Notes

Notes

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Harold A. Winstead

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Notes

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OUTSIDE FRONT COVER:
H. Jack Feibelman's cap and Medal of Good Conduct from World War II

INSIDE COVERS:
Portrait of Harold A. Winstead, with photo of Temple Beth-El's sanctuary, designed by Percival Goodman and completed in 1954

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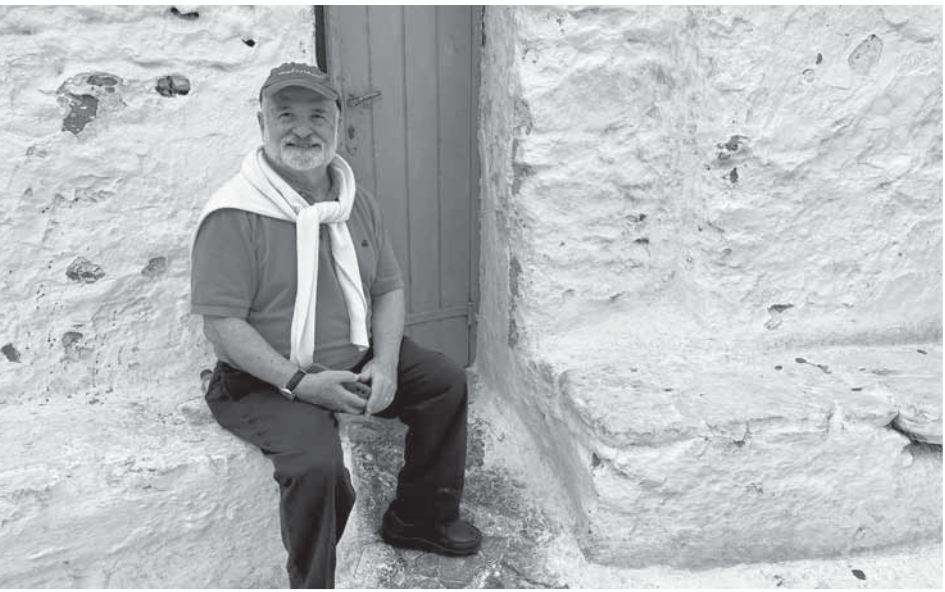
Editor's Comments



Last year's issue of our journal was notable for having four women contributors. This new issue has seven, and six are first-time contributors. Fortunately, Nancy Munzert Carriuolo has written a second article.

Of course it's rather awkward considering Edith Pearlman a contributor because she had no idea that her splendid article would be republished posthumously. But during her final years, though she expressed strong interest in writing an essay for us, Edith was unable to do so. Fortunately, Edith's younger sister, Betty, was also able to deepen our understanding of the wonderful Grossman family.

Yes, it sounds corny, but many of my fellow contributors feel like my close relatives. Mike Fink, our most consistent contributor, may seem like my much older brother – partially because my twin, Theo, is nine minutes older than I. By contrast, Steve Logowitz, our quite talented graphic designer, is a few months

older than we Goodwin boys. I had met Jack Feibelman on only a few occasions, but after four consecutive issues with his articles, he does feel like my distant uncle. And his daughter, Barbara, whom I've known far better for many years, feels like a cousin. My colleagues and I share quite unusual familial bonds because we seldom disagree with one another and virtually never squabble!

Our journal may also suggest a familial gathering because of the topics – mostly joyous, some haunting – that we inevitably consider. I think that it's accurate to say, given both our far-flung and communal ancestry, that we not only respect but also enjoy each other. And this bond is made possible – often fruitful- by so many other friends, including, for example: Harold Winstead and his nephews, Norman Jay Bolotow and Philip M. Weinstein; RIJHA's board, publications committee, and staff; the professionals of Signature Printing; and our loyal Association members and readers.

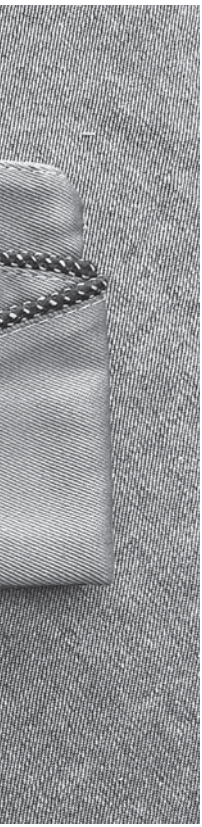
Indeed, I am so proud to have served as editor of *The Notes* for two decades – yes, 20 issues or more than 4,000 pages. I was so reluctant to accept this responsibility even for a couple of issues, but Stan Abrams, both the former chair of the publications committee and my friend, asked, "Why not give it a try?" As I've remarked on a few other occasions, "I'm still trying." Somehow, I have surpassed the tenures of all my predecessors, including my friend, Seebert Goldowsky, who served no fewer than 17 years.

So, which do I like better: editing or writing for *The Notes*? Knowing that they somehow fit together, I truly love both endeavors. Indeed, I hope and pray that we – dear friends, colleagues, and supporters – can continue so productively and happily for a few more years. I'm so proud of and grateful for all that we have accomplished together!

cap, dogtag, & Medal of Good Conduct

Feibelmaenner:
A Chronicle, Part IV

H. Jack Feibelman



This is the final installment of Jack's autobiography published in our journal. His daughter, Barbara, believes that readers will have learned many essential facts about his life and the larger Feibelman saga. Therefore, except for one fruitful experience, which is included, it is unnecessary to publish chapters dealing with recent decades. Indeed, Jack was opposed to publishing his story during his lifetime.

Readers may recall that Jack completed his autobiography in 2001, when he was 80 years of age. Spanning 250 pages, it was undertaken as his master's thesis in English at Brown. Readers will learn below that Jack had completed his bachelor's degree at Northeastern University, under quite difficult circumstances, in 1945. Readers of the second part of Jack's autobiography may recall that in 1938, he had also completed a two-year program at Chillicothe Business College in Chillicothe, Missouri.

I had the privilege of meeting Jack at Temple Beth-El on a few occasions, but did not get to know him. Through his reflections, however, I have been able to learn, ponder, and treasure so much about him.

Jack was a natural learner, who probably experienced far more than most graduate students or academicians. He was also a quite humble person – one most grateful for his blessings and good fortune. His sense of pride is also nearly palpable.

Jack died on June 19, 2020 at 99 years of age. He outlived his wife, Hannah, and their son, Jeffrey. Alas, a Feibelman grandchild, Matthew Orenstein, passed away in 2021. I believe that Jack's words, deeds, and spirit will live indefinitely.

1943

I was in one of several busloads of young men going from downtown Providence to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, on December 28th, 1942. The Army was ill prepared to receive the thousands of draftees who descended on them.

Twelve inches of snow had fallen that weekend. They had no snow boots for the troops, so we trudged around the slush with our regular boots and in wet feet. This in the long run had severe consequences for me.

In the barracks, assignments were handed out. There was a call for volunteers. Although I had been warned against volunteering, that it only would get me into trouble, I volunteered and was assigned to the chaplain to run errands.

Two days later, on Sunday before services, the chaplain, an Episcopalian to whom I must have looked as Christian as anybody, handed me a couple of dollars with instructions to grab the next bus into town, Ayer, Massachusetts, to buy a quart of juice and hurry back in time for the communion services. I did; I returned just in time for the services with a quart of pale, yellow grapefruit juice.

The chaplain gave me one exasperated look; little did I know that I should have bought wine-red grape juice as wine for the communion. I wished that the earth would open up and swallow me.

On New Year's Eve, I called Hannah just before taps. A week later I was on a troop train to Miami Beach Air Force Basic Training Command. The troop train consisted of old railroad passenger cars with about 80 soldiers and their barrack bags in a car with one toilet at each end. We spent one week in that car, most of the time sidetracked while trains with urgently need war *matériel,* mail, freight and troops going to ports of embarkation were given priority and passed us. We spent two days in the Carolinas waiting for clearance. Our train moved slowly at night. Meantime, in this car full of soldiers packed like sardines, I was miserable with a cold contracted in the snow in Massachusetts.

Finally, on the 14th of January, 1943, we arrived in sunny Florida, where I was stationed at 39th Street and Collins Avenue in Miami Beach in a private villa. The accommodations were more for tourists than for an Army private. We spent our time on activities such as drills, marching, parading, practicing the manual of arms, and on our specialties.

I had been assigned as a "G-man" with a group of soldiers to be on the beaches at six each morning to dig deep holes in the sand

to bury the garbage that was delivered to us each day form military training posts all over Miami Beach. Thirty days after our arrival, we were assigned to attend school in Colorado.

We were shipped by train in a very circuitous route to the Colorado State College in Fort Collins. After a four-day trip, we settled into dormitories to attend classes in Air Force administrative work. These classes were well organized; they made us good typists, taught us how to cut all types of military orders, and how to keep planes' maintenance records.

After five weeks there, I experienced terrible pains in my joints for which the infirmary prescribed aspirin. I returned to classes for another three weeks, when my elbows, knees, and ankles ballooned to at least twice their normal size.

I was put up at the Army infirmary, where I was the only overnight patient. My pains were terrible; the doctor, not knowing how to cope with them, prescribed more aspirin. If it had not been for the night watchman-janitor, I would have gone out of my mind. This little old man recognized my problem as rheumatic fever and offered to do for me what his mother prescribed.

At night, when everybody was gone, he would pack each joint carefully in cotton soaked in oil of wintergreen. Thereafter, I had painless nights and was able to sleep. In the mornings before the nurse showed up for duty, I carefully discarded this cotton so no one was the wiser, lest my friend be reprimanded for practicing medicine.

At the end of a week, when the swelling did not disappear, the doctor wisely decided to ship me by ambulance to the Air Force Hospital outside of Denver. I spent thirteen weeks in a rheumatic fever ward and was visited by majors and colonels from the Medical Corps studying rheumatic fever to find a solution. For the first four weeks, I was told to take three times daily anywhere between 24 to 36 aspirin accompanied by a like number of sodium salicylate tablets to offset the aspirin, which would otherwise cause me to black out.

I awoke one morning with itches all over my body and discovered that I had contracted measles. Ten days after my recovery from measles, I contracted scarlet fever and was put into an isolation room (by myself). This confinement lasted twenty-one days and was

unforgettable.

I was located away from everybody at the end of the field hospital, which was bordered by a huge meadow on which cows grazed. The meadow extended for a mile or more to the foot of snowcapped mountains. If a yodeler or a shepherd with an alpenhorn had been in the background, I would have been certain that I was in Switzerland.

All the while I tried very hard to keep my mind active. I wrote letters daily to my parents, Hannah, and others in the family. To keep occupied, I asked for books from home to study Spanish. I felt this was an important language to learn and practiced it out loud in the isolation ward without disturbing a soul. I read more classics than I ever had.

In the meantime, Hannah was a great correspondent and wrote me as fast as I wrote her. She kept me posted on the political and military events going on in the outside world. Her letters and my parents' letters kept me cheered up.

Hannah's mother, very concerned that Hannah might catch the measles or scarlet fever from my letters, had her use a hot iron on each and every letter before she touched them. It worked; the letters were immunized and not infectious – to a certain extent – although she would succumb to them in the long run.

On June 16th, 1943, I was discharged with an honorable medical discharge and sent home. I traveled from Denver via Kansas City to Camden, Arkansas, where I spent a week with Aunt Adeline and Uncle Adolf, who were very pleased to see me. The citizens of this little town were very conscious of and committed to the war. They wanted to contribute to the war effort, and they did. Their sons and daughters were overseas fighting and dying for America.

My Camden schoolmate, Israel Solomon, volunteered in 1941, before our entry into the war, and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force because American forces were not yet accepting pilots. He was lost in an air fight over Europe. Charles Purifoy, also in my class, was lost over the English Channel.

My aunt and uncle were pleased when, during my visit to Camden, a little notice appeared in the local paper. Their nephew

had stopped in town directly from training in the Air Force in Colorado, showing that they were indirectly contributing to the war effort.

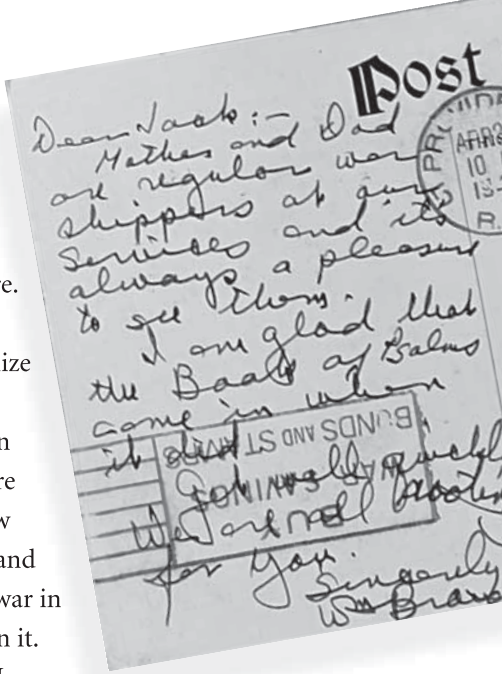
I arrived home in Providence just in time for the Fourth of July, 1943. I stayed in uniform until all my friends had welcomed me home.

Thereafter, for a long time, I was ashamed to be seen in civvies at home. I felt that I was shirking my duty being at home when other men my age were overseas under terrible conditions fighting for me. I wrote to the Adjutant General and appealed to be assigned to work in the Armed Forces. I felt my health was good enough for such a task, but was turned down.

In the meantime, Coro had been waiting for me. Its 400,000-square-foot plant had been adapted to war work. Having had a shortage of manpower and materials, Coro assigned me immediately to help expedite the production of diverse items, including: bomb nose fuses, hardware items for tanks, detonator

Jack in Army Air Corps

caps, and all types of decorations and badges. We subcontracted orders for many components, which required me to travel to Keene and Laconia, New Hampshire, to coordinate production there.



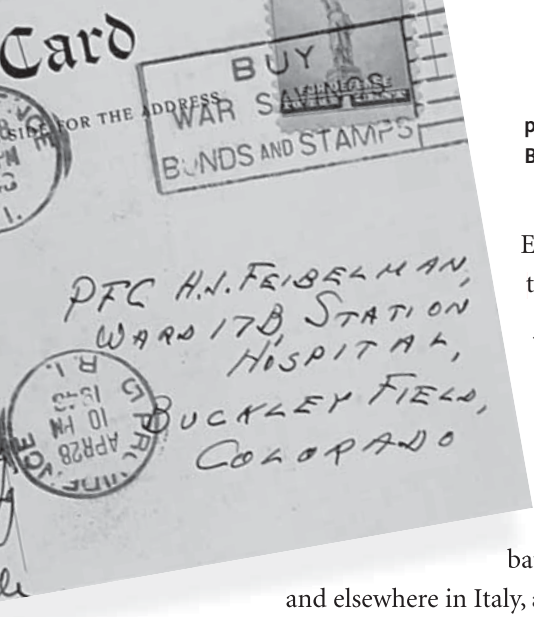
The atmosphere at work had completely changed. We wanted to maximize the company's contribution to the war effort. Most jobs traditionally done by men were now filled by women and shifts, where feasible, were doubled. As civilians, we now fully understood that this was a long war, and our increased production supporting the war in Europe and in Asia was essential to shorten it.

Upon my return from the Army, I resumed my studies at Northeastern University. Since it had closed its branch in Rhode Island, I had to travel to Boston for classes four nights a week from 7PM until 10 PM.

Transportation to school was a big challenge. Whenever possible, I shared an automobile ride with three other Providence students. As gasoline was available only through ration coupons, of which we had none, we bought and borrowed – with a promise to replace – extra coupons to get the gas. Since we had to travel to Boston through Woonsocket to pick up a fourth student, mostly on country roads – there were no interstate highways – it took close to two hours each way. I returned home many nights after midnight.

Several times coming home from Boston we ran out of gas and stopped at police stations, where they accommodated us with enough gas to get home. The alternate travel was by the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad, which also took all of two hours. Allowing time for homework, there was little leisure time for me. Life revolved completely around the war.

During these years, all our attention was given to the daily radio broadcasts from overseas by correspondents who reported on our heroes in the field and were heroes themselves. Edward R. Murrow reported nightly from London rooftops on the bombing.



postcard from Rabbi William Braude, 1943

Ernie Pyle was island hopping in the Pacific with the troops. Many journalists lost their lives and were vicariously our family members in battle.

All of us civilians had our constant lows and highs as the reports came in from the many battles at El-Alamein in Egypt, in Sicily and elsewhere in Italy, and from our ships plowing the Atlantic and being sunk by German submarines. We suffered with the troops the terrible defeat at Dunkirk, where British troops were driven into the North Sea and a fleet of pleasure boats dared to cross to Europe to pick up survivors in the water. Our hearts were heavy for our troops who were being tortured in the Philippines and the pilots we lost daily on bombing runs. These pilots flew not only in Europe but on flights from bases in India over "the hump" – the Himalayas – to bomb Japanese positions.

People at home contributed their spare time to the war effort by rolling bandages at the Red Cross, entertaining troops at the U.S.O. (United Service Organization) canteens all over the country, and selling war bonds to raise money for the federal government. Hannah worked several evenings each week in the lobby of the Majestic Theatre (now Trinity Repertory Company) to sell war saving stamps. In retrospect, it is difficult to recreate the fever of patriotism that swept up the country.

When the war finally came to an end, we were numb. As a nation, we suffered a national syndrome of jet lag. We were overjoyed having survived this long journey, and in our frenzy did not know how to cope with victory. The troops returning from all parts of the world were noisily welcomed home, and they quietly slipped back into life not quite knowing what to do.

All the war work at Coro came to a stop. We braced

ourselves for the huge demand for consumer goods that was about to hit the country. America was ready to go back to work.

After the War: Our Family and Friends

The tunes had changed in America. We no longer hummed "Saturday night is the loneliest night of the week" or "When the lights go on again all over the world" or such a frightful bombardier song as "Coming home on a wing and a prayer." Suddenly we were singing "Oh what a beautiful morning' or "On a clear day you can see forever" or "I've got the world in my hands."

Wendell Willkie, the Republican presidential candidate opposing Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 election, ran his campaign on his philosophy of "One World," but did not live to see it confirmed. Harry Truman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and George C. Marshall led America into this "One World" when they helped bring together that world in the United Nations.

America shouldered the postwar burden of rescuing Europe from famine and chaos through the beneficence of the Marshall Plan, which enabled war-torn European countries to rehabilitate themselves. We went to work after WWII with unlimited horizons.

1945

This was a momentous year for my parents and me. Having celebrated the final end of the war, we could now get in touch with the members of our family and friends overseas and take stock.

The first surprise was the survival of my father's sister, my Aunt Rika, who emigrated at the age of 78 from the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia. On her way to freedom, she arrived in London, where she was reunited with her daughter. Aunt Rika visited us in the summer of 1946 on her journey to her new home with her son, Fritz, who had found refuge in Cali, Colombia.

We marveled that Aunt Rika could carry on after seeing her husband, Willi, her daughter, Susy, her son-in-law, and her lovely nine-year-old granddaughter torn from her side and sent to another death camp. Aunt Rika told us of the hardships of her life in her death camp. Food was scarce, soups were colored water, sanitary

facilities were limited, clothing supply unavailable, and electricity restricted. She survived on her inner strength buoyed by the spiritual guidance of Leo Baeck, chief rabbi of Germany, who was with her in her camp.

We heard from Georg Herwig, the Gentile husband of cousin Anneliese (Aunt Rika's daughter). He was a lawyer, who survived the war in Berlin. As the Gentile husband of a Jewess, he was ostracized by the Hitler regime, but was later appointed mayor of a Berlin suburb by the Allied occupation forces. They needed citizens who had no affiliation with the Nazis to staff the postwar government.

Anneliese, who survived the war as a refugee in England, left George upon her return to Germany. She later crossed over to East Germany, convinced that communism was the only solution to cure the world of evil capitalism. She was welcomed there and appointed to a ministerial position.

Alex and Flora Fisch and their daughter, my cousin Suzy, survived the war in Brussels because they were hidden by loyal friends. Suzy reclaimed her son from a monastery.

Our good friend, Hans Vogelhut, a bachelor, survived the war by living underground in Brussels. His story is as unbelievable as many others that have been told by survivors. We had last heard from him from Warsaw, in 1939, just before the Germans marched into Poland and started the war.

Now, shortly after V-E Day, in June 1945, Hans wrote to us from Belgium about the difficult war years. In 1939, he had left Warsaw, flying over Germany to Brussels, where he expected to live safe from Hitler's persecution. When the war started and Hitler massed troops at the Belgian border, Hans recognized how dangerously he was exposed in the event of a German invasion.

With a suitcase of essentials, Hans bicycled on the road to Paris with the intention of seeking safety there. But after invading Brussels, the Germans overtook him. He hid in a village before eventually returning to Belgium.

Again, righteous Christians hid and fed him, so he was one of a few fortunate Jews there who survived the war. In the postwar

years, however, he was depressed and had a breakdown. He lived a tortured existence while attempting to rebuild a life for himself.

Another friend, Heinz-Ulrich Mannheim, was deported to Siberia and survived the war there. He wrote to us after being returned to Soviet Berlin. A brief paragraph from his first letter hints at the unbelievable terror that he suffered:

> I would have to write many thick volumes if I were to report – on eleven years behind barbed wire, eleven years with a tin cup and an aluminum spoon, eleven years without anything to spread on bread- much less a filling like cheese or meat – eleven years of forced labor, eleven years without a bed, milk, fruit and eggs. I spent nine years in Kazakhstan in central Asia (800 kilometers from the Chinese border) and two years in the European USSR (in Moscow and twenty other camps). How can I get this all into a letter?

When we read about Heinz-Ulrich's grandson, we learned of the life in the Soviet gulags and its impact on all members of the population:

> My daughter has a darling, wide awake, four-year-old boy, who was my only untroubled joy in prison, although we had to face many problems with him. Since Karin, my daughter, was anemic, she had no milk of her own, so the child had to grow up the first two years without any milk whatsoever; remember, we were 800 kilometers from the nearest railroad and abducted into the middle of the Kirghizian desert (near Afghanistan).

1945 was momentous for me for many good reasons. In May, after six years of study, I received my B.S. in business administration from Northeastern University. My parents and Hannah attended my graduation exercises for which I had worked so long.

On Columbus Day, Coro offered me a management job that involved hands-on work with jewelry. I jumped at the opportunity. With it came a good increase in pay to $75 per week, a good salary in those days. I was supporting my parents and now, with this increase, I would support a second home and family.

There was no reason to delay my marriage to Hannah any

longer. After my formal proposal in a most romantic spot in Roger Williams Park, and after receiving my mother-in-law's blessing, we surprised our family with the engagement announcement at the traditional Thanksgiving dinner. I really think that we didn't surprise anybody, for we had been dating for four years.

Hannah and I were ready to put the war and the tragedy of the Holocaust behind us and get on with a life on our own. Hannah, who had given up her job as a pricing clerk for McKesson & Robbins and a short stint as a secretary, was ready to raise a family and back up my career.

Hannah's father, Jacob ("Jack"), had died in 1938. With the brashness of youth, she and I saw no significant problems in being the major support of her mother, Sadie, and continuing the full support of my parents. As we saw it, the world was ours.

1946

We were married on Sunday, February 24th at noon at Temple Beth-El, which at that time was located on Broad Street in Providence.[6] Hannah's brother, Maurice, who had been ordained in December 1945, performed the wedding ceremony with Rabbi William Braude. It was a most modest wedding in every way.

Since we had two weeks for our honeymoon and did not want to give up any of that time, we left the wedding party to its

wedding at Temple Beth-El

Hannah & Jack

formal dinner and caught a train to Baltimore, where we were scheduled to take a seaplane to Bermuda. Land-based planes had not started operations.

Since high waves in Bermuda made landing impossible, our flight was aborted two days in a row. On Wednesday, February 27th, we finally arrived in Bermuda. Unfortunately, our stay there for a week was marred by rain and a lack of sunshine. We returned to New York by ship after a very enjoyable, three-day cruise, which brought us home to terra firma and reality.

1947

Hannah and I visited Aunt Adeline and Uncle Adolf Feibelman in Camden, Arkansas, where I had first lived in America. I was anxious for them and Hannah to meet and for her to be introduced to life in the Southern states. The trip accomplished both, and I was happy to find that they took to each other quickly.

It was good timing for this trip, as the next year and the following five years proved to be very busy for us. On August 3, 1953, Uncle Adolf passed away at the age of 85.[7] Another two years would pass before we visited Camden again, this time accompanied by our two children.

1948

On April 10, 1948, Hannah gave birth to our son, Jeffrey Arnholz Feibelman, who was named in memory of my maternal grandfather, Isaac. The Arnholz family had lived for generations in Pommern (also known as Pomerania), which was a principality before becoming a Prussian province on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. I was the only Arnholz survivor in my generation. So Jeffrey's birth was a blessing, an occasion of encouragement and great joy, particularly for his grandparents.

Our rejoicing was redoubled thirty days later, on May 10, 1948, when Israel declared its independence and statehood, giving Jews a haven if even another Holocaust should arise. [8]

The apartment we rented in January 1946, just before our wedding, did not allow for any children. Because there was such a

staggering shortage of housing with all the servicemen returning from the war that we accepted this condition.

We solved this problem by buying the three-family house in Providence's Washington Park neighborhood, where Hannah's older step-brother, Irving Kotler, occupied the first floor. My mother-in-law, Sadie, moved into the third-story flat. [9]

On June 7th, 1951, Hannah added to our happiness by giving birth to Barbara Ruth. She was named in memory of three of her great-grandmothers. Her middle name memorialized Hannah's older sister, Ruby, who had died in 1939 at 22 years of age.

Hannah had her hands full with Jeffrey, Barbara, and our home. I was of little help, as I had a full work schedule with a few hours of overtime each day, and I also worked on Saturdays and Sundays during the height of the manufacturing season.

1998: *L'dor v'dor*

In the summer of 1998, descendants of Isaak Feibelman gathered for their first family reunion and to celebrate their survival from the Holocaust. As I said at the beginning of this narrative, Hannah and our offspring, who joined me in Chicago, had no idea what to expect from this gathering.

The cousins, including first, second, third, and fourth relations, wanted to get acquainted, to look into the eyes of their elders. This was especially true for those who had participated in the exodus from Germany: Idel Bensinger, now of La Paz, Bolivia; Hans Bensinger, now of Louisville, Kentucky; Hilde Holzapfel, now of Laguna Hills, California; Henny Feibelman, now of Oakland, California; and Yvonne Bernstein and Nicole Newman, now both of London, England. The cousins wanted to exchange their memories and stories to learn about the Feibelmans.

This was particularly true between my son, Jeffrey, and Lester Feibelman, who was the son of my cousin, Alphons, of blessed memory.[10]

But this was not why we were there; we wanted to hear the message that these Feibelmans carried, a message given us by our grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts. It

is about integrity, loyalty, and responsibility. I have come across a poem, "Your Name," by an American, Edgar A. Guest, which, I feel, says this best.

As much as our biblical patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were joined with our matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, both Hannah and I were also guided by the words of Barbara, Clare, Adeline, and Sadie.

I must also acknowledge the truth of the statement by an unknown author: "The long ago and far away are always with you." As much as the gruesome, untiring, and vicious persecution of my family and all Jews should have bred in me a never-ending hatred of all that is German, this has not happened.

This point was driven home to me in an editorial in *Der Tagesspiegel,* a Berlin newspaper. I had consulted it for the exact text of German songs. Our correspondence generated an editorial, which was printed on Sunday, May 28, 2000. The editor cited the opinion held by some Germans that former Jewish citizens were not real Germans at heart. "Clearly," he wrote, "Jack Feibelmann's search for his *Heimat* home or homeland, the German melodies of his youth, and his family's past demonstrate that the Jews of yesteryear as well as the Feibelmanns were at one time as German as any German."

In my readings in connection with this reminiscence, I was concerned about the value of such a chronicle. I was encouraged by a quotation cited by Henry Miller opposite the title page of his *Tropic of Cancer:*

> These novels will give way, by and by, to diaries or autobiographies – captivating books, if only a man knew how to choose among what he calls his experiences that which is really his experience, and how to record it truly.
>
> – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Emerson here anticipates future chronicles, such as mine, to speak of the experiences which are the wellspring of traditions that articulate and validate the values of a family. As I have demonstrated, a people, a family, though displaced from its *Heimat,* its geographical

place of origin, can maintain an identity through an understanding of its name and history, which are preserved in the telling of a narrative such as this one.

Jack [top, center] **with graduates, Northeastern University School of Business, 1945**

Editor's Notes

1
For detailed discussions of Adolf and Adeline Feibelman's lives in Germany and in America, see the first and second installments of Jack's article.

2
The author's recollections about Israel Solomon's heroism during the war are inaccurate. As the elder son of Charles and Etta Solomon, who had been born in Eastern Europe, Israel was born in Helena, Arkansas in 1916. He did grow up in Camden and probably attended Georgia Institute of Technology before enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Force and attaining the rank of second lieutenant. As a pilot with the 373rd Bomber Squadron in Asia, he went missing in action in February 1946 and was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart. A monument in the American Army cemetery at Fort William McKinley, in Manila, the Philippines, commemorates Israel's heroism.

Israel's younger brother, Solie, had been born in Camden in 1920 and studied briefly at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. A plaque in front of the Ouachita County Courthouse, in Camden, erected in 2006 by the Camden Historical Advisory Commission, commemorates his heroism. After having enlisted in the Army Air Force, Solie also became a pilot and eventually an instructor on B-24 planes. In March 1945, while serving as a P-61 fighter pilot, his squadron was the first to land on Iwa Jima.

On August 15 of that year, while based on Ie Shima Island, near Okinawa, Capt. Solomon flew the Army's final combat mission in the Pacific theatre. World War II had officially ended on midnight of August 14, 1945, but he was sent on a mission that continued during the next day's early morning hours. Having intercepted a Japanese plane, he shot it down. Accordingly, Capt. Solomon received the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. In 1990, in order to rectify a clerical error, he was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

In 1948, Solie married Ethel Kendall, a Canadian, in Santa Monica, California, and they settled there. In 1962, he changed his name to Lee Kendall. For approximately 35 years, the couple owned and operated a nursery school, Hill & Dale, in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of West Los Angeles, approximately five miles west of where I grew up.

Lee and Ethel retired to Solvang and Orcutt, small towns north of Santa Barbara. He passed away at 98 years of age in 2018, but it cannot be determined where he is buried. If Ethel is still living, she would be 99 years of age. The couple had two sons, Carey and Richard.

Lee's obituary states that in 1948 the couple asked Frank Lloyd Wright and his son, Frank, Jr., known as "Lloyd," to design a home for the couple's nursery school. I have studied Wright's career in great depth over many decades, and I have published articles about his Jewish clients in the West (and elsewhere), but I am unaware of documentation for such a project. evertheless, a Hill & Dale School still exists, farther south, in the flatlands of Santa Monica.

3
There is no online record of Charles Purifoy, Jr.'s military service during World War II. He was born in Rosston, Arkansas, in 1918, and he registered for the draft in 1940 in Beech Creek. According to the 1940 census, Charles's younger brother, Billie, was born in 1920. In 1950, the federal census shows that Charles, Jr. was living in Hempstead, Arkansas. In 1996, he was buried in the same state's Bluff City Cemetery.

4
Barbara Feibelman has explained that, during the war, her family lost at least 18 close relatives.

5
Barbara recalls hearing her father's explanation of Anneliese's frustration with capitalism. While a refugee in England, she was poorly treated as a domestic worker.

6
By February 16, 1942, when Jack registered for the draft, he was living with his parents in an apartment at 59 Glenham Street, which runs along the Temple's southern periphery. After their wedding, Jack and Hannah moved to 93 Lexington Avenue, farther west and south within the Elmwood neighborhood.

7
Aunt Adeline died in 1964 and is also buried in Camden's Beth El Emet Cemetery.

8
Israeli independence was actually declared on May 14, 1948.

9
This three-decker house was located at 186 Washington Avenue in the Washington Park neighborhood (southeast of Elmwood). Irving Kotler, an auto dealer, and his wife, Ann, had lived at this address since 1942. The Kotlers are buried with members of the Kotler and Davis family at Sinai Memorial Park in Warwick.

In 1959, Jack and Hannah built a single-family, ranch-style home at 11 Baldwin Orchard Drive, near Meschanticut Valley Parkway, in Cranston. They lived there the rest of their lives.

10
Barbara Feibelman also explained that Jeffrey and Lester were also surprised by how closely they resembled each other.

Jack with Jeffrey, 1948

author, 1949

Bill Braude Is Dead

Rabbi Maurice Davis

Rabbi Davis (1920-1993) merits a full portrait in our journal, but the completion of the series of articles by his brother-in-law, H. Jack Feibelman, offers a special opportunity to publish the following tribute, which appeared in the April 5, 1988 issue of Temple Beth-El's bulletin. While researching an unrelated topic, I recently came across it.

Jack Feibelman mentioned Rabbi Davis in the third and fourth parts of his article, and I added an endnote about the Providence-born spiritual leader in the first part. My endnote explained that a branch of the Feibelman family had settled in Indianapolis. Coincidentally or not, Rabbi Davis led Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, a pioneering Reform institution, from 1956 until 1967.

In the following tribute, Rabbi Davis mentions that Providence was his boyhood home. But why was it necessary for him to identify the state in which Providence is located? Having speculated that the tribute was originally written for another publication, I wanted to figure out which one.

Thanks to the amazing resources of the internet and plenty of good luck, I discovered the answer on the website of "Hoosier State Chronicles," which is maintained by Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. Rabbi Davis's tribute first appeared in the March 9, 1988 issue of a national newspaper, *The Jewish Post and Opinion,* which began publication in Kentucky in 1930 before relocating to Indianapolis five years later. Even after the newspaper became a national publication in 1948, Indianapolis remained its base and a focus of attention.

No doubt Rabbi Davis had been acquainted with the newspaper's longtime publisher, Gabriel M. Cohen. And perhaps Cohen appreciated the fact that, following his ordination at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Rabbi Davis had led Congregation Adath Israel in Lexington, Kentucky. Rabbi Davis served as a regular columnist in Cohen's newspaper for decades.

When the following tribute was published, Hannah Feibelman's

brother had recently retired from the Jewish Community Center of White Plains (later known as Congregation Kol Ami of Westchester), which he led from 1967 to 1987. He and his wife, Marion, moved to Palm Coast, Florida. The couple would be buried at Sinai Park in Warwick, though his mother, Sadie, and many other Davis and Kotler relatives were buried at Beth-El's cemetery. Maurice's father, Jacob, was buried with his parents at Lincoln Park Cemetery. Jeffrey Feibelman, Jack and Hannah's son, was buried at Sinai Park.

It should also be mentioned that both of Maurice and Marion's sons, Jay and Michael, also grandsons of Abraham Cronbach, a distinguished Reform rabbi and a professor at Hebrew Union College, became rabbis. Perhaps they can write an article for a future issue of our journal.

Despite the power of Rabbi Davis's tribute, an important fact was omitted. Both the mentor and his protégé had marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King on March 21, 1965 from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. I doubt that either spiritual leader had planned to meet the other, but their dedication to Jewish ideals and values was far from theoretical or coincidental.

Many Beth-El leaders and friends may have read Rabbi Davis tribute in *The Jewish Voice and Opinion* and called it to the attention of the bulletin's editor. Obvious candidates would have been Rabbi Braude's widow, Pearl, or another rabbinic protégé, Leslie Gutterman, who became Rabbi Braude's successor. Of course other possible candidates would have been Hannah and Jack Feibelman.

Bill Braude is dead.

Some of you may know what those words mean, and some of you will never know.

Bill Braude was my rabbi. Rabbi William G. Braude. He came to my town (Providence, RI), when I was about 10 years old, and he became my rabbi.

I had already announced to the world when I was seven that I would someday be a rabbi, but Bill came to town, and that childish thought became a certainty.

Religious school began at 9 a.m. but I would go to his tiny apartment at 8 a.m. just to talk to him, to be near him, even while he

was shaving.

When I was in high school Bill would pick me up after school to drive me to a neighboring city where he was scheduled to give a talk. Along the way I would read to him from the *chumash,* and translate as best I could. Arriving at the destination we would eat with the others, and then I would go to the rabbi's study to do my homework while Bill gave his talk. On the way home, when it was too dark to read, Bill would recite a line from the *chumash,* and I would repeat it.

I memorized the entire *haazinu* poem (Deuteronomy 32) one night on the way home from Worcester, Massachusetts.

Or I would walk with him for miles on end, trying out my awakening philosophy of life, while he gently guided me into somewhat more intelligent paths.

March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, 1965, led by Dr. Martin Luther King with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel at far right & author at far left [encircled]

Once when I was bemoaning the ills of the congregation, which I saw as clearly as only a teenager can, he said, "Moshe, the truly religious person seeks first to find the fault within himself."

When I entered Brown University, Bill was teaching a course in beginner's Hebrew. He changed it to advanced Hebrew, and the class narrowed down to three people. The next year his course at Brown was a study of Talmud, and the class narrowed down to me.

Whenever I saw him it was time to study. My father died while I was at Brown, and I had to drop out to go to work. Everyone tried to console me. So, I wouldn't be a rabbi, they told me. The world would not come to an end, they told me. I could still make for myself a decent life, they told me.

Not Bill. He heard of it, and came to me and said, "Let's study." And we did.

And when I returned to Brown, he was there. And when it came time to apply to Hebrew Union College, it was Bill who proctored my exam.

Every summer I would come home to visit with him, and we would study. Whether he was writing his translation of the Midrash to the Psalms, or the Pesikta de Rav Kahana, we would study.

It was he who invited me to speak at Temple Beth-El every year on the day after Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was my mother's birthday, and the night after was Sadie Davis Night at Beth-El. He took his share of flack, no doubt, for inviting me, but that never stopped him.

When my first son, Jay R., was born, Bill and his wonderful wife Pearl presented us with a cup and saucer which Pearl had made. And scratched in the clay were the words with which we had announced his birth. *Yeled Yulad Lanu. Ben Nitan Lanu.* "Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given."

Last summer I visited him in his terrible illness. Both light and sound caused him pain. My voice caused him pain. After my first words, he said, "Moshe, there was Zophar, and there was Eliphaz…"

And I whispered back, "Yes, and there was Bildad." And it

was quiet. Those were the three friends of Job, who when they saw his pain and his suffering, sat silent for seven days.

When my visit was over I kissed him. I kissed him goodbye. He said, "Moshe…". He was the only one who ever called me Moshe. And that was the last time he ever said it, or I shall ever hear it.

For 58 years I boasted that I had a rabbi. He was my teacher, my counselor, my confidant, my role model, my hero, my friend.

I was just an ordinary kid, treated in an extraordinary way, by a most extraordinary man.

For 58 years I had a rabbi.

And now I do not.

And I am bereft.

author on left with siblings:
Herbert, Hanelore & Julie, ca. 1935

On the 84th Anniversary of *Kristallnacht*: November 9, 2022

Ruth Heimann Oppenheim

Introduction by W. Robert Kemp

A RIJHA board member and a member of our publications committee, Bob is also a past president of Temple Habonim.

Ruth Heimann and Walter Oppenheim, who had fled Germany with their families, arrived in New York City during the late 1930s. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and they were married in New York in 1947.

The Oppenheims were drawn to Providence when it was still a thriving jewelry center. Walter became a partner and eventually the sole owner of A. M. Schaler & Company in Cranston, a precious-metal casting business, which reproduced museum pieces and fine jewelry.

The couple and their two children moved to Barrington in 1972, and Walter served as president of Temple Habonim from 1986 to 1988.

After a brief stint as a part-time secretary in the design department of Imperial Knife Company, Ruth, who had once served as a research assistant for Prof. Henry Hatfield in the German department at Harvard, landed a job as academic department manager for the English department at Brown. With her administrative colleagues, Ruth served forty professors, fifty teaching assistants, and hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students.

In her memoir, *Beyond Survival: The Story of My Life,* published in 2016, Ruth wrote with her characteristic humor, "At times, when I happened to answer the phone, the person on the other end would inquire 'English department?' hearing my German accent. 'What better place to learn English?' was often my response."

Ruth remained in the English department for fifteen years, working under five chairmen. In 1988, at the "milestone age of 60," she became the manager of the Office of the Dean of the College, serving under Sheila Blumstein.

Ruth retired in 1994 to spend more time with Walter. He passed

away in October 1995.

In the March 15, 2018 issue of *Jewish Rhode Island,* Ruth's longtime friend, Rabbi James Rosenberg, reviewed her memoir. He wrote:

Ruth tells her readers that her 'intention in writing the memoir has been to record people and events in my life for the edification of the current and future generations of my family.' What she is too modest to say is that her memoir also serves to edify all those who seek insight into the tragedies and triumphs embodied in the immigrant experience; her personal story sheds light upon the lives of millions of others who have come to America's shores.

Ruth has spoken about her experiences to members of the Barrington Police Department and in local schools, and her story has appeared in *The Providence Journal*. Ruth also delivered the keynote address during Brown's Global Day of Inclusion on March 28, 2023, in which she admonished her audience:

I'm deeply concerned about the resurgence of antisemitism. If only we could reach acceptance of each other's differences. Tolerance is not enough unless tolerance is used in the sense of, 'I have no tolerance for discrimination, bigotry, and hatred.' I count on you to remember longer after I am gone: Do not let it happen here.

At its 225th commencement, on May 28, 2023, Brown honored Ruth and five others with the degrees of Doctor of Humane Letters. In the commencement program, Ruth was recognized as "an author and activist dedicated to Holocaust education, driven by a mission to inspire people to confront injustice." The program also noted that she had written many articles on Holocaust education, lectured for Rhode Island's Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, interviewed survivors for the Institute for Visual History and Education founded by Steven Spielberg, and delivered a keynote address at a Genocide Studies Conference held at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport.

Ruth remains an active and beloved member of Temple Habonim. She participates in Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman's weekly "Lunch and Learn" programs and still speaks to students. Now 95, Ruth remains elegant, modest, and gracious. Her German accent serves as a constant reminder that we must never forget.

Eighty-four years have passed since November 9, 1938, and yet it remains emotional for me, as you will notice. You may wonder why I subject myself to recounting these painful memories. With anti-Semitism on the rise, it seems doubly important to me.

As a famous Austrian scientist, David W. Weiss, expressed so poignantly:

> Not to talk of the past is a tacit acquiescence, a having come to peace with it. The consequence of that "peace" can only be more horror down the years without even a ripple of shuddering. To keep the memory saliently alive is to struggle for a better future, not only for Jews but for all humanity.

I agree with those sentiments. And it is in that spirit that I will relate my memories, no matter how painful.

Over the years a frequent question from audiences has been: Do you think it could happen in America? I always answered emphatically, "No." However, after the traumatic January 6 attack on the Capitol, sadly I am not sure.

I would like to give you a short view of my background. I come from Werne, a small town in northern Germany close to the Dutch border. At the time, Werne had approximately 20,000 inhabitants with ten Jewish families. Ours was the only one with children. The inhabitants were mainly Catholic with some Lutherans. My family had lived in Werne since 1784 and was well accepted.

I had two older sisters and in 1930 my brother Herbert was born – finally, the much-awaited son to carry on the Heimann name. He was born in the hospital across the hall from my grandfather's room. Grandfather Herman Heimann died after giving a traditional Jewish blessing to his long-awaited grandson.

I attended the nearby elementary school and liked my teacher very much. She was strict and exacting, but she was also fair and treated me kindly. Since in Germany there was no separation of church and state, Fraulein Tygs also taught catechism. I was sent out to wait in the schoolyard during that hour. As I stood alone outside waiting to be called back, I wondered what my classmates

were learning. I was always shy and found it difficult to return to the classroom with all eyes upon me. I still remember my lonely hour in the schoolyard, feeling very much the outsider.

After elementary school, I attended the local church-affiliated high school. Little by little some teachers were replaced by uninformed SS officers. I have a vivid memory of my English teacher. I felt terror stricken by the black-uniformed figure looming in front of the class. He held a reed in his hand to emphasize the cadence of the English words and to use on the fingertips of inattentive students. It was not conducive to my learning English.

New restrictive regulations were constantly announced. By 1938 we were no longer allowed to go to movies, concerts, swimming pools, skating rinks, and public events. Former playmates distanced themselves and became members of the Nazi Youth Movement.

Teachers expounded on Jewish crimes and dirty Jewish traits. You may wonder why we subjected ourselves to such abuse. We never refused to attend school. It was our only way of getting an education. My father used to remind us that what we learned no one could take away from us.

We continued to attend even when new regulations limited us to attending without participating in any way. I remember sitting in the back of the classroom, and no one was allowed to speak to me. During recess I stood alone in the playground wishing for invisibility. I have never forgotten that sadness.

So, 84 years ago, on November 9, 1938, I vaguely remember waking up to pounding on our front door. Our house faced the main street of our town. In contrast to the usual quiet of the street, now a mob was shouting "Out with the Jews!" while pounding on our heavy wooden door. My father must have dressed hurriedly. By the time I was fully awake, he was at the front door. "I'll come with you. Just spare my family," I heard him say. They pushed and dragged him down the street with boasts of imminent revenge. In horror we watched from the upstairs window. Some of the men had rushed into the house. Sobbing, we huddled together, listening fearfully until long after they were gone. A neighbor later recalled that she

Father Albert Heimann

had heard us repeat over and over the *Shema Yisrael* and our pleas to G-d to bring back our father alive.

Some time later we were paralyzed by a creaking at the back door, and then sounds of shuffling up the stairs. Too frightened to move and knowing there was no escape, we clung to our only remaining source of safety, our mother. When the door opened, it was my father, streaked with blood and hunched over, holding the Torah from our synagogue. We clung to him with tears and questions. He said he was all right and that it was safer to separate and hide.

I do not remember where my father hid the Torah. We got dressed in the dark and hurried down the back stairs. Each shadow intensified our terror as we fled across the cobblestone yard across the garden, where we used to play hide-and-seek, to the back street, where a remnant of the town's ancient wall stood, a wall that had shielded the town's people from their enemies in the Middle Ages. We hid behind beer barrels marked "Pilsner Bier – Germany's Finest."

At dawn our next-door neighbor came. She must have watched us during the night. Her husband came home from his night watch at the police station. She told us that the police had been helpless; but the Nazis had no orders to hurt women and children at that time, so we could return home.

Feeling weary and numb, we hesitatingly opened the back door. Dazed, we wandered through what had once been our neat and orderly home. Lamps were smashed, and crystal lay shattered among overturned furniture. The contents of drawers and shelves lay scattered everywhere. Most of our books had been thrown out of the window, together with photo albums and treasured keepsakes.

A phone call informed us that my father was in the hospital until he could be transported to jail. We were allowed to visit him. It was fortunate that we lived in a small town where we were well known. In the cities the men were sent to concentration camps. Mother Superior in the hospital knew our family well. She whispered that G-d would not tolerate such behavior for long. My father tried to reassure us and keep his usual reserve as we kissed him goodbye, but it was noticeably difficult.

My father fared better than the other Jewish men: one lost an eye; another fell from his roof. At home we listened to announcements over the radio. Shocked, we heard reports that Jewish bank accounts had been confiscated as well as Jewish businesses. Heavy taxes were levied. Jewish children were expelled from school. Somehow, this still dismayed us, though school had long ago become a torment. The Jews had to pay for the repair of the destruction caused by the Nazis all over Germany and Austria.

After my father's hospitalization, he was imprisoned with the other Jewish men in a little jail outside of town, a converted barn owned by a policeman, who was somewhat embarrassed. He had known these Jewish men for a lifetime.

Even after my father was released, he never spoke about the 9th of November and what happened that night. It was only from others that we heard how the Jewish men were rounded up on the market square. They were ordered to destroy the Torah as our little synagogue was being demolished. My father was the leader of the Jewish congregation. He refused despite relentless beatings. He would not give in to the shouting mob and destroy what he had always held sacred.

Why did they relent? Maybe it was because others called out that he had fought in the First World War. The thanks of the *Vaterland* were what Germany had promised him when he received his Iron Cross for valiant service in an elite unit. Finally, they let him drag himself away, weighed down by the heavy Torah scroll. Outer wounds healed in time, but his disillusionment remained. My father rescued the Torah and donated it to Hebrew Tabernacle, a Reform congregation in Washington Heights, New York. My brother read

from that Torah on his bar mitzvah day, and so did several of the grandchildren.

After the 9th of November, all-important was the desperate search to emigrate. Which country in the world was willing to accept Jews? America was everyone's top choice, but that involved a low quota number and an affidavit guaranteeing not to be a burden to America. We knew no one who would supply an affidavit for a family of six. I felt sure that the wondrous land across the ocean would bring a happy ending to all our sadness.

Of great importance was the quota number. My Uncle Ernst and his family had the lowest number in our extended family, and they were the first to make the dreaded trip to the American consulate to verify their fitness for emigration to the U.S.A. With apprehension and even greater hope, they set out for Stuttgart. With dejection they returned due to my uncle's stiff knee from a motorcycle accident, prompting fear that he might become a burden. Uncle Ernst pleaded with the consul, though that was not his style. "I have done physical work all my life. Please give me a chance and reconsider." With his usual vigor, he desperately jumped over a table to demonstrate that his leg was not a hindrance. The consul had passed his verdict, and with cold arrogance he dismissed yet another burdensome Jew. Seemingly in that wonderful land of beautiful movie stars, only flawless human beings were acceptable. Would we be perfect enough when our time came?

Tears and discussions followed their return from Stuttgart. My aunt would not separate from her husband and leave with her little son, Helmut, who was doubly related to us. My aunt was my mother's sister and my uncle was my father's brother. We adored Helmut.

My oldest sister, Julie, had an opportunity to leave for America at the age of 15 in May 1939. It took less money for a healthy teenager to get an affidavit. After much discussion, my father left next for America, in August 1939, with the hope of earning enough money to send for us. War broke out a few weeks later, on September 3, 1939. Now my mother and the three younger children had no hope of ever being reunited.

The German army occupied the greater part of our house. We felt abandoned in a country that hated us and in a world that did not want Jews. It was a time of utter despair and isolation. During air raids we were not allowed in public shelters. We found it difficult to even leave the house. Neighbors and former friends avoided us or greeted us furtively– if no one else was in sight. For our part, we did not want to jeopardize those who might have defied Nazi rule, so we kept our distance.

In America, my father made every effort to procure affidavits for us. Amazingly, in the winter of 1939, the American consulate summoned us when our quota number was called. We felt traumatized, remembering our uncle's experience. The consulate was staffed by German personnel, and they treated us with impatience and annoyance. As they examined our eyes, they threw arithmetic questions at us. We feared that a wrong answer might jeopardize our ability to escape. Somehow, the consul authorized our visas for America. Instead of joy, we felt dazed. Our mother immediately rushed to book passage, not easy in wartime. Since passage had to be paid for in U.S. dollars, Mother booked the cheapest cabins. We were in a state of utter disbelief.

[Above] **Aunt Berta, Uncle Ernst & Cousin Helmut Heimann**

We spent our final days in Germany with our closest relatives in Birkesdorf. My Aunt Bertha had decided to stay home with little Helmut. Uncle Ernst was to accompany us to Cologne's train station. We met my maternal grandfather in the railroad station's restaurant. My grandfather went around the table to give each child a Jewish blessing. We were relieved to leave Germany, but so sad to say goodbye to our relatives. I shall never forget the heart-wrenching goodbye of my mother and her sister. We all knew that it was unlikely that we would ever meet again, and we never did.

My uncle accompanied us to the train platform. He gave each of us a small gift that my aunt must have bought. Mine was a small green leather sewing kit. It is tattered now, but I have treasured it over the years. I watched my favorite uncle through the train window as he wiped his tears. The day was January 21, 1940.

Our train headed to Rotterdam, Holland. Silently and apprehensively, we sat on cold, wooden train benches, hardly daring to look up or move. Uniformed Nazis patrolled the train. We feared interrogation and being pulled off the train at the last minute. Eventually we heard a commotion, and then prayers and rejoicing. We had crossed the Dutch border; the Nazis had left. We felt utter relief, but to the best of my knowledge we never moved from the cold, wooden benches.

The Dutch social service was very kind and hospitable. We stayed with a family for a few days until our ship was scheduled to

author at Brown graduation, 2023

sail. We asked our hosts whether they feared a German invasion. They were confident that their dams would protect them. Sadly, they were mistaken. On May 10, 1940, three months after we left, Hitler invaded Holland, using blitzkrieg tactics. Holland capitulated within a week.

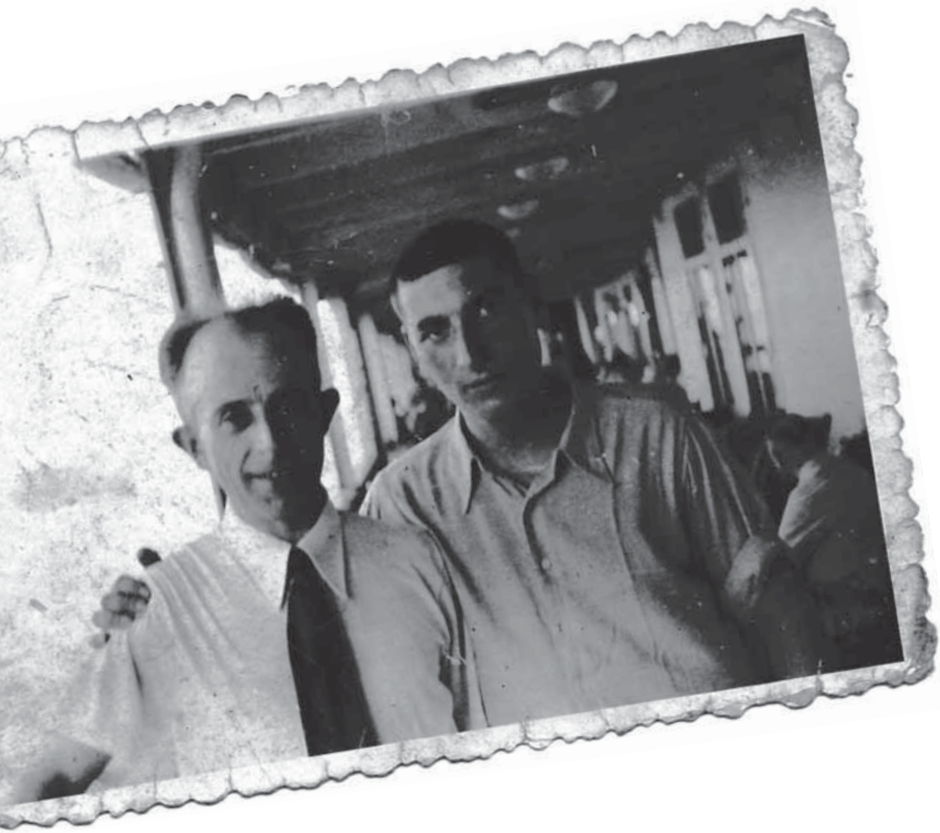
On January 24, 1940, we sailed on the *S. S. Veendam,* an older ship of the Holland America line. Since it was wartime in Europe, blackout conditions were enforced. It was a two-week journey across the Atlantic Ocean. The *Veendam* was one of the last passenger ships to cross the Atlantic during the war. We lived in constant fear of U-boat attacks. At times panic broke out when a possible sighting was suspected. Our third-class cabin was airless and cramped. Most of the time we leaned over the rail in agony and embarrassment.

When we reached Hoboken Harbor in New Jersey, my father, my sister, and relatives were waiting at the pier. To be reunited was beyond magical. I felt that all our problems would be solved. That was not the case, of course. It was challenging to adjust to a new country, new customs, and a new language.

I feel grateful, and even triumphant, that Hitler did not succeed. Loss and sadness remain. Uncle Ernst and his family were gassed, and many other relatives were lost.

I have had time to reflect, especially during the pandemic years. As childhood memories have surfaced, so also the realization that I have been deeply affected by persecution and anti-Semitism. The impact of having lived in fear, desperation, and hopelessness has been profound. Yet, I am proud to have led a productive life, to have had a good marriage, two amazing children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. I am grateful for all that America has offered to my family and me. It is difficult to fully appreciate America unless one has lived under a fascist regime.

I fervently hope that we can preserve our precious democracy.



Paul, right, on ship to Shanghai

Shanghai Days

Evaline Blum

Once again, this article demonstrates how closely Jewish lives have always been entwined. For example, although I am well acquainted with Norman Bolotow, I had not yet met his wife, Tammy. Then, as a teacher of a class in memoir writing at Providence's Hamilton House, she encountered an amazing student, whom she encouraged to tell her story. So Tammy contacted me.

Soon I was pleased to meet both Tammy and her student, Evaline, and explain some of the dynamics of publishing an article in *The Notes.* Jack Feibelman's were obvious examples, but I was of course interested in another saga about the fate of German Jews during the Holocaust and World War II.

After reading the first part of Evaline's article, I recalled that my late parents had a friend with a somewhat similar story. Having been born in Berlin, she too had spent several years of her youth in Shanghai.

Rita Atterman, whom I had met on many occasions, settled in Los Angeles and married one of my father's law school classmates, Robert Feder, in 1950. I was aware that Bob, the same age as Dad, had passed away in 2005 and is buried at Hillside, the same Jewish cemetery in Los Angeles where my parents' remains and those of other Goodwin relatives reside. But I did not know if Rita's remains are also there. So I began a search, which leads me to believe that she is still probably alive at 95 years of age.

I also wondered if the Blums and Attermans may have been acquainted in Shanghai. My online, genealogical research demonstrated that not only had these families sailed to San Francisco on the same American ship, but that they had departed Shanghai on the same day. Indeed, there had been fewer than 100 passengers, and half were Jews. Thus, how could the Blums and Attermans not have become acquainted on their two-week voyage to safety, freedom, and redemption?

Further, the Blums settled in Kentucky – not far from where my mother had grown up and where some Rosenthal cousins still

live. There's no reason to believe that their paths ever crossed, but then how can I also explain that I met Evaline in Rhode Island?

As for Jewish suffering during the Holocaust and other epochs, words escape me.

In 1938, World War II was on the horizon. Among the hundreds of thousands of Jews trying to escape Germany and the occupied territories were two Jewish teenagers, Paul Blum and Dorit Korn. By chance, luck or destiny, they found refuge in a most unlikely place, Shanghai, China.

At that time, Shanghai was known as an international city, and it was controlled by the Japanese, who were staunch German allies. Yet, in spite of this alliance, the Japanese allowed Jews to enter China as stateless refugees. Ultimately, it became a refuge of last resort for about 20,000 Jews. On a personal level, a scant three years later, the two young people, Paul Blum and Dorit Korn, became my parents.

Paul Blum

Paul, born in Berlin on November 23, 1917, was the only child of Arthur and Ida Blum. He was devoted to his gentle, loving mother and respected his typically stern German father. After finishing as much schooling as the government allowed Jews, which was up to age 14, he eventually went to work in the family business, a shoe factory.

As a teenager, Paul got into a minor scape with the authorities when he accidentally crashed his motorcycle into a police barricade. He was arrested and taken to jail. His father, Arthur, immediately went to the police station to plead for his release. It's possible that in addition to an appeal for mercy, he might have brought a bribe in return for his son's freedom. With the rise of Nazi political dominance and their popular, avowed policy of ridding the country of Jews, life became very precarious for Jews.

Paul had to be extremely cautious and not bring attention to himself. But that alone couldn't save him. On Kristallnacht,

November 9, 1938, the Gestapo rounded up Jewish men and transported them first to jail and the next day to a forced labor camp. Paul, along with an uncle, were sent to Dachau. Prior to this roundup, other "undesirables," such as homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, and Communists, were confined to labor camps. A few years later, when the Nazis turned toward the desperate "Final Solution," Dachau became a concentration camp for efficient, mass murder. For the time being, however, the Nazis were satisfied with working Jews to death.

Camp was a brutal experience. Besides having very little food and working prisoners to exhaustion, there were severe punishments for any infraction. If one man was to be punished, then all prisoners suffered the same punishment.

In later years, my father opened up and told me a story about one such punishment. Shortly after he had arrived, a prisoner escaped. This meant that all the men had to stand at attention on the parade ground, dressed only in their thin rags, and endure the bitter Bavarian winter cold all night long. Officers walked up and down the rows, and if a prisoner didn't look sufficiently at attention, he was clubbed.

Paul, being young and strong, survived this rampant brutality, but old men died and others dropped to the ground. When the men were finally allowed to go back to the barracks, my father said he was so stiff from the cold that he could only crawl away on his hands and knees.

Of the prisoners at Dachau, Communists and homosexuals were confined to separate areas. The Nazis believed in some sort of redemption, so if a Communist could convince the Nazis that he renounced his beliefs, then he could be released. However, under no circumstances could the homosexuals be set free. In fact, they were completely segregated and not allowed to eat in the mess hall with the rest of the prisoners. The Jewish prisoners delivered food to them.

As for the Jews, they were allowed to leave the camp if they had a ticket for passage out of German and went directly from the camp to a ship.

Paul Blum & family, Fraulauten, Germany

While Paul was imprisoned, his father, Arthur, sold his business. Part of the proceeds secured passage on an Italian luxury ship for his son to travel to Shanghai, a place that allowed immigration and didn't require a visa. Unfortunately, there were only a small number of passenger tickets available, and Arthur couldn't secure any for himself or his wife and therefore had no place to go.

So in 1939, while Paul was standing without boots in a thigh-high sewer installation, he was told he was being released and to leave immediately. At 19 years of age, he traveled alone from his hometown, the village of Fraulautern, in the Saarland, to China. The trip took 23 days and was the greatest luxury Paul had ever or would ever experience. So it was a jarring experience when he arrived in Shanghai because he had to climb into a cattle cart packed with refugees, and they were trundled off to a displacement camp.

Dorit Korn

Dorit was born in Berlin on August 20, 1918 and lived there with her parents, Hulda and Julius. By the time she was 18, the situation for German Jews had deteriorated so badly that her family was looking for an escape. The only place willing to take them was Shanghai. So Dorit left with her family, which included her mother, who was a stern, tough widow; Dorit's brother, Eli, a well-known soccer player nicknamed "Mamala Korn"; his wife, Sybil; and Dorit's other brother, Fritz.

Among the stories my mother told me in later years was one about Fritz. He had been deemed mentally disabled by the Nazis. She didn't know what was wrong with him, but described him as *"nicht ganz dich,"* meaning "not quite right." The government forced him to undergo surgery. When young, I didn't know what this meant, but, over time, as my mother told the story, she lowered her voice to convey the importance of what she was about to say. "He could never get married or have children," and finally I understood.

In contrast to Paul's small family and stable home life, Dorit's was miserable. Her father had died when she was four, leaving her mother, Hulda, to eke out a living for herself, Dorit, and four older children. Hulda sold candy from a pushcart. Realizing that she was in an untenable situation, Hulda took the only way out and placed the two youngest children, Dorit and Eli, in an orphanage. She promised that this was temporary, though she had no idea when she could retrieve them.

This Catholic orphanage was a very strict institution, and all children, no matter their religion, were expected to learn and practice Catholic beliefs, prayers, and rituals. The nuns stressed to the children that they had to obey to save their souls. As a Jewish child, this was foreign to Dorit and, having a rebellious nature, she at first resisted. But ultimately, to avoid punishment for disobedience, which could be extra prayers on her knees or a whipping, she obeyed.

When I was growing up, she told this story, but felt guilty because as a child she found herself truly believing and praying in earnest to Mary and Jesus. Such was the power of this indoctrination that, even as an adult, when at wit's end, she confided to me, she found herself wondering if these teachings were helpful.

The few bright spots for Dorit, as a youngster, were occasional visits by her sister, Edith, who always brought her favorite treat, hard candy. In fact, in all her life that was one sweet she still wanted.

I don't know how long Dorit was in the orphanage, but finally her mother decided to bring her and Eli home. The situation there had not improved much, but now she was older and could muddle through, taking care of herself. Due to various disruptions

and illnesses, Dorit's schooling was spotty, and it ended at the mandatory age of 14. Then she found work in a home for the elderly.

Nazi policies dominated every aspect of life, especially in severely constricting Jewish life. My mother told me of one instance when she was sitting with a Jewish boy on a park bench. By this time, Gentiles and Jews were discouraged from fraternizing. A policeman approached the couple and began haranguing my mother for sitting with a Jew. My mother, never one to shy away from confrontation, looked up and said, "I'm a Jew, and I have a right to sit here with my friend." Fortunately, the policeman just gave them a disgusted look and walked away.

By 1939, almost all the world's ports, including those in the United States, had closed their borders to newly stateless Jews. This global closing of borders aided the Nazi propaganda, which declared that Jews were unwanted everywhere.

The situation for Dorit's family looked bleak, but Uncle Eli found out that they could all emigrate to Shanghai. Through his contacts, he was able to buy passage for the entire family.

In Shanghai

A Jewish organization, the Joint Distribution Committee, was primarily tasked with housing and feeding the newly arrived refugees. The housing was anything and anywhere they could find it. They set up soup kitchens and fed the people three meager meals a day. But as my father said, he had no work, and therefore didn't need much food. So he had enough. The JDC continued this work until the Japanese took over Shanghai in 1941.

During the 1920s, several Jewish families had immigrated to Shanghai and became very successful. Some of these longtime "Shanghaiers" were from the Sephardic branch of Judaism, which meant that they descended primarily from the Spanish and Portuguese diaspora. The Jews now arriving in Shanghai were Ashkenazim, primarily from Germany and Poland. There were some cultural differences between the two branches of Jews, but they worshipped in much the same way. In a short while, the longtime residents established schools for the newcomers' children. These had a heavy emphasis on Orthodox Judaism and learning Hebrew.

Dorit Korn Blum

Paul and Dorit

At the beginning of 1940, Paul and Dorit had been in Shanghai a few months, when they happened to sit across from each other at breakfast. My mother was a lively girl, and my father very much liked "the *Frauleins*" (single girls). As Paul and Dorit started talking, they were much attracted to each other. So they began seeing each other.

It wasn't long before my mother realized that she was pregnant. Filled with guilt and shame, Dorit hesitated to tell her fearsome mother, but having no one else to turn to, she finally confessed the grievous situation to Hulda.

As I heard the story, anger and dismay roiled the family. Hulda told her son, Eli, to talk to Paul and demand that he make this right. So, it was agreed that Paul and Dorit would get married, and a hasty shotgun wedding was arranged.

One photo survives from that day. The family is dressed in what they had, but it was starched and pressed to look its best. Dorit borrowed a white gown and looked like a proper bride.

The wedding party posed on a deserted side street, in front of a brick wall. They could be mistaken for a group looking at a firing squad, staring directly into the camera with small, unconvincing smiles.

Up to then, my father had slept in a bunk bed in a factory building, along with a great many other single men in a large space. But once married, the couple was given a small room of their own.

Shortly after the wedding, my mother realized she was mistaken, that she wasn't pregnant. When she told Paul that no baby was coming, he felt tricked into marriage. "Your father said I made it up, to trap him," she told me, "but it was just a mistake." But now that they were married, they stayed married. Resentment smoldered on both sides. Dorit felt stung by Paul's accusation that she had

tricked him, and Paul was convinced he had been lied to. Frequently, the anger burst into flame. This was the inauspicious start to their married life.

It wasn't long before Dorit was truly pregnant, and I was born the following year, on February 15, 1941, just in time for the beginning of World War II.

At first my father was disappointed I wasn't a boy, but accepted reality, though he hoped the next one would be a boy. In the twists of fate, the next two children were also girls, but 21 years after my birth, he got his long awaited son.

After my birth, my father sent a letter to his parents to let them know the good news. They were especially delighted to have become grandparents, as Paul was their only child. Writing back, they expressed their hope that the end of the war we would meet.

The following year, in 1942, Paul sent another letter, but as the months went by, he didn't receive an answer. He feared the worst.

When the war ended in 1945, he made inquiries about his family as soon as possible, probably through HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), JDC (Joint Distribution Committee) or one of the other, less-well known Jewish agencies. He was informed that his mother, Ida, along with his father, Arthur, and aunts, uncles, and cousins had all been transported to the Sobibor concentration camp in Poland and murdered on June 3, 1942.

This was a devastating blow to my father. He would never again see his beloved mother and father, who sacrificed everything to save him. In Shanghai, my father rarely had money in his wallet, but he always had a photo of his mother. Sadly, heat and moisture degraded it past the point of recognition.

I remember when he pulled it carefully out of his wallet and showed it to me. "This is your grandmother," he said, as we looked at the fragile portrait, her features barely visible, her hair dark, wearing a shirtwaist blouse. Then he slipped it back into his worn brown wallet and stuffed it into his back pocket.

When he eventually reached America, he placed a desk and a chair in the front room and called that his "office." In the center drawer, he had a small, metal box, called his "secret place." I don't

know who he kept it secret from, as it was always unlocked. In there, along with his passport, naturalization papers, and bills to be paid, nestled the photo.

This was my life and it felt normal, but then I saw other people had grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, who lived near them or visited, and I realized how much had been taken from us.

Paul Leaves

During the war years in Shanghai, it was hard for my father to find work. By one estimate, only 20% of refugees had jobs. The Chinese people were worse off than we were, however. They had no aid agencies, and the Japanese were brutal to them. Subsequently, they worked for next-to-nothing so there was little for refugees to do.

We relied on the soup kitchen to stay alive and continued to live in the abysmal, crowded shelter. My parents fought constantly, their differences magnified by extreme poverty and the daily stress of life in a war zone.

I was about a year old when my father got fed up with the misery and left my mother and me. I never knew where he went.

But here was my mother, abandoned by her husband and with no support beyond the meager help from the refugee agency. At wit's end, she appealed to her relatively prosperous brother, Eli. As she told me years later, "He shrugged his shoulders and said 'I can't support everybody, you have a husband, try to get along, he should take care of you.'" He washed his hands of the problem.

"I didn't know what to do," she would cry, years later, when telling me the story. Putting aside pride and feeling intense shame, she held me in her arms and went onto the street, begging. A well-dressed Jewish woman, a friendly stranger, approached her. They got to talking and my mother told her what had happened to her. The woman was sympathetic and, as they got to know each other, my mother learned she had no children and seemed awfully fond of me.

One day, the woman made a startling offer. She said, "Evaline is such a nice baby, but what can you do for her? I don't have any children, but you can have more. Let me raise her and give her a good life."

My mother was dumbfounded and said, "You think that I would give up my baby?"

The woman replied, "What can you do for her? You don't have a husband, no money. I can give her a good life. I can give you money to help you."

My mother stepped back, outraged. "Don't touch her," she cried angrily, as the woman reached out to pat my curls. "I'm not selling my child. I don't want your money. She is all I have. Who do you think you are that you can take my child!"

Over the years, as my mother told this story to my sisters and me, she recalled the scene, as fresh as if it had happened the day before, wiping her eyes with the back of her hand. There were tears of anger at her husband and her brother Eli.

I don't know how long my father was gone from us, but in time, he returned. Where had he gone? Did Uncle Eli, my mother or someone else persuade him to return? Did he realize he couldn't abandon his wife and infant child?

But once he returned, what mattered was she had her husband back, and I had my father. Yet, in the coming years, even though he shouldered his responsibilities as a husband and a father and the episode was thought to be put aside, every once in a while, when they had a fight, she brought up the abandonment story.

My father would leave the room but she didn't stop. My mother believed in remembering all insults and slights, and she had a good memory.

Hongkew Ghetto

In 1941, the Japanese took total control of Shanghai. The Nazis asked the Japanese, who were Germany's allies, to exterminate the Jews. But that's not what they did. Instead, they herded all the Jews into a rundown, poverty-stricken, mile-square area, called the Hongkew Ghetto. This confinement lasted from 1941 until the end of the year in 1945.

There are theories as to why the Japanese chose this more humane option, but I have never heard a satisfactory explanation. The result was that 20,000 Jews were saved.

In the ghetto, we lived in an old, deserted factory building. Water and toilets were in a one-story, nearby building. As I got older, I remember being afraid of going there by myself, as it was vast and forbidding.

I recall when I was about three or four spending most of my time in the dusty, weed-choked factory yard, trying to find something to do. Even though all the residents were in the same leaky boat, even here, I had less than other girls.

I stared at the ones who had dolls and sometimes even a doll carriage. Watching them parade around the yard with their treasures made me sick with envy. There may have been other children feeling as deprived as I did, but if there were, I didn't notice them and certainly don't remember talking to anyone. I spent my time running, climbing on things, falling down, and mostly getting dusty and dirty.

To do laundry, my mother had to get wood to boil water, find soap, boil the clothes, and hang them to dry. Back when I was a baby, she had only a few cloth diapers, so washing was arduous and frequent. She was determined to get me out of diapers, and in later years told me proudly that I was toilet-trained at one-year old. I can't imagine how she did that.

By age three or four, the few clothes I had were mostly hand-me-downs from my cousin, Miriam, who was two years older. But my mother still had to boil clothes, so my getting dirty was a constant battle.

The Little Chair & Shoes

One day, my father brought me a surprise gift, a small chair. I never got presents, and though I was disappointed that it wasn't a doll, I kept the disappointment to myself. I carried the chair into the yard and, with great dignity, set it down and sat on it. Some kids came over and showed interest, so I let them sit on it too. I may have gotten bossy over parceling out the sitting time. I remember a little dispute, but for the first time, I had something precious to offer and felt I belonged. I cherished the chair.

At the time, my father was earning some money repairing shoes. This wasn't a completely off-the-wall job for him. His father,

Arthur, had owned a small company making house shoes or sandals. This business was confiscated during the war.

I didn't know where my father did the shoe repair work, and I didn't think about it until I was told his chair had broken and he needed something to sit on for work. This information was accompanied by the demand that I give back my chair.

I was shocked and hurt by this betrayal and cried as any little child would, but my tears didn't change anything, and he took the chair. I loved my father and recall thinking that I know work is important, but why do I have to give up my chair?

To my keen disappointment, it didn't take long for the chair to break under his weight. After a while I accepted that I was not getting another one.

It was about this time, when the Americans were bombing Shanghai and the sirens blared, warning us to find shelter. I recall an instance, when my father hoisted me onto his shoulders, and he and my mother took off for the air raid shelter. As he was running, I was bouncing on his shoulders, hanging on for dear life, and pulling on his thick black hair.

I felt a shoe drop off. I immediately cried out and begged him to stop to pick it up, but he kept going. I knew there was danger, but I was focused on my shoe. Because of all the noise, I thought that he couldn't hear me, so I continued screaming that I needed my shoe, but we just kept going.

Finally in the shelter packed with people, we would have liked to sit against the wall, but there was no room, so we sat in the middle. I didn't see any Chinese people in the shelter, but that didn't seem strange. Our lives rarely touched, except Uncle Eli had an "Amma," a Chinese woman take care of his house and children, and there were vendors in the market. When growing up in America, people often asked me if we spoke Chinese, but I felt sad to say, "No, and that I didn't also get to know any Chinese people."

As we huddled in the shelter, I leaned against my mother and felt comforted by her closeness. The noise of the bombs raining down was terrifying, but at the time, I was still very worried about my lost shoe. My father wasn't upset with me, but said that we would

Paul & fellow firemen, 1942

look for it when we could leave the shelter. I don't remember if we searched, but it was gone.

Tante* Dorit *Weint

Probably at the beginning of 1945, when I was four, my father took me to visit Uncle Eli, Aunt Sybil, Grandma Hulda and, best of all, Cousin Miriam. I looked up to Miriam, who was two years older than I, knew so much more and, most importantly, had so many toys. My father told me, "Don't cause trouble and obey Aunt Sybil and Grandma." He added that he would come back soon and take me home.

I turned away eager to play. I knew I would be good because my mother had always told me, with evident pride, that I was Grandma's favorite. Because Grandma always said that I was the smart one, I wouldn't disappoint her.

I didn't wonder why I was there or how long I would stay, and I didn't miss my mother or father. I was happy, surrounded by people who were nice to me and who had plenty of everything. I ran after Miriam wherever she went, and we played with her dolls and toys.

One day, I heard Miriam shout, "*Tante* (Aunt), Dorit is here.

Tante Dorit is here!" With no thought other than eagerness to take part in the excitement of greeting *Tante* Dorit, I chased behind Miriam. As we got closer, I heard Miriam shout, *Tante* Dorit *weint, Tante* Dorit *weint!*" (Aunt Dorit is crying!)

Confused, I turned and glanced at Aunt Sybil, who was standing in the doorway, but saw nothing in her face and then, turning back toward *Tante* Dorit, I joined in the shouting, "*Tante* Dorit *weint.*"

"I'm your *Mutti* (mother)," my mother cried out, tears streaming down her cheeks. She dabbed her handkerchief to her eyes and called out loudly and angrily, "I'm not your *Tante* Dorit, I'm your *Mutti.* How could you forget me?" She glanced at Aunt Sybil standing in the doorway to see her reaction to my confusion. I followed her gaze. In her version, Sybil looked smug and superior. But what I saw was Aunt Sybil looking sad, her lips pressed tightly together. I knew I had disappointed her, and I was ashamed.

As I got older, I learned that my mother had been hospitalized for several weeks, suffering from scarlet fever. With my father working and unable to take care of me, he had asked her brother and mother to take me in. Upon being discharged, anxious to see me, and possibly not completely recovered, my mother had come straight from the hospital to take me home. Now she was devastated to find that, within a few weeks, I had completely forgotten that she was my mother. Of course it was just that moment, but still, I was ashamed at how I had disappointed her.

War Ended

By the war's end in 1945, things eased up. We had more food and a little more money, so we went to the bustling Chinese market. Little shops lined the streets, but in front of them was a solid wall of endless vendor carts. Chinese people called out to us in strange words, motioning us to come over and holding up what they were selling. I loved the strong smells, bright fruit, massed vegetables, caged chickens, and fish flopping on tables.

Mother and I meandered along, but rarely stopped until we got to the big oil barrel. Scavenged from the war, it was now full of

sweet potatoes roasting on charcoal briquettes. Following hallowed tradition, my mother argued over prices, then watched intently as a Chinese man pulled out one after the other, until she was satisfied that she had the biggest potato in the barrel.

My mother and I were on one of these wonderful outings when I saw a boy, bigger and older than I was, in an empty lot. He pulled out his penis and directed his pee. I slowed to a stop, cheered by the sight. I was sure that when I got older, I would also be able to pee like that. My mother hurried me along, and I didn't say anything about my eye-opener.

According to my parents, children didn't question their elders and didn't offer opinions. Yet, sometimes, I couldn't help but open my mouth and give my opinion. This was called "talking back," which made my mother mad. "Wait until your father gets home," she threatened, meaning that I would get a spanking.

Around this time, I had another memorable experience. I was chosen to sing a song in a performance in the social hall. I recall standing on a small riser and singing a Kniebe Leid (bar tune). My mother was always singing, and I had learned it from her. The song began, "Imagine I am a dancer in the dance corps." (*"Ich stell mich Ihnen vor, ein Performer aus dem Corps. Laura, laura, let."*)

I saw my parents smiling and nodding, proud of me as I sang and gestured toward my imaginary dress (*schönes Kleid)* and wide-brimmed hat (*ein Federhut so wite*). I basked in the warmth of the attention, without a speck of shyness.

Once I was six years old, my mother enrolled me in school, one operated by Sephardic Jews, with a curriculum heavy on religion and Hebrew. Sometime during the Holocaust, my parents, who had both grown up in religious homes, gave up on religious observances. They always proudly identified as Jews and enjoyed celebrating holidays, but they didn't want me steeped in the Orthodox religious life of kosher observance and synagogues. But my parents also didn't have money to spare for tuition, so I was withdrawn. Frankly, I was relieved because I didn't like it. They would wait until we got to America, where school was free and secular.

Leaving Shanghai

My parents felt certain that we would emigrate to America – partially because my father had family living there. My parents had also heard that in 1945, President Truman signed a directive to assign two-thirds of the quota for displaced persons to German-born people. This was primarily to accommodate German Jews, who had suffered so much. This directive angered other displaced Jews of different nationalities, but it changed nothing.

After the war, displaced Jews were encouraged to go to Palestine, in what became Israel, but few wanted to go there. It was in hostile territory and offered harsh living conditions. Unfortunately, my Grandmother Hulda had a spot on her lungs, which disqualified her from ever entering the U.S.A., so she and her son, Fritz, emigrated to Israel.

In 1947, we finally emigrated to the U.S.A. My family easily passed the health exam, but my mother couldn't help feeling a little schadenfreude (envy). Her brother Eli's daughter, Miriam, had a little medical problem that needed to be taken care of, which delayed their departure to America. With evident satisfaction, my mother said to me, "Even with all their money and connections, they have to wait."

Finally, on October 15, 1947, we were on our way to America on a decommissioned troop ship, the *U.S.S. General W. H. Gordon.*[1] It was a two-week ordeal for my father, who slept in steerage, below deck, but my mother was lucky. My little sister, Yeni (Jane), was only six months old, so my mother, the baby, and I were assigned to officers' quarters, which were now considered first-class on the uppermost deck.

My father said that he ate his meals with us upstairs, but I do recall being in the mess hall and smelling the sickening odor of cooked tomatoes. We had never eaten tomato-based food, and it turned my stomach. I lost my appetite for a while, but, fortunately, I never had motion sickness.

I remember that in first class, our table was set with beautiful dishes, glasses, and cloth napkins. We had poached eggs for breakfast and could always ask a waiter for more. It was an unbelievable luxury.

Our only stop before San Francisco was Hawaii. Passengers were encouraged to get off the ship and wander through paradise for the day. Smiling girls hung fresh-flower leis around our necks as we walked off the gangplank. The air smelled briny and fresh, and a warm breeze rustled the threes.

Yet, as much as I liked walking around, it was colored by my worry about missing the boat. I didn't want us to get too far away from the ship, which would leave without us. Finally, to my relief and when completely worn out, we returned to the ship.

When we arrived in San Francisco, on October 31, we stayed in a hotel room for almost two weeks as we waited for a train to Louisville, Kentucky, our final destination. We walked around and gawked, amazed by what we saw. We visited the Crystal Palace Market, a modern, glass-walled grocery and emporium. I had never seen anything so massive and bright. I was overcome with the sight and smell of grapes, oranges, and grapefruit heaped up in baskets. There were also rows of pineapples and banana bunches hanging on a rack. The blinding sun glared through the glass walls, until my mother moved me along.

Strangely, with all that abundance, I only recall eating tins of sardines in our hotel room. I'm guessing that we didn't have money for much more than that, but I wasn't picky.

While walking around San Francisco, we stopped at a vendor cart, and I got my first taste of soft-serve ice cream. I licked the sweet, cold, and creamy confection, which tasted like whipped cream. I was careful not to let a drop escape, but I closed my eye and savored the taste.

We came across a man with a camera, who asked people passing by if they wanted their photos taken. It probably didn't cost much, so my parents and I formed a little group, and the photographer prepared to take a shot. While waiting for the photo to be snapped, I remember thinking only of my legs. It was boiling hot, and they were encased in knee-length, wool socks and itched madly.

As I bent down to scratch once again, I saw my father glaring at me. I straightened up, enduring the agony.

It wasn't long after that we got on a train to Kentucky. I re-

member looking out of the hazy, soot-covered windows as the miles rolled by, my legs dangling off the hard seat, as I wondered what would happen next.

Once in Kentucky, we were no longer in a war-torn land, but my parents were still penniless, unskilled, poorly educated, and scarred by persecution. They didn't know the language, the customs or people. Even my father's aunt, Augusta Bravman (1890-1970), who had sponsored us, was a stranger.[2]

We set about becoming Americans. Right away I started first grade. I quickly learned to speak English, became familiar with American ways, and became the family translator. This built my confidence, and I was proud of myself. My father got a job in his family's bakery. My mother went grocery shopping, and at home turned on the radio, so soap operas taught her English.

wedding of Dorit & Paul

Editor's Notes

1

The ship's manifest shows that there were 97 passengers. None being an American, all were considered "aliens." Fifty-one of the passengers were identified by their "race" or "people" as "Hebrews." (No other religious group was identified.) Forty-seven of the "Hebrews" were state-less. Three other "Hebrews" were identified as "Soviets," and one as "Lithuanian." He was Shevel Movshov, 83, a "retired rabbi," who planned to reunite with his daughter, Gita Leff, in San Francisco.

The "stateless" Hebrews were born in the following countries: Austria, 1; China, 3 (including both Blum daughters); Czechoslovakia, 5; France, 1; Germany, 29; Poland, 4; Russia, 3; and the United States, 1. The "stateless" Hebrew, born in New York, was Paul Mandelstamm, 69, a printer. His wife, Emma, 68, was born in Germany.

2

According to her petition for naturalization, filed on July 18, 1945 in Louisville, Augusta Fleischhacker Bravmann (later known as Bravman) had been born on May 24, 1890 in Merching-den, Baden, Germany. She married Heyman Bravmann on September 10, 1911 in Merchingden, and the couple's ship sailed from Genoa, Italy, and arrived in New York on January 12, 1940.

Three Bravman children had already arrived in this country. The eldest, Berthold, born in 1916, had arrived in New York in May 1938 and was serving in the army. The older daughter, Melitta Erlebacher, born in 1920, was living in Louisville. The third Bravman child, Edgar, born in 1922, lived in Norfolk, Virginia, before serving in the army. In September 1943, he was naturalized in Anniston, Alabama. The youngest Bravman child, Margareta, born in 1928, arrived with her parents.

By April 1940, Augusta, Heyman, and Margareta settled in Louisville because Augusta's brother, Siegfried, was living there. By the time Berthold registered for the draft, on October 16, 1940, he was working at the Old Colonel Distillery on Main Street.

Melitta Bravman's future husband, Soly Erlebacher (born in 1914), had emigrated from Hamburg on the *S.S. President Roosevelt* to New York on October 9, 1938. According to his draft registration card, he lived in Manchester, Connecticut, while his mother, Jenny, a widow, resided in New York City. Melitta's's petition for naturalization, filed on May 15, 1944, shows that she and Soly were married on April 10, 1941 in Hartford, where he worked as a baker. Melitta and Soly's first child, Caroline, was born there in February 1943. While serving in the army at Camp Grant in Illinois, he was naturalized in Rockford on November 19, 1943.

Having been later stationed in Louisville, Soly decided to remain and open a bakery. Heyman Bravman, his father-in-law, would also work there.

The Blum family arrived in Louisville in December, 1947.


My Life
In the
SERVICE

A Gitte Neshamah (A Good Soul)

Bonnie Jaffe

A lifelong Rhode Islander, the author was born at "the old" Lying-In Hospital in Providence's Elmhurst neighborhood. She grew up on the East Side with her parents, Annette (Wintman) and Murray Perlman, and her older sister, Marsha. The girls' maternal and fraternal grandparents, two sets of aunts and uncles, and four cousins lived only a few blocks away.

Bonnie attended Hebrew school and Sunday school at Temple Emanu-El. She graduated from Mary C. Wheeler School in 1974, when it enrolled only girls. She may be the only Wheeler graduate who speaks some Yiddish! Bonnie earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in film and video at RISD and then a master's in education at Rhode Island College.

She has shown her creativity through numerous positions: a corporate producer and writer, an audio/ visual training manager, and a broadcast advertising manager. For almost thirty years Bonnie has also managed her husband, Marc's, OB/GYN office.

The author is a professional photographer and an exhibiting member of the Providence Art Club. She has shown and sold her work throughout New England.

Bonnie and Marc live in Barrington and belong to Temple Habonim. They have five children and four grandchildren – the youngest of whom is only a few months old.

For more than two decades Samuel Buckler has been an integral part of my heart and my family's life. His story is important to us and presumably many others.

The first features one might notice when meeting Sam, who turned 99 on July 7, 2023, are his beautiful blue eyes. They have borne witness to Jewish traditions, family, poverty, hard work, war, success, love and loss.

Family Background & Youth

Sam was the eldest of Hime and Rose's four children. His younger brother was Leonard (1927-2023), and their sisters were Edith (1929-2006) and Charlotte (1934-1996). Hime (pronounced "Chaim" but also known as "Hymie") had been born in Poland in 1900, immigrated to Boston in 1921, and moved to Providence within a year. Rose Pepper had been born in Austria in 1902 and by 1920 was living with her older sister and brother-in-law, Lena and Henry Rodenberg, in Cumberland, Rhode Island, where she worked as a "braider" in a cotton mill.

As was common at the time, Rose was naturalized as Hime's fiancée in 1922. Married a year later, the couple lived at 238 North Main Street in Providence, and Sam worked as a "junk dealer." The Bucklers later lived at 107 Middle Street in Pawtucket.

By 1928, the family lived at 128 Dudley Street in South Providence, and Hime worked as a truck driver in the junk business and helped operate a secondhand furniture store at 997 Westminster Street, which west of downtown Providence. The Bucklers later rented a two-bedroom apartment in a three-decker house at 294 Willard Avenue, five blocks farther south. Hime's ill mother, who spoke only Yiddish, also lived there. She spent her final years in the Jewish Home, at 191 Orms Street in the North End, where she passed away at 104 years.

From an early age Sam had always embraced Jewish values, and they would play an important role throughout his life. He became a bar mitzvah at the South Providence Hebrew Congregation, known as the "Russhisa shul," which had been founded in 1898 and was located at 201 Willard Avenue.

Hime still struggled as a poor junk peddler, and times were tough. As a teenager, to help his family, Sam worked in Israel Greenstein's grocery store at 250 Willard. Every Saturday, after Shabbos, the streets in South Providence came alive. In winter, Sam worked from 4 PM until midnight; in summer, from 8 PM to midnight. His year-round wages were only 25 cents per shift.

Sam enjoyed homemade pickles and bricks of halvah (chocolate and vanilla) as well as pastrami, salami, and kishke. He

still clearly remembers the smell of fresh, Sunday morning bagels at Snell's Bakery and crowds standing in line to make their selections. From an old wooden cheese box, Sam built a telegraph and learned Morse code. He communicated with, among others, a few people "out West." This talent as a telegrapher would serve him well in the future.

After completing tenth grade at Central High School, Sam enrolled in a local trade school, where he learned to operate a hand-fed printing press. One week he attended class, and the following week he worked. The hours were long. Eventually, he bought a small printing press and completed small jobs in his basement. These jobs often included business cards and letterhead for family and friends.

Years later, Sam would partner with two good friends: Orlindo Amore, a Catholic, and Chester Long, a Protestant. Each friend invested $200 and a handshake to begin what became a full-service printing business. United Printing, which he helped lead for the rest of his career, would eventually have over 125 employees.

World War II

On May 13, 1943, nineteen-year-old Sam enlisted in the Army and was sent initially to Fort Devens in Massachusetts. His two-volume journal, "My Life in the Service," documents his daily experiences and impressions of military life. During basic training in Biloxi, Mississippi, he took salt tablets to prevent dehydration. On August 16, 1943, he wrote: "had a very bad day. 6 hours close order drill and 2 hours of PT (physical training). Half the Unit fell out due to the temperature 130. Whew!"

Many journal entries convey his joy attending services. For example, on Yom Kippur in October of 1943, he felt honored to have been chosen to read two haftorahs.

Because of his understanding of Morse code, Sam learned how to read and translate Japanese code. Eventually, he would become part of a top-secret unit, which intercepted the codes of enemy planes sent on missions to the Philippines.

Before shipping out to the Pacific, Sam figured out a way to travel home. In a journal entry on June 1, 1944, he wrote: "Hooked

with his family, Providence, July 2, 1944

onto the back of a freight train, but I have some pretty interesting company and I'm getting along fine."

Sam was transported across the Pacific on an old, broken-down ship. He assumed that the enemy "would never waste a torpedo on us." The camouflaged ship did break down and drifted for three weeks in rough seas before help came to repair it.

Food and water were scarce, and the crew was permitted to consume only one orange each day during a voyage lasting fifty-five days. Sam once defied an officer's order to pick up a crumpled piece of paper on the ship's floor. Sam thinks that this may be the best thing he ever did, for his punishment consisted of KP (kitchen police) duty. This meant greater access to some rations.

According to his journal, Sam survived typhoons, air raids, kamikaze planes killing soldiers only ten feet from him, sweltering heat, knee-high mud, and malaria outbreaks. He of course appreciated letters from home and the "swell guys" with whom he served. Here's an entry from Wednesday, March 28,1945, following his regular shift: "We had a big seder at a hospital. There must have been about 5,000 people. We had matzoh and wine made in Austria, soup, chicken – also a 'kneadle.' It was really something."

Sam witnessed up close the Japanese surrender and saw General McArthur get out of his Cadillac. He also heard Winston Churchill's addresses and reacted strongly to President Roosevelt's death.

But Sam also had some fun. He attended USO shows starring Tommy Dorsey, Bette Davis, and Eddie Cantor. Once, on a three-day "R & R" (rest and recuperation) pass, he saw Sophie Tucker, Arthur Treacher, Danny Kaye, Leo Durocher, Kay Kyser, Ish Kabibble, and a burlesque show.

Sergeant Buckler was honorably discharged from the Army in February of 1946, nearly three years after his induction. But he held on to two guns that he acquired in the Philippines. These would be donated to Israel during its war of independence. And Sam plans to donate his two World War II journals to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Marriage & Family

When back home in Providence, Sam went bowling on Sundays at Sullivan's Alley on North Main Street in Providence. There he met Laura Kagan, a Providence native, who, while working as a clerk, lived with her father and stepmother, Morris and Celia, at 43 Carrington Avenue on the East Side. This was the same street where my father also lived. According to Sam, she approached him and asked for a ride home. They spent three hours talking, began their courtship the next day, and were married on August 3, 1947.

The newlyweds moved into a multifamily home at 159 Irving Avenue on the East Side. My own parents, Murray and Annette Perlman, who were married in 1946, happened to live at 173 Irving for only a year, in 1949, before relocating to Pawtucket. Annette and Laura struck up a friendship.

Sam and Laura raised two children, Bruce and Barbara. They also have two grandsons and twin great-grandsons.

Sam and Laura eventually owned homes in Providence, a summer cottage in Narragansett, and a home that they built in Cranston. They enjoyed a life filled with love, hard work, and travel (including multiple cruises and trips to Israel).

Sam is one of Touro Fraternal Organization's oldest living members. In addition to being season ticket holders since 1950, Sam and Laura often went on bus trips to see URI's basketball team play in tournaments around the country. They were eventually honored for their longtime enthusiasm and loyalty.

New Relationships

After a prolonged illness and years of Sam's untiring devotion, Laura passed away in March of 1999, just shy of their 52nd

anniversary. My Mom, Annette, had been widowed in 1996.

In 2000, Mom attended a Chanukah party hosted by the Cranston Senior Guild. She recognized and approached Sam, the organization's longtime treasurer, who was seated at the next table. She reintroduced herself, reminding him that they had once been neighbors.

According to Sam, Mom gave him her phone number. He called the next day and they met at Gregg's Restaurant on North Main Street.

For twelve years they were devoted, loving companions. Mom was a *balabusta* (an excellent homemaker), and they saw each other for weekly home-cooked meals. Mom and Sam spoke every day, went out to dinner with friends, traveled, and celebrated birthdays, holidays, and many *simchas* (joyous celebrations) together. Unfortunately, Mom developed dementia and passed away in 2012. Throughout her decline, however, Sam was there for her and me. She always recognized him. Holding hands comforted her – even the day before she passed away.

Over a decade later, Sam remains a big part of my life and my family's. He has been present at all of our celebrations and was honored at the wedding of one of our daughters and at a grandson's naming. We have continued to speak Yiddish together, celebrate holidays, and enjoy frequent visits, weekly telephone calls, and countless lunches.

On his 99th birthday, I asked Sam what he wished for. "To live to 100!" he proclaimed. His secret to living a long life? "Stay out of your chair and keep moving."

Two men in my life of sixty-seven years have been true heroes. Both my father, Murray Perlman, and Sam Buckler were Jewish veterans of World War II. Both men were truly members of "The Greatest Generation!" Sam still makes my world

warmer, brighter, and more wonderful through his presence. Thus, I'm fond of the following saying:

Vahksin zuls du,
Tsu gezunt,
Tus leven tus langeh yor.

(The approximate translation is: You should grow to health, to life, to long years.)

Some more favorite Yiddish words and expressions that Sam and I use:

shana beckelach – pretty cheeks
fahstincha – smelly
fahkata hoisen – smelly, dirty pants
gatkes – underwear
a kluptz tse mein kup – a hit to the head
in drert – in dirt or hell
ois gemutchet – exhausted
arouse gavofen gelt – a waste of money
a yenta talabenta – a gossip
er shiker – drunk
nish geferlach – not so terrible
tepel – pot
efsher – maybe
gornish – nothing

Editor's note: Bonnie completed her article in August, and Sam enjoyed hearing her read it. He passed away on September 7 and his brother, Leonard, eight days later.

Wayland Square,
Providence, 2023

Traveling: Away From and Back Home

Michael Fink

Forever young, Mike turned 90 in December of this year. I told him that readers and I expect to savor his articles for at least another decade. But how can he sound simultaneously wise and witty, reverent and rebellious?

Mike recently told me that two-year-olds are especially drawn toward him. Yet, many of his most loyal and faithful RISD protégés are now more than 65 years of age. Indeed, he has welcomed and bade farewell to nearly a dozen RISD presidents.

I have no doubt that Mike will live forever among Rhode Island's curiosities, legends, and treasures. If you have any doubts, please ask a Francophile, a fowl or a flower.

Kids labelled me "nature boy" maybe because of Nat "King" Cole's song of that title, the melody and lyrics smuggled into his studio from a Yiddish tune. But I believe my half-mocking, half-admiring nickname predates those lyrics and dates back to my obsession with running away from home.

Behind our then new house on Creston Way, on the East Side, there was an abandoned farm, and if I was "mad" at my older brothers or my father, I could simply wander a bit beyond the backyard into a wilderness. Oh, yes, after sitting on large rocks and noticing birds and little beasts, I returned for lunch or supper with thorns covering my coat or stuck in my hair. Our editor has invited me to describe in some detail my other attempts and methods to escape from the confines of this little cosmos and so, here goes!

Well, I could hike uphill to Summit Avenue or sled downhill to the flower nursery at the corner of Camp Street. Whoops, there is a kid I am a bit afraid of at the top, so downward bound or behind our property is safer. Let us get going.

I had survived the hurricane of 1938, while in kindergarten, and it was good to sit and stare at the tame flames in our brick

fireplace and then listen to the large parlor radio as war was declared in 1941, on the brink of '42. I got through grammar school until the death of FDR, which sent me whirling on my bicycle in confused circles of distress.

I had a double family at the higher corner of my realm. Twin houses held most of my family. You see, my grandfather had been twice married. I was named for his first wife, and thus "Mira" became "Mike." His second wife, Clara, had a son and a daughter, Herb and Edith. My parents met in Montreal at the wedding of that second marriage after Mira's death. Therefore, Herb and Edith were both my uncle and aunt and also my cousins on my mom's side. Our founding father, Roger Williams, had somehow outlawed the marriage of first cousins, except for Jews! Check it out for yourselves and correct me if I am mistaken.

In World War Two, both Herb and his half-brother, Samuel, were G.I. combatants. Upon the Victory of the Allies, if my two heroic relatives met at the corner of Creston and Summit, they would, to my amazement, bow to each other! It always moved me to the brink of tears. One brother had fought at the Battle of the Bulge and came home wounded, and the other had served as a medic, laden with medals for saving lives!

My only courage came from my storytelling skills. Never too shy to tell a tale on a stage, I won my battles with words. I date my first victory at the polls to the establishment of Israel in 1948, when I was elected class president of Nathan Bishop Junior High School despite my lack of gymnasium gusto. I won, I guess, for my jokes and jests, my greetings and my bravado. Wow.

At Hope High School, which I also reached on foot, I was in the debating society and won an award for which there was a prize. Guess what? A private plane would take me to the skies above my own house in that abandoned orchard. My very first experience in the "firmament" beyond the clouds was thus like the lyrics to a song.

By the time of my high school graduation, in 1951, I knew I could finally run away from my address and seek my fortune or fame elsewhere. I had once believed that the Hollywood Theatre in East Providence WAS Hollywood, just as the street lights beyond North

Main Street were in fact the planets of the Universe. For a myopic, four-eyed kid, squinting through glasses or having left home without his spectacles, the stars and planets were barely around the corner. You can get there on foot, on tires, even via a balloon.

After my freshman year over the border in Connecticut as an adopted son of Eli, I grew used to traveling by thumb. I would hitch my way either homeward bound or to M.I.T.'s riverfront world (where my brother, Chick, was a student). This was where Tomorrow loomed, and it seemed somehow more important than Yesterday's study of poetry, classics, and the pursuit of the past, which appealed so much more to me.

In fact, as a junior, I joined Sweet Briar College's program at the Sorbonne. Yes, I traveled to and from France on an ocean liner, but my journeys there continued via the pleading thumb. I made my way thus to Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, and Italy – even to London, the land where my father had been born.

Paris may be a movable feast, but my exit from my year at that fabulous feast was a startling surprise. Perhaps I have told this anecdote too many times, but here it is again. I stuck out that trusty thumb and, amazingly, a very fancy limousine stopped, and its chauffeur in full regalia and livery opened the rear door. And there was – no kidding! – the king of France!

Prince Achille Murat handed me his card and narrated his plight. It seems that his monarchist power had vanished into the void, and it was forbidden for him to enter the capital city. So he would cruise around the gated circles protecting the inner circle from his claim. I kept his card but alas it seems to have vanished during my many moves from abode to abode. Since then I have cruised the Seine more than once and even jumped in for a quick symbolic dip.

Perhaps one of the most spectacular trips I have experienced happened many years later in Paris, where I was staying in Pont Aven, after teaching for a stint in a RISD program. I was to meet my older daughter, Emily, who had been a college student in that Normandy corner of France. The next dawn we planned to fly homeward bound together.

I visited the Pompidou Center, a new place that had not

been there in the time of my long-ago sojourn at the Sorbonne. And there appeared a troupe of Gypsies whose musical instruments were built into tricycles, three-wheeled vehicles for a wandering tribe. And I asked if I might join their troupe to sing a song I recalled from my era as a student, and they agreed, if I supplied them with "Gitane" (gypsy) cigarettes and glasses of wine at a bistro. I said, "Oui, bien sûr," and put my hat on the street to collect tips from passersby.

When I had finished my pretty-fine version of a ballad, "Le Chemin de Liberté" ("The Road to Freedom"), they invited me to dinner. They led me to a nearby building, but they were clearly breaking into a bleak apartment as squatters. Since I had my passport in my pocket, I was a bit nervous, but accepted nevertheless and they made a pleasant pasta repast, but by the time we were done the subway was closed for the evening.

So they put me on one of those tricycles and, to the vast amusement of drivers of small cars along the boulevards, left me at my hotel. They gave me their addresses in hopes that I might invite the group to visit Providence and RISD.

Well, that had been my longtime dream, to escape into a Gypsy world of roaming and playing tunes like a scene from "Golden Earrings," a 1947 movie starring Ray Milland and Marlene Dietrich. And so, my theme that travel without a guide is the very finest way to experience escape from routine can now be shared with you via a few snapshots I was able to offer our editor.

During my tenure at RISD, my travels included voyages by canoe, both on campus and on research grants funded by the Liberal Arts Division. I often made my way to explore the Jewish world of the Caribbean. With support from Brown RISD Hillel and its publication, *Machberet,* I have made use of snapshots, tales, and texts of the Sephardic presence following Columbus's voyages. Some European powers, like the Netherlands, might have welcomed the Hebrew presence, but others, like France, resisted, rejected, and even exiled Jewish explorers.

Among these small worlds, I have visited Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Surinam, Costa Rica, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. I have made friends

and found resources for further study and reports to file. I stroll the shorelines and explore the sunken remnants of vanished traces, such as ritual *mikva* baths and cemeteries, sometimes with carved roses as metaphors. I climb steep embankments, paddle in swamps, and photograph rocks and plaques. I also bring back materials I could use within several of my courses. These included Jewish history and ornithology electives as well as bird-watching adventures during winter sessions.

Well, I had one time signed up for a cruise along Caribbean canals, but I found it had been cancelled, so I rented a skiff on my own and rowed my way regardless, under a rainy and rather chilly sky. Travel for me is adventure, and I acknowledge that there are disappointments and yet also surprises and delights. These become available once I leave my familiar pathways behind and face what comes. Such expeditions remind me of my boyhood adventures of getting lost in my own backyard, among the thorns and boulders.

Once upon a time, long long ago, a circus used to come right up to my father's garage, and I saw a baby elephant grazing near our garden's peony bush. I stroked its hide, and it felt like a living rock from the Ice Age. My neighbor would discourage such intrusions and holler, "No, No, No!," and push benign beasts away.

So my conclusion is that one can travel without the help of a cross-country map. With the Covid curse, you might also make your way on your own shoes around your own block. On my block, an oval memorial to the Revolutionary War's D'Estaing Camp bewilders letter carriers who cannot fathom the ever-changing names and numbers.

During the 1960s, I purchased a Binelli, an Italian-made motorcycle (now Chinese) – only a 50-cc. model – and drove it all the way to U.R.I. Foolishly, I rode without a helmet. Among my peregrinations, I believe that it was my most terrifying time on planet Earth! Especially with those immense trucks stealing my oxygen. That is why I oppose all forms of what crowds label "progress."

I met my wife, Michael, because of a canoe. I asked a young fellow to help me lift it onto the roof of my car. Then he told his mother that I was "cool," so she invited me in for cocktails at the

author running for Providence City Council, 2022

family's nearby home. *Voila*, I was greeted at the door by his sister. Then Michael helped launch my life. Yes, travel is destiny.

In the early summertime of my marriage, I drove to Montreal or Quebec and visit my family there. Another time, Michael and I took a glass train across all of Canada to stare at the wildlife and experience the expanse of space itself.

I picked up the habit of traveling as lightly as possible, which often got me in trouble. In our beloved Israel, for example, my wee wardrobe and mini-kit created doubt and anxiety – not admiration – among customs officials.

On a journey to classical Athens, I rode a donkey up a steep hill. It was a happy event for me because one of my favorite fables from Torah tells the tale of a donkey blessed with spiritual vision. Balaam, a prophet with reservations and doubts, cannot see the angel guiding him towards his responsibilities. The beast of burden, however, blocks his irresponsible evasions. I tell this tale wherever I travel, in synagogues on many continents. Its moral? "Listen to those who labor. Be kind to animals. They see what you cannot." This is my sermon "to go," and my search is for that path to truth.

For additional adventures, a person can wait for whomever one seeks until he or she finds a way to visit you. Over my more than six decades at RISD, so many of my heroes and heroines have visited my classes! One can even use dreams and memories to time-travel.

I believe that my father, born in Whitechapel in the days of the British Empire, was deeply interested in American Jewish history. He collected Indian-head nickels, copper pennies, and arrowheads, and he encouraged me to visit our own West Coast as long as I took a few snapshots for him to peruse. He had found an antique camera in a pawnshop in Manhattan and would hand it to me for just this purpose.

After I had the images developed, I found, spilling out generously, all my various searches superimposed upon each other: an elephant stuffed in a garage in Tours, France, and a buffalo from the Grand Canyon. I displayed this Dada-istic masterpiece of accidental, painterly poetry in the Old Stone Bank, but it has since vanished from view.

As usual in my life's span so far, a few fragments must do the trick. I prefer not total recall but glimpses like mirages.

Not only do I collect paintings and illustrations of Noah's ark, but also I have in fact taken refuge on a nearby local ark, built by the son of one of my early RISD students. With the company of a pet crow, last-born "Zachary" sought to escape progress through his own ark, which included bunk beds and a functioning fireplace.

So and thus, all things spin back to our wee but wondrous community.

Reading My Mother

Edith Pearlman

Fortunately, after decades of working in relative obscurity, this distinguished writer, a specialist in short stories, won widespread praise and numerous national awards for two collections: *Binocular Vision,* published by the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, in 2011, and *Honeydew,* published by Little, Brown, in 2015. I too much enjoyed her fourth and fifth story collections, which I found in paperback editions at Providence's Books on the Square.

Thus, in July of 2015, I contacted Edith, a Providence native, at her home in Brookline to invite her to pen some reminiscences for our journal. Her speedy reply: "I'd be glad to." Unfortunately, declining health prevented the fulfillment of this endeavor. Far worse, Edith passed away this past January at 86 years of age.

Edith was still esteemed by old friends in her final years. One of our favorite writers, Mike Fink, was able to visit her a few years ago. Steve Logowitz, our gifted graphic designer, recommended that I contact his older sister, Linda Zindler, another old friend, who, like Edith, had departed Providence long ago. Not considering herself a writer, Linda did not feel up to the challenge of creating a portrait, but she recommended a friend who visited Edith more often. Regrettably, this person too did not consider herself worthy of my invitation.

I also contacted a few Brown professors of English, hoping that they would share some of their expertise and insights with our readers, but none seemed even slightly interested. Edith's upbringing in Providence didn't seem to make a difference.

As the father of an alumna, I was aware that Edith was a relatively early Jewish graduate of Providence's Lincoln School – in 1953. Yet, she had at least three Jewish classmates: Ina Joy Dwares, Susan Esta Low, and Marjorie Alice Shore. Most appropriately, Edith was honored by her alma mater in 2014 with its Distinguished Service Award.

I contacted the school's administration, hoping to gain access to some of her records so perhaps I could fashion a profile. Fortunately, through an Internet search, I found more than a few

of Edith's essays written at the dawn of her career for Lincoln publications. Inevitably, my curiosity about her upbringing on Hazard Avenue and her experiences at Temple Emanu-El was heightened.

Fortunately, Betty Grossman, a member of Lincoln's Class of 1958, was eager to help me learn more about her sister. So she and Mike Fink joined Betsey and me for lunch in Providence in 2020, and we discussed numerous facets of growing up in and leaving Little Rhody, which both sisters had done.

Eventually, I decided that I too was probably unworthy of portraying Edith. Thus, I sought to identify one of her pertinent short stories and try to obtain permission to republish it.

Through an internet search, I stumbled on the following article, which was originally published in *The Women's Review of Books,* XXVIII (January-February, 2011), pp. 21-2. After months of suspenseful waiting, I quite fortunately gained permission from Guy Griffiths, president of Old City Publishing in Philadelphia, to republish it.

Such a fearless and penetrating portrait of one's mother! Yet, there's so little biographical information that I would have almost automatically included. Indeed, the city and street where the Grossman family lived were not even mentioned. And neither is Lincoln School nor another alma mater, that women's college in Cambridge.

Through Edith's article, I was astonished to realize that, as late as the 1960s, I had read a few of the books that Edna Grossman had enjoyed. Edith's article also helped me remember many of my own mother's favorite authors and books – perhaps only one or two with literary aspirations or pretentions. I could write a far more detailed portrait about Mom's interests in the visual arts and her involvement in Jewish and other philanthropic endeavors. For that matter, sports too.

Edith was an artist, and I'm a preservationist or a documentarian. Nevertheless, while continually aspiring to improve, I seek to avoid sounding like a technician. I want to be guided and challenged by deep feelings as well as by facts and formulas.

Yet, can there be accuracy without artistry and vice versa? Microscopes without mirrors? I'll let you know in a decade or so.

Anthony Trollope says that women are instructed by the books they read. When I realized that my mother, dead now for a quarter of a century, was still a mystery to me, a riddle in pearls and a peplum, I decided to take Trollope to heart. I would read or reread the books she was instructed by. Perhaps I'd finally figure her out.

At ten, my mother's favorite book was *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909), by Gene Stratton Porter. *Girl* tells of young Elnora and her widowed mother, who was delivering Elnora when her husband sank into an Indiana swamp. She has never forgiven her daughter, whose birth prevented his rescue. She grudgingly supports Elnora to the extent the law demands, but Elnora must secure what she wants – a high school education and a proper wardrobe – by capturing and selling swamp butterflies. Her mother sabotages her efforts. This is a story of the conflict between dissimilar women whom biology has mischievously connected.

My mother lived in the American shtetl – a collection of three-decker houses crowded near a malodorous river in a small New England city. The Yankees lived up on the sweet-smelling hill. My mother, familiar with city pigeons and neighborhood cats- what did she make of this swamp story and its woodsy heroine? What did she identify with, and continue to identify with, even as memory airbrushed the details?

I suspect it was the clothes. She discovered early the transfiguring power of dress. This was to contribute to our own later conflict, visible to anyone who saw us: the mother pretty, well-groomed, dressed in flattering suits; the daughter messy, bespectacled, dressed in warring garments. At least my socks usually matched.

As a teenager my mother adored Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1884), which is set in California shortly after the Mexican-American war. Ramona, the daughter of an Indian mother and a Scotsman, unaware of her mixed blood, is raised in an aristocratic Mexican household. She falls in love with a heroic Indian. Her adoptive family disapproves of this low alliance. She flees with her Indian, remaining chaste until they find a priest to marry them.

Ramona is a polemic. According to the novelist and critic Michael Dorris, it altered Americans' conceptions about Indians by

presenting them not as savage but as industrious, gentle, and devout. But to my mother, reading it sixty years after its publication, it was a love story, one about social structures and rules. The hierarchy of her own city – Yankees at the top; Jews, Italians, and Irish next; blacks at the bottom – was as strict as the one in Ramona.

Or in *Middlemarch.* My mother never read George Eliot or Jane Austen, but in her thirties she relished The Semi-Detached House (1860), a novel by Austen's talented imitator Emily Eden. In this book, all the activity is directed toward one supreme purpose: to get the young women characters to the altar. Rachel, a hold-out, is pursued by a widower. Everybody – even Mrs. Hopkinson, the mother of the widower's late wife- desires the match. Mrs. Hopkinson asks Rachel,

> "Could you not just fall in love with him?"
> "I do not believe it is in my power to fall in love with anybody."
> "Then my dear, you may just as well marry him as another."

So Rachel does.

My mother would have given the same advice. All cats are gray at night, she often implied, so choose the cat who suits the life you want to lead. If you want romance, find it in books, movies, and popular songs; fairy tales (she read them all the time to me); gossipy conversations with other women; and, eventually, gossipy conversations with your daughter, no matter how difficult she is.

I was a deceptively easy baby. My mother gave me a ladylike name. She might as well have called me Sass. By the time I was ten no one could tell me much. I refused to read the books suggested to me – I have yet to open *Anne of Green Gables* or *Green Mansions.* Instead I swiped popular novels form the lending-library stack on my mother's night-table.

At least once a month she reminded me that she had won my father – a handsome, respected doctor – with her femininity, slenderness, and deference. By her beautiful forties, she lived in a fine house not far from the Yankees, played bridge, and kept up with national events. She kept up with local ones, too: who loved whom, who married whom, who brought money to a match, who was

carrying on with somebody else. When the news was exhausted and housework done, she read.

By the time I was a teenager, we were reading the same books.

John Marquand was our favorite. We particularly admired *The Late George Apley* (1947). The book erupts with instruction. "There must be a class," writes the Late George, "which sets a tone, not for its own pleasure, but because of the responsibility which it owes to others." Marquand's novels speak poorly of happiness – "I believe that a large part of life consists of learning to be unhappy without worrying… about it"; and of marriage – "The great thing…is not to think too much"; and of young passion, inevitably doomed. George Apley's true love is an Irish girl. His father forbids the romance. In Marquand's *Point of No Return* the hero's true love is an upper-class girl. The hero is only lower upper. In that book, it is her father who turns thumbs down. The spurned lovers marry other people, and learn not to think too much.

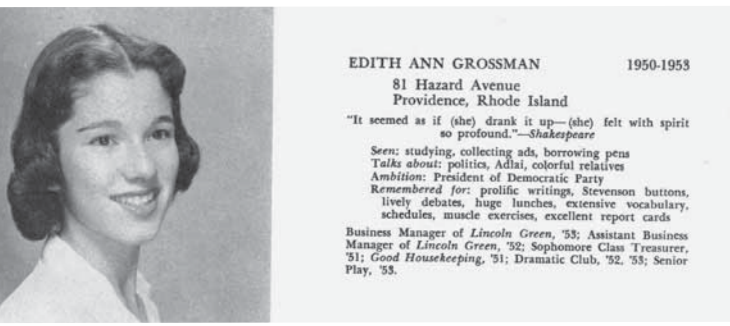
Marquand was my ally. See: marriage is no guarantee of happiness, I pointed out, probably at the top of my voice. Without marriage there is no chance of happiness, countered my mother. How a woman looks – why should that influence how she fares? I demanded, tossing my unkempt head. Maybe it shouldn't but it does, she answered. I could not acknowledge that truth until I returned to my beloved fairy tales and saw that the message of "Cinderella," for example, is not only that women can be counted on to be cruel to each other, but also that a cleansing bath, a flattering coiffure, and new clothes alter the outer girl and can change her destiny.

We found a hero we both loved – Vladimir Nabokov's feckless Timofey Pnin. Pnin's first appearance in *The New Yorker* (in stories later collected in a book, *Pnin,* 1957) coincided with my father's death after a long illness. We pretended that the two men were similar – the unworldly, unmarried Pnin, with a few human ties, and the beloved husband and parent snatched from us. Really they shared only a birthplace – Russia. My father's Russia was a country of poverty, hopelessness, and forced conscription into the Tsar's army: a place fit only to leave. The self-exiled Pnin's was an idyllic birch-and-cloud country of liberal hope destroyed by the Bolsheviks: a place to long for. Never

mind: for my mother and me, the Russia of the shtetl and the Russia of the dacha were the same.

Together we admired the tragicomic Pnin's struggles with English. We were enslaved by Nabokov's prose. He spoke directly, lushly, to our grief. When we read his descriptions of illness (Pnin, in a moment of cardiac distress, speaks of the heart as "a strong slimy untouchable monster that one had to be parasited with, alas"), how could we not think of our own lost man? When we read Pnin's plaint – "Why not leave their private sorrows to people?" – we sorrowed: privately as well as together.

Pnin united us. Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), a few years later, divided us. I adored it. My mother refused to read it. Nymphophilia was an unfitting subject for a novel, she insisted. Humbert Humbert was not someone that she (or Timothy Pnin, for that matter) could sympathize with. Sex, she believed, should occur in private, like sorrows, as it did in Helen Hunt Jackson, Emily Eden, and John Marquand.



EDITH ANN GROSSMAN 1950-1953

81 Hazard Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island

"It seemed as if (she) drank it up—(she) felt with spirit so profound."—*Shakespeare*

Seen: studying, collecting ads, borrowing pens
Talks about: politics, Adlai, colorful relatives
Ambition: President of Democratic Party
Remembered for: prolific writings, Stevenson buttons, lively debates, huge lunches, extensive vocabulary, schedules, muscle exercises, excellent report cards

Business Manager of *Lincoln Green*, '53; Assistant Business Manager of *Lincoln Green*, '52; Sophomore Class Treasurer, '51; *Good Housekeeping*, '51; Dramatic Club, '52, '53; Senior Play, '53.

Lincoln School yearbook, 1953

I went to college and read Eliot, Marcel Proust, Trollope – assigned classics. At home my mother read James Michener, Herman Wouk, and Bel Kaufman – the bestsellers of the day, almost forgotten now. But here and there our choices matched: we both read Carson McCullers and John Cheever. The popular could be literary, the literary popular. The mother seeking entertainment and the daughter hellbent on enlightenment sometimes found what they wanted – and found each other, too – on the same pages.

But we no longer discussed books when we met. We didn't discuss looks, either – I had capitulated: I now dressed up and combed my hair. We didn't discuss anything at all, really, for the next decade or so, because every sentence my mother uttered, whatever its topic, mutated into the sentence that was on her mind – every noun became "men," every adjective "eligible," every verb phrase "have you met any?" For single-mindedness and firmness of purpose, Captain Ahab had nothing on her. For murderous resentment I was a match for Hamlet.

And then I got married, after all, and even bore a couple of lovely kids.

But after a decade of this conflict, my mother and I could not return to the comfortable days when George Apley was our banker and Timofey Pnin our cousin – not until the year when, along with the rest of the world, we both read a novel with cardboard characters and silly dialogue and a shrunken plot. Sharing scorn, we approached each other again.

The heroine of Erich Segal's *Love Story* (1970) is Italian American. Its hero is a Yankee who hates his father. The heroine, doomed to die, fails to reconcile father and son. "A Jewish girl would have managed things better," summed up my parent.

She was still in her sixties, this woman who had relished Marquand and Nabokov with me, who had managed the ironies of Cheever and ambiguities of McCullers without my learned assistance. But she was beginning to fail – she'd had an early stroke – and for a few years after *Love Story* she read mainly magazines. Then she entered a nursing home, and in its twilight comfort she returned to books.

She enjoyed Nora Ephron's *Heartburn* (1983), a moderately funny roman à clef in which the marriage of two spoiled Jews is souring because of the husband's adultery and the wife's wisecracking. He believes in self-gratification. She believes in faithful love and chicken soup, but her runaway tongue makes her less than loveable. An Italian girl might have managed things better – but I didn't say that. "There's a lot of sex," my mother impishly told me; old age had broadened her outlook. Indeed there is a lot of sex in *Heartburn,* but

description is limited to passages like this: "And then we went to bed. We stayed there for about three weeks."

(In *Lolita,* on a Sunday morning, the bewitched Humbert Humbert holds his stepchild on his lap, both fully clothed, and surreptitiously masturbates against her seemingly unwitting twelve-year-old body. For three breathtaking pages, the surf breaks against the land, the world falls away, the reader loses track of time and place and responsibility, until at last Humbert "crushed out against her left buttock the last throb of the longest ecstasy man or monster had ever known." This thrillingly mimetic passage – I didn't mention that either.)

I read to live. I'd drop my computer keyboard down a ravine before I'd surrender my library card. My mother too found elevation, excitement, and relief in books. And so, when I think of her as a fellow devotee, I can peel the outer woman – the one who advised me to take off my glasses and for heaven's sake keep my mouth shut – from the woman who grew misty remembering Elnora and Ramona. With her interest in who marries whom and her obsessive insistence that I marry, oh, anybody, she reincarnated some memorable fictional parents; Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice;* the determined mama who engineers her daughter's marriage to Dickens's *Dombey.* That respectful daughter is named Edith, and Dickens is my favorite novelist; perhaps some day my own daughter – true to family tradition, she finds me irritating – will undertake to relate my character to my taste in reading. I hope, as she turns the pages, that I rise in her estimation. My mother has risen in mine: she was as persistent as Elnora Comstock, as faithful as Ramona, as worldly as Mrs. Hopkinson, as snobbish as George Apley, as sentimental as the young wife in *Heartburn* – that is, she was full of lively contradictions and forgivable faults. She was also, I regretfully admit, as underappreciated by some of those around her as Timofey Pnin.

My Portrait of Edith

Betty Grossman

The author graduated from Lincoln School in 1958 and then Connecticut College, at a time when it too enrolled only young ladies. Having moved to Cambridge to work as an editorial assistant at a publishing house in Boston, she has remained in the metropolitan area ever since.

Ms. Grossman earned a master's degree in education at Boston University and served as a guidance counselor at Newton South High School for more than three decades, before retiring in 2000.

In 1979, after earning a doctorate in psychology at BU and possessing a state license, she began a psychotherapy practice and later formed a group, Crossroads Counseling, in Wellesley. After Covid made in-person sessions impossible, Dr. Grossman has continued to see patients via telehealth (using Face Time). Her second career, she explains, has been as satisfying as her first.

Dr. Grossman lived with her partner for 30 years before he passed away in 2017. She often visited and remains close to his two children and five grandchildren, who live in his native Argentina.

Dr. Grossman still enjoys travel, theater, reading, and laughter. With many wonderful friends, she has not given up on "figuring out life." Thus, she created the following portrait for a gathering held in Edith's memory.

I'm Edith's sister and, as a fixture in the Pearlman household for many years, I could tell you about the enormous pleasure Jessica (her daughter), Charlie (her son), Naomi (her daughter-in-law), and Joseph (her grandson) gave her. I could also describe the loving support and encouragement she received from Chester throughout their marriage. But, as the person here who has known her the longest, I prefer to share things you may not know about her childhood.

First, some information about our parents and grandparents. Our father escaped from Russia in 1908, when he was eight. He, his parents, and three siblings made it to Ellis Island and then settled in Providence. Our mother was the sixth of seven children born in

the United States to Polish immigrants, who settled in Providence.

On June 26, 1936, the evening Edith was born, the stars shone brightly over our family home. Our father, at 36, was enjoying a burgeoning medical practice, and our mother, 29, was still starry-eyed from having "landed" (a word allowed in those days) such a handsome, charming man. And most important, Edith was a healthy, easy baby, who, from the start, was alert and seemed delighted just to BE – much like characters in her stories, who enjoyed the cards they were dealt. And her cards were excellent.

For example, though it was thought wise at the time to let fretting children cry themselves to sleep, our father disagreed. Just a whimper from the nursery, and he would dash upstairs to bring Edith to the living room to enjoy whatever company we had that evening.

To make Edith's life even sweeter, our father's younger sister, Sarah, an enthusiastic high school English teacher, lived with the family and adored her niece. As soon as Edith could grasp a story, and it didn't take long, she introduced this quite young child to Shakespeare.

They shared a bedroom. Edith was usually asleep before Sarah came to bed, but one night, pretending she was in a trance, Edie sat up in bed, thrust her arm forward and asked, "Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my hand?" Sarah continued Macbeth's soliloquy until her niece cried, "Oh, Aunt Sarah, stop. It's just me – Edie." What a perfect setting for a bright young child with an ear for literature.

Life continued smoothly for the family – lots of loving relatives nearby (14 first cousins within a 20-block radius), many friends, and a commitment to the community. I like to think that my birth in 1941 wasn't disruptive, despite my not being the brother Edith wanted.

Winters were spent in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, where we went sledding, ice skated, and entertained hotel guests with card tricks. As a family, we had our kind of fun, playing lots of word games, chess, "20 Questions," and a rhyming word game called "Stinky Pinky." Each parent had a lively, natural sense of humor, ir-

Edith Pearlman, undated portrait

reverent and wry. There was a lot of laughter.

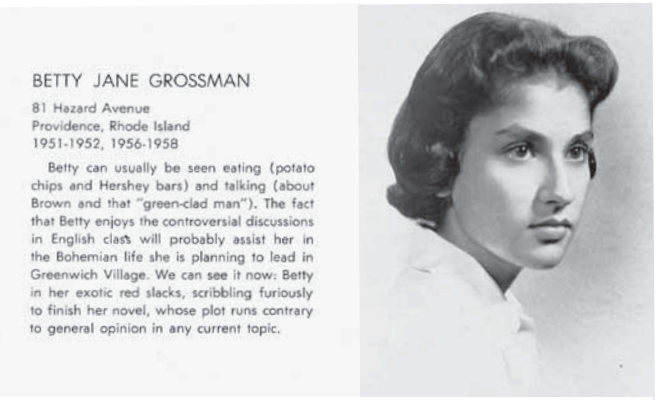
At school, Edie shined in everything. Her interest in writing started early: as a fifth grader, she and three classmates formed S.A.P.S., an acronym for Saturday Afternoon Playwriting Society.

All went well, more than well, as the family thrived and was grateful. My mother once told me that when we were all in a cab on our way to the Providence train station to start a family trip, she looked in the back seat at her husband and at Edie and me, and she said to herself, "I have it good."

Sadly, "having it good" came to an abrupt halt in April, 1945 (when Edie was nine). Our father, at 45, was diagnosed with cancer. Though the long-term prognosis was dismal, surgery and good medical care gave him seven years in remission. He was able to continue working and enjoying the family. We continued our capacity for fun, played chess, and found humor in things. Still, though not talked about, the threat of his illness loomed large.

While his health still allowed, our father wanted to give his family something extra special to remember. So, in December of 1950, our many New York relatives came to Hoboken, New Jersey, to see us off on the *New Amsterdam* for a two-week Caribbean cruise. It was a new experience for all of us – formal dinners, Dad in a tuxedo, Mom and Edie in strapless evening gowns, and our very own waiter, Artur.

But for Edie the trip was beyond special. Hands down, she was the belle of the teenage contingent, and she was mad about a dashing, 17-year-old, Don Leeds, who quickly fell for her. Every eve-



Lincoln School yearbook, 1958

ning they strolled hand-in-hand down different decks.

One night she was startled to spot her dad on deck – hiding behind a lifeboat as Don was about to kiss her. On hearing about this many years later, I asked, "Weren't you furious?" "I was annoyed, but flattered too," she responded. As is typical of many of the characters in her stories, she found something positive in a situation.

Our Dad's cancer returned in 1951. It was particularly hard for Edith, as they had a nightly ritual of translating her Latin assignment together. Since the cancer was now in his bones, his pain was obvious and made her dread what had been a joyful ritual for so long.

On June 5, 1952, he died at home. Edie, about to turn 16, was finishing her junior year of high school. At that point she and I weren't particularly close nor had we ever been. Because of our age and grade differences – four-and-a-half years and five grades – we were seldom at the same school at the same time, and we didn't spend that much time together.

We spent lots of family time as a foursome, but she and I weren't a pair growing up. After school she'd run home to read Dickens in the den; I too ran home but to get my cap guns and shoot up the neighborhood.

Not until I finished college and we both lived in Cambridge did Edie and I become much closer. That started 61 years ago! We discovered that we spoke the same language, with the same inflec-

tion, and we were never at a loss for something to share or laugh about.

Edith's children, Jessica and Charlie, called our endless reminiscences and interest in talking about people's lives "TALKING JUNK." "There they go again," they'd say, though they never left the room. And we never apologized. We were proud to model for Jessica and Charlie the beauty of two sisters who could love, enjoy, and be so devoted to each other.

author after first communion

Learning (Belatedly) about My Jewish Ancestry

Nancy Munzert Carriuolo

Readers will happily recall the author's impressive article about her dear departed friend, Robert T. Galkin, in our previous issue. Nancy called him an "eternal optimist," and no doubt she is one too.

Perhaps contrary to expectations, this former English professor and former president of Rhode Island College is also a down-to-earth person. Thus, she has no need to toss around such a word as "Judeophile." But I do humbly suggest that she deserves such an accolade. But "mensch" would also work fine.

Making My Way to Rhode Island

I was born in 1948 and joined my parents and two brothers on a small farm in Hilton, New York. Our antique farmhouse was so cold in winter that my father rolled bales of straw against the foundation and nailed plastic over the windows.

My father's ethnicity was German, and my mother's was Scotch/Irish. Both had attended Catholic schools but my father, Bill Munzert (1901-1978), went to work after sixth grade. My mother, Monica (1911-2004), left school after ninth grade but eventually did a stint in secretarial school.

When I was still in high school, my mother tried to reassure me that I was attractive enough to find a husband. Neither of my parents could understand why a woman would need to go to college. You can imagine how flabbergasted they were by my decision to earn a Ph.D. at SUNY Buffalo (which I completed in1979).

After publishing my first journal article, my father asked how much I had been paid. When I explained there was no pay, but the publication would support my promotion in rank to full professor, my father tossed the journal back to me and said, "I will never understand you." And here I am, after all these years, still writing without pay, just to explain myself, in this case in regard to my expe-

riences with ethnicity and religion and my life in Rhode Island.

My connection to Rhode Island began in 1981, when I met my husband, Ralf, while teaching English and directing the Learning Assistance Center at the University of New Haven, where he had been teaching music for many years, beginning when he was a recent undergraduate at Yale and continuing while he earned his Ph.D. in ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University in Middletown. On our second date Ralf took me to the Blue Grotto in Providence. I thought it was quite odd to drive from West Haven to Providence just to have dinner, but I did not question him until years later when he explained he was seriously interested in me, so he was taking me home to Providence. Although his Rhode Island relatives were deceased, Rhode Island was still home, and Ralf was introducing me to his home.

After a brief courtship, we were married in a simple civil ceremony in Old Lyme, Connecticut. We shared one attendant, Richard (Dick) Kline, a cartoonist for such prestigious publications as *The New York Times.* Kline is a Jewish surname, but I never thought of Dick as a Jew. I was mostly oblivious to the ethnicity and religion of others. Both Ralf and I were Catholic, but neither of us was particularly active during that period.

The University of New Haven provided me with my first full-time, college-level position. My position eventually became Assistant Provost and a tenured full professor of English. With my promotion came a new link to Rhode Island. My new assistant was Adrienne Krassner (RIP), who became one of my closest friends for over 30 years. Her husband was Dr. Leonard Krassner (RIP), whose sister is Myrna Rosen, a longtime Rhode Island resident. Adrienne introduced me to her Jewish family in Rhode Island, and on a couple of occasions we were invited to special Jewish holiday dinners.

Fast forward to the early 1990s, when I saw a job posted by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) for the director of its new Office of School/College Relations. I interviewed for the position and met Eleanor McMahon, who had been Rhode Island's first Commissioner for Higher Education and later president of NEASC's board. She also chaired the search commit-

tee for the new director. Eleanor followed me into the hall after my interview and said, "If we do not hire you for this position, we will hire you for something else. You interviewed very well." I floated home on her praise.

After I secured NEASC's directorship position, we rented our home in New Haven to a family, and the University of New Haven gave me an unusually long, four-year leave. When the leave expired, I returned to UNH and became Dean of Arts and Sciences and Hotel/Restaurant Management.

My time at NEASC, though, had a lasting effect on my career. NEASC's Higher Education Associate Commissioner, Amy Lezberg, became a close (Jewish) friend, and Eleanor became a mentor. She introduced me to other excellent Rhode Island educators, including Bill Holland, who was active in NEASC and later became the state's Commissioner for Higher Education. When he needed a new Associate Commissioner for Program and Planning, a new opportunity arose.

Ralf strongly urged me to apply for this position because it meant "going home to RI." I came to understand that all Rhode Islanders are born with salt in their veins and might travel far, but always yearn for Rhode Island and the ocean. During our years in New Haven, we had maintained a summer home on Flintstone Road on Harbor Island in Narragansett, but after I secured the position working for Bill Holland in 2000, we moved to 97 Butler Avenue on Providence's East Side. Ralf continued the hour-and-a-half commute

[above]
author's parents, Bill & Monica

to UNH in his red pickup truck until his retirement in 2005.

This was a true return to Rhode Island to raise our son, Matthew (born in 1983). He says some kids grew up on mother's milk, but he grew up on Del's.

The first question people asked when I began to work here was, "Who do you know?" I was not sure how to answer that question until a colleague said, "Your husband was born in Providence. That is your hook. Talk about him." With my upstate New York accent, I have always been easy to spot as an outsider, not a born-and-bred Rhode Islander.

Being Too Jewish or Maybe Not Jewish Enough?

I do not recall meeting a Jew until I entered Brockport State, a campus in the SUNY system about a half-hour from my home. The college heavily recruited from Long Island during my undergraduate years (1966-1970), so I met many affluent, middle-class Jews who were the children of professionals. Having grown up in a rather insular, rural community, I was intrigued by the students from Long Island (or "Long Guy-Land," as they pronounced their home.) I recall, in particular, being smitten with a well-built, dark-haired Jewish student. He was so sophisticated in comparison to the farm boys I knew. One of the pretty Jewish girls in my residence hall also had a crush on him. Although a number of students on campus were Jewish, we never talked about religion. The other girls and I talked about boys, clothes, movies, music, classes, and more about boys.

After one of our classes, I was giddy when this handsome Jewish young man invited me to dinner and a movie. In the days before cell phones, we did not see each other again until our next class, at which time he approached me and said apologetically that he could not take me out on the coming Saturday. I misunderstood and said that another Saturday would be fine, too.

He said, "No, I cannot date you. . . ever."

I persisted and asked why. He said he thought that I was a Jewess, because I looked Jewish, but a friend warned him that I attended Catholic masses on campus. (Although I did not attend Catholic school, I had attended religious instructions that were offered

after public school, so that my friends and I could be confirmed as Catholics. I understood Catholicism, and when it was so easy to just walk to mass on campus, I did so.)

I was not letting go of this young man so easily. I asked why my religion made a difference.

He said, "I like you very much, but I am Jewish. Who knows? I might fall in love with you, and my parents would never let us marry. It is a tragedy to be averted."

I can quote parts of what he said because his words have lingered in my memory. I, too, thought that we might develop a committed relationship, and I was dreadfully disappointed.

Elsewhere during my college years, the issue of my ethnicity and religion arose again. My German-born mathematics professor insisted on calling me *fraulein* (meaning "miss or little woman," which I assume was a reference to my diminutive size, 5' 1" and 110 pounds). He was also abrupt and abrasive whenever I addressed him. Finally, one day after class, I asked him why he called me *fraulein.* He said derisively, "Because your last name is Munzert, which means money changer, a Jewish name." I argued that I was Catholic, but he just snickered and said, "You are still a Jew."

I went home to our small farm for the weekend. I did not really know anything about Jews other than what my history books said about the Holocaust. I told my father about my mathematics professor and asked if we could be Jews. My father replied that his parents were German immigrants who did not attend a church, but our religion was Catholic – end of subject.

I have recently read that it was not unusual for blonde, blue-eyed German Jews to convert to Catholicism to avoid persecution, so I suspect fear may have been the reason for my German family's conversion. Hilton did not have a local Catholic school, so probably my parents never considered sending me to a Catholic school not only because of the cost but also inconvenience. Taking care of crops and animals takes up a great deal of time in the morning and late afternoon especially, and my mother did not have a license to drive, so we only attended mass on rare occasions.

My mother, though, had been raised as a devout Catholic

actor Martin Sheen, author & officials of New England Tech at graduation, 2012

and even had considered entering a convent prior to meeting my father. The priest at St. Leo's Church in Hilton baptized and confirmed my brothers and me, so, for all practical purposes, we were, indeed, Catholics.

My father knew little about his family history. His father (whom I never met) did not speak of Germany or the hardships of coming here with medical training, but also a strong German accent that made him difficult to understand. Consequently, my grandfather was able to get only menial work to support his large family. His two elderly aunts owned shoe factories in Rochester, New York. These aunts helped by raising one of my father's sisters. My father and his other seven siblings were not so lucky and barely subsisted.

Even though my father left school in sixth grade to work, he was smart and industrious. He raised cattle and crops on our small farm and was also employed by General Motors's Rochester Products Division. The automotive company periodically paid him

President Obama with author at RI College

$50 for "suggestions," which I recognized as much more than mere suggestions. They were actually hand-drawn inventions that made manufacturing machinery more efficient. The envelopes with the $50 checks always included a legal note that indicated the so-called suggestion would become copyrighted by the company.

Once, when my father was out with the flu for a week, I recall frantic calls to our house from his manager. The engineers could not figure out how to run the machines my father had altered for efficiency. I was afraid that General Motors would fire him, but my father just said, "The carburetor line will stay closed until I return – my job security."

Many years later I understood that my father's dismissive behavior toward my first publication simply reflected his experience. An idea was only worthwhile if someone paid for it. Similarly, talking about whether or not we were Jewish seemed to him to be a waste of time. It could be better used milking a cow or drawing up "a sugges-

tion" for General Motors.

I returned to college not having learned much about Judaism from my less-than-talkative father. I just shrugged off my professor's words. Because he clearly did not like me, I reveled in getting straight A's in his class. Correct answers in math are hard to argue with. I did not give much thought to the connection between his treating me rudely and his insistence that I was Jewish. I probably had other Jewish professors, but I was not aware of common Jewish surnames.

My favorite English professor was Peter Marchant, a graduate of the University of Cambridge, but we never discussed religion or ethnicity. I know now that Marchant is a German-Jewish name meaning merchant, but I had no such knowledge as an undergraduate. As a student who had multiple scholarships, I focused on getting all A's not only in my major (English) or my minor (history), but also performing respectably in such a course as field hockey, where I usually ended a game black-and-blue from my knees to my hips.

I also served as a resident assistant from sophomore through senior years. As chair of the College's Red Cross chapter, I spent one weekend per month as a volunteer at the VA Hospital, but I did not get involved in many other distractions from my studies.

Meeting Jews in my Personal Life

My first lengthy, up-close-and-personal interaction with deeply religious Jews came after my marriage, in 1982, when my family and I moved to 591 Ellsworth Avenue in New Haven. This was in the middle of a neighborhood with many Hassidic and Conservative Jews.

My Scottish/Irish mother, never having seen an Hassidic Jew, was frightened during our moving day when she saw a group of Jewish men in our driveway. She described them as men with long curls, who dressed as if they were from another century. Over her objection, I went out to greet the men. They were very upset that a home in their Jewish neighborhood now belonged to Gentiles, and they told me so. Our driveway and backyard had been along the route to their synagogue on the next street. I assured them they were

still welcome.

One of our Conservative Jewish neighbors had a blonde, curly-headed son named Avi Noam, who was the same age as my preschool son. The boys looked enough alike to be brothers. I stopped Avi's mother when she was walking down the sidewalk with him and suggested that the boys have a play date. She shook her head "no" and kept walking. I made the same approach to Avi's father, who looked thoughtful and then said, "No television and no food or drink, but I will talk with his mother and see if she will agree."

Avi's mom showed up at our door with Avi the next day, but she looked very disgruntled. She spat out, "No television, no food or drink, and no using your bathroom. I will be back to pick him up in 45 minutes." Clearly, the boys were not going to be best friends. The play date was stressful. I probably should have realized that our lifestyles were just too different for more than peaceful coexistence in our neighborhood.

Right next door to us, though, lived Herb and Barbara Elkin with their large family and collection of pets. They practiced Judaism, but the Elkins were more than merely tolerant of us. They were friendly and curious and invited us to family gatherings. When Herb passed away, his family buried him within 24 hours, but without a headstone. My family attended the burial and *shiva.*

A few days later, Ralf and I bought grave blankets (six-foot long lattices of wood with artificial flowers and often a cross mounted on top) for Ralf's deceased relatives, who are buried in a Catholic cemetery in Brockton, Massachusetts, and where we will be buried, too. As we chose the grave blankets, we impulsively bought one for Herb, too. We wanted to cover his bare grave before snow fell. As we entered the Jewish cemetery, Ralf carried one side of Herb's grave blanket over his head, and I did the same at the other end. It was beginning to get dark, and the cemetery closed at dusk, so we hurried as fast as we could to find the old tree that marked the site of Herb's grave. We lowered the blanket, said a hasty Catholic prayer, and left.

When I saw Barbara, Herb's widow, a few days later, I confessed what we had done and hesitantly noted that Herb never liked being cold. She laughed and said that we put the blanket on the

wrong grave, but when she heard that there was a Christian grave blanket near Herb's grave, she knew exactly whom to thank. She hugged me and said Herb would have loved the warmth of a blanket, especially since we had thoughtfully chosen one without a cross. She and her son had already replaced the blanket on Herb's grave. As usual, the Elkin family modeled loving tolerance.

Professional Connections with Members of the Jewish Community

When we settled in Rhode Island, Jewish leaders of the educational and business communities made deep, positive impressions on me. For example, Marcia Reback, the president of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, who passed away in 2019, became a good personal friend and advisor. Seth Magaziner, another strong Jewish advocate for public schools, stood with my family and me when a rabbi blessed Marcia's headstone in 2021. Marcia, who managed to blend her love for students with her need to serve teachers, was a strong, articulate, and passionate woman leader.

Another such leader, who was proud to be a Jew, was Jason Blank, the president of Rhode Island College's chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). He was a fierce protector of faculty, but he also spoke privately with a professor if he thought there might be an issue affecting students. As an educational advocate, Jason became an advisor to management and faculty alike. I respected Jason and enjoyed his sense of humor. To show his approval, he would sometimes grasp a male colleague's head with both hands while planting a kiss on his forehead. Much to the amusement of anyone watching, Jason often had to chase a man in order to plant his kiss.

Beyond union leadership, there were two Jewish educators at New England Institute of Technology who formed an inspiring team and won widespread loyalty. These were Richard Gouse, one of America's longest-serving college presidents, and Seth Kurn, his executive vice president. After retiring, Seth has continued to serve as a board member.

In 2016, after serving as president of Rhode Island College, I became NEIT's vice president for advancement at Rich's invitation. Both Rich and Seth impressed me with their intelligence, creative problem-solving skills, and commitment.

Rich kept in constant communication with his team, but he also planned thoughtful rewards. For example, my Jewish stomach was delighted when Rich served a wonderful variety of food delivered from Katz's Deli in New York City for his lunches with senior staff. The only treats missing were potato pancakes, which I learned to make at home and serve with applesauce. As Rich wisely knew and demonstrated, good food and good conversation make a good, team-building meeting.

In discussing higher education influences, I would be remiss in not pointing out that former Governor Bruce Sundlun was one of the first to make a point of welcoming me to RIC's presidency. He was always willing to offer advice, usually within the context of a story. Bruce's funeral introduced me to beautiful Temple Beth-El, and the reminiscences of those gathered demonstrated the impact this great leader had inside and outside of our state.

I also learned from various Jewish business leaders. Alan Hassenfeld and I had long conversations. He demonstrated selfless commitment to education and the overall well-being of Rhode Islanders. And then there are Bob and Warren Galkin, Jane Nelson and her brother John Sapinsley, and his wife Lila, Ros Sinclair, and Jim Winoker, all of whom befriended me and who supported Rhode Island education with their funds, wisdom, and time.

In particular, I recall Jim advising me that there is no such thing as luck. Luck comes when a person prepares for an opportunity, recognizes the opportunity when it comes, and grasps it confidently. Jim does not set religious boundaries: he has even served on the board of Providence College.

I also benefitted from many international experiences. In the early 2000s, for example, I engaged in educational consulting for Arabs in Morocco and Qatar. Like most Jews, Arabs were also tolerant of my ethnicity and Catholic religion, and they expected me to be equally tolerant in return. I recall, in particular, when the head of

a school in Morocco gave me a gold necklace and pendant as a parting gift. When I inquired about the pendant's inscription, he said, "Praise Allah." He added, "We all believe in one divine being; we just call him by different names, right?" He articulated my own feelings about religions. Beneath the rules and rituals of organized religion lies a basic belief in a divine being, who expects moral behavior from mere humans.

Ten years later, on a trip to Israel organized by Governor Lincoln Chafee, I witnessed an excellent example of people with differing religious views living compatibly. I visited a college of education where Jews and Arabs were studying side-by-side. I was surprised and pleased to see such tolerance because American media had given me the impression that Israel was a country consumed by war and hate.

Proud to be a Jew

Periodically over the years, people have said that I look Jewish. People have also commented that my son looks like a rabbi. His best friend in college, Elana Blumenthal, approached him originally because she thought he was a Jew. They are still friends, and our family attended her Orthodox Jewish wedding, and we were invited to attend her twins' bar and bat mitzvahs in Florida.

Still, Elana was disappointed the day when she and my son met because he said that he was Catholic. This was the same response as the Jewish young man from Long Island whom I had met in college. My son seems to be carrying on my life betwixt and between regarding Jewishness.

My son was baptized in the Catholic Church and became an altar boy. We still attend Catholic mass at St. Brendan's Church in Riverside as a family. Yet, like me, he has gravitated toward close friendships with Jews. Nadav Katz, his friend from Choate-Rosemary Hall and later Brown University, lived in Israel for a time and still keeps in touch with Matthew, as does Elana.

I always wondered: so many Jews say my son and I look Jewish. Are we biologically Jewish? DNA finally provided the answer just a few years ago. My brother and I took the Ancestry.com test. We

have some DNA from the Jewish diaspora. So there was the answer that came to me online when I was 70 years old. I am, at least in part, a Jew.

Though I do not practice Judaism, I respect those who do, and I am proud to be part of the ethnic group which – against the odds – has not only survived but prospered worldwide.

Alan [lower left] at his bar mitzvah party

Brotherhood and Temple Beth-El

Alan Moskoff

Beth-El's chapter of Brotherhood was founded in 1921, two years before it helped establish the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. In June of 2023, the Temple hosted the organization's national convention – during its centenary – for the third time.

As Alan explains in the following article, he has been involved with the national organization, now known as Men of Reform Judaism, for two decades. He was also close to another prominent Beth-El leader, the late Stuart Aaronson, who served as national president.

Somehow, Alan does not dwell on his misfortunes. Surprisingly and quite impressively, he remains an optimist, emphasizing his good fortune. Judaism, he has learned, is sustained by kind words and good deeds. And close bonds, derived from many male friendships, have contributed to his sense of happiness and well-being.

I was born in 1946 in New Bedford and grew up in Middleboro, Massachusetts. The town's population was 13,000, and there were only 20 Jewish families. There was no synagogue in Middleboro, so my parents arranged to have me driven to Taunton, about 10 miles west, where there was and still is a shul. Congregation Agudath Achim had been founded as an Orthodox congregation in 1912.

I traveled to Taunton three times a week to attend Hebrew school. My rabbi was Baruch Korff (1914-1995), who served Agudath Achim from 1954 to 1972 (longer than any of his predecessors or successors). Of course he became best known as one of President Nixon's most outspoken defenders. Rabbi Korff spent his final years in Providence and left his vast collection of personal papers to Brown University. (I don't think that I'm mentioned in them.)

In high school, I joined Aleph Zadik Aleph, the Zionist

youth fraternity, and in my senior year I was elected president. We were scheduled to host a B'nai B'rith Youth Organization convention the weekend President Kennedy was assassinated. Rabbi Korff did not want us to hold the convention, but BBYO advisors told us to act respectfully, so we did.

My parents, Benjamin and Dorothy, ran a very successful business, Moskoff's Supermarket, in Middleboro. My father, who had been born in Taunton, would leave home at 4:00 AM and drive his truck to Boston. By checking produce and meat prices, he would pay the right prices for what he would buy, always on the following Monday. Everyone loved my father, and he was well liked by people in town and was generous to many. Eventually, when I worked in my family's market, I visited Shaw's Supermarket, copied the produce prices, and my father would sell all his produce for less.

My father raced greyhounds as a hobby, and they were all well fed. Ted Williams often stopped in the store because his baseball camp, in Lakeville, was not too far away.

I attended Memorial High School in Middleboro. I did well and was elected to the National Honor Society. I played clarinet and tenor saxophone in the symphonic band, dance band, and orchestra. I still remember flubbing a solo in "Peppermint Twist," a song that had been recorded by Joey Dee & The Starliters in 1960.

My college career began at Boston University, where I majored in biology. I planned to become a dentist. On April 23, 1965, when I went to class, the professor said that it was cancelled so we could march with Dr. Martin Luther King in Boston. I admit that I was nervous, but I did march with a friend.

I applied to dental schools, but was unfortunately turned down. Like so many others, I was not eager to serve in Vietnam. My lottery number was not good, so I needed to do something.

I remembered that my high school music teacher had played in a National Guard band. So I asked him if he thought I could audition, and he told me to try. I practiced, but I knew it wasn't enough. I auditioned for a clarinet player named "Squeaky," and I was not good.

I asked "Squeaky" if I went home and practiced like crazy

whether he would take me. If I really improved, he would. So I practiced a great deal. Meanwhile, I had to go for an army physical exam. Time was closing in.

After a month, I scheduled a new audition with "Squeaky." He was impressed, and told me he would accept me. Meanwhile, time was again closing in.

I asked "Squeaky" how soon I could be sworn in to the National Guard. He said that one man was ahead of me, and there was a two-week wait. I then asked "Squeaky" if I could call that fellow and switch. Both "Squeaky" and the other person, Michael, said yes. I was sworn in on a Tuesday, in August 1969, and three days later my induction notice came. That was a close call. Michael and I became great friends for many years.

Basic training in the regular army at Fort Dix in New Jersey was not much fun. There were four groups. Three were for high school graduates and one for college grads. All of us had to pass a physical training test. But I couldn't do one part. This was jumping up to a monkey bar then traveling across a hundred more. Exhausted after jumping up, I fell off after five bars.

Then a high school grad from upstate New York came over and put me on his shoulders and carried me all the way through. I touched every bar and passed. The army officers in attendance said nothing. This was what they wanted to see- soldiers helping soldiers.

Basic training lasted ten weeks, but my service in the National Guard lasted six years. During summers we practiced and performed in parades at Camp Drum in upstate New York and on concerts along the St. Lawrence River. Most listeners loved us, and I did have some fun.

My first wife and I moved to Upper Montclair, New Jersey, where I went to work for JC Penney. Two years later, we moved back to the Boston area and bought a home in Stoughton. I had two sons, Gary and Eric, with my first wife. I understand that they are doing well.

My future father-in-law, who was not Jewish, suggested that I attend pharmacy school. He explained, "It was a good profession and a good business." So I entered Massachusetts College of Pharma-

cy in Boston. I completed the program in only three years because of my undergraduate classes at B.U. My first job was at Dunnington's, a small chain in Brockton and Wareham.

Then my father called and asked if I would help him with his supermarket. He suggested adding a prescription department.

I looked forward to meeting my father for breakfast on mornings when he didn't travel to Boston. Over the next couple of years the volume of business doubled because I advertised in Brockton's newspaper.

After our father passed away on November 24, 1982, my older brother and I struggled over the family business. I decided to resume being a pharmacist. I took a position at Pleasant Drug, in Fall River, which was owned by a Jew. I met my future third wife, Maria, a Catholic, who was working at the drugstore, and we married in 1992.

Maria was twenty years younger than I, and we raised two wonderful children: Ben, born in 1990, and Micah, born two years later. We rented a house for many years in Somerset, Massachusetts. I went to work at Brooks Pharmacy in Plainville. I enjoyed my time at Brooks and worked in many stores. I also opened some new stores, which was fun. I was asked to manage a store in New Bedford and did so for 20 years.

Maria and I decided we wanted to raise our children, Ben and Micah, in the Jewish faith. He had been named after my father and she after my mother. I knew some members of Temple Beth-El, so we thought that we would give it a try. We joined in 1989, and I never left.

We both took and enjoyed the course, "Introduction to Judaism." This was the first time that I finished a Seder. Maria converted to Judaism, and I can remember Micah running in the Temple yelling, "My mother is finally Jewish." The Temple was also near Butler Hospital, where Maria worked as a nurse. Ben became a Bar Mitzvah and Micah a Bat Mitzvah.

A Brotherhood member, the late Malcolm Itkin, asked me if I would come to a meeting, and I did. I became an active member, and in 2001 I was elected president. In 2003, during my second term,

Maria's conversion at Beth-El with Rabbi Michael Cahana, Cantor Ida Rae Cahana, Alan, Micah, Ben, & Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman

Micah was diagnosed with leukemia, so I had to cut back.

All Micah wanted was to make it to her Bat Mitzvah, and she did! We stayed strong as a family when we needed to be strong. We also had a lot of help. Anita Steiman, the director of Beth-El's religious school, came every day to Children's Hospital in Boston to visit Micah. I can still remember running with Maria, Anita, and her husband, Mark, in the hospital's basement. I also remember pushing Micah on her bed in the basement to go for a CT scan after she had a very big seizure.

Sarah Mack, Beth-El's associate rabbi, was also there for Micah and us. The Temple staff was caring, and so was the Jewish community, which arranged meals for us and helped in other ways.

Jason Varitek, the Red Sox catcher, came to visit children in the hospital. Ben didn't go to school that day, and Micah, who didn't feel good, wasn't going to miss Jason.

After she was cleared at the hospital, Micah and I ran to our car. She said that she had never seen me run so fast.

Micah graduated from Somerset High School and then went to Elmira College in upstate New York. After earning a social work degree and becoming licensed in mental health, she worked for the Veterans Administration in Washington, DC. She now owns a home in South Carolina and conducts therapy sessions via Zoom.

I would now like to say more about Ben. Following in my footsteps, he graduated from Northeastern Pharmacy School with a doctorate in pharmacy. He lives in Sacramento with his wife, Jenae, who's a nurse. My family enjoys celebrating Hanukkah on FaceTime.

By the way, both Ben and Micah enjoyed Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, Connecticut. In 1988, Paul Newman helped established this incredible camp for kids with cancer and other serious illnesses. Ben also worked at Hole in the Wall.

Maria remarried and lives in Fall River, but we have remained friends. She has remained Jewish but her husband is not. I wanted to keep our family together, and we did. We much enjoy gathering for Thanksgiving. I felt that Maria was a gift because we were able to raise a family.

I'm still busy working as a pharmacy director at Pembroke Hospital. I live in Sharon.

My friends in Temple Brotherhood now are basically the same guys I hung around with when we watched our children grow into mature adults. These friends are still active in Brotherhood.

Other reasons we stayed at Beth-El? Since Maria and I began going to services, we loved listening to and learning from Rabbi Les Gutterman. He had the knowledge to teach us, to make us cry, to make us laugh, and to make us feel better. Les called us often when Micah was sick, and we always looked forward to his calls.

I helped lead the daily minyan for two years and served on the Temple board's executive committee. I have also enjoyed serving as an usher, particularly on the High Holy Days.

Holding the office of Beth-El's Brotherhood's president was a privilege and an honor, and it opened many other Jewish doors as well. Stuart Aaronson (1944-2016), a lifelong Temple member,

Alan receiving national award from Brotherhood on behalf of Beth-El, 2019

became president of our chapter and eventually president of the national organization (2003-05), the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. (It is now known as Men of Reform Judaism.) Having helped plan Stuart's wonderful, national inaugural weekend in Providence, I was invited to join MRJ's board. I'm still involved on its executive committee.

My first project was working on NFTB's National Health Initiative. As part of National Men's Health Week, Beth-El Brothers held a program with two doctors, Richard Caesar and Martin Miner. Martin now runs the Men's Health Clinic at Miriam Hospital.

recent family gathering: Micah, author, Maria, Ben, his wife Jenae & dog Mo

In 2008, NFTB published *The Still Small Voice: Reflections On Being A Jewish Man.* I contributed a chapter, "Becoming a Better Man and a Better Jew." We teach future generations of Jews through our words and deeds.

I was able to work with about twelve Reform Brotherhoods in Rhode Island and greater Boston. I occasionally ran programs with them or sometimes simply attended their programs.

In 2011, after serving as assistant secretary, I became a vice president of NFTB. We have held our June meetings all over the country. The third national convention in Providence was held on June 23-25, 2023.

I have been proud to receive two awards. The first, the Bessie C. & S. Herbert Kaufman Award, was presented in 2007. The second was presented in 2016, in recognition of my unwavering support for Stuart Aaronson during his final illness. Stu has been the only Beth-El member who became president of NFTB. This second award was intended to exemplify the true spirit of *Gemilut Chasidim:* "Surely the righteous will never be shaken: they will be remembered forever" (Psalm 112:6).

I remain an optimist and am grateful for most of my experiences.

Why do I continue to deepen my bonds with Brotherhood? One factor is surely the loss of my own older brother. A statement by Rabbi Allan Tuffs of Temple Beth El in Hollywood, Florida, also rings true: "For too long Jewish men have been absent from the spiritual life of our people. To thrive, Judaism and the Jewish people need the spiritual energy that is unique to the masculine soul. As Jewish men, we reaffirm our commitment to the renewal and evolution of our sacred heritage. As biological or adoptive fathers and as teachers in our community, we fulfill the ancient commandment."

We teach future generations of Jews through our words and deeds. If men are involved and engaged, then we can do our part to ensure the future of Judaism.

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Temple Habonim at Sixty

Sandy Rosenberg

The author, born in Manhattan, was the eldest child of immigrants. Her father, Richard Mattison, came to America as a child from a small town near Kiev. His first language was Yiddish. Sandy's mother, Regina, came to New York as a teenager from the Greek island of Rhodes (then under Italian rule). Her native language was Ladino, but she also spoke French. Sandy's maternal grandfather, Rabbi Jacob Cabuli, led the Sephardic Jewish Center in the Bronx, and this is where she attended services.

Sandy graduated from the Bronx High School of Science in 1960 and then earned a Phi Beta Kappa key at City College of New York. She majored in English literature, loved art history, and worked in a French bookstore. She earned a master's degree at Harvard's Graduate School of Education.

In 1965, having returned to New York City, Sandy launched her career as an elementary school teacher. Through a date arranged by his classmate, she met James Rosenberg, a rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College, the Reform seminary in Manhattan, and they were married within a year. Following his ordination in 1971, the couple moved to Boston, where he became an assistant rabbi at Temple Israel. He discussed some of the strengths and weaknesses of this experience in his 2019 article, the second of three (thus far) for us.

When Sandy and Jim moved to Rhode Island in the summer of 1974, they had a six-week-old baby, Karen. The Rosenberg's son, David, was born five years later. Sandy and Jim now have five grandchildren.

Sandy was an educator for four decades. In the Ocean State she was a reading specialist at Providence Country Day School and then Lincoln School and later taught in the Barrington schools. She also earned a second master's degree in reading at Rhode Island College. Both Rosenberg children, who live in Massachusetts, also became educators.

In the following article, Sandy never describes herself as a *rebbetzin.* She proudly observes, however, that in 2024, one of

Temple Habonim's former rabbis and his wife will be celebrating a half-century of living in Little Rhody.

In the Beginning

Before the Pilgrims landed, Barrington was a home to the Wampanoags, and it was known by such Native American names as Sowams and Pokanoket. In 1717, the town of Barrington was founded by Congregationalist separatists from Swansea, Massachusetts. This was almost 250 years before Temple Habonim was established. Barrington was later ceded to Rhode Island, and in 1747 it merged with Warren. Barrington was eventually incorporated as a separate town in 1770.

Barrington was primarily a rural farming community for most of its history. In 1847, using the extensive deposits of red clay on Brickyard Pond, Nathaniel Potter founded the Nayatt Brick Company. Other companies followed during the 1850s, and these attracted many French Canadian and Italian workers. The construction of a steam railroad in 1855 made it relatively easy to travel seven miles southeast from Providence to Barrington.

The first Jews in Barrington were probably not merchants but summer visitors, who took advantage of new trains or automobiles to stay in hotels or summer cottages near the beaches on Narragansett Bay. As Prof. Michael Fink of RISD recalled in his 2021 article in our journal, he, his older brothers, and their parents stayed in the summer of 1944 at a home at 53 Teed Avenue on Hundred Acre Cove. This was an easy commute for Moe Fink, whose furniture business was located in East Providence.

Barrington's early Jewish visitors found no need to create a synagogue, however. This dream arose among a wave of permanent Jewish residents, who moved to town during the decades following World War II. Thanks partially to the construction of new highways and new schools, Barrington began evolving from a small town to a Providence suburb. Its population grew from about 8,000 in 1950 to about 14,000 in 1960 and reached its zenith of about 17,500 in 1970. Barrington's median household income would make it Rhode Island's wealthiest town.

Some of Barrington's new Jewish permanent residents, such as Barnet ("Bunny") Fain and Leonard ("Lenny") Rumpler, had grown up as friends in Providence. Some other new residents were transplants to Rhode Island. For example, Cliff Hostein and his wife, Rollie, chose Barrington because it was both near yet somewhat distant from his business in Fall River.

During the late 1950s, several Jewish families living on the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay felt the need to provide a social and educational meeting place for adults and children. Yes, it would have made some sense for these suburban Jews to affiliate with the established Conservative and Reform congregations on Providence's East Side, but convenience was a factor, especially when it may have meant driving children back and forth to religious and/or Hebrew school. Many Jews already commuted to businesses, offices, and classrooms in greater Providence or other cities and towns.

Bristol, which is about the same distance from Barrington as the East Side, had its own synagogue, United Brothers, which had been established in 1900. It closed in 1966, and was not revived until 1975.

According to Geraldine Foster and Eleanor Horvitz's article in the 2000 issue of this journal, on the founding of four suburban synagogues in Rhode Island, efforts to organize a Jewish group in Seekonk and Rehoboth began as early as 1953. (This was only a year before Temple Beth-El moved from South Providence to its stunning new building on Orchard Avenue.) Friends and relatives, led primarily by women, began meeting in members' homes. The group was less interested in religious observances than in social and educational activities – primarily for children.

Soon this group began renting space in the Roger Williams Grange Hall on Pawtucket Avenue in East Providence. On April 8, 1954, the group became known as the Eastward Jewish Center because all of its participants lived east of the Seekonk River. The Center received a Rhode Island State charter on March 24, 1955. The incorporators were: Alma Alper, Bernice Dickens, and Leonard Mandell from Massachusetts and Lawrence Arnoff, Donald Paster, Ralph Povar, and Grace Schwartz from Rhode Island. The Center's

annual budget was "not to exceed $2,000."

The first meeting to formally organize a new group and possibly establish a Jewish congregation was held in Jean and Barnet Fain's living room in Barrington in September of 1959. This was nearly two years after a group of ten families in Cranston began discussing the formation of a Reform congregation, which led to the creation of Temple Sinai. Both Jewish groups predated the national *havurah* movement, which, originally affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement, gained strength during the 1960s.

Barrington Jewish Center

According to Foster and Horvitz's article, Eastward Jewish Center came to an end by November 1, 1963, when many of its former members established a constitution and by-laws for the Barrington Jewish Center. Of approximately 65 Jewish families living in Barrington, "almost two thirds" became Center members. Barnet Fain, the first president (of 32), served from 1963 to 1964, and 36 children studied in the religious school. Saturday morning classes were taught by such parents as Jean Fain, Lois Graboys, and Beverly Malin. Shabbat services were held on a monthly basis.

Initially, the Center's families met in members' homes, community rooms in local churches, and in the basement of Barrington's Town Hall, which had been built in 1888. The first High Holy Day services were held in Barrington Congregational Church, which is part of the United Church of Christ. Its iconic structure, often called "the White Church" and dating from 1805, is glimpsed when entering town on the Wampanoag Trail (Route 114).

Inevitably, young Jewish families in and near Barrington sought a place of their own. Proud of their Jewish identities, these families sought both a visible presence and greater acceptance by their Gentile friends, acquaintances, and neighbors.

In 1965, members of the Barrington Jewish Center purchased their first building at 147 County Road for $25,000. This modest but attractive Victorian structure, originally a house, still stands. It is adjacent to St. John's Episcopal Church, often called "the Red Church," which dates from 1859. The Barrington Jewish Center

was also located across the street from the popular Chellel's Market and a shopping center erected in 1948. The little white house had just enough space for a small sanctuary and a kitchen on the ground floor and for two classrooms in the basement. An office, a rabbi's study, and a third classroom, were located under the eaves of the second floor.

The Barrington Preservation Society has documents and photos attesting to the fact that this little house at 147 County Road, originally known as Bosworth House, was actually moved across the street from its original location at 365 County Road. Bosworth & Son's General Store had been adjacent to this location.

Soon after the Barrington Jewish Center purchased Bosworth House, five members contributed $1,000 each to purchase a strip of land just below the building's property line. These donors were: Barnet Fain, George Graboys, Harvey Lapides, Leonard Rumpler, and Paul Segal. (Sadly, all of these leaders are now deceased.) Later, when the State of Rhode Island took the land to widen County Road, the Center received $7,250, and the men were repaid for their kindness.

In 1967 another milestone occurred, when the new congregation became the guardian of its first Sefer Torah. This was Holy Scroll #1133, one of 1,564 that the Nazis had plundered in Czechoslovakia and which were obtained in 1964 by Westminster Synagogue in London to redistribute to congregations around the world. To transport the Torah to Barrington, Joseph Fath's mother, Muriel, flew from London to Boston with it strapped into an adjacent seat. Eventually two more Torahs would be sent to Rhode Island: one to Temple Emanu-El in 1986 and another to the Bornstein Holocaust Education Center in 1995.

Initially, the Barrington Jewish Center was served by student rabbis (all men) from the Conservative and Reform movements. The first was Elihu Burkow, who would be ordained at the Reform movement's New York campus of Hebrew Union College in 1966. Alan Klepper recalled that these rabbinical students – usually from New York City – would come once or twice a month and stay overnight in the building at 147 County Road. He remembered that

he and his wife Linda were on the "house committee." This meant that the couple would come in on a Monday or Tuesday to vacuum and change the sheets for the next visitor.

Rollie Hostein, the Barrington Jewish Center's first woman president, recalled that the congregation took a vote on which national Jewish movement with which to affiliate. She did not recall how close the vote was, but the decision was to become part of the Reform movement.

Accordingly, in 1968, the Center hired its first full-time rabbi, Richard Weiss, who had graduated from HUC's Cincinnati campus in 1964. He later led Temple Beth Jacob in Pontiac, Michigan, and retired in 1990. He passed away in 2008.

In 1971, Robert Schenkerman, who had been ordained at HUC's New York campus in 1961, came from Hawaii to become the congregation's second rabbinical leader. During Rabbi Schenkerman's tenure, Marjorie Blowers became the Temple's beloved part-time secretary and its full-time secretary in 1989. Rabbi Schenkerman later led Temple Beth Torah in Melville (Long Island), New York, and Temple B'nai Emmunah in Tarpon Springs, Florida. He passed away in 2004.

A Long and Fruitful Partnership

In August of 1974, when James Rosenberg became the Jewish Center's third, full-time spiritual leader, no congregant could have imagined a partnership lasting 33 years. For that matter, Rabbi Rosenberg could not have imagined such a possibility.

James Rosenberg, who had been ordained at HUC's New York campus in 1971, came to Barrington after serving as one of two assistant rabbis to Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn at New England's largest Reform congregation, Temple Israel in Boston. In the fall of 1974, Rabbi Gittelsohn not only installed Rabbi Rosenberg, but also named Jim and Sandy's infant daughter, Karen, at a service held at St. John's Church in Barrington.

For several years, a group of Jewish Center members had been suggesting that the congregation choose a Hebrew name for its community. In March of 1975, a small group met with Rabbi

Marjorie Blowers & Rabbi Rosenberg

Rosenberg in Bob and Diana Glashow's home and decided that Rabbi Rosenberg's suggestion of Habonim would be perfect. *Habonim,* which means "The Builders," seemed most fitting for an evolving congregation.

In 1976, the year of our nation's bicentennial, Temple Habonim celebrated its bar mitzvah year. When Diana Glashow created a Temple history, she reported that, in 1976-77, the congregation's membership had grown to 110 families and that 120 children were enrolled in the religious school. The house at 147 County Road had been renovated to maximize its space, but as the congregation grew, the building began to feel very tight.

When the town of Barrington decided to sell its building at 165 New Meadow Road, which had been built in 1906 as a school and later served as the school department's administrative office, the news seemed too good to be true. The idyllic, riverfront setting and the structure's striking architectural lines made this opportunity especially appealing. After much discussion, and some strong dissension, the congregation voted to bid on the property.

Dr. Stephen Kaplan, who was president of Habonim from 1976 to 1978, remembered that he, Walter Oppenheim, and Herb Malin were the first to take a tour of the building when it became available for purchase. He said that the classrooms of today were originally coal storage bins!

When Alan Klepper was president of the Barrington Jewish Center, he had asked Herb Malin to serve as "clerk of the works" on the renovations to 147 County Road. Now Herb Malin, who was

Habonim's president, returned the favor by asking Alan to serve as the clerk of the works on the renovations to be done at 165 New Meadow.

David A. Presbrey, an award-winning Rhode Island architect, created a wonderful new home for Habonim. In a memorable procession in June of 1980, Rabbi Rosenberg and Remmie Brown, Habonim's cantorial soloist, carried the congregation's two Torahs from the porch of 147 County Road, east on County Road, and then north on New Meadow Road to 165. They were accompanied by many congregants and their children, who also helped carry the Torahs. In September of 1980, members and their guests were able to celebrate the High Holy Days in their own building for the first time.

It did not take Rabbi Rosenberg long to realize that in a town with seven Protestant churches, two Catholic churches, and Zion Bible College (Pentecostal), he would need to devote considerable time and energy to developing and strengthening interfaith relationships. As it turned out, Reverend James O'Brien, the senior minister of Barrington Congregational Church from 1972 to 1981, was living in the congregation's parsonage on Fireside Drive. This was just a few doors from the house that the Rosenbergs had purchased on Old Chimney Road. The two Jims soon became both colleagues and friends.

During Habonim's bar mitzvah year, Rabbi Rosenberg spoke to an interfaith audience at Barrington Congregational ("the White Church") on "A Rabbi's View of Christianity." In his lecture/discussion, he emphasized what he considered to be significant differences between the two religious traditions. Perhaps the most thorny was the role that the State of Israel played in the respective communities, especially in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973.

A few weeks after Rabbi Rosenberg's presentation, Rev. O'Brien was invited to speak to an interfaith audience at the synagogue on "A Minister's View of Judaism." Subsequently, Rev. O'Brien introduced Rabbi Rosenberg to several other clergy in town.

Early on, Rabbi Rosenberg helped form an increasingly

active Barrington Clergy Association, which met regularly to discuss a wide variety of local matters. In his first year or so in Barrington, he enlisted his fellow clergy to arrange for the town crèche to be moved from the lawn of the Town Hall during Christmas season to the lawn of the Barrington Congregational Church ˆ thereby resolving a sticky church-state issue, which, elsewhere in Rhode Island, has resulted in major lawsuits.

Over the years, Barrington's religious communities became more tolerant and cohesive. They began holding annual interfaith Thanksgiving worship services on the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving, the location rotating from church to church to synagogue. For many years, under Rabbi Rosenberg's leadership, the town's congregations came together for four to six weeks each spring for interfaith adult education. Each session, held at a different location, was led by a different member of the Barrington clergy. Many themes focused on differing religious perspectives, but at other times the clergy turned to more general themes, such as human sexuality or facing serious illness.

Rabbi Rosenberg's ecumenical outlook was expressed in other ways. For example, from September of 1980 through May of 1988, he taught part-time in the department of religious studies at Connecticut College in New London. Most years he taught a "Basic Judaism" course each fall semester, and he alternated his spring offerings between courses on Zionism and the Holocaust. On two occasions, he taught a seminar-style course on Jewish mysticism.

Rabbi Rosenberg brought the intellectual rigor he developed during his years of teaching at Connecticut College to many areas of his congregational and communal work. For example, in addition to his interfaith activities in Barrington, he expanded his outreach to clergy statewide. He met regularly with a group of rabbis and Catholic priests as well as with a more broadly-based group of interfaith clergy. He also participated in a relatively short-lived Black-Jewish Alliance.

As a natural student and teacher, Rabbi Rosenberg offered his congregants close readings of such relatively short biblical books as *Kohelet,* Song of Songs, Jonah, and Ruth. He also offered studies of

such longer and more complex books as Genesis and Job.

Over the years, the rabbi also taught such subjects as Jewish mysticism, varieties of meditation, and the State of Israel seen from multiple dimensions. For a small group of dedicated students, he also analyzed complicated legal passages from the acclaimed English translation of Adin Steinsaltz's commentary on the Babylonian Talmud.

Rabbi Rosenberg also introduced poetry-writing workshops to the congregation, and Habonim members produced four chapbooks. The initial volume, "Nutmeg and Clove," was assembled under the guidance of a synagogue poet, Lee Whitman-Raymond.

While Rabbi Rosenberg greatly enjoyed teaching adults, he was also deeply engaged with the Temple's religious school. He served as principal for no fewer than 32 of his 33 years at Habonim.

Two years before his retirement, he urged synagogue leadership to hire a part-time principal for the 2006-2007 academic year to run the school. Otherwise, he warned, the Temple would not be able to find his rabbinic successor. The congregation hired Linda Silverman Levine from Temple Solel in San Diego for this part-time position. She served as a most capable and inspiring principal until she returned to California with her husband in 2013, but still visits Habonim whenever possible.

In addition to serving 32 years as the Temple's principal, Rabbi Rosenberg spent all 33 years of his tenure preparing seventh graders for their bar or bat mitzvah. He also offered a cycle of classes one evening a week to ninth and tenth graders. This included guiding the tenth graders in writing large portions of their own Confirmation services. Copies of all 33 services are on file at Habonim.

The Temple can be especially proud of its students who grew up to become leaders in the Jewish world. These include, for example: Lisa Hostein, who is the executive editor of *Hadassah Magazine;* Allison Kaplan Sommer, a journalist for *Haaretz,* one of Israel's leading newspapers; Rabbi Marc Katz of Temple Ner Tamid in Bloomfield, New Jersey; and David Rosenberg, an assistant head at Rashi School in Dedham, Massachusetts.

While rabbinic leadership is vital to a congregation's growth, the work of lay leaders and their synergy with clergy are also crucial to a synagogue's success. Temple Habonim has been blessed with extraordinary lay leaders. Presidents and their boards have worked tirelessly to strengthen the congregation and reach out to the community at large.

Rabbi Richard Weiss brought a commitment to social justice to Habonim, and the congregation has remained true to that vision. When Harold Foster, a past Habonim president, was asked when the social action committee was formed and who served on it, he said, "Everyone at Habonim was on the committee." His words could not have been more accurate. Almost everyone has participated in the Temple's commitment to *tikun olam* – repairing the world. Harold emphasized that Habonim did not try to reinvent the wheel, but worked with such existing local agencies as Tap In, Women's Resource Center, and Jewish Federation (now Alliance) on national and international projects. BCTY, the Temple's youth group, always played an active role in Habonim's efforts.

During the 1980s, Daniel Marwil, a pediatrician, encouraged the congregation to become involved in Earth Day Rhode Island. Maxine Richman and Harold Foster led the congregation's impressive efforts to help Jews from Gomel in Belarus resettle in Rhode Island. This effort led to Habonim's assistance to a nondenominational medical clinic in Gomel.

Then Renee Vogel, a pathologist and a longtime member of Habonim, thought of asking Rhode Island doctors to donate drugs given to them as samples. She and her husband, Benjamin, also a physician, collected these samples and with the aid of Habonim members arranged for them to be carried in suitcases to Belarus.

During the fall of 1988, Rabbi Rosenberg traveled with Rabbi Cary Yales of Temple Isaiah in Lexington, Massachusetts, to Leningrad and Moscow in the former Soviet Union. They visited refuseniks in both cities, and miraculously all of them made their way to the United States or Israel.

One important social action project originated at Habonim, when Dr. Leonard Fein, a cofounder of MAZON: a Jewish Response

to Hunger, and the editor and founder of *Moment* magazine, came to speak at a Friday evening service. As was customary, he had Shabbat dinner with the Rosenbergs. When he spoke about the Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy, Sandy Rosenberg, a reading specialist in the Barrington public schools, suggested that we could create a Rhode Island Jewish Coalition for Literacy. Dr. Fein thought the idea had a lot of merit, so Sandy pitched the idea to Federation. Within weeks, it was up and running.

Sandy reached out to all the synagogues and social service agencies in Rhode Island, urging them to sign on and provide volunteer tutors. These included, for example, Brown's Hillel students. Within a few months, over 100 volunteers were tutoring in Providence schools. In May of 1999, Sandy and Steven Rakitt, Federation's chief executive, were honored with the Kaleidoscope Award for their work on behalf of Providence schoolchildren.

Not surprisingly, another area where Habonim's lay leaders played a crucial role was in fundraising. They sought not only to achieve a balanced budget but also to cover other expenses. During the congregation's early decades, for example, members worked all year to gather merchandise from local stores and businesses to sell at an annual pre-Christmas event called "Holiday Happening". Home-baked pastries were sold, and coffee and pastries were served to shoppers to build good will in the community. Habonim's Sisterhood also published a very successful cookbook, *Butterfingers,* which went through several printings before an even healthier, second edition was created.

In February of 1996, Habonim's president, Temma Holland, received a telephone call from the daughter of an elderly couple who had lived in a small house, built in 1910, which was adjacent to the Temple. The caller's second parent had died, so she wondered if Habonim might like to purchase the residence. Temma immediately contacted Walter Oppenheim for his always wise advice, and he encouraged the board to move forward. But where would the funds come from?

After the board expressed its approval for the purchase, Temma left the meeting and went to Rabbi Rosenberg's office, where

she began calling congregants who might be able to help with gifts or loans. Within a few hours, she received commitments for $115,000, and the purchase was fully funded. Many congregants worked enthusiastically to make repairs and paint the home's interior, and it has produced rental income ever since.

At the turn of the millennium, the Temple's facilities needed to expand again to keep pace with congregational growth. In September of 2003, the board, with the membership's approval, hired Jay Litman, a noted architect and a congregant, to draw up a plan for enlarging the structure. And what an extraordinary plan it was! The expansion would include updated classrooms, an enlarged sanctuary, and an enlarged social hall. At this time, membership numbered almost 200 families and 185 religious school students.

The enlarged sanctuary's ceiling is probably the first feature that visitors notice. While the rhythmic, undulating curves might remind some guests of clouds, others may think of ocean waves.

The glass art on either side of the bimah adds to the sanctuary's mysterious beauty. The artist, Paul Housberg, created a work that Rabbi Rosenberg has described as "both elusive and evocative in its abstraction." Both glass panels include Hebrew letters formed in the medieval Rashi script rather than more familiar block letters. Also rendered in clear glass is the *Ner Tamid,* the eternal light, by artist Neil Drobnis.

When closed, the handles on the ark's doors form a Mogen David. These were created by Seymour Glantz, an exceptionally talented artist who has also been a longtime Habonim member. He also created the wooden menorahs on both sides of the ark as well as the magnificent *Etz Chaim,* the Tree of Life, on the left wall of the bimah.

While much of the art in the sanctuary is new, other pieces were brought from the Temple's first home on County Road. For example, the bas relief of a rabbi placed at the building's entrance was originally created by Glantz for the entrance on County Road. The freestanding ark that now houses prayerbooks was the Temple's original ark. Its doors were redone by Temple member Lois Graboys after extensive research on Israel's twelve tribes.

Many members may also remember a handsome semi-portable mahogany ark that Jean and Barnet Fain commissioned from Hugh Townley, a Brown art professor, in the mid-1970s. This truly beautiful work of art is now on permanent loan to the Brown-RISD Hillel House from the Fains and Habonim.

Another Inspired Leader

In 2005, a rabbinic search committee cochaired by former Temple presidents Paul Segal and Bob Kemp was formed to begin to work in earnest to interview candidates to succeed Rabbi Rosenberg, who planned to retire in June of 2007. Congregants felt that candidates would be eager to come to a warm, stable, and beautiful synagogue in a lovely New England town close to Boston and New York. Yet, congregants were disappointed when Rabbi Arnold Sher, the placement director for the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis, came to meet with the search committee, which expressed pride in the beautiful, new sanctuary. After taking a look around, Rabbi Sher exclaimed, "It's no Taj Mahal."

The search committee held telephone and in-person interviews at Habonim and visited some of the leading candidates in their synagogues, which Bob Kemp described as their "native habitats." Fortunately, the committee turned out to be in total agreement, and it offered the position to Andrew Klein, who had been ordained at HUC's New York campus in 2001 and served as the associate rabbi of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The committee was thrilled when Rabbi Klein accepted its offer.

During the spring of 2007, there were many events to welcome Rabbi Klein and to bid farewell to Rabbi Rosenberg. At a dinner in honor of Jim's retirement, Dr. Jerald Katz, Habonim's

president, presented Jim with the red bike on which he can still be seen riding almost daily on Providence's Blackstone Boulevard.

That summer, when Rabbi Klein and his husband, Adam Mastoon, a very talented writer and photographer, moved to Barrington, a new era in the congregation's life began to unfold. Rabbi Klein began by making sure that there would be some measure of continuity. Daniel Marwil, who had begun in 1980 to serve as Habonim's High Holy Day cantor and occasional bar and bat mitzvah cantor, agreed to continue in that role.

In addition, Rabbi Klein asked Marjorie Blowers to stay on as his administrative assistant. "Margie," as she was called by all, was much loved in the life of the Temple. In fact, she was the hub of Habonim! Her bright blue eyes and warm smile radiated welcome. She had the patience of a saint and the amazing ability to call upon St. Anthony whenever anything was temporarily lost or missing. When serious illness forced her to retire in August of 2010, hundreds of people came to a special service and *oneg* in her honor. There were almost as many people present for a tree-planting ceremony in her memory in the fall of 2011.

Rabbi Klein immediately brought both warmth and wisdom to Habonim, and it quickly became apparent that the congregation would be in exceptionally capable hands. During his first weeks, toward the end of summer, he arranged to hold some Kabbalat Shabbat services at Barrington Beach, a tradition that continues.

Rabbi Andrew Klein & Adam Mastoon

Early on, Rabbi Klein quipped that he was "not another singing rabbi." What might have been a concern turned out to be an excellent

example of necessity being the mother of invention. During his years at Habonim, Rabbi Klein brought many talented and engaging vocalists and musicians – in addition to Daniel Marwil – to share their talent and lift the congregation's voice in song. For example, in the fall of 2007, Max Chaiken, a Brown student who would become a Reform rabbi, served as the Temple's first song leader. When Max departed, Jodi Blankstein, a cantorial soloist studying at Boston's Hebrew College, joined Rabbi Klein. Later, Deborah Johnson, an art history professor at Providence College, followed Jodi.

Music also came from within the Temple's membership. For example, Dr. Ivan Wolfson often accompanied Jodi Blankstein on guitar. Leslie Katz, who had been an active Temple member for many years, became the *shli'ach tsibur* (representative of the congregation) and led Shabbat services with Rabbi Klein on many Friday evenings. Diane Minasian, energized by singing in an African tradition, approached Rabbi Klein with her idea of creating a new musical group. Coming together by word of mouth, it often met on Sundays after religious school. What emerged was a group called *Ruach* (Spirit), which has performed some of the most moving music ever heard in a synagogue.

Joe Shansky, a member of *Ruach,* also brought his creative talents over many years to numerous Purim spiels and original musicals. The most spectacular was his *Beraysheet,* which was written in conjunction with the Temple's thirtieth anniversary in 1993. Set to the music of "Fiddler on the Roof," *Beraysheet* brought to life the drama and excitement of the congregation's early years. Joe and Bob Kemp also coauthored "The Rabbinical Dream," set to the music of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," to celebrate Rabbi Klein's dream of having "a schul of my own."

Rabbi Klein brought a great many other innovations to Habonim. For example, in the fall of 2007, the Temple began weekly e-blasts, a major administrative improvement. In March of 2008, the Confirmation class, led by Rabbi Klein, went to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Reform movement's social action program for Jewish teenagers; this journey to the nation's capitol has become an annual event.

In the fall of 2008, Rabbi Klein also initiated Thursday "Lunch and Learn" sessions, which became very popular. The initial group of participants, who developed a strong sense of community, welcomed newcomers. With Rabbi Klein, the participants discussed secular current events as well as Israel, the weekly Torah portion, selections from prophetic sections of our Hebrew Bible (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Isaiah) as well as life cycle events.

Shortly after "Lunch and Learn" was firmly in place, Edie and Jerry Weinstein suggested creating a havurah. It too has brought many Habonim members together. They continue to meet every-other-month for a potluck dinner in a member's home and engage in a previously selected topic of discussion.

In March of 2011, Rabbi Klein and Adam Mastoon led an interfaith trip to Israel with Rev. Jeff Larson and his wife, Kathleen, for members of Temple Habonim and Barrington Congregational Church. The group visited sites significant to both religious traditions.

In the years that followed, Rabbi Klein initiated an overseas congregational trip to Eastern Europe, a second trip to Israel, and a trip to Cuba. The Shabbat evening when congregants reported on their visits to Auschwitz, Krakow, Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, and Vienna was riveting. Linda Klepper also made an impressive photo album, which is available in the Temple library.

In addition to journeys involving travel, Rabbi Klein introduced a very moving addition to the afternoon Yom Kippur service called "Jewish Journeys." Each year two or three congregants speak about their journeys to or within Judaism. The talks are always a very powerful part of the Days of Awe.

In June of 2012, a few months before celebrating the fifth anniversary of Rabbi Klein's tenure, the congregation held its first LGBTQ Pride Shabbat. The speaker was Jordan Pious, who grew up at Habonim. The following year, April Peters, who had been a Temple vice president and later became a Reform rabbi, was the speaker. Perhaps the most powerful Pride Shabbat was held the year before Andy Klein retired, when he and Adam spoke about growing up, finding themselves, and finding each other.

In 2016, Temple Habonim became the first congregation in Rhode Island to join the HIAS Welcome Campaign, a global effort to support refugees. Some other Jewish congregations followed quickly. Elizabeth Bakst and Bob Kemp led Habonim's efforts to act locally as well as globally by actively supporting Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, the state's largest refugee resettlement agency.

When Linda Silverman Levine and her husband left Rhode Island to return to California, the Temple sought a new principal who could also serve as its song leader. This seemed a daunting task, but soon after moving to Rhode Island with his young family in the summer of 2015, David Perolman demonstrated that he could fill those dual roles splendidly.

In January of 2019, shortly after leading the second congregational trip to Israel, Rabbi Klein announced his plans to retire in June of 2020. The congregation was heartbroken, but the Temple's board quickly appointed a search committee cochaired by two former presidents, Nicole Jellinek and Alan Buff. The search committee offered the congregation many opportunities to reflect upon its future needs. Thanks to strong leadership – both lay and rabbinical – Habonim had grown from humble roots in borrowed facilities to become a vibrant and thriving congregation. Old and newer members alike began to envision the next chapter in the Temple's evolution.

Into the Future

When the search committee was ready to share its recommendations with the entire membership, the board convened a congregational meeting in the winter of 2020. The committee announced its choice of Howard Voss-Altman, the senior rabbi of Providence's Temple Beth-El, to follow Andy. Formerly a lawyer, he was ordained at HUC's Cincinnati campus in 1999, served as an assistant rabbi at North Shore Congregation Israel in Illinois, and for 13 years led Temple B'nai Tikvah in Calgary. Surprised and delighted by the search committee's announcement, congregants enthusiastically voted their approval. Yet, nobody present at that meeting could have imagined what would occur little more than

a month later. The entire world would be gripped by a terrifying pandemic.

In March of 2020, the congregation held a festive Purim spiel, but the carnival that was planned for the following Sunday had to be cancelled. Similar changes quickly followed. For the last months of his 13 years at Habonim, Rabbi Klein was alone in the Temple building. On Friday nights, David Perolman came in to lead services with Rabbi Klein, which were livestreamed for the congregation. David and Andy often led services from separate spaces in the building during the early, very frightening days of the Covid pandemic. Adina Davies, who had been hired to replace Jodi Sullivan as Habonim's administrative assistant, began using a laptop to work from home.

The transition committee, led by Ruth Fain, had planned all sorts of festivities to honor Rabbi Klein's exceptional contributions to the community. Sadly, however, all farewells needed to be "live-streamed" or "Zoomed."

Adina David, Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman & David Perolman

Rabbi Voss-Altman, who asked congregants to call him "Rabbi Howard," began his leadership of Habonim in July of 2020, also under the dark cloud of Covid. Several outdoor "meet and greets" took place during that summer, but services continued to be live-streamed from an empty sanctuary.

Rabbi Howard delivered a formal sermon every Friday evening, and congregants immediately realized that he was a strong advocate for the voiceless and a powerful speaker on a wide range of topics. Congregants also glimpsed Rabbi Howard's interests in film, theatre, and music, as well as his family's love of Disney World.

As Temple members became more comfortable using computer technology, Torah study was held on Saturday mornings via Zoom. Beach services and some other outdoor services were held, but there was only a gradual return to in-person, Temple gatherings.

Rabbi Howard is clearly ready to bring Habonim into the world of post-Covid opportunity, and there is every reason to look forward to many more years of his leadership as he further guides Barrington's 60-year-old congregation from strength to strength.

Temple Habonim Presidents

Barnet Fain z"l (of blessed memory)	1963-64
Donald Miller z"l	1964-66
George Graboys z"l	1966-68
Joseph Fath z"l	1968-69
Edwin Mehlman	1969-70
Allan Klepper	1970-72
George Miller z"l	1972-74
Rollile Hostein (first woman president)	1974-76
Stephen Kaplan	1976-78
Herbert Malin z"l	1978-80
Richard Carr z"l	1980-82
Roberta Segal	1982-84
William Mutterperl	1984-86
Walter Oppenheim z"l	1986-88
Steven Baron z"l	1988-90
Paul Segal z"l	1990-92
Janet Shansky	1992-94
Temma Holland	1994-96
W. Robert Kemp	1996-98
Ron Kurtzman	1998-2000
Harold Foster	2000-02
Larry Berren	2002-04
Pat Buff	2004-06
Jerald Katz	2006-08
Alan Buff	2008-10
Ruth Fain	2010-12
Leslie Lorber	2012-14
Lisa Shea	2014-16
Nicole Jellinek	2016-18
Alane Torf	2018-20
Ivan Wolfson	2020-22
Heidi Brousseau	2022-24

Twenty Years Later: Reconsidering My Book on American Synagogue Architecture

Samuel Gruber

Dr. Gruber's previous article in our journal appeared in the 2019 issue. Following a visit to Rhode Island, he wrote about five of our notable synagogues. They still intrigue and inspire him.

Sam and I did not meet until 2005, when we lectured at a conference on American Jewish history at Cornell. For a variety of reasons, I feel that we have become close colleagues. One obvious reason is our devotion to synagogue architecture. Both of us are also Italophiles. And both of us studied in Columbia University's celebrated graduate program in art history and archaeology, though I earned only a master's degree there and I preceded Sam by several years.

Perhaps it's also important to acknowledge that, beginning with the medieval era, both of us were weaned on centuries of Christian art and iconography. Yes, Columbia's distinguished art history faculty included many Jews, but I don't recall ever examining a major or even a minor example of Jewish art or being invited to celebrate Shabbat- let alone a holiday. For that matter, religious art from around the world was seldom studied from a spiritual perspective – and never through music or silence.

We graduate students never entered a house of worship together. Of course the Jewish Theological Seminary and several landmark churches were located only a few blocks away. In some sense we graduate students were cloistered, though we didn't even visit The Cloisters, the Metropolitan Museum's campus for medieval art.

Yes, Columbia offered a few courses on modern art and American art, but our professors were unable or unwilling to acknowledge that, given small numbers of Jewish artists, other Jewish contributions to art have been enormous. Indeed, such contributions have mattered far beyond a Jewish context.

No doubt another reason that Sam and I feel like colleagues is our

coffered sanctuary ceiling, Temple Beth-El

sense of humor. Academic and Judaic worlds are not exclusively solemn places. At the very least, we can laugh at some of our own aspirations, shortcomings, and foibles. Indeed, studying art, even within a Jewish realm, can be loads of fun! At times, even a bit foolish.

There's perhaps another reason why Sam and I feel like colleagues. Both of us, reared and educated far from here, can marvel at Little Rhody's distinction. Such splendid examples of synagogue art found in such a tiny corner of our country, if not the world. Indeed, but perhaps as always, Judaism's magnificence has had so little to do with numbers.

Twenty years ago, Rizzoli published my book, *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community.* It doesn't seem like so many years have passed, but they have. Now seems a good time to look back to see what the book got right and what it did not.

I had not planned to write a book about American synagogues. I was not an expert in the field, though there have been and still are very few.

Two decades ago, most of my work on synagogues had focused on the history and the current needs of Jewish heritage sites – especially in Eastern Europe – where I had been working on documentation and historic preservation projects. Since 1989, I had focused on synagogues and cemeteries for the World Monuments Fund and the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

My book came about because I was approached by Scott Tilden, who developed architectural books, mostly for commercial publishers. Scott wanted to create a book about modern synagogues in collaboration with the talented architectural photographer Paul Rocheleau. Scott and Paul were savvy about publishing but knew very little about synagogues. At that time very few people knew much about American synagogues – at least from a historical and an architectural perspective. There had not been a significant book published on the subject since Rachel Wischnitzer's *Synagogue Archi-*

tecture in the United States: History and Interpretation (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955).

Scott turned to a prominent architectural historian, Prof. Carol H. Krinsky of New York University, who had published *Synagogues of Europe* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). Not interested in writing a book about American synagogues, she suggested that he talk to me. I had written *Synagogues* (New York: Metrobooks, 1999), which was primarily a photographic overview of notable structures in the Middle East, Israel, Asia, Europe, and North America. Of course Newport's Touro Synagogue was included.

Though not an expert on the modern era, I was interested in all aspects of synagogue design. I was also a quick study and might be able to help put together a commercial book in a fairly short time. Because I was not a full-time professor on a tenure track, I might be willing to skip the more common academic press route to publishing. So Prof. Krinsky was right: I was interested.

The invitation came at just the right time, when I was looking for a new topic to teach at Syracuse University, where, since 1994, I've usually taught one course a year on some aspect of Jewish art and architecture. Thus, I agreed to write a book about American synagogues and, around the same time, teach a course on the same subject.

It quickly became apparent that Rizzoli, which was the most likely publisher of this book, was not particularly interested in a wide-ranging or deeply scholarly book about American synagogue architecture. But it did want an attractive book with high-quality photography that featured the best-known modern synagogues of which their editors were aware. This was a problem for me, because there were only two or three well known modern synagogues, such as those by Frank Lloyd Wright and Minoru Yamasaki. But these noteworthy examples are hardly representative of the long history and diversity of American synagogue architecture- or even of the variety of synagogues built during the 20th century.

Essentially, Rizzoli wanted a coffee-table book on a fast schedule. I had already written a quick, coffee-table book about synagogues, but I also wanted that to make a substantive contribu-

sanctuary interior, Temple Beth-El

tion to the study of synagogue and architectural history.

After several discussions with Scott and Paul, and then with David Morton, Rizzoli's experienced editor, I was able to convince them that the book would be much more useful and probably sell more copies if it covered more ground. I showed them that there were remarkable synagogues built in the first half of the twentieth century that had hardly ever been published. Even when still standing, these were virtually unknown even to architectural historians, let alone the general public.

I explained it would be impossible to understand the impact of Wright's and Yamasaki's synagogues without first understanding a larger context: the types of synagogues that had been popular before World War II and were still in use when new suburban synagogues began to be designed. I don't think that my editors at Riz-

zoli knew anything about the four American synagogues designed by Eric Mendelsohn – a name they did know – or a vastly larger number designed by Percival Goodman, which included Providence's quite notable Temple Beth-El. Ultimately, the book included Goodman's Providence synagogue (with seven photographs) and his Temple Beth Sholom, in Miami Beach (with six photographs), completed in 1956, only two years later.

I don't think that Providence's Beth-El was a first choice for a Goodman building, but I now know that it was one of my best choices. We had hoped to include Goodman's earlier synagogue, B'nai Israel in Millburn New Jersey, completed in 1951, but we were refused permission. This was right after 9/11, and the congregation's leadership had concerns about security.

That's when we looked at Providence. I must have come across George Goodwin's important article, published in the spring/summer 1993 issue of *American Jewish Archives,* which must have made my writing about the building much easier.

Before writing my book, I had never consciously entered a Goodman synagogue, but since then, I have visited many, several of which were deserving of a place in the book. Now, with two more decades' experience, I'm certain that Providence's Beth-El is one of Goodman's best buildings, and it has been well-cared for since its opening. I've written blog posts about Goodman's synagogues and included many of my own photographs taken on these visits. Indeed, I dream of producing a beautiful, analytic, and well-illustrated book about all of Goodman's many synagogue buildings.

The time frame we had for this project was very short, just about two years from the signing of the contract to the publication date. That meant that all the buildings had to be chosen, all the visits had to be arranged, all the research had to be done, all the text had to be written, everything had to be edited, and the book had to be designed in about a year and a half. Anyone who has had anything to do with an academic project knows that this is an almost unheard-of speed.

The time frame was good for me because it forced me to work constantly on the project and get it done. But I knew every day

that if more time had been available, I could have obtained much more and better information, checked other people's information more carefully, and personally visited all the buildings.

I set about to compile a list of important synagogues, but there were numerous constraints. For example, Rizzoli was quite adamant that this was to be a book about architecture, not religion. It was not a history book, but one about existing buildings. The editors and designers were not interested in historic photos or information about buildings that no longer survived. They wanted good-looking buildings, preferably by name architects, and with sexy photos that would have been at home on the pages of *Progressive Architecture* or *Architectural Record.*

I wanted something different. I wanted to tell the story of the evolution of American synagogue design and also to describe the various types of buildings and to identify how they best met the needs of America's diverse Jewish communities. Some of these ideas made it into the introductions for different sections, but most of the text consisted of more detailed analysis of individual synagogues.

How were the buildings chosen? There were no lists to work from, and there had been a lot of building since Wischnitzer's book. Avram Kampf's excellent *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966) helped get us to the mid-1960s. The catalogue of the important exhibition, *Recent American Synagogue Architecture,* organized by New York City's Jewish Museum in 1963, was also helpful. Its curator was none other than the future "starchitect" Richard Meier, who would never design a synagogue.

To flesh out the list of synagogues from 1965 to 2000 was more difficult. For the most part, synagogues were not regularly featured in architectural journals. Similarly, the Jewish press had not been much interested in reporting architectural details.

Today we have the advantage of being able to digitally search many local Jewish newspapers of the past century, but these were not easily available 20 years ago. I appealed to congregations for help in locating dedication programs, architectural descriptions, newspaper articles, and building committees' correspondence with

architects. Sometimes we were successful and some of this material made it into the book.

The Internet was still fairly limited, and there was no Facebook. Similarly, most library and archival catalogs were not on-line or digitized. E-mail was up and running, and one could put out queries on certain listservs, but it was still hard to communicate the way we routinely can today.

Nevertheless, within a few months, I was able to compile a substantial list of notable twentieth-century synagogues and their architects. Much of the information I gathered had to be cut because of space limitations, which included the number of words accompanying photographs, but I have often used some of these details in other ways.

Presumably for marketing reasons, Rizzoli wanted a book with national coverage. Therefore, we were discouraged from including too many synagogues within only a few geographical regions. But Jews have not settled evenly around this country or any other. Just as an entire book could have been written about Goodman's synagogues, so too could one have focused on noteworthy modern synagogues in metropolitan New York City, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles or Miami. Our approach meant ignoring scores of important buildings but also traveling the country to photograph interesting but often obscure synagogues from as many places as possible. I am still proud of some of these "discoveries."

The budget for the book was not very high, so to obtain a national sample of synagogues, our photographer, Paul Rocheleau, combined our project with two other books he was working on. He and I made a master list of potential buildings from all over the country, and he tried to include some likely synagogues where he would be working. After calling a congregation to make arrangements for Paul's visit, I would continue or begin my own research. Surprisingly, this process worked very well, and in some cases actually allowed the inclusion of important synagogues that had been unknown to us.

This is how a brand-new synagogue, for Agudath Achim in Austin, Texas, was included. Paul was working on another project

in San Antonio, but would be passing through Austin. He called me in California, where I was working at the time, so I could then make some calls to Texas. Some information about Agudath Achim was sent to me, and it was clear that it had built a remarkable building. With only one day's notice, I was able to obtain permission for Paul to visit and take photographs. By a happy coincidence, the person who answered the phone owned a copy of my previous book, *Synagogues,* and we had some mutual acquaintances, so she was eager to help set things up.

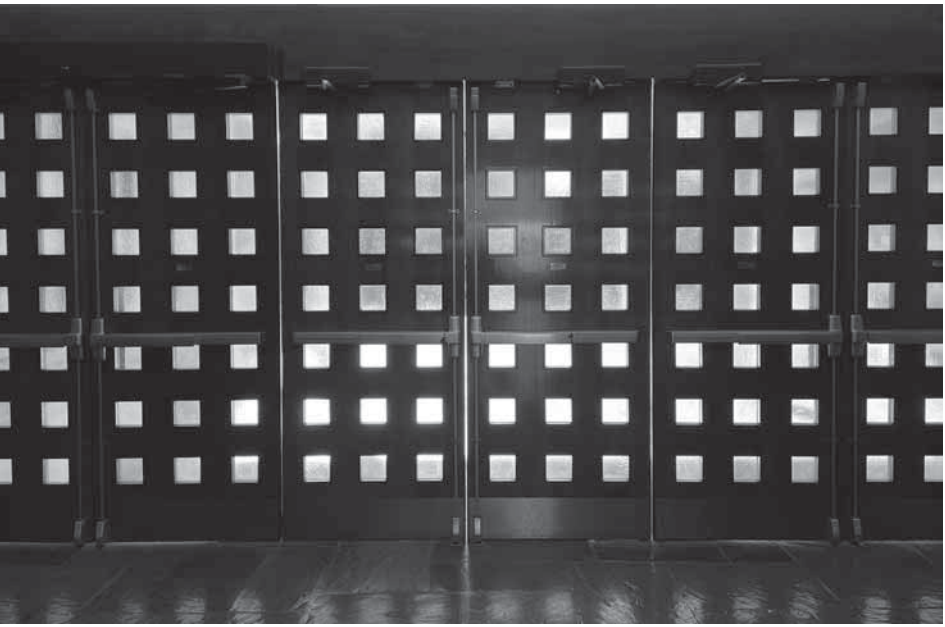
Over the years many people have complimented me on the book, and I have in turn asked them what they liked best. Usually, it was the photographs. It became clear that most people did not read the text or at least did not read it in any consistent way. So, I always told them I appreciated their approval but they really should be thanking Paul, not me.

The decision was made early on to provide more than one photo of each synagogue in order to convey a building's appearance and significance. Architectural books that define synagogues only by their facades usually miss the buildings' significance. Therefore, if we were going to include three to six photos of each synagogue, then the number of buildings would also be reduced. Similarly, I insisted on providing longer and more analytic descriptions of each building rather than a short, thumbnail entry. In the end, we were able to include 35 synagogues within the size of book that Rizzoli was ready to produce.

For people who read and understood my text, I think that the book was something of a revelation, especially in the way that synagogues were described. Having taken a lot from Wischnitzer's book, I strove to emulate her ability to seamlessly interweave history, description, and analysis. But my material for most synagogues had to be gleaned from many different sources. So, surprisingly for a Rizzoli coffee-table book, I tried to provide a complete set of endnotes.

I didn't say so at the time of publication, but I will admit now that there were many synagogues that I wrote about but never saw personally. I think that by now I have seen all of them.

But there were also differences, at first, between the ways



entrance doors, Temple Beth-El

that Paul and I viewed synagogues. That is, Paul had his own way of looking at a building, and so did I. Fortunately, early in the project, we were able to visit some buildings together, and I was able to explain my method and also to suggest a greater variety of vantage points. This meant, literally, taking photos from many angles. One might be that of a congregant sitting within a sanctuary.

Unfortunately, Rizzoli wanted only beautiful buildings – or at least beautiful photos of buildings- which meant empty buildings, especially sanctuaries. So we couldn't include schools, libraries, social halls, kitchens, and all the other ancillary spaces – inside and outdoors – that form, define, and animate a synagogue. (True, we probably didn't need any photos of empty or overflowing parking lots.) Paul and I suggested having an insert, perhaps in black and white, to show some interiors filled with worshippers, but this idea was rejected.

Today, looking back at the book, I regret nothing that was

included, but privately wince about all the remarkable synagogues and architects left out. For example, Samuel Glaser's B'nai Israel in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. I would love to write a sequel to *American Synagogues* – actually three sequels (plus the Goodman book)!

Paul and I actually pitched a prequel – a book focusing on eighteenth – and nineteenth – century American synagogues: beginning with Touro in Newport and continuing to Shearith Israel in New York City. We could easily do another book on twentieth-century synagogues, which could include Temple Emanu-El in Providence. At least one new book with color illustrations is also needed for synagogue art, especially stained glass. For such a volume, I would include Emanu-El's windows by the Keck Studio of Syracuse and the Woonsocket synagogue, with its great abstract windows by Avigdor Arikha. Lastly, it is already time for a book about synagogues built during the last 25 years, which would also explore the impact of new technology.

People often ask me what were the greatest surprises in writing the book and what I learned the most. Well, the lavish synagogues of the 1920s were a big surprise to me. I hadn't known about most of them before the project began. We could only show a few of them but they represent an entire class of Jewish architecture which already, in 2000, had been mostly forgotten. Of the modern buildings, the one that impressed me most – in part because I had never heard of it – is Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo designed by Max Abramowitz and completed in 1967. When I visited this building, I was just blown away by the brilliance of its expressive form. Outside it doesn't look like much but inside it's one of the most striking interiors I've ever been in. It should be included in every book on modern American architecture, but to this day I find that most of my architect friends have never heard of it. Sadly, I recently learned that Beth Zion's survival as a functioning synagogue is uncertain.

I'm mostly very proud of the book but I do have several regrets. It needed some additional proofreading, and my copy is marked up with many small mistakes I've noticed when I've gone back to use the text. The book was supposed to have been published in paperback once a certain number of hardback copies had been

sold, and this would have allowed greater use within Jewish studies and architectural programs as well as within synagogues. But as is the case with many commercially published books, after a flurry of interest in the months following publication, a publisher moves on to a new list of books to be promoted during the following season. American Synagogues did sell out within a few years, but it was never republished.

After the book was published, I used to joke, when giving lectures, that I could have written a sequel entitled: *American Synagogue Buildings Not in the First Book but That Have Been Brought to My Attention by Their Architects during My Lectures.* I was constantly being upbraided by architects and other Jewish professionals for not including their designs or their favorite synagogues. So, I had to explain the limitations of such a project.

Is it time for another book about American synagogues? Well, several specialized studies have come out since my book was published, but I do think that a comprehensive book would be useful.

For better and worse, many new synagogues are quite different from their predecessors. Many new buildings are much smaller, but others have more open spaces. There's also a surprising mix of new synagogues within urban and quite rural settings. These trends were indicated in the final sections of my book, but much more has happened to congregational life during the ensuing decades.

Now one of the most and least impressive developments within congregational life is a reliance on Zooming. For too many Jews, a synagogue and a cell phone have become interchangeable, and this will certainly impact the use of existing synagogues and the design of new ones. On the other hand, during the COVID pandemic, many congregations began to regularly use their large sanctuaries again because they allowed for social distancing. But this was also evidence that for many twentieth-century synagogues, congregations are now too small to support their large facilities.

A lot more has happened to some of the synagogues presented in my book during the past two decades. For instance, B'nai Jehudah, built in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1967, has been demolished. Others, such as Wilshire Boulevard Temple, built in Los Angeles in

1929, has not only been wonderfully restored but experienced an enormous expansion. Presently, K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation, built in Chicago in 1923, and Congregation Israel, built in suburban Glencoe, Illinois, in 1965, are being renewed. Sadly, however, my own congregation, Temple Society of Concord, built in Syracuse in 1910, has been sold but with the expectation that it will be partially preserved, though not as a synagogue.

Change is an inevitable part of the American Jewish experience. Books like *American Synagogues* are needed to document, explain, celebrate, and perhaps mourn its impact. We are not merely a functional religion, however. Within Judaism, settings and beauty matter, for they help create and strengthen a sense of community and inspire greater possibilities. Even with an abundance of new technologies, I hope that the age of building proud, magnificent, and noble synagogues has not passed or never will.

[right to left]:
Rhode Islanders Mark & Cindi Feinstein, Timna Benn's parents, Timna, her husband Sender Kaplan, Hannah Feinstein from RI, and her friend

Israel's Young Ambassadors to Rhode Island

Lawrence M. Katz

Larry has been a Jewish educator in our community for no fewer than 26 years. Originally the assistant director of the Bureau of Jewish Education, he later served as the Alliance's director of Jewish life and learning. Even after his official retirement in June 2023, he continues to serve on the boards of numerous Jewish organizations, including our own.

As is evident in the following article, Larry loves working with young Israelis. Indeed, among his extensive travels, he has visited Israel nearly 20 times.

A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Larry grew up at Temple Israel, a Conservative congregation that his parents had helped found. While president of its youth group, he traveled to the Soviet Union to meet and encourage Jewish dissidents. He graduated from the Hebrew Academy of Tidewater and a public high school before studying at Columbia College (in New York City, not South Carolina). He spent his junior year studying at Hebrew University.

While pursuing his bachelor's degree, Larry also earned a master's in Jewish education at the nearby Jewish Theological Seminary. In 2010, this led to an honorary degree, Doctor of Pedagogy, from JTS. But Larry doesn't sound or act like a pedagogue! Despite abundant accomplishments, he's a modest and humble person.

Before arriving in Rhode Island, Larry worked in Cleveland's Bureau of Jewish Education and was principal of what he calls "complementary" schools. He also was president of the Canadian region before leading the much larger Jewish Educators Assembly.

Larry's devotion to Judaism and Judaica includes building a wonderful stamp collection. Needless to say, he also enjoys reading. He and his wife, Marilyn, are active members of Temple Emanu-El. Ironically, both their sons now live in Virginia. Larry's article, written a year and a half ago, can now be seen in a different light. The photos he gathered also illustrate what we have always known.

Every year the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) trains more than 1,000 enthusiastic, driven, and proud Israelis to serve as *shlichim* (emissaries, plural) in Jewish communities around the world. The young ambassadors who come to Rhode Island, for example, have numerous responsibilities. They teach, inform, and serve as role models for a life lived in Israel. They inspire our community and, in turn, are inspired by us.

A Rhode Island *shaliach* (male singular) or *shlichah* (female singular) serves as a central resource for Israel education and engagement by building and strengthening Jewish identity. These young ambassadors represent a diverse and vibrant Israel (separate from the politics of government). They also play a leading role in shaping what Israel and Jewish identity can mean for individuals and communities living in the Diaspora.

Practically speaking, effective advocacy for Israel can only result from feelings of deep connection to the Jewish homeland. Such a connection is not the product of advocacy seminars (which may be great for building strategies), but largely from positive personal interactions with Israelis. It is all about relationships; programs are secondary.

It is hard to know how many people are moved or touched by a *shaliach* or a *shlichah* because these young ambassadors teach in a variety of places across the community and conduct numerous programs. Although they work primarily with Jews, they interact with many others as well.

Before the COVID pandemic, a young ambassador's J-Space (the after-school program for elementary grades at the Dwares Jewish Community Center) was always full and in demand. Teachers in the JCC's Early Childhood Center wanted to know when an Israeli would return for a visit or was available for appearances in both of Providence's Jewish community day schools. Each *shaliach* or *shlichah* would not only serve Rhode Island's Hillel programs but would often be called to classes and to informal gatherings at Brown, Johnson & Wales University, and even Salve Regina University. Similarly, young ambassadors were asked to speak to adults at various synagogues as well as to such membership organizations as the

Jewish War Veterans and Hadassah. Needless to say, the ambassadors would also speak at celebrations of Israel's national holidays and sometimes even in the news media. Each summer, the young Israelis also serve at Camp JORI.

During the pandemic, however, personal appearances were quite limited. Nevertheless, as many as 300 devices were often connected for a remote program. A more typical program brought 50 to 100 viewers and listeners together.

Background

Since its founding, Israel has sent *shlichim* to Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. For example, during the 1950s, my father had an Israeli cousin who was sent to Brazil.

During the 1980s and into the 1990s, Project Renewal was a program that paired Jewish communities in North America with distressed Israeli neighborhoods that needed rehabilitation. Needless to say, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island was involved.

Ruth ("Duffy") Page, who ran the Bureau of Jewish Education's Israel Desk until 2005, recalls that our community partnered with the Stern Street neighborhood in Jerusalem. Under the auspices of our JCC, a group of teens, led by Cantor Remmie Brown, went to Israel for a month and connected with Israeli teens at its Hassenfeld Community Center. (Of course the Hassenfelds were and are major philanthropists from Rhode Island.) Subsequently, seven or eight Israeli teens came here to work at our JCC's summer camp. The teens stayed with local families, and I coordinated housing arrangements. This program lasted for two or three years.

Duffy explained that Ofra Ben Hamo, a teen who stayed with her family, became a close friend. In fact, when Duffy's daughter, Laura, spent her junior year at Hebrew University, Ofra was also a student there. So they spent much time together. Laura also flew to Israel to attend Ofra's wedding to Tzhahi, an Israeli from Ethiopia. Two of their three children are now serving in the Israeli army.

During the 1990s, when serving as executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Rhode Island, Steven Rakitt tried to democratize the relationship with Israel. He did not want it to be a program

involving only Rhode Island participants with financial means. So he worked with an Israeli professor, David Mittleberg, to build a new type of relationship, emphasizing people-to-people programs.

During this era, Project Renewal became known as Partnership 2000 (P2K), and our community's focus shifted to the Afula-Gilboa communities in the Jezreel Valley of the lower Galilee. By the time of the *Hazon* mission in 1997, a few Rhode Island teens were working at Kibbutz Jezreel and nearby moshavim (collective settlements), and some Israeli teens were working at the JCC's summer camp.

A major objective of the P2K program was to develop a "living bridge" between Americans and Israelis through personal connections. Thus, in November 1997, I took a small group of students from Providence's Alperin Schechter Jewish Community Day School to Afula to develop a program with students at its community center.

During the new millennium, P2K was renamed and became Partnership2Gether (P2G), which remains its current name. Except for those in greater Boston, most Jewish communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts joined ours to form the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC), so we could collectively make a major impact on the city of Afula and the region of Gilboa, which included dozens of *kibbutzim* and villages, including some belonging to Arabs. In 1981, I first visited this area as a tourist. In 1999, Duffy and I took 20 teachers from Rhode Island and Attleboro to learn about Israel and Afula-Gilboa in particular.

To further the concept of a "living bridge," the first *shinshin* program in North America began. Meaning "service year," the North American *shinshin* served as a gap between high school graduation and military service. After months of training during their senior year, several teens from Afula-Gilboa volunteered in a few Connecticut communities.

It should also be noted that other *shlichim* have served our community, but through various programs. For example, Brown University Hillel once employed its own *shaliach,* who was trained specifically to work on campus. The day camp of the Dwares JCC

has also enjoyed the services of a summer *shaliach,* and Camp JORI often has a few Israelis on staff.

However, when Steve Rakitt (executive director of the Jewish Federation) led a solidarity mission to Israel in December 2000, Minna Ellison (executive director of the Bureau of Jewish Education) and others met Gal Ben Ami. She knew that he was just the right person to become Rhode Island's first shinshin. By this time he had also obtained a driver's license, so she invited him to serve. Nate and Karen Beraha, East Side residents, became the first host family in our community.

Eventually, *shinshinim* (plural) stayed with two host families, usually switching at midyear. Some families, such as those led by Karen and Nate Beraha, Lisa and Bennett Bergman, Cindy and Mark Feinstein, and Leslie and Robert Landau, hosted Israeli guests for two or more years. These families usually provided far more than room and board. They took their guests on local sightseeing trips and sometimes on family vacations.

Shinshinim were provided with cars so they could travel to teach on Sunday and after-school programs at area synagogues as well as in day schools. The young ambassadors also taught in the Attleboros and in New Bedford.

Not surprisingly, many host families established enduring friendships with *shinshinim,* which resulted in visits to Israel, especially for weddings. In turn, many Israeli families served as hosts, even for other Rhode Islanders touring Israel.

Claire Roche *z"l* (of blessed memory) was the Bureau's chief financial officer, who also taught in its high school division and at the University of Rhode Island and was involved with the March of the Living. Additionally, Claire supervised the *shinshinim* and become their primary friend and advisor. Not only did the young Israelis attend staff meetings and participate in training sessions, but also they were treated as colleagues. The young ambassadors were also assisted by such Bureau staff members as Sharon Yanku Wilk *z"l* and later Diane Cerep of the Bureau's Teacher Creativity to develop lesson plans. Claire and her colleagues also often took the *shinshinim* to dinner and socialized with them on weekends. Consequently,

shinshinim came to enrich Jewish life in Rhode Island, but they were enriched as well. American Jews and Israelis learned that they have a connected future with Jewish peoplehood at its core.

Shinshinim

So far, the young emissary program has brought over 270 young men and women to SNEC communities. The following Israelis have served as *shinshinim* in Rhode Island, usually in the gap year following high school and before military or national service:

Gal Ben Ami	2001-2
Yael Nir & Orit Lasko/Lana Sobko	2002-3
Einat Goldstein & Yoav Arnow	2003-4
Or Lustig & Gani Born	2004-5
Dana Zax & Shlomi Yehiav	2005-6
Timna Benn & Nadav Ben Ezer	2006-7
Anna Ensilovich & Hadas Naky	2007-8
Zohar Bromberg & Ziv Assor	2008-9

Below are sketches of a few *shinshinim,* which they have written, their hosts have written or I have helped compile:

Hadas Naky by Laurie Noorparvar

Rahmat and I were originally hesitant to become a host family. Our son, Elan, called while we were on vacation, saying that the Bureau of Jewish Education needed an answer. He said "Mom, here's the number; just say yes." Sage advice! Our daughter, Ariel, would have been on her own, since her two siblings were away at college. So in very short order, Hadas became another sister. Hadas blended into our family from the get go. The fact that her father and Rahmat were both Persian gave us an immediate connection.

We clearly remember Hadas asking us about the rules of our household. There was only one: when you leave the house, we need to know where you're going. Hadas was very respectful of this rule, which alleviated any worries.

Hadas was truly a ray of sunshine. She always had a smile, a joke, and her guitar. We grew to love her in a heartbeat. Hadas's mother, Tamar, referred to us as "her parents from America," and we called her "our Israeli daughter." Just before Hadas went back to Israel, she gave us a photo album entitled "My Big Persian Family." It is a treasure.

We have gone to Israel several times over the past few years, and we always make time to see Hadas and her family. Anna was the other emissary who served at the same time as Hadas. She didn't actually live with us, but she was always at our house. We became very close with her as well, and we make sure to see her whenever we are in Israel. Ariel will be going to Israel in two weeks (at the time this was written) and has made plans to see both Hadas and Anna.

Hadas and her husband, Eitan, came to Elan's wedding in 2011. More recently, Hadas's mother and brother, Shmuel, spent a Shabbat with us when they vacationed in the States four years ago. We have tickets for Israel in June 2022, and we will be sure to get together with them all!

When I asked Ariel for her reflection on our hosting an Israeli emissary, she immediately said, "It was the best decision of our lives!"

[above]:
Hadas Naky & her family

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Hadas:

> *I was born in Jerusalem in 1989 and grew up there. My parents had made* aliyah *from Persia (Iran) when they were children. I wanted to do something meaningful before my army service, and I was curious about Jewish life outside of Israel, so I decided to become a* shlichah.
>
> *I knew nothing about Rhode Island before going there – except that it's the smallest state. I was very surprised at the diversity of Jewish lifestyles as well as noticing that people knew each other even though they belonged to different congregations.*
>
> *My only disappointment while there was not getting to teach as much as I wanted in the day schools. I was also certainly homesick by December. I missed my friends and the ability to speak Hebrew to everyone. However, I enjoyed the independence of being an adult at the age of 18 and the importance of representing Israel. From the first day I entered the Noorparvar household, I felt at home, and when we left, I felt the* shlichut *(emissary program) had ended too soon. I still had more to contribute.*
>
> *Since returning home, I have traveled twice to the U.S. and stopped both times in Rhode Island. In the army I specialized in precision weapons optics, and then I pursued a master's degree in education at Hebrew University. I am now taking part in cyber-security boot camp. I am married to Eitan Gafni, and we have three wonderful boys: Neta Joy, Ruach Midbar, and Goni. We live in Alon, on the way to the Dead Sea. If you stop by, you will fall in love with the area.*
>
> *I don't appreciate the stress of being an Israeli, but I am proud of Israeli warmth and our ability to be initiators and laid back. I think American Jews work much harder on their Jewish identity, which Israelis take for granted.*
> *I am still in touch with some friends from Rhode Island, though mostly via FaceBook. We also try to meet up whenever someone comes to Israel.*

Yael Nir Nof

You may know me by my maiden name, Yael Nir. I was born in Afula and lived there until eight years ago. Today I live in Kfar Tavor, a small village near Afula.

I was a young shlichah *twenty years ago. I still look back with a smile on my time in Rhode Island, and I tell my two kids stories about my time there.*

After returning from the United States, I enlisted in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces). I served in the artillery and was in charge of a unit's manpower. Toward the end of my service, I moved to a base close to home at my request, and there I met my life partner, Chen.

At the end of my military service, I studied for a bachelor's degree in sociology and anthropology at Yizrael Valley College. My first postgraduate job was advising young people after their military service, guiding them as to what they should study and what they should do to be accepted by colleges. While doing so, I earned my master's degree in sociology at Tel Aviv University. It was definitely difficult to combine a full-time job with work on a master's degree, but it was a good preparation for the motherhood that would come.

During the four years I worked as a counselor for students, I also chose to get married. In Israel, only Orthodox marriages are recognized by the state. Most of my [secular] friends wanted a wedding ceremony as short as possible, without much text and ritual, but for me things were a bit different. When I came to Rhode Island, I came as a secular Zionist – far from interested in religion. I thought I had only come to give and teach about being an Israeli in my year as an emissary.

I had grown up in a home opposed to Judaism. This was based on my grandfather's approach as a Holocaust survivor. His father's death – with his entire family – made him hate Judaism.

When I arrived in Providence, I was exposed to how much you have to work in the United States to preserve Judaism, and

how much it is your choice.

That year in Rhode Island I developed my identity as a Jew. I was exposed to the Reform and Conservative movements, and I also learned about an Orthodox current that is more accepting. I knew that you could choose your way of preserving *Judaism.*

Therefore, I chose to have a Reform, egalitarian wedding. However, such a wedding is not considered legitimate in the eyes of the Israeli rabbinate. Therefore, I had to marry in Prague in addition to the ceremony in Israel.

For this outlook and the formation of my Jewish identity, I still owe a debt of gratitude to my year in Rhode Island and to your lovely community that welcomed me and exposed me to all streams of Judaism.

Toward my completion of graduate school, my eldest son, Ori, was born. He will soon celebrate his tenth birthday.

My second job was running a center for young adults aged 18 to 35, where I worked for about two years. With the birth of my youngest child, Yuval (now 6 years old), I decided I wanted to change my employment. As a result, I made a transition to teaching, and since then I have been a teacher and an educator at Kadouri Elementary School near Kfar Tavor. I teach language, arithmetic, geography, history, and more. I enjoy being a teacher despite the difficulties that teachers have in Israel. What I will do in the distant future I do not know.

Yael Nir Nof

My year as a shlichah *was one of the hardest years of my life due to being away from home. However, it was also one of the most important years of my life. I got to know a warm and embracing community. You accepted me with open arms. You allowed me to bring my Israeliness to all places, where I was integrated with everyone from the youngest to seniors. Also, I have a special place in my heart for the three families I lived with. They were wonderful to me. Thank God there is Facebook, in which you can know what's going on and keep in touch despite the burden of life.*

I sincerely hope to come visit in the future.

Ziv Assor by Marilyn Katz

I particularly remember Ziv's first day in Rhode Island. Jacob, our elder son, had left for college the day before. Having put fresh sheets on his bed, I was silently upset by his absence. Then, suddenly, I had a new son in what was only briefly an empty room!

Ziv integrated easily into our family and developed a great bond with Daniel, our younger son. They often played "Guitar Hero" together, among other things. Since Ziv had never seen penguins and was eager to do so, our first outings included visits to the New England Aquarium in Boston and to the Mystic Aquarium. Watching Ziv absorb new experiences was delightful!

The first time that Ziv had to drive from South County Hebrew School to Temple Sinai he apparently went in the wrong direction and called seeking directions. He was exasperated, and he declared that he had passed through "Galilee" and "Jerusalem," but they looked nothing like the Galilee and Jerusalem he knew!

Snow was also a new experience. We remember one snowfall when Ziv and Daniel built a fort and a tunnel. During a visit by Asaf Ron, the Israeli supervisor of the shinshinim, *Ziv had to get snow and ice off his car. He carefully sprayed the snow*

remover on the back window – just an inch at a time – while Asaf filmed him. We had not thought that we would have to instruct someone on how to clear ice off a car. As winter progressed, Ziv moved to Amir Cohen and Willa Perlman's home because we strove to share each shinshin *with another family.*

We have kept in touch with and visited Ziv and his family in Israel. At times we were cautioned not to take pictures when one of them was in uniform.

We were fortunate to attend Ziv's wedding to Lior. We had never been to a wedding at a swim club. However, people seemed more dressed up at the picnic tables by the pool (overlooking a beautiful valley) than at a more traditional wedding we had attended the night before near Jerusalem.

The most unusual aspect of Ziv and Lior's wedding was the chuppah. *We had never seen one inscribed with good wishes from dozens of friends. This was a true demonstration of the affection people felt for* the newlyweds.

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Ziv:

I was born in Afula in 1990 and grew up there. My parents were native Israelis, but my father's family came from Morocco and my mother's from Iran. Authentic, ethnic food was and is a big part of our life.

I was looking for something different, exciting, and meaningful to do before going into the army. Having heard about the shnat sherut *from a few former* shlichim, *I knew I wanted to do this. All I knew about Rhode Island was that it is a very small state, with the oldest synagogue in the U.S.A.*

In Rhode Island, I most enjoyed the love from the community. It was amazing to meet so many people and see the love they have for Israel.

However, while in Rhode Island, I particularly missed my girlfriend at the time. We eventually broke up, but do not worry, there is a happy ending! Five years later we were back together,

we got married, and we have an amazing son, Yali.

When I returned to Israel, I served as an officer in an artillery group for almost five years. I earned a bachelor's degree in economics, and these days I am doing a master's in economics. My thesis is in the field of behavioral economics. I am a data analyst at Lemonade, an Israeli, hi-tech company in the insurance industry.

I live in Maalot with Lior, my wife. This is a small city in the north of Israel. My wife's parents live next to us, in Kfar Vradim. We love living here, next to them, so our son, now nearly two years old, sees them almost every day. (Yes, they're very helpful.)

Unfortunately, we have a really hard time now in Israel. During the past week (this spring), we had a few terror attacks. My heart goes out to the bereaved families. It's different when you have a child; suddenly you are actually scared.

I always think about my service as a shaliach. *I had an amazing experience, and I am always talking about it- at work, with friends, anywhere. It's hard to believe that it's been almost 14 years since this amazing experience. I love you all!*

Also, many other shlichim *in SNEC are my best friends. My little brother, Paz, was a* shaliach *four years after me.*

I am not in touch with friends from Rhode Island as much as I wish. However, my host families, the Katz family and the Cohen family, are deep in my heart.

Timna Benny by Cindy Feinstein

Our experience with Timna was amazing and continues. She is our daughter, Hannah's, Israeli big sister. The girls and their boyfriends enjoy scuba and free diving together in Eilat. This past July (2021), we had Shabbat dinner with Timna and her whole family at their horse therapy ranch in the Afula region. We have seen Timna several times since she went back to Israel, and all three of my kids are very much in touch with her.

Timna Benn

We love her and cannot wait to spend time with her and her family when we visit Israel in May (2022).

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Timna:

I was born in 1988 in Afula and I lived in Moshav Devorah *until I was 24. My brother and our parents still live there, where my childhood was surrounded with open fields and animals.*

My father was born in the same moshav. *His parents made* aliyah *from Morocco and helped build the* moshav. *My mother made* aliyah *from Switzerland at the age of 16. Her mother was a Jewish German, who left Frankfurt just before World War II.*

To be honest, I became a shaliach *by following in the footsteps of my older brother, who was a* shaliach *in West Hartford a few years before me. He had a great time and came back with many amazing stories. He was passionate about this program.*

We didn't have a choice as to where we would serve, but even if I had, I would have chosen Rhode Island. The community environment was special, and I met and learned about a variety of ways of living as a Jew. Also, Providence and the area are so beautiful and fun. However, for an Israeli girl, it wasn't so easy adjusting to the weather.

I was mostly shocked by how different life is as an Israeli Jew compared to an American Jew. Previously, Judaism was an integral part of me because I was born Jewish, not because of a certain closeness to religion. From the Jewish community in Rhode Island, I learned that Judaism is also a choice and a

daily challenge, something that accompanies me to this day.

I missed my friends, family, and the sunny Israeli winter, but after about three months, I started dreaming in English. That was a big part of finally feeling at home in Rhode Island.

A couple of years after finishing the shlichut, *I was working at a Jewish summer camp in Colorado. Unfortunately, I never got back to Rhode Island. I am looking forward to doing so.*

After two years as a physical trainer in a Nachal *unit of the Israel Defense Forces, I completed a bachelor's degree in psychology and political science and later a master's degree in education. I am the community relations manager of the Israeli Swimming Association, and I live with my partner in Herzliyah, right next to the beach. Sender and I have a beautiful five-year-old son, Yotam.*

I am proud to be an Israeli. Israelis love their country. We have many criticisms about it, and we love to complain, but we understand there is no other place. Growing up as an Israeli taught me to stand up for my opinions, to accept other opinions, to be mad about political movements, and to celebrate them at the same time. We are such a small country, and I love to laugh because even in the smallest and farthest places where I have traveled, people have heard about us.

The only thing that bothers me is the lack of peace. From the moment I was born (and probably much earlier), there is a sentence we constantly hear: "Perhaps by the time you turn 18, you won't need to join the army anymore." I still hope Yotam will see it happen.

As for Americans, I love them, their sense of humor, and how much they enjoy celebrations of any kind. I love how they appreciate Israel and believe in its existence.

My shlichut *is always a part of me, especially the families I lived with. I am still in close touch with them and the memories. I think that there many ways of giving back to society and to your country, and shlichut is one of the best ones.*

Shlichim

The following young Israelis, older than those in the previous group, served as emissaries following military or national service, which lasts at least one year. I supervised all of the following young people.

Yisca Shalev	2010-1
Noa Prawer	2011-2
Matan Graff	2012-3 & 2013-4
Gilor Meshulam	2014-5 & 2015-6
Tslil Reichman	2016-7 & 2017-8
Nir Cafri	2018-9
Or Cohen	2019-20 & 2020-1
Amit Moshe Oren	2021-2
Elihay Skital	2022 to the present

Below are sketches of a few of these *shlichim:*

Matan Graf

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Matan:

I was born in 1988 in HaEmek Hospital in Afula, but I grew up on a small moshav, *Tel Adashim, about four miles north. My father's parents were born in Poland and my mother's in Morocco, so I guess that makes me a third-generation Israeli.*

I started my "career" as a shaliach *working for the summer camps'* shlichim *program. I didn't know much about Rhode Island, though I had heard about Brown University a few times. Once I had the opportunity to work at Rhode Island's Camp JORI, I read more about RI, and found lots to relate to. I wanted the experience of working in a summer camp to meet Jewish Americans my age and to have an impact on young campers. After three summers, I felt that I wanted to do more and have a bigger impact, so I applied for the long-term* shlichut *program.*

I may have been asked where I wanted to serve or what I wanted to do, but I honestly wanted to return to Rhode Island

because I already knew the state, and I had friends – campers and counselors – from JORI. I was happy to hear that the position in Rhode Island was open, but many other applicants were also interviewed.

Once I was back in Rhode Island, I was surprised how small the state is. As in Israel, you can drive literally everywhere. I found that the community felt quite large but also like one big family. Everyone knows one another.

However, at the beginning of my shlichut, *I was a little afraid of being the only shlichim around. My friends in New York City had more than 10* shlichim *around them. However, very quickly Rhode Island's Jewish community made sure I wouldn't feel alone.*

I most enjoyed the people. Meeting and working with the community was a blast! Also, I tried to be positive and focused on the good things, so I tried to enjoy everything I did. I think that I fit in quite quickly.

I did miss my family and friends. They came to visit and saw Rhode Island. This made my connection even deeper.

Since I left Rhode Island, I have been back almost every year

Graf Family with Matan in Center

– either to travel or visit. I came to friends' weddings and celebrated holidays in the community as a guest.

Before my shlichut, *I served with an intelligence unit in the Israeli air force. After* shlichut, *I studied materials engineering at Ben Gurion University and graduated in the summer of 2020. I work as an engineer for NVIDIA and live on Kibbutz Hatzerim, near Beersheba. Yael, my wife, is originally from there. We met at the university and decided to move to the kibbutz after graduation.*

Everything makes me proud of being an Israeli, but I am bothered by the cost of living. It is very hard to buy a house or even a car, and I wonder how hard it will be when I have kids.

I always encourage others to become shlichim. *This experience is life-changing. It also taught me a lot- English skills, living by myself, social skills, and much more.*

I often think of my service as a shaliach. *I had such a great time, and I miss my time in Rhode Island. I try to keep track and care about what's going on in the community. I miss my American friends – whom I consider my family located across the Atlantic Ocean. I wish there wasn't a seven-hour difference. It would make keeping in touch much easier.*

Nir Cafri

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Nir.

I was born on June 10, 1995 in Asaf Harofe Hospital in Rehovot. My mom's father came from Berlin, and her mom came from Arad in Romania. My father's mom came from Berlin, but his dad came from the Island of Capri in Italy. I grew up in Ness Ziona, a small suburb 20 minutes from Tel Aviv.

I liked the special connection Jews have no matter where they are from, so I went on Birthright (a ten-day program for young Jewish adults to explore Israel) twice as a host soldier. Then I worked as a social coordinator for a group of Ameri-

Nir Cafri with girlfriend

cans during their summer internships in Israel. I loved the multicultural interaction between Americans and Israelis, especially the eagerness to learn about each other and to understand how Judaism developed during the hundreds of years those generations were apart.

I wanted to serve my shlichut *in Rhode Island because my girlfriend went to Brown, and I wanted to be as close to her as possible. All I knew about Rhode Island was that it is the smallest state and that the* shlichim *before me had a very close bond with the community. I understand that several Israelis were interviewed for the position.*

I was surprised to discover how tight the community is. I like that everyone knows everyone and everywhere. I was surprised by the variety of religious streams, synagogues, and heritages. I felt that each congregation had a soul of its own.

I most enjoyed Yom HaAzmaut, *Israel Independence Day. This included planning, getting equipment, finding a band, deciding on content, making decorations, and spreading the word around. Finally, there was the event itself. I had great luck with the weather and the amazing support of the community who came to the event. I was very proud seeing how much people enjoyed the event.*

After the High Holidays, I felt more comfortable when my routine started and I had my day-to-day, steady job. I felt that I improved running classes, lecturers, and events as the days went by.

However, I did not like driving during winter. As part of my

role, I had to be in many parts of Rhode Island, and during storms I was afraid of getting stuck in the car or skidding due to frozen rain. I also missed the fresh produce and great tahini and hummus one can only find in Israel.

At the end of the shlichut, *my girlfriend and I drove to Newfoundland through New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. We came back to visit her family, and we went back to Rhode Island and then around New York. We are coming back to the States in October for her brother's wedding in Florida.*

Before my shlichut, *I served in combat engineering as a defense construction director. I had to guarantee civilians' and soldiers' safety in the Mt. Hermon area.*

I am currently in my last year studying for my bachelor's degree in neuroscience and biology. I work in the university as a data analyst for a new drug experiment for epileptic patients. We live in Beersheba with our dog, Bruno.

I am proud of how much people in Israel love helping each other. Should you ever need help, most people whom you will approach will immediately have a positive response. Unfortunately, the Israeli bureaucracy takes so long, and many times big organizations, such as universities, are highly inefficient.

I think that many American Jews think of themselves as having many other titles before being a Jew. I think that being a Jew comes with many pros and cons, and we should embrace who we are and leverage it. I think that the idea of Jewish communities in the States is unifying, and the model could perhaps accommodate secular Jews. I am still in touch with some members of the Israeli community in Rhode Island.

I think that for young people the opportunity of being a shlichim is unique. The amount of responsibility required and the great support from the Jewish Alliance allow the shlichim to fulfill themselves.

Tslil Reichman

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Tslil:

> *I was born in Tel Aviv in 1991. Both my parents were born in Israel, though their older siblings were born in other countries. My mother's family is from Iraq, and my father's family is from Poland.*
>
> *I grew up all over, but mainly in central Israel: Yehud, Qiryat Ono, and Ramat Gan. Many of my childhood and teen years were spent in London. My experience of growing up abroad and attending Jewish day schools led me to want to bring Israel to Rhode Island's Jewish community. I interviewed in another community, but something during the interview with Rhode Island felt like the right fit.*
>
> *I knew a little bit about Brown and a little history about Rhode Island, but I didn't know much about its Jewish community. I was surprised by Rhode Island's rich culture and how unique the state is. I truly felt (and still do) that it's such an amazing and interesting place to be a* shlichah.
>
> *Rhode Island has a mix of everything – culture, nature, and history – and the same goes for the Jewish community. In such a small state, the Jewish community is so visible, and there is so much to do and take part in. It was great to have the opportunity to meet the amazing people in the Rhode Island community.*
>
> *However, in Rhode Island I was far away from home, and I probably most missed Israel's sun. When I started my second year, I felt at home.*
>
> *After leaving Rhode Island, and just before COVID, I managed to visit Europe for a couple of weeks. But I haven't been to the United States since.*
>
> *Before my* shlichut, *I was in the Israel Defense Forces and earned a degree in education. I just finished my graduate degree in learning and technology, so I am now an instructional*

and digital learning designer. I live and work in Tel Aviv, and many of my friends live here. I am still in touch with friends in Rhode Island!

Yisca Shalev-Halfon

The following sketch is based on questions I asked Yisca:

Hello everyone! I was born in Jerusalem but lived with my family in a small community village, Kedumim, located in the Shomron, in central Israel. I am the second generation born in Israel. My grandparents made aliyah *from different countries. My mum's parents came from Yemen. My father's mother came from Romania, her husband from Russia.*

As a child I met a few shlichim *who came to Kedumim with groups of teenagers from the U.S.A., and I always thought I would become a* shlichah *one day. Before coming to Rhode Island, I was already in* shlichut *for one year in New Jersey. When I asked to come to Rhode, it was the best choice I ever made!*

The only thing I knew about Rhode Island was that it's the smallest state. I was surprised to meet a big and strong community, full of nice and very welcoming people! I loved the great views and sites in Rhode Island, working with people of different ages, and meeting all the community.

However, I least enjoyed the weather, which was very cold. I also missed the food in Israel, and I especially missed my family and friends. However, I think after the High Holidays, I felt I fit in here, and I received invitations every week from many people. They made me feel like home. So thank you, all!

I did a national service for two years before my shlichut, *and I studied filmmaking and education. This is what I do today. I am a teacher and an educator in high school.*

Since finishing my shlichut, *I have returned only once to the U.S. Unfortunately, I didn't make it to Rhode Island. How-*

Yisca Shalev-Halfon with her family

ever, I hope to come one day with my family.

Now I live Haifa! It's such a beautiful and great city. However, we are building our home in the Golan Heights. I have my own family. I married Onn, whom I met after my shlichut. *He was a* shaliach *in Mobile, Alabama. We have three kids – two girls and a boy. Shachar is 4.5 years old, Liya is 3 years old, and Noam is 4 months.*

I love being Israeli, and I am proud to live here – to speak Hebrew, to celebrate the Jewish holidays with all my country, to travel our beautiful country, and to help each other every time someone is in need. I do hope that we keep seeking peace and will live together with all people without concern for religious differences.

I think only good things about my shlichut *in Rhode Island, and today one of my best friends from Israel lives in Provi-*

dence temporarily with her family. I encourage people to go on shlichut, *especially my students. This year a few of them are going to be summer* shlichim.

I have a few Israeli friends from my shlichut *I keep in touch with. We go on vacations and trips together and meet up every few months.*

Conclusion

The *shlichut* program has been quite successful in a way that we did not imagine – its effect on Israelis. As is evident in what they have said and written, they return to Israel with a new appreciation of Judaism and of the Jewish people who live beyond Israel. They learn about our diversity and how we live both as Jews and as Americans. Yes, the Diaspora is thriving, despite the challenges we face.

In my estimation, the *shlichut* program in Rhode Island has been highly successful. There is always a demand for more involvement. For example, synagogue education directors always request that a *shaliach* spend more time in their schools so that they may develop deeper relationships with students and their families. Yet, since we only have one *shaliach*, most see that young person once a month at best. The same demand exists at the college and adult education levels. Rhode Islanders want more time with a *shaliach.*

Some local leaders have suggested that we seek a married couple to serve as *shlichim* or have a couple of *shinshinim* in addition to a *shaliach* (as do some other communities). However, these would be costly additions to the Jewish Alliance's budget, and each year the cost of even a single *shaliach* is carefully examined and weighed against the costs of other communal programs.

In addition to an apartment and utilities, the Alliance provides a car and gas to *shlichim.* We also pay a fee to the Jewish Agency for Israel that covers some of the costs of recruiting and training *shlichim* as well as salaries, insurance, and other expenses.

Shinshinim serve for a single year before joining the IDF. By contrast, *shlichim* have a two-year contract, though either party may decide that one year is sufficient. Those who serve only one year generally return to Israel due to family reasons or to resume their

education or professional lives.

Since the older *shlichim* live in an apartment provided by the community, we no longer need to seek hosts to provide room and board, as we did for the younger *shinshinim*. Unfortunately, few Rhode Islanders take advantage of the opportunity to invite *shlichim* over for a meal and conversation or to take them sightseeing. As a result, Rhode Islanders miss out on an opportunity to learn about life in Israel beyond the headlines or to experience a local landmark through the eyes of an enthusiastic newcomer.

Fortunately, there is still an opportunity to contact Elihay Skital, our current *shaliach,* to see if he can join you for dinner!

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association: *Latecomer and Pioneer*

George M. Goodwin

The following essay was published in May as the third chapter in an anthology, *Jewish Historical Societies: Navigating the Professional-Amateur Divide,* by Texas Tech University Press in Lubbock. The book is part of its series, "Modern Jewish History," which is coedited by Prof. Jonathan L. Friedmann of the Academy for Jewish Religion California. Jonathan is also president of the Western States Jewish History Association. The new volume was also coedited by Jonathan and Prof. Joel Gereboff of Arizona State University and AJRC.

Many of our readers may know Joel, for he is a Providence native who earned his doctorate in Judaic studies under Prof. Jacob Neusner at Brown. This experience was the subject of Joel's article in our 2017 issue. Joel's older brother, Murray, a lawyer in Providence, has helped lead several of our Jewish communal organizations.

But the Gereboff family has still another connection to RIJHA! Joel and Murray's late mother, Caroline, served as our Association's office manager before Lynn Stepak and Anne Sherman.

The other Jewish historical societies profiled in the new study are: Western States, Southern, Michigan, Rocky Mountain, and Arizona. Our Association is of course the oldest state or local Jewish historical organization in this country. Thus, my chapter followed Joel's chapter on "Goals and Roles." I'd like to point out, however, that my chapter is neither the longest nor the most footnoted! Although the volume has an extensive bibliography of "Works Cited," it does not include any photographs, which is de rigueur for our publication.

Neither Jonathan nor Joel objected to an underlying theme of my chapter: our organization's professional and volunteer historians have worked so well together. Indeed, RIJHA would not have flourished for so many decades without such an enviable record of collaboration. Needless to say, I'm so proud of all that RIJHA has accomplished and will continue to accomplish!

For three quite obvious reasons, Rhode Island merits a place of honor within studies of American and perhaps international Jewish history. Indeed, for Jewish visitors from near and far, the Ocean State has become a hallowed destination as both a religious and a patriotic shrine.

Consecrated in 1666, Newport has the oldest intact Jewish cemetery in North America. According to a map drawn for the British admiralty in 1777, it was located on Jew Street. Newport's synagogue, identified on the same map as "Jews' Synagogue," was located near the cemetery on Griffin Street. In 1823, this byway was renamed Touro in honor of two brothers, who helped preserve and sustain both holy places.

Congregation Jeshuat Israel's home had been dedicated in 1763, thirty-three years after the construction of North America's first synagogue, the home of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City. But its first synagogue on Mill Street was demolished in 1818 in order to build a larger one on the same site, and its second lasted only until 1833, when another was built on Crosby Street.

The third reason for Rhode Island's prominence within American Jewish history also relates to its colonial synagogue but through a two-dimensional object. George Washington had made his first visit to Jeshuat Israel in 1780, when it housed Rhode Island's General Assembly and sessions of the Supreme Court. In advance of his second visit, as president, in August, 1790, Washington received a letter from a congregational leader, Moses Seixas, who wrote on behalf of "the children of the stock of Abraham." Seixas characterized the new government "which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance." In his reply to "the Hebrew Congregation in Newport," Washington not only echoed the hazzan's words but further extolled the blessings of liberty and freedom.[1]

The president's reply, regaled for generations as "the Washington Letter," was enshrined within the Newport synagogue until about 1950, when it was sold mysteriously to a private collector. The Morris Morgenstern Foundation later lent it to B'nai B'rith's Klutznick Museum in Washington, DC, but then sequestered it in a vault in Maryland. Between 2012 and 2015, this providential letter was lent to the new National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, where it should be perpetually enshrined.

Fortunately, additional structures in Newport still mark the presence of its early Jewish colonists – loyalists and patriots alike. Many documents found in the city's archives and others also shed significant light on the Jewish community's early inhabitants. And there are holy objects, such as Torahs and *rimonim,* as well as other works of art, scattered among various museums. All of these rarities exemplify and evoke Newport's rich Jewish past.[2]

Thus, it would seem almost inevitable that a Rhode Island Jewish historical organization would be eventually established to protect, study, and celebrate the state's quite remarkable legacy. Indeed, one was, but not until 1951.

Yet, this was our country's first state or local Jewish historical organization. So, it may also be appropriate to say that the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was created "as early as" 1951. And this organization may have become a fourth reason why the study of Rhode Island Jewish history is possible, enlightening, and rewarding.

Beyond Newport

It also seems notable, at least in retrospect, that the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association (RIJHA) was founded by Jews in Providence, and that its basic purpose was to augment and, in some sense, counterbalance the study of Jews in colonial and federal Newport. The state's more recent Jewish history began a few decades after 1822, when the last Jew had departed Newport and others began to settle at least temporarily in Providence.[3]

By the late nineteenth century, Jews lived not only in Rhode Island's largest cities but also in many small towns and more distant

crossroads. And during the post-World War II era, decades after Providence was eclipsed as America's twentieth-largest city, Jews accelerated their exodus from cities to suburbs and then to former vacation spots.

Consequently, Rhode Island did not succeed in establishing a central authority, a statewide Jewish Federation, until 1970, seventy-five years after Boston organized its own, which became a prototype for many of North America's Jewish communities. Despite herculean efforts, Rhode Island Jewry remains scattered and perhaps divided, unable or unwilling to perceive itself as part of a larger community, which could easily relate, at the very least, to its closest New England neighbors.

National Jewish Historical Societies

What were some of the milestones that led to the state's charter of RIJHA on September 11, 1951? The most obvious had been the creation of the American Jewish Historical Society in New York City in 1892. Indeed, the Society was not only the first but would become the country's oldest continuously functioning ethnic historical organization.[4] Originally located within the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, this eminent historical organization moved to the campus of Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1967 and remained there until 1999, when it returned to Manhattan to become a founding member of the Center for Jewish History.[5]

In the spring of 1988, when the American Jewish Historical Society's annual conference was held in Providence, RIJHA served as its host. This was one of the Society's best-attended conferences in many years- and perhaps one of the more stimulating.

Thanks to the Straus family of New York City, there was a little-known connection between Providence's Jewish community and Brown University. Oscar Straus, the Society's founding president, was better known as America's first ambassador to Turkey and later as the first Jewish cabinet member (Theodore Roosevelt's secretary of commerce and labor from 1906 through 1909). He was also a lawyer and a self-taught historian, who became deeply interested in Roger

Williams, Rhode Island's founder.

David Blaustein, the third rabbi of Providence's Temple Beth-El, from 1892 to 1898, had studied Semitics at Harvard College from 1889 to 1893, without earning a bachelor's degree.[6] There he became a close friend of Oscar's nephew, Jesse Isidor Straus, who did graduate with the class of 1893. Subsequently, Jesse entered the family's business, Macy's department stores, ultimately becoming its president and then serving as FDR's ambassador to France from 1933 until his death in 1936.

In 1898 Rabbi Blaustein earned a master's degree in Brown's department of biblical literature and history of religions, and he became the university's first Jewish instructor when he taught Semitic languages on a part-time basis from 1897 to 1899. Thus, Blaustein probably became instrumental in Brown's courtship of the Straus family, which resulted in Oscar receiving an honorary doctor of literature degree in 1896. In 1912, after delivering the annual Washington birthday address at Brown, Oscar also spoke at Beth-El's new synagogue and was accompanied by Brown's president, William Faunce, a Baptist minister. Eventually, the University received a Straus bequest of $10,000.

In 1894, only two years after becoming president of the American Jewish Historical Society, Oscar Straus published *Roger Williams: The Pioneer of Religious Liberty,*[7] which contributed to the scholarly and popular restoration of Williams' stature. Oscar also named his son, Roger Williams Straus, and his grandson became Roger Williams Straus, Jr.

Jesse Straus's younger son, Kenneth, graduated from St. George's, the elite Protestant boarding school near Newport, in Middletown, Rhode Island, before matriculating at Harvard with the class of 1927 and earning a master's at Harvard Business School in 1931. The Straus family's bequest to Brown proved to be relatively modest, however, for in 1924 Oscar and his brothers donated $300,000 to Harvard. Perhaps it should also be mentioned that Rabbi David Blaustein left Temple Beth-El through Isidor Straus's encouragement to become superintendent of New York City's Educational Alliance, a Jewish organization that Isidor had helped found.

Information about Rabbi Blaustein, the Straus family, and Brown might suggest that almost all research about American Jewish history can be conducted – or at least initiated – on a local basis. Such details surely enrich and strengthen broader and deeper historical discussions and investigations. The danger, of course, is losing sight of a far larger, more complex picture.

No doubt the creation of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) on the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College (HUC), in 1947, also inspired the founding of RIJHA. Rabbi William G. Braude, a 1931 alumnus of the Cincinnati campus, was surely acquainted with the Archives' founder, Rabbi Jacob Rader Marcus, who would become known as "the founding father and dean" of American Jewish historical studies. Soon after his ordination in 1920 – even before earning his doctorate in Berlin in 1925 – Rabbi Marcus joined the HUC faculty and remained a beloved professor there until his death in 1995. So, presumably, Rabbi Marcus was one of William Braude's professors.

A few dozen letters in Temple Beth-El's archives, written between 1945 and 1980, are addressed to "Jake" or "Bill." In his first letter to Prof. Marcus, Rabbi Braude asked him to verify the year that the Temple had been founded (1844 or later?). In his 1947 letter to Rabbi Braude, Prof. Marcus thanked him for his introduction to a layperson, David Adelman, while visiting Providence. In 1951, Adelman would become RIJHA's founding president. In a 1957 letter, Rabbi Braude asked Prof. Marcus if he planned to speak at Touro. If so, could he also speak at Beth-El? A year later, Prof. Marcus asked Rabbi Braude if some of his father's papers could be donated to the Archives, and they were. In 1984, "Jake" thanked "Bill" for sending both parts of his autobiographical reflections, which had been published in RIJHA's journal in 1981 and 1982.[8] In 1984, however, the professor explained that the Archives could not accept twenty-five boxes of the pulpit rabbi's sermons; rather, twenty-five or thirty "representative samples" would suffice. Ultimately, eight boxes were accepted, and many more boxes and filing cabinets remain at Beth-El.

Prof. Marcus also sent Rabbi Braude annual requests for financial donations to AJA. The Cincinnatian called these *"schnorr"*

letters, and he dutifully sent thank-you notes for gifts received. Temple Beth-El's library also subscribed to AJA's journal since its inception in 1948. The library eventually bound the first thirty-three volumes for continual, if not perpetual, use. It also purchased many of Prof. Marcus's books.

Rhode Island Historical Society

The earliest precedent within Rhode Island for the creation of RIJHA was likely the Rhode Island Historical Society, a privately funded and governed institution. When established in 1822, it was the fourth oldest state historical society in the country.[9] But to what extent was the Society a prototypical organization for Jews?

The Rhode Island Historical Society's first home, known as "The Cabinet," was built on Waterman Street, on the northern periphery of the Brown University campus, in 1844. Fashioned in the Greek Revival style, it was a structure only thirty feet wide, fifty feet deep, and twenty-nine feet high.[10] The organization acquired its second home nearly a century later, in 1941, when John Nicholas Brown, a scion of the university's founding family, purchased the former John Brown House, one of the state's grandest, built in 1788 at 52 Power Street, on the southern edge of the Brown campus. A few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he sold it to the Society for a dollar. Mr. Brown and his family continued to live in their own magnificent mansion, the Nightingale-Brown House, built in 1791 at 357 Benefit Street, before donating it in 1995 to the university as the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage.

Beyond its location, prominence, and hospitality, however, the Rhode Island Historical Society's influence on the creation of RIJHA was probably tangential. Unquestionably the fiefdom of blue bloods, the Historical Society had only gradually begun to study history or collect in a more objective manner. William Greene Roelker, Jr., who served briefly as its librarian and then as its director from 1940 to 1953, personified the organization's antiquarian and sentimental approach. He descended from Rhode Island nobility, Roger Williams and two colonial-era governors, the William Greenes

(Sr. and Jr.), and belonged to such organizations as the Society of Colonial Wars in Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati, and the Society of Mayflower Descendants. Educated at Groton and Harvard, he did not earn a master's degree in history (at Harvard) until 1939, shortly before joining the Historical Society's staff. He had worked previously in advertising and banking. But Roelker prevailed upon his board of trustees to acquire the John Brown House, significantly expand the Society's membership, and in 1942 launch a new quarterly journal, *Rhode Island History* (to replace two discontinued series). Typically thirty-two pages in length, it focused on the state's Yankee hegemony and artistry.

No doubt Roelker also deserves some credit for hiring Clifford P. Monahan as the Historical Society's next librarian. This Maine native, a graduate of Bowdoin College, happened to be a member of the Sons of the American Revolutionary Society. His ancestor, Joseph Hubbard, Jr., a native of Berwick, Maine, had served as a corporal in the Massachusetts militia. Quite likely, he was impressed by the Jewish history buffs' curiosity and commitment as well as their pursuit of accuracy. Perhaps Monahan also encouraged these Jewish adventurers to establish a journal.

Leaders of the Jewish Historical Association must have felt welcome at John Brown House, for they held annual meetings there for two decades. But in 1951, for example, thirty-three other organizations held meetings there. There was no auditorium, so meetings were probably held in the Washington Room, a kitchen annex decorated with handmade wallpaper showing scenes from the president's inauguration in New York City. Nevertheless, the Jewish Historical Association's creation was never mentioned among the occasional brief announcements published in *Rhode Island History.*

During William Roelker's leadership, the Historical Society's membership increased significantly, from about 500 to 1,400 individuals or couples. A decade after the founding of the Jewish Historical Association, however, Jewish names were still extremely scarce on the Historical Society's published rosters. Likewise, there were no Jews among the thirty-eight members of the Historical Society's eight standing committees. And the same was true in 1970.

The first Jewish officer of the Historical Society's board was Frank Licht (1916–1987), who was elected vice president in 1980 and served two years. He was not exactly a risky choice, however. After having served as a Democratic state senator from 1949 to 1956, Licht was appointed a Superior Court judge and served as president of Providence's General Jewish Committee. In 1968, elected by a slight majority, Licht became Rhode Island's first Jewish governor (of two), and two years later he was reelected but chose not to run for a third term. Most likely, Licht felt no need to serve as the Historical Society's president, but it was probably easier being elected governor.[11]

Historic Preservation Movement

Given that Rhode Island's nickname is "the Ocean State," some of its residents and visitors may quip, "Yes, it's drowning in history." Such a feeling becomes abundantly clear when surveying the state's scores of local historical organizations and almost countless architectural landmarks. The designation of such landmarks did not begin until the late nineteenth century, when, for example, the Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution placed a bronze plaque on Brown University's original building, the College Edifice, built in 1770, noting its occupation by "patriot forces and their French allies" during the Revolutionary War.

Providence did not establish its Preservation Society until 1956, when numerous edifices, both grand and relatively humble, were threatened by decay or demolition. Not surprisingly, moreover, John Nicholas Brown led the battle against architectural apathy and served as the Preservation Society's first president. It should also be mentioned, however, that in 1936 this scholarly and soft-spoken activist had commissioned Richard Neutra, a Viennese-born Jewish architect who had settled in Los Angeles, to design "Windshield," a major, modern vacation home on Fishers Island, New York.[12]

A prominent Jew also played a major role in the city and state's evolving and never-ending preservation movement (or battle). His effort involved far more than rescuing one historic building, however. Indeed, for Baptists and civil libertarians alike, this was a

sacred space. In 1931, the same year that he became the first Jewish justice of Rhode Island's Supreme Court, J. Jerome Hahn, donated the property known as "the Roger Williams Spring" to the city that Williams had founded. This property, cleared of dilapidated industrial and commercial buildings to form a park, was located across Main Street from where Williams and his followers purchased land from the Narragansetts and built their first settlement in 1636. As explained by two bronze plaques marking the entrance to the park, Justice's Hahn's gift was made in memory of his father, Isaac, an émigré textile manufacturer, who in 1884 had been the first Jew elected to public office (as a state representative) in Providence. In 1965, through legislation approved by President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Department of the Interior purchased the park and has preserved and operated it as the Roger Williams National Memorial to honor the concept of "Liberty of Conscience."[13]

Preservation and Recognition of Touro Synagogue

The creation of RIJHA in 1951 followed a far more convoluted commemorative project that had occurred, understandably, in Newport. Like Touro Street, Jeshuat Israel Synagogue acquired its nickname in 1823, following a bequest by Abraham Touro, a son of the congregation's first *hazzan,* Isaac, to care for both the Jewish cemetery and the house of worship. In 1854, a bequest by Isaac's younger son, Judah, provided similar funds, and both brothers, who had lived beyond Rhode Island, were buried in Newport's Jewish cemetery. The Touro legacies were not intended to preserve the synagogue as a museum, but instead to provide a home for a new or revived Jewish congregation. Meanwhile, North America's first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel in New York City, became the trustee for such an endeavor, and it oversaw summer services held at Touro during the 1850s, for example.[14]

At the turn of the twentieth century, two groups of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who had settled in Newport, vied for Touro's use. In 1902, Rhode Island's Supreme Court gave its approval to one, and it eventually prospered. No later than 1932, on the occasion of the bicentenary of George Washington's birth, the ritual of a

ceremonial reading of Moses Seixas's letter to the president – and his reply – was established. In 1936, Morris Gutstein, Touro's rabbi from 1932 to 1943, published *The Story of The Jews of Newport,* which was the first comprehensive study of this subject.[15] It led to many detailed and critical studies, including, for example, important biographies of Judah Touro and Aaron Lopez.[16]

But Touro Synagogue was not designated a National Historic Site by the Department of Interior until 1946, and this designation had nothing to do with efforts by Rhode Islanders – Jewish or Gentile.[17] The idea originated in 1944, when Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of *The New York Times* and a descendant of an original Jeshuat Israel family, sought the federal government's designation of three significant houses of worship – Protestant and Catholic churches and a synagogue—to symbolize and commemorate Americans' unity during World War II. Such architectural expression would be impressively achieved in 1956, under Jewish auspices, through the creation of the Three Chapels on the campus of Brandeis University.[18]

In 1946, despite much opposition by an advisory group of architectural historians, Oscar Chapman, the acting secretary of the Department of the Interior during the early days of the Truman administration, gave his approval for the designation of Touro. The synagogue was selected for two principle reasons: its elegant yet understated design by Peter Harrison, a major colonial architect (and loyalist) from Newport, and the structure's use as Rhode Island's General Assembly during the close of the Revolutionary War.[19]

Thus, the federal government's designation had nothing to do with the celebration of religious liberty, a theme embraced in 1947 through the creation of the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue National Historic Shrine. Nevertheless, the reading of the Seixas and Washington letters, often by a leading state or federal elected official, became an annual ritual. Indeed, a reader in 1958 was none other than President Eisenhower, a frequent vacationer in Newport.

In 1963, as a result of the Friends' national fundraising campaign to honor Touro's bicentenary, the synagogue was fully

restored. In 1982, following nearly two decades of efforts, Touro was portrayed on an American postage stamp to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Washington's birth.[20]

In 1998, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private organization chartered by Congress in 1949, joined the Department of the Interior and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities to form a consortium, Save America's Treasures, which could receive and administer federal grants. Consequently, in 2003, Interior's regulations were further modified, allowing historic structures still used for religious purposes to receive federal funding. As a result, Touro Synagogue received a $375,000 preservation grant and designation by the National Trust as one of its twenty-seven "historic sites." The land and structure are still owned by New York City's Shearith Israel, however.

Recent additions to and alterations of the Touro property have included the creation of Patriots Park, the placement of some small Holocaust memorial plaques within the park, and in 2009 the construction of the Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr. Visitors' Center. These efforts further demonstrate that the reinterpretation of Touro's importance is never ending.

American Jewish Tercentenary

No doubt, the seven incorporators of RIJHA were uplifted and propelled by a patriotic spirit as well as Jewish pride. Indeed, each reservoir of emotion fed the other. The incorporators happily foresaw local celebrations of the American Jewish Tercentenary in 1954. Indeed, many celebrations were documented within the first issue of the Association's journal, *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes,* which began publication in June of that year.[21] The documentation of celebrations extended to the third issue (June 1955), which was dubbed "The American Jewish Tercentenary Issue" and ran to 226 pages.

The numerous celebrations included a program held at the Roger Williams Spring, another in the Providence's Veterans' Memorial Auditorium (which featured an address by James P. Adams, the director of the Rhode Island Historical Society), and a service spon-

sored the by the State Council of Churches held in the First Baptist Meetinghouse in America, the oldest Baptist congregation in the US. Still another Tercentenary service was held within the sanctuary of the new home of Temple Beth-El, the congregation's third, where the featured speaker was President Abram Sachar of Brandeis. The Providence Public Library organized a "Jewish Tercentenary Exhibit," and the Museum of Art at Rhode Island School of Design presented "The House of God," an exhibition of Jewish ceremonial art from Rhode Island synagogues and homes throughout the state. The relatively new medium of television was also put to good use. A half-hour show, "The Jewish Heritage," was broadcast on channel WJAR on February 13,1955.

The most enduring result of the tercentenary celebrations was probably a scholarly article by David C. Adelman that was published in the July, 1954 issue of the Rhode Island Historical Society's journal, *Rhode Island History.* This impressive study was entitled "Strangers: Civil Rights of Jews in the Colony of Rhode Island" and ran twelve pages.[22] In his first sentence, Adelman, who was identified as a Providence lawyer and the president of RIJHA, noted the dual celebrations of the American Jewish Tercentenary and the centenary of Providence's Temple Beth-El. In his second paragraph, he proclaimed, "Jews owe no greater debt of gratitude to any man in the history of the United States than Roger Williams."[23] Adelman not only examined a multitude of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century legal documents, but was also able to publish photos of four belonging to Newport's Superior Court as well as the State Archives.

Of course, the American Jewish Tercentenary occurred within a far larger political and social context, which included, for example, the cessation of the Korean War. Though there were no obvious ramifications in Rhode Island, a great many Jews were also no doubt frightened, if not stigmatized, by the victimization of the Hollywood Ten, for example, and other brethren during the McCarthy era. Indeed, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had been executed at Sing Sing Prison on June 19, 1953.

RIJHA's Founders

The driving force behind the creation of RIJHA – and its president for no fewer than fifteen years – was in fact David C. Adelman (1892–1967), a son of Eastern European immigrants and a Providence native. Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, the Association's seventh president and a longtime editor of its journal (1962–78; 1983), referred to his friend and colleague as the organization's "founding father." In his 1974 article about the Jewish Historical Association's history, which was reprinted in 1991 on the occasion of the Association's fortieth anniversary, Goldowsky also characterized the organization as "the first in the country devoted to the scientific study of local Jewish history."

Adelman had graduated from Providence's Classical High School in 1910 and Brown University four years later. Like most of Brown's Jewish students, he commuted from home to campus and did not belong to a fraternity. Adelman earned his law degree, probably again as a commuter, at Boston's Northeastern University and was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1919, shortly after his military service during World War I. For nearly two decades, while building his own practice, the Association's founder, who became active in Republican politics, served on the staff of several of the state's legislative committees. He belonged to numerous Jewish fraternal organizations and, as a member of Temple Beth-El, served as its volunteer archivist.

Rabbi William G. Braude asked him to write a congregational history, and Adelman wanted to do so, but he could not proceed after determining that too many early records had been lost or destroyed in a fire. Seebert Goldowsky built on many of Adelman's published articles when he too was eventually asked to write a congregational history, which was published in 1989.

As Goldowsky explained in his 1974 article about the Association's history, Adelman's interest in Rhode Island "Americana" began in childhood and evolved through book collecting. According to Adelman, "at first subconsciously but later deliberately" he began to search for Jewish "historical items." Eventually, this self-taught but driven historian sought to correct errors that had been published in

the journal of the American Jewish Historical Society, for example. In 1936, he published his own booklet, "The Life and Times of Judah Touro." This was the same year that he spoke on this topic to the Touro (Jewish) Fraternal Association in Providence, when it celebrated the state's tercentenary. Having eagerly continued to collect vast amounts of Jewish historical materials, Adelman would eventually need a home beyond his own residence to store them.

Born between 1881 and 1907, the six additional RIJHA incorporators were the children of immigrants or immigrants themselves. Only one of the incorporators had been born in Rhode Island. Two had earned doctor of philosophy degrees, though neither in history. But given how much the incorporators had overcome and achieved in their lives, their lack of formal historical training seemed unimportant.

The eldest incorporator and only woman, Matilda J. Pincus (1881–1954), had been born in nearby Fall River, Massachusetts. Her deep sense of patriotism was surely felt through her father, Newman's, military service during the Civil War. He settled in Providence in 1866 and soon joined Rhode Island's second congregation, Sons of Israel, which had been chartered in 1854. Matilda, having been confirmed at Temple Beth-El in 1895, eventually became a president of its alumni association as well as a teacher in its religious school and the congregation's first librarian and archivist. Nearly a lifelong resident of South Providence, the site of Beth-El's second home, she did not live long enough to enjoy its third home, which opened on the city's East Side a few months after her passing.

Only a year younger than "Mattie" was Alter Boyman (1882–1966), a Romanian immigrant who settled in Providence in 1908. Having been required to support himself, he was unable to earn the equivalent of a high school education. Nevertheless, in 1927, he began to chair the publication of *Providence Passover Journal,* a Yiddish-English newspaper devoted to labor Zionism. Although nominally successful in the clothing business, Boyman found his true calling as a leader of numerous Jewish communal organizations. For example, following World War I, he represented the American Jewish Relief Committee. In 1935, he was a delegate to the World

Jewish Congress. Boyman also helped lead numerous local organizations, including, for example: Hebrew Free Loan Association, the Jewish Orphanage, Miriam Hospital, the Jewish Home, and Jewish Family Service.

By contrast, Arthur J. Levy (1897–1972) enjoyed a privileged upbringing as well as professional distinction. A native of New York City who grew up in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, he followed David Adelman to Brown and graduated in 1919. Levy worked briefly as a sports editor at the *Providence Tribune* before earning his law degree in 1923 at Boston University. Five years later, he helped establish his own firm, which lasted two decades. In 1950, a year before the Association was chartered, he was elected president of the Rhode Island Bar Association – the first Jew to hold that office. Levy also became the founding editor of the Bar Association's journal, from 1952 through 1954, but he was particularly devoted to Jewish Family Service, serving as its founding president for a decade. As president of Temple Beth-El's Brotherhood, he no doubt knew David Adelman on a social as well as a professional basis.

Levy was in more than one way a visionary. Beginning in 1944, he chaired Beth-El's building committee, which led to a thoroughly modern structure designed by Percival Goodman, a New Yorker. In 1935, Levy had considered another modernist, William Lescaze from Philadelphia, for the design of his own home, steps from Narragansett Bay in Cranston.

Bernard "Beryl" Segal (1900–1980) had been born in Romania and immigrated to Providence as a child. Like Alter Boyman, he was a Yiddish speaker and writer. In fact, Segal's wife, Chaya, was a Boyman cousin. Segal graduated from Brown in 1927 and earned a master's degree in science from the University of Rochester. Having graduated from Rhode Island College of Pharmacy in 1940, he practiced pharmacy, including thirty years on the staff of the Miriam Hospital. Also a devoted teacher of Hebrew, he taught at several synagogues, including Beth-El, where he was both a member and a close friend of Rabbi Braude. Segal became widely known in the Jewish community for his numerous articles in the *Rhode Island Jewish Herald* and in T*he Providence Journal-Bulletin* before writing many

more in the Association's journal.

Beginning in 1967, Segal served as the Association's second president. His daughter, Geraldine S. Foster, was made the organization's eighth president, becoming both its first woman and its only second-generation president. Foster's son and Segal's grandson, Harold, is as of this writing the Association's president, its twentieth. Unfortunately, no other descendant of incorporators has been active in the Association's leadership. However, both children of the following incorporator have written articles for its journal.

The Association's second youngest incorporator was Prof. Israel J. Kapstein (1904–1983). Born in Fall River, "Kappy" lived in Boston before moving to Providence in 1916. Like David Adelman, he graduated from Classical High School and then Brown in 1926. As an aspiring writer, his closest friends included S. J. Perelman and Nathanael West (both members of the class of 1925), who would achieve significant literary recognition far beyond New England. After obtaining some writing gigs in New York City, Kapstein returned for graduate studies in English at Brown and earned his doctorate in 1933. He won some early recognition as a novelist and taught writing as well as literature, thereby becoming a beloved English professor on College Hill. In 1946, Kapstein became the first Jew to receive tenure at Brown, where he spent his entire academic career until his retirement in 1969. Though nominally affiliated with Temple Emanu-El, a Conservative congregation on Providence's East Side founded in 1927, he became Rabbi Braude's close friend and colleague. As specialists in Hebrew and Aramaic translations, they won renown among Judaic scholars.

Rabbi William Braude (1907–1988) was the youngest of the Association's incorporators. Born in Lithuania, he immigrated as a teenager with his family to New York City but grew up in Denver. The son of an Orthodox rabbi who feared the disappearance of traditional Judaism, William earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati before his ordination at HUC in 1931. A year later, following his first pulpit in Rockford, Illinois, he came to Providence's Beth-El, where Mattie Pincus took him under her wing. In 1934, Braude earned a master's degree and in 1937 a doctorate in

religious studies at Brown. The university published his dissertation in 1940. Beth-El's rabbi also later taught in that department, helping pave the way for a generation of rabbinic scholars who would never be required to lead congregations. Long before his retirement in 1974, Rabbi Braude became Rhode Island's longest-serving congregational rabbi with a tenure of forty years. Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman, his associate and then his successor, having served forty-five years, established a new record.

Rabbi Braude was devoted to the congregation's library, and in 1967 it was named in his honor. He had played a key role in envisioning the new synagogue's design: not only in the search for a suitable architect but an appropriate style. Rabbi Braude, who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, was also a prolific writer. Between 1929 and 1985, he published eighty-six scholarly articles and reviews (in addition to many sermons and articles for general readers).

Infrastructure and Staff

So, in its early decades, where was RIJHA housed? Rumor has it that, in place of an office, David Adelman's car overflowed with myriad books and documents.

Since its founding, however, the RIJHA's official address was the John Brown House. Perhaps there was some space in an attic for storing files and a small reference collection. Otherwise, John Brown House was crammed with art, artifacts, furniture, books, manuscripts, offices, and staff.

During its earliest years, the Association's membership records would probably have fit within a briefcase. By 1954, it had only forty-four dues-paying members. A year later, following the publication of the first issue of *The Notes,* there were more than 100 members. Many of the men, who could select from various levels of financial support, were pillars of the state's Jewish community. As for female members, most memberships were either held in husbands' names or only a few widows and unmarried women were welcomed.

Finally, in 1963, Jewish Historical moved to a third-floor office in a younger building, a Victorian structure at 209 Angell Street (on the opposite, northern edge of the Brown campus). But why

there? There's a simple Rhode Island explanation, which boils down to a commonly uttered phrase: "I know a guy." Since the mid-1930s, the building's owner had been Dr. Maurice Adelman, a prominent pediatrician and a Beth-El member. Married in 1929 to Eleanor Goldowsky, one of Seebert's two older sisters, Adelman was in fact his brother-in-law. Beatrice, the other Goldowsky sister, would serve as Adelman's office manager for a half-century. As a Brown graduate of 1916, Adelman had also been a member of Phi Epsilon Pi with a RIJHA founder, Arthur Levy.

Beginning in 1973, the Association's meetings were moved to the auditorium of the new Jewish Community Center (JCC) on Elmgrove Avenue (opposite Brown's football stadium and adjacent to its Marvel Gymnasium). Given the increased visibility and convenience for East Side residents, the Association's membership reached 322 families and individuals. Members received complimentary issues of the journal, as did sixty-three Jewish or Rhode Island organizations. Nineteen copies of *The Notes,* mailed overseas, required a modest subscription fee.

In 1975, the Association moved its operations from Angell Street to downstairs quarters within the Federation wing of the JCC complex. Two small spaces became available: an office and an adjacent storage area. Although RIJHA was not considered a beneficiary agency (and never became one), the Federation did not charge rent. The Association's downstairs neighbor was a beneficiary agency, the Bureau of Jewish Education, which was led by a growing professional staff. Regrettably, despite similar goals, the Bureau and Association found very few ways to work together. Regrettably, Bureau staff members had a rather condescending opinion of the Association's volunteers, and these volunteers felt that the staff had little interest in local or American Jewish history.

Even if these neighboring organizations had sought collaborative projects, there were probably financial impediments. Since its inception, the Association struggled, in this regard, to achieve its relatively modest goals. In 1954, for example, income was only $1,615, but it resulted in a balance of $1,000. The largest expenditures – for printing and rent at John Brown House – were about

$600. Occasional speakers may have received honoraria, but volunteers did just about everything. Essentially, the Rhode Island Jewish Association was – and remains – a labor of love. Perhaps accordingly, through various waves of consolidation, the Bureau of Jewish Education's staff has shrunk.

Eventually, RIJHA's operating expenses improved, and several bequests were received. The Association's annual budget is currently about $100,000, and its endowment now exceeds $900,000. In some ways it has become a dowager organization.

In 1962, David Adelman and Seebert Goldowsky met with William G. McLoughlin, a professor of American history at Brown from 1954 until his death in 1992, to gain a deeper understanding of how the Association could advance its research efforts. McLoughlin was a prolific author and editor, and his specialty was the history of American religion. He wrote two histories of the Ocean State: one for the American bicentenary, the other a decade later. Unfortunately, a more comprehensive state history, long overdue, has not yet been published.

Prof. McLoughlin recommended that RIJHA engage one of his doctoral students, Freda Egnal, to compile a bibliography of all published and archival materials relating to Rhode Island Jewish history. This definitive project took nearly four years.

Egnal's first bibliography, focusing on materials found only within Brown University libraries, was published in the May, 1963 issue of *The Notes* and ran twenty pages. Her second sweeping bibliography focused on materials belonging to other Rhode Island collections, such as libraries, Jewish organizations, synagogues, and a few prominent Jewish families. When published in the journal's November, 1966 issue, it ran more than 200 pages. Ms. Egnal, who earned a master of arts in teaching in 1965, identified nearly 1,000 items. She has spent the rest of her life as a political activist in Philadelphia, but did not earn a doctorate.

RIJHA steadily increased its efforts to assist researchers. In 1955, after the completion of the journal's first volume, consisting of four issues, an index was prepared. Then the number of issues was reduced to one per year, but also resulted in four issues per volume.

Each had its own index, and a cumulative index was published in 1987 to cover the first seven volumes. A second cumulative index was published in 1994 to cover the next seven. Occasionally, in order to guide researchers and writers, the journal also published short bibliographies of important and obscure new studies about Rhode Island Jewry.

The Association's first regular employee was a part-time librarian. Dorothy M. Abbott, a retiree, had spent her career at the Providence Public Library. After serving RIJHA from 1967 to 1972, she received the title "librarian emerita."

Ms. Abbott was a Methodist, but this was not entirely surprising, for Temple Beth-El's first professional librarian, Maryland Estes, who served from 1958 to 1981, was also a non-Jew. Indeed, she was more instrumental than any of her successors in building its highly significant Judaica collection.

Ms. Abbott's successor was Eleanor F. Horvitz, whose title eventually became librarian-archivist. She served no fewer than thirty years: from 1972 until her retirement at 83 years of age. A Providence native, she had been an undergraduate at Brown's Pembroke College before moving with her husband to St. Louis and completing her degree at Washington University. After the couple returned to Rhode Island, she earned a master's at Brown and taught briefly in Providence's public schools.

Ms. Horvitz's basic tasks were building, cataloguing, and storing a vast archival collection, which included documents, photographs, Jewish newspapers, other published materials, two-dimensional ephemera, and a small number of artifacts and tchotchkes. Some of the obvious organizational records include: Providence's General Jewish Committee, a forerunner of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island; the Federation itself; and its subsequent transformation as the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. With Ms. Horvitz's help, RIJHA also collected the records of many of the fundraising organizations' beneficiary agencies. Fortunately, the archives also include handwritten and printed records of numerous organizations that have disappeared. These include, for example, the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island and many small synagogues and

some burial societies. Records of some of the more colorful defunct social organizations include: the Order of Hebraic Comradeship, the Association of Parents of American Israelis, and the Rhode Island Jewish Bowling Congress.

Eleanor Horvitz also became the most prolific contributor to the Association's journal by writing or co-writing more than thirty articles, a record that I eventually surpassed. Her frequent collaborator was Geraldine Foster, the Association's past president and a fellow Brown graduate and educator. Though a quiet and reserved person, Eleanor was more than eager to share her vast knowledge with researchers of all ages and levels of experience. Fortunately, her family's finances allowed her to serve the Association on a voluntary basis.

RIJHA required clerical and administrative assistance on a part-time basis. Two fondly remembered office managers over many years were Caroline Gereboff and Evelyn Stepak. The longest serving office manager was Anne Sherman, whose upbeat tenure lasted from 1991 to 2015. Anne also contributed some articles to The Notes.

Over many decades, the Association was able to achieve most of its goals without employing an executive director. In recent decades, two individuals with significant library experience were hired, but both soon resigned. It was evidently not easy working with volunteers or perhaps vice versa. The Association's current executive director as of this writing, Kate-Lynne Laroche, who earned a master's degree in history, previously served as its office manager. Not being a Jew, she has a great deal to learn but is also eager to do so. Meanwhile, a new office manager, Jaime Walden, also a Gentile, ably assists with administrative tasks.

It should also be noted that most editors of *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* have served as volunteers. The previous editor received an honorarium, as does the incumbent, but these are merely tokens of appreciation. The same is true with the previous and current graphic designers of the journal, Bobbie Friedman and Stephen Logowitz. Both are highly talented and accomplished professionals who have been more than generous with their expertise.

Heritage Harbor Museum

Reared by working-class parents in New Jersey and educated in the Midwest, Albert T. Klyberg came to the Rhode Island Historical Society as its librarian in 1968. Two years later he became its executive director. He retired in 1999, but his greatest professional and personal challenge still lay ahead.

Klyberg's weightiest academic accomplishment had been overseeing the publication of the papers of Rhode Island's great Revolutionary War general, Nathanael Greene. This project, which began in 1971, took thirty-four years and resulted in thirteen volumes. Klyberg also oversaw the two-volume publication of Roger Williams's correspondence.

In 1961, when still headquartered in the John Brown House and responsible for a few historic properties in rural parts of the state, the Rhode Island Historical Society acquired a former branch of the Providence Public Library on the city's East Side. This facility, built in 1874 as the Hope Street Methodist Episcopal Church, was further transformed into the Society's study and research center. Consequently, Aldrich House, which had been donated by the Aldrich family to the Society in 1974 and is only a short walk from its library, gained use as administrative offices and for the presentation of public programs and small, temporary exhibitions. John Brown House, though continually improved and upgraded, continued to serve as museum of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century decorative arts. Such use must have pleased the city and state's dwindling Yankee aristocracy, but it did little to reach the vast majority of Rhode Islanders, who descended from more recent immigrants or were immigrants themselves.

Consequently, in 1976, coinciding with the state's celebration of the country's bicentenary, Klyberg encouraged the formation of eighteen ethnic heritage subcommittees. RIJHA had already existed for twenty-five years, but he became an advisor to and an incorporator of the state's Black Heritage Society.

Similarly, Klyberg later became involved with the celebration of Rhode Island's French-Canadian history in the northern industrial town of Woonsocket, where many Jews, also associated with

the textile business, had built a gorgeous new synagogue in 1961. Thus, the Rhode Island Historical Society's first satellite museum, a cooperative venture with Woonsocket's municipal government, opened in 1997. In fact, the permanent and changing exhibitions center, given the dreadful name of "The Museum of Work and Culture," are housed in a former factory building once leased to a Jewish manufacturer.

But Klyberg, a true populist and proselytizer, sought to share a comprehensive understanding of Rhode Island history on a far larger and more dramatic scale. So, his next idea was creating Heritage Harbor, a high-tech, interactive museum for the state's residents as well as visitors from around New England and beyond. Though Heritage Harbor was a splendid and long-overdue idea, the Historical Society's finances were modest – in fact, rather shaky.

Various commercial and industrial buildings in downtown Providence were considered for the proposed museum's home. A solution seemed to have been found in 1999, when the Narragansett Electric Company donated its outmoded Eddy Street generating plant to the Heritage Harbor Corporation. This vast and mighty structure, built between 1912 and 1925, offered approximately 260,000 square feet, including a turbine hall three-stories high. Klyberg, who became the museum's acting director, and his supporters, estimated that the cost of building Heritage Harbor would be $30 million, but the amount soon grew to $50 million, then even higher. Meanwhile, some generous gifts were pledged and others received from some of Rhode Island's larger corporations as well as many families and individuals – Jews among them.

A large degree of public financing would also be required, however. Unfortunately, in 2000 a state bond measure for $25 million was narrowly defeated. Two years later, a second measure, for only $5 million, was approved, but private fundraising faltered during the Great Recession.

Even before Klyberg's retirement as executive director, the Historical Society's board had lost confidence in the Heritage Harbor project, so it was spun off as an independent organization. Then, in 2002, to protect its assets and credibility, the Historical Society

withdrew entirely from the project. Regrettably, some blame for this decision was placed on Klyberg's successor, Bernard Fishman, the first and only Jew to serve as the Society's executive director until his departure in 2011. He knew museums rather well; in 1984, for example, he had become the founding director of the Jewish Museum of Maryland and guided it for fifteen years.

Heritage Harbor, which became an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, also sought local partner organizations. The first two were the Black Heritage Society and RIJHA. Eventually, more than fifteen organizations signed on, and they were expected to raise funds for the museum's construction and operating costs as well as for their own office and storage areas. The consortium of ethnic organizations eventually included, for example, Rhode Islanders of Armenian, French, German, Irish, Italian, and Portuguese descent, and they were also invited to participate in a permanent exhibition known as "Cultural Crossroads."

Alhough guided by an experienced museum professional, the representatives of these ethnic groups, consisting mostly of idealistic volunteers, were expected to work democratically and, if necessary, collect artifacts on their own. I participated in the Crossroads group as a representative of RIJHA. After becoming the Association's president in 2002, I served as a Heritage Harbor trustee for three years and later as a Historical Society trustee for a dozen years (through 2021).

Eventually, the scale of the museum project was significantly reduced, such that Heritage Harbor would occupy only a small portion of a privately developed hotel complex. Many of Heritage Harbor's partner organizations, including RIJHA, withdrew from active participation, and others severed their ties. The entire project came to a halt in 2007. Ultimately, in 2009, Klyberg's dream of Heritage Harbor collapsed. While some of the significant funds that RIJHA had raised on behalf of Heritage Harbor were lost, other gifts remained in its endowment.

In 2014, a private developer purchased the former electric generating plant and, with considerable state funding, built entirely different spaces within it. When completed in 2017, these spaces

were almost evenly divided between two institutions: a new nursing school cosponsored by the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College (another state institution) and administrative offices for Brown University.

Alas, the Rhode Island Historical Society still lacks adequate space to display its permanent collection or changing exhibitions. Likewise, RIJHA, like many of Heritage Harbor's former partner organizations, cannot exhibit more than a fraction of its collection, and many materials are kept in an off-site storage facility. The state still lacks a venue or a method to educate most of its citizens about their shared past, and Rhode Island still does not require that its history be taught in public schools. Yet, a state law passed in 2016 does require instruction about the Holocaust and genocide.

Holocaust Museum and Memorial

Although its focus was only indirectly on Rhode Island, one of the partner organizations recruited to participate in Heritage Harbor Museum was the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum. In 1988, two years after its founding, it opened a memorial garden and a stone-clad facility within the Jewish Federation-Jewish Community Center's 1971 complex. While they represented very different visions and interpretations of Jewish history, leaders of the Holocaust Memorial Museum and RIJHA discussed ways to share space and work together as partners at Heritage Harbor. For better and worse, this never happened.

In 2007, never having succeeded in developing a notable collection, the Holocaust Museum shifted its emphasis and became the Rhode Island Holocaust Resource Center. While conducting annual memorial services, it focused on outreach to students and teachers – especially non-Jews. In 2013, after the Jewish Federation became the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, and the JCC complex expanded to become the Dwares JCC, the Holocaust Museum acquired handsome upstairs quarters and was reborn as the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center.

But the state's Jewish tug of war between the condemnation of hatred and the celebration of freedom persists. In 2015, follow-

ing an extensive fundraising campaign, the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial, a diminutive sculptural ensemble, was dedicated within Memorial Park, near the Providence River and amidst World War and Korean War memorials. The Holocaust Memorial's miniature stone columns, representing the Six Million, are overshadowed by a gigantic stone pillar, topped with an allegorical figure, dedicated to the battles and victors of the First World War.

Memorial Park is located at a key symbolic juncture: only a five-minute, downhill walk from the John Brown House and only a five-minute, northerly walk to the First Baptist Meetinghouse in America (also known as "the Mother Church"), which was designed by Joseph Brown and completed in 1775. This also means that the Holocaust Memorial is no more than a ten-minute walk from the Roger Williams Spring, Justice Hahn's gift to the city.

The Association's Anthology

I grew up in Los Angeles, where, through its Jewish Federation, I met my wife, Betsey. We did not arrive in Providence until 1987, shortly after our first child was born. After living in the Midwest, Betsey and I decided to live closer to her family or mine, and hers north of Boston looked inviting for a number of reasons. Following many years of teaching art history and conducting oral history interviews, I earned two more graduate degrees and began work as an administrator in federations. But I soon sought greater independence and more intellectual stimulation. Thus, I began undertaking a rich variety of historical projects for Jewish and secular organizations on a freelance basis.

Betsey and I joined RIJHA as soon as we moved to Providence, and I met many of its leaders and supporters through Temple Beth-El. But the organization seemed wary of transplants as well as younger people, so it took several years before I was invited to join its board (or, for that matter, the temple's board). Meanwhile, I had begun contributing articles to the Association's journal. My first, published in 1994, was a shortened version of my study of Beth-El's modern architecture, which had appeared a year earlier in *American Jewish Archives Journal.*

That year I was finally invited to join RIJHA's board, and eight years later I was elected its president. Having already served as president of Providence's Hebrew Free Loan Association, I had some sense of what I wanted to accomplish and how to go about it. My major goal was honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the association's journal, *The Notes,* which would occur the following year. My board supported the idea, but I was responsible for making it happen.

Rather than publishing a lengthy article or even a short book about The Notes, I thought of publishing an anthology of notable articles. The challenge was deciding which of the approximately 300 previously published articles were important and to whom.

Knowing that the journal's current editor, Leonard Moss, a retired English professor from Wheaton College, would probably not be interested in editing such a volume, my initial effort was to recruit somebody else. The obvious place to turn was the faculty of Brown University's distinguished Judaic studies program, which is actually part of the religious studies department. Over several decades, many prominent Brown professors – in numerous disciplines – had not only belonged to our association but became active board members and wrote many articles for the journal. The most obvious examples of professional involvement were sociologists, Sidney and Alice Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, who also saw themselves as members and leaders of Rhode Island's Jewish community. Several editors of *The Notes* had also been professors: Albert Salzberg at Rhode Island College, George H. Kellner at the University of Rhode Island, and Michael Fink at the Rhode Island School of Design. Fink became one of the journal's most prolific and stylish contributors. Nevertheless, a young professor at Brown, whose primary interest was French Jewry but occasionally taught a course on American Jewish history, was not in the least bit interested in becoming the anthology's editor.

Consequently, I sought guidance from the obvious expert, Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna of Brandeis, who had delivered a significant lecture to the Association in November 1994. His speech, "What's the Use of Local Jewish History?" was published in the 1995 issue of *The Notes.* Sarna happily suggested that the association seek guidance

from his associate, Dr. Ellen Smith, a former librarian of the American Jewish Historical Society and the associate director of a Brandeis journalism program. She not only agreed to serve as editor, but also helped persuade Jonathan to publish the anthology in Brandeis' eminent series in American Jewish History, Culture, and Life.

A fundamental challenge facing the publication of the anthology was selecting a small number of articles to represent the hundreds previously published. Eventually, seventeen were chosen to represent three categories: communities, business and labor, and learning and leisure. The fourth category, "I Remember," represented dozens of first-person accounts, which quickly became essential to the journal's success by giving personal examples of broader trends.

It was also necessary to include within the anthology's articles some examples of "lists" – more often the first examples of a phenomenon rather than the last. Such lists have guided historical research since the journal's first issue. The anthology's enumerations included Jewish-owned textile companies and a less extensive description of Jewish-owned farms. History buffs rather than experienced writers have typically assembled such lists. But scholars and professionals were well represented through the anthology's selection of articles. Indeed, several articles had been delivered as lectures at the Association's annual meetings. But there was also space for two original introductory articles written by academicians, but in a non-academic style.

In October 2004, *The Jews of Rhode Island* was co-published by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, Brandeis, and the University Press of New England. Jonathan Sarna spoke at the book's wonderful publication party. I too delivered some celebratory remarks.

Having happily contributed in various ways, I was credited as the volume's co-editor. Perhaps my most enjoyable task was helping select about 100 photographs from more than 10,000 that I examined. Despite the creation of indispensable websites and the continuing use of online programs, I believe that the two national Jewish historical organizations remain deficient in their relative neglect of visual imagery in their journals.

Of course, my most practical responsibility was fundraising in order to underwrite the cost of producing 2,500 copies, but also in order to donate copies to every Jewish library, public library, and high school library in Rhode Island. Thanks to Prof. and Rev. Ernest Frerichs, the founder of Judaic studies at Brown, the anthology's largest donation came from the Dorot Foundation. Other notable donations were received from the Federation's Endowment Fund, the Rhode Island Foundation, and many Jewish Historical Association leaders. By the way, I lectured at numerous congregations, and most copies of the anthology were quickly purchased. Eventually, the entire edition sold out.

My Editorship

In 2003, following Leonard Moss's retirement as editor of *The Notes,* I needed to recruit his successor. There was no obvious candidate among authors of previous articles, and I tried unsuccessfully to entice a few acquaintances and strangers with some publishing experience. Then Stanley Abrams, the chair of RIJHA's publications committee, asked me to serve. For various reasons I was reluctant, but I said that I would give it a try. I suppose that, after editing nineteen annual issues and surpassing Dr. Seebert Goldowsky's record for longevity, I'm still trying. Professional and nonprofessional historians have far more to say. I keep a list of potential topics, which seems to grow rather than diminish.

One key to my success was the publication committee's decision, ultimately supported by the Association's board, to spend much more on production costs. *The Notes* had to look and feel much better. This meant hiring a successful graphic designer to custom-design outside and inside covers as well as every other image and every page. After eleven issues, Stephen Logowitz succeeded Bobbie Friedman, and he too has become an excellent collaborator and colleague.

Another key to my success was welcoming articles about relatively recent occurrences in Rhode Island Jewish history – or putting aside the question of when our history begins (or resumes), or even, perhaps, what "historical phenomena" might be. I have learned

to believe that almost all historical analysis is open to – or truly demands – reinterpretation. The purpose of such inquiry, however, is not to overturn conventions or strive for political correctness, but to be far more imaginative and inclusive.

As a result, I have attempted to recruit many new writers, including Jewish and non-Jewish professors from many disciplines, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. The Association continues to offer an annual financial prize to a student for a notable article, but there are, unfortunately, few submissions. A high school student could also submit an impressive essay, but this has not yet happened. At the other end of the age spectrum, the author of an article in a recent issue, a retired elementary school teacher, was ninety-seven years of age.

I happily encourage experienced writers to continue their submissions. But I am also pleased to occasionally republish an article from elsewhere that has not yet received the attention it deserves. Occasionally, I publish a reminiscence or a portion of a memoir by a deceased writer. In fact, there have been more than a few series of three consecutive articles by the same author; the record has been four. Several of these authors were Holocaust survivors, so *The Notes* has become an unacknowledged publishing arm of the Bornstein Holocaust Resource Center.

What has been my least enjoyable responsibility as editor? Surprisingly, it has not been writing more than 300 obituaries of association members. This has been both an honor and a challenge that I enjoy. Rather, every four years it becomes an enormous task to index each volume. There is simply no high-tech shortcut. Almost every name, event or phenomenon seems to matter, especially to individuals who may be conducting genealogical research—but boasting about ancestry was never RIJHA's goal.

Over nearly seven decades of publication, has our journal lost a broader focus, becoming burdened with trivia? I do not believe so. During the twentieth century, for example, the following major themes and focal points have endured: immigration to America and then migration to Rhode Island; financial hardship and prosperity; education; the professions; patriotism; Jewish congregations and

organizations; Zionism; the arts; and recreation—among others. Thus far, however, there have been few comparative studies placing Rhode Island within a regional or a larger context and, surprisingly, antisemitism has not been a prevalent theme.

One major omission in the journal's coverage has been spirituality. It is so much easier for a writer to discuss the glorious history or sad decline of his or her congregation than the growth, withering or rejuvenation of one's faith. And this may be as true for laypeople as for clergy. Generally, I have found that professional and nonprofessional historians, perhaps through their somewhat different perspectives and methodologies, have much to learn from one another. Yet, if the Association had relied entirely on professional historians, its journal would never have emerged.

Yes, I would happily welcome the publication of a second anthology from *The Notes* (even if Prof. Jonathan Sarna's splendid Brandeis series no longer exists). During my tenure, the journal has been more productive than ever, publishing about 275 articles and about 1,700 photos – nearly 4,000 pages. Of course I would also surely welcome the publication of a monograph covering the breadth and depth of Rhode Island Jewish history. Admittedly, however, the market for such a volume would be tiny.

The Future

RIJHA entered a new era in 2006, when it finally created its own website: www.rijha.org. The site has been redesigned many times in order to share the Association's comprehensive understanding of Rhode Island Jewish history with local, regional, national, and, possibly, international researchers. Many wonderful resources have been posted, including: a full run of *The Notes* (except for each year's current issue); the Association's occasional newsletter; its complete files of published obituaries; and a list of 400 oral history interviews (but not the actual recordings). There are also full runs of two discontinued newspapers: *Providence Passover Journal* and *Rhode Island Jewish Herald.* Additionally, the website has announcements of upcoming meetings as well as a roster of Association board members and staff. It may not be a flashy resource, but it is intended to be inviting.

The Association has made other forays into contemporary educational or social technology. For example, in cooperation with the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and Brown University's John Nicholas Brown Center, it recently launched its version of "Rhode Tour," which consists of a free mobile app and website for tours around the Ocean State.

Especially during the COVID pandemic, cyberspace has not only helped members of RIJHA stay in touch with each other and present some programs, but it has also led to some more ambitious Zoom meetings. For example, the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, established in 2015 and headquartered in Boston, has brought together sister Jewish historical organizations from throughout the region. Surely, they will discuss and benefit from further collaborations. Ironically, the Wyner Center evolved after the departure of the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) from the Brandeis campus.

Unfortunately, that national body, which courageously initiated the study of American Jewish history and later served as an umbrella organization for smaller organizations around the country, no longer plays a leadership role. Instead, it works primarily to serve the needs of scholars and professional historians, although its website does serve researchers from multiple backgrounds.

One important way that RIJHA prepared for the future was by moving a second time, in 2018, within the Dwares Jewish Community Center, to larger, more adaptable, more comfortable, and far more visible quarters. This move to the former home of the Rhode Island Holocaust Education and Resource Center was made possible by a $263,000 capital campaign. The largest gift came from the Gertrude Regensteiner Revocable Trust; though deceased at the time of this gift, she and her immediate family had been Holocaust survivors. Other large gifts came from Association leaders and members as well as the Jewish Alliance, which remains the Association's generous and gracious landlord.

There is more wonderful financial news. At the time of its recent move, the Association's endowment increased to more than $500,000. Through prudent management, it has continued to grow

impressively to about $900,000.

But, in less conventional terms, will RIJHA's future be as bright as its past? Unfortunately, despite continuing accomplishments, membership has seriously declined to about 270 lifetime and annual members. Most members are elderly; "young" leadership would begin with individuals approaching grandparenthood. Indeed, the Association's major challenge is identifying, encouraging, and educating two younger generations of leaders. No doubt many of Rhode Island's Jewish organizations face a similar challenge or peril.

Is there something especially confounding, burdensome, or illusory about Jewish life in the Ocean State? There are, of course, many fewer Jews than there were approximately ninety years ago – perhaps only sixty percent of those numbers. Fortunately, many young Jews are curious to explore a larger world, but many do not return after completing their studies or early work experiences. Fewer family businesses exist here than ever, and few are related to high-tech technologies or expanding, international markets. Although the cost of housing in Rhode Island has increased significantly, it is considerably less than in the larger cities of other states.

Fortunately, Rhode Island still offers all kinds of opportunities for individuals and families to become and remain Jewish, even as the number of synagogues has declined, and greater competition between Jewish and secular organizations for Jewish leadership and support exists. Yes, Rhode Island was and remains a rather quirky place. Simultaneously small and large, unified and divided, cosmopolitan and provincial, colorful and bland, it is forever denying, ignoring, and rediscovering itself.

It seems somewhat unlikely, however, that RIJHA could ever again attract such talented, accomplished, and driven leaders as its seven founders. What an unusual yet remarkable group of friends, colleagues, and visionaries they were. Could anybody have foreseen what the Association has been able to accomplish, with quite limited resources, over a mere seven decades? Yet, when least expected, miracles do happen. RIJHA's success has been one such!

Editor's Notes

1
George M. Goodwin and Ellen Smith, eds., *The Jews of Rhode Island* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2004), Appendix B, 228–29.

2
For information about the recent lawsuit regarding the ownership of the rimonim housed at Touro Synagogue, see the following articles: George M. Goodwin, "Wondrous Rimonim: Ownership, Holiness, Beauty, Rarity, and Value," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* (subsequently identified as *The Notes*) 17:1 (2015): 130–159; Paul Berger, "America's Oldest Synagogue Wrestles With Court Battle and Its Own Decline," *The Notes,* 17:1 (2015): 160–167; "Shul v. Shul: Judge McConnell's Decision," *The Notes*,17:2 (2016), 316–361; Mel A. Topf, "Introduction to the First Circuit Opinion," and "Decision in Congregation Jeshuat Israel v. Congregation Shearith Israel," *The Notes,* 17:3 (2017): 515–52.

3
It would be tempting to say that Jews, having departed one capital, were eventually attracted to another, but Rhode Island history, especially in view of its tiny size, is exceedingly complex. Providence, having been founded in 1636, was Rhode Island's first capital, but between 1681 and 1854, the capital rotated five times per year between Providence, Newport, Bristol, East Greenwich, and Kingston. Between 1854 and 1901, Providence and Newport served as the capital. Then in 1901, following the construction of a new State House, Providence became the only capital. The state's official name until 2020 was Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, when a ballot measured shortened it to Rhode Island. Sadly, many Americans in the Northeast, who have never visited the Ocean State, confuse it with Long Island.

4
Temple Beth-El in Providence subscribed to the AJHS's publications since their inception. For continuing reference and research purposes, the Temple also bound its copies.

5
On October 22, 1986, Nathan M. Kaganoff, AJHS's librarian, wrote to Temple Beth-El's leaders regarding the scope and quality of its archival collection. "I have visited several synagogues that have extensive archives and museums and I must say that I have never in all my experience visited a synagogue that has not as yet established its archives and has such a rich collection of materials as you have." Letter in Beth-El archives.

6
George M. Goodwin, "Class of 1896: Three Pawtucket Lads at Harvard," The Notes 16:2 (2014): 621–625.

7
Oscar Straus, *Roger Williams: The Pioneer of Religious Liberty* (New York: Century, 1894).

8
Rabbi Braude wrote eleven articles for *The Notes.* The two that Prof. Marcus acknowledged were: "Recollections of a Septuagenarian" (Parts 1) 8:3 (1981): 345–372 and (Part 2) 8:4 (1982): 401–441. The second part was excerpted in the RIJHA's 2004 anthology.

9
The nation's oldest, the Massachusetts Historical Society, founded in Boston in 1791, sought initially to collect materials on a national basis. Rhode Island's other predecessors were the New York Historical Society, founded in New York City in 1804, and the Maine Historical Society, founded in Portland in 1822, only two years after Maine had become a state through the Missouri Compromise.

10
In 1824, the Rhode Island Historical Society's "Southern Cabinet" was established in Newport. Nearly thirty years later it received its own state charter. In 1884, the Society acquired a historic structure, the Seventh Day (or Sabbatarian) Meetinghouse, which had been built in 1730 to the east of where Touro Synagogue would be erected. In 1902, the Historical Society built a library extension adjacent to Touro. During the late 1960s, the Historical Society assumed ownership of and responsibility for another key religious structure, the Friends Meetinghouse, whose core was erected in 1699. Another significant development occurred in 1993, when the Historical Society opened a museum and a shop within the Brick Market, the second of three important buildings that Peter Harrison had designed in Newport. The Brick Market, completed in 1772, was once used as a town hall and is still owned by the municipality.

11
In 1979, Seebert Goldowsky became probably the first Jewish member of the Society's publications committee. He chaired the committee from 1981 to 1984.

12
For "Windshield," see Dietrich Neumann, ed., *Richard Neutra's Windshield House* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2001).

13
For a detailed history of this property, see John Auwaerter and Karen Cowperthwaite, *Cultural Landscape Report for Rogers William National Memorial,* third draft (Boston: National Park Service, 2009), especially 32–41.

14
In 1867, Emma Lazarus, a summer visitor to Newport, had written a poem, "In the Jewish Synagogue in Newport," which, when published four years later, also foresaw the rebirth of Newport's Jewish community. This was a contradiction of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Jewish Cemetery in Newport," which he wrote in 1852 and published two years later. Ely Stock, a teaching associate in Brown's department of American civilization, reproduced and interpreted Longfellow's poem in an article: "Longfellow's 'The Jewish Cemetery at Newport,'" *Rhode Island History* (July 1961): 81–87. This was the first article with a Jewish focus that appeared in the journal since David Adelman's, "Strangers: Civil Rights of Jews in the Colony of Rhode Island," which had been published in the July, 1954 issue and will be cited later in my discussion. The third article was written by Sidney Goldstein, a prominent Brown sociologist: "The Providence Jewish Community After 125 Years of Development," Rhode Island History (April, 1966): 51–57. I would like to thank Phoebe S. Bean, the Rhode Island Historical Society's librarian, for helping me identify these articles.

15
Morris Gutstein, *The Story of The Jews of Newport: Two and Half Century of Judaism, 1658–1908* (New York: Bloch, 1936).

16
See Leon Hühner, *The Life of Judah Touro (1775-1854)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946) and Stanley F. Chyet, *Lopez of Newport: Colonial American Merchant Prince* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

17
George M. Goodwin, "The Politics of Preservation: How Touro Synagogue Became a National Historic Site," The Notes 18:2 (2000): 177–207.

18
In 1952, the idea of the Three Chapels was conceived by a prominent Jewish architect, Max Abramovitz, who built extensively on the Brandeis campus. Jaya Kader, "The Three

Chapels," in *An Architectural Celebration of Brandeis University's 50th Anniversary*, ed. by Gerald S. Bernstein (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 30–33. (My article on Abramovitz's design of the Rose Art Museum follows.)

19
An early key study of Harrison's architecture was Carl Bridenbaugh, *Peter Harrison, the First American Architect* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949). Bridenbaugh, whose specialty was colonial American history, taught at Brown between 1938 and 1942 and again between 1962 and 1969 as a University Professor. Largely as a result of his 1962 presidential address to the American Historical Association, however, he was considered an antisemite. Se: William Palmer, "Carl Bridenbaugh, American Colonial History and Academic Antisemitism: The Paths to the 'Great Mutation'," *American Jewish History* 98:3 (2014): 153–74. Another early and still useful study of Harrison's importance is Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640–1915* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); a second, revised edition was published by American Legacy Press in 1982 (see 78–91). Downing, who lived on College Hill in Providence, was a founder of the Providence Preservation Society in 1956 and helped guide it for more than four decades. One fascinating but traditionally overlooked feature of Newport's Jewish cemetery is its gateway, designed in the Egyptian Revival style and erected in 1842. See George M. Goodwin, "The Gateway to Newport's Jewish Cemetery," *Rhode Island History* 67 (summer/fall 2009): 61–73.

20
The stamp also cites two phrases used in Seixas's letter to Washington and repeated in Washington's letter to the Hebrew congregation. A decade earlier, the Postal Service had approved the use of a Touro image, but it would have appeared on a postcard, which the Society of Friends rejected. On August 20, 1982, two days before the commemorative stamp was finally issued, the postmaster general, William F. Bolger, spoke at the reading of the Washington letter. See James H. Bruns, "Persistence Pays Off: The Touro Synagogue Stamp," *The Notes* 8:4 (1982): 487–93.

21
The journal's first issue was mailed to Association members using seven, three-cent stamps—each with a different historical image. Needless to say, the oldest stamp, issued in 1936 in honor of Rhode Island's Tercentenary, portrayed Roger Williams.

22
David C. Adelman, "Strangers: Civil Rights of Jews in the Colony of Rhode Island," *Rhode Island History* 13 (July 1954): 65–77.

23
Ibid., *65*.

24
Goldowsky's article, "Local Jewish History: The Rhode Island Experience," The Notes 6:4 (1974): 622-28, had actually been written as a speech, "Local Jewish History: The Rhode Island Experience," presented at a 1974 conference, "New Approaches to Local Jewish History," held at Ohio State University. The Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish studies program at Ohio State, the Ohio Historical Society, and the Columbus Jewish Federation cosponsored the conference. A surgeon, Goldowsky would become the biographer of Usher Parsons, an early Rhode Island surgeon, and the longest-serving editor of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal* (1961-1989). He was devoted to a factual understanding of history – and just about everything else, including spirituality. Thus, his congregational rabbi, William G. Braude of Temple Beth-El, occasionally referred to him as "my favorite agnostic."

25
Seebert J. Goldowsky, *A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David* (Temple Beth-El) Providence, Rhode

Island (Providence, RI: Congregation of the Sons of Israel, 1989).

26
Goldowsky, "Local Jewish History: The Rhode Island Experience," 624. Adelman delivered his remarks at the Association's first formal meeting, held on February 12, 1953 at the Rhode Island Historical Society's John Brown House.

27
Goldowsky, "Local Jewish History: The Rhode Island Experience," 624.

28
In 1874, this congregation merged with Sons of David to become Congregation Sons of Israel and David. In 1877, when it joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, it became one of the first Reform congregations in New England. In 1911, after erecting its second synagogue in South Providence, the congregation became widely known as Temple Beth-El.

29
Levy belonged to Brown's Jewish fraternity. See George M. Goodwin, "The Brothers of Phi Epsilon Pi," *The Notes* 14:1 (2003): 127–47.

30
See Judith Kapstein Brodsky, "Kappy and Stella," The Notes 14:2 (2004): 304–21; Jonathan Kapstein, "Captain John J. Kapstein, U. S. Army Air Force: In War and Peace," *The Notes* 17:4 (2018): 664–80.

31
See Jay Barry, "Israel J. Kapstein of Brown," The Notes 14:2 (2004): 281–303. This article was a shortened version of a chapter in the author's book, *Gentlemen Under the Elms* (Providence: Brown Alumni Monthly, 1982), 94–109.

32
Two of Rabbi Braude and Prof. Kapstein's collaborative translations were *Pesikta-de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975) and T*anna Debe Eliyyahu: The Lore of the School of Elijah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981). The first volume won the 1976 National Jewish Book Award for English translation. Rabbi Braude's earlier translation was *Pesikta Rabbati: A Translation from the Hebrew,* 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

33
The book was published as: William G. Braunde, *Jewish Proselytizing in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era: The Age of the Tannaim and Amoraim* (Brown University Pres, 1940). See "Bibliography of Selected Publications" in Rabbi Braude's Festschrift: Herman J. Blumberg and Benjamin Braude, eds.,*"Open Thou Mine Eyes…": Essays on Aggadah and Judaica Presented to Rabbi William G. Braude on His Eightieth Birthday and Dedicated to His Memory* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing, 1992), xiii–xx. His eighth publication was a book review, consisting of five paragraphs, in the April 1943 issue of *Rhode Island History.* Perhaps this was an appropriate length for Samuel Broches's *Jews in New England* (New York: Bloch, 1942), a two-volume set that ran only 148 pages. Beth-El's spiritual leader did reveal some of his humorous side when he stated, "Now this reviewer is temperamentally incapable of excitement over candles, spermaceti and molasses with which many of the documents published in the Broches monograph deal….But since he cannot follow the complexities of a simple business contract he is quite baffled by the give-and-take in letters exchanged among canny Jewish and Yankee traders," 67.

34
For more details about RIJHA's founding and evolution, see Geraldine S. Foster, "In the Beginning: How Our Association Grew and Took Root," The Notes 61:2 (2012): 387–91.

35
William G. McLaughlin, *Rhode Island: A Bicentennial History.* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); *Rhode Island: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986).

36
Freda Egnal, "An Annotated Critical Bibliography of Materials Relating to the History of the Jews in Rhode Island, Located in Rhode Island Depositories (1678-1966)," *The Notes* 4 (1966): 305–6.

37
Richard K. Showman, Margaret Cobb, Robert E. McCarthy & Dennis M. Conrad, eds., *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene* (13 vols.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Rhode Island Historical Society, 1971-2005).

38
Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams,* 2 vols. (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1988).

39
See George M. Goodwin, "Woonsocket's B'nai Israel," Rhode Island History 58 (February 2000): 3–21.

40
Fishman became the director of the Maine State Museum, in Augusta, where he continues to serve. A more recent Jewish member of the Historical Society's staff is Becca Bender, a film curator and archivist, who arrived in 2018. The newest Jewish member of the staff is Deborah Krieger, the exhibit and program coordinator at the Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket.

41
In 2011, Brown's Warren Alpert Medical School (named for its Jewish benefactor) relocated nearby, to a former jewelry factory, once one of the world's largest. It had been owned and operated by the Briers, a prominent Jewish family.

42
George M. Goodwin, "The Design of a Modern Synagogue: Percival Goodman's Beth-El in Providence, Rhode Island," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 45, no. 1 (1993): 31–71. I have published many articles on synagogue architecture.

43
At the Association's annual meeting in 1999, for example, Albert T. Klyberg, the director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, spoke on: "A Rhode Island Historian Looks at the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes."* After examining every article published in the journal since 1954, he was the only historian or writer to render a comprehensive opinion. More generous than critical, he called the journal "a true Thanksgiving Feast." See *The Notes,* 13, no. 1 (1999), 9.

44
The anthology included several appendices and other research aides including a timeline of Rhode Island Jewish history and a bibliography of notable references, with an abbreviated, topical guide to articles published in The Notes. No less important were the texts of two canonical letters penned in 1790: Moses Seixas's to George Washington and the president's reply.

45
Goodwin and Smith, eds., *The Jews of Rhode Island.*

In Memoria:
November 1, 2022-November 1, 2023

Richard Bornstein, the son of the late Harry and Ethel Bornstein, was born in Providence, where his family owned and operated Miller's Delicatessen, a landmark on the East Side.

Mr. Bornstein attended Providence Hebrew Day School and graduated from Classical High School, where he enjoyed playing basketball. After earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Rhode Island, he worked in his family's business on Hope Street. Following his marriage to Sandra Koffler, he became actively involved in his father-in-law's business, American Tourister, a leading manufacturer of luggage. Following the sale of that business, he created The Koffler Group, which became one of New England's major real estate development companies.

Mr. Bornstein was active in the leadership of many philanthropic organizations, including: the Jewish Federation (later known as the Alliance), Temple Emanu-El, the Dwares Jewish Community Center, The Miriam Hospital, Brown's Alpert Medical School, Wheeler School, Bryant University, and his alma maters. With his wife, Sandra, he helped establish the Koffler Bornstein Institute of Jewish Studies at Temple Emanu-El and the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, which is housed within the Dwares JCC.

Mr. Bornstein was also active in the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County. In addition to having served as a president of Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts, he was a president of High Ridge Country Club in Palm Beach.

Mr. Bornstein, an avid fan of numerous New England teams, also enjoyed driving sports cars. One of his favorites was a red Ferrari convertible. He also enjoyed grilling food at family gatherings and travel abroad.

Mr. Bornstein is survived by his wife, Sandra, and his stepchildren: Jo-An Kaplan, Scott Chernick, and Terri Chernick.

Died on April 13, 2023 in Providence at the age of 72.

Janice J. Gadon, a daughter of the late Harry and Dora Brosofsky and a stepdaughter of the late Bessie Brosofsky, grew up in Providence. After graduating from Hope High School in 1950, she studied at the University of Rhode Island, and completed her bachelor's degree in English in 1972.

Having worked in many fields, Mrs. Gadon became a career placement counselor at the Katharine Gibbs School. After retirement, she became a successful writer of resumes.

Mrs. Gadon was an active member of Temple Sinai and the Cranston Jewish community for more than a half-century. She was also devoted to the League of Women Voters, Opportunities for Women, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and the Cranston Public Library. Additionally, she mentored students in Cranston and Providence schools.

Mrs. Gadon also enjoyed participating in and hosting book club meetings and card game nights. She played tennis, partook in cross-country skiing, and practiced yoga. She also found time to enjoy cooking and hosting family and friends.

"Jan" and her husband, Harold, having lost their parents at an early age, felt especially drawn to one another. They much enjoyed taking family vacations in the mountains of Vermont and on the beaches of Cape Cod.

Mrs. Gadon is survived by her husband and their children, Charles, Jane Breslau, and Brenda Lewis.

Died on December 26, 2022 in Cranston at the age of 90.

Sanford H. Gorodetsky, the son of the late Louis and Sally Gorodetsky, was a Providence native. He was a proud graduate of Classical High School and Providence College.

During World War II, Mr. Gorodetsky served with the Army in the Pacific. He became a commander of Rhode Island's chapter of the Jewish War Veterans and served on several other veterans' advisory committees, including the Disabled American Veterans chapter in Bristol.

As a graduate of Boston University Law School, Mr. Gorodetsky practiced law for no fewer than 62 years. He also served as

chief judge of Providence's municipal court, director of Providence's department of public safety, and a member of its city council.

No shrinking violet, Mr. Gorodetsky enjoyed singing, playing many musical instruments, and acting. He appeared in various movies and television shows.

Mr. Gorodetsky, a member of Temple Emanu-El, was predeceased by his first wife, Harriet, and is survived by their sons, Evan and Brian. He is also survived by his second wife, Barbara, and his stepchildren, Robin and Perry.

Died on February 25, 2023 in Providence at the age of 94.

Joyce Hurvitz, the daughter of Jacob and Jennie Rady, was born in Bristol, Virginia, and grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. She graduated from Hillsboro High School, attended Vanderbilt University, and kept her Southern accent.

She met her late husband, Arthur, a New York City native, because his older brother, Alex, had married one of her cousins, Honey Blumberg. Arthur and Joyce's first date was in Chattanooga.

After living briefly in Atlanta, where Arthur completed his engineering degrees at Georgia Institute of Technology, the couple settled in Rhode Island, where they supported numerous organizations. These included: The Miriam Hospital, the Jewish Alliance, Jewish Seniors Agency, and Jewish Family Service as well as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Pawtucket and its partner in Cumberland-Lincoln. Mrs. Hurvitz was also devoted to the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. The family belonged to Temple Beth-El.

Mrs. Hurvitz enjoyed writing poetry, especially to celebrate relatives' and friends' special occasions, and was also an accomplished cook and baker. Her numerous interests also included tennis, bridge, and ballroom dancing.

Mrs. Hurvitz is survived by her daughters, Karen and Ellen.

Died on July 27, 2023 in Providence at the age of 96.

Dorothy Licht, the daughter of Ralph and Bessie Krauss, was a lifelong resident of Providence. She was predeceased by her husband,

Governor Frank Licht, and their daughter, Beth Laramee.

Mrs. Licht, who graduated from Wellesley College in 1943, became actively involved in her husband's political career (as a Democrat). Initially a state senator from 1949 to 1956 and then a Superior Court judge, he became Rhode Island's first Jewish governor (of two), and served two terms: from 1969 to 1973. Mrs. Licht also served as a delegate to a Democratic national convention.

Following her husband's death in 1987, Mrs. Licht established the Licht Lecture Series at Brown, his undergraduate alma mater. A few of the many distinguished speakers have included: President Barack Obama, Senator John Kerry, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Governor Deval Patrick.

An accomplished leader in her own right, Mrs. Licht was deeply involved with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, the New England Foundation for the Arts, Rhode Island Arts Council, Rhode Island Philharmonic, and the RISD Museum. She and her husband were also active members of Temple Emanu-El and the Jewish Federation (later known as the Alliance).

Mrs. Licht is survived by her daughters, Carol Kanin and Judy Licht.

Died on April 30, 2023 in Providence at the age of 97.

Charlotte Penn, a daughter of the late Louis and Dora Finkler, was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, but her family soon relocated to Providence, which was Dora's hometown.

Charlotte attended Roger Williams and Nathan Bishop Junior High Schools and graduated from Hope High in 1940. She especially enjoyed performing in school plays, and her life inevitably took many dramatic turns.

Charlotte completed her bachelor's degree at Salve Regina College at 56 years of age. Nearly a decade later, she earned a master's in nonprofit management at Lesley University.

Having been married to a bomber pilot, Harold Goldenberg, on July 4, 1943, near his base in Oklahoma, she soon began caring for a young family. After World War II, when the Goldenbergs returned to Providence, Harold suffered from poor health, and he

died in 1968 at 49 years of age. Charlotte, who continued to participate in Jewish veterans' groups, found a nearly ideal position as the director of teenagers' programs at the Jewish Community Center. For a decade she counseled and mentored hundreds of young people, and she never lost touch with some.

In 1972, Charlotte became the administrative assistant to the executive director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in Providence. Within a year she replaced him, and then served as a bridge builder for two decades. Her idea of a "Heritage Panel" was implemented nationally.

Charlotte was married briefly to Matthew Penn, and the couple lived in New York City.

During her retirement, Charlotte spoke frequently to elementary school students, traveled to numerous countries, and continued her extensive genealogical research, which resulted in several stunning photo albums.

While living in South Providence, Charlotte had been confirmed at Temple Beth-El. As an adult member of the congregation, she took numerous classes and was active in its Sisterhood.

Fortunately, one of her major interests became our Association. Beginning in 1988, she edited its newsletter, and she later served as the board's secretary. After retiring in 2004, Charlotte remained an honorary board member.

A decade ago, after receiving the Rhode Island Foundation's Community and Justice Award, she left her home adjacent to Beth-El and moved close to her son, Jonas Goldenberg, in Northborough, Massachusetts. She made many new friends while maintaining many of her interests.

When asked the secret to her long life, Charlotte replied, "Give me a couple more years, and I'll tell you." In 2022, she was able to celebrate her centenary by Zoom with many local and Rhode Island friends.

Charlotte was predeceased by her husband, Harold Goldenberg, and their children, Cori Maass and Larry Goldenberg. She is survived by her son, Jonas.

Died on March 16, 2023 in Northborough at the age of 100.

Lillian N. Schwartz, the daughter of Irving and Ida Newman, was born in Brooklyn, New York, and moved with her family to Pawtucket as a child. She graduated from Pawtucket East High School and the University of Rhode Island. She was predeceased by her husband, Harold.

After serving briefly as a social worker in Central Falls, Mrs. Schwartz focused on her life as a homemaker. For nearly 25 years, she served as the librarian of Temple Emanu-El, building its notable collection and circle of readers. She retired in 1999.

Mrs. Schwartz was a lifetime lover of music and art. She played piano from an early age, and she enjoyed painting landscapes.

Mrs. Schwartz had broad academic interests and was a devoted leader and board member of our Association. She was a member of the publication committee for 25 years, and both her children, Michael Schwartz and Bobbie Friedman, who survive her, have played leadership roles.

Died on October 14, 2023 in Providence at the age of 92.

Philip A. Segal, a son of the late Philip and Nanette Segal, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and graduated from Newton High School in 1943. During World War II, he served as a sergeant with the infantry in Okinawa, Japan.

Having earned a bachelor's degree in economics at Dartmouth in 1948, Mr. Segal remained forever devoted to his alma mater. But he led and remained loyal to many other institutions. For example, as a longtime resident of Cranston, he became a founding member of Temple Sinai and served as its president. He was also a board member of our Association and a member of the Jewish Community Center. Mr. Segal was actively involved with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, the Providence Coalition for a Drug-Free America, and the Greater Providence YMCA.

He was a seasoned docent for the Roger Williams Park Zoological Society. He also enjoyed such hobbies as tennis, photography, gardening and travel.

Initially a buyer for Commonwealth Grocery, Mr. Segal later became a store manager for Almacs. He became the company's ex-

ecutive vice president and then its president, before retiring in 1992.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, and their children, James, Joan, and Adam.

Died on April 5, 2023 at the age of 96.

Shirley S. Wolpert, a daughter of the late Robert and Jennie Sugarman, grew up in Providence. She was predeceased by her husband, Irving.

Mrs. Wolpert was a 1942 graduate of Classical High School and earned her bachelor's degree in psychology at Pembroke College four years later. Not only was she an active member of Providence's Pembroke Alumnae Club, but also worked as a receptionist at Brown's Alumni Center for 23 years. She welcomed a huge number and variety of campus visitors, including George Harrison, Howard Cosell, and many foreign dignitaries. Upon her retirement in 2001, Mrs. Wolpert received the Brown President's Achievement Award.

Mrs. Wolpert, who enjoyed summering in Narragansett, was also an avid Patriots fan.

She is survived by her son, Bruce, and her daughter, Nancy Rachman. Bruce's wife, Marlene, has been a longtime member of the Association's board.

D*ied on June 29, 2023 in Providence at the age of 97.*

Janet R. Zurier, a native of Philadelphia who later lived in nearby Allentown, Pennsylvania, was a daughter of the late Albert and Helen Rosen. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University before earning a master's degree at Harvard's Graduate School of Education.

While working for Providence's public schools, Mrs. Zurier became a specialist in early childhood education and in special education. She earned a second master's in education at Rhode Island College and pursued a doctorate at Boston University's School of Education. Mrs. Zurier was so committed to her students and colleagues that she continued teaching beyond her expected retirement. Then, when she finally decided to officially conclude her career, she established a children's fund at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Elementary School in Providence.

As a retiree, Mrs. Zurier founded Volunteers in Providence Schools, which is now known as Inspiring Minds. As an art lover, she became a docent at the RISD Museum. She and her husband, Melvin, traveled extensively, often meeting with teachers in foreign countries.

Mrs. Zurier was a longtime member of Temple Beth-El and chaired the Career Women's Affiliate of Rhode Island's Jewish Alliance. She also enjoyed gardening and cooking. During the Covid epidemic, she wrote a brief article, "From My Balcony," for friends and neighbors about the "blessed relief" she found on the ledge of her Laurelmead apartment.

Mrs. Zurier is survived by her husband and their four married children, Rebecca, Samuel, Benjamin, and Sarah, all of whom proudly retained their family name.

Died on December 15, 2022 in Providence at the age of 92.

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