it survived the original men's organization. In more recent years, once the decision was made to keep the organization alive, the name was updated to reflect the fact that men were now not only members but often played active roles. Today, the David-Horodoker Organization (DHO) is led by tri-presidents Norma Gorosh (Greatest Generation), Roz Blanck (baby boomer), and Amy Friedman Brody (millennial). Yet, in form and in substance, it remains very much like the landsmanschaft originally organized more than one hundred years ago.

Unlike their New York counterparts, the Detroit Horodokers never built a synagogue. They did, however, purchase cemetery plots for burials in the

Westwood Cemetery on Michigan Avenue in the nearby city of Inkster. The local landsmanschaft also made loans, provided opportunities to socialize in Yiddish, and, of course, collected and distributed tzedakah (charitable funds). Times have changed. Today's members, now fully integrated into society, don't identify as immigrants. Most enjoy a quality of life that their ancestors could not have imagined. Still, last year the David-Horodoker Organization distributed more than $30,000 in tzedakah to charitable organizations including Jewish Senior Life, the Zekelman Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, and Magen David Adom, Israel's national emergency-medical and disaster-relief service. It also supports Project Kesher in Belarus, an organization dedicated to helping current inhabitants discover their Jewish roots and advancing the status of women and girls in the former Pale of Settlement.

In 2010, more one hundred David-Horodok descendants traveled to Belarus. The group walked seven kilometers from the center of town to the fields where their ancestors were murdered. The emotional journey duplicated the march their ancestors were forced to endure.

Local DHO members continue to socialize together, of course. But in addition to annual dinners, members meet each year at the Zekelman Holocaust Memorial Center to say kaddish and hold a memorial service for the thousands of men and boys killed by the Nazis on August 10, 1941, and for the 1,100 women and children who were marched to the same killing field on September 10, 1942, and shot. DHO members raised $50,000 to design and install a memorial at that site, and in 2010 a group of about one hundred American and Israeli Horodokers traveled to Belarus for the memorial's dedication. They walked the seven kilometers from the center of town to the fields where their ancestors were murdered, duplicating their ancestors' forced march to their deaths. DHO additionally has organized several other group trips to Belarus.

As noted above, American immigration laws were tightened in the early

1920s. As a result, many of the forebearers ended up in Cuba or South America until passage to the United States could be secured. Some never left, so a trip to Cuba was organized in 2015. Participants in the Cuba trip had so much fun that they decided to plan a Horodoker trip to Buenos Aires in the fall of 2019.

In an early attempt to groom future leaders, the DHO provides each baby born to any member's child, grandchild, or great-grandchild with a "Horoduckling" bib.

Today, a permanent exhibit at the Zekelman Holocaust Memorial Center includes photographs of the Jews who lived in David-Horodok, and pictures and descriptions of everyday life in the shtetl. It is the hope of the families who donated these treasures that the names of those gone for many generations will be remembered, and that Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement will not be forgotten.

Why has the David-Horodoker Organization continued to thrive on two continents when so many other landsmanshaftn have disbanded? While a precise answer is beyond the scope of this profile, it nearly always comes down to leadership. Will our millennial children, now one more generation removed from the old country, continue to see the value in keeping the DHO alive? Only time will tell. The DHO gifts each baby born to a member's descendant with a "Horoduckling" bib and, while the David-Horodokers are constantly thinking of ways to remain relevant, the Horodokers' survival ultimately will be up to those ducklings.

AUTHOR

Neil Gorosh, immediate past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, is a third-generation David-Horodoker. Gorosh was privileged to be one of those who traveled to Belarus with the group in 2010. This article was prepared in cooperation with Linda Sher.

Landsmanschaftn

WORKMEN'S CIRCLE IN DETROIT

by Patricia Cousens Becker

Authors Note:
My grandparents, Jacob and Gishe Reissman and Mendel and Ida Cousens, and my parents, Leon and Frances Cousens, were members and leaders of Workmen's Circle of Detroit. Thus, I am a third-generation member. For my peers and me, as we grew up, Workmen's Circle was our "church" – it was the place where, beyond our homes, we were socialized into Jewish life and values. Those values have remained with me throughout my life, now nearing completion of its eighth decade, and they continue to fuel my participation in a wide variety of political and social-justice activities. It is my honor to introduce readers to the Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring, and to its historic role in the Detroit Jewish community.

In 1900, facing exploitive labor practices, poor tenement housing, ethnic rivalries, and the difficulties of assimilation, progressive-minded immigrants who carried traditional and deeply held Jewish values of community and social justice came together in New York City to create a new organization which they named Workmen's Circle, or *Der Arbeter Ring* in Yiddish[1]. At the outset, Workmen's Circle, like the landsmanschaftn described elsewhere in this series, acted as a mutual-aid society, assisting its members in their transition to life in America. It provided economic assistance, health care, life insurance, and burial aid, and it created a safe space in which to socialize. Also similar to its landsmanschaftn kin, Workmen's Circle was dedicated to celebrating and promoting Yiddish culture. Uniquely, however, Workmen's Circle was stridently secular and fully supportive of the labor and socialist movements.

Almost immediately after Workmen's Circle's founding, a national network of autonomous branches was formed. Though chartered by the national organization, each branch catered to its local members. By 1905, as a new wave of pogroms was occurring in Russia, the number of Jews immigrating to the U.S. increased and included a great number of politically sophisticated Bundists[2]. Mostly socialists, Bundists tended to be anti-Zionist and anti-assimilationist, and were all about promoting Yiddish culture and a secular Jewish identity. While initially sympathetic to the Bolshevik Revolution and the new Soviet regime, by 1929 the organization was clearly anti-communist and

its general support of socialism evolved into the promotion of social democracy. Still, even after Workmen's Circle became active in the American Labor movement, it continued to act as a mutual-aid society. As a national organization, Workmen's Circle reached its peak sometime during the 1920s with approximately 84,000 members,125 schools, and numerous branches nationwide.

Der Arbeter Ring Detroit

The earliest record of the presence of Workmen's Circle in Detroit is Branch 156, which appears to have been founded around 1904, and which was followed by Branch 111 in 1916. As was often the practice throughout the country, both branches conducted their activities entirely in Yiddish. By 1917, Branch 156 was the largest in the nation.

The first English-speaking branch, 460E, also known as the Emile Zola[3] branch, was chartered in March 1939 with forty members, many of whom were the adult children of members of the pioneer Yiddish-speaking branches. These members were young, mostly in their twenties. A dating bureau, which publicized its social events with the Jewish Community Center and the League of Women's Jewish Organizations[4], led to romances, marriages, and children aplenty.

Workmen's Circle Branch 460E, Detroit, 1946. Photo courtesy of Patricia Becker.

After the end of WWII, and the marathon baking sessions that saw dozens of cookies being shipped overseas[5], several new branches were formed. Branch 470-E included younger members who were just coming into their marriage and childbearing years. Branch 463-E, founded in 1947 under the leadership of Leon A. Cousens, became known as the "trade union branch" because of its efforts to reach into the wider "liberal-labor" community in Detroit, and it included non-Jewish members.

Branch 463-E also developed the Workmen's Circle Award for

Distinguished Service to the Community. Honorees were feted at an annual banquet held at the Jewish Community Center on Linwood Avenue. In 1953, honorees included UAW-CIO political action director Roy Reuther (brother of UAW leader Walter Reuther) and former U.S. Senator Blair Moody. In 1957 Sarah Robinson, principal of Jefferson Intermediate School, the Honorable Talbot Smith of the Michigan Supreme Court, and Neal Staebler, chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, were honored.

In the 1950s, Branch 1060[6] was formed to serve yet a younger generation, most born in the 1920s. The early leaders of this branch were Ed and Norma Shifrin and Stan and Iris Ovshinsky. At a later point, after a significant number of immigrants from the Soviet Union began to arrive in the Detroit area, Branch 684 was established to meet their needs. Russian was the primary language of this branch, which appears to have existed from approximately 1975 to 1994. Branch 1065, established in the 1960s, was composed primarily of the children and grandchildren of Branch 460-E members. This branch existed for only a few years.

In 1940, Workmen's Circle purchased its first building, at 11529 Linwood in Detroit's Dexter Avenue area, located down the street from Central High School. The two-story building, with meeting rooms, classrooms, an auditorium, and kitchens on each floor, also had rooms available for rental to other Jewish organizations. The rental income provided important funds for sustaining the facility. In the mid-1950s, following the northward movement of the Jewish community, a new facility was constructed on West Seven Mile Road in northwest Detroit. It served the organization's needs for about twenty years. By 1978 the organization had moved to Coolidge Highway in Oak Park. Elderly members of Branch 460E helped maintain this building for more than twenty years. After it was sold, Workmen's Circle moved into the Jewish Community Center's Jimmy Prentis Morris branch in Oak Park.

The Shule

In addition to the labor and socialist movements it supported, Workmen's Circle was also dedicated to the promotion of Yiddish culture and education. In 1917, Workmen's Circle established its first I. L. Peretz School, which grew to become the largest network of Jewish secular *shuln* (schools) in the United States and Canada.

The earliest formation of the *shule*, or educational program, for children in Detroit appears to date to 1919. The classes originally ran as an after-school program. During the post-war period, Workmen's Circle owned a bus and employed a driver to pick up the younger children from the elementary schools in the area[7]. Older children were picked up at their homes for a second session

of classes later in the afternoon. Until the 1960s, instruction was conducted entirely in Yiddish. The curriculum included Yiddish language, Jewish history, and Hebrew, which received greater emphasis and a change from Ashkenazic to Sephardic pronunciation after the formation of Israel in 1948. Music was a strong part of the program, as were dramatic presentations performed for the parents at annual Chanukah and Purim parties.

Most shule students graduated from the elementary school program when they were in the seventh grade, at age twelve or thirteen. There were no b'nai mitzvah programs in the early years; they began for boys in the late 1950s and later for girls.

Sometime in the late 1950s or early 1960s, the Workmen's Circle and Sholem Aleichem schools merged as the Combined Jewish Schools, supported by the Jewish Welfare Federation, with classes through the high school level[8]. At some point, with the Jewish community much more spread out, the program was moved to Sundays. Archival records show that the school ran continuously until at least 2001. As a Sunday-only program, the emphasis on Yiddish decreased, with instruction conducted in English, although Yiddish songs were always part of the curriculum.

A More Beautiful World

While Workmen's Circle continued to shift away from its Socialist beginnings, the organization and its members never abandoned the general goal of the creation of a *shenere un besere velt* or "a more beautiful and better world." Workmen's Circle, nationally and locally, was involved in social-action and social-service activities in a variety of ways. It was always close to the labor movement, and worked alongside and as part of the Jewish Labor Committee to improve the lives of workers everywhere. In 1953, local Branch 460-E was specifically involved in supporting workers who were striking at Rockford Shoe, a Grand Rapids-area company. Similar efforts were expended on behalf of workers in the Kohler strike in Wisconsin.

Members were involved in civil-rights efforts, fair-housing initiatives, and immigration issues, and they worked to root out influences of communism or fascism in American life. While not explicitly Zionist, the organization's members were strong supporters of the *Histradut* (Israel's national trade union) and the Jewish National Fund. Central to all of these efforts was the core theme of working to make a better, more beautiful world.

Over the decades, with the loss of the immigrant Yiddish-speaking generation and then the first English-speaking generation, Detroit-area Workmen's Circle membership saw a decline. Records from 1981 show about four hundred members. By 1991, the number had declined to about two

hundred. The branches had merged into a single group, although some activities were organized separately for the different generations. One of these activities, the *Kumzitz* - A Shmooze Café, was held in members' homes from 1998 to 2005. High Holiday services continued, held for many years at the Oak Park Jewish Community Center and, after the center's closure, at a nearby Jewish senior residence. A "third seder" was held intermittently. Sponsorship of an event at the Jewish Book Fair continues. But all in all, the Detroit Workmen's Circle of today is a shadow of its former self.

In its heyday, the Workmen's Circle was a strong force in the Detroit Jewish community. It was a home for secular Jews with a strong Jewish cultural identity and an interest in the political world and in social justice. Essentially, the organization operated on a parallel track to synagogues, and even to the United Hebrew Schools program, which provided a more religiously (and non-Yiddish) oriented program for families without synagogue membership. Workmen's Circle members were active in the Jewish Community Council and in countless political campaigns, social-justice efforts, and non-profit organizations in the Detroit community at large. While completely secular, Workmen's Circle recognized and celebrated Jewish holidays with programs of its own creation. Shule students were imbued with an understanding of Jewish struggles in the diaspora, with an emphasis on workers, and were exposed to the rich lode of Yiddish literature and music.

At the national level, and especially in New York City, the Workmen's Circle remains an active, vibrant organization. Its values are twofold: the celebration of Jewish culture and the pursuit of economic and social justice. Outside New York, the organization functions in Boston, Ohio, southern and northern California, Toronto, and Detroit. The Detroit presence is now primarily on the website, www.circlemichigan.org, where prospective members may join the email list to receive further information.

AUTHOR

Patricia Becker is a lifelong Detroiter. She and her husband, Allan Becker, co-own APB Associates, a small consulting business from which they are now mostly retired. Ms. Becker is a demographer who, among other endeavors, was the in-house specialist for the 1989 Detroit Jewish Population Study at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Michigan and her master's degree in sociology at the University of Wisconsin. In addition to her lifelong affiliation with Workmen's Circle, Ms. Becker and her husband have been members of the Birmingham Temple since 1982.

Much of the information for this essay came from the Workmen's Circle archives at Bentley Historical Library, Box 4. Unless otherwise noted, all references below are to materials located in these archives. The Bentley Library is located on the north campus of the University of Michigan.

ENDNOTES

[1]https://www.circle.org/who-we-are.our-history/
[2]A secular Jewish socialist movement, whose organizational manifestation was the General Jewish Labour Bund, known in Yiddish as the Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland, founded in the Russian Empire in 1897.
[3]Emile Zola was a French novelist, playwright, and journalist who was a major figure in the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfuss, an Jewish army officer who was falsely accused and convicted of giving military secrets to the German Embassy in Paris.
[4] Emile Zola Br. 460E, C*ircle Light*, New Year's issue, December 1944.
[5]This is one of the author's earliest memories. Three women bustling around our kitchen, multiple pans of cookies baking at once, and careful wrapping into shoe boxes with waxed paper and confetti.
[6]The national Workmen's Circle/AR organization had begun a new custom of designating English-speaking branches with numbers greater than one thousand.
[7]At that time, most of the Detroit Jewish community lived in a concentrated area of only two or three square miles – often referred to as the core – located between Twelfth Street on the east, Livernois on the west, Clairmount on the south, and the railroad a few blocks north of Davison on the north.
[8]Garret, Morris, "The Development of Jewish Education in Detroit" (Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, *Michigan Jewish History*), May 1965.

Historical Tidbit

1928: Zella Himelhoch passed away at the age of fifty-two. He was one of the five sons of Wolf Himelhoch, who had immigrated to Caro, Michigan, from the province of Kurland in Russia in 1873. There he founded Himelhoch's, which would become one of Michigan's most iconic women's clothing department-store chains. "Zell," as he was known, became president of the chain and was active in dozens of community organizations.

Feature Article

THE CORNER DRUGGIST

By Edward Malkin (with Janice Morgan)

In the post-World War II climate, many Jews found opportunity in the well-respected and accessible pharmacy profession. Professional schools, colleges, and universities provided an educational door to entrepreneurialism. Once graduated, these pharmacists relied on Jewish-owned supply houses that supported the core of hard-working merchants who spent long hours in service to their customers and employees. Author Edward Malkin provides an overview of the pharmacy culture in Detroit. His introduction is followed by a series of personal essays by family members of some of these early business owners.

The corner drugstore was a neighborhood business, at a time when the pharmacist likely lived nearby and greeted his customers by name. It was an era when the druggist, donned in a neatly pressed white lab jacket, stood proudly behind a tall counter mixing medicines, while his wife and children helped at the cash register or delivered items on foot to nearby neighbors.

Julius Spielberg opened his first drugstore, Spiel's Drugs, in 1926, on the corner of Fenkell and Birwood in Detroit. Before his death in 2004, Spielberg was awarded an honorary degree from Wayne State University recognizing his more than sixty years as a licensed pharmacist. Photo courtesy of Neil Gorosh.

From the 1940s to the 1960s in the Jewish neighborhoods of metro Detroit, the corner druggist was an active community member and often a mentor to those interested in a career in pharmacy. Established pharmacists would offer apprenticeships to likely candidates to help them get started. The resulting network of pharmacy professionals nurtured many successes. Some grew their businesses into large companies, and several went on to pioneer new business models for the industry.

After World War II, Jewish access to many professional schools, colleges, and universities was still curtailed by quotas implemented in the 1920s.[1] This practice limited the options for Jewish college graduates – often first-generation immigrants – to pursue occupations other than merchant or craftsman. The pharmacy profession offered an opportunity for Jews to enter a well-respected, well-compensated career path.

HISTORY OF PHARMACY IN DETROIT

In the first half of the twentieth century, requirements to obtain a pharmacist license were less rigid than they are now. Although pharmacy was offered at colleges as a degree program, a degree was not a prerequisite to practice.[2] In these early days, one could attend the Practical Institute of Pharmacy in Sandusky, Michigan, for six months. Later, one could opt to obtain a four-year degree from the Detroit Institute of Technology (DIT), the forerunner of Wayne College (now Wayne State University). An apprenticeship was also required. Students would be given credit for hours worked in a drugstore, and this accumulated work experience would allow them to take the licensing exam sooner. The combination of less time needed for school, being able to work while in school, and the allure of owning a business made pharmacy an appealing path to follow.

The golden years for the independent pharmacist in the Detroit area coincided with the golden age of Detroit's growth – the 1940s into the early 1960s – when the majority of pharmacies were independent, pharmacist-owned businesses. Chain stores had yet to permeate the market. In 1941, eighty percent of the Jewish population lived in the 12th Street-Dexter area, making it a


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This advertisement, circa 1926, hawks a concise, ten-month course in preparation for the registered pharmacist examination, at a cost of fifteen dollars a month. Courtesy Detroit Jewish News Archive.

practical location for a Jewish merchant.[3] The interconnected and supportive Jewish community contributed to the viability, growth, and success of Jewish-owned pharmacies.

The self-serve drugstores of today are a world away from the apothecaries of the 1940s. Items that customers now find on the shelves would have been hand-formulated by the pharmacist. Medications, creams, and lotions were mixed from the pharmacist's own recipes, many of which were well-guarded secrets. Empty gelatin capsules were filled with carefully measured cough suppressants and pain relievers.

With little government oversight, early pharmacies were able to sell all kinds of medicines. Beginning in the late 1930s, however, laws and regulations began to have a dramatic effect on the business. The Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act of 1938 forced a change in the way medications were dispensed. The law "mandated pre-market approval of all new drugs, such that a manufacturer would have to prove to the FDA that a drug was safe before it could be sold." And, the law "irrefutably prohibited false therapeutic claims for drugs".[4] The in-house formulations were thus greatly curtailed. The introduction of third-party drug-coverage insurances, which began in Michigan with the health coverage provided by the Big Three auto companies to their employees, also affected the industry.[5] Pharmacies needed more sophisticated record-keeping, and pharmacists needed to adopt professional accounting practices and business models. Not surprisingly, Detroit's corner druggists were major players in this transformation, and many of their innovations remain evident today.

INNOVATIONS

Julius Spielberg, notable for his late-in-life accomplishments as a speed walker and inductee into the Michigan Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, graduated from DIT and opened Spiel Pharmacy at Fenkell and Birwood in 1926, just five years after arriving in Detroit from Boston. Born in Russia in 1906, Spielberg's pharmacy is credited with being one of the first to offer self-service, heralding a dramatic change in America's shopping habits. Back then, nearly every item in a drugstore had to be handed to the customer by the pharmacist or an employee. Everything was located behind the counter. In 1948, after a trip to Portland, Oregon, to investigate the new self-service concept, Spielberg launched the concept in his own store. He also brought back the idea of

Pharmacist Julius Spielberg and his wife, Anna, in their store, circa 1930. Photo courtesy of Neil Gorosh.

locating the pharmacy next to a grocery store, introducing what we know today as the strip mall. Spielberg contacted Wrigley's Supermarkets with his idea, secured a location, and opened Wrigley Drugs on Seven Mile Road.[6]

Bernard (Bernie) Shulman was also a remarkable innovator. He opened Regal Drugs in 1956 and hired accountant Sidney Dworkin. In 1962, they purchased Cleveland's Standard Drug Company, a forty-one-store chain, renaming it Revco Drugs. Shulman's major insight was the power of self-service. He picked the best products in each category of over-the-counter products and adopted a low-profit, high-volume business model.[7] With this innovation, he became the "architect of the modern drugstore."[8] In the 1960s, Revco became one of the first chains to provide discount plans to senior citizens and children, and, in what resembled today's loyalty programs, Revco offered savings to its registered customers.

Shulman guided his relatives, Fred and Margaret Cohen, through the 1955 opening of the very popular F&M (named for Fred and Margaret) Distributors on Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. F&M gained national attention by selling brand-name products at bargain prices, and became one of the most powerful bargain chains in the United States. The strategy employed by the Cohens—selling products at deep discounts, relying on word-of-mouth advertising, and offering well-stocked, well-located stores—led to the F&M Distributors chain being recognized not only as the originator of the deep-discount model, but also as one of the most powerful bargain chains in the country.[9] In fact, pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Company once sued F&M for discounting Lilly's products.

Eugene Applebaum opened his first drugstore, Civic Drugs, in Dearborn in 1963. Within a decade, his chain of five stores was incorporated as Arbor Drugs. Keeping his focus on excellent customer service, Applebaum grew the chain into an industry leader. In 1979, Arbor became one of the first pharmacies to computerize its system so that prescriptions could be filled and refilled more efficiently. By 1989, Arbor had extended this service by linking all of its stores into a single network, allowing customers to fill or refill their prescriptions from any location in the chain.[11] In that same year, Applebaum took Arbor Drugs public; it was by then a chain of forty-eight stores.

Jack Robinson opened Perry Drugs on Perry Street in Pontiac in 1957. (The previous business on the site had been called "Perry," so Robinson kept the old sign and the name.) Robinson premiered Michigan's first twenty-four-hour pharmacy in the late 1970s. It was a big store "with large H&BA (health and beauty aid) departments and a lot of convenience food and beverages – all the elements of a modern drugstore. At the time that approach was not very common."[11]

When Steve Wohl bought his first drugstore, Sherman Drugs, at the unpaved corner of Rochester and Thirteen Mile roads in Royal Oak, it was the start of an ambitious career. Born in Budapest, Hungary, he received a pharmacy degree from the University of Budapest and came to the United States in 1939. After fighting in WWII, he began to build his Sherman Drugs chain. He created a section that featured upscale gift items and, when he opened his second location, on Middlebelt at Fourteen Mile Road in Farmington Hills, he expanded the gift department and added a wide selection of Judaica.[12]

FURTHER SUCCESSES

In 1918, Nate Shapero, a twenty-six-year-old Navy pharmacist's mate, borrowed $4,500 from his mother, two friends, and one bank, and opened a drugstore on the lower floor of a Detroit rooming house. He called the fledgling business Economical Drug Store No. 1, displaying his optimism that more stores would be added. Shapero would go on to expand his business, purchasing the Cunningham Drugs chain in 1931 and merging it with his own Economical Drug Stores to create Economical-Cunningham. Eventually, "Economical" was dropped.[13] In 1959, Cunningham absorbed Kinsel Drug Company, another Detroit-based chain, along with several other drugstores, making Cunningham Drugs the second-largest chain in the United States.[14]

Cunningham Drugs would launch the careers of many pharmacists through its informal network of apprenticeship. The company would pay for an employee's pharmacy-school tuition, and then the employee would work for Cunningham Drugs as a pharmacist to pay back the loan. Among the pharmacists who benefited from this program were Bernard J. Levin and Rudy Keller.

TZEDAKAH

Bernard J. Levin was born in Chicago in 1914 and moved to Detroit as a child. He started out working as a clerk for Nate Shapero, and then attended Detroit Institute of Technology to become a pharmacist. After passing the exam, he returned to work at Cunningham Drugs, where he remained for forty-seven years. To honor her father's resilience in pursuing his degree, his commitment to serve, and his love of his profession, Judith Levin Cantor established Wayne State University's Bernard J. Levin Award for Outstanding Professional and Community Service.[15]

Louis Stone (born Leiba Stepansky) had dreamed of becoming a doctor, but, as a Jew in Russia, he was barred from attending medical school. He came to Detroit and opened a drugstore. On Halloween night in 1928, a distraught woman came into his store, located on Stimson Street at Third Avenue, asking for something to calm her down. Further inquiry revealed that

her son, while trick-or-treating, had been struck and killed by a car whose driver never saw the boy. Touched by the tragedy, Stone began to host giant Halloween block parties, complete with clowns, candy, and bands. He dedicated himself to helping area kids, mentoring them, and taking them to baseball games, circuses, and parks. After his death, the City of Detroit honored him with the naming of the Louis Stone Memorial Pool and Park at the corner of Forest Avenue and Fourth Street.[16]

In 1940, Belle Elkiss became the youngest female graduate of the Wayne State Pharmacy School. She and her husband, Harry, opened a pharmacy inside of Pontiac General Hospital when she was twenty-three years old. Together they practiced pharmacy for more than forty years. Their son Terry established a scholarship at Wayne State University in their honor.[17]

Also at Wayne State University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, two scholarship funds are named for Nettie and Paul Deutch.[18] Paul Deutch founded Paul's Cutrate Drugs in Detroit's Hastings Street neighborhood, and relocated to Broadway Street in 1924.[19] Paul was joined in the business by his brother Joseph. Sam Deutch, another brother, earned his pharmacy degree, began his career at Paul's, and later established Dewey Drugs on Six Mile Road and then Davis Cut Rate at Davison Avenue and Woodrow Wilson.

MORE EMPLOYEE-TO-OWNER STORIES

After graduating from Central High School, Rudy Keller worked at Cunningham's tobacco counter and studied pharmacy at DIT. He then served Cunningham's as a pharmacist for two years to pay the company back. Keller later teamed up with Jack Lafer to run Lafer Drugs.

Herschel Epstein is another example of a Jewish kid getting an introduction to pharmacy by doing odd jobs in a drugstore, being inspired to attend pharmacy school, and eventually opening his own store. On his professional path, he worked for Jerry Gotthelf at Fairway Drugs, for Applebaum (a former classmate) at Arrow Drugs and State Drugs, and then for Sam Bez (one of the Bez brothers) on South Outer Drive. He ultimately bought the Bez store and another one in Livonia, where he worked for many years.

Jewish-owned pharmacy-supply houses provided great support to pharmacists experiencing the difficulties of opening and running a drugstore. For example, Mike, Ronnie, and Seymour Karbal, who owned National Wholesale Drug, not only helped many customers set up their stores' opening inventory, but also extended credit during holiday seasons. The Karbals' assistance allowed many pharmacists to launch their businesses. Nor-Les Sales, owned by Harold, Seymour, and Lester Greenspan, broke new ground by supplying a greater variety of products and providing circulars to be used for monthly

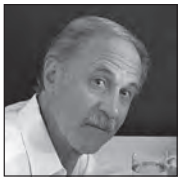
advertising. The circulars promoted assorted product lines and were a major vehicle in building up the small businesses. In addition to supplying pharmaceuticals, drug wholesaler Frank W. Kerr Company allowed smaller stores to process customers' film in a few days through its affiliate, Guardian Photo.

Working long hours, most druggists rarely left their stores and had little time to keep up with business trends. Local companies and individuals helped fill this gap. Sales representative Joe Stearns was legendary for presenting new products from pharmaceutical companies, and he sold many private-label vitamins and remedies. Richard Gutov and Ray Corridor of Fisher Electronics offered great deals on batteries and small electronics, a huge business in those days and especially important near holidays. They could fill the shelves with non-drug items such as toys, camera batteries, and flash cubes. Seymour Greenstein at Golden Valley Dairy kept the milk stocked and would extend credit and help with advertising. Detroit City Dairy, run by the Must family, would also round out inventory selections with assorted food products. The Bittker family's B and E Sales supplied off-brand candy, pantyhose, sweatshirts, and all kinds of *tchotchkes*.

THE ERA ENDS

It seemed, in those halcyon days before the advent of massively large drugstores and big-box department stores, that there was a drugstore with a soda fountain on nearly every street corner in Detroit. Why did so many choose the pharmacy and drugstore business? Because few other professions provided such opportunity. The Jewish druggist was a proud, hard-working merchant who, through innovation and effort, found success, both large and small. Over time, as real estate became more difficult to locate and more expensive to secure, as changing laws limited what could be sold, and operations expenses climbed, the golden age of the corner druggist came to an end.

AUTHOR



Ed Malkin grew up in Detroit and Oak Park, Michigan. In 1969, he graduated from Wayne State University's College of Pharmacy and launched his career as a pharmacist with Henry Ford Hospital. Then, after the 1967 Disturbances, he moved to Revco Drugs in Birmingham. He also worked with Model Drugs in Warren, then Lafer Drugs in Fraser. Malkin, who after retirement began volunteering with JHSM and now serves as a member of JHSM's board of directors, wore his white coat as the era of the corner druggist was coming to a close, witnessing first-hand the intimacy of community and neighborly relationships and then the efficiencies offered by the modern, mega drugstore chains.

Founding members included (pictured) Marvin Cheresh, James Costello, David Learner, Sam Karp (Sav-Mor's first treasurer and later president), and Elliott Shepard. Photo and newspaper clipping courtesy of Gary Karp.

SAV-MOR DRUG STORES

Founded in 1957, a group of independent pharmacists, representing forty-five local drugstores, founded Sav-Mor Drug Stores, a network of independent stores looking to lower costs by purchasing in volume. They bought a warehouse to store inventory, and ran a quarterly sale. Sav-Mor proved to be a harbinger of the corporate chains that would overtake the independent, community drugstore business.

12 Wed., Nov. 6, 1957 The Detroit Times

Detroit Times Photo

DRUGGISTS UNITE: Officers of the newly organized Save-Mor Drug Stores, a merger of the buying power of 45 independent drugstores in the Detroit area. From left: Marvin Cheresh, secretary; James Costello, executive board member; David Learner, president; Sam Karp, treasurer; Elliott Shepard, vice president. They will open formally under the new name later this month, but each store will retain its identity. They hope to compete more effectively.

Bel-Aire Drugs

by Stuart Logan

My paternal grandparents, John Logan and Ida Schmelkiewicz, emigrated from czarist Russia, arriving separately as preteens in Detroit by way of Ellis Island. After they married in 1921, they made ends meet by my *zeyde's* dedication to the dry cleaner he opened and by my *bubbe's* work as a homemaker and seamstress. While making a life for themselves on Montclair Street near Mack Avenue, in one of the few Jewish neighborhoods on Detroit's east side, and later on LaSalle Street, not far from Detroit's Palmer Park, they raised three children — two daughters, Sylvia and Maxine, and the son who became my father, Jerome Herbert ("Jerry") Logan, born June 26, 1928.

Jerry and Mickey Logan at the wedding of their son, Stuart, to Deborah Szobel, on December 16, 1990, at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills.

Before graduating from Central High School, my dad gave thought to his future. The healthcare industry offered a special appeal. So, in 1946, Jerry enrolled in Detroit College of Pharmacy. He received his pharmacy degree in 1950, at roughly the same time that he received his conscription notice from the draft board. Even though, throughout his life, my dad battled hypertension, his high blood pressure did not dissuade the army recruiter. Jerry spent three straight days (without a toothbrush or a change of clothes) in that federal office, enduring periodic checks and re-checks of his blood pressure. When the medic finally got an acceptable reading, my dad received permission to leave and orders to report for induction.

War had begun on the Korean peninsula, but Jerry hoped to serve at a military post in another part of the world. For reasons he always found comical, my dad ended up in America's garrison of the Panama Canal. His ersatz knowledge of Latin, acquired in pharmacy school, struck the military as a special qualification for a unit the army had assigned to Panama.

Upon his return stateside, Jerry considered the path blazed by two of his college buddies who had entered medical school. The GI Bill would cover my father's tuition, making a tough decision a bit easier. Jerry took the plunge. After receiving word of his admission, my *bubbe* promptly bought all of the required texts (an outlay not covered by the GI Bill), at no small financial

sacrifice. Jerry's decision, almost immediately thereafter to forego medical school, led to a family conversation about the value of money. When friends would ask why he rejected a career as a physician, my dad would say he had known doctors who struggled for economic stability, but that every pharmacist of his acquaintance enjoyed financial comfort.

My dad then joined forces with Frank Nager, a friend and classmate from pharmacy school, to open a drugstore. Another DCP alum had offered my father a position at an already-established pharmacy, but Jerry's entrepreneurial inclinations prevented his consideration of that offer. My father knew he would love the responsibilities and accoutrements of ownership. I admire his having identified and achieved, at a relatively young age, a goal that resonated with him.

In 1954, my dad and Frank decided to locate their store on Orchard Lake Road, just south of Ten Mile, in Farmington. That year, no structure stood near that lonely corner, and Orchard Lake was a dirt road. Many of their friends thought of the region as the boondocks.

Around that same time, my dad met Marilyn ("Mickey") Siegel, the woman he would marry one year later. Jerry's energy, vision, and ambition impressed my mom, even though my father fell somewhat short as a romantic: On their first date, in lieu of food or entertainment, my dad drove the two of them along unpaved Orchard Lake Road to the desolate site chosen for the store. There, my bored mother sat staring at a vacant lot while my dad counted the passing cars, discussed his plans, and, in the tallying, hoped to justify his upbeat view of the current and projected demographics.

In 1955, my dad and Frank opened "Bel-Aire Drugs," borrowing the name of the closest residential subdivision. During the pharmacy's early decades, Jerry and Frank alone staffed the "scrip" counter and managed the retail aisles, which encompassed not only cosmetics, toys, candy, remedies, tobacco, magazines, liquor, beer, wine, groceries, and sundries, but also an old-school soda fountain that served ice cream, pop, burgers, and fries. The two partners worked tirelessly. They had to, not only because they had assigned themselves such daunting jobs, but also because, under law, at least one licensed pharmacist had to be on the premises during business hours. For most of its history, Bel-Aire Drugs was open every day, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekdays, 10:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 8:00 p.m. on Sundays. My sisters (Rhonda and Barbara), Frank's son and daughter, and I would work on Christmas and Easter to minimize the time employees might spend away from family.

All of the employees were Christian, and so were nearly all of the clientele. The differences in faith or culture – whether in the context of pharmacist and patient, or owner and customer – meant nothing in that environment of

neighborly camaraderie and mutual respect. My dad loved to kibitz with the regulars, shooting the breeze whenever he could take a quick break. When a local church or neighborhood charity planned a fundraiser, Bel-Aire Drugs would donate prizes and sundries. One Sunday afternoon, my father could barely believe his luck as an unprecedented stampede of customers entered the store. It turned out the pastor at a nearby church had just told his congregation that the church's fundraising event had succeeded, thanks in part to money contributed by the owners of Bel-Aire Drugs, members of another religion. What a lesson in openhearted goodwill and charity!

My father's hypertension and ninety-six-hour workweeks took a toll. Before he was sixty, he had endured three heart attacks. Despite physical frailty, he refused to step back. He worked in the drugstore until he was sixty-five, putting in long hours even with a damaged heart. More than anything else, I admire my dad's stoic selflessness, a quality borne from an appreciation of the luck he enjoyed as the child of parents with the fortitude to escape the poverty and anti-Semitism of the Eastern European ghetto. That underlying gratitude informed many of Jerry's fine deeds as a Jew and as a citizen.

When I was a child, I would have sworn that Jews had founded nearly every drugstore in Metro Detroit. The originator of the five Sentry Drugs pharmacies, Sid Bluestone, lived with his family across the street from us in Southfield. My dad's cousin, Richard Warren, owned the Sherman Drugs pharmacies. Yet another Jewish pharmacist owned Efros Drugs at Ten Mile and Greenfield, where my friends and I would walk each weekend from our homes a mile away.

Jerry seemed to know every pharmacist within thirty miles, and, whether they be neighbor, relative, or outsider, my dad could not only identify the individual, but could also summarize his history and circumstances. Even as a child, I found humor in the ridiculous degree of shared knowledge that bound the group of professionals to which my father belonged.

Once they hit retirement age, Jerry and Frank (who died in 2014) decided to sell Bel-Aire Drugs. Frank scouted potential suitors, eventually approaching Jack Robinson, founder of Perry Drugs, who purchased the pharmacy in 1994. Less than one year after the sale of Bel-Aire Drugs, my father's heart finally gave out. With his death on June 12, 1995, Detroit lost yet another of its legacy Jewish pharmacists. My mom, my sisters, and I lost much more.

Karp's Drugs

by Gary Karp

Sam Karp made it home from World War II, having commanded troop carriers under fire in the Pacific. At that time, any man with a college degree automatically went into officer training. Sam, my father, had already graduated from Wayne State University College of Pharmacy, as had his older brother Dave, and as would his oldest sibling, Aaron. Sisters Ann (the eldest) and Adele (the baby) both did bookkeeping and office work during and after the war.

The three Karp brothers opened five stores between them. Each Karp's Drugs, or Karp Drug, as my father named his store, anchored its surrounding neighborhood. However, Dave's store, located in Northwest Detroit at Seven Mile and Meyers roads, across from the Royal Theater and up the street from the Jewish Community Center, was the best known of the five. Further, that Karp's Drugs had a soda fountain!

Karp Drug Asbury Park Pharmacy, my dad's store, was on West McNichols between Southfield and Greenfield roads, in the radius of Detroit's Sinai Hospital.

Karp's Drugs was founded by the Karp brothers, Sam, Dave, and Aaron.

By the time I started working at my father's store, when I was in third grade and was paid a dollar an hour, Dad had shut down the soda fountain. I had been looking forward to making malteds and sundaes (with Sanders hot fudge, of course), but my dad saw the fountain as a hassle, as well as a loitering attraction for neighborhood kids. Noting my interest in the cash register, he had the staff teach me how to count change: Just fill in the difference. A five-dollar bill for a $1.36 purchase? Four pennies makes $1.40, a dime to $1.50, two quarters to $2.00, three singles to five. So simple.

Sam Karp, one of the founding members of the Sav-Mor buying group, served two terms as president of the organization. The group recognized his dedication with this watch that is now owned by his son Gary.

I was taught to look the customer in the eye, give them my full attention, and always say "thank you." Incredibly, my dad left me to run the front checkout counter when I was only eight years old. I'll never forget his pride and amazement when the cash register checked out perfectly at the end of the day.

Our store made deliveries in the neighborhood – my father would often drop off prescriptions on his way home after closing. It was another milestone when I got my driver's license and could drive the red Chevy Impala with "Karp Drug" hand-painted on the doors.

There was another Karp Drug at Eleven Mile and John R, operated by my father's business partner Al Levine. The Farmer Jack supermarket next door dropped its lease, so Sam and Al bought the building and moved their store into the supermarket space. It would be one of the first large-scale drugstores in the country; Sam and Al were ahead of their time. The store was later bought by Perry Drugs, which was then bought by Rite Aid.

In the early 1960s, middle-class Jewish families wanted new "stuff" and bigger homes, and they began moving to the suburbs, especially to Southfield. After the 1967 riots, that movement increased. Real-estate prices in the city dropped, and the twenty-five years of equity my dad had built into his store was dwindling fast. In 1972, thieves knocked a hole in the roof and broke into Karp Drugs Asbury Park. A year later he gave in to the inevitable and sold the store.

Sam Karp was not accustomed to change. He had always appeared to be confident and in control, but he had a hard time maintaining that façade after giving up his store, along with the community that had so affirmed his value in the world. He was prone to uncharacteristic demonstrations of frustration as he explored what would come next. My father passed away in October 1973.

I still have the impulse to straighten shelves as I walk through the aisles of a drugstore. I can get crotchety about cashiers who need a computer to tell them how much change to give, and I'm especially sad when they don't look me in the eye and say "thank you."

Seward Drugs

by Jeffrey Siegel

I was extremely fortunate to grow up as a third-generation member of the pharmacy business that was established by my grandfather, Morton Siegel. In an oral history taken by James Kolad on April 16,1973, "Mort" tells of walking home from Detroit's Northern High School, where he was a student. It was 1920, and Mort observed a pharmacist making a compound behind a window. His fascination with what he saw launched his journey into pharmacy.

He transferred to Detroit's noted Cass Technical High School, which at the time offered a pharmacy course concurrent with regular diploma requirements, and he graduated in 1924 as an assistant pharmacist. Soon after, at the age of eighteen, Mort purchased Ottaway Drugs on Oakland Avenue in Detroit. Among his more unusual memories was that "The Purple Gang had one of their offices across the street and it was not uncommon for people to get shot in front of the store."

Morton Siegel founded Seward Drugs in 1933.

In 1925, Mort sold Ottoway Drugs and opened Siegel Drug Store on Harper Avenue. A few years later, in 1933, he sold that store as well. By then he was married and had a son, Lewis "Skip" Siegel. But, with an income of only $27.50 per week, he needed to find a way to increase his earnings. Later that year, he opened Seward Pharmacy at Hamilton and Seward streets.

Skip, my father, worked at Seward's, as we called it, throughout his teens, along with Jack Robinson, who would go on to open Perry Drugs. In 1953, when city planners were plotting the construction of the John C. Lodge Freeway, Seward's stood in the way. In those days, eminent domain laws did not apply to reimbursing businesses when they had to move. In 1952, Mort and his wife, Sybil, instituted legal action against the City of Detroit and Wayne County, and the resulting decision ensured that future landowners and tenants would be reimbursed when forced to move.

Mort re-opened his store in 1953 at 8317 John C. Lodge Freeway, at Virginia Park Road. My mother, Beverly, and my father proudly attended the opening-day festivities. Skip, twenty-three, became an equal partner with Mort

Morton and Skip Siegel standing outside of their Seward Drug Store location. Skip Siegel ran the business until his retirement, and was succeeded by his sons, Jeffery and David.

and the two set in motion expansion plans. They opened a store in Dearborn Heights on Van Born, another on Goddard Road in Taylor, and finally one in Flint. Within a few years, the brief expansion ended and only the first two stores remained. I spent many a Sunday going to work with my grandfather. I remember having to stand on a milk crate in order to ring sales on the cash register. In those days, we wrote the price of each item on a paper bag, added them up, used our "noggins" to figure out the 3 percent Michigan sales tax, and rang the whole amount on the register. Cigarettes cost a whopping twenty-nine cents a pack.

Our Detroit store had a soda fountain and, for me, the best part of working there was being able to go behind the counter and pour myself a fountain drink whenever I wanted. Sadly, on July 24, during the 1967 Detroit Rebellion, the store was destroyed. My grandfather moved over to the store in Dearborn Heights, where he continued to work until he passed away in 1979. Then my father ran the store with my brother David and me working alongside him. Eventually David and I owned the business.

Feeling a bit under the weather? Seward's pharmacist would give customers a five-cent wooden nickel to use in the store for a future purchase.

Grateful for the support of the local community, my father suggested that we consider a project to help the surrounding Westwood School District. In April 1983, I approached school superintendent Dr. Equilla Bradford, who noted that the district was in need of band uniforms. With a stipulation that the community raise half the required funds, Seward Drugs raised $14,000 for the project. In November 1985, I had the honor of presenting the check at a school board meeting, where we enjoyed a special performance by one of the district's marching bands playing "When the Saints Go Marching In." After the uniforms were purchased, the district held a parade to honor our family, and David served as grand marshall.

In August 2008, after three generations of Siegels in the pharmacy business, David and I sold Seward Drugs to Walgreens and closed that chapter of our lives.

Irving Belinsky and The Film Exchange Drugstore

by Brenda Zales

It's 6:30 a.m., and my father, Irving Belinksy, is awake, dressed, and quietly stealing out of our apartment in Detroit. My mother and baby Arnold (my older brother) are still sleeping as he softly closes the door behind him. By seven, Dad is at the bakery buying freshly baked rolls, bagels, and bread for his customers. Thirty minutes later, he has removed his jacket and rolled up his shirt sleeves and is behind the soda-fountion counter, making a huge urn of coffee and putting a turkey in the oven. By lunchtime, that turkey will be cooked and ready to be sliced for his delicious signature sandwich.

By nine, my father has donned his crisp white pharmacist's coat and unlocked the doors, and he is standing behind the pharmacy counter in the Film Exchange Pharmacy on the ground floor of the Film Exchange Building at the corner of Cass Avenue and Montcalm Street. It is 1933 and my father is twenty-six years old.

Irving Belinsky

Irving Belinsky, born Izek Boruch Bilinski in 1907 in the shtetl of Antonovka, Ukraine, came to America in 1919 with his mother Fayga (Americanized as "Fanny"), sisters Rose and Sara, and brother Alex. Irving was the baby of the family, and upon their arrival he was malnourished from years of near starvation. He spoke only Yiddish and had little, if any, formal education. The family traveled almost immediately to Detroit, where they were greeted by his father, Herschel Bilinski, also known as Harry Belinsky, who had arrived earlier. Irving and Alex thrived on the streets in the area of Hastings and Division, interacting with other youngsters and easily picking up English. Unlike their sisters, who stayed close to home, the boys quickly assimilated. As adults, neither of them had a trace of an accent.

Almost immediately, my young father got a job working in a drugstore. He stocked shelves, made deliveries, worked the soda fountain, swept the floors. He kept a small portion of each paycheck for himself, but gave the bulk of it to his mother to help support the family.

Irving Belinsky, second row, far left, with his class at the Practical Institute of Pharmacy (1927).

It is hard to say which influenced my father more: that he was lucky enough to go to Detroit's Cass Technical High School, where the teachers were career-oriented, or that he worked in that drugstore for so many years. He loved Cass Tech and was devastated when, just one semester shy of his 1927 graduation, his family moved out of the district and he was told he'd have to complete his school year at nearby Detroit Central High School.

After graduation my father never doubted what he wanted to do with his life. He was accepted at the Practical Institute of Pharmacy in Sandusky, Michigan, in "the thumb." He had saved enough money for tuition, but had to work while in school to pay for room, board, and books. As my father waited to board the bus, suitcase in hand, my grandfather wished him Godspeed, then handed him a five-dollar bill. It was the only contribution my grandfather would make toward my father's higher education, and the only one my grandfather could afford.

In 1933, in the middle of the Great Depression, being a pharmacist was a good profession, and the Film Exchange Pharmacy was a good place to be. Conveniently located in the middle of downtown Detroit, the mid-rise building's tenants included MGM, Warner Brothers, and Universal, each of which leased whole floors. Dad was involved in every aspect of his business, from filling

The Film Exchange Pharmacy was founded by Irving Belinksy and served customers of downtown Detroit's then-robust film industry.

prescriptions to stocking shelves alongside the stock boys. His customers called my dad “Doc,” and he knew their names and their stories.

During the 1930s, the movie business in Detroit was one of the few businesses that prospered. The Film Exchange Building functioned exactly as its name implied: Theater exhibitors came at least weekly to the offices on the upper floors to book their movies for the following week. It was a busy place, filled with traveling salesmen who, after completing their business upstairs, would come down to the drugstore to while away the rest of their day. Sometimes they would roll dice with my father for double-or-nothing to see if they could get a free pack of cigarettes. As long as the movies did well, so did my father. There was much to be admired about the lifestyle of movie-theater owners, my father noticed. Except for weekends, movie theaters were open only in the evenings. The owners did not work nearly as hard as retail-store owners, and they made a lot of money.

The Film Exchange Pharmacy featured a soda fountain and lots of room for customers to while away the day drinking coffee, eating lunch, or playing cards.

In 1940, my father opened his first movie theater, the Clawson Theatre, at Fourteen Mile Road and Main Street. Although he hung on to the drug-store in the Film Exchange Building, he eventually opened six movie theaters throughout the metro Detroit area.

As the emerging television industry began forcing movie theaters to close, my father, around 1948, sold his theaters and used the money as a down payment on another drugstore, Reid’s Prescription Pharmacy at Gratiot Avenue and Harper in Detroit.

A few years later, the Lurie family, who owned the local Wrigley Supermarkets chain, approached my father regarding the purchase of three of their drugstores. He would run those stores as Wrigley Super Drugs, which included the location next to the renowned Darby’s Restaurant on Seven Mile Road in Northwest Detroit. The store shared a parking lot with Darby’s. My clever father got foot traffic to move through his store by placing a sign in the window of his back door: “This way to Darby’s.”

Irving Belinksy (center) and his employees.

As he acquired more stores, Irving offered partnerships to his most competent employees, usually the head pharmacist who also served as the store manager. He believed that, as an owner, the pharmacist would have a vested interest in making the store a success. He was right.

To help ensure his stores' continued success, he made "the rounds," as he called it, to each store at least once a week. He was a hands-on partner/boss and the young pharmacists respected his experience and business acumen. Hadar Granader, one of those young pharmacists who would go on to own the store at West Road and Grange Road in Trenton, recently shared some of Irving's suggestions:

- When you arrive at work after your long drive, stay in the car for five minutes. Clear your head of any concerns you might be having about your life outside your work. Give 100% of your mind to your work while you're there.
- When you walk into your store, your mood will dictate the mood of your employees. Always be optimistic and upbeat, and your employees will follow your lead.
- Make sure the cashier at the front of the store smiles the most. She's the one who will make the first impression on the customers.

Hadar and the other partners thought of Irving as their mentor. They were grateful for his wisdom on the ins and outs of running a business, and for the knowledge they use to this day, not only in business but in every area of their lives.

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Featured Article

THE BIBLE-READINGS BATTLE IN DETROIT'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Le Roy G. Barnett, PhD

As the twentieth century dawned, an attempt was made by the Detroit public school system to incorporate bible readings into the classroom. Jewish leaders stood in opposition. Readings from the Bible *was brought to Detroit by a Chicago-based group and, had it been adopted, could have changed public education for decades. Author Le Roy Barnett provides a look into one of Michigan's most fascinating episodes.*

From the time Chicago's public schools were established, and continuing until 1874, the Bible was openly read in class. The custom was for teachers to daily recite a few passages of scripture to their pupils. As the 1876 centennial of the United States approached, the school board of the Windy City, respecting the increasingly pluralist religious sensibilities of residents, discontinued this practice.[1]

Some fifteen years later, a group of Chicago Protestants attempted to re-establish this abandoned tradition. They felt the change necessary for a number of reasons, among them being:

- Article III of the Ordinance of 1787, which stated that "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged."[2]
- A belief that the Bible "contains the most exalted literature ever produced."[3]
- A conviction that "the Bible is the basis and best standard of morality."[4]
- Sureness that, "from a patriotic point of view, the Bible must be a respected book in the public schoolroom."[5]
- A sentiment that the Bible is "a volume recognized by every civil government as sacred, and without which this Nation would never have had an existence."[6]

The organization behind this movement was the Chicago Woman's Educational Union, formed on September 24, 1890.[7] This body was

co-founded and led by the energetic and highly accomplished Maria Elizabeth Blanchard Cook,[8] wife of local stationer and publisher Ezra Asher Cook.[9]

Mrs. Cook and her group circulated a petition asking the Chicago Board of Education to require the reading of extracts from the Bible in opening exercises each school day.[10] On December 10, 1890, Mrs. Cook presented to the school board her group's petition, signed by 16,000 adult residents of the city.[11] In February 1891, after several weeks of consideration, the board declined the request.[12]

With this defeat, Mrs. Cook and the Chicago Woman's Educational Union concluded that a different approach was needed in order to achieve their goal. After some deliberation, they decided in 1894 to produce a book containing what they believed to be the Bible's best nonsectarian passages.[13] Such a volume would supposedly guide teachers "in selecting Scripture readings for the opening exercises of the public schools."[14]

To keep the proposed book as free as possible from denominationalism, eminent U.S. clergymen were asked to forward to the union "such selections from holy writ as in their opinion would meet the approval of the champions of all creeds when read in the public schools."[15] These suggestions, from leaders in the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths, were then compiled into bound form[16] with the belief that the final product, *Readings from the Bible*, would be "acceptable to people of all religions."[17]

CONTROVERSY SPREADS TO DETROIT

With their completed text in hand, the Chicago Woman's Educational Union began promoting the use of *Readings from the Bible* not only in the public schools of the Windy City, but also in those across the country.[18] Among the communities targeted for adoption of the sampler book was Detroit.

Detroit was a focus of attention for at least two reasons. First, Bible reading in Michigan schools outside of the future Motor City was common, with many districts including during the course of the school day some fashion of Bible reading.[19] Second, late in 1895, a proposal had been made to the school board of Detroit that the Lord's Prayer be required in all classrooms during the closing hour of each afternoon session. Though this resolution was rejected, it was a seed that, in slightly modified form, would soon take root.[20]

On June 11, 1896, the members of the Detroit school board's Committee on Text Books suggested that *Readings from the Bible* "be secured for each [class]room and the daily sessions be opened by a brief exercise led by the teacher, wherein selections [from the volume] could be read." [21] After mulling over this idea for about three months, the district superintendent recommended purchasing 4,000 copies of *Readings* for use in the schools, and 85 percent of

the board members voted in favor of the motion.[22]

Realizing that the decision to introduce Bible readings into the public schools was certain to cause dissension in the community, Detroit Mayor Hazen S. Pingree vetoed the board's action. He observed that if the goal of adopting the *Readings* was to improve the morals of students, there were numerous printed sources that could do this "without dragging the Bible into the textbook arena."[23]

The mayor's efforts to keep the status quo and the peace were not to be. On November 12, 1896, numerous local Christian groups came before the board of education to lobby for the adoption of *Readings from the Bible* in Detroit's public schools. These pleas, petitions, and prayers were more than the board could ignore, and that evening they overrode the mayor's veto and once again made the controversial volume a part of the school curriculum.[24]

Two weeks later, at the next meeting of the school board, about a half-dozen Jewish Detroit citizens – led by Rabbi Louis Grossmann of Temple Beth El – showed up to object "to the further use of the *Readings from the Bible* in the schools." Accompanying the rabbi were Louis Blitz, Sigmund Simon, David W. Simon, Samuel Goldstein, Julius Freud, and Bernard Ginsburg. These gentlemen were present to reveal that some claims made by proponents of the book were false.[25]

Rabbi Louis Grossman, photo from "A History of Congregation Beth El," Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

To demonstrate their claim that the *Readings* had support from across the Judeo-Christian spectrum, the book's marketers quoted five rabbis as favoring the work. These supposed endorsers were Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and Rabbi Aaron Norden of Chicago; Dr. Henry Pereira Mendes and Dr. Kaufman Kohler of New York City; and Dr. Moses Mielziner of Cincinnati. Rabbi Grossman read telegrams from all five men saying that "they opposed the book and objected to its introduction into the public schools."[26]

After a week of further research, Rabbi Grossman reported more fraud in the promotion of *Readings from the Bible*. He learned that, contrary to statements made by the book's supporters, Jewish luminaries such as Professor Felix Adler of New York, and the Rev. Bernhard Felsenthal and Rabbi Joseph Stolz, both of Chicago, had not vouched for the volume and were, in fact, opposed to its mandatory use in the public schools.[27]

In the following week, Rabbi Grossman uncovered one last example of misrepresentation: Two prominent Chicago Jewish women, Henriette Greenebaum Frank and Hannah H. Solomon, had been mentioned as backers of the volume and of its deployment in the public schools of America. Rabbi Grossmann obtained and released testimony from both women that such was not the case.[28]

These disclosures angered supporters of the *Readings*, and they made their displeasure known with statements from the pulpit. The Rev. Sayres, for instance, pastor of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Detroit, opined, "That the objection to the Bible being read in the schools was made by a minority which represented a foreign element, that in this land of freedom every institution, doctrine and sect stood upon its own merits and none should fear the truth." He continued, "That a religion or a philosophy which could not exist where the Bible was read ought to go and go at once. If it could not stand against the free reading of the Bible it was not true and ought to fall." He maintained that opposition to the Bible was un-American and unpatriotic.[29]

Another example came from the Rev. Thoburn of Detroit's Central Methodist Episcopal Church. Speaking to his congregation, he warned the descendants of Abraham that "it ill becomes that time- and God-honored people to raise their voice against the [holy] cornerstone of the only country which never persecuted them."[30]

The controversy reached the point that Mrs. Cook was required to come to Detroit in December and defend the claims used to champion the *Readings.* Though she spoke for over an hour in defense of her cause, she was unable to refute the facts brought forth by Rabbi Grossman.[31] With their case made, Sigmund Simon submitted to the board's Committee on Text Books a petition with 300 signatures asking that its decisions in favor of the controversial volume be rescinded.[32]

The committee considered the evidence presented and the appeals made, and then announced its decision. The members unanimously said that it had been "two weeks since they listened to verbal protests from several Hebrew citizens against the further use in our Grammar Schools of the text book called *Readings from the Bible Selected for Schools*. They have also carefully considered the petitions to the same effect presented and referred to the Committee at the last meeting of the Board. Your committee are unable to see any sufficient reason why these petitions should be granted, and recommend that no action be taken by the Board with the view of the removal of the book from the schools."[33]

FOCUS SHIFTS TO THE COURTS

Where appeals of the Jewish community in this matter were rebuffed, a local freethinker sought to succeed through legal means. Conrad Pfeiffer, soon to be the founder of the famous Pfeiffer Brewing Company, late in 1896 filed papers in the Wayne County Circuit Court for a writ of mandamus restraining the school board from using *Readings from the Bible* in the classroom.[34]

The Detroit board of education naturally elected to defend itself in this lawsuit, with legal services coming at no cost to the board.[35] Most Protestant churches in the city offered to cover the expenses incurred in this legal matter. Pastors appealed to their congregations to make free-will offerings to the cause, with each religious denomination seeking to raise one hundred dollars.[36]

The lawyers for the Board of Education, in responding to Pfeiffer's legal challenge, defended their client by noting, in part, that:

- "The law recognizes that an overwhelming majority of the citizens and taxpayers of this country believe in the Christian religion, in the existence of Almighty God and in certain relations of man to God, and the obligation to worship God; that in these things the religious sects of Christians do not disagree, and that these things constitute the foundations of our civil society."[37]
- From the beginning to "the present time there have been in constant use in all the public schools of [Detroit] text-books containing numerous passages taken from the Bible, passages teaching the existence of Almighty God, the relation of men to Him, and the duty of man to worship and obey Him, and that no objection has ever been made by the parents or guardians of the pupils to the use of same, or by anyone else."[38]
- "An overwhelming majority of parents and guardians of pupils in [the Detroit public] schools are in favor of the [Readings] book and its use. To substantiate this it is stated that there are 30,000 pupils in the public schools at present, and that only 200 objections, or less than two-thirds of one percent, had been received."[39]

The magistrate hearing the case considered these and other points made by the defendants, along with arguments of the plaintiff, and on May 8, 1897, rendered a decision in favor of Pfeiffer. This judgment was based on a number of factors, among them being Article 4, Section 41, of the Michigan Constitution at that time. This clause said that "the civil or political rights privileges and capacities of any person" could not be diminished or enlarged "on account of his opinion or belief concerning matters of religion."[40]

With respect to this provision, the judge observed that the school board, by its action, "gives to those who accept as true the religious teachings of King

James' version of the Bible, the right of having their children taught a portion of those teachings at the expense of those who do not accept them as true. Can it be for one moment contended that this does not enlarge the civil rights and privileges of persons holding one religious belief and diminish the civil rights and privileges of persons holding another religious belief?"[41]

It was a foregone conclusion that whoever lost this case would appeal the decision to a higher level. This was made clear at the board of education's first meeting following the judge's verdict. Members of a local ministers association wrote to "remind the Board that when some of our churches contributed funds to assist in the conduct of the case it was understood that the matter would be carried to the Supreme Court and a final decision secured. What was given was contributed in good faith" that the matter will now be taken forward.[42]

A special meeting of the board of education was called for May 18, 1897. On that occasion, the board's attorneys discussed the errors they thought the judge had made in his decision and encouraged advancing the matter to "the court of last resort." Also present were representatives from most Protestant sects supporting an appeal and promising to help finance such a course of action. As a result, 82 percent of the board voted to continue the case to the Michigan Supreme Court.[43]

The matter of Conrad Pfeiffer v. The Board of Education of the City of Detroit was sent to the Michigan Supreme Court on certiorari, with the case receiving Docket Number 77 in the January 1898 term. Each party presented one or more briefs giving its side of the dispute, the one for Pfeiffer including a twenty-page contribution by Rabbi Grossman titled "Hebrew Objections to Readings from the Bible."[44]

Oral arguments for the case were made on January 26, 1898. The attorney for the school board admitted the book in question was a religious work, "but declared that it was the intention of the founders of our system of schools that the teachings of the Christian religion should be forever established in the Northwest Territory." The lawyer for the plaintiff saw things differently, as he claimed *Readings* to be "the last expiring effort of the Protestants to cram the Bible down the throats of the people."[45]

The members of the Michigan Supreme Court considered these remarks, along with briefs that the litigants had filed, and on December 6, 1898, four of the men concluded (with just one dissension)[46] that *Readings from the Bible* could be used in the classrooms of our state.[47] Among other points, the jurists in the majority noted that those who do not care to listen to readings from the controversial volume are unharmed if others are given the opportunity to so.[48]

One might think that the Detroit school board would react to this decision with great joy, as its actions had been vindicated. In fact, almost the

opposite was the case. A newspaper reporter, asking four board members for their thoughts on the ruling, got the following responses:[49]

- "It is hardly likely that the school board will take advantage of the ruling to reintroduce the Bible Readings, although there are 3,000 copies of the book on hand."
- "While there is now nothing to prevent our putting these books into use again ... I am inclined to think that there is no use in stirring up the old discussions."
- "I should be very glad for myself to see some such book used in readings in the schools, where pupils were not compelled to stay to listen. I think very likely it will be felt inadvisable to stir the trouble up again."
- "... no attempt will be made to put the books into use."

In fact, at a meeting of the school board one day later, it was "resolved that the book so-called Bible Readings be gathered up from the different schools and the same to be placed in the stock room with the view of having the same exchanged for some other school books."[50] The volume had so disrupted and divided the community that, despite winning the case, the school board decided to abandon the book in the interest of restoring a harmonious atmosphere to the town's educational system.[51]

And so ended with a whimper Detroit's great bible-readings controversy of the 1890s. Reflecting on this event a quarter century later, Rabbi Grossman found it curious that "some citizens object and cry horror when it is suggested to turn over to the State or to the city, say the street-cars or the railroads or the water-works or the gas [works], but they run to the State at once to turn over to them the souls of the children. The State is to teach religion and they run to the Legislature to enact a [favorable] bill. If State-owned railroads are socialism, what is State-enforced religion?"[52]

The rabbi concluded his thoughts on the subject by observing that the "crusade for Bible Reading in the Public Schools and the attempt to use the police force of the State to back it is part of the reactionary spirit of churches that cannot take courage to confess that they have lost their hold on the people and on life. And it is based on allegations that are false and untrue. It is not true that childhood today has no morality, no respect and no reverence. It may not respect, nor reverence the things pious agitators do. But it has great respect for the really worthy and the genuinely true, and he who denies that libels his time, his home and his country."[53]

For a quarter century, Dr. Le Roy G. Barnett was head of reference at the State Archives of Michigan. During his forty-four years as a historian, he has authored about 240 articles and monographs, most relating to some aspect of our state's past.

ENDNOTES

[1]*The Christian Cynosure* [periodical], October 2, 1890 (volume 23, number 3), page 9. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 15, 1896, page 1.
[2]*The Christian Cynosure*, October 23, 1890 (volume 23, number 6), page 4.
[3]*The Christian Cynosure,* October 2, 1890 (volume 23, number 3), page 9.
[4]ibid.
[5]*Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1890, page 5.
[6]ibid.
[7]*Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 25, 1891, page 3; *The Nation's Book in the Nation's Schools.* Chicago: Woman's Educational Union, 1898, page 115.
[8]Wheaton [IL] *Progressive* [newspaper], March 12, 1915, page 1; *The Christian Cynosure*, April 1915 (volume 47, number 12), page 369. It appears Mrs. Cook did not use the forename "Maria" in adulthood.
[9]*The Book of Chicagoans*. Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Co., 1911, page 153; *The Christian Cynosure*, October 1911 (volume 44, number 6), pages 161-163.
[10]*The Christian Cynosure*, October 2, 1890 (volume 23, number 3), page 9.
[11]C*hicago Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1890, page 5.
[12]*The Christian Cynosure*, February 19, 1891 (volume 23, number 23), page 1.
[13]*Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 20, 1896, page 12.
[14]*Chicago Inter-Ocean*, June 9, 1895, page 26.
[15]ibid.
[16]*Readings from the Bible: Selected for Schools and to be Read in Unison*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1896.
[17]*Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 22, 1895, page 12.
[18]*Chicago Inter-Ocean*, March 12, 1897, page 12.
[19]*The Nation's Book in the Nation's Schools*., Chicago: The Chicago Woman's Educational Union, 1898, page 63. Similar findings appeared in the *Report of the Commissioner of Education* for the Year 1897-98. (Washington: Government Printing Office), 1899, Volume 2, page 1555.
[20]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1895-6*. Detroit: James H. Stone & Co., 1896, pages 151-52, 192-93.
[21]Ibid., pages 493-94.
[22]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1896-7*. Detroit: James H. Stone & Co., 1897, pages 105, 117.
[23]*Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1896, page 5. The full text of the mayor's message can be found in *Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1896-7*, page 142.
[24]ibid., pages 158, 182.
[25]*Detroit Free Press*, November 25, 1896, page 10. *Detroit Evening News*, November 25, 1896, page 2.
[26]Ibid.
[27]*Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1896, page 6.
[28]*Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1896, page 12.
[29]*D etroit Free Press*, December 7, 1896, page 2.
[30]ibid.
[31]*Detroit Evening News*, December 9, 1896, page 5.
[32]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1896-7*, page 199.
[33]ibid., pages 214-215.
[34]*Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1896, page 5.
[35]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1896-7*, pages 245-6.
[36]*Detroit Evening News*, February 15, 1897, page 6.
[37]*Detroit Free Press*, January 26, 1897, page 10.

[38]ibid. This is not quite correct. In an article by William D. Wilkins (*Detroit Free Press*, February 12, 1871, last unnumbered page of supplement), the author makes reference to Jewish students refusing to say the Lord's Prayer in Detroit schools. In addition, Bible reading was a major issue during 1844-1845 as related by Le Roy G. Barnett, "The Early Bible Battle in Detroit's Public Schools," *The Great Lakes Pilot*, March 2018 (volume 12, number 5), pages 46-48.
[39]ibid.
[40]*Detroit Free Press*, May 9, 1897, page 11.
[41]*Detroit Evening News*, May 8, 1897, page 1.
[42]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1896-7*, pages 374-5.
[43]ibid. pages 400-406.
[44]Michigan Supreme Court. *Conrad Pfeiffer, Relator and Appellee v. The Board of Education of the City of Detroit, Respondent and Appellant. Brief for Appellee.* Detroit: Record Printing Company, 1898, pages 77-97.
[45]*Detroit Free Press*, January 27, 1898, page 7.
[46]*Detroit Evening News*, December 7, 1898, page 7.
[47]A synopsis of the decision can be found in Michigan Reports, volume 118, pages 560-595. The actual Records and Briefs are at the Law Library, Library of Michigan, Lansing.
[48]*Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1898, page 10.
[49]*Detroit Evening News*, December 7, 1898, page 7.
[50]*Journal of Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Detroit for the Year 1898-9*, page 190; ibid., page 215.
[51]Though apparently ending well, it is possible this acrimonious contest had some bearing on the creation four years later of the first Hebrew free school, as described in the *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1902, page 2.
[52]G*limpses into Life.* New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1922, pages 47-48.
[53]ibid., page 48. Biographical sketches of Louis Grossmann can be found in the *Detroit Evening News*, September 27, 1896, page 20; *The Menorah*, November 1898 (volume 25, number 5), pages 278-281; and the *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1926, page [19]. His papers are housed at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

Historical Tidbit

1958: In September, Hillel Day School, one of 240 such schools across the country, opened in the Labor Zionist building with a kindergarten and first-grade class. Each year thereafter, another grade level would be added. The school's method of both Hebraic-religious and secular education was considered by the organizers to be an instrument of "creative Jewish survival."

Feature Article

THE NOBLE NURSES WHO LEARNED YIDDISH TO AID THEIR JEWISH PATIENTS

By Jerry Stelmaszak

In the late 1920s, a group of nurses employed by the North End Clinic decided to learn Yiddish in order to provide a higher level of care to their patients. Very little information is available about this group who studied with United Hebrew Schools. Author Jerry Stelmaszak recounts a bit of the history in a tribute to his mother, Ingeborg Seibenwirth, who immigrated to this country in the 1940s and lived until the age of sixty-nine.

For many Jewish baby boomers, the Yiddish language conjures up warm thoughts of older relatives sitting around discussing the issues of the day. Perhaps they recall their bubbe speaking the mother tongue while cooking over the stove, or parents choosing to speak in the strange and foreign language so their children couldn't understand more than a word or two of their private conversation. For more than a thousand years, Yiddish was the Esperanto of the Jewish culture, the universal language that brought together Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern and Central Europe. It was a way for people from different countries to understand each other when they met. Before the Holocaust, roughly ten to thirteen million Jews spoke Yiddish — but a large number of those Jews perished during World War II, depleting the population of native speakers almost to the point of losing the language altogether.

The pocket watch carried by the Seibenwirth family with a photo of Ingeborg, born in 1920.

In the early twentieth century, a wave of Jewish immigrants came to the U.S. to escape Russian pogroms. Thirty years later, many fled Europe prior to the outbreak of World War II to escape German persecution. Many of those who survived the Holocaust then came to the U.S., hoping for a better life, with some settling in Detroit. Most of these immigrants arrived with very little: their few belongings, their traditions, their culture, and their language. But when Yiddish-speaking Jews needed medical or respite care, there were few facilities to help them; no Jewish hospital existed in Detroit until the opening of Sinai in 1953. They also faced a significant language barrier.

Founded in 1907, the Jewish Home for Aged, or the Old Folks Home, was first located on Brush at Winder in Detroit. The home provided kosher meals, socialization, and spiritual and cultural support for up to ninety residents. Anna Korman was the head nurse, overseeing the health of many of the residents and making sure that they had a warm and pleasant place to stay.

In 1937, the facility relocated to Petoskey Avenue, where it offered more advanced care that included ambulatory services, an infirmary, and occupational and physical therapy. In 1967, the main home moved to Borman Hall on Seven Mile Road in Northwest Detroit and, in 1970, an additional facility was established at Prentis Manor on Lahser Road in Southfield. Later, the homes were consolidated at the Fleischman Residence/ Blumberg Plaza on the Jewish Community Campus on Maple Road in West Bloomfield. It is now part of Jewish Senior Life, and in the lobby a permanent exhibit outlines the history of the Old Folks Home from 1907 to the present.

DEDICATED CLINIC STAFF

Even though they came from many different European countries, Jews were lucky to have one thing in common—they could speak to each other in Yiddish. But aside from the Old Folks Home, Yiddish-speaking Jewish residents had no place to seek ongoing medical care. At the time, no hospital facility in Detroit openly employed Jewish physicians or catered to the Jewish population. In fact, Jews often did not even feel welcome in the local hospitals. That changed in 1926 with the establishment of the North End Clinic. Located on Holbrook near Oakland Avenue, the two-story facility replaced a small medical clinic that had opened four years earlier in a former poultry store on Westminster Avenue. Funded by the Jewish Welfare Federation, the clinic —staffed primarily by Jewish doctors who often provided care at no charge— came to be regarded as one of Detroit's finest outpatient facilities. Still, while the Jewish physicians of the North End Clinic did their best to communicate with their Yiddish-speaking patients, the language barrier continued to limit the doctors' ability to follow through with the care of admitted patients.

The North End Clinic provided Jewish residents of Detroit with much-needed outpatient medical care. Photo courtesy of the Leonard N. Simons Archives, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

In 1929, an extraordinary turn of events would help not only the Jews who needed medical help in their new country, but also set a standard of care to be followed when the Jewish community later built its own hospital.

Helen Shaw, a Canadian dietician employed by the North End Clinic, wanted a group of interested nurses to learn to converse with their Jewish patients in the patients' native language. Shaw believed that knowing Yiddish would not only help the nurses to better comprehend their patients' health concerns, but would allow them to provide care in an environment that promoted a familiar social atmosphere. Shaw also wanted to be sure that the patients understood that they could access properly prepared kosher food, because many patients were refusing to eat what was served due to not knowing whether it was indeed kosher. Lastly, and maybe most importantly, she wanted to make sure that the newly arrived immigrants didn't feel disenfranchised by their new hometown.

Shaw shared her idea with clinic director Eleanor Jones Ford, and Ford took the idea to Dr. John Slawson, director of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Slawson agreed. Working with United Hebrew Free Schools, Slawson set up a class that would meet for one hour, twice weekly. Of the eleven nurses who volunteered to take the class, only two were Jewish; the rest were Scottish, Irish, Italian, or Finnish. They began by learning the aleph-bet and studying a few papers that were written for them. They also read children's books, especially *Yiddish far Onfanger* (Yiddish for Beginners), and then they moved on to delve into the language.

According to the 1930 North End Clinic annual report, Dr. Slawson worked to provide "a very competent teacher... [and] The result has been that several of the staff have learned to handle the Yiddish in a surprising way much to the assistance of a number of the patients."

Nurses learned Yiddish using a variety of books, including the children's Yiddish-language book, Yiddish far Onfanger. *In just five months, the nurses were able to speak with and write letters alongside their patients. A few were so taken with their lessons that, when they saw that some of the Yiddish words were also Hebrew words, they wanted to continue to study and learn Hebrew as well.*

The Seibenwirth (Wirth) Family

Among those who faced challenges in receiving good medical care was the Seibenwirth family, who had escaped from Berlin prior to the war. Earnest Seibenwirth had fought in World War I, proudly defending his homeland Germany. But with the rising anti-Semitism of Hitler's Nazi Germany, Seibenwirth, his wife, Ida Martha, and their family gathered up a few belongings, including a gold pocket watch with a picture of their daughter, Ingeborg, hidden inside. They destroyed all papers and photographs and, with nothing more than the clothes on their backs and a few personal possessions, procured passage on a ship headed to Ellis Island in New York Harbor. They then traveled to Detroit, where a sponsor had promised to take them in and give them shelter at 1734 Parker Avenue.

Ida Martha Wirth. Family lore is that officials at Ellis Island shortened Ida and Earnest's last name from Seibenwirth to Wirth.

After their arrival in the U.S., the Seibenwirth name was shortened to "Wirth," possibly by officials at Ellis Island, according to family lore. In their effort to assimilate, and because they feared cultural anti-Semitism in the U.S., the Wirths hid their Jewish faith. They also feared that Americans had little affinity for Germans, Jewish or not. But while they couldn't hide their strong German accents, they could hide their faith. They told people they were Catholic, because they believed it to be the prevailing religion, but they didn't attend church or religious services. Still, behind closed doors, the family ate challah every Friday and latkes during Hanukkah, and they had a library that included books in Hebrew (although those were kept hidden).

When Ingeborg was eight or nine, she began having problems with her eyes. It is likely that she was treated at the North End Clinic, but because they were a poor family, Ingeborg's care was limited to the services that were available to immigrants. Ingeborg's disease was treatable, but because of the family's lack of funds or their lack of access to hospitals, she did not receive the treatment that might have saved her eyesight. Ingeborg, who would later marry and have children of her own, led her life as a blind woman.

Ingeborg Wirth

While it is possible that one of the nurses who learned to speak Yiddish treated Ingeborg at the North End Clinic, it is certain that these Yiddish-speaking nurses showed a kindness that will be forever remembered, providing Yiddish-speaking Jews with the comfort, compassion, and health care that was and should be the right of all people.

Jerry Stelmaszak is the son of Ingeborg Wirth, the young girl featured in this story. Ingeborg would go on to marry Ray Stelmaszak, whose family immigrated from Poland. Born in Detroit, Jerry attended San Diego State University, where he earned a master's degree in pure mathematics. Jerry teaches AP calculus and AP statistics; he also teaches mathematics part-time at two community colleges. He and his wife, Patti, live in Nashville, Tennessee.

Historical Tidbit

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

MICHIGAN WOMEN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE
BUILDERS OF THE DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY

MEET **PATRICIA POLACCO:**

AUTHOR, CONSUMMATE STORYTELLER, AND ILLUSTRATOR

BY AIMEE ERGAS, CURATOR, MICHIGAN WOMEN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

"When my Great-Gramma Anna came to America, she wore the same thick overcoat and big boots she had worn for farm work. But her family weren't dirt farmers anymore. In New York City, her father's work was hauling things on a wagon…. Everyone was in a hurry, and it was so crowded, not like backhome Russia. But all the same it was their home, and most of their neighbors were just like them."

This is how the stage is set for Patricia Polacco's most renowned and beloved book, *The Keeping Quilt.* In spare but moving prose and lively drawings, Polacco chronicles the immigrant beginnings of her family in the U.S. She tells the story through a special quilt made from the clothes of her Russian great-grandmother as it "experiences" Shabbats, weddings, births, and deaths in New York, Michigan, and California through the generations, ending with her hope that she will one day "tell the story of the Keeping Quilt to my grandbabies." Since the publication of *The Keeping Quilt* in 1988, and more than 115 books since then, Polacco has babies and grandbabies numbering in the thousands—fans of her stories who are now sharing them with their children across the country.

Patricia Barber Polacco, a daughter of Michigan (and, through her family, of Ireland and Ukraine), is celebrated as a consummate storyteller and illustrator, beloved among children, parents, teachers, and librarians. Many of her books draw on her personal experiences in her very early years and childhood summers in a multigenerational family in rural Michigan and, during her school

years, in a multicultural neighborhood in Oakland, California. The power of her stories is that they present differences respectfully and joyfully, while allowing young readers to participate, not just in the characters' stories, but also in the larger realm of what it means to be human. Hers are not just "children's books"; educators at all levels, from kindergarten to college, as well as leaders of adult groups, use Polacco's stories to stimulate discussions about values, character, and social issues. Family is the prime force above all in Polacco's stories, whether the family is created by biology or by the ties that people choose. Her books lend themselves to reading aloud and, buoyed by Polacco's signature illustration style, have a distinctive integrity and uniquely authentic voice.

Born in Lansing, Michigan, Polacco grew up on her grandparents' farm near Union City, in southern Michigan, and the stories she created from those memories abound with themes of neighborly sharing, Jewish culture and holidays, and the importance of storytelling. All of this is especially highlighted in her 1996 book, *The Trees of the Dancing Goats*, which tells of a Jewish farm family during the holiday season: Babushka dipping candles, Momma polishing the menorah, and, most special, Grampa carving and painting small wooden toys. When the family learns that their neighbors are ill with scarlet fever and unable to make preparations for their Christmas holiday, the family takes their Hanukah cheer—latkes, candles, roast chicken, and Grampa's "dancing goats"—to the neighbors. The story of holiday sharing and caring paints a vivid portrait of family life on the farm. Polacco wrote *When Lightning Comes in a Jar* as a tribute to her grandmother (called "Babushka" in all her books) and to a cousin. It describes a nostalgic family reunion full of favorite foods like meatloaf and Jell-O salads, lawn games, and looking back through photo albums. Other holidays, such as Passover, Sukkoth, and Easter, play important parts in Polacco books, as do many experiences in the life cycle of a child – moving to a new home, school days, making friends, and being part of a community.

During her childhood years, Polacco spent the school year in Oakland, California. Her experiences in that diverse community, especially of having an African-American boy as a best friend, are reflected in books such as *Mrs. Katz and Tush* and *Chicken Sunday*. As a child, Trisha, as she was known, was a natural artist, but had a very hard time with school until a special teacher came to realize that she suffered from dyslexia. Trisha did not learn to read until she was almost fourteen years old. *Thank you, Mr. Falker* is a tribute to that teacher, who understood and inspired her.

As an author, Polacco respects young children enough to believe that they can accept their places in the human community, playing small but essential

roles in the life stories of that community and identifying with others very different from themselves. The stories encourage everyone to care about those who are much older, those who lived in different times and places, and those of different racial, ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds. She addresses issues such as friendship, bullying, sibling relationships, and sharing religious traditions, and she brings to life historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln. All of this is done in expressive stories with beautiful prose and colorful illustrations. Many of the stories are available on audio and video media.

From her early roots, Polacco went on to study in England, France, Russia, and Australia, earning a B.A., an M.A., and a Ph.D. in art and art history. She originally trained as a restorer of religious icons and did not begin illustrating books until after she was forty. This training and her interest in black-and-white photography have influenced her style, which is remarkable for its contrasts between monochrome and a wide color palette. She has developed a unique style of presenting black- or sepia-and-white drawings with the important figure or object on a page highlighted in color to focus the reader's attention, as seen in *The Keeping Quilt*.

When not writing and illustrating, Polacco spends much of her time at schools around the country, telling stories in classrooms and assemblies, answering questions, and talking with teachers and parents. The assemblies include her family stories that have become the bases of her books, and the real "keeping quilt," brought for the children to see. She also offers a writing seminar for children and a special presentation for teachers and parents. With her commitment to schools and education, Polacco has become a champion of teachers. Since the 2012 shooting tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, Polacco has established a special relationship with the school and has designed a series of lectures to raise awareness of the plight of classroom teachers, as well as an anti-bullying campaign that has earned national recognition.

In her hometown of Union City, located southeast of Kalamazoo, Polacco holds herself to her ideals of the importance of community. She hosts storytelling festivals, teachers' retreats, and writing seminars, and she has rescued an old firehouse from the wrecking ball and turned it into a local gathering place. Named the Gaw Center for the Arts, in honor of her mother's family, it is also the site of a community festival that Polacco has hosted in past summers. The historic home that Polacco has restored and lives in, not far

from her grandparents' farm, is named Meteor Ridge Farm. Built around 1859, it was part of the Underground Railroad during pre-Civil War years. According to Polacco, "its name comes from the story about the meteor that fell onto my grandparents' yard." That story is told in her book, *Meteor!* Polacco brings a piece of the meteor to show children at her school presentations.

Polacco's work has been recognized by the American Library Association, the National Council of Teachers, the National Council for the Social Studies, the Society of School Librarians, the Association of Jewish Libraries, and the Catholic Library Association. Her individual books have been honored with the Sydney Taylor Book Award, the Parent's Choice Honors, and more. Michigan has recognized her with the Gwen Frostic Award from the Michigan Reading Association (2010) and the Michigan Author Award from the Library of Michigan and the Michigan Library Association (2004).

Despite, and because of, the ups and downs, ins and outs, past and present of her life, Patricia Polacco's writings express the joy of living in ways that are meaningful to children of all ages. Her stories cross generations, borders, and cultures with ideas about family traditions, friendships, working together for community, and finding hope in the challenges of life. Those are ideas we can all benefit from, no matter how young or old we are.

Aimee Ergas is the founder of JHSM's Michigan Women Who Made a Difference Project. *The project seeks to chronicle, preserve, and share the stories of Michigan Jewish women who helped shape our communities and make our world a stronger and more vibrant place.*

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 includes profiles of athletes, activists, attorneys, and bubbes. Many of the biographies are now a part of the MWWMD digital archive, available at www.michjewishhistory.org.

REMARKABLE ARTISTS

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

Ezra Korman was Detroit's dean of Yiddish letters and, along with Shloime Schwartz in Chicago and Alter Esselin in Milwaukee, was a pillar of Yiddish creativity in the Midwest.[1] Born in Kiev in 1888, he immigrated to the United States in 1923,[2] and died in his adopted city, Detroit, in 1959.[3] In this touching profile, author Michael Yashinsky shares his extensive research on the man, his family, and his contributions to a culture nearly lost. Much of his understanding of Ezra Korman was enriched by the artifacts of his life, by the poet's own words, and by his telephone conversations with Nina Korman, fifty-one, the poet's granddaughter and only living descendant.

EZRA KORMAN OF DETROIT: THE LIFE AND AFTERLIFE OF A YIDDISH POET

by Michael Yashinsky

In the Ferndale *feld* (cemetery) of Machpelah, the earthly remains of many of the Detroit Jewish community's departed loved ones are buried. Their stones bear tribute to the impression they left in this world, in elegant engravings: "Beloved Sister," "Beloved Mother and Grandmother," "Lovingly Remembered." English predominates, with Hebrew letters providing the sacred names of the departed, the dates of their births and deaths, and holy benedictions for their souls. But on one low monument, whose inscriptions appear on the pages of an open book etched into the stone, Yiddish is the chief language.

A choice was made here, on the gravestone of Ezra Korman and his wife Anna, to honor a pair of departed souls who evidently cared a great deal about their native language. That much is clear from a closer look at the epitaphs.

They are the departed man's own words — his own Yiddish poetry. The verses, displayed on both his and his wife's sides of the stone, humbly express the mark that Ezra and Anna have left behind — not feats of dashing and daring or even great renown, but rather a humble commitment to the language of their forefathers, and to the creation of literary art in that language. Art, he recognizes, may outlive the artist, and so, as long as his works are read, may lend him a kind of eternity, continuing to speak for him and his generation after death, though perhaps just as "quietly" and "modestly" as he was able to speak in life.

On Ezra's side, the following text appears, cited as deriving "from his last poems":

Shtil, on taynes un basheydn	Quiet, without complaints, and modest,
fun dem erdish yarid	From this earthly teem
vel ikh, ven bashert, zikh sheydn	I will part, when the time is promised,
mit mayn letstn troym un lid	With my final poem and dream

Anna's epitaph is most likely a continuation of the former verse. Though she was not a poet, perhaps her "Yiddish song" was just that: the remembered warblings of a woman raised in that melodious language.

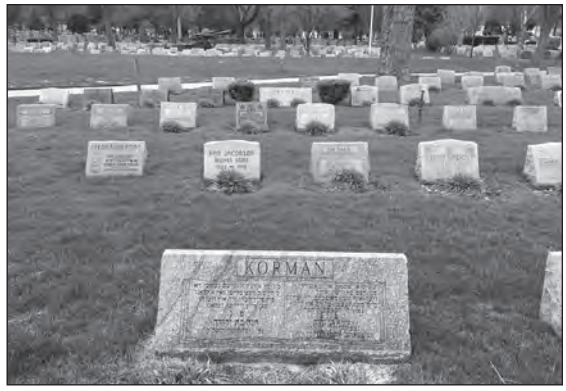
Kh'vel avek vi nisht geven do	I will away as if I were never here,
Kh'veys, s'vet blaybn nor a klang	I know there will remain but a sound
fun mayn kern zikh un vendn	Of my comings and my goings,
fun mayn yidishn gezang	Of my Yiddish song.

Yes, in the great borderless, world-spanning Yiddishland of once-upon-a-time, even Detroit had a Yiddish poet of renown, though *"nor a klang,"* "but a sound," remains of his poetry today. Original copies of it are rare, and none of it translated beyond what has been prepared for publication in this article.

And why should there not have been such a poet in Detroit? There, too, masses of Jews settled during the Great Immigration from Eastern Europe. The number of Jews in the city leapt from 1,000 before 1880 to 34,000 in 1914, most of the enormous new wave of immigrants being Russian Jews of Yiddish-speaking background. With them grew institutions of Jewish life and communal, theatrical, and literary outlets for the usage of their *mame-loshn*, Yiddish.[4] (Many of these are described in *Idishe institutsyes un anshtaltn in detroyt* – Jewish Institutions and Relief Establishments in Detroit – published in 1940 by Detroit's Jewish Welfare Federation.)

The Jews of the Motor City spoke and read local papers in their native language. One paper was *Undzer vort (Our Word)*: a socialist magazine populated with photographs of smiling toddlers in Workmen's Circle schools and advertisements for May Day celebrations and quick lunches at delicatessens.

They attended Yiddish performances like the one in May 1915 at the old Detroit Opera House, where members of the Detroit Progressive Literary Dramatic Club produced Sholem Aleichem's one-act *Agentn (The Insurance Agents).* The classic writer spoke to the packed crowd and then retired for the evening to the nearby spa town of Mount Clemens, where he stayed at the picturesque Elkin's Hotel.[5] (My grandmother, Elizabeth Elkin Weiss, 1925-2015, whose great-uncle founded the hotel, used to hide on the landing there past her bedtime, listening to visiting Yiddish theater stars declaiming in the parlors below.)



The Yiddish-language monument of Ezra and Anna Korman stands out among the Hebrew- and English-engraved stones in Machpelah Cemetery in Ferndale.

The poet Ezra Korman on holiday at a Yiddishist summer camp where he and his wife Nina worked as counselors in exchange for free tuition for their son.

And, to make a penny, Detroit's Yiddish speakers dealt in scrap metal, laundry, bootleg alcohol...and, yes, poetry.

The holdings of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, testify to the diversity of Korman's oeuvre and his tripartite literary talents: as anthologist-editor, as translator, and as poet. The bibliography also gives us a sense of Korman's life. The first title is his translation of Heinrich Heine's poetry, put out in 1917 – before Korman had reached the age of thirty – by Kiev's avant-

Cover and interior pages of Korman's anthology Yidishe dikhterins (Yiddish Poetesses) *(1928), with its tipped-in portraits of writers.*[6]

garde *Kunst-farlag* (Art Publishing House), an institution he cofounded.[8]

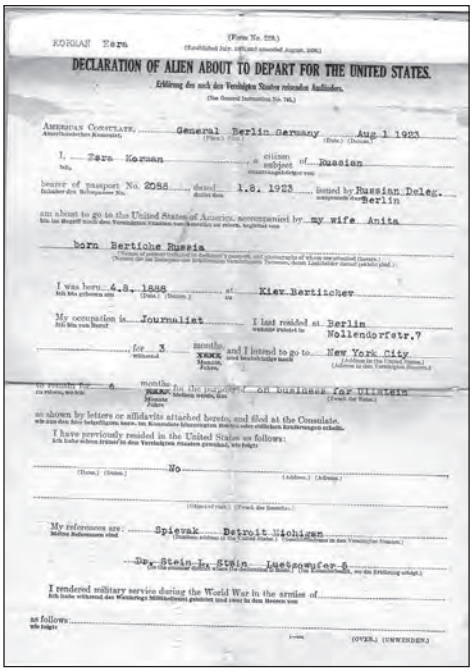
In a display of sympathy with the struggle of the working classes, Korman then published his first anthology, *In fayerdikn doyer - zamlung fun revolutsyonerer lirik in der nayer yidisher dikhtung fun ukraine (In Fiery Duration: Collection of Revolutionary Lyrics in the New Yiddish Poetry of Ukraine)* (Kiev, 1921),[9] and its expanded version, *Brenendike brikn (Burning Bridges)* (Berlin, 1923).[10] At the same time, in his native Kiev and in Warsaw, he was helping to establish the *Kultur-lige*, a prominent, socially engaged organization focused on the promotion of Jewish culture, arts, and education.

While in Warsaw, in 1923, his wife Anna gave birth to their only child, Nokhem (after Ezra's father), later Norman Korman (the poet's ear for rhyme not being limited to his poetry, it would seem). Around the same time, two more of Korman's translations were published in Warsaw and Berlin: a drama (the Dutch-Jewish playwright Herman Heijermans's *Op Hoop van Zegen* (*Hoping for Luck)*; or in Korman's less, well, hopeful rendering, *Farloyrene hofenung (Lost Hope)*, translated from a German version)[11] and a Russian memoir of Jewish life during the Bolshevik Revolution.[12] (Years later, proud of his new Midwestern surroundings, he would translate Chicago poet Carl Sandburg into Yiddish, and, as it happens, his own poetry into English.)

Ezra Korman and his wife Anna looking young and creatively coiffed. This and all other personal photographs of the poet and his documents are included courtesy of Nina Korman.

In 1923, Korman immigrated to the United States, traveling on the S. S. Tyrrhenia and noting "Journalist" as his occupation on his pre-departure papers. He and his young family soon made their home in Detroit, where Anna would become a registered nurse at Harper Hospital. In 1932, the first book of his own poetry was released: *Shkie, lider fun elter un toyt (Sunset: Poems of Old Age and Death)*, dedicated to his father's memory.[13]

Published by a prestigious house in Chicago (but with the copyright belonging to Korman), the small book, bound in leather with a tombstone embossed on the cover in gold, is filled with reflective, rhythmic word-pictures



KORMAN Ezra

DECLARATION OF ALIEN ABOUT TO DEPART FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Erklärung des nach den Vereinigten Staaten reisenden Ausländers.

AMERICAN CONSULATE, General Berlin Germany Aug 1 1923

I, Ezra Korman, citizen of Russia

bearer of passport No. 2088, dated 1.8. 1923, issued by Russian Deleg. Berlin

am about to go to the United States of America, accompanied by my wife Anita

born Bertiche Russia

I was born 4.8. 1888 at Kiev Bertichev

My occupation is Journaliet I last resided at Berlin Nollendorfstr.7

for 3 months and I intend to go to New York City

for 6 months for the purpose of on business for Ullstein

as shown by letters or affidavits attached hereto and filed at the Consulate.

I have previously resided in the United States as follows:

No

My references are: Spievak Detroit Michigan

Dr. Stein & Stein Luetzowufer 6

I rendered military service during the World War in the armies of

as follows:

(OVER.) (UMWENDEN.)

A form Korman completed at the American Consulate in Berlin, 1923. In it, he states that he is traveling to America for six months "on business for Ullstein," the German publishing house, though it seems he did not return to Europe thereafter.

on death and dying and what comes after. A standout is *"Levaye"* ("Funeral"), in which mourners gather to silently say goodbye, knowing that they *"ale veln zikh bekorev dort bagegenen"* ("will all soon meet there"). Suddenly *"eyn kol,"* one voice, *"rayst zikh,"* tears through the silence, wailing. Throughout the book, snow and frost are recurring motifs, chilling the body and the soul, or blanketing the earth and its memory. No wonder, for Korman on the last page tells us of these poems' provenance: *"Vinter 1929, detroyt."* Winter is a cruel season in that city. When sitting down to compose, snow is the closest—often the only!—image at hand.

But Michigan is a place where all four seasons are clearly, richly defined, each with its own color and emotion. Korman was moved by all of them, as we see in a poem from 1933, when his work was featured in an anthology meant to give the public an impression of the breadth of Yiddish creativity throughout America, not just in New York.

In this *Antologye - mitvest-mayrev,* or *From Midwest to North Pacific: Anthology of Yiddish Verse*, Korman receives a section for his representative urban poems and is also given the special honor of contributing a poem in memory of the book's dedicatee, the recently deceased New York poet Moyshe Leyb Halpern. In his piece, printed in the introductory pages of the anthology, Korman presents a favorite notion: that the departed are not truly so, if their words be only read again, and their spirit remembered:

The first book of Ezra Korman's poetry, Shkie: lider fun elter un toyt *(1932), with its gold-shadowed tombstone on the cover.*

"Nit gloyb, az toyt iz moyshe leyb. / Es lebt zayn umru nokh, / zayn vilde kraft, / zayn dreyste tsung, / fun lid zayn shtarker shvung..." – "Don't believe that Moyshe Leyb is dead. / His restlessness lives, / his wild power, / his audacious tongue, / the powerful swing of his song...."[14]

The most fun poem, though, is Korman's cacophonous, scent-and-sound-

Author's list in Mitvest-mayrev *beside Chicago-artist Mitchell Siporin's depiction of the mind of the Yiddish poet (tradition as represented by the white goat beside the cradle; the march of modernity, with its smokestacks and skyscrapers).*[15]

filled pæan to spring in Detroit, *"Friling-dzhez"* ("Springtime Jazz"). The season's sudden clash of fragrance and color becomes, synæsthetically, jazz music, of the sort Korman might have heard drifting from the city's streets and speakeasies. Hastings Street, at this time the center of Jewish settlement, was becoming a key thoroughfare of Black Bottom, Detroit's African-American neighborhood. In "Springtime Jazz," the idioms of both groups harmonize in one multichromatic melody.

Korman would not publish another book of original poetry until the final year of his life. In the intervening years, he would continue to edit, forge connections between Yiddishist centers in the Midwest and Canada, and, in his usual fashion, spearhead innovative cultural projects, like his journal *Heftn - far literatur*, *kunst, un kultur (Notebooks: For Literature, Art, and Culture)* (1936–37), based in both Detroit and Montreal. Though Detroit abounded with *leyenkrayzn* (reading circles) and literary and dramatic groups, which boasted plenty of readers though not necessarily writers, he seems to have been one of the only people

Friling-dzhez,[16][17]
Di zun af tatsn shpilt a dzhez
in oysgebloytn himl.
In heler droysn shmekt mit bez,
mit frilingdik geviml.

Der friling shtelt di fidlen on
af der dinster strune
Un entfert himlshn trombon
tsezungen un tsezunikt.

Un s'klingt fun horn reyner mesh —
a tkie oysgetsoygn.
Un kuper fun dem zunen-dzhez
flamt uf in fayer-boygn.

Springtime Jazz
The sun beats jazz on its cymbals
in the blue-dyed sky.
With wild springtime rhythms,
lilac scents the bright outside.

Spring's tuning the slenderest strings
of all its violins
and answering heaven's trombone
in a song with sun therein.

The polished brass of horns drags
out a wah-wah shofar-blow.
And copper from the sunshine jazz
flames up in fire-bows.

Ezra Korman, outside of his home in Detroit, 1946.

in the city busily engaged in Yiddish literary production. This is testified to in the pages of his *Heftn*, billed as an international journal, with Detroit as one of its two centers. Korman is the only Detroit writer with any articles or poems printed in its short-lived run of four issues, the vast majority of the others coming from Montreal.

Meanwhile, Korman's articles, produced in Detroit and dispatched to the larger centers of Yiddish intellectual life, appear in myriad other journals, too. Though in a fairly remote corner of the Yiddish world, he was participating in the literary and linguistic debates of the day, writing to New York's YIVO-produced journal *Yidishe shprakh (The Yiddish Language*) in 1954 to argue against an article written in the previous issue by the editor Yudel Mark, which had attributed many Yiddish coinages to poet H. Leivick. In his response, Korman eruditely and colorfully antedates many of these words and phrases, finding them in earlier poems by Dovid Hofshteyn, or even in the speech of his own mother, Hodl. The verb *"shmokhn,"* which Mark had said Leivick uses creatively to mean "to glitter with cheap and worthless ornaments," Korman's mother, who came from the Ukrainian city of Berdychiv, had also used, though differently, to disparage someone who was smiling too often and artificially. *"Vos shmokhstu?"* he remembers her saying—"Why are you grinning?"[19]

And he continued to translate. In 1946, he self-published his translation, into Yiddish, of a selection of the revered Russian poet Sergei Yesenin's verse. The cover page of Korman's only book printed in Detroit gives his own address in the city, 18252 Steel Avenue.[20]

In 2016, I was engaged by Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield to look into their basement archive of books, moved in 1962 from the congregation's old building in Detroit to its current location and not looked upon since. I began to excavate the collection and separate out the Yiddish volumes, then catalogue and describe them.

Wading through the fascinating miscellany of the vault, past mountains of Goliath-sized soup pots and set dressing for what appears to have once been a Biblical masque (a wooden well painted to look like stone, a rocking billy goat), I was greeted by this marvel: Nearly every other Yiddish volume in the collection bears Ezra Korman's bookplate. Many of the tomes were personally inscribed to him by their authors, like Ida Maze of Montreal, who writes in a copy of her *Mother and Children's Poems* to her *"liber fraynt un liber*

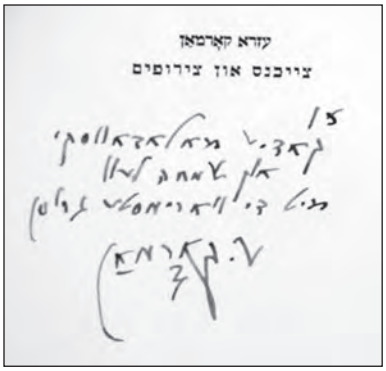
dikhter ezre korman" ("dear friend and dear poet Ezra Korman"), his wife Anna and their "dear child." There are heaps of periodicals, too, all with their address labels made out to Ezra Korman—among them, the New York communist magazine *Der hamer (The Hammer)*, Detroit's *Undzer vort*, the Midwestern literary journal *Shikago*, and *Undzer veg (Our Path)*, the organ of Holocaust survivors living in the British zone of postwar Germany, its first issue published in a displaced persons camp. In many of them, Korman's own contributions appear.

But literary pursuits were not the whole of his daily work. The *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur (Biographical Dictionary of Modern Yiddish Literature)* gives but a few sentences on his life; likewise, his biographical entry at the back of the Midwest anthology. Korman did not live by Yiddish cultural activism alone—who could? For most of his years in Detroit, he earned regular wages as the comptroller of Detroit's Jewish Home for the Aged, where Anna also worked as a nurse. The detail gives an added nuance, a daily lived experience, to Korman's litany of poems dwelling on the latter stages of the life cycle, or as the first book of his poetry is subtitled, *"Old Age and Death."* By the time of its publication, he would have already been working at the Jewish Old Folks Home (as the institution was then called) for five years.

Ezra Korman died just after his long-anticipated final volume of poetry, *Tseykhns un tseyrufim - lider un poemes (Signs and Symbols: Verse and Long Poems)* was published in 1959 by Tel Aviv's Farlag Y. L. Perets, one of the preeminent publishing houses for Yiddish literature after the war. Though translated as such on the inside cover for the purpose of a pleasing alliteration, *"tseyrufim"* are more than "symbols." They are, according to Kabbalistic tradition, combinations of Hebrew letters which, when arranged and rearranged, possess mystic powers of creation and recreation. The tone such a title strikes is unmistakable. To Korman, poems are not mere incandescence—they are incantation. They have the power not only to sum up, but also to summon.

This is an ample collection, including many never-before-published pieces. It was first previewed in the opening pages of his 1946 translation of Yesenin's poetry: *Greyt tsum druk: Tseykhns un tseyrufim - lider (Ready for Printing: Signs and Symbols - Poems)*, though this would not come to fruition until thirteen years later. The collection's gestation was protracted, and its birth momentous. Shortly after Korman's words saw the light of the world, he left it, as if he had built

The stamp of Korman's bookplate, which he kept in a brass box along with a lilliputian Russian-English dictionary and a bit of Native-American-inspired kitsch.


עזרא קאָרמאַן
צוויבנס אוּן צוּרופים

Korman's inscription to Kadia Molodovsky, written within months of his death, on the inside of his final book, Tseykhns un tseyrufim *(1959).*

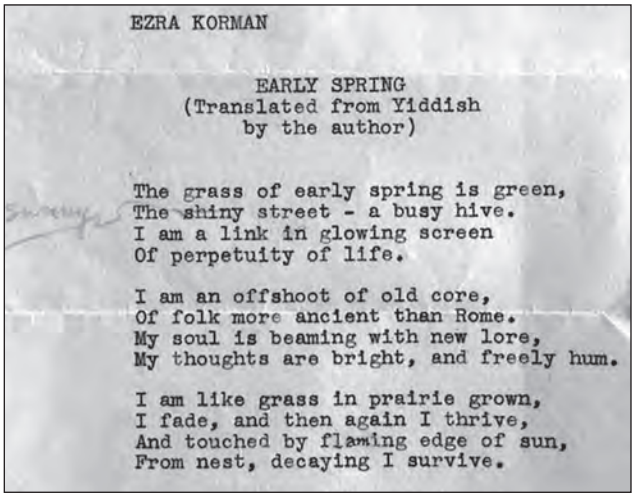
his monument and were satisfied with it. The Yiddish Book Center has in its collection a copy the poet enthusiastically inscribed to Kadia Molodowsky, whose work he had helped make famous some thirty years earlier in his anthology of women poets: *"Tsu kadye molodovski un simkhe lev mit di varimste grusn, e. korman"* ("To Kadia Molodowsky and Simkhe Lev [her husband] with the warmest greetings, E. Korman").

In this wide-ranging volume, the poet speaks in his quietly cadent, linguistically resourceful (particularly in the use of Hebraisms), deliberate but emotional manner on such topics as the ravages of the Holocaust in the lands of his birth, Elijah the Prophet and other figures of Jewish legend, intermarriage (in a provocative, ambiguous poem titled *"Perl un kreln"*—"Pearls and Beads"), his *"likhtiker turem"* ("luminous tower") that is the Yiddish language, and, of course, philosophies concerning life, death, and the life thereafter.

For all his rumination on this theme, at the end of his life Korman claimed to have gained no more than the slightest idea of its great mysteries. A sad thought, perhaps, but one we may comfort ourselves with—even minds and hearts tuned extra-sensitively to receive the waves of the world may not endure to grasp them. This he expresses in the piquantly epigrammatic *"A remez"* ("A Clue"), a poem worthy of being committed to memory:

A remez	**A Clue**
A lebn lang gezukht dem emes,	A whole life long in search of truth,
un gefunen nor a remez,	and I only found a clue,
nor a shpilter, a dermanung,	a mere splinter, a suspicion,
fun dem emes nor di anung.	of the truth — a premonition.

In his wake, Korman left a world of words. Nina, herself a journalist, is seeking to find her way in it, although she grew up barely aware of who Ezra had been. Still, she enjoyed a very warm relationship with her grandmother, Anna, who moved to Miami Beach to be near the family after Ezra's passing. Nina, lacking Yiddish, has read very few of Ezra's poems: only the few that I have translated, and this one, rendered into English by the poet himself. She found it folded inside her father Norman's wallet after his death.



EZRA KORMAN

EARLY SPRING
(Translated from Yiddish
by the author)

The grass of early spring is green,
The shiny street - a busy hive.
I am a link in glowing screen
Of perpetuity of life.

I am an offshoot of old core,
Of folk more ancient than Rome.
My soul is beaming with new lore,
My thoughts are bright, and freely hum.

I am like grass in prairie grown,
I fade, and then again I thrive,
And touched by flaming edge of sun,
From nest, decaying I survive.

Korman's translation of his poem "Early Spring," found in the wallet of his son Norman, who likely typed and added corrections to the text.

During our first chat, I translated another poem for Nina, one addressed to her own father, titled "*Tsu mayn yingl"* ("To My Boy"). In it, the speaker cautions his son, whose ear is pressed to the latest serial dramas rumbling forth from the radio, against growing up too quickly, and involving himself too soon in the cruel dramas of the world.

Nina owns artifacts of Ezra Korman's life: Among them are his books, and LP recordings of his memorial service in Chicago and of him reading some of his own poems, *"In tol"* ("In the Valley") and *"Yidn geyen keyn erets-yisroel"* ("Jews Are Going to the Land of Israel"). The contents of the latter, declaimed in a voice aged but still hearty, dramatic, and drawn-out with impressive sound, surprised Nina when she learned that it was a poem uncritical of Jews making their journey to the Holy Land after the war. She had heard from her family that Korman was an ardent Bundist, committed to the Diaspora. But this is a poem mournfully cognizant of the hell from which the Jews were escaping. These migrating Jews are the *"reshtlekh fun der yidisher eyrope, / shplitern fun khoreve shtet un shtetlekh"* ("remnants of Jewish Europe / splinters from destroyed cities and towns"). The poet is awed by their bravery and accepting of their dire need for a refuge, any refuge.

Nina also owns her grandfather's Yiddish typewriter, which her father had once wished to gift to the elderly Isaac Bashevis Singer, then living in nearby Surfside, Florida. Nina hotly refused, having been told that her grandfather had preferred the novels of I. J. Singer, the elder brother of Bashevis. But she also remembers her father once unexpectedly rising to the defense of Korman's legacy. In the late eighties, she had heard her father "talking on the phone, very loudly, almost yelling." At the end of the verbal "battle," he slammed down the

Ezra Korman and his son Norman, Detroit, 1948.

receiver. “Who were you talking to?” Nina asked Norman. “Irving Howe,” he answered, bitterly. Norman had been chiding the scholar for not including Korman in his recently published *Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse*. The great anthologist himself no longer had a place in the latest anthologies.

Of these objects and these memories, this semi-forgotten legacy of a once-renowned poet, Nina reflected:

“Part of the problem with being the only heir...of somebody like my grandfather is you have all this stuff...but you don’t really know what to do with it. ...Who will take it, this kind of orphaned stuff?”

Her grandfather’s poem *“Gezang nokh di niftorim”* (“Song for the Departed”),[21] printed shortly before he died, could serve for a bit of advice to her, and to all who wonder what to do with the legacies we have been left: Hold them dear. Even if we cannot read every word, or recognize every face in every yellowed photograph. Only uncover them, and keep them where they can be found again. Only peer inside them—the damp cellar, the torn valise, the wallet with a secret piece of paper inside, softened by time and touch—and they may reveal untold treasures, animating spirits that were thought lost forever. Only blow the dust off of a *tseyref*, and its letters may shift and glow in ways unimagined.

Nina Korman, 2015, and her grandfather Ezra Korman, 1948.

Gezang nokh di niftorim

Zey geyen af eybik, af eybik avek,
s'blaybt keyner nisht nokh di niftorim.
Nor shtoyb klaybt zikh on, vi der zamd
afn breg,
un leygt zikh gedikht af di kvorim.

Azoy oysgeleydikt es vert undzer tol,
der vint rayst di beymer, vi riter.
S'farshvindn di shefer fun groysn amol,
fun doyres un shteyger di hiter.

Ver vet, vi zey, kumen in blendiker shayn,
ver zeyer yerushe vet arbn?
Es zol vider blien der tol, er zol zayn,
dos lebn zol goyver-zayn s'shtarbn.

Tsu netsekh getsoygn zikh hot zeyer veg,
tsu shleymes, tsum eybikn kern.
Zey zenen gegangen foroys fun di teg,
durkh zamdn fun midber tsu shtern.

Haynt dekt zey di erd tsu bam
fintstern breg,
nor s'vert nisht alts ofer-voeyfer.
Fun erdishn shoym, fun unter ir dek
vet ufblien s'gold nokh fun oyfer.[22]

Song for the Departed

They are gone forever, here no more,
none who've departed remain.
Only dust is here, like sand on the shore
it settles thickly on their graves.

Thus our valley empties out,
wind felling trees like knights have
cut them.
The shepherds have vanished from
the great long-ago,
those keepers of clan and of custom.

Who like them will arrive, in some
dazzling light,
to bear the legacy they left?
Our valley would surely bloom
once more,
as life would overcome death.

The paths of the buried would reach
to forever,
to fullness and worth beyond hours,
advancing from their earthly days,
from sands of the desert to stars.

Today they are covered at the world's
dark edge,
but all that is ash does not as dust
reappear.
From under the dirt, from under its sludge,
there will rise the wealth of Ophir.

All translations are by Michael Yashinsky, unless otherwise noted. The author originally published on Korman on the website of the Yiddish Book Center, in an article appearing June 2016 and titled "The Signs and Symbols of Ezra Korman: Detroit's Soulful Yiddish Poet." The present article was adapted therefrom, and expanded with new research undertaken by the author.

AUTHOR

Michael Yashinsky is lecturer in Yiddish at the University of Michigan. He was born in Detroit, the grandchild of Rubin Weiss and Elizabeth Elkin Weiss z"l*, career actors in the city and proud members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. After graduating from Harvard with a degree in Modern European History and Literature, he directed and assistant directed operas at Michigan Opera Theatre. Later he worked at the Yiddish Book Center, where he co-authored a new Yiddish textbook, and first began researching Korman. Yashinsky has recently performed with the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene in the Yiddish-language* Fiddler on the Roof, *directed by Joel Grey, and in the title role of the classic operetta* Di kishef-makherin (The Sorceress).

ENDNOTES

[1]Sol Liptzin, *A History of Yiddish Literature* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1985), 461.
[2]"Korman, Ezra" in *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur,* ed. Shmuel Niger and Yankev Shatski (New York: Congress for Yiddish Culture, 1981), 137–38.
[3]"Ezra Korman, Yiddish Poet, Dies in Detroit; Edited Anthologies," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin*, October 27, 1959, 4.
[4]Robert A. Rockway, *The Jews of Detroit: From the Beginning, 1762–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 51-52.
[5]Philip J. Gilbert, *Michigan Jewish History* 17, no. 1 (July 1977): 11-16.
[6]Ezra Korman, ed., *Yidishe dikhterins: antologye* (Chicago: L. M. Shteyn, 1928).
[7]Heinrich Heine, *Lider*, trans. Ezra Korman (Kiev: Kunst-Farlag, 1917).
[8]"Korman, Ezra" in *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*.
[9]Ezra Korman, ed., *In fayerdikn doyer: zamlung fun revolutsyonerer lirik in der nayer yidisher dikhtung* (Kiev: Melukhe Farlag, 1921).
[10]Ezra Korman, ed., *Brenendike brikn: antologye fun revolutsyonerer lirik in der nayer yidisher dikhtung fun ukraine* (Berlin: Yidisher Literarisher Farlag, 1923).
[11]Herman Heijermans, *Farloyrene hofenung: pyese fun holendishn fisher-lebn in fir aktn)*, trans. Ezra Korman (Warsaw: Der Turem, 1922).
[12]L. G. Deĭch, *Yidn in der rusisher revolutsye: zikhroynes,* trans. Ezra Korman (Berlin: [s.n.], 1924).
[13]Ezra Korman, *Shkie: lider fun elter un toyt* (Chicago: L. M. Shteyn, 1932), 7.
[14]Ezra Korman, *"Nit gloyb az toyt is moyshe leyb,"* in *Antologye mitvest mayrev*, xv.
[15]Mitchell Siporin, frontispiece in *Antologye mitvest-mayrev*, 1932–1933, eds. Mates Daytsh, Ben Sholem, and Shloyme Shvarts (Chicago: L. M. Shteyn, 1933), V.
[16]Ezra Korman, *"Friling-dzhez," in Antologye mitvest-mayrev, 153.*
[17]*Ezra Korman, "Friling-dzhez,"* in *Tseykhns un tseyrufim* (Tel Aviv: Farlag Y. L. Perets, 1959), 79. Most of the Yiddish original is taken from *Mitvest-mayrev*, with the last verse appearing as it did in *Tseykhns* un *tseyrufim*.
[18]Heftn: *fertlyorike shrift far literatur, kunst, un kultur-inyonim - dershaynt in detroyt, mayrev-shtatn un montreal, kanade,* vols. 1-2 (Detroit and Montreal: 1936–1937), eds. Ezra Korman and N. J. Gotlib. All four issues held at the New York Public Library.
[19]Ezra Korman, *"Bamerkungen tsu 'vortshafung in h. leyviks lider,'" Yidishe shprakh XIV*, no. 2 (April–June 1954): 57.
[20]Sergei Yesenin, *Lider un poemes*, trans. Ezra Korman (Detroit: Published by the translator, 1946), 4.
[21]Ezra Korman, *"A remez,"* in *Tseykhns un tseyrufim*, 205.
[22]Ezra Korman, *"A remez,"* in *Tseykhns un tseyrufim*, 105.

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THE CENTRAL UPPER PENINSULA AND NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

THE SAM M. COHODAS PAPERS

In 1893, Aaron Cohodas joined his brother-in-law, Sam Weksler, in Marinette, Wisconsin, after immigrating from Kobylnik, Russia (now Narach, Poland). Aaron had eight children born in Russia (and one born later in the U.S.). He had eked out a living buying produce from nearby farms and then selling it at the Vilna market. Aaron Cohodas arrived in the U.S. on his own, and eventually brought his entire family to Wisconsin. He died in 1904, leaving his widow, Eva, to care for the family.

Two of the Cohodas children, brothers Sam and Harry, came to Houghton, Michigan, in 1915, where they set up Cohodas Brothers Fruit Company, a wholesale and retail produce business. It became the third largest produce company in the United States.

In 1934, Sam Cohodas opened his first bank, Michigan Financial Corporation, in Ishpeming. The firm grew to eight banks and branches, and he remained chairman of the board until the age of ninety. “Mr. Sam,” as his friends called him, was instrumental in the establishment of Bell Memorial Hospital in Ishpeming, and he was involved in many charitable activities in Michigan and Israel. He died in 1988 at the age of ninety-two.

We want you to know how much your message meant to us. There is much to do and we count on your support and friendship in our efforts to make that new beginning we all desire. With our heartfelt appreciation and best wishes,

Nancy and Ronald Reagan

Within the Sam Cohodas collection are a number of thank-you notes from political officials, including U.S. presidents. This note from President Ronald Reagan was sent circa 1987.

The Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives, located in Marquette, Michigan, maintains the Sam M. Cohodas papers (MSS-18). This collection contains papers, photographs, and audiovisual records dating from 1903 to 1988. Arranged in scrapbooks by and for Sam Cohodas, the collection documents his life and accomplishments. The collection is open to public viewing, and the collection finding aid can be found online at http://aspace.nmu.edu:8081/repositories/3/resources/288. For more information, email archives@nmu.edu or call 906-227-1225.

- Emily Wros, senior history major, Northern Michigan University

Early photographs of Sam Cohodas and some of his family: (from left) his mother Eva, ca. 1930; his father Aaron, ca. 1900; one of his older brothers, Hymie, with unknown child, ca. 1900s; Sam Cohodas in Marinette, Wisconsin, 1917.

Sam Cohodas visited Israel several times and was a strong supporter of Hebrew University, which in 1974 honored him by naming the Sam Cohodas Chair in Agricultural Economics at the Faculty of Agriculture. Photo 1974.

Sam Cohodas, 1974.

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The Cohodas building in Ishpeming, ca. 1930s.

(Above) Product labels from the Elberta Packing Company, 1940.

(Right) A fruit packer in the Cohodas Brothers Fruit Company, Elberta plant, ca. 1940s.

ARCHIVED 2018 TREASURES

(Left) The Cohodas family began their success in America as fruit vendors and packers. (Clockwise from top) Sam's uncle Morris Cohodas, Sam Cohodas, another produce businessman identified as "Louis C.," and Harry Cohodas, Marquette County, 1932.

All photos courtesy of the Sam M. Cohodas papers, MSS-018, Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives, Northern Michigan University.

HISTORIC NEWS OF NOTE FROM AROUND THE STATE

THE B'NAI DAVID CEMETERY GAINS HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Not long after his son-in-law moved to Michigan in the late1990s, Nison Sabin took the younger man to B'nai David Cemetery to visit the grave of Nison's grandmother. The cemetery, located on a small hill, on Van Dyke near Detroit City Airport in what was then Hamtramck, was surrounded by blight, though the city block that housed it stood fenced in and perched safely on a hill. Few people still made the trip to visit the cemetery, which opened its gates only once between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and again on Mother's Day.

Headstone at B'nai David Cemetery

Esther Malka Shibovich, Nison's grandmother, had died in the 1918 influenza pandemic at the age of thirty-eight. Her oldest daughter, only sixteen and newly married, became the surrogate mother to her three younger siblings. One of these children, Benny Shibovich (later changed to Sabin), would be Nison's father. Benny's mother's death had a lifelong effect on him, and even though he was only a child when she died, he visited her grave often and always made sure it was well cared for.

After their father's example, Nison and his brother Mitchell continued to tend to their grandmother's grave. They wanted their children, and eventually their grandchildren, to know the story of their heroic grandmother who died caring for friends and family during one of the deadliest disease outbreaks the world had seen.

B'nai David Cemetery

The Beth David Cemetery was founded in 1897 and incorporated in 1903 by the founders of Beth David Synagogue, also known as the Russische Shul. The congregants did not live in the neighborhood (and neither did any other Jews),

but the land was inexpensive and the site was on the streetcar line, making it convenient to the Hastings Street neighborhood. The synagogue was large and prosperous from its inception in 1892 until the Great Depression, when it fell on hard times and was forced to reorganize. Beth David Synagogue and the cemetery were then renamed B'nai David, and the community began to rebuild.

In 1958, following the Jewish community's migration to Detroit's northern suburbs, B'nai David constructed a new building on Southfield Road in the city of Southfield. The cemetery remained active during this period as the congregants aged. But by the late 1990s, the congregation had dwindled dramatically and its Southfield building was sold. For a time, the remaining congregants rented office space in West Bloomfield, but eventually they stopped gathering entirely.

The cemetery had a few burials in the 1990s and only one or two in the 2000s. Funds were tight, but a handful of dedicated B'nai David members did their best to maintain the grounds. The surrounding neighborhood had lost much of its residential and commercial population and was one of the most dangerous areas in Detroit. The caretaker's house had become a haven for drug dealers and prostitutes and was eventually razed. Still, the cemetery continued to open its gates twice a year for those wanting to visit loved ones, but groundskeeping became an onerous and costly task for the aging few who tried to maintain the 1.6-acre property containing more than 1,400 graves.

In 2013, Nison recruited his own grandchildren to visit Esther Shibovitz's grave. The slow decline of the property had accelerated. Grass was shoulder-high, and trash and fallen tree limbs were abundant. Saddened by what they saw, family member Laurie Brown Sabin suggested to her niece, Eva Goldman, who would soon become a bat mitzvah, that she consider organizing a cemetery clean-up as her mitzvah project. Eva liked the idea, and convinced more than twenty-five members of the extended family to come to the cemetery on a Sunday armed with lawn mowers, chainsaws, weed wackers, and rakes.

In 2013, Eva Goldman, about to become a bat mitzvah, organized a group of family members, volunteers, and friends to clean up the long-neglected B'nai David Cemetery.

While the day's effort made only a small dent in the mess, Eva's enthusiasm was contagious, and a movement was born. Word spread and people took notice. Ralph Zuckman of Shaarey Zedek's Clover Hill Park Cemetery became the group's Jewish-cemetery maven, and Ben Falik of Repair the World hopped on board to help organize the first of many events at the cemetery. A community clean-up was scheduled, a board of directors was formed, and the 501c3 Friends of B'nai David Cemetery was put in place.

Historic Designation

The first community cleanup was a huge success with nearly two hundred participants. Falik and his crew collected nine hundred illegally dumped tires on the street adjacent to the cemetery and paid to have them recycled. Arnold Collens of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan took pictures, Detroit Chabad's Rabbi Pinson was spotted with a chainsaw, Michael Madden brought his grandchildren, and the great-grandson of Ezekiel Aishishkin, the synagogue's first rabbi, stopped by. The community's ancestors were honored and the long overdue respect their souls deserved was gracefully bestowed.

Motivated by the event's success, the group began to host more cleanup events with the help of Jewish Family Services and NEXTGen Detroit. Funds were raised to have the grass cut on a regular basis and to remove graffiti from the outer walls. Anyone may now visit between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, on Mother's Day, or on any day in between.

One day, Scott Benson, Detroit city councilman for the area, was invited to visit the cemetery. Hosted by David Goldman, Eva's father and founder of the nonprofit, Benson stopped and said, "Wait—this is called B'nai David? Is that the same B'nai David as the synagogue building on Elmhurst we just voted to make a historic district?" This fortuitous visit began the process of establishing the cemetery as a historic district. Finalized about a year and a half later, in October 2016, the designation protects the grounds from future development and brings positive public recognition to the restoration efforts.

In the process, the cemetery has become a dynamic urban meeting place for Jewish learning. Synagogue youth groups come to learn about Jewish burial customs and Detroit Jewish history. Three *ganiza* (the ritual required to respectfully destroy Jewish prayer books) ceremonies for the Isaac M. Agree Downtown Synagogue have been conducted there. A group of young adults from Washington, D.C., toured the cemetery with City Councilman Benson and fellow Detroit City Council members. Sarah Hulett, a reporter from Michigan Public Radio, produced a story for the station. B'nai David has even been a highlighted stop on Wheelhouse Detroit's East Side Cemeteries Bicycle Tour.

Geneology tools and digital archives are used to help the many persons who call and email in search of their relatives' burial spots. Census documents, marriage and death certificates, and obituaries can be printed for those craving more information about their relatives. After decades of absence, individuals and families from across the country have been able to find and visit the graves of loved ones buried at B'nai David.

Enthusiastic volunteers come from both inside and outside the Jewish community: Muslim students from the Wayne State University School of Social Work, African-American neighbors of the cemetery, and urban activists wanting to do their part to make Detroit a better place have all pitched in to help. But while Friends of B'nai David Cemetery has been strengthened by everyone's assistance and from the generous donations of numerous individuals and groups including the David-Horodok Organization and the Ferber Family Foundation, a sustainable funding model for the cemetery in perpetuity has yet to be secured.

This challenge is not unique to B'nai David Cemetery. Several communities, through their local Jewish federations and private foundations, have established funds for local Jewish cemeteries with the understanding that even those cemeteries that are financially secure today may not remain so tomorrow. Friends of B'nai David Cemetery hopes that Detroit's vibrant and forward-thinking Jewish community will follow the example of areas such as Cleveland, Toledo, Metro-West New Jersey, and the many others that have proactively planned for the day when their local cemeteries need financial help. For now, Friends of B'nai David continues to work diligently to preserve the dignity of those buried at B'nai David and to provide unfettered access to family and friends wishing to pay their respects to those who came before. May their souls be bound up as a blessing.

JHSM is grateful to David Goldman for his assistance in preparing this article.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE *DETROIT JEWISH NEWS*: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

It's been a little over seventy-five years since the founding of the *Detroit Jewish News,* which we've come to know as the town crier of our community.

Town crier? Yes, if we're talking about the weekly that arrives every Thursday or Friday to tell our community what's going on in the Jewish world.

The *JN* was born during a time of mixed promise. In 1942, Philip Slomovitz, by then an accomplished journalist whose career had included positions at the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Jewish Chronicle*, launched the paper in order to reach "15,000 Jewish Families In Detroit, 60,000 Individuals Plus 700 Families In Flint, 700 Families In Grand Rapids and Hundreds of Others In Pontiac, Lansing, Saginaw, Bay City, Mt. Clemens, Ann Arbor and Elsewhere in Michigan," according to a *Jewish News* editorial published in the inaugural edition.

Slomovitz's vision and determination were what made the *Detroit Jewish News* happen. He was backed by the support of several dozen of our most influential community and spiritual leaders, including John D. Dingell Sr., who was the U.S. Congressman for Michigan's 15th District from 1933 to 1955; Rabbi Steven Wise, who served as president of the American Jewish Congress and World Jewish Congress; Fred Butzel, a noted philanthropist and attorney; Rabbi Morris Adler of Congregation Shaarey Zedek; Bernard Isaacs, superintendent of United Hebrew Schools; Morris Schaver, president of the Detroit

THE JEWISH NEWS

A Weekly Review of Jewish Events

DETROIT'S NEW JEWISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER WILL PUBLISH ITS FIRST ISSUE ON MARCH 27, 1942

Local and National Leaders Greet Appearance of Community Sponsored Jewish News

"A Well Published Jewish Paper In Detroit Is Long Overdue." Fred M. Butzel

"Many Opportunities for a Paper . . . to Accomplish Much Good for the Jewish Community." Henry Wineman

"Philip Slomovitz Writes Intelligently, Readably and Effectively." Dr. Stephen S. Wise

PLUS COMPLETE LOCAL JEWISH NEWS COVERAGE

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

The inaugural issue of The Jewish News*, published on March 27, 1942. The edition featured many letters of congratulations from community and religious leaders and, on the front page, a photo of Sergt. Henry "Hank" Greenberg, the Detroit Tigers baseball great who had joined the U.S. Air Force during WWII. Courtesy of the William Davidson Digital Archive of Detroit Jewish History.*

Labor Committee for Palestine; and Henry Wineman, a businessman and community leader. In a letter published in the first issue, Wineman wrote, "I look forward with great interest to the publication of the *Jewish News* under your guidance and direction. With an honest editorial policy, and a genuine desire to publish all the news fairly, I am sure the *News* will receive a hearty response from the Jewish community of Detroit."

Now, seventy-five years later, his promise to "Give Our People the Latest News and Historical Data Concerning the Jews All Over the World" continues. In the inaugural issue, published during the waning years of a horrendous war and the early years of a final march toward the establishment of a Jewish state, Slomovitz stated his mission to "Help Build Up the Morale of the Jews in This War Torn World by Fostering That Spirit of Brotherhood Which Will Assure Amity and Good Will Among All Faiths of the United States, the World's Greatest Nation."

Wartime and the horrors of the Holocaust put a new urgency to his promise. But on November 28, 1947, Slomovitz's weekly column, Purely Commentary, shared a hopeful message about the United Nations: "Jewish statelessness is nearing its end . . . We have come to the end of debates and maybe reached the stage of international effort to restore the nationhood of Israel in Eretz Israel." On later trips to Israel, Slomovitz reported on and urged support for the young state and its people. In 1960, his coverage of the Adolph Eichmann trial was extensive, as he filed reports via telex directly from the Jerusalem courthouse.

To recap a little of the personal history of "*JN*'s founding father," the late Alan Hurvitz wrote about how the fourteen-year-old immigrant from Russia went on to study journalism at the University of Michigan. Later, after nearly two decades as editor at the *Detroit Jewish Chronicle*, Slomovitz's decision to begin his own paper attracted not only the endorsement but also the financial backing of Detroit's most important and influential Jewish community leaders.

Hurvitz's historical perspective, which appeared in the seventy-fifth anniversary issue of the *Detroit Jewish News* on July 18, 2017, continued: "By 1942, Slomovitz had an established reputation in the American Jewish community as an activist and as a newspaper editor. He was called one of the leading editors of the English-Jewish press. He was a leading figure in the Zionist movement and a crusader in the fight against anti-Semitism. His activism and reputation allowed him to establish relationships with any number of local and national Jewish communal leaders and important political figures...."

Slomovitz was short and slight, but a powerful force for good—sometimes prickly, but always devoted to his community, his people, and Israel. He was a rare combination of pragmatism and idealism and his editorials often hit the

Philip Slomovitz (left) was the first recipient of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's Leonard N. Simons History Award in 1991, for his great understanding of the significance of history. He is seated with Leonard N. Simons in 1991.

proverbial nail on the head. Among them was his unrelenting castigation of Father Charles Coughlin and the anti-Semitic sheet "Social Justice" that, thanks in large part to Slomovitz, eventually went into the dustpan of history. Slomovitz's columns, typed on his clattering typewriter, tackled many issues and ran the gamut, despite his eventually deteriorating vision, and he never wavered in his support of Israel.

In 1984, Slomovitz sold the paper to *Baltimore Jewish News* publisher Charles A. Buerger, who deployed Arthur Horwitz to Detroit to work on the paper. Horwitz went on to become publisher, and ultimately purchased the publishing entity. Horwitz paid tribute to his predecessor in the *JN's* seventy-fifth anniversary edition:

"By the time we met in 1986, he was editor emeritus of the *Jewish News* and still writing his weekly Purely Commentary column. Though approaching ninety and legally blind, he was brought to the office every day." Percy Kaplan, the former executive director of the Jewish National Fund, would read to Slomovitz, and "Phil would listen. Occasionally, they would argue. And then... Phil would painstakingly peck out his column. And he'd do it again the next week...and the next."

– *Charlotte Dubin*

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE: 90 YEARS OF COMPASSION

Does it feel as though Jewish Family Service (JFS) has been a mainstay of Detroit's Jewish community since before one could remember? That's because the agency has, in fact, been around far longer than most of us. JFS was officially established in 1928 – ninety years ago this year – but its roots go back even further.

Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit is a non-sectarian, nonprofit health- and social-services organization that helps individuals and families meet life's challenges. Each year, JFS touches the lives of 14,000 people of all ages, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds through a variety of programs centered around older adults, mental health and wellness, and safety-net services. The vast range of programs includes geriatric-care management and transportation services for seniors, counseling services for individuals and families, and support services in the form of basic-needs assistance, public-benefits enrollment, and more.

Residents lighting Chanukah menorot, circa 1960.

Links to Detroit's Earliest Jewish Agencies

The altruistic beginnings of JFS date back nearly 130 years to organizations such as the Relief Society of Temple Beth El, the Hebrew Ladies Sewing Society, the Jewish Relief Society, and the Self-Help Circle. These groups exemplified the traditional Jewish concept of helping the poor, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. Their concern went beyond emergency assistance, including a focus on education, Americanization, housing, and other issues.

To avoid duplication of services, the groups came together in 1889 as the United Jewish Charities, with the primary function of helping the needy with cash assistance, clothing, household goods, and small loans to establish and maintain small businesses. Services for children were provided by the department informally referred to as the children's bureau, which established a kindergarten and nursery school. Influenced by the White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children in 1909, a children's foster home was soon established.

Under the umbrella of the United Jewish Charities, other relief-department services included an employment bureau, medical clinic, and educational and recreation services with an emphasis on Americanization. The problems dealt with most frequently were tuberculosis, desertion, sickness, divorce, and unemployment.

In 1928, the newly incorporated Jewish Social Service Bureau—the forerunner of today's JFS—took over the relief department and children's bureau of the United Jewish Charities with the goal of promoting "family welfare and welfare of children among the Jewish people of Detroit and environs."

A man and young girl are seen on the steps of the original JFS building at 5737 Second Avenue in Detroit.

In the 1930s, the agency began providing counseling and financial-assistance services, and placing homemakers in homes with an ill, absent, or incapacitated mother. The first program of its kind in the state, and one of the first in the country, it was created to keep children in their homes. Eventually, it grew to serve older adults, helping many avoid being placed in nursing homes.

In the 1950s, the organization began to define many of the specific services offered today. In 1952, the Department of Services for the Aged was formed and, over the ensuing decade, JFS processed applications for the Jewish

Home for Aged (the forerunner of Jewish Senior Life), initiated Kosher Meals on Wheels as a collaborative project with the National Council of Jewish Women and Jewish Federation Apartments, and established the Group Apartments for the Elderly – an endowed program with congregate housing and support services.

In 1957, the name was changed to Jewish Family and Children's Service to reflect the increased focus on child-welfare services. In 1967, it was changed to its current name, Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit.

The 1970s and 1980s saw an increased focus on counseling services, which have been offered to the community on a sliding-scale-fee basis since 1953. In 1975, JFS was approved as an outpatient psychiatric clinic with services reimbursable by Blue Cross and other insurance carriers. Training was undertaken to develop expertise in a variety of specialty group therapies for adults, children, and families with children who had been physically or sexually abused.

The expansion into non-sectarian services began in 1983 when the organization received a grant for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and a grant from Area Agency on Aging 1-B for counseling and homemaker services. These grants allowed JFS to leverage non-sectarian funding sources to benefit the Jewish community while also serving the broader community.

Celebrating Ninety Years

The ninetieth anniversary was celebrated on May 30, 2018, at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, featuring keynote speaker Jeannette Walls, author of *The Glass Castle*. More than seven hundred community members attended.

Walls grew up in extreme poverty; her family foraged for food and lived in homes without heat. She experienced many difficulties as a result of her parents' alcoholism and mental illness. Her story is one of resilience and triumph over life's greatest challenges. It's easy to understand why JFS chose Walls as the annual Reva Stocker speaker for their anniversary event. (Reva Stocker, the late community advocate, endowed JFS in 1994 to provide educational programs on issues affecting families.)

All the challenges faced by Walls's family—food insecurity, affordable housing, financial struggles, addiction, and mental illness—are the very challenges that Jewish Family Service addresses every day. One can't help but wonder how Walls's story would have been different had her family been able to turn to JFS.

How might other stories have differed had JFS not been here for the past ninety years? What might have happened to the seven thousand refugees fleeing the former Soviet Union without JFS to help with resettlement? To the families who struggled during the economic downturn? Or to the forty-five-year-old who never thought he'd experience hardship, but needed help paying a bill so he could get back on track? Who would have supported the mother looking for assistance for her troubled teen?

Fortunately, those are questions we don't need to answer. As long as there are older adults needing help to safely age in place, families coping with life's transitions, and individuals experiencing financial difficulties, Jewish Family Service will continue to serve, meeting the needs of our community. It is this truism that drives Jewish Family Service to assist whoever might walk through its door.

– Debbie Feit, Communications Manager, Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit

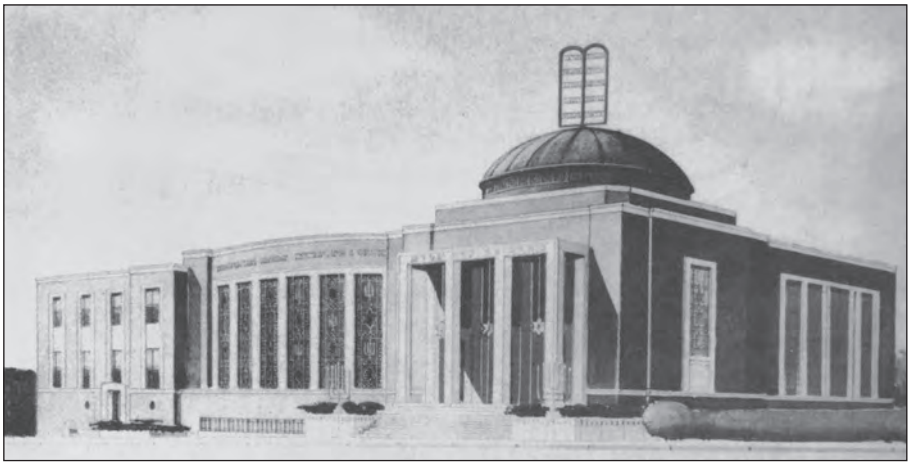
Historical Tidbits

2008: On April 7, Samuel Frankel died at the age of ninety-four. Frankel parlayed a wholesale retail business into a real-estate empire and became one of Michigan's most beloved Jewish philanthropists. He and his wife Jean championed numerous organizations and causes, among them the Frankel Jewish Academy, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the University of Michigan, Adat Shalom Synagogue, and Congregation Shir Tikvah.

1938: Seymour Tilchin purchased a parcel of farmland and 3,200 feet of waterfront on Walloon Lake, near Boyne City, and founded Camp Walloon for Boys. He later opened a girls' camp but sold both businesses in 1941 to Jack Mann.

ADAT SHALOM SYNAGOGUE MARKS ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

In October 2018, Adat Shalom Synagogue celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. Born during the era of the Holocaust, a time marked by the dedicated service and sacrifice of Jewish-American soldiers in World War II, Adat Shalom carried forward the American Dream, underscoring the Jewish contribution to American democracy and cultural life and enhancing that contribution through individual and group talent.



Adas Shalom Synagogue, now Adat Shalom Synagogue, dates to 1943, when the congregation was founded on Curtis Avenue in Northwest Detroit.

In 1943, a group of around fifty-two Jewish residents created the nucleus of a small, neighborhood congregation. They applied to the state of Michigan for a charter under the name "Northwest Hebrew Congregation" with intentions to serve the Jewish community in Northwest Detroit. Traditional High Holiday services were conducted in 1944 in a building on Livernois near Seven Mile Road by a guest rabbi and cantor. Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the first election of officers took place, and by resolution of the new board of trustees and a decision of the general membership, the congregation joined the United Synagogue of America in February 1945, thus officially identifying with the Conservative movement.

Membership grew dramatically, and the need for permanent quarters became evident. In the fall of 1945, under a huge tent, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Curtis Avenue for the initial wing of the synagogue. By September 1946, the Northwest Hebrew Congregation, with four hundred member families, had decidedly outgrown the initial building. Plans were made

The Curtis Avenue building still stands and its present-day owner, the Bailey Cathedral Church of God, has maintained much of the building's original Jewish iconography. Pictured here is a portion of a ceiling mural with a Jewish star at its center. Photo by Arnold Collens.

to enlarge the building and establish a branch of the United Hebrew Schools, a unique union of a communal Hebrew school and a local synagogue. The synagogue purchased a twenty-five-acre cemetery on Six Mile Road near Middlebelt in Livonia, now called Adat Shalom Memorial Park.

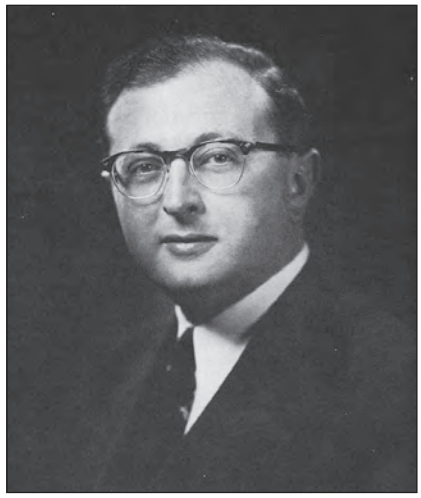
In August 1946, Rabbi Jacob E. Segal was engaged as the synagogue's first spiritual leader. As the congregation grew, attention focused on the beauty of the worship service and cultural expression of the Jewish people. Pavel Slavensky became the first permanent cantor, succeeded in 1949 by Cantor Nicholas Fenakel, who served for twenty-six years. Along with an active sisterhood and men's club, an Institute of Jewish Studies was formed. The religious school blossomed, and the first confirmation took place in 1948. In June 1951, after much study and research, a general meeting was held to select a new name for the congregation, more in keeping with a spiritual institution. Adas Shalom, "congregation of peace," was the popular choice.

A Beehive of Activity

Born during the struggle for Israel's existence and statehood, Adas Shalom became identified with the purchase of Israel Bonds, protest on behalf of Soviet Jewry, and relief for oppressed Jewish communities—underwriting study programs in Israel and support of the Conservative movement in Israel. Adas Shalom, an anchor of the Jewish neighborhood, became a leader among congregations in the support of Israel.

Amid the excitement of a new sanctuary dedicated in the spring of 1952, Rabbi Segal tirelessly pursued another dream: to afford Jewish children the opportunity for a deep, informed Jewish day-school education. In 1958, Hillel Day School came into being. With the aid of equally compelled and dedicated congregants, Adas Shalom and Hillel began a relationship that would grow ever closer and productive in the following decades.

Cantor Larry Vieder, z"l



Rabbi Jacob E. Segal, z"l

Cantor Larry Vieder arrived in 1960 and undertook a unique program of youth involvement in the adult worship services. In those years, the groundwork was laid within the congregation for many future Jewish communal leaders. Synagogue membership had reached its capacity at the Curtis building, which was now "bursting at the seams."

Since most of the congregation's families had relocated to the suburbs, a bold proposal to build a new synagogue complex on Middlebelt Road at Thirteen Mile in Farmington Hills was accepted. At the same time, in keeping with the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew in Israel and the new modern Hebrew used during services, Adas Shalom became Adat Shalom. A magnificent new edifice was constructed, incorporating echoes of the then-new Israel Museum in Jerusalem, with its indoor-outdoor ambience. Impressive ceremonies were held marking the end of the Curtis-building era and bringing the Torah scrolls to the new location in 1972.

Seymour Rosenbloom, who joined the synagogue as assistant rabbi in 1972, came to the aid of Rabbi Segal during Segal's final illness in 1975. Rosenbloom was named rabbi of the congregation in 1975, and he guided it with detailed concern and firm decision through the growing pains of life in the suburbs until he departed for Philadelphia three years later.

Efry Spectre assumed his duties as rabbi of Adat Shalom on Sukkot of 1978. A dramatic Ner Tamid campaign successfully ended crippling bank obligations, and the synagogue was poised to grow dramatically. Executive director Alan Yost headed the administrative department as membership totals climbed and new programs were developed. Elliot Pachter was hired as assistant rabbi in 1987 and served the synagogue for five years. In the summer of 1991, the congregation welcomed Cantor Howard Glantz, who succeeded

(left to right) Cantor Nicholas Fenakel, Adat Shalom past president Julius Allen, unknown, Rabbi Jacob Segal, z"l

Cantor Vieder in 1993. The following fall, Rabbi Daniel Nevins joined the clergy as the *mara d'atra*, serving until he was named dean of the Rabbinical School of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 2007.

Merger with Beth Achim

In June 1998, members of Congregation Beth Achim overwhelmingly approved a merger with Adat Shalom Synagogue, along with the sale of its Southfield building to the United Jewish Foundation. Following merger negotiations, the Beth Achim congregational vote was the last in a series of official steps leading to the two congregations becoming one and worshipping together in Farmington Hills by the 5759 High Holy Days.

Beth Achim Rabbi Herbert Yoskowitz joined the Adat Shalom clergy at that time, becoming rabbi emeritus in 2018. In the summer of 2004, Rabbi Rachel Shere joined the clergy. Frank Lanzkron-Tamarazo also served as cantor. In July 2008, the congregation welcomed *mara d'atra* Rabbi Aaron Bergman, followed by Hazzan Daniel Gross in 2009.

Celebrations for the seventy-fifth anniversary were held during the weekend of October 26-29, 2018. Throughout the diamond anniversary year, members will remember their past and at the same time ensure the continuity of Adat Shalom for generations to come.

POETRY AND MEMOIR:
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN

Creative Expressions

In Creative Expressions we strive to bring you a sense of history through personal essays and poetry. Isak Dinesen, born Karen Dinesen, the author of Out of Africa*, wrote, "All sorrows can be borne if you put them in a story or tell a story about them." She also said, simply, "To be a person is to have a story to tell."*

"Detroit to Dachau: Tenacious Reva Gornbein Recounts Her Army Life in Postwar Germany" tells the story of Reva Gornbein, who was born in Detroit in 1920. Richard Leland, a founding member and former Jewish Historical Society of Michigan board member, introduces us to this extraordinary woman who spent three years in service as a GI during WWII. Her own accounts of transporting Hitler's secretary, and of seeing Dachau just after liberation and again years later, reveal a smart and, as Leland puts it, "tenacious woman."

A stirring poem, written by Michigan poet Alinda Dickinson Wasner, takes place at Grinnell Brothers Music House, which has its own history in both Pontiac and Detroit. It is a wonderfully condensed story of unrequited love between a "shiksa" and a Jewish pharmacist who comes into the store. Wasner manages to invoke a bygone era and a strong woman, a survivor of her own difficult circumstances.

We'd like to thank Richard Leland and Alinda Wasner for contributing such fine pieces for this edition. As always, we invite readers to submit personal essays or poems for our Creative Expressions section. If interested, please email us at info@michjewishhistory.org or call the JHSM office at 248-432-5517.

Joy Gaines-Friedler
Editor, Creative Expressions

DETROIT TO DACHAU:
TENACIOUS REVA GORNBEIN RECOUNTS HER ARMY LIFE IN POSTWAR GERMANY

Introduction by Richard Leland

In 2017, Reva Gornbein decided to take a trip to Antarctica. In order for her to participate in this extremely challenging journey, she needed her doctor's permission. When Reva showed her cardiologist the release forms for the trip, his response was a resounding "Where do I sign?"

Reva Gornbein joined the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps in 1943.

You may be wondering what is so unusual about someone going on a rugged expedition to Antarctica. Well, at the time of the trip, Reva, a World War II veteran who spent three years in service as a GI during and after the war, was ninety-seven years old. Her accomplishment as an Antartica explorer is but one example of the remarkable life of this Jewish woman. Reva Gornbein was born in a house on Alfred Street in Detroit on Sept. 10, 1920. She was the oldest of three children born to Louis Stern, who had immigrated from Poland, and Minny Stern, who had immigrated from Russia.

Her sister Ann died at eighty-five, and her brother, Dr. Harry Stern, was a distinguished professor of chemical and nuclear engineering at Washington State University. His difficult road to renown was profiled in "One Face of Anti-Semitism: The Story of Harry Stern, an Eminent Scientist," in Vol. 44 (Fall 2004) of *Michigan Jewish History.*

Reva graduated from Detroit's Central High School in 1938 and went to work in the law offices of Dacey, Green and Atler. She married a fellow WWII soldier and the couple had one son, Michael Stetten. She later married Abe Gornbein, who had a son, Henry.

When Reva was in her forties, she decided to go to college to become an educator. She received her bachelor's degree from Oakland University in 1968, and later a master of education degree in remedial reading from Wayne State University. She began her teaching career in Clawson Public Schools, working there for twelve years until she was laid off due to a reduction in staff. However, retirement at age sixty-two was not for Reva.

Group 7-W of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, August 1943. Reva is circled in photo.

Reva then launched a fifth career as a full-time paid teacher of bridge for the Troy School District. She left that position twenty-two years later, but continued to teach bridge at community houses and senior-citizen residences until the age of ninety-three.

Reva's military-career memories are preserved in two oral histories. One was recorded by her, and the other was produced as a student project and can be viewed online at vimeo.com//141420119. What follows is an abridged version of her words:

> "In March 1943, I joined the WAAC, Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. I was sent to Chattanooga, Tennessee, by train. I remember the train had no air conditioning, and the windows were open. The locomotive must have used bituminous coal; everyone was covered with soot by the time we reached our destination.
>
> After several months' basic training, I was stationed in Newark, New Jersey, in a hotel with about one hundred other women. I was enrolled in a course of training that included working on radio transmitters and receivers that would be mounted in airplanes. During the course, we were given the opportunity to leave Women's Auxiliary Army Corps because the auxiliary was being dissolved. It was being turned into the WAC (Women's Army Corps).
>
> After graduating from the course, I was stationed at Turner Army Airfield in Albany, Georgia. I became a "trouble shooter" for the radio equipment on the bombers (B-25s). I had never been in a plane before, and I wanted to fly. So, I told the pilot I had to be in the air in order to fix the trouble with the transmitters and receivers. I would sit in the cockpit with the pilot while in the

air. The pilots had to do so much flying time in training, and I was able to fly with them.

After the end of the war in 1945, I was put on orders to go to the ETO (European Theater of Operations). It took more than a week to reach the coast of France, and it took more than two days to reach Paris. We were billeted in tents just outside Paris. Our restroom facility, a tent, (consisted of) two long boards with four holes on a little platform. Needless to say, it was very unpleasant.

Hitler's Secretary Was My Prisoner

Being Jewish, I felt a need to see a concentration camp. In order to get to Germany, one had to be stationed there. I went to the administration tent and offered to work in the office for a cadre, if they would send me to Germany.

Once in Berlin, I was assigned to the Judge Advocate section as the chief clerk (similar to an office manager). The Judge Advocate could try someone by court martial. Hitler's secretary was a prisoner at Dachau, near Munich, and someone was to be assigned to bring him to Berlin.

After much persuasion by me, the colonel in charge consented to let me go to Munich and bring back this man. At the time, the only way to get into or out of Berlin was by air. I flew to Munich and was prepared to fly back with the prisoner. However, a problem arose with transportation.

A civilian was not permitted on a military aircraft. I was told that I would have to take him on the train to Berlin. That meant I would have to travel through the Russian zone with the prisoner. I absolutely was not going to be in a position where I would be vulnerable to any Russian soldier while traveling through the Russian zone.

I refused to take the train back and said I would wait until I could get clearance to travel by air with the prisoners. This was 1945. I believe the Army didn't have any rules as to how to treat women in the service. That may be the reason I could assert my own wishes and the Army would abide by them. My colonel sent back orders giving permission to fly back with the prisoner.

Terrifying Visit to Dachau Crematory

While waiting for clearance, I looked for the crematory in Dachau. There was a small forest and in the middle of it was a clearing. In the clearing was the crematory. It looked like a wooded garage. Instead of being on a cement slab, it had three steps leading up to the door. The steps were worn down,

like many, many people had climbed those steps.

Upon entering the crematory, I saw a big picture on the wall of a huge pig with a man sitting on it. The man had a hook nose. Underneath the picture were the German words, “Don’t be a pig, wash your hands when you’re through.” There were two ovens on the walls and attached to each oven was an apparatus that could hold a body. This apparatus with the body on it could then be shoved into the oven.

I was all alone in this place at the time when I heard a truck drive up. For a moment, I thought they were coming after me to shove me in the oven – that’s how horrible it felt to be in a place like that. Instead, it happened to be a group of American soldiers.

Twenty-five years later, I revisited Dachau, and the place looked completely different. Outside the crematory was a coffin with a cross on it. The picture was gone.

After four days of waiting for clearance to fly back to Berlin, I was given permission to take the prisoner on board with me. The plane stopped at Nuremberg, and two MPs got on and told me to get off the plane with the prisoner. I refused and just sat there. The MPs made no effort to verbally or physically remove me from the plane. They just left. After about four hours, the plane took off with me and the prisoner. We landed in Berlin, and there was a staff car waiting for me, and two MPs waiting for the prisoner.”

Author Richard Leland, a retired educator and military veteran, is also a founding member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He submitted this article in memory of Reva’s husband, Abe Gornbein.

ENDNOTE

[1]The Judge Advocate’s office acts as the legal arm of the U.S. Army. Attorneys serving in this office manage the full range of legal matters that may and do arise.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY POOR WILD HEART?

By Alinda Dickinson Wasner

The July heat a holocaust so fiery and unbearable
Even the trees were holding their breath
Still, she struggled into her corset and green wool dress
To stand behind the counter at Grinnell Bros.
And talk opera
To the Jewish pharmacist
Who came in every day
Who, she hoped had no clue about Yoopers
And how she had raised her seven siblings
On her own
And fled when she was
Sixteen, swearing she
Would push off any man
Who came too near
(She'd learned the art with her father)
But then there he was
No ring on his finger
And she violated her own vow
When she told him she worked here
Only because she was
Paying her own way
Through nursing school
And when he asked
Which one
Almost let her heart
Fly out of her throat
But instead pulled
La Boehme out of its jacket
And placed it on the turntable
And as it spun

Tried not to picture herself
With his hand on her waist
As she wobbled in her high-heel shoes
And then wrapped it as carefully
As she would have an infant in its blanket
As he laid his cash on the counter
And smiled at her in such a way
That she knew
She was forever lost
The very idea of glass
Splintering under his heel
And a canopy over their heads
As remote as the word, shiksa, must be to him
And the rhythm of the next customer
Drumming his fingers
On the counter to
Command her attention
As the bell on the door
Reminded her that the pharmacist
Was gone once again
Too soon—
Almost before he even
Came in.

Detroit poet Alinda Dickinson Wasner is a Prague Writers Fellow and the winner of numerous awards including the Ireland International Poetry Prize and the Atlanta Review International Poetry Prize. Her works appear in more than forty literary journals, and have been translated into Greek for publication in Khoros*, an authoritative journal of Greek tradition, dance, and the arts.*

2017CORRECTIONS

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.*

JEWISH DETROIT 1967: IN RETROSPECT AND REFLECTION

We were thrilled with the number of emails and comments we received applauding our 2017 article series, "Jewish Detroit 1967: In Retrospect and Reflection." One very kind note, from Kathleen Straus, writer of an essay in the section Why We Stayed, noted that we misspelled her husband's name. Everett (not Evert) Straus moved to Detroit with his wife, Kathleen, in 1952. The couple quickly adopted the city as their home and became involved in Detroit Public Schools, politics, and various Jewish organizations. Kathleen remained in the city even after Everett's death. She now lives on Jefferson Avenue, overlooking the Detroit River, with her husband Hon. Walter Shapero.

There were a few small typos in other parts of the book. We misspelled the name of Matilda Rabinowitz on the title page of the article profiling this Michigan Woman Who Made a Difference, and we mistakenly left off the name of the editor of the Creative Reflections section, Joy Gaines Friedler.

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

Historical Tidbit

1948: On May 16, some 22,000 exuberant Jewish Detroiters gathered on the athletic field of Central High School to celebrate the birth of the State of Israel.

TIMELINE

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

1896 June 11: Members of the Detroit school board suggested that *Readings from the Bible* be introduced into daily classroom lessons. Rabbi Louis Grossman of Temple Beth El was among the many who vocally and actively objected.

1898 May 30: Mrs. Rachel Davis, who lived on Carrie Street in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, suffered a compound fracture of her left arm. A week later, her amputated arm was buried in the "Hebrews" section of St. Mary's Cemetery.

1904 Workmen's Circle Branch 156 in Detroit is founded, the first branch of the national mutual-aid society. Dedicated to celebrating and promoting Yiddish cultures, members of the *Der Arbeiter Ring* were also stridently secular and fully supportive of labor and socialist movements.

1916 May: Chesed Shel Emes, the Detroit Jewish Free Burial Society, was founded by ten Detroit-area men. They purchased thirteen acres of land in Clinton Township in Macomb County with a capacity for 27,000 gravesites.

1926 Julius Spielberg, who would eventually be inducted into the Michigan Jewish Sports Hall of Fame for his athletic prowess, opened his Spiel Pharmacy in Detroit. He was among the many young men who found opportunity as professionals and entrepreneurs in the pharmacy business.

1927 Spring: The Pinsker Progressive Untersitzung Verein was founded by a group of men and women who had immigrated to Detroit from the city of Pinsk in Belarus, Russia. The purpose of the Pinkser Progressive Aid Society was to provide support, companionship, burial benefits, and social outlets for its members.

1928 Jewish Family Service was officially established. The agency dates to the mid-1800s when agencies such as the Jewish Relief Society were founded to help the poor, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. JFS celebrated its ninetieth anniversary in 2018.

1930 Dr. John Slawson, director of Detroit's Jewish Welfare Federation, stated in the annual report of the North End Clinic that a very competent teacher had been retained by the organization to teach Yiddish to the nurses at the clinic (most of whom were not Jewish).

1934 Sam Cohodas opened his first bank, Michigan Financial Corporation, in Ishpeming, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The firm grew to eight branches.

1942 March 27: The first issue of Detroit's *The Jewish News* hit the newsstand. Published by Philip Slomovitz, the weekly paper – now known as the *Detroit Jewish News* – promised to "Give Our People the Latest News and Historical Data Concerning the Jews All Over the World."

TIMELINE

1943	A group of fifty-two Northwest Detroit Jewish residents founded the Northwest Hebrew Congregation. In the fall of 1945, construction began on a new facility, on Curtis Avenue in Detroit. By then, membership had grown to around four hundred families. In June 1951, the name of the congregation was changed to Adas Shalom, "Congregation of Peace."
1943	March: Reva Gornbein joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps, which would later become known as the Women's Army Corps. Gornbein became a "trouble shooter" for bomber radio equipment. In the immediate months after the war's conclusion, she transferred to Germany to work as a clerk.
1945	October 18: Community members from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, celebrated as Congregation Beth Jacob, on the Canadian side of the St. Mary's River, was dedicated. The synagogue continues to serve both Jewish communities.
1955	August 8: Mose Mezerow, of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, passed away. Born in Russia, Mezerow immigrated to Michigan's Upper Peninsula where he became a successful merchant.
1956	The Hebrew Benevolent Society of Detroit published a 40th Anniversary Jubilee Journal that listed more than forty-five *landsmanschaftn* organizations. Missing from that list were the Pinsker Progressive Aid Society and Workmen's Circle, which are two of three landsmanschaftn groups that exist today.
1957	November 6: The *Detroit Times* newspaper published a photo of five of the independent pharmacists who founded the Sav-Mor Drug Store co-op. They joined together to lower costs by purchasing in volume.
1959	October 23: Poet and author Ezra Korman passed away in Detroit. Born in Kiev, Korman became internationally recognized as a pillar of Yiddish creativity. Korman uniquely made a living in poetry, translating numerous poems into and from Yiddish, and writing his own touching poems.
1998	September 21: In June, members of Congregation Beth Achim overwhelmingly approved a merger with Adat Shalom Synagogue. By Rosh Hashanah, the two congregations had become one and celebrated the new year together at Adat Shalom's Farmington Hills sanctuary.
2004	Author Patricia Polacco won the Michigan Author Award from the Library of Michigan and the Michigan Library Association. Polacco's charming children's books address issues such as friendship, bullying, sibling relationships, and religious traditions.
2016	October: The City of Detroit designated B'nai David Cemetery, located on Van Dyke, as a historic district. The project began in 2013 when Eva Goldman, in preparation for her bat mitzvah, gathered a group of friends and family, including her grandfather Nison Sabin, to clean up the long-neglected burial site.

JHSM PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

RISHA B. RING

I am honored to serve as the president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan as we embark upon our Diamond Jubilee Year. JHSM has been successful in documenting, preserving, and promoting the past for sixty years. I am confident we will continue to excel in this endeavor for many years to come. I am eager to serve as your president during this important time in our history.

All along, we have been committed to making history matter and passing it on to the next generation. To continue impacting the lives of our members, we need to follow our strategic plan for intentional and focused growth and change.

In August, we welcomed Catherine (Katie) Cangany, Ph.D., as our executive director. Together, we will work to exceed expectations and take the current organization to new heights as we continue to preserve, curate, celebrate, and share the stories of Jewish Michigan with our community and beyond.

In our short time working together, Katie and I have created new and important collaborations with a wide variety of agencies as we strive to increase programming. These partnerships will allow us to reach a larger and more diverse population and provide meaningful exposure of our important history to a wider audience.

Additionally, we have plans to take our expanded speakers' bureau to Florida to connect with our "snowbird" members and with Michigan natives who have moved there permanently. Volunteers are working on bringing back the successful Detroit River Cruise from the summer of 2014. Our programs developed through the Nosh Gen committee will continue under a new name that will better describe the programs we provide –

Nosh and Know: Experiencing Michigan's Jewish History. Our members are excited to see what this new name, new look, and new focus will provide.

We are expanding our student education program and tours this year to include one for sixth-graders, concentrating on social justice, discrimination, and life in early Detroit. Additionally, we are especially excited about a high-school program to be held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January, which will include a tour focusing on sites specific to the civil-rights movement and Dr. King.

Our membership continues to grow and we are committed to meeting the needs of our members so that they become active participants in our programming. Providing diverse programs will help generate enthusiasm for Michigan's Jewish history. When that happens, we are successful in our mission.

We are exploring new funding opportunities in cooperation with our executive board and endowment committee to increase our operating funds and endowment.

Our membership committee is working to engage members in a meaningful way. We will be reaching out to involve more and more people in our work as we expand and improve our outstanding programming, engage a wider membership, and share our proud Jewish history.

My goals during the year ahead are to work with our members and staff to increase:

1) our active membership
2) the number of programs offered
3) attendance at all of our programs
4) the number of members who volunteer in some way to help plan or promote one of our programs
5) the number of members who contribute to our JHSM Endowment

These are lofty goals, but together we can make it happen! I call upon you to join me in celebrating the past sixty years and planning for the decades ahead.

Risha B. Ring
JHSM President

ARNOLD COLLENS

RECIPIENT OF THE 2018 LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD

What are the qualities of a good historian?

Photo by Elayne Gross

Wikipedia offers that a historian is one who "studies and writes about the past, and is regarded as an authority on it." Webster's categorizes a historian as a "writer of history, a chronicler." Harvard University describes "one who examines the past through a variety of critical approaches while engaging in deep investigation of how evidence and historical narratives have developed over time."

Study. Examine. Investigate. Write. Chronicle. And, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan would add, "be curious and diligent." These are all qualities evident in Arnold Collens, the 2018 Leonard N. Simons History Award honoree. He is also, thankfully, a successful businessman, a loyal volunteer, a dedicated husband and an adventurous photographer with a keen eye.

Established in 1991, the Leonard N. Simons History Award honors those who contribute to the preservation of Michigan's Jewish history. Arnie Collens, JHSM's eighteenth president, has led countless JHSM tours, has developed and presented several historical lectures, and has astutely researched and documented important regional Jewish history, including tracing the origins of Michigan's early Jewish communities and the Civil War.

Curious by Nature

Arnie knows the art of telling a story, a trait he may have inherited from his father, Joe. Occasionally, the two would walk to one of the small shuls that lined Wyoming Avenue in Northwest Detroit. "He didn't take me to *daven* (pray) but to hear the stories," said Arnie. After shul, Joe and his friends, many of them first-generation immigrants, returned to the Collens home to eat *kichel*, a favorite cookie, and to joke around and tell more stories. They spoke about their homeland, they shared their common histories, they talked politics and community.

As a student at Detroit's Mumford High School, Arnie witnessed how history, when told with passion as a story, could be truly engaging. He first experienced that engagement one day in his history class and the effect, said Arnie, was profound. It would be many years before Arnie would connect that high school moment to his adult life; instead, he pursued his business career. But first, there was camp.

In 1964, the Fresh Air Society opened Camp Kennedy, an outpost camp in Mio, in Michigan's northern lower peninsula. By then, Arnie had spent several summers at camp, first as a camper and then working his way up from maintenance worker to "tripper" (he led canoe trips), and then as the first director of Camp Kennedy. Long an outdoor enthusiast, a passion that continues to this day, Arnie set up a robust camp program and became close to Ed Levy, Sr., who had donated the Camp Kennedy land to the Fresh Air Society.

Sadly, that was also the summer when Arnie's father, Joe Collens, died at the age of forty-four. Around that time, Arnie met and began dating Dorothy Tann, whom he married two years later in June of 1966. That summer, Arnie and Dorothy led the Fresh Air Society's Eastern and Western teen trips. It was during those trips that Arnie again saw how history and storytelling connected. "Staff at our national parks were models of how to involve guests in the story," Arnie said. "They created living history, and I found it to be contagious."

Professionally, Arnie went from teaching to sales to owning his own industrial, janitorial, and plastic-injection-mold supply firm, which he sold in 2005.

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

In 2005, Arnie discovered the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan when he joined a JHSM bus tour of historic Jewish Detroit. Within a few months he was leading JHSM tours, mentored by some of the organization's best: Judy Cantor, Barbara and Jerry Cook, Ruthe Goldstein, Mike Kasky, and Adele Staller (z"l), to name a few. Arnie became one of JHSM's most in-demand docents, cherished historians, and important leaders.

In 2006, Arnie began putting his stories on paper when he contributed to a *Michigan Jewish History* article about Detroit's Eastern Market. In 2016, he chronicled life in Jewish Detroit during the Civil War era.

Recently, Arnie worked with Wendy Bice, JHSM's former executive director, to redevelop and update the script and route for JHSM's Settlers to Citizens Bus Tours of Historic Jewish Detroit. In the process, he also completed the creation of several JHSM maps, including a tri-fold map that can be used by consumers to help plan their own historic Jewish Detroit tours. There was no one better suited for that task, as Arnie is a co-founder of JHSM's Jewish

Landmarks Committee which chronicled the locations of many of Michigan's historic sites. He was one of the first members of JHSM's speakers bureau and, as JHSM's president from 2008 to 2012 (including two years as co-president with Ellen Cole), he ushered in the transitional period that led JHSM to grow into the organization it is today.

An Eye for Nature's Most Magnificent

Even as a child, Arnie Collens loved photography. That passion and his inherent interest in exploration fit together perfectly as he neared retirement. With his camera at the ready, Arnie and Dorothy began traveling the globe and capturing the beauty of communities, humankind, and nature. They have explored forty-nine states and six continents. All the while, Arnie found himself investigating lessons of the past and connecting them to the present.

"He has a wonderful eye and captures amazing places and faces. The best part is that he shares his talents with others," said Mary Lou Zieve, chairperson of the Leonard N. Simons History Award committee. "He not only tells great stories, but his photographs speak volumes."

Arnie uses his photography and research skills to record the renewal of both Detroit and Jewish Detroit. He donates his time to photograph events for many of Detroit's Jewish institutions, including JHSM and Hadassah. During the winter months, he spends his days at the National Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples, Florida, serving as a naturalist, tour captain, and photographer.

Arnie's talents have not gone unnoticed. He is an oft-requested lecturer throughout the community, sharing both Jewish and Detroit history. He is a past board member of Temple Israel, has served on committees with the Jewish Community Archives, including serving as chair of the Irwin I. Cohn Cemetery

Arnie Collens spends winters in southwest Florida, where he volunteers as a day captain at the National Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. Here he captured a Palamedes Swallowtail, large black, brightly marked butterfly, in motion.

Index Project, and is involved at the committee level with Fresh Air Society and Jewish Senior Life. He is also one of the founding members of JARC, which serves to enrich the lives of persons with disabilities.

Now in retirement after a teaching career and more than thirty years as a small-business owner, Arnie revels in the opportunity to pursue his passions: traveling with Dorothy, spending time with family, learning, discovering new corners of the country (most recently on a fall 2018 road trip along Route 66), and engaging others as he shares his vast knowledge. Arnie and Dorothy have two married sons and five grandchildren. When not chasing birds and butterflies in Naples, they love watching sunsets from their Waterford Township home.

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, Collens 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**	2000	**Alan D. Kandel**	2010	**James D. Grey**
1992	**Avern L. Cohn**	2001	**Sidney M. Bolkosky**	2011	**Charlotte Dubin**
1993	**George M. Stutz**	2002	**Adele W. Staller**	2012	**Michael O. Smith**
1994	**Irwin Shaw**	2003	**Matilda Brandwine**	2013	**Irwin J. Cohen**
1995	**Emma Lazaroff Schaver**	2004	**Susie Citrin**	2014	**A. Alfred Taubman**
1996	**Leslie S. Hough and Philip P. Mason**	2005	**Edith L. Resnick**	2015	**Carl Levin**
		2006	**Gerald S. Cook**	2016	**Jan Durecki**
1997	**Mary Lou Simons Zieve**	2007	**Sharon L. Alterman**	2017	**G. Aimee Ergas**
1998	**Judith Levin Cantor**	2008	**George M. Zeltzer**	2018	**Arnold Collens**
1999	**Michael W. Maddin**	2009	**Mandell L. Berman**		

IN MEMORIAM

EUGENE APPLEBAUM
1936-2017

He loved telling stories. He cherished education. He reveled as he watched young entrepreneurs achieve success and lauded those who stood as leaders in the community. He valued Jewish history and treasured the gifts of opportunity his community afforded him. And, he never forgot his roots.

Eugene Applebaum, eighty-one, passed away in December 2017. He was born November 16, 1936, in Detroit, the second son of Joseph and Minnie Belkin Applebaum, immigrants who raised their children in a traditional Jewish home. In a 2004 oral history conducted for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, Applebaum recalled how his parents "talked about philanthropy, tzedakah, and they set proper goals for me to reach."

The Applebaum family lived in the predominantly Jewish area of Detroit known colloquially as Dexter-Davison, but more officially as Oakland Avenue. Applebaum grew up in a modern Jewish shtetl, a densely populated haven where kids played stickball on the street and there was a synagogue on nearly every corner. Many residents were either recent- or first-generation immigrants, and, while not wealthy, they nurtured their youth to ensure connectedness, education, and opportunity.

An Idyllic Childhood

Applebaum often shared stories of his childhood with his own children, friends, and colleagues. He attended Winterhalter Elementary School and Durfee Junior High, and graduated from Central High School in 1955. His was among the last of the mostly Jewish graduating classes of Central High, as many families had begun moving to Northwest Detroit and the suburbs. Still, Applebaum and his peers, born ten years after the last of the Greatest Generation, became a Great Generation of their own. He and his fellow graduates, among them David Hermelin and Sidney Forbes, became lifelong friends and would go on to become some of Michigan's greatest leaders and philanthropists.

Clearly, the influences of his youth—his time at Central High School and Wayne State University in particular—influenced Applebaum's leadership style, but it was his time at Fresh Air Society camp that cemented his sense of community. Wanting her son to have the camp experience, Minnie stood with hundreds of other families who applied for and received financial scholarships that enabled their children to attend the overnight camp, then located in Brighton. Then, as now, no child who attended camp on scholarship was treated differently from those whose families paid the full fee. "I hold camp very dear," he said, "It gave you an opportunity to get away from home, to learn to live with others…."

Applebaum never forgot the generosity of those who made possible his camp experience, and he became one of the Fresh Air Society's most generous supporters. In 1998, Applebaum and his wife, Marcia, endowed Applebaum Village at what is now Camp Tamarack, to house second- and third-grade boys – the same age he had been when he first attended the camp. He later made another contribution to redevelop and sustain the village, and Applebaum Village was rededicated in 2016.

Philanthropy was the Core of Eugene Applebaum

At a young age, Applebaum vowed to share his achievements to benefit others. Long before it was considered a matter of corporate social responsibility, Applebaum modeled the ideal of inspiring others to follow his positive example. "When you are a leader, you are making people follow in your footsteps, and doing what is right for the community and what is right for our people," he said.

The impact of Applebaum's philanthropic gifts extends from Detroit and Michigan to Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Israel and beyond. Motivated by his father's interest in Yiddish, for example, Applebaum and his good friend Eugene Driker set up the Applebaum Driker Theater at the Yiddish Book Center

in Amherst, Massachusetts.

In 1998, he contributed what was then the largest individual gift in the history of his alma matter, Wayne State University. His investment of more than five million dollars helped pay for construction of the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences building, which opened in 2002.

"My father felt very strongly about giving back to Wayne State," recalled his daughter, Pamela Applebaum. "Wayne State was such an important part of his life. He so often reflected on his time as a student, especially the camaraderie and friendships he formed. Those experiences guided him throughout his career. In the late 1990s, he had the opportunity to serve as Wayne State University's first Foundation chair. For my dad, leading this effort for Wayne was about giving back to the place that gave him so much. It was also about Detroit: A strong urban university in the heart of the city is crucial to the strength of Detroit."

Education, health and medical research were central to Applebaum's philanthropy. In 1999, he cofounded the Hermelin Brain Tumor Center for the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, and in 2006, Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak opened the Marcia and Eugene Applebaum Simulation Learning Institute, the first facility of its kind in the nation. The Mayo Clinic benefitted greatly from the Applebaums, as did Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

At the heart of his philanthropic gifts, stood Applebaum's Jewish heritage and dedication to preserving local and Jewish history. He was among the first supporters of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and he cherished every volume of *Michigan Jewish History*. Recognizing the organization's importance and position for growth, in 2006 Applebaum made two transformational gifts that paved the way forward for JHSM by challenging leadership to match his funds.

In 2015, JHSM honored Applebaum with the Leonard N. Simons Lifetime Achievement Award for distinguished service to the community and to JHSM. Mary Lou Zieve, chairperson of the award committee, said that "Eugene's life exemplified the commitment we have to preserving Michigan's Jewish history, and his dedication to philanthropy demonstrates the important impact one individual can have on his community."

In 1999, he and Marcia announced the largest capital gift in the history of metro Detroit's Jewish community, leading to the naming of the 195-acre Eugene and Marcia Applebaum Jewish Community Center of Metro Detroit, located in West Bloomfield. In September 2013, he received the Fred M. Butzel Award, the community's highest honor, from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

It Began In a Drugstore

When "Gene" was twelve, he had a job as a fountain and stock boy at Fox Drugs, located near his home. In high school and college, during summer vacations, he sold clothing for United Shirt, worked at Tom's Hotel as the night clerk, worked at Roland Drugs, and sold newspapers.

"When my father started at Wayne, he had other aspirations in mind," recalled Pamela. "He had hoped to become a lawyer. However, in those days, if you were Jewish, it was not easy to become a lawyer. A pharmacist was able to make a living. Also, since his brother who was four years older was a pharmacist, my dad decided on pharmacy school."

Applebaum graduated from Wayne with a pharmacy degree in 1960, one of only seventeen students in that year's class. Three years later, at the age of twenty-five, he opened Civic Drugs at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Greenfield Road. Five years later he opened another drugstore, eventually building the successful Arbor Drugs chain and innovating contemporary features such as wide aisles and uniform store designs. He operated on four principles: Be good to your customers, keep products in stock, remain disciplined by not diversifying or getting off track, and do not get caught up in the press. In 1986, he took Arbor Drugs public. By 1997, the chain had two hundred stores. In 1998, Applebaum merged with the national chain CVS. That sale allowed Applebaum to focus on his philanthropy: healthcare, education, the arts, and giving back to the Jewish community.

Applebaum said it best himself: "Philanthropy is part and parcel of life. First you take care of your family, then your community. Then you help the nation and the world. This is more than an obligation. It is a privilege."

Eugene Applebaum is survived by his wife of fifty-seven years, Marcia, two daughters, Lisa and Pamela, son-in-law, Gaal, and four grandchildren. The Eugene & Marcia Applebaum Foundation continues to provide transformative philanthropic gifts in his memory.

MADELEINE H. BERMAN
1927-2018

Born in Detroit in 1927, Madeleine "Madge" H. Berman (née Brodie) studied music and the arts, receiving a bachelor's degree in musicology from Northwestern University. In 1950, after dating him for four years, Madge married Mandell "Bill" Berman, who described his wife as beautiful and "smart as hell." The couple, noted for their community service and philanthropy, shared many interests, but perhaps none more so than Madge's love for the arts.

After her graduation from Northwestern, Madge served as theater and music critic for the *Birmingham Eccentric*, and then went on to earn a master's degree in speech and communication from Wayne State University. In the 1980s, Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young appointed her to the first Detroit Arts Council. She also served as a founding board member of Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan. She initiated the Governor's Arts Awards, presented annually to artists, arts organizations, and civic leaders who have made outstanding contributions to the arts in Michigan. In 1981, Governor William Milliken appointed her to the Michigan Council of the Arts, and Governor James Blanchard appointed her vice chair in 1983. In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed her to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and President Barack Obama renewed the appointment in 2009. In 2014, she received the prestigious Legacy Award from Americans for the Arts, joining past recipients Yo-Yo Ma and Richard Serra.

Locally, Madge's passions stretched from one end of the region to the other. She served on the board of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and on the advisory council of the Detroit Zoological Society, and she was a major supporter of the Detroit Institute of Art and the Michigan Opera Theatre. She was on the board of the Michigan Humane Society and funded an MHS shelter in Westland, Michigan. Her creative energy led to the 2014 creation of DSO Live: Classroom Edition, which brings free webcasts of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Educational Concerts to more than 50,000 students each year.

The Bermans' generosity to the Jewish community was seemingly endless. It was Madge's suggestion that led to the Bermans' four-million-dollar gift to build and create the Berman Center for the Performing Arts, which opened at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield in 2010. She and Bill were

also among JHSM's most devoted supporters, providing funds to the organization for continuation of its programming and for the Traveling Trunk religious-school education curriculum. Longtime members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, the couple in 2014 established the Berman Center for Jewish Education at the Southfield synagogue.

Madge Berman was predeceased by her beloved husband of sixty-six years, Bill, who passed away in 2016. She is survived by her son, Dr. Jonathan Berman (Nicky), her daughter Ann Berman (Daniel Feld), and three grandchildren.

ALAN HURVITZ
1956-2018

Before he had a chance to really begin, he was gone. Alan Hurvitz, born in Detroit to Rae (Bigman) and Harold Hurvitz, was set to become the inaugural author of the newly established Judge Avern and Lois Cohn/Prentis Family Foundation Michigan Jewish History Writers Fund. The JHSM fund will provide stipends for authors and historians to chronicle the history of post-1965 Jewish Detroit. Hurvitz had also been tapped to join the JHSM board of directors. Sadly, before he could complete the research he had begun on JHSM's behalf, he passed away.

Hurvitz spent his childhood years in Detroit attending Detroit public schools. Just prior to his senior year of high school, his family moved and he graduated from Southfield High School in 1975. In 1978, he received his bachelor of arts in history, with high distinction, from Wayne State University; then a juris doctor, summa cum laude, from Wayne State University Law School in 1981.

While at Wayne State, he met his sweetheart, Ruth Indenbaum. The two were married in 1981. Hurvitz began his law career that same year, and would spend more than thirty years with the Detroit-based law firm Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP. The real-estate-law expert served in many leadership positions, including as a member of the firm's board of directors. Hurvitz received numerous accolades and honors for his work in real estate law, real estate taxes, and leasing, including being listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* for more than twelve consecutive years.

In June 2011, Hurvitz left the full-time practice of law to pursue his love of teaching. After some traveling, he taught as an adjunct professor at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, and was asked to return to Honigman to serve as of counsel. His real goal, though, was to earn a master's degree in history.

"Alan Hurvitz was not only one hundred percent mensch, he was also a first-rate historian with an elegant and eloquent mind and a keen ability to reconstruct the past and present it in a way that was engaging to other scholars and lay readers alike," remarked Howard Lupovitch, associate professor of history and director of the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University. "Working with Alan was an honor and a privilege — I learned as much from him as he did from me."

In 2017, a year after doctors discovered his brain tumor, Hurvitz graduated with a master of arts in history from WSU. His thesis, "A Communal Bridge: *The Detroit Jewish News*, the Detroit Jewish Welfare Federation and the Detroit Jewish Community in 1942," allowed him to further research and document the history of Detroit's Jewish communal agencies, many of which he had served. Hurvitz was a board member of the Anti-Defamation League and an executive committee member of the Fresh Air Society.

Hurvitz is survived by his wife, Ruth; his children, Steven (Tammy), Leah Hurvitz (Oren Yair), and Danny; and one grandchild.

BURTON LELAND
1948-2018

Burton Leland, who began his political career in 1980 as a state representative, then served as a state senator, and in 2006 was elected to the Wayne County Commission, passed away in February after a long battle with cancer.

Often referred to as a "warrior for social justice," Leland dedicated his public-service career to improving the lives of his constituents. One of his early achievements in Lansing was the introduction and passage of the Lemon Law, which gave car buyers the right to a replacement vehicle if a manufacturing defect affected their car's safety, value, or utility. He also developed a clean-up program that battled the blight threatening the neighborhoods in his district, and provided support to food banks, community gardens, neighborhood associations, and Detroit police precincts. Burton felt a deep commitment to the Northwest Detroit community, its individual residents, and the children returning to school each fall.

In 2007, Leland got involved in the restoration of the Albert A. Fields Park, located at Florence and Forrer streets in Detroit. The park honors the first deceased Jewish World War II soldier to be brought from Belgium for reburial in the United States. At the time, Leland was serving as a Wayne County commissioner, and he helped locate Private Fields's surviving family members, who were unaware that the park was being restored.

Leland, born and raised in Detroit, graduated from Mumford High School and went on to earn a business degree from Wayne State University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan. Leland is survived by his wife of forty-five years, Rosanne; sons Gabe and Zachary; and one granddaughter.

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