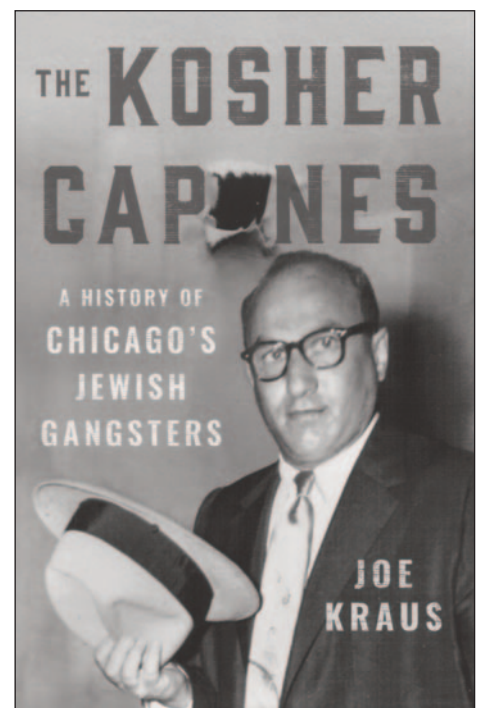
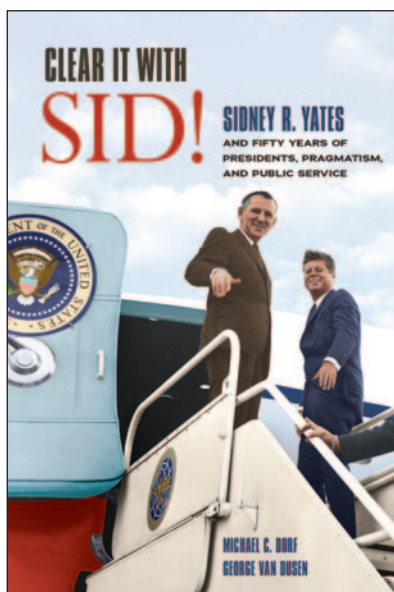
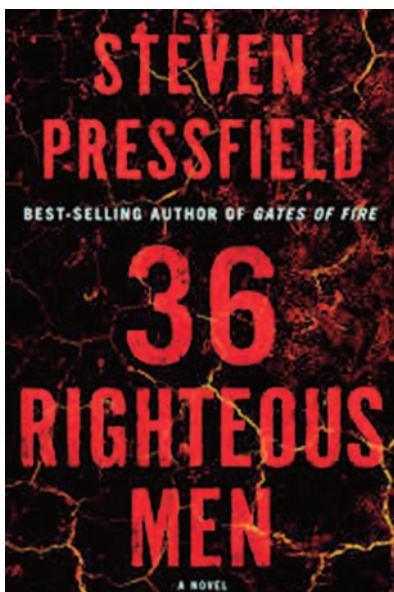
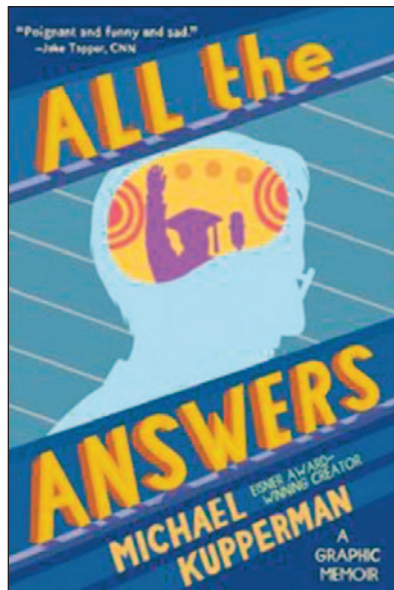
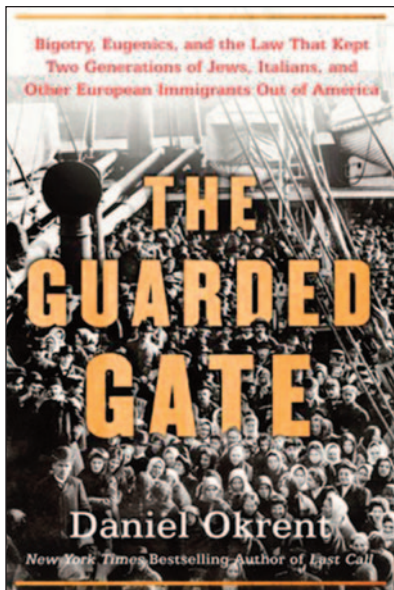




CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

The Annual Book Issue



**IMMIGRANTS, LAMED-VOVNIKS, A QUIZ KID,
A CONGRESSMAN, A CARTOONIST and Gangsters**

CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The multicolored sunset was magnificent. It started to appear minutes after I lit Shabbat candles, and I gazed at it until the sky turned dull and dark. How fortunate I am to witness such beauty, I thought.



Dr. Rachelle Gold.

This is the time of year in which gratitude is the focus of our lives as Jews and as Americans. For me, the autumn Jewish holidays are so powerful because they are sober and humbling, but ultimately celebratory. We are summoned to appreciate what we have and to look forward with optimism and hope. In a parallel way, the American holiday of Thanksgiving reinforces this experience.

I want to share with you some reflections about gratefulness within the context of being a Jewish Chicagoan and a relatively new leader of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. But first, some words about Jewish origins of Thanksgiving and its establishment as an American holiday. William Bradford, who arrived on the Mayflower and later became governor of Plymouth Colony, composed an account of his experiences, *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

He wrote that the Pilgrims were obligated by Scripture to thank God, citing Psalm 107.

In a 2013 essay, Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik points out that Psalm 107 is the same source used by Jews for the *halacha* (Jewish law) of the *todah* (thanksgiving) offering in the Temple. Soloveichik concludes, "...it is not too much of a leap to draw an intellectual link between the *todah* and the Thanksgiving that we know today."

Thanksgiving was proclaimed an American holiday by President George Washington on October 3, 1789, "...a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by the People of the United States by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God..." It was observed on November 26th until it became fixed as the fourth Thursday of November by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939.

One of the benefits of the study of history is a heightened admiration for the struggles and achievements of our predecessors. This is true of the Chicago Jewish community, among others. We learn of determination, courage, faith, effort, risk-taking, sacrifice, resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity. As we learn about the past, we are humbled by the complicated process of change and the roles of individuals and groups that built our community.

I never cease to be struck by the contributions of people in all walks of life, from the everyday to the prominent, who comprise our history. You have been reading their stories (often related firsthand in endearing memoirs) in *Chicago Jewish History* for more than forty years.

Our Illinois Bicentennial series, begun in 2018, "Beyond Chicago: Illinois Jewish Roots," is a recent example. The latest installment begins on page 18.

In our own community of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, gratitude is due to the founders and leaders, the members and supporters who have sustained it, and to the people who have brought their varied skills and talents to the work of the Society. They are my inspiration and role models.

Last month we showed our gratitude by honoring the memory of our president emeritus, Walter Roth *z"l* with a special tribute program on November 24th. It featured a talk by the author of a new biography of Ben Hecht, one of Walter's favorite writers. Walter Roth's devotion and contributions to the CJHS — as a scholar, writer, enthusiast, and leader—were innumerable. His discovery of untold stories and unsung individuals, which he wrote about with prolific flair, greatly enhanced our appreciation for our history.

We are indebted to another pillar of the Society, Muriel Rogers *z"l*, who passed away in November. She was a dynamic force who was instrumental in the creation of the Society and served as its founding president. Her active involvement continued for nearly forty years. Read the eulogy by her close friend and past CJHS president Rachel Heimovics on page 23.

Finally, I am certain that you join me in expressing gratitude to a Society mainstay whose role is changing at the end of 2019. This issue of *Chicago Jewish History* is the last one to be edited and designed by Bev Chubat. We are enormously grateful for her twenty-one years of stewardship of our award-winning journal, an outstanding gem and resource for our community. We thank her and wish her all the best.



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Chicago Jewish History

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Submissions: Request guidelines at info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

EXHIBITIONS

^Oakton Community College Koehnline Museum of Art
1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois

From Sorrow to Triumphant Joy: The Art of David Bekker Through January 24, 2020

Museum Hours Monday – Friday, 10 – 6; Saturday, 11– 4

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Talmudic Study, Undated, Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in., Private collection.

David Bekker (1897-1956) was born in Vilna, Poland. In Chicago during the Great Depression and beyond, he created powerful images on Jewish themes in paintings, prints, murals, and stained glass windows.

Ground Level Arts Lab

Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership,
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Linda Robinson Gordon | Ellen Holtzblatt

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Through January 19, 2020

Inspired by the natural world, the four contemporary artists delve into the relationships between the physical and the spiritual.

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Report: CJHS Program Sunday, August 19, 2019

After More Than a Century, Chicago's Jewish Arts Scene Continues to Thrive

ROBERT NAGLER MILLER

Since the 1880s, when Jews from Eastern Europe began arriving in Chicago in massive waves, they have left their imprint on the city's cultural institutions. This has been as true in the realm of the visual arts as it has been in the world of literature and the halls of academe and on the stages of the city's theaters.

Master printmaker and woodcut artist Todros Geller (1889–1949), a native of the Ukraine, and painter Aaron Bohrod (1907–1992), the son of a Bessarabia-born grocer, for instance, were among the most notable of Chicago's fine artists in the first half of the last century. In 1926, they became founding members of "Around the Palette," which later became known as the Chicago-based American Jewish Artists Club.

An exhibition of works by David Bekker, a member of that group, is opening soon. See details on Page 3.

A century later, Jewish artists in and around Chicago continue to make their mark—and CJHS members and friends have had a front-row, up-close look at the work of some of these painters, textile artists, photographers, and digital artists.

This past summer several dozen of us packed into the West Lakeview studio of husband-and-wife artists **Alan Hobscheid** and **Ellen Holtzblatt**, members of the Jewish Artists Collective Chicago (JACC), to learn about their and some of their colleagues' visual muses.

For Hobscheid, a professionally trained cartographer and draftsman who creates oil paintings, digital art, and photography, the image of the Leviathan—the sea monster referenced in various books of the Hebrew Bible—figures prominently into his work. A Jew by choice, Hobscheid said that he became fascinated by the concept of the Leviathan, "God's plaything," when he began studying for his conversion some twenty years ago, because it represented for him the "deep-in-the-ocean" unconscious.

Holtzblatt's art is deeply personal, based on memories, family lore, and photographs. Many of her large-scale oil paintings, part of her *Yizkor* series completed over the past decade, depict her parents and grandparents. They are "symbolic representations of the juncture of physical transience and Jewish ancestry," she has written. Frequently, Holtzblatt noted, the pictures also include birds in the background or foreground.

As she explained to her CJHS audience, "Birds are like angels, bringing messages to people."

Ellen Holtzblatt is included in the current exhibition in the Spertus Institute Ground Level Arts Lab.

Hobscheid and Holtzblatt were joined by three other JACC members, including **Judith Joseph**, the group's coordinator, who arranged the studio talk for the CJHS. A calligrapher and ketubah artist, as well as a painter, Joseph now creates woodcuts, which, she said, have "become my first love." But whatever medium in which she is immersed, such as her *Golem* woodblock print series, "Hebrew lettering is present," she said.

JACC member and textile artist **Berit Engen**, a native of Norway, presented a small portion of her ongoing series, *WOOF & D'RASH—Weaving a Thousand Jewish Tapestries*. Her small-scale linen panels, created on a loom, touch on every part of her own Jewish experience, which began before she converted to Judaism years ago and has continued to the present. D'rash, she notes on her website, "is a Hebrew term meaning both inquiry and commentary," and she finds "inspiration in all that the Jewish experience encompasses: from the laws of the Torah to the words of living poets." Since she embarked on the project in 2007, she has completed more than five hundred and fifty panels.

Hidden Jewish origins are a force that painter and JACC member **Carol Neiger** reckons with in many of her works, such as "the mysteries behind the windows of Inquisition-era homes in Portugal and Spain, where Jews may have lived seven hundred or so years ago." Even the traces of where a mezuzah may have been nailed to a doorpost in the fourteenth century are fertile ground for her painterly imagination. "We can only imagine what was left behind," Neiger said.

The twelve-member Jewish Artists Collective Chicago was formed in 2015, an outgrowth of the Spertus Institute's inaugural cohort of its Midwest Artists Lab. Joseph noted in her introductory remarks that the JACC is among a number of thriving Jewish artists' groups throughout the world, which also include the New York-based Jewish Art Salon; RIMON: the Minnesota Jewish Arts Council; and the Jewish Artists Initiative of Southern California (JAI). ❖

Read about Robrt Nagler Miller, the incoming editor/designer of *Chicago Jewish History*, on the facing page.



The Artists:

1. ALAN HOBSCHIED
2. BERIT ENGEN
3. CAROL NEIGER
4. ELLEN HOLTZBLATT
5. JUDITH JOSEPH

Photograph of Berit Engen
by Rachelle Gold. The other four
by Robert Nagler Miller.

ROBERT NAGLER MILLER

is delighted to assume the post of editor/designer of *Chicago Jewish History* in January 2020 after the long reign of the estimable Bev Chubatz, who, he humbly acknowledges, will be a hard act to follow. Robert, a native New Yorker, returned to Chicago almost four years ago after a twenty-five-year hiatus. He is a seasoned writer and editor, as well as a longtime nonprofit communications professional who worked for many years in the Jewish communities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. A graduate of Wesleyan University, Robert also holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University. He lives near Andersonville, on Chicago's North Side, with his husband, retired psychotherapist Dr. Arnold Friedlander.

Learn more about Robert at
www.robertnaglermiller.com
robertnaglermiller@gmail.com

Report: CJHS Program Sunday, October 27, 2019

Discovery of Father's WWII Letters Sparked Research on Jewish GIs Who Guarded German POWs in the USA

When Dr. Michael J. Greenberg was cleaning out his parents' condo in California prior to their move to an assisted living facility, he found a box of letters his father had written to his fiancée (later his wife, Michael's mother) during his US Army service in WWII. Fifty of the letters were sent

from Clinton Prisoner of War Camp in Mississippi in 1944.

What began as an interest in this never-discussed part of his father's service blossomed into a full-fledged research project on the diverse experiences of many Jewish GIs who found themselves serving in American POW camps for German soldiers.

The result, to date, is the book *Tables Turned on Them*, an overview of which Greenberg presented in a video at Emanuel Congregation. See the listing in the Book Section.



Sgt. Arthur Greenberg, 4408th Service Unit, Clinton POW Camp, MS.
Collection of Dr. Michael J. Greenberg.

Welcome New Members of the Society

Scott Aaron
Chicago, IL

Diane Blumenthal
La Jolla CA

Lynda Brodsky &
Jacob Pomeranz
Chicago, IL

Michael & Edith Cohen
Bannockburn, IL

Joel Goldberg
Highland Park, IL

Miryam S. Harris
Chicago, IL

Alan Hobscheid &
Ellen Holtzblatt
Chicago, IL

Edythe Kleinman
Northbrook, IL

Julie Lasin
Chicago, IL

Della Leavitt
Chicago, IL

Roberta Levin
Chicago, IL

Kathy Raffetto
Chicago, IL

Joel & Jeri Rothman
Wilmette, IL

Sam & Jill Shponka
Skokie, IL

Barbara Zuckerman
Riverwoods, IL

CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

The Hebrew phrase means "More Power to You."

CJHS Past President **Dr. Edward H. Mazur** has been appointed to the Chicago Police Foundation Board. This is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to providing supplemental resources in technology, training, and safety equipment to the Chicago Police Department, to enhance public safety and help build stronger community trust.

Mazur delivered a one-hour talk titled "Perspectives of Jewish Chicago: From The 1830s to Today" to an adult education class at Bernard Horwich JCC. He continues to chair meetings of the City Club of Chicago.

On Sunday, September 15, 2019, CJHS members **Robb and Fern Packer** attended a ceremony at Buddy Guy's Legends inducting Fern's father, Bernard Abrams, into the Chicago Blues Hall of Fame.

In 1945 Abrams converted his family residence at 831 Maxwell Street into a business called Maxwell Radio, TV and Record

Mart. He founded the Ora-Nelle record label and made the first recordings of legendary blues musicians Muddy Waters, Johnny Young, Jimmy Rogers, and Little Walter in a small booth at the back of the shop. These demo records helped launch their careers.



Photo: Collection of George Paulus.

“Kibbutz Buchenwald” Holocaust Survivors Thanked Jewish Chicagoan for Helping Them to Reach Eretz-Israel



**Lt. Col. Alex H. Rosenbaum
in post-WWII Germany.**

Collection of David N. Rosenbaum.



The Gehringshof is located on the southwestern edge of the district of Hattenhof, a district of Neuohof in the district of Fulda in eastern Hesse. The Gehringshof is a now unused former agricultural estate. From 1929 to 1941 and again from 1945 to 1948 it was an agricultural training center [hachshara] for Jews emigrating from Germany to Palestine.—*Wikipedia*

Alex Rosenbaum's family was proud of his US Army service. They knew that in 1945 he had assisted a group of young liberated inmates of the Buchenwald concentration camp with transportation as they made their way from the Gehringshof to Eretz-Israel, calling themselves Kibbutz Buchenwald.

One of Alex's nephews, CJHS member Jeffrey Graubart, knew that the group had presented a handmade album to his Uncle Al, and that Al's son Wally (now deceased) had donated it to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Earlier this year Graubart contacted the museum and was told that pages of the album were eligible for digitization. He requested jpeg scans, and he emailed them to the CJHS.

The album is inscribed in Hebrew and English. It includes a group photograph of the kibbutz members. Other pages have lines from a Yiddish song by Mordecai Gebirtig, who was murdered in the Krakow ghetto in 1942, and a song about Buchenwald by violinist Percy (Peretz) Brand, a liberated inmate who later immigrated to Boston in the US.

Alex Rosenbaum (1902-1973) was born in Stashev, Poland, and immigrated to America with his family as a child, so he could communicate with the kibbutzniks in Yiddish. He resided in Evanston and practiced law in Chicago.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The Lt. Col. Alexander H. Rosenbaum Collection.

**Document | Accession Number: 1996.15. Gift of Wallace Rosenbaum.
1996.15_001_001_0002.jpg and 1996.15_001_001_0007.jpg**



A Life in Pursuit of Birds

JOEL R. GREENBERG

I have been interested in animals as far back as I can remember. My wonderful parents, Sam and Miriam, kept me well-supplied with books and Steiff stuffed toys. Zoos were frequent destinations; horseback riding lessons were attended at the McCoys on Harms Road (now the Glen Grove Equestrian Center). On vacations we avoided places like Sun Valley (my dad's preference) in favor of my choice, Craters of the Moon National Monument, which offered a wider range of wildlife. At the age of five or so I announced that when I grew up, I wanted to be a farmer, an unusual aspiration I am guessing for a Jewish kid in Skokie in the early 1960s (my second career choice was veterinarian).

We lived in the eastern part of Skokie, which was part of Evanston's District 65. During the 1966-67 academic year, I attended seventh grade at the now defunct Skiles Junior High, built on the grassy banks of the North Shore Channel. Fortunately, in addition to all the required courses, students could choose one or two electives a semester. "Audubon: Outdoor Education" seemed created for me.

One assignment involved writing a report on a local bird. I wanted my subject to be a rare species, so I called the Field Museum of Natural History and asked for some possibilities. I have no idea who I spoke with there, but he or she was very helpful, suggesting several options, and most importantly, recommending that I obtain the book *Chicagoland Birds: Where and When to Find Them* by Ellen Thorne Smith. I wound up selecting the Kirtland's warbler, a bird that back then bred exclusively in a few Michigan counties and had shown up in northern Illinois only a handful of times. (I can't refrain from mentioning that the story of the Kirtland's involves the notorious Nathan Leopold.)

Not too long thereafter, I was browsing in the Kroch's and Brentano's bookstore in Old Orchard, while other family members shopped for items much less alluring to me, when I came upon Smith's slender volume. It consists of bar graphs indicating the abundance of a species at any given time in eight or so key areas scattered across the Chicago region. These locales included the Indiana Dunes, Illinois Beach State Park, the Illinois and Michigan Canal, and sections of various forest preserves.

Given that my birthday and Hanukkah were on the horizon, my mother promised to take me to each of the areas as a present. My father, taking a skeptical but correct view, pointed out that even if the book says golden eagles are regular visitors at Illinois Beach in November we would neither know where to look or be able to identify one even if we should encounter it.

In his perusal of *Chicagoland Birds* he came upon a brief mention of what were then the area's two principal birding groups, the Chicago Ornithological Society and the Evanston North Shore Bird Club. The phone number for the Evanston group was the Evanston Public Library, where librarian Louise Borchelt provided me with information on the club. (Through her efforts Evanston had one of the best bird book collections of any local library.) The most impactful information she left us was the name and phone number of Richard Horwitz, then a senior in high school.

Being somewhat shy back then (hard to believe), I was reluctant for my dad to phone, but he did, and Rich said he would let me know when he next planned to go birding.

I usually spent Saturday mornings watching such television shows as *Fury*, *My Friend Flicka*, and *Sky King*, and that November 19th started out no differently. But Rich's call saying that he would pick me up in an hour changed everything.

We headed out to the Skokie Lagoons and saw birds previously unknown to me—a hooded merganser, a Bonaparte's gull, and a Wilson's snipe. But the barb that hooked me was the long-eared owl, a pair of which were roosting in a spruce tree in the front yard of a house in Northbrook. (A few words on Rich: he received his BS at Cornell University and his doctorate at The University of Chicago, after which he has spent his career at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University in Philadelphia.)

Neither of my parents was a birder but they both devoted themselves to their children. In March 1967 we went on our first cross-country birding trip when my mom took my sister and me to Grand Island, Nebraska, to see the huge flocks of sandhill cranes that gather along the Platte River in the spring.

One January, my late friend Bob Russell took the three of us up to Duluth, Minnesota, to see the winter visitors that don't get as far south as Illinois. To keep my sister interested, I offered her money for every new species she could find. The top price was \$50 for an ivory gull, an arctic species whose presence in the Midwest was so unlikely that I was sure I wouldn't have to pay off. Her principal recollection of the trip was that we got stuck in an icy ditch, while my memories are more of an avian nature. Although as an adult she claims it was to her detriment that she was dragged along on all these trips, she was a sport through most of it, even spotting target birds on occasion.

In the summer of 1971, my mother made an even more generous offer to advance my growing passion for birds. If a genuine rarity showed up anywhere within a thousand miles we would make the effort to see it. This led over the course of two years to three round trips of 1,670 miles to the Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge (now Edwin Forsythe NWR) in New Jersey.

The last trip was one I went with my dad. Our target bird was a spotted redshank, a European sandpiper that had crossed the Atlantic on only a few known occasions. When we arrived early in the morning, I dropped my dad off at the motel and headed off to the refuge to look at the observation sheet where visitors would write comments. I learned that the bird we had driven all this way for was very likely just a common species that was spotted with oil.

There is an extended punchline to this story. Some years later a birding friend (I will call her Rachel), a veterinary student at the University of Illinois in Urbana, called me to say that she had just observed a very rare yellow rail in a nearby cattail marsh. Yellow rails do not usually hang out in such a habitat, while a similar and much more common species often does. Still, my mom and I drove the two hours to meet my friend at her dorm. Mom stayed in the car, and I went up to get Rachel. I found her in tears, just sobbing. As I approached her, she backed away, fearing that I would strike her. It turned out that she had returned to look at the bird after phoning me and realized it was the more expected sora rail.

Years later Rachel told the tale to another birder, who replied, "That's nothing. There were people who drove from Chicago to New Jersey to see a bird that had been misidentified." "I know," said Rachel. "It was Joel and his father." (I want to reassure everyone that this suppurating wound finally healed when I *did* see a genuine spotted redshank many years later in Indiana.)



The author and a great gray owl.

However it was that first peregrination to Brigantine that proved to have the greatest importance on my life. We were also looking for a European shorebird, in that instance a black-tailed godwit. Not only did I see the bird (albeit briefly), but I met Ted Parker, who would become one of the foremost authorities on the birds of South America (he died young in a plane crash while surveying habitat in the Andes). Ted was entering his freshman year of college in the late summer of 1971 while I was headed to my senior year of high school. I had no definite plans as to where I wanted to go, but Ted was adamant there was only one choice: The University of Arizona. The birding is great in southeast Arizona, and you are close to California, Texas, and Mexico.

So when the time came, I applied to that school and Ted and I became roommates. I would attend two more colleges for the same reason: they had new birds for me to see. I do admit that the places I applied to for law and graduate school were selected for more traditional reasons and I returned to the Midwest. But birding, and my expanded interest in other realms of natural history, have largely colored everything I have done since. Indeed, if it had not been for my attachment to these subjects, and the books I have written about them, I would never have met the most wonderful editor of this journal. And without her, this article would never have been written. ❖

JOEL R. GREENBERG is a member of the CJHS. His books are listed on the pages of "Our Authors." Joel is currently working on his next book, tentatively titled *To Life: Jews Exploring Nature*. And when a bird that would be new for his Illinois list shows up, as several have this year, he tends to drop whatever he is doing and chase it, with mixed results.



Sidney R. Yates. Spertus Institute, Chicago, n.d.

CLEAR IT WITH SID! Sidney R. Yates and Fifty Years of Presidents, Pragmatism, and Public Service. By Michael C. Dorf and George Van Dusen. University of Illinois Press, 2019.

Reviewed by Jacob M. Kaplan

When Sidney Yates retired from Congress in 1999, he had devoted fifty years to government service, forty-eight of them as Representative of the 9th District of Illinois, one of the most reliably Democratic and Jewish Congressional districts in the country.

His work ethic and dogged determination to simply get the job done were evident from day one. Never the most vocal member of Congress, he worked hard behind the scenes, mastered parliamentary procedure, and became well-respected as knowledgeable on many issues among his colleagues. Never close to the Cook County Regular Democratic Organization, Yates quickly learned how to work with both regular and independent Democrats to forge a winning coalition.

The only break in his Congressional service was when he was persuaded to run for Senate against Republican Minority leader Everett Dirksen in 1962 before returning to the House after the 1964 election.

Yates worked respectfully with everyone, even those he vehemently disagreed with. During his longtime role as chair of the important Interior Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, Yates was not afraid to trade favors with Republicans or use earmarks and legislative pork to get something passed.

His skills as a politician were more than just tactical though—in a pinch, he could use the power of persuasion with many of his colleagues. Whether it was fighting the Republicans over the funding of the

National Endowment for the Arts (a continual Reagan-era battle), or convincing one of his conservative Democratic colleagues to vote for newly-elected President Clinton's tax increase on high income earners (it only passed by two votes!). Yates was a member whose opinion was respected by both sides of the aisle.

The authors reflect upon Yates' position as the senior Jewish member of Congress for many years. Yates represented a heavily Jewish district, but he never wanted to be pigeonholed as simply the "Jewish Congressman." Sometimes this created controversy with hardline members of the pro-Israel lobby. Yates strongly supported Israel and was a frequent advocate for its interests, yet he refused to be seen as "bought" on certain issues. He was often consulted by fellow members and Presidents, including Jimmy Carter, on matters involving Israel and the Middle East.

However, like so many other aspects of his career, Yates often conducted this business behind the scenes. He wanted to be seen as representing all of the concerns of his district and the country, not only Jewish ones.

A most valuable aspect of the book is the epilogue, where the authors comment on the often detrimental changes to the rules and culture of Congress in the years since Yates served. Some of these issues are complex, including earmarks, which were often criticized, yet helped keep Congressional legislation moving. Some are simple, like working across the aisle and treating others with respect. Yates served at a time when many members stayed in Washington over weekends, getting to know each other on a more personal basis. The authors suggest that this absence (as almost everyone sees the need to return to their district on the weekend) has led to more polarization and less collegiality.

Michael C. Dorf is a practicing lawyer and an adjunct professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He was Congressman Yates's Special Counsel in Washington and remained his lawyer and campaign chairman until the congressman's death.

George Van Dusen is Mayor of Skokie, Illinois, and an adjunct professor at Oakton Community College. He oversaw Yates's 9th District Operations for more than twenty-five years.

The authors will discuss *Clear It With Sid!* at a CJHS Open Meeting on March 22, 2020, 2:00 pm, at Beth Emet The Free Synagogue, 1224 Dempster Street, Evanston

Reviewer Jacob M. Kaplan is a Board member of the CJHS, Editor and Co-founder of Forgotten Chicago, and Executive Director of the Cook County Democratic Party.

THE BOOK SECTION

exploring the past - imagining a future

*Today books are available in many formats from many vendors, so we don't list prices, except for the ***starred selections on page 13** that can be purchased from the CJHS office.*

Some books are out of print, but reference copies may be found in libraries.

Most of our listed books can be purchased on the internet, but please also shop local bookstores!

THE GUARDED GATE: Bigotry, Eugenics and the Law That Kept Two Generations of Jews, Italians, and Other European Immigrants Out of America.

By Daniel Okrent. Scribner, 2019. Powerful, definitive, and timely account of how the rise of eugenics helped America close the immigration door to "inferiors" in the 1920s and kept "unwanted" groups out of the US for decades. 496 pages.

36 RIGHTEOUS MEN: A Novel.

By Steven Pressfield. Norton, 2020. Set in the year 2034, as the world tilts into climate chaos, two New York detectives are called upon to investigate a string of murders. When they apprehend a woman—a disgraced but brilliant rabbinical scholar—fleeing one of the crime scenes, they are brought face-to-face with the shocking truth: the Jewish legend of the hidden Righteous Men, the 36 who protect the world from destruction, is no legend at all. They are real, and they are being murdered. 340 pages.

THE KOSHER CAPONES: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters.

By Joe Kraus. Cornell University Press, 2019. The origin of this fascinating work occurred in the mid-1980s when the author's mother asked him to look into a rumor that her father, Max Miller, was a gangster who, along with his brothers Davey, Hirschie, and Harry, were caught up in Al Capone's Prohibition wars. Joe Kraus is a scholar—Professor of English and Chair of the Department of

ALL THE ANSWERS: A Graphic Memoir.

By Michael Kupperman. Gallery 13, 2018. The celebrated writer and artist traces the life of his reclusive father—Joel Kupperman. During WWII this Jewish boy from Chicago's Albany Park became one of the most famous children in America as the young genius on the radio series *Quiz Kids* with the uncanny ability to solve complex math problems in his head. 218 pages.

WE ATE WONDER BREAD: A Memoir of Growing Up on the West Side of Chicago.

By Nicole Hollander. Fantagraphics, 2018. Her syndicated comic strip *Sylvia* ran for thirty years. The characters and unique sense of humor that inhabited that progressive comic strip originated in the cartoonist's own childhood six-flat on Wilcox. Loaded with terrific illustrations, of course. 124 pages.



Softball team sponsored by the Roosevelt & Kedzie Restaurant, 3216 West Roosevelt Road. It was owned by Benjamin Zuckerman, "Zuckie the Bookie," (second from left, kneeling). The restaurant's previous owner was Davey Miller. The photo, first published in our Summer 2017 issue, incorrectly identified Zuckie as a barber and Davey as the restaurant's owner. Apologies!

English and Theatre at the University of Scranton; and co-author with Walter Roth of *An Accidental Anarchist*; and the previous editor of this journal. He left no page unturned or source unquestioned in a thirty-year pursuit of an aspect of Chicago Jewish history that has never been told so comprehensively. 225 pages.

We cheer the publication of this valuable resource by our former colleague and hope that we can welcome him for a presentation at a future CJHS open meeting.

new titles and rediscovered gems



A JEWISH COLONEL IN THE CIVIL WAR: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers. Edited by Jean Powers Soman and Frank L. Byrne. University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Marcus M. Spiegel, a German Jewish immigrant, served with the 67th and 120th Ohio Volunteer regiments. He saw action in Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. These letters to Caroline, his wife, reveal the traumatizing experience of a soldier and the constant concern of a husband and father. (Caroline Hamlin Spiegel was the first convert to Judaism in Chicago.) Spiegel was fatally wounded in battle in May 1864 in Louisiana, and his body was not recovered. His cenotaph is in the Hebrew Benevolent Cemetery in Chicago near the graves of his wife and children. Jean Soman, a great-great-granddaughter of Colonel Spiegel, is a Life Member of the CJHS. Paper, 353 pages.

THE NOTORIOUS BEN HECHT: Iconoclastic Writer and Militant Zionist. By Julien Gorbach. Purdue University Press, 2019. If you attended the CJHS open meeting on Sunday, November 24th, at Beth Emet the Free Synagogue, you were among more than a hundred members and guests captivated by Julien Gorbach's illustrated talk about Ben Hecht, the writer turned polemicist. But that was just a tasty nosh. This book is the whole meal. Dig in. Paper, 484 pages.

TABLES TURNED ON THEM. By Dr. Michael Greenberg. Page Publishing, 2019. Seventeen detailed biographical sketches and another fourteen snapshots of Jewish GIs who "turned the tables" on German prisoners of war by serving as their guards, caretakers, and physicians during World War II. Paper, 287 pages.

AN ACCIDENTAL ANARCHIST: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago's Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America. By Walter Roth and Joe Kraus. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1998.

The episode took place on a cold Chicago morning in March, 1908. A 19-year-old Jewish immigrant, Lazarus Averbuch, knocked on the door of the Near North Side home of Police Chief George Shippy. Minutes later, the boy lay dead, shot by Shippy himself. Why Averbuch went to the police chief's home and exactly what happened afterward is still not known. The book does not solve the mystery, rather the authors examine the many different perspectives and concerns that surrounded the investigation of Averbuch's killing. Illustrated. 212 pages.

A BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE OF THE PRAIRIE STATE: Readings from the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society. Edited by David W. Scott. Foreword by Leah Joy Axelrod. Southern Illinois University Press, 2018. More than thirty articles culled from the *ISHS* 110-year archive. 424 pages. The book includes suggestions for further reading and directs the reader to online articles via *JSTOR*. CJHS members are represented online: "A Regiment of Immigrants" by Eric Benjaminson was published in the Summer 2001 issue; "The 1847 Illinois Constitutional Convention" by Jerome B. Meites appeared in the Fall/Winter 2015 issue.



CALM SEA AND PROSPEROUS VOYAGE: The Selected Stories of BETTE HOWLAND.

Edited by Brigid Hughes. Afterward by Honor Moore. A Public Space Books, 2019. A mitzvah — reprinting the soulful writing of Jewish Chicagoan Bette Howland (1937-2017). 331 pages.

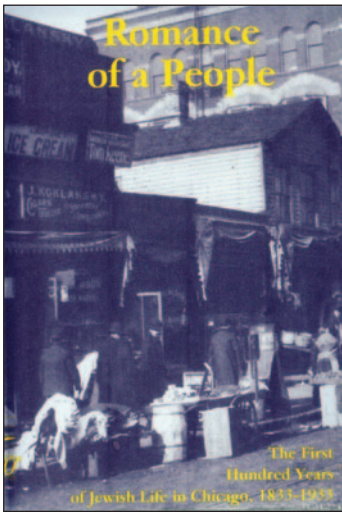
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LOOKING BACKWARD: True Stories from Chicago's Jewish Past.

By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2002. The unknown story of Jewish participation in the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 is only one of the fascinating nuggets of history unearthed and polished by Walter Roth in the pages of *Chicago Jewish History*. 305 pages. Paper. \$20*

AVENGERS AND DEFENDERS: Glimpses of Chicago's Jewish Past.

By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2008. The avenger in the title is Sholom Schwartzbard. He assassinated the Ukrainian nationalist leader Simon Petlura, whose followers were among the perpetrators of the post-WWI pogroms in Ukraine. Illustrated. 235 pages. Paper. \$20*



DVD: ROMANCE OF A PEOPLE: The First 100 Years of Jewish Life in Chicago: 1833-1933.

Beverly Siegel, Executive Producer-Director, 1997. Rare film footage, vintage photographs, sound recordings, and informative interviews combine to tell the story of the building of Chicago's Jewish community and its impact on the City of the Big Shoulders. Highlighted is the role of the early German-Jewish settlers in the development of some of the city's major cultural institutions, the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe, and the founding in Chicago of several national Jewish organizations. Includes a very brief bit of film footage of dancers in

the Jewish community's spectacular pageant, *The Romance of a People*, presented on Jewish Day at A Century of Progress, the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. Color and B&W. 30 minutes. \$30*

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF CHICAGO.

Edited by Hyman L. Meites. The Chicago Jewish Historical Society's 1990 facsimile of the original 1924 edition and supplementary excerpts from the 1927 edition. Introduction by James R. Grossman. Foreword by Thomas R. Meites and Jerome B. Meites. Hundreds of biographical entries; synagogue and organization histories; index. Black and white photographs and drawings. 856 pages.

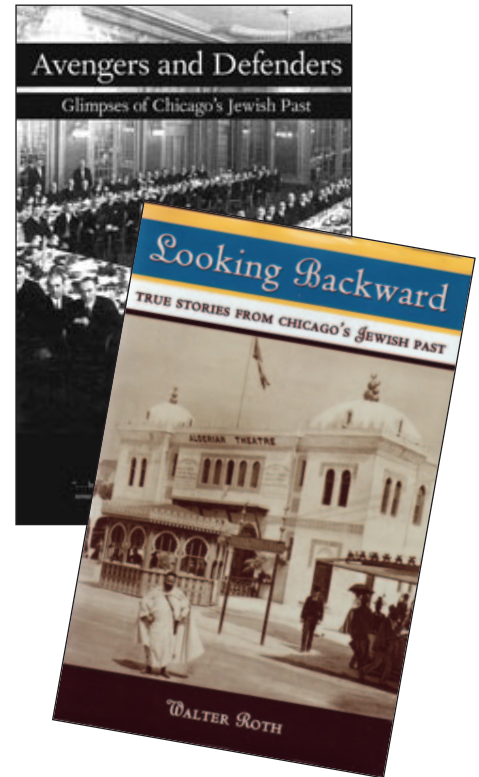
Limited Edition Sold Out. Reference copies can be found in the Asher Library of Spertus Institute, the Chicago Public Library, and other libraries.

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF CHICAGO Digitized.

Good news for researchers. The original 1924 edition is available online in the University of Florida Digital Collections. www.ufdc.ufl.edu.

A WALK TO SHUL: Chicago Synagogues of Lawndale and Stops on the Way.

By Bea Kraus and Norman D. Schwartz. 2003. 160 pages. **First Edition Sold Out.** Second Edition in preparation. Reference copies can be found at Spertus Institute and the Chicago Public Library.



SYNAGOGUES OF CHICAGO.

Edited by Irving Cutler, Norman D. Schwartz, and Sidney Sorkin. Project supervised by Clare Greenberg, 1991. A compilation of information on local synagogues, based on listings in Chicago city directories (1839 through 1928-29) and Chicago classified phone directories (1929-30 through 1992).

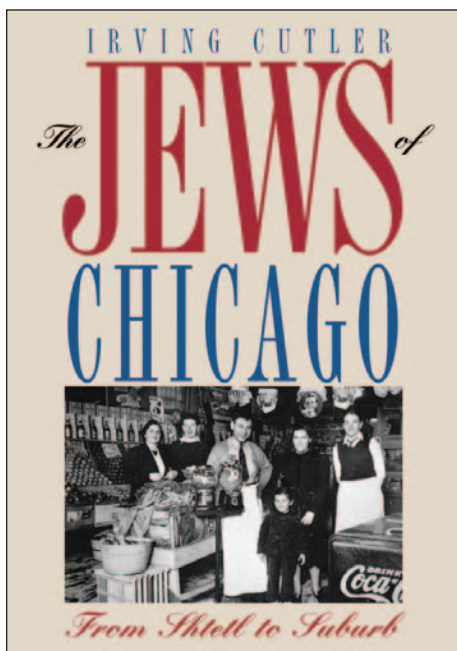
The information was entered into a computer database from microfilm prints of the directories located in the Chicago Municipal Reference Library. Entries were sorted into various categories, and separate lists were made: by year, by synagogue name, by address, by rabbi's name, and by congregation president. Three parts, spiral-bound paper.

CJHS Members \$90*

Non-Members \$100*

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REV. DR. EMIL G. HIRSCH: Early Ministry thru 1881. Compiled and Edited by his Grandson, Emil G. Hirsch, 3rd. Collage Books, Inc., 2014. Rare *Chicago Tribune* and *American Israelite* newspaper articles, 1866-1881. Paper, 304 pages.

MINYANS FOR A PRAIRIE CITY: The Politics of Chicago Jewry 1850-1914. By Edward H. Mazur. Garland Publishing, 1990. CJHS Past President Mazur displays his deep knowledge and youthful enthusiasm for our community's fascinating history. 428 pages.

REMEMBERING CHICAGO'S JEWS. By James Finn. CreateSpace, 2015. An encyclopedic compilation of the contributions to Chicago by Jews, 1832-1920. Complete with indexes searchable by events and fields of vocation. 518 pages.

CHICAGO'S ONLY CASTLE: The History of Givins' Irish Castle and Its Keepers. By Errol Magidson. Magidson LLC, 2017. Tells the stories of the five Castle "keepers." Their stories are tied to the history of Chicago from 1886 to the present. Over 400 images. Paper. 284 pages. **DVD:** Errol Magidson, producer and co-director; Joshua Van Tuyl, co-director. 2011. One hour, 26 minutes. www.chicagosonlycastle.org.

THE JEWS OF CHICAGO: From Shtetl to Suburb. By Irving Cutler. University of Illinois Press, 1996. The authoritative, vividly told history of Chicago's Jewish community by the professor emeritus of geography at Chicago State University and a founding board member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. 162 black and white images. 336 pages.

Arcadia Publishing: *Images of America*

Each book contains hundreds of black and white images. Paper, 128 pages.

CHICAGO'S JEWISH WEST SIDE. By Irving Cutler. 2009.

LOGAN SQUARE. By Andrew Schneider, Ward Miller, Jacob Kaplan, and Daniel Pogorzelski. Introduction by Prof. Edward Kantowicz. 2018.

AVONDALE AND CHICAGO'S POLISH VILLAGE. By Jacob Kaplan, Daniel Pogorzelski, Rob Reid, and Elisa Addlesperger. Foreword by Dominic Pacyga. 2014.

EAST LAKE VIEW. By Matthew Nickerson. Foreword by Alderman Tom Tunney. 2017.

LAKE VIEW. By Matthew Nickerson. Foreword by Norman J. Dinkel, Jr. 2014.

DOWNTOWN NAPERVILLE. By Joni Hirsch Blackman. 2009.

CHICAGO'S FORGOTTEN SYNAGOGUES. By Robert A. Packer. 2007.

DOORS OF REDEMPTION: The Forgotten Synagogues of Chicago and Other Communal Buildings. Photographed and edited by Robert A. Packer. Booksurge, 2006. 282 pages. Spiral-bound paper.

THIS USED TO BE CHICAGO. By Joni Hirsch Blackman. Reedy Press, 2017. Every building has a past! Included are the stories behind more than ninety Chicago buildings that used to be something else: the liquor store that used to be a speakeasy during Prohibition; the yacht club that used to be a ferry boat; the countless condominiums that used to be factories, and the circus school that used to be a church. Illustrated. Paper. 192 pages.

CREATING CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE: A Suburban History. By Michael H. Ebner. University of Chicago Press, 1988. Evanston, Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka, Glencoe, Highland Park, Lake Forest, and Lake Bluff—eight communities that serve as a genteel enclave of affluence, culture, and high society. Prof. Ebner explains the origins and evolution of this distinctive region. Photographs and maps. 368 pages.

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GLENCOE: The Little Migration. By Robert A. Sideman. The History Press, 2009. While little has been written about Glencoe's African American heritage, the author discovered ample historical resources to tell the story from the very first days. Illustrated. Paper. 126 pages.

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THE MA and PA STORY: A Novel.

By Anne H. Edwards. Amazon, 2019. Based on the lives of the huge, very real Henich family. Immigrants from Chernovitz to Chicago, they made the West Side their home, and Annie, their next-to-youngest daughter, became their historian and day-to-day chronicler. Photographs and maps. Paper. 475 pages.

CHICAGO SKETCHES. By Richard Reeder. AMIKA Press, 2012. Single-page stories drawn from the author's childhood and from the neighborhoods he visited in his work for the city: Rabbi Mendel's Purim party, Maxwell Street, the Arbeter Ring social hall, the racial situation in Canaryville. Color illustrations by Leonid Osseny. Paper. 45 pages.

THE ALEXANDRIA LETTER:

A Novel. By George R. Honig. Synergy Books, 2010. Cambridge scholar Nathan Tobin discovers an ancient Aramaic letter that contains surprising revelations about the lives of Jesus, John the Baptist, and Paul of Tarsus. Paper. 329 pages.

BEYOND THE SCENT OF OLIVES.

A Novel. By Alice Marcus Solovy. CreateSpace, 2012. Historical novel follows a Jewish family that flees the Spanish Inquisition on a journey that takes them through England, Ireland, France, Holland, Poland, and Germany. 308 pages. Paper and Kindle.

CORPORATE WAR: Poison Pills and Golden Parachutes.

A Novel. By Werner L. Frank. Amazon, 2010, A business thriller portraying the cutthroat behavior of two computer companies engaged in a hostile takeover during the early days of the computer industry by an author who was an integral part of it. 360 pages. Paper and E-book.

A FEATHERED RIVER ACROSS THE SKY: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction.

By Joel Greenberg. Bloomsbury USA, 2014. The epic story of why passenger pigeons became extinct and what that says about our current relationship to the natural world. As naturalist Joel Greenberg relates in gripping detail, the pigeons' propensity to nest, roost, and fly together in vast numbers made them vulnerable to market and recreational hunting. 289 pages.

A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CHICAGO REGION.

By Joel Greenberg. The University of Chicago Press, 2002. 595 pages.

OF PRAIRIE, WOODS, & WATER: Two Centuries of Chicago Nature Writing.

Edited by Joel Greenberg. The University of Chicago Press, 2008. Paper. 402 pages.

THE ART OF THE YIDDISH FOLK SONG.

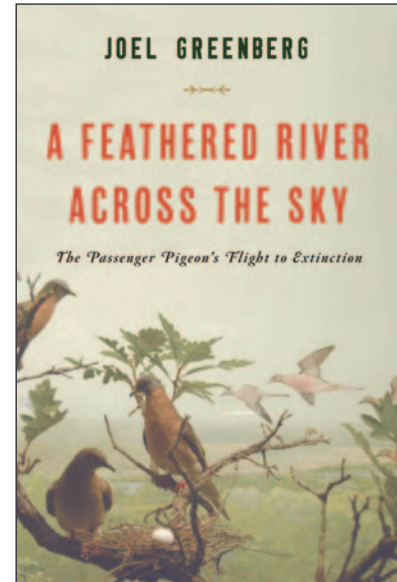
Sima Miller, soprano, Arnold Miller, piano. A collection of performances by Chicago's legendary concert artists. These recordings were chosen for inclusion in the collection of the National Library of Israel. Four CDs. *Order at (847) 673-6409.*

NEW ART IN THE 60s AND 70s: Redefining Reality.

By Anne Rorimer. Thames & Hudson, 2004. A detailed account of developments centered around the conceptual art movement highlights the main issues underlying visually disparate works dating from the second half of the 1960s to the end of the 1970s. 304 pages. 303 illustrations. Hardback and Paper.

BLOSSOM WINTERS IS DRIVING ON THE LOS ANGELES FREEWAYS and Other Short Stories.

By Albert Zimble. CreateSpace, 2012. One of the six short story collections by this comic writer. 263 pages. He asks our readers to visit his website to enjoy examples of his humor. *AlZimComedy.com.*



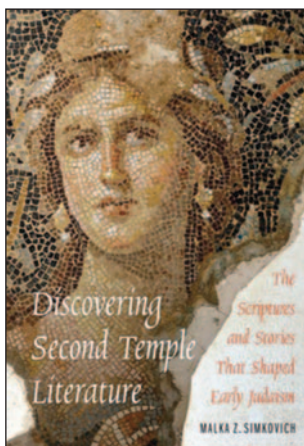
THE CITY IN A GARDEN: A History of Chicago's Parks, Second Edition.

By Julia S. Bachrach. The University of Chicago Press, 2012. Through unprecedented access to a cache of historical plans, photographs, and drawings, Bachrach documents the city's 175-year commitment to its public parks and explains how luminaries such as architect Daniel H. Burnham, landscape architect and conservationist Jens Jensen, and social reformer Jane Addams shaped and influenced the city's green spaces. 150 halftone illustrations. Paper. 224 pages.

INSPIRED BY NATURE: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago's West Side.

By Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan. The University of Chicago Press, 2007. Celebrates one of the nation's most stunning and intriguing botanical havens. 150 illustrations. 160 pages.

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DISCOVERING SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM: The Scriptures and Stories That Shaped Early Judaism. By Malka Z. Simkovich.

Jewish Publication Society, 2018. The author takes us to Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, to the Jewish sectarians and the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus, to the genizah in Cairo, and the ancient caves that for centuries kept the secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls. She presents samples of some of the period's most important works and analyzes them for both known and possible meanings—illuminating the perspectives of Jewish writers, leaders, and readers in this era.

Simkovich's "popular archaeology" style will engage readers in understanding the ways Jews chose to practice their religion and interpret its scriptures in a cultural setting so unlike that of their Israelite forefathers. 384 pages.

THE MAKING OF JEWISH UNIVERSALISM: From Exile to Alexandria.

By Malka Z. Simkovich. Lexington Press, 2016. This book argues that scholars and theologians have not properly defined the term "universalism," and that their misconceptions of this popular term have led many to ignore the universalist ideas that were circulating in Jewish communities in the late Second Temple and early rabbinic period. By redefining universalism, Simkovich argues that the binary of "Christian universalism" and "Jewish particularism" must be done away with, and that both religious communities have universalist and particularist elements at their core. 216 pages.

MOLLIE'S WAR: The Letters of a World War II WAC in Europe.

By Mollie Weinstein Schaffer and Cyndee Schaffer. Contributing Editor Jennifer G. Mathers. Introduction by Leisa D. Meyer. McFarland Publishing, 2010. Molly Weinstein Schaffer (1916-2012) was accepted into the WAC. After basic training in Florida she was on her way to Europe as a secretary in Medical Intelligence, following the American troops into England, France, and finally Germany with the Army of Occupation. *Mollie's War* was based on the letters and photos that she sent home and that were saved by her sister. Paper. 291 pages.



WOMEN BUILDING CHICAGO, 1790-1990: A Biographical Dictionary. Edited by Adele Hast and Rima Lunin Schultz. Indiana University Press, 2001. Of the more than 400 entries, forty are Jewish women. Illustrated. 1,088 pages.

THE CHICAGO FOOD ENCYCLOPEDIA.

Editors: Carol Haddix, Bruce Kraig, and Colleen Taylor Sen. University of Illinois Press, 2017. All things food—except ketchup—in the City of the Big Appetites. Ten entries by Ellen F. Steinberg. Illustrated. 344 pages.

DVD: WOMEN UNCHAINED.

By Beverly Siegel. National Center For Jewish Film (NCJF) 2011. English and Hebrew with English subtitles. An important film documenting the experiences of modern-day *agunot*, or women whose husbands refuse to grant them a Jewish divorce. Narrated by actress Mayim Bialik (*The Big Bang Theory*), *Women Unchained* offers strategies for what women can do to protect themselves and why the issue matters to all Jews. 60 Minutes.

FROM THE JEWISH HEARTLAND: Two Centuries of Midwest Foodways.

By Ellen F. Steinberg and Jack H. Prost. University of Illinois, 2011. Authors Steinberg and Prost *fressed* their way through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri—all in the name of research! This is not a cookbook. Rather it is a fascinating exploration of how immigrant Jews adapted their Old World recipes to the ingredients they found in the Midwest. Illustrated. 224 pages.

IRMA: A Chicago Woman's Story, 1871-1966.

By Ellen F. Steinberg. University of Iowa, 2004. Based on the diaries and later memoirs of Irma Rosenthal Frankenstein, a Chicago-born member of the German Jewish community. 252 pages.

LEARNING TO COOK IN 1898: A Chicago Culinary Memoir.

By Ellen F. Steinberg. Wayne State University, 2007. Based on Irma Rosenthal Frankenstein's manuscript cookbook. Recipe adaptations by Eleanor Hudera Hanson. 240 pages.

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LEGACY: The Saga of a German-Jewish Family Across Time and Circumstance.

By Werner L. Frank. Avoteynu Foundation, 2003. The history of a German-Jewish family spanning several hundred years. Includes a portion on the author's immigration to Chicago and growing up in Hyde Park. 926 pages plus CD.

JUDENHAUS: Small Ghetto at Grosse Merzelstrasse 7.

By Werner L. Frank. Foreword by Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon, 2016. The National Socialist rule in Germany issued more than 2,000 anti-Semitic decrees. A lesser-known restriction was The "Law on Tenancies with Jews" imposed on April 30, 1939, forcing the Jewish population to be crammed into a limited number of designated houses, the *Judenhaus*, the Jews' House, or sometimes called "small ghetto." This book focuses on one such *Judenhaus* in the city of Mannheim and follows the fate of its 80 residents in the period 1938-1940, reflecting their experiences during the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938 and the massive October 1940 deportation of all Jews in the Baden/Pfalz/Saar area to Camp de Gurs in Vichy France. Paper and E-book. 306 pages.

THE CURSE OF GURS: Way Station to Auschwitz.

By Werner L. Frank. Foreword by Dr. Michael Berenbaum. Amazon, 2012. In an October 1940 *aktion*, Jews from the States of Baden and the Pfalz/Saar were deported to Vichy's Gurs internment camp, followed in 1942 by deportation to Auschwitz from the Parisian suburb of Drancy. The book records the events and fate of more than 6,500 Jews. Paper and E-book. 408 pages.

A Film by Ethan Bensinger

REFUGE: STORIES OF THE SELFHELP HOME

(2012, 60 minutes.) *Refuge* reaches back more than seventy years to give voice to the last generation of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The film traces the lives of Holocaust survivors and refugees who today live in Chicago at Selfhelp, a home that has provided refuge for more than 1,000 elderly Central European Jews since the end of World War II. Told through the eyewitness experiences of Selfhelp's residents and founders, it is a story of remarkable courage and resilience.

www.storiesofselfhelp.film.com

THE FATE OF HOLOCAUST

MEMORIES: Transmission and Family Dialogues.

By Chaya H. Roth with the voices of Hannah Diller and Gitta Fajerstein. Amazon Kindle, 2013. Part oral history, part psychological exploration. The book uses interviews, diary entries, and psychological analysis to reveal how each generation has passed on memories of the War and the Shoah to the next. Finally, this work speaks to the remaining survivor generations who struggle with issues of Holocaust transmission, wondering about the value, necessity, and manner in which Holocaust memories are handed down. Illustrated. Paper. 295 pages.

OUT OF CHAOS: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust.

Edited by Elaine Fox. Preface by Phyllis Lassner. Northwestern University Press, 2013. Brief or elongated moments, fragments of memory and experience. In all, the anthology expresses these survivors' memories and reactions to a wide range of experiences as they survived in many European settings. Some writers chose to write story clusters, each one capturing a moment or an incident, often disconnected by memory or temporal and spatial divides. 318 pages.

TRANSPLANTED LIVES:

The adventures of young Jewish immigrants from post-Fascist and Communist Hungary to the Free World following the 1956 Uprising.

By Susan V. Meschel and Peter Tarjan. CreateSpace, 2016. Anthology of personal recollections of escaping from Hungary, the land of their birth, where they never had real roots, following the 1956 uprising against Communist rule. Filled with hope and fear, most of the young adult storytellers were eager to learn the language of their new home and complete their education to become professionals. Their family backgrounds represent a broad range as does the spectrum of their careers at the time of writing these memoirs—more than half a century later. Paper. 288 Pages.

Most of the protagonists described their wartime experiences as children and post-war experiences as teenagers in two earlier collections.

YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK: Surviving the Holocaust in Hungary.

By Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1993.

RED STAR, BLUE STAR: The lives and times of Jewish students in Communist Hungary, 1948-1956.

By Andrew Handler and Susan V. Meschel. 1997.

BEYOND CHICAGO: ILLINOIS JEWISH ROOTS

Growing Up Jewish in the Western Suburbs

JACOB POLLACK

An Oral History (most of it true) transcribed by Katie Rosenbaum

Photographs courtesy of Ron Pollack

My parents, Joseph and Anna Dora (Weinstein) Pollack were immigrants from Russia. They spoke Yiddish in our home. My father was a peddler. I was born in 1925 in Chicago, the youngest of eight children—following Eva, Ruben, Hyman, Bill, David, Elmer, and Evelyn. My brother Bill, born in 1915, was sickly, so the doctor advised my parents to move out of the city to improve his health. It's likely that our family's buggy broke down in Downers Grove, and that's where we stayed and struggled.

We lived in a two-story house on the outskirts of the village, a block and a half from the high school. It seemed to me, at my young age, a big house. I remember two bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs and indoor plumbing. The hot water heater was in the basement; Pa would go down to light it when someone wanted a bath. There was an open kitchen where Ma made all our meals—kosher, of course. We had a cow that was milked every morning.

I remember Ma making cottage cheese, which she hung in a big sack in the kitchen. There was a separate barn where Pa's employee, Charlie Johnson, slept in the loft.

Jake Holgraves, one of the local policemen, would come out to our house where Pa did his work. Jake just wanted to visit. He would put me on the handlebars of his motorcycle and take me around the neighborhood. Everyone called us Big Jake and Little Jake.

Eventually milk was delivered to us from Baker's Dairy. When I was in the third grade, and very small, the milkmen went on strike. Late one evening there was a knock at the door. The dairy owner, Charlie Baker himself, was there with our milk. He said that a family with small children needed it whether there was a strike or not. He became Ma's hero.

On Thursday evenings Pa did the shopping in Chicago, a twenty-five-mile trip each way. He would

stop at the kosher butcher, the Jewish bakery, and the fish market. He also went to the deli to get cold cuts and salami. Fruit came in a large basket, which Ma turned upside-down to salt the meat before she cooked it, because it wasn't kosher enough for her.

Whoever was the last to get a driver's license was Pa's designated driver.

My brother Hyman went so often, he met and married the butcher's daughter. They settled in Elgin and later moved to Joliet.

When I was in grammar school, my handsome brother Ruben was assigned to do the shopping. One Thursday he wanted to go to the Jewish dance clubs on Chicago's West Side, which was a thriving Jewish community with a synagogue on every block. He took me with him and left me at the butcher shop, promising to pick me up at closing time, around 9 p.m. But he forgot (I guess he was having too good a time). So I remained there and helped with the cleaning up by

sweeping the sawdust. I was very sleepy when Ruben finally showed up to get me.

Shabbos was a big deal for our family. It was a ritual that Friday night was dinner at home with everyone in attendance. Even when some of the family had moved to Joliet and Elgin we all got together on Friday at Ma's. She made a complete fancy dinner for all: chopped liver, matzo ball soup, kishka, and often duck. Everyone wanted a drumstick, so Ma would graft two chicken drumsticks onto the duck.

Sophie is my wife of seventy-two years. Her parents, Harry and Goldie (Smilovich) Piolet, were another family of wandering Jews who moved west of Chicago. They planned to settle in Morris, Illinois, but they didn't get that far. They ended up in Hinsdale, a very affluent town, where they stayed. They were poor like us, but none of us knew it.



Joseph and Anna Pollack and the first three of their eight children: Eva standing, Ruben on chair, Hyman on lap, c. 1914.



The Harry and Goldie Piolet Family of Hinsdale, Illinois.

Ma and Goldie were both looking for Jewish friends, and they got together. Both of them became pregnant at the same time. They joked that if one had a girl and the other a boy there would be a match.

It turned out to be Sophie and me; a womb to tomb relationship. We were both born in November 1925 and we married in August 1947.

I'm sure we even shared a playpen. That's how close our mothers were. Our two families have been interlocked my entire life, for every occasion. When Sophie and I went to apply for Social Security, we brought along our birth certificates, which in those days recorded the father's occupation. We discovered that both of our fathers had been peddlers.



Sophie and Jake, August 3, 1947

run out the back door as he walked in the front. Seymour could already drive at that early age. I don't remember where we traveled when we were supposed to be studying with the rabbi. That was the extent of my

Jewish education. Neither Seymour nor I ever became Bar Mitzvah. But we could both ask the Four Questions at the Passover Seder.

One evening a short time after our Hebrew lessons stopped, Sophie's parents came to visit. Sophie and her sister Freda came, too, and perhaps the other girls as well. (There were six Piolet sisters.) The conversation led to the question of how many Jews lived in the area. No one knew exactly, so both families decided to look around. They began contacting the Jews they knew.

Soon a network formed, as each Jewish family we contacted knew of some others in the area. All of us, especially the junior high and high school kids, decided to form a Jewish group. My sister Eva, the attorney, became our advisor. After a few gatherings we realized that we needed a name. We went through the Hebrew alphabet, and when we got to *lamed*, we decide that was the best name of our group. The Lameds had dances, activities, and trips to shows and events in the area. We went as a group: most of us didn't drive yet, so our parents took turns serving as chauffeurs.

After a couple of years, the parents started getting together. They named their group the Parent Lameds. Their group survived longer than ours. Before long, the oldest of us had to register for the Draft, and some went away to college. The young Lameds faded away, and the Parent Lameds became the ongoing group. The end result was we found more Jews in the western suburbs than any of us thought possible.

During the High Holidays the entire family would relocate to Homan Avenue on Chicago's West Side, where my Tanta Ella lived. We would all sleep in her apartment so we could go to the synagogue there. Ma prepared the food in Downers Grove and brought it with us for everyone to enjoy over the whole holiday. Then on Yom Kippur we did it again. Ma even brought the breaking-of-the-fast with her. Because we went to Chicago every year for the High Holidays, we became acquainted with many of the neighborhood kids. Though it was a Jewish neighborhood, there were quite a few Italian families, as well. And those kids loved our yom tovim, too, because attendance was too low to keep the schools open.

My sister Evelyn and I were very close. She was only a year and a half older than me. When she was a sophomore at our local high school, a gentile boy walked her home, so my parents sent her to Joliet to attend high school.

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They didn't want her to date non-Jews. And because Sophie's parents didn't want her to date non-Jews either, we were often together. We went to her proms together. Otherwise she would not have been allowed to go.

Eva was the oldest of my siblings. She became the first woman attorney in DuPage County. When she entered grammar school she could only speak Yiddish. It didn't matter because she was brilliant and learned very fast. At that time, they didn't have Advanced Placement, they just jumped bright kids a grade. Eva jumped two grades, so she was a bit of a misfit. She was the only girl on the debate team, and Mrs. Johnson, the coach's wife, had to share a hotel room with her when they went to out-of-town debates.

Eva graduated from high school in 1926, when she was 15 or 16. She left such a big impression on the Downers Grove High School that at my forty-fifth class reunion, when I wanted to say "Hi" to Mr. Johnson, our principal, he didn't even ask me my name. He just said, "Your sister was the most brilliant student I ever had." But the rest of us were not as smart, and some of my siblings didn't graduate. They went to work with Pa, to help raise the younger kids.



Eva Rose Pollack Glaser and her husband, Dr. George Glaser.

Eva graduated Northwestern Law School in 1932. Her first job out of law school was working for our local congressman, Chauncy Reed, in Naperville, about ten miles west of Downers Grove. Every morning, one of the employees of our wrecking yard would take her to Reed and Keeny. And every night, one of the employees would drive to get her and bring her home. She was a brilliant lawyer, but completely lost in the kitchen.

When Eva opened her own law office in the Morton building in Downers Grove her rent was eight dollars

a month. Her office was in a little waiting room, and she couldn't afford furniture. Some people in town had a son who considered himself an interior decorator. But I called him an "interior desecrator." When Eva set up her law office, the desecrator went to our auto wrecking yard and took car seats to put in her waiting room. They were actually quite comfortable.

She kept her law office in that building for more than fifty years. The only time she didn't practice law was during World War II, when she wrote government contracts. After the war there was talk of naming her to a federal judgeship, but it never came about.

Eva was also the secretary of the Republican Party in DuPage County, but Pa voted a straight Democratic ticket in each election. Pa's hero was Illinois Governor Henry Horner, who was Jewish. Eva and Pa never had an angry word about politics.

Our family had an auto wrecking yard by our house. My brother Hyman got a job at Ed Volberding's Ford dealership in Downers Grove. Model Ts were a big seller. People would trade in cars and the dealership would sell them. Hyman would buy used cars, bring them to the wrecking yard, and sell them for parts. The money that he earned went to pay off the cars. Our wrecking yard grew and grew. So they opened a second yard in Elgin.

Then they decided that Ruben would run the Downers Grove yard with Pa, and Hyman would set up a used car lot and wrecking yard across the street from the Elgin Watch Company. Eventually the Elgin used car lot grew so successful that they closed the yard in Downers Grove. Then they closed the used car lot in Elgin (where the gambling casino sits today) and combined it with the one Bill had in Joliet.

Ma went to night school to learn English. But Pa couldn't read or write in English. His bookkeeper taught him to sign the checks while my brothers were in the Army and Pa was running the wrecking yard. Even though he never learned much English, Joseph Pollack was an astute businessperson and a walking telephone directory. He knew everyone and how to reach them.

World War II broke out in Europe when I was in the seventh grade. Ma got Yiddish letters from Europe that made her cry. Her dresser drawer held all of them. I heard the word "Hitler" often when the letters came. And then the letters stopped abruptly.

When Bill was a sophomore in high school, he got his pilot's license. Then he dropped out of school to become an aviator. I have a picture of him in the cockpit of an open plane. He qualified to fly twin-engine planes, and when the war broke out, he tried to

volunteer. But his eyesight was 20/30, so he became an instructor. He taught many different aspects of aviation: facets of the engine, gunnery, and other subjects.

I was a first semester high school sophomore, visiting my brother Hyman in Joliet when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. I was driving to go to breakfast with Evelyn and her friends when I heard the news on the car radio. I turned around and went back to Hyman's house to tell everyone the news.

Everybody registered for the Draft. David and Elmer, who were running the auto wrecking yard in Elgin, were going into the service. Elmer was also taking flying lessons. That meant I had to run the Elgin yard. So I transferred from Downers Grove to the high school in Elgin, and I lived in an apartment behind the yard.

David and Elmer were there just long enough to teach me what I needed to know. I went to school half-days in the morning and to the yard in the afternoon. I learned to price parts and tires. With the war going on, many high school kids were now young adults working in war industries. I learned from the yard employees how to cut up cars and how to re-groove tires with a heating iron. In school I took a general business course and learned double entry bookkeeping, how to write checks, and how to make bank deposits. I also worked with a man from the War Production Board, learning how to keep track of all the cars, and to cut up cars for scrap iron for the war industry.

I had to deal with customers over the counter. We had five acres of cars. The living quarters were behind the shop, with indoor plumbing and an outside pump. One by one, our employees left. They were getting notices to go into war production or be drafted. It was getting hairy, because the War Department wanted so many cars cut up for scrap metal.

Our Elgin wrecking yard was considered a war industry and we received the best gas ration cards, so traveling was not a problem for me. But everything else was rationed, and we were just like any other family. Almost everything on a grocery shelf was rationed. We even saved our toothpaste tubes because the metal could be recycled for the war effort.

I was practically alone, at 16, dealing with the situation. Of the five acres of cars, the large majority had to be cut up for scrap and taken to a foundry in Elgin. At one point we had to close down because there were not enough employees.

Every Friday, except during basketball season, I'd drive to my parents' house. But in my junior year I dropped out of school to work full-time at the yard. The War Production Board wanted more cars cut up for

tanks and other war needs. But eventually the light went on for those people, and they realized they couldn't cut up all the cars—some needed to be saved so people could get to work.

There was a small Temple in Elgin. All my brothers' friends were Jewish, and through my brothers I became acquainted with their friends and their brothers in high school. We often went to get ice cream at the Prince Castle next door to the Temple. We would each buy vanilla ice cream and a cup of hot chocolate and go to the basement of the Temple and play blackjack all evening. It was a fun time.

One weekend while I was visiting my parents for Shabbos, we had a cold spell. When I returned to the apartment behind the wrecking yard, I found that the heater was frozen. One of the friends from our blackjack evenings had already graduated and gone off to college at the University of Illinois, and his mother, Mrs. Isenberg, got wind of my situation. She invited me to stay in his empty bedroom, and I lived there until graduation. Mr. Isenberg loved to play gin rummy, and we had some good sessions on Sunday afternoons.

After the yard closed, and I was back in high school, I worked in the Elgin Watch Factory making proximity fuses for the war. When artillery was fired into the sky, the proximity fuse would help the shell explode close to the target. I went to Elgin Academy to pick up the credits I'd lost. Then, for my senior year I went back to Elgin High School. As an extra-curricular activity I joined the yearbook staff. I became the business manager and met lots of kids I might not otherwise have known.

In November 1943 I registered for the Draft, and almost immediately got my notice. I asked the school principal if my induction could be delayed until the following March. He actually got it delayed until after graduation. He liked me, and saw my potential—something that I didn't see. I received my diploma in June, and my induction came just a few days after graduation.

Our family had five brothers in the service. Three of Sophie's brothers also served. Her brother Art was a Seabee at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. When the Japanese would bomb the field, the Seabees had to repair the landing strip. Art got a serious case of malaria while there. Sophie's brother Seymour fought in Italy, was wounded, and lost a kidney. My brothers were in aviation and weren't wounded. Our respective mothers would call each other on the phone to cry together whenever a letter came from any son in the service.

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After Seymour Piolet—my future brother-in-law and fellow Hebrew tutoring escapee—recovered from his injury, he became a mess sergeant assigned to Allied Forces Headquarters in Caserta, Italy, just outside of Naples. It had been King Victor Emanuel's palace. I was a clerk-typist at a post outside Caserta, at a replacement depot on a dairy farm owned by Ciano, the son-in-law of Mussolini. Seymour found me there and brought me to the palace's mess hall. They had an ice cream machine and a donut machine, so I ate well.

A few weeks later Seymour brought me back to the palace, where they were having a Passover Seder with many people from many nations in attendance.

Somehow Sophie knew my overseas assignment before I did. The packages we received had to be a certain size, not all that large. One time she sent me a salami, one that just fit the box. She knew I loved salami, and I still love it to this day. I had the first guard duty that day and all I could think about was: three more, two more, one more hour until I could taste my salami. But when I opened the box, I found that the men in my troop had eaten all of it—except for the ends. I guess even those must have tasted good to me.



Jake and Sophie, August 16, 1945

Sophie decided to go to school to become a teacher. She was attending DeKalb State Teachers' College (now Northern Illinois University). After returning from Europe I was stationed not too far away. I would come to see her some weekends and stay in a hotel, because she was living at a boarding house where the landlady, Mrs. Rich, a minister's widow, didn't allow men to stay.

But one time I went to see her when I had a furlough during the week, and I found that there was nowhere for me to stay. The hotel was full up with factory workers. I ended up at the jail, where I had a terrible night—cold and coughing the whole time. When I showed up at Sophie's place, Mrs. Rich took pity on me; she liked me a lot by this time and invited

me to stay in a spare room. She didn't allow smoking in the house. I didn't know that, and during one visit I lit a cigarette. She went into the kitchen and brought me a saucer to use as an ashtray.

Right after the war, lots of people got married. In Sophie's family there were six weddings in one year. Sophie and I got married in 1947. My brothers Bill and Dave got married in 1948. My sister Eva got married while Sophie was expecting our second child, Sharon. Most of the weddings took place on the West Side of Chicago. If it was a fancy wedding, you got two pieces of kishka with the meal.

I went to work at the family's wrecking yard in Downers Grove. People would come in to buy glass out of the cars, and one of the employees learned to cut the glass. At that time, it was flat, rectangular, and straight cut. And we had a polishing wheel. I learned how to make safety glass (that's two pieces of glass with plastic in-between) which we sold to car dealers.

Cars came out with curved glass in the late '40s. If the curved glass got cracked, the car dealers couldn't use it again, so their mechanics didn't want to work with it. Some of the dealers asked me to do the installation work. I refused, but the dealers told me that I couldn't be any worse than their mechanics. So I said, "Okay, I'll do it, but be patient." I had a helper, and every time we did a job, we'd sit down afterward to discuss how we could do it better the next time. We were completely self-taught. When I went into business for myself, it was mostly in the glass business, and it was very successful.

After the war, Jews in the western suburbs were no longer a novelty. We joined a Reform Temple in Lombard. If traffic was light, we could be there in fifteen minutes on Shabbos morning. Friday evenings took a bit longer. ❖

From Jake and Sophie's son, Ron Pollack:

My parents live in Longboat Key, Florida. Of their three children, Donna Hershkopf, the oldest, is the only Pollack still living full time in Downers Grove; Sharon Green lives in Springfield, Illinois; and I live in Washington, D.C.

As for my mom's family, I still have cousins living in Hinsdale—a bunch. Remember, Mom is one of twelve kids, and Dad is one of eight. I have or had fifty-six first cousins (when asked, I can name them all, but please don't ask). Many still live in the greater Chicago area. Two of them live within five miles of me here in D.C.

My West Rogers Park mother-in-law (of blessed memory) never believed I was from Downers Grove and could also be Jewish.



Muriel Robin Rogers, CJHS Founding President

Muriel Robin Rogers died November 1, 2019, at the age of 93. She served as president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society from 1977 to 1980, and again, 1981 to 1982. Wife of the late Alfred Rogers and former wife of the late Burton Robin, she is survived by children David (Kathy) Robin, Carol Robin, and Jerry (Irene Rosenthal) Robin; grandchildren Mindy Robin and Jeremy (Annie Valente) Robin, great-grandson Graham; and sister Gloria (Allen) Needlman.

A memorial service was held Sunday afternoon, November 3rd at Montgomery Place, 5550 South Shore Drive, where Muriel and Fred had resided. David, Carol, and Jerry spoke eloquently, with sensitivity and humor, about their feisty activist mother. Rabbi Frederic Reeves of KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation conducted the service.

Muriel was my friend for nearly fifty years. We were brought together by our mutual love for Chicago Jewish history. She was the organizer and I was the researcher. Our friendship grew through the years. We visited each other in the Chicago area—from her book warehouse in the city and my home in Highland Park, to her home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with her beautiful hummingbird garden, and to my home in Central Florida. When we hadn't seen one another for a while, we would talk on the phone. We laughed, agreed, argued, and agreed again. She and Fred were two of only four non-family members that Mati and I had at our wedding in Milwaukee fifteen years ago this week.

Muriel was loyal, supportive, opinionated, demanding, creative, honest, true to her beliefs, and true to her friends. She was so proud of her family. Mati and I extend our deepest sympathies to all of them.

In *A Man Called Ove: A Novel*, Fredrik Backman wrote: "Death is a strange thing. People live their whole

lives as if it does not exist, and yet it's often one of the great motivations for living. Some of us, in time, become so conscious of it that we live harder, more obstinately, with more fury. Some need its constant presence to even be aware of its antithesis. Others become so preoccupied with it that they go into the waiting room long before it has announced its arrival. We fear it, yet most of us fear more than anything that it may take someone other than ourselves. For the greatest fear of death is always that it will pass us by. And leave us there alone."

Muriel was one who always kept her eyes on the road ahead, who never lost her zest for life. I marveled at her energy when at age 90 she drove from Hyde Park to see me in Highland Park and, on top of that, spent hours visiting with me. Her energy left me envious. I am saddened that she has left me—but in a profound way, she has not. ❖

RACHEL HEIMOVICS BRAUN *CJHS President 1981-82*

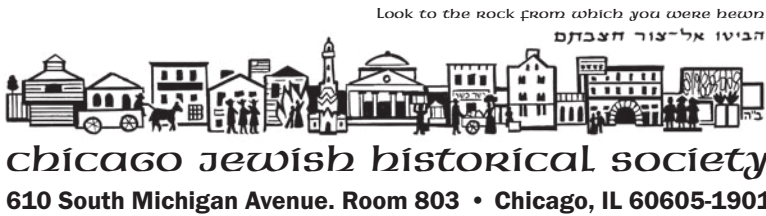
The Muriel Robin Rogers Chicago Jewish History Award at the Chicago Metro History Fair

The CJHS awards a cash prize to a worthy Chicago area high school student or group at the annual Spring Fair. Our Board of Directors voted to accept Rachel's suggestion that the Society name its award in memory of Muriel.

A Closing Message from Beverly Chubatz

Dear Friends,

After twenty-one years as editor/designer of *Chicago Jewish History* I am handing over the reins, passing the torch, and tossing the bouquet to the talented Robert Nagler Miller. Thanks to you all, Society leaders and members, for your respect, support, and kindness.



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- **Joel Greenberg: A Life in Pursuit of Birds**
- * **Growing Up Jewish in the Western Suburbs**

Our History and Mission

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977, and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 at an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Science and Industry by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the American Jewish Congress. Forty-two years after its founding the Society’s unique

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

mission continues to be the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open meetings, tours, and outreach to youth. The Society does not maintain its own archives, but seeks out written, spoken, and photographic records and artifacts and responsibly arranges for their donation to Jewish archives.

Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials The card design features the Society’s handsome logo. Inside, our mission statement and space for your personal message. Pack of five cards & envelopes \$18.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at \$5.00 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to the CJHS office, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803. Chicago IL 60605-1901. You may also order online at our website.

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All issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present are digitized and posted on our website in pdf format. Click on the Publications tab and scroll down through the years. There is also an Index to the issues from 1977 to 2012.

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations, and includes:

- A subscription to the Society’s award-winning quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is \$10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1st are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1,000
Annual Dues	
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Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron	65
Member	40
Student (with I.D.)	10



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