The Brier family held its first reunion on June 2, 1987. These photos, one of Herman Brier (top left), the other unnamed, were displayed in the Providence Marriott Lobby. Together, they suggest the position not only of the Briers, but of their Jewish generation, wrapped equally in the tallith of their faith and the flag of their beloved new country.
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STUDYING JEWISH HISTORY: HOW DOES IT HELP US UNDERSTAND CONTEMPORARY JEWS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES?

BY CALVIN GOLDSCHEIDER, PH.D.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

As a social scientist, I study society and people, communities and families—changes and continuities, variations and differences. I examine history and use historical comparisons to provide clues about the understanding of contemporary communities. History helps me understand the structure and functions of communities, why and how they work and change over time, how they got to be the way they are; where they have been and where they are going. So I need to understand history in order to compare and analyze the present and to gain some perspective about current conditions to be able to project into the future. The present in its instantaneous and contemporary form only links the past with the future; the present is truly a fleeting moment in the transition in time. We need to go beyond the present into the past to know how we and our communities are different compared to other places and other times.

All too often social scientists who study our contemporary Jewish communities pay little attention to historical issues. History, historical circumstance, historical context are often taken as "givens" in the social scientific study of the Jews and are treated as part of the background; to be acknowledged, but not to be studied directly or learned from. To be sure, we recognize that a particular community which we study has a history; we know that the individuals we study have personal and family histories and that the societies where our community is located have a history; and surely we recognize that the Jewish people have a rich and complex history.

The awareness of history is, however, only a first step in our understanding. Too often we only pay simple lip service to the historical context without taking the lessons of history into account in our analysis. We assume that history is there when we study contemporary Jewish

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*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Mid-Winter meeting, February 1, 1987, of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and builds on research carried out jointly with Alan Zuckerman. This paper benefited from the comments and suggestions of Frances K. Goldscheider.

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communities and we may describe that history. But rarely do we treat history as relevant to our interpretations or as a basis for comparisons. We seldom use history to know how, and in what ways, we are similar to other communities in the past and in what ways are we different. We treat history too often as an exogenous variable — something outside the system we are examining, influencing it, but not to be examined or studied systematically. Social scientists often treat history in trivial ways when we say such things as "history repeats itself" (or "history does not repeat itself"), without specifying the conditions under which history is a guideline and where history provides few models for analysis.

In short, we do not regularly incorporate history into our understanding — our "verstehen" — of contemporary societies and communities. We rarely learn from history more than that history is in the past, long ago.

Often we study history L'ZICHORON — as our Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association uses as its motto — for remembering; for ourselves, our families, our community, to know who we are. We study history for its own sake and that is of course legitimate, appropriate, and can be exciting. Remembering, however, has two meanings: (1) to remember in order to understand and to know and (2) to remember in order to treat as heirloom, as in the past, as archive. I suggest that history as "remembering", when it means preserving the past as heirloom to be examined and admired but not incorporated as part of our being and understanding, is not enough. That meaning of remembering does not take history seriously; it does not use our historical "verstehen" to understand ourselves, our communities, our societies, our families, and in turn our future in some perspective and context.

So I argue, first, that to understand the here and now and project into the future we need to understand the past. Second, I argue, that the social scientific study of history requires us to compare the past systematically so we can identify and isolate commonalities and continuities, differences and changes.

We understand by making historical comparisons — carefully and selectively, in detail and in depth. So my questions as a social scientist when I study contemporary American Jews and their communities are threefold:

(1) How are American Jews contemporary? How are Jews different today than at earlier periods of time. This question focuses on continuities and change.

(2) How are American Jews American? How are today's Jews in America particularly American and not something else. That question also requires historical comparisons.

(3) How are American Jews Jewish? What are the ways Jews and their communities in America are Jewish that is similar and different from the past?
Studying Jewish History: How Does it Help in Understanding Contemporary Jews and their Commitments?

Thus, to study contemporary American Jews and their communities, I need to learn from history, from the experiences of the past in other times and places. My comparisons over time have to be varied and detailed in order to understand the past, to understand the present, to project into the future.

Let me illustrate these three themes on the contemporary American Jewish community by sharing with you briefly some historical analysis. I draw upon some of the existing literature on Jewish historical patterns, using the analysis of others to enhance new interpretations of the present.* We need not reach back into the very distant past to learn about ourselves and our communities. Let us start with a brief review of German Jews in 19th century America. We ask: Does the analysis of the patterns of integration and assimilation of German Jews of 100-150 years ago in America help us understand fifth generation American Jews of largely eastern European origins? I think so. But as we shall see in ways that are quite surprising.

German Jews in 19th Century America

Between 1820 and 1870 an estimated 50,000 German Jews immigrated to the United States, and the Jewish population in America increased from 6,000 to 200,000. Many came from villages and small towns of Germany where formal religious education was weak as was the organization of their community. Why did they come to America?

The primary motivation for emigrating from Germany was economic, as it was for other Germans who were also migrating to the United States at that time. The opportunities available in the United States appeared to be more open. Political and religious issues determined the timing of German Jewish migration, not the decision to leave Germany and emigrate to America. Most of these immigrants were young adults without families, with previous work experience and educational levels suited for mercantile related occupations. Some of these immigrants had been squeezed by repressive legislation or burdened by taxes and restrictions on marriage, residence, and jobs in Germany. But Jews in Europe had almost always faced these restrictions. The new factor was opportunity, and the motive was economic. The place was America.

What happened to these German Jews in America? Their education, occupation, literary skills, and socioeconomic background resulted in social mobility, geographic dispersion, and exposure to secularization. As a result, they rapidly integrated into American society. German Jews in America moved from traditional to Reform Judaism. They did not establish extensive Jewish education networks, and significant proportions were intermarried.*

*In part, I draw upon the work that Alan Zuckerman and I have used for a more general comparative-historical analysis of Jewish communities. See in particular Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1985; on the American Jewish community see Goldscheider, 1986a; 1986b.
ing. A classic case of immigrant assimilation in two generations! But were they assimilating totally? Was their community disintegrating? Some have argued that were it not for the subsequent mass immigration of eastern European Jews to the United States, who were more religiously traditional and whose origins were anchored in well organized Jewish communities, German Jews would have vanished in America. I think not! This assimilation argument is incomplete. There were many bases emerging to underpin Jewish continuity in America for German Jews. Let me outline a few of them.

German Jews were residentially concentrated in several states and large urban areas. In 1877, two-thirds of German-American Jews lived in only five states and in the largest cities compared to only 10 percent of the non-Jewish population in America. Within cities, Jews lived mainly in “Jewish” neighborhoods, with a high concentration of fellow Jews. As within Europe, German-American Jews were an overwhelmingly urban group within a rural society.

Geographic clustering and residential segregation fit in with commercial opportunities in America and therefore with jobs. In mid-nineteenth century America, there was an enormous occupation concentration among Jews (for details and documentation see Mostov, 1981; Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1985). Peddlers, tailors, and clothing and dry goods merchants accounted for half the Jewish employed. Almost no German Jews worked in manual, semi-skilled, and service jobs, compared to about 40 percent of the non-Jews. Not surprisingly, German-Jewish jobs parallel their occupational backgrounds in Germany. The rapid growth of cities and capitalist industries in America expanded economic opportunity for tradesmen and merchants. Between 1825 and 1840, Jewish population size in New York increased from 500 to 40,000 Jews. By 1870, German Jews controlled the entire clothing industry. Eighty percent of the retail clothing stores were owned by Jews, and 90 percent of the wholesale clothing industry was controlled by Jews. In Boston, New York, Detroit, Columbus, Ohio, and San Francisco between 1850 and 1870 fully 80 percent of the Jews were peddlers, merchants, and artisans (Mostov, 1978). Even when we examine specific categories of occupations among Jews and non-Jews, major differences emerge. Thus, for example, half of the Jews and half of the non-Jews in Boston in the 19th century were “artisans”. But among Jews these artisans were tailors, opticians, watchmakers, and cigarmakers; among non-Jews the artisans were largely bakers, shoemakers, and smiths.

What do these geographic and residential concentration patterns mean? They imply extensive economic and social networks and contacts among Jews. An entire economic network including a credit system emerged that was controlled by, and catered to, German Jews in America (Tenenbaum, 1986). These networks linked Jews to each other. Even as social mobility and integration into America took place, they occurred in a form that reinforced their ethnic bonds. So instead of moving in the direction of total
assimilation, the patterns of change resulted in the formation of new and extensive bonds of economic and social ties among Jews.

In addition, there were reforms in religious service and changes in traditional religious observances and ritual practices among German Jews. But these changes did not imply a rejection of the Jewish community or a severance of ties to Judaism. Indeed, most of the German Jews had ties to synagogues and temples. Shuls*, burial societies, welfare institutions, fund raising, and some religious education all characterize the emerging German Jewish community in late 19th century America. New institutions and organizations were being established. New rituals were developing. Religious reform represented a major break from traditional Judaism, but not from German reform in Germany. The reformation of Judaism in America was a clear attempt to adapt to American conditions, not to reject Judaism altogether.

German-Jewish immigrants had already been exposed to religious changes in places of origin and were developing religious institutions and ideologies consistent with their place in America. Only from the perspective of traditional Judaism was religious reform the symbol of assimilation. Clearly the evidence indicates that from their perspective, German Jews were remaining Jewish in America and were maintaining Judaism, even as they were changing the ways they expressed their Jewishness and were reforming their religion. So they were retaining their Judaism not despite religious reform, but in conjunction with it; perhaps even because of it.

Synagogue reforms, the development of new Jewish communal institutions, and the expansion of Jewish organizations, were not the signs of a vanishing, chaotic group. Most Jewish economic activities involved only other Jews, within Jewish neighborhoods and Jewish business activities. Emerging in America was a new community, bound together by culture, background, experience, economics, family, and religion. Describing the most influential, prosperous Reform Jewish community of the midwest United States in the mid to late 19th century, one historian notes:

Cincinnati's Jews remained a distinct subcommunity. What made the Jews different from other communities was the degree of their distinctiveness in an economic in addition to a social, ethnic, and religious sense. To be a Jew in Cincinnati meant not only that one might pray in a different place than non-Jews, or belong to a separate set of organizations. Rather, one's Jewishness was an important factor in how one happened to settle in Cincinnati and how long one remained, of where one resided and worked within the city, and how one made a living (Mostov, 1981, p. 238).

Thus, from the middle to the late 19th century, Jews in the United States

*Synagogues.
were linked to each other in a variety of ways. Residentially, occupationally, and culturally, Jews were distinctive. These differences defined the cohesiveness of German Jewish immigrants and their children in America. The secularization of Judaism and the opportunity to integrate transformed the context of Jewishness in America, without threatening German Jews in the United States with total assimilation.

What can we learn about the contemporary American Jewish community from this brief historical illustration? Several points can be highlighted. We learn that social, economic, and cultural networks can play a critical role in the reinforcement of community cohesion. We also note that reform and change are not by themselves equal and do not imply total assimilation. Change does not mean dissolution. We also learn that residential and occupational concentration, family and geographic ties, are direct ways to form networks, and it is these networks that constitute a voluntary community. We learn as well that religious changes only imply the dissolution of the community when we accept the domino theory of assimilation that argues that as one thing changes everything falls apart. Rather, it seems that Jews underwent a transformation where jobs, family, schools, and residence became radically different when compared to the past, along with drastic changes in religious expression, yet within a context of emerging new bases for Jewish communal forms.

VIENNA AND THE ASSIMILATION OF THE JEWS

Are these patterns of social change and continuity among immigrants and their children only an American phenomenon, limited to an open pluralist society? The Jewish communities of central and western European countries have often been portrayed by Jewish historians as symbols of assimilation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Upon more systematic examination, these communities turn out to be remarkably parallel to our American case study. Vienna in the late 19th and early 20th centuries invokes images of the birth of modernism and the rapid assimilation and acculturation of Viennese Jewry. Artistic and intellectual elites were conspicuous in the Viennese Jewish community, reflecting the fact that Jews had achieved a high level of assimilation into Viennese culture and society (Rozenblit, 1983).

Yet, Jewish assimilation in late 19th century Vienna as in other European cities was a group phenomenon. Jews acculturated into the larger society and adopted the tastes and styles of Austro-German society but did so in the company of other Jews. The whole process of assimilation, as Rozenblit documents, was a group process. Careful historical analysis has shown that Jews developed new social patterns and modes of behavior instead of merging into the larger society. These new lifestyles continued to mark Jews off as Jews, to themselves and to the outside world. By living in the same neighborhood, going to school together, befriending and marrying each other, by associating and interacting intensively within their own group, particularly on informal and social occasions, the Jews of Vienna created
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group continuity in the Hapsburg capital as they were socially and geographically mobile.

Viennese Jews certainly hoped that they would win acceptance as Austrians and as Jews, but they recognized that they were not accepted in the social and intimate circles of non-Jewish Vienna. Anti-Semitism continued, and was a continuous feature of Vienna; the external rejection remained despite, perhaps because of, the success of the Jews.

Viennese Jewry did not want to forgo their Jewishness just for the sake of total acceptance, but neither did they want to forgo gentle acceptance for the sake of their Jewishness. Austria never did accept the Jews fully. By the end of World War II, Austria became virtually Judenrein. Yet anti-Semites continued to denounce and attack non-existent Jews.

The success of the Nazis and the end of Austrian Jewry should not obscure the powerful achievements of Viennese Jewry. They forged a Jewish and European identity, even though Austria may not have been conducive to that blend. Whether anti-Semites accepted Jews or not, the Jewish community of Vienna before the 1930s was in fact a community of Austro-Germans who held fast to their sense of attachment to the Jewish community.

Vienna, like America, shows Jews assimilating in some ways and not in all; changing but not decaying as a community. And if anti-Semitism was a factor in Vienna and in Europe, it was not, and is not, the major source of Jewish cohesion in America. Historical comparisons have shown us that.

GERMAN JEWS IN GERMANY

As a final example, let us look briefly at Germany itself and the assimilation of German Jews there. Perhaps no case has been cited more often to demonstrate how the Jews were assimilating in Germany and how that historical case illustrates the disappearance of Jews in modern societies through the process of assimilation. A closer assessment of the German case shows again that the issues are more complex and that there is much to learn from history in our understanding of contemporary American Jewish communities. But again the lessons to be learned are surprising.

In his analysis of German Jews and in reflections on his own family situation, Gershom Scholem, the great Jewish philosopher of Kabbalah, provides insight into the German Jewish community before World War I, a community long considered to epitomize the assimilation of Jews. He describes the secular assimilated household where he was raised, where despite manifest claims of religious nonbelief there were forms of religious observances, and where there was a rejection of becoming non-Jewish. He observes:

One day it dawned upon me that for friendly intercourse our house was exclusively visited by Jews, and that my parents paid
visits only to Jews. There were exceptions: On formal occasions some of my father's colleagues from the typographic profession... came to tender their congratulations — practically always unaccompanied by their spouses. Upon my inquiry, my father answered that a social return visit to the families concerned would not be welcome. At that time, my father was a lively, witty and polite man, popular and respected in his profession. This rather far-reaching social ostracism of the Jews, though often denied in family discussions, was especially pronounced in commerce and trade... (Scholem, 1979, p. 17).

The social context described by Scholem characterized the great majority of German Jews. Their occupational and residential distinctiveness had been transformed, and their children were obtaining high levels of education. They spoke only German and spoke of themselves as German. They were not particularly observant religiously, nor were their institutions particularly Jewish. Scholem writes: "It was stressed again and again that one belonged to the German people with which one formed a religious group, the same as others" (pp. 16-17). Yet, Scholem's reflections portray these "Germans of the Mosaic faith" as a particular subcommunity within Germany, invisible only to those who wanted to disappear; in reality they were a community interacting socially mainly with each other.

Modernization did not destroy the powerful bonds that held Jews together and apart from non-Jews in Germany. In Europe, external forces destroyed Jewish communities; terror and Holocaust, emigration and killing victimized the Jews. The end of European Jewish communities was the consequence of Holocaust, not assimilation. It was the European Holocaust and subsequently Soviet terrorism that destroyed the Jewish communities of eastern Europe as well as those in western Europe.

Thus, we do not know the survival patterns of the third, fourth, and fifth generations among German Jews in America in the mid-19th century, since the migration to America between 1880 and 1924 of two-and-a-half million Jews from eastern Europe redefined the transformation of American Jews. Viennese Jewry and other European Jewries did not survive as a community after World War II.

THE UNIQUENESS OF AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN HISTORY

As a result, our contemporary American Jewish community comprised largely of fourth and fifth generation Jews is unique in modern Jewish history. There is, nevertheless, much to be learned by historical comparisons. We are in America a community that is both assimilated and Jewish. Recent social science evidence on the patterns of networks — social, residential, family, occupational, educational — of American Jews point to the continuing salience of Jewish communal life. These networks are reinforced by connections based on religion and common background and
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experiences. The anchors of continuity are strong. Continuities between generations are clearer than ever in terms of institutional developments; there are linkages to the Jewish community among those who share lifestyle, education, jobs, politics, culture, and neighborhood; religious and communal affiliations, identification, and common behavior patterns continue to characterize new generations of Jewish families (for documentation see Goldscheider, 1986a; 1986b).

History teaches us that American Jews are different from European Jews of a century ago. Social and economic opportunities are greater; there is no political anti-Semitism in the United States that is comparable to the European experience. High levels of educational attainment and occupational achievements characterize American Jews, and general patterns of integration into American society complement the enormous institutional and organizational developments within the Jewish community. Together, these features uniquely characterize American Jews. These developments extend to the continuing role of Judaism as a religion in America and the emergence of new forms of religious and cultural expressions in the lives of American Jews. The total configuration of Jewish life in America is unique and therefore cannot be compared simply to other communities in other times. Never before in Jewish history have so many Jews been as educated, as wealthy, living in peaceful relationship with their non-Jewish neighbors as in America! The absence of perfect historical analogies must not deter us from understanding how the “special” in America has consequences for Jewish continuity.

Often we bemoan the Jewish educational accomplishments in the United States that can only be viewed negatively by comparison to the nostalgic (not the real) past. For while everyone remembers his or her grandparents as scholars and Talmidei Hakhamim (Talmudic Scholars), most Jews in Europe 150 years ago were not literate in any language. Yet 75 percent of American Jewish youngsters have some exposure to Jewish education, and with rare exceptions all Jewish children have at least some college education. And while Kashrut (dietary laws), Sabbath observances, and synagogue attendance have declined over the last century in America, new forms of religious expression have emerged. These include communal activities, charity, and, of course, connections to Israel. I do not want to imply that the American Jewish community can easily be sustained without the Judaism associated with Kashrut observances, synagogue attendance, and Sabbath observances. That pattern, of course, finds no parallel historically. Nevertheless, we can ask for the first time: Can Jewishness in the communal and cultural forms, in the organizational and institutional forms, in the form of networks and lifestyles, substitute for religious ritual and piety? Can we build qualitatively on what we have already established, even in our secular-modern society? I think that it is more constructive to build on the diversities of the past and the strengths of the present, on the foundations that we have already constructed, than to bemoan the decline of
traditional Judaism and suggest that there are no historical precedents for the here and now. That seems to me to be the challenge of American Jewish community survival and development.

THE FUTURE IN AMERICA: BUILDING IN NEW WAYS ON THE PAST

Contemporary American Jews are clearly different from communities in the past. History teaches us that. But history also teaches us that to describe American Jews in terms of assimilation is to miss the complexity of community. Too often we obscure the major sources of cohesion (residence, family, politics, religion, and culture) when we focus solely on changes. Jews are distinctive in America relative to non-Jews, and this distinctiveness is as characteristic of the voluntary open society of America, as it was of the conditions of forced Jewish segregation of eastern Europe several generations ago. That fact seems to me to be astounding, and reassuring of Jewish continuities in the future. The amazing historical lesson is that, in America, Jews are part of a cohesive Jewish community without compulsion. There is growth and continuity and new forms of Jewishness within a voluntary and open society.

The forms of distinctiveness of the contemporary American Jewish community are different than in the past. Often the evidence on residential dispersion and intermarriage is compared to an idealized standard of total ghettoization — where Jews live only in neighborhoods with other Jews, marry only other Jews, interact only with other Jews. We almost never ask, what are the social, economic, political, and cultural costs of Jewish segregation? Why focus only on the benefits and not the costs? In contrast when Jewish historians view the integration of Jews and some of the assimilation patterns of their communities, they tend to focus only on the costs and almost never on the benefits.

We need a more balanced appraisal. Often the comparisons are between the ideal and the real — between the nostalgia of eastern European Jewry of 100 years ago and the reality of contemporary America. Hardly an instructive comparison.

To ignore the major strengths of the American Jewish community is to fail to build on and enhance the quality of Jewish life. To ignore the new forms of Jewish communal cohesion is only to use history in its idealized form and in the context of nostalgia for the past; it is to treat Judaism and the Jewish community only as heirlooms to be preserved in archives and museums, but not to be constructed and developed; not to be experienced or learned from. It is to fail to use Jewish history as one basis for understanding contemporary Jews and their communities.

Systematic historical understanding is essential for interpreting the contemporary American Jewish community, and that of course is one primary reason why we must continue our historical studies.
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We in the American Jewish community are different from other Jewish communities in the past; yet we are viable. I think history documents that and instructs us about what to build and how to construct on the firm foundations that are already in place.

We, are, of course, entering a new period of Jewish history, without simple precedent and parallel. Our traditional models and our texts, our cultural and religious sources, do not provide clear blueprints for the future. We have few maps to chart our course as a community and few insights into what will be. Prophets of doom see the future through the lenses of the past — assimilation in Germany, holocaust in Europe. But I think this is distortion not only of contemporary American Jewry, but of history as well. The American Jewish community is hardly disappearing; its institutions, political presence, and self-consciousness are conspicuous features in national American Jewish life. And, as I have suggested, German Jews constituted a socially vibrant Jewish community, and assimilation was not the cause of the decline of European Jewish communities.

To suggest that the American Jewish community is just “surviving” does not accurately portray the richness of American Jewish life or its potential for growth in the future. For American Jews and their communities have responded in creative ways to the new historical circumstances of American society, and will find new ways to remain Jewish in their society.

We have begun to build on the foundations laid by our parents and grandparents. What we have built is different from anything they imagined. What our children will build is bound to be different from anything we imagine. The next generations will face new challenges and will have the resources, spiritual and material, social and economic, to build new layers, new responses appropriate to their situation. It is not for them nor for us to finish the task, as the Mishnah* says. We and they are part of the continuity and change that characterize America and the Jewish people, in history.

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*The Oral Law of the Talmud.
PHILIP PAIGE AND THE JEWISH LEGION

BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

The year 1917 is memorable for World War I, the Balfour Declaration, and a not-to-well-known phenomenon — the formation of the Jewish Legion. It was the first Jewish-identified military formation since the days of Bar Kochba (revolutionary leader of the revolt against Hadrian) almost 1900 years ago.

The Jewish Legion was founded during World War I to assist the Allied effort to oust Turkey from Palestine. The concept originated simultaneously in Zionist circles of several European countries, the United States, and Canada. It was effectively propagated in Egypt among Jewish refugees from Palestine by Vladimir Jabotinsky and Joseph Trumpeldor.1

To form this Palestine Jewish Legion, soap-box orators appealed to the Jewish youth to volunteer. Ten thousand young men are said to have answered the call. Philip Paige was one of those thousands of young men.

Philip (Petrofsky) Paige was born in Togachev, Byelorussia on July 15, 1902, second oldest of eight children born to Simon and Sophie (Petrofsky) Paige. The family left Russia in August 1914 and settled in Montreal, Quebec.

There were two influences in Paige's adolescent years that inspired him to be a "Jewish fighter." The first was as a student in Heder (a school for Hebrew and the basis of Jewish religious observance), where he learned about Moses and Abraham. "I used to think they were such strong men as well as King David and King Solomon. And about the Maccabees, I used to get so excited about them. What the Jewish people accomplished in those days!"2 The second influence were Zionist speakers.

The Paige family were Poale-Zionists (Socialist Zionists). They attended meetings and often heard these Zionist speakers. At one of the meetings the speaker was attempting to organize a British Brigade to fight in Palestine only. The sixteen-year-old Philip Paige, inspired by the speaker, started to walk to the speaker's stand to enlist. Suddenly he felt someone grab him by the collar, and heard a voice say in Yiddish, "Vu gaistu?" (where are you going?) It was his mother. A week later he went to another meeting which...
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Philip Paige, 1918, Jewish Legion, World War I.
Philip Paige and the Jewish Legion

his mother did not attend, and this time was successful in signing up with the recruiter, declaring that he was eighteen years old.

The next morning he presented himself at the ammunition factory where he had been working, collected the money due him, went home, and, while his family slept, left all the money under his pillow for them. His parents were very poor and had depended on his wages. He returned to the recruiting office, was examined by a doctor and given a tag identifying him as a member of the British Service Corps. The date was July 15, 1918. With no money Paige boarded a train bound for Windsor, Nova Scotia, where there was a British camp. On the train he met two other recruits. The three young men ate well, charging their meals to the British government. After two weeks in Windsor he was sent overseas to England. He was assigned as a private to the 39th Royal Fusiliers consisting mostly of Canadian and American volunteers. After one month's training the soldiers were sent overseas to Cherbourg, France, by train to Naples, Italy, and by boat to Alexandria, Egypt, where they joined another British Jewish Battalion, which had been stationed in Alexandria since 1917.

Instead of being sent to fight in Palestine as they had anticipated, they were kept in Alexandria. Their assignment — to guard the approximately 20,000 Turkish prisoners and 2,000 German prisoners. Here they remained for about six months. Finally, one month after the war had ended, they were sent to Palestine. And Paige's assignment — more security duty, but this time it was to guard the oil pumps. However, he almost did engage in combat. On one occasion when he was on guard duty, he was sent to Jaffa by his leader, Colonel Eliezer Margolin. The Arabs were causing trouble in that city. As they approached Jaffa, carrying rifles with attached bayonets, they encountered a strange silence. Evidently the Arabs must have had advance warning of their arrival and left the troubled area.

THE JEWISH LEGION

What was this comparatively short-lived Jewish Legion? It was the brainchild of Vladimir Jabotinsky, a Jewish-Russian journalist, who conceived the idea of a Jewish Legion in 1914 when he heard the news of Turkey's entry into World War I. The account of his role in the Jewish Legion is recorded in a book he wrote entitled, The Story of the Jewish Legion, translated by Samuel Katz, with a foreword by Colonel John Henry Patterson, D.S.O., and published by Bernard Ackerman, Inc., New York in 1945.

Jabotinsky wanted for the Jews what they lacked most: a united nation with a central leadership; a state with an army; "iron" for their defense in a hostile world. Thus it was that he conceived the idea of a Jewish Legion in World War I. But everything went against him. The idea of a Jewish Legion was a precedent-breaking concept. Since the fall of Judea and the Jewish dispersion, the Jewish people had had no state organization of their own, nor a Jewish military unit anywhere in the world. Originally, Jabotinsky
Philip Paige, 1918, Jewish Legion. World War I.

Jewish Legion, Palestine.
Philip Paige and the Jewish Legion

had never conceived of a Jewish Legion as a symbol of a Jewish Army, but more as a co-ally with the Allies. He met with opposition not only from the British Army, but also from other Jews. In 1914 the British did not have a very high regard for the fighting ability of the Jew.

Finally, the British military authorities permitted the raising of the Zion Mule Corps, which served at Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915-16. After the British decided in 1917 to accept Russian subjects resident in Britain for the British Army, the advocates of a Jewish Legion achieved their objective in the same year. The nucleus around which this Jewish Legion was formed was not more than 120 soldiers from the Zion Mule Corps who had returned to London. Around this nucleus was created the 38th Royal Fusiliers of Jewish soldiers under Col. John Henry Patterson. The 39th Royal Fusiliers was commanded by Col. Eliezer Margolin. While the 38th was comprised mostly of British Jews, the 39th contained about 6,000 United States and Canadian Jewish soldiers. It was in the ranks of the latter that Philip Paige served. It was stipulated by the British that the Jewish Legion could be used only on the Palestinian front.

The 38th and 39th Royal Fusiliers of Jewish soldiers became a reality only after Jabotinsky had to overcome much opposition. There was Zionist opposition from such men as Tschlenov and Sokolow who were against the idea of a Jewish Legion. Chaim Weizmann, although sympathetic, did not openly support the movement, for he did not want to appear to favor a project condemned by the Zionist “Actions Committee”. At the beginning, Jewish youth of London’s East End were indifferent to the idea. But with the nucleus of the Zion Mule Corps, some of these boys volunteered. Another factor was the support of the London Times. Henry Wickham Steed, editor and friend of Theodor Herzl, ran a lead article advocating the formation of a Jewish Legion. An editorial stated:

The Times ridiculed their (The War Office’s) concerning themselves with a handful of plutocrats and forgetting the idealism of millions of Jews whose sympathies were worth something. If there was to be a compromise with the plutocrats, it was enough that the name should be changed; instead of ‘Jewish Regiment’ let it be ‘Maccabean Regiment’; but its Jewish character must be strictly safeguarded.

Following the editorial, realization was but a formality. The Legion would be purely Jewish, but the name should not include the word “Jewish” until the new regiment distinguished itself on the battlefield. In the meantime they were designated “Royal Fusiliers”. In spite of the official name, the units did not lack for Jewish identification. They had a Hebrew signboard outside the London recruiting depot. In the press and even in official documents they were referred to as the “Jewish Regiment”. At the front all men wore on their sleeve a “Magen David” (Shield of David). Their chaplain was Rev. M. Falk. Kosher laws were observed.
Jewish Legion — Philip Pace (and from left) 1917-1918.
Eventually the Jewish Legion consisted of three battalions. In addition to the 38th and 39th, a third battalion, the 40th, consisted of Palestinian Jews under command of Col. Fred Samuel and later Col. M.F. Scott.

Jabotinsky divided the actual military history of the battalions into three periods: the summer months at the front in Shechem (Nablus), the great offensive in the Jordan Valley, and the Armistice, which he considered the most important.

In Stage One the great danger for the soldiers was their night patrol duty, according to Jabotinsky's record of the Jewish Legion. It was very difficult service at the front with several of the men killed on patrol duty. Malaria was prevalent and incapacitated many of the soldiers.

The march into Transjordan was very arduous through the desert where the Turks had burned the dry grass in their retreat. There were steep hills to climb and burdens of bulky backpacks, rifles, and ammunition.

The third or Armistice period marked the fate of the Jewish Legion:

The main purpose of the creation of the Legion was not so much its participation in the war, though we naturally desired this, as its remaining as the garrison of Palestine after the war . . . We undoubtedly attached great value to the Jews themselves playing a part in the conquest of their homeland. At best these men, who had made the Jewish Legion a reality, realized they would be merely a part of the army of conquest. By 1919 the Legion had increased threefold since its inception, but of its total number of 5,000 (one-sixth of the British forces), only 1,500 men actually took part in the campaign. The rest were in training in Egypt. The Jews were deployed by the British to protect their own defense system. And, according to the chronicler, Jabotinsky, just as long as the Legion existed, all was quiet and peaceful. This be considered to be the chief purpose of the Jewish Legion. With 5,000 Jewish soldiers on hand, peace was possible. In 1920 the Legion disbanded almost entirely. With the disappearance of the “Royal Fusiliers” a series of pogroms erupted: Jerusalem, Jaffa, Petach Tikvah, and Jerusalem.

That this small group of men who made up the Jewish Legion even existed is a remarkable phenomenon. They persisted in spite of the anti-Semitism of the British General Staff, who saw no need for a Jewish Legion, and in spite of the English bureaucracy in Egypt, who were almost all Arabophiles. As Colonel Patterson stated in his foreword, the British always rejected a Jewish Army: “They could not shed their ghetto fears. Instead of a great Jewish Army, a mere Jewish Legion had to suffice.”

**Aftermath**

In November 1919 Philip Paige returned to Worcester, Massachusetts, to which in his absence his family had moved. On August 12, 1923 he married
1921 — Philip Paige, 6th Soldier in, Chaim Weizman and Worcester Mayor.

Philip Paige, 3rd row, extreme right.
Philip Paige and the Jewish Legion

Elizabeth (Youngnelson) Young. They had three children, a son and two daughters. In 1933 the Paige family moved to Providence, Rhode Island, and five years later he opened the Paige-Young Furniture Company. He has since retired.

Philip Paige is particularly proud of a letter he received datelined Tel Aviv, November 14, 1977 from the Principal Assistant to the Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Defense for the State of Israel. He was notified that he was granted the State of Israel Fighters Award. He is proud of the photograph he owns (see illustration) of himself and other Jewish Legion soldiers with Chaim Weizmann. It was taken at a reunion in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1921. Several other photographs and a few decorations evoke memories of this exciting period in his life.

The few survivors of the Jewish Legion, including Philip Paige, feel it their duty to publicize this epic of Jewish courage and valor for the present and future generations. They are proud of men like David Ben-Gurion, Levi Eshkol, and Itzhak Ben Zvi, who formed the Jewish Legion, but most important they are proud of the decisive part the Legion played in the history of Zionism and in the eventual building of the State of Israel.

A museum in Israel houses the historical memorabilia and documents of the Jewish Legion. Built by the survivors of Vankei Hagdudim Haivrom (Jewish Legion Veterans), it is located in Avi-Chail, a village organized by those who returned to Palestine after the Jewish Legion disbanded. It is operated by the Israeli military.

NOTES

2 Taped interview with Philip Paige at the Jewish Community Center on December 10, 1986.
3 The Story of the Jewish Legion by Vladimir Jabotinsky. Translated by Samuel Katz, with a Foreword by Col. John Henry Patterson, D.S.O., New York, Bernard Ackerman, Incorporated (undated) p. 13
4 Ibid. p. 14
5 Ibid. p. 45
6 Ibid. p. 98
7 Ibid. p. 138
8 Ibid. p. 144
9 Ibid. p. 181
After World War I, immigration quotas meant that fewer Jews were coming into this country, but many of those here were finding their way into American culture and now were no longer in need of a newspaper written in Yiddish. Those avid readers of the Israelite, the Yiddish newspaper published in Rhode Island just before the turn of the century, were parents of grown children and even grandparents. It was this new generation, the men and women who had been born in this country, who were influential in Jewish life and who now needed a press that would reflect their interests.

So it was that on March 14, 1919 the first known Rhode Island Jewish newspaper in this century made its debut in Providence. And an auspicious debut it was. Those former readers of the Israelite with its lack of sophistication must have been surprised to pick up the 42-page Providence Jewish Chronicle, which, at least for its premiere issue, more closely resembled a magazine than a newspaper.

A first read-through of this new publication indicates immediately that like the Israelite it too has a raison d'etre. The Israelite existed to assist in the transition of a group of settlers from one country to another. The Providence Jewish Chronicle noted on its editorial page that it came about "to present articles from Jews, non-Jews, Orthodox and Liberal," and that its editors "don't espouse the cause of any one faction of Jewry."

Here in fact is the first known Jewish publication in the state to bring to its readers diverse accounts of news related to Jews from around the world and all written in English. James Yaffee in his The American Jews: Portrait of a Split Personality notes, "The relatively close-knit American Jewish community of the 1900-1920 era had become a geographic ghost as people moved to the suburbs." A similar phenomenon was occurring in Rhode Island as Jewish families moved into West Warwick, Bristol, Westerly, and other cities and towns away from the mainstream of Providence. With this migration and consequent hints of acculturation came the need for news, the need to keep in touch with Jewish life.

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It is not known how successful the Providence Jewish Chronicle was, nor how many families subscribed to it, but that first 42-page issue (subsequent issues tended to run six pages) was indeed progressive. The drawing on the cover or front page depicted a woman garbed in classic toga pulling back a stage curtain revealing downtown Providence, its streets bustling with people and streetcars. Under the name of the publication were the words “A Voice for Rhode Island Jewry. Progress, Peace, Prosperity.”

In modern terms, the Chronicle was upscale. Its advertisements, which tended to run four to six page in equal-sized blocks, touted such local establishments as Tilden-Thurber, the jewelry store; Gladdings, the fashionable women’s clothing shop; and the Union Trust Bank.

Heading this new publication were Leon Semonoff, the editor; Rabbi Simon Cohen and Rabbi Israel S. Rubenstein, contributing editors; and H. David White, business manager. Their aim, they told readers, “is to be a regular Sabbath visitor in every Jewish home in Providence.” They also urged non-Jews to read the Chronicle.

From the beginning, the Chronicle’s goal was to promote the cause of Zionism, to raise the consciousness of its readers to the need for a Jewish state. Its purpose may have been to publish the news of the Jewish people that was not to be found in the establishment press, but, as the Chronicle published more and more issues, it became apparent that the news it felt important to its readers was that of Zionism.

Stanley Feldstein in his book The Land that I Show You: Three Centuries of Jewish Life in America says that the years immediately following the war were “a time of restrictive immigration, laws of rampant racism and anti-Semitism.” He adds, “That the American Jews were looking toward a homeland where they could live in peace and harmony was no accident. For the first time in their American experience, home-grown anti-Semitism was threatening Jewish survival.”

It is evident from reading the pages of the Providence Jewish Chronicle, beginning with that first issue, that the need for a homeland, an escape from the “home-grown anti-Semitism,” was a foremost concern of its editors.

One story gives an account of Jews in Providence who were raising their quota of the $3 million the Zionist Organization of America needed for its Palestine Restoration Fund. The dollar amount of the local quota was not mentioned. Several articles, some of them lengthy, appeared on the Palestine issue, including one brief story noting that Siberian Jews “are organizing for Palestine.”

Perhaps the most moving article was under the headline “Will the Jews Disappear?” It was unsigned. The writer began by listing the Jews who had risen to importance in this country, especially under the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. It noted that Wilson had appointed the first Jew, Louis D. Brandeis, to the Supreme Court and also the first Jew, Paul M.
Warburg, to the Federal Reserve Board. In themselves, these were unusually profound accomplishments, given the tenor of the times. Why would the Jews then disappear? The writer explained that through assimilation and intermarriage the Jews were doomed.

The succeeding issues of the Providence Jewish Chronicle looked very much like newspapers, not repeating the magazine format of the first issue. It appeared weekly and included an almost equal mix of local Jewish news and news from abroad. Stories on Zionism continued to dominate the news pages. The paper cost five cents.

The front page usually featured a story about a local Jew — a doctor or a brave soldier. In the May 23, 1919 issue, however, page one was devoted solely to a massacre of Polish Jews in Lemberg. The next issue of the paper reported on page one that vigils and protests had been held locally to protest the massacre.

On April 11, 1919 it was reported that local Jews had donated more than $10,000 to the Palestine cause. Individual donors and their contributions were listed on the front page. The highest sum was $100 and came from Samuel Priest. The average contribution, however, was $10. In this issue, Rosa Lee Schneider is listed as the society editor, and Rabbi David Bachrach as a contributing editor.

In the June 27 issue, the names of Schneider and Cohen are missing from the staff box on the editorial page, the pages of the paper are smaller, and the type is larger. The last extant issue of the Providence Jewish Chronicle is dated Friday, September 5, 1919.

On February 20, 1920 the Rhode Island Jewish Review made its debut, probably a continuation of the Chronicle, since Leon Semonoff was still the editor. Costing five cents and running four pages weekly, the Review carried more local news of organizations and social events, but it kept up its dialogue on Palestine and Zionism.

The office of the newspaper was in the Union Trust Building in downtown Providence, and its staff consisted of Leon Semonoff as the editor, Rabbi Rubenstein as the contributing editor, Frank Dubinsky as business manager, and Noah Semonoff as circulation manager.

Continuing to publish under the name Rhode Island Jewish Review until September 2, 1922, when it became the Jewish Review, the newspaper eventually began to lose its Zionist focus and more closely resembled an establishment newspaper, both in content and in design. More general news appears, with columns devoted to fashion, entertaining, and medical advice. Photographs show up regularly, usually the head and shoulders variety of local people in the news. Advertisements, which make up about one-third of the paper, are both local and national, the latter for patent medicine products. By 1928, comics had been added to the paper.
The Rhode Island Jewish Press in the Twentieth Century

THE JEWISH HOME NEWSPAPER OF RHODE ISLAND

The Jewish Herald

VOL. IV. NO. 39 PROVIDENCE, R.I., MAY 12, 1933

6 cents a copy

WRITER REVEALS NAZI DEGRADATION OF JEWS

Germany Beginning to Feel Effects of Boycott on Goods

By HENRY FRIEDMAN

While the "Germany" are solely but scarcely affecting the Jewish community, these restrictions are being carried out in a more far-reaching manner by the present government, which is the outcome of the Nazi party, the result of the last election that took place throughout the whole country. It is the result of the most bitter political campaign ever waged in Germany, and the result of the most intense political activity that has taken place in Germany. The whole country has been cajoled and deceived into voting for the Nazi party, which has been clearly identified with anti-Semitism and with any form of racial prejudice.

The writer has seen a number of people, of all classes, who have been treated with the utmost cruelty and contempt by the German government, and who have been degraded and humiliated beyond belief. The worst of it is that this treatment has been given to Jews and non-Jews alike, and that the whole country has been cajoled and deceived into voting for the Nazi party, which has been clearly identified with anti-Semitism and with any form of racial prejudice.

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Beth-El Sisterhood Installs Officers

Beth-El Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El has installed its officers for the current year, at a meeting held on Thursday, May 9th. Mrs. J. Green Nathan was installed as president, with Mrs. Samuel M. Saul as vice-president, and Mrs. Samuel Z. Dreyfus as secretary-treasurer. The installation was attended by a large number of members of the congregation.

The congregation has a strong sense of community, and the members are united in their desire to do good works and to help their fellow-men. The Sisterhood is a very active organization, and its officers are very efficient and devoted.

Temple Synagogue Will Observe Anniversary May 25

The Temple Synagogue will observe its anniversary on May 25th, with a special service and program. The anniversary is an occasion for the congregation to reflect on its past and to look forward to its future. The service will be held in the afternoon, and all members of the congregation are invited to attend.

The congregation has a strong sense of community, and the members are united in their desire to do good works and to help their fellow-men. The Sisterhood is a very active organization, and its officers are very efficient and devoted.
When it became the *Jewish Review*, the newspaper listed its sole editor as Leon Semonoff with Abraham E. Pobirs, identified as a junior at Brown University, as its new editor. There were now no names of rabbis appearing in the staff box.

A new editorial policy states, "We believe in a paper that carries a message of humanity . . . The paper will not deliberately portray anything to cause fright, suggest fear, glorify mischief, condone cruelty or malice. We will never picture evil or wrong except to prove the fallacy of its lure."

It is fascinating to speculate about this sudden reversal in policy — from a newspaper that made every effort to inform its readers of the atrocities against Jews around the world and the intense efforts of Jewish leaders to secure a safe homeland, to a publication that blatantly tells its readers not to expect bad news, gives rise to a myriad of questions as to this radical change. Was there perhaps a sudden philosophical schism in the local Jewish community? Was it an economic reason? Did advertisers pull their advertisements because of the newspaper’s politics? Or was it simply that the rabbis no longer had the time to devote to the paper, while Semonoff did? At any rate, the newspaper became a vehicle for his own, obviously less religious, less Zionist, brand of news. Whatever the reasons, the *Jewish Review* was a much different product than its predecessors.

Local news included the opening of Congregation B’nai Yaakov in Woonsocket (1923), periodic listings of leading Jewish organizations in the state, the account of a Purim play presented by the children of Temple Beth-El (1925), a talk by N. Russell Swartz about the importance of Jewish boys joining the Boy Scouts of Rhode Island (1925), and social news, such as these two items from Providence in the March 20, 1925 issue: "Miss Sarah Kaufman of 168 Prospect St. is entertaining friends from abroad," and "Dr. N.A. Bolotow has taken up work in the clinic of the Rhode Island Hospital."

By the end of 1925, Semonoff is still the editor. But now the newspaper has an advisory board, and three rabbis, including Rabbi Rubenstein, show up in the staff box on the editorial page. The board consists of Judge Max Levy of Newport, John J. Rosenfeld, Max L. Grant, and Samuel Steiner. The other rabbis are Rabbi Morris Schussheim and the Rev. Dr. Phineas Israeli.

But the newspaper never returned to its original character. Its editorials were weak and featured such topics as the need for theater in communities. Crossword puzzles showed up regularly, and one issue prominently featured a column on "taking care of your car." Advertisements took up part of the front page.

Although the *Jewish Review* continued to publish until November 20, 1931, the issues on microfilm at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library
The Rhode Island Jewish Press in the Twentieth Century

The Providence end with the December 27, 1929 issue. Nor does the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association have copies of the missing issues.

Apparently there is no record as to the reasons why the Review folded. The Jewish Herald had begun publication in September, 1929, and possibly there was no market for two Jewish newspapers in the state. Or perhaps the economics of the Depression put the Review out of business.

As the Providence Jewish Chronicle and for a while its successor the Rhode Island Jewish Review used their pages to inform readers of the need for a Jewish homeland, so the Jewish Herald presented news of the second major issue facing Jews in the first half of the century. That story, of course, was the Holocaust.

Numerous books and articles have documented the apathy of the establishment press in reporting news of the extermination of the Jews in Europe both prior to and during World War II. It should be emphasized that, to understand the significance of the Jewish press in this country, it is important to recognize this apathy.

One of the best books on the subject is David S. Wyman’s The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945. In it he says, “Only a limited amount of news about the murder of European Jews reached the American public.” He adds, “The coverage in the Jewish press was enormous compared with that of regular American newspapers.”

Peter Grose in his Israel in the Mind of America singles out the New York Times as one of the worst offenders of this apathetic approach to reporting news of interest to American Jews. Though the publisher of the Times, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, was a Jew, the newspaper remained steadfastly anti-Zionist. And story after story about Zionism as well as the plight of the European Jews were buried deep inside the newspaper. Grose points out that “Jewish-sounding bylines of the Times’ reporters were regularly disguised under bland initials.”

The first issue of the Jewish Herald appeared on October 13, 1929, just in time for the Jewish New Year. It cost five cents a copy, had 12 pages with eight columns per page, was a full-sized newspaper as opposed to tabloid-sized, and carried a mixture of about two-thirds stories and columns of news to one-third advertisements.

The editorial page told readers that the new paper was published by the Jewish Press publishing Company at 116 Orange Street in downtown Providence. President was Meyer M. Cooper, managing editor was Joseph Finkle, and editor was Harold K. Halpert.

The new paper differed considerably from its predecessors. The front page carried seven news stories from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, several of which discussed Zionism, and three local stories. The only art on the page was a line drawing of Baby New Year, a rather Christian-like symbol for the
Anti-Nazi Boycott Meeting Slated Here Sunday

N. E. Zionists
Open Nashua Parley Today

German Refugee Problem in Palestine to Feature
Deliberations

2-Day Program Arranged

(Special to The Herald; ABERN, N. Y., June 27) — A 2-day parley here today to
discuss the German refugee problem in Palestine will be attended by nearly 100
European Jews, 80 American Zionists and 20 members of the World Zionist
Organization. The program will be opened by an address by Dr. I. M. Goldman,
President of the World Zionist Organization, who arrived here yesterday morning.

To Report on Refugees

The meeting, to be held in the auditorium of the Pan American Union, will be
attended by representatives of the World Zionist Organization, the United
Jewish Appeal, the Joint Distribution Committee and the American Jewish
Committee of New York. The meeting will be opened by an address by Dr. I. M.
Goldman, President of the World Zionist Organization, who arrived here yesterday
morning.

Britain's Palestine Policy Now Faces
Better Row

(Continued to Page 3)
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33

Jewish New Year. But Baby New Year did not prove a portent of news to come in the new publication.

The editorial page included a note from the new owner stating that he and the editors hoped to make the newspaper “a respectable and important member of all Jewish communities in Rhode Island,” adding that they “will strive to make this newspaper thoroughly interesting, honest and authentic.” At least through most of the 1930s, that is exactly what they did.

Twelve letters to the editor appeared in the first edition, most of which were congratulations on the “birth” of the new publication. One was from Gov. Norman Case, and another from Sen. Jesse Metcalf, who owned the Providence Journal. Many of the advertisements in the first paper were congratulations from local residents and businesses. One of these came from Senator Metcalf. Six years later in the August 23, 1935 issue, the Herald ran an editorial chastising Senator Metcalf for “straddling the fence” on the Nazi issue.

Inside, the newspaper was divided into sections, including “Weekly Happenings of Interest in the Women’s World,” “Personal and Social Notes,” “The Sporting World,” “Jewish War Veterans News,” “The Children’s Department,” “Temple News,” and news from Jewish organizations outside of Providence. Brief stories from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency appeared on many of the pages.

It was thanks to the efforts of the reporters who worked for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that so much news of European Jews reached the pages of the American Jewish press. Throughout the 1930s, it was the reporting of this wire service, with such stories as those headlined “German Jews to be Branded as Aliens,” “German Citizenship Denied to All Jews,” and “World Boycott Called Against Germany,” that kept the American Jews informed.

Beginning with the 1933 issues, reading the Jewish Herald becomes an emotional experience. Not only was the editor running the stories from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on the front page, but he was writing hard-hitting and sensitive editorials.

One on-going story that makes fascinating reading was the question of whether the United States should withdraw its team from the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. The story appeared frequently on page one of the Herald in 1933 and was attributed to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. A survey of the New York Times for 1933 shows that the subject of the Jews and the 1936 Olympics was covered in 22 stories, none of which ran on the front page, including the November 21 story reporting that the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) voted unanimously to boycott the games altogether unless there was a change in the attitude of Hitler’s government toward Jews in athletics.

As the 1930s progressed, the major story in the Herald was that of Hitler’s rise to power in Germany and his promise to annihilate the Jews in Western

Meanwhile, local news stood side by side with the dramatic stories from Europe. On June 12, 1931 the *Herald* reported that the cornerstone of the Jewish Home for the Aged in Providence would be laid the following Sunday. On November 11, 1932 the paper carried a page-one story about Paul Rabin of Providence, who had been elected to the state Senate and would be the only Jew in that legislative body.

On June 9, 1933 the *Herald*’s lead story on page one said that $20,000 was being sought locally for relief aid for victims of Hitler. The off-lead or far left-hand column story on that page was headlined “Germany Forced to Quit Discriminatory Stand on Jewish Olympic Athletes.” It read in part, “German officials promised not to discriminate against Jews in that country who might be on teams or against Jewish athletes from other nations.” The following week the *Herald* carried a page-one story that said that “Germany duped the International Olympic Committee” since officials of the country had already decided to eliminate Jews from athletic teams.

On January 6, 1933 Pauline Chorney’s name appeared in the staff box as the editor with Meyer Cooper still the president of the newspaper. (By October 6, 1933 she is listed as Pauline Chorney Poulton.) Her arrival as editor coincided with the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, and she wrote a number of strong editorials against the Nazis. In one, she called for a boycott of German-made goods, pointing out, “We can affect Hitler and his Nazis where they will feel it most — in the pocketbook.”

The effects of the Depression were reported in the *Herald*. A story in the October 20, 1933 issue stated that the financial inability of children to care for elderly parents was putting a burden on the new Jewish Home for the Aged. And Palestine remained a viable issue in the pages of the *Herald*. On November 10, 1933, an editorial pointed out that the *Herald* “is encouraged by Britain’s insistence to keep her promise to provide a Jewish homeland in Palestine.”

All news in the *Herald* was not as negative during this time. Local columns on “News of Interest to Men” were contributed by Jack Silverman and George Joel. And Kitty Gordon reported on “Happenings of Interest in the Women’s World.”

A major story during 1934 was the boycott of German-made goods, and the *Herald* carried long stories regularly on page one as one by one local stores joined the boycott. In one story, it quoted Col. Joseph Samuels, president of the Outlet Company department store, as saying, “This policy will continue indefinitely, if need be, until Hitler’s inhuman persecution of
Germany's 600,000 industrious, hard-working Jews is finally and completely repudiated."

On November 1, 1935 two new names appeared in the staff box. They were Jacob Leichter as advertising manager and Walter Rutman as editor. It was the beginning of a new era for the Herald, one in which the paper gradually moved away from tackling controversial issues and more toward being a public relations organ for local Jewish organizations.

By the time the January 10, 1936 edition appeared, the Old English masthead had been replaced by a more streamlined one with modern typeface. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service had been replaced with the more moderate Worldwide News Service, although that lasted less than two years. After that most international and national news was simply lifted from the pages of The Providence Journal, news that had originated with the Associated Press.

By 1940, the Herald carried fewer stories from Europe and more local items. Editorials had lost their impact, and much of the news on page one consisted of short stories and a mixture of local and national/international news. Staples of the inside pages were obituaries, social and club news, and advertisements, although during the war their numbers dwindled to less than a quarter of the entire newspaper.

The Herald became difficult to read, as it seemed to have no focus, while stories on related topics often were scattered over several pages. By 1942, the front page featured a regular column called "The War This Week" with updates on government actions and other war-related activities, again mostly taken from the Associated Press and other secular wire services.

While the Herald was guilty of a variety of journalistic errors, it remained the only source of Jewish news for Rhode Islanders. And if for no other reason, it was an important force in the local Jewish community.

After the war, the news columns focused almost entirely on local news, and editorials remained bland. At a time when the Palestine issue was in the forefront even in the establishment newspapers, it only occasionally showed up as a page-one story in the Herald.

It was not the intent of this monograph to critique the Herald after World War II. Rather, the purpose was to show how the Jewish press of Rhode Island covered the two major stories affecting Jews in this century — Palestine and the Holocaust. Had it not been for the Jewish press in this country, it is conceivable that even less information would have been available to the very people affected by these events. For it is certain that they never would have been informed by the establishment press of the times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Note: The following Rhode Island Jewish newspapers are on microfilm in the Rhode Island History Society Library, Providence, R.I.:

I have traced my family and that of my wife Judy in all possible directions, and stories are attached to every direction. But my mother-in-law's family turns out, through a remarkable coincidence, to have the closest connection to Rhode Island.

Of all the lines I traced, my mother-in-law's started out the smallest. Ursula Hirschfeld was the only child of parents who divorced when she was a little girl in Düsseldorf, and she grew up in a much smaller town in what is now Poland, where her stepfather was a manufacturer. Her mother had a childless brother, and a sister with two children, who were Ursula's only close relatives. Ursula was sent to school in England shortly after Hitler came to power, and barely managed to get her mother out in 1938. Her assimilated grandmother, who had probably been chagrined to see her three children marry into consciously Jewish families, and who, it is said, did not have her son circumcised, was the only member of the family to perish in the Holocaust.

Ursula's mother, whom I never met, was Meta, née Bardach. Meta's father came from a large family in Vienna, originally from Lemberg. His family is probably closely related to the family of Peter H. Bardach in Providence, Rhode Island, but I have been unable to trace the connection. Meta's mother, Anna, née Kohn, was one of five brothers and sisters. Ursula is in touch with, but not close to, her four second cousins from this family. In addition, Ursula is in touch with one group of third cousins: Anna's mother Emma, née Marx, had a brother Moritz, whose descendants she knows, though not well. When I first drew up the family tree, that was the extent of the Marx family: the brother and sister in what was then the first generation (nobody remembered the names of their parents); eight cousins in generation 2; twelve in generation 3; only fifteen in Ursula's generation 4, two of them adopted; and 27 in our generation 5, four of whom, in fact, hadn't been born in 1971 when I first charted the tree. Compared with the 700-odd relatives in my maternal grandmother's family, or the 1,200 or so in my father-in-law's paternal line, it was a small family indeed.

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Marriage record of David Marx and Adelheid Kaufmann, Bonn, 1820. The record gives the names of the parents of the bride and groom, and gives David Marx’s age, probably incorrectly, as 30. These were Ursula’s great-great grandparents.
My first clue to the extent of the Marx family came about ten years ago, when I visited Claire Selo in New York. Claire is the widow of Richard Selo, a grandson of Moritz Marx. She is a cultured, patrician lady of considerable, though perhaps somewhat formidable, charm. She professes no interest in, or knowledge of, the family. But on this occasion she produced a thin, somewhat battered, olive-green paperback volume entitled Die Siegburger Familie Levison und verwandte [related] Familien, about her own family. My German was not up to the text, but the index and charts presented no difficulty. There was a small chart showing Moritz and his family; presumably because Claire had married Richard Selo, the Marxes qualified as a “verwandte Familie”. And there were the names of Moritz’s parents: “David Marx aus Weisweiler (Krs. Düren)” and Adelheid. The tree had been pushed back one more generation.

Not long afterwards, I consulted the Branch Genealogical Library operated by the Mormons in Weston, Massachusetts. Because of their religious concern with genealogy, the Mormons have the most extensive collection of genealogical information in the world. In particular, they probably have more information of use to Jewish genealogists than any Jewish organization. The material is on microfilm and is ordered from Salt Lake City upon request. The town of Weisweiler, Kreis Düren (a local administrative district), appeared in their index, and I ordered the records of births, deaths, and marriages from about 1800 to 1875. David Marx appeared only as a witness, as he was born before 1800, but the names of his parents and grandparents, the births and marriages of his five sisters, and the births of several of their children, were there. We were now seven generations back!

David Marx’s parents were Mathias Marx and Janette (or Schönetta), née Jacobs or Simons. Until 1808, when Jews in the Rhineland were required to register family names, Mathias was known as Marx Cahn; his Hebrew name, which he signed to documents, was Mordecai ben David HaKohen. His parents were David and Rachel Cahn of Königswinter, which turns out to be a suburb of Bonn, now a fashionable area where diplomats live (John LeCarré’s A Small Town in Germany begins there), but 200 years ago the site of a thriving Jewish community. The index at the genealogical library showed no listing for Königswinter. Janette’s parents were Simon (or Susmann) Jacobs and Caroline Capell, both of Weisweiler. And that seemed to be as far back as I could go. But I did have the married names of David Marx’s sisters, along with the information that three of them seemed to have moved away from Weisweiler: Regina Marx (her husband, having no family name, had taken hers) of Siegburg; Caroline Francken; and Rosa Hirtz. I guessed that the latter two might have settled in Aachen, the nearest city of any size, where David Marx lived, but had no evidence for this. But since the family names were rare, I could at least keep an eye out for them.

In the fall of 1981, I saw an obituary notice in the Aufbau, the German-
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Ursula's genealogic chart as worked out by Richard D. Plotz, M.D.
Jewish weekly that is still published for a dwindling audience and that I used to see at the house of our Providence neighbor, Ignaz Wenkart. The notice said that Martha Hirtz, formerly of Aachen, had died in California in her 102nd year, and gave the address of her son Walter in Los Angeles. I wrote to Walter, but heard nothing for some time. Later, however, in the summer of 1982, I received a letter from him saying that the David Hirtz I wrote about was indeed his great-grandfather, but by his second marriage. His first wife, Rosa Marx, had died young, and the widowed David had married his housekeeper, from whom all the Hirtzes Walter knew were descended. But Walter wrote that his cousin Herman Heineman, also a great-grandson of David Hirtz, had lived in Providence, where his widow Hedwig ("a lovely lady") still lived. "You will like her," wrote Walter, "and she may be able to help you; she is from Aachen, too."

I called Hedwig Heineman in Warwick, Rhode Island. She was very interested in meeting me. I asked if she recognized any of the names of David Marx's sisters. "Francken?" she said. "One of my aunts married a Francken. In fact, there's a born Francken living here in Providence." I asked her who was this person born Francken, and she replied, "You know Adler's hardware store on Wickenden Street?" I did. "Well, Mrs. Adler is a born Francken."

It was some time before I met Hedwig Heineman, but I immediately went to Adler's store and learned that it was Betty Adler whose mother was born Francken. Betty's husband Carl told me that she really knew nothing about the family — her mother had died when Betty was still a child — but that I really should get in touch with their cousin John Francken in London: "a delightful young man, a dentist. We met him when we were over there a few years ago. He's been working on the Francken family tree for over twenty years."

I wrote to John Francken, explaining my wife Judy's descent from Mathias Marx and Schonetta Jacobs and the marriage of their daughter Carolina to Hermann Francken. I understood that he had been working for a long time on the Francken family tree. Was he descended from Carolina and Hermann Francken, and, if not, did he know any of their descendants? John replied: "I am a great-great-grandson of Mathias Marx and his wife Janette (or Schönetta), nee Jacobs. Your wife is a great-great-granddaughter of the same couple. I, too, therefore, consider we are close relatives."

In further correspondence John revealed that he had located and examined the records from Königswinter, and had learned that Mathias Marx's father David Cahn had owned vineyards near the town. His father Anschel had been a moneylender there in 1740 and had been born there about 1700. Anschel's father Vaes Cahn had also lived there, possibly descended from a "Lazarus der Jude" who had been living there in 1625. Moreover, David Cahn had had a brother Vaes Anschel Cahn, who had
preceded his nephew Mordecai (Mathias Marx) to Weisweiler and was the
grandfather of David Hirtz. Thus, David Hirtz was a second cousin of his
first wife Rosa Marx, and even his descendants by his second marriage were
related to us! Together, John and I traced the descendants of Carolina
Francken’s nine children, and I located as well two other large families of
descendants, that of David Marx’s sister Regina Marx of Siegburg and that
of Mathias Marx’s brother Moses Cahn, who remained in Konigswinter.

I was helped in the latter search by a remarkable book John called to my
attention, Bonner Juden und ihre Nachkommen bis um 1930. It contains
five hundred pages of genealogical tables and notes, as well as documentary
material on the Jewish community of Bonn and its environs. Mathias Marx
is listed (although his father is incorrectly stated to be Vaes instead of
David), as are many other relatives. This monumental work was compiled as
a hobby by Klaus H.S. Schulte, a non-Jewish lawyer in Düsseldorf, who has
gathered a huge amount of material on the Jews of the Rhineland. John
Francken, who has visited Schulte, writes that Schulte has a huge card file
with a card for every Jewish resident of the Rhineland on whom he has
information. I’ve found Schulte’s work to contain some errors, but it serves
well as a guide.

We eventually visited Hedwig Heineman in Warwick early in 1983. She is
a remarkable lady, maintaining an immaculate, though far from forbidding,
house and taking care of her daughter, who has been confined almost
entirely to a wheelchair since a stroke many years ago — all of this at an
advanced age. On that first visit we also met Hedwig’s other daughter and
her granddaughter Monica Rickenberg, who is now a public defender in
Brooklyn, New York. We discovered that Monica is a close friend of
Martha Tanenbaum, daughter of our friend Ada Winsten of Providence.
Monica remembered that she had met us several years before, and at the
time had no suspicion that she and Judy were seventh cousins!

There is a further thread to this story. During 1984 I was trying to trace
the descendants of a great-granddaughter of Vaes Anschel Cahn (Mathias
Marx’s uncle), who had married a Salomon Levenbach. I could not find
anyone named Levenbach in any of my usual sources: telephone directories,
the New York Times Index of Personal Names, the Biographical and
Genealogical Master Index, or the National Union Catalog. Finally, in
Science Citation Index, I found a few articles listed that had been written by
a George Levenbach at Bell Laboratories in the 1950s. I then reverted to
some New Jersey telephone books I had not previously examined. There I
found George Levenbach’s name and called him. His family was from
Holland, but had originally come from Germany many years before. The
name Weisweiler sounded familiar to him, but he suggested that I call his
brother Felix in Swampscott, Massachusetts, who was working on a family
tree.

Felix told me that he recently retired as a chemical company executive
Ursula and Orville Poland, Fall 1986.
and started working on his genealogy. It had been his great-great-great-grandfather who had left Weisweiler in 1780 and moved across the Dutch border to Sittard. Most of the family eventually made their way to Amsterdam, where many of them had rapidly assimilated and intermarried. Those who had survived the German occupation still lived there. Most of those who remained Jewish had managed to escape, some returning after the war. Felix himself had been born in Amsterdam and escaped to America, but often returned to visit family and friends. Now, in the course of his genealogical work, he had met some descendants of the branch of the Levenbach family that had stayed in Weisweiler, but had not met anyone from Salomon Levenbach's family. During our conversation, he mentioned his great-great-grandmother's name, which I remembered having seen in Bonner Juden. I checked that work and sent Felix a long list of his relatives.

I suggested that Schulte would be interested in learning more about the descendants of Felix's ancestors. Felix wrote that, although his great-great-grandparents had had about ten children, only his great-grandfather Meyer Levenbach had had descendants beyond the second generation. Meyer had been married to Rosa Hirtz from Aachen, born on the 4th of July, 1825, and they had had eleven children, of whom Felix's grandfather was the oldest.

I consulted my notes and found that David Hirtz and Rosa Marx had married in October 1824. Could Rosa have died giving birth to a daughter, also named Rosa, thus making Felix and all the Levenbachs of Holland members of the Marx family? It took a while to gather the evidence, but every item checked. Rosa Levenbach's gravestone showed that she was bat (daughter of) David. Her birth certificate from Aachen gave her parents' names as David Hirtz and Rosa Marx. The death certificate of Rosa, senior, dated 15 July 1825, gave further evidence of the coincidence of dates. We do not understand how the daughter could have been named for the mother while the mother was still alive, but perhaps the rule of not naming Jewish children after their living ancestors was not strictly followed in liberal Holland. Thus, the largest of all the branches of the Marx-Cahn tree had been added to the roster. When Hedwig learned that we had discovered the descendants of David Hirtz by his first wife, she recalled that on their way out of Germany in 1938 she and her husband had stayed with relatives in Amsterdam — first cousins of Felix's father!

With the help of books, microfilms, memories, curiosity, and persistence, my mother-in-law's family tree has grown from barely a hundred names ten years ago to nearly two thousand now. Moreover, six branches of the family have independently settled in or near Rhode Island: our own family, Hedwig's family, the Adlers, Claire Selo's daughter Margaret Church and her family in New London, Connecticut, Roberta and Thomas Preve in Attleboro, Massachusetts (she's a Levenbach descendant), and the late Claus Meyer in Cranston, Rhode Island, a descendant of Vaes Anschel Cahn.
THE JEWS OF WOONSOCKET — A FURTHER STUDY*

BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

Situated in northeastern Rhode Island, Woonsocket is approximately eight-and-one-half miles square. Early European settlers were attracted to the region because of the Blackstone River, which entered Woonsocket at its northwest corner. In the eastern part of the city it formed Woonsocket Falls, the largest waterfall on the river, thus creating a source for power. Richard Arnold and Samuel Comstock, it is said, built a sawmill on the site in 1666. The Arnold family figured prominently in Woonsocket textile business. John Arnold, son of Richard, has been called the “patriarch of Woonsocket”. A major landowner, leader in the political and religious affairs of the community, John Arnold died in 1756. In 1810 the first hum of the spindle was heard there when Joseph Arnold established his cotton mill, the Social Manufacturing Company. By the middle of the 1880s Woonsocket had become one of the great textile manufacturing centers in the United States. The leading industrialist was native-born Edward Harris, a woolen goods manufacturer. By 1860 Woonsocket occupied a position of prominence in the field of wool manufacture, and Harris was recognized as one of the greatest wool factors in the country. Harris's legacy to Woonsocket was the Harris Block, now Woonsocket's City Hall.

The entire Woonsocket economy was accelerated by the improvement of transport facilities during this period. Many laborers were needed to run the textile mills and to build the Providence and Worcester Railroad.

The first immigrants to arrive were Irish. In 1856 the first local directory revealed that 56 percent of residents of Cato Hill (a section of Woonsocket) were Irish, and their occupations were listed as either tradesmen or laborers. The Irish were followed by the French Canadians. Their numbers had increased after the outbreak of the Civil War as they took over jobs of the workers who were called into service. By the 1890s French Canadians far outnumbered all other ethnic groups.

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Woonsocket was incorporated as a town in 1867 and became a full-fledged city in 1888.

Around the turn of the century many immigrants of varied ethnic backgrounds migrated to Woonsocket—Poles, Lithuanians, Roumanians, Russians, Swedes, Syrians, Lebanese, Ukrainians, Italians. It may be assumed that Jews were included among those who came from Poland, Lithuania, Roumania, and Russia. Their number was small compared to many other ethnic groups. Listed according to national origin, the 1895 population figures for Woonsocket disclosed that there were 7,481 French Canadians, 2,032 Irish, 652 English, 409 Canadian English, 108 French (from France), 38 Swedish, and 11 Italians. Under the category “Jews”, the number was “0”, but 132 individuals were listed as having migrated from Russia.

**OCUPATIONS AND BUSINESSES OF WOONSOCKET JEWS**

Four Jews were listed as being in the clothing business as early as 1875, according to the Woonsocket Business Directory of that year. They were: Edward Levine, Joseph and Manuel Levine, and Solomon Treitel, the latter at 2½ Main Street. He lived at 17 Fountain Street. Treitel's progress and growth are traced in listings in the business directories. By 1892 he was listed as a “clothing manufacturer and dealer” at 2-6 Main Street and had moved to 71 Hamlet Street, which became his permanent address. In 1900 his son, Symon, joined him, and “Gents' Furnishings” were added to their business, which included hats and shoes. Although Symon Treitel died in 1915, his business was continued, and a 1917 directory featured the following advertisement:

S. TREITEL & SON, Est. 1873, Clothiers and Tailors, Uniforms and Liveries, Royal Tailoring. Ed. V. Price Tailoring & Treitel Made Garments and Ready to Wear Clothes.

An interesting listing in the 1895 business directory was that of a “Jewish clergyman”, S. Sackheim of 265 East School Street. Many Jewish immigrants earned their first livelihood by peddling. Woonsocket Jewish immigrants were no exception, as revealed in the 1895 business directory. A partial list included the following: Joseph Schwartz, Herman Goldstein, Sam Epstein, Max Epstein, Bernard Goldman, Solomon Goldman, Jacob Levin, Solomon Levin, and Israel Schillo. It noted that Aaron Goldenofsky ran a grocery store and that Barrus Goldenofsky was the owner of the New England Clothing Company. Jacob Freedman was a shoemaker, Henry Cohen a painter, and Julius Cohen a variety store proprietor. A unique occupation was that of M. Potvin (see illustration), who repaired and made violins in the Commercial Building, which was located on Main Street.

The histories of a number of business establishments are contained in a 1907 volume entitled, A Woonsocket Souvenir by J. Burgess. It appears that only two of those listed were Jewish-owned.
The Standard Bottling Company. Established in 1903 and having one of the best equipped plants in our city, the bottling house of Kramer Bros, known as the Standard Bottling Company, located on Grove Street, has gained an unrivalled reputation for the purity and general excellence of its products and receives a large and constantly increasing patronage. Special products are ginger ale of high grade, sodas of various flavors, tonics of all kinds and the famous Pontiac, an Indian herb drink delicious and very healthful. Pure ingredients only are used in manufacturing, and all beverages bottled under the strictest sanitary conditions. Some six or seven new drinks will be put on the market shortly, all registered and bound to become popular. Goods are sold throughout the city and in Franklin, Pascoag, Milford, Ashland and other towns. In summer six assistants are employed, and one double and two single teams kept in delivery service. The Kramer Bros. are natives of Russia, and are business men of well-known commercial integrity. B.A. Kramer is a member of the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs and R.D. Kramer of the K. of P. [Knights of Pythias] and several others.

Union Clothing Co. It is a fact, well known to the clothing trade and the most discriminating buyers, that while more than half the ready-to-wear clothing for men for the whole United States is made in New York City, by far the best made and best fitting garments are the products of Rochester, N.Y. and Boston manufacture. Moreover, and most important still, the goods are never made in sweat shops. This should be significant to all, especially in a mill city like Woonsocket. Rochester and Boston made goods are exclusively handled by the Union Clothing Company, located at 1 Clinton Street, the newest and one of the best stocked clothing houses in our city. Although established as recently as February 1, 1907, this finely equipped store has already gained a large patronage, which is constantly increasing, and meeting all competition in the most successful manner. Large and select lines of ready-to-wear clothing for men, youths and boys are carried, embracing all that is correct as to style, perfect in fit and sound in fabric. Moderate prices prevail, and your money's yours until you are satisfied. Furnishing goods fashionable, reliable and desirable are also kept, including the unrivaled Bates Street and Congress shorts, leading brands of collars, cuffs, etc. Standard makes of fine hats and caps are also to be found here with prices right. Every garment, every article in this newly established house is of spring selection and latest manufacture. Floor space, 24x96 feet, is occupied, and from three to four competent clerks employed. S.W. Levy, the proficient proprietor, is a native of Waterbury.
Main Street, Woonsocket, R.I.
A clothing and dry goods business was operated by Sam Kornstein and Isaac Eisenberg. Sam Kornstein's brother, Arthur, compiled a scrapbook of interesting newspaper clippings. One of the references contained this provocative heading: "Changes from wet to dry goods store — Hanley's saloon first sold since Prohibition began." The story continues: "John Hanley's saloon on Main Street opposite the [Woonsocket] Call office is no longer a place where thirst may be quenched, although it still bears the appearance of a barroom. But it will soon lose this effect, for starting today [the article is not dated, but indications are that it may have been about 1920], the place is being renovated and will be used by two local men as a place for the dispensing of dry goods instead of wet goods as heretofore. This is perhaps the first saloon in the city to be renovated and used for another purpose. . . A large sum of money was laid out for improvements which was recently sacrificed to Sam Kornstein and Isaac Eisenberg, the former recently discharged from the army, and the latter a prosperous dry goods merchant on Clinton Street."

The largest furniture store in Woonsocket, Kane's, was located in the Kane Furniture Building in an area adjoining Monument Square. Adjacent to the Kane building was a group of "inspiring structures" which included the St. Jean Baptiste Building, the Stadium Building and Theatre, the Brown-Carroll Building and Colonial Hotel, the Federal Building, the St. James Hotel, and the United States Post Office.

By the year 1925 Jewish-owned businesses figured prominently in the Woonsocket Directory. Four jewelry stores are noted: Colitz Jewelry at 86-88 Main Street, and on the same street, Israel Feingold & Son at number 20, and Daniel Fellman at number 70. Hyman Rosenfield's jewelry store was located in the 58 Commercial Building. Eight junk dealers were listed: Sam Blankenstein at 26 Adams; David Decter, 92 South (actually in the wool-waste business); Sam Golden, 23 Polo; Harry Goldfine, 475 Ballou; Max Goldfine, 79 Mason; Hyman Levinsky, 74 Havlock; Abraham Medoff, 25 Oak; and Rubin Morris, Sunnyside Avenue.

Jewish proprietors appear to have taken over the men's furnishings businesses, particularly on Main Street in Woonsocket. Examples from the 1925 Woonsocket Directory are stores owned by Israel Dunn, Nathan Goldstein, and Edward Rabinovitz. There was also Kaufman's Hat Store, and the Levin family businesses:

I guess my dad (Israel Levin) merits mention, too. He had a clothing store on Main Street for many years, and was the first of five brothers to emigrate from Russia. After coming here at the turn of the century, he brought over his brother, Robert (who spells his name with an 'e' — Levine). He took in Robert as a
partner, and for a while the store was 'Levin Brothers'. But then Robert struck out for himself and opened another store — Bob's Men Shop. This, of course, was typical of families of the day, very close and very supporting.9

Another well-known clothing establishment on Main Street was Falk Brothers. Zel Levin commented on this business:

Falk Brothers was a huge clothing store, known for its easy credit terms. The "Brothers" were Morris and Joseph. Legend has it that, like my own late dad, they started their business by peddling from packs on their backs, walking many miles to service customers. [Nathan Falk was in the Women's clothing line.]10

Two Jewish dentists were in practice in Woonsocket at this time. Philip Epstein practiced at 26 Main Street and Julius Irving at 6 Globe Building.

Jewish-owned dry-goods stores were as numerous in 1925 as they had been earlier in the century. Several businesses were well established, such as Eisenberg & Kornstein at 66-68 Main Street, Eisenberg & Tickton at 472-474 Clinton, Abraham Moses at 831 Social, Annie Nathanson at 221 Second Avenue, and Bennie Solomon at 14 Transit.

Jewish-owned establishments listed among the 1925 corporations were:

Brenner Bros, on Island Place, incorporated in 1923 with a capital of $100,000. President and treasurer was Jacob W. Brenner and secretary, Rebecca Brenner. The Brenners were a large family. Listed as junk dealers, they were involved in the Jewish community. Rebecca Brenner was noted as a cook, particularly for Sisterhood of Congregation B'nai Israel and for Hadassah, where she volunteered her services. Later she opened a hotel with restaurant in Bethlehem, New Hampshire. Rhode Island Jewish families patronized this establishment, which was very well-known.11

Also incorporated in 1923 was Arthur I. Darman, Inc on Railroad Street at the corner of Arnold. President and Treasurer: Arthur I. Darman, dealing in cotton and wool waste.

H. Feizman & Sons, Inc., incorporated 1923, with a capital of $50,000, as opticians. President and treasurer was Harris Fellman, Louis was listed as optician. According to their advertisement in the directory (see illustration), their eyeglasses provided "comfort and appearance".
Important to the business community of Woonsocket was the Mactaz family. Sam Mactaz was in the cotton and wool-waste business at 239 Grove Street. His brother, Louis, spelled his name Mactez. He also was in the wool-waste business. Among other Jewish businessmen who did well in the wool-waste business were Hyman Brickle, Samuel Golden, and Max Gottlieb.12

Another familiar name was that of Baram. Joseph Baram operated a store which specialized in linens. Louis Sadwin was a well-known manufacturer of curtains and handkerchiefs. Along with his manufacturing, he owned a store for sale of these items.

Jacob Finklestein & Sons were in the needle trade. Jacob Finklestein has been described by his sons:

Jacob Finklestein went up to Woonsocket in 1927 with the idea of manufacturing reincoats there. He had cut out a tall order for himself. The needle trades were unknown to this Rhode Island city (Woonsocket); there were no more than a dozen trained needle workers among all its citizens. But that didn't faze Pop. It was a fancy he had taken to the town 'way back in his house-to-house, direct-to-consumer selling period . . . Woonsocket is by and large a French-speaking town. Pop, born in France, enjoyed nothing better than to orate in his polished Parisian . . . He and the people of Woonsocket hit it off quite well together. He brought in 20-odd machines, set them up in a small loft off Main Street, hired 30 men and women. He was in his late fifties with over 30 full years of garment merchandising behind him.13

* * *

Jacob Finklestein died in 1933, but of his four sons, three carried on the business, Noah, Robert, and Harold. They manufactured field jackets, raincoats and ponchos for the Armed Forces. A business which was very concerned about its employees, Jacob Finklestein & Sons had its own shop newspaper, “Teamwork”, which recorded news of the employees' activities exclusively. Contributions to the newspaper included stories, poems, cartoons, biographical notes, especially of war service experiences, household hints, bowling team scores, annual banquets and social news. There was even a pin-up girl contest.14

BUSINESS LEADERS

Inherent in the history of a community are the men and women, the leaders responsible for the growth and importance of that community. Woonsocket Jews were fortunate in having had several such leaders, among whom two are singled out, Israel Medoff and Arthur I. Darman.

Born on August 18, 1896 in Russia, son of the late Abraham and Rose
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(Guzner) Medoff, Israel Medoff came to the United States in 1901. The trip was via an old steamer, third class. Forced to leave school when he was in the sixth grade in order to help support his family, he took a job as a mill worker. There he toiled 66 hours a week for $5.60. Not satisfied with his meager mill wages he went out on his own as a peddler to add to his mill income. He sold merchandise door-to-door in small area communities.

During World War I, Israel Medoff joined the Armed Services as a private. He was sent overseas with the 322nd Supply Company. As a veteran he joined the American Legion serving as the first and only Jewish commander of Woonsocket's Andrew F. Young Post. On Armistice Day, November 11, 1962 Woonsocket held Veterans Day Memorial observances co-sponsored by the United Veterans Council and Congregation B'nai Israel. Highlight of the program was the unveiling of a memorial plaque to Woonsocket Jewish servicemen in the Veterans Hall of Congregation B'nai Israel. It was Israel Medoff's role to accept from the Jewish War Veterans and the United Veterans Council the presentation of the American, Rhode Island, and Israeli flags to the congregation.

About Medoff's role it was said, “The ceremony will be a worthy tribute to a man who as a veteran, philanthropist and civic leader of great stature has contributed so much for so many years to his community, his state, his nation and to the progress of the Jewish people in every part of the world.”

After his return from France to Woonsocket he was employed in a haberdashery, and emerged from that position as a jobber. In 1919 he established the I. Medoff Company, which was to grow in four decades into one of the three largest textile converters and jobbers in the nation.

The I. Medoff Company, which Israel conducted together with his brother, Samuel, was considered an anchor of the local business and industrial community for many decades. It was termed a “fixture” in Woonsocket, which had given employment to nearly 200 persons, supported civic ventures, fielded Little League teams. It occupied imposing buildings at 245 Railroad Street, its headquarters, and at 320 Main Street. The I. Medoff Company carried on its business in all parts of the world, selling to the largest retailers, to manufacturers, and to immense chains. The business was dissolved in the early 1980s upon retirement of the brothers, Israel and Samuel.

Israel Medoff received many honors during his lifetime. Involved in scores of humanitarian endeavors, he received such awards as “Man of the Year” by the Woonsocket Lodge 989, B’nai B’rith in 1960, and in 1972 the Jewish Theological Seminary of America bestowed upon him the national award for community service.

The “Man of the Year” annual program featured the following influential individuals: Edward Berman, President of the lodge; Arthur S. Robbins, Program Chairman; Benjamin M. Falk, Master of Ceremonies; and Rabbi
The Jews of Woonsocket — A Further Study
Pesach Krauss of Congregation B’nai Israel. Guest speaker was Rabbi William G. Braude. The presentation was by Lester A. Macktez, of the Board of Governors, Grand Lodge District No. 1. Present as distinguished guests were Samuel J. Medoff, President, Congregation B’nai Israel, and Joseph M. Finkle, Past President Grand Lodge District No. 1.

Upon receiving the “Man of the Year” award, Medoff thanked the B’nai B’rith Lodge for the honor and commented, “Because I was fortunate enough to have been given so many of the good things in life, I tried, in my own small way, to dedicate my efforts so that I might bring some happiness to those who need it. Man should not be a mere individual, isolated and alone. We want to belong together, to influence and be influenced by our social togetherness . . . to continue our efforts to build a better community, for in so doing, we build a better America, an America wherein we are privileged to enjoy all the blessings we have.”

Other honors accorded Medoff include the Jewish Theological Seminary of America national award for community service, which he received on November 9, 1972. On his 70th birthday Israel Medoff was honored at a dinner-dance held in the Congregation B’nai Israel Synagogue. He was praised by Joseph Shorr, president and principal speaker “for his devotion to his religion, his benefactions and his service as chairman of the building fund for the new synagogue on Prospect Street.” A bronze plaque marking the event was unveiled in the synagogue lobby. His interests and charity were myriad. The Woonsocket Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, the Woonsocket Chamber of Commerce were but a few recipients of his generosity.

Israel Medoff, who rose from humble beginnings to become a national leader in the textile industry, was a man who spent his lifetime doing good for others. He was much more than an industrialist. He was called “one of the elders of the city’s Jewish community and a great philanthropist.” Israel Medoff died on May 4, 1984.

Arthur I. Darman was born on September 28, 1890 in Jurilevitz, Province of Podolsk, Russia, the son of Louis and Tsyvia (Schatzman) Darman. When he was five years old his mother, a younger brother, and sister died of cholera. His father, Louis, remarried and had two more children. In 1899 Louis Darman came to America, where he went to work in the wool-waste business. Two years later he sent for his family. Before his migration to the United States. Arthur attended Heder (Jewish religious school). After his arrival in the United States he had but one year of formal education, but during this one year he completed eight grades in the Woonsocket public school system.

In Woonsocket the Darman family lived for a few weeks on Polo Street and for two years at 79 Mason Street, and then moved to their permanent address at 119 Fifth Avenue.
Arthur Darman began his working years at the age of twelve as an employee in his father's wool-waste business. He soon left to obtain the food concession at the Woonsocket baseball park. At age 14 he left Woonsocket to join a touring theatrical company called George Adams’ Humpty Dumpty Show. He started as a peanut vendor, but soon became a proficient actor. He faced unemployment when the troupe folded one year later. Stranded, he entered the restaurant business, working his way up from a dishwasher in Quincy, Illinois to owner of a first-class restaurant in Springfield, Illinois.

Although very successful as a restaurateur, Arthur Darman decided he could do better in Woonsocket. In 1914 he returned to enter the wool-waste business in partnership with his father. In 1915 he married Frances F. Cohan of Worcester, Massachusetts. They had two children, Morton and Sylvia (Medoff). A year later he opened his own wool-waste business, which also dealt in wool tops.* It was housed in a building which he erected in 1917, the Darman Building, located at the corner of Railroad and Arnold Streets. The need for more space prompted the 1940 purchase of the Rathbun Knitting Mill at 565 North Main Street. A merger with the Draper and Walker Companies resulted in the formation of the Top Company, Inc. Its main offices were in Boston, Massachusetts and its manufacturing plant, which employed about 600 people, in South Barre, Massachusetts.

In addition to his textile business, Arthur Darman built the elegant Stadium Building and Theatre located in the approximate geographical center of the city, the Monument Square area. It was described in a handsome volume as follows: “A dignified four story structure in sturdy Colonial lines that harmonize with New England architectural tradition, the Stadium Building was designed by Messrs. Perry and Whipple of Providence. Supervising architect was Chester N. Godfrey, chief engineer.” Completed in 1927 at a cost of three-quarters of a million dollars, it was considered one of the finest of its type of building, completely modern and fireproof in design and of brick, steel and reinforced concrete construction. “The upper stories,” the description continues, “are devoted to offices: the ground floor and arcade are occupied by a group of modern retail stores. The lobby is particularly impressive with its inlay of quaint colorful tiles from Holland. The walls of the lobby are of polished Tennessee marble and Italian travertine stone. The ceiling is richly inlaid, one portion of which is adorned with a mural painting by Maurice Combris, symbolizing the progress of Woonsocket from its obscure founding in 1666 to its present industrial prominence.” The theatre section housing the Stadium Theatre was erected under the supervision of R.I. Hall, chief consultant architect and engineer in the construction of the Paramount Theatre in New York City. Described as “the show place of Woonsocket,” it was leased by the Paramount Famous-Lasky Corporation. Fortunately the building and theatre have been meticulously maintained by Arthur Darman’s family.

*Top — yarn made into balls which were then ready for the spinning stage.
Darman's interest in the theatre lasted throughout his life. In 1942 he purchased a fifty-year-old opera house, gutted the interior and spent $150,000 in remodeling it. The result was the Park Theatre. Because of his personal experiences in the theatre world, he had great empathy for the performers and concentrated on constructing ideal accommodations for the actors. His unique attitude toward the performers and his insistence on perfection in every aspect of the theatre prompted a "Saturday Evening Post" article titled, "Book Me at Woonsocket," by T.E. Murphy, which appeared in the June 23, 1945 issue. According to the author: "For all the money he's tossed away and the time and energy he's expended, Darman feels amply rewarded — so great is his satisfaction in having restored vaudeville to his city." The old opera house, re-named the Park Theatre, and the abutting Brown-Carroll building burned to the ground on September 22, 1975.

Commenting on Darman's interest in religion, Murphy stated: "One year after his marriage, he became greatly interested in religion and at the age of 25 (1919) he became president of the B'nai Israel Congregation. To the religious side of his life, Darman brings the same devotion, the same intensity, the same determination that transformed his opera house from a down-at-the-heel rookery to a modern theatre."

It was said about Arthur Darman22 that, in his role as the first elected president of Congregation B'nai Israel, he reconciled the orthodox views of the older generation with the demands made by progressive youth, which required tact and firmness of purpose. In view of the devoted membership, which elected him president for 25 years and then Honorary President, he evidently succeeded.

He was the vital force in the building of the new synagogue of Congregation B'nai Israel (dedicated on September 16, 1962) on Prospect Street, which was considered one of the architectural masterpieces among American synagogues. As in everything in which Darman was involved, he closely followed every step of the construction. "He knew where every nail went," according to one woman who knew him.23 He was credited with sparing no expense, time, or energy in helping to build up an efficient system of religious instruction for the well-attended religious school.

The honors bestowed upon Arthur I. Darman during his lifetime were numerous. It is worthwhile to cite just a few of those honors. He was named "Man of the Year" in 1959 by the Woonsocket Lodge, B'nai B'rith. At the ceremony he was called a person of great faith. Tribute was paid to him for his contributions and leadership in varied activities on both state and local levels. In January of 1967 he was acclaimed Woonsocket's "Man of the Year" by the Woonsocket Kiwanis Club.

For his outstanding record of community service he received the following awards: in 1944, honorary degree of Doctor of Science from Rhode Island College of Pharmacy; in 1964, national award for
distinguished community service from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; also in that year, the Brotherhood award from the Jewish War Veterans of Rhode Island.

In 1965 the National Conference of Christians and Jews presented him with its National Brotherhood Award for outstanding and devoted leadership. In an interview, Arthur Darman's wife, Frances, talked about her husband's ecumenicalism. He was very friendly with priests and ministers, whom he taught the rudiments of successful fund-raising. The Darmans often entertained in their home the leaders of the neighboring churches.24

Among other citations which Darman received were the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities in 1966 from the Franklin Pierce College of New Hampshire, and in 1968 the Human Relations award from the American Jewish Committee for distinguished service.

Arthur Darman held positions in many organizations and institutions, both Jewish and non-Jewish. He was the first president of the local Lion's Club, organized in 1926. He served as chairman of the Rhode Island Industrial Building Authority, and of the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket. He was a trustee of several hospitals and other institutions. He had a reputation for personal philanthropy and also for the capacity to raise large sums of money, serving as chairman of such organizations as the Woonsocket United Jewish Appeal, the Rhode Island Division of the Touro Synagogue Restoration Committee, and the Jewish Children's Home Foundation, and as trustee of the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island.

Frances Darman reminisced about the constant activity in their large home on Prospect Street. This rambling 17-room house contained a ballroom large enough to accommodate 150 people. It was often the setting for lectures given by the many visiting rabbis and scholars who were guests at the Darman home. The dinners that were served at the Darman house were notable for the elaborate table settings and gourmet menus, supervised in every detail by Arthur Darman. Their daughter, Sylvia Darman Medoff, recalled, "There was so much going on in my house — all the visiting rabbis, all the speakers, no matter what, no matter when, it all took place in our home. But my mother would go along with it. My father was very fortunate. My mother was a wonderful cook. Every dish was a picture."

Arthur I. Darman died on May 31, 1978, active to the very end of his life. The morning of his death he had watched and supervised construction of one of his stores.25 The Woonsocket Call of June 1, 1978 reported his death on its first page. The long obituary stated in part: "Arthur I. Darman, whose boundless energy and drive made him internationally renowned in industry, and whose civic, fraternal and religious causes were espoused with the same vigor on local, state and national levels, died last night."
A study of the current status of Jewish-owned business in Woonsocket reveals that the former lively and active scene on Main Street no longer exists. Most of the clothing, dry goods, and jewelry stores no longer survive, except Baram's Dry Goods Store, still situated at 32 Main Street. And in that vicinity the Stadium Building and Theatre stands as testimony to that past. In a recent article it was reported that the Stadium Theatre had been listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places in 1977. Although seven movie theatres in Woonsocket had closed, the Stadium Theatre attracts 100,000 movie and theatre-goers each year. However, outside the theatre, "... Main Street has hit hard times, and the sidewalks are nearly deserted. Many of the two- and three-story brick buildings flanking the street are vacant. Orange 'for rent' signs hand in the windows."

Among the survivors is the Sadwin Curtain Manufacturing Company operated by Louis Sadwin's daughter-in-law Edythe Wittes and her son Larry, located at 828 Park Street. Listed under Waste Business, both wool and cotton, are the concerns of Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc. and Sam Golden & Sons, Inc., operated by Edward Golden. Sarah Daniels Kaplan at age 90 is still involved with the Save Rite store she operates at 450 Clinton Street. She is one of three generations in her family owning businesses in Woonsocket. Benjamin Eisenberg, one of four generations owning businesses in Woonsocket, operates the Rathbun Factory Outlet at 401 Clinton Street, although he makes his home in Providence.

Noteworthy is the change in occupations of succeeding generations of Jews in Woonsocket. Replacing store owners, merchants, and manufacturers are accountants, lawyers, opticians, dentists, and physicians. Many of the Woonsocket Jews, as is true in all communities in modern times, have moved from their native city.

There may no longer be physical evidence of many of these Jewish-owned stores, businesses, and manufacturing plants, and many of the owners have died. Still, the impact on Woonsocket of these civic-minded and philanthropic men and women will continue to be felt and be a substantial part of Woonsocket's history.

NOTES


2Ibid. Page 7.


4See Note 1. Page 25.

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1See Note 3.


3Letter from Zel Levin, August 18, 1987. Mr. Levin worked on the Woonsocket Call from 1928-1950.

4See Note 8.

5See Note 9.

6Ibid.


9Jewish Advocate, November 8, 1962.

10Woonsocket Call, November 20, 1960.


12Woonsocket Call, May 21, 1982.

13See Note 16.

14Woonsocket Call, October 21, 1966.


16Silver Wedding Anniversary booklet, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur I. Darman, 1915-1940.

17See Note 8.

18Interview with Mrs. Arthur Darman and her daughter, Syvia Darman Medoff, August 13, 1986.

19Ibid.

The Holocaust Memorial of Rhode Island and Some Holocaust Memories

By Michael Fink

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial were held at the rear of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island on April 22, 1987. Sam Jamnik spoke for the survivors. The Holocaust Memorial, he said, has a twofold purpose: to remember the victims of Hitler’s death camps and to teach future generations what can happen when bigotry triumphs.

The Holocaust Memorial Committee, which at one time was a Jewish subcommittee of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, with the encouragement of its deputy director Gladys Wyatt, initiated the specific concept of a Rhode Island Memorial, which was to be educational, or “living”, as well as memorial. The organization hoped to be associated with an educational, not a religious institution. As a separate group, Holocaust Survivors of Rhode Island encouraged many educational programs and made its testimony available in schools and on television. Its members contributed leadership, participation, and attendance at meetings and commemorations. Before Holocaust Survivors existed as a formal unit, its members met socially and at religious functions and envisioned a memorial from the very start of their arrival in Rhode Island. However, for a variety of reasons, the time was not right until the 1980s.

In this paper we gather brief excerpts from the journals of a few local survivors, specifically about their experiences after the liberation and upon their arrival at the shores of Rhode Island, transplanting a remnant of Europe’s Jewry.

Rose Berger, secretary of the Holocaust Memorial Committee and owner of the Bertoex Fabric Store, arrived in Rhode Island in 1949 and worked in a bakery (for 65 cents an hour). Her husband had a factory job until illness forced him to retire. They started a business in May of 1955. “He passed away in March 1956,” she said, “so we only had been together a very short while. But he was a great help and an inspiration because he was a businessman while I was not. I never was in business. I always studied. We

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Drawing of proposed Holocaust Memorial to be located at the rear of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, 401 Elm Grove Avenue, Providence, R.I.
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came from Germany. I was liberated in Germany. I was in a displaced person camp at Bergen Belsen. I was liberated by the English. I was very, very sick and had typhoid. They improvised hospitals right in the camp and gave us some treatment which helped us to survive. To survive was like a miracle. I didn't even know my own name. My husband had a heart condition as a result of his starving in concentration camps, and his escape from Treblinka was another unbelievable miracle. He hid himself in the car that transported the clothing of people who were murdered there. Of course, afterward he was captured again and was taken to Auschwitz where I met him in an incredible way.

"I came from a family of five children, and my husband Oscar came from a family of five. Nobody in my family survived. I am the only one. In my husband's family, two brothers survived because they were in Russia. We knew each other before the war, but Oscar was married and had a child. They disappeared. They were destroyed, so we were the only close ones because he didn't know his brothers had survived. We were distant cousins. It was marvelous to see each other.

"I was in the English zone and to move to the American zone was difficult, but he arranged it. We were married in the American zone by an American chaplain. My husband started the Jewish Community Center. He did a lot of work for the people who survived. After a couple of years, we got papers and moved. We didn't know anybody, and we came at night, and it was snowing, and we didn't even believe that this is the United States, because it seemed as though the houses were small. Our idea of America was that it was all skyscrapers. We lived with an older woman. Then we found an apartment for ourselves.

"After I worked in the bakery I got a job working in a place where they make buttonholes in belts and that got me acquainted with this trade."

Esther Nudrick worked in a jewelry factory, twenty-five years in one department. Her husband Ezra was employed by American Tourister Luggage, Inc. "I want to tell what's true," she said. "American people, they don't want to listen to bad things. You know what I mean. They were not too interested. I feel this way. I made very very good friends with the gentle people in my department. They come to visit me. Of the survivors I have friends also. We all understand one another. My daughter was born in Germany. I never told her about us because I thought, why tell her these terrible things. I didn't want to make her feel bad. My husband, he never told her. When she started to go to school, she understood anyway. 'Til today she says, 'Ma, you always were crying and you never want to tell me everything.' Even when my husband was so sick, four years at home and then in the hospital. I don't tell her everything because I don't want to make her feel bad. And she says, 'Ma you're wrong. You have to tell me everything.' I always like to protect her, you know."

Mrs. Nudrick invited Peter O'Neill of the Rhode Island School of Design
film department to film and tape an interview for the film “Here We Live Again” sponsored by the Holocaust Survivors of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, and the Rhode Island Foundation. Mrs. Mudrick’s impressions were gathered from the tape. One purpose of the film was to record the Rhode Island lives past and present of this group.

Other survivors were invited particularly to write down and share with readers of the Notes their early impressions of Rhode Island, in order to build a reliable collective account of the nature of their experiences within our shores: work, uncertainty about what to do with their testimony and memory, the search for new ideals upon which to build an American future.

Flora Kalman, Lenka Rose, and Ray Eichenbaum have been among those survivors who have frequently spoken in schools.

Mrs. Kalman currently resides in Nazareth, Israel, and sent the following account of her Rhode Island life:

What we have found in Rhode Island is profoundly more precious than its physical beauty or its culture. The impressions which will stay with us as long as we have memory were the people.

Neighbors, who helped us to get acquainted with the daily necessities in the area, to find a medic, grocer, cleaner. People who helped us to find available courses for our eager curiosity to improve the intellect in evening college classes. Their help and advice, plus my effort, were instrumental for me to proceed successfully in speaking in public, lecturing in schools, churches, organizations, to give interviews on radio programs as well as on television on a subject which is of vital importance, yet not always popular.

The more I got involved with the subject of the Holocaust, the more confidence I derived from the positive support of people, school children, faculty, headmasters, rabbis, priests. For it was not easy before an audience to strip my soul of all the emotional, personal hurt I went through in the Death Camps, but I was given a strong feedback of honest compassion and understanding. The culmination of the effort on this subject was when I was selected to receive an Honorary Diploma from the Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island in June 1985. I must admit, this is one of the most precious experiences of my life, and I hope it will be an inspiration to my grandchildren, and for that I am grateful.

I remember the strangers, who were polite at the first meeting, then became true friends, friends indeed, when we needed them. I remember the notes, cards, even little gifts, from people I never met, just to let me know they were positively affected by what I had to say. Now, from this distance looking back, I sincerely believe that
Lenka Rose, a Czechoslovakian Jew who survived Hitler's death camps, as she appeared in 1946. She tells the story of her imprisonment and the torture and death of her 14-year-old sister in the documentary film "Here We Live Again".

Lenka Rose, today.
my activities were successful because of those people and that everything I have encountered had meaningful results.

Rhode Island has offered and extended to us so much in a short time which enriched our lives considerably in many aspects.

Thank you, Rhode Island.

Lenka Rose contributed this description of her sojourn, first in Sweden, then upon her immigration to Rhode Island:

The decision on my part to go to Sweden after the Holocaust was right. I was carried on a stretcher from Bergen Belsen. The people of Sweden were kind to us, the victims of cruelty — perpetrated upon an innocent people. The Swedish young men found us interesting as few of us were tall blondes like their women. We were just the opposite. They liked our looks. They chased after us. Many of our women remained in Sweden and married Swedish men. All came from Orthodox Jewish homes, but the war changed all that. The Swedish people couldn't do enough for us. They lavished us with kindness. They tried to undo the pain that was inflicted upon us. I was there for two-and-a-half years. They helped me to gain back my faith in humanity. I am forever indebted to them. We received the best medical care. By the time I left for America I looked just like everybody else except for the extra baggage in my heart and soul, the loss of my loved ones.

About leaving Europe I had ambivalent feelings. I felt guilty about leaving. I didn't know then that I was suffering from guilt feelings for having survived. We found our relatives in America. We were six children, two boys and four girls. The three older ones survived, my brother Lou, myself, and my brother Bernie. My brother Bernie fought in the Korean war. Justice was done when the military found out that he was a survivor of the Holocaust. He was shipped back to work at the supply base. My brother Lou is a pharmacist.

I came to Ossining, New York to our relatives. They were good people. They opened their hearts and home to us. I was to go to school, learn the English language, get a job, and become an independent individual. The streets were not covered with gold, but the streets were there to get you out in the world, work hard, and find your golden nuggets. Eventually I moved to Providence, Rhode Island. I joined a Zionist organization, Masada. I wanted to be with my own people. To belong to something, to somebody, was the uppermost thought on my mind. To be alone is devastating to the human spirit. I can't help but think of how many people must be out there who must be as lonely as I was, once upon a time. I guess you had to experience it yourself to know what it is like. Hitler did a good job of ripping up families, leaving here and there a few members of
family units or of extended families of hundreds. Already in Providence, I remember one day while coming home from work, I spotted a young woman about my age speaking Yiddish to her young daughter. I ran over to them and told the mother who I was. She too was a survivor. I had my paycheck in my pocket. I offered to buy the child a doll, which she accepted. I was happy that I was, for the first time after the war, able to give something to somebody else. To this day I cherish that feeling.

I was married eventually. I remember meeting a young man years later. His words to me were, “I have never met in my life anyone who wanted to get married as much as you did!” My answer to him was, “because you don't know what it's like to be all alone.” Nobody should ever know. I arranged my own wedding. My cousin Irene from Ossining, New York made some homemade gefilte fish, which made a big hit, and her favorite cookies. I spent all my savings of $600 that I brought with me from Sweden. It was a beautiful day — October 29, 1950. My brothers Lou and Bernie came. This was our first reunion since the war. What a happy day it was for all of us! Everybody at that wedding smiled. There was so much joy. I hired an accordionist. He too said to me, “What a happy wedding this is, and I, too, am happy to be part of it.”

It took another eight years before the three of us met again in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in my brother Lou’s house. It wasn't that we didn't care to meet, it was financially impossible. By that time we all had children. What a glorious time. My son, Harold, playing with his cousins Steven, Annie, Rita, Kathy, Suzan, and Kenny. I had a hard time leaving them behind, knowing how much I would miss them. By this time my brother Bernie lived in Florida. All good things must end. When I went back home, my husband, who was and is a good man, waited for us with open arms.

Last spring, after my talk to an assembly in a local high school during the Week of Remembrance, a slightly-built, woman history teacher whispered into my ear, “Thank you for surviving.” I didn't make anything of it, but when I came home that evening I was stunned when I grasped the meaning of these kind words. Since I did not take these words as personal praise at all, it then began to sink in that these were the only words that all the Holocaust survivors seek.

I consider myself very fortunate indeed to have survived this human catastrophe. I am grateful to have overcome this personal tragedy with my senses and intellect intact. Besides surviving, I am thankful for being a cognizant observer of the events and people around me. As far as I can tell, not many of us survivors take this almost three-
Ray Eichenbaum, Providence, circa 1950.

Ray Eichenbaum in the service of his adopted country.
dimensional look back at what has transpired in our lives. Perhaps they were too busy with the process and mechanics of survival in those dreadful days. I consider myself an exception because, being one of the few youngest to survive (16 on the day of liberation), I did not accomplish this feat by brawn, shiftiness, speed of movement, or aggression. On the contrary, I remember being quite passive and resigned to my fate, although full of willpower and inherent optimism. If anyone ever conducted a study of who the survivors are, I will probably be the one who, by all odds, should not have gotten through. However, this passiveness allowed me to observe and be more conscious of the happenings about me. I am also very appreciative and thankful to the people of Rhode Island and the Jews of the Providence area in particular. When I came here in 1947 as a youth, I was marvelously received, placed in a loving home, and allowed to resume my education. This last factor was the most important in my “resurrection”, since it made possible my going to college later on — an opportunity not available to the majority of survivors, who were mostly sent off to work. I will also be forever grateful to the beautiful and generous people of Rhode Island, who contributed so much to the creation of the Holocaust Memorial of Rhode Island, a living museum whose main purpose is to honor the martyrs of the Holocaust by educating Rhode Islanders and others about the dreadful happenings of those horrible times, so as to prevent such occurrences from happening ever again.

“Thank you for surviving” — How sweet these words sound to me. If they convey a true feeling, then I am euphoric, because I believe that humanity is finally on its way to extricate itself from one of its repeating periods of extreme terror and brutality. These few sounds portend to me that there is a chance that man is evolving into a finer species, that he might be on the threshold of a new era in human relations.

For me personally, these few words represent many other things as well. The continuation of the human spirit, indeed proof of its indestructible nature. As a Jew, they also mean that we are surviving well as a people; that our traditions and way of life were not destroyed, albeit they were badly shaken. Indeed, these sounds to me are the verification that the promises we the survivors made to those dying around us in their hours of martyrdom are being kept and that the sacrifice of their lives would not have been in vain.

We the survivors are a unique lot. For many years most of us could not talk about our tragic, immediate past. The terrible experiences were too recent; the pain too much for the soul to disclose. We carried our burden inside, accumulating our hurts, just an occasional whimper here and there.
The world was also not ready to hear us. Even the victorious allies in their victory-blush were more receptive to the pandering babbling of the rosy-cheeked, submissive Nazis than to the truthful voices of the emaciated victims. Most of our liberators looked away — not wanting to believe that any members of the human race could perpetrate such heinous crimes. The Nuremberg Trials were quickly done and disposed of. Humanity did not want to own up to its own enormous criminal potential. Come to think of it, if Hitler's hordes had another year's time, there would have been no survivors at all. A clean slate. No witnesses. Some previous civilizations must have disappeared from the face of this earth this way.

We who survived started to talk and badger. The illustrious voice of one Elie Wiesel, a contemporary of mine in Auschwitz, was like an illumination given off by one small candle in the total darkness. We kept on talking. It took almost forty years — a lifespan by Biblical dimensions — for the world to regain its conscience. It took all that time for people to start to listen to our tales of woe and to regain their collective souls.

And humankind will be better for it. Mysterious are the ways of the Almighty. Have we been “chosen” again to bring man up the ladder in its evolution another peg? To quote Tevya from Fiddler on the Roof: “...could He not choose somebody else for a change? However, if that's what was intended, then we are here to hear you, Lord our God...”

For the survivors there will always be the omnipresent cry of blood emanating from the earth reminding us of the millions of innocent brothers and sisters — the sweet laughter of the multitudes of innocent children taken from us so prematurely to an incomprehensible destruction. We can only tolerate our constant “guilt trip” here on earth by believing that humanity will have emerged to a new plateau of civilized life through this latest cleansing with the blood of the innocent.

And talk out we will. We assume a right to speak on any subject seriously affecting the human condition on this earth. Some may ask, “What is your constituency?” We the survivors, who are but an extension of the fallen martyrs of the Holocaust here on earth, dare to assume the right to speak out for the masses of the innocent who were wiped out from the face of this earth. We will speak out for this “fellow constituency”, for the bond of suffering and mourning for them makes us duty-bound to do so. Our aim is to legendize the brutality and inhumaneness of the killings during the Holocaust. We hope that when they listen, people will acquire a permanent aversion to mass killings of any kind. They don't throw Christians to the lions any longer, do they?
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I vividly recall how some of the "visionaries" in the camps before their demise would exhort the surviving to go on fighting for life because "There are good people out there; good, kind men and women who will greet you as heroes when you survive. All your riches, material as well as spiritual, will be restored to you. You will attain what all of us dreamed about in our suffering."

I am sometimes uplifted. I am beginning to believe that some of the desired "visions" of the fallen martyrs are coming true for me. "Thank you for surviving." Four very beautiful words.

André Scheinmann recalls the weeks of arrival in America.

March 1952: all formalities accomplished, Claire and André Scheinmann had their immigration visas stamped in their passports and within three weeks were on board the Vollendam, a Dutch ship, on their way to the promised land. They had mixed feelings leaving behind England and France — their past, their very best friends, and some distant family who had survived the war. Both were happy to go to America.

Both were feeling the cruel, hard war years and souvenirs of what had happened in Europe. For Claire, the memory of her family wiped out almost entirely and the nervewracking war years of service in a special unit of the R.A.F. For André the Gestapo and the camps. They were attracted by America, which at that time was the force that had made it possible for the British to resist the Nazi onslaught and in every European mind represented all the virtues a real democracy could possess. They hoped that America would allow them to forget a fearful past and be their dawn of a better world. Claire was born in Russia and brought up in England, after a sojourn in Germany. André was born in Germany, brought up in France. Their countries were far apart, but they had one common goal: America, which still is a magnet for millions from all over the world.

They found a warm welcome when going through immigration. The officer screening them was a veteran, a former marine, and had read Claire's and André's file and congratulated them for having "given the Jerries a hard time." He felt they were a good element for America.

All formalities were taken care of with a minimum of time and questioning. Once outside the ship, their very good friends and some relatives were expecting them to drive off to the place where they were going to live for the first few months until they would know what André should do and where they might live. The first few weeks went by very fast, lots of welcome parties, lots of discussions about future work.

Scheinmann is writing his memoirs and explains why:
I write because the dead cry still in my ears and my promise to all of them, for whatever reasons they had landed in a camp and found death, to tell the world what happened. The world which knew, despite the denials of those responsible in various governments, the world which wishes to ignore the hideous past of Nazi Germany and the cruelty of so many of its nationals. Sure, we put up monuments in the world to recall the murdered people, and piously we gather from time to time in front of these cold stones by which our governments hope to whitewash their guilt. But when you look at these people and see their age, one wonders who is going to remember what happened in another fifty years? Our young people don't want to be bothered. But how to avoid another Holocaust if they are not aware of how inhuman men can become, if we the generation which has lived through this experience and survived it do not remind them?

We must instill the ideals which guided all the resistance fighters of the various undergrounds. They laid their lives on the line and often went to a horrible death brought upon them by the Nazis. Our children must know that to be free means also to fight and be willing to sacrifice their very existence if need be. They must know that the good life so many enjoy is not without responsibility. If they look at the life so many people endure under oppression and hardship, maybe they will be armed to resist future dictatorships and preserve the precious gift of liberty. A life of freedom of thought and enterprise, of religion and political belief, without being punished for disagreeing or for being different.
Bernard E. Bell. Members at large serving on the Executive Committee are: Carl Feldman, Ruth Fixler, Bonnie Goldowsky, Dr. Sidney Goldstein, Jeremiah J. Gorin, Sanford I. Kroll, Bernard Kusinitz, Barbara Long, Sidney Long, Ruth Page, Louis I. Sweet, Melvin L. Zurier. Past Presidents on the Executive Committee are: Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Dr. Marvin Petterman, Benton H. Rosen, Jerome B. Spunt, Erwin E. Strasmich. The Chairman asked that the Secretary cast one ballot in favor of the slate. It was so moved and voted.


Sanford Kroll, in his closing remarks, brought to the attention of the audience the sale of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association’s new informals as well as the sale of Geraldine Foster’s booklet on the Jews of Rhode Island.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ELEANOR F. HORVITZ
Secretary pro tem
NECROLOGY — 1987

SAMUEL Z. BAZARSKY, born in Malden, Massachusetts, a son of the late Ruben and Rose Bazarsky.

President and founder of New England Poultry Co., Inc. and Samuel's Realty Co., Inc., Mr. Bazarsky was a member of the Board of Directors of the Newport National Bank for many years. He was chairman of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island-Newport County campaign, chairman of the Newport County Israel Bond Drive. Among the many organizations to which he belonged were the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue, B'nai B'rith, and the American Jewish Congress. He was a founding member of Temple Beth Israel on Longboat Key, Florida and also a member of Touro Synagogue-Congregation Jeshuat Israel.

Died in Boston on May 2, 1987 at the age of 67.

ROLAND C. BLOCK, born in Providence, a son of the late Louis and Bertha (Basker) Block.

Mr. Block was a 1932 graduate of Bryant College and maintained an accountant's office in the Fleet Bank building in Providence for nearly 50 years. A member of Temple Beth-El, he was a member of the first confirmation class of that temple. He was also a member of Redwood Lodge No. 35, AF&AM, Aleppo Temple of Shriners, the state and national Association of Public Accountants, and a charter member of Crestwood Country Club.

Died in Cranston on March 22, 1987 at the age of 79.

FAYE C. BRIER, born in Miami, Florida, the daughter of the late Morris and Gertrude Cowen.

Mrs. Brier attended the University of Miami and Rhode Island School of Design. She was a costume designer for Cabot Street Playhouse and also taught sewing at Wheeler School. She was a member of Temple Beth-El.

Died in Providence on April 20, 1987 at the age of 61.
CHARLES COKEN, born in Russia, a son of the late Leon and Bertha (Potter) Coken.

Mr. Coken was long known as “Mr. Touro” for his 40 years service as secretary of the Touro Fraternal Association. Employed by the Atlantic Refining Company, he was treasurer of Arco’s Northeasters Retirees Club. He was a past vice president of the John A. Fogarty Center for the Retarded and held membership in many organizations: the Jewish Home for the Aged, Providence Hebrew Free Loan, Chesed Shol Emess, What Cheer Lodge, Knights of Pythias, Redwood Lodge No. 356, F&AM. Mr. Coken was president of the former Temple Beth Israel of Providence.

Died in Warwick on June 16, 1987, at the age of 80.

IDA L. ENGLE, born in Lithuania, daughter of the late Samuel D. and Anna (Zablotsky) Schwartz.

Mrs. Engle was a life member of the Women’s Association of the Jewish Home for the Aged, of Pioneer Women and was a member of ORT, Hadassah, Temple Torat Yisrael, and Congregation Shaare Zedek.

Died in Providence on June 4, 1987 at the age of 87.

HARRIET A. HORVITZ, born in New York City, a daughter of the late Nathan and Sonia (Adelson) Curland.

Mrs. Horvitz attended Bryant College. Active in many organizations she was a member of the board of directors of Temple Emanu-El and president of its sisterhood and Garden Club. She was chairman for many years of the Rhode Island Israel Bond Committee, and member of the board of trustees of the Women’s Division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. She served on the board of the Women’s Association of the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Died in Providence on February 8, 1987 at the age of 67.
KIRSHENBAUM, JORDON, born in Providence, a son of the late Morris and Eda (Skolnick) Kirshenbaum.

He was a graduate of Providence College. Mr. Kirshenbaum was a former member of Temple Torat Yisrael and a member of the Masons and the Shrine Temple.

Died on November 18, 1987 in Dallas, Texas, at the age of 56.

HAROLD F. KLIBANOFF, born in Russia, a son of the late David and Zelda (Zuckeroff) Klibanoff.

Dr. Klibanoff attended the former Rhode Island State College and was a graduate of the New England College of Optometry, Boston. He was a member of Temple Emanu-El. Among the organizations to which he belonged was the Roosevelt Lodge, F&AM, the Palestine Shrine, Touro Fraternal Association, B’nai B’rith, Providence Hebrew Day School, The Miriam Hospital, Jewish Home for the Aged, and Crestwood Country Club.

Died in Providence on September 16, 1987 at the age of 82.

GOVERNOR FRANK LICHT, born in Providence, the son of the late Jacob and Rose (Kassed) Licht.

Governor Licht was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and valedictorian of his graduating class at Brown University in 1938. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1941. He served as a state senator from 1949 to 1956, and was named to the Superior Court in 1956, where he served for 12 years. In 1968 he was elected governor, winning the election over then governor, John H. Chafee. Governor Licht served for two terms.

He was honored and awarded Doctor of Laws degrees by St. Francis College in Maine, Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Yeshiva College of New York, the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Brown University, Roger Williams College, New England Institute of Technology, and Suffolk University.

Governor Licht was most recently honored in March, 1987 when the Providence County Court House, which houses the state Supreme and Superior Courts, was named the Frank Licht Judicial Complex.
He served on the Providence Human Relations Commission, was president of the General Jewish Committee. He was also a past president and on the board of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, a past president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, and vice president of Temple Emanu-El.

Died in Providence on May 30, 1987 at the age of 71.

BENJAMIN F. RUTTENBERG, born in Reading, Pennsylvania, a son of the late Max and Hannah Ruttenberg.

Mr. Ruttenberg was an executive of the former City Hall Hardware Co. for 35 years before retiring in 1965. He was an Army veteran of World War I. He was a daily volunteer at The Miriam Hospital for three years and a former trustee and honorary life trustee of the hospital. He was also an honorary life trustee and former vice president of Temple Beth-El. A member of the board of directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, he was also an executive committee member of the Rhode Island Bond Campaign.

Died in Providence on June 24, 1987 at the age of 86.

SIDNEY SHAPIRO, born in Worcester, Massachusetts, the son of the late Joseph and Leah Shapiro.

Mr. Shapiro was owner and operator of Sidney Office Supply Company in East Providence. He was a founding member of the Cranston Jewish Community Center, now Torat Yisrael, was a member of the Hillel Board at the University of Rhode Island, served on the Jewish Council of the Boy Scouts of America and was a member of the Century Club of B'nai B'rith.

He was once selected Man of the Year by the Boy Scouts of America and of B'nai B'rith.

Died in Providence on November 12, 1987.

M. WILLIAM SMIRA, born in Providence, a son of the late Louis and Rose (Rosen) Smira.

Mr. Smira was a 1926 graduate of Brown University. He was proprietor of the former Gloraine's of East Greenwich and Pawtucket for 30 years before retiring in 1977.
A member of Temple Emanu-El and its men's club, he was also a member of B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Home for Aged, and the Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association.

Died in Providence on October 2, 1987.

RACHEL D. WAKSLER, born in Lithuania, a daughter of the late Nissan and Ida Simon.

Mrs. Waksler was co-owner of Simon Supply, Inc. with plumbing and heating stores located in Pawtucket, Fall River, New Bedford, and West Yarmouth. She was a member of Temple Emanu-El, honorary life member of the Women's Association of the Jewish Home for Aged. She was a member of the Providence Chapter of the Red Cross and during World War II served as a nurses' aide at Rhode Island Hospital.

She received several honors including the Woman of Valor award in 1968. She was awarded a citation of merit by the 1960-61 campaign of the General Jewish Committee.

Died in Providence on July 26, 1987 at the age of 85.
Errata

ERRATA — VOLUME 9, NUMBER 4

"The Jews of Woonsocket"

Page 325, Line 8, should read: "By 1900 Woonsocket's population had grown to 28,204."

Page 326 — Should read “Y.M.H.A.” in several places instead of “Y.H.M.A.”

Page 329 photograph at bottom of page: Should read “Mrs. Alexander Brenner”.

“A Sabbath Tour of Synagogues in Providence and Vicinity”

Page 343, Line 12, should read “29 June 1985”.

Page 345, Line 35, should read “did materialize”.

Page 346, Line 9, should read “Douglas and Orms Streets”.

Page 346, Line 15, should read “3 August 1985”.

Page 347, Line 11, should read “17 August 1985”.

Page 357, Line 10, should read “1967”.

Necrology

Page 369: Addenda to “Dr. George Messner”: “He had been Chief of Pathology at the Rhode Island Hospital for many years. Dr. Messner was full Professor of Pathology at the Brown University Medical School.

Index

Page 389: Married names of the “Sholes” daughters had been omitted. Should read: “Alice Sholes Guthart, Bertha Sholes Aren, Beatie Sholes Lipson, Esther Sholes Harris, Evelyn Sholes Kagan”.
Recent acquisitions in the library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association containing items of Rhode Island interest and a listing of these items:


Contains the same material as mentioned in Note 5 above, plus additional material. Pages 26 and 29 contain the same interviews as above.


Pages 259-262. A review of Calvin Goldscheider’s *Jewish Community and Change: Emerging Patterns in America* as mentioned in Note 1 above.


Pages 80-81. Describes the holdings of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.


Page 434. Lists the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*.


“This study of generation change in a Jewish Community is very largely a report on the Jewish population of the metropolitan area of Providence, Rhode Island”. Based on a population survey initiated in 1962 of 1,500 Jewish families.
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For information on becoming a Life Member or establishing a Fund, write to the Association at 130 Sessions Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906.
BACK COVER

In 1933 Benjamin Nathan Cardozo received an honorary LL.D., Doctor of Laws, at Brown University. He thanks his friend Arthur J. Levy for hospitality shown on that occasion. Property of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.
June 21, 1933

Dear Mr. King,

Many thanks for the chart and for the letter which accompanied it.

My stay at Brown was a very pleasant one.

The pleasure was augmented by meeting you.

Very truly yours,

Benjamin N. Cardozo

Justice, S.C.C.