

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



VOLUME 50 | FALL 2010 | TISHREI 5771



THE MISSION OF THE
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN
IS TO EDUCATE, CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE
AWARENESS OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF THE JEWS OF MICHIGAN TO OUR STATE,
OUR NATION AND THE WORLD.



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

is dedicated to the memory of Sarah and Ralph Davidson
and Bessie and Joseph Wetsman, the parents and grandparents
of William Davidson, of blessed memory, and Dorothy Davidson Gerson.

EDITOR

Wendy Rose Bice

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marilyn Krainen

Designed by Laurie Blume, *BlumeDesign*

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

is published by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

6600 West Maple Rd.

West Bloomfield, MI 48322

(248) 432-5517

info@michjewishhistory.org

www.michjewishhistory.org

Correspondence concerning editorial matters should be sent to the Editor. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors. *Michigan Jewish History* is available online at www.michjewishhistory.org and on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Articles in this journal are indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and in *America: History & Life*. No reproduction, electronic or otherwise, may be distributed without the express written permission of the president of the Jewish Historical Society.

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ISSN 0543-9833

COVER PHOTO

Cover of El Al Haggadah, 1972. El Al, the Israeli airline, provided Haggadot to passengers traveling around the Passover holiday. From the Jewish Heritage Collection at the University of Michigan Hatcher Graduate Library. See Archived Treasurers, page 56.

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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

When your children shall ask their parents in time to come...

Joshua 4:21

THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 50

Fall 2010

Tishrei 5771

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EDITOR'S LETTER

How do you know success when you see it? Is it a child's triumphant smile as he hands his Mom a paper marked with a big red "A," or the rousing, endless applause for a soloist who has given the performance of a lifetime? Is success being the recipient of a prestigious award or finally raising the funds needed in order to build a new wing on a building? Of course, the answer to all of these is yes, these are signs of success.

As I review this *Michigan Jewish History*, our 50th issue, I see success. I see our stunning cover — a beautiful *Haggadah* cover, one of the many donated to the University of Michigan Hatcher Graduate Library by Connie Harris and her husband, Theodore, of blessed memory. Connie is not from Michigan, by the way. She lives in L.A. but keeps an apartment here so she can visit her son who lives in the area. Connie decided to entrust her vast collection of Judaica to the University because of the quality of its Judaica studies program and the hospitality of those who now care for it. She thinks that we Michiganders are tops! I wholeheartedly agree.

This issue boasts six fascinating feature stories — a record, I believe for this publication. What better sign of success could there be than having six talented writers (actually, seven, because our article on Myra Wolfgang was the joint effort of two sisters) research and pen the stories that are now a part of this Journal's history. Their work is not for pay, by the way. These volunteers share a passion for the mission of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Where once this publication struggled to find individuals to offer their talents, we now have more than ever with a few already working on pieces for next year.

We also are introducing two new features this issue. The first is Reflections, a creative writing section that offers an opportunity for readers to submit memories of their lives in Michigan. Please be sure to read more about this new section, and how you can get involved on page 76. This year's essays include a lively story by Mel Tichik who writes about his childhood rise to fame, and a poem by Joy Gaines Friedler. We're also pleased to present a section we are calling Timeline, designed to help readers keep track of the many historically significant dates mentioned throughout the book.

It is truly an honor to be the caretaker of this publication. While this is certainly a personal success, I believe that the most meaningful triumphs are the compliments that pour in when the Journal is released. The letters, emails and phone calls we receive may be directed to "the Editor" or to the Jewish Historical Society, but in reality they are praise for those who quietly work behind the pages and make our little blue book such a wonderful accomplishment each year.

Our road to success has been and continues to be a fabulous journey. What a blessing it is to have the chance to be a part of this expedition.

-Wendy Rose Bice

FEATURED ARTICLE

LABOR'S CHAMPION: MYRA WOLFGANG

by MARTHA WOLFGANG AND LAURA GREEN

SOMETIMES, headlines referred to her simply as Myra, because a last name wasn't necessary. As Detroiters knew, Myra meant Myra Wolfgang, the fiery labor leader who had devoted her life to the members of the Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union — and, not incidentally, to anyone who benefited from Michigan's wage-and-hour laws, or suffered discrimination at the hands of their employers.

In the 43 years from the day she began working for the union's Local 705 to her death in 1976, she labored for decent pay and benefits and reasonable hours for a pool of workers broad enough to encompass hotel chambermaids and Playboy bunnies, chefs and bartenders at the top, and busboys starting at the bottom.

She stood up to public figures when she believed them to be wrong — from a governor and legislators who retreated from minimum wage commitments, to AFL-CIO leaders who refused to condemn the war in Vietnam in which their members' sons were fighting and dying. She captivated local media who relished her quotes, reporting gleefully on union strike tactics that thwarted and embarrassed management. She raised two daughters and soldiered on when her husband, a rock of strength in her crisis-filled environment, died when she was just in her 40s, plunging her into a once unimaginable life without him. And along the way she inspired countless young women to believe they could be more and do more.



Myra Wolfgang was one of the nation's — and Detroit's — most beloved labor leaders, organizing hotel and restaurant workers and advocating for the working class throughout her life.



Taken in 1953 at the Department of Labor, Myra is pictured with her two daughters, Laura on Myra's right and Martha on the left.

She was our mother; and while she may have been Myra to the world, she was Mom to us.

Some of what has been written about her has focused on her fearlessness, her way with words, her steadfastness, her optimism. One columnist wrote that she was “a woman of such aura, such mental force and conviction that she overwhelms you.” The press made her work look easy, but it was demanding and her day was long. Then as now, labor unions had to be creative to organize in the face of better-funded, politically well-connected businesses. Women leaders were rare on either side of the bargaining table. Leaders who captured the public imagination and became a household word were even scarcer.

AT THE TOOT OF A WHISTLE

Myra Wolfgang was born in 1914 into a family of independent thinkers, fervent Zionists and political liberals. Her parents, Abraham and Ida Komaroff, were emigrants from Eastern Europe who believed passionately in the importance of Jewish culture and knowing one's history. Though her family was steeped in Jewish learning, theirs was not a religious household. Her parents, who met in Canada, had been married in Montreal's labor temple, making her, she said, “a union-made union maid.”

When she was around two years old, her family moved to Detroit and prospered until the Depression. Wolfgang, an interior design student at what was then called Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, had to drop out and return home. At the suggestion of a friend, she went to Detroit's Local 705 of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union looking for work. The phones were ringing — they

always were — and she began answering them and taking messages. By the end of the day, Louis Koenig, the union's secretary-treasurer, hired her as his secretary. She had taken the first step toward becoming the woman she was meant to be.

In the mid-1930s, several factors suddenly opened the way to unionizing more hotel and restaurant workers. The Wagner Act, passed in 1935, made it easier for all unions to recruit new members and bargain for wages and benefits. Michigan's Governor Frank Murphy was sympathetic to labor and refused to use police to break up strikes, as was done in other states. The fledgling UAW had taken on the powerful auto industry and wrung union contracts from it, inspiring others.



Wolfgang (right) was as comfortable walking with her workers on a picket line as she was meeting with dignitaries.

Wolfgang quickly rose from secretary to union organizer and contract negotiator. In 1937, Local 705 organized a sit-down strike at the Woolworth's department store at Woodward and Grand River in Detroit. At 23, she walked into the store, blew a whistle in a pre-arranged signal to the women behind the counters, and a pink-collar, sit-down strike began. It lasted eight days and generated nationwide publicity, including a story in *Life* magazine and newsreel segments. An organizing drive at Detroit's major hotels followed. After sit-down strikes at the Statler and Book Cadillac hotels, the members of the Detroit Hotel Association signed union contracts that brought 7,000 new members into the union local, and gave them better wages and hours and the beginnings of fringe benefits.

That year, it seemed as if all Detroit was on strike. There were sit-down strikes at 15 automobile plants in Detroit, sit-downs in department stores, clothes stores, shoe stores, trucking companies, storage companies, lumber yards, printing plants, meat-packers, bakeries, coal yards and warehouses. Newspapers estimated that perhaps 35,000 took

part in sit-down strikes and about 100,000 walked picket lines. "You couldn't be an observer back in the 1930s," she used to say. "You had to be a participant."

Over the next few years, Wolfgang's local grew in scope and power. By the beginning of World War II, most of the city's best restaurants and hotels were union shops, as were no fewer than 40 Woolworth's stores. Union organizers like Wolfgang could, and did, launch a hotel or restaurant strike at the toot of a whistle — a sound that meant employees would drop what they were doing and walk out. Powerful unions, such as the Teamsters, respected their picket lines, and refused to cross them to make deliveries.

MR. AND MRS. WOLFGANG

In the midst of all this, our mother found the time to meet our father, Moe Wolfgang, a lawyer. They were married on August 31, 1939 (we mention the date because they woke up the morning after their wedding to learn that Germany had invaded Poland and the war had begun. It was a grave and ominous beginning to a very happy life together).



Moe and Myra were married 24 years. Theirs was a marriage of equals, Moe easily stepping in to care for their daughters if Myra was working.

Growing up in the '50s, it was a long time before we understood that our parents' marriage was a partnership that was unique for its time. They went off to work together, discussing the day to come on their way downtown, and reviewing the day on the drive home. Our father also was a legal sounding board, providing unofficial and unpaid advice along with the union's official attorney. At home, our father was an equal partner in child raising. And while our parents split the carpools, he reigned as king of the breakfast table.

At dinner, work and politics were always part of the conversation. At his perch at the head of the table, our father

held his own against one of the city's best debaters. We were included, but we couldn't just spout off. Family or guest, we all had to defend our points of view. "Growing up, Myra was the only mother who you could get into a knockdown, drag-out debate with about politics and life and learn something," said the Wolfgang family's good friend, Susan Werbe, vice-president for history programming at AETN-TV. "To us she was a woman of the world."

Our parents taught us invaluable life lessons. We learned that girls should have careers so they could support themselves and be independent. We understood that work was important, but being home by 5:30 sharp for dinner with your children was just as important. Above all, we saw that our father was unbelievably proud of our mother, that he supported her in all her work, and that he knew he had married a powerhouse of a woman and loved her all the more deeply for it. Their partnership set an impressive standard.

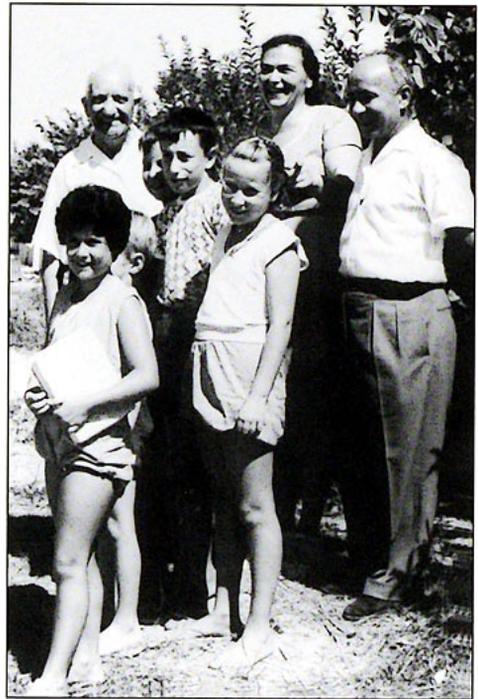
THE MOST IMPORTANT WOMAN UNIONIST IN THE COUNTRY

By the time we had absorbed enough to know what a union was and why we should never cross a picket line, our mother had become an international vice-president of her union, and a go-to authority on wages, hours and women in the work force. *The Detroit Free Press* called her "the most important woman unionist in the country." Yet prestige did not make her work easier. Passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, which limited actions unions could take in the event of disagreements with management, made it harder for unions to expand. The growth of chain drive-ins, with their transient staffs, presented an insurmountable organizing challenge to her union. But if drive-ins, and their successors, fast food chains, seemed unconquerable, bigger, prouder establishments were not.

In 1955, the national hotel and restaurant union began a long drive to unionize the Miami Beach hotel industry, an enormous challenge in the proudly anti-union South. At the union's request, Wolfgang began commuting back and forth periodically to help. By then, she had considerable experience as a negotiator, strategist, and speechmaker who could rally striking hotel workers to hang in for another week, another month or another year. During the winter, the three of us would join her in Miami for several weeks. The two of us did our homework in the mornings at the motel where we lived — a union motel, of course — while our father supervised us and our mother worked. The strike lasted two years, but finally nearly 50 hotels signed union contracts.

Not long after that, our parents received an invitation to join a group of labor leaders who were going to Israel to dedicate a children's village, which was supported by funds raised by the Teamsters Union's powerful Local 299. It was their only trip to Israel. Although it was a union trip, it was personally significant, too. Her parents were Zionists, and her older sister, Sarah, had lived and worked on a kibbutz near Haifa for several years. On the trip, our mother met Golda Meir, who at the time was the minister of labor. Meir told her, "We need more people like you and Sarah here." She was proud of that, for herself, and for her sister, who had died not long before that trip.

Over the years, Wolfgang developed many kinds of strike strategies. None were more unusual than in strikes at country clubs in 1962, when targeted clubs were



Invited to dedicate a children's village, the Wolfgangs visit Israel sometime around 1954. Wolfgang is pictured here at the children's home she visited with either Israeli labor or orphanage officials.



Meeting with Golda Meir.

picketed on foot, by boat and on horseback. The strike came to the Detroit Boat Club on a night when Woody Herman and his band were hired for a dance. Club members smuggled them onto the club grounds by boat so the famous musician would not be seen crossing a picket line. Not to be outfoxed, Wolfgang got the musicians in the band shell on Belle Isle to play marching music to overwhelm the proper dance tunes from Herman's band. "First I would hear Woody Herman. Then I would hear something from John Philip Sousa," a club member told the *Free Press*. "I didn't know whether to do the two-step or present arms." Later in the strike, the union was tipped off that Sammy Kaye's band was trying to sneak through the woods for an event at the Western Golf and Country Club. Outfoxed by picketers, who ran into the bushes to confront them, they refused to play. "I'll be damned," Wolfgang said when she learned what happened. "Now we've come to 'one if by land and two if by sea.'"

In 1964, when she was trying to bring the Detroit Playboy Club into the union, she sent Martha, who was 17, to apply for a job. She had no qualms about dressing her daughter in a tight skirt, high heels and lots of makeup to play detective during the extensive bunny interview process. Martha always wondered why Keith Hefner, the brother of Hugh, never caught on when she asked detailed questions about wages, hours and benefits. Our mother believed that the image of the Playboy bunny was "a gross perpetuation of the idea that women should be obscene and not heard," but she worked damned hard to get them the respect and wages they deserved. The club settled and became the first of several Playboy Clubs to contract with the union.

AN ADVOCATE FOR THE WORKING POOR

Hard bargaining and strategic strikes won significant benefits for her members. In the '30s, a waitress might earn \$6 a week. By 1960, the union pay scale had risen to \$66 a week, with such benefits as a pension plan, and health, accident and life insurance (today it ranges from \$3 an hour to as much as \$12 an hour). She took great pride in



Wolfgang met with politicians regularly. Here she is chatting with Michigan Governor Frank Murphy.

what the union had accomplished. "We represent some darned nice women who have raised children and sent them to college," she once said. "If we have to strike to get them decent wages and working conditions, we strike."

At the time, federal minimum wage laws did not cover many waitresses and waiters, union members or not, so Wolfgang became a tireless advocate for a state minimum wage law. She was outspoken and adamant on behalf of her members, and all low wage earners. "Service workers are still on the bottom of the economic pole," she once explained. "Any little change in the economy, in politics, in legislation affects our members tremendously." As a member of Michigan's Wage Deviation Board and the Wayne County AFL-CIO executive board, she had a bully pulpit to campaign for a higher minimum wage. In doing so, she ruffled a lot of political feathers, but the minimum wage levels were slowly raised. She became, as one newspaper put it, "far and away the most effective leader of the working poor in Michigan."

Over the years, she fought hard for protective legislation limiting the loads women could lift and the hours they worked. That made her an opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment, which she believed would have eliminated sex-based distinctions in the workplace. She argued publicly and forcefully against the amendment. "We don't want equality of mistreatment," she often said. She ultimately dropped her opposition because, she told us, she refused to stay in a fight when her only remaining ally was the arch-conservative Phyllis Schlafly.

Wolfgang was sought after as an authority on women, wages and working conditions,



A tireless advocate for women's rights, Wolfgang had access to many world leaders including Eleanor Roosevelt.

serving on many organizations from Presidential commissions on down. Most were concerned with wages, hours, working women and job training, but she also sat on the board of directors of WDET-FM (originally owned and operated by the UAW for the purpose of public service programming, and in 1952, taken over by Wayne State University) and the Detroit City Theatre Association. She attracted public service awards like a magnet. Her activism went beyond the workplace. She argued for a child care system like those in Europe. She took part in the civil rights march in Selma. She opposed the war in Vietnam and called on other union leaders to oppose it, too.

She was one of the founders of CLUW, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, formed to help women become leaders in their unions and give their issues greater weight during contract talks. She was the presiding officer at CLUW's first conference, which attracted more than 3,000 women from 82 unions. She opened it with a challenge. "We have a message for George Meany," she told the crowd. "We didn't come here to swap recipes." Judy Berek was a young labor organizer from Local 1199, the Drug and Hospital Workers Union who attended that first meeting. She remembers Myra as a "seasoned trade unionist who understood the frustrations of young women whose home unions did not understand their needs," adding that she was one of the best speakers she had ever listened to, one who "inspired the union women to just say things how they are."

Our mother continued full steam ahead until 1976, when she was felled by a brain tumor at 61. She collapsed at home and died three months later. At her memorial service, the speakers were a reflection of her life and work: her friend, Monsignor Clement Kern, the revered Corktown priest and activist; her friend, Jerome Cavanagh, the former mayor and her friend, Ernest Goodman, the progressive lawyer. Her friend Addie Wyatt, the union leader and CLUW founder spoke, as did her friends, the waitress Alberta Van Etta and Audley Grossman, the theater director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. As forceful as they were in describing her, it was, and still is, hard to pin our mother down on paper. Capturing her dedication, her drive, her wit, her steadfastness and her adamant love is like trying to bottle a tornado. In public, she often had the last and best word, so it's fitting that she do so now... "I don't look for trouble," she once said. "But, by God, I don't run away from it."



In a meeting with President Harry S. Truman.



Laura Wolfgang Green is a retired reporter, editor and health care writer. She also served as an assistant journalism professor at Northwestern University and is currently active with several not for profit organizations in the New York area. She lives near New York City with her husband, Steven Christianson.



Martha Wolfgang is a retired foundation and hospital executive. She is now on the adjunct faculty of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University in New York City. She also sits on not-for-profit boards in her areas of interest. She is married to Peter Hutchings and lives in New York City.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

To augment our memories, we drew from, and are deeply indebted to, the following sources: *The Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*; *Working Detroit*, by Steve Babson with Ron Alpern, Dave Elsila and John Revitte; *Myra*, by Jean Maddern Pitrone, and *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century* by Robin D.G. Kelly, Howard Zinn, and Dana Frank. We also wish to thank Steven Christianson for his help finding and scanning photos.

Working Detroit, Steve Babson with Ron Alpern, Dave Elsila and John Revitte
Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1986
(Note sections: Labor's March, pp.80-86, and Leaders & Ranks, pp. 87-90.)

Myra, Jean Maddern Pitrone
Calibre Books, 1980

Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century, Robin D.G. Kelly, Howard Zinn, and Dana Frank
Beacon Press, 2002



(above) 3,000 women from 82 unions attended the first Coalition of Labor Union Women conference, an organization Wolfgang helped form.

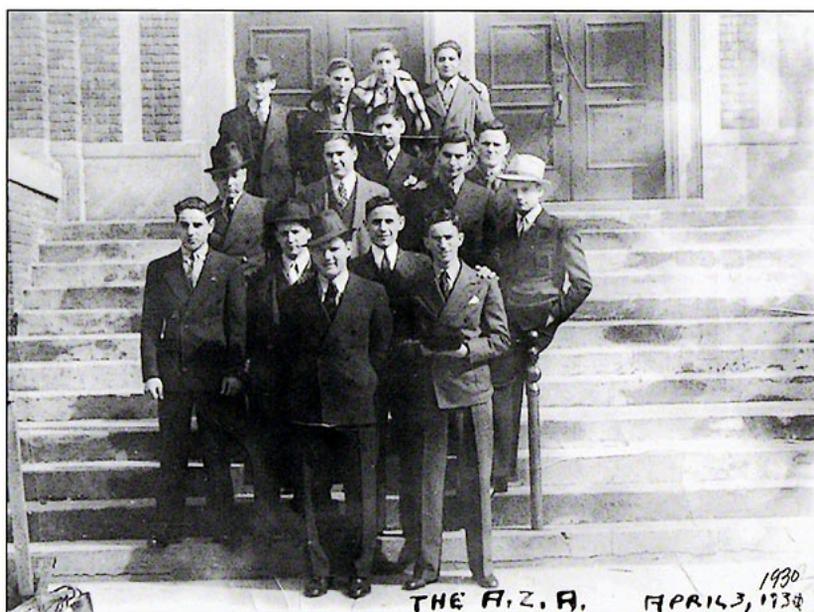
(left) Wolfgang with Robert Alpern, fellow union leader and long time friend.

(far left) Being interviewed by WXYZ Channel 7. Wolfgang never shied away from advocating for labor rights.

FEATURED
ARTICLEBETH TEPHILATH MOSES,
MACOMB COUNTY'S ONLY SYNAGOGUE
REMAINS STRONG, VIBRANT AND ALIVE!

by TOUVANIA TAMER

ASK what it means to live out our Judaism in times like these and some will say, "History!" We all know what Tevya would say, "Tradition!" And still others would say that Judaism is about adapting to "Change!" After 100 years as Macomb County's only synagogue, the congregants of Beth Tephilath Moses (BTM) in Mount Clemens will tell you that it's a delicate balancing act to be a "Fiddler on the Roof" as we attempt the melding of all three and grow into a cogent and vibrant community in *Ha Macom* (the place) where *HaShem* has planted us.



Macomb County's only synagogue, Beth Tephilath Moses, has played an important role for the Jews of the area. The BTMAZA chapter stands on the steps of the congregation in 1930.

HISTORY!

Mount Clemens and congregation Beth Tehpilath Moses are inextricably intertwined. The establishment of Mount Clemens (which later became known as Bath City USA), and the construction of its bath houses, hotels and rooming houses were the vehicles that brought the area's Jewish community into existence. The history of the city begins in 1797, when John Brooks built a distillery. Three years later, Christian Clemens purchased the distillery and acquired 500 acres of land. By 1818 the Village of Mount Clemens was platted, and a year later, the post office was established. By 1822 there was also a saw mill and a store. As a point of reference, Michigan was not admitted to the Union as the 26th State until 1837. In 1862, a young 12-year-old boy named Thomas A. Edison saved the life of the stationmaster's child at the Mount Clemens Grand Trunk Railway Depot. The Mount Clemens Salt Company, formed around 1865, was the first to extract and market salt from the area's rich mineral water. In 1872, Dr. Abner Hayward discovered the water's curative powers, which led to the establishment of the mineral baths that would bring more than 40,000 visitors from all over the world to Bath City each summer. According to an on-line Wikipedia quote on the city:

“Over the years, noted visitors such as film actors Clark Gable and Mae West, athletes Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey, news magnate William Randolph Hearst, and the Vanderbilt family vacationed in the city for the bath industry.”

By 1907, nine Jewish families operated kosher rooming houses in Mount Clemens. Some of the establishments included:

- The Elkin's Hotel was strictly kosher. Samuel Elkin was one of the many wheelchair-bound bathers who visited the baths and became residents. Sam and his son, Joel, were devoted to the idea of personal service. The Elkin's was the scene of boxing matches with purses ranging from \$5-\$25. In 1935, Sam and his sons also purchased the Olympia Hotel & Bath House. When Sam died, Leon Mandell purchased The Elkin's, renaming it The New Glenwood Hotel. He later changed the name to The Mandell Hotel.
- The Albany Hotel (Cass Avenue near Olympia Bathhouse). Meals were strictly kosher and supervised by Mrs. Benjamin Muscovitch.

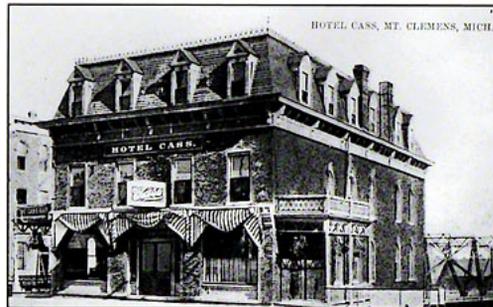


Strictly kosher, the Elkin's, known for providing personal service, was the scene of many boxing matches.



Leon Mandell purchased The Elkin's, renaming it The New Glenwood Hotel.

- The Edison Hotel (Crocker Boulevard) owned by William Diehl, opened in 1908 —named after the famous inventor who saved the Mount Clemens stationmaster's son. It was later taken over by Mrs. Szeinbach, who specialized in kosher cooking. In 1960, it was demolished to make room for the Commons Municipal Building.
- The Baths of Arethusa (Cass and Grant Avenue) was built in 1910. William Lehner, one of the original financiers, managed the property until 1924 when the Feldman brothers took over. Morris & Sadie Feldman were faithful members of BTM. It was the last Mount Clemens bathhouse to offer the baths.
- Jacob Malbin left Russia at the age of 12, and after traveling extensively, decided to try his luck in America. He found success in New York, but having trouble dealing with his rheumatism, was told to see if the Mount Clemens baths would help. Like many before him, he chose to stay, and then bought a hotel on South Gratiot. In 1923, he founded the J.H. Malbin & Sons Furniture Store, familiar to long-time city residents.
- The Cass Hotel (Broadway and the old Market Street Bridge). In the late 1800s the building was known as the National Hotel, later the Cass Hotel (which was not kosher), and ultimately the Broadway Market (operated by the Hauptman family), where locals went for meat and other essentials.



The Cass Hotel ultimately became the Broadway Market.

- The New York Hotel (Cass Avenue) had 50 guestrooms and served strictly kosher Hungarian food. Sam Ginsberg was the first proprietor, and Mr. and Mrs. David Willinger later took over.
- Riverside Hotel (North River Road) owned by BTM's Madorski family.
- The Reh Hotel (South Gratiot) was formally known as Hall House and had an excellent reputation for reliability. Mr. Reh had over 20 years of experience in New York City, and all food was strictly kosher. The Reh was usually overflowing with visitors from all parts of the country, especially from New York.

A RELIGIOUS HOME

As tourism increased, so did the demand for a synagogue. Moses Reh devoted one of his hotel rooms to worship services, conducted by Meyer Davis. A building fund was established, and many of the visiting Jewish tourists helped with donations. In 1909,



When Bas Israel was first established, Meyer Davis, pictured with his wife Sarah, owned one of the only kosher butcher shops in town. He helped conduct services, was named shoychet or slaughterer and was on the board of directors.



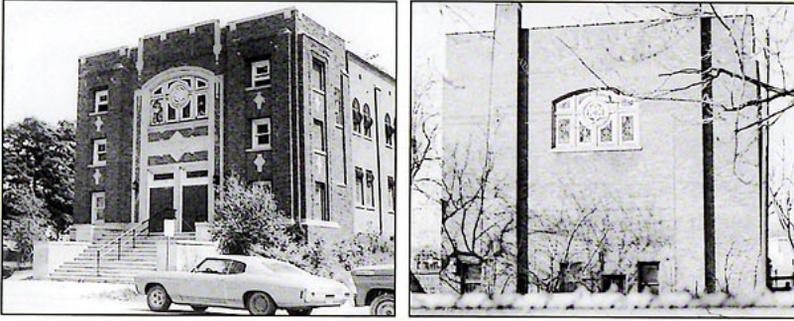
Samuel Elkin was president of the congregation in 1911.

Reh and Davis established Bas Israel at a home on South Walnut Street. The following officers were elected: Morris Reh, president; Benny Muscovitch, vice president; Herman Orbitz, treasurer; Meyer Davis, secretary; Jacob Levy and Mordecai Fleischer, trustees. Davis was named *shoychet* or slaughterer. The minutes were written in Yiddish, the language all members could read and write.

In 1911, Samuel Elkin, president of the congregation, along with Max Fleischer, vice president, began the process of chartering Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses, which was finalized in 1912. A Hebrew school was established with Davis as a teacher, while members Jacob Malbin, Joseph Stiglitz and M. J. Cohen energetically worked for the growth and improvement of the synagogue. In 1913, the Hebrew Association was formed, which secured a cemetery. Beth Tephilath Moses took over the cemetery in 1918.

In 1920, construction of the BTM synagogue began and the sanctuary was completed in time for the High Holidays in 1921. The *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark) — constructed in 1867 — was purchased from Temple Beth El in Detroit. One of the first couples to be married at the new building, Lillian Edelstein and Dr. Joseph Scher, had to enter the synagogue over wooden planks because the outside steps were still unfinished.

The synagogue had three stories. The basement held a large social hall with a kitchen and bathrooms. Room dividers allowed for two good-sized classrooms for Hebrew and Sunday School. Children attended Hebrew School three afternoons a week while



*Completed in time for the 1921 High Holidays,
Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses had three stories.*



*The Main floor had a mechitzah (barrier) that separated men and women,
and the wooden benches dated back to the 1860s.*

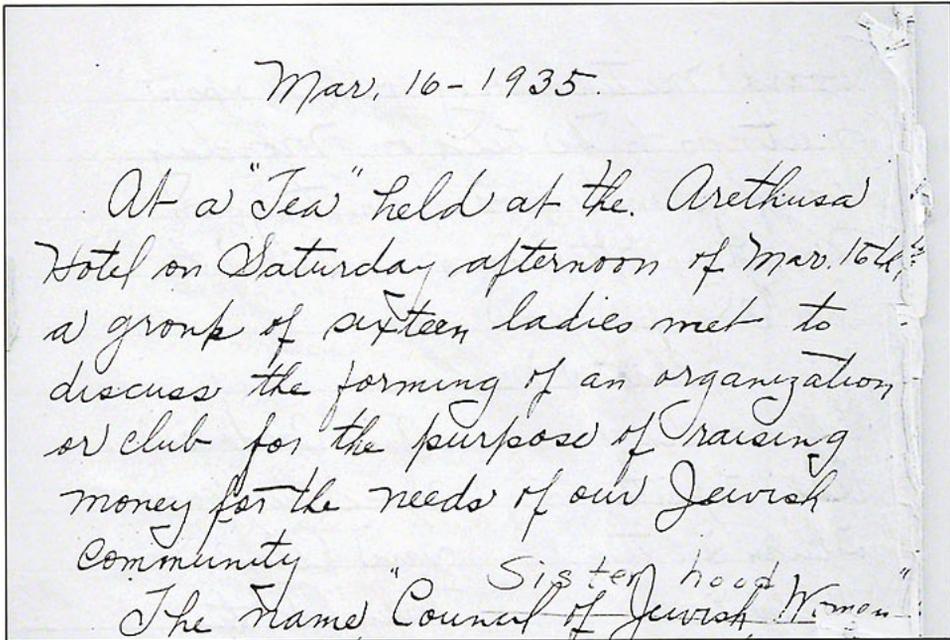
Sunday School lessons revolved around details of the holidays.

The main floor held the Sanctuary with a *mechitzah* (barrier) that separated men and women. There were two entrances into the sanctuary: a massive entrance at the front of the building — stone steps that measured approximately 25' across framed by a twin set of solid railings, and a second staircase on the right side of the building. Bright burgundy carpeting covered the entire main floor and 50 beautiful stained-glass windows radiated light throughout the synagogue. The wooden benches dated back to the 1860s and one could sit comfortably in them all day on Yom Kippur.

The beautiful *Aron Kodesh* was made of hand-carved Italian wood with two pillars on each side (its height was twice that of the current synagogue!). Upstairs featured a balcony for women and children (used when the main portion of the sanctuary was full, or if one chose to sit up there) and the Rabbi's study.

TRADITION!

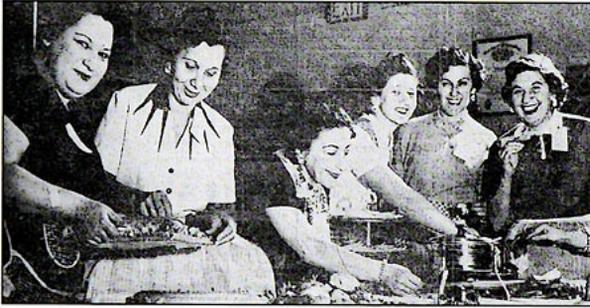
In 1924, Rabbi A. Kahn, originally from Munkacs, Hungary, was elected spiritual leader of the congregation and also served as a teacher in the Hebrew School. He was followed by Rabbis Zakuto, Winchester, Goldman (early 1930s), Joshua Sperka (1930s, lived at The Olympia House while owned by Elkins Family), Krickstein (of Grosse Pointe), Louis Kaufman (1948), Aaron Brander (1950s–1960s), Wolicki, Leonard Pearlstein (1973–1975), Herzig (1975–1977), Goldwater (late 1970s), Goldman (early 1980s) and Tatelbaum (1980s). Today Rabbi Mordechai Waldman serves as the congregation's leader.



"At a 'Tea' held at the Arethusa Hotel on Saturday afternoon, a group of sixteen ladies met to discuss the forming of an organization or club for the purposes of raising money for the needs of our Jewish community." The Beth Tephilath Moses sisterhood was thus organized in March 1935.

BTM's very active Sisterhood, organized in March 1935, met regularly to raise funds to support the needs of the Jewish community. One of the most famous and successful fund raising projects was the annual community smorgasbord. The first was held on March 24, 1954 and continued every March until 1974. The Beth Tephilath Moses women would cook, bake, and serve over 1,200 people in three hours at the local VFW Hall.

In 1968, the Mount Clemens chapter of Women's American ORT published and sold a very successful cookbook. A generation later, the 2009 Mount Clemens Kosher Centennial Cookbook used many of those original ORT recipes. After more than 20 years, the Sisterhood continues to sponsor the Annual Mother's Day Shabbat Luncheon. Each year, sisterhood member Mary Robinson has assumed responsibility for the Tu B'Shvat Seder, now in its 30th year.



BTM's Sisterhood was most proud of their annual community smorgasbord, which served more than 1,200 meals each year. Photo courtesy The Daily Monitor-Leader, March 24, 1954



The BTM Sisterhood was and remains a very active group dedicated to community service.

CHANGE!

People of Judaic faith worked, lived and prospered throughout the area, active in the civic affairs of the community. Aside from owning hotels and rooming houses, Jewish residents were successful business owners and held community positions including judges. Among the notables are: Louis Davis (1911-2002) who, in 1951, was elected president of the Macomb County Bar Association; his sister, Ada Davis Eisenfeld, was Mayor of Mount Clemens from 1981 until 1985. Her husband, Dr. Irwin Eisenfeld, was a member of the Mount Clemens School Board. Abraham Levine, member of another prominent Jewish family in town, was also mayor of Mount Clemens.

As the Detroit Jewish population began migrating out of the city in the second half of the 19th Century, most expected that this migration would follow the Woodward/Gratiot corridor and meet with the Mount Clemens population. Even though Detroiters headed north and west rather than north and east, the Mount Clemens population remained intact as the only Jewish community in Macomb County.

Over the years, the nature of the congregation has changed. The original members of



The roots of Beth Tephilath Moses' congregants date back several generations. Here Morris and Bella Litwak, the maternal grandparents of Leah (Zeve) Reeves (current Sisterhood president), stand in front of their deli.



Rabbi Wolicki presiding over a children's lesson in 1968.

Beth Tephilath Moses were first generation immigrants from Europe and were Orthodox Jews, following the strict precepts of the Torah and the Talmud. Their conviction was so strong that it resulted in the 1959 landmark decision by the Michigan Supreme Court in the case of Davis v. Scher. It was a case that pitted fathers against their sons. The synagogue members, headed by the founder Meyer Davis, sought an injunction against the trustees to prevent men and women from sitting with each other. While the trial court dismissed the case as a religious matter, the Supreme Court reversed and noted that the decision to allow mixed seating deprived the members of a property right that had been dedicated to the entire congregation. BTM member, Mr. Baruch Litvin (of blessed memory) wrote a book about this case titled "The Sanctity of the Synagogue." By 1974, the BTM board of Trustees presidency was headed by the Honorable Arthur Feldman, followed by the Honorable Michael Schwartz until 2001 when Dr. Robert Shore was selected.



In 1977, Beth Tephilath Moses relocated to a smaller building on South Avenue. Pictured here are front (l to r): Larry Goldberg, Martin Rubin, Honorable Judge Frank Jeanette, Honorable Judge Michael Schwartz, Rabbi Herzig, Larry Rohkind (the architect who designed BTM building and Adat Shalom). Back row (l to r) persons are unidentified.



Ya'acov (Jack) Robinson and his son Ken help move the Torahs into the new building in 1977.

In 1977 the synagogue was sold and a newer, smaller structure was built. BTM's building committee included Martin Rubin, Harvey Gordenker and Nate Litvin. The Grant Park School property (on South Avenue) was given to the BTM congregants by the City of Mount Clemens. No longer needed, the hand-carved Aron Kodesh was sold to a synagogue in Durham, N.C. Many congregants purchased some of the old benches and windows for use in their homes; 12 of the original stained glass windows were hung inside the new synagogue.

The new BTM structure was rededicated as a Conservative synagogue in 1979, allowing mixed seating, but labeling the last two rows on one side for women and reserving the first two rows on the other side for men. Being smaller allowed BTM to serve its members in a more personal and family-oriented manner. BTM coined the phrase "Conservadox" to better describe the services.



Rays of brilliant sunshine stream through the colorful stained glass windows of Beth Tephilath Moses' sanctuary in Mt. Clemens.

BTM TODAY...

Over the years many volunteers have carried out the duties/responsibilities of the synagogue. Daily services were led by one of the patriarchs of the synagogue, Max Schwartz. Sam Heinfling served as *shammes* (caretaker). Members credit Mrs. Jennifer Heinfling and others who were instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of women in the minyan and blessings. Today, women play an important role in the services and are called to the Torah each Shabbat for *aliyah*.

The shul has been blessed to have wonderful members who offered their time and talents to maintain the house of worship over these decades. Today, another generation is stepping in including people like Mary Robinson who prepares Kiddush and her sons, Jack and Rob, who do everything from serving on the *bimah* to building maintenance. The Davis, Goldberg, Hauptman, Rubin and Schwartz families were strong members of the original congregation and their presence today influences current membership.

BTM's current rabbi, Mordechai Waldman, calls his synagogue "The Miracle East

of Dequindre.” Its vibrancy is exemplified by inspirational sermons, active Torah study groups and its sisterhood. Members have created an exceptionally family-oriented, loving place where everyone knows each other and works together to build a community that fans the flame of Judaism and teaches that, indeed, the Levitical call for justice and love of neighbor is the by-word of a cogent, loving community.

Throughout the last 100 years of both Mount Clemens and BTM history, BTM has successfully blended Conservative and Orthodox tradition into a “Conservadox” culture, adapting to changes brought upon the congregation by the community in which its members were placed and utilizing today’s technology to support and grow the community in these difficult financial times. After 100 years, BTM is proud to be the only synagogue in Macomb County — empowered and imbued by Tanakh.



(Top) A group of young adults in 1957.

(Bottom) Celebrating Chanukah in 1988.



Touvania Tamer grew up on the Northwest side of Detroit and attended Detroit College of Business (DCB, now Davenport University) where she studied marketing and computer information systems. She has been a writer and editor at DCB, Macomb County Community Services Agency (MCCSA) and technical writer for the automotive, retail and real estate industries. She currently works for the U.S. Census Bureau as Technology Manager, is a mother of three, grandmother of four and the webmaster and media liaison for Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses.

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HISTORICAL TIDBITS

160 YEARS AGO

Michigan's first Jewish congregation, Temple Beth El, was founded in 1850 by 12 families, all of whom were recent German immigrants.

130 YEARS AGO

The population of Detroit in 1880 was 116,340 and included 665 Jews.

110 YEARS AGO

Among the many all-Jewish labor unions throughout the city of Detroit in 1900 was the Jewish Peddlars Protective Union No. 9350. Organized as a self-defense organization, the union's membership had swelled to more than 300 by 1093. The peddlars were engaged in an assortment of businesses peddling on foot, with carts and horses and had been experiencing severe harassment by young ruffians. (source: *The Jews of Detroit*, Robert Rockaway, pg 69)

FEATURED
ARTICLEOSSIP GABRILOWITSCH
AND HIS LEGACY

by CYNTHIA KOROLOV



Born in 1878 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Gabrilowitsch laid the foundation for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra to become the world-class orchestra it is today.

OSSIP Solomonovich Gabrilowitsch (Gab-re-LOV-itch), the man for whom Detroit's Orchestra Hall was built, was a musician of world renown before joining the Detroit community in 1918. He arrived first as a guest soloist and returned as the music director and conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. His passionate devotion to beautiful music brought joy to thousands and his legacy — a world class concert venue and orchestra — lives on today.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Born in 1878 in St. Petersburg, Russia, the youngest child of Rosa and Solomon Gabrilowitsch, Ossip's talent for music was evident from an early age. At five, he began studying piano with his oldest brother, George. A professional piano teacher was soon engaged, and at the age of 10, Ossip entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music where he studied for six years, graduating with honors.

One of the Conservatory teachers who admired young Gabrilowitsch's musical talents suggested that after completing his training at the Conservatory, he study for a year in Vienna with Theodor Leschetizky, a well-known Polish teacher of piano whose instruction methods included not only piano but also character-building exercises designed to enrich his young male students by exposing them to both the good and the bad in life. Gabrilowitsch's training with Leschetizky began in 1894, and two years later, the brilliant young pianist gave his first recital in Berlin. Gabrilowitsch's musical career flourished, and soon he was giving frequent recitals and solo performances in cities all over the European continent.



Ossip and Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch. Clara was the daughter of Mark Twain.

While visiting his former teacher in 1898, Gabrilowitsch met another pupil of Leschetizky's, Clara Clemens, daughter of American writer Mark Twain. Clara and Ossip were drawn to each other by their common interests in music and nature, and a friendship developed between them.

Early in their friendship, Gabrilowitsch made it clear to Clara that he was descended from the Jewish tradition, but since the head of the Clemens family taught his children that people should be considered for their personal worth rather than for their religious or ethnic background, that made no difference either to Clara or her parents. Although

the young couple was not often on the same side of the Atlantic, since the Clemens home was in New England and Gabrilowitsch was on performance tours in Europe much of the time, they corresponded regularly as their feelings for each other deepened.

They married in October 1909, at the Clemens home in Connecticut. The newlyweds soon returned to Europe where they planned to make their home as Ossip's concert career continued.

Their first year together was filled with both sorrow — as Clara's father and sister both died suddenly — and joy when their only child, a daughter they named Nina, was born. The young family lived in Munich until the tumult of World War I drove them to depart first to Switzerland, and then to America in 1917.

TO ORCHESTRA HALL

Gabrilowitsch joined the Detroit community in 1918 and left his indelible stamp on the culture of the city through his work with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. From his first Detroit appearance in a recital concert in January 1901, there was a special chemistry between the young Jewish concert pianist and the classical music lovers of this area. He visited Detroit often to give recital performances or to perform as a soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

In November of 1918, he began as resident conductor with the symphony, performing as soloist for the 1918-1919 season opening concert. At that time, the symphony concerts were held in the Arcadia Auditorium on Woodward Avenue and it was during this season that Maestro Gabrilowitsch made it clear to the orchestra's directors that he would not consider returning for a subsequent season unless a proper concert hall was built for the orchestra.



Gabrilowitsch insisted on an acoustically supreme concert venue for his Detroit orchestra. Orchestra Hall was designed by architect C. Howard Crane and opened to the public on October 23, 1919.

By April of 1919, both a site and financing had been secured, and orchestra patrons were advised that the new hall was guaranteed to be opened for the beginning of the 1919-1920 concert season in October. Program books given to patrons for the final classical subscription concert for the 1918-1919 season included a notice on the last page announcing the new building. The last paragraph of this notice put all the hopes of the Maestro and the symphony patrons into words. The new hall "will be the center of Detroit's musical life."

A remarkable four months and 23 days after the structure that stood on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Parsons in Detroit was razed, the new home for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Hall, was opened. Ossip Gabrilowitsch returned and conducted the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in its own hall for the next sixteen seasons.

Touring became a regular part of the symphony season while Maestro Gabrilowitsch was the music director. In February of 1919, the DSO toured in Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Toledo. Newspaper articles and reviews of the concerts were published in concert program books after the tour so Detroit patrons could see how their home orchestra had been received. During the early part of 1920, Maestro Gabrilowitsch took the DSO on tour several times, visiting cities in Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Missouri, as well as an international visit to Toronto. Everywhere they went, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and its Maestro were well-received.

THE MUSIC

Gabrilowitsch brought a European tone to Detroit's classical concert stage by attracting the great European musicians of the time to the city. In the 1920s, when Maestro Gabrilowitsch was making considerable strides toward turning the DSO into one of the foremost orchestras of its time, he brought cellist Pablo Casals, harpsichordist Wanda Landowska, and pianists Arthur Rubenstein, Artur Schnabel and Percy Grainger, as well as composer and pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff to perform on the stage at Orchestra Hall. Throughout his conducting tenure, he continued to bring prominent musicians, including violinist Yehudi Menuhin and pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Harold Bauer, to perform in concert with the DSO. There were others, too numerous to mention, who came over the sixteen-year period when Maestro Gabrilowitsch was the music director at Orchestra Hall.

Gabrilowitsch may have made his career on the conductor's podium, but his first musical devotion was to the piano. He was known for the elegance and subtlety of his performances. Throughout his years in Detroit, Maestro Gabrilowitsch played numerous solo performances with the orchestra, in which he performed concerti by the European master composers, including Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky as well as Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. His most frequent choice was Mozart. He played the Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20 for the final season concerts in 1919, 1923 and 1930, as well as during a 1931 tour and in a special concert performance in November of that same year. For most seasons, he performed as soloist at the final concert, and often performed in the season opening concert as well.

1920 - SEVENTH SEASON - 1921

FOURTEENTH PROGRAMME

SOLOIST

OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH

PIANIST

- Mozart* —Symphony in E Flat No. 39
Adagio; allegro
Andante con moto
Menuetto
Finale
- Rachmaninoff* —Second Concerto for Piano and Orchestra
 Opus 18 in C Minor
Moderato
Adagio sostenuto
Allegro scherzando

At the Piano — Mr. Gabrilowitsch

Directing the Orchestra -- Mr. Kolar

INTERMISSION

- Liszt* —Symphonic Poem No. 3 "Les Preludes"

Mr. Gabrilowitsch Uses the Mason & Hamlin Piano

The doors of the hall will be closed during the performance of each number on the programme. Those who wish to leave before the end of the concert are requested to do so in an interval between numbers.

Floral Decorations by Paper Brothers

The 1920-21 season included solo performances
 by Gabrilowitsch at the piano.

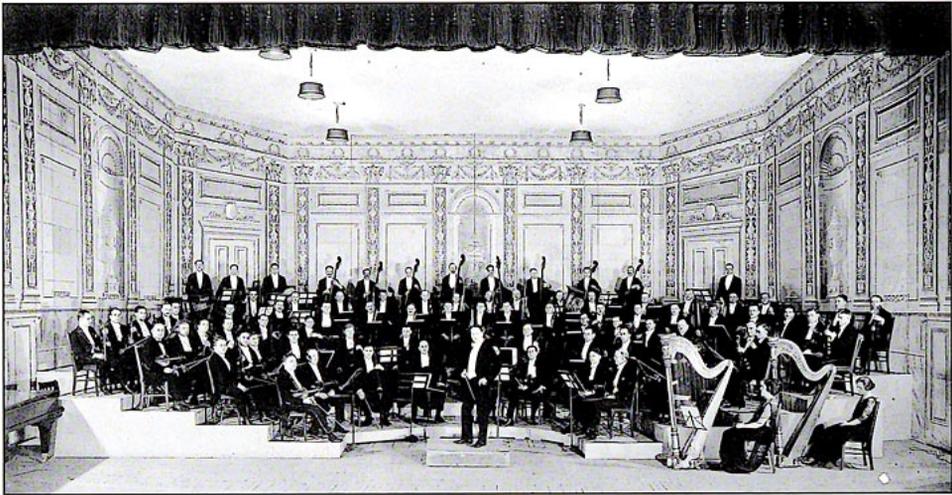
MUSIC FOR THE CHILDREN

The symphony's concerts were extremely popular with classical music lovers, but Maestro Gabrilowitsch realized there was an important group of Detroit's population that the symphony was not reaching at all — the city's children. He knew of a school children's program in another city, headed by Edith Rhetts, and wanted to institute the same sort of program in Detroit. After several meetings with the Symphony directors and manager, an agreement was reached and Maestro Gabrilowitsch contacted Miss Rhetts, inviting her to come to Detroit and take charge of the school children's program. She accepted, and in the spring of 1923, Edith Rhetts began her work as Educational Director with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Working with representatives of the Detroit Public School system, and with the backing and encouragement of Maestro Gabrilowitsch, Rhetts began instituting a program that would include classroom lessons in music appreciation and concert etiquette, as well as attendance at special musical programs held in Orchestra Hall. Tickets to these student concert performances were free of charge, and available to any Detroit public school that offered courses of music study. Private and suburban schools were soon

included in the program, and by 1924, the music education program in Detroit had gained attention nationwide.

Maestro Gabrilowitsch was also involved in the early days of the National High School Youth orchestra, which his acquaintance, Joseph Maddy, a professor at the University of Michigan School of Music and president of the National High School Orchestra Camp Association in the late 1920s, formed and guided. This group of talented youth performed at Orchestra Hall, under the direction of Maestro Gabrilowitsch in the late 1920s. Maddy found a summer home in Interlochen, Michigan for this orchestra. The summer home was first named National Music Camp, later became known as National Academy of the Arts and today is none other than Interlochen Center for the Arts.



His orchestra behind him, Gabrilowitsch stands at the podium sometime in the mid-1920s.

Maestro Gabrilowitsch was also a strong supporter of the re-establishment of a Women's Association to provide behind-the-scenes and fund-raising support for the orchestra. During the late 19-teens, a Women's Auxiliary was formed, but it didn't catch on. It disbanded and started again several times before closing down completely in 1923. Maestro Gabrilowitsch was familiar with the activities of the Women's Committee for the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and was anxious to have a similar group. By 1928, with his encouragement, and in conjunction with the relationship Edith Rhett had built with the Detroit Foundation of Women's Clubs while setting up the school concerts program, the Women's Association of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra was formed. The group took root and began actively working to support the orchestra through sale of concert subscriptions and fund-raising events geared to the interests of the area's women.

The orchestra flourished under Maestro Gabrilowitsch's direction, and until 1935, he kept up a vigorous schedule of performances both at home in Detroit, and touring. By this time he was in his late 50s, and his health began to decline due to cancer. He directed his final concert and gave his final solo piano performance on March 14, 1935.



Ossip Gabrilowitsch

Although he was listed as music director in the programs for the 1935-1936 concert season, he was unable to appear on stage. His life ended in 1936.

Ossip Gabrilowitsch's cultural legacy continues to distinguish Detroit and its surrounding areas in many ways: Through the concerts performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Orchestra Hall, the music education and school concert programs, the summer music programs at Interlochen and the continuing work of the volunteers whose membership and efforts have expanded far beyond those envisioned when the Women's Association was formed.

Photos courtesy of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra archives.



Cynthia Korolov is the Detroit Symphony Orchestra archivist, managing the collections associated with the DSO's long and rich history. She is also assisting DSO Historian Paul Ganson with research for his forthcoming book on the history of the DSO. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with honors in History and a Master of Arts in History with a Certificate in Archival Administration, both from Wayne State. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and has worked in the archival profession for 16 years.

FEATURED ARTICLE

THE LOST TORAH SCROLL OF MORAVSKE BUDEJOVICE: REMNANTS OF A COMMUNITY

by MARK HOOLIHAN, PHD

IN a glass case in the lobby of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing sits an old Torah scroll. A small plaque describes it as coming from the community of Moravske Budejovice. The scroll, an artifact from a community that exists no more, is part of a large collection of scrolls that were preserved while the Nazis annihilated the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia. The story of this scroll and how it came to be in East Lansing is a story not only of a community and its destruction, but a story also of preservation and memory. The story of this scroll is a window into the history of a community, an event and a journey through time and space, from a small town in Moravia, through the Holocaust, Communism and eventually to a town in central Michigan.

The historical province of Moravia is the Eastern part of what is now the Czech Republic. Historically Moravia and Bohemia, as well as the province of Silesia, were part of the kingdom of Bohemia, part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1526, these lands came under the control of the Habsburgs. Most of Silesia was lost to Prussia in the 18th century. In 1918, these territories, peopled by Germans, Czechs and Jews, joined with the Slovak inhabited lands to form Czechoslovakia. In 1993, Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia — to which I will refer as the Czech lands — date back to medieval times. Jews lived as a minority people in a Christian land, dependent on “protection” from either the king or local nobility. The medieval and early modern periods were marked by restrictions and discrimination, as well as threats of expulsion and pogroms, brutal anti-Jewish riots resulting in injury and death. Jews went to the parts of town they could live in and were in the professions they could practice.

The Bohemian Jewish community, especially Prague, is most often studied by scholars. The Prague Jewish community was one of Central Europe’s larger and more influential ones. The most famous inhabitant of Prague’s Jewish community was Rabbi Judah Ben



Estimated to date back to the early 1900s, this Torah scroll from the Moravske Budejovice Synagogue in Czechoslovakia can be found in the lobby of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing.

Loew, today the center of the legends of the “Golem.” Within Prague, Jews were forced to live in the ghetto, a small crowded area enclosed with a wall and locked at night. Outside of Prague, the Jews of Bohemia lived mostly in small towns and villages.

The Moravian Jewish community differed slightly from the Bohemian one. By the 16th century, the Jews of Moravia had been expelled from most royal towns. Not allowed to live in the larger cities, Jews resided in small to medium size towns ruled by the nobility. Moravian Jews lived in self-governing communities next to non-Jews and there was more interaction between them than in Prague. Most Moravian Jews spoke a German dialect very similar to that of the substantial German community of the province. While originally under the protection of the King, the Jews of Moravia came to be under the control of the local nobility.

THE JEWS OF MORAVSKE BUDEJOVICE

Moravske Budejovice was a small town originally under the rule of the King of Bohemia. It later came under the control of a series of noble families: the Lords of Lichtenburg, Lords of Valdstein, Lords of Schaumburg and the Wallis family. The last owner of the manor was Anna Maria Schaffgotsch, who owned the manor house until 1945. The Lords were responsible for enforcing discriminatory practices and taxes on the Jews and had almost complete control of the community, including expelling any person the lord saw fit. Since the Jewish community was considered an important

part of the local economy and a source of income through taxation, the lord generally protected the Jewish community from pogroms. Within this system, Jews were self-governing, enforcing day-to-day laws and deciding disputes within the community.

The first mention of the Moravske Budejovice Jewish community comes in 1386. In 1564, all Jews were expelled from the town. By the 19th century, Jews had returned numbering 127 in 1890, but the population declined after this. By then, many Jews had begun migrating from small towns to larger ones in search of work, the medieval restrictions having been lifted by the 1860s.

The Jews of Moravske Budejovice engaged in many trades, principally handicrafts. While Jewish artisans in the Czech lands during this period were restricted from most trades by the guild system, Jews were engaged in crafts such as glassblowing, embroidery, tailoring and sword-making among others. Despite general rulings – which prevented Jews from selling to non-Jews – Jewish artisans continued to penetrate into these trades. They were particularly known for their sword-making. Despite guild restrictions, there were six sword makers registered in the town as late as 1562. These sword-makers, along with other Jewish craftsmen, were direct competitors to the guilds and there was continual pressure from the guilds to expel them, culminating in a royal edict banning them from the town after 1564.

The Burgers of Moravske Budejovice lobbied to maintain the exclusion of Jews, but 120 managed to get permission to attend the annual fair over the period between 1794 and 1842. Some Jews were allowed back into the town after 1848 and there are records of a community by 1853. These families revived a religious community, building the first prayer house in 1867 and a formal synagogue in 1910. The Jewish cemetery and burial society was established in 1908. The community also founded a religious school for its children, although the education was done in private houses. There was a succession of religious teachers, the longest serving being Adolf Kohn, who taught from 1892 until 1920. The last recorded rabbi in the town was D. Alt, who was based there after 1921.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GERMANS

Jews in the Czech lands lived between two competing nationalisms in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As Czech nationalism grew among the Czech speaking population, they fought for control of government and culture throughout Bohemia and Moravia. As German speakers, most Jews were identified as German by Czechs. Yet the growth of racial anti-Semitism in the 19th century meant Jews were not accepted by Germans, and German nationalism was often also anti-Jewish. Within this tug of war, the Jewish community generally shifted to speaking predominantly Czech by the mid 20th century, a shift that was more pronounced in Bohemia than Moravia.

By 1938, the Germans occupied the border areas of Czechoslovakia, which they called the Sudetenland. By March 1939, they had taken over all of the Czech lands. Immediately, restrictions were placed on Jews. In 1941, the Moravske Budejovice Synagogue was closed. In 1942, the Germans began deporting the Jews of the Czech lands to be murdered in the gas chambers of the death camps, most of them at Auschwitz.

More than 80,000 out of 110,000 of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia were murdered, almost completely destroying the Jewish communities of these lands. Many of the few survivors emigrated after the war, particularly after the Communist takeover in 1948.

Throughout Europe, the Germans destroyed synagogues and artifacts as they destroyed communities. The Czech lands were a great exception. Prague's synagogues were mostly spared. And, most vital to this story, the artifacts of the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia were collected in Prague and preserved. Among these artifacts were many from the community of Moravske Budejovice.

The Jews from the Trebic region, including those from Moravske Budejovice, were deported to Theresienstadt, and from there to the death camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka in May of 1942. Of the 140,000 people transferred to Theresienstadt, 33,000 died there. As the Jews of these communities were being sent off to their deaths, the cultural and religious artifacts were being collected and shipped to Prague. The collection was done by the Jewish Central Museum in Prague. There is a great historiographical controversy with no conclusive results as to whose idea it was to preserve the artifacts. One narrative has the Nazis directing the Jewish museum to do so while yet another has Jewish directors of the museum approaching the Nazis for permission to preserve the artifacts. There is no final answer to this problem, as no documents exist that detail the Nazis' motivation.

THE MUSEUM OF AN EXTINCT RACE

The fortunate result was that the Jewish Central Museum of Prague worked with the Central Office for Jewish Resettlement in Bohemia and Moravia, an outpost of Adolf Eichmann's Department IV B4. By war's end, the collection had 200,000 objects in eight buildings and 50 warehouses. Torah scrolls, other religious artifacts, archives, books and manuscripts were among the many items delivered to the museum. The Jewish Museum in Prague lists the oldest dated artifact from Moravske Budejovice as having originated in 1756.

Hana Volavkova, the only surviving senior scholar of the original Jewish Museum staff, re-opened the museum after the war. She credits the idea of preserving the artifacts to Jewish scholars, who, she claims, crafted the plan to undermine the Nazis by preserving the history of the Jewish communities. The Jewish scholars had to bring the Nazis into the plan to make it work, an act that Volavkova says, "contained the seed of resistance and a grain of free will." Volavkova's thesis has been criticized as too subjective, but hers is the best insight into the museum workings that is available.

The strange case of the exhibits also raises interesting historiographical questions. Some of the artifacts were arranged in exhibits cataloguing Jewish life in Bohemia and Moravia. This has often been called "The Museum of an Extinct Race," although the term does not appear to have been used contemporaneously. The exhibits were only viewed by a small number of Nazis.

This exhibit, along with the museum work itself, contradicts the general Nazi plan to erase all memories of not only Jewish communities, but of their destruction as well. Mass graves were dug up, bodies burned and the main death camps were destroyed

once the mission of mass murder was complete. This shows a general plan by the Nazis to hide all evidence of mass murder. Yet the existence of the museum and its work raises the question: did the higher up Nazis know of the collection's existence or was it a purely local decision? What would the ultimate purpose of the museum have been? Were these to be temporary exhibits for the Nazi leadership or a permanent display? These questions are unanswerable for the moment, although future research may provide answers.

In 1946, the museum re-opened. In 1950, the Czechoslovakian government took it over and, as the years went by, let many of the Jewish memorials fall into neglect, including the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial which had been inscribed with the names of the Czechoslovak Jewish victims. The Memorial was dismantled sometime after 1968 but re-opened after the fall of communism.

In these circumstances the Museum continued to function on a restricted scale, even publishing articles from its journal abroad. Strangely enough, the Jews within Czechoslovakia were denied access to the collections of the museum during this period.

THE SCROLLS

The scrolls themselves have an interesting story. A British art dealer, Eric Estoric was negotiating deals with the Czech government in 1963, when he was approached by Artia, the official government agency dealing with cultural properties, about the scrolls, which were neglected and rotting in the Michle Synagogue in Prague. Estoric had them examined by an expert and found that they were in very poor condition. A wealthy London businessman, Ralph Yablon, contributed the funds to purchase the scrolls and brought them to the Westminster Synagogue in London.

The Memorial Scrolls Trust was then created to preserve as many of the scrolls as could be saved. To further preserve the memories of the lost communities which had been home to the scrolls, the Trust distributed them to Jewish communities worldwide. Each community had to provide adequate insurance and protection of the scrolls, which are all on loan and remain the property of the Trust. Thus, if a community disbands, the scrolls revert to the Trust.

It was through this program that the scroll from Moravske Budejovice made its way to the Shaarey Zedek Congregation on Coolidge Road in East Lansing in 1995. Moravske Budejovice's Jewish community is gone; most of its inhabitants died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Treblinka. Most of the surviving Jews from the Czech lands moved elsewhere. The Moravske Budejovice Synagogue was torn down in 1977, and today, the only reminders that there was once a Jewish community are the cemetery, opened in 1908, and a ceremonial hall and house of the sexton.

This scroll itself does not tell us anything about the community that lived in Moravske Budejovice. The accompanying paperwork merely gives the name of the community and two identifying numbers: 32855 and 1495. The Trust dates the scroll from around 1900. Today, visitors can find the scroll in a glass case, protected from sun damage, with the original tag which has the two identifying numbers and "Jewish religious community in Prague Central Museum" written in both Czech and German.

By tracing this story back through the Trust to the Jewish Museum, we see a story of destruction and preservation, of murder and memory. Although the story leaves many questions unanswered, by tracing the artifact's history back to its origins, it teaches us about the Jewish communities of Moravia and emphasizes the connections and continuities of Jewish history, Europe to America, even across the divide of the Nazi Holocaust.



Mark Hoolihan, PhD, is an historian who specializes in East European and Jewish history. His research has covered topics in Czech nationalism as well as Jewish communities residing in the Czech lands. His teaching expertise includes the Holocaust as well as European Jewish history. He has a BA from St. John's University, an MA from St. Cloud State University and a PhD from Michigan State University. He is currently a visiting assistant professor at Michigan State University.

HISTORICAL TIDBIT

40 YEARS AGO

Judge Theodore J. Levin passed away on December 31, 1970. In 1946, President Harry Truman nominated Levin, then just 49 years old, to succeed Judge Edward J. Moinet for the U.S. District Court, Eastern Division. Levin served in that esteemed position for 10 years at which time he became Chief Judge of the District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Levin served until he was 70 years old, retiring in 1969 with great honors. Judge Levin served on numerous committees and boards including his presidency of the Jewish Welfare Federation and the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Detroit. Levin is the uncle of both U.S. Senator Carl Levin and U.S. Representative Sander Levin. He was the father of Supreme Court Justice Charles L. Levin. In May 1995, the Judge Theodore Levin United States Courthouse, located on Lafayette Blvd. in Detroit was dedicated in his memory.

FEATURED ARTICLE

MULIAS AND ELLIAS: THE STORE THAT WAS THE HEART OF TRENTON

by MARILYN KRAINEN

IN the early 20th century, a young Jewish woman, her husband and brother came to the downriver village of Trenton from a farming colony in Bad Axe, seeking commercial opportunity. They purchased an existing one-room general store. Four years after they were married, the husband died, leaving the woman with a two-year old son and a new business. The woman's brother became her partner in the store, working alongside her, and providing important financial resources. The ensuing article traces the path of the young Jewish pioneers as they set out to make their way in life, and ultimately founded Mulias and Ellias, the legendary department store that defined and embodied 20th century Trenton.

THE STORY BEGINS IN BAD AXE

"The Jewish agricultural colonists in turn-of-the-century North America testify to a utopian quest, a messianic urgency" Philip Slomovitz, "Michigan Jews as Farmers: Their Roles Depicted in Exhibition."

In 1891, 16 Eastern European Jewish immigrant families seeking to shed painful memories of persecution and pogroms settled in Bad Axe, Michigan, and established a farming colony, which they named Palestine (see related story *MJH* Vol. 42, 2002). Noah and Bella Ellias, Lithuania-born immigrants who first settled in Marine City upon coming to America, decided to join the Palestine Colony pioneers and raise their family there. Similar Jewish agricultural settlements were sprouting in many American communities across the country; the Palestine Colony in Bad Axe was the first such experiment in Michigan.

Fueled by back-to-the-land fervor, the idealistic (albeit inexperienced) farmers paid \$12 an acre, under a five-year contract, each family agreeing to purchase 40 to 60 acres. Bolstered — and frequently rescued — by Jewish social and benevolent agencies, the optimistic farmers set vigorously to work to create what they hoped would become a self-sustaining agricultural colony. They constructed small shacks for their families and built a synagogue, which served a dual purpose as place of worship and meeting place.

But, despite the colonists' best efforts, season after season, severe climate conditions worked against them. The land proved to be unfruitful, crops continually failed and debts accumulated. Some of the colonists managed to hold on by traveling back and forth to Bay City, the closest urban center, earning money by peddling and other means. Others gave up, left the land and their debts behind and attempted to re-establish their lives in different locations. By 1899, the zeal and optimism for the utopian dream of Jewish farming settlements had run its course across the country, and the Palestine Colony experiment took its place in history.

Noah and Bella Ellias and their family persisted in their farming attempts after the original Palestine settlers abandoned the site. Eventually, Noah was able to finalize payment on the land and obtain title to the property. In 1909, Noah's parents and brother came to Bad Axe to join their family, and in 1910, moved into the synagogue building, which Noah had purchased and moved to his farm. Noah and Bella remained on the Bad Axe farm until 1919, when they relocated to Trenton, where their two eldest children, Sadie and Meyer, had settled some years earlier.

THE ROAD FROM BAD AXE TO TRENTON EARLY 20TH CENTURY

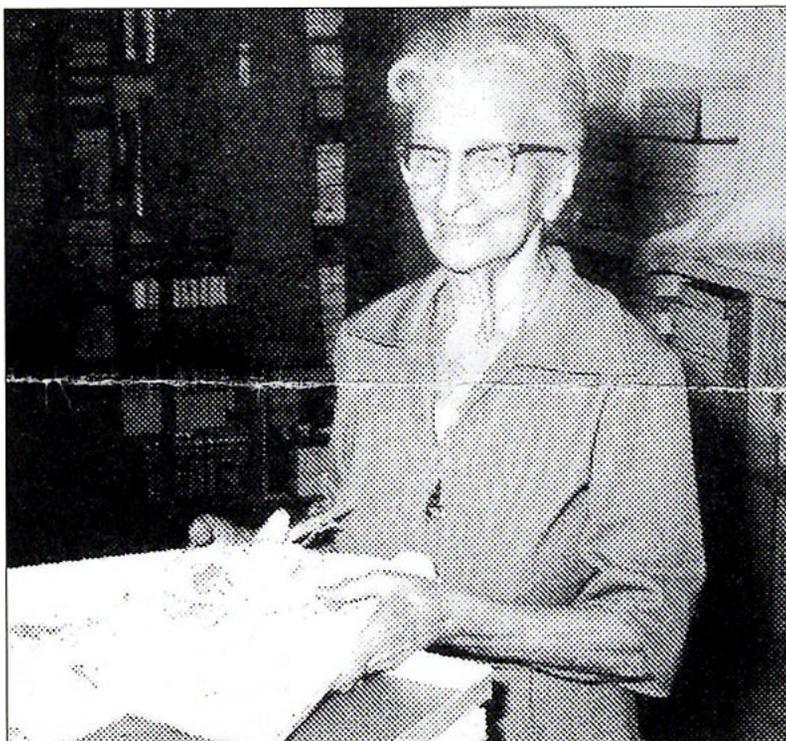
When Sadie and Meyer came of age, they left the farm in Bad Axe looking for work to help support their struggling family. In Detroit, Sadie obtained a sales position in a clothing shop on Woodward Avenue. Sadie took to the merchant's way of life; she had a natural flair for recognizing goods of high quality and loved talking with customers and influencing their buying decisions.

Meyer was extremely ambitious, trying his hand at various endeavors including trapping and selling fur pelts. In Detroit, he became a partner in a junk business and it soon became obvious that Meyer had a gift for capitalizing on business opportunities. He was able to earn and save a considerable amount of money.

In 1908, while living and working in Detroit, Sadie and Meyer crossed paths with Meyer Mulias, a cousin, also Lithuanian by birth, who had immigrated to South Africa at the age of 14 and grew up there before coming to Michigan.

While searching for business ventures around Detroit, Mulias spotted an especially appealing opportunity in the downriver village of Trenton: a small general store on what was then Washington Avenue, and would later become West Jefferson. Mulias was motivated to become a successful store proprietor for a personal reason — he had fallen in love with Sadie and wanted to marry her. He thought Trenton would be a good place to put down roots. Accordingly, he and his cousin, Meyer Ellias, moved to Trenton, rented the building and started to gain experience working in the store selling hardware, dry goods and groceries.

Meyer Ellias' daughter, Margaret Charnes, a Detroit-area resident who grew up in Trenton, recalls the stories she heard in her childhood about the origins of her family's department store: "The way our father told the story, it was *beshert* (destined) that he and my aunt would connect with Meyer Mulias at that particular time and place. My dad



Sadie Mulias still working in her mid 80s. Photo courtesy of The News-Herald Newspapers, the Trenton Historical Archives.

was looking for ways to earn money to help his family and secure his future, my aunt was learning how to sell, and Meyer Mulias was shopping for business opportunities."

When Sadie, her new husband and her brother first came to town, the quiet, farm-dotted little village of Trenton held the promise of the commerce and industry to come. One of Trenton's strongest appeals for settlers had always been its fortuitous geographic setting, nestled alongside harbors, coves and channels on the Detroit River, which flows into Lake Erie and thus is part of the Great Lakes System. These natural assets, as well as its proximity to Grosse Ile (across the river), and major cities in Ohio and Canada, attracted pioneers and adventurers to Trenton in the mid-19th century, who would leverage the abundant waterway access to expand railroads, build steamer ships, boatyards, flour mills, sawmills and other industries. On the outskirts of the village were numerous farms and a rare natural underground feature — a strata of limestone. The mining of limestone would bring an influx of Italian quarry workers to Trenton and provided seasonal employment, as did the farms, boatyards and mills for the locals. Consequently, the stores that came into being in those early years served the needs of seasonal workers at a time when roads were bad and travel was limited to horse-and-buggy or by foot.

THE FIRST SMALL STORE

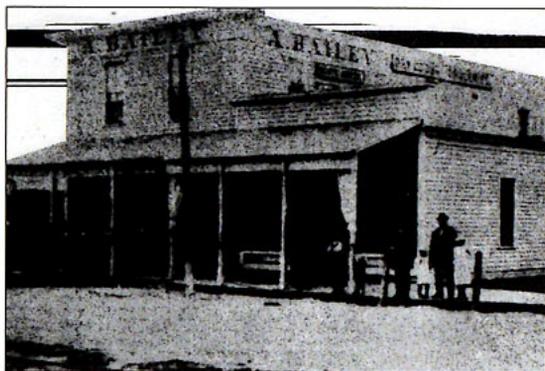
In 1910, Sadie and Meyer Mulias were married and moved into an apartment above the store. The store is described in Lucy Armstrong Shirmer's book, Snug Harbor:

"In the beginning the usual one big room held all of the merchandise, with the store offering most of the things a housewife might need, except, perhaps, certain groceries and drugs. Assorted pieces of hardware hung along the back wall. Milk was sold, and baskets of eggs as well as large bins of candy to tantalize the youngsters were arranged along the front of the store. Of course, the usual round of cheese sat temptingly on the counter with a cracker barrel nearby, and there was the yard goods counter on the other side of the store. About the only ready-made clothing then available for men were the overalls which were stocked for the many farmers and laborers."

Meyer Ellias worked long and hard helping his sister and brother-in-law run — and eventually — expand the store, with a cash infusion of \$10,000 he had saved. When Meyer wasn't working in the general store, he was delivering groceries and other necessities on foot to families and farmers across the village.

In a 1971 interview for the *Detroit News*, Sadie mused about her early years in Trenton, emphasizing the difficulty of travel in those days, as well as the multiple generations of residents the store served. (At the time of the interview, Sadie was 80 years old and still running the store.)

"Judy's [an 18-year-old employee] great-grandparents used to make weekly trips, when weather permitted, from their farm near New Boston to bring eggs and farm produce to the one-room store," wrote the interviewer. Sadie added, "New Boston is only eight or ten miles away, but then over the muddy, bumpy road in a horse and buggy, it was an all-day trip — an event, really, that everyone looked forward to all week. We always had cheese and crackers and coffee with them before their trip back."



*The small store that began the legend.
Photo courtesy Trenton Historical Archives,
The News-Herald Newspapers, July 1, 1987.*



Inside Mulias and Ellias in the early days, around 1912. The woman at the left is Meyer's sister Jenny, and the young man in the corner is Meyer Ellias. Photo from Truaxton Truago Trenton.



The Mulias and Ellias store interior as it looked in the 1920s. Sadie is behind the counter; her young son Isadore is standing at the left. Photo from Truaxton Truago Trenton.

THE BEGINNING OF MULIAS AND ELLIAS DEPARTMENT STORE

When Meyer Mulias died suddenly in 1914, leaving his widow with a two-year-old son, Isadore, and a general store to run, Sadie's brother, Meyer Ellias, became her fulltime business partner. He helped his sister with business and merchandise buying decisions and guided the store's expansion through its various incarnations. Sadie and Meyer took a major step forward in 1917, when they purchased a neighboring store. By 1919, they built a 70' X 70' addition on an adjacent lot to accommodate the store's expansion into a complete department store. The store became the centerpiece of the block and a drawing card for other businesses.

In 1926, an overnight fire all but destroyed the store and most of its merchandise. Sadie and Meyer demonstrated their indomitable spirit, salvaging whatever merchandise they could and selling it from a makeshift tent. Then, with the help and support of several kind neighboring business owners, Sadie and Meyer painstakingly rebuilt the store and started over.

Meyer and Sadie became known for their generosity and willingness to help struggling families during times of personal setback, illness or loss of work. This was especially true during the Great Depression when they would give whatever was needed — whether it was money, clothing, shoes, or coats — in a manner that didn't smack of charity, but enabled the recipients of their kindness to maintain their dignity and improve their life circumstances. Their generosity is noted in the 1976 bicentennial publication, Truaxton Truago Trenton:

"One of the most interesting, unsung stories in our town's history is of the many



*Co-owner Meyer Ellias in the store. Date is unknown but appears to be circa 1940s.
Photo courtesy of Howard Ellias.*

kind and generous acts performed by the Mulias and Ellias families. There are many tales of children, throughout the years, who were without shoes or other necessities, and were quietly and generously helped by these people.”

THE FINAL EXPANSION

When Meyer Ellias passed away in 1952, his eldest son, Stanley, gave up his law practice to take his father’s place as partner with his aunt in the store. Under Stanley’s direction, the store underwent its final remodeling and expansion. Stanley worked side-by-side with his aunt until she died in 1980, shortly before her 90th birthday.

By the time of its final expansion, the downtown department store covered almost a whole block on West Jefferson, employed approximately 50 salespeople and contained an inventory that could rival that of the largest big-city department store. The store’s longtime motto, “If you can’t find it at Mulias and Ellias, you probably don’t need it,” was not an idle boast. Stories accumulated throughout the years about the store’s seemingly endless variety of merchandise.

Along with women’s, men’s and children’s wear, shoes and accessories, “the Store was a place where you could buy fine china and string, buttons and furs,” reported the *Detroit News*. And nothing was too much trouble for the owners or their employees when it came to finding whatever it was their customers wanted, no matter how small. The same *Detroit News* article tells about the time a Trenton councilman went to Mulias and Ellias looking for plaid shoelaces for his softball team. “After 45 minutes rummaging



By the 1950s, the store spanned almost an entire block.

in the basement,” he said, “not only did they come up with them, they came up with a choice.”

The coming of the Detroit Edison Channel plant, steel mills, automobile factories, chemical plants and other major industries changed Trenton’s landscape and business climate. But even in its final incarnation as the focal point of a thriving downtown, the store’s relationship to its community remained a constant; the owners and their heirs ran the store with the same old-fashioned concern for their customers’ welfare as they exhibited in 1910 when the store consisted of one room.

THE JEWISH EXPANSION IN TRENTON

The Jewish population throughout downriver was sparse in the early years of the 20th century when Meyer and Sadie Mulias and Meyer Ellias first settled in Trenton. Around 1919, the rest of the Ellias clan migrated to Trenton from Bad Axe: parents Noah and Bella, and siblings Max, Bessie (Betty), Jennie, Ben and Rose. In 1922, Noah and Bella settled in Detroit, as did some of their children, while the others remained in Trenton, where they made copious civic, charitable and cultural contributions and wove themselves into Trenton’s multi-cultural fabric.

Despite the fact that institutionalized anti-Semitism was rampant across the country in those times, making it difficult for Jews everywhere to buy land, own property, serve on company boards and live peacefully in neighborhoods of their choice, the perseverance and exemplary behavior of the openly observant Ellias and Mulias families paved the way for their acceptance by the community. Their success in business likely was a factor in encouraging other Jewish merchants and professionals to move to or establish a business in Trenton. Another was the establishment of a synagogue that would serve as a rallying point for the small population of Jews who lived or worked downriver.

BETH ISAAC SYNAGOGUE

By the early 1950s, about 40 Jewish and interfaith families formed the Downriver Jewish community and began fundraising efforts to build a synagogue. In 1964, a small synagogue building was erected and dedicated in a residential neighborhood in Trenton, on land donated by Meyer Ellias' brother, Benjamin Ellias, a well-known businessman. The building of the structure was supervised by Sadie's son, Isadore Mulias, a builder and developer. The synagogue — the first Jewish house of worship to be built south of Detroit — was named Beth Isaac, after the Ellias family patriarch, and was proudly and ceremoniously welcomed to Trenton by the city's business, political and religious leaders of all faiths.

Three years later, in 1967, Beth Isaac gained national attention and elicited outrage when ... "some sick, hate-filled person broke into the building, scrawled ugly phrases and symbols on the walls and started a fire. It was an act which shocked the whole nation, and the whole nation responded," (Truaxton Truago Trenton, pg. 27). With the help and contributions from people of all denominations, the synagogue was rebuilt and rededicated just six months later.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE LEGEND: MEYER ELLIAS

Meyer was a quiet, steadfast balance to his gregarious sister, Sadie. His industriousness was boundless, and although he worked long hours in the store, he also sought additional business opportunities. He saw abundant possibilities for Trenton's growth and was interested in purchasing individual lots or land parcels on which he planned ultimately to build rental properties.

In 1930, after he had been turned down for a loan by the town's major bank, Meyer became a founder and vice president of the People's State Bank of Trenton. The debut of the bank is described in Truaxton Truago Trenton:

"To meet the quite definite demand on the part of this community for a home-owned and directed bank, People's State Bank of Trenton was organized with much local interest and enthusiasm. During the worst depression the world has ever known, local business people had the courage and character to start the People's State Bank of Trenton."

In the People's Bank, Meyer found a friendly, accepting environment where his fellow bank officers respected him for the reasoned, thoughtful, ethical man he was. Accordingly, he was able to



*Meyer Ellias at 60, 1947
Photo courtesy of Margaret Charnes,
daughter of Meyer Ellias.*

go forward with his development plans. In the 1930s, he started buying lots, building small houses on them and renting them out. Thus, during the years of the Depression, he provided a wide variety of jobs for numerous unemployed workers. When World War II began in 1941, Meyer turned his attention to building handsome brick houses, which he predicted would entice young servicemen to settle down and raise their families in Trenton after the war. His prediction came true; other building projects followed, including apartments and commercial units. In laying the foundation for Trenton's development, Meyer always kept the welfare of future generations of inhabitants at the forefront of his mind and vision.

Meyer's son, Howard Elias, a retired builder and long-time Trenton resident, speaks admiringly about his father: "Our dad had little formal education, but he had native intelligence, resourcefulness and ambition. He seemed to have been born with a visionary eye — he had an uncanny ability to see opportunities that others missed. When there were obstacles in his way, he wouldn't give up but would work around them and craft solutions in his own creative way."

Meyer seemed to be everywhere at once — at the store, on buying trips, supervising building sites, attending bank board meetings — and not incidentally, caring for his family who were left motherless at a young age. Married and widowed twice, he was the father of five, two from his first marriage and three from his second. Occasionally, during an evening meeting at the bank, his grueling schedule would catch up with him and he would appear to be dozing off. But when his name was called or an important issue was raised that required a vote, he was instantly alert and on point. A bank official commented that Meyer absorbed more information napping than most people did when they were wide awake.

Meyer Elias died in 1952, at the age of 65. After his death, his numerous acts of anonymous charity became known, as person after person told stories about how Meyer helped them through their financial crises. Howard Elias has a letter from one such person, which had been originally sent to Sadie:

"[My wife] and I started talking about the many, many people you folks had helped over the many years, loaning them money, extending credit and in just about every way possible. I remember when I went on the Trenton Police Force, I needed \$150 to buy uniforms. I went to Meyer... He just took the money out of his pocket and handed it to me without a note or anything else."

SADIE MULIAS

With her strong, outgoing personality, Sadie was the "face" of Mulias and Elias, becoming known to generations as "Mrs. M.," or "Mother M." Sadie ran the store from 1910 when she was a bride until 1980, when she died one month before her 90th birthday. Never remarrying after the death of her husband, Sadie devoted herself to raising her son, Isadore, and was proud of his energetic involvement in business, political and community affairs, especially his two-term service as Trenton's mayor in the 1970s.

Sadie had a genuine interest in getting to know people, their families, their life stories — and she wove herself into her customers' lives as though she were a beloved, trusted



Sadie poses with obvious pride in front of a campaign portrait of her son, Isadore, who served two terms as Trenton's mayor. Photo courtesy of The Detroit News.

family member. She became the ritual go-to person for young brides furnishing their first home; for parents selecting clothes for new babies or outfits for special holidays; for anyone looking for a good quality gift; and for any item, uniform or accessory needed by Boy Scouts, sports teams or other organization. Extremely community minded, Sadie found time to devote to inter-faith work and numerous civic and charitable organizations, particularly those involving the education of children.

At the same time, Sadie was a no-nonsense, steely-minded businesswoman who frequently scared off new salesmen. A Trenton resident said: "Everybody in town has stories about Sadie. She was outspoken and warm and loud and gentle... She drove you to absolute distraction and you loved her."

Sadie's memory remained razor sharp throughout her life. When she went on buying trips, she made a point of remembering customers' sizes, styles and color preferences and purchased items she knew they liked or needed. As one devoted, longtime customer mourned in the aftermath of the fire that destroyed the store, "Where else could you simply say, 'I need a dress for Mom,' and have someone hand you a size 14 in a style she likes and a color she doesn't already have?"

When Sadie died in 1980, her son, Isadore, took her place in the store partnering with his cousin, Stanley Ellias. They ran the store together for eight years until June 24, 1987, when a massive fire brought it to its end.

EPILOGUE

Although the store and its principals are gone, vestiges of their legacy remain, some visible, others built into Trenton's framework: Meyer Ellias Park and Ellias Cove, on land donated to Trenton by Meyer's children following his death; education scholarships and foundations established by Sadie and Isadore Mulias and other members of the Mulias and Ellias families; Beth Isaac, still serving downriver as a cultural and spiritual center for Jewish and interfaith families; and most enduring of all — the legacy of their good name.



Marilyn Krainen is a freelance writer and editor, an advisory board member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, former corporate writer for a national healthcare IT firm and writing instructor at Oakland University.

SOURCES

Books, which include history and photos of the store and its owners

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(Comprehensive feature on the history of Jewish settlement downriver – includes story of Beth Isaac synagogue)

Acknowledgments

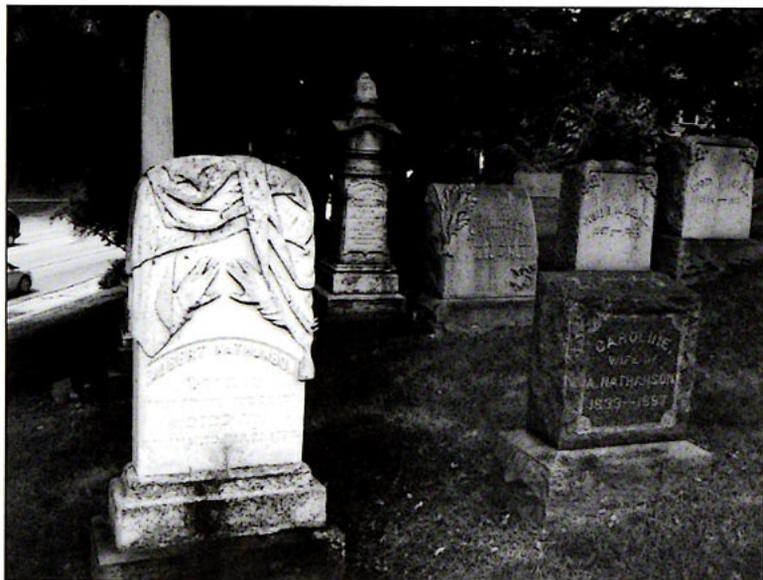
The author is indebted to the following for providing the inside, *human* stories based on their personal experience — and for enthusiastically sharing them: Howard Elias, son of Meyer Elias; Margaret Charnes, daughter of Meyer Elias; Ray Clement, president of Beth Isaac; Pauline Arthurs, president of the Trenton Historical Archives; Carol Hendricks, Trenton Historical Society

FEATURED
ARTICLEA PLACE TO CALL HOME:
TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL'S LONG JOURNEY

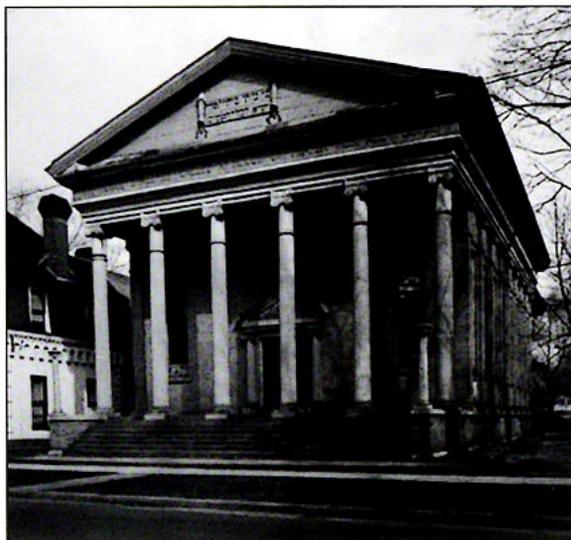
by RAYE M. ZIRING

THE origin of Temple B'nai Israel in Kalamazoo began with the 1843 arrival of the first Jewish resident in the area, Magnus Israel, who would be followed shortly thereafter by many others.

Congregation B'nai Israel was officially organized in Kalamazoo by a group of 20 Jewish families who held their first recorded meeting on October 1, 1865. German immigrants who were dedicated to Reform Judaism, the group's first action was to acquire land for a burial ground on property adjoining Mountain Home Cemetery on West Main Street. This cemetery was consecrated on December 17, 1865, and is still in use today.



Consecrated in 1865, the Temple B'nai Israel Cemetery is still in use today.



Temple B'nai Israel, Michigan's first building built as a synagogue, was dedicated on January 29, 1875.

The first meetings as an organized congregation were held on November 4, 1865 and December 17, 1865 when by-laws were drafted. Each of the 20 founders signed the by-laws on January 7, 1866, and Congregation B'nai Israel (Sons of Israel) officially came into being. At that time, services were held Friday evenings and Saturday mornings in private homes, and were conducted in German. Rabbi Simon Rosenberg was the first spiritual leader in 1866-1867, followed by Reverend E. Liepmansohn, Isaac Epstein and Dr. Maurice Fluegel.

In 1873, the congregation purchased a house on a 130' x 150' lot at 152 East South Street. A temple and schoolhouse were erected, while the house was used as the rabbi's residence.

The temple was dedicated on January 29, 1875. *The Daily Telegraph* described the event, "Last evening, about 5 p.m., the new temple, reared by the zeal and sacrifice of the Israelites of Kalamazoo, was formally dedicated to the most high with beautiful services." An overflow crowd attended. "The audience room is 57 x 33 ft, and the hall is 80 x 33 ft, and no expense seems to have been spared in making this temple pleasing to the beholder in every way."

The service was conducted by Reverend Isaac Epstein, who served as rabbi from 1873 to 1878. He was accompanied by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, a prominent rabbi from Cincinnati, a significant personality in Reform Judaism, and one of the founders of Hebrew Union College (1875) and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Congregation B'nai Israel was one of the 34 founding members of the UAHC, which was formally established on July 6, 1874. Newspaper articles in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *American Israelite* (Cincinnati) and *The Chicago Times* also reported the dedication.

In January 1908, Rabbi Samuel Thurman became the spiritual leader of the congregation. According to Milton Orwin who researched the temple's history in 1980, the congregation thrived under the leadership of Rabbi Thurman, a native of Boston and



B'nai Israel's second building, located on South Park Street, was dedicated in September 1911.

graduate of Hebrew Union College. In 1910, after considerable discussion, and after Rabbi Thurman "made an earnest plea for progress," the decision was made to sell the South Street building, and a new building site was purchased at 621 South Park Street. The cornerstone was laid on November 6, 1910, and the temple was dedicated on Friday evening, September 14, 1911.

On November 3, 1912, Rabbi Thurman submitted his letter of resignation to the congregation, and his resignation was accepted "with profound regrets." But Rabbi Thurman's career was destined for higher acclaim. In January 1949, at the invitation of Harry S. Truman, he became the first rabbi to participate in the inauguration of an American President.

Following Rabbi Thurman's departure, the congregation began a period of decline. For a number of years, the congregation went without a permanent rabbi, managing its needs by bringing rabbinic students from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Rabbi Philip Waterman served the community from 1918 to June 1923, but upon his leaving to assume a position in Grand Rapids, MI, the congregation again resumed using the services of student rabbis.

The decline and struggle to survive continued through the 1930s and 1940s. Energetic members of the congregation tried to revive congregational activities, but were unsuccessful. According to Orwin, "notwithstanding the long and arduous efforts of a

few, and notwithstanding that we had a beautiful temple building and no indebtedness, plus a fine background of the early years, the task of restoring the temple to full activity seemed impossible." A special meeting was held on May 27, 1946 and the decision was made to sell the building to the Congregation of Moses, a Conservative congregation. For the first time since 1875 when the South Street Temple was built, Congregation B'nai Israel did not have its own place of worship.

It was at this point that Congregation B'nai Israel entered a long association with a Unitarian/Universalist congregation, The People's Church. It was in their building that the congregation conducted High Holy Day services and an occasional Friday evening Shabbat service. The hospitality offered by the church and Minister Dr. Ed Palmer made the congregation feel very welcome. A portable ark was built, and the Torah, prayer books and bible were brought to People's Church.

The congregation languished in this fashion until January 1961 when a member, Jerrold Rakieten, led a drive to increase activity. Announcements were prepared for local newspapers, inviting members and guests to a series of bi-weekly Friday evening Shabbat services, beginning on January 27, 1961. The response was very encouraging, and additional services and meetings were held in the following months. Soon a Sunday school was started, a Sisterhood formed and a rabbi hired. The congregation found a new home at 6318 Portage Road in 1962, an old farm house which they rented and refurbished. It was there on May 22, 1966 that the congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary with activities that included a rededication service, open house and exhibit. However, after several years of having rabbinic leadership, in the fall of 1970 the congregation returned to the use of student or part-time rabbis, and in 1975 once again returned to The People's Church.

In the summer of 1992, the congregation was notified that they were the beneficiaries of the estate of David Lowe, a former member of Temple B'nai Israel. It was through this generous bequest that the congregation was able to purchase its current building at 4409 Grand Prairie. On September 5, 1994, Rabbi Michael Cahana and members of the congregation proudly carried their two Torah scrolls the 2.7 miles from The People's Church to their new location. After 19 consecutive years of services at The People's Church, and after having been without a permanent home for 48 years, the congregation



*Charter member,
Meyer Desenberg, Sr.*



*Board members: The 1911 Temple B'nai Israel board of directors included (l to r)
Louis Rosenbaum, Dr. E. J. Bernstein, Meyer Desenberg, Jr., A.L. Blumenberg,
Louis Isenberg, Samuel Folz, Lester Solomon.*



Thanks to a generous bequest by former member, David Lowe, the congregation found its new home on Grand Prairie Ave.

of Temple B'nai Israel at last had a place to call home. A dedication service was held on June 4, 1995.

In August 1998, Rabbi Steven Forstein joined the congregation as a full-time rabbi, followed in 2006 by Cantor Larry Charson, who currently serves as spiritual leader.



Raye Ziring has been a member of Temple B'nai Israel for more than 30 years and is a past president of the congregation. She was also religious school director for several years and is currently chair of the Caring Committee. Ziring is a past-president of Hadassah, and currently is serving as its treasurer and communications coordinator. Ziring and her husband Larry have two daughters, a son-in-law and two grandchildren.

LOST HISTORY FOUND!

In 2009, as he read the weekly *Shabbat* folder handed to congregants at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Mich., Richard Cavaler noticed an error. In the handout, it stated that Congregation Shaarey Zedek constructed the first building in the state of Michigan specifically erected and designed to be a synagogue. While there are older congregations in the state such as Temple Beth El, Jewish services until then had been held in private homes or in former churches remodeled into synagogues. Shaarey Zedek's claim centered on the first erected synagogue. Cavaler knew that somewhere in the past he had come across information to the contrary.

Knowing that in 2011, Shaarey Zedek would be celebrating its 150th anniversary, Cavaler felt this would be the time to set the record straight.

LOST HISTORY FOUND!

"I pointed out the error to the former executive director, Janet Pont. But I needed some documentation. I thought that would be very difficult, so as a first step, I went to the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El and spoke to archivist Jan Durecki," recalled Cavaler.

Minutes later, Durecki had a file in her hands on Kalamazoo's Congregation B'nai Israel. In the file was a copy of *The American Israelite* newspaper from January 1875, published by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, founder of the Hebrew Union College and the Reform movement. Here was Rabbi Wise's first-hand account of the dedication of Temple B'nai Israel's building in January 1875. Shaarey Zedek laid their cornerstone at the corner of Congress and St. Antoine two and a half years later, in July 1877.

Cavaler showed Pont the article. Obviously unaware of the discrepancy, Shaarey Zedek took immediate steps to correct the error. The Shabbat bulletin was updated noting that the synagogue was the first to build a building as a synagogue in Detroit, not Michigan.

Shaarey Zedek had believed their congregation was the first in the state to construct such a building for more than a century. To commemorate their place in Jewish and civic history, the congregation had applied for and received permission to erect a Michigan Historical Commission's Michigan Historical Marker on their Southfield property. Their information was based on a reliable source, the *Detroit Free Press*. In July 1877, the paper featured a lengthy article congratulating the members of Detroit's Congregation Shaarey Zedek on constructing the state's first synagogue at the corner of Congress and St. Antoine. The mayor of Detroit, NAME, laid the cornerstone.

Even this publication, *Michigan Jewish History*, has printed articles mentioning B'nai Israel of Kalamazoo, but never noticed the discrepancy on the congregation's important place in Michigan's Jewish history (see: "Kalamazoo's Jewish Community: An Overview of the First 75 Years," by Tom Dietz, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol.44, 2004).

Judy Levin Cantor, archivist at Congregation Shaarey Zedek and one of the state's most noted historians on Jewish history, understands how errors like this happen. Historians are always uncovering new information which conflicts with or clarifies long-assumed historical arguments. "Like many legendary historical 'facts' and as more than a century and a quarter has passed by, it was wrongly assumed that this was the first building built as a synagogue in Michigan. But, thanks to Richard Cavaler pointing out the discrepancy, it is now understood that the Kalamazoo temple was the first in the state, and Shaarey Zedek was the first in Detroit built for that purpose," said Levin.

Plans are under way in Kalamazoo to celebrate their new status and Congregation Shaarey Zedek will be among the first to send congratulations. Until they were contacted by Cavaler with the historical information, the congregants of Temple B'nai Israel did not even know that their building at 152 East South Street was Michigan's first building built as a synagogue. Cavaler continues to work diligently to provide them with more of their history, researching newspaper articles that appeared in Cincinnati and Chicago.

"Eventually, I'd like to go to the State of Michigan Historical Commission in Lansing so the record can be officially updated. After 135 years, it is time to give the proper salute to B'nai Israel and their rightful place in history! Mazel Tov!"

Thank you to Richard Cavaler for your important detective work and congratulations to these two Michigan institutions whose long history have helped contribute to our state's rich past.

ARCHIVED TREASURES

2010

JEWISH HERITAGE COLLECTION DEDICATED TO MARK AND DAVE HARRIS

IN LATE 2003, Constance and Theodore Harris donated their extraordinary collection of some 2,000 items that reflect Jewish life to the University of Michigan Hatcher Graduate Library and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. Named the Jewish Heritage Collection, this unusual assemblage of artwork, books, printed ephemera such as pamphlets and postcards, and objects of everyday and religious significance ranging from dolls and serving dishes to menorahs and mezuzahs, is vast.

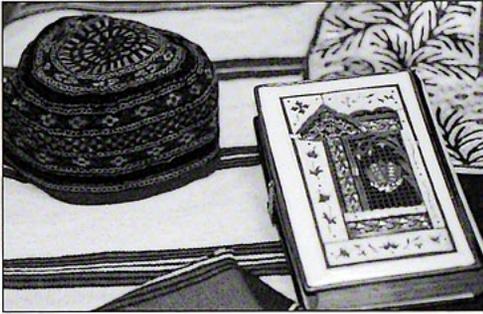
At the heart of the Harris Collection lies artwork that will support both the serious study of Jewish artists and Jewish life as it has been portrayed in images from the 15th to the 20th centuries. The collection encompasses work by fine artists alongside magazine caricatures and political cartoons. There are more than 700 books, including some 150 editions of Passover Haggadot which often feature elaborate illustrations; 18th century engravings and museum posters from the 1990s; and artists including fine European silversmiths and Ethiopian refugees in Israel.

The Harrises began to collect these works of art and everyday objects early in their marriage, when Connie sought works of art for their living room.

The couple traveled extensively to many parts of the world, giving them the opportunity to seek out unusual items of Jewish interest. The collection is dedicated to the Harris' grandsons, Mark and Dave Harris of Birmingham, Michigan.

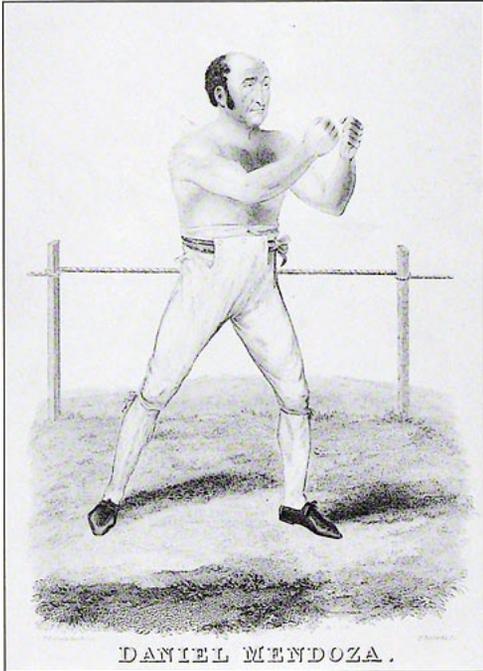


Antique rolling pin and cutter marked matzah shmurah, with matzah cover of embroidered satin.



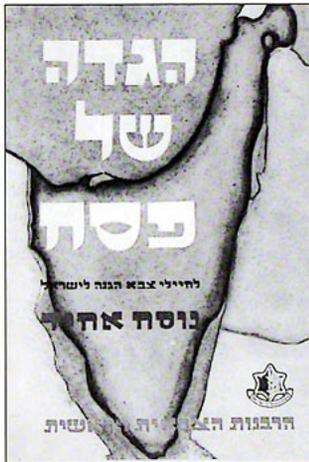
Antique prayer book with ivory and metal on-lays, yarmulke embroidered in the style of the Bukhara region of Uzbekistan and prayer shawl with embroidery by Ethiopian Jews.

ARCHIVED TREASURES



This rare print from 1822 is based on original art by George Cruikshank depicting the famous boxer Daniel Mendoza.

Engraving by Sir Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956), used in the bookplate designed for the Jewish Heritage Collection.



Cover of an Israel Army Haggadah, 1971.

"Don't worry, he's all right," poster from the Jewish Welfare Board, 1918. Reprinted.

CELEBRITIES & *Celebrations*

B'NAI MOSHE CELEBRATES A CENTURY OF TRADITION

When the nine Hungarian families formed what would become Congregation B'nai Moshe in September 1911, they likely could only imagine how their dreams for a better life would take shape during the next century.

Meeting within the walls of a rented hall in Detroit on Winder and Hastings, those nine — led by the shul's first president Aaron Holland — organized themselves as Congregation Beth Elijah. Also known as Elias Einczig Congregation, after one of its passionate supporters, the *shul* — buoyed by the continuing flow of Eastern European immigrants into the Lower Hastings area — spent those early days traveling from home to temporary home along Hastings Street.

In 1915, the congregation purchased a home on the corner of Eliot and Hastings. A year later, the congregation's 70 families, led by president Herman Eichner, began erecting their first house of worship on Garfield and Beaubien, in the Jewish neighborhood called Upper Hastings. The newly hired part-time rabbi, Joseph Thumin, joined building chairman Jacob Farkas and the Ladies Auxiliary in raising money for the 600-seat sanctuary, social hall and two classrooms. In a fund-raising gesture, Einczig offered to sell the congregation's name to the highest bidder. The eldest sons and daughters of Moshe (Morris) Gunsberg pledged \$45,000, allowing the family to name the synagogue in honor of their father.

On March 18, 1918, the renamed Congregation B'nai Moshe (Sons of Moshe), whose membership had blossomed to 300 families, celebrated the opening of their building. That same year, B'nai Moshe welcomed Cantor Samuel Glantz but also lost Eichner, whose sudden death galvanized President Sam Gunsberg to acquire 600 burial spaces in Royal Oak's Oakview Cemetery.

Cantor Anton Rosenfeld arrived in 1922, leading members in prayer for 15 years. Then, on Aug. 26, 1923, B'nai Moshe welcomed Hungarian-born Rabbi Moses Fischer and his family.



Rabbi Moses Fischer



Dedicated in 1929, Congregation B'nai Moshe featured a decorative ceiling and chandelier that today remain a centerpiece of the building's architectural details.

Rabbi Fischer, who also served the Delray Hungarian Congregation on Burdeno (in Detroit), had spent 20 years at Chicago's largest Hungarian synagogue. In celebration of his arrival, a delegation met him at the Michigan Central Depot and escorted him to his Detroit home at 448 E. Ferry St. Later, an honor guard of congregants and community leaders led Rabbi Fischer to B'nai Moshe. Early in his tenure, Rabbi Fischer developed the Sunday School, which opened with almost 100 students and seven female instructors.

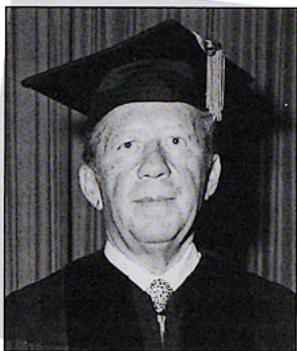
In the mid-1920s, as Detroit's Jewish community continued its migration north and west, the congregation, led by President Harry Rosman, sold the Garfield building and began construction at Dexter Boulevard and Lawrence Avenue. After leaving the Garfield building in 1927, B'nai

Moshe rented stores on the corner of Linwood and Clairmount and the Jericho Temple before dedicating the Dexter building in July 1929 — just shy of the stock market crash. Despite economic hardships, synagogue presidents Robert Rosenberg, Joseph Kornfield and Sam Gunsburg successfully guided B'nai Moshe through these difficult years.

As the Depression eased, the outlook at B'nai Moshe brightened. A merger with the Detroit Hungarian Hebrew Congregation in 1934 brought membership to 354 families. Fueled by an improving economy and Rosman's successful membership drive, which increased the roster to 485 families, B'nai Moshe began remodeling and improving the synagogue. Later, the congregation welcomed Cantor David Katzman, whose tenor could be heard until his 1959 retirement.

As the United States entered World War II, many B'nai Moshe members signed up to do their part. Several sons were lost to the war effort including Lt. Robert S. Deutsch, Lt. Eugene Freedman, who was killed in action on Leyte Island in the Philippines, and Lt. Lester Katzen, whose plane went down after a successful bombing mission. Leyte Island also claimed the life of PFC Frank Faudem, who left behind his wife, the former Lydia Ruth Kepes, and a baby girl, as well as a promising baseball career with the Detroit Tigers.

Despite the heartache, including the loss of sexton Harry Landsman, B'nai Moshe grew during the war years, culminating in a burning-of-the-mortgage ceremony on Chanukah, Dec. 4, 1944. Following World War II, B'nai Moshe welcomed Holocaust survivors



Rabbi Moses Lehrman

such as Abe Pasternak, who had survived Auschwitz, Buchenwald and the loss of family.

Rabbi Moses Lehrman assumed the pulpit in September 1948, the same year Shalom Ralph joined as sexton and Rabbi Fischer became Rabbi Emeritus. Under Rabbi Lehrman's leadership, B'nai Moshe joined the United Synagogue of America's Conservative movement.

As the decade ended, B'nai Moshe president, Theodore Curtis, improved the library, kitchen and other facilities. The congregation also reached a rental agreement with United Hebrew Schools and broke ground for a school building. These were the

years that the Jewish community began drifting away from Detroit and B'nai Moshe officials began exploring options for a new home.

After renting six classrooms at Oak Park's Clinton School in 1955, B'nai Moshe purchased its first Oak Park site, spurring a building fund campaign led by past president, Alfred Deutsch. By the end of 1957, B'nai Moshe had sold its Dexter building to St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church and made plans to lay a cornerstone at 10 Mile Road and Kenosha. This would be B'nai Moshe's home for more than 30 years. The congregation also bid goodbye to Cantor David Katzman and welcomed Cantor Louis Klein's rich baritone.

Throughout the 1960s and '70s, B'nai Moshe thrived. The Oak Park congregation established a Young Married Couples Club, held Monday night Bingo games and affiliated with United Hebrew Schools. In 1977, Rabbi Stanley Rosenbaum joined B'nai Moshe as associate rabbi, becoming its top spiritual leader two years later.

By the late '80s, after the departure of Rabbi Rosenbaum and the arrival of Rabbi Allen Meyerowitz, B'nai Moshe began to face difficult times. A declining, aging membership, increasing deficits and other issues, led leadership to consider the synagogue's viability. When merger talks failed, members decided to make the move to West Bloomfield, purchasing property on Drake Road and selling its Oak Park facility to Yeshiva Beth Yehudah.

After a zoning fight with West Bloomfield Township Trustees, there remained the challenge of constructing a \$4 million building with less than \$2 million in the bank and

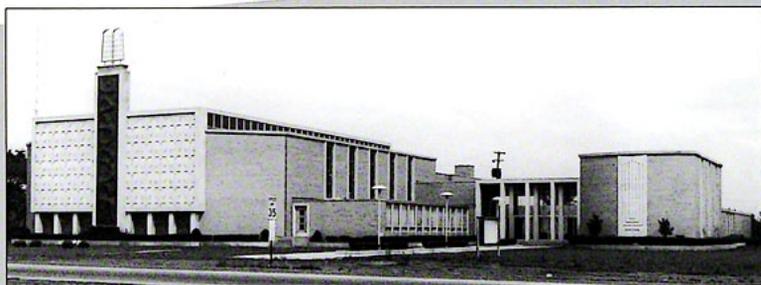


In 1957, B'nai Moshe sold their Dexter Ave. building to St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church and moved to Oak Park.

no mortgage commitment. President Michael Grand credited building chairman Rob Roth, then executive director Steven Snider, Turner Construction and many others in getting the job done.

For three years, B'nai Moshe held services at the West Bloomfield Jewish Community Center. Then, in 1992, the congregation opened its new home, the Bernice & Alfred Deutsch Campus located on Drake Road in West Bloomfield. Members welcomed Rabbi Elliott Pachter and, after Cantor Klein's retirement in 1995, Cantor Earl Berris in 1997. That same year, B'nai Moshe dedicated its school wing. Eight years later, the Cantor Klein Chapel opened.

As B'nai Moshe marks its 100th anniversary, much has changed. But that same spirit of optimism and family focus those first nine families brought to this small but welcoming congregation remains.



The building on 10 Mile Rd. in Oak Park served as the congregation's home for more than 30 years.



B'nai Moshe's Bernice & Alfred Deutsch Campus in West Bloomfield.

- Susan Brohman is an active member of Congregation B'nai Moshe, where she serves on the Sisterhood board and works on the synagogue bulletin. She spent more than 20 years as a corporate communications writer and community journalist, including a stint at the Detroit Jewish News. Currently, she is beginning a new career as a paralegal.

THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CELEBRATE 100 YEARS! WE WERE THERE...THE LEGACY CONTINUES

In 2010, the Boy Scouts of America celebrated its 100th anniversary. Founded by Chicago publisher William Boyce in February 1910, scouting for boys actually began in England in 1907 when Gen. Robert Baden-Powell (soon to be Lord Baden-Powell), one of the Boer War heroes, discovered that many boys were using his military book Aids to Scouting as a guide to outdoor activities. He began to think how he could convert his concepts of army scouting to "peace scouting" for boys. The concept worked so well that it spread rapidly to become the largest youth organization in America.

It was in 1910 that Boyce met with prominent Jewish businessman, Mortimer Schiff, and Young Men's/Young Women's Hebrew Association president, William Mitchell. These visionaries believed that Jews and Jewish institutions should be involved in the movement created by Lord Baden-Powell. In 1911, Jacob Schiff, Mortimer's father, joined Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller as the first major contributors to the Boy Scouts of America. Mortimer Schiff served as vice president of the Boy Scouts from 1910-1931 when he was elected president. He died later that year.

Scouting in Detroit's Jewish community caught on fast under the tutelage of none other than renowned community leader, Fred M. Butzel. The newly organized Detroit Area Council (now the Great Lakes Council) wisely chose Butzel as the first Chairman of its executive committee in 1914. The rest, as they say, is history.

Scouting thrived. Almost every major synagogue and temple chartered Boy Scout Troops, beginning with both Temple Beth El and Shaarey Zedek. Temple Beth El Scouts attended area Boy Scout camps in the 1920s, and Shaarey Zedek's two Troops, numbering over 100 Scouts, were among the largest contingents to attend the 1933 World's Fair held in Chicago, which featured not only prominent displays from the Boy Scouts of America, but was well attended by Jewish Scouts from all over the nation. Temple Israel, B'nai Moshe, Ahavas Achim, Beth Aaron, Adat Shalom and the Jewish Community Center have all chartered Boy Scout programs since those early beginnings, providing the life skills and character building which scouting in America has always represented.

Today, this legacy continues. Boy Scout Troop 364, chartered by the Adat Shalom Synagogue Men's Club; Cub Scout Pack 613, chartered by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the combined effort of the five Conservative synagogues in the metro area; and Venturing Crew 18, chartered by Jewish War Veterans-Department of Michigan provide major links in the relationship of Detroit's Jewish community with the Boy Scouts of America. In addition, there are hundreds of Jewish men affiliated with Scout programs at schools, churches and neighborhood organizations. Boy Scout Troop 180, chartered to Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing, has been nationally recognized for its International Scouting programs.

The Detroit Area Council has enjoyed the leadership of men such as David Page and Bernard Cantor, among others. Cantor, an Eagle Scout, currently sits on the Executive

Committee of the Great Lakes Council, the newly formed Council representing the merger of the Detroit Area Council with neighboring Clinton Valley Council.

There are approximately three million young Americans between the ages of seven and 20, and one million volunteers who are current members of the Boy Scouts of America. The National Jewish Committee on Scouting (founded in 1926 by Schiff and Cyrus Adler), which promotes Scouting in Jewish communities, estimates there are 45,000 Jewish Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturers nationwide.

Boy Scouts of America is dedicated to re-energizing its role as the nation's foremost youth organization and is committed to remaining a vital part of America's Jewish communities. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, visit www.scouting.org; the National Jewish Committee on Scouting: www.jewishscouting.org.

- Allen Olender Chairman-National Relationships National Jewish Committee on Scouting/Boy Scouts of America

Boy Scout Troop 364 and Venturing Crew 18 serve as Honor Guard and Escorts at the Annual Governor's Holocaust Memorial Ceremony held at the State Capitol in Lansing (2007).



This Aron Kodesh (ark), circa 1965, was given to the Detroit area Boy Scouts by Beth Aaron's Boy Scout Troop and was used at Camp Howell, the Boy Scout Camp of the Detroit Area Council.

Congregation Shaarey Zedek's Boy Scout Troop 23, Detroit, circa 1933.



CONGREGATION AHAVAS ACHIM AND BETH AARON RABBI YOSKOWITZ IS CREATING A HISTORY

DO YOU REMEMBER AHAVAS ACHIM OR BETH AARON?

For four score years, children have been inspired by a man whose pseudonym was Wally Piper and whose story for children, The Little Engine That Could, taught the values of optimism and of hard work. The storyline is simple: A little engine succeeds in pulling a train over the hill while saying over and over again, "I think I can. I think I can," after larger engines had declined the task. The approach of the centenary of the founding of Congregation Ahavas Achim, and the upcoming 70th anniversary of the founding of Beth Aaron reminds me of The Little Engine That Could.

According to local historian Philip Applebaum, Congregation Ahavas Achim was organized in 1912, and Beth Aaron was organized in 1944, after it split from the Northwest Hebrew Congregation. The two synagogues merged in 1968 to become Beth Achim Synagogue, where I served as rabbi. I decided to utilize my 2009 sabbatical year at Adat Shalom Synagogue to begin research on the histories of these two synagogues.

It is little known that one of these two synagogues organized the first late Friday evening service among Detroit's Conservative congregations and the other enjoyed the largest percentage increase in membership in one year, more than 300% — from 125 families to 400 families. Declining memberships and financial challenges led Beth Achim Synagogue and Adat Shalom Synagogue to merge in 1998. Actually, it was a reuniting of the Northwest Hebrew Congregation, which eventually became Adat Shalom Synagogue, and Beth Aaron, which became part of Beth Achim.

Although I have learned much, and seek to learn more, I am asking for help.

If you have any memories, documents or mementos from Ahavas Achim and/or Beth Aaron, please send them to me at Adat Shalom Synagogue, 29901 Middlebelt Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334 or by e-mail hyoskowitz@adatshalom.org.

- Rabbi Herbert A. Yoskowitz

THE RADIANT SUN: DESIGNER RUTH ADLER SCHNEE

A documentary film highlighting the life of renowned Detroit textile designer Ruth Adler Schnee had its Michigan premier at the Cranbrook Academy of Art on May 2, 2010. Schnee is a world-recognized designer of textiles and interiors, who came to Detroit from Germany with her parents as a child. After attending Central High School and the Rhode Island School of Design, she returned to Michigan to attend the Cranbrook Academy of Art. During her career, she worked with many architects and designers such as Minoru Yamasaki and Buckminster Fuller. Some of her best known work in the Detroit area was for the Winkelman's Department Stores. In the 1950s she and her husband Edward Schnee established and operated the popular retail store, Adler Schnee, a modern furniture, housewares and decorative items store in the Harmonie Park area of Detroit.

The film, "*The Radiant Sun*," was directed by Terri Sarris and produced by Sarris and Ronit Eisenbach. It surveys Schnee's life and her work, including the challenges she faced as a woman in her field. Production of the film was supported by the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, The University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching and The University of Michigan Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Her work has been exhibited widely and she has received many honors from organizations in her field. Schnee now lives in Southfield, Michigan, and continues to work on design projects and historic preservation activities in Detroit.

-Aimee Ergas, Director JHSof MI

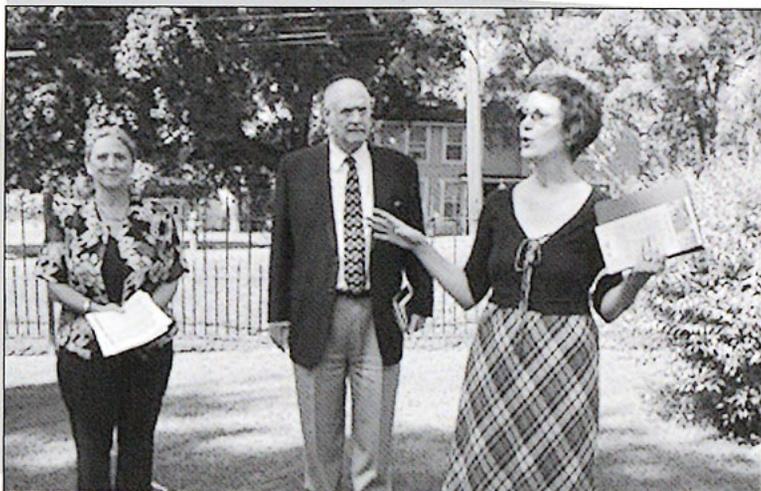


IT'S OFFICIAL...
TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL'S CEMETERY
IS MICHIGAN'S OLDEST JEWISH CEMETERY
IN CONTINUOUS USE

In June 2009, the Temple Beth Israel cemetery in Jackson was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Michigan's second oldest existing Jewish cemetery and Michigan's oldest Jewish cemetery in continuous use. The cemetery continues to serve as the burial place for Jackson's Jewish citizens. To recognize and celebrate this honor, the congregation rededicated the one-acre burial ground on Sunday, September 13, 2009, at a service held in conjunction with the High Holy Days Memorial Service. The rededication, led by the Temple's rabbi, Jonathan V. Plaut, D.H.L., D.D., recalled 150 years of Jewish settlement in Jackson and concluded with the Temple's Religious School students marking each of the more than 200 graves with a small white stone in remembrance.

Jackson's Jewish community traces its history back to 1842. In that year, Prussian Jews Jacob Hirsch and Jacob Levy set up households, establishing themselves variously as merchants, grocers, and tailors. According to U.S. census records, Bernhard Wolff emigrated from Prussia and joined Hirsch and Levy in Jackson four years later. Jackson's earliest Jewish merchants provided their goods and services to the community, as well as those who worked or traveled on the Michigan Central Railroad.

The first Jewish burial in Jackson took place in 1859, when Jacob Hirsch's young wife, Rosa, was interred in a newly acquired one-acre plot of land located on West Avenue. In 1862, the Jews of Jackson formally established Temple Beth Israel, a congregation founded on the "progressive" ideals of Reform Judaism. In affirmation of these pro-

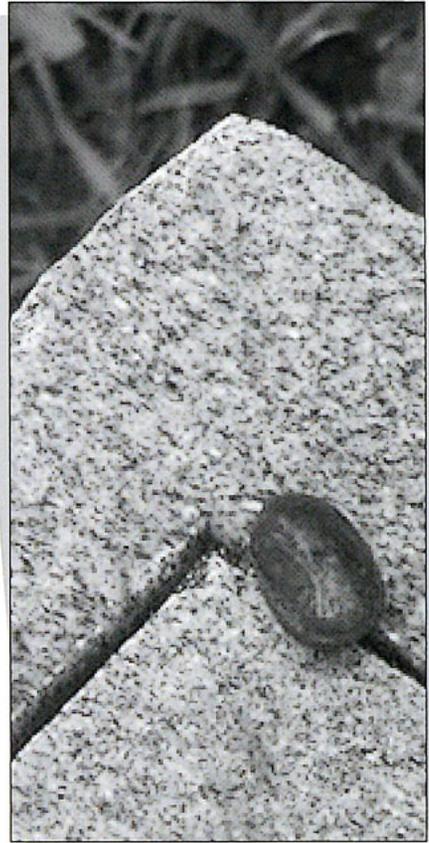


At the rededication ceremony (l to r) Temple co-president Anne Frank, Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut, cemetery historian and rededication organizer Nancy Demeter.

gressive ideals, Rabbi Isaac Wise traveled from Cincinnati to consecrate the congregation's first house of worship on January 29, 1864. The building, located on the town square, was originally built as a church and was purchased from one of Jackson's early Christian congregations; since that time, Jackson's Jewish community has held services in one other former church. The congregation currently occupies their third building, which was the first and only building constructed for them in 1948.

Temple Beth Israel remains the only Jewish congregation in Jackson. The Temple has had the privilege of being led by a succession of rabbis, among them Sally Preisand, the Reform movement's first female rabbi, who served the Temple as a student rabbi in the early 1970s. Currently, Temple Beth Israel is led by rabbi and scholar Jonathan V. Plaut, D.H.L., D.D., son of W. Gunther Plaut, celebrated rabbi and Torah commentator. The congregation plans to celebrate its sesquicentennial in 2012.

- Nancy Demeter, cemetery historian and rededication organizer



Little stones were placed on each of the more than 200 graves.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

As the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan celebrates its 25th anniversary, members agree that without Betty Provizer Starkman's lifelong fascination with her family's history, the JGSM would not exist today.

When Betty was 11 years old, she began listening to the stories her parents and relatives told of their own history. In college, on a yellow legal pad, Betty began recording those names, dates and places. She had her father's precious family photographs that he had carried with him from his home in Ilza, Poland, to pre-state Israel, and then to the United States.

In 1959, Starkman joined the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Since her passion was to find genealogical information, and at the time there were no computer programs or groups in the Detroit area to help her, she decided to explore the creation of a genealogical society.

In 1982, Starkman gathered about a hundred people interested in genealogy (genealogists delve into the history and roots of their individual family history). This was the seed of what would become, in 1985, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan. At its founding, there were just 15 or 20 members. Today, the JGSMI has more than 200.

During all this time, Betty has done more than search for her family. She has dedicated her life to helping the rest of us with genealogy. She has traveled extensively to Poland and to Israel. In Ilza, Poland, she helped create the monument and fence that now surrounds Ilza's cemetery that was destroyed during World War II. For a long while, she wrote a column for the *Detroit Jewish News*, "What's In a Name?" answering inquiries concerning surname and town origins, using pre-Internet resources.



Betty Provizer Starkman is holding one of her treasured family pictures surrounded by some of her prized Judaica collection.

In the spring of 1984, Starkman began publishing *Generations*, the quarterly newsletter of JGSMI. The first issue contained an impressive 12 pages. Starkman often gave lectures, usually at JGSMI meetings. Her first lecture was about Holocaust research sources, her field of expertise.

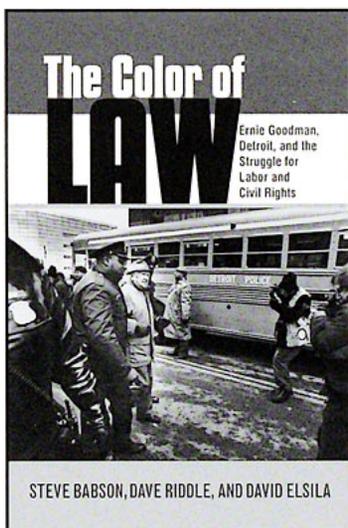
The genealogical world of today is vastly different from the one in which Starkman began her quest. Now we can search the Internet for databases of births, deaths, marriages and other documents. We can send emails to new-found cousins anywhere in the world, share pictures instantaneously. But without the hard work, dedication and leadership qualities of people like Betty Provizer Starkman, the JGSMI would not be celebrating 25 years.

Starkman's advice to genealogists is as true today as it was when she was an 11 year old listening to her parents' stories: "Contact all living relatives. Start early while they are still alive. Write down what they say. Make new contacts."

Congratulations to Betty for her lifetime of learning, teaching and being a friend to all; and congratulations to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan.

- Ruth Rosenberg, editor *Generations*

Wayne State University Press



PREMIERE LAUNCH EVENT

October 14, 2010 • 7:00 pm

Birmingham Temple

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Join Wayne State University Press, the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the Walter P. Reuther Library, the Maurice & Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice, and the Birmingham Temple to celebrate the launch of **THE COLOR OF LAW: ERNIE GOODMAN, DETROIT, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LABOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS.**

The Color of Law

Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle
for Labor and Civil Rights

STEVE BABSON, DAVE RIDDLE, AND DAVID ELSILA

"This wonderful, inspiring, and compelling book is not only his story, it's the chronicle of the most important struggles of the twentieth century—from the first auto worker sit-down strikes, to the Red Scare, the fight against Jim Crow, opposition to the Vietnam War, and the Attica prison rebellion. Ernie understood better than most lawyers that progressive social change comes from popular struggle and that a lawyer's job was to protect those in struggle. *The Color of Law* holds key lessons for today. Ernie was unbowed until his death at age ninety and so must we be."

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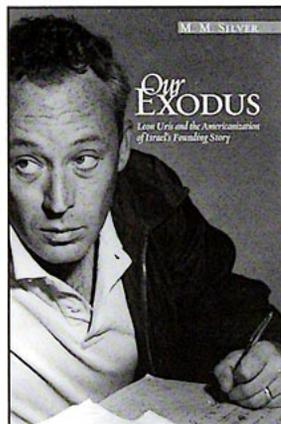
Our Exodus

Leon Uris and the Americanization of
Israel's Founding Story

M. M. SILVER

Despite the dramatic circumstances of its founding, Israel did not inspire sustained, impassioned public discussion among Jews and non-Jews in the United States until Leon Uris's popular novel *Exodus* was released in 1958. Uris's novel popularized the complicated story of Israel's founding and, in the process, boosted the morale of post-Holocaust Jewry and disseminated in popular culture positive images of Jewish heroism. *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story* examines the phenomenon of *Exodus* and its largely unrecognized influence on post-World War II understandings of Israel's beginnings in America and around the world.

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TIMELINE

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

The latter half of the 19th century was a busy time for Michigan's Jewish residents. Besides working very hard to establish themselves as part of the fabric of American culture, they were also hard at work creating cohesive religious communities.

19th CENTURY

- 1850: Michigan's first Jewish congregation, the Beth El Society (Temple Beth El) is founded in Detroit.
- 1859: In Jackson, the first Jewish burial takes place when Rosa Hirsch is laid to rest. The cemetery is Michigan's second oldest existing Jewish cemetery and Michigan's oldest Jewish cemetery in continuous use.
- January 1864: Temple Beth Israel, in Jackson, celebrates the dedication of its first house of worship, an old church.
- October 1865: The first recorded meeting of what was to become Congregation B'nai Israel is held in Kalamazoo by a group of 20 Jewish families.
- January 1875: Dedication of Temple B'nai Israel in Kalamazoo. Michigan's first building constructed to be a synagogue.
- July 1877: Dedication of Congregation Shaarey Zedek's building at the corner of Congress and St. Antoine in Detroit.
- 1891: Sixteen Eastern European Jewish immigrant families settle in Bad Axe and establish a farming colony, which they named Palestine.

20th CENTURY

- 1907: Nine Jewish families operate kosher rooming houses in Mount Clemens. Some of the establishments included the Albany Hotel, Edison Hotel, Cass Hotel, New York Hotel, Reh Hotel, The Baths of Arethusa and The Elkin's Hotel.
- 1908: Mulias and Ellias buy one-room general store in Trenton.
- 1909: Moses Reh and Meyer Davis establish Bas Israel at a home on South Walnut Street in Mt. Clemens. The congregation would later become Beth Tephilath Moses.
- September 1911: Nine Hungarian families rent a hall in Detroit to form Congregation Beth Eliyah, which would later be renamed Congregation B'nai Moshe.
- 1912: The charter forming Congregation Beth Tephilath Moses in Mt. Clemens is finalized and a Hebrew School opens.
- 1912: Congregation Ahavas Achim in Detroit is organized.
- 1913: The Hebrew Association of Mt. Clemens is formed and secures a

TIMELINE

- 1914: The newly organized Boy Scouts of America Detroit Area Council (now the Great Lakes Council) chooses Fred Butzel as the first Chairman of its executive committee.
- March 1918: Congregation B'nai Moshe's 300 families dedicate their first house of worship on Garfield and Beaubien, in the Detroit Jewish neighborhood called Upper Hastings.
- October 1919: Orchestra Hall, designed by architect C. Howard Crane for the Maestro Ossip Gabrilowitsch, opens to the public.
- 1921: The new Beth Tephilath Moses synagogue welcomes congregants to its new home on the High Holidays.
- July 1929: Congregation B'nai Moshe dedicates its new building located on Dexter Boulevard and Lawrence Avenue in Detroit.
- 1934: The Detroit Hungarian Hebrew Congregation merges with Congregation B'nai Moshe.
- 1944: Congregation Beth Aaron in Detroit is organized, after it split from the Northwest Hebrew Congregation.
- 1957: B'nai Moshe lays their cornerstone at 10 Mile Road and Kenosha in Oak Park, where B'nai Moshe would be located for more than 30 years.
- October 1964: Trenton's Beth Isaac Synagogue is dedicated, the only synagogue in the Downriver area.
- 1968: Congregations Beth Aaron and Ahavas Achim merge to become Beth Achim Synagogue.
- 1977: Beth Tephilath Moses in Mt. Clemens relocates to its present day property on South Avenue.
- 1979: Beth Tephilath Moses rededicates itself as a Conservative synagogue, allowing mixed seating.
- 1992: Congregation B'nai Moshe moves to its new home, the Bernice & Alfred Deutsch Campus located in West Bloomfield.
- 1995: The Torah scroll from the Czech land's Moravske Budejovice Synagogue makes its way to Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing.
- June 1995: After 19 consecutive years of services at an area church, Kalamazoo's Temple B'nai Israel dedicates and moves into their current building on Grand Prairie Ave.
- 1998: Beth Achim Synagogue and Adat Shalom Synagogue merge.

21st CENTURY

- April 2008: A fire destroys the Hechtman II Apartments at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ashes, Art, Heroes, and Heart

By Peter Wurdock

Jewish Senior Life of Metropolitan Detroit, 2010 • 42 pages

On the morning of April 9, 2008, Barb Green, a custodian at Hechtman II Apartments smelled something burning. So began, as Peter Wurdock chronicles in his book, *Ashes, Art, Heroes, and Heart*, an orchestration of actions by staff, firefighters and community that resulted in the discovery of a serious fire blazing beneath the third floor boiler and the (well-planned) evacuation that saved many lives, including 93 frightened residents.

Wurdock, director of communications - Jewish Senior Life, upon arriving at the terrible scene that morning immediately understood its implication: "The idea that these elderly residents had condensed all their belongings into a one bedroom apartment and could lose everything was a hard one to take," he writes.

Wurdock's book is compelling, not only because he tells a story of survival and outreach, but also because, Wurdock, a participant in the drama, has turned ash into art, turned fear into expression. Wurdock kept records of the events that unfolded that day and the ensuing difficult days. Among other things, he took photos, jotted down notes, and kept a journal. The result is an account of trauma and heroics. It is also a reminder of the vibrancy of this community. He has included firsthand accounts from some of those brave seniors who through fear and anxiety, made it out safely. The most memorable accounts include the anecdotal moments where those vulnerable folks, in fine Jewish tradition, kept a sense of composure and humor.

Wurdock's 42-page, coffee-table style book is a tribute to the way this community came together, and with the help of others, sprang into action. Colorful, life-affirming photos of The Art Fence, created to provide hope against the broken ruins of Hechtman while it was demolished and rebuilt, ribbon throughout the book as a reminder of how strength of character is measured by how we respond to the tests we are put to. Wurdock transformed that terrible fire into a book that reminds us that the Jewish community of Detroit contains, among other traits, a spirit of wisdom, charity, cooperation and humor.

- Joy Gaines-Friedler



Ashes, Art, Heroes, and Heart

**Extreme Michigan Weather:
The Wild World of the Great Lakes State**

By Paul Gross

University of Michigan Press, 2010 • 166 pages

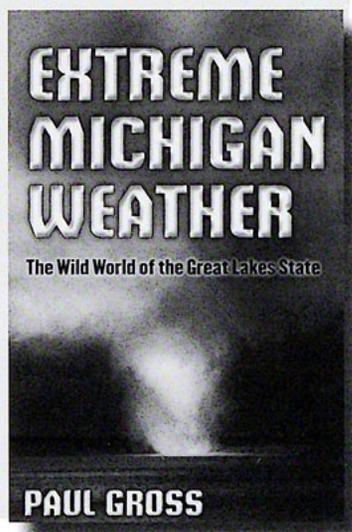
Weather geeks are bound to love the 80 pages or so of Paul Gross' painstakingly compiled statistics on the highest and lowest temperatures recorded on any date you can just about imagine, in more than 20 Michigan cities. But, for the more fair-weathered of us, this little book, *Extreme Michigan Weather*, is Meteorology 101 taught by a kindly, passionate and highly skilled professor who speaks in a language we can all understand, with a little bit of humor thrown in.

In just 70 or so pages, Gross, a meteorologist with WDIV in Detroit, manages to explain, in mostly layman terms, why Michigan's weather can frizz hair in seconds and freeze parts of the Great Lakes in days. Gross walks the reader through some of the most basic facts about weather, such as how rainbows are formed and how lightning occurs, to more complex concepts such as how the hydrostatic equation ($P = \rho gh$) affects temperature. He covers the gamut of Michigan's four seasons — explaining in one chapter why lake effect snow, which happens when cold air flows over the relatively warmer Great Lakes and picks up moisture along the way — doesn't help replenish lower lake levels (the water originates from the Great Lakes, thus it does not bring new water into the area). And in another, how tornadoes form and why they hit our area, along with important safety steps when severe weather is threatening. Gross also delves into global warming, avoiding politics and sticking with the facts.

Along with the science of weather, Gross mixes in a bit of history, too: the story of the November 1975 storm that sank the Edmund Fitzgerald, and the heat wave of 1936 when, for nearly eight days in July, temperatures throughout the state exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit — and those temperatures are without figuring in the heat index, a term used to further emphasize how hot it feels out there.

Since Michigan weather is predictably unpredictable, *Extreme Michigan Weather* helps make sense of the old adage: if you don't like the weather in Michigan, wait ten minutes.

-Wendy Rose Bice



**The Color of Law: Ernie Goodman, Detroit
and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights**

By Steve Babson, Dave Riddle and David Elsila

Wayne State University Press • 568 pages

The Color of Law is, as its first sentence states; “a book about the people and the social forces that have changed our society over the last century, told through the story of Ernie Goodman.” Goodman is indeed a perfect subject for the authors; he himself was a social force. By placing the biography within the larger history of the social activism years in which Goodman became one of the nation’s prominent civil rights lawyers, the authors provide the readers with a superbly researched, comprehensive history of the life and times of Ernie Goodman, a person who looked like “your favorite uncle,” but was a courageous lawyer, with a fierce conviction that motivated his life and career: that the poor had the same rights as the rich.

Goodman, the son of Jewish immigrants (his father from Estonia and mother from the Ukraine) moved to Detroit in 1911 at age five. His father, an itinerant peddler, struggled economically for many years, living in and moving with the city’s working-class Jewish neighborhoods. Goodman grew up with a variety of experiences that shaped his philosophy on life. He joined the Boy Scouts, studied religion under the rabbis his parents hired as his tutors and attended Detroit’s Central High School. As a young man he also experienced anti-Semitism, and witnessed social injustice and racism in the streets. From the moment he earned his law degree in 1928, until he died 62 years later, Goodman was an activist and a first-rate legal mind.

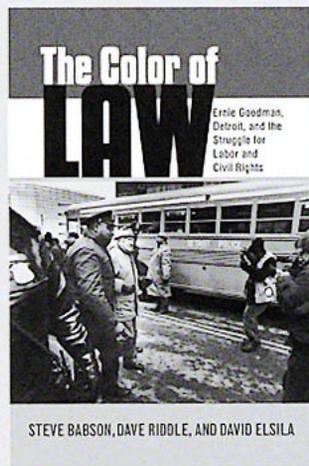
Goodman chose a career path well out of mainstream political thought and practice. The expanse of his experiences is breathtaking. He learned his craft as he worked with lawyers such as Maurice Sugar and future Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy; he formed the nation’s first interracial law firm with George Crockett and he was actively involved in the mass organizing of the labor movement in the 1930s and the rise of the United Automobile Workers. He defended an alleged Communist at Smith Act trials during the years of the Red Scare after World War II, earning the scrutiny of the FBI for his efforts; and, during the 1960s, an era of student protest, Vietnam, urban disorder and the turbulent growth of the Civil Rights Movement, Goodman defended anti-war protestors and members of the Black Panthers in Detroit. Perhaps, his most notable national role was as a defense counsel for inmates in the aftermath of the Attica Prison Riot in 1971.

Simply stated, Goodman was a life-long advocate for, and protector of, the rights of those Americans who, for social or political reasons, faced adversity with the most meager of resources.

The Color of Law is a fine contribution to the larger historiography of modern Detroit. It is a dense, serious narrative, but the reader is rewarded with a fascinating story of a remarkable man. Goodman chose a different life path than most Americans. He dedicated himself to betterment of society, and he could truly claim *to have made a difference*.

- Mike O. Smith

NOTE: The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is pleased to be one of the sponsors of the book launch of The Color of Law by Steve Babson, Dave Riddle and David Elsila on October 14, 2010 at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills.



HISTORICAL TIDBIT

40 YEARS AGO

In 1970, a motorcade carrying two Torah scrolls traveled from Schaefer Rd. in Northwest Detroit to 12 Mile Rd. in Southfield. The scrolls were the property of Congregation Beth Aaron, which had merged with Ahavas Achim. The two congregations were moving into their building and became known as Beth Achim.

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS
IN POETRY AND MEMOIR:
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN

Reflections

Memoir is the opportunity for family and community to know, not only one's history, but to bring a depth of meaning to that history. Memoir is not simply the telling of a story, it is reflection upon that experience – a reflection that transcends the event allowing a deeper understanding, not only for the reader, but for the writer. Memoir is not as large as autobiography, but is rather a specific moment, an anecdote, an incident, that, as Saul Bellows says, "keeps the wolf of insignificance from the door."

Like a prayer, a poem intends to make one feel something in such a way that, according to Emily Dickinson, it "makes the top of your head feel like it is coming off." The poet Jack Ridl says that "poetry uses language to say what words cannot." How does one describe hope, fear, or joy? These experiences can only be fully felt through simile or metaphor – it is like something. So too, a poem can say something significant about something ordinary. It can lift the veil to reveal the extraordinary and the universal. It can start conversations.

Reflections

This is why we are very pleased to announce the expansion of our section "I Remember" and rename it: "Reflections...Creative Expressions in Poetry and Memoir: The Jewish Experience in Michigan." This section will offer the opportunity for readers of this publication to express their Jewish experiences through these creative devices.

We are issuing a call for submissions. Each year, our editorial team, together with Joy Gaines-Friedler, local author and poet, will choose one or two poems, and/or one memoir to be published in *Michigan Jewish History*. This year, we read a memoir from Melvin Tichik, a – as he puts it – has-been musician. Also, the newest member of the editorial team, Joy Gaines Friedler, whose poetry has been enjoyed by thousands, presents us with a gift of her memories.

We look forward to reading your submissions. Send them to the JHS of MI, to the attention of Editor, Reflections. Be sure to include your contact information including your email address and phone number. All submissions must contain reflections or memories of Jewish life in Michigan.

Joy Gaines-Friedler is a writer and teacher of poetry and creative writing in the Detroit area. Among her publications in literary journals and magazines her first full-length book of poetry, Like Vapor, was published by Mayapple Press in 2008.

Reflections

FROM A CHILD PRODIGY TO A HAS BEEN...BY AGE NINE

by Mel Tichik

When I was growing up in Detroit's Twelfth Street area, Gene Krupa was a guest at our house daily. Not literally, of course. It was the sound of his records that could be heard every day in our house. That is what led me to be a little drummer boy.

I was born in 1940, on Hazelwood, half a block from Boesky's Delicatessen on the corner of 12th Street and Hazelwood. The deli was a favorite in the Jewish community, including some of the Purple Gang members.

We had a full house — my parents, Harvey and Sarah; my Bubbe Edith Goldstein; my mother's sister, Millie; and my mother's brother, Sol Goldstein. It was my Uncle Sol who loved the big bands, especially Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa, and maintained a huge record collection. He had a big drum and used to pound on it to Krupa's "Sing, Sing, Sing." I had an apparent natural feel for the music. By the time I was four, I knew the Krupa solo by heart. I would use a suitcase as a drum and an ashtray as a cymbal and play along with that record — every day. In fact, I'd play along with many different records that we had at the time.

My mother decided I should take drum lessons, so downtown to the Wurlitzer Building I went every week. (Now let me interject that many of my memories are from the information I gathered and questions I had answered through the years, but my long-term memory is excellent and I can remember many bits and pieces of my short, but full, prodigy days.)

That was in 1944, and within a year my parents bought me a used, klutzy two-piece drum set upon which I practiced daily. I appeared in a few programs put on by my music teacher who decided that, because of my natural ability and sense of rhythm, I should not learn to read notes. The teacher wanted nothing to interfere with my potential.

Reflections



At 4 ½ years old, Mel Tichik was already on his way to fame. This photo, taken in 1945, was used in a Detroit Times article.

The sounds of my drumming and rumors of my talent spread. A neighbor suggested I enter some of the amateur contests going on at local theaters. She also began booking me in local clubs. My grandparents bought me a new Slingerland drum set, which I still have.

I was six years old when I entered my first amateur contest at the Abington Theater on 12th and Seward, earlier known as Littman's People's Theater. I played my new drums to a recording and won the \$25 second prize. I celebrated by going to Zukin's drugstore on 12th and bought three comic books. My mother kept the rest.

During that year, 1946, I appeared and won first prize at a few other theaters. I'd play the drums with a group on stage at local clubs like the Latin Quarter and Frank Barbaro's

Reflections

FROM A CHILD PRODIGY TO A HAS BEEN

Bowery, while my parents would sit in the audience and be treated to dinner and a free show. Wurlitzer had a banquet in May of that year at Nebiolo's Motor City night club and I sat in with their orchestra. I played at some of the Black and Tan nightclubs around this time, also.

My industrious neighbor, whose name I never knew or was smart enough to investigate, was trying to book me with big musical organizations. She succeeded. In December of 1946, Gene Krupa and his orchestra were appearing at the Arcadia Ballroom and I was given an audition-of-sorts backstage during an intermission. I remember Krupa handing me a pair of drumsticks and having me drum on a table. Although I don't remember hearing him say, "Good enough! I see what you can do!," I read his remark in a newspaper clipping I have. He led me to his drums and he conducted while I played for ten minutes. My idol! I still have his autographed photo.

On January 10, 1947, Danny Raskin wrote an article about my appearance with Gene Krupa in *The Jewish News* and mentioned my upcoming appearance for a Faygo banquet. In February, I jammed at the Paradise Theater (presently known as Orchestra Hall) with Dizzy Gillespie and Illinois Jacquet. Sarah Vaughn was also featured and supposedly gave me a big kiss. Then, in short succession, I appeared with Lionel Hampton at the Downtown Theater and the Lawrence Tech Frolic dance, where I sat in with the Woody Herman Orchestra. In October, I sat in with Louis Prima when he appeared at Eastwood Gardens. I have his autographed photo with the two of us on stage as well as a photo of me behind the drums.

There was an attempt around this time to get me to try out for movie studios, possibly short subjects. I have an envelope from William Meiklejohn in Hollywood, head of talent and casting at Paramount Studios. There's no letter so I'm not sure what that one was about. There is another one from Charlie Dietz of MGM in Detroit about an audition at the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts on Putnam. One of them was about a tryout for a part in a film that eventually went to Joey Preston, a great young drummer who was two years older than I. In the attempt to further my too-young career, my

Reflections

FROM A CHILD PRODIGY TO A HAS BEEN

mother and I went to New York to try to audition for the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts radio show, but I became ill and that ended that opportunity.

Also in 1947, when I was seven, I played the drums in an outdoor program on the playground at my elementary school, Crosman Elementary, and played on the Jack the Bellboy radio program over the radio station WJBK. Ed McKenzie was the host, I believe. I played my drum set to a record by Woody Herman called "Apple Honey." I played for the Red Cross at a gathering in 1947 and entertained at the Veteran's Hospital in Allen Park. My remembrance consists of watching wounded men being wheeled into a large room and asking some of them if they had any extra medals I could have. I did get a few.

The child prodigy part of my life was, unfortunately, coming to an end. With the coming birth of my sister, Terry, we moved to a large rental home on Gladstone and 14th Street. I played a session at the Bowl-O-Drome on Dexter and Leslie with Rudy Rutherford, an alumnus of the Count Basie band. That session was the only time I was recorded. Early in 1948 I appeared with the Vaughn Monroe Orchestra at the State Fairground for a Lawrence Tech dance.

For many reasons — including that we lived above our landlord, I was too young to "go on the road" as had been requested by some agents, the addition to our family and the partial end of the big band era — my budding career ended. My drums sit in my basement today, being played only very occasionally. In the late 1960s, I sat in with the band at the wedding of a family friend. It was the first time my wife heard me play.

And so it ended, but I wouldn't trade those memories away. I have them, along with my drum set, my scrapbook and the knowledge that if Gene Krupa came to town and asked me to sit in with his orchestra, I could do it and do it well.



Melvin Tichik with Louis Prima at Eastwood Gardens ballroom, 1947.

Reflections

Detroit

by Joy Gaines-Friedler

Sunday women in blue feathered hats
men in polished shoes, full of glory
and promise, eat Cajun at Fishbones.

Men who wash the windows
of General Motors,
who build faith on broken porches

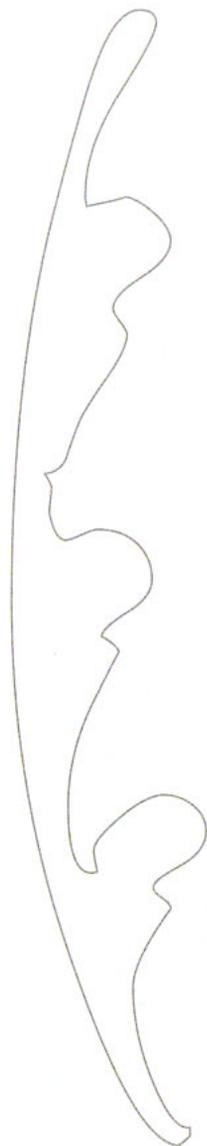
and dance in barbecue voices
at summer picnics. They speak
in jit and Jive, their cadence

like the hymnal breath of the radiator.
These women work the hallways at Grace
Hospital. Those men's hands press

the levers in factories left to perish
along Woodward.
Disillusioned by covenants,

the Diego Rivera mural offers
no alternative. The number of cars
produced each minute has slowed

like traffic on the Chrysler Freeway
where that huge tire
casts shade over their backyards.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ARNOLD COLLENS

Oh what a year!!

The question I ask is: are we a Jewish Historical Society that documents place, date, fact and person, or are we a collector of stories that put our data into historical context? As I reviewed the past year, it became evident to me that the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is structured to accommodate both streams of thought.

It is our organization's custom to present the community with events, tours and a scholarly journal each year. This year, JHS of MI has continued to expand our reach under a leadership team that centers on Aimee Ergas, our director. I am proud to report that in 2009-2010, our leadership team exceeded our goals by offering quality programming to the community at a rate of one to three programs per month. In addition, we are continuing to build access to our yearbook collection and we once again produced a raved-about, head-turning issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

The Year in Review:

From Haven to Home

Already, more than a year has passed since our members and guests celebrated the gala opening of "From Haven to Home" (H2H) and the commemoration of JHS of MI's 50th anniversary. Little did we know that this Detroit Historical Museum exhibit would be visited by thousands and become an important catalyst that would spark interest in arenas we had only dreamed about entering.

"From Haven to Home" generated nearly three dozen privately booked bus tours, plus a curator talk by Judy Levin Cantor. Our fabulous H2H docents — more than 30 in all — listened to stories as much as they spoke. Our guides learned a script and then became a part of it by adding context.

The luncheon and H2H tour that included members of Detroit clergy allowed us to reestablish roots and to thank those who welcome our bus tour groups. As a result of this luncheon, we were able to form and conduct a tour of three synagogues and a former temple, all built in the 1920s (B'nai David, Shaarey Zedek and B'nai Moshe and Temple Beth El- Gladstone). The faces, the smiles of remembrance and recognition, the words "it's me, it's my heritage" filled the air as we walked into these sanctuaries. At the old Shaarey Zedek, on Chicago Boulevard, still as pristine as when it was built, Bishop Shedrick Clark said, "We owe it to the Jewish people to keep the building as they remember it."



In March, the JHS of MI sponsored a reception for JHS of MI Heritage Council Donors and Life Members honoring Maestro Leonard Slatkin of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the JCC Stephen Gottlieb Music Festival. Pictured here are (l to r) Ellen Cole, Maestro Slatkin, Dr. Paul Goodman and Judy Cantor.

Presenting Programs That Span Generations

Partnering with other organizations benefits not only our membership but the larger community, as well. This year those partnerships included the JHS of MI support of the JCC Annual Book Fair, the Jewish Ensemble Theatre (JET), the Michigan Local History Conference, Temple Beth El's Jewish History Detective lecture series, the JCC Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival and honoring Leonard Slatkin at the JCC Stephen Gottlieb Music Festival.

Youth and adult bus tours are evolving to meet specific interests. At some schools, parents and grandparents join us on our award-winning "Settlers to Citizens" youth tour. The many letters we've received expressing gratitude show us that important context is added to our lessons and historical perspective when family members attend. One



Many JHS of MI tours are now being customized for family groups. Temple Israel on Manderson Rd., in the Palmer Park area of Detroit, is an often requested stop.

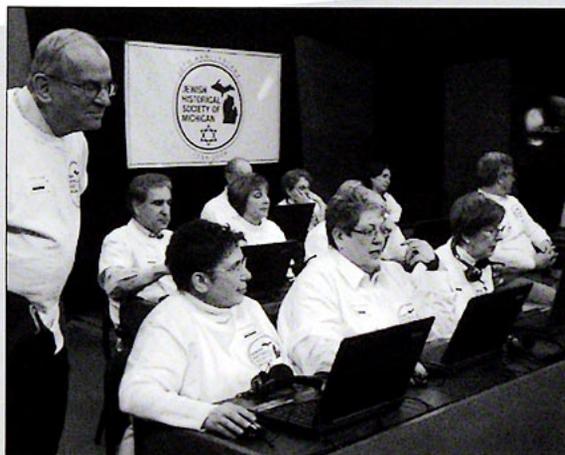
family wrote, "...went on a fabulous tour with my daughter and her Sunday school class. What a wonderful way to spend time with her and learn about Detroit's Jewish history over the last 300 years. It was beautiful and the history amazing."

We are also expanding our tour program to include private Family Tours, which combine community, nostalgia and family history. Family homes, schools, places of business, recreation and worship are featured along with historical sites. Participants can share memories of times past while surrounded by their family. Because history unfolds at the very site where it occurred, the result is often positive generational family building.

Tours that explore extended community are also essential to our growth. This year, we looked at our contribution to Detroit music in the 1960s as we sang, danced and toured the Motown Museum. The Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit then hosted a dessert discussion that focused on the Mogen Abraham stained glass window.



In October 2009, JHS of MI toured the Motown Museum followed by a stop at the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit. Having a little Motown-style fun are (l to r) JHS of MI president Arnold Collens, Harriet Burg and Jim Grey. RCD: Carol Weisfeld, JHS of MI trustee and active leader with the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit shows off the RCD's beautiful, hand-carved Aron Kodesh.



As co-sponsor of the WTVS Detroit Public Television premier of "Detroit Remember When: the Jewish Community" in December, the JHS of MI was able to reach a broad television audience with our message.

Past president Ellen Cole enjoys a happy moment with Big Bird at the WTVS studios in Novi.

Past president Gerald Cook helps volunteers at the WTVS phone bank during the premier of "DetroitRemember When: the Jewish Community."

Volunteers Marilyn Krainen and Jim Grey man the phones.



Our involvement with Detroit Public Television's premier of "Detroit Remember When: The Jewish Community" was a milestone for the JHS of MI. JHS of MI volunteers were involved in not only the film as interviewees, but in ground-level planning, script building, interviews, photography and staffing the phone bank at DPTV. We are continuing to work with DPTV to look at future opportunities to tell our story.

In this electronic age, more and more people are looking at and using the JHS of MI website, www.michjewishhistory.org. Our website offers information about upcoming events and features back issues of the journal collection that can be used for research or pleasurable reading! This year we've even been able to give our office a technology update, which enables us to be much more efficient in volunteer and staff hours and in communicating with our membership.

In closing, I'd like to thank an anonymous donor for generously putting JHS of MI in the spotlight, making people aware that they have JHS of MI to turn to for research and information. Thank you to the Eugene Applebaum Family Foundation and the Mandell L. & Madeleine H. Berman Foundation for illuminating our message by purchasing the H2H Michigan Panel, now on display at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. Thank you to the Holocaust Memorial Center for hosting our annual meeting, and its director, Stephen Goldman, for speaking at our annual meeting. His enlightening words



The JHS of MI 2009 Annual Meeting was held at the Zekelman Family Campus Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. The Center's new executive director, Stephen Goldman was the keynote speaker.



JHS of MI president, Arnold Collens, presented the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Robbie Terman (left) and Jan Durecki (right). Terman and Durecki organized the scheduling and training of the docents for the Haven to Home exhibit in 2009.

on how personal context puts history in perspective brings to light our unending quest to tell and preserve our story for everyone.

Congratulations to Jim Grey, the 2010 Simons History Award recipient. It was well deserved as Jim quietly does so much for us, including opening the Beth Olem Cemetery twice a year. Thank you to the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation Challenge Grant for providing matching funds and to all of you who have generously supported us with your contributions, helping us reach our challenge commitment for the second year of our five-year initiative.

We continue to build excellence by evaluating our services and operation. The best gauge of this is the continuing challenge we face of having a wait-list for our events. This proves there is increasing interest in what we do. By reviewing our year it becomes clear that with the support of our officers, board members, volunteers and general members, we will continue to fulfill our mission. With your help we will continue to enrich our community not only with new facts about Michigan's Jewish history, but with the beautiful and inspiring stories behind those facts.

Arnold Collens
President

JHS 2010

LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD

JAMES D. GREY

No one but his sister could have better summed up why Jim Grey, a life member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and one of the organization's most active volunteers, was the recipient of the 2010 Leonard N. Simons Jewish History Award.

In a speech before several hundred at the 2010 JHS of MI annual meeting, JHS of MI past-president Ellen Cole lovingly described her brother's palpable passion for preserving family and community history. Grey has served on numerous JHS committees ranging from programming to finance, special events and tours.

Maybe it was pre-ordained that Grey, also a past-president of JHS of MI, would fall in love with Michigan's Jewish history. His great-grandfather, Solomon Goldman, had a dry goods business in Elk Rapids, Michigan from 1873 to about 1895. Goldman traded inventory with Julius Steinberg in Traverse City, and the two men were among the founders of Congregation Beth El (Traverse City) in 1882. Grey's bar mitzvah *tallit* was a gift from his great-aunt Janet Gould, whose grandparents were Sarah and Isaac Couzens, credited with forming Temple Beth El of Detroit in 1850. Grey's great-great-grandfather was among the first members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek of Detroit, and his parents, Lydia and Archie Grey, were founding members of Temple Israel.

Members of JHS of MI know Jim Grey. He's the man with the camera, managing group shots and creating a permanent record of the organization's events. He's also played an integral role in the establishment of the JHS of MI Yearbook Collection, a physical collection of yearbooks from Michigan high schools that Jewish students attended. The contents of the books, which now number in the hundreds and span more than a century, are being entered into a searchable on-line database.

With seemingly endless energy, he spreads his wings far and wide throughout the community. He's a member of the archives committee of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit (the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives) and Temple Israel, and was an early founding member and past president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan. He is also a life member of the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society. In addition to this year's Simons Award, Grey has been honored by the Jewish War Veterans as a recipient of its Brotherhood Award, and by Temple Israel Brotherhood, with its Man-of-the-Year Award.

Active with B'nai B'rith Metropolitan Detroit Council, Grey is a past board member of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, B'nai B'rith Couples Unit and B'nai B'rith Great Lakes Region.

Grey, a certified public accountant, is managing partner of Grey & Co., PC in Bing-

ham Farms and runs the consulting firm, Genetrex, Inc., which he founded to help facilitate compilation of family genealogy and family history. He is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and the Michigan Association of CPAs. Most important, acknowledges a humble Grey, it is his role as the husband of Ruth (Nemon), and father of Rachel (Jason) Ellis and Emily (Jordan) Berman and the late Jeff Grey, and grandfather that he cherishes most.

Named after Leonard Simons, who founded the advertising agency Simons Michelson Zieve in 1929, the award honors an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the Jewish Historical Society's mission. Simons was an active leader with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and had a deep passion for the preservation of Jewish and communal history. His desire to ensure that the Jewish community of Detroit would retain a sense of pride in knowing who they are and where they came from was influential in the growth of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

- JHS of MI



James Grey, 2010 Leonard N. Simons Jewish History Award. Photo taken by Bob Benyas.



(l to r) Jim Grey, Arnold Collens, JHS of MI president and Mary Lou Zieve, daughter of Leonard Simons and JHS of MI trustee. Photo taken by Bob Benyas.

LEONARD N. SIMONS HISTORY AWARD RECIPIENTS

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1991 Philip Slomovitz | 2001 Sidney M. Bolkosky |
| 1992 Avern L. Cohn | 2002 Adele W. Staller |
| 1993 George M. Stutz | 2003 Matilda Brandwine |
| 1994 Irwin Shaw | 2004 Susie Citrin |
| 1995 Emma Lazaroff Schaver | 2005 Edith L. Resnick |
| 1996 Leslie S. Hough & Philip P. Mason | 2006 Gerald S. Cook |
| 1997 Mary Lou Simons Zieve | 2007 Sharon L. Alterman |
| 1998 Judith Levin Cantor | 2008 George M. Zeltzer |
| 1999 Michael W. Maddin | 2009 Mandell L. Berman |
| 2000 Alan D. Kandel | 2010 James D. Grey |

IN MEMORIAM



LAWRENCE RUBIN 1912 – 2010

Lawrence Rubin left a huge legacy when he passed away at the age of 97 on May 11, 2010. The Mackinac Bridge became a reality due to his interest and involvement in both its construction and maintenance. Profiled in *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 47, Fall 2007, Rubin was the Mackinac Bridge Authority's first executive secretary, remaining on the job for nearly 34 years before retiring in 1983. He so loved the span across the Straits of Mackinac that he built two homes within sight of the bridge. One of his most prized mementos of his years with the Bridge Authority was the 1954 \$96,000,000 check made payable to the Bridge Authority.

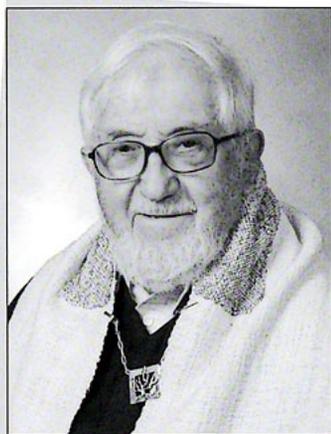
The funds generated from the sale of bonds were used to finance the bridge project. Rubin was the author of two books about the Mackinac Bridge, "*Mighty Mac: The Official Picture History of the Mackinac Bridge*," and "*Bridging the Straits*."

Mr. Rubin graduated from the University of Michigan and then opened an advertising agency. He later became a state Highway Department radio publicist and the director of the Michigan Good Roads Federation before he was hired by the Mackinac Bridge Authority, four years before construction began.

An avid athlete, Rubin skied until he was 90 years old. A man of many interests and accomplishments, Rubin served as the Director of the Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association, was chairman of the Mackinac Straits Hospital & Health Center and was one of the founders of St. Ignace's public library. It is not surprising that, in 1971, he was named St. Ignace's Citizen of the Year. So beloved was he by his community, that the Mackinac Bridge Authority announced that the traditional Labor Day walk across the bridge will this year be re-named the Lawrence A. Rubin Memorial Bridge Walk. Rubin also served as a member and volunteer of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, contributing a series of articles in the early 1970s.

Mr. Rubin is survived by his wife of 15 years, Elma, and his son, David. He was a remarkable, modest man of whom the Jewish community can be proud.

- Edie Resnick



RABBI ERNST CONRAD

1921 – 2009

Members of Temple Kol Ami lost their beloved founder, Rabbi Ernst Conrad, in November 2009. Temple Kol Ami was founded in 1966 when Conrad, after leaving Temple Beth Jacob in Pontiac, gathered eight families at the Birmingham Unitarian Church and organized what he called “the New Temple.”

Conrad, a masterful scholar and teacher, founded his new congregation on the principles of liberal Judaism, strong social action and the firm belief in the independence of pulpit. The first services were held on Sep-

tember 2nd, 1966, and the first Sunday school classes met at Eagle Elementary in West Bloomfield one month later. He loved teaching and surrounding himself with young people and was extraordinarily proud to serve as Rabbinic Dean of MSTY (Michigan State Temple Youth). He was a life member of the Reform Youth Movement.

The congregation steadily grew, and in 1970, the membership formally changed its name to Temple Kol Ami, or Voice of My People. “We were liberal enough to realize that Oakland County should be integrated,” recalled Conrad in an interview with his friend and congregant, Paul Gross. “So from that came the decision to establish Temple Kol Ami in West Bloomfield.” Ground was broken in 1974, on Walnut Lake Road, just west of Farmington Road in West Bloomfield, Michigan. The congregation initiated the new building in the spring of 1975 with a special Seder.

Born in Berlin, Germany in 1921, Conrad immigrated to the U.S. in 1938. He was ordained at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, in 1947, earned advanced degrees in Hebrew letters and completed graduate studies in Oriental Languages and Near Eastern Archaeology. Before coming to Michigan he served in congregations in Hagerstown, Maryland and Winston Salem, North Carolina.

In 1986, when Temple Kol Ami had reached a membership of 225 families, Rabbi Conrad retired to Emeritus status, but remained actively involved with the congregation until his death. In November 2008, Rabbi Conrad gave a special presentation on the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, which he witnessed personally as a teenager growing up in Germany. Ironically, his funeral occurred on the anniversary of Kristallnacht — one year later.

Rabbi Conrad was loved throughout the city. He had a lifelong interest in liberal Judaism and in interfaith, intercultural and interracial projects and programs, and was a long-time member of the Michigan Regional Board of the Anti-Defamation League. He was a board member of Michigan Coalition for Human Rights and served on various committees for the Detroit Area Conference for Community and Justice and United Community Services, Oakland County.

Rabbi Conrad is survived by his loving wife, Nathalie, who serves as Music Director Emeritus at Temple Kol Ami, two children and one grandchild.

- Paul Gross, Wendy Rose Bice



MELBA WINER

1917 – 2010

What Melba Winer lacked in height – she was just over five feet tall – she made up for in spirit, enthusiasm and energy. She devoted her life to helping others...whether it was teaching youngsters to read or helping newly arrived immigrants learn English as a second language; helping someone overcome stage fright or doing volunteer work for numerous Jewish organizations, including the JHS of MI, which benefited from her wisdom, vision and philanthropy.

Winer was born in Detroit to Harry and Tillie Sklar, both of whom were active volunteers in the community. The eldest of four, Melba began her leadership career as a teenager, when she followed in her mother's footsteps and joined the Little Women of Hadassah. She remained involved with Hadassah throughout her life, serving as president of the Greater Detroit Chapter of Hadassah from 1969 to 1971.

Her parents dreamt of their daughter becoming a great pianist, purchasing a used piano for her when she was five. The piano teacher gave the young girl a perfectly failing grade, recommending that Melba should instead learn to dance — which is exactly what she did. She'd go on to graduate from Wayne University with a master's degree in speech, English and theater. Performing became second nature to Melba, along with a deep love for the performing and fine arts that would last her lifetime. She and her husband, Sidney (of blessed memory) co-founded The Center Theater, the community theater group that performed at the Jewish Community Center on Meyers and Curtis Roads in Detroit. Until an actual theater was built, the Winers hosted living-room rehearsals. Over the years, the couple staged dozens of shows and plays, many for the Jewish Federation Women's Division. The Center Theater eventually closed and evolved into what is now known as The JET, the Jewish Ensemble Theatre. Winer stayed active with the organization her entire life.

The Winers also established the Sidney & Melba Winer Dance Barn at Camp Tamarack in Ortonville, Michigan. Winer's many leadership positions included past-president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit's Women's Division, and serving on the boards of the Sinai Guild and the Jewish Community Center. Winer was



Winer (far left, standing next to the piano) leads a musical rehearsal for an upcoming Jewish Federation Women's Division annual meeting. Date is unknown, 1960s. Photo courtesy of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

the recipient of several prestigious awards including induction into the 8 Over 80 Hall of Fame in 1990, the Jewish Federation Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001, the State of Israel Bonds Award in 2002 and, in 2003, she was honored for her theater contributions by the Jewish Women in the Performing and Visual Arts Project.

Winer is survived by her three children, Susan (Betsy Brill) Winer, Jan (David) Kirschner and Harry (Shelley) Winer; four grandchildren; and her sister Esther (Marvin) Mintz.
-Wendy Rose Bice

SARAH BOLKER BELL

1921 – 2010

Sarah Bolker Bell's intense love of education, books and history came to define her life. Always eager to explore libraries and read books, Bell went back to college after raising children, becoming a professional librarian and an expert in reference work specializing in Judaica. For 25 years, she served as the head librarian at Midrasha College of Jewish Studies Library (formerly United Hebrew Schools Library), providing exceptional attention and assistance to patrons in a wide range of projects including the writing of books, academic journal articles, doctoral dissertations, plays and the production of television documentaries. She developed a passionate interest and knowledge in local and family history as well as genealogy. For many years, she served concurrently on the boards of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan and the Jewish Library Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

As a young woman, Bell enrolled at Wayne University and majored in Sociology. She graduated in 1943, right in the middle of World War II and went to enlist in the WACS (the Women's Army Corps). Her hopes of becoming an officer were dashed when she was turned away because she was underweight. She married Max Bell in 1945 and had two children. Years later, the ever ambitious Bell enrolled for a second time at Wayne State University and, in 1969, graduated with her M.S.L.S in Library Science. She and her children spent many evenings doing homework together.

Bell embarked on a 25-year career as the librarian for the United Hebrew Schools and Midrasha College of Jewish Studies. She retired in 1993. She served as president of the Jewish Library Association of Metropolitan Detroit and for many years was also an active member of the National Association of Jewish Libraries.

Among her many community contributions, Bell is remembered for her work as project coordinator of the Michigan Jewish Genealogical Index, a card catalogue including information from birth and death records of Jewish communities throughout Michigan and as a volunteer for the Irwin I. Cohn Michigan Jewish Cemetery Index. She lent her expertise to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan as a volunteer and financial secretary and was a member of the Board of Directors. She also served as president and secretary of the Jewish Library Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

Bell is survived by her two children, Sanford (Karen) Bell and Linda Bell, and two grandchildren.

- Jewish Historical Society of Michigan



MEL JEROME RAVITZ, PHD

1924 – 2010

A lifelong fighter for honest and effective government and an advocate for the poor and the weak, Mel Ravitz worked most of his adult life to help Detroit become an effective and efficient city, one which would offer all of its citizens an equal opportunity for a better life. He was elected to seven four-year terms on the Detroit City Council where he applied his knowledge and intelligence to trying to make the city more responsive to the needs of all the people. He fought predatory and special interests with no interest in personal enrichment.

Perhaps his biggest disappointment was losing the 1973 Detroit mayoral primary election, coming in third behind Coleman A. Young and John Nichols.

Born in New York City to parents who relocated to Detroit in 1929, Mel Ravitz graduated from Detroit Central High School in 1942, earned his B.A. in history from then Wayne University in 1948, his M.A. in sociology from the New School for Social Research in 1949, and his PhD in sociology from the University of Michigan in 1955. His early experiences centered on journalism; he wrote for the Wayne University student newspaper, then called *The Detroit Collegian*, and was a news editor and announcer for radio station WDET-FM.

In his college teaching, Dr. Ravitz focused on urban problems and urban planning. From 1953-1960, he served as the Detroit City Planning Commission's Director of Community Organization where he coordinated neighborhood conservation projects. He organized block clubs and tried to promote racial cooperation in neighborhoods experiencing racial tensions and "white flight." These experiences and contacts inspired his candidacy for City Council in 1961, to which he was elected with strong support from the black and Jewish communities.

As a council person, Ravitz advocated many concepts that would later be incorporated into civil rights legislation. He argued for greater regional cooperation and metropolitan government. He helped create and then chaired the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). He was also a strong proponent for greater civilian control of the police department.

After resigning his council seat to run for mayor, he served as staff director for the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Services Board from 1974 to 1982 when he was re-elected to Detroit's City Council. During this time he received considerable publicity for opposing contracts which he perceived as more beneficial to the contractors than to the public.

Ravitz took strong stands in favor of more assistance to neighborhood development projects and less to downtown. He believed Detroit could reinvigorate itself by providing better public services to the neighborhoods. In taking these positions, he frequently butted heads with Mayor Young.

After retiring from the City of Detroit, Ravitz relocated to Ann Arbor where he continued to write opinion pieces for newspapers, even offering written recommendations to President Barack Obama on various social issues. Ravitz is survived by his wife of 60 years, Eleanore; his children Billie Piazza, Jill Curmi, (Michelle Bos) Ravitz, Beth (Norm) Harrington, Eric (Paula) Ravitz, Joel (Whitney Bull) Ravitz; seven grandchildren and his brother, Seymour.

- Mike Kasky

GILBERT RUBENSTEIN

1913 – 2009

In November 2009, Flint area residents mourned the loss of attorney and Jewish Federation past-president Gilbert Rubenstein, who wanted to be remembered as a "fair-minded lawyer who tried to find common ground in a dispute." He was 96.

Born in Chicago to Phillip and Ida Rubenstein, he moved to Flint in 1915. Gilbert graduated from the University of Michigan in 1933 and from its Law School in 1936. He practiced law in Flint 68 years, serving in the army during World War II. Past president of the Genesee County Bar Association, Gilbert was hailed in a 2004 *Flint Journal* article as the county's longest practicing attorney in the county. The headline read, "Esteemed 'Dean' of Local Bar Retires at 91." Even though he formally retired, he worked until the time of his death.

Rubenstein was engaged in numerous non-profit organizations, from which he received awards and recognitions. He was a member of Congregation Beth Israel and Temple Beth El, both in Flint. Gilbert Rubenstein is survived by his wife of 26 years, Anne, and his children and grandchildren.

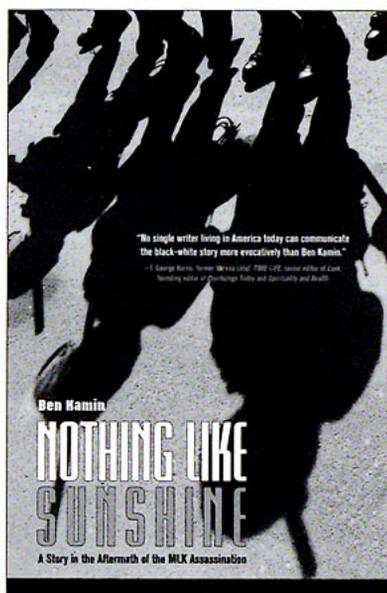
- Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

HISTORICAL TIDBIT

30 YEARS AGO

The iconic film, *Somewhere in Time*, was released. The movie was filmed at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island and spawned a fanatical following. Cinematographer Isidore Mankofsky whose film credits consist of more than 100 films, including *The Muppet Movie*, *Somewhere In Time* and *The Jazz Singer*, said that the Mackinac location "could not have been better."

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



NOTHING LIKE SUNSHINE

A STORY IN THE AFTERMATH OF
THE MLK ASSASSINATION

BEN KAMIN

Rabbi Ben Kamin has written a definitive personal expression about race, coming of age in the 1960s, friendship, and his personal love for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This is a story that spans a four-decade search for a lost high school chum, a deep misunderstanding, and a coming to terms with an America painfully evolving from the assassination of MLK to the promise of Barack Obama. The book is a remembrance of Kamin's life at Cincinnati's aging Woodward High School, a microcosm of the 1960s and of America itself, as well as a detailed account of Kamin's search—for his friend Clifton, for America, for the key to understanding what race relations really are in the United States. Simultaneously, it is the story of the emerging rabbi's exploration of the legacy of his spiritual mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which took Kamin from Cincinnati to Cleveland to Memphis to New Orleans and other points, while constantly bringing him home to Clifton and "the heaving hallways" of that high school.

\$19.95
978-0-87013-882-9
Paper, 138 pages, 6 x 9
References, World Rights

Praise for *Nothing Like Sunshine*

Ben Kamin has been an unremitting voice of white compassion for the racial story of this nation all of his adult life. I have stood with him in discussions and debates, some of which were costly to his professional life, over decades. He remains unwavering in his commitment to social justice and the legacy of Dr. King. This is a fine coming-of-age story of two high school boys who defined the racial crisis of the 1960's.

—Louis Stokes, Member of Congress (Retired), Former Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus

Ben Kamin's relevant and timely book brings to life the racial tensions of his high school in the days before and following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His journey to Memphis forty years later is one of discovery and redemption—this is a poignant narrative and a must-read.

—Robert Kline, President and CEO, Enduring Freedom Productions, former Sr. VP of 20th Century Fox, and co-founder of Lifetime Television

No single writer living in America today can communicate the black-white story more evocatively than Ben Kamin.

—T. George Harris, former bureau chief, TIME-LIFE, senior editor of *Look*, founding editor of *Psychology Today* and *Spirituality and Health*

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"WHEN YOUR CHILDREN SHALL ASK THEIR
FATHERS IN TIME TO COME..." *Joshua 4:21*

**A legacy society that ensures our work for future generations.
Your will can keep our story alive from generation to generation!**
L'Dor V'Dor

The Joshua Society gratefully recognizes and honors as Charter Members those who this year make a bequest in their will to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. By performing this mitzvah, your bequest for the future will be matched at this time by the A. Alfred Taubman Challenge Fund. All bequests to the JHSM in your estate will be credited for membership at the appropriate level in the JHSM Heritage Council.*

____ Please enroll me as a Charter Member of the Joshua Society.

I am making a testamentary bequest in the amount of \$ _____
to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, a Michigan non-profit corporation,
in my will to be part of the JHSM Heritage Council Endowment or
(specific purpose) _____.

(*Minimum \$1000)

Name _____

Address _____

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(248) 432-5517
info@michjewishhistory.org

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The Heritage Council, an endowment society, seeks to insure the future of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan through large gifts and bequests. The Guardian's name will appear as the endower of the journal. Trustees, Chancellors, Deans, Fellows and Collectors become life members. The Heritage Council will continue to be listed in Michigan Jewish History, which circulates to members, libraries and universities around the world.

All donations are matched by the A. Alfred Taubman Challenge Grant

I hereby join the Heritage Council at the following level:

- \$100,000 Guardian of the Heritage Council
- \$ 25,000 Trustee of the Heritage Council
- \$ 10,000 Chancellor of the Heritage Council
- \$ 5,000 Dean of the Heritage Council
- \$ 1,000 Fellow
- \$ 600 Collector
- \$ 100 Chronicler (annual)



Name _____ Date _____

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Check enclosed for my gift of \$ _____

- I am pledging a gift of \$ _____ to be paid over _____ years.
- I am making a testamentary bequest to the Society in my will and will forward documentation.
- Please contact me regarding the Heritage Council.

The Society profoundly appreciates the support of the Heritage Council.

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Support the ongoing work of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Categories of membership include: \$36 Individual/Family; \$100 Corporate/Foundations; \$360 Life Member. Tribute Cards will be sent upon request for contributions received (minimum \$12).

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

6600 West Maple Rd.

West Bloomfield MI 48322-3003

(248) 432-5517

info@michjewishhistory.org

Corrections:

Sometimes, a little mistake can lead to a wonderful discovery. Such is the case with a statement found in *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 33, 1992. Selma Morris Alschuler, of Los Angeles, noticed an error in a story entitled "Detroit Jews in the Armed Forces: 1941-1945." The content of the journal reads "Flight Officer Henry Morris was killed on July 17, 1944 in France. Only the previous day, his engagement had been announced in the Bulletin of Temple Beth El."

Ms. Alschuler wrote us to correct this statement: "This article refers to my brother. He was incorrectly identified as 'Henry Morris.' Our father's name was Henry. My brother's correct name is Herbert Warren Morris."

Thanks to the work of archivist Jan Durecki at the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, we found this image of Herbert Morris. It is one of many such images found in the Golden Book (*MJH Vol. 49, 2009*), a record of Jewish soldiers from Michigan who perished in WWII and the Korean War.

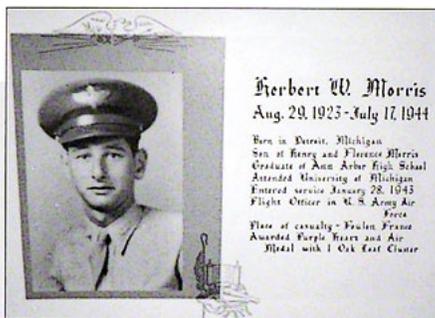
Herbert Morris attended McCullough Elementary, Durfee Junior High and Central High School through 11th Grade. The family moved to Ann Arbor and Herbert graduated from Ann Arbor High School, and attended the University of Michigan majoring in soil chemistry. He loved sports in particular baseball and hockey.

Judge Avern Cohn also contacted us to point out a few omissions in the article published in the last issue on Michigan's WWII Soldiers From Central High School, written by archivist Durecki. He notes that Central High School graduate (1939) 2nd Lt. Robert N. Wiener, a pilot in the Pacific theater lost his life in the war as did Kurt Friedman, class of January 1942. Friedman, a corporal at the time of his death, perished in the "Battle of the Bulge" and was awarded the Purple Heart.

In last year's issue, we also incorrectly identified Michael Feldberg as being the curator of the original "From Haven to Home" exhibit. To set the record straight, in celebration of the 350th anniversary of Jewish Life in America (1654-2004), Michael Grunberger curated the original "From Haven to Home" exhibit at the Library of Congress, which featured original documents.

Michael Feldberg, a former Executive Director of the American Jewish Historical Society, then created a traveling exhibit for the AJHS, based on exact facsimiles, which was hosted last summer 2009 at the Detroit Historical Museum by the JHS of MI. The final panel of the Detroit exhibit, "Haven to Home in Michigan," was curated by Sharon Alterman and Judy Levin Cantor and remains in our community in the lobby of the Holocaust Memorial Center.

Our apologies to Ms. Joan Jampel whose name we omitted as the author of the article on the 50th anniversary of the Henry and Delia Meyers Library at D. Dan and Betty Kahn building of the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield; and to Dr. Samuel Millstone, whose name we misspelled in the article noting his Tzaddikim Honorable Mention from the Union for Reform Judaism Northeast Lakes Council.



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6600 West Maple Rd.

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