

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
הביטו אל-צור חצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

FORMERLY SOCIETY NEWS
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CHICAGO JEWISH History

"A Flag is Born" Pageant Sought to Establish Jewish State in Palestine *Ben Hecht Pageant Designed to Raise Funds for Irgun, Struggle against British Jurisdiction*

By Walter Roth

Beginning December 26, 1946, The American League for a Free Palestine presented Ben Hecht's *A Flag is Born* at the Studebaker Theater at 418 South Michigan Avenue to a sold out audience. The theater presentation was another (and the last in Chicago) of Hecht's pageants dealing with the plight of World Jewry. The League had been formed in America after the end of World War II under the leadership of Peter Bergson, the same person who had organized the Irgun Zvai Leumi organizations in the United States during World War II. Under the auspices of the earlier organizations, Hecht had written the Holocaust pageant *We Shall Never Die* produced at Chicago Stadium in 1943. Now, over three years later, six million Jews had been exterminated and the focus was on the remnants of European Jewry and the struggle for statehood for the Jews of Palestine. Adding to that turmoil in 1946, Hecht and his followers were at odds with mainstream Jewish organizations.

The Three R's

As its Chicago pamphlets enunciated, the League emphasized "The Three R's": the Repatriation of a million and a half Jews to Palestine with or without British consent; Recognition of the Hebrew Nation; and Resistance in Palestine which must be supported. The League accused the mainstream Zionist and American Jewish organizations of dragging their feet and of doing little effective work to further the three R's. In

Society Receives \$5000 Bequest Long-Time Member Leaves Grant to Society

Sylvia Brenner, a long-time member of the Society, has left a \$5000 bequest to help the Society continue its present work and plan for new undertakings.

Active in various Jewish causes even into her 90s, Ms. Brenner taught Sunday School at the North Shore Congregation and attended adult education classes at Temple Shalom. According to former Society President Norman Schwartz, she was sympathetic to the

continued on page 2

Inside:

- Oral History excerpt with Jack and Dollie Galter
- Long range planning committee delivers report
- Society announces video history project

continued on page 4

President's Report

Society Welcomes New Members from Last Quarter

You will note that our current newsletter has a new format, the product of our new composition methods which give editor Joe Kraus more flexibility with layouts and cut down on the time it takes to put the newsletter together. We congratulate him on getting out this issue of the newsletter and on the year's worth of issues he's already completed for us.

We have many new projects for the new year. We are embarking on a new venture: the production of a videotape based on the history of the Jews of Chicago. It is an ambitious undertaking which will require time by our members and the raising of funds for the hiring of professional help. In addition, we are working on a new publication of the Minsky Fund and completing a project collecting the best photographs depicting Jewish life

in Chicago. This, of course, is in addition to our oral history and summer tour programs.

Let me also mention that a dear friend of our Society, Bernard Wax, recently retired as Director of the American Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Massachusetts. Bernie served in that capacity for over 26 years. Many of us got to know him during his studies at the University of Chicago, from which he received both a B.A. and an M.A. From there, he went on to the Illinois State Historical Library where he became an expert on material dealing with the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln in Illinois. Bernie is now Director Emeritus of the American Jewish Historical Society and we wish him well in all his future endeavors and thank him for all he's done over the years. □

The Society would like to announce the new members who have joined in the last quarter. We welcome them and urge them to participate in our ongoing efforts to preserve and record Chicago's Jewish history.

<i>Mr. & Mrs. James Chatz Michael Ebner Faye Garick Mildred Mallin Lois Mandel Mori Mickelson</i>	<i>Mr. & Mrs. Edward Neisser Cantor Elwin Redfern Richard Sobel Emily Soloff Sandra Stone Jack Trost</i>
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We would like to invite all of our members -- new and old -- not simply to participate in existing Society programs but to suggest and undertake new ones as well. In addition to our quarterly open meetings, we have several existing committees for such disparate projects as producing a video history of Chicago's Jews, staging a photography competition, pursuing an oral history project, and seeking to increase Society membership.

Becoming involved in Society activities is a good way to insure that your particular interests and experiences are preserved. For more information on specific committee projects, call the office at (312) 663-5634.

You might consider as well giving a Society membership as a gift either to someone still a part of the city or to someone who has moved away from Chicago without getting it out of his (or her) heart. A schedule of membership dues is printed on the back cover of this newsletter.

Please, consider as well making a financial donation to the Society to help us continue our work. □

Brenner

Continued from page 1

Society's purposes and looked forward to the Society's growing even more successful in its goal of preserving Chicago's Jewish history.

Brenner's bequest will go toward the Society's general operating fund where, according to Schwartz, it will help establish the sort of endowment the Society needs before it can begin to consider such long-range projects as the hiring of an executive secretary.

The Society invites other members to consider making donations and to consider including the Society as a beneficiary in your will. We ask you as well to consider us as a repository for the artifacts you consider relevant to our mission.

"The benefit of Ms. Brenner's donation goes beyond its dollar value," Society President Walter Roth said. "We are an organization that accomplishes a great deal strictly

through the efforts of our volunteers. If we can establish an endowment, it will make those efforts all the more effective." □

Consider Minsky Publication as Gift

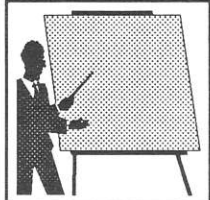
Those of you looking to give a small gift to someone as a thank you for hospitality over the holidays or as part of a belated gift exchange should consider purchasing copies of the Minsky Memorial Fund's publication, *Chicago Jewish Street Peddlers and Memories of Lawndale*.

At only \$5, the book is an affordable way to share the Society's work with friends or relatives in Chicago or away from it. While supplies still remain, the press run of 2000 is beginning to run low.

The book is available at Jewish and history bookstores throughout the Chicago area. □

Creating Chicago's Jewish North Shore

The Society's fall program featured Professor Michael Ebner of Lake Forest College speaking at Emanuel



Speakers

Congregation on October 25. His talk on the creation of Chicago's Jewish North Shore filled the auditorium and became the

subject of a recent article in the *JUF News*.

Jews first migrated to Highland Park on the North Shore because it was an inclusive rather than an exclusive suburb. Chicago's German Jewish elite began to relocate there in 1901 when four families built a summer residential compound called Wildwood. They built this compound partly because they were excluded from gentile country clubs. Seven years later a Jewish country club, the Lake Shore Country Club, was founded in Glencoe. It grew rapidly and had about 200 members by 1912.

That same year, 1912, Julius Rosenwald, the wealthy president of Sears & Roebuck, purchased a summer home in Highland Park. He built an entire compound for his growing family in Highland Park in the 1920s. A new pattern began to emerge of Jews living in Highland Park all year round.

The first synagogue, North Shore Congregation Israel, was built in Glencoe midway between Highland Park and Winnetka. Winnetka had a much smaller Jewish enclave than Highland Park. Ebner feels construction of the synagogue was delayed for fifteen years after the country club because of strong tension between Jewish leaders about their Jewish identity. Building a synagogue



Michael Ebner (left) talks with Society Vice-President Burt Robin

was a public declaration that Jews were a separate segment of the community.

Professor Ebner also spoke about two communities that did not attract a large number of Jewish residents: Kenilworth and Glencoe. Kenilworth saw itself as an exclusive rather than inclusive suburb. Kenilworth residents were concerned with appearance and social character. Modie and Lena Spiegel of the famous catalogue company family moved to Kenilworth around 1910. When they both became ardent Christian Scientists, Jewish identity was diminished there.

Glencoe, like Highland Park, was incorporated over a century ago and was an inclusive suburb. It had many non-wealthy residents and even had an African-American community at its founding. Despite the presence of the country club, however, Jews were slow to settle there.

According to Ebner, the North

Shore includes eight communities stretching from Evanston to Lake Bluff. These suburbs existed in a self-conscious network with shared historical experiences. The clustering of Jews in Highland Park and Winnetka, and eventually in Glencoe, set these communities apart but established them as a distinct Jewish area. □

--Mark Mandel

Manley High to Hold 50th Reunion

The Manley High School Class of January, 1943 will hold its 50th anniversary reunion on Saturday, May 22, 1993 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Deerfield. Organizers have planned a weekend full of activities and they invite all alumni to attend. For more information, call Susan Menkin Saper at (708) 433-8233. □

"A Flag is Born"

continued from page one

turn, the League faced a barrage of counter-charges by the Zionist organizations. The Haganah, it was said, was struggling to bring thousands of Jews into Palestine and fighting the British with all its resources. Palestinian and American Zionist leaders little appreciated what they considered the diversionary and distracting activities of the League. They felt that the League's efforts amounted to propaganda to assist the Irgun's terrorist activities in Palestine. Hecht, however, was undaunted. His solution for the money required to save the Jewish survivors in Europe was another pageant, this time to raise millions of dollars for the Three R's. This Hecht undertook in his usual furious fashion and the pageant opened in New York in the summer of 1946.

Stars Featured in Chicago Production

After a successful run for over a month on Broadway, *A Flag is Born* opened in Chicago on January 6, 1947 not simply as a pageant but as a full-scale dramatic play. The production included music written by Kurt Weill who had also written the music for the earlier Hecht pageant, *We Shall Never Die*. The lead role of Tevya was played in Chicago by Jacob Ben-Ami, a great actor of the Yiddish and English stage. In New York this role had been played with great success by Chicago born Paul Muni. The

role of Tevya's wife was played by Celia Adler, the "first lady" of the Yiddish stage and the daughter of Jacob P. Adler and Diana Adler.

The role of David, the young survivor in the play, was performed by a young actor named Sidney Lumet, who had just returned to his acting career after a two year stint in the Army. His role had been played in New York by another actor soon to achieve his own fame in Hollywood: Marlon Brando.

The role of the singer was played by Avrum Matthews, the well known Chicago cantor who had, as the Studebaker playbill stated, "created a sensation" in the Chicago production of *Romance of a People* and had appeared as well in *We Shall Never Die*. Other well known actors appeared in secondary roles and local Chicago talent was recruited for the roles of guards, attendants, soldiers, ladies-in-waiting and boys for the chorus. Among the last category was Fred Lane who went on to prominence as a Chicago attorney and a star of The Chicago Bar Association's annual Christmas benefit shows.

The Plot of the Pageant

The plot of the *Flag* revolved around Tevya and Zelda, survivors of Treblinka who are searching for a new life after surviving the horrors of the War. It is Friday and they come onto a Jewish cemetery to rest. There they meet David, a young Jewish man, like them a survivor but one who has lost all faith in God. Zelda and Tevya have lost their children in the War but still retain their Jewish faith. Realizing that it is Friday night, they light candles on a tombstone and are magically transported to Tevya's hometown synagogue as he starts praying.

The Cantor, played by Avrum Matthews, sings the Sabbath service as a robed choir of eight men circle the altar. Suddenly a trumpet blows and King Saul and his captains appear as if ready for battle. Men of Biblical Jabesh Gilead appear pleading for Saul's help to save them from the Ammonites. Here Hecht satirically introduces the representatives who have come to see Saul, the Old One, the Middle-Aged One and the Young One. While the Old One cries for mercy, the Young One is bitter about the cowards who will yield to the enemy -- and his words are directed at the Middle-Aged One -- the rich man who wants only to please and to present a balanced picture. "Who knows," he says, "perhaps we can make friends with the Ammonite -- do nothing to

Society President Walter Roth's article on Ben Hecht and his *Birth of a Flag* pageant marks the third time Roth has written about famous pageants for *Chicago Jewish History*. Our summer issue featured an article by Roth on *Romance of a People*, a pageant celebrating Jewish history at the 1933 Chicago World Fair, and our fall issue carried several additional accounts of the first pageant as well as another article by Roth on an earlier Ben Hecht pageant called *They Shall Never Die*. Throughout his series of articles, Roth has shown how such pageants were attempts at using history to define and defend Jews as a world people.

As Roth suggests in his article in this issue, Ben Hecht was a dynamic and driven man. The collection of his papers housed at Chicago's Newberry Library remains largely unexplored and will certainly yield interesting insights to future scholars. We invite any readers with further information on Hecht's career in Chicago and his stormy relationship with the Jewish community to write us.

anger him -- show him how learned and law abiding we are -- woo him by turning a kindly face to him."

King Saul's Message

Saul, King of Israel, rejects the Middle-Aged One's sage advice and opts for a fight to the death -- and he wins the battle. Saul now recognizes Tevya. "Is that Tevya from Dubinsky?" he asks. Saul then tells Tevya that all the heroes and prophets "are alive together in the dream of Israel." Tevya now realizes that since all the Jewish heroes of the past are in his blood, "then what am I worried about."

Soon Saul, pointing to the sky, tells Tevya that he must cross a bridge in order to find Israel. A cloud appears and King David, playing his harp, looms above reading the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is My Shepherd, I Shall not Want."

Zelda's Delusions

King David fades away; Zelda

back at the cemetery begins to have her Sabbath meal as if her destroyed children were present and eating with her. Zelda, played by Celia Adler, talks to her children: "How nice everyone looks! What are you doing, Rochelle? Enough *lukshen!* Leave some room for the fish! Yusela, Yusela, use a napkin! Don't wipe your hands on the tablecloth! Estherel, you are not eating. Stop sitting in a dream and eat." The scene ends with her singing the lullaby "Rozinkes Mit Mandlen" (Almonds with Raisins).

David Attacks Unfeeling Jews

The young man, David, who has stood by observing the scene now bursts out in anger:

"Where were you, Jews? Where were you when the killing was going on?...You Jews of America! You Jews of England! Strong Jews, rich Jews, high-up Jews...A curse on your silence! That frightened silence of Jews that made the Germans laugh as they slaughtered. You with your Jewish hearts hidden under your American boots...you let six million die -- rather than make the *faux-pas* of seeming Jewish. We heard your silence -- in the gas chambers. And now, now you speak a little. Your

hearts speak -- and you have a dollar for the Jews of Europe. Thank you. Thank you."

The scene now shifts to another vision: King Solomon and his royal entourage appear with the pillars of Solomon's Temple in the background. His maidens danced as he reads from the *Song of Songs*. Solomon asks Tevya what he is complaining about and Tevya answers "The world." Then go to the world, says Solomon.

Tevya Attacks the World

The next scene is a satirical and farcical array of delegates from the world's nations who have come to hear Tevya plead the case for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The English delegate is ridiculed as if he were the new "German" enemy. The Russian delegate does not know of any anti-Semitism in the world and the

American delegate is highly ambivalent. But Tevya upbraids the English and calls to the whole world:

And Tevya says to everybody, to the whole world here, under all its fine flags -- the Jews are tired of building a sickness in the souls of others. Be tired with us. You couldn't swallow us. And who wants to swallow you? Let us go and become a nation instead of a sickness in strangers' lands. Let us go and build a land of our own. Let us go and become part of the world -- an arm, a hand, a finger of the world -- instead of a fever in alien veins.

Tevya says open one little door for the Jews who have opened so many big doors for everybody else. Open one little door to Palestine, to Eretz Yisrael.

In response to Tevya's pleas, all the statesmen of the world show their approval and there is a mighty "yes" from the chorus of nations. But almost immediately the British statesman moves that the matter be put on "tomorrow's agenda" -- to which the American statesman agrees. Tevya is stunned -- his implorings have fallen on deaf ears. He looks at the ground where Zelda now lies motionless -- dead.

Tevya Sees the Angel of Death

David tells Tevya that they will continue their journey to Palestine without Zelda, but Tevya answers that he has seen the Angel of Death and sinks to the ground beside Zelda. David speaks bitter words, "Better to be dirt than to be a Jew," and holds a knife as if to plunge it in his heart.

David is Recruited for Palestine

At this moment the music swells with the *Hatikvah* theme and three soldiers appear in the uniform of the Jews of Palestine and urge him to join them in the battle against the new enemy, the British. "We promise you a battlefield of Jews that will stand and die and stand until a Hebrew nation arises out of the Hebrew soul. Come David and fight for Palestine."

David turns to take the *tallis* off the body of the dead Tevya. He takes a blue star from his pocket and puts it on the *tallis*, fastens it to a branch and joins the soldiers walking toward a distant bridge, to Palestine from which can be heard the strains of *Hatikvah*, the sound of joyous singing and the roar of guns.

With this melodramatic ending, the curtain fell on Hecht's *A Flag is Born*.

Mainstream Press Praises Pageant

The play ran for over a month in Chicago to generally favorable reviews. Both the *Chicago Sun* and *Chicago Tribune* critics voiced their approval. Claudia Cassidy, the *Tribune* critic, found the play full of "passion and compassion."

The League's Chicago office was located at 130 North Wells Street and its Midwest director was Howard Y. Williams. Between tickets to the performances and additional contributions, the League raised a great deal of money toward its campaign for agitation against the British.

After its Chicago tour, the play moved to Detroit and then to Philadelphia, where it was met by Jewish pickets. In Baltimore and Boston it was received with great acclaim. It then went on to South America as well. In the meantime, the millions of dollars raised by the pageant were sent, at least in part, to purchase a boat called the SS Ben Hecht for transporting Jews from Europe to Palestine.

Unlike the rescue activities of the Haganah which were conducted in great secrecy, the League's venture with the "Ben Hecht" was well publicized at every step, so that when the boat with its human cargo approached the shores of Palestine, it was seized by

the British and its occupants were interred in Cyprus. The League then responded with a propaganda blast, culminating in vicious newspaper attacks on the British in American newspapers. Hecht authored many of those attacks.

Hecht's Hatred of British Grows

Soon after, on April 16, 1947, the British hung four Irgun soldiers at the Acre prison. Their leader, Dov Bela Gruner, became the central figure in Hecht's last pageant, *The Terrorist*. Hecht also let loose a blast in the media in which he compared the British to the Nazis and stated that he "had a holiday in his heart" whenever he heard that a British soldier had been killed in Palestine.

These anti-British diatribes caused the British movie industry to declare a boycott of all movies in which Hecht had any input. Although he had written scores of screenplays for some of Hollywood's biggest successes, he was immediately boycotted by Hollywood and his career collapsed. Hecht then grew increasingly distant from his Irgun friends as well as increasingly bitter about Zionist leaders in general.

Begin's Affection for Hecht

Among his papers at Newberry Library in Chicago is a letter signed by a "Ben-David," the underground alias of Menachem Begin, then the Irgun commander in Palestine. Written in the summer of 1947 after the hanging of Dov and his men by the British, the letter calls on Hecht to use his "brilliant pen" to write a spectacle to memorialize Dov. The letter, dated "Tammuz, 5707," concludes:

Permit me to take this opportunity of shaking your hand for all you have done for us...You have taken your stand at our side without fear or compromise, and have moreover drawn your readiness to take the stone hurled at you from all sides...We shall not forget it.

Israel achieved its independence in May, 1948. Ben Hecht's pageant *A Flag is Born* had helped to bring it about in Menachem Begin's mind. But for many others, Ben Hecht and his pageants were forgotten, his great outcry against the world in *A Flag is Born* became lost in a war of words with his fellow Jews. Despite such a destiny, *A Flag is Born* as staged in Chicago's Studebaker Theater still resounds with Hecht's feverish expression of the age-old Jewish longing for justice and a national homeland. □

Ben Hecht Lead Controversial Life in Quest for Jewish Justice

Ben Hecht was born in 1894 and raised in Chicago. He became a newspaper reporter in the Windy City and developed his invective prose and satire in the columns of the old *Chicago Daily News*. In his *Guide for the Bedeviled* written in 1944 as a rambling discourse on anti-Semitism, he claims he had no Jewish identity in his early life and that the Jews he knew were not worthwhile. He did remember and admire Shmarya Levin, the great Russian Zionist leader, and Louis Brandeis, the eventual Supreme Court Justice when the two met in Chicago for a American Zionist Organization conference. Aside from these two, Hecht could not remember any Jews he admired.

In a book containing a collection of articles from his *Daily News* columns, *1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, originally published in 1922, Hecht wrote a number of stories such as "Mottka" and "Mishkin's Minyan" in which he despaired of Jews and their poor upbringing in the villages of Eastern Europe. In 1925 Hecht left Chicago for New York -- and greater fame. His writings were enormous: numerous novels, scores of short stories and plays -- including *The Front Page* -- came from his pen, either solo or in conjunction with Charles MacArthur. From New York he often sojourned in Hollywood where he became a prolific screenplay writer. Beginning with *The Underworld*, Hecht wrote *Scarface* and the film versions of *The Front Page* and *Twentieth Century*. He then wrote the screenplays for *Wuthering Heights*, *His Girl Friday*, *Spellbound*, and *Notorious*. Uncredited, he worked on *Gilda*, *Roxie Heart*, and *Gone with the Wind*.

Hecht's Jewishness apparently caught up with him in the late 1930s. In his autobiography, *A Child of the Century*, he writes that while he developed a violent dislike of Germans during his two year tour as a reporter to post-World War I Germany in 1919-20, he did not recognize any anti-Semitism in Germany until the Nazis came to power. With the advent of Nazism, however, Hecht adopted an extreme Jewish self-assertiveness. He began to call on all Americans

who had never thought of themselves as Jews --like himself -- to rise up in defense of their rights.

He wrote articles in newspapers which brought his name to the attention of the Irgun, the extreme militant Zionist organization bent upon agitating worldwide protests in order to achieve its end. In his subsequent role as an Irgun supporter, Hecht wrote plays, stories and his great pageants and succeeded in raising millions of dollars for the group and its activities. Hecht's role as a Jewish warrior came to an end with the British boycott of his movies which ruined his Hollywood career.

In Israel another tragedy occurred that further tarnished Hecht's reputation. Money raised by Hecht and others was used by his Irgun friends to purchase arms for Irgun soldiers in Palestine. The Provisional Jewish Government in Israel determined that the main

purpose of the arms was to aid in the Irgun's effort to overthrow the government, so it sank the ship off the shores of Tel Aviv. Hecht never forgave Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion for the act. Years later in his book

With the advent of Nazism, however, Hecht adopted an extreme Jewish self-assertiveness. He began to call on all American Jews --like himself -- to rise up in defense of their rights.

Perfidy he vented his anger at mainstream Zionist leaders for their allegedly "cowardly" acts during World War II.

After the creation of the State of Israel, Hecht wrote incessantly of his inward search for his Jewish soul. His second wife Rose, like him a reporter, seems to have been a partner in his turmoil. There is evidence that near the end of his life the two of them were researching and writing a book proving that Shakespeare was born of Jewish ancestors.

Hecht died in 1964. When his wife died in 1979, she bequeathed all of his notes, diaries, letters, books and memorabilia to Chicago's Newberry Library where they are now located as part of the Ben Hecht Collection. The Collection has been only partially catalogued and is still largely unresearched. Somewhere in the Collection there may be further evidence to document Hecht's search for his Jewish soul. Justly famous for his journalistic style and his feverish stage and Hollywood writings, much work remains for scholars to give us a clearer picture of his early life in Chicago and the directions it gave him in his struggles on behalf of the Jewish people. □

Deadline for Photo Contest Extended

The Society is pleased to announce to all of our shutterbug friends that the deadline for our photography contest has been extended until March 31. Held in memory of Moselle Schwartz, the competition is an effort to chronicle the varied strains of Jewish life throughout the Chicagoland area.

The contest is open to members as well as non-members and professional photographers as well as amateur ones. Each entry should be accompanied by a separate entry form and should conform to the following guidelines:

- The photo must have an identifiable Jewish theme and be taken in the Chicago Metropolitan area.

- All photos must be taken between June 1, 1992 and February 28, 1993.

- Only prints are acceptable. They may be black and white or color with a minimum size of 8" x 10".

- Prints should neither be framed nor mounted. There is a maximum of five entries per person.

- On the entry form, identify the

events and indicate the names of all identifiable individuals. State where and approximately when the photo was taken.

- Do not write on the photo. Do not attach the photo to the entry blank using anything that will damage the print.

- Entries must be postmarked by March 31, 1993. First, second and third prizes will be awarded at the 1993 annual meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

- A panel of judges will evaluate all entries on the basis of photographic quality and adherence to contest rules. The decision of the judges will be final.

- Winners will be notified by May 15, 1993. Contestants formally designated as award winners will be required to supply the original negative of the winning photograph and a release from each identifiable person in the photograph.

- Carefully package your photo entries between pieces of cardboard so they will not be damaged in the mail.

- Mail entries to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 618 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605.

- All entries become the property

of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and none will be acknowledged or returned. If they are used by the Society for publication or exhibit purposes, suitable recognition will be given.

Information Request:

Chicago Historical Society Seeks Help for Upcoming Exhibit

The Chicago Historical Society is currently looking for artifacts and oral history stories for our upcoming exhibition, "Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920." We are interested in artifacts (clothing, photos, documents, etc.) that you can lend or donate. They also hope to collect personal stories and memories of the trip to America and Jewish women's early experiences in their adopted country. Any help you can give them will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Joanne Grossman at The Chicago Historical Society, 1601 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 642-5035 ext. 270.

CJHS Photo Contest Entry Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: () _____

About this Entry: _____

One Entry Form per Photo -- Entries Must be Postmarked by March 31, 1993

Long-Range Planning Committee Report Considers Video History and Other Projects

While the Society is involved in numerous projects already, former President and current chair of the long-range planning committee, Dr. Adele Hast, recently released a report outlining possible future Society undertakings.

According to Hast, the Society should focus its volunteers resources on a few particular projects rather than allow our energies to be spread too thinly over several different projects. As a result, she and the committee put together a list of long-term projects the Society has considered and recommended that we choose one or perhaps two of them to pursue.

At the top of the list is the production of a video history of Chicago's Jews, one that might be

organized around the narrative and photographs from H.L. Meites *History of the Jews of Chicago*, reprinted by the Society in 1991. The Society has already announced the formation of a new committee, chaired by President Walter Roth, to investigate video content, production methods, and costs.

Six other items round out the long-range planning committee's list. First, there are still as many as 100 oral history interviews preserved on audio tape but not yet transcribed. Raising the funds and overseeing such transcription will require a great deal of the Society's energies.

In addition, while the Minsky Fund has proved a source for an impressive first publication and a successful second competition, we will need to devote some fund-raising energy to replenishing the fund.

Third, it has been over three years since the Society staged its last exhibit, the acclaimed "Landsman-shaften" exhibit at Spertus College. Several members have discussed staging another exhibit.

And finally, the committee's list proposes three possible future

publications: a compilation of essays on various aspects of Chicago Jewish history solicited from local experts, a collection of articles out of our own *Chicago Jewish History* newsletter, and an update of Rachel Heimovic's guide to places and organizations in Jewish Chicago.

While we are already working on the video history project, we invite members to suggest additional projects as well as to offer opinions on which projects should take priority. We hope you will consider the Society not just for its history but for its future as well. □

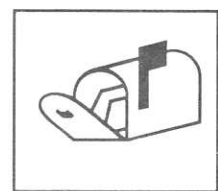
Information Request: Seeking Copies of "Lawndale News"

For information on a history of Lawndale, former Chicagoan and current resident of Sweden Phil Chavin is looking for copies of the *Lawndale News* publication from 1940 through 1948. If you can help, please contact Sid Sorkin at (708) 541-2188.

Letters:

Dear Mr. Roth,

I read the article on Havurot in *Chicago Jewish History* in your summer issue. In the fall of 1971 I



started a minyan-havurah within the Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston. We offered our members and

anyone from outside the Synagogue an alternative way of worship and study. A *siddur* was developed by the members and we had a complete reading of the weekly *parashah* and

haftorah with open and free discussion of each *aliyah*.

Needless to say, the membership in the minyan is based on equality of gender. This minyan does not adhere to any of the various denominations of Jewish worship. We were written up several years ago in the *Wall Street Journal*. Many youngsters from the cradle through high school graduation grew up in this minyan; we count a couple of rabbis among our "alumnies." This was all done within a Reform Congregation. In all these years I always cooperated fully with the Rabbi in order to prevent any friction that could arise.

Maintaining such an informal group for over 21 years makes this a

successful attempt at a renewal of Jewish spiritual life within existing organizations. Within this minyan one will find people who are active within the congregation and other Jewish organizations.

I know it's not always possible for a writer to explore every aspect of the subject matter, but our minyan is well known and I would have enjoyed greeting Joe Kraus in our Shabbat minyan. So that your records may be more complete, I have enclosed copies of several papers from the history of our minyan as well as a copy of our current *siddur*.

--Herbert Hubert
Evanston

Galter Family Talks of Chicago, Inventions, and Benny Goodman

The following is an excerpt of an oral history interview taken from Dollie and Jack Galter, real estate investors and philanthropists by Chicago Jewish History editor Joe Kraus on September 9, 1992. In addition to her own celebrity, Mrs. Galter is the daughter of inventor Herman Schiff and the niece of banker B.J. Schiff.

Galter: My father was a sort of an inventor (she says pointing to an old date book of his) and he'd write down things that he'd thought of. He was the first one to make this candy out of rice crispies. And now it's being revived. I see it all over the place...

But I think one of the funny stories...I'll just tell you one of the funny stories. He sold a little machine that would crisp the rice crispies. And he loved mail order. He liked things coming in cash. And finally after, he was very, very successful. And then he would send them samples of the candy and people would buy this old machine to make the candy which is being made now. Well, the business kind of died off, but I had an aunt who was a very fine cook. And she used to make *ebenin*. It was a Jewish candy with carrots that had ginger in it. Well, you know Oriental people use a lot of ginger. So he placed an ad that if they would buy the machine, he would give them the secret recipe of Confucius. So they'd order in and he'd send my aunt's Jewish recipe (she laughs) as a come on to buy the machine...

Then he started with phonographs. We had the third largest phonograph company in the United States that he started here.

Kraus: What was that called?

Galter: Vita-noa. Yeah, the factory's still over there on Cicero. We passed it just recently...

Oh he was way ahead of his time. He wanted to buy a radio station and sell advertising. Everybody said nobody will listen to you. Then he wanted to build a place where people would drive in automobiles to see movies. He was always way ahead of everybody.

"Do you want to get rich?" (she reads from a newspaper ad clipping) Look at this one.

Kraus: (reading still) "One new idea may make you rich."

Jack Galter: When did they do the Vita-noa.

Galter: Well they started in our house. He'd make one -- he was the first out here -- and then place an ad. It's when phonographs were the Victrola, Columbia, Edison...

Kraus: The Vita-noa company, did you make phonographs or phonograph records?

Galter: He had a recording laboratory in New Jersey...but phonographs. It was the third largest phonograph company and the factory's still over on Kedzie or something...

Jack Galter: Her father was a fascinating man, a fantastic operator.

Galter: Anyway, when we got married I had \$100 and he had an old Ford. And we got married because we found an apartment in Logan Square for \$59 and we thought the two of us could make it between the two. I worked for Western Union and he was a musician. And last year we gave away to the hospital \$35 million.

Here, maybe this will be of more interest to you.

Kraus: This is a story about your uncle?

Galter: Yeah, he's the one that had the big bank at 12th and Halsted. He brought over I don't know how many hundreds of Jewish people. And (once) when I introduced my mother to somebody he said, "Are you related to B.J. Schiff?" She said yes, and he said, "Well, we thought he was God and nobody ever did anything without asking him." He was a wonderful

man, very gentle, very sweet.

Kraus: Now was your father a Schiff or was your mother born a Schiff.

Galter: No, my father was a Schiff.

Kraus: He was a younger brother to Benjamin or an older one?

Galter: Yes, younger. There was Benjamin Schiff and there was Ike Schiff who was also a banker and Moses Schiff who was also a banker and then my father and another brother...Sam, my Uncle Sam.

I know when Jack was a musician, there was a musician who later became a professor at the University of California. And he said to me, "Dollie, talking to you is like playing tennis. You throw out a word and it bounces back." Well that's the way that it was at our family. That's why I built a library for the hospital. The medical library because library is where they all, really, were educated. Actually self-educated because of their love of books and reading...

When I came to Chicago I had never even known any Jewish people. And I was walking across the street and somebody threw a rock at me and called me a "sheenie." I had never heard that word. That's another word for Jew, I guess.

Kraus: This was when you were nine or ten?

Galter: When I was about ten. The first time I'd ever heard that word. I came home and I asked what it was. In San Francisco everybody knew everybody and if you lived...

But we've had a very interesting life. Jack played for Capone.

Kraus: You played for Capone?

Galter: Yeah, he played at the dog track.

Kraus: For how long?

Galter: Oh played until 1932.

Kraus: In what band was that?

Galter: All the ones that were great, they were all kids then. Benny Goodman, Dave Rose. They were all kids and since they came from poor families they went to the Hull House.

There were two things that developed the musicians of Chicago, the Daily News band and the Hull House. And the Goodman Boys were all products of the Hull House.

Benny Goodman had one brother who was a very fine trumpet player and another one who was a bass player. Unfortunately, he overshadows everybody so you don't know about it. But Benny Goodman started with us. He was 14 and we were 19. And we used to pick him up after school. We played mostly on the north shore and the train would take us -- if the cars held up -- we'd get there...

the programs would start at 8. And then Benny would fall asleep.

Kraus: Because he was so little?

Galter: Yeah, he was only 14 years old. And the boys used to carry him upstairs and put him to bed. Sometimes he'd even play for him because he'd be too tired to play...Jack would blow and Benny would finger the clarinet.

Kraus: So this was at the track or at other shows?

Galter: No, we ran the dances...we ran dime-a-dance up there at Waukegan. And up in Lake Forest there was a dime-a-dance place. There's a movie you'll see about Benny Goodman and you'll see a man by the name Padolsky in it. He was the piano player and his wife and I used to take the tickets. We were married then...yeah, we were married then...

Kraus: You were married at 19, then?

Galter: 21. Yeah we were married. And Benny used to fall asleep and his brother and...now you know the magazine *Downbeat*?

Kraus: Uh-huh.

Galter: Well, we were coming down LaSalle Street and Benny's brother was in the car and his girlfriend and

Benny and somebody said, "Gee we ought to publish a magazine about jazz." And the girl said, "I've got a good name for it. Call it the *Downbeat*." I called up the people at *Downbeat* and they don't even know that. And then they wanted Jack...Benny wanted Jack to be his manager and by the time we were married and 24, I think, no...you were 21, it must have been 25...

Galter: Well, anyway, Jack was the drummer finally with...he was quite successful as a musician and he was playing with Jules Stein, the

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composer. Julie Stein? "High Button Shoes" and all that.

Anyway, I said to Jack, "I want you to quit the music business." I said, "That's because you can't go in -- when you hear that they need somebody -- that you qualify. You know you have to be discovered. Benny Goodman just happened to be in New York and the telephone rang and he answered and they said they were looking for somebody for the Let's Dance program That's when Benny...all the musicians knew he was great, but you have to be discovered. So, Benny came from New York to Chicago and they hired him and was going to start from Denver.

Jack was visiting some musicians in South Haven, Michigan. And Benny called up and he said that he wanted to see Jack. And so we went to South Haven and we saw Jack, and then we came back and Benny Goodman was getting on the train to

go to Denver that night. That was before planes were common. And he was to start that program, Let's Dance. There were different bands: Xavier Cugat, Benny Goodman and I don't know who the third band was. They were playing different kinds of music. Cugat played the rhumba, Benny was playing the jazz. And he called up this piano player, Johnny Morton -- was that his name?. And Johnny was playing at a little tavern here but Benny knew he was a great piano player so when Benny called him and said, "I want you to join me in my band," he said, "Come on, you're kidding. You're not Benny Goodman." And he hung up on him. Benny called him back and he was with him for years. And we put him on the train that night and that was the beginning of Benny's career...

Jack came up to me. It was near Thanksgiving and he said to me, "I just got a good job." He said, "It's down in Florida. Should I go ahead and take it." I said, "Go ahead and take it." But you had to know how to read (music) because it was for a big musical show. It was the one that had "Tea for Two and you for me and a boy for you and a girl for..." That was the show. But you had to cue it. Well, it used to take four days to get to Florida. So the whole band was going down. The man was from St. Louis who had the orchestra. And the boys said, "Don't worry, Jack. We'll teach you how to read." So they put up his drums in the mail car and they went in there everyday and they taught Jack, and they said, "When you get there we'll help you with the cue." So by the time he finished that job he was able to work in the pit. That's the time when they didn't have music in the pictures. □