Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

Fifty Years of Giving

RHODE ISLAND
JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES
VOLUME 12 NOVEMBER 1995 NUMBER 1, PART A
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D., Chairman

Stanley Abrams
Geraldine S. Foster
Bonnie N. Goldowsky

Sidney Goldstein, Ph.D.
Eleanor F. Horvitz
Terry Kantorowitz Shaffer

Jerome B. Spunt

The Library of Congress National Serials Data Program (NSDP), Washington, D.C. 20540, which operates the U.S. Serials Data System, has assigned the following International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, a publication of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association: ISSN 0556-8609.

Front Cover
First Board of Directors of General Jewish Committee, September, 1945.
RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
130 Sessions Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906

DAVID CHARAK ADELMAN (1892-1967), Founder

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AARON COHEN .......................................................... President
HERBERT BROWN ....................................................... First Vice President
CHARLOTTE I. PENN .................................................. Second Vice President
SYLVIA FACTOR ........................................................ Secretary
LILLIAN SCHWARTZ .................................................. Assistant Secretary
ALFRED JAFFE, D.D.S ................................................... Treasurer
HERBERT L. ROSEN ..................................................... Assistant Treasurer

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

BONNIE N. GOLDSWORTHY  BERNARD KUSINITZ  MELVIN L. ZURIER  LYNN STEPAN

PAST PRESIDENTS
STANLEY ABRAMS  BENTON H. ROSEN
GERALDINE S. FOSTER  BERYL SEGAL (1898-1980)
SIEGEL J. GOLDSWORTHY, M.D.  JEROME B. SPUNT
ROBERT A. KOTLEIN  ERWIN STRASMICH
MARRIEN PITTERMAN, PH.D.

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
KENNETH ABRAMS  GEORGE GOODWIN, PH.D.
GRACE ALPERT  MILTON LEWIS
ROBERT BERKELHAMMER  RITA MICHAELSON
HADASSAH DAVIS  TOBY ROSSNER
CALVIN GOLDSWORTHY, PH.D.  ALVIN RUBIN
SIDNEY GOLDSTEIN, PH.D.  MILTON STANZLER

EUGENE WEINBERG

JUDITH WEISS COHEN, Editor
SIEGEL J. GOLDSWORTHY, M.D., Editor Emeritus
ELEANOR F. HORTON, Librarian-Archivist

Printed in the U.S.A.
Published for the Association by Richard Alan Dow Technical Communications, Titusville, Florida
JEWISH FEDERATION OF RHODE ISLAND
FIFTY YEARS OF GIVING

By Hadassah Davis

Preface

The firm consolidation of Jewish charitable giving in Rhode Island took shape in 1945 with the incorporation of the General Jewish Committee of Providence (GJC). Since then the GJC and its successor, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island (JFRI), have provided channels that connect the Jews of Rhode Island with each other, with Jews around the nation, with Jews in other countries, and, perhaps most importantly, with Jews in the land of Israel.

JFRI's collection and distribution of funds constitutes what is arguably the major communal effort of Jews in Rhode Island. Contributors include members of every Jewish religious or social organization and many people who have no other formal affiliation with Jewish life. As we approach the end of the century, Federation continues to address a range of issues. It supports charitable activities in Israel and other international situations, and national and local institutions. Its Jewish Voice of Rhode Island goes out each month to every identifiable Jewish family in the state, without regard to affiliation, non-affiliation, or contribution.

In the course of fifty years, particular individuals and general circumstances have affected levels of giving and priorities of distribution, and they have modified the internal structure of Federation. Decisions are shaped by people's hopes, fears, and expectations. They reflect historical factors as well as concern with the immediate situation.

The following account of Federation is based on reading and conversations, which are only partly acknowledged in the footnotes. Anne Sherman, Eleanor Horvitz, and Maurice Cohen guided me through the archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, which include speeches and memorabilia that bring people and events to life. I am grateful to Joseph and Freda Galkin, George Goodwin, Jenny Klein, Julius Michelson, Joan Ress Reeves, Robert and Marcia Riesman, Harris and Myrna Rosen, Rabbi Arnold Samlan, Tovia Siegel, Milton and Selma Stanzler, Jeanne Weil, DeeDee Witman, Melvin Zurier, and Samuel Zurier for taking time to share reminiscences and current views. The staff at JFRI have been uniformly helpful, and I must particularly thank Leah Camara, Lisa Heath, Rose Mossberg, Jane Sprague, and May-Ronny Zeidman for their interest and cooperation.

Above all I thank Aaron and Judith Cohen of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and Steven Rakitt of JFRI for offering me the chance to learn about the Rhode Island Jewish community.

Hadassah Davis

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, Vol. 12, No. 1, Part A, November, 1995
FIFTH. Said corporation shall be located in Providence, Rhode Island.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and stated our residences this 11th day of July, A.D. 1945.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RESIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Adams</td>
<td>75 Hazard Ave., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Berger</td>
<td>176 Waterman St., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Benjamin</td>
<td>169 Reynolds Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Barin</td>
<td>15 Upton Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Berman</td>
<td>57 Lenox Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Caplan</td>
<td>498 Cole Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Denmark</td>
<td>344 Taber Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Finkle</td>
<td>23 Vassar Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Jones</td>
<td>11 Gorton Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Kennedy</td>
<td>650 Elmgrove Ave., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Longacre</td>
<td>11 Catalpa Rd., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Lasky</td>
<td>210 Blackstone Blvd., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Lasky</td>
<td>45 Belton Rd., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biltmore Hotel</td>
<td>154 Prospect St., Prov., R.I.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incorporators of the General Jewish Committee of Providence, Inc. (From Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, Vol. 6, No. 1, November 1971, p. 14).
BEGINNINGS

"On July 11, 1945, the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations recognized and registered the General Jewish Committee of Providence as a corporation, entitled to "conduct an annual campaign, collecting, receiving, and distributing funds for the support, maintenance, and development of such Jewish charitable, cultural, and religious organizations and causes as are willing to participate as beneficiary agencies assisting in communal activities and promoting general Jewish welfare.""

The fifteen incorporators represented a cross section of the Jewish community. Among them were Rabbi Morris G. Silk and Dr. Ilie Berger, a dentist; Alter Boyman, a peddler; Archibald Silverman, owner of a jewelry factory; Frank Licht, a lawyer; Alvin Sopkin, who owned a clothing factory in Fall River; and Joseph Ress, a lawyer who had moved into the manufacture of jewelry findings. Within the group, religious beliefs included Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism as well as outright secularism; political views ranged from socialist to Republican. What held the group together was a shared sense of Jewish community; most of the members were Zionists; all were concerned with the fates of Jews in Europe and Palestine.

In fifty years following World War II the General Jewish Committee of Providence evolved into the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island that we now take for granted. But when we look back from 1945 to the beginning of the century, we see that several earlier efforts to coordinate a General Jewish Committee in Providence were made but that no one was able to establish a viable organization.

In 1903 the Kishinev pogroms and the anti-Semitic violence that continued after them evoked horror and anger in American Jewish communities and in the American community generally. The heat of this reaction melted parochial barriers. From New York Jacob H. Schiff, head of the Kuhn, Loeb banking firm, and Oscar Straus, head of R.H. Macy & Co., sent a telegram to Harry Cutler, a thirty-year-old jewelry manufacturer in Rhode Island,* urging him to join them in coordinating relief activities. In response, Cutler called together a conference of all Jewish organizations in the state to raise funds for the relief of Russian Jews. He presided over the conference deliberations and was elected permanent chairman of what came to be the United Jewish Relief Committee of Providence, an affiliate of the New York based national relief effort.²

For about a year Cutler was able to hold forty-four diverse Jewish organizations together. Solicitation was organized so that every Jew in the community was appropriately approached. A major fund-raising event in downtown Providence attracted both Jews and non-Jews. The funds collected altogether exceeded initial projections.³

---

But, when the emergency had been met, the United Jewish Relief Committee of Providence broke apart. Each of the diverse organizations that made up the Committee was held together by ties established in the old countries. Russian, Polish, and Galitzianer landsmanshaft men provided bridges of connection for new immigrants; and each separate group maintained its own charitable institutions. Thus, for instance, in 1903 the Hebrew Free Loan Society was set up to provide funds for emergencies, to be repaid without interest. Two years later the Jews of South Providence incorporated the South Providence Free Loan Society for the same purpose. The physical distance between Prairie Avenue and North Main Street was at most two miles; but social divisions called for separate institutions.

Jewish immigrants arriving through the Port of Providence remained a continuing concern for the Jewish community throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. In those days transatlantic boats of the Fabre line docked regularly at the State Pier in Providence; and, as regularly as they docked, Archibald Silverman and Alter Boyman, representing the Hebrew Sheltering Society, were there to greet them. The Providence men made sure that the Jews on board found their way through immigration procedures and that, once safe on land, their immediate needs were taken care of. Alter Boyman was also concerned about the naturalization of the immigrants. He personally attended meetings of various organizations, urging the newcomers to apply for citizenship. At one meeting he reported the purchase of one hundred booklets of the Constitution of the United States in English and in Yiddish, and these he distributed among organizations where study groups were formed to prepare for naturalization tests.4

In November 1923 the Johnson Bill then before Congress proposed to limit immigration to one half of what had been allowed in the Quota Act of 1921. Archibald Silverman and Alter Boyman, appalled at what this law would mean to the prospects of East European Jews, gathered together a group to form the General Jewish Committee of Providence.

The first annual conference of this General Jewish Committee met in January 1924. Thirty-five organizations represented by seventy-five delegates attended. They authorized a committee consisting of Rabbi Morris Schussheim; Joseph Smith, a prominent attorney; and Joshua Bell to prepare a resolution protesting the adoption of the Johnson Bill. Copies of the resolution were sent to the Rhode Island senators, LeBaron Bradford Colt and Peter G. Gerry, and to the three Rhode Island representatives, Richard C. Aldrich, Clark Burdick, and Jeremiah E. O'Connell; all responded favorably.

The General Jewish Committee of Providence also called a mass meeting of protest against the anti-immigration bill in March; the meeting was held at the Elks' Auditorium, with a panel of speakers.
Nonetheless, the Johnson Bill passed; and after 1925 the GJC fell apart.

In the 1920s Jews in Providence still defined themselves in terms of old country connections; for the most part the "Galitzianer" lived in the North End and the "Russians" in South Providence. As Frank Licht described the situation to Florence Markoff, in 1926, when he was a boy of ten, his family had moved from Gay street in South Providence to a house in Pawtuxet where they were the only Jewish family in the neighborhood, and then, prompted by an anti-Semitic incident at school, the family moved from Pawtuxet to Oakland Avenue in the North End, where there was a flourishing Jewish neighborhood. But those were the wrong kind of Jews. Frank Licht said, "There's a historical fact that I think is of some interest; we were from South Providence, we were not from the North End. My mother was uncomfortable living in the North End. You would think it was like another city... and so we moved back to Atlantic Avenue [in South Providence]."

Against this background of neighborhood antagonisms, leaders like Silverman, Boyman, and Alvin Sopkin worked toward cooperative community efforts. They and many of their co-workers had come to the United States from Eastern Europe as children, bringing with them a strong sense of Jewish identity. As adults they integrated deep commitment to Jewish values with appreciation of American political openness to compromise and consensus.

Archibald Silverman himself was born on March 5, 1880, in Zincov, a small Hasidic town in the Ukraine. Ten years later, when the situation of Jews in Russia was deteriorating, the Silverman family immigrated to the United States. At the age of eleven "Archie," as he was generally and affectionately known, was working in mills and factories. When he was seventeen he started a jewelry business with a capital of what he sometimes said was five dollars and sometimes eleven dollars. Shortly after, he joined with his brother Charles in a partnership that lasted the rest of their lives.*

The business prospered. Silverman grew to be a well-known, highly respected member of the community. In 1930 when Charles Silverman gave a party at the Biltmore to celebrate his brother's fiftieth birthday, official Rhode Island came to speak in his honor. Arthur Darman, a manufacturer based in Woonsocket who came — like Silverman — from a village in the Ukraine, was the toastmaster. William Clark of the U.S. Immigration Service spoke about Silverman's generosity and work with the immigrants; ex-Governor Emery J. San Souci took Archibald Silverman as an example of one who prospered in spite of early poverty and lack of education; and so on throughout several hours.

At the end of the long evening Silverman responded:

My friends, I promise I won’t keep you here very long. While I sat here tonight listening to all of you talking about me, I thought of a story I heard about some people who lived in the mountainous district of Kentucky, where people had never even heard of a mirror. They tell this one about a man finding a piece of broken mirror on a railroad track one day. Never having seen himself, he didn’t recognize his reflection when he looked in the glass, but said “My God! My father!”

He took it home and hid it carefully, thinking he had some kind of treasure. His wife used to see him take it out and look at it now and then. So she watched where he put it and went to look at it one day. Not recognizing herself any more than her husband had recognized himself, she said, “My God, so that’s the kind of a dame he’s taking out now.”

That’s the way I feel. I don’t recognize myself now. But I do know one thing, no one will have to give a eulogy for me when I die. I know just how it would sound.”

Archibald Silverman’s economic success, his involvement in Jewish life, his generosity in the community generally, and his personal charm put him in a strong position to lead the organization of Jewish philanthropy. In the later years of his life, as the Jewish community changed its patterns of integration, his vision of united philanthropic effort became feasible.
PULLING TOGETHER

Beginning with the advent of Nazi rule in Germany, and continuing through World War II, the desperate plight of Jews in Europe and the uncertain situation in Palestine served as catalysts to centralize Jewish philanthropy.

On a national level the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, (popularly known as the JDC and the “Joint”) had fallen on hard times during the Depression. Organized by Felix Warburg in 1914 as The Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, the JDC had worked during World War I and subsequently through the 1920s to provide aid for European Jews. Officially the JDC was neutral on Zionism, but in fact until the 1940s the leadership was ambivalent. They opposed Zionism’s claim to be the only solution to the Jewish problem. Although the JDC supported Palestinian ventures such as yeshivahs and in 1926 gave $1.8 million to the Palestine Economic Development Corporation, which invested large sums in the country, part of the leadership leaned toward the non-Zionist wing of the Jewish Agency, and some of its leaders were outright anti-Zionists. Thus through most of the 1930s JDC’s fund-raising for European Jewry competed with Zionist efforts for Palestine. Under the pressure of events the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was founded with American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal as principal partners and with the National Refugee Service as a beneficiary.

All across the United States continuing emergencies abroad encouraged continuity of central fund-raising organizations. In the late 1930s and early '40s dozens of communities from California to Connecticut organized local federations for Jewish philanthropy. In Providence, beginning in 1938, the major Jewish fund-raising effort was in support of the United Jewish Appeal; permanent widespread coordination was signalled by the incorporation of the General Jewish Committee of Providence in 1945.

Each year the UJA campaign in Providence included a dinner at which speeches were given and members of the audience announced pledges. The leaders of the campaign, having previously decided on their own contributions, set the pace. Those who came to the dinner were among the fifteen percent of donors whose gifts made up eighty-five percent of the total collected. Many of them had been approached before the meeting. The ritual of solicitation and response, announcing amounts pledged, was for the most part well orchestrated.

Occasionally there were surprises. In 1942 the UJA campaign dinner was held at the Narragansett Hotel, and Archibald Silverman began the solicitation of funds in his usual jovial way. When he asked for pledges, a hand went up from the audience, and with it came a quiet, almost inaudible, announcement, “Five thousand dollars.” This was an enormous sum. Mr. Silverman, hardly trusting his ears, asked, “How much did he say?” A chorus of voices who were sure they heard correctly repeated
the amount. The audience broke loose with applause. Benjamin Sopkin and his family had made the largest gift of the era to this cause. They were newcomers to Providence, but, after that, everyone knew the name.8

In the summer of 1944 Alvin Sopkin, (Benjamin Sopkin’s son), invited a group of Jewish community leaders to a meeting at his summer home to discuss forming a central fund-raising committee for the UJA. At that meeting a committee, headed by Jacob Temkin, an attorney respected to the point of awe, was appointed to present the organization to the community at large. During the following months Temkin and his committee worked hard to engage cooperation in a situation where sincere and devoted people differed honestly over purposes and objectives. People like Archibald Silverman and Alter Boyman worried about the sufferings of world Jewry; other members of the community, including Ida Silverman, Silverman’s wife, were Zionists, passionately devoted to the development of a homeland in Palestine; still others were chiefly concerned with conditions in the local community.9
As it worked out, consensus was achieved. The vision and dedication of a few leaders in the Jewish community, together with the growing maturity of the community as a whole, allowed for effective consolidation of charitable drives.

On the evening of May 28, 1945, about 500 people packed the ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel in Providence. The assembled company included representatives from fifty-one Jewish societies and groups. They voted to authorize the formation of a permanent Jewish communal organization, the General Jewish Committee of Providence, a name suggested by Alter Boyman.\(^{10}\)

They elected a slate of officers: Archibald Silverman, president; Alter Boyman, Benjamin Brier, and Joseph Ress, vice presidents; Milton C. Sapinsley, treasurer; and Frank Licht, secretary. Alvin Sopkin was the first campaign chairman. Jacob Temkin was chosen head of a committee to prepare by-laws and arrange the legal affairs of the organization.

The group also approved specific goals for the GJC:
1. to conduct one annual campaign for the United Jewish Appeal;
2. to establish a permanent committee for community planning;
3. to invite all Jewish organizations in the city to join this united Jewish agency;
4. to welcome all agencies wishing to join the GJC, assuring them of an equitable share of the funds collected, provided they abandon their separate drives.\(^{11}\)

In order to achieve these goals, the GJC needed an administrator to conduct day-to-day operations. Luckily, Joseph Galkin, then executive director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Providence, was available. Galkin, born in 1909, the youngest of seven children, had graduated from Hope High School as president of his class. He had a B.A. degree from Brown University (class of 1931), and an M.S.W. degree from the Columbia University School of Social Work. He had worked as a field social worker for the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York City and as Director of Field Services for the National Refugee Service, helping to resettle refugees from Nazi Germany in such areas as Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Most importantly, Galkin had the talent and the local knowledge to connect with all the various factions and points of view in the Providence community and persuade them to work harmoniously together. He knew everybody. And everybody trusted him. With these skills he held the community together behind the General Jewish Committee, while Archibald Silverman, Alvin Sopkin, Alter Boyman and the others provided inspirational leadership in fund-raising.

Frank Licht (1916-1987), then a promising young lawyer serving as secretary of the GJC during its first year, was noticeably younger than most of the founding
members. He regarded the leaders — Silverman, Sopkin, Henry Hassenfeld, Boymen, and Ilie Berger — with profound respect, even with awe. In an interview forty years later, he remembered their idealism and devotion, saying:

When you sat down with Archie Silverman, or Henry Hassenfeld, or Ilie Berger, they were not just talking about dollar raising; there was an articulation of philosophy, of history, of Judaism. It was not sitting down — as you know, and you have attended these meetings — saying, “Well, can we structure this in a way that we can get these things involved so that we can raise a little more money?” ... These men were not looking at deductible items on their income taxes. I mean these were people who would if they were young and there was some way to go over and pick up equipment and fight for the State of Israel — they would have done it. They were that devoted. But more than that, there was an intellectual basis of their support of Israel, above and beyond money. ... Alter Boymen, for example, as intelligent a man as you would ever meet, was not particularly interested in anything of earthly rewards. He was not a successful business man, but the committee respected him.\(^\text{13}\)

Throughout the early years of the GJC in Providence, as throughout the United States, Jewish communal fund-raising focused on local contributions to the UJA. Many people, thinking of the misery of Jews in Europe, felt like the seventy-year-old man who pledged $100 for each year of his life, saying “But for the grace of God I might have been one of them.”\(^\text{13}\)

In 1946 Archibald Silverman wrote to the community as president of the GJC, stressing the misery of Jews in Europe. He said:

For us in Providence 1946 is truly a year of crucial decision. More than one year has passed since European Jewry was liberated from the yoke of Hitlerism, but despite this liberation our fellow Jews overseas are today the most terribly afflicted people in the world. The 1,400,000 Jewish survivors of Europe are today destitute, hungry, homeless, uprooted, and economically dispossessed. ...

Our Jewish survivors in Europe know that we in America hold their fate in our hands. The Jewish homeland in Palestine stands at a critical point in its glorious history. Our action must be swift, determined, decisive. This year, as in years past, we cannot, we dare not, fail to meet our solemn obligation to those of our people who today live at the edge of doom.\(^\text{14}\)

In May 1948 the miraculous establishment of the State of Israel gave new meaning to Jewish life and infused a new spirit into fund-raising. In September 1945 the first campaign for funds of the General Jewish Committee had raised $367,769, an unprecedented sum for the Providence area. The next year this sum was more than doubled. In 1947 contributions exceeded one million dollars. In 1948 when the
Rabbi Steven S. Wise, great Zionist leader, came to Providence to address a mass rally at the Biltmore Hotel for the 1947 GJC campaign. Governor John O. Pastore is at the podium extending the greetings of the State of Rhode Island. At the left next to him is Rabbi Wise, seated between his very close friends Ida and Archibald Silverman.

The newly created State of Israel was fighting for its life against its Arab neighbors, Providence Jews gave the campaign $1,125,742. These outpourings of generosity displayed the solidarity, compassion, and unity of all segments of the Jewish community in the face of danger. They were years of emergency. As Archibald Silverman said, “The need was great, so the response was equally great.” By 1953, when Selig Greenberg wrote a series of articles for The Providence Evening Bulletin, the GJC had, in the course of eight years, raised six million dollars, most of it to help develop the State of Israel.15

The GJC had quickly gained widespread confidence and trust. Local and national organizations joined the federation. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), which had previously conducted fund-raising in synagogues and temples during the High Holidays, discarded its lists of contributors and its traditional fund appeal and accepted a proportional allocation from the GJC. The Histadrut (the Israel Federation of Labor), The Zionist Organization of America, the Hadassah Youth Aliyah,
each of which had conducted annual campaigns and had developed community support, relinquished their fund-raising prerogatives in favor of allocations from the GJC, which was sending three-quarters of its receipts to Israel. They and numerous other organizations joined in the annual campaigns in order to justify their rightful shares of the funds.

The GJC also benefited in its early years from the enormous energy and dedication of its leaders and from their detailed knowledge of the community. Selig Greenberg described a meeting at the start of the 1953 campaign when Alvin Sopkin, then president of the GJC, and Henry Hassenfeld, the campaign chairman, got together to go over the pledge cards of potential donors from whom substantial gifts might be expected. They thought carefully about who should approach these donors; in Sopkin’s words it was important to make sure that “the right pledge cards are put in the hands of the right workers.” They also gave thought to the financial standing of the larger donors. Pledges that did not come up to expectations might be returned, and a renewed effort made to get an increased donation. As Sopkin put it, “Nobody is pressurized. We just try to sell them. We go back to them privately and fight it out.”

In those days the GJC had only a few paid employees: the executive director, Joseph Galkin, and his secretary, Elinor Callahan; the office manager, Gertrude Tarnopol, and her assistant, Ann Klein; and three or four clerical workers. The officers and members of the large board of directors not only gave money to the best of their ability; they also did much of the day-to-day campaign work. Alvin Sopkin himself was both hugely generous and energetically engaged in the immediate work of solicitation. He personally handled a large number of pledge cards, he made innumerable phone calls, and he was not above ringing doorbells. He didn’t ask any of the twelve hundred volunteers to do what he wouldn’t do himself.

Photos on facing page:

Above. “In those days we really had an active Young Adult Division,” Joseph Galkin. At a 1947 meeting, l. to r., Ira Rakatansky, Claire Ernstorff, Anne Naemark.

Below. Mass rally for 1948 campaign. The full catastrophe of the Holocaust was not yet known; six million Jews died.
LOOKING AT A NEW GENERATION

The first Jews in Providence arrived there in the years between 1850 and the Civil War. They came chiefly from German-speaking countries; they worked as merchants, and as tailors; and in 1854 they founded the city’s first Jewish congregation, Congregation Sons of Israel. By 1880, when immigrants from Eastern Europe began to settle in Providence in noticeable numbers, these earlier Jewish immigrants were well established. Many owned businesses and had become wealthy. They were middle-class Americans, and they took a responsible but aloof stance towards the “greenhorns.” They provided charitable services but kept their distance socially. 

On the other hand, the leaders of the Providence Jewish community from 1900 to 1950, like most of their followers, had spent their childhood years in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. They differed individually in their attitudes toward religious observance and in their knowledge of Jewish texts. Within the Providence community, these differences and local variations of custom contributed to local antagonisms. But all the new immigrants spoke Yiddish; all were more or less familiar with an encompassing Jewish culture, and their common knowledge gave them grounds for mutual understanding.

However, by the 1950s leadership and membership in the Jewish community had passed, for the most part, to American-born people who fitted Jewish practices, beliefs, and connections into their complex lives as members of a multicultural society. The tight and narrow boundaries of the communities of the North End and South Providence melted; and, as this happened, the shared knowledge of Jewish culture faded, and the self-awareness of Jews as a community evaporated. In 1951, when the GJC undertook studies of Jewish education and of leisure-time needs in the Jewish community, they had to rely on popular estimates for basic population figures, and on interview questions for some sense of community needs.

In 1960 Joseph Ress, as president of the GJC, confronted important decisions: What services should the GJC provide in the coming years? Whom would the services be designed to help? Where should the various service agencies be physically located? And as he contemplated these questions, he saw that in order to arrive at appropriate answers, the community needed a clear look at the conditions of the present.

Ress himself, born in 1904, was raised in South Providence. His father, Morris Ress Cohen, had come to America as a young man. The story is that Morris Ress became Morris Ress Cohen because the immigration officer at Ellis Island could not grasp the spelling of Ress, so Morris went back to an older family name, Cohen.

Morris Ress Cohen was the proprietor of Cohen’s Delicatessen Store and Lunch Room on North Main Street in Providence, known to Jews and non-Jews for its superb corned beef sandwiches and for the mouth-watering half-sour pickles that his wife made herself. Cohen’s Delicatessen was the place where people went after
the theater for a bite to eat and a chance to chat. It was a community gathering place, and Morris Ress Cohen taught his son two lessons: "Work for the community," and "Do not forget your own people."  

Young Joe helped in his father’s store, and attended the Technical High School. He went on to Brown University, where he was the business manager of the Brown Daily Herald, and from which he graduated in 1926, B.A., Phi Beta Kappa. He attended Harvard Law School, receiving an L.L.B in 1929. At that time he and his brother changed their family name back to Ress. He practiced law for five years and then put together a chain of supermarkets. After a few years he sold that business and became associated with E. A. Adams, a jewelry findings manufacturing firm which flourished for many years under his management.

Joseph Ress took his father’s teachings about community service and awareness of his own people to heart. He was a charter member of the GJC when it incorporated and served as a vice president in its first year. During the next fifteen years he served in many offices at the GJC, and when he undertook to be president he knew what he was up against. He thought the GJC should be a forum for all shades and nuances of Jewish opinion in the community; he knew the range of differences that this encompassed; and he considered it the job of the GJC to hear everyone and to respond appropriately in terms of allocations and subsidies.

But who was everyone?

In 1962 Mr. Ress persuaded the board of the GJC to set up a Community Planning Committee. At the GJC Board of Director’s meeting on January 30, 1963, Mr. Alvin Chenkin of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in New York outlined the value of a population study for community planning purposes. He persuaded the board that a comprehensive population study of Greater Providence was essential for establishing facts on which community planning could be based. The board authorized a population study of Greater Providence, under the general supervision of the Community Planning Committee.

They engaged Professor Sidney Goldstein of Brown University to direct the project. Goldstein, a sociologist and demographer, met with the leaders of many Jewish agencies to find out their concerns and to enlist their help. At the same time announcements, publicity stories, and speeches encouraged cooperation by the Jewish community as a whole. A sample of about 1600 households was chosen to represent a total population of about 5600 households; and in the spring of 1963 twenty-two captains and about two hundred volunteer interviewers, from many sections of the community, conducted face-to-face interviews with the heads of households selected. The interviews addressed a range of issues, and the survey when completed gave a detailed view of the Jewish community. In 1964 it was published by the General Jewish Committee as “A Population Survey,” written by
Sidney Goldstein. The report gave statistics for socioeconomic and family characteristics in each area and for the Jews of Greater Providence generally.²⁰

The Population Survey lists, as of 1963, the numbers of Jews in the separate parts of Greater Providence — Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, Warwick, East Greenwich, and Barrington. At that time almost twenty thousand Jews lived in Greater Providence: eleven thousand of them in the city of Providence itself and another 2,400 in neighboring Pawtucket. The largest suburban community was Cranston, with about twenty percent of the Jews in Greater Providence; the West Bay towns of Warwick and East Greenwich had about 1,600 Jewish persons; and there were five hundred Jewish persons in the East Bay towns of Barrington, East Providence, Bristol, and Warren.

This population distribution marked a noticeable change from a survey done twelve years earlier. In several ways it quantified what people knew. It showed how much the Jewish community had abandoned the North End and South Providence, and the extent to which Jews had moved to the East Side and to the suburbs — Cranston, Warwick, Barrington, and East Greenwich. In an era when city residents were moving out to the suburbs, Jews were doing it more, but also selectively in regard to age, schooling, and occupations. The numbers showed, for instance, that of 867 Jews living in the North End almost sixty percent were over fifty, and few (fourteen percent) had any college education; while of the 494 Jews who lived in Barrington sixty percent were under forty, and almost two-thirds had some college education. These findings confirmed general perceptions.

The interviewers addressed questions about religious identification (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and non-affiliated), about languages spoken in the home in addition to English, about intermarriage, and about the practice of specific religious rituals, including synagogue attendance, the lighting of Sabbath candles, and annual attendance at a Seder. They asked about enrollment in Jewish education and anticipated use of community services.

For the GJC, the interview data were not only descriptive; they influenced action. Professor Goldstein made projections for population growth and needs during the next fifteen years. The demographic and other social evidence in "A Population Survey" was taken into account in making plans for the future.

The Board worried most about the continuing identity of Jews in younger and future generations. The survey showed: (1) an increasing proportion of aged persons; (2) a large proportion of children and teenagers living in the suburbs; and (3) some tendency for Jewish religious identification to diminish from one generation to the next. At the same time there was evidence that Jewish parents put a high value on Jewish education for their children. One-third of the children whose parents expected to enroll them in Jewish education in the years ahead were
members of families not affiliated with any congregation at the time of the survey. It was clear that the Bureau of Jewish Education, which at the time of the Goldstein survey provided broad-branched services, would be called upon to help meet those future needs.21

In 1952 the Bureau had been set up by the GJC as a means of addressing the fractured and inadequate provisions for Jewish education then available to Rhode Island families. Until then the quality of instruction in Jewish studies and the presence of Jewish youth groups depended on the individual strength and commitment of congregational leaders. Frank Licht recalled Rabbi Schussheim’s influence and the value of Temple Beth Israel in his own school years, roughly 1927 to 1933:

On Yom Kippur [Rabbi Schussheim] would have young boys whom he respected or felt had potential come up and read a prayer either in English or in Hebrew during the day. You can’t imagine what a thrill that was for a young boy to do that. . . . And Temple Beth Israel in addition to the Rabbi was very important to me because that’s where the youth clubs were formed . . . I was president of the Masada, and that’s how I became a real ardent Zionist and nationalist. As a matter of fact the synagogue for me was a second home.22

By contrast, many Jewish schools in Rhode Island at that time and later had untrained young people teaching a haphazard curriculum. No wonder pupils’ attendance was uncertain and sporadic.

In 1956 Max Winograd, the first president of the Bureau, reporting on the first four years of BJE, was proud of what had been accomplished during his term of office, while aware of what remained to be done. He acknowledged the work of many people. His report mentions Dr. Engelman, of the American Association for Jewish Education, who, at the invitation of the GJC in 1951, examined the state of Jewish education in Rhode Island, recommended that a central agency be set up, and suggested plans for its structure. Winograd gives credit to Rabbi George Eade, who laid the foundation to implement those plans and praises Dr. Harry Elkin, executive director of the BJE beginning in 1953, for the devotion and dedication that was largely responsible for the improvement that had taken place in four years. The report concluded with gratitude to the GJC

... not only for the financial grants it makes to the Bureau, but even more so for the vision and responsibility it displayed in calling into existence a community agency for Jewish education. If our city, after many years of inactivity, is sensing the urgency of community responsibility for Jewish education, and if we are all beginning to know that without sound Jewish education no Jewish community has any significant future, it is in no small measure due to the alertness and devotion of our community leadership who have seen the need and taken steps to meet it.23
The June 1967 GJC annual meeting, originally planned as a dinner, became an emergency session on June 8 at the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel, Providence, with a huge overflow crowd, because of the Six-Day War in Israel.
FRANK LICHT AND THE 1967 CRISIS IN ISRAEL

On May 25, 1967, The Providence Journal reported the nomination of Frank Licht for the office of President of the General Jewish Committee. The report said:

Superior Court Judge Licht will head a slate of officers to be presented for approval to the 22nd annual meeting of the GJC at a dinner to be held on Thursday evening, June 8, at 6:30 o'clock at the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel.

Other officers nominated are Max Alperin, Bertram Bernhardt, Stanley Grossman, Arthur Levy and Alex Rumpler, vice-presidents; Sol Koffler, treasurer; Edwin S. Soforenko, assistant treasurer; Melvin L. Zurier, secretary.

Joseph Galkin is executive director of the GJC. Merrill Hassenfeld, who is completing a three year term, will be elected and installed as honorary president.24

On that same evening the Israel Bond Committee held a dinner at the Sheraton-Biltmore. Frank Licht, Robert Riesman, Max Alperin, and Merrill Hassenfeld were among those sitting at the head table. They knew that two days earlier Gamal Abdal Nasser, President of Egypt, had closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and to shipping bound to or from Israel. This would effectively strangle Israel, whose economic life depended on imports and exports. Israel had made clear that such an act would be considered a declaration of war. The situation was full of foreboding; the State of Israel's existence was at risk.25

Normally the Israel Bond dinner marked the end of a Spring campaign for funds, and GJC fund-raising began in the fall. But as they sat at table, discussing the situation, Licht and Riesman decided, "We must start our GJC campaign tomorrow!" By the time the dinner was over, a meeting of the GJC executive board had been set up for the following Monday at the home of Merrill Hassenfeld.26

From May 25, the night of the Bond dinner, to June 8, the date of the annual meeting, was just two weeks. During that fortnight Israel fought and won the Six-Day War; and in that brief period the GJC raised $2,600,000 in gifts and pledges from the Jews of Rhode Island.

Looking back at those days — which no Jew who lived through can forget — we may wonder at the miracle of Israel’s strength and marvel at the outpouring of local generosity.

We can also consider the effectiveness of the General Jewish Committee, even when lines of organization were invisible. Communication worked through channels and connections developed since the incorporation of the GJC. During those twenty-three years, leadership of the organization, while gradually changing, remained essentially continuous, an organic structure. People knew each other well. Joseph Galkin, the tireless, dedicated, tremendously knowledgeable executive director, knew whom to call and how to speak to them. At a day's notice he
arranged meetings all over Rhode Island, and in the ten days following the Israel Bond dinner Frank Licht and Robert Riesman barnstormed the state, addressing meetings in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport, as well as the annual dinner of the Jewish War Veterans of Rhode Island.26

In commemoration of the miracle of 1967 the GJC issued a special report with brief reminders of the events of those days. The names of all the contributors were printed on pages of gold.27 The story begins on June 1, when Iraq dispatched troops to Egypt. It continues through June 6 when Israel wiped out Egypt’s air force. It ends on June 9 when Cairo and Damascus admitted defeat.

The report includes a picture of Frank Licht speaking to a crowd gathered at the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel, with Robert Riesman seated at the table next to him. It tells the story of a community working together. “There were no teams and no captains. Workers by the thousands answered the call of Israel. Everybody gave what they could.” It concludes with a clipping from The Providence Journal, reporting on the annual dinner held June 8: “Merrill Hassenfeld looked out at 1000 Jews jammed into the stuffy hotel ballroom.”

When the emergency had been met, Frank Licht used the cohesive energies generated by it to address an issue close to his heart; that is, to transform the GJC of Greater Providence into a federation that represented every Jew in Rhode Island. It was a difficult task.

The Jewish communities of Newport, Pawtucket and Central Falls (which took the name The Blackstone Valley; and Woonsocket each treasured their independence. They did not want their autonomy abated, nor their local institutions swallowed up. The Blackstone Valley United Jewish Appeal, Inc., had been founded in 1947. In twenty years of independent operation their disbursements closely paralleled those of the GJC — with the exception of such local institutions as the Pawtucket and Central Falls Hebrew School and, in addition, to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.28 However, this exception was both central and symptomatic. Just as fifty years earlier, the North End and the South Side in Providence represented different and somewhat antagonistic social environments, so in 1967 the Jewish community of the Blackstone Valley, like those in Newport and Woonsocket, enjoyed a sense of uniqueness that was hard to relinquish.

In June 1968 Frank Licht accepted the Democratic nomination as candidate for Governor of the State of Rhode Island. It was not a widely sought candidacy; John Chafee, the Republican opponent, was thought to be invincible. Moreover, at the time the name Frank Licht was familiar to only seven percent of Rhode Island voters, although Licht had served as a State Senator from Providence from 1948 to 1956, before being named Associate Justice of the State Superior Court. Nevertheless, after an active campaign Licht was elected. He was the first Jewish
Blackstone Valley United Jewish Appeal, 1963 Year Book. L. to r., Leonard Holland, Julius Robinson, Unidentified — possibly the speaker, David Horvitz, Governor John Chafee, Harry A. Schwartz, Oscar Zetter, Mrs. Benjamin Sinel. Schwartz served as chairman of the Blackstone Valley group for the first ten years. Other leaders not in the photograph were Israel Resnick, Al Saltzman, Hyman Cokin, Benjamin Sinel, Max Berry, and Alexander Rumpler. Frances Pritzker and Charlotte Rosenberg each served as executive secretary.

governor of Rhode Island. Being elected, he resigned his presidency of the IFRI. His mother was not altogether pleased; she told him, “Frank, don’t hurry, don’t resign. The presidency of the Federation is as important as being governor of Rhode Island”.

Frank Licht’s terms as governor were distinguished by his respect for and acknowledgment of the diverse ethnic heritage of the state’s population. He participated in various ethnic and national holiday celebrations; he attended social and political club meetings of every variety; he spoke to anniversary celebrations; and in all these ways he symbolized his ceremonial role as governor, and recognized ethnic identities. Beyond that he explicitly expressed personal identification with the rich contribution of ethnic groups to local and national life,
alluding to his own father’s immigration to America, and asserting the importance of pride in one’s heritage. His public career altogether signaled the translation of ethnic heritage and aspirations into broad, widely accessible terms. His immersion in Zionism during his youth and his subsequent immersion in Jewish community affairs as an adult marked out the contours and the continuity of his identity as a Jew in modern America.\textsuperscript{30}

At the same time, within the Jewish community his influence served to reduce internal barriers. When they heard Frank Licht speak about the crisis in Israel, Jews in Newport, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket appreciated the importance of their common heritage.

1969 GJC annual dinner. Front row, l. to r., Marvin Holland; Professor Yigael Yadin, scholar and soldier, chief of operations during the Israel War of Independence; Robert Riesman; Frank Licht; U.S. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey; Max Alperin. Back row, l. to r., Jacob Licht, Max Leach, unidentified man.
THE NEW LOOK, 1968-1975

In 1968 when Frank Licht resigned as president of the GJC, Max Alperin (1909-1994) took over. Unlike Frank Licht and Joseph Ress, Max Alperin was not a native of Providence. In 1984 in an interview at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem he described his early years:

I was born in Russia in 1909. I had very limited education other than heder (school, Hebrew). When the war started in Europe my schooling was practically eliminated. . . . My father was here [in the United States] before us. He came here in 1913 ... [and] was caught during the war. When he left Europe there was a problem of us not all going together. We were going to follow. In 1914 the war came and immigration stopped, so we were in Europe until 1922 . . . I was twelve when we left home; by the time we got here I was thirteen already. We lived in Boston for almost a year . . . when we got to the United States my father was already sick and died very shortly after.

My involvement in Jewish life — my thinking about what to do many times — was due to an uncle of mine. When we were in Europe we had no income of any kind, but we had an uncle [my mother’s sister’s husband] who was fairly well off. This uncle undertook to support all of us. They had no children of their own. I was young, but I could understand in those days what it meant for somebody to give what he had to somebody who needed it. It wasn’t only our family but it was others in the community that he helped along. So I really had a chance to see what you can do when you had the means to do it, and how you can be supportive of those in need. So it was because of this uncle that I later became involved in Jewish life.31

When Max Alperin assumed the presidency of the GJC in 1968, its name and structure remained more or less as Archibald Silverman, Alter Boyman, Alvin Sopkin and Joseph Ress had set it up in 1945, with Joseph Galkin as executive director. The organization’s headquarters, described by Selig Greenberg in 1953 as “a busy unpretentious suite of offices on the second floor of the Strand Building on Washington Street,”32 was even busier and less pretentious fifteen years later. Meeting in these offices, the GJC president and board of directors set broad policy; the president appointed committees to deal with special concerns; the president with his close associates devised strategies for collecting funds; an allocations committee, meeting in a smoke-filled room, decided on the distribution of funds; the executive director with a small staff converted policies, strategies, and distribution into effective action. The statewide coordination that Frank Licht had set in motion in 1967 had not been fully achieved.

The unification of all Rhode Island’s Jewish communities took months of careful negotiation. Max Alperin was an honorary president of the Blackstone Valley United Jewish Appeal. His influence as president of the GJC made a noticeable
difference; so did the presence on the Board of the GJC of other major supporters from outlying communities. Negotiations also involved compromises which to this day provide independent funding from the JFRI to Hebrew schools and one or two other institutions in Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Newport. 33

Ultimately, in 1969 the annual report of the GJC announced that the General Jewish Committee of Rhode Island linked together Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Providence, and Newport, in a single organization. Each community would be represented on the General Jewish Committee Board of Directors with its own vice-president and local representatives.

Besides this unification, Max Alperin effected major changes in the GJC. By 1974, when he retired, the GJC had been renamed the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island; the organization had moved its offices from a decaying building in downtown Providence to a brand-new building on the East Side; and many elements of its internal structure had been transformed to those of the institution we find today.

The change of name was easy; everyone agreed that "Jewish Federation of Rhode Island" correctly reflected the reorganization that came with expansion of geographical scope. The name was also more consistent with usage in other communities.

The change of place was more controversial. In the 1940s when Archibald Silverman gave the GJC office space in his Strand building on Washington Street just opposite Shepard's department store, downtown Providence was the hub of Rhode Island activity — central, easily accessible, the place to be. The Strand theater was flourishing; City Hall was a block away; everyone went downtown to shop at the major department stores. In the 1960s downtown was becoming a place that people avoided in the evening; women were afraid to come to meetings there. 34 Plans for urban renewal were sand castles against a tide sweeping people into the suburbs to live and into malls to shop.

The GJC needed a new center of operations. But where should it be located? One possibility was the new building of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, then being planned. Max Alperin said later:

As a matter of fact ... when the Center was being planned — and I was quite involved with Center planning too — we had thought of making part of the Center an office for the Federation. But there was a lot of pros and cons, and the administrators of both organizations weren't very cooperative, and we dropped it ... and we bought land from the city's development department near the Roger Williams Shrine on North Main Street ... [But then] the city, or the government, decided they wanted the whole area ... and they asked us to give up the land ... which we did.
GENERAL JEWISH COMMITTEE
OF RHODE ISLAND
A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION
An historic development has taken place for the Jewish People of Rhode Island. The Jewish community of Newport, Woonsocket, and Pawtucket have joined with the greater Providence area to establish the General Jewish Committee of Rhode Island. For the first time, the entire Rhode Island Jewish community will have a single collective voice capable of speaking for the Jewish people of the state. Each community is represented on the General Jewish Committee Board of Directors with its own vice president and local representatives.

The combined effort of the Rhode Island Jewish community, through the coordination and direction of the General Jewish Committee will result in greater benefits to our Jewish people everywhere, and this statewide merger comes at a time of emergency in Israel when collective solidarity is essential.

YOUR GJC DOLLARS HELP SUSTAIN LIFE AND HOPE FOR JEWS ALL OVER THE WORLD!

... Then the thought came to us about going back to trying to join up with the Center. And, working with Henry Markoff, we started developing plans. ... But then there was opposition ... on two grounds. First there were some people who didn't want to be with the Center. Secondly they felt it was too costly for the Federation to have its own building.

I then made a proposition to the board that I will undertake to raise $250,000, some of it our own money, and some of it I'll raise from outside people, ... and the balance should come from the Federation treasury. And that was accepted by the board.

... There were three people who objected to it. And because of their objection I never went to ask them for any money.35

In the end the building, an addition to the Center in 1975, but with its own entrance at 130 Sessions Street, cost $400,000. Max Alperin raised more than he had anticipated; the Federation only put in $175,000, and everybody has been happy with the building.35 Along with relocating the offices, Max Alperin restructured the financial situation of the JFRI. He personally led in establishing an endowment fund. Inspired by his example, people were encouraged, apart from donations to the campaigns, to give money to the JFRI, of which the principal would be held for investment, while the interest could be used for specific purposes. Melvin Zurier was appointed to chair a committee to reform the allocations process, so that distribution worked through subcommittees with clear guidelines, rather than in the previous mode of informal horse trading.37

At the same time Max Alperin expanded the GJC field of operations. The GJC had been incorporated in 1945 chiefly for purposes of collecting and distributing money. While this function remained primary, as early as 1952 the GJC moved towards community planning by establishing the Bureau of Jewish Education; it confirmed this role in 1963 when it sponsored Sidney Goldstein's population survey; and in 1969, under Max Alperin's leadership, the GJC extended its scope further by establishing a Jewish Community Relations Council.

Lawrence Y. Goldberg, first chairman of the Community Relations Council, had headed the Planning Committee which investigated how other community organizations develop the best possible relations between the Jewish community and the community at large. The Planning Committee had invited Dr. Jerry Hochbaum of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council to meet with them and give them the benefit of his knowledge and experience. They had also formed three subcommittees: Rabbi Jerome Gurland led the committee on objectives and purposes; Charles Swartz chaired the committee on representation; Robert Riesman led a committee on how the council would function; and on the advice of these committees Alan Flink was asked to draw up by-laws that were approved by the Board of the GJC on May 1, 1969. The Community Relations Council was established as a standing committee of the GJC. It would serve to
coordinate the efforts of the various Jewish organizations in the community. It would also, like many other community councils across the country, be affiliated with the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.\footnote{38}

THE FEDERATION AS A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

In the entrance hall of 130 Sessions Street there are two tablets. The one on your right as you enter, reads:

THE ALPERIN BUILDING

In behalf of the Jewish Community, the Officers and Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island dedicate this building in honor of Max and Ruth Alperin in recognition of their leadership, philanthropy, and total involvement in every cause affecting the Jewish people.

The tablet on your left says:

In honor of Alexander Rumpler the Officers and Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, in appreciation for his zeal and dedication in supervising the construction of this building and in recognition of his generosity in giving of his time, talent and means to every area of Jewish concern.

Each tablet bears the date June 1, 1975, and the Hebrew date, 22 Sivan, 5735. Each testifies to personal energies that brought the building into being.

Since the tablets were set, five presidents of JFRI and several executive directors, (see appendices), have contributed, each in a personal and characteristic way, to the growth and development of the institution. The location of the organization remains the same; its underlying structure has not changed much, but over the course of twenty years the JFRI has reflected and directed in varying ways the concerns of the community it serves.

Let us begin by looking at the bottom line. The JFRI is, after all, an organization for collecting and distributing money annually.

Each year a campaign manager works with the president, the executive director, and a committee to design a strategy for eliciting voluntary contributions from members of the Jewish community. For the past forty years there has also been a separate Women’s Division with its own campaign chair. In each division subcommittees are appointed, each with a leader, to solicit pledges from contributors who are categorized according to the amounts they can be expected to give. For example, in the year 1995-96 the Women’s Division has five categories: Lion of Judah ($3,500+), Zahava ($1,500-$3,499), Kadima ($750-$1,499), Tikva ($200-$749), Phonathon ($1-$199), and also a special event, Home Sweet Home, at which members of the Board of Directors make their pledges. It may be noted that the Women’s Division and Business and Professional Women together now account for almost one quarter of JFRI Campaign collections.

The amounts collected in the first twenty-five GJC campaigns ranged from $367,000 in 1945 (the first year of GJC) to an exceptional $2,500,000 in 1967 (at
the time of the Six-Day War in Israel). Starting with 1970, the amounts collected each year increase, more or less steadily, apart from a surge of response in 1973 and 1974. Contributions reach a peak of $4,718,000 in 1991, after which the totals diminish slightly. As can be seen in the graphs, the 50-year increase in giving has kept pace with inflation and soared above the Consumer Price Index in the peak years — 1948, Israel Independence; 1967 — the Six Day War; and 1973-1974, the Yom Kippur War.
Each year an allocations committee decides on the distribution of funds. There are basic expenses for executive staff and for the maintenance of the building; there are some contractual obligations still in force from the articles of confederation with Woonsocket, Pawtucket, and Newport; there is a long-standing commitment to the Bureau of Jewish Education; there is concern with Israel; there are connections with national organizations; there are various local organizations that need support. Decisions are difficult, and always unsatisfactory to some people. In 1952 the GJC Annual Report devoted a page to defending the decisions of the Allocations Committee. The text, decorated by a drawing of a chairman with ten stick-figure men seated at a table, says:

Appointed and headed by your president, the Allocations Committee of the General Jewish Committee, representing diverse views in the community, is a hard-working year-round group. At meeting after meeting, hour after hour, sometimes well past midnight, these committee members listen to statements and explanations from representatives of the various beneficiary agencies, and study detailed financial statements and other reports in their workbook, prepared by the staff, consisting of 205 pages. They then weigh, consider, debate, and sometimes almost quarrel, in a serious, completely conscientious and utterly honest attempt to make the money which you give do the best possible job among those agencies and groups who are your beneficiaries.

By basic determination of the campaign organization and Board of Directors, 75% of the funds go directly to the United Jewish Appeal, for United Israel Appeal, Joint Distribution Committee, and United Service for New Americans. The other 25% is divided among 52 agencies — local, national and overseas. All of them insist that they need much more money, and in most cases, their requests are justified. But your Allocations Committee only has a limited amount, and must determine where to cut more or less and where it is impossible to cut at all.

Contributors should know that their money is paid out only after the most careful scrutiny of the applicants.

We referred earlier to changes in the procedures of the Allocations Committee instituted during Max Alperin’s tenure as President. The 1970 Annual Report of the JFRI contains an account of these changes as well as a photograph of the committee. It says:

Recently a detailed study and review of the procedures of our Allocations Committee was undertaken by a group under the chairmanship of Melvin L. Zurier. Among the recommendations was the establishment of two major subcommittees, one for local agencies and the other for national and overseas agencies. Robert A. Riesman was appointed chairman for the subcommittee on local agencies, and Melvin L. Zurier was appointed chairman for the subcommittee on national and overseas
JFRI as a Financial Institution

agencies. Beneficiary agencies were given an opportunity to be present for hearings before the subcommittees. It is hoped that as the result of the subcommittee structure, an opportunity will be made available for more people to learn about the various agencies to which funds are granted, and for more of an in-depth study of the work of each of these agencies to be made. The full allocations committee, after many hours of discussion, and sometimes debate, present their recommendations to the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island Board of Directors for final approval of the distribution of funds.

Contributors should know that the money they contribute is paid out only after the most careful consideration of all requests. 40

Allocations, with whatever division of responsibility, remain problematic. The National Association of Jewish Federations runs an annual Large City Budgeting Conference which offers chairs and other delegates from allocation committees all over the country a chance to hear presentations from major fund seeking institutions. A recent conversation with one of the younger members of the 1994 Allocations Committee suggests that after twenty-five years the JFRI allocations committee is again contemplating some reform of its procedures. He reports a tendency for the committees to take the previous year's allocations and tinker with them very slightly, whereas he and his contemporaries feel a need for some more thorough re-thinking of priorities. In fact, as reported in the Voice of June, 1995, "for the first time in its 50-year history, the board of directors [of the JFRI] has voted to retain more funds here to address domestic Jewish needs than we will send abroad." Forty-nine percent of the campaign funds will be sent for overseas use and fifty-one percent will remain in Rhode Island. 41

Apart from annual campaigns, Federation has for the past decade mounted a series of special campaigns for funds directed at specific needs. These have been very successful. In the years 1985-1988, Project Renewal raised more than two million dollars for rebuilding the Stern Street neighborhood in Israel; between 1990 and 1991, Exodus I raised $3,652,763 to help Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union, to leave and resettle; between 1992 and 1995, Exodus II raised $1,615,766 for Jews from what was then the Former Soviet Union to establish new lives in this country.

Separate from all campaign collections, the JFRI has, in the course of twenty-five years, accumulated endowment funds valued at about $22,000,000. These funds are currently growing at a more rapid rate than campaign collections, through careful investment, and as a number of people, some of whom are generous donors to campaigns, give or bequeath capital to the JFRI.

JFRI Executive Director Steven A. Rakitt notes several significant benefits to the donors who give capital to designated funds: (1) charitable deductions can be
taken when needed and distribution of the assets may be made when desired; (2) a one-time gift results in continuing support because the fund is invested and accrues tax-free income for distribution; (3) the designated use of the fund is assured; (4) donor's names are memorialized in perpetuity on an endowment plaque.\textsuperscript{42}

In the year 1994-95, interest and dividends produced by this capital made possible distribution of over $600,000. A detailed report published in \textit{The Jewish Voice of Rhode Island} for March 1995 named individual restricted endowment funds, and described their diverse intentions. They included, among many others:

The Leonard I. Salmanson Fund, a bequest to provide eligible students with financial aid for study and travel in Israel — by the end of 1994, with the cooperation of the Bureau of Jewish Education, 638 students had benefited from this fund;

The Norman M. and Rosalie B. Fain Fund, income designated for the enhancement of the URI Hillel program and for repairs or capital improvements to their building;

Deanna and Fanny Berger Memorial Fund, which designates income each year to American Red Cross Magen David for Israel, Inc., and for the absorption of immigrants to Israel;

The Norman D. and Flo Tilles Fund in Loving Memory of their Parents, a fund to encourage community relations leadership development at JFRI through an annual award for attendance at the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council Plenum;

The Gladys C. and Sherwin J. Kapstein Family Fund, that establishes a special scholarship in honor of Father Edward Flannery, to be awarded to a student at Providence College who has been active in promoting interfaith relations.\textsuperscript{43}

These all are special purposes that campaign collections might not cover.

Looking ahead, some leaders of Federations both here in Rhode Island and across the country foresee a day when the balance between campaign and endowment will shift; income from endowment funds will cover not only these special purposes, but also the ordinary yearly outlays for upkeep of property, administration, and relatively fixed commitments, while campaign funds will be used for special topical needs.\textsuperscript{44}
WOMEN SEEN AND INVISIBLE IN THE GJC AND JFRI

When Robert Riesman, who has worked actively with Federation for many years (including four years as president), read an early, incomplete, draft of this history he said: “This is a sexist document. You don’t mention any women. You are going to be in big trouble! The women will hate it.”

I allowed that his comment about my writing was accurate. “Still,” I answered, “my impression is that for many years the GJC and the JFRI were in fact sexist institutions where men took all the major parts.” He laughed and did not deny the point. 45

Although this more finished version of GJC/JFRI history has so far mentioned a few women here and there, it has not yet dealt properly with women’s importance to the organization. This is partly because many significant contributions that women made to the achievements of JFRI remain hidden. Ruth Alperin is acknowledged with Max on the tablet in the Federation building entrance, but most wives of Federation leaders were virtually invisible partners. They gave behind-the-scenes support which made the husband’s public activities possible; and this support was generally taken for granted, and only privately acknowledged. 46

At present, the division of responsibility between men and women is becoming more balanced. Harris and Myrna Rosen are both recognized leaders of Federation; Karen Dannin was first woman chair of the Community Relations Council in 1992. In the next generation, many couples share public and private responsibilities and are deeply involved in Federation events at all levels. It is correspondingly difficult, but important, to remember that contributions which went unmentioned may nonetheless be significant.

Women’s public presence as a group in the GJC began in 1945 when a few women met at the home of Dorothy Isenberg and decided to collect donations from the women of the Jewish community that were separate from their husbands’ gifts to the GJC. 47

Some weeks later, The Evening Bulletin of December 6, 1945, carried a picture of six women, Mrs. Bernard Zeman, Mrs. Charles Markoff, Mrs. Nathan Samors, Mrs. Philip Dorenbaum, Mrs. Alvin Sopkin, and Mrs. Jay Isenberg, with the story that they were preparing for a luncheon meeting at the Narragansett Hotel. At that luncheon four hundred women wore the slogan “We Give in Our Own Right ... We Serve In Our Own Right.”

In 1948, under the direction of Selma Pilavin, the women’s division instituted the “M” day collections that Joan Ress Reeves remembers being part of. “Mothers Mobilized for Mercy Day” was an original conception, and an undertaking that involved careful organization and weeks of work. On the day itself, four hundred volunteers, carried by one hundred automobiles, covered Providence, which had
been mapped out into zones, sections, and streets. After a briefing at the Narragansett Hotel, each volunteer received a kit of cards and the number of the automobile to which she was assigned. They started on their rounds and were back within two or three hours with heart warming stories, and generous donations.48

In the following years, Natalie Percelay, Bea Fain, Pearl Kaplan, Roz Elias, and Ann Meyers all served to strengthen the role of women in the GJC. Helene Bernhardt, the first president of the Women’s Division, took office in 1957.

Since the first meeting of what became the Women’s Division, now fifty years ago, women’s activities in American society generally, and in Jewish life particularly, have come out from the background and onto center stage. The Women’s Division of JFRI has changed in corresponding ways. It has a wider range of activities; it attracts more active members; it collects more money.

The Women’s Division is especially distinguished in that three of its leaders, Selma Pilavin Robinson, Sylvia Hassenfeld, and Roberta Holland went on to high...
office in national Jewish organizations. Selma Pilavin Robinson, leader of the women’s division here in 1948 and 1949, served in 1953 as chair of the national Women’s Division of UJA; Sylvia Hassenfeld, president of the GJC women’s division in 1964 and 1965, the first woman to be a member of the UJA’s national cabinet, became the first woman to be president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Roberta Holland, president of JFRI women’s division in 1981 and 1982, has been National Campaign chair and National Women’s Division president. Selma Pilavin Robinson, Sylvia Hassenfeld, and Roberta Holland are particularly gifted women; their achievements are also harbingers of more widespread changes.49 It should be noted that until 1995, when Norman Tilles was elected president of HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), no Rhode Island man had achieved the same level of national office of these three women.

During the 1970s many Jewish women left the confines of their houses, and embarked on professional and business careers. Their occupations precluded the daytime meetings characteristic of the Women’s Division, while their earnings

Women’s Division held a novel fund-raising campaign meeting during the election season in 1960 at the Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Mass. Women in the photograph were, l. to r., Reika Rapaporte, Selma Pilavin, Roz Winograd, Martha Fowler, Mildred Samors, Sara Goldberg, Sarah Robinson (Brier), Beatrice Fain, Martha Blackman, Ann Ress, Leah Michaelson, Ms. Jacobs, Rebecca Siegel.
made independent giving a possibility. The Career Women’s Affiliate was established as branch of Federation in 1979. Ten years later, the name was changed to the Business and Professional Women’s Affiliate (B & P).

In the JFRI hallway near the Women’s Division Conference Room, a statement from Selma Stanzler, written in 1992, looks at developments in the relationship between women and Federation. Mrs. Stanzler, then retiring chair of the B & P, quotes a 1974 handbook for Federation campaign workers that suggests that women make up their contributions to JFRI with money saved on days when the cleaning woman fails to turn up. The primary mission of the B & P Women’s Affiliate is to raise funds to meet local and international Jewish social, educational, and humanitarian needs. B & P offers dynamic educational and networking programs on contemporary topics, including women’s issues, Jewish continuity concerns, and life-cycle events. The B & P has grown from twenty members to more than six hundred, and their annual contribution to JFRI has increased from three thousand dollars, to more than one hundred thousand.50

The Women’s Division, separately, has a full program of education, and a well worked out system of solicitation, (discussed in “The Federation as a Financial Institution”). It operates in some sense, like other JFRI subdivisions, for leadership development for Federation.

In the general organization of JFRI, several women now serve as vice-presidents, and a fair number on the Board of Directors. Roberta Holland chaired the general JFRI campaign in 1985-1986, and Myrna Rosen, president of the Women’s Division in 1989 and 1990, has headed the campaign in 1994 and 1995. She and Dee Dee Witman, president of the Women’s Division, 1995-1996, agree that sometime in the relatively foreseeable future, almost certainly within the next ten years, a woman will be president of JFRI. They also agree that however well integrated women are into JFRI as a whole, the Women’s Division should continue as an independent unit, addressing concerns to which women are especially sensitive and allowing space for particular talents that might not otherwise have room for expression.51
THE FEDERATION AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Before the State of Israel existed, or the GJC was formed, Jews in Providence remembered the land of Israel, then called Palestine, as they dropped spare coins into little blue Jewish National Fund boxes. These boxes, like other charity-collection boxes (familiarly called pushkes, Yiddish), were fixtures in many homes. Sometimes the JNF boxes represented political hopes—Theodore Herzl’s prophecies of a Jewish Homeland resonated in many hearts; sometimes they connected with religious aspirations—the restoration of Zion is a recurrent theme in Jewish prayers. But thoughts of an independent Jewish State seemed wildly visionary, and the boxes were also present in irreligious households. Basically the blue boxes were an expression of Jewish identity, a connection to earlier and later generations of Jews.

A few people in Providence connected actively with the development of Jewish settlements in Palestine. Alter Boyman, for instance, was a dedicated member of the Labor Zionist organization, Poale Zion (workers of Zion, Hebrew). Ida Silverman, the wife of Archibald Silverman, was an early Zionist and an impassioned, inspiring speaker. Her devotion and eloquence took her around the country on speaking tours and put her on the national board of the Zionist Organization of America. Julius Robinson was one of a group who gathered support for the Keren HaYesod (Foundation Fund, Hebrew) which bought land in Palestine, and for the Haganah (Defense, Hebrew, clandestine Jewish self-defense organization in Palestine), when Palestine was still under the British Mandate. Max Alperin credits Robinson with being responsible for his (Alperin’s) involvement in Rhode Island Jewish community life (apart from the synagogue). In the 1930s and ’40s, the Alperins and the Robinsons lived in the same two-family house in Pawtucket. One night Robinson, who was widely active in Jewish community affairs, pulled Alperin to a meeting at the home of Alexander Rumpler. As Alperin tells it: “I asked him what the meeting was all about, and he said you’ll find out later. And my first contribution that night at Alexander Rumpler’s house was three dollars.”

That three dollars heralded a connection that in the course of the next forty-five years produced many structures in Israel and in Rhode Island.

In its beginning, GJC campaign fund-raising aimed almost exclusively at developments abroad. During GJC’s first ten years, while the plight of Jews in Europe after World War II required emergency measures, six million dollars of the eight million collected went directly to the UJA; and through the UJA most of these funds went to Israel. In those days the GJC appeared to exist chiefly as a means of organizing support for Israel, despite some token attention to local institutions. In 1949, for instance, when the campaign collection totaled $893,600, more than two thirds went to the United Jewish Appeal (the United Palestine Appeal, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the United Service for New Americans), and another fifty thousand was distributed to Israel oriented organizations such as the Hadassah.
Early 20th century Pushkes.

Youth Aliyah, and the National Committee for the Histadrut.  

In the fifty-year record of campaign totals we can clearly read the continuing crucial significance of the Israel connection. Landmark heights of contribution mark years when Israel’s emergencies galvanized Jewish giving in Rhode Island: 1948, the year of fighting for Israel’s independence; 1967, the time of the Six-Day War; and 1973, the year of the Yom Kippur War.

In the years that the State of Israel was struggling to be born, the GJC roused the Jewish community of Rhode Island to respond. Joan Ress Reeves, then a girl in her teens, remembers going from door to door on “M” day, a special day of solicitation organized by the women of the community, asking for a contribution from each housewife, and being warmly received in almost every case. The grand total collected in the 1948 GJC campaign passed the million dollar mark, which was not passed again until 1967.

The tale of response to the 1967 crisis has already been told, in connection with the leadership of Frank Licht. Again, the $2,500,000 total raised that year was not equalled until the crisis of 1973.
The JFRI campaign after the Yom Kippur War of 1973 included an event at which Yitzhak Rabin spoke. Rabin, then Israel’s ambassador to the United States, drew an overflow crowd. His presence and his speech evoked contributions that surpassed expectations. The campaign total of $3,500,000 was more than a fifty percent increase over previous years. Though equalled in the following year, it was not equalled again or surpassed until 1984.

Quite apart from emergencies, support for the development of Israel remained the central focus of GJC/JFRI allocations. Annually the United Jewish Appeal received as much as three-quarters of the year’s collected funds. Besides the UJA there were smaller grants. In 1968 for example, awards included $1,300 to the American Israel Cultural Foundation, a joint fund-raising institution that provided financial support to many educational, cultural, technical, and welfare agencies in Israel, thereby eliminating ninety separate appeals by mail or personal solicitation, and $2,500 to the Child Rescue Fund of Pioneer Women’s Organization, which had been designated by the Jewish Agency to help raise money to care for the thousands of refugee children in Israel.

After fifty years, campaign collections continue to go predominantly to Israel. In the four million dollar budget for 1995-1996, six hundred thousand is reserved for administrative costs; and of the $3,466,237 available for allocation the United Jewish Appeal receives $1,991,442. However JFRI’s effective efforts to connect Rhode Island Jews with Israel go beyond annual allocations.

Over the years, JFRI has sponsored and organized missions that bring community leaders and others to Israel, and encourage personal involvement there. In December of 1973, in the wake of the Yom Kippur War the Community Voice announced: “In an expression of solidarity with the people of Israel, several community-wide trips are being planned for the coming months. The first of these, primarily a touring trip, will leave on January 13 under the leadership of Rabbi Jacob Handler.”

A JFRI mission in 1979 resulted in the “adoption” of Stern Street, an area of Jerusalem where relatively new high rise buildings (built in 1969) housed Afro-Asian Sephardim ill-equipped to deal with an Israeli society constructed in the European/Ashkenazic mode.

Stern Street was one of 160 neighborhoods for which in 1977 Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin designed Project Renewal, a social assistance program intended to attract large amounts of money from Jews in the Diaspora. However, as it turned out, Jewish leaders outside Israel did not want to send money without some supervision of the program; and eventually the program evolved as a pairing of Diaspora donors with needy neighborhoods in Israel. In 1979, under the leadership of Melvin G. Alperin, the JFRI entered Project Renewal paired with
Stern Street in Jerusalem.

On January 3, 1988 *The Providence Sunday Journal* ran a feature story in the magazine section describing changes in Stern Street brought about by Project Renewal. The writer, Judith Rakowsky, interviewed a young man, Shlomo Benisti, who with four other Israelis had spent a month in the United States, reciprocating a visit by a group of Rhode Island teenagers to Israel.

In the past, Shlomo said, he didn’t like to say he lived on Stern Street; he saw in people’s faces that they considered the neighborhood a home to drunks, thieves, and squalor. Now, thanks to Project Renewal, the face of Stern Street has changed and he is happy to say that he lives there.

The community center, built largely by the Hassenfeld family, offered space for young mothers to learn child care, for tutors to help students with their homework, and for social workers to counsel families. It also provided courts where children could play basketball and soccer instead of playing in the street.

Project Renewal also widened the options available to young people who lived in the area. It encouraged rising levels of expectation, and with rising hopes came increased effort. Shlomo’s brother Elie, for instance, had chaperoned the visit to the United States, and had received financial aid through the JFRI for studies at the university.59

From the Rhode Islander’s point of view, the Stern Street project offered a chance to make a visible difference. It was, as the stock prospectus said, “[a]n opportunity to share in the lives and futures of Stern Street’s 3,500 adults and 1,000 children.” One of the JFRI visitors when she first visited Stern Street was prepared to see “just another building built by the Hassenfelds,” but she found a neighborhood in transition from slum to civic order. Since then she has returned several times. On a recent visit she met, on Stern Street, a young American couple who had made *aliyah* (ascent, Hebrew; making *aliyah* means immigration to Israel) and were living there; it seemed to them a good place to live and bring up their two small children.60

In recent years, as Israel’s economy has improved, JFRI focus of concern in relation to Israel has shifted from “What should we do for them?” to a more balanced relationship. Of course, Israel still needs financial support and tourist dollars from the Diaspora for social services. But Israel Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in Providence to speak at Brown University and receive an honorary degree May 28, 1995, when asked by a member of the local community: “What can American Jews do for Israel today?” answered: “Please, keep your children Jewish.”
Visits to Israel remain among the most effective means of strengthening Jewish identity. In February 1995, *The Jewish Voice of RI* published two reports by college students who had spent part of their winter break in Israel on a trip substantially subsidized by the Federation. Both were enthusiastic; both felt they and the others in the group had come back changed. In Vanessa Zimmerman's words: "For some the change was finding something barely recognizable, for others it reinforced something already in existence. For everyone, the change embraced a heightened awareness of and sense of connection to our Jewishness."

Jewish Federation mission to Israel, 1972. Men from Rhode Island were joined by hundreds of others from Federations all over the U.S. In this photograph taken at a kibbutz, Merrill L. Hassenfeld of Providence is standing in the center wearing a white coat.
THE FEDERATION AND OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES

The allocations for the fiscal year 1995-96, published as part of the Annual Report of the JFRI in a supplement to *The Jewish Voice of Rhode Island* of June, 1995, list five major local beneficiaries:

- the Bureau of Jewish Education receives $515,126;
- the Jewish Community Center receives $236,195;
- Services to the Elderly receives $184,650;
- Jewish Eldercare of Rhode Island receives $121,850;
- Jewish Family Service receives $121,330.

Each of these institutions is administratively autonomous, in greater or lesser degree. Each receives some funding from other sources. Each has its own history of relations to Federation that can be considered separately.

THE BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION

In discussing the 1964 population survey, we referred to the JFRI's responsibility as an agent of the community in the matter of Jewish education and described some of the origins and early years of the BJE. Since 1964 the condition of Jewish education in Rhode Island, and correspondingly the scope of BJE activities, have changed radically. The Bureau now employs eight staff members. Together they provide a structure that supports all aspects of Jewish education in Rhode Island.

An important development on the Jewish educational scene is the greater presence of day schools in the community. The Providence Hebrew Day School continues to serve families who choose an Orthodox education for their children. The Alperin-Schecter Day School is Conservative; it started in 1979 with a kindergarten and added the following grade each year to take care of its pupils until they completed the eighth grade. Students of the first class have now graduated from college; and the Alperin-Schecter Day School has a full lower school program. There is talk at Temple Beth-El of instituting a Reform day school there. Day schools do not depend on BJE for funding, but teachers, administrators, and even students make regular use of BJE resources.

Day schools, however important, reach relatively few children. On the larger scene, BJE has improved instruction at Sunday Schools and in weekday after-school programs through education for teachers and administrators and through a most important function, evaluation and accreditation of schools. The Report of the Forty-second Annual Meeting of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island, held on May 24, 1994, includes a statement by Alice Goldstein, then president of the BJE, in which she says,

We have increasingly recognized the breadth of our constituency, from pre-school to the elderly, from the most committed and identified Jews to those barely touching the margins. Many of our programs have evolved
to reach out to such diversity; others have targeted specific groups especially in need of service. The family education inserts in the Jewish Voice and the Adult Education directory reached a maximum audience of Rhode Island Jewry. The Gesher program for unaffiliated teens, our expanded service to special needs children, new programs for the elderly, and training seminars for teachers and principals had more specific targets.63

In that same report, Rabbi Arnold D. Samlan, executive director, lists new projects undertaken in the past year; they included a Principals’ Retreat that provided a full day of enrichment for the area’s educational directors and the establishment of an audio-visual collection to support Facing History & Ourselves, a Holocaust and intergroup relations education curriculum for public and private schools.

The Bureau of Jewish Education was, as we have noticed earlier, an organization created by Federation; it still receives eighty percent of its funds from JFRI, which represents, in Rabbi Samlan’s words, “the greatest single source of financial support for Jewish education in our community.” The Bureau has, however, developed some endowment funds and a Friends of the BJE campaign. Looking to the future, BJE leadership is working toward more financial independence.64

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND

If the Bureau of Jewish Education can reasonably be thought of as the child of Federation, the Jewish Community Center stands more in the relationship of an older sister, with some of the tensions and sibling rivalry that that relationship can involve.

To begin with, the existence of the Jewish Community Center, chartered in 1925, predates that of the General Jewish Committee by twenty years. The Center itself grew out of earlier efforts by the community to provide social and educational milieu outside of a synagogue setting.65 In its beginnings the JCC was the most widely accepted secular Jewish institution in Providence. The JCC building on Benefit Street in Providence was a second home to many young Jews in the area; it was a place for socialization and self-expression within a Jewish (that is, a familiar and welcoming) context.66 When the General Jewish Committee became the primary source of Jewish community funding, board members of the Jewish Community Center felt shut out. The GJC seemed to them a closed circle of rich, powerful men who were more concerned with Jews far away than with those nearby, and who distributed community funds arbitrarily, after private deliberations.67 From the GJC point of view, the Jewish Community Center was a communal facility, only nominally Jewish, that was appropriately supported by the United Way. (See below.)
In the 1950s, when urban change made the Benefit Street area less desirable for a community center, the JCC moved to an abandoned police station on Sessions Street, in the middle of the East Side residential area, having arranged with the City of Providence to buy it for one dollar. This move, and some subsequent decisions, met with opposition from the GJC; nonetheless the leaders of the JCC proceeded with their plans. GJC's 1968 allocations awarded $38,350 to the Jewish Community Center with a somewhat defensive explanation:

With the expansion of the program of our own Jewish Community Center on Sessions Street, the United Fund has not found it possible to finance this program completely. Therefore, for several years the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center have looked to the GJC for supplementary financing in order to meet their budget of this important group service. This new building on Elm Grove Avenue and Sessions street is now under construction. 69

We have described some of the factors that led to Federation moving its offices next to, but separate from, the JCC building. There is a story that, as final decisions about financial responsibility for services of the JCC building and the adjoining Federation building were being negotiated with lawyers on both sides, arguments went on into the night. Finally, Max Alperin, who was then president of JFRI and had contributed generously to the capital campaigns for both buildings, gave a parable:

Once in a small town, a group of men jointly owned a building that they rented out to a woman who ran a brothel. When town property taxes went up, they wanted to raise the rent; so they asked the madam of the brothel to meet with them, and they presented their case.

"Well," said she, "if you raise my rent you realize I will have to raise my girls’ rates.”

The two sides argued back and forth, until one of the men said: "What are we arguing about? It’s all our own money anyway.”

The lawyers laughed; the tension was broken. The questions at issue were amicably resolved. 70

For the past twenty years the Federation and the Community Center have been friendly neighbors, cooperating on many projects. In the JCC budget for 1994 the JFRI accounted for thirteen percent of JCC income. 71 The Federation contribution helps subsidize a wide range of services for all ages. Programs include scholarships to nursery school and day care for young children and many services for the elderly, including kosher lunches five days a week, Meals on Wheels, health screening, social and educational events, and transportation to and from the Center.
SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY AND JEWISH ELDERCARE OF RHODE ISLAND (JERI)

In his 1964 survey of the Jewish community of Providence, Professor Goldstein predicted that the following decades would see an increasing proportion of elderly people in the Jewish community. He was right. He suggested that social services for the elderly would be an increasing concern; and indeed in the JFRI allocations for 1995-1996 Services for the Elderly and JERI taken together, receive $306,980, and, as noted earlier, a significant part of Federation funding for the JCC and JFS is for elderly services.

Goldstein could not have predicted in 1964 that during the following thirty years the Jewish Home for the Aged would first expand and then vanish. But it happened.

The situations behind those occurrences are complex. They include demographic changes (more elderly people living longer; more dispersion of families, and a corresponding absence of personal help), and changes in federal funding and tax laws. Medicaid, which pays for long-term nursing care, only becomes available when the patient has less than $4,000 of assets; this presents a considerable temptation to patients and families to dispose of whatever financial assets the patient has, and to let third-party caretakers fight it out with the government. At the same time Medicaid does not, in fact, cover the costs of quality long-term care as currently construed. One of the troubles that afflicted the Jewish Home for the Aged in later years was the predominance of Medicaid patients.

The Jewish Home for the Aged, like the JCC and JFS, was an autonomous institution. It had its own endowment, and its own self-selecting board of directors. For many years it received moderate amounts of support from JFRI; in the late 1980s, and especially after 1990, the amount of JFRI support needed for the functioning of the Home began to escalate rapidly. The factors mentioned above, together with other elements in a situation that was and is variously perceived, decided the fate of the Jewish Home for the Aged.

In June, 1993, it fell to Stanley Aronson, M.D., newly elected chairman of the board of the Home, to announce that the Home would close its doors on the following September 15, and that all patients would be relocated. The actual closure was postponed to October 31, 1993, because of difficulty in relocating some patients.

The announced closing of the Home came as a terrible shock to the Jewish community. Although every individual patient was relocated into comparably comfortable — and in some instances superior — facilities, and Kosher meals were provided to Jews in nursing homes where they had never been available, the absence of a Jewish Home was widely felt as a shame to the community, and widely resented by many Jews, contributors to JFRI, who themselves had no other connection to the Home.
Harris Rosen, then president of JFRI, recognizing the role of JFRI as an agent of care, and at the same time responding to the community outrage, addressed the issues with the trustees of the Home and in cooperation with Jewish Family Service and the Jewish Community Center. A community task force was appointed whose mission was to arrive at policies and suggest ways in which the needs of elderly and infirm Jews could be met. The deliberations of this committee, whose chairman was Edward Feldstein, Esq., with subcommittees led by Rabbi Leslie Gutterman and Adelaide Luber, resulted in a double program: (1) a committee in charge of Services to the Elderly allocates funds to the JCC, the JFS, and the BJE, for those agencies to use in programs targeted to the elderly; (2) Jewish Eldercare of Rhode Island has been constituted with an autonomous administration, sponsored by The Jewish Home Corporation and funded jointly by JFRI and by some funds available from The Jewish Home endowment and contributions.76

JERI has now been in operation for about two years, under the administrative supervision of the JFS. By including all nursing homes that have Jewish patients, JERI has expanded the scope of services that the Jewish community offers those of its members who are old and infirm. It takes programs and services to more than fifty nursing homes where Jews live today. It provides the staffs with information about Jewish customs and holidays and acts as an advocate for residents when necessary. Hundreds of volunteers of all ages who visit residents regularly bring holiday greetings and treats, supplementing the work of JERI professional staff.

**JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE**

Like the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Service, (earlier known as Jewish Family and Children’s Service), was well established when the General Jewish Committee was just a gleam in Archibald Silverman’s eye. Founded in 1929, the independent organization has flourished for almost seventy years, financially supported chiefly by fees, private contributions, and the United Way. In recent years, as the United Way has been generally reducing its subsidies, Jewish Family Service has come to rely more heavily on Federation funding. JFS services which JFRI helps support include counseling, family life education, adoption programs, home care service, and Tay-Sachs prevention. A broad range of services for the elderly includes, in addition to home care, a kosher lunch mealsite in Cranston, a personal emergency response system, and Meals on Wheels.

**FEDERATION AS LEADER AND COORDINATOR**

The role of Federation as leader and coordinator of community services has been particularly notable during the past twenty-five years, in regard to the reception of immigrants from the USSR, and later from FSU (the Former Soviet Union). Apart from the special campaigns of Exodus I and Exodus II that we mentioned earlier, Federation provided leadership in the years when Jews hoping to emigrate from the
Marchers in Federation Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, June 3, 1990. The march, which began to the sound of shofars in front of the Jewish Community Center, Elm Grove Avenue, Providence, was part of a nationwide effort, Operation Exodus, to help pay the costs of emigration and settlement of Soviet Jews in the United States and Israel.

USSR were held hostage to U.S.-Soviet relations; Federation provided funds and coordination in 1987 when Rhode Islanders joined thousands of Jews from all over the United States for a march in Washington, D.C.; and Federation's influence continues in the work of the Refugee Resettlement Policy Committee at present headed by Charles Samperil.

The first Jews from the Soviet Union came to Providence in 1970. In the course of the next ten years five hundred Jewish immigrants from the USSR arrived here, more than one hundred of them in 1979. Since then, a continuing stream of refugees has added more than thirteen hundred New Americans to the Rhode Island Jewish
community. They form a small but significant segment of the Jewish community; and this presence in the Jewish community has been encouraged, not to say made possible, by the work of the Jewish Family Service, aided by the JFRI, the Jewish Community Center, and other Jewish institutions, notably the day schools.

Jews who left the USSR came, in the words of Mira Eides, who arrived in Providence in 1973, "[because] there was no future for us in the Soviet Union. We left so our children could have a better chance to make it." They left an anti-Semitic totalitarian society, plagued by economic shortages; and hoped to find an open society with good economic opportunities. However, many Soviet Jews found the transition harder than they had expected. In the USSR, government provided most of life's needs and prescribed its conditions; in the United States people are expected to exert initiative and responsibility to find their own jobs, housing, etc. In the USSR, (and the FSU) people knew the ropes, however tangled, and more or less what to expect from their neighbors and from the authorities; in the U.S. they didn't. Many immigrants were suspicious of their neighbors, and of authority, (including resettlement workers).72

The early months of transition are crucial; and that is when the JFS has been most helpful. The head of refugee services, (Esther Miller, and later Ellen Steingold) having been notified in advance by HIAS, (the international Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) makes sure that each immigrant is met at the Theodore Francis Green State Airport in Rhode Island by someone from JFS. In recent years Tamara Berezin, herself a former resident of the Soviet Union, has been the greeter. Once the immigrants are here, JFS, with money and help from several other community institutions, notably JFRI and the Rhode Island Section, National Council of Jewish Women, provides housing, orientation, and financial support during their first three months of residence in Providence.

The JFRI has also supported outreach by other Jewish organizations; day schools provide scholarships for the children; the Bureau of Jewish Education offers orientation classes of various sorts; synagogues offer free memberships for a year; the Jewish Community Center offers English language lessons and a year's free membership. For the past five years money has been available from the Federation's Campaigns Exodus I, 1990-91, and Exodus II, 1992-95, for the Soviet Jews.

Instruction in the English language is mandatory for Soviet immigrants receiving help from JFS; few come with the fluency in English that virtually any job requires. When the New American has enough English for employment, someone at JFS, (for the past several years it has been Temma Holland) looks for and talks with employers who have jobs that the immigrant can fill. Within a relatively short time most immigrant families are self supporting.
Housing and jobs are necessary; on the other hand, joining the Jewish community is optional. Few New Americans come with much knowledge of Jewish religion or Jewish life, or much interest. A study published by the United Way in 1982 stated: "Unlike earlier waves of Jewish immigration to this country, the Soviet Jews found themselves with few cultural and religious links to their nominal co-religionists who presented themselves as their hosts."

In the March 1995 issue of the Jewish Voice Yehuda Lev wrote: "The Jewish Community Center is virtually a Russian speaking institution during the morning hours as the immigrants congregate there both for companionship and for ESL classes and social functions." How fully these New Americans, and their children and grandchildren, will become integrated into the Jewish community remains to be seen. To the extent that they are, much credit goes to the JFRI and the other Jewish institutions of Rhode Island.
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The preceding pages present a kind of slow-motion picture of the growth of Federation, observed recurrently from various angles.

The complex development of the GJC/JFRI from July 11, 1945, the day of its incorporation, until this day, fifty years later, has grown in the context of Jewish personal and communal relations to other social institutions and to more broadly historical forces. We have described the impact of some social forces, and the influence of a few major personalities, but Federation’s success depends ultimately on thousands of personal interrelationships among Jews living in Rhode Island. Written accounts are necessarily incomplete; any particular connection, closely examined, leads to a dozen others, and each of those requires looking at another set of circumstances.

At this time, Harris Rosen, the current president of Federation, and Steven Rakitt, the executive director, expect Federation to face serious challenges in the coming decades in developing both economic resources and new leadership. They are preparing for those challenges by intensifying annual campaign efforts, continuing to build Federation’s endowment, and by instituting training programs which attract the next generation of leaders and educating them to the complex community issues the Federation tries to address.

Federation has also begun to subsidize programs of creative outreach in synagogues and in other Jewish organizations, so as to strengthen ties that will structure Jewish identity in the coming generation of Rhode Island Jews. Federation subsidizes services that address the Jewish migration to South County; it also sponsors the Community Relations Council, which deals with issues affecting both Jews and non-Jews in the wider Rhode Island community.

Perhaps the impact of Federation can best be appreciated by considering the role it plays in the life of particular people.

Some weeks ago a man who had been a fellow student with my sons at Classical High School was kind enough to spend an hour at my house talking about Federation as he sees it. After Harvard, a Rhodes Fellowship, and Harvard Law School, Sam Zurier has returned to Providence to practice as an attorney. It was pleasant, but hardly surprising, to read in the Voice that JFRI was giving Sam an award for community service. He and (as I realized later) his wife Lauren have been spotted by Federation as among the likely leaders of the Rhode Island Jewish community in the coming generation. They are active members of Temple Beth-El; they enjoy Federation’s young leaders program; they are concerned about the world into which their children will grow, and they work to make it a hospitable place. They design their life together in ways to nurture their daughters’ internal resources. They greet the Sabbath with candle lighting, kiddush, and challah; they
celebrate the Jewish holidays.

Sam is aware of differences between his generation and the previous generation whose ideas have dominated local Jewish institutions, including Federation. At Beth-El some of Sam’s contemporaries think of establishing a Reform Day School; most senior members of the Temple are appalled at the idea. At Federation, Sam has been involved in reevaluation of allocations procedures. (It is interesting to note that a generation earlier his father, Melvin Zurier, undertook the same assignment.) More generally, Sam feels that he and his contemporaries are less involved with Israel than their elders, and more concerned with their own Jewish life here in Rhode Island.

Several of these shifts have already affected Federation policy, and it is interesting that these views fit in with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres’ response to American Jews: “Please keep your children Jewish!”

“Continuity” is the watchword; Sam and Lauren and many of their contemporaries are aiming at it. But how is it to be achieved?

A few days after my talk with Sam, my husband and I were at a friend’s family celebration, and I fell into conversation with one of the other guests, a man whom I had never met before; let me call him “Stan”. It soon transpired that Stan, a Jew and a native New Englander, had spent sixty years in an ambivalent stance toward being Jewish. When he heard my name he didn’t like it: “Too Jewish.” He told me proudly that he had given all his children Anglo-Saxon names; he was disappointed that his new grandchild had a biblical name.

But as we talked some more, another set of attitudes appeared. A year or two ago he had been persuaded by friends to join them in a Federation-sponsored tour of Israel. He had gone chiefly for the sake of friendship, but he found the trip a transforming experience. They toured Jerusalem; he sailed a boat on the Sea of Galilee; and when he came back to Rhode Island he called Federation to ask how he could help.

Since then he has been a faithful volunteer in the JERI program. Every week he visits “his men” in the V.A. home; and he has found many of those contacts wonderfully rewarding; one, in particular, connected him with his father who had died when he was young.

Stan is a man for whom Federation has provided reconnecting pathways. Continuity is a stream that connects parents with children and children with previous generations. Among Jews, continuity connects each of us with the values of the prophets, the traditions of the rabbis, the people with whom we live.
Continuity is fed by learning and by experience. It can flow underground, but runs more strongly in well-built channels. For the past fifty years, JFRI has built and maintained important channels for Rhode Island Jews. The greatest challenge to Federation for its second fifty years is to help create and support the means that will sustain a vibrant, thriving communal life for Jews who live in Rhode Island.
FROM THE EDITOR

This special issue of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes represents a collaboration between the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation and its precursor, the General Jewish Committee. The ties between our two organizations are close. Alter Boyman, one of the founders of the GJC in 1945, was a founder of RIJHA in 1954. The Federation provides space for the RIJHA office and archives in its building. The Jewish Community Center, one of the Rhode Island agencies which the Federation helps fund, gives meeting space to the Association, and another of these agencies, the Bureau of Jewish Education, our neighbor in the Federation building, provides staff assistance for many projects. Their help in arranging exhibits is invaluable.

RIJHA assists the Federation and its associated agencies by providing professional as well as volunteer staff to organize and store their records for accessibility to researchers. Eleanor Horvitz, RIJHA librarian-archivist, has been writing articles on Rhode Island Jewish history for the Federation’s newspaper, The Jewish Voice of Rhode Island, for many years.

It has been a real pleasure for me to work closely on this project with the author of “Fifty Years of Giving,” Hadassah Davis. A historian, she has written two books on Rhode Island history, What Cheer Netop!, published by the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology and History You Can See; Scenes of Change in Rhode Island 1790-1910 (with Natalie Robinson), published by the Rhode Island Publications Society.

I also wish to thank the Publications Committee of RIJHA for its wise counsel on the arrangements for this history and one of its members, Terry Kantorowitz Shaffer, for proofreading assistance. Fred Kelman’s many photographs of Federation activities were an important resource. Others who helped the editor were Albert T. Klyberg, executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Society; the JFRIs staff, with special thanks to Jane Sprague; Maurice B. Cohen, Claire Ernstof, Bonnie and Seebert Goldowsky, David Horvitz, Eleanor F. Horvitz, Anne Krause, Barbara and Herbert Rosen, Toby Rossner, Anne Sherman, Lynn and Samuel Stepak, Jeanne and Manfred Weil, and, most especially, Aaron Cohen.

Judith Weiss Cohen
Editor
APPENDIX

PRESIDENTS OF JFRI

Archibald Silverman ........................................... 1945-1950
Alvin A. Sopkin .................................................. 1950-1955
Henry J. Hassenfeld ........................................... 1955-1960
Joseph W. Res .................................................. 1960-1964
Merrill L. Hassenfeld ......................................... 1964-1967
Judge Frank Licht ............................................... 1967-1968
Max Alperin ..................................................... 1968-1974
Robert A. Riesman ............................................. 1974-1977
Marvin S. Holland ............................................. 1977-1981
Melvin G. Alperin .............................................. 1981-1984
Charles Sandperil .............................................. 1984-1987
Norman D. Tilles ............................................... 1987-1990
David M. Hirsch ............................................... 1990-1993
Harris N. Rosen ................................................. 1993-

CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

Alvin A. Sopkin .................................................. 1945-1949, 1955
Joseph W. Res .................................................. 1950-1951
Henry J. Hassenfeld ........................................... 1952-1954
Benjamin Brier .................................................. 1956
Joseph K. Levy .................................................. 1957-1959
Merrill L. Hassenfeld ........................................ 1960-1962
M. Edgar Pain .................................................... 1963
Albert Gordon ................................................... 1970-1972
Edwin S. Soforenko ............................................. 1974
Melvin G. Alperin .............................................. 1975-1976
Bruce C. Selya ................................................... 1977
Charles Sandperil .............................................. 1978-1981
David A. Cohen ................................................. 1982-1983
Howard S. Kaufman ............................................ 1984
Roberta Holland ............................................... 1985-1986
Norman D. Tilles ............................................... 1987
David M. Hirsch ............................................... 1988-1989
Harris N. Rosen ............................................... 1990-1991
Donald M. Robbins ............................................ 1992-1993
Myrna K. Rosen ................................................ 1994-1995
Edward D. Feldstein ......................................... 1995-

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Joseph Galkin ................................................... 1945-1975
Dan Asher ........................................................ 1975-1978
Sanford Lupovitz .............................................. 1978-1980
Elliot Cohan .................................................... 1980-1990
Steven A. Rakitt ................................................ 1990-
### Women's Division Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bertram L. Bernhardt (Helene)</td>
<td>1957-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Julius Irving (Mal)</td>
<td>1960-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Raymond L. Cohen (Marion)</td>
<td>1962-1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Merrill L. Hassenfeld (Sylvia)</td>
<td>1964-1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Leonard I. Salmason (Thelma)</td>
<td>1966-1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Edmund I. Waldman (Janet)</td>
<td>1968-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Max Alperin (Ruth)</td>
<td>1970-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Jacob Stone (Betty-Rose)</td>
<td>1973-1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Manfred Weil (Jeanne)</td>
<td>1975-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Maurice J. Shore (Fannie)</td>
<td>1977-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Sol Resnik (Esther)</td>
<td>1979-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberta Holland</td>
<td>1981-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine S. Foster</td>
<td>1983-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Kaufman</td>
<td>1985-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Odessa</td>
<td>1987-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrna Rosen</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Feinberg</td>
<td>1991-1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenda Labush</td>
<td>1993-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeeDee Witman</td>
<td>1995-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Women's Division Campaign Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Samuel Michaelson (Leah)</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Philip Dorenbaum (Jennie)</td>
<td>1946-1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Albert Pilavin (Selma)</td>
<td>1948-1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Abraham Percelay (Natalie)</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Archie Pain (Beatrice)</td>
<td>1951-1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Kaplan Loeber</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Myron Elias</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. David Meyers</td>
<td>1956-1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bertram L. Bernhardt</td>
<td>1957-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Julius Irving</td>
<td>1960-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estelle Pulver Terry</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Raymond L. Cohen</td>
<td>1962-1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Sol Koffler</td>
<td>1963-1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Merrill L. Hassenfeld</td>
<td>1964-1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Leonard I. Salmason</td>
<td>1966-1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Edmund I. Waldman</td>
<td>1968-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Albert I. Gordon</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Max Alperin</td>
<td>1970-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Jacob Stone</td>
<td>1973-1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Weil</td>
<td>1975-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pannie Shore</td>
<td>1977-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn H. Winoker</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Reznik</td>
<td>1979-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberta S. Holland</td>
<td>1981-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine S. Foster</td>
<td>1983-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Kaufman</td>
<td>1985-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Odessa</td>
<td>1987-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrna K. Rosen</td>
<td>1989-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Feinberg</td>
<td>1991-1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenda Labush</td>
<td>1993-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy Wachtenheim</td>
<td>1995-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Young Women's Division Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lawrence S. Gates (Helene)</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Joseph H. Markel (Molly)</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Alden H. Blackman (Nancy)</td>
<td>1972-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. David A. Cohen (Pat)</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Robert A. Starr (Joyce)</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Jerald Cohen (Estia)</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Charles Kahn (Susan)</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Robert E. Sock (May Ronny)</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Barry Glucksman (Suzanne)</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Michael Dressler (Fredda)</td>
<td>1980-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Robert Berkellhammer (Mitzi)</td>
<td>1982-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bruce Holland (Betsy)</td>
<td>1984-1987*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Young Women's Division Campaign Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Joseph H. Markel (Molly)</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Alan D. Brier (Evelyn)</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Richard S. Mittleman (Linda)</td>
<td>1972-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gerald Cohen (Estia)</td>
<td>1974-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Leonard W. Labush (Glenda)</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Robert E. Sock (May-Ronny)</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lewis Finkel (Andrea)</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lawrence Friedman (Marilyn)</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Stanley Wachtenheim (Mindy)</td>
<td>1980-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bruce Holland (Betsy)</td>
<td>1982-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Ronald Markoff (Lynn)</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gary Witman (DeeDee)</td>
<td>1985-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Joshua Tevorou (Cheryl)</td>
<td>1987*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Career Women's Affiliate — Business and Professional Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita Berger</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Goldstein</td>
<td>1979-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Feibish</td>
<td>1982-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Goldin</td>
<td>1984-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Zueri</td>
<td>1986-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Messing</td>
<td>1988-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma Stanzler</td>
<td>1990-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Brooklyn</td>
<td>1992-1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Levitt</td>
<td>1994-1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Campaign Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gladys Kapstein</td>
<td>1979-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Marks</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladys Kapstein</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Goldin</td>
<td>1982-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalind Kurzer</td>
<td>1983-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Steingold</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye Mandell</td>
<td>1985-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Bentnall</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma Kiltzner</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Feibish</td>
<td>1990-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Mann</td>
<td>1992-1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam Ross</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor Elbaum</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1987 was the last year of the Young Women's Division
NOTES

BEGINNINGS
6. Archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

PULLING TOGETHER
7. Encyclopedia Judaica.
9. Archives, RIJHA.
10. Ibid.
11. Segal, ibid, p. 10.
15. Greenberg, ibid.
16. Ibid.

LOOKING AT A NEW GENERATION
20. Goldstein, ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Markoff, Licht interview, ibid.

FRANK LICHT AND THE 1967 CRISIS IN ISRAEL
25. Interview with Robert Riesman, June 4, 1995; background material from Encyclopedia Judaica.
27. The Making of a Miracle, the 1967 Roll of Honor of Greater Providence, issued by the General Jewish Committee of Greater Providence, 1967.
29. Markoff, Licht interview, ibid.

THE NEW LOOK 1968-1975
31. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division, an interview with Max Alperin on June 12, 1984, at the Alperin home in Providence.
32. Greenberg, ibid.
33. Rabbi Arnold Samlan, interview, March 5, 1995. Direct subventions of particular institutions were commented on by several other people.
34. Interview with Melvin Zurier, January 30, 1995.
Notes

35 Florence Markoff, oral history interview with Max Alperin, November, 1980.
36 Ibid.
37 Zurier, ibid.
38 The Community Voice, a publication of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Rhode Island, was first issued by the JFRI in November 1973, in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. Vol. 1, No. 1, November 23, 1973.

THE FEDERATION AS A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

43 Ibid.
44 Melvin Zurier, ibid.

WOMEN SEEN AND INVISIBLE IN THE GJC AND THE JFRI

45 Riesman, ibid.
46 In conversation, Joan Rees Reeves underscored her mother’s active and unsung support of her father’s GJC activities, which involved frequent meetings and sometimes elaborate entertainment.
50 Selma Stanzler’s letter as retiring president of B & P division.
51 Conversations with Myrna Rosen and DeeDee Witman.

THE FEDERATION AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

52 Riesman, ibid.
53 Markoff, Alperin interview, ibid.
55 Reeves, ibid.
57 The Jewish Voice of Rhode Island, June 1995.
60 Interview with Selma Stanzler, June 30, 1995.

THE FEDERATION AND OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES

63 Ibid.
64 Samlan, ibid.
65 Eleanor Horowitz, “The Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island,” RIJIN, Vol. 6, No. 2, November 1972, pp. 145-190. This article examines the organizations and attitudes that led to the establishment of the Jewish Community Center.
66 Conversations with Selma Stanzler, Joseph Galkin, and others, June 1995.
67 Conversations with Julius Michaelson and Milton Stanzler, June 1995; each was president of JCC during the years when the building on Elm Grove Avenue was first proposed and undertaken. Each recalls confrontations with Federation.
68 Ibid.
70 Zurier, ibid. He was one of the lawyers present.
72 Kempner, ibid.
Ibid.

75 Conversations with board members of other nursing homes confirm that the disparity between what Medicaid pays and what it costs to keep a patient in a nursing home is a problem that concerns many nursing homes.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

77 Samuel Zurier, ibid.
FUNDS AND BEQUESTS OF THE RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION FUNDS

Seebert J. and Gertrude N. Goldowsky  
Benton H. and Beverly Rosen  
Erwin E. and Pauline E. Strasmich

Research Scholarship Fund
Book Fund
General Fund

BEQUESTS

Jeannette S. Nathans
B. Ruby Winnerman
LIFE MEMBERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND
JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MRS. SAUL ABRAMS
STANLEY AND SANDRA ABRAMS
MR. AND MRS. CARL ADLER
IRVING H. AND ELEANOR ADLER
MR. AND MRS. MAX ALPERIN
MR. AND MRS. MELVIN ALPERIN
MRS. ALICE BERNSTEIN
MRS. BENJAMIN BRIER
MRS. JESSE BROMLEY
AARON AND JUDITH COHEN
DR. AND MRS. EARLE F. COHEN
MR. AND MRS. NEWTON B. COHN
MR. AND MRS. DONALD H. DWARES
ENGLE TIRE COMPANY
BARRY AND ELAINE FAIN
MR. AND MRS. CARL H. FELDMAN
WARREN AND GERALDINE FOSTER
MR. ARNOLD T. GALKIN
DR. AND MRS. SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY
JEREMIAH AND ROSALIND GORIN
MRS. HARRY A. GOURSE
MR. AND MRS. STANLEY GROSSMAN
DR. AND MRS. JAMES HERSTOFF
DR. AND MRS. ABRAHAM HORVITZ
MR. AND MRS. JAY ISENBERG
DR. ALFRED AND BETTY JAFFE
MRS. MILDRED FEINER KAPLAN
MRS. SAMUEL KASPER
HOWARD AND RACHEL KAUFMAN
ROBERT A. AND BETTY KOTLEN
MRS. SANFORD KROLL
MRS. FRANK LICHT
BESS AND CHARLES LINDENBAUM
MRS. BESSIE SHOLES LIPSON
DR. AND MRS. STEPHEN J. LOSBEN
DARIELLE AND GABRIELLE ZARAKOV MASON

MR. AND MRS. MILTON NACHBAR
MRS. DOROTHY M. NELSON
MR. AND MRS. SIDNEY NULMAN
MR. THOMAS PEARLMAN
MRS. ABRAHAM PERCEILAY
DR. AND MRS. MARVIN PITTERMAN
MR. HYE RAPAPORT
MRS. NATHAN RESNIK
MR. AND MRS. S. DAVID ROBERTS
MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM L. ROBIN
MR. AND MRS. BENTON H. ROSEN
MR. AND MRS. HERBERT L. ROSEN
MRS. ALEXANDER RUMPLER
MR. AND MRS. LEONARD RUMPLER
MR. AND MRS. HAROLD SADLER
MR. DONALD SALMANSO
MR. AND MRS. JERROLD SALMANSO
MR. HAROLD SCHEIN
MR. IRA L. SCHREIBER
PHYLLIS AND IRVING SIGAL
MRS. MARTIN SILVERSTEIN
MRS. JOSEPH S. SINCLAIR
MR. HAROLD B. SOLOVEITZIK
SONIA SPRUNG, M.D.
MILTON AND SELMA STANZLER
MR. AND MRS. SAMUEL STEPAN
MR. AND MRS. ERWIN E. STRASMICH
MR. AND MRS. LEWIS TANNER
MR. JACOB TEMKIN
MR. AND MRS. ARNOLD B. WASSERMAN
MR. AND MRS. HOWARD S. WEISS
MR. AND MRS. JAMES R. WINKER
MR. AND MRS. JAMES W. WINTON
MR. AND MRS. IRVING WISEMAN
MR. AND MRS. MELVIN L. ZUKER
MR. AND MRS. SYDNEY ZURIER
Banner displayed at gala celebration of the first 50 years of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, Westin Hotel, Providence, May 23, 1995. Family continuity of Jewish giving in Rhode Island is exemplified by Harris Rosen, at left, president of JFRI since 1993, the son of Samuel Rosen, board member of JFRI for many years, and, at the podium, Melvin Alperin, president of Federation from 1977-1981, son of Max Alperin, president 1968-1974. Photo © Phil Cohen.