Look to the rock from which you were hewn
הביטו אל־צור חצבתם
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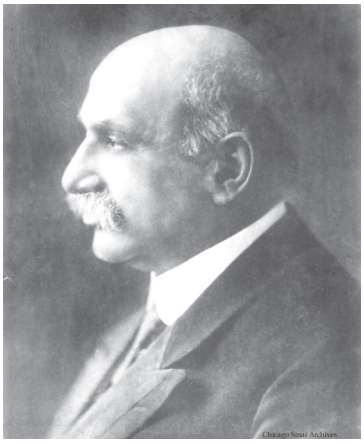
CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

"All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does" — Julius Rosenwald

Striving for Fellowship: Sinai's Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and Hull-House's Jane Addams, A Not-So-Odd Couple. Part I

By Rima Lunin Schultz, PhD

Emil G. Hirsch, born in Luxembourg in 1851, was the son of Samuel Hirsch, a prominent rabbi known in Europe and America for his advanced thinking on philosophical subjects and his leadership in the Reform movement. The family immigrated to America when Samuel was called to Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel of Philadelphia. Emil enrolled in an elite Episcopalian-affiliated preparatory school and then attended the University of Pennsylvania. Graduating at 20, he returned to Berlin and Leipzig for further studies and ordination as a rabbi. Back in the United States, and filled with the ideas and spirit of the Reform movement, Hirsch had brief stints in Reform congregations in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Louisville before he was called to the pulpit of Sinai Congregation in Chicago in 1880.



Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch of Sinai Congregation in Chicago
image courtesy of Sinai Congregation

Within five years, he had built up the congregation and filled the capacious sanctuary in the temple, constructed by Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, with Sunday morning services that attracted prominent Protestant civic leaders as well as the well-to-do German Jews who were his congregants. "We have no bars and barriers at our doors," Hirsch explained. In defining the mission of Reform Judaism and, in particular, of Sinai Congregation, he summed it up in this way: "We don't insist upon ceremonies that have the tendency to repel and disgust. We don't insist upon the lines of race being observed and being preserved. We stand, as the inscription on our door reads, for a community of religious aspiration. Our house shall be called: 'A House of Prayer, a House of Aspiration for all the nations of the world.'"[1] According to Rabbi Eric Moffic, writing in 2005, to Hirsch, the rabbi's goal was to bring Judaism's message to as many people as possible—Jews and non-Jews—so that they could work together and act on that message in their lives. Symbols and traditions were only crutches; not obligations, but reminders.[2]

Under Hirsch's leadership, Sinai would host conferences of liberal religious societies, bringing together independent Protestant liberals, Unitarians, Universalists, Ethical Culturalists, and Reform Jews. It would host meetings of the NAACP, breaking Jim Crow boundaries. Sinai's actual dues-paying members, however, were almost exclusively wealthy German Jews, including business moguls Julius Rosenwald, Joseph Schaffner, Marcus Marx, B. Kuppenheimer, Siegmund Florsheim, and Max and Harry Hart. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon and Sadie American—founders of the National Council of Jewish Women—were also members.

Working-class Jews from Eastern Europe lived in poor neighborhoods and worked in factories owned by Max and Harry Hart and Schaffner and Marx. They may have sent their children to the Jewish Training School or the

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dr. Rachelle Gold

As members of a large Jewish community, can Chicago Jews be inspired by faraway American cities with fewer Jews—places that today seem inconsequential? I am sure that many of you will agree with my answer: Yes! My recent trip to Charleston, South Carolina, strengthened this conviction. I returned with enthusiasm for the achievements of American Jews, and also felt challenged that we can do more to ensure the appreciation of our history here in Chicago.

To begin, I will mention some obvious differences and similarities between the two cities.

Among the differences are their founding dates and demographics. Charleston and its Jewish community precede Chicago's by about 150 years. Formed in 1670, Charleston has one of the oldest Jewish communities in the U.S, with its first Jewish resident recorded in 1695. (For context, the first Jews in the U.S. came from Brazil to what was then New Amsterdam in 1654.) In 1820, Charleston had the largest Jewish population (about 600) in the U.S. Jews were attracted to South Carolina by economic opportunity and the state's attitude of tolerance for their religion. (Historians note that as South Carolina was a slave state, the percentage of Jewish households that owned enslaved persons—defined as at least one—was the same as in the general population: about 80 percent). Jews who arrived through the 1700s and early 1800s were largely of Sephardic (Spanish and Portuguese) origin, and their worship followed the Sephardic tradition. German and Eastern European immigrants arrived after the mid 1800s, but the total number of Jews remained relatively small. The Jewish population in South Carolina doubled from 2,500 to 5,000 between 1900 and 1920. The current Jewish population in the state is approximately 17,000, with 10,000 in Charleston.

The younger City of Chicago was founded in 1837, and Jews settled here by the early 1840s. Most of Chicago's early Jews were Ashkenazic, from German-speaking lands. Eastern European Jews immigrated in large numbers starting in the 1870s, and especially after 1881. A group of Jews from the Balkan states came soon after 1910. From the 1880s to the 1920s, Chicago's Jewish population soared from 10,000 to 250,000. In 1930, Chicago had a Jewish population of 275,000, the third largest in the world after New York City and Warsaw. Recent estimates put the number of Jews in metropolitan Chicago today at around 320,000.

Though differences exist between the two cities, similarities are evident. To cite a few examples, Jews in both cities organized themselves early on for religious and communal purposes. Charleston's first congregation was organized in 1749, and its first synagogue building was erected in 1791. Kahal Kadosh Beit Elohim lays claim as the oldest synagogue building in continuous use in the U.S. The oldest cemetery, Coming Street, dates to 1754. Chicago's and Illinois' oldest congregation, Kehilat Anshe Maarav, now Kehilat Anshe Maarav Isaiah Israel (KAMII), originated in 1847. Our first Jewish burial ground was created by the Hebrew Benevolent Society in the early 1850s. It is often referred to as the "Jewish Graceland."

There are similarities in societal and occupational roles. In both cities, Jewish people have contributed in all spheres of local society. In the economic sector, Jews have been active as merchants, often starting out as peddlers and progressing to store and business owners. In Charleston, in 1867, almost one-third of the city's 50 dry goods stores and half of the 20 clothing businesses were owned by Jews. I visited King Street, Charleston's lively, longtime shopping artery, where there are numerous buildings that housed Jewish-owned stores into the mid 1900s and beyond. The district is well preserved, and the names of former Jewish stores and store owners can still be seen.

Now, to return to my opening question: What is noteworthy about the Charleston Jewish community that inspires me as a Jewish Chicagoan? In addition to reading about and touring the community, I was fortunate to meet and speak with some of Charleston's Jewish leaders. (I am grateful to Rachel Heimovics, Past President of CJHS and of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, for making introductions.) I was struck that, for its size, the community is impressive for its involvement, vibrancy, scholarship, and historical consciousness. The community has benefited from the interest of the larger non-Jewish community in the region's history, as well as from the participation of its Jewish citizenry.

There are communal institutions and services for Jews across the denominational spectrum: a Jewish day school, the Addlestone Hebrew Academy, one of the oldest in the country, founded in 1956; a *mikvah* (ritual bath); *eruv*

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(boundary enabling Jews to carry on Shabbat); *chevrah kadisha* (burial society); kosher caterer; and five synagogues. I attended Shabbat services at Brith Sholom Beth Israel (BSBI), an Orthodox congregation that dates to 1854.

Outstanding Jewish individuals and groups have done, and continue to do, great things. There is fruitful collaboration among academic, historical, and community institutions. The College of Charleston (CofC) is a center for Jewish scholarship and history. It hosts the Yaschik/Arnold Program in Jewish Studies; the Jewish Heritage Collection, an extensive archive, in Special Collections at the Addlestone Library; and the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Jewish Culture. The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC) works closely with the CofC.

The Jewish Studies Program at CofC grew under the leadership of its longtime director (1979–2019), Dr. Martin Perlmutter, *z"l*, who was also the founding executive director of JHSSC. The Jewish Heritage Collection, formally organized in 2000, was spearheaded by its founding curator, historian Dr. Dale Rosengarten (emerita, since 2023). As an example of collaboration and leadership, a major exhibition, "A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life" took place in 2002 at the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina.

I met with Dr. Max Modiano Daniel, Public Historian and Jewish Heritage Collection Coordinator, successor to Dr. Rosengarten, who described his research interests—Sephardi and Mizrachi Jews—and the aims of the collection. I had the honor to be a Shabbat guest at the home of BSBI's Rabbi Yosef Bart and Rivka Bart. Rabbi Bart, who has led BSBI since 2023, has extensive experience in education and rabbinic leadership in the South.

Delightfully, Chicago connections emerged. Dr. Daniel is a Chicago native whose family synagogue is the Sephardic Congregation in Evanston. His father, Dr. Isaac Daniel, is a survivor of Salonika, and the synagogue's building on Howard Street was designed by his uncle, Aaron Daniel. Rabbi Bart's predecessor at BSBI, Rabbi Scott Hoberman (2020–2022), was born and raised in Skokie.

My experience in Charleston reinforced my commitment to the mission of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society: discover, document, and share the history of our community. Fellow proud Jewish Chicagoans and CJHS supporters, I am posing these questions to you: In a small Jewish community, everyone has a role to play, so in our large Jewish community, are we each doing enough? Are we taking full advantage of the resources of our community? What more can Jewish Chicagoans do—individually, together, and in partnership with others—to champion our history? Send your thoughts to me at info@chicagojewishhistory.org.

Julius Rosenwald Program

Jewish Neighborhood Development Council (JNDC) of Chicago and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society (CJHS) will honor Julius Rosenwald in celebration of Jewish-American Heritage Month at an event at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton Street, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 27.

The program will feature a screening of "From Sears to Eternity: The Julius Rosenwald Story," a 30-minute documentary recounting Rosenwald's spectacular rise to success as he built Sears, Roebuck & Company into America's leading mail-order catalogue, as well as the philanthropy that defines his legacy.

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Hirsch and Addams: A Not-So-Odd Couple

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Chicago Hebrew Institute, and they may have been aided by the Associated Jewish Charities—all organizations supported by Hirsch or members of his congregation. But they were not members of Sinai.

To be fair, there were complex reasons why the German Jewish and Russian and Polish Jewish groups had their own spheres of institution-building. Hirsch was aware of the class and cultural divides; he used his influence on his wealthy congregants to educate them along the lines of social justice and was unafraid to instruct them on their responsibilities: "Property entails duties, which establishes its rights," he argued. "Charity is not a voluntary concession on the part of the well-situated. It is a right to which the less fortunate are entitled in justice.'"[3]

Jane Addams

Hirsch often spoke openly and bluntly from the pulpit about the historical relationship of the Jews with Jesus and with Christianity. Titles of his sermons and addresses give some idea of the scope and focus he brought to his pulpit: "My Religion and the Religion of Jesus"; "Dogmatic Christianity"; "The Function of Prayer and Ritual"; "The New Social Adjustment Suggested by the Implications of My Religion [text: Isaiah]"; "Judaism and the Higher Criticism"; "Doctrine of Evolution and Judaism"; "The God of Israel"; "The Ancient Anti-Semite and His Modern Successors." It was important that non-Jews as well as Jews heard these sermons because Hirsch understood, as did the Reform movement as a whole, that for Jews to participate in modernity, it was essential that Christians accept revision of the stereotypes and anti-Semitic charges of the traditional New Testament narratives. Biblical higher criticism was a two-sided sword, as Professor Susannah Heschel eloquently argued in *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). In acknowledging the Jewish Jesus and showing him to be a representative Jew, rather than an original thinker, scholars walked a fine line. They could correct the worst slanders against the Jews and unleash the powerful prophetic parts of the Bible that had influenced Jesus. But in making Judaism the mother religion, Jewish scholars risked a backlash from liberal Protestants. This was serious business. Reform Judaism was not just a more convenient Judaism, but a thorough-going revision of Judaism and Christianity.

Jane Addams, the daughter of an Illinois State Senator who was a prosperous banker and miller with family roots that went deep in American soil, was born in Cedarville, Illinois, in 1860, and graduated from a small Protestant evangelical female seminary in nearby Rockford. After graduation, she traveled extensively in Europe in the company of family and friends. Her encounter with Toynbee Hall, the London settlement house established to connect privileged Oxford college graduates with the poor of the city's East End slums, gave Addams the idea to undertake a similar enterprise in Chicago.

Returning to the States, Addams and her college friend, Ellen Gates Starr, established Hull-House in a rundown immigrant neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. With a mission to learn about immigrant working people's lives by living among them and being of service to them, the two women invited privileged young women and men of their own class and education to reside in apartments in the old Hull homestead. Then, throwing open the doors to the neighborhood people—men, women, and children—Addams began to construct what she had dreamed about: a cathedral of humanity, "which would be capacious enough to house a fellowship of common purpose," and which should be "beautiful enough to persuade men to hold fast to the vision of human solidarity."[4]

Hirsch and Addams, on the face of it, were improbable colleagues, a seemingly odd couple. Yet the dream of "A House of Prayer, a House of Aspiration for all the nations of the world" and a cathedral of humanity were similar visions.

The similarities of vision indicate that Hirsch and Addams were the children of what historian Richard Wightman Fox calls the "cultural moment of liberal Protestantism," a period [that] was "distinctive in its nearly boundless idealism about reconstructing society, and its simultaneous devotion to moral endeavor, and scientific efficiency and expertise."[5] Historians of European and American Jewry know that this was also a cultural moment of liberal Judaism, the rise of the Reform Jewish movement primarily in Germany and in the United States. Both these movements advocated for greater understanding and acceptance of universal truths about humanity that transcended differences of race, creed, or nationality.

This cultural moment is the broader context for a discussion of how Hirsch and Addams learned from each other and aided each other in utilizing their respective institutions—Sinai Temple and Hull-House—to bring people together across divisions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and religion. They each practiced a new democratic social ethics in their respective institutions. In striving to bring about social justice for their age, they put creedal differences in the background and universal humanistic values they believed consistent with the practice of democracy in the foreground. This was the fellowship that they were striving to achieve. Almost everyone knows of Jane Addams, co-founder of Hull-House and its head resident for 45 years, internationally acclaimed social reformer, and peace activist, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1931. Few people today know the name Emil G. Hirsch, the rabbi of Chicago Congregation Sinai, one of the leading synagogues in Reform Judaism in the United States at the turn of the 20th century, who served there for 43 years (1880-1923). He played an important role at the Pittsburgh Conference of Reform Rabbis in 1885, advocating that prophetic social justice should be a key element in the tenets of Reform Judaism. During his tenure at Sinai, he held a professorship in Rabbinical Literature at the University of Chicago, was the editor of the *Reform Advocate* for 30 years, and contributed many scholarly articles to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

Hirsch was also a civic leader in Chicago, a role in keeping with his concept of rabbinical leadership that extended beyond Jewish issues and the communal needs of Jews. In 1888, he was appointed a member of the Board of the Chicago Public library. Later, as he became President of the Board, he oversaw the construction of a new library building, which is now the Chicago Cultural Center on Michigan Avenue. He was a member of the State Board of Charities and Corrections, an active participant in the World Parliament of Religions held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition—the World's Fair; a lifelong Republican, a member of the Hamilton Club in Chicago, and a Presidential elector at-large for the State of Illinois in 1896. That same year, the Civil Service Commission chose Hirsch as President of its examining board. He was also a participant in the first White House Conference on Children in 1909 and one of the original members of the NAACP.

Hirsch became known in the political networks of Progressivism, the movement in American politics, dating roughly from the 1870s to 1920s, which endeavored to awaken a nationwide consciousness to the injustices of unregulated industrial capitalism and which was politicized in the campaigns of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Addams, who seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, when he was selected to run on the Progressive Party ticket, had by that time reached the highest circles of political power, probably the first time a woman had achieved such influence in the United States. She had worked on the National Committee on Child Labor for a number of years. When the moment had arrived for the appointment of the first director of the newly established federal Children's Bureau, the "man" for the job, from Addams's perspective, was Julia Lathrop, a Hull-House resident who had championed reform of the State Board of Charities and Corrections in Illinois. Lathrop knew Emil Hirsch, who had sat on that board and had held similar views about professionalism and civil service. Addams called upon Rabbi Hirsch to petition outgoing President William Taft to

Jane Addams (left) with Hannah Greenebaum Solomon
image courtesy of Sinai Congregation

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Hirsch and Addams: A Not-So-Odd Couple

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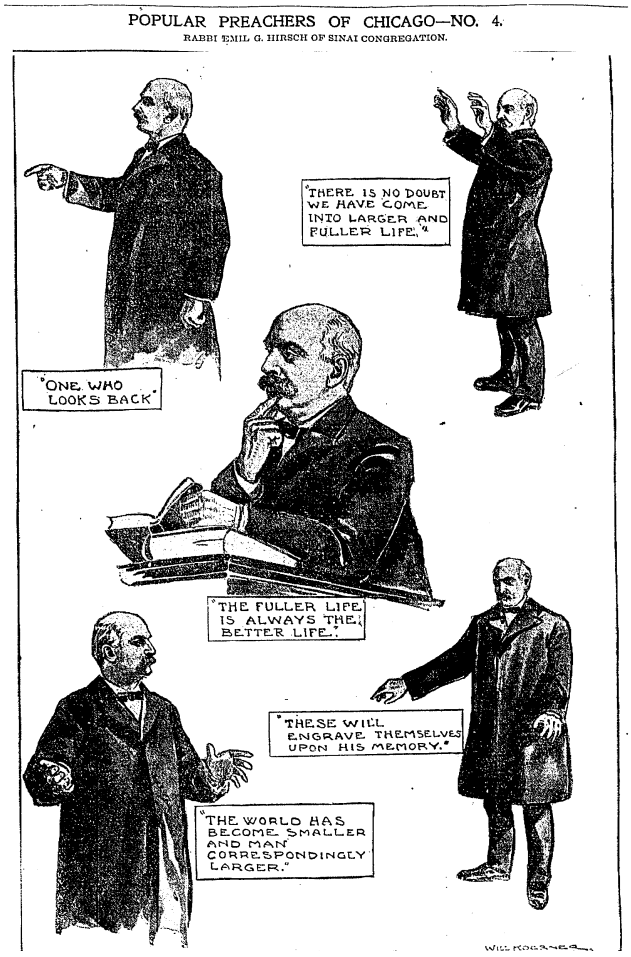
appoint Lathrop. Others also promoted Lathrop, who got the appointment, but Hirsch's influence was not insignificant. It is not an exaggeration to claim that he was part of the Progressive network with Addams. During the Progressive Era, his political influence approached the level of that exerted by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of the prestigious Temple Emanu-El, New York.

How close the personal alliance between Addams and Hirsch was is hard to determine. It is clear that they both forged a community of activists who engaged in the difficult work of racial uplift in the first two decades of the 20th century. They made connections through their personal diplomacy and the hospitality of their institutions so that whites and Blacks could gather for conferences and meetings, talk informally, and eat together and listen to each other's ideas in safety and in mutual respect. They also frequently spoke as guest lecturers at each other's "pulpits," promoting causes and educating their followers on a variety of topics. Hirsch lectured often at the settlement house. He brought Sinai member Julius Rosenwald to the settlement house, where the wealthy capitalist began a lifelong relationship with Addams, serving as a trustee of the Hull-House board for 20 years, making annual financial contributions, and giving advice to Addams and her colleagues. Reciprocally, Rosenwald engaged Addams and Hirsch in his work with Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute. Rosenwald, at various times, actually transported Hirsch, Addams, and Anita McCormick Blaine, the daughter of Cyrus McCormick, the Reaper King, to Tuskegee, bringing them South by private railroad car. Rosenwald and his wife, Augusta, became intimates of Addams and her close associate and friend, Louise Bowen. It was Augusta Rosenwald who donated $25,000 in 1912 to build a cottage on the Hull-House's campgrounds in Waukegan, Illinois, to house working-class women and their babies for two-week summer vacations. Rosenwald's biographer and grandson, Peter Ascoli, attributes Julius Rosenwald's interest in the cause of African Americans to the preaching and personal guidance of Rabbi Hirsch. For her part, Addams was able to gain support and aid from Rosenwald for the education of African American social workers at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy (later the School of Social Work Administration at the University of Chicago), which she and Graham Taylor had established in 1908, and for the Wendell Phillips Settlement House on Chicago's West Side, a social settlement for Blacks that was supervised by an interracial board and financed in large part by Rosenwald.



Sketches of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch from the *Chicago Tribune*

The short life of the Wendell Phillips settlement and the personal control of its staff by Rosenwald are reminders of the limits of Rosenwald's approach to philanthropy and of a world in which even interracialists like Addams, Hirsch, and Rosenwald were not integrationists. This all-Black settlement was about equidistant from Hull-House and the Chicago Commons Settlement House, which Congregational minister Graham Taylor established in an immigrant, working-class Chicago neighborhood as part of the social reform settlement expansion during the Progressive Era. Yet the African Americans living in relative proximity to these well-established places were not encouraged to join either one. Instead, Addams and Taylor thought a separate social settlement—Phillips—with an interracial board supervising an African American social worker they had trained was the more appropriate path to take.

On other issues—gender equality and inclusion of [German] Jews in civic endeavors, for instance—Addams and Hirsch were proactive. Hirsch invited Addams to speak from the pulpit at Sinai, the first non-Jewish woman ever accorded such an honor in an American synagogue.6 Addams had endorsed Hannah Greenebaum Solomon, a Sinai member, for membership in the prestigious and influential Chicago Woman's Club. Solomon was one of the first Jewish women to be admitted, and she and Addams were partners in the women's political culture of the era, sponsoring legislation for the protection of women and children. Hirsch's and Addams's names were on the same petitions advocating the rights of African Americans, workers, and women and children's protection. They shared the platform at public forums, addressing such questions as "How Do We Uplift the Masses?" and they were so well respected by both labor and capital that they were called in as mediators to settle protracted and hostile labor disputes.

Addams and Hirsch were perceived by their peers as people who had insight and wisdom, and whose experience and location in the urban scene gave them the authority to interpret the world of the immigrant, the worker, and the slum dweller.

There are many points to highlight when examining and comparing the lives of Emil Hirsch and Jane Addams. One of the most compelling and, arguably, the strongest reason for viewing them together is the way in which these two experimented with the problem of sectarianism in religion: how divisions and creedal battles had obstructed religion's universal message of social justice and inhibited the power of people of faith to work for social change. They found in liberal Protestantism and liberal Judaism a way to overcome sectarianism and harness the energy for humanitarian causes that lay dormant in religious groups. Some historians have interpreted Hirsch's emphasis on social justice as evidence that his was a Jewish Social Gospel message akin to the Protestant Social Gospel movement. Similarly, historians have suggested that Addams's offered a social gospel message in her work at Hull-House and point to her activities with Graham Taylor, a proponent of applied Christian ethics as a form of social work. A theologian and ordained minister, Taylor connected sociology and religion in his kingdom theology: "The gospel of the Kingdom is sociology with God left in it, with the Messianic spirit as the bond of unity, with the new birth of the individual for the regeneration of society, and the dynamic spirit of religion as the only power adequate to fulfill its social ideals. Sociology may yet be claimed as having derived its birthright from Judaism and Christianity as the science of 'the kingdom' which fulfils the covenants of promise in both Testaments."7

Social Gospelers argued that the true mission of Christianity was to bring the ethical teachings of Jesus to all aspects of life. Instead of viewing the church's primary role as ensuring the salvation of the individual, the Social Gospelers believed that the church must address itself to the correction of social abuses and the amelioration of social ills. That made sense, but the problem for both Hirsch and Addams was that Social Gospelers were often traditional Trinitarians who viewed God as three separate entities. Their kingdom theology centered on healing the world in the present, rather than a future messianic age in heaven, but it still was a theological position that emphasized Jesus as God's son.

Part II of "Striving for Fellowing" will appear in the Summer 2025 of *CJH*.

Endnotes

1Gerson B. Levi, "Introduction," *My Religion* by Emil G. Hirsch, New York: MacMillan & Company, 1925, pgs. 12-13; Irving Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago From Shtetl to Suburb* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996, 32-33; Emil G. Hirsch, *My Religion*, Compiled by Gerson B. Levi. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1925, pg. 61-62.

2Rabbi Evan Moffic's essay, "Emil Hirsch and Kaufman Kohler: A Comparison," written in 2005, and awarded the Rabbi Richard Hertz Award from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Taken from Chicago Sinai Congregation's website.

3Peter M. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 407.

4Jane Addams, *Twenty Years At Hull-House* with Autobiographical Notes edited by James Hurt, (University of Illinois Press, 1990 reprint),50. This was Addams's description of the Cathedral at Ulm. She writes about visiting it & how she hoped for such a cathedral of humanity.

5Richard Wightman Fox, "The Culture of Liberal Protestant Progressivism, 1875-1925," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXIII: 3 (Winter 1993): 639-660, pg. 644.

6Peter M. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, pg. 55.

7Graham Taylor, *Religion in Social Action* (Dodd, Mead and Company, 1913), pg. 104.

Letters from Members and Friends

A number of CJHS member and friends have responded to the Winter 2025 President's Column by Dr. Rachelle Gold in which she considered the heyday of Jewish pharmacies in Chicago. With their permission, we are happy to share their own reflections.

Why Not Jewish Optometrists?

I enjoyed reading the President's Column in the most recent issue of *Chicago Jewish History* regarding pharmacists and the history of Jewish involvement in the pharmacy profession. Fascinating interviews.

Just to add to the story: The University of Illinois College of Pharmacy was recently renamed the Herbert M. and Carol H. Retzky College of Pharmacy. See the link to the history of Herbert Retzky, RPh, and details of the gifting to the university. https://pharmacy.uic.edu/news-stories/transformative-retzky-gift/

In addition, Frederick Siegal, PhD, a longtime and well-loved faculty member of the UIC Retzky College of Pharmacy, was certainly Jewish, though I do not know the details of his roots.

You may also wish to consider a future story highlighting Chicago optometrists, who have deep and lasting roots in the Chicago Jewish community. They would include my father, Milton Gaynes, OD, who had an optometric practice for over 40 years on Lawrence Avenue, just east of Damen Avenue. I am certain there are many other Jewish optometrists, who, like my father, held private practices in neighborhoods throughout Chicago.

Similar to your piece on pharmacists, an article on several of these prior optometric practices may be of interest to readers.

Thanks again for your dedication to maintaining Chicago Jewish History as an outstanding periodical and the go-to source for all topics related to Chicago Jewish history.

Bruce I. Gaynes, OD, PharmD

Pharmacies Run in the Family

I was reading your series on Jewish pharmacies and saw that you were looking for names of Jewish pharmacists.

My great uncles Sol and Arvin Finkelman *z"l* owned Finkelman's Drugs in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. I believe that Arvin worked at Golden Pharmacy in Oak Park as well. I saw that Finkelman's Drugs was mentioned in the Spring 2009 issue of *Chicago Jewish History* on page 8. Their sister, Florence, is my Bubby (grandmother). She is now 97. Her husband, my Zaide, Abe Rosenblum *z"l*, was a Holocaust survivor from Czechoslovakia. His brother, Willy, moved to the United States before World War II and opened Rosenblum's, the Jewish bookstore in Skokie.

Bubby and Zaide had four daughters. Their second oldest daughter, Judy, has three kids, and two out of three of them became pharmacists as well. It wasn't coincidental. My Bubby and Zaide believed that pharmacy was a very reputable profession. My cousins have since moved on to other occupations within the field, but the occupation of pharmacist runs in my family!

Michelle Collins

Pharmacy Memories

I lived in the Humboldt Park neighborhood—not West Town, as the modernists have renamed it!—from birth until I was Bar Mitzvahed. Our pharmacy was Mishlove Drugs, headed by Bernard Mishlove, which located on the southeast corner of California and Augusta Boulevards. Mr. Mishlove was a Bialystoker, as were my parents, David and Rena. Thus, it was a natural occurrence to support a landsman. Mishlove had a soda fountain counter with stools; it served Nonebetter and Highlander brand ice creams in a safety or sugar cone. More important, it was an emergency outlet for medical attention.

My LaFayette Elementary School was almost directly across the street from the pharmacy. If you got a cinder or another obstruction in your eye, or if you fell and bloodied a knee or bled from a scraped finger, you went to Mishlove. Mishlove would come out from behind the counter where he was filling prescriptions, tell you to sit on a stool at the counter, and proceed to remove the obstruction from your eye or provide a bandage. Then, he would provide you with a five-cent Coca-Cola. Today, such care and attention would be nonexistent largely because of our litigious society.

In my freshman and sophomore years at Sullivan High School—we called it Sol Levin because of the preponderance of Jewish students—I worked at the Cal-Touhy Drugstore on the southwest corner of California and Touhy Avenues in West Rogers Park. The drugstore had a soda fountain, and I learned how to make the best chocolate phosphates ever, as well as green rivers and vanilla Cokes. I used my Schwinn bicycle with a large basket to make home deliveries and hoped to augment my one-dollar-an-hour salary with a few nickel and dime tips. My mentor at Cal-Touhy was Joel Weisman, who became a lawyer and television personality on WTTW-Channel 11 in Chicago.

My third pharmaceutical experience came when I was in my late 40s and became friends with Scott Missner, a pharmacist, of Missner Drugs. His father, Irving, had two drugstores—one at Clark Avenue and Foster Avenue; the other on Foster, near Kimball, almost directly across from the Telshe Yeshiva. The Yeshiva bochurs loved to come in, order something, and peruse the magazine selection towards the rear of the store. One day, I came in to have a prescription filled, and Irv asked me to work the lottery machine. I said I had no idea of what I should do. He said that he would direct me while he was putting pills into vials.

Afterwards, I asked him how I could become a pharmacy technician to add to my University of Chicago Ph.D. in Urban Studies. Irv said, "Send five dollars to the Department of Registration and Education, fill out this form, and in a few weeks, you will be certified."

The form asked for a copy of a high school diploma, in addition to the five dollars. I could not find my diploma, so I sent in a copy of my graduate school diploma. Soon, I received a reply indicating the Department of Registration and Education could not process my application because it could find no proof that I was a high school graduate! Aren't bureaucracy and the inability to be creative wonderful and frustrating? I never did become a pharmacy technician.

Today, my prescriptions come via the mail. Pharmacists are unseen but as necessary as ever, especially if you are 81 years old.

Edward Mazur, PhD

Welcome New Members

Jonathan Baum, Chicago, IL
Joanna Benjamin, Chicago, IL
Abra Berkley, Glencoe, IL
Dr. Tobias Brinkmann, State College, PA
Nick J. Brown, Northbrook, IL
Marc S. Buslik, Chicago, IL
Elliot Cohen, Lincolnshire, IL
Daniel Cutler, Wilmette, IL
Rita Goone, Northbrook, IL
Rabbi James and Marilyn Gordon, Skokie, IL
Mark Jacob, Evanston, IL
Howard Hast, Chicago, IL
Scott Krantz, Northbrook, IL
Dr. Kathy Lawrence, Washington, D.C.
Gene Levee, Chicago, IL
Elyse Malamud, Northbrook, IL
Northwestern University Library, Evanston, IL
Erin O'Brien, Downers Grove, IL
Rabbi Joseph and Ashira Ozarowski, Skokie, IL
Bruce Rottner, Skokie, IL
Sivan Spector, Chicago, IL
David S. Sperling, Chicago, IL
Maxine Topper, Walnut Creek, CA
David Welbel, Skokie, IL
Celia Wilk, Union Pier, MI
Rabbi Kenneth and Shelley Zisook, Chicago, IL

Julius Rosenwald Program

continued from page 3

Produced for WTTW's Chicago Stories series, the short film explores the impact of Rosenwald's Jewish faith on his philanthropy, his founding of the Museum of Science and Industry, and his historic contributions to Chicago, the Jewish community, and the lives of Black Americans.

The program will include a brief presentation on a nationwide campaign to create a national park in Rosenwald's honor, which would be the first to honor a Jewish American.

Admission is free of charge, but reservations are required. Go to the CJHS homepage to register.

The Hunt for David Bekker: We Need Your Help

By Jerry Wexler

David Bekker died in 1957. In the prior 30 years, he was among the best-known Chicago Jewish artists and a vital member of local art circles. The year after his death, his wife and children moved to Israel. Within a short time, his work ceased to be shown. Discussion of it disappeared.

Despite all this, Bekker remains an important artist. He pops up in multiple art exhibits from time to time. Occasionally, his work re-emerges in the strangest of places. Over the years, the Bekker family and interested collectors, of whom I am one, have been searching for his lost art. We need your help.

I was introduced to David Bekker's work by my Bar Mitzvah tutor. He had been educated in elite European schools and yeshivas. After spending the war years in Shanghai, he and his wife immigrated to Chicago. The walls of their Lake Shore Drive apartment were covered with art. The only name I recognized was Marc Chagall. I now know that other pieces were by Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, Ernst Kirschner, and Egon Schiele, all noted German Expressionists. (Hitler referred to their work as "degenerate art.") He also collected two Chicago artists, Leon Golub and David Bekker. Both men were my tutor's close friends. He remained my secular tutor through high school. He used the Bekkers in his collection to comment on the music that he played for me. He frequently played Mussorgsky's "*Pictures at an Exhibition*" as we discussed the paintings. He explained that the piece was a musical representation of actual art works painted by Mussorgsky's recently deceased best friend, Victor Hartmann. Given my tutor's own history, Bekker's work was especially important as it dealt with life in two worlds—Jewish life prior to the Holocaust and Jewish life rooted in America.

Bronx Express David Bekker

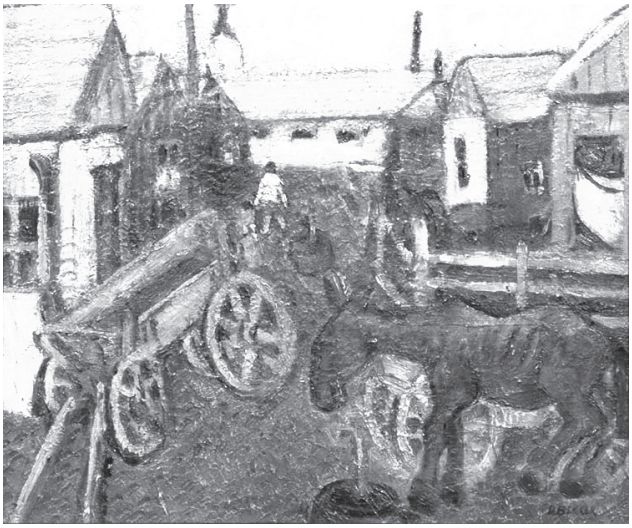
Bekker's subjects were everyday life in Europe and America and remembered scenes of Jewish traditions. A good example can be seen in "*Chai Gelebt*," literally translated "life jumping," but given the flexibility of Yiddish, I prefer "*Jumping for Joy*." When I first saw it in a used furniture store, I was told that its name was "*The Dancing Rabbi*!" Many of his works explore the tension and linkage between the two worlds of recent Jewish immigrants. *"Letter from the Old Country*" and "*Letter to the New Country*" are companion paintings. The first depicts an elderly couple in a shtetl writing a letter, and the other shows a young couple in America reading it. Another example of this tension and linkage can be seen in a 1940 painting of a lamed vav—a reference, in Jewish mysticism, to the 36 righteous yet hidden individuals engaged in good deeds—floating over New York City, perhaps attempting to save the Jewish community from destruction.

Bekker was born in Vilna. His family, recognizing his artistic ability, provided him with art instruction at local schools. The extended family made aliyah—immigrated to what was then Palestine—before World War I. Bekker was immediately accepted at Bezalel Academy of Art in Jerusalem, where he studied under Boris Schatz and Abel Pann. He left Jerusalem after the war, migrating through Europe and eventually settling in Chicago. He was adopted by the Jewish arts community. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, he was a noted WPA artist who was commissioned to paint murals throughout the country. His work was exhibited extensively in major museums, including the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Block Museum in Evanston, the Spertus Institute in Chicago, the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian, and other institutions throughout the country.

After college, I attempted to furnish my apartment on a student budget. In a junk shop on Broadway near Montrose Avenue in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, I saw a print on the floor, and I knew immediately that it was a David Bekker. I bought it for two dollars. It still hangs in my home. From that point on, whenever I saw a used furniture store, I stopped in to say hello. My friends knew about my obsession and called me whenever they saw a Bekker. One was found in a junk shop in Texas, two in a third-rate gallery in Los Angeles. Others appeared in Minneapolis and Phoenix. I bought them all sight unseen. At a used furniture store in Miami, I found the folio "*Two Worlds*," which contains 10 dry points depicting a variety of domestic, rabbinic, and political scenes. As far as I know, it is the only complete folio in existence. My most recent acquisition is a significant

oil, which, for some reason, made its way to Tulsa, Oklahoma. I now have over 20 Bekkers. About 15 years ago, I saw "*Letter to the New Country*" and "*Letter from the Old Country*" at the Art Institute of Chicago exhibit "They Seek a City: Chicago and the Art of Migration 1910–1950." At that exhibit, the "*Letters*" were the first paintings visitors saw when they entered the exhibit. I concluded that it was time to do some serious research.

At the time, there was very little written about Bekker—enough to get me started, but nothing substantial. One day, I saw an article in the *Chicago Jewish History* publication, which announced, "We finally discovered who did one of the stained glass windows at Anshe Emet." At the next CJHS meeting, I asked the president if he knew anything about David Bekker. He said, "I don't, but she does." "She" was Beverly Chubat, the previous editor of this journal. Beverly was a treasure trove of information. Her uncle was one of Bekker's good friends, and one day he took her to Bekker's studio. She told me his family was in Israel, and she had the email of one of his sons! Thank you again, Beverly.



Bekker's "*Farm Yard*"

When I got home, I sent Bekker's son an email. I didn't realize it was almost midnight in Israel. He wrote back immediately, and a correspondence began. We both knew that my tutor's wife had maintained her collection. She told me that a professor at the University of Chicago also had a collection of Bekkers. She couldn't remember his name; neither could Bekker's son. One day, he mentioned that the professor had a daughter who was married to a doctor, and Bekker's son remembered the doctor's name. I knew the doctor and called him. He and his wife also had a number of Bekkers. All of us, after many phone calls and emails, decided that it was time for a Bekker exhibit. None of us knew anything about curating an exhibit. Once again, Beverly came to the rescue and put us in touch with Professor Nathan Harpaz, Director of the Koehnline Museum of Art at Oakton College in suburban Des Plaines.

Curated by Professor Harpaz, the Bekker exhibit at the museum was a stunning success. For the first time, the world could see the range and talent of this artist. He was active in many different media: oil paint, pastels, watercolors, linoleum prints, etchings, murals, and stained glass. A catalogue was prepared, featuring a scholarly essay written by Professor Harpaz, as well as photographs of the art. (Catalogues are available on Amazon.) Several members of Bekker's family came to Chicago to view the exhibit. It was very well reviewed, and for the first time since Bekker's death, his name reappeared in art circles. The internet now has numerous Bekker entries. We are grateful to Professor Harpaz for his magnificent work as curator of the exhibit and author of the catalogue.

Now, we need your help. The family in Israel has been creating a catalogue raisonné of his works. The family has many Bekkers, and we know of some in Chicago. Since the exhibit, five additional paintings have appeared, as owners, or more likely their descendants, have checked the internet. One of them is owned by a member of CJHS. Fortunately, as Bekker progressed in his art, a member of the family took pictures of much of the completed work.

Yet a great deal of Bekker's work is unaccounted for. During the Depression, some of his work was sold at street fairs and synagogues, mainly on Chicago's Old West Side. No doubt, the bulk of his work was sold locally. But much of it traveled, as Chicago collectors moved to other states. It is my hope that some of it is in your homes. Bekker usually signed his work in English, but some pieces are signed in Yiddish or with his deceased daughter's name, Shoshona.

Take a look at your paintings, as well as the artwork hanging in your neighbors', friends', and relatives' homes. One of the newly discovered pieces was located in a next-door neighbor's living room. Any work discovered will be photographed at the expense of those working on the catalogue raisonné initiative; it will also be included in the catalogue. Ownership can be disclosed or concealed at the owner's request. If you make a discovery, or if you have any questions, contact me at jwexler@jdsadvisors.com.

My Son, the Policeman: More Tales from the Shomrim Society. David Welbel, Part II

CJH Editor Robert Nagler Miller continues the series in which he interviews local Jewish law enforcement officers—member of the Shomrim Society of Illinois—about their experiences in a profession not known to attract a large number of Jews. Founded in 1959, the Shomrim is a professional organization for Jewish first responders, including police, sheriffs, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics. The Illinois chapter is part of the National Conference of Shomrim Societies. In this issue, Nagler Miller concludes his interview with retired Chicago Police Department Sergeant David Welbel, whose Part I conversation appeared in this past winter's issue.

Did you experience any antisemitism among colleagues in the line of duty?

I believe I have what I call "Jewdar," an uncanny ability to detect other Jews. I am typically right nine out of 10 times, sometimes to my own amazement. I also have the same sense when I meet someone I believe doesn't care for me because I am Jewish. Over the years, I am sad to say, a number of these individuals were police officers. In fact, two were my supervising lieutenants. I always acted professionally with both, but I kept them in front of me and at arm's length.

In one case, one of these lieutenants, as the watch commander, denied my request to have Yom Kippur off, even after I explained to him that it was the holiest day of the year for Jews. He repeatedly denied my request, and I stormed out of his office. Later, I recalled a general order that stated members of a religious faith could not be denied switching their days off or taking personal time to accommodate their religious practice. I walked back into his office and laid the order on his desk. Apparently, when I had stormed out of his office, he found the same order. I could see the sweat pouring out of his forehead as I suggested filing a complaint not only with my union, but also with the Police Board. He immediately back-pedaled. I felt great after taking a stand with this lieutenant. It was the last time he messed with this Jewish sergeant.

What have been some of the most meaningful experiences as a law enforcement officer?

One day, driving east on Foster Avenue, I noticed an elderly gentleman on the sidewalk. Suddenly, his hands went up to his chest, and he fell to the ground, his head hitting a cement base of a light pole. I immediately pulled over and checked for a pulse; I could not feel one. In those days, we had no lifesaving equipment in our squad cars. I called for an ambulance and began chest compressions and mouth to mouth, as we were taught in the academy. Long story short, when the paramedics showed up, the first one said, "You're the first cop I ever saw giving actual mouth to mouth." I was given an award for saving the life of an 89-year-old man—my first major award on the job.

Welbel (second from right) from Area 3 Patrol Division headquarters

I also remember responding to a radio dispatch about a domestic disturbance involving a gun. A retired police officer who had been drinking and arguing with his wife took out several of his guns and started shooting up his house. I was a sergeant at the time and approached the home with a couple of my officers. The wife opened the door, and the living room was full of the stench of gun powder, with bullet holes all over the house. I asked her about the location of her husband. She said that he was on the bed with a gun to his head. I told my officers to stand back while I talked to him. I slowly entered his bedroom, where he was holding a .25 caliber pistol to his head. I spoke to him for what seemed to be hours, at one point asking him if I could sit on the edge of his bed because my feet were getting tired. Eventually, I said,

"Claude, you really don't want to do this." I reached over, and he allowed me to take the weapon from his hand. When I came out, I found a SWAT team outside: The district commander, assistant deputy superintendent, and the entire police district had shown up. What a sight that was! I couldn't believe the response. With my radio turned off and strict instructions to my men to not to enter the room, I had no clue what was going on outside. This was to be my second lifesaving award.

Describe your Jewish background; did your parents or grandparents speak Yiddish?

I was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, to Holocaust survivor parents. I grew up in a home that was multilingual: Yiddish-, Hebrew-, and English-speaking.

My father's tattoo number in Auschwitz was 80982, and my mother's was 4701. Hers was only four digits because she was one of the first arrivals of single women brought in for slave labor. She survived for 33 months when most did not, as she put it, last for 33 days. My parents met after liberation in a displaced persons camp in Bari, Italy, in 1945. My mother told me that marriages occurred only after several days of meeting each other because everyone there had no one or any family, so two people quickly became a family. I asked my dad if they had rabbis in the camp to marry people, and he said you don't need a rabbi to marry you. Any Jew can marry another Jew by reciting the correct blessings. I couldn't believe it until I called Rabbi Moshe Wolf of the Chicago Police Department, who told me, "Your father is absolutely right." My father said he conducted many marriages in the DP camp. It seems funny that those marriages are the ones that lasted; divorces were very rare. My parents were married for 59 years when my mother passed away in 2004.

My father fought in the War of Independence in 1948 and, again, in the Sinai in 1956, where he was wounded, but not seriously. In 1957, my parents, older brother, and I immigrated to the United States. We settled in Chicago, where my father's only surviving sibling and his wife, whom he also met in the same DP camp, had already been for several years.

Both my parents were raised in a much more Orthodox environment. They came from kosher homes—my father from Poland, my mother from Czechoslovakia. As a child, my father would go to synagogue with his father and grandfather every Shabbos. That was typical for most Jews living in small towns and villages in prewar Europe.

Both my parents provided testimony for the Spielberg group (Shoah Foundation), and I recall my father telling the interviewer, when he was asked as to what type of Jew he was (Reform, Conservative, etc), "After the war, I am not the same Jew I used to be." The one sentence revealed quite a bit. While in Auschwitz, he was assigned the role of Sonderkommando, a Jewish prisoner who performed duties in the crematoria and gas chambers. He would be subjected to the killing of thousands of men, women, and children in a single day. He would see them alive and healthy coming off the trains, and within a couple of hours, they were gassed and cremated. How could one survive and expect to live a somewhat normal life after that experience? My father was severely damaged, but he struggled through it and somehow managed.

One of my reasons for becoming a police officer is that while I was growing up and hearing my parents' stories of the Holocaust, I would often hear someone say, "Why didn't theaay fight? Why did they allow themselves to be led like sheep to slaughter?" The answer is simple: The Jews were civilians against a trained well-equipped army. They had no guns; even if they did, they did not know how to use them. They were weak, starved, and unaware of their fate. I vowed that I would never find myself in that position. As a police officer, I was trained in the use of firearms, both long guns and pistols. I know how to protect myself, my family, and my community, should things ever get to where they were in 1930s Germany. I pray to G-d that never happens, never again.

Visit Us!

Visit the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at the Greater Jewish Chicago Festival on Sunday, June 8, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Cook County Forest Preserve.

Notes to My Granddaughter: I Was a Child in Chicago During World War II

By Alice Marcus Solovy

I was born on January 24, 1940, before we had entered the War. (When anyone older refers to "the War," it is always World War II, not the Korean War, not the Viet Nam War, not the Gulf War.) The attack on Pearl Harbor was on Dec. 7, 1941. That was a significant day for my family. My Grandfather Meltzer had just recovered from a heart attack. We were out for a ride in his car, and there was a fender bender. My mother said she held on very tightly to me. No one was hurt. When we got back to my grandparents' apartment, they turned the radio on and heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. My uncle, Dr. Herman Meltzer, was there. My mother felt that day shortened my grandfather's life by a few years.

The author as a young child

Uncle Herman had been horseback riding when the attack occurred. He came back immediately. He was in his riding boots for two days and two nights, working furiously on the wounded. He also invented a malaria drug while he was there. Because he was an officer, he was allowed to bring his wife. My Aunt Elsie was a nurse in civilian life, but not an army nurse. However, she was one of the brave nurses there who continued to hang her wash outside as the attack was going on all around her. She later told my father that she felt their house was so flimsy that it wouldn't have withstood bombing, so she felt she might as well just continue doing the laundry. It was three weeks before anyone in the family knew what happened to Uncle Herman and Aunt Elsie. My mother found out through the Red Cross and then let my aunt's mother know.

Grandmother Meltzer had a little flag-like banner hanging in her front window with blue stars representing each of my uncles in military service. Someone across the way had a flag with gold stars. I asked my grandmother, "Why don't you have one with gold stars?" My grandmother was horrified. She told me the one with gold stars was for servicemen who were killed in combat. The flags with blue stars meant they were alive.

We had rationing. There were ration books with stamps. Shoppers were only allowed to buy limited quantities with their ration book stamps. I once overheard a woman in the grocery tell another woman that she used hers for meat for chop suey. She could stretch the meat in chop suey further.

My brother Arthur was born on July 26, 1944. I was staying with my Marcus grandparents.[1] That day, my grandmother took me to Lincoln Park Zoo. She had brought a picnic lunch, which we ate sitting on a bench. When we got up to leave, she saw that her purse was gone. Someone stole it while we were eating. It had her keys, her ration book, and money for the bus ride home. At that time, Chicago had a unit of Park District police. We walked over to their police station, where my grandmother asked to borrow a dime for carfare. The rude policeman threw it at her.

My mother's cousin Elizabeth lived on the same block as my Marcus grandparents. When we came home, we went to her apartment and watched for my grandfather to arrive home. My grandmother borrowed three potatoes for supper. As soon as my grandfather came home, my grandmother sent him across the street to the mailbox with an envelope with a dime in it for the policeman. My father came over that night to change the locks. When Gramma got her next ration book, she gave my cousin three potatoes to replace the ones she borrowed.

Arthur had cystic fibrosis. He had digestive problems, and bananas were something he could eat. Bananas were hard to get. One of my mother's uncles had a brother-in-law who worked in the wholesale grocery market on Fulton Street. He was able to get bananas for my brother. I remember being down there once with my mother. We stood in front of a brick building with a big open space and platform in the middle. This was where my great-uncle's relative stood when he gave my mother the bananas. It scared me a little, as there was a lot of activity going on in back of the opening.

[1]Many Jewish families at that time lived in close proximity to each other. When I was born, all four grandparents lived across the street from each other in the Uptown neighborhood—on Margate Terrace, right off Marine Drive. The building across the street from the Meltzer family and next to the Marcus family was a three-flat. My Great-Uncle Leo and my Great-Aunt Sib Meltzer lived on the third floor; my Great-Uncle Harry and Great-Aunt Dora Meltzer Kirsch lived on the second floor with their sons and my great-grandparents Abraham and Toby Fisher Meltzer. My great-grandmother Emma Teweles Marcus and my Great-Uncle Carlo Rosenthal lived with my Marcus grandparents.

There were paper drives during which kids with wagons collected newspapers that would be recycled for the war effort. Tin cans were also recycled. When I stayed overnight at my Marcus grandparents, my job was to jump on the empty cans to flatten them before they were collected.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the President, and a prominent radio newscaster was H.V. Kaltenborn. My father had a table set up in the middle of the living room so he could listen to the war news while he ate supper. He looked grim. I did not like hearing the names Roosevelt and Kaltenborn, because as a toddler, I had to be quiet when those names were said on the radio.[2]

While television was in existence, it wasn't in homes. Radio was the main entertainment. On Sunday night, Jack Benny was on at 6 in the evening, followed by Fibber McGee and Molly and Duffy's Tavern. I knew if I was quiet enough when Duffy's Tavern started, I could get away with staying up later because my parents didn't want to stop listening to put me to bed.

My weekends usually meant Saturday lunch at Gramma Meltzer's and Sunday lunch at my Marcus grandparents. Both grandmothers were very good cooks. After my Grandfather Meltzer passed away, my father and my Uncle Sid shared my grandfather's car. Since Uncle Sid was away in the military service, my father was the one who used it more during that time. Gas was rationed. My father knew that the local gas station owner gave his friends extra gas when they didn't have the stamps for it. He never did that for my father, and my father resented it.

I was the first grandchild on both sides, and I had a lot of toys. Marshall Field's, a big department store in downtown Chicago, had a big toy department, with one corner just for dolls. My father said that for one of my birthdays during the war, he went to buy a doll for me—and they didn't have any at all. Dolls before the war came from Germany, and we were at war with Germany.

I played with other children on the block. When the streetlights came on, that was the signal that it was time to go home.

My mother bought meat at a butcher shop that entailed her taking a number of buses. There was a library near the butcher's. She would get library books to bring back with us and read them to me.

My father read a bedtime story to me every night. One night, I said that I could read. It looked like I was reading the story. My mother was shocked. "Can she read?" she asked. My father said, "She memorized it." Then he took something else out for me to read. He was right—I had memorized it.

When it snowed, my father pulled me on a sled. My Grandmother Marcus once made a snowman for me in front of our apartment. In warm weather, when Lake Michigan reached a water temperature of 65 degrees, we went to Montrose Beach. Besides going to Lincoln Park Zoo, we sometimes went to Brookfield Zoo. I can remember being on my father's shoulders, with Arthur in a stroller. My Grandmother Marcus took me to the Field Museum, the Art Institute, and the Chicago Historical Society (now called the Chicago History Museum.)

I had a little red tricycle that was passed down from a family friend's son. There were two parks in the neighborhood. I enjoyed the swings and the slides. There was also a little strip called Wrightwood Park—and that's all it was, just a little strip, and that wasn't as much fun.

Even with a war going on, it was a pretty normal childhood.

[2]*When I was born, we lived in an apartment on Roscoe Street, near Cicero Avenue. We moved from there to an apartment in a two-flat at 2922 North Keating Avenue. It was not a Jewish neighborhood. We lived there because my father was a mechanical engineer at Western Electric in Cicero. He didn't want a long commute, and he had a friend in the neighborhood. The landlady was nice until she learned that we were Jewish. I remember leaving a toy in the yard. When I went inside for a minute and came outside again, the toy was gone. I found it in front of the apartment. I never left a toy in the yard again.*

**Longtime CJHS member Alice Solovy is a novelist and poet. She wrote down her World War II recollections after her 16-year-old granddaughter mentioned that she was studying the era as part of a class project.*

Correction: In the Winter 2025 issue, the late pharmacist Robert Yablon was erroneously referred to as Larry Yabon in the President's Column. We deeply regret this mistake.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn

הביטו אל־צור חצבתם

chicago jewish historical society

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IN THIS ISSUE

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Our History and Mission
The Chicago Jewish Historical Society, founded in 1977, is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Forty-eight years later, our mission remains the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open programs, tours, and outreach to youth and others interested in the preservation of Chicago Jewish history.

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Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials The card design features the Society's handsome logo. Pack of five cards and envelopes $36. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at $5 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to CJHS, P.O. Box 597004, Chicago, IL 60659-7004. You may also order online at our website.

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Inquiries: *info@chicagojewishhistory.org*

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

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

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