



# chicago jewish historical society

618 South Michigan • Chicago, Illinois 60605 • Telephone: (312) 663-5634

## society news

VOLUME VII 54

JUNE, 1984

### SUMMER BUS TOURS TO INCLUDE NORTH SHORE, OLD NEIGHBORHOODS AND MILWAUKEE

#### Axelrod, Cutler To Lead Groups; Early Reservations Are Advisable

Three Sunday bus tours of sites of Jewish historical interest have been announced for the summer months by Leah Axelrod, CJHS tour chairman. In their eighth year and by now a highlight of local Jewish activities, summer tours this year include two new ones as well as a repeat of a perennial favorite.

Included in the 1984 series will be a tour of "Chicago's Jewish Roots" led by Dr. Irving Cutler on July 15, a tour of North Shore Synagogues on July 29, and an all-day tour of "Jewish Milwaukee" on August 26. Mrs. Axelrod will lead the latter two tours. As in the past, paid-up CJHS members will receive substantial discounts on the cost of the tours. Reservations may be made using the form on page eleven of this newsletter.

#### Feature West, North Sides on July 15

The Jewish roots tour on July 15 will be a sentimental journey to Maxwell Street, North Lawndale, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Albany Park and West Rogers Park and will include a number of stops. This is a repeat of a popular afternoon tour which will leave from Bernard Horwich JCC (3003 West Touhy Avenue) at 12:30 and return there at 4:30 PM. This repeat tour has been a sellout each year.

The North Shore congregations tour on July 29 will have pickups at 12:00 at the Chicago Marriott Hotel (540 North Michigan

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Incoming  
President  
Norman D. Schwartz

#### NORMAN SCHWARTZ CHOSEN TO HEAD CJHS FOR NEXT TWO YEARS

#### Annual Election Also Adds Two To Society's Board of Directors

Norman D. Schwartz, a founder and most recently treasurer of CJHS, was chosen to lead the Society for the next two years. He was elected by the board of directors at its June 3 meeting along with Doris Minsky, vice-president; Sol Brandzel, treasurer; and Ruth Brandzel, secretary.

Schwartz succeeds Rachel Heimovics who remarked, "I'm delighted to see so capable and dedicated a person assume the position. I know his fellow officers and directors will give him the full and fine cooperation they provided me." A brief biography of the new president appears elsewhere in this issue.

#### Hagerup, Cutler Join Board

Elected as new board members at the

[Continued on Page 3]

President's Column

PRESIDENT HEIMOVICS' FAREWELL  
TO CHICAGO AND THE SOCIETY

To all my friends in our Society, I write a deeply-felt letter of farewell. This final column of my presidency is really a personal goodbye to all of you, thanking you for all of your support. There is a double message of departure here, because I am not only leaving the presidency of CJHS, but I am also leaving Chicago.

Thank you for your support of CJHS during the seven years of its existence--and the two years of my presidency. Thank you for helping to fulfill our incomplete goal of preserving the history of our community. Please keep up that support. Please bring new members into the organization. Don't forget to save the archives! And keep your tape-recorders and cameras running!

Growing Interest in Local Jewish History

Since the early 1960's, when I began my research, Chicago Jewish history has been the great consuming vocation of my life. And since 1977, when CJHS was founded, the Society has become an increasingly significant focus of my life and work.

When I began my research, there were very few people interested in local Jewish history. Within the past decade, many have become interested and involved. I am confident that the work of CJHS will continue--and will continue to grow and achieve great success--and that the importance of local Jewish history as part of the great patchwork quilt of American history will be more and more appreciated.

Some Lessons Learned

There are some lessons I have learned that I would like to impart to you.

First. There are exceptions to every generalization made about Chicago Jewish history. No Jewish neighborhood was monolithic and not all Chicago Jews lived in Jewish neighborhoods. In fact, Jews must have lived in every one of the city's 77 community areas and in most of the suburbs. There were Jews living in Lake Forest in the Nineteenth Century and in Kenilworth in the 1920's. Contrary to some statements, Russian, Orthodox Jews lived on the south side and German, Reform Jews lived on the west side. Beware of sweeping statements



Outgoing  
President  
Rachel B.  
Heimovics

about Chicago Jewish history. Ask for documentation.

Second. None of the histories so far written is complete and most are not accurate. Of course some histories have been written with the greatest of integrity. But time reveals new information. No one knows who the first Jew was to settle in Chicago. I have learned of families who came here in the 1850's who were never mentioned in any of the written histories of our community.

Third. No single person and no single organization can do all of the work of recording and preserving and researching Chicago Jewish history. Let CJHS have as one of its most important roles, that of clearing-house and cooperative support for other organizations and individuals working in local history.

Fourth. Time does not stand still. Do not wait to conduct oral history interviews or collect archives. Do not wait--even if you have not been trained. Something is better than nothing.

Learning the Techniques

Finally. More and more information is available on preservation, photography, oral history interviews. Try to find time to learn as much as possible about the latest information, the newest tools, and the best techniques.

Soon I will be leaving Chicago for the much smaller community of Orlando, Florida. I expect to take with me many unfinished projects and many unanswered questions about the Chicago Jewish community that I know will continue to tease me. I sincerely hope that I will still be able to work on them. With my departure, I send best wishes to all of you. I know that I leave the Society in good and capable hands. It has been an honor to serve as your president.

Rachel Baron Heimovics

# JULY GENEALOGY MEETING TO COVER DIVERSE ASPECTS OF ROOTS-SEEKING

## CJHS Members Will Play Prominent Roles in Evanston Sessions

Details have now become available concerning the fascinating series of workshops and special events which will constitute the Fourth National Seminar on Jewish Genealogy to be held in Evanston on July 22-25.

Co-sponsored by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, the seminar offers interested Society members a wealth of information and assistance for tracing family histories and discovering their "roots."

### Varied Program Planned

The seminar includes an extensive series of workshops, field trips to research sites in the area, a tour of present and former Jewish neighborhoods as well as a keynote speaker and banquet. Interested persons may register for the four-day session for \$55.00 (\$65.00 after June 18) or for daily sessions at \$25.00 per day.

The keynote speaker on Sunday evening, July 22, will be Rabbi Malcolm Stern of New York City, current president of the Jewish Genealogical Society and known as the father of Jewish genealogy. His topic is "Jewish Migration Through the Ages: A Framework for Jewish Genealogy."

### Workshops Cover Many Aspects

Workshops include such topics as Hungarian Jews in Chicago, using legal records and health care records for genealogical purposes, landsmanshaften, rabbinic genealogy, Yizkor books, as well as separate sessions on German, Russian, Canadian, New York and Holocaust sources for research.

Another series of workshops involves technical aspects such as the use of computers, how to begin genealogical research, organizing reunions, publishing a family history, preserving photos and documents and using oral history techniques. Most workshops will be repeated to allow for greater participation.

### Prominent CJHS Members Involved

Among CJHS leaders directing work-

## Election Results [cont'd]

[Continued from Page 1]

annual meeting on June 3 were Marian Cutler and Janet Hagerup. Their terms extend to 1987. Re-elected for the same period were Leah Axelrod, Irving Cutler, Elsie Orlinsky and Shirley and Sidney Sorkin. Also elected was former board member Mark Mandle.

The above directors join the officers and continuing directors Muriel Robin and Adele Hast (past presidents) and Charles Bernstein, Clare Greenberg, Sara Jacobson, Burt Robin, Moselle Schwartz and Elaine and Irwin Suloway in the guidance of CJHS activities.

### Nominating Committee Selects Candidates

Elections resulted from reports of a nominating committee consisting of Sol Brandzel, chairman; Adele Hast, Muriel Robin and Norman Schwartz.

Officers were installed at the June 3 annual meeting of the Society.

## Society Offers Prizes for Jewish Entries at Metro History Fair

Once again the Society encouraged young people to prepare projects related to Chicago Jewish history for the annual Metro History Fair. The Fair, held on May 19 at the Museum of Science and Industry, honors American history projects prepared by area high school history students.

The CJHS Board recently voted to offer one year's free membership in the Society for each entrant of a project with local Jewish historical content and a \$25.00 prize for a winning entry.

shops or making presentations are Charles B. Bernstein, the Society's official Jewish historian and original program chairman; Dr. Irving Cutler, tour leader and authority on Jewish migration within the Chicago area; and Sidney Sorkin, in charge of oral histories and authority on local landsmanshaften. General chairman for the seminar is CJHS board member Janet Hagerup.

Registration is being handled by Bobbie Berkowitz, 9259 North Kedvale, Skokie 60076. Further information is available in the evening from Freya Maslov, 965-8277.

I.J.S.

## MOURN DEATH OF RABBI GRAUBART, EARLY FRIEND OF THE SOCIETY

Rabbi David Graubart, a venerable figure in Chicago Jewish life, died on April 27, 1984. Closely associated with the CJHS since its earliest days, he was a prolific writer in English and Hebrew, but his greatest love was speaking and writing in Yiddish. He contributed numerous articles to the Farband and the Forward, once the "living" journal of immigrant Jews.

A noted and respected scholar, Rabbi Graubart served as a source for questions regarding religion virtually throughout the country. He was the presiding Rabbi of the Beth Din, the ecclesiastic court of the Rabbinical Assembly, where he was a liberal voice for women on such issues as giving women a more equitable role in divorce, supporting the inclusion of women in the Minyan and the ordination of women by the Jewish Theological Seminary. His contributions to Conservative Judaism were many and important.

### Spoke at CJHS Meeting

In March of 1979, Rabbi Graubart addressed a meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society on the history of the Beth Din. Fortunately that program was taped as part of the Society's Oral History Program and will remain available for future scholars.

On the occasion of a tribute to Rabbi Graubart given last December, Isaac Bashevis Singer said of him, "He was a man rich in knowledge of Jewish life in America, as well as in the whole world."

### Educated in Chicago

In 1920, upon leaving Staszow, Poland, where his father was the Chief Rabbi, the family moved to Toronto, Canada, and a few years later emigrated to Chicago. In 1933, the Rabbi married Eunice Morris of Rock Island, Illinois.

He was a graduate of Armour Institute and, in 1928, received his Master's Degree in Hebrew Literature from the Garrett Theological Seminary of Northwestern University. In 1929, he graduated from the Hebrew Theological College, and in 1972 he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Graubart was the author of a number of books and a co-editor of a num-

## Retiring President Heimovics To Move from Chicago Area

Unfortunately for Chicago Jewish history, Rachel Baron Heimovics, retiring president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, will more than step down from office this summer. She will also be moving from Highland Park, her home for sixteen years, to the Orlando area in Florida, where her husband John has taken a new position.

During her residency in the Chicago area she has distinguished herself as an astute historian of the Chicago Jewish community as well as a leader in that community. She will perhaps best be remembered locally for her book, The Chicago Jewish Source Book (1981), an invaluable resource directory of local Jewish institutions, secular and religious, sources of goods and services, cultural resources and many other facets of Jewish living.

In addition Rachel, a founder of CJHS, has prepared several exhibits and audio-visual presentations on local Jewish history, has lectured widely and has directed tours of Jewish interest. She was elected CJHS president in 1982.

Founding CJHS President Muriel Robin said of Rachel's imminent departure, "I'm sure that CJHS would never have accomplished what it has without her. We are grateful for her many contributions and, like the Jewish community at large, we will surely miss her."

I.J.S.

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ber of journals on Jewish life.

### Postwar Visits to Place of Birth

A few years ago, in the early 70's, Rabbi Graubart returned to Poland and found no Jews in his home town. Where once there had been approximately 5,000 Hasidic Jews, only 400 had survived the Holocaust, and none had returned to live permanently in Staszow.

In 1976, the writer also returned to his home town, Staszow, and the definitive recollections of Rabbi Graubart's trip were most helpful to my own visit.

Rabbi Graubart's broad scope of activities will leave an indelible imprint on Chicago Jewish history.

Sol Brandzel

## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SOCIETY'S NEW PRESIDENT

Norman David Schwartz, one of the founding members and new president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, was born in Waukegan, Illinois. He attended public school in Waukegan and made his Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Am Echod there.

He was graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and served two and one-half years as an officer in the U.S. Navy in World War II, including duty aboard a destroyer in the Pacific Theater.

### Long Record of CJHS Service

He has assisted in almost every aspect of CJHS activities but is perhaps best known for his contributions to the oral history and archives programs and for his just completed term as treasurer.

In addition to his work for the Society, his current activities include committee assignments at Temple Sholom and the Jewish Federation.

During the 1976 United States Bicentennial Schwartz served as a docent at the local Jewish exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry. It was from discussion among a small group of docents at the exhibit, titled "My Brother's Keeper," that the Chicago Jewish Historical Society was formed. He is thus a "founding father" in the real sense of the term.

## Honor Elsie Sang for Gift of Documents of American Jewish Life

Several hundred prominent members of Chicago Jewry were present on May 12 to join the American and Chicago Jewish Historical Societies in honoring Mrs. Philip D. Sang of Chicago for her contribution of 1200 rare and important items of American Jewish historical interest to the American Jewish Historical Society in Massachusetts.

The ceremony honoring Elsie Sang was held at the Chicago Historical Society building in Lincoln Park on the occasion of the publication of a descriptive catalog of the contributions, part of a priceless collection of Americana collected through several decades by her late husband. Other parts of that collection now grace important university libraries around the country, but most of the items related to Jews in American history have been giv-

## A Message from President Schwartz

Dear Fellow Members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society:

I thank you for giving me the honor of serving as your new president. I am confident that, with your help, we can continue to save for future generations the inspiring record of the Jews of Chicago. The more we learn about the history of our Jewish people, the more we feel it is important to preserve it. The members of the Board of Directors who give of their time and knowledge make this a stimulating opportunity for us all.

Norman D. Schwartz

## JUNE BRUNCH AT SPERTUS OPEN ONLY TO SOCIETY MEMBERS

A special brunch open only to members was featured as the CJHS June meeting. Held at noon at Spertus College on June 3, the intimate gathering served as the annual meeting at which new board members were elected and new officers installed.

The meeting also served as an opportunity to bid farewell to CJHS founder and out-going president Rachel Heimovics and her husband John, who are moving to Florida. Entertainment was provided by the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band.

Arrangements for the meeting were made by Muriel and Burt Robin. "Although we believe in opening most of our meetings to all interested persons, we especially enjoyed the smaller gathering which provided the officers and board with an opportunity to really spend time with the group that constitutes the heart of the Society--its loyal members," said Muriel, the Society's founding president.

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en to the American Jewish Historical Society.

Mrs. Sang was presented with a bound volume of the catalog at the ceremonies which also marked the opening of the national meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society.

She and her husband have also distinguished themselves through philanthropic and leadership activities locally and nationally in both Jewish and secular activity. She is a longtime member of the AJHS board, which her husband at one time headed.

## Society Member Publishes Book On Jewish Family Genealogy

A major work to assist persons re-searching Jewish family histories has been compiled and published by CJHS member David S. Zubatsky. JEWISH GENEALOGY: A Sourcebook of Family Histories and Genealogies, by Zubatsky and Irwin M. Berent, published by Garland Publishing, New York, identifies and locates 6300 genealogies, family trees and family histories of 3500 Jewish family names.

Included are bibliographic references culled from books, journals, archives and newspapers in the United States, Europe, Israel and elsewhere citing both published and unpublished Jewish family name information.

Dr. Zubatsky is a professional library and bibliographic consultant formerly based in Champaign. He is currently associated with the Online Computer Library Center in Ohio. Berent is a professional genealogist who is currently on special assignment to the Chicago Jewish Archives of the Asher Library of Spertus College.

Copies are available from Dr. Zubatsky at 150 Corbins Mill Dr., Dublin, Ohio 43017 at \$30.00 each plus postage.

## More Members Join the Society

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society welcomes the following new members who have joined in the last two months. They are helping to keep alive Chicago's Jewish heritage as well as brightening the days of their lives.

Gerald Adelman  
Ann Barzel  
Frances Century  
B. Cohen (Mr. and Mrs.)  
Congregation Beth Shalom  
Harold Friedman  
Florence Garb  
Florence Goldberg  
Robert S. Jacobs  
Stuart Kalinsky  
Arnold Kuhn  
Labor Zionist Alliance  
Ruth Rubin  
Sarah Willis

Marian Cutler  
Membership Chairman

## CJHS Member Discovers Papers Of Rabbi Teller in Former Home

In the course of her real estate business, Bobby Moss was involved in the sale of the Oglesby Avenue residence formerly occupied by the late Rabbi Morris Teller, of South Side Hebrew Congregation, and his wife. The seller asked Bobby if she were interested in some old papers which had been left in the house through the years.

Of course, Bobby, an active member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, recognized the importance of the papers and arranged for their pickup by Moselle and Norman Schwartz. The papers include a wide variety of materials relating to Rabbi Teller's long career as spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Bezalel and South Side Hebrew Congregation on the south side of Chicago as well as some related to his earlier years in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The papers have been brought to the office of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, where they will be processed for placement in the Chicago Jewish Archives. There they will be available for use by scholars doing research.

## Daily Papers Quote from Article in 'Society News'

An article in a recent issue of Society News was quoted extensively in both of Chicago's metropolitan daily newspapers on May 7, when the subject of the article, Ida Margolis, died at the age of 88.

The article by Marian Cutler, which appeared in the June, 1983, issue, told the story of how Mrs. Margolis, a widowed shopkeeper in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago, came to be known as the "Mayor of 35th Street" because of her generosity and many kindnesses to her gentile customers and neighbors.

Among the paragraphs quoted was Mrs. Cutler's conclusion, "There are many organizations that try, with some success, to improve Jewish-Christian relations. But it is often unheralded individuals like this warm and caring 'Mayor of 35th Street,' Ida Margolis, who are truly leading the way."

Thanks to the Society News article, Mrs. Margolis' passing at least did not go unheralded.

# DEATH OF CURTIS MELNICK DEPRIVES SOCIETY OF EARLY LEADER

CJHS members recently joined countless other Chicagoans who mourned the death of Curtis C. Melnick, who died on April 22.

Although his citywide and indeed broader reputation rested primarily upon his important achievements as a teacher and administrator in public education, Society members were among the many who will remember him as one committed to Jewish education, Jewish community life and the preservation of Jewish history.

### Many Contributions to CJHS

A long-time member and board member of the Society, he had a particular interest in oral history and, fortunately, was himself recorded for posterity shortly before his death by the current oral history chairman, Sidney Sorokin. Dr. Melnick also spoke with his family at a CJHS meeting in March of 1981, when they recalled the Englewood Jewish community of the early years of this century. That too has been preserved on tape.

Dr. Melnick served thirty-eight years in the local public school system as a teacher, principal and senior administrator, retiring in 1975 as an associate superintendent of schools. He later served as a professor and dean of education at Roosevelt University.

### Active in Religious Education

He was educated at the University of Chicago and Harvard University. Throughout his years he was also active in religious education and at Congregation Rodfei Zedek.

The Society and the city at large regret the loss of a man rightly eulogized by his rabbi as a man of inspired leadership and total dedication.

I.J.S.

### Kopstein Oral History Tape

The March, 1984, Society News, which contained a listing of all tapes currently on file in the CJHS oral history project inadvertently failed to include the topics discussed on the tape made by Esther Kopstein. Mrs. Kopstein, daughter of the late Rabbi Saul Silber, provided important information and insights concerning the early Orthodox Jewish community in Chicago.



The Late  
Curtis C. Melnick

## CJHS PLAYS MAJOR ROLE AT MEETING OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The National Conference of the American Jewish Historical Society met in Chicago May 12 to 14. Our Society officially welcomed the delegates at a wine and cheese reception on Sunday afternoon, May 13, at Spertus College. Throughout the three-day event, CJHS board members played prominent roles, and other members served on the volunteer staff helping with a myriad of conference tasks.

The reception was the final stop of two bus-tours of Jewish Chicago operated for delegates by Leah Axelrod and Dr. Irving Cutler. The reception was chaired by Moselle and Norman Schwartz. Guests viewed a special exhibit of Chicago Jewish history from the Chicago Jewish Archives assembled by Elsie Orlinsky. The entire volunteer corps was coordinated by Janet Hagerup.

### Plan Network of Local Societies

Representatives from local and regional Jewish historical societies from throughout the United States attended special working sessions on Sunday and Monday in order to explore means for future networking and the possibility of establishing a new organization for local societies. Dr. Adele Hast, past president of CJHS, assumed a leadership role in these workshops.

Rachel Heimovics, CJHS president and member of the AJHS board of trustees, spoke on behalf of CJHS at the conference opening, Saturday evening, May 12, at the Chicago Historical Society. She said it was a very special honor to welcome delegates to Chicago.

The AJHS is a 92 year old organization and the oldest ethnic historical society in the United States. Its headquarters is in Waltham, Massachusetts.

## IN SEARCH OF . . . .

A Service for Those Individuals Seeking Information  
About Jews and Jewish Events in Chicago's Past

## Seeks Missing Mother

The following is reprinted from a recent issue of Reform Judaism in the hope that some Society member can help Ms. Madsen locate her mother.

I am trying to locate my mother and her family and would appreciate your help in circulating the information below to your readers.

Before her marriage, my mother's name was either Bessie or Betty Kaplan. According to my birth certificate, she was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1921. I believe that her father's name is David; her mother's name is unknown at this time. She has at least one sister, Helen, believed to be a bit younger, and at least two brothers, probably older and perhaps twins.

My mother married Harry Norman Madsen in Stuart, Florida, in 1942. I do not know where she spent the war years; but, when my father was mustered out in 1945 or 1946, they settled in Chicago where I was born in 1949.

My parents parted, apparently bitterly, in 1951 or 1952. In 1953 she vanished. I was raised by my father's family in Audubon, Iowa; attended Brandeis University in the late 1960s; and am now an attorney working in the Domestic Relations Court in Denver, Colorado.

I would very much like to meet my mother or her surviving family--or even just learn a little more about them. If any of your readers has any information, please write to me.

Patricia Anne Madsen  
1445 Birch Street  
Denver, Colorado 80220

## World's Fair Beauty Queen

Society board member Sidney Sorkin received the following letter from the president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Can any reader help? If so, write to Mr. Applebaum.

With regard to my research, let me give you the following details: The story concerns a Mary and Solomon Lenhoff, a married couple who separated in 1894 but were reunited 10 years later. An account of their marital fortunes was given in the (Detroit) Evening News of January 3, 1905. According to the paper, Mrs. Lenhoff won some sort of prize at the 1893 World's Fair, but I haven't been able to confirm any of the details. This is how the newspaper put it:

As May Stubensky, Mrs. Lenhoff was a girl of exceptional beauty. In 1893, a year after her marriage, she won first prize in the world's fair beauty contest, being declared the handsomest woman of her race.

I'm assuming "of her race" means the Jews. Can you see if anyone in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society has any knowledge of ethnic beauty contests being held at the 1893 World's Fair? Perhaps there was something on May (or Mary) Stubensky in one of the local papers Jewish and general. Whatever information you can provide will be appreciated.

Thanks again for your offer to help. I hope we meet again.

Phillip Applebaum  
24680 Rensselaer  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

**society news**

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President . . . . .Norman D. Schwartz  
Editor . . . . .Irwin J. Suloway

## Editorial Board

Marian Cutler, Rachel Heimovics,  
Mark Mandle, Burt Robin, Sidney Sorkin

## APRIL MEETING LEARNS OF CHANGES IN DIRECTION OVER PAST 40 YEARS

### Rabbi Ralph Simon Traces Several Encouraging Local Developments

Rabbi Ralph Simon of Congregation Rodfei Zedek discussed major changes in the Chicago Jewish community during the past forty years at the April 8 meeting of the Society. Addressing a large crowd gathered at Spertus College, he chose not to discuss such obvious topics as physical and social mobility or changes in financial or professional status but rather to concentrate instead on some basic but perhaps less obvious changes in the direction of local Jewish life.

He commented that these local changes in direction took place against the broader background of changes in world Jewish life more far-reaching than any since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.--the holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel.

#### Emphasizes Unity, Zionism and Education

Looking over the past two generations from his vantage point as an influential rabbi and community leader, Rabbi Simon chose to emphasize (1) the change from widespread concern with ethnicity to unity in local Jewish life, (2) the shift in local attitudes toward Zionism and Israel, and (3) changes in Jewish education in the Chicago area.

He recalled how forty years ago Jews identified very strongly with their ethnic backgrounds, not only German Jews as opposed to East European Jews, but also the Polish as opposed to the Russians, the Hungarians as opposed to Roumanians and so on.

#### Ethnic Background Once Basic

He reminded his audience of the ethnic orientations of synagogues, burial grounds and landsmanshaften but focused mainly on social clubs, such as the Standard and Covenant Clubs, which emphasized the social importance of ethnic origins; and upon charitable groups and philanthropy. In the latter groups, because of the difference in kashruth observance among ethnic groups, separate orphanages, hospitals and homes for the aged had to be main-



Rabbi Ralph Simon with President Heimovics --Photo by Moselle Schwartz

tained even by the already unified Jewish charity organization. Similar differences in attitudes toward Zionism also fragmented philanthropic appeals for funds.

During the past forty years all this has changed to such an extent that ethnic origin plays no important role in any of these institutions, and the local Jewish population is basically a unified one in all communal areas except religious observance. He considers this a wonderful and encouraging advancement.

#### Zionism No Longer a Divisive Factor

Rabbi Simon similarly traced the impact the founding and support of Israel has had as a unifying factor for area Jews, reminding his younger listeners that forty years ago Zionism had important and vocal opponents in our community. On few other topics have area Jews been so united in recent years.

His summary of encouraging local changes during the past two generations concluded with the degree to which Chicago Jews have embraced organized Jewish education and traced its development from its earlier total synagogue orientation to its present position as a concern of the broader community. He touched upon the growth of the Board of Jewish Education, the metamorphosis of the College of Jewish Studies into Spertus College of Judaica, Hebrew high schools and the growth of the Jewish day schools.

#### Not All Changes Were Encouraging

As the rabbi himself indicated and the question period which followed confirmed, all is not perfect for Chicago Jews and some changes have not been welcome ones, but the CJHS audience left the meeting encouraged by what they heard and vastly impressed by the knowledge, the insight and the personality of the speaker.

I.J.S.

## Summer Tour Plans [cont'd]

[Continued from Page 1]

Avenue) and at 12:30 at the Horwich JCC and return to both places in the late afternoon. It will include visits to several synagogues to see a variety of architectural styles, religious objects, artistic decoration and museum collections. Because the tour will take somewhat longer than usual, participants might wish to bring along a snack.

### Milwaukee Has Active Jewish Community

The Milwaukee tour on August 26 will be an all-day tour and promises to be an especially interesting one as the active Jewish community there provides an opportunity to explore synagogues, museums and other institutions. The tour leader, Mrs. Axelrod, is a Milwaukee native. A kosher lunch will be available at the Jewish Community Center in Milwaukee at extra cost, or individuals may choose to bring a box lunch. The tour leaves at 9:00 AM from the Marriott Hotel downtown and at 9:30 from the Horwich JCC and will return to both places in the late afternoon.

### Rates for Various Tours

The afternoon tours cost \$9.00 each for members and \$12.00 for non-members, while the all-day Milwaukee tour costs \$15.00 for members and \$18.00 for non-members. Children receive reduced rates as indicated on the reservation form on page eleven. Non-members may save money by joining the Society at the time reservations are sent in. Annual dues begin at \$15.00 per person or couple with senior citizen dues beginning at \$10.00.

### Early Reservations Advised

Since both Mrs. Axelrod and Dr. Cutler are interesting and knowledgeable tour leaders well known to CJHS membership, it is expected that the tours will fill quickly. Reservations are therefore essential and early reservations are advised. Checks must accompany all reservations.

"This is Mrs. Axelrod's eighth consecutive season as tour chairman for the Society, and we are grateful to her for the many enjoyable experiences she has provided CJHS members," said ex-President Rachel Heimovics. "Each year they seem to get better, and I'm sure this year will be no exception."

## Record of A. G. Becker's Integrity Preserved on Oral History Tapes

"A. G. Becker--A Man of Honor." So reads the caption on the editorial in the Chicago Journal of Commerce of May 16, 1925.

In 1893 there was a bank panic and many widows and orphans lost money which they had invested in the firm for which Mr. A. G. Becker worked. The firm went bankrupt. He took upon himself the duty to pay back from his own personal funds all the money those widows and orphans had lost.

I had heard part of this story about A. G. Becker, but I wanted to fill in the details. Fortunately, I was recently able to meet with Mr. Herbert Schaffner, a broker with the company bearing Becker's name, who was kind enough to give me his personal recollections of the man whom the editorial identified as "one who has consistently exhibited an integrity which not only has met all the demands of the law and all the requirements of common morals but has gone far beyond them."

I also learned of Mr. Schaffner's own involvement in the Jewish community as an officer and later as president of the Young Men's Jewish Charities, as president of the Jewish Vocational Service, and as treasurer of Michael Reese Hospital.

That conversation is now on tape in the CJHS Oral History collection for those interested in Chicago Jewish history.

Norman D. Schwartz

## Two CJHS Leaders Are Honored For Contributions to Community

Members of the Society have yet additional reasons for pride in their organization's leadership as another two CJHS leaders have been honored for contributions to the local Jewish community. Most recent recipients of honors are Leah Axelrod and Sol Brandzel.

Mrs. Axelrod, a CJHS founder and chairman of the summer tours program, was recently honored by the North Suburban District of the Jewish Family and Community Service for her contributions to the

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## CJHS Leaders Honored [cont'd]

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Jewish community and in particular her recent service as co-president of Congregation B'nai Torah Sisterhood. The ceremony took place on the Third Annual Jewish Women's Day on April 29.

Mr. Brandzel was honored by the Educators Division of the Jewish United Fund at its annual meeting on May 16 at Spertus

College of Judaica. A founder of CJHS and its incoming treasurer, he was honored for his many-faceted services to public education, which included years of service on the governing board of the Chicago City Colleges as well as his years as a member and his recent presidency of the Chicago Board of Education.

We're grateful that these two busy individuals take the time to work so hard for the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

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1984 CJHS TOUR RESERVATION FORM

Mail with check (payable to CJHS) to Mrs. Leah Axelrod, 2100 Linden, Highland Park, IL 60035

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Please make the following reservations for CJHS Summer Tours: (indicate how many for each tour)

\_\_\_\_\_ seats for Chicago Jewish Roots, July 15

\_\_\_\_\_ seats for North Shore Synagogues, July 29

\_\_\_\_\_ seats for Jewish Milwaukee, August 26 (all day)

## Kinds of Reservations

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$9.00 each for CJHS members

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$15.00 each for CJHS members (Milwaukee tour)

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$4.00 each for member's children

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$12.00 each for member's children (Milwaukee tour)

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$12.00 each for non-members

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$18.00 each for non-members (Milwaukee tour)

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$5.00 each for non-member's children

\_\_\_\_\_ at \$13.00 each for non-member's children (Milwaukee tour)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

NOTE: Non-members paying dues now are entitled to members' rates. Annual membership begins at \$15.00 for individuals/couples and \$10.00 for senior citizens. If CJHS membership dues are included in check, indicate name, address and phone number of new members on reverse side of this form.

(Additional information is available from Mrs. Axelrod at 423-7003 or CJHS at 663-5634.)

SEE YOU ON THE BUS!