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**FRONT COVER**
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130 Sessions Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906

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FROM THE EDITOR
NOTES ON THE NOTES

This issue of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes has several coincidences and links from one article to another. "A Civil War Hero and His Rhode Island Family" tells about a Jew volunteering to fight in the Civil War because of his strong belief in freedom for the slaves while an article about events a century later, "Blacks and Jews Together — Thirtieth Anniversary of the Selma Civil Rights March," reports on the 1995 joint meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association with the Black Heritage Society that commemorated Blacks and Jews marching together for voting rights for Southern Blacks. The "Civil War Hero" article describes a Rhode Island Jewish woman who was the Rhode Island State Psychologist, while "Women Ahead of Their Time" tells of three Rhode Island Jewish women psychiatrists. "Economic and Social Aspects of the Decline of Newport Jewry" and "Passover and the Crypto-Jews" both have interesting facts about early Jews in Newport. All the articles in the Notes, I believe, illustrate answers to Jonathan Sarna's question "What's the Use of Local Jewish History."

The editor is grateful as always for the articles by our writers and for additional help provided by Association members and others. The list for this issue includes Jasmine Appleberry, Aaron Cohen, Maurice B. Cohen, Abigail Davis, Hadassah Davis, Richard Alan Dow, Norman Fiering, Bonnie and Seebert Goldowsky, Eleanor F. Horvitz, Jana Lipman, Joseph Puleo, Herbert L. Rosen, Toby Rossner, Anne Sherman, Lynn and Samuel Stepak, and Lynn Tesler.

Judith Weiss Cohen
Editor
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What's the Use of Local Jewish History? ......................................................... 77  
by Jonathan D. Sarna

Economic and Social Aspects of the  
Decline of Newport Jewry ................................................................. 84  
by Jay M. Eidelman

A Civil War Hero and His Rhode Island Family ................................................. 93  
by Joyce Blackman

Passover and the Crypto-Jews ........................................................................... 114  
by David M. Gitlitz

Women Ahead of Their Time — Part I .................................................. 124  
by Eleanor F. Horvitz and Geraldine S. Foster

Jewish Veterans of World War II — Oral Histories, Part II  
by Pearl F. Braude

Irving Jay Fain ....................................................................................... 150

Blacks and Jews Together —  
Thirtieth Anniversary of Selma Civil Rights March .................................... 156

Bibliographical Notes ........................................................................... 158  
by Lois Atwood

Forty-First Annual Meeting of the Association .............................................. 162

Necrology ....................................................................................... 165

Errata and Addenda ............................................................................ 172

Funds and Bequests ............................................................................. 173

Life Members of the Association .......................................................... 174
WHAT'S THE USE OF LOCAL JEWISH HISTORY?

by Jonathan D. Sarna

Richard Lederer, in a delightful volume entitled *Anguished English*, offers readers a glimpse at history as students understand it, based upon written work turned in to their teachers. Among the “remarkable occurrences” that he preserves for us are the following:

Socrates was a famous Greek Teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln’s mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was president, he wore only a tall silk hat.

And finally, my favorite:

The nineteenth century was a time of a great many thoughts and inventions. People stopped reproducing by hand and started reproducing by machine. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Samuel Morse invented a code of telepathy. Louis Pasteur invented a cure for rabbis.1

For all of the humor in these embarrassing errors, we should also read them with a great deal of sadness. For these errors, and a host of less humorous ones, point to a problem of quite considerable dimensions in our day: widespread public ignorance of the facts of history. Such ignorance characterizes the general American population and is, unfortunately, no less true in Jewish circles. Even otherwise well-educated Jews know little about the span of Jewish history, the great names in Jewish history, and the great themes of Jewish history. American Jewish history, our field, has been particularly neglected. Many American Jews have very little sense of how the American Jewish community developed, how different immigrant waves impacted upon it, and how our community is like and unlike other great diaspora centers in the history of our people.

The truth is that we have not been very successful in the past in explaining why American Jewish history is important for students to learn, why local Jewish history is important, and why our history should be preserved. For this reason, I want to suggest here five uses of history, really five broad principles, that all of us engaged in the practice and teaching of history, especially those of us engaged in history at the community level, and even more especially those of us who are Jewish and may,
therefore, have a special relationship with history, should keep in mind as we go about our work.

To begin with, we study local Jewish history because it teaches us that we have a history. As human beings, we seek roots, we are interested in where we came from, and we crave the legitimacy that the past bestows. We Jews particularly respect yichus (family pedigree, Yiddish), not because we are determinists, but because we have learned to respect the power of tradition. We know that we have been shaped by those who came before us. The colonial Jews of Newport illustrate this principle. They were deeply shaped by their Sephardic heritage and by their own or their family’s experience, in Catholic countries, of living as secret Jews. The enormous significance among them of family ties and their close personal and business associations with Jews up and down the Sephardic trade network, spanning three continents, reflected this heritage — as Stanley Chyet’s biography of the colonial Newport Jewish merchant Aaron Lopez amply demonstrates. Lopez and other Jews in colonial Newport not only had a history; they also knew that it was one that greatly impacted upon them.¹

Precisely because the past has this shaping power, there have always been those who have sought to write Jews out of history. To this day, some schoolbooks present Jewish history as something that ended with the destruction of the Temple and the rise of Christianity. Others, including some so-called multicultural texts, bury Jews among dead white males, as if there is nothing distinctive about Jewish history at all.² One of the tasks of every Jewish historian and every Jewish historical society is to demonstrate that this is utterly false, and that we actually have a continuous history dating back some 3500 years, and dating back in America — and in Rhode Island — to the mid-17th century.

Now there is a great danger in our learning to appreciate the power of the past, and that is, since power corrupts, that we may fall prey to the temptation to rewrite the past to conform to what we wish had happened, rather than what actually did. Samuel Butler once cynically observed that “though God cannot alter the past, historians can,” and he speculated that because of this God “tolerates their existence.”³ I hope he was wrong, but we all know that some have rewritten the past to make themselves or their ancestors more significant and saintly than they could possibly have been.

Synagogue histories are particularly prone to this malady, and I was therefore particularly pleased to read Seebert Goldowsky’s recent history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El) in Providence, where this pitfall is carefully avoided. Dr. Goldowsky relates, at one point, that Rev. Jacob Voorsanger lost his job with the congregation in 1878 because of a controversy over whether a student who had done no work in religious school should be graduated.
What's the Use of Local Jewish History?

Voorsanger scrupulously refused to graduate the student, but as she happened to be the daughter of the richest man in the congregation her father's response — "either the Rabbi goes, or I go" — ultimately carried the day. The synagogue's minutes, like most such documents, attempted to prettify the story by relating that Rev. Voorsanger "accepted a call" from a congregation in the South. Happily Dr. Goldowsky, building upon an oral history preserved by Rabbi William G. Braude, restores the truth, teaching us, in the process, much that we would not otherwise know about the balance of power in the congregation at that time.5

The more common practice, however, is illustrated in the classic (and one hopes apocryphal) story about one Mrs. Depew, scion of an old pioneer family. Mrs. Depew, it seems, decided to commission a history of her illustrious ancestors. She approached the local historical society, of which she was a member, and it agreed to do the job. The only stipulation was that "due sensitivity" be shown concerning Mrs. Depew's late Uncle Charlie, the black sheep of the family, whose life ended, alas, on the electric chair at Sing Sing prison. The historical society promised to be very sensitive, and in time it produced a beautifully illustrated volume — The Depews: A Family History — that it proudly delivered to the family mansion. Naturally, Mrs. Depew opened at once to the chapter on Uncle Charlie, and there she read as follows: "In his last years, Charles Depew occupied the chair of applied electricity in one of the government's great institutions. He died in harness and his death came as an extreme shock."

At the time, it is always easy to justify these rewritings of history on the basis of "what others might think" or in order to protect somebody's reputation. This temptation is particularly great when one is writing about one's own kinsmen. Nevertheless, the temptation must at all costs be resisted. For once we begin rewriting the past for personal or political reasons, we lose all credibility. If we historians cannot be relied upon to preserve the past accurately, nobody can.

Besides reminding us that we have a history, the past shows us, and this is our second point, that we have a usable history, that is to say a history that can teach us something about the present. Since the present has deep roots in the past and can only be understood in terms of that past, to the extent that the past is forgotten we lose the ability to comprehend contemporary events. Without history, the present lacks both context and perspective.

Take, for example, the case of Ezra Stiles and the Jews. Rev. Stiles, one of the most learned New Englanders of his day, became pastor of the Second Church of Newport in 1755 and evinced a great deal of interest in local Jews, several of whom he befriended. His philosemitism is reflected in his diary, his visits to the Newport synagogue, his study of Hebrew and Hebrew sources, and in his close relationship with Rabbi Raphael Haim Isaac Carigal, an emissary from the Holy Land, who spent
five months in Newport, from March through July 1773, as the local Jewish community’s guest. Yet for all that he knew and genuinely liked Jews, Stiles continued to view them as unassimilable and worthy of divine punishment, and he always sought to convert them to Christianity. In the tense period preceding the American Revolution he went so far as to question their loyalty, reporting in his diary, on one occasion, that they were involved in a clandestine international intelligence-gathering conspiracy centered in London. “Perhaps Stiles’s attitude toward the Jews,” Arthur Chiel concluded, after surveying all of the relevant material, “might be best characterized as one of ambivalence.”

It is precisely this ambivalence that makes the relationship between Stiles and the Jews of enduring significance. History, in this case, sheds helpful light on a wide range of Jewish-Christian relationships in America, extending down to our own day.

The ability to place a contemporary problem into a broader and sometimes quite different perspective is one of the most important functions of history. Local Jewish history, in the same way, can shed light on local problems and how they developed. We should be encouraging much more research of this kind, for we have not yet even begun to recognize its potential. Jewish history and especially local Jewish history is also significant because — this is our third principle — it teaches us that we have a variegated history, a history that is rich and and diverse. Too often, young people assume that what exists today has always existed and that our city and state is a microcosm of the whole country, if not the whole world. History, properly studied, counters this ethnocentrism. It introduces us, for example, to the aristocratic lives of Newport Jews more than two hundred years ago and to the impoverished lives of immigrant Jews in Providence some one hundred years later. It teaches us that the history of men may be different from the history of women, and that “the world of our fathers” in New York was different from the world of our fathers (and mothers) in Providence.

One of the great tasks facing local and regional Jewish community historical societies is to broaden our perspective on American Jewish history: to make it, frankly, less New York centered. We need to highlight and explain what made American Jewish history here in Rhode Island and in myriad locations throughout the United States both different and unique.

This leads us straight into our fourth principle, which is that local Jewish history shows us that we have an organic history: that differences and distances notwithstanding we are nevertheless integrally related to one another; we form one world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fascinating and largely unexplored ties linked Dutch Jews to the Newport and Providence communities. Isaac Touro, Moses Michael Hays, Jacob Rodriguez Pareira, Myer Noot, Jacob Voorsanger —
all were Dutch Jews. Some of these men continued, even in America, to maintain connections to the great Sephardic center of Jewish life back in Amsterdam. Within the United States, one can discern similar kinds of intercommunal relationships. Providence Jews, for example, were at one time closely tied to the Jews of New York.

Congregation Sons of Israel, originally a Sephardic congregation, felt a special kinship to New York's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Shearith Israel. Later, as the Boston Jewish community strengthened, Providence Jews fell more naturally into its orbit. One indication of this is the fact that Reform Judaism came to Providence and to Boston at about the same time, a whole generation after it arrived in other sections of the country.

In addition, by the late 19th century Providence Jewry was also involved in world Jewish affairs. The persecution of Jews in Rumania, the Dreyfus Affair, and the pogroms against Jews in Russia all met with local responses, spurred on by the traditional injunction that "all Israel is responsible for one another."

Much more could be said about these subjects, but the larger point is clear. History generally, and Rhode Island Jewish history in particular, can teach us important lessons about the ties that bind: those that bind us as human beings to one another, those that bind us as Jews to one another, and those that bind Rhode Island Jews to other Jewish communities in the United States and beyond.

The fifth and final reason why local Jewish history merits our attention carries this previous theme further and brings us back to where we began: local Jewish history reminds us that we have a history that binds us across time. We are, in other words, not only bound to one another, we are also part of an ongoing process of history: links in an endless chain stretching from past to present to future. History — all history — fights the dangerous presentmindedness that contemporaries are particularly prone to: the idea that all issues are new and there is nothing to be learned from what happened in the past. In the Jewish community this misguided attitude is manifested today in the absurd idea that Jewish continuity and intermarriage are new challenges that arose in 1991 with the publication of the National Jewish Population Study. In fact, of course, these themes are as old as the history of Jewish life on this continent. Excessive focus on the present at the expense of the past blinds us to the historical forces that have promoted and continue to promote change over time. When George Santayana famously observed that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," he had, I think, precisely this danger in mind. An historical association like this one can fight presentmindedness among Jews, and help all to appreciate how much past and present are interconnected, forming part of an historical continuum stretching across time.

Notwithstanding these five principles, some may nevertheless wonder as to how
we keep historical memory alive — especially in the absence of direct personal experience? This, in fact, is the central challenge that all of us involved in historical societies, archives and museums are attempting to confront. Remember that in only fifty years’ time there will be nobody alive who will be able to speak at first hand — from memory — about three pivotal events in contemporary Jewish life: the great immigration of East European Jews to America, the death and destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel. Even today, the vast majority of world Jewry have no conscious memories of these events; we only know other people who experienced them. In fifty years those other people won’t still be with us.

We already have some inkling of the dangers that lie in store when survivors are no longer alive to bear witness. I don’t just mean the funny errors that stem from student confusion. I am far more concerned about the unspeakable obscenities of those who deny that the Holocaust ever happened, or those who distort the State of Israel’s early history in an effort to destroy it, or even those who now rewrite the history of Black-Jewish relations in this country forgetting all the good that the alliance once accomplished. As memories fade, these already strident voices will undoubtedly grow louder and more shrill. Demagogues always thrive on historical ignorance. What can we do? Our obligation is to do all we can to preserve the past while it still is directly accessible to us. Where written records survive, let them be placed in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association’s archives. Where artifacts survive, let them be displayed in one of our Jewish museums. Where individuals survive who participated in history-making events, let them record their memories for posterity, so that their voices may be heard long after they themselves have passed from the scene. Remember that history, to a very great extent, belongs to those who preserve their records. Letters, tapes and artifacts may not fully compensate for the absence of living survivors, but future generations will cherish them, both as sacred links to the past, and as the best possible answer to those who would rewrite our past without reference to facts at all.

Now I do not mean to imply that we preserve our past solely for defensive reasons, to prevent mean-spirited distortions. Clearly, history has a positive function as well. The great Norwegian-American novelist, Ole Edvart Rølvaag, who did much to ensure that the Norwegian heritage in America has been preserved, put forth a thesis that I think applies to Jews as well. “When a people becomes interested in its past life [and] seeks to acquire knowledge in order to better understand itself,” he wrote, “it always experiences an awakening of new life.” Since in order to move forward we need to learn from our past, the study of history, Rølvaag reminds us, is actually a creative act, itself a means of inspiring individuals and communities to forge ahead.

I would like to think that the remarkable growth and development, in our own day,
What's the Use of Local Jewish History?

of local and regional Jewish historical societies in America — the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association being among the most active and successful of these — also adumbrates within the American Jewish community an awakening of new life. It would seem to me that the act of recovering the forgotten histories of Jews in the many regions and municipalities of the United States, the effort to understand why Jews settled where they did, how they transformed themselves over time, how they struggled to overcome problems and challenges posed by American society, and how they emerged to become part of one of the greatest Jewish communities in all of Jewish history — this engagement with the past, it would seem to me, might very well stimulate new ideas, new approaches and new directions for American Jewish life in the decades ahead. Historical experience suggests that Jews who are actively concerned with preserving our past tend to be the same Jews who are actively concerned with securing our future. I suspect that this will prove no less true in our generation than before. Certainly it seems to be true here in Providence.

Nor is this surprising, for, as we have seen, past and future form part of a single continuum stretching across time. When we neglect or distort our past we endanger that future. When, by contrast, we preserve and engage our past — collecting it, recalling it, researching it, teasing out its lessons — then we possess the tools to shape our future confidently and creatively.

NOTES


3 See, for example, the American Jewish Committee's report of a preliminary study on The Treatment of Jews in History and Social Studies Textbooks in Use in American High Schools (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1970), and its more recent study of The Treatment of Jewish History in World Civilization Textbooks: A Report to the Dallas Independent School District (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1981).


7 Goldowsky, pp.36-52, 152, 185. On the development of Reform Judaism in Boston, see Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith (eds.) The Jews of Boston (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies, 1995), esp. pp. 5-6. For the rabbinic statement, see Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shavuot, p.39a.


ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS 
OF THE DECLINE OF NEWPORT JEWRY, 1776-1822

By Jay M. Eidelman

One of the most significant demographic changes experienced by early Jewish North Americans was the dissolution of Newport's Jewish community in the 1820s. No other Jewish settlement is as closely associated with colonial life in America. After the Revolution, Newport experienced a sharp decline, both economically and as a locus of Jewish life: a decline usually attributed to the British occupation of the city during the Revolution. While the British played their part, Newport's fate, and by extension, the fate of its Jewish community, was sealed by the economic changes that arrived in the wake of the Revolution. The post-Revolutionary economic milieu witnessed the growth of local manufacturing and the turn from oceanic commerce to interior trade. Both worked to Newport's disadvantage.

Equally significant are the social factors which pulled Jews away from a once viable Jewish community, often to seek their fortunes in places totally devoid of Jewish life. Perhaps what is most remarkable about the colonial and early republican Jewish community was its integration into the American mainstream. Unlike the later mass migrations which consisted of large groups of people not of British origin, thereby transplanting new cultural communities intact, early American Jews were very much a part of Anglo-American society. What's more, unlike European Jews, they lived lives relatively unhindered by discriminatory legislation. As such, they were perhaps the first Jews to face the difficulties of Jewish survival in an accepting and integrated general society. Their responses to the challenge of acculturation presage those of the present-day Jewish community, some choosing new patterns of affiliation and others choosing to end their ties to Judaism altogether.

According to Max J. Kohler, there were 200 Jewish families in Newport immediately prior to the American Revolution. Later scholarship based on the census reports of 1774 found only 121 Jewish residents in Newport. By 1818, there were only three Jewish families left in the town. Although Kohler's numbers make the loss of the Newport Jewish community seem more dramatic, considering that prior to the arrival of the mass migration from central Europe the American Jewish community never numbered more that 2500 individuals, 121 Jews is not an insignificant community. New York City, for instance, never exceeded a Jewish

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population of approximately 500 persons during this period, and it was the largest single Jewish settlement in the era. More importantly, the early Newport Jewish community was a relatively successful merchant settlement and the original home of some of the era’s most notable Jewish individuals and families. From the Revolution onwards, however, Newport Jews increasingly moved to the interior. If, prior to the Revolution, Newport had been a viable place of settlement, why did it cease to be so afterwards?

**The Economic Decline of Newport**

Historian Peter Coleman, who described the economic challenges faced by Newport in *The Transformation of Rhode Island, 1790-1860*, noted that by 1790 Newport “was no longer favorably located for sustained commercial expansion.” Despite its superlative harbor facilities, Newport only had immediate access to the small communities of Portsmouth and Middletown. Attempts to serve the interior would have been opposed by mainland merchants, and the transportation systems required for Newport to emerge as a major commercial hub in the nineteenth century were impossible to build given its island location. More crucial however, notes Coleman, was the outflow of entrepreneurs from the town. “The new generation of merchants lacked the vigor, resourcefulness, and determination once characteristic of the port’s traders, and they did not display the same opportunism.” Times were changing, and the more entrepreneurial minded merchants left Newport to take advantage of new and what they surely felt were better opportunities.2

Even before the American Revolution the seeds of Newport’s demise as the economic center of Rhode Island began to germinate. If we compare Newport with its northern rival and successor, Providence, what emerges is a picture of stagnation for the former and dramatic growth for the latter. Newport’s great wealth had been built on its excellent harbor and the customs monopoly it held during colonial times. The American Revolution changed that in several important ways. Firstly, the British occupation drove away many merchants. The British also destroyed the wharves, rendering the port inoperable. While Newport’s deeper, more accessible harbor may have been advantageous in better times, it made the town much more vulnerable during the Revolution. Providence, by comparison, benefited from the safety of having a more sheltered port further inland. The end of colonial tariffs and Newport’s customs monopoly also helped boost Providence’s wealth.3

Harbors can be rebuilt however, and, in fact, the end of colonial trade restrictions allowed Rhode Islanders to ply the Baltic and China trade routes, thereby reviving oceanic trade to some extent. Wealth generated from these endeavours was the base upon which later fortunes rested. Nonetheless, Rhode Island merchants realized that oceanic trade was not going to be able to sustain the state economically indefinitely. Indeed, the Napoleonic Wars, the British embargo of 1808, the War of 1812, all
disrupted and diminished oceanic trade. At the same time the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 opened opportunities in the interior that drew people and capital away from the eastern seaboard. While these factors were true for all American merchants, Newport’s case was exacerbated by the inability, or unwillingness, of its commercial community to exploit new opportunities for growth.4

Facing uncertainty on the high seas, merchants turned both to interior trade and to manufacturing in order to maintain their earnings. Providence’s location adjacent to the interior allowed it commercial advantages as a hub of trade for the rest of New England, advantages with which Newport, located on an island in Narragansett Bay, could not compete. In fact, Newport’s demise had been predicted as early as 1750 by Dr. William Douglass. Newport, he wrote, “... is of easy and short Access [sic], being near the Ocean, but for that Reason not so well situated for inland Consumption; Providence is about 30 miles farther up Narragansett-Bay inland, therefore in a few years must be their principal Place of Trade.”5

The turn to manufacturing dealt an even more dramatic and severe blow to Newport. In this, Rhode Island simply followed the general trend in American post-Revolutionary economics. As American economic historian James Merrill has pointed out, “the release from old restraints and opportunities born of war [the Revolution] turned more and more men to manufacturing.”6 Primary among these was the contraction of commercial credit which boosted local industries, since, by the time credit could be reestablished artisan manufacturers had succeeded in having protective tariffs put in place, thus allowing them to compete more effectively with foreign manufacturers.7

Entrepreneurial opportunism played its part too. Providence merchants, led by the Brown brothers, Nicholas, Moses, John, and Joseph, began challenging Newport’s economic domination of the colony in the twenty years that preceded the Revolution. The Browns used monies generated from commerce to invest in various types of manufacture, including candles, iron, and cotton mills. Providence merchants consolidated their political power as well, backing Stephen Hopkins as governor over Samuel Ward, leader of the Newport faction. In 1770 they succeeded in bringing Rhode Island College (now Brown University) to Providence after it had outgrown its quarters in Warren. Thus, by 1776, though it had only half the population of Newport, Providence merchants succeeded in amassing a nearly equal amount of political and commercial power.8 Yet, it was Samuel Slater’s mill, established at Pawtucket in 1790, in cooperation with William Alvey and Moses Brown, that put the final nail in Newport’s economic coffin. Slater’s water-powered cotton spinning mill was Rhode Island’s first step on the path to becoming a major center for textile manufacture. By 1815 Rhode Island boasted one hundred mills in twenty towns, thus making it the first urban, industrial state in the union.9
The Decline of Newport Jewry

In the aftermath of the War of 1812, as manufacturing, particularly textiles, became the dominant economic activity in Rhode Island, port activity in Providence finally surpassed that of Newport. Once again Newport's location sealed its fate. Despite efforts to revitalize its economy, Newport simply did not have adequate rivers to set up textile mills.10

The distribution of banking capital (Table 1), provides a good demonstration of Providence’s rise to economic supremacy in Rhode Island. By 1860, banking capital in Providence was forty-seven times what it had been in 1790. During the same seventy years Newport’s available banking capital grew only 8.5 times. Even in 1790, Providence, though slightly smaller in size than Newport, already had three times the bank assets. By 1860, Providence banks controlled almost eighteen times more capital. Most significant of all, between 1820 and 1830, Newport banks did not show any increase in capital. Providence banks, on the other hand, increased their assets by approximately 140 percent for the same ten year period.

Table 1: Distribution of Banking Capital (in $1000s)12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>3,516</td>
<td>15,208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effects of the new economic conditions are mirrored by demographic changes. Comparing population growth for Newport and Providence (Table 2), the latter, though less populous in 1790, surpassed the former quite early in the nineteenth century. From 1790 onwards, the population of the United States grew at a rate of 3.3 percent per year. This growth did not slow down until after the Civil War. For the years 1790 to 1860, Newport grew at less than one percent per annum, while Providence grew at a rate of almost ten percent per year. This is a reflection of the great advantages held by inland settlements and the ability of residents to exploit those advantages to their own benefit. The availability of industrial employment attracted workers, and the burgeoning communities could support expanding service economies. Newport was simply unable, or unwilling, to compete.13

Table 2: Population14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>6,716</td>
<td>8,010</td>
<td>10,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>6,380</td>
<td>16,836</td>
<td>50,566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Decline of the Newport Jewish Community

Returning to the story of the end of early Jewish Newport, it is quite clear that the
community's dissolution reflects economic and social forces operating on post-Revolutionary American society. At first it was the British occupation and subsequent retreat that prompted their dislocation; later it was the availability of better opportunities elsewhere that drew Jews away from the town. While the ability to earn a living undoubtedly played a role in the decisions concerning settlement made by all freemen in the early republic, Jews had the added decision of whether or not to live in a place with an active Jewish community. As we shall see, this was not a priority for everyone, and many Jews established themselves on the frontier far from the Jewish communal fold.

Newport Jews were not alone in moving to the frontier. Many Eastern Jewish families had members who settled in small Western towns in order to conduct trade. Benjamin Gratz, for instance, a scion of the famed Philadelphia merchant family, settled in Lexington, Kentucky. From there he would travel a circuit of small settlements, conducting trade along the way. In a letter written from Louisville to his family back in Philadelphia, he described the growth of commerce in the West and its difficulties:

...the rage for becoming merchants has been so great, that every man who could possibly collect together any money was induced to embark in trade, the farmer sold his farm the mechanic abandoned his more profitable calling the consequence will be that very many now engaged in trade must be an immense amount of bad debts made by our citizens, no one ought to have concerns in the west that is not familiar with the funding of the people. 15

The same inducements that caused Western farmers and artisans to take up trade, also brought Eastern merchants westward.

Speculation in real estate also brought Americans westward. Throughout this period, notes Jacob Rader Marcus, “Jewish merchants dreamt of town and country settlements across the Alleghenies as far west as the Mississippi and as far south as Florida. They never gave up hope that land speculation would make them rich.” 16 As trade with the interior surpassed oceanic trade, it is easy to understand these merchants’ optimism.

As Malcolm Stern described in the pages of this journal, the saga of Meyer Benjamin’s descendants illustrates the geographic mobility of Jewish life in this period. Meyer Benjamin came to America with his wife Rachel in 1758 and moved to Newport with their first child Benjamin (born December 1758) in 1761. By 1764, although Meyer Benjamin was declared insolvent, he continued to live on the good graces of the Newport Jewish community, working as a shohet (ritual slaughterer, Hebrew) and shamas (beadle, Hebrew) of the synagogue. Meyer Benjamin died just prior to the British occupation of Newport. His wife and son took the loyalist side
and, like other Britons, when the British were driven from Newport, the family made their way to New York, which was still under British control. At the war’s end, Meyer Benjamin’s family was evacuated by the British to Nova Scotia, where they remained until 1787. They then returned to New York City. In 1792 Benjamin was living in Richmond, Virginia, where he was later joined by two brothers. Benjamin married Hannah Hays of Westchester in 1794 and moved to Nashville, Tennessee. They later returned to Richmond, where Hannah died in 1803. In 1804 Benjamin was married to his wife’s older sister Rachel and then returned to New York City. His youngest son, Mordecai Myers, who left a published account, Reminiscences 1780 to 1814 Including Incidents in the War of 1812-1814 ..., married out of the faith and eventually settled in Schenectady.17

Touro is perhaps colonial Newport’s most widely recognized Jewish name. Yet, the Touro family provides one of the best examples of the dissolution of early Jewish life in Newport. When the Reverend Isaac Touro, one time hazzan (cantor, Hebrew) of the Newport congregation, died in Jamaica in 1783, his widow and three children were taken in by her brother Moses Michael Hays of Boston. Hays had lived in Newport but had left prior to the Revolution to secure a more prosperous livelihood. The Reverend Touro’s sons, Abraham and Judah, became merchants like their uncle. Abraham stayed in Boston, Massachusetts, where he died in 1822. His bequest of $10,000 to the State of Rhode Island established an endowment for the maintenance of the Newport synagogue edifice, this despite the fact that the Jewish community was nearly nonexistent by this point.18

While Abraham may have taken advantage of opportunities in the New England interior, Judah Touro joined the great number of merchants who left established communities to settle in the frontier. Judah set up shop in New Orleans and was among the founders of the first synagogue in that city. Judah outlived his brother by thirty-two years; when he died in 1854 he also left a $10,000 endowment to the Newport congregation, in this case for the minister’s salary and care of the cemetery. Without the munificence of the Touro brothers, it is quite likely that the synagogue would have not been available when the congregation was able to reestablish itself in 1881.19

Judah Touro’s choice of New Orleans is significant in another way as well. New Orleans held promise for merchants because of its status as an entrepot on the Mississippi. Not uncoincidentally, a great portion of Judah Touro’s wealth came from his investments in real estate. As people streamed into New Orleans land prices increased. Touro had the great fortune of having arrived early enough and with enough capital to exploit the situation to his great advantage. Whether it was visionary business acumen which caused Touro to see the potential of the Mississippi basin, or an adventurous spirit that brought him to the frontier before others, Touro’s decision to move westward allowed him to amass a relatively large
Moses Seixas’ family story offers a similar picture. The brother of the Reverend Gershom Mendes Seixas, the first American born Jewish minister, Moses was a merchant and served as the Newport community’s mohel (circumciser, Hebrew) from 1772 on. In 1795 Seixas founded the Bank of Rhode Island along with other Newport merchants. The bank operated out of his house and he served as the bank’s clerk. After Seixas’s death in 1809, the bank continued to operate from its original location, moving to new quarters only in 1818.

Moses Seixas married Jochebed Levy in Newport in 1770; they had eight children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. Of those seven, five are known to have died in New York City. One daughter, Judith, remained in Newport until quite late. She had married Samuel Lopez. Lopez along with his two brothers and their families were the only Jewish families remaining in Newport after 1818. Eventually, they also left for New York City, Moses Lopez being the last to go. When he and his family left in 1822, the Newport Jewish community came to its end.

Equally significant was the fact that only three of Moses Seixas’ seven children to survive into adulthood ever married. One of the three, Grace Seixas, married Benjamin I. Cohen at the age of seventy-two. It was her first marriage. The unavailability of marriage partners was a difficulty for all North American Jews in the early nineteenth century. One result was intermarriage; another was that Jews of this period married later on average than their Christian neighbors. While the economic impetus was the prime motivation for Jews to leave Newport in the early nineteenth century, social considerations, like marriage opportunities, should not be discounted. Of course, the very communal nature of Jewish religious life would eventually force individuals desirous of maintaining their religion to move when numbers dwindled.

Returning to the question of why the Jewish community of Newport did not rebound from the difficulties of the Revolution, the answer seems clear. Had economic conditions been better, especially for commercial pursuits, the community probably would have seen a regrowth. Things being what they were, a significant chapter in American Jewish history came to its end, the principle players and their descendants moving on to exploit the burgeoning opportunities of the west.

Although it requires a certain amount of speculation on our part, actions of the Seixas and Lopez families may indicate that living in a organized Jewish community was a higher priority for them and they thus moved to New York City. The Touros’ and the Myers family’s choice reflect other priorities. For the Touro brothers, raised as they were in their uncle’s home in Boston, living as one of few Jews in town was not unusual; they had known it all their lives. Yet, even without
The Decline of Newport Jewry

The benefits of an organized community, the Touro brothers remained fairly traditional throughout their lives, and their important bequests may be two of the first instances of Jewish affiliation through charitable works — something that has become commonplace in the North American Jewish community. Most importantly, they made their choices based the availability of opportunity, not religious needs. In short they acted like other Americans, weighing the benefits and disadvantages of any place of settlement and often choosing to overlook the hardships of the frontier in favour of potentially greater economic gain.

* *

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NOTES


3 Gilekson, ibid., pp. 17-18.


5 Gilekson, ibid., pp. 17-18, 68 ff.


7 Ibid.

8 Gilekson, pp. 13-14.


10 McLoughlin, ibid. p. 45.


12 Ibid.


14 Ibid.
Benjamin Gratz, February 8, 1819. Gratz Family Papers, American Jewish Historical Society.


Ibid., pp. 320, 324.


Phillips, *ibid*. Difficulties in finding marriage partners was not exclusive to Newport. Rebecca Gratz, the most noted Jewish woman of the early nineteenth century in the United States, was one of 12 children, ten of whom survived to adulthood. Of these ten, only six married. Four of the six Gratz children to marry chose Christian partners; Dianne Ashton, “Rebecca Gratz and the Domestication of American Judaism,” Dissertation, Temple University, 1986, xv, p. 92.
A CIVIL WAR HERO AND HIS RHODE ISLAND FAMILY
LEOPOLD KARPELES

BY JOYCE BLACKMAN

Leopold Karpeles, who won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism in the Civil War, had, among his descendants, six Rhode Island Jews — three children, two grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

Karpeles was born in Prague, Bohemia, in 1838, the second son of a cloth manufacturer. He left Prague at age eleven to follow his older brother, Emil, to Galveston, Texas, in 1849. The Southwestern frontier environment was a stark contrast to the strict establishment lifestyle embraced by Leopold’s prominent family in the Old World. But he thrived in the fresh elements of direct, unobstructed sunlight, boundless open space, and unrestricted freedom.

After orienting himself to the nature of Emil’s household, his fancy dry-goods store, and his expectations, Leopold’s first priority was to master the skills necessary to become an expert Western rider though in his childhood he had ridden stable horses and had become a highly accomplished equestrian. Close relatives had owned farms or resorts outside of Prague where Karpeles and his parents vacationed and enjoyed long hours of country horseback jaunts.

In Texas young Karpeles became a familiar figure around the horses and cowboys, eager to participate in the rites required for acceptance into this rough, new order of men and horses.

An opportunity to utilize Karpeles’ abundant energies constructively evolved soon when angry Galveston merchants decided to form a militia group to protect themselves against bands of marauders who descended upon the merchants’ caravans and looted the merchandise and abused or killed the riders. The culprits were generally Mexican bandits who crossed the Rio Grande River or bands of Indians, mostly Comanches, from remote areas. Karpeles joined the early force of Texas Rangers who strove to protect the victims of banditry. He was one of the youngest, most effective characters in both the Rangers and the Brownsville Guard. In later years he related tales of many narrow escapes and horrific circumstances.

Whenever Karpeles returned to Galveston between tours of duty, he and Emil would inevitably clash. There were so many issues where they differed that quarrels would soon escalate. One of the major problems was religion. Karpeles believed ardently in Judaism and its philosophy while Emil remained a staunch Catholic. In...
Prague, they had both attended Catholic school, which was fairly common in those
days. Emil’s fascination for Catholicism led him to help establish a building for the
Ursuline Convent in Galveston. He eventually died there and left all his worldly
resources to the nuns.

Next to the fiery emotional arguments about religion, slavery was another
problem for the two. Karpeles abhorred the practice of slavery and chafed at sights
and situations involving abuse of fellow human beings. He was outspoken about his
abolitionist views and could not comprehend his older brother’s complacency on
the subject, but Emil felt comfortable with the Southern system.

Unencumbered by his disapproving elder, the hot-headed youth thundered his
way through the territory confronting menacing villains and, occasionally, inviting
females. It was a colorful era and place, and Karpeles fitted in ideally.

By 1860, the furor over slavery was boiling over, and Texas, like the rest of the
country, was seriously divided. Liberal thinkers like Leopold were defying Souther-
ern tradition and threatening the basis for the area’s prosperity. Animosity flared
ominously. The hostility of the Karpeles brothers grew and obliterated their earlier
devotion to each other. Firebrand Leopold posed no minor threat to Emil’s
painstakingly crafted security. Emil began exploring avenues to rid himself of his
brother. He chose the most civilized means and engineered a move far away from
Texas for Leopold, all the way to the land of liberals, Springfield, Massachusetts.
Here, his anti-slavery brother would find compatible opinions and would likely
never trouble him again.

Leopold was shocked at the “moving mandate” and bitterly regretted leaving
many congenial aspects of Texas living. He had never tired of the generous, open
landscape and the many people whose attitudes mirrored that topography. He was
especially close to his cohorts in the militia and their values. He had forged a niche
for himself, and he was loath to quit it for anywhere else. He felt that life on
horseback was always an adventure that satisfied his restless nature. He journeyed
to Springfield via New York consumed with misgivings.

Propelled into this Northeastern major industrial center, Karpeles faced a new set
of challenges. In this Connecticut Valley major city action was usually confined to
written and spoken dialogue rather than frontier violence. Nevertheless, a sense of
danger pervaded Springfield when Karpeles arrived. Thinkers of the day feared that
American civilization and the Constitution of the United States were threatened by
the South’s stance. They corroborated Karpeles’ fervent beliefs and stirred him
deeply. He met and mingled with intellectual local contemporaries such as Samuel
B. Spooner, who became his closest friend. Spooner introduced his colorful new
comrade to many key Abolitionist figures, including those involved in the “Under-
ground Railroad.”
Springfield’s importance had increased dramatically when the U.S. Government decided to locate a federal armory there in 1794. The armory was viewed as a model of industrial development and a catalyst for attracting new settlers. When the Civil War finally broke out on April 12, 1861, “The subsequent destruction of Harper’s Ferry Armory in the South left Springfield to reign as the sole manufacturer of small arms operated and owned by the federal government.” Springfield was catapulted into a boom economy, and significant activists were drawn to this industrial hot spot.

The pace of life in Springfield quickened, and Karpeles was drawn into the provocative turmoil raging between factions in his new state. With Spooner’s encouragement and guidance, he turned to books and newspapers thirstily to understand all the dynamics of the bitter conflict. They attended lectures and meetings to listen to academics, politicians, and other respected figures of the era.

Karpeles avidly read all the material he could find about his idol, Abraham Lincoln. He made a pact with himself to support Lincoln’s ideals in every way possible. He was moved powerfully by the man’s brilliance and resolve and charmed by his refreshing humor. Theresa (Tasy), Leopold’s first child, remembered her father often quoting Lincoln’s remarks. Leopold especially savored these words of Lincoln:

I desire to conduct the affairs of this administration so that if at the end when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.²

The news of the start of the Civil War at Fort Sumter galvanized the North. Lincoln leapt into action requesting 75,000 men to bear arms. “Response was instantaneous and enthusiastic. The whole population seemed to be in the streets with Union favors and flags.”³ During the nineteenth century, the flag, as the most revered symbol of this country and its doctrines, assumed an almost holy stature.

Springfield seethed with excitement and pride and activity as the need for war materials stepped up production dramatically. Karpeles solemnly pledged himself to support the Northern cause and its symbolic Stars and Stripes. He now prepared to embark upon what would be the most fateful mission of his life.

As the nation mobilized for outright hostilities, Governor John Andrews of Massachusetts followed Lincoln’s lead and laid the groundwork for raising and training the state’s troops. Of course the armory was a focal point. By 1864, about 26,000 arms a month would be produced by the armory, more than 30 times the production at the war’s start.

Karpeles and Sam Spooner discussed the ways they wished to serve their country. Sam desired a position of leadership while Karpeles, characteristically, desired a
role that would require total dedication to his principles, regardless of danger. Full
of pride for his adopted land, Karpeles vowed to protect its sacred symbol with all he had to offer: his very life!

In the Civil War, there was a pressing need to flaunt “the colors” both as a moral and visible support for one’s own men. In the smoky, murky confusion of battle, orders could not be clearly heard and troops could easily lose their bearing. Visually, the flag was the rallying point on which they all relied. Conversely, the most demoralizing act to a regiment was seizure of its colors by the enemy. As John Anderson stated in his memoirs, “Colors are as important to a regiment as a head is to a man.” During the 19th century, the flag represented all that men and women held dear; it was the prize, the symbol that mattered more than mere mortals.

Leopold Karpeles enlisted in the Massachusetts 46th Regiment, a company of which was captained by his closest friend, Sam Spooner. The troops trained at Camp Barks in Springfield beginning on September 24, 1862. Karpeles was appointed Regimental Color Bearer, as he desired, and rapidly rose to the rank of Corporal. He was acutely aware of the dangers inherent in being color bearer, that it meant he would frequently be the number one target for the enemy. Regiments would regularly have to replace this man, sometimes three or four times within a single battle. In The Color Bearers Fairfax Downey says, “when bullets, shell fragments, and canister balls loosened grips on staffs, almost always other hands caught colors before they fell. . . . The toll of flag-bearers was so great that there are but few instances of one man carrying a flag throughout the war.”

The Massachusetts Archives of Military Records tell us that “The 46th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers Militia was raised largely in Hampden County in response to the President’s call of August 4, 1862, for troops to serve for [a period of] nine months.”

The 46th Regiment left Camp on November 5 and proceeded to Boston, where it took transports for North Carolina. New Bern was reached November 15, and here the Regiment was assigned to Colonel H. C. Lee’s Brigade. The regimental camp was established on the banks of the Neuse River near the city.

Their first active duty was during the Goldsboro Expedition. Starting December 11, the Regiment participated in the battles of Kingston, Whitehall, Goldsboro, Gum Swamp, and Bachelder’s Creek. They served with the Army of the Potomac during the emergency caused by Robert E. Lee’s invasion of Pennsylvania, did patrol duty around Baltimore the first week in July, and were stationed at Maryland Heights near Harper’s Ferry the second week. On the 12th, the Regiment joined the First Army Corps in front of the Confederate position at Falling Waters. After Lee’s retreat into Virginia, they were ordered back to Massachusetts, reaching Springfield July 21. At that point, the men were furloughed for one week and then mustered out.
of the service July 29, since their nine-month term had expired.\(^7\)

Commentary by officials regarding Karpeles’ service in the 46th includes the following:

This is to certify that Leopold Karpeles is a corporal of colors of this 46th Regiment. When Captain of his company, I appointed him corporal because I saw in him a fitness for the position and a fondness and taste for military life. I have always found him faithful to his duties and, what is a rare quality in a non-commissioned officer, appreciative of his rank and using that rank as an assistance to his commanding officer. In the battles of Kingston, Whitehall, Gum Swamp, and Goldsboro, Leopold Karpeles bore the State colors. The promptness with which he came upon the line of battle and the firmness with which he stood his ground, though his flag was several times pierced by the bullets of the enemy, were so conspicuous as to be the subject of remark and commendation. Major Samuel Spooner

I very readily give my testimonial to the efficiency and soldierly qualities, of Leopold Karpeles, having frequently remarked and observed his alertness, promptness, and faithfulness to duty.

Signed — W. S. Shurtless, Colonel Commanding the 46th Regiment\(^8\)

When the volunteers were mustered out in Springfield in the summer of 1863, debate was raging over Lincoln’s poor planning in creating six- and nine-month terms of service. Pressure was mounting to increase the time served so that seasoned forces would be available to press the Northern cause.

Karpeles returned briefly to Springfield and worked days at Meyer and Levy’s Store. He often wrote diligently into the early morning hours recording his impressions of army experience and his grave concerns about the state of current affairs. He commented on the emotional impact of seeing endless lines of blue forms proceeding in synchronized manner and punctuating the air with the raucous sounds of bugle blare and drum beat and occasionally, the cheering chorus of male voices blending harmoniously. On formal maneuvers, heavy artillery would add their chorus, and the fumes of fresh charges of gunpowder assailed one’s nostrils.

He wrote:

I marched in an inspired manner with my flag waving proudly for all to see and cheer. I am aware that while I’m providing a rallying point and courage for my comrades, I’m also a prime target for the enemy. I vowed to accept that risk when I assumed this obligation which I consider a privilege and honor. My dedication to my country’s flag rests on my ardent belief in this noblest of causes, equality for all. If my future rests under this earth rather than upon it, I fear not. ...

Tedium is another negative factor. Marching monotonously down
country roads in lines for hours at a time breeds boredom and hostility. There is no relief from enforced routines nor protection from danger. The soldier's life is a balancing act of striving to exercise control over one's mind and body despite unhealthful, wretched living conditions. Hours spent marching are futile if the commanding officers have miscalculated enemy positions. We are often ordered to turn around and march back to the position just vacated. This is mandated without explanation. We often rush to surprise the enemy before he can assemble properly, but the generals often outwit themselves rather than their adversaries. The men of their own army often become their victims. 9

This last statement is strangely prophetic because of the circumstances that would be the reason for Karpeles' being so severely wounded that he would endure a significant disability for the rest of his years.

When President Lincoln requested an additional force of 300,000 troops in October 1863, Karpeles had already decided to re-enlist. His second tour of duty began on March 7, 1864, in Springfield, when he was mustered into Company I, 57th Regiment. He was transferred on March 10 to Company E of that same regiment. The men trained at Camp Wool near Worcester. Warren Wilkinson, in his book *Mother May You Never See the Sights I Have Seen*, said

The men of the 57th came from eighteen states and thirteen foreign countries and reflected the diverse and dynamic America of their time. They ranged in ages from fifteen to forty-five, and most were in their mid twenties. They were predominately poor and Irish. Only about twenty-five of the regiment were seasoned veterans and the 57th's corporals and sergeants [Karpeles was promoted to sergeant on April 14] were used to help train raw recruits. 10

On April 18 the 57th Regiment, 928 strong, left Worcester. On the 20th it reached Annapolis and there became part of First Brigade, First Division, Ninth Army Corps. It resumed the march on April 23rd and passed through Washington, D.C., where the troops were formally reviewed by President Lincoln. On this momentous occasion, Karpeles was indelibly impressed by the grandeur of the parade, but even more by the stark simplicity of the reviewer. It was a riveting experience Karpeles would remember forever, to be given the chance to bear his nation's most valued symbol in front of the man who had inspired him to dedicate himself to the cause of freedom.

After Washington the regiment continued its course until April 30th, when it reached Rappahannock Station. Bartlett mentions that "It marched well for a new regiment, for in the last six of these eight days it accomplished one hundred and one miles." 11 The 57th was placed into the heaviest of action almost immediately. According to Steve Hill from the Massachusetts State House Flag Project, "The
Color Sergeant Leopold Karpeles and the Congressional medal of Honor awarded to him for his gallant service during the Civil War.
"57th Regiment suffered the greatest casualties of any of the Veteran Regiments proportional to the number enrolled. The 57th suffered the second greatest loss in killed and wounded of all the Civil War Regiments, being surpassed only by the 2nd Wisconsin, which was in the field four times as long."\(^{12}\)

The 57th now became a component of the Ninth Army Corps, commanded by General Ambrose Burnside. It would receive orders directly from Ulysses Grant himself. The first open conflict experienced by this virtually green new regiment was one of the bloodiest battles ever witnessed, the second Battle of the Wilderness. It was the first instance when General Grant and General Lee were the opposing directing generals, and it was, according to Captain John Anderson in his memoirs, *The Fifty-Seventh Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers in the War of Rebellion,* a veritable baptism of fire by immersion ... marching up in picture-book style, though the men struggled through trees and undergrowth never encountered on the parade ground, advancing over and through knots of ardent veterans huddled to the earth, the 57th was shot to pieces. In the first hour of its first battle, almost half of the regiment's field combat strength was killed, wounded or missing. The whole left wing of the Union Army crumpled up and then disintegrated under fire by two Confederate corps.\(^{13}\)

Color Sergeant Leopold Karpeles won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions "above and beyond the call of duty" on that horrifying day, May 6, 1864. He recounted his recollections of the bloody battle to Captain John Anderson thirty years later.

The 57th found the Wilderness cloaked in dense fog on the fateful day of May 6th, 1864. The troops were bedeviled by the tortuous tangle of all manner of irksome brambles, vines, scrubby vegetation, twisted roots, and sudden irregularities in the terrain. The men realized that the Rebels were not their only enemy for the dark, confusing depths of the wilderness posed alarming threats to their safety. The men became impossibly lost; separated from their comrades. Their judgement suffered until they were unable to perceive the enemy from their own troops. Fury and fear mounted.

To make matters worse, as shells ricocheted through the woodland interior toward the troops, they sliced through the trunks and branches, setting them ablaze. In turn, the brittle undergrowth received sparks that ignited it like thousands of matches. As the foliage burned, large and small branches became disconnected from the trees and crashed to earth, often trapping the men below. Rescue was next to impossible because of the separation of the men. Wounded comrades often were knocked to the ground and burned hideously, helplessly alone in their agony.\(^{14}\)

John Anderson reported that

the smell of burning flesh permeated the airless interior of the wilderness
A Civil War Hero: Leopold Karpeles

as the North endured what is considered the bloodiest war in history. In the two days of the 1864 Wilderness Campaign, the Union and the Confederacy lost over 2500 men.\(^\text{15}\)

Obviously, the Southerners were better acquainted with the area’s topographical eccentricities and took every possible advantage of the trapped Union forces. Stephen Minot Weld, in his *War Diary Memoirs*, emphatically declared that “The Wilderness surpassed anything ever imagined and was the hottest action he had ever seen.”\(^\text{16}\)

Some historical analysts pinpoint the ferocious Wilderness Campaign as the pivotal juncture when the North began its slow march toward victory. If that is an accurate evaluation, then Leopold Karpeles was a significant factor since he was instrumental in turning the tide of that battle.

Karpeles described the action in Anderson’s book:

\[
\ldots \text{our right wing commenced to break and through that brought about a general stampede. When it reached our regiment, Lt. Colonel Chandler [Colonel Bartlett having already been taken wounded to the rear] inquired “Color Sergeant, what’s the trouble?” I mounted a stump which had been broken by a shell and replied, “Colonel the Rebs are around us.” General Wadsworth (bringing up another division to support the collapsing wing) saw the colors of the 57th far out in advance, floating proudly and defiantly amid the sulphurous smoke in the face of the advancing foe. He also witnessed Sgt. Karpeles standing firmly and entreati}
\]

... Karpeles said

\[
\ldots \text{As I was the only color-bearer left on the field, I, with the assistance of officers Royce, Ward, and Bowman, by every possible exertion, halted the retreat and gathered a large number of men from other regiments, in addition to our 57th to rally around our colors! We also prevented the capture of stragglers in the woods and we added a sizable number of the rank and file of a Pennsylvania and a New York regiment. We succeeded in forming these men into a fighting line and ordered them to advance on the approaching rebels, and by a rapid discharge of firearms managed to check the enemy. We also enabled the disordered wing to form anew, thereby saving that portion of the wing aforesaid from almost total destruction.}
\]

We held until dark and then fell back and reorganized regiments and corps in time to take part in the fight the next day, in which engagement, our colors were very severely shattered.\(^\text{17}\)

Dr. Shomer Zwerling, in his book *Spiritualist Perspectives on Antebellum Experiences*, voices the opinion that “At the Wilderness, General Lee lost the initiative and never could regain it. The Wilderness was the turning point of the
Karpelès' citation for his Medal of Honor read: "While color-bearer, he rallied the
retreating troops and induced them to check the enemy's advance."18 Obviously,
Leopold's contribution to the cause of freedom was significant.

Karpelès and the 57th Regiment had little time to reflect on their stalwart stand
at the Wilderness as the Virginia campaign spun on. "It was fight, march, and dig,
with little sleep and little food." Frequently, there was a total lack of either, but
despite their deprivations, "The 57th fought like lions."19

On May 24th, 1864, the Ninth Corps was officially designated part of the Army
of the Potomac on a permanent basis although they had fought in tandem before this.

After a frustrating engagement at Spotsylvania Court House, the 57th moved on
to a major fiasco at North Anna.

The March to North Anna was arduous and it was kept up night and day
day until the footsore men thought they would drop from exhaustion and many
of them did. The men were weary and bleary-eyed, but obediently they
went, once again certain that the next fight was not far off. Most of them
felt that they were walking dead men, and they were resigned, through
fatigue and intimidation and despair, to that fateful destiny."20

The brigade to which the 57th belonged was badly led and suffered
seriously because of that. At the crossing of the North Anna River, on May
24th, its commander, Brigadier General James Ledlie, inspired with that
artificial courage (bottled) known through the army as Dutch Courage, led
his brigade without orders and unsupported against a virtually impregna-
able Confederate position. Shattered by musket fire, blasted by entrenched
artillery which shook the very ground and swept everything in front, closed
upon from both sides by Confederate infantry charge, [it was] a complete
rout. All semblance of a line was lost. It was a wild, tumultuous rush. As
the Union forces came closer to the rebel battery and its supporting
sharpshooters, the 57th men began to fall. The colors of the 57th went
down as Color Sergeant Karpeles was hit. Though badly wounded,
Karpeles rose and again moved forward with the colors. Colonel Chandler,
always near to the colors, tried to take the flag from him and send him to
get medical assistance, but Karpeles refused until a loss of blood com-
pelled him to give it up. In the collapse and rout that soon followed, Colonel
Chandler was mortally wounded and had to be abandoned on the field. All
night long, Karpeles charged himself with the death of his dear Colonel
because he had to leave the field. He was inconsolable though he was in
no way responsible for what had transpired.... "We had seen the regiment
very nearly annihilated and had lost dear friends we dearly loved. In the
loss of our colors, our pride had been humiliated, yet we felt a conscious-
ness that the brave men who were with the 57th that day had done all, under
the circumstances, that brave men could do." 21

Severely wounded, Karpeles was taken to a cavalry camp where, he was later
informed, he remained unconscious for several days. He was then moved to an area
hospital, was treated, and spent a recuperation period. True to his nature, Karpeles
became very restless during his convalescence and yearned to rejoin his regiment.
The doctors were wary about granting permission for his release but finally agreed
in October. Unfortunately, the debilitating wounds incurred at North Anna made his
re-entry into action very brief.

Wounded again in December, Karpeles was forced to submit to official orders and
allow himself to be transported behind the lines. His wounds were so acute that he
was moved to Mt. Pleasant Hospital in Washington, where care was most advanced
for that period. His condition was listed as nearly total paralysis. It was feared that
his leg would have to be amputated to save his life. This dire consequence was
avoided by a fortuitous twist of fate in the form of a chance meeting. The meeting
involved a young lady volunteering as a hospital aide, along with her mother and
sister, to minister to the men through such activities as letter-writing, ambulatory
exercise, and general morale boosting. This aide proved remarkably well-suited to
Karpeles' needs, and her cheerful visits and parcels of food and books elevated his
spirits commendably. Through the weeks, sixteen-year-old Sara Mundheim (daughter
of Rabbi Simon Mundheim, first Reform Rabbi of Washington) grew increasingly
fond of her fallen hero. The feelings were mutual. When amputation of his limb was
threatened, Sara queried the doctors anxiously and was told that there was a slim
chance that intensive care might avoid that catastrophe, but the hospital could not
offer such a level of care.

Sara prevailed upon her parents to allow Karpeles to be brought to their
Pennsylvania Avenue home and receive the nurturing she would gladly provide.
Her mother objected strenuously to the burden this would impose upon the
household. Mrs. Mundheim demanded to know the personal history of the young
stranger and his religious affiliation. Sara related Karpeles' life story, including his
enforced indoctrination into Catholicism in order to attend school in Prague. The
Mundheims acquiesced to their daughter's ardent pleas, but with one crucial
condition. They insisted that if Karpeles were to live under their roof he must agree
to convert to Judaism. Since he was already of that faith and he was willing and eager
to resume Judaic studies and practices, there was no problem. Joyfully, Sara
prepared to receive her young hero into the household where he would be evaluated
by their excellent doctor and nursed back to health by a dedicated team of
Mundheim women.

Their family physician was as competent as he was kind and began to monitor
Karpeles closely. With the excellent care provided by Sara, Karpeles’ health began gradually to stabilize, and he won the battle to retain his endangered limb.

One of Karpeles’ first ventures outside the house occurred when Lincoln’s funeral cortège proceeded up Pennsylvania Avenue right in front of the Mundheim home. Wearing red, white, and blue slippers made by Sara, Karpeles, with the use of a cane and leaning heavily on his lady, descended the stairs to join the throng mourning his idol. He remembered weeping copiously and was inconsolable for several days. His health took a turn for the worse, and the dark gloom of worry invaded the house until he finally began to recover.

Sara Mundheim and Leopold Karpeles were married in Washington’s Hebrew Congregation by her father as soon as Karpeles’ doctor considered him out of danger and reasonably strong.

Karpeles quickly became active in civic affairs. He artfully weaved his way through select Washington circles and became acquainted with the key figures. His daughter Tasy said, “Father knew absolutely everyone from the President down as far back as I can remember.”

Karpeles was also a major figure in the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), which supported veteran causes. His home was always open to any veteran in need. It also became the site for countless celebrations with elaborate banquets and merry music.

Karpeles’ adjustment to civilian and family life seemed complete when he and Sara became parents of Theresa (Tasy), a beautiful, strong-willed daughter, on December 21, 1870. One year later a second daughter was born, and life appeared unblemished with limitless promise. But, as in war, conditions reversed themselves rudely a year and half later when Sara died in childbirth along with her baby. Before she died, the family gathered around her bed, and Tasy remembered her mother grasping her hand as she summoned Leopold to her side. She begged him to promise to marry her older sister, Henrietta, when the obligatory mourning period of one year had elapsed. This would guarantee the good care of her young daughters, she reasoned. A weeping Henrietta and Leopold were prodded repeatedly by dying Sara to follow her last wishes. Finally, Rabbi Mundheim bade the two to comply to what Jewish law prescribes in such a case. Before the next year elapsed, the younger daughter also died of diptheria, and Tasy became the sole survivor of the original match.

After one year, a somber group assembled in the Mundheim’s parlor to join Leopold and Henrietta in matrimony. Tasy thereafter was told she had two mothers: one on earth and one in heaven.

A growing brood of children, now three sons and four daughters, required all of
A Civil War Hero: Leopold Karpeles

Above left. Karpeles Corps Badge. These were privately purchased by individual soldiers. The trefoil cross is the badge of the XVIII Army Corps, to which the 46th Massachusetts belonged. Army Corps were divided into Divisions, usually three, each of which used the badge in a different color. Karpeles badge is unusual in that it includes all three appropriate colors, red, white and blue, indicating that he was attached to Corps Headquarters. Above right. Badge of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union veterans organization in which Karpeles remained active after the war. Below. Inscription on Karpeles sword. Karpeles carried a sword of a pattern normally reserved for commissioned officers. Unusual, but not unknown during the Civil War, this suggests that Sgt. Karpeles enjoyed much of the status if not the actual rank of an officer.
Henrietta's energies. Money was never plentiful, although Karpeles' appointments to the Commerce and Post Office departments provided a steady income. Budgeting was not ever easy for Karpeles, who always supported anyone seeking his assistance as long as the seeker was a Civil War Union veteran. The Karpeles home was also the setting for both veteran and civic affairs with lavish spreads for many guests.

Karpeles established a niche in official Washington. His appearance was distinguished, and the cane he used because of his disabling wound only added to this mystique. He possessed a finely-tuned public persona and moved easily among the "movers and shakers" of post-Civil War Washington. He was recognized as a catalyst for the legislation of social causes as well as for his exemplary military heroism. He was avidly sought as a star attraction for major expositions, political campaigns, and veteran affair conferences, where he was a featured speaker and often prodded to discuss his exploits in Texas and the Civil War and his knowledge of Lincoln.

The emerging panorama of Washington with its snow white buildings was an awesome vision, and Karpeles was a fitting component. It was a setting "crying for impressive figures and he definitely cut one," said his eldest daughter.

He often was seen strolling with a Senator, Representative, or key foreign ambassador and conversing heatedly in one of the five languages he spoke fluently (English, French, German, Greek, and Czechoslovakian). His power of speech was all the more remarkable because he had virtually lost it completely when he suffered his severe battle wounds. 22

New Year’s Day was Karpeles’ favorite:

New Year’s morning the “Colonel” was up bright and early singing Civil War songs, snatches from Grand Opera and just bubbling with the joy of living. By eight o’clock he was fully dressed in his best Prince Albert suit with all of his medals: the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Commonwealth Medal, and the GAR Medal. He was freshly shaved and impeccably groomed. His high silk hat was polished over and over again until it gleamed. Tucking his silver-headed walking stick under his arm, Father was en-route to join the other Medal of Honor recipients and pay his respects to the President of the United States and other top dignitaries. 23

As years passed, Karpeles became more and more involved in worthy causes and became an officer in many organizations such as the Masons and the GAR, and one of the six founders of the Medal of Honor Legion, which he served as vice-resident. He worked tirelessly and successfully to pass the early closing law for District of Columbia stores. He always dedicated himself to helping those unable to help themselves. Tasy said, “His backbone was strong as steel like his will. He was a great patriot and unshakably loyal to his beliefs.” 24
A Civil War Hero: Leopold Karpeles

Tasy Karpeles

When Leopold Karpeles died in February 1909, he was buried in the cemetery of the congregation where he worshipped, the Hebrew Congregation in Washington. His tombstone is unique, with a replica of the Congressional Medal of Honor emblazoned on its granite surface. Buried with him are his widow, her cousin (a dear comrade), and his oldest and youngest daughters, Tasy and Lotta.

Three of Leopold’s children, Maurice, Tasy, and Lotta, became Rhode Island residents.

Tasy was headstrong and innovative and notable for her intelligence and charm. As the motherless member of the flock, she was allowed considerable freedom. She was dazzled by the sphere in which her father moved and resolved to “follow in his footsteps.” An irresistibly pretty child, she made secret trips to the White House, where she sat upon President Arthur’s lap and wrote at his desk. She became as well-known as her father and felt that she was quite a special personage. She resented work in the domestic front and managed to evade it whenever possible. School bored Tasy, as it had her father, and she learned the classics and politics from tutors. She became a gifted poet and writer.

When Leopold’s urbane, glamorous cousin visited from Prague, Tasy fell madly in love with him though she was only sixteen. (That was the exact age her mother was when she felt similarly about Leopold.) Cousin Adolph was the Austrian
ambassador for world’s fairs and crisscrossed the globe arranging details for these events. After a stay at the Karpeles home, Adolph left to attend to pressing business in New Orleans. Tasy refused to be left behind and pleaded, threatened, and coerced her way to accompany Adolph, who considered her a mere child, but loved her as he would his sister. Passage was on a Mississippi River boat and very romantic. By the time the pair arrived in New Orleans, Tasy had convinced Cousin Adolph to marry her and wire her frantic parents of their status.

Although Adolph was more than three decades older than Tasy, the marriage was a success and of long duration. The couple traversed the world and were well-acquainted with many of the luminaries of Europe, including royalty. Queen Victoria and the Czar of Russia were both charmed by the dignified Ambassador and his young wife from a world they considered almost uncivilized. Tasy adapted to the customs of each country in which they lived and was a significant social asset to her husband and his purposes. Like Leopold, Tasy was poised and unshakable.

When Adolph died in the 1930s and his Austrian securities could not be claimed, Tasy sharpened her wits and opened a jewelry repair shop, Chopard’s, at 212 Union Street, the Fletcher Building, in Providence, Rhode Island. The business was named after a family business and remained small, but select. She hired only expert craftswomen and became known for her gentility, honesty, and tireless attention to detail. Tasy’s business became her raison d’être and remained so until her death in 1960.

When Tasy lost her husband, Adolph, after forty-four years of marital bliss, her despondency was eased by the presence of her younger sister, Lotta. Tasy wrote in her memoirs,

Lotta lived with us when my good Adolph went to his eternal rest. To accustom me to a new lifestyle, Lotta and her many doctor friends (mostly psychiatrists) would arrange little gatherings at our house and they encouraged me to tell them about my various experiences with many prominent people in foreign lands. Then, one night, while I was sitting up in bed as usual — Lotta came in and said, “Tasy, instead of sitting here staring into space you can be with Adolph. Write your various experiences. I will have them typed; years later they will be of great interest to our descendants.” And so, through her urging, I began to record my memories — pages and pages; first of my childhood in Washington and then the progressive stages of my adolescence and young adulthood including my romance that erupted into an early marriage. Lotta seemed fascinated. She read each new portion to her doctor friends, who mandated that I should develop my reminiscences into a full-fledged autobiography. If Lotta had lived, this project would have reached completion.25

Tragically, Lotta May Karpeles died when she was thirty-eight in Washington,
Lotta Karpeles

D.C., at Garfield Hospital, which was headed by her brother, Dr. Simon Karpeles. She had been admitted for a routine appendectomy but died in the operating room.

Lotta was a brilliant scholar and a psychologist of advanced theories. She served as the State Psychologist of Rhode Island from 1930 to 1938, the first woman to achieve such an appointment.

Lotta held degrees from both George Washington University and Boston’s Judge Baker Guidance Clinic. In addition, she did graduate studies at Columbia University and Harvard University.

*The Providence Journal* obituary tells that

She was the author of many theories on psychological subjects. ... She developed many new methods of determining intelligence quotients, and she had the privilege of attending meetings of the State Parole Board, where her reports often determined the fate of a State inmate. ... Her work was evaluated as of inestimable value to the State and many an unfortunate soul who was steered to a proper course after her tests showed his true abilities. Miss Karpeles was a strong advocate of compulsory intelligence tests for all children of the State under pre-school age, declaring that such tests would reveal a child’s real capabilities and prevent many cases of later maladjustment. ...

[Miss Karpeles] recognized no normal working limits and would often report to work long before 8 in the morning and stay long after the others
in the State House had gone at night. She had a genuine love of work, and brought to it many modifications and improvements on Binet-Simon methods.²⁶

Lotta’s death was mourned deeply in the community and within her family circle. Her generous, sensitive ministrations toward her relatives were as remarkable as those to her profession. She pledged herself, like her father, to service to those in need of help. She was as outstanding as a pioneer in her field as Leopold Karpeles was on the battlefield and in the fight for civil rights.

Maurice Karpeles was born in Washington, D.C., in 1879, and settled in Providence, Rhode Island, in the late 1890s. He founded the first business that imported cultured pearls from Japan into the United States and, with a Japanese associate, Mikimoto, exhibited cultured pearls at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900.

The Low-Taussig-Karpeles Company was incorporated in 1910 at 139 Mathewson Street, Providence. Karpeles manufactured simulated pearls, naming the product La Tausca. The pearls, made with a process he developed, were known as the finest artificial pearls made. In the ’30s, Karpeles sold the name to another manufacturer.

After losing money during the Depression, Karpeles went into business manufacturing ecclesiastical jewelry and received an award from the Vatican in recognition of his work in making the rosaries presented to the first Americans named as cardinals by the Vatican.²⁷

Maurice Karpeles was a founder and first president of the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island, a member of Temple Beth-El, and an honorary vice-president of Camp JORI. His wife, Mietze, was a figure-skating champion from Bohemia whom he met while on a trip to Europe to buy precious stones. He had two daughters, Madeline Karpeles and Margaret (Williams) Graham. His grandson, Lyman James Williams, is descended on his father’s side from one of the first Jews in Providence, John Williams. Maurice Karpeles died in 1951.

There is one further Rhode Island connection with Leopold Karpeles. Dr. Kathleen Shanahan Cohen, one of his granddaughters, a psychoanalyst in New Jersey, is married to Dr. Morris Cohen, an economist, who is the brother of the president of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, Aaron Cohen.

To commemorate the memorable deeds and history of Leopold Karpeles, the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts, opened in 1994 a permanent exhibit of his Civil War artifacts and history. This museum is especially appropriate since it is located in the city where Karpeles began his Civil War odyssey.

Leopold Karpeles inspired his descendants to serve their country in the military and other public service arenas with ardor and distinction. They all wished to do justice to the example of their patriarch and his idol, the martyred Abraham Lincoln.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Reading about the heroism of Leopold Karpeles in the Civil War recalled a much earlier article in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes about "the calumny that Jews would not serve their country." This calumny, which certainly could have been refuted by achievements such as those of Karpeles and the five or six other Jewish Union soldiers who won the Congressional Medal of Honor, "was first raised in the United States in 1891," the article says,

... in a letter printed in the North American Review by a former Civil War soldier in which he wrote that he never met a Jewish soldier or anyone in the service who had. The "Gay Nineties" were not days of gaiety for Jews. It was the period of the pogroms in Russia, when waves of anti-Semitism were at their peak in Germany and France (Dreyfus affair). Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe were pouring into the United States and American Jews were straining their individual and collective strength to
cope with the problems created by this influx.

The Hon. Simon Wolf, President of the B'nai Brith, an official in Washington, D.C., feeling that it was obligatory to answer the letter in the *North American*, sent a statement to the magazine which they refused to print on the curious grounds that they had received so many replies that they had decided to publish none. However, Wolf’s statement was published in the *Washington Post*, was widely copied by other newspapers and was generally favorably received. Wolf received so much information from Jews who had served in the United States War, and from their families, friends, heirs and descendants that he engaged in additional, independent research and published [a book] *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*. The agitation aroused by the Dreyfus affair in France and Wolf’s work inspired Jewish citizens in many Jewish communities in the United States to form voluntary military organizations and one of these was the Touro Cadets of Providence.28

Samuel Mason was ... one of the founders of the Touro Cadets, “a semi-military youth organization, involved with drills, uniforms, marches, and parades in the military fashion. He soon became Captain of the Cadets.”29 During the Spanish-American War in 1898 the Cadets sent the governor of Rhode Island the following statement offering the services of the group to fight for its country:

Resolved, That the adjutant general of this state be informed of our readiness to enlist in the nation’s roll of volunteers after a reasonable notice.30

The Cadets were about to be shipped to Cuba when the war ended. They continued as an organization for “promoting physical culture” and for social activities such as balls and outings, later became the Touro Guards and, eventually, the Touro Fraternal Association.31

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**Notes**


2 Theresa Karpeles Taussig, *Memoirs: My Father’s Life and My Life*; original source of Lincoln quote unknown.


5 Ibid.


7 War Records Division, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

8 Ibid.
A Civil War Hero: Leopold Karpeles

9 Taussig, ibid.
17 Anderson, ibid., pp. 37, 38.
18 Citation from the President of the United States authorized by the Act of Congress March 3, 1868, awarded in the name of the Congress — The Medal of Honor — Date of issue April 30, 1870.
19 Wilkinson, ibid., p. 75.
21 Anderson, ibid., p. 102.
22 Taussig, ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
30 Document in Rhode Island State Archives.
PASSOVER AND THE CRYPTO-JEWS

BY DAVID M. GITLITZ

Five hundred and three years ago, in the spring of 1492, a new-Christian convert from Judaism named Juan de Salcedo was celebrating Passover in Soria, a small city in north-central Spain, with his good friend Isaac the Portuguese, when a neighbor burst in with the terrible news of Ferdinand and Isabella's order to expel the Jews. As Salcedo later recalled to Inquisitors:

The year that Their Majesties ordered the Jews to leave Castile, on Passover I was with the Jews at the home of Isaac the Portuguese ... teaching one of Isaac's sons to read [the holy books]. While we were reading, old Fernando de Guernica, the pot maker from Soria, who was a great friend of Isaac, came in and said: "What are you doing? Misfortune take you. You are wasting time. You read, you read. And even this fellow, alas, he thinks he is doing something useful." He was referring to me. "You would do better, festival or not, in thinking how you are going to sell your property, and how you are going to depart. Some say that you should become Christian, but may God give me a bad time if I advise it. The reason is that once you have become Christian then they will find a way to put your face in the fire. For as long as this devil lives, who came into Castile in an evil hour," which he said about the King, our Lord, "he'll have plenty enough power ... with the Inquisition. ... I tell you ... it is not worth while turning Christian." ... This is what Fernando [the pot maker] said to Isaac the Portuguese and his wife and mother-in-law and me. And they all went to Portugal and never came back."

Two groups: one that stayed in Spain and became Christian and one that chose exile and remained Jews. Yet the lines were not so clear cut: while most of the Spanish converts assimilated into mainstream Catholic society, some of them, perhaps even a third, continued to identify themselves as Jews and to practice as many of their old customs as they could. And in 1496 the exiles who had followed Fernando and Isaac to Portugal were given a similar ultimatum — convert, or be killed, or be gone — and some of them chose to stay and some to go. Over the next two hundred years those converts who stayed behind in Spain or Portugal, who are variously called new-Christians, or conversos or Marranos, tended to be of two sorts: if they wanted to blend in, or assimilate, then they, or their children, gradually became Portuguese or Spanish Catholics, indistinguishable from their Catholic neighbors. On the other hand, if they wanted to retain their Judaism, then they became crypto-Jews, secretly practicing as many Jewish customs as they were able.

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Over time the Spanish or Portuguese crypto-Jews met one of several fates. (1) Some of their families hung on for a generation or two, or five or six, and then, like their early assimilationist relatives, melted into the mainstream. (2) Others were caught by the Inquisition and executed. And (3) still others reached a point when they could no longer tolerate the need to hide their true beliefs, and they emigrated.

It is important to keep in mind that they did not all emigrate at once. Although a first wave of exiles in 1492 and 1496 went to Italy, and Turkey, and North Africa, additional refugees trickled out of Iberia for the next two hundred years. They tended to seek haven in the more liberal, commercially booming countries of the north. Protestant Holland, which had recently separated from Catholic Belgium, was a prime choice; and from Holland eventually many went to England. From their bases in those two centers they sought economic opportunities in America, in Dutch colonies like Brazil, or Curaçao, or New Amsterdam, or in British colonies like Jamaica, or New York, or Newport. The López and Touro families, for example, did not leave Portugal for Holland until around the year 1600; by mid-century an Abraham Touro became a *parnas* (lay leader of congregation, Hebrew) of the Sephardic congregation in Amsterdam; in 1673 the death of an Eliaho Hizkiaho Touro was recorded in Curaçao. In 1658 fifteen Jewish families came to Newport from Holland. Others, like members of the Levy and Seixas families, came from the British West Indies a few years later.

Though they came in different years, and from different ports, they brought with them some common experiences that had an important impact on the development of Jewish life in the British-American colonies. Their root culture was Sephardic Judaism, and almost all of them were descended from families which for some period of time — 50, 100, 150 years — had been forced to live as crypto-Jews. This means that for generations some of their ancestors had been half Jewish, half Catholic. Their grandfathers had been baptized, had regularly attended church, and had images of Jesus and the saints in their homes. They had been raised in an environment with no rabbis, no synagogues, no *mohels* to perform circumcisions, no *mikvehs* (ritual bath, Hebrew) for the women's monthly ablutions, and no Jewish books. For the most part their Jewish liturgy consisted of the few prayers they knew by heart: the *Shema* (basic statement of the Jewish faith, Hebrew), the *Kaddish*, and the brief formulæ recited at home over bread and wine, hand-washing, or blessing one's children. In an environment where servants, neighbors, and even family members could be Inquisition informers, building a *sukkah* (booth erected for Sukkot festival, Hebrew), or keeping the kosher laws, or lighting a Hanukkah lamp, incurred mortal risk. So the people who still thought of themselves as Jews tended to dream of the day when they or their children could emigrate, and meanwhile to attend church as little as possible, to quietly and privately mumble a few words of Hebrew, to follow as many of the old customs as they dared, or could remember, to
apologize to themselves for neglecting most of the halakhah (rabbinic jurisprudence, Hebrew), and to identify themselves in their hearts as Jews. This is an important point, and I will come back to it.

The religious culture of the crypto-Jews is a vast and intriguing question. It is an area which has engaged my attention for many years and is the subject of my book The Religion of the Crypto-Jews which the Jewish Publication Society is bringing out in the spring of 1996. In this paper I will focus mainly on the Passover customs of the crypto-Jews. I do this partly because these customs are interesting in and of themselves, and they give us a focused glimpse into the crypto-Jewish lifestyle of some of our cultural ancestors. But additionally, crypto-Jewish practice has some important implications for modern American Judaism as many of us practice it today.

Perhaps because Passover was a home festival, and its celebration could be shielded from prying eyes in the street, and perhaps because it celebrates communal freedom from oppression, the Passover festival played an important role in crypto-Judaism. In fact, after the Sabbath and Yom Kippur it was the most important crypto-Jewish holiday. Since this was known to Inquisition officials as well, they almost always quizzed witnesses about it, and as a result we have a great deal of data about how the holiday was celebrated in Spain, Portugal, and the Iberian colonies.

The first issue facing any crypto-Jewish family wanting to celebrate Passover was when was it? Since most had no access to Hebrew calendars, they tended to fix the date by the Julian calendar. The Mexican conversa Maria de Zárate told Inquisitors in 1656 that the “festival of the lamb was on the first day of April.” Others said it was some time in March. But by far the most convenient reference point was Christian Holy Week, and it is common to find testimony such as that of a young woman in 1572 in Baeza that “from Holy Thursday until the next Thursday was the Jewish Passover.” The next question was how long to celebrate it? Although normative Judaism in the Diaspora celebrates the Passover for eight days, with a communal seder on the first, or first and second evenings, crypto-Jewish families tended to be guided by their tenuous recollections from their often distant Jewish past, and they frequently varied the eight-day pattern. Some Mexican crypto-Jews, for example, held to the eight days, but some followed the instructions in Exodus 12:15 and only observed it for seven. In the late sixteenth century in Coimbra, Portugal, Passovers of four, five, six, seven, eight, and ten days were recorded. In addition, some crypto-Jews tried to throw off the village spies they knew were scrutinizing their every move by holding their seder not on the first evening of Passover but on the third, or fourth evening.

One characteristic of crypto-Jewish practice was that it tended to shift emphasis to not doing things. Customs that involved publicly observable actions were risky
because of the watchful eyes of informers. It was a good deal safer to fulfill your sense of Jewish obligation by abstaining from work, or refraining from eating, or both. So that on the whole there was a shift from feasts to fasts. Within a few years of the Expulsions, for example, Rosh Hashanah had all but disappeared from the crypto-Jewish calendar, while Yom Kippur became ever more important. The carnival-like celebration of Purim was replaced by a three-day Fast of Esther. And among many groups mid-week fasts were the rule. Because the crypto-Jews lived in an overwhelmingly Catholic environment, they came to think of fasting in the ways Christians tended to view all mortifications of the flesh: they demonstrated the sincerity of piety, and they were a way of accumulating a sort of credit that in the after life would hasten a person’s way through Purgatory; that is, fasting became a kind of insurance of salvation. Fasting was so important for crypto-Jews that there are many recorded cases of people who, unable to fast themselves, hired other people to fast for them.8

So it is not surprising to find fasting among the crypto-Jewish Passover customs. During Passover around Coimbra in the 1570s, Judaizers abstained from eating during the day and then ate a ceremonial meal with their friends in the evening. Their name for this fast was the *jejum das filhos* (the fast of the flat cakes).9 Ana Cortés, a crypto-Jew from Majorca, told Inquisitors in 1678 that, just before Passover, around Holy Thursday, her family kept the “Fast of the Lamb,” not eating or drinking for an entire day,10 and in Mexico, the family of her contemporary María de Zárate observed the “Fast of the Lamb” on April 1.11 Some colonial Mexicans, in fact, did not eat or drink during daylight hours during the entire week of Passover because, according to Seymour Liebman, fasting “had become so ingrained that many thought that every holiday had to be accompanied by a fast.”12

But even for the crypto-Jews committed to fasting, no matter how important the Passover feast was, it was still merely preliminary to the main events: a communal meal commemorating the Exodus from Egypt and the consumption of unleavened bread. In the Middle Ages, before the Expulsions drove the remaining Jews underground, the Iberian Passover seders seem to have been very much like those we celebrate today: the table was lavishly set with new dishes bought for the occasion,13 each family’s traditional recipes produced a wealth of special foods for the meal, flasks of Kosher wine sat on the table, and the Passover liturgy with its central story of Exodus was read — at least in the wealthier homes — from lavish Hagaddot, some of which have survived into modern times. The windows were open to let in the spring breezes, and families and friends sang out the traditional Passover hymns — including a few in Spanish — in voices that filled the evening air in the Jewish neighborhoods. During those years the ever increasing number of crypto-Jews, those whose families had been converted in the riots of 1391, or after the disputations of 1413-14, or during the waves of conversionist activity all
through the fifteenth century, tended to celebrate with their Jewish neighbors or friends. This was almost universally the case before 1480, when the Inquisition began to operate, but it was not uncommon right up until the Expulsion. In Spain the last elaborate, open seders of that sort were held in the spring of 1492 in homes like that of Isaac the Portuguese in Soria. By 1493 it would be worth your life to own a Haggada, or to sing the Spanish version of Had Gadya (un cabritico) loudly enough for your neighbors to hear.

The dozens of extant descriptions of crypto-Jewish seders from the 1480s give much detail about the ceremony, with particular attention to the foods that were served. In Ciudad Real, Spain, in 1484 María Díaz's family "began by eating lettuce, celery and other green vegetables ... and vinegar, and another ceremony which they make with maror, which means bitter, and certain little cakes of unleavened bread." Descriptions after 1510 tend to be much less explicit, often merely indicating that a seder was held and that wine and matzo were consumed.

Because crypto-Jews had no access to Haggadot, they had to rely on their communal memory about what to do and say at the seder. In addition, many made use of the one readily available source of the story of the Exodus, the version in the Latin Vulgate Bible, without commentary, and unmodified by the centuries of rabbinical interpretation that has become part of the traditions of normative Judaism. Thus Exodus Chapter 12:1-20, dictated the norms for crypto-Jewish observance, even to smearing the blood from the sacrifice of a lamb on the inside of the door-posts of their houses. Cristavão Lopes, a doctor in Evora who was executed in 1570 for Judaizing, every year at Passover would follow Exodus 12:5 and kill a one-year-old unblemished white male lamb.

Crypto-Jews tended to adhere literally to the injunction in Exodus 12:11 to eat with "your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste." It was common both in Spain and the colonies to eat the Passover meal while standing, and to carry a walking-staff in one hand. Thus, for example, at Luis de Carvajal's Mexican seder around 1580, Luis "paced back and forth as he read aloud, with a staff in his left hand and the Bible in the other." Frequently the group would sing hymns of praise from the Vulgate, with the favorite selection being Moses' hymn of thanksgiving from Exodus 15.

For most crypto-Jews, even more important than the seder ceremony was the consumption of matzo. In part, of course, this derives from the stern injunction of Exodus 12:15: "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel." But in part the extraordinary importance given by crypto-Jews to matzo is related to Catholic concepts and practices having to do with the consecrated wafer that is consumed...
Passover and the Crypto-Jews

during the mass in symbolic reenactment of the seder which was Christ's last supper. For example, Catholics believe that one must celebrate the Eucharist in order to qualify one's soul for salvation, and although these concepts are foreign to Judaism, it was common for crypto-Jews to tell Inquisitors that they ate matzo because — to quote what Isabel Gomes told the Coimbra tribunal in 1574 — "era bom pera salvar a alma" (it was good for the salvation of her soul). Micaela Enríquez of Mexico City said that at Passover her mother would place a piece of matzo in her mouth, saying certain words which seemed like the communion that the priests give." Other conversos cherished pieces of matzo the way they would a powerful amulet. In 1500, Beatriz Jurada told Inquisitors in Toledo that she believed that a piece of matzo could insure a safe pregnancy and delivery. A Mexican Judaizer in 1646 reported that a "relic" of matzo placed on the head could cure a headache.

In the tense atmosphere of secrecy in which most crypto-Jews lived, making matzo, buying and selling or distributing matzo, and even consuming matzo all presented major problems. Prior to the Expulsions, most crypto-Jews could secure matzo from their Jewish neighbors or relations. After the Expulsions this source was gone. And for the most part people were not equipped to bake their matzo at home. In those days, when most houses were small and the danger of fire in crowded cities was great, few homes had their own ovens. If you wanted bread, you took your dough to a commercial oven which baked it for you. But this was far too dangerous for matzo, and as a result, in each region some few converso families took it on themselves to prepare the unleavened bread for their community.

Matzo is fairly simple to make, but there are some variant methods, and lots of recipes have come down to us in the documents. The most basic was the recipe dictated by Antonio Cardoso of a village near Madrid, around 1650: a plain dough of flour and water, mixed without salt or yeast. In Almazán, Soria, around 1505 there were several bakers, and each one made the matzo a little differently. Francisco Suárez's wife enriched her matzo with egg and olive oil. Angelina de León added pepper and honey to hers. And Rodrigo Díaz's wife added to the pepper and honey white wine and clove. When conditions precluded preparing matzo, crypto-Jews looked to the local economies for unleavened substitutes they could use in their seders. Judaizers around Coimbra in the 1590s consumed a pasty cake made of cooked chestnuts. Mexican crypto-Jews had a ready substitute at hand; as Luis de Carvajal reported in 1589, "because he did not have unleavened bread he ate corn tortillas, since they had no yeast." Inquisitors were particularly interested in the system for the distribution of matzo, for they saw in it a map of the crypto-Jewish communities. Because they frequently asked about matzo distribution, we have lots of data about how it was accomplished. In Huete, around 1615, Rodrigo de Castro relied on his network of relatives to
distribute matzo to the crypto-Jews in the region. A generation later in Mexico City, matzo was prepared by the Montoya family and distributed by Rodrigo Tinoco.

Once you had safely acquired matzo the danger was not over, for it still had to be kept and consumed in secret. There were lots of strategies for doing this. Leonor González (Ciudad Real 1484) wrapped hers in a towel, which she hid in a basket under her bed. Sancho de Mora (Ciudad Real 1511) kept his matzo hidden among the papers and notebooks on his desk. In Ciudad Rodrigo, Spain, the Gómez sisters, toward 1580, tried to consume their matzo under the very noses of their Catholic friends and servants.

They baked some flat cakes of bread, white and without color, which were unleavened, baking them in the coals of the fire place. And all throughout Holy Week, when they were eating they handed pieces to one another under the table... trying to make certain that no one saw them. And all throughout the Feast of the Resurrection the witness saw them eating it in that way, even though they had put ordinary bread on the table.

For every crypto-Jew who slaughtered a white lamb, smeared blood on his door posts, baked matzo, and gathered his family and friends at his seder table, there were ten who thought they were doing well if they could just consume a little matzo during the Passover season. For every one who ate matzo, there were ten who merely abstained from eating leavened bread. And for every one who did any of these things in remembrance and continuance of their Jewish ancestry, there were others who each year at the season of the Christian Holy Week merely recalled the Passovers they had heard about in their family legends and, as they walked home from Easter mass, continued to think of themselves in some way as Jews.

And that thought, that tenuous ethno-religious self-identification, was in some ways the most enduring legacy of the Iberian crypto-Jews. It was a new definition of Judaism. Unlike any of their Jewish ancestors, who had defined their Judaism biologically (I am a Jew because I descend from a Jewish mother), or halakhically (I am a Jew because I observe all of the customs and precepts that are prescribed by Jewish law), or theologically (I am a Jew because I believe what Jews believe — whatever that may be), the Iberian crypto-Jews considered themselves to be Jewish principally because they thought of themselves as Jewish. Their self-concept was the key. When they at last emigrated to Amsterdam or London or the Dutch or British colonies, they emerged from hiding proud of their families’ generations of sacrifice for the sake of Judaism and of the way they — unlike so many of their assimilationist friends — had maintained their Jewish identity despite unbelievable coercion. As they emerged from the Iberian closet, they were met by rabbis who pointed out that they had been baptized, they had attended mass every week of their adult lives, they ate pork and rabbit and eels, had not been circumcised, and did not
know any more Hebrew than some mangled, half-remembered version of the Shema. “Yes,” they replied, “all that is true; but we are Jews nonetheless. And we want to return to the mainstream of traditional Judaism.”

But many of them really did not want that, at least not entirely. They did not understand the full implications of halakhic Judaism. They were used to a Judaism where individuals had the freedom to choose just how much of the halakhic law they wanted to observe. Theirs was not a separatist brand of Judaism, which emphasized the myriad restrictive customs which seemed to have been designed — in part — for the purpose of keeping Jews and Gentiles apart. Theirs was an adaptive Judaism, which while maintaining an often undefinable central core of Jewish practice and Jewish self-concept, allowed its practitioners to assimilate enough of the practices of the majority cultures in which they lived in order to blend in, to become citizens. Unlike much of traditional medieval Judaism, which preserved Jewish culture in isolated, ghettoized enclaves, the Judaism of the descendents of these crypto-Jews was a brand of Judaism well suited for the melting pot of America.

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EDITOR’S NOTE

Members of the Aristides De Sousa Mendes Society were guests at the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Annual Meeting on April 30, 1995, when Dr. Gitlitz gave the lecture on which this article is based. Many members of the Society, as well as many residents of Rhode Island, consider themselves to be descendants of crypto-Jews in Portugal.

The Aristides De Sousa Mendes Society was founded after the Portuguese Consul, Joao L. Laranjeira de Abreu, spoke at the midwinter meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association in 1990. He spoke of the Jewish-Portuguese diaspora and concluded with an appeal for “an institution representing the voice of the Portuguese-Jewish descendants in the State. The day this institution is created, please let me inscribe my name, because I feel, in my heart, the call of my Portuguese Jewish ancestors.” (See RJHJN, Vol. 11, No. 1, November, 1991, p. 67.) As a result, the Aristides De Sousa Mendes Society was formed.

In March 1995, about fifty Society members made a ten-day trip to Portugal at the invitation of Dr. Maria Soares, wife of President Mario Soares of Portugal, to honor the memory of Dr. Aristides De Sousa Mendes. The Portuguese counsel at Bordeaux, France, during World War II, De Sousa Mendes personally saved more than 30,000 Jewish refugees from the Nazis by writing visas for them to escape France through Spain and Portugal. For this action he was fined and forbidden to practice law in Portugal and died penniless and in disgrace in 1954. President Soares posthumously honored him in 1987.
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes

Society members on the trip to Portugal were received by the President, entertained lavishly by the mayors of every city they visited, and accompanied by the President’s wife on most of their trips. They visited ancient synagogues, the birthplace of De Sousa Mendes, the University of Coimbra, and cities where Jewish settlements had been located, with ancient Jewish quarters in ruins.

NOTES


2 Huhner, Leon, the Life of Judah Touro (1775-1854), Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1946, pp. 8-10.


9 Azevedo Mea, ibid., p. 359, etc.

10 Selke de Sánchez, Angela, Los Chuetas y la Inquisición: Vida y muerte en el ghetto de Mallorca, Madrid: Taurus, 1972, p. 274.

11 Lewin, ibid., p. 488.

12 Liebman, ibid., p. 69.


15 Roth, ibid., p. 25. Liebman, ibid., p. 68.


Passover and the Crypto-Jews


19 Toro, ibid., p. 247.

20 Azevedo Mea, ibid., p. 375.


23 García, ibid., p. 73.


26 Azevedo Mea, ibid., pp. 26, 186.

27 Toro, ibid., p. 243.


30 Beinart, 1974, ibid., p. 325


33 For example, in 1767 the Newport merchant Aaron López sent a ship to Lisbon to bring his crypto-Jewish nephews and his brother Abraham to America, where in September he arranged their circumcision. Marcus, Jacob Rader, *American Jewry: Documents Eighteenth Century*, Cincinnati: The Hebrew Union College Press, 1939, pp. 5, 6.
WOMEN AHEAD OF THEIR TIME
BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ AND GERALDINE S. FOSTER

In her autobiography, Golda Meir wrote that, on graduating from elementary school at fourteen, she dreamed of continuing her education and becoming a school teacher, the noblest profession, she thought. Her parents, however, had other plans for her. She could work in the family business “and sooner or later — but better sooner — start thinking seriously about getting married, which ... was forbidden to women teachers by law.” If Golda insisted on a profession, her mother suggested secretarial school to become a stenographer or typist. That way she would not have to become an old maid.

Although her ideas were rather boldly put, Golda Meir’s mother’s sentiments echoed those prevailing during the first decades of this century on the role of women. Marriage was the goal. A career, if it interfered with the greater good of marriage, was not desirable. Education was positive, up to a point, but “men did not like women to be too clever,” according to the current belief. It was felt that a young woman, on graduating from elementary or high school, could find “refined” work, meaning a job in an office or in a department store, until marriage. Teaching and library work were also considered refined but suitable only for women without marriage prospects.

There were some exceptions to the above accepted wisdom. There were families who supported their daughter’s aspirations and allowed them to define their own lives. However, most young women had to find their own strategies for developing their private interests and pursuing their goals.

This paper describes some of the Jewish women working in Rhode Island before 1940 who in many ways were ahead of their time, women who did define their lives according to their own aspirations. The Providence City Directory as late as 1940 lists no women as dentists, accountants, engineers or lawyers, but the stories of the following women involved in a diverse number of occupations and professions illustrate how each woman in her own way met the challenge of supporting herself or her children and pursuing a professional career or competing in a male-dominated occupation.

A DESIGNER AND ENTREPRENEUR

The 1974-75 edition of Who’s Who of American Women describes Anna Silverstein Port as an interior designer and owner and president of Stanport in Providence, consultant interior designer for the State of Rhode Island, Brown University, Old Colony Bank, R.I. College of Education, the Catholic and Episcopal

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Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, Vol. 12, No. 1, Part B, November, 1995
Women Ahead of Their Time

Dioceses, and hospitals, synagogues, and temples. Her restoration works included several Brown University buildings, Touro Synagogue, and Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York. She was a president of the New England Chapter and a national board member of the National Society of Interior Designers.

Anna Port accomplished all this with very little formal education. She married at sixteen and had her only child at seventeen. According to her daughter, Muriel Port Stevens, her mother always regretted that she never finished her schooling. Instead, she was self-taught and never stopped studying.

Even before Anna Port opened her own business, she and her sisters were often consulted by their friends about drapery and upholstery fabrics and sources for the purchase of materials and furniture. After Mrs. Port founded her own company, she received many calls for home decorating. Since she was more interested in commercial decorating, she suggested that her sister Florence take on the smaller, home jobs.

In 1941, when Anna Port started her business, fabric supplies were running low because of World War II. Many mills had to convert from peacetime production of curtain and upholstery materials to production of fabrics to meet armed services requirements. Anna, though, not only had remarkable talent but she was tremendously resourceful. Muriel Stevens said, “My mother would never say ‘no’ to a challenge.” While she was staying at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City she was asked whether she could make about 150 pairs of curtains for the hotel. She made up a sample pair, which met with the hotel’s approval, received her first big order, and managed to find the necessary fabrics.

Her company’s name, Stanport, was derived from her name and that of her son-in-law, Stanford S. Stevens, who joined her in the business in 1942. Their first quarters were downstairs in one room in a building at 27 Dryden Lane, Providence. Anna was meticulous about every aspect of her products. She herself could not even sew on a button, but she knew how sewing should be done. She had very high standards, demanding hand-finishing. She added a workroom for her employees next to the original space. Gradually she took over the building, expanding the number of workrooms for about thirty employees and adding a showroom.

Muriel Stevens commented that her mother never worked well with other decorators, maintaining that her mother “had to be in charge. Anna Port did not confine herself solely to the areas she was hired to decorate but often worked on the appearance of the entire building. Anna Port had studied architecture and had designed her parents’ home before she founded her business. She read everything pertaining to design, color, architecture — even plumbing. She studied colors and their evolution and why during certain periods in history some colors were used and others were not.”
Eventually Anna Port did work with one of the younger architects in a local architectural firm. Her contacts led to the enormous growth of her business.

During the Kennedy administration Anna Port was invited by the First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, to a reception for individuals and societies who had redecorated the rooms at the White House. The New England Chapter of Interior Designers, of which Anna Port was president, was responsible for the room located directly above the Oval Office of the White House (it, too, was oval shaped). The room was designated as the place in which foreign diplomats were received.

Anna Port's husband, Eli Port, took care of the bookkeeping for Stanport. It was he who chauffeured his wife everywhere. She never drove after an accident on Hope Street in which she hit the back of a horse cart and almost killed the horse. Muriel Stevens described her father as infinitely patient. He had none of his wife's ambition and could not understand how she worked so hard.

Mrs. Stevens described her mother as very caring. As a child she knew that her mother was always there for her and would never leave her if she were ill. But her mother could be very strict, and Muriel had to practice the piano; she had no choice. And her mother was a wonderful cook. Mrs. Port had remarkable patience in her cooking, and if a friend was having a Bar Mitzvah party, she would make all the little pastries. She never let anyone help with cooking or baking.

Anna Port was the oldest child in her family and had a close and caring relationship with the whole family, according to her daughter. She and her sisters often accompanied their mother, Mamie C. Nelson Silverstein, on trips in their chauffeur-driven car. They enjoyed plays and exhibits in New York and Boston. As Muriel commented, "My grandmother liked a good time but she did not want to be bothered with details, especially when it concerned her servants, leaving that up to her daughter Anna."

This remarkable woman, Anna Silverstein Port, died at the age of seventy-two on July 7, 1975.

Steep Hills to Climb

The first Jewish well-qualified woman physician in Rhode Island, according to Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky's article, "Jews in Medicine in Rhode Island," was Dr. Anna Topaz. She was born in Kevne, Russia, on March 23, 1872. After preparatory school in Kevne she studied medicine at the University of Warsaw, from which she graduated in 1894. She came to America in 1900. Since her foreign medical diploma was not acceptable to the Massachusetts State Board of Health, she entered Tufts College Medical School, from which she graduated in 1903. After practicing for five years in Boston she went abroad to study obstetrics and pediatrics at the Medical
School of the University of Paris. She returned to resume her Boston practice but in 1912 moved to Providence. Licensed to practice medicine in Rhode Island, she was elected to the Providence Medical Association in 1916. Her practice was largely devoted to obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Topaz was a member of the original staff of The Miriam Hospital. With many male doctors in the service during World War II, she assumed the full burden of the ward obstetrical service.

In June of 1945 Dr. Anna Topaz was in a streetcar accident, dying almost instantaneously. Never married, she was in her seventy-fourth year.

The children of two women doctors and one woman doctor herself were interviewed about their professions. Coincidentally, the three women concentrated in the psychiatric specialty of medicine.

Hattie Greenblatt Wolfe, a daughter of Leah and Berman Greenblatt, was born in 1891 in Providence. A brilliant student, she graduated from English High School and was a special student for one year at Pembroke College.

Her youngest child, Barbara Saroian, said it was her impression that her mother had always aspired to be a doctor. Hattie Greenblatt’s father was very supportive of his daughter’s choice of a career. When she entered Tufts Medical School, he decided she was too young to live in a dormitory and for her first year she commuted by train from Providence to Boston. She graduated in 1912, cum laude, then interned at the New England Hospital for Women & Children in Roxbury, Massachusetts.
Following her internship, she returned to Providence and the family home and opened her first office at 155 Benefit Street, practicing gynecology and obstetrics. Her father bought her a Buick roadster when she graduated from medical school. She used this car to make house calls.

In 1918 Hattie Greenblatt married Samuel Wolfe, a businessman. He had come from Baltimore to Providence, where his family opened a men’s clothing store. They lived next door to the Greenblatts.

Dr. Greenblatt Wolfe practiced medicine and lived with her husband at 110 Francis Street in Providence, according to the Providence City Directories of 1919 through 1927. With the birth of her third child, Barbara, born in 1928 (her other children were Eleanor and Marshall), the family moved to 377 Lloyd Avenue in Providence. She was no longer listed as a physician.

With the responsibility of three children she did not formally practice medicine, but her patients continued to call even after she gave up her office. According to her son, she continued unofficially to take care of her patients when they called on her, not, however, charging the two or three dollar fees she had formerly received.

In 1943 Samuel Wolfe died. Hattie Greenblatt Wolfe decided to take courses in psychiatry in order to practice a specialty which did not entail night calls. She decided that the most propitious way for her to practice was to get a job with the Rhode Island State Hospital. This was during World War II, and the State Hospital was short of psychiatrists. She was given an apartment at the State Hospital in which she lived during the week, returning to her Providence home on the weekends. Barbara, fourteen years old, had to commute to Providence to attend school. A number of German refugees took positions at the Hospital. Dr. Wolfe was especially friendly with Dr. Clara Haas, who had practiced medicine in Germany but was required to train for her medical license in Rhode Island.

Dr. Greenblatt Wolfe worked at the State Hospital for almost twenty-five years and advanced to head the department of psychiatry. She had the option to retire at sixty-five, but was urged to remain, which she did until seventy, when again she was asked to continue and worked until she was seventy-five, when she retired.

Her son said that his mother’s job was her life. She was compassionate and understanding with her patients. Hattie Greenblatt Wolfe died in December 1968.

Clara Loitman Smith, who was born in 1900 in Boston and graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1923, practiced pediatrics in Providence for many years. She was admitted to The Miriam Hospital medical staff in 1933 and was a member of the pediatric staff until the Hospital eliminated that department.

Dr. Smith was described by her granddaughter as a wonderful role model, a woman
of tremendous strength who had a remarkable outlook on life. She was one of four
daughters who were all achievers and goal oriented. One sister, Jennie Loitman
Barron, was the first woman judge in the hundred-year history of the Massachusetts
Superior Court.

Clara Loitman married Dr. Joseph Smith, head of the Providence Department of
Health, in August 1932. At that time she was the pediatrician in charge of clinics in
the Boston public schools. The Smiths had four children, two sons and two
daughters. With her office in her home, located at 281 Olney Street in Providence,
she was able to manage her practice and her children, as well as a grandniece,
Jeannie Blazer, whose mother had died when she was young.

The enormous home at 281 Olney Street, called the Marvel House, contained a
"ballroom which ran the entire length of the house. When the children were small,
Dr. Smith had the ballroom windows barred and let the children roller skate and ride
their bicycles there to their hearts' content."

For five years while her husband was in the service, Dr. Smith raised the children
alone (the youngest was sixteen months when Joseph Smith went into service), kept
up her large home, and conducted her private practice.

After many years of taking care of so many children, Dr. Clara Smith finally
retired from the practice of pediatrics when she was in her early eighties. This
beloved woman had an unusual amount of vim and vigor. She always talked about
how lucky she was in life to have had both her career and the love of her family.

Dr. Clara Loitman Smith now lives in Rockville, Maryland.

Vera Weinstein Fish was born in Toronto, Canada in 1911, the oldest of three
girls. Upon her mother's death when Vera was nine years old, the three girls were
sent to live in separate homes. By the time she was sixteen years old, Vera had
obtained a job and arranged for her two sisters to live with her. She changed her
name to Winston when she was unable to find a job with the name Weinstein. She
was interested in becoming a doctor, and according to her daughter, Carol Scott, she
said that she was able to succeed in her aspirations because of her father, who was
supportive of her goal, and because she believed herself to be ugly. (The latter factor
her daughter denied.) Because of this image of herself, Vera Winston felt she would
not be distracted by men or thoughts of ever getting married.

Vera Winston received her undergraduate degree from the University of Toronto
and then was one of nine women to receive a degree in medicine. She came to the
United States for a residency in psychiatry at a hospital in Santa Barbara, California.
A brilliant woman, she held medical licenses in California, Rhode Island, Canada,
and even Minnesota, her daughter said.
In the late 1930s Dr. Winston moved to Rhode Island to work at the Institute of Mental Health in Cranston, where she held a full-time administrative position along with her medical duties. There she met Dr. David Fish, also on the staff of the institution, whom she married.

Their first child, a girl, was born in 1942. Dr. David Fish went into the Army and was assigned to a base in Maine, working between Bangor and Portland, conducting psychiatric interviews of Army candidates. The Fishes’ second child, another daughter, was born in Bangor. At the conclusion of David’s service in Maine, the family moved back to the Institute of Mental Health. They had a house on the grounds across the street from the institution. According to Carol Scott, patients from the I.M.H. took care of the three children (by that time their only son was born). Vera Fish was in and out of the house all day, and the children saw a great deal of her.

In 1950 the family moved to the East Side of Providence, and Dr. David Fish entered private practice. In 1959 Dr. Vera Smith retired from the I.M.H. They owned a building on Thayer Street in Providence with separate offices for their psychiatric practices. Dr. Vera Fish arranged her office hours so that she could be home by three in the afternoon, when the children came home from school. The family ate dinner together.

Carol Scott also remembers that her mother thought she and her husband might conduct couple therapy with their patients, but her father did not think it would work out because her mother would always side with the woman. Vera agreed with her husband, and they never did practice couple therapy. Carol Scott also recalls how her parents loved talking about their work, a tremendous common bond. Her father always claimed that his wife was smarter than he was.

According to her close friend and fellow-psychiatrist, Dr. Sarah Saklad, Dr. Fish had many interests in addition to psychiatry. She was an opera buff who attended all the Metropolitan operas during their engagements in Boston. She maintained her proficiency in Yiddish and conversed in that language with Sarah Saklad. She subscribed to the Yiddish newspaper The Forward. She had a very warm nature and a very good sense of humor, a trait she shared with her husband. They traveled a great deal. Sarah Saklad said that the two couples often traveled together, including a trip around the world.

Dr. David Fish died in May 1979. Dr. Vera Fish retired that year and took on several new projects. In 1984 she was one of the founding members of the Brown community for Learning in Retirement. She was a founder and a benefactor of the Rhode Island Medical Women’s Association, which recognized her in 1988 as an inspiration and mentor to Rhode Island women physicians. After her husband’s death, Dr. Fish hired Brown University students to help her around the house, and,
eventually, when she became ill, she depended on them for assistance. According to Dr. Saklad and Carol Scott, she had a remarkable rapport with these students. She treated them as if they were her grandchildren, and they responded with great devotion. As each succession of Brown students graduated and left for distant places, in the United States and abroad, they kept in touch with Dr. Fish. After her death, one of her former students, a columnist on the New York Times, held a party in New York, and of the thirty guests, about a dozen had been Brown students who had worked for Dr. Fish. They continue to correspond with Carol Scott.

In 1981 Dr. Vera Fish established the David J. Fish Memorial Lecture in Psychiatry at the Rhode Island Hospital to honor her husband, who had been chief of psychiatry at the Hospital until his death. The lecture is now known as the David and Vera Fish Memorial Lecture.

Unfortunately, in the last months of her life, Dr. Vera Fish suffered from Lou Gherig’s disease and was unable to speak. She relied on her beloved students and never gave the impression that she felt sorry for herself. Dr. Fish was a woman who never boasted about her accomplishments, and although she was often quiet her daughter said that was because she did not believe in “small talk.”

Dr. Vera Fish died on February 9, 1994.

Sarah Mazick Saklad was born on Chalkstone Avenue in Providence and attended Candace Street School and Classical High School. She traces her interest in medicine to an injury she sustained when she was ten years old. She had injured her knee and was taken to the hospital to have it sutured. The event impressed her so much that she came out of the hospital convinced that she wanted to be a doctor—not a nurse. At that time she had no idea what was entailed in becoming a doctor.

She read all about medicine through her years at Classical High School. She entered Pembroke College in Brown University with the class of ’29 and majored in pre-medical courses. To reach the college Sarah Mazick had to take the trolley to the First Baptist Church on North Main Street and walk up the steep hill to the college campus. She recalls how difficult this was during severe icy winters. But College Hill was just one of the many steep hills that Sarah Mazick Saklad had to climb to reach her goal.

Quoted from the Pembroke College Yearbook, 1928 (she graduated in three years): “With seemingly small effort she solves terrible electricity problems in Physics 28, she understands the most noted formidable organic chemistry equations ….” Sarah Mazick was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi.

Dean Margaret Shove Morris of Pembroke College took an interest in Sarah Mazick and her aspiration to be a doctor. It was she who found a “fairy godmother”
to underwrite the expenses of medical school. That medical school was at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, and was unique in that it was obligated to take women applicants. The reason for this was explained by Dr. Saklad: The University was not prepared financially to initiate a medical school. A group of wealthy women which included Mrs. Grover Cleveland, the wife of the President of the United States, offered to raise the money the school required, but only on the condition that the school accept women on the same basis as men. This proposal seemed unacceptable to the men of the University, but since they were unable to raise the money themselves, they finally had to agree. The women presented $450,000 to Johns Hopkins, the school opened in 1893, and women have always been part of the student population. It should be noted that Harvard Medical School did not accept women applicants until 1946. Sarah Saklad said, "I never felt any discrimination as a woman medical student." She was one of seven women in a class of seventy-two students.

Dr. Saklad graduated from Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1932. She took a rotating internship at a Boston hospital which is no longer in existence and then a rotating internship in infectious diseases at the Charles V. Chapin Hospital in Providence. She was the first woman doctor hired for this position. At Chapin Sarah Mazick met her future husband, Dr. Elihu Saklad, who had been hired as City Physician by the hospital. Originally Sarah Mazick's appointment had been for three months, but she was asked to stay on for another nine months. After an interim of three months on contagious diseases at a Worcester hospital, she returned to Chapin for a residency in psychiatry. Her training included work at the State Hospital and a residency at the State Mental Hospital in Middletown, Connecticut. This appointment paid her $2,400 annually plus room and board. She was thrilled at this unexpected salary (she had previously earned $75 a month). It enabled her to pay back money she had borrowed in order to finish her studies at Pembroke College.

Sarah Mazick's next career move was to Boston, where she worked with individuals who were "out on the street" — not institutionalized. From that part-time job she was appointed a Harvard Fellow, for which she received $1,000 to work at the Massachusetts General Hospital. She was able to live at home in Providence and commute to Boston for this part of her training. After leaving Harvard, having fulfilled the requirements for Boards in Psychiatry, she and Elihu Saklad were married on July 2, 1939.

Dr. Saklad said, "I promptly became pregnant, and I decided that if I were going to take the Boards, I'd better take them before I had my baby." After months of intensive study, she took the one-day grueling oral exams in New York and passed.

Dr. Saklad's first position was in the Outpatient Department of the Chapin
Hospital. Her mother took care of the baby during Sarah’s working hours. After her second child was born, a cousin took care of the children (her mother had died). Then came World War II, and her husband went into service. They had been in their home on Morris Avenue in Providence only ten months when his orders came to go to the West Coast. She recalled how difficult it was to travel by car cross-country with two children, one four years old, the other seventeen months. Dr. Elihu Saklad practiced his specialty, anesthesiology, while she took care of then three children, the third having been born in 1945. Her comment, “I had a rough time.”

The Saklad family returned to Providence in 1946, and Sarah Saklad resumed her career. She had an in-patient service at Chapin Hospital and was on the consultant staff of The Miriam Hospital. When asked how she managed their care and her work, she replied that she scheduled appointments while the older children were at school and the baby was napping. She had converted her den to an office. “It was like a three-ring circus. I never had live-in help, but I am well organized,” she said. In later years when the care of young children was not a factor, she took on the position as consultant to the pediatric department in psychiatry at Rhode Island Hospital.

Dr. Sarah Saklad was a physician at the Crawford Allen Hospital in East Greenwich and then at the children’s rehabilitation unit at Rhode Island Hospital. The children’s stay was lengthy, and the nurses had problems managing them, but Sarah Saklad gave greatly of her time and expertise to help the children. Her career is known for the devotion and great skill she gave to the care of children who were fortunate to be her patients.

IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

Nursing “in those days,” the 1920s, was generally not considered a “respectable” occupation. For a Jewish girl to enter the profession often meant facing down parental opposition in order to pursue a cherished dream.

Eve Margolis Goldberg wanted to be a nurse ever since she saw how nursing nuns ministered to her mother during a serious illness and hospitalization. “They were like angels from heaven,” she said. On her mother’s return home, Eve, then in the eighth grade, tended to her, winning compliments from friends and from her mother’s doctor, who encouraged her interest in nursing.

Although Mrs. Margolis did not know what to make of her daughter’s choice of career, she accepted her decision but did not offer approval. She herself, a single mother of two, supported the family by caring for women and new-born babies in Boston, where Eve was born.

Rebecca (Betty) Marks Berger’s father was adamantly opposed to her going to
Rebecca (Betty) Berger, nurse

nursing school. He had no respect for the profession at all, according to Sheila Berger Kaplan, her daughter. While in high school and after graduation from Commercial High School in Providence, she had worked as a bookkeeper at her father's glass business, and he expected that she would continue to do so until she married. But so great was her desire to become a nurse, she enrolled in night school to take supplementary courses that would enable her to meet the entrance requirements for the nursing school at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston.

The nursing school of Beth Israel Hospital was the mecca for Jewish students in this area. It was close to home and provided kosher meals as well as a congenial atmosphere in the nurses' residence, where accommodations were "adequate" according to Eve Goldberg — two girls to a room, one bathroom per floor. It was close enough to Providence to enable Betty Berger to make the trip home whenever she wished, yet far enough for her to feel independent.

Eve Margolis Goldberg graduated in 1928, Betty Marks Berger a decade later. Eve Goldberg described the three years of her training as classes and exams and twelve-hour duty days. Students received twelve dollars a month the first year, fourteen dollars the second year, and sixteen dollars the third. Out of this sum, they paid for uniforms and books and any breakage of hospital supplies.

The first two years of training were spent at Beth Israel, taking courses as well as working on the hospital floors. During the final year one could choose among a number of area hospitals for more specialized training. Mrs. Goldberg would not
allow Eve to take a rotation in the psychiatric hospital. During those years of training, Eve Goldberg said, "You scrubbed. You cleaned. We had to scrub those white steel beds and the stools and the bed pans. Everything had to be scrubbed. The linen had to be put away just so." Betty Berger told of how hard she and her classmates worked with little auxiliary help. It was a sharp contrast to the experience of her daughter, Sheila Kaplan, in nursing school during the '60s.

Following graduation, Eve Margolis decided to do hospital private duty nursing in Boston, her home city. She recalled working twelve-hour shifts for seven dollars a day. Some of the more aggressive nurses (called Commies by their peers) agitated for an eight-hour shift. They succeeded. Private duty nurses were thereafter paid five dollars per eight-hour shift, minus fifty cents paid to the hospital for a meal. Floor nurses at that time received ninety dollars a month.

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Miss Carleton said, because her family had neither relatives nor friends there, unlike Boston or New York. She was anxious to be on her own.

Sarah Carleton was accepted into the program at Rhode Island Hospital in 1928. At dinner on her first night there, Miss Carleton later told, she learned that she was the only Jewish student in a hospital that did not seem to welcome Jews on its staff or nursing school. The unthinking comments of her fellow students (who did not know her origins) stunned her because she had never experienced anti-Semitism in Canada. In response to the attitudes expressed at the table that night, she “ostracized” herself from the whole class. However, the intervention of the director of nursing, Miss Potter, helped to ameliorate the situation, and Miss Carleton made the effort to become a member of the group.

During the six-month probation period, student nurses earned eight dollars a month, from which they had to pay for needed supplies and any breakage. Probationers wore a uniform of black stockings and shoes, navy dress buttoned down the front, and a starched white apron that had to be the regulation two inches shorter than the dress. Student nurses wore pin-striped dresses instead of navy. Failure in an academic subject meant termination at the end of the probation period. Of the seventy-two young women who began the course, only about forty continued in the program.

Coming from a wealthy home, Miss Carleton found the washing and the scrubbing, chores she never did at home, a challenging new turn in her life, but she still loved nursing, especially the work on the wards. A ward consisted of forty patients, twenty beds to a side, and on a surgical ward, there was also an additional room, a sort of recovery room for the post-operative patients. Her training also took her to Butler, Lying-In, and Chapin Hospitals.

Following her graduation in 1931, Miss Carleton remained at Rhode Island Hospital for a short time. She and Lena Pomerantz set up the infirmary at the newly opened Jewish Home for the Aged on Hillside Avenue, Providence, where she remained for a year. Most of her nursing career, though, was spent in private duty nursing, with a short stint in the early 1940s as a nurse at the Health-Tex plant.

Sarah Carleton left the nursing profession in 1943 to open an antique shop bearing her name, first on Broad Street, then North Main Street, and finally in East Providence.

Esther Markensohn Kane has the distinction of being the first woman graduate of the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences. At the time of her graduation in 1915, she was married and the mother of two boys. In addition, she worked in the family drug store during her husband’s illness and ensuing recuperation.
Pharmacy seemed a natural choice of career for her. Her husband, Benjamin Kane, had passed the State Boards in Pharmacy shortly after they were married, and her brother Frank, also a pharmacist, owned a drug store at the corner of Prairie Avenue and Blackstone Street, which Mr. Kane purchased soon after becoming a registered pharmacist. As Mr. Kane's business interests grew, Mrs. Kane retired from the pharmacy to devote herself to her family and philanthropic interests.

**Rose Goldsmith Kunstler** was born in New York City in 1907 and attended grammar school in South Providence. She graduated from Classical High School and decided to become a pharmacist. Her brother, Maurice, may have had a major influence on her decision as he had graduated from the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy in 1921, and he may have envisioned the two of them owning their own drug store. She was one of four women in her class of perhaps two hundred students, and the only Jewish woman.

The Goldsmith family lived across the street from Benjamin Kane's drug store when they moved to Rhode Island in 1913 from the Ukraine by way of New York. Philip Goldsmith opened a watchmaker/jewelry store at 190 Prairie Avenue. According to their son James Goldsmith, they lived above a market, Livingston and Bolger's. He was born in this apartment and was the first baby delivered by Dr. Harold Libby. There were already two older siblings, Maurice and Rose. Esther was born three years later.
The family purchased a drug store at the corner of Camp and Lippitt Streets in 1925, a year before Rose's graduation. Because of the store's hours — eight a.m. to eleven p.m. seven days a week — and because making a living in the store required the participation of almost the whole family (Mrs. Goldsmith and Esther excepted), Mr. Goldsmith sold his jewelry business, and they moved to the East Side, Providence. The store was the traditional type of pharmacy in those times. It had a stock of sundries, patent medicines, tobacco products, candy, and, of course, a soda fountain.

In 1929 Maurice married and moved to Dorchester, Massachusetts. Rose was now the only pharmacist, with a great deal of responsibility on her shoulders. The family made a living from the store, James Goldsmith said, because everyone worked long hours. The only time the family sat together at a meal was on Yom Kippur night when they broke the fast. It was a pattern of their life that Mrs. Goldsmith served each family member one at a time as they went from the store to home to eat and back to the store.

The store became burdensome for Rose, because Rhode Island law required a pharmacist on call at all times during a drug store's business hours. She was a young woman and wanted to have time for herself. Finally, Mr. Goldsmith decided to sell the store. The next owner called it "Dave's Pharmacy."

Rose Goldsmith found employment as the pharmacist at The Miriam Hospital, on 25 Parade Street in Providence. Although her working space resembled a cubby-hole, she "loved it there." Very outgoing, she became very popular with the nurses and other members of the staff and frequently attended dances and parties. She remained there for a decade and then left to join the staff at the Biltmore Hotel Pharmacy. In her letters to James Goldsmith during World War II she wrote about all the famous people staying at the Biltmore who came to the pharmacy. She loved the glamour of it all. When the Biltmore Pharmacy closed, she worked for the National Drug Store, Pawtucket, owned by James Lippitt.

Shortly after The Miriam Hospital moved to its present location on Summit Avenue, Providence, Rose was offered a position as director of volunteers at the hospital. At first she thought that she was wanted once again in the pharmacy, but, on hearing the offer, she decided to accept the challenge of a totally new departure in her career. It was during this time that she met and married Edward Kunstler. He died three years after their marriage, and Rose continued as director of volunteers until her retirement.

"She Is a Practical Person"

Irving Howe described the East European immigrant mother as a "practical person." Whether in the old country or in America, when she had children to feed, she always managed to put food, however meager, on the table. To this end she could be both resilient and resourceful.

Tillie Blake Percelay and her family arrived in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, by way of Lawrence, Massachusetts, near the turn of the century. Max Percelay died at a very early age, leaving Tillie a widow with very young sons dependent on her. Her granddaughter, Marion Percelay Pranikoff, stated that Tillie was a very brave woman who worked very hard to provide for her family and to care for their daily needs. She opened their home at 302 North Main Street (now Roosevelt Avenue) to boarders, generally landsleit newly arrived in Pawtucket, in order to support her children.

As soon as the boys were all in school she began to look for other means of earning a living and became involved in a company selling yarns for wire manufacturing, a business with which her sons were also later associated.

Sadie Fried was born in Hungary, near the Carpathian Mountains, in 1883. At about fifteen she left home to visit a sister who had settled in New York. The visit lasted nine years, ended only by the illness of Mrs. Fried's mother. She returned to Hungary to be at her mother's side during her final days. While there, she was introduced to Myer Fried, and they subsequently married.

Sadie Fried longed to return to the United States, and so the Frieds followed the course of so many would-be immigrants. With a group of friends, Meyer left for New York in 1910 to find work and a future for his family, while Sadie remained behind with their baby daughter, Molly.

Although she had a house with a yard where she kept a goat and some chickens, Mrs. Fried was faced with the problem of supporting herself and her child. The problem became more acute when World War I broke out and all postal communication between Hungary and the United States was severed and no money could be sent to her. However, Mrs. Fried and a friend, Mrs. Gluck, found a way to put food on their tables. They would go to the neighboring town, buy sacks of corn and wheat, bring these to a mill near their town to be ground, and then sell the flour.

Eleven years elapsed before the family was reunited in New York.

A visit in 1923 to their landsleit, the Glucks, who had arrived in the United States earlier, introduced Mr. Fried to life in Providence, which he found quite agreeable. After three months he sent for his family.
Realizing that her husband was an excellent carpenter but an inexperienced businessman, Mrs. Fried looked for an investment opportunity for herself and found it in a large property on Oak Street in the Olneyville section. It consisted of a boarding house plus duplex cottages, occupied mainly by tenants who worked at the mills in the area.

Mrs. Fried had never had any experience in running a boarding house or managing rental property, nor did she know anything about non-kosher cooking since she herself was very observant. However, that did not faze her.

The duplexes were rented to families, while the boarding house catered to single men, who had the option of renting a room or two for two and a half dollars a week or having room and board for ten dollars. There were thirty-five rooms on four floors, a bathroom and linen closet on each floor, no heat in rooms above the first floor. The first floor contained the large dining room, a so-called smoking room with a pot-bellied stove (no smoking allowed in the room), a bedroom given to a young relative adopted by Mrs. Fried, and two pantries, one kosher for the family’s food, and the other treyf (non-kosher, Yiddish) for the boarding house food. The large kitchen also boasted a huge butcher-block table where sides of beef were cut. The children were not allowed to go near that table with any of the family’s dishes or cutlery lest they also be rendered treyf.

The first year Mrs. Fried hired a cook, but once she had learned how to cook for the mostly Irish blue-collar workers, she took over the task herself. She learned how to make corned beef and cabbage to their liking. Molly Fried Sklut remembered the breakfasts that her mother produced: eggs, pancakes, steaks. Often there were people from the neighborhood who came to the boarding house to eat instead of to a restaurant, as well as people who arrived with a pot or pail for some “take out.”

At first Mrs. Fried had a hired hand to do the needed maintenance on the property, but as Mr. Fried’s construction business did not prosper, he gave it up in 1927 and took over maintenance of the property. It soon became a family enterprise, as Molly, then a teen-ager, helped with the cleaning and changing the linens. Her two sisters were too young to help.

Although the Depression played havoc with their enterprise, Mrs. Fried managed to keep it going. She made a practice of using any leftovers for sandwiches, which she distributed among the homeless in the area. She was given the nickname “Mother Macree” from the old Irish song.

On Sunday mornings Father Sweeney from St. Mary’s Church came to the boarding house to visit parishioners, Molly Sklut recalled. The boarders would give her mother their rent plus one dollar each which she collected in their behalf for the church. The priest would then offer her a blessing, invoking the names of Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob.

Despite the Depression, Mrs. Fried enlarged their holdings by purchasing a neighboring property, consisting of a store and two apartments, at 1775 Westminster Street. She turned the store into a small discount outlet, selling merchandise purchased from other businesses that were closing. She also allowed Pioneer Women (now Na'amit) to hold their rummage sales there.

By 1936 Mrs. Fried had stopped serving meals to her roomers, and the large dining room took on another function. It became the site for the High Holy Days services for the seventeen or more Jewish families who lived in the Olneyville area. The small congregation used two Torahs inherited from the Sklut family which were previously used for services held in their home in Cranston. “How my mother loved those Torahs,” Molly Sklut recalled. “She decorated them with nice mantles and a curtain. Even now I meet people who remember the services held in our dining room.” In the late 1940s, when the Olneyville congregation had already dispersed, the Torahs were donated to the newly organized Cranston Jewish Center, now Temple Torat Yisrael.

In 1949 the Fried property was purchased by the State of Rhode Island to make room for the Olneyville Freeway.

The Milliner and the Modiste

Mollie Sales Katz was born in Austria. Orphaned at a young age, she and her brother lived with their grandmother, and, as a young teen, she went to work in her uncle’s bakery. When her grandmother received passage money from her husband, who had preceded them to the United States, Molly and her grandmother immigrated to Providence in 1900.

Mollie soon found employment with a milliner who taught her the art of making hats. Her pay was three dollars for a six-day week, but since she was observant and did not work on Shabbat, fifty cents was deducted. On that salary she supported herself and saved enough money for passage money to send to her brother.

Mollie married Harry Katz in 1906. A year later their first daughter, Rebecca, was born. When Rebecca was seven years old, Mrs. Katz decided to open her own millinery shop and found suitable quarters at 256 North Main Street, not far from their home on Pratt Street. Her other daughter, Sylvia Katz Factor, born fifteen years later, recalled that her mother walked up the hill from North Main Street, often as late as ten at night because she might have a customer who came at closing time and wanted to try on every hat in the shop.

As a very young child, Sylvia Katz spent many days with her mother at the shop. Among her memories of that time was the customer who could not seem to find a
hat she liked, until she spied Mrs. Katz's hat hanging on a peg. Pleased with the style and the fit, she wanted to purchase it. Mrs. Katz was prepared to give up her hat, but four-year-old Sylvia blurted out, "Look! She's taking Mama's hat." That ended the sale.

Sylvia Factor recalled going with her mother on buying trips to New York City. They took the train to New London to avoid the turbulent waters around Point Judith and then boarded a boat for the rest of the journey. They stayed at the Hotel Breslin in the heart of the garment district.

Mrs. Katz had a large following. She made elaborate hats in the style of that time, using felt or buckram frames which she decorated with velvets, ribbons, bows, and feathers. However, much to the dismay of her customers, she closed her shop in 1928 in order to stay at home with her children. From then on, she devoted her energies to her family and to charitable and community organizations.

Sarah Spater Koffler learned the art of tailoring and dressmaking in her native Rumania. Always a very independent person, she was sixteen years old when she left her family and homeland in 1912 to come to Providence, where she had a stepbrother much older than she. After a brief stay with her relatives, she rented a four-room top-floor apartment on Goddard Street and within a year began to operate a tailoring business there. She specialized in making wedding gowns, although she made dresses as well. Even at that time, according to Elsie Koffler Chernack, her mother charged $150 to $200 for a gown. Sarah was able to do intricate work in satin and lace, with beading and pearls.

Although her daughters never saw any of her bridal creations, they met women who described them in great detail and raved about their beauty.

When Sarah Spater married Charles Koffler in 1921, she ended her career as modiste, and from then on devoted herself to her family and to keeping the books for her husband's newly founded luggage business. She confined her dressmaking to creating outfits for her daughters and grandchildren.

Elsie Koffler Chernack stated that her mother's abilities extended to all kinds of handiwork: sewing, crocheting, knitting, embroidery. She would look at a dress or coat or suit, then cut out her own pattern from newspaper. Then she would help her daughters to make the outfit, thus nurturing their abilities and teaching them the art she had mastered.

SHOWING WHAT THEY CAN DO

When Mamie Brown Block was ready in 1913 to enter the business world in New York City she saw few opportunities for a woman, save as typist, stenographer, or clerk. She had a crisp new high school diploma in hand, ambition, and confidence,
but no experience. Without experience no jobs were available; without a job, how could one gain experience?

Anxious to get started in the world of business, she applied for a position as typist with a small magazine, *Rider and Driver*. When she let it be known that she had studied shorthand and was willing to take dictation, she was hired. This gave her an opportunity to work in the various departments of the publication. Advertising appealed to her the most. “After more than a year,” Mrs. Block stated in a taped interview made a few years before her death, “I left the publication for greener pastures.” However, her expectations were not fulfilled until she decided to target six firms—none of whom had placed help wanted ads—with a letter of application that included this sentence: “If no position is available at this time, will you create one so that I can show you what I can do.”

The Burroughs Company, an advertising firm, had just opened in New York City. Mrs. Block was hired as secretary to the manager of business advertising. However, she aspired to a higher position, and using her powers of persuasion effectively, she was promoted to field representative.

Her new position meant traveling to visit customers to get “human interest” stories for Burroughs advertising copy. Her territory covered the area between New York and Boston. The thought of her traveling alone worried her employer and scandalized her father, particularly when he realized that she would be staying in hotels unchaperoned. The problem was solved initially when her mother arranged for her to stay with an aunt on her first business trip. On a working visit to Boston, she met James Curley, the city fire commissioner, later to become the famous mayor of Boston. He was most concerned about a young lady traveling alone and was happy to learn that she was staying in a proper residential hotel for women. He also took the time to make certain that her interview was successful and that she arrived at the train station on time.

Mrs. Block stated that she was expected to dress well, travel by parlor car, and stay at the best hotels. For that purpose she had a liberal expense account. A friend facetiously remarked, “And she even gets paid for it.”

In 1921 Mamie Brown married Morris Block, a metallurgist at Rhode Island Malleable Iron Works, and she moved to Providence.

Mrs. Block’s advertising career had apparently come to an end, since her husband shared the prevailing opinion that a wife worked only when her husband could not support her. Eventually they compromised. She worked at home doing free-lance work and writing articles on homemaking for a woman’s magazine, as time and her growing family permitted. She also took an active role in the Women’s Advertising Club in Rhode island and in Zionist organizations.
In 1939, Mrs. Block said, "I felt the urge to go back into business." Her children, Evelyn, Muriel, and Robert, were all in school. Her brothers owned a major art supply company in New York, Arthur Brown and Co., and they offered her a territory in Rhode Island that reached as far as Worcester, Massachusetts. However, as Mr. Block still objected to her working, they reached a compromise whereby she would work part-time. Evelyn Block Goldstein recalled that her mother, who did not drive, dressed up in gloves, hat, and a conservative outfit, and rode buses to prospective clients, names gleaned from the telephone book. A large linen closet in their home on Lenox Avenue was given over to storing stock. Everyone pitched in to make deliveries; Evelyn also helped with the record-keeping.

Except for a brief period, Mrs. Block did not have live-in help. She did all the cooking herself. Mrs. Goldstein remembers her mother juggling two pressure cookers in order to have dinner ready on time. Passover was an exceptionally busy time, as the family was observant.

It became apparent that their home could no longer accommodate the expanding business. A friend in the real estate business warned Mrs. Block that landlords in the Providence downtown area, where she wanted to locate, were "suspicious" of a woman wishing to rent a store or office unless she were a hairdresser, milliner, or dressmaker. It was suggested that she lease premises in her brother's name as the owner of the store. However, she refused and told the truth to the landlord of the desired location, above Weybosset Pure Food Market on lower Weybosset Street. After a very careful background check, Mr. Albert Dailey accepted her as a tenant.

On opening day, Mrs. Block's mother told her sons not to send flowers to their sister. "Send a big clock. People always want to know what time it is," she said. She, too, was a very practical businesswoman.

Evelyn Block Goldstein, who gave up going to Pembroke College in order to participate in the business with her mother, spent two months in New York before the opening to learn about stock and inventory. She managed the store while Mrs. Block called on customers. Mr. Block did the custom framing.

In 1954, Block Artists Supply moved to a first floor location adjacent to their previous store. Eleven months later Hurricane Carol flooded downtown Providence. Their stock was ruined; the building had to be razed. By this time Leon Goldstein had joined his wife in the family business. They relocated nearby, but eight years later fire struck. They reopened on Dyer Street, followed by a store in Warwick.

Mamie Brown Block earned many accolades for her community service, her work done in behalf of the Women's Advertising Club, and for her business acumen. She was chosen Rhode Island Advertising Woman of the Year in 1972.
Celia Helford Sherman, next to George Jessel, noted comedian.


Celia Helford was a publisher, editor, advertising writer, and sales manager. Born in Providence in 1898, she attended Hope High School. Always of an independent nature, she left home at eighteen to live with her half-sister in Cleveland, Ohio. She began her magazine career in that city working in advertising for This Week in Cleveland.

When she returned to Providence, she worked with J. I. Cohen, a publisher and first director of the Jewish Community Center. They published This Week in Providence, a weekly guide containing a store of information, distributed free at hotels, libraries, bus lines, depots, restaurants, business places, drug stores, public buildings, advertisers, and other places. A copy of this little booklet for the week of September 29, 1928, reveals the stores, the eating places, the others business of the era. The visitor was shown the activities of that week in Providence — the exhibits, the meetings, theater offerings, trolley car schedules, and available radio programs.

Celia Helford, who did not drive, hired a driver to make calls on potential advertisers.
She moved to Boston, where, her niece, Florence Markoff, said, “Her career really took off when she went to work for the firm that produced *This Week in Boston*. She met and worked with celebrities. It was not long before she decided that she could produce a better edition than her employer. She did so and put him out of business.

Later in her life she married Sam Sherman, a lawyer who never practiced law but was in the manufacturing business. Upon her marriage she gave up her writing and publications. All her energies and creativity she transferred to her husband’s business and to the Jewish community activities of Stamford, Connecticut, where they lived.

Florence Markoff described her aunt, Celia Helford Sherman, as a “mover and a shaker. A very independent lady, always a control person—an extrovert, a takeover person.”

Celia Helford-Sherman died in November 1993 at the age of 95.

**She Only Talked to the Man in Charge**

Jean Hyman Goldberg had no intentions of pursuing a career in retailing. Born in Providence, daughter of Ettie and Haskell Hyman, she graduated from Classical High School, and, an accomplished pianist, also from the Hans Schneider Piano School. She was admitted to Boston University. Her goal was to become a lawyer, a rare occupation for women at that time. However, she did not complete the courses necessary for a degree. Through her brother Nathan she met Jesse Goldberg, who changed her life and her goal. He had come to Providence from New York to take a job at the Outlet Company as a buyer for the clothing concession in that store.

After Jean Hyman and Jesse Goldberg were married they moved in with her parents. In 1927 the young couple rented a small store in the Kinsley Building on Westminster Street in downtown Providence to open a dress shop. They based their brave move on Jesse Goldberg’s experience in the clothing business. Having very little capital, they opened with an inventory of only twenty-five dresses. They named their dress shop *Jean’s*. Jesse Goldberg introduced his wife to the wholesale garment district in New York, where he taught her the intricacies of buying for a dress shop.

Gradually they built up their business and moved to a larger store in the Alice Building, also on Westminster Street, renting space on two floors. The building was shaped like an arcade, with windows facing the interior. Jean Goldberg arranged one of the window spaces to display dresses. There was a walk-in gate to the area, and Jean’s was the first store as one left the elevator. They built up a very good clientele. Mrs. Goldberg learned the taste of her customers and bought accordingly. She
provided for charge accounts and carried moderately priced merchandise.

After several years they made a decision which proved to be the wrong one. They considered it necessary to take in a line of coats, but neither Jean nor Jesse Goldberg had enough knowledge of this product. They took in a partner, and, as Jean Goldberg said, "What did we know? We were both so young." The partnership did not work out and in 1933 dissolved.

They then opened a dress shop on Westminster Street and a second dress shop on Tremont Street in Boston, both under the name Jobe, since they could no longer use the name Jean's. In 1936 they gave up both stores. It was at this point that Jean Goldberg's "survival instincts" came to the fore. They had to sell their home and moved with their son to Jesse Goldberg's parents' home in New York.

Jean Goldberg was intent upon finding a job. While walking in Manhattan's garment district, she saw a sign, "Pinner and Rubinstein," a commission wholesale house. She literally "sold herself" by submitting a list of her contacts in the dress business. She was hired on the basis of the glowing recommendations she had received.

Jean Goldberg was able to find many customers for the firm. When she realized that her salary was inadequate for the business she was providing, she asked for a raise and was refused. She left to take a position, not based on commissions, with another firm, the Manny Strauss Buying Office, at sixty-five dollars a week. She said, "This was at the height of the Depression, but I never hesitated to move on, to upgrade my salary and responsibility with each move."

Luck also played a big role in her career. A chance meeting with Harry Pinkerson led to his offer for her to become a buyer for his dress shop, Pinkerson's, on Westminster Street in Providence. The idea of moving back to Providence appealed to her. Her starting salary was to be $125 per week. The year was 1937.

After six and a half years as buyer for Pinkerson's, once again coincidence or luck changed the course of Jean Goldberg's career. As buyer of Pinkerson's, she often took the train to New York. Morris Zimmerman, who often took the same train, told her of the difficulty Edward Zwetchkenbaum, owner of the New York Lace Store on Lorraine Avenue in Pawtucket, was having in finding a suitable buyer. He suggested that she investigate the position. She met with Zwetchkenbaum, who offered her the buyer's job. She agreed only on the condition that they sign a contract, to be reviewed annually. He replied that in his nineteen years of doing business he had never had a contract with an employee. She stood firm and said that she would not change jobs unless he did so. He conceded, and that was the beginning of a twenty-six year relationship between Jean Goldberg and the New York Lace Store.
It was in her position at New York Lace Store, the first discount store of its kind, that Jean Goldberg was able to demonstrate her business acumen and her creativity. A press release from the advertising agency Bo Bernstein & Co., Inc., in 1968 described her position and responsibilities.

Mrs. Jean Goldberg, architect of the boutique shop image to the fashion departments at Warwick Shoppers World, Coats Field Shoppers World and New York Lace Store, has been named women's fashion merchandise manager for the chain. She will merchandise the same departments for which she now buys dresses, junior petite, knit suits, maternity, formals and brides. She will also retain her buying duties.

Jean Goldberg described the store at that time: “The physical appearance of our fashion departments in no way complemented the merchandise. High style dresses and suits were hung on wire hangers attached to iron pipes. The floors were of bare wood.”

In her capacity as buyer she spent two or three days a week in New York City visiting fashion designers and manufacturers. She was considered by people in the fashion world as an “astute, intelligent buyer who knew fashion, material, workmanship, price and timing.”

A student at Arkansas State University picked Jean Goldberg’s name from other women executives in the 1964-65 edition of Who’s Who of American Women and wrote to her asking for insights into what characterized the woman executive of the day.

Jean Goldberg emphasized in her letter of reply that the woman must have a great desire to do well. She must know every phase of the business, giving all details that can be handled by employees to them, but keeping control in her own hands. “If you have drive and ambition for the work you do, your key people will remain by your side and will also get the drive. You must be able to get along with people.”

The student, Mary Lou Studdard, wrote a letter in 1995 about how she utilized the information received in her own career. She replied, in part:

I am now retired [she received her master’s degree in Education and became assistant dean of students at Arkansas State University] ... I still consider the qualities she spoke of as meaningful to today’s executives as I felt they were in 1966. Though not an executive in the corporate business world, I endeavored to utilize those qualities she spoke of in my responsibilities of guiding and teaching.

Upon her retirement in 1970 from the New York Lace Store and its eleven stores, Jean Goldberg was earning a salary of $39,000 a year, a very high salary for a woman at that time.
Jean Goldberg was a successful woman executive who also had many other talents. Utilizing the same dedication and drive she had as buyer, she served as vice-president and director of her husband’s business, the American Wholesale Toy Company and the Zelda Realty Corp.

She is an artist and has studied at the Rhode Island School of Design. As owner of Jobe Dress Shop, she was noted for her window displays. She combined apparel display with drawings of the seasons. Last, but by far from the least, is the following news story in the May 15, 1972, Providence Evening Bulletin: “Mrs. Jesse Goldberg of Providence using a No 3 wood, scored a hole-in-one yesterday on the 150-yard eighth hole at the Crestwood Country Club.”

Editor’s note: This article will be continued in the next issue of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes. No doubt some “Women Ahead of Their Time” will not be included, but the authors make no claim that every possible person can be listed.

NOTES

1 Interview with Muriel Port Stevens, December 12, 1994.
3 Interview with Barbara Wolfe Saroian, July 7, 1995.
5 Interview with Jean Blazar, July 8, 1995.
6 Interviews with Carol Fish Scott, June 2, 1995, and Dr. Sarah Mazick Saklad, November 17, 1994.
7 Saklad, ibid.
10 Interview with Sarah Carleton, June 22, 1995.
11 Benjamin N. Kane, As I Remember It, privately published memoir, undated, p. 15.
13 Interview with Marion Pranikoff, June 10, 1995.
14 Interview with Molly Fried Sklut, May 18, 1995.
15 Interview with Sylvia Katz Factor, January 5, 1995.
17 Interview with Evelyn Block Goldstein, May 17, 1995.
19 Interview with Jean Hyman Goldberg, January 1, 1995.
JEWISH VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

The following oral history was transcribed and edited from a number of interviews conducted by Pearl F. Braude of Providence, Rhode Island. More of the over forty of these interviews will be published in future issues of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes as space permits and as funds become available for transcriptions.

IRVING JAY FAIN

Irving Jay Fain was born in Providence on August 11, 1906, and died on August 22, 1970. The following interview about his World War II experiences was conducted by Pearl Braude with his widow, Macie Fain (Silver), in 1990.

PEARL BRAUDE: Unfortunately, Irving died in 1970 and so we can't have him to give us his testimony. But, Macie, try to recall as best as you can. When was he inducted?

MACIE FAIN (SILVER): ... Fall, 1942. ... He volunteered, because he had quite a lot of business contact with the army and he figured that they needed someone who knew tires, which was his business. And, they said they did and if he volunteered they would use him in the Quartermaster Corps. He volunteered and was sent down to a camp outside Baltimore ... And while there, he found that he was not put in the Quartermaster Corps, but he was put in the [Air Corps].

PB: Did he have any kind of rank?

MFS: as a lieutenant ... Shortly after he got into the army, about, as short as about two weeks, he had no basic training, he was alerted to go overseas and he was then transferred to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, which was what was called a staging area for departure overseas. ... At first he was allowed to stay off the campgrounds with his wife. We stayed at a room in a boarding house there. It was very difficult to get any place. ... and after he was there he was not able to ... come back there much of the time. He never knew when he left whether he was going to be able to come back. There was a number at which I could call him or he could call me at this number, but the lady who ran the boarding house wouldn't let us use the telephone. I heard her talking on the telephone to a friend of hers and she would say she felt "so sorry for these poor young people who were being separated. It's just so sad." She felt so bad and yet she wouldn't let us use the telephone. It was a very expensive proposition to stay there and we had one miserable room. At any rate, that was unimportant.

PB: How long did you stay?

MFS: I think it was about a couple of weeks, maybe a little bit longer. I'm not too sure right now. But I remember one night, in the pouring rain, Irving's life-long friend, Eddie Goldberger, who at that time was married and living in New York ... a native of Providence — [Irving] had been friends with Eddie since boyhood. Eddie
came out with his wife ... Margie ... to see us, and after we took Irving back to the base, Eddie said he didn't know what kind of arrangements I had but whatever I needed, call on him. ... We lived from day to day. It was very pathetic. We'd sit in the dayroom and see these people that were well into middle age. There was one colonel and his wife. The colonel had been in World War I and he thought he'd never be called back. And, here they were, sitting, holding hands with tears in their eyes. He, too, was waiting to be sent off, overseas.

First they told Irving that they were going to issue them warm underwear and blankets. The first rumor was that they were going to North Africa. Then the rumor was that they were going to Russia 'cause they issued such warm, heavy clothing. Finally, when he left, he didn't know where he was going but the next thing we heard, he'd been sent to England, to a staging area there, near ... I forget the name ... I think it was Sheffield, England.

One of the wonderful parts of Irving's experiences overseas was the cordiality of the local people wherever he was sent. Now, I don't know if it was only the Jewish people felt that or whether all people were. He became very friendly with a family named Cohen and they were just like real family to him. He was invited over for dinner and whatever ... Friday night dinner, whatever religious occasions, he was invited there. I think he stayed in England for about a couple of months. Then —

[In November 1942] ... he was in the second wave of attack in North Africa. The first wave was purely military and shooting. He was right after that.

PB: What was his actual duty?

MFS: Well, they were ... supplying the Air Corps. He took care of the tires on the airplanes. But when he arrived in Algiers, Algiers was sortof a country-town place. It was very undeveloped and rude but it was, not only France, but the former French colonies were still under the rule of Petain and they still had the Nazi restrictions. The Jews still wore the yellow arm-bands.

PB: The Vichy government?

MFS: ... Well, I don't know whether the Vichy government was in power in France. But certainly, ... the people in Algiers were following the Vichy line. ...

There, too, he met a wonderful French family. ... They came from Paris. ... They were very well-to-do ... Everything that they had was taken over by the Germans when they occupied Paris. They got out with their two sons and their lives, and lived in Algiers as many of the expatriate French people did. They befriended Irving to a remarkable degree. The two boys were extraordinary, bright young men. They were really children at the time in their mid-teens. But to show the extent and the influence of the Vichy government, at one time Jean-Jacques and his brother, ... the
older of the two ... they were going to join General Leclerc ... who was leading a resistance army through the Sudan off to Algiers to replace the Vichy-oriented government there. The boys had to leave in the middle of the night because, had they been caught, they would have been shot as traitors.

Irving went around collecting the posters which showed the Vichy orientation forbidding Jews to sit on certain park benches, forbidding them to go to school, and these other things. These posters are now at Harvard University ... As a matter of fact, at that period, he [Irving] was in danger of being court-martialled as a spy.

PB: For who?

MFS: By our government, which was cooperating with the Vichy government. You know, it has been the policy of the United States, in most cases, to walk in and cooperate with the government in power because there was an existing structure and they thought that would avoid chaos.

PB: And the fact that Irving was doing things which were against the regulations of the ... Vichy government would have made him suspect?

MFS: That's right.

PB: So he would have been a spy for whom, though?

MFS: I don't know, but he was in danger of being court-martialled. ... I never found out exactly how it was averted, but the circumstances developed which showed what the true situation was. At any rate, that did not happen. ... He was there in Algiers until the invasion of Italy. He stayed there ... It was during that time that our first child was born — and died. And the [French family] was marvelous to Irving during that period, which was very painful to us as you can imagine.

Then he went with the invading army when they took over Rome and there he met an Italian family, not Jewish, an Italian family and they were marvelous to him ...

His stories of [waiting for] the planes from Africa when he was in Algiers were very poignant. They would stand out waiting for the planes. The planes would leave on bombing raids every day and as they came in they would always count them ... as they came back to see that —

PB: The right number?

MFS: The right number, and there were always some missing. There, again, Irving felt a great concern for the civilians there. The Arab children used to come and pick up the refuse to eat from the refuse cans. Food [was in] very short supply. They were — everybody was very poor.

They went over to Rome. Irving became friendly with a Roman family there who
were very nice to him. Then he was transferred to Bari, on the Adriatic, in Italy, because that was a front, too.

PB: And how long was he there?

MFS: He was there for ... Let's see, he was overseas for two years in all ... towards the end of his stay in Bari, there was some talk of his being transferred to Japan ... the war with Japan was going badly.

While he was in Bari, they were right up at the front line, and he became ill.

PB: Remember what it was?

MFS: It must have been some type of pneumonia or something like that 'cause he was in a tent hospital at the front lines with mud, everything ... there was no such thing as real care. They got up and had to get their own food and come back and go out to the latrines and come back. He realized he was getting worse and worse.

And, finally one day he decided — in the meantime, he had been ... promoted to captain. And, finally, he said, he decided that if he didn't get out of there he would die. He wanted to go to a hospital further back where there was better care. So one day he picked himself up and went out and commandeered a jeep and drove to a —

PB: Himself? Did he have a fever?

MFS: Himself. Yes. He was a very sick man ... and drove to a hospital — I forget what you call it. This other hospital was one step beyond a MASH-type hospital where he'd been.

PB: A little better than [a MASH]?

MFS: No, a little worse ...

PB: Still in Bari?

MFS: In Bari. This was the first place to which the wounded were brought from a battlefield ... Then they were patched up as best they could.

PB: And then sent further back.

MFS: And then sent further back ... And there he was taken care of and he got better. And ... He was sent back home [to the U.S.] because of his health.

PB: Sent back to where?

MFS: He landed in Norfolk, Virginia, and was sent up to New York, and I met him in New York. And at that time, here he was a man six foot one and he weighed something like 145 pounds. Or less, after this illness. He had a few days of leave in
which we went to Providence. Then he was reassigned for Rest and Rehabilitation down in Florida, in Miami, ... which was very pleasant because there were a lot of other people, people with whom he had been sent back home from his unit. And we had two weeks down in Florida. ...

Then he was assigned to Washington, D.C., where we stayed for about two weeks, then reassigned to ... in Dayton, Ohio. ... there he was connected with Wright Field and we stayed there for a number of months. And the housing there was also a problem, to such an extent that my father-in-law came up to see us and looked around at the place I was so pleased that we had found and said, "Macie, you don't have to live in a place like this. Come home with me." (laughter)

PB: But his work there was also with tires? What did it consist of, do you know?

MFS: Not really. There's a lot of maintenance having to do with tires. ... He approached all of these things in a very analytical manner.

And from there we were transferred to Sacramento, which was a receiving base, a big air-base in Sacramento, receiving people coming back from overseas ... from the Pacific war. ...

A short time after, there was a whole group of soldiers who were flown back from the Pacific area. And they stayed for a couple of days at the air-base in Sacramento. Irving came in contact with them because this was an airfield and these people were in the Air Force. Some of those people were black. They were in the barracks, and Irving invited them to have dinner at the Officers' Club. They were officers. And they had been overseas and they're coming back home for rehabilitation, rest and rehabilitation.

Of course there couldn't be any overt criticism of this because all of these things were legal. ... However, the feeling was very strong that this was a terrible thing that Irving had done. But, knowing Irving, it didn't matter much to him what they felt. He felt what was right was right and he did it.

We stayed on there until ... VJ-Day came and went while we were there and we knew that he would soon be mustered out. In the meantime, I had become pregnant, and, because I had had a very difficult time in the past we felt it was wiser not to leave right then ... 'til the pregnancy was over. So our baby was born in Sacramento.
BLACKS AND JEWS TOGETHER
THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH
MID-YEAR MEETING NOVEMBER 5, 1995

The 1995 mid-year meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was held jointly with the Black Heritage Society at the Jewish Community Center on November 5. Rita Michaelson, chairperson of the meeting, welcomed the audience to the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Mrs. Michaelson cited the parallel lives of Martin Luther King and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, who had been assassinated the previous day. She said they both led great marches but did not reach the promised land.

Aaron Cohen, president, greeted the audience, also speaking about Yitzhak Rabin and the legacy that he hoped would be "his reality ... his vision of peace." He announced a memorial service to be held the next day at Temple Emanu-El under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Board of Rabbis.

Linda A'Vant-Deishinni, the executive director of the Black Heritage Society, spoke and described the traveling exhibit "Hand in Hand for Justice — Martin Luther King and the Jewish Community." The nineteen panels on display in the auditorium, which were lent by the Black Heritage Society, illustrated the relationship of the famed civil rights leader with the Jewish people. Also on display at the meeting were photographs of the Selma March assembled by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Mrs. Michaelson then introduced the four main speakers, two Blacks and two Jews who had participated in the March. The first was Cliff Montiero, a Black civil rights activist and a founder of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality). He said he was motivated to take part by the death of the three White civil rights workers who were murdered in Mississippi in 1964 and by the death of Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian minister from Massachusetts, another murdered civil rights advocate. He recounted his experiences as he worked in Selma to register Black people to vote. He was moved to call for hope this day in remedying the schism between White and Black as "an injustice of the unfulfilled American dream."

The next speaker was Rabbi Saul Leeman, Rabbi emeritus of Temple Torat Yisrael, who recalled that he had responded to a letter from Martin Luther King asking fellow clergy to join him in the March. He and Rabbi William Braude became a part of this mission and marched "fifty miles on Highway 80 with U.S. federal soldiers on guard along the road and helicopters hovering above to insure safety." The rabbis, too, canvassed for voter registration in the Black communities, dedicating themselves to "love and the common cause."
Jeane Wiley was the third speaker and shared her personal memories of the hostility the marchers faced, with local White residents shouting obscenities at them, and her appreciation for the hospitality of Southern Blacks.

The concluding speaker was Morris Nathanson, another Jewish marcher from Rhode Island, recalling his commitment for participating in what he called a "truly American middle-class demonstration in the name of justice."

Dr. Richard Plotz rose from the audience to recall his feelings as he joined with his younger brother and his father to be part of this exciting major event.

Several persons spoke from the floor on other activities in the area to continue the commemoration of the March and the bonding it afforded to the Jewish and the Black communities.

A social hour followed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Lillian Schwartz
Assistant Secretary
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BY LOIS D. ATWOOD


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The Forty-first Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, held Sunday, April 30, 1995, at Temple Beth-El, was opened at 2:05 p.m. by the chairperson for the day, Hope Mellion. She welcomed a large audience of members and friends and a group from the Aristides de Sousa Mendes Society, who were guests of the Association. She then called on the president of the Association, Aaron Cohen, for a brief business meeting and his annual report.

President Cohen began with a tribute to Chaya Segal, who had died the previous day. A gifted teacher to generations of Rhode Island children, she was the wife of one of the founders of the Association, Beryl Segal, and the mother of a past president, Geraldine Foster. He asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the reading of the minutes of the last meeting be waived. President Cohen expressed his appreciation for the excellent work done by the small part-time staff of the Association, namely, Eleanor Horvitz, Judith Weiss Cohen, and Anne Sherman.

Cohen reported that the B. Ruby Winnerman estate was settled and the Association received a generous bequest to be used for general purposes in memory of Harriet J. Winnerman and B. Ruby Winnerman. A plaque was placed on the door of the Association archives room naming the archives the B. Ruby Winnerman and Harriet J. Winnerman Archives.

The Association did not receive the funds applied for from the National Historical Publications and Records commission for a full-time archivist for a year but was awarded an Archives Development Consulting Grant which may lead to further grants.

President Cohen brought the members up to date on the progress of the prospective Heritage Center in the South Street Power Station in Providence being donated by the Narragansett Electric Company. It is a long-term project that will take many years to complete. He described what a positive experience it has been working on this project with the various ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Cohen's complete report is on file in the RIJHA office.

The Association's first trip, to the Jewish Museum and the Lower East Side in New York on October 16, 1994, was very successful, and suggestions for other destinations were requested.

The Association's winter meeting on November 6, 1995, will be a joint meeting with the Black Heritage Society. The theme will be the 30th anniversary of the Civil rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.
Forty-First Annual Meeting

The treasurer's report was given by Herbert Rosen, assistant treasurer, in the absence of Dr. Alfred Jaffe. He reported that the financial health of the Association is good. Assets are approximately $23,500 higher than last year because of two major donations, the B. Ruby Winerman Estate and a very generous anonymous gift. The complete report is on file in the office.

Eleanor Horvitz, librarian/archivist, reported that there continue to be many requests by mail, telephone, and in person for information on people who have lived in Rhode Island in the past. Brown University students, particularly those in the Program for Judaic Studies, often use the Association's library for research for their course papers. She reported on new major acquisitions of memorabilia from Rhode Island Jewish organizations and from individuals. Her report giving more details is on file in the Association office.

Judith Weiss Cohen, Editor of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, thanked all the authors who made the latest issue possible and thanked Stanley Abrams, Aaron Cohen, Maurice Cohen, Geraldine Foster, Bonnie and Dr. Seebert Goldowsky, Rosalind Gorin, Eleanor Horvitz, Robert Kotlen, Toby Rossner, Terry Kantorowitz Shaffer, Anne Sherman, Lynn and Samuel Stepak, and Lynn Tesler for their assistance. She announced an additional issue of the Notes in 1995, a history of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island in honor of its 50th anniversary, with Hadassah Davis as author and Judith Weiss Cohen, editor. The complete editor's report is on file.

Melvin Zurier, chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for the year 1995-1996, as follows: President, Aaron Cohen; First Vice President, Herbert Brown; Second Vice President, Charlotte I. Penn; Secretary, Sylvia Factor; Assistant Secretary, Lillian Schwartz; Treasurer, Dr. Alfred Jaffe; Assistant Treasurer, Herbert Rosen; and new Executive Committee members: Milton Stanzler, Rita Michaelson, and Eugene Weinberg. The other members of the Executive Committee are listed in the slate filed with this report and on the second page of this issue of the Notes. There being no counter-nominations, one ballot was cast for the entire slate, and the new officers were elected.

President Cohen announced that Melvin Zurier was named to the position of honorary member of the Executive Committee in recognition of his many years of service to this Association. Cohen named Milton Lewis as a presidential appointment to the board for one year.

President Cohen turned the meeting back to Hope Mellion to introduce the guest speaker, Dr. David M. Gitlitz, who spoke on the subject "Passover and the Crypto-Jews." Dr. Gitlitz received his master's and doctorate degrees from Harvard University and has also studied at the University of Madrid and Oberlin College. He has held teaching positions at several universities and has been a professor of...
Spanish at the University of Rhode Island since 1988. He has published several books, his latest being *The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*. The audience was captivated by his fascinating talk, and an excellent question and answer period followed.

Those in attendance were invited for a showing of Temple Beth-El's exhibit "Visions and Voices" by George Goodwin. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. A delicious collation and social hour completed the afternoon. Lynn Stepak chaired the hospitality committee, assisted by Samuel Stepak, Sylvia Brown, Rosalind Gorin, and Eleanor Tanner.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Factor
Secretary
ALPERIN, MAX, born in Ukraine, son of the late Beryl and Dora Alperin. President and chief executive officer of Carol Cable Company, Pawtucket, he was a former president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Mr. Alperin was a founder of the Ruth and Max Alperin-Schechter Day School, Providence. He had been president of Temple Emanu-El and the Jewish Home for the Aged. He was a board member of The Miriam Hospital, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and the United Israel Appeal. He was a Life Member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

An ardent supporter of the State of Israel, Mr. Alperin established the Alperin Regional College of the Jordan Valley.

Mr. Alperin received an honorary doctorate from Providence College. He was a trustee of Bentley College, Waltham, Mass., and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York City. From 1969 until he retired in 1971, he was acting president of Avnet in New York City.

Died in Providence on December 24, 1994, at the age of 85.

BRAUDE, PEARL, born in Providence, daughter of the late Joseph M. and Rose (Levy) Finkelstein. The widow of Rabbi William G. Braude of Temple Beth-El, she helped inspire the architectural and artistic design of that temple.

A 1939 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Pembroke College in Brown University, she later returned to Brown where she received a master's degree. She taught art and dance in Providence for several years.

Active in several organizations, she was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Sisterhood, Hadassah, the Providence Athenaeum, the Friends of Bezalel Museum, Friends of Israel Museum, and the Friends of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

Died in Providence on March 6, 1995, at the age of 77.

COHEN, BERNARD I., born in Providence, a son of the late Harry and Minnie (Weitman) Cohen. He was the owner of the Cohen Manufacturing Company in Providence.

Mr. Cohen was a 1933 graduate of Brown University and served in the Army during World War II. A member of Temple Beth-El and its Men’s Club and the Roger Williams Lodge of B’nai B’rith, he was a volunteer for The Jewish Home and the United Way.

Died in Providence on September 24, 1995, at the age of 84.
COHEN, DR. EARLE F., born in Providence, a son of the late Dr. Leo Cohen and Etta Cohen, he had lived in Newport since 1986. A pediatrician by training, Dr. Cohen led four other lives as well — as an opera impresario, real estate developer, taxpayer advocate, and hotelier/restaurateur.

A graduate of Brown University in 1941 and of Tufts Medical School in 1944, he served in the Army during World War II as a physician. He practiced medicine in Providence and Cranston until 1980.

Dr. Cohen served on the staffs of Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, Roger Williams Hospital, and the Boston Children’s Hospital for many years.

A member of Temple Beth-El and its Brotherhood, he also was a Life Member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, a member of the Ledgemont Country Club, and a founding member of the Alpine Country Club in Providence.

Died in Newport on September 4, 1995, at the age of 75.

FAIN, ARCHIE, born in Providence, a son of the late Barnet and Ida (Shaset) Fain. He was co-founder and co-proprietor with his brother, Irving Fain, of Fain’s Carpets until retiring in 1980. He was also a partner in the former E.A. Adams Co. in Pawtucket.

Mr. Fain was a member of Temple Emanu-El and its Men’s Club. He was a member of Roosevelt Lodge 42 F&AM, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, The Miriam Hospital Association, and the Jewish Community Center, and was a founding member of the Ledgemont Country Club.

Died in Providence on September 5, 1995, at the age of 91.

GOLDSTEIN, SIDNEY, born in Woonsocket, a son of the late Israel and Etta (Halpern) Goldstein. He was co-founder, co-owner, and executive vice president of CVS and the president and treasurer of Mark Steven, Inc.

A 1947 graduate of Dean Academy in Franklin, he attended the former Bryant & Stratton Business College. He was a member, president, and chairman of the board of the Toiletries Merchandisers Association. A member of the Rhode Island Small Business Administration Advisory Council, the Woonsocket Industrial Corp., the Woonsocket Redevelopment Agency, and the Woonsocket Industrial Authority, he also served on the Board of Directors of the Woonsocket Chamber of Commerce, as well as on the board of managers of the Rhode island Hospital Trust National Bank.

Mr. Goldstein headed fund raisers for the local Hemophilia Fund, the United Way, and Meeting Street School.

Died in Carefree, Arizona, on February 15, 1995.
LEACH, OSCAR A. “ARNIE”, born in Providence, a son of the late Harry and Pauline (Greenberg) Leach. He had been president of the former H. Leach Machinery Co. He was treasurer of the National Chain Co., treasurer of the Yale Machinery Co. of Hartford, vice president of the Industrial Machinery Appraisal Co., and vice president of the Maine Machinery Co.

Mr. Leach pioneered conversion of idle mill complexes in Rhode Island by restoring them to provide jobs and industrial space for many well-known manufacturing companies.

He was a captain in the Army and was chief ordnance officer in the Automotive Division from 1942 to 1945. During his military career he received a commendation for saving the government $80 million in tank production costs.

Mr. Leach was a member of the Aurora Civic Association and was a founding member of the Ledgemont Country Club as well as a member of the Machinery Dealers National Association. He had been appointed a commodore by former Governor J. Joseph Garrahy.

Died in Providence on July 27, 1995, at the age of 83.

RAKATANSKY, DR. NATHAN S., born in Providence, a son of the late Morris and Fannie Rakatansky. He was chief of anesthesiology at The Miriam Hospital for thirty years before retiring in 1985.

A graduate of Tufts University, he completed his medical studies at that university in 1932. He was an Army veteran of World War II and served as chief of anesthesiology at McCloskey General Hospital in Temple, Texas. Dr. Rakatansky served on the staff of The Miriam Hospital for more than fifty years and had been president of its medical staff from 1954 to 1956.

A member of the Rhode Island Medical Society and the American Medical Association, he was one of the earliest members of the American Society of Anesthesiology. Dr. Rakatansky was a member of Temple Beth-El.

Died in Providence on October 15, 1995, at the age of 87.

ROITMAN, AARON H., born in Cambridge, Mass., a son of the late Barnet and Kate (Sanisper) Roitman. After graduating from Brown University in 1930, he joined the wholesale furniture business that his father had started in 1916.

Mr. Roitman was the founder and honorary chairman of Chamber Music United in Rhode Island. He served for many years as president of the Narragansett Council of Boy Scouts.

A volunteer in the Navy at the outbreak of World War II, he was commissioned a lieutenant and served as navigator on the attack transport Clermont in the Pacific.
For his efforts on behalf of the Danish furniture industry, Queen Margarethe of Denmark awarded Mr. Roitman a knighthood in the Royal Order of Danneburg in 1984. From 1972 to 1984 he was honorary consul of Denmark in Rhode Island.

In 1979, Rhode Island College awarded him an honorary doctor of public service degree, and in 1980 he was chief marshal of the academic procession at Brown University commencement.

A member of the executive board of the General Jewish Committee, he was chairman of the Federation’s first Committee on the Aged.

Active in many organizations, Mr. Roitman was a former president of the National Wholesale Furniture Association and a member of the Providence Historic District Commission and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce. He also was a member of the boards of directors of the Rhode Island Foundation and Roger Williams Hospital. Other memberships include that of Temple Beth-El, the R.I. Yacht Club, the University and Turks Head Clubs, and Roosevelt Masonic Lodge No. 2.

Died in Tucson, Arizona, on February 18, 1995, at the age of 85.

SALHANICK, EDITH, born in Providence, a daughter of the late Harry H. and Clara (Cohen) Fink. She was vice president of Victoria Creations until she retired to become a free-lance jewelry designer. She was a member of the Brown Community for Learning in Retirement and a family advocate volunteer in the Intensive Care Unit at The Miriam Hospital.

Mrs. Salhanick served on the Executive Committee of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association and was a volunteer reader for In-Sight as well as a volunteer at the Barker Playhouse and the Trinity Square Repertory Company.

Died in Dallas, Texas, on March 15, 1995, at the age of 77.

SEGAL, IRENE (CHAYA), born in Russia, a daughter of the late Menashe and Gitel (Friedman) Waxman. She had been a past president of the Pioneer Women and a leader in the annual sales of Israel Bonds.

Mrs. Segal was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Sisterhood. She was an honorary board member of the Women’s Division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and a Life Member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. She also held memberships in the Women’s Associations of The Miriam Hospital and The Jewish Home.

Died in Providence on April 28, 1995, at the age of 95.
WALDMAN, JANET L., born in Providence, a daughter of the late Alfred A. and Elizabeth (Stoneman) Fain. A graduate of Pembroke College in Brown University, she received a graduate degree in social work from Columbia University and was a social worker for two years with Jewish Family Service.

Mrs. Waldman was a member of Temple Beth-El and a past president of its Sisterhood. She was a past president of the Women's Division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the John Howland PTA. She held memberships in the Ledgemont Country Club, the Women's Association of The Jewish Home, and Hadassah.

Died in Providence on February 10, 1995, at the age of 82.
JACOB RADER MARCUS: 1896-1995

More than any other teacher, writer, or scholar, Jacob Rader Marcus shaped the study of American Jewish history. Though immensely influential in academic circles, he eagerly assisted all who sought his guidance. Indeed, our Association is part of his wonderful legacy and a vivid illustration of his belief that the mighty and the humble forge the American Jewish experience.

Only a few months short of achieving his own centenary, Dr. Marcus belongs to the entire twentieth century. The son of lowly Russian immigrants, he was reared in western Pennsylvania and studied at Hebrew Union College and the neighboring University of Cincinnati. Ordained in 1920, he was the seminary’s longest surviving graduate.

Following doctoral studies at the University of Berlin, Dr. Marcus joined the faculty of Hebrew Union College. As the Adolph S. Ochs Professor and later the Milton and Hattie Kutz Distinguished Service Professor of American Jewish History, he mentored three generations of Reform rabbis. He was a vibrant member of the College community until his passing.

In 1947, Dr. Marcus founded the American Jewish Archives. Presently housing more than eight million pages of documentation, it is an extraordinary study center serving researchers from around the world. In 1956, Dr. Marcus also founded the American Jewish Periodical Center. The College’s Skirball Cultural Center, soon to open in Los Angeles, is a further manifestation of his remarkable legacy.

Dr. Marcus was editor of American Jewish Archives, a journal renowned for its scholarly standards and its personal warmth. He was the author and editor of numerous books and scores of articles. While particularly fascinated by the colonial era and primary source materials, he built a panoramic framework for American Jewish history. Though never a purveyor of academic fashion, he embraced new avenues of inquiry, including women’s and demographic studies.
In no sense a recluse in an ivory tower, Dr. Marcus was celebrated for his wit and wisdom. Despite limited experience as a congregational rabbi, he served as a president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and, since 1978, as its honorary president. He was also beloved in Cincinnati, and the street where he resided was recently renamed in his honor.

In addition to his support for our Association, Dr. Marcus felt a close bond to Rhode Island. One of his teachers at Hebrew Union College was Rabbi Henry Englander, who led Temple Beth-El from 1905 to 1910. Dr. Marcus taught Rabbis William Braude and Leslie Gutterman and eight of their associate or assistant rabbis. He taught several other rabbis who were called to pulpits and chaplaincies in the Ocean State.

Though I never met Dr. Marcus, I felt close to him. Through our correspondence, I discovered that he remembered one of my great-grandfathers from services at Cincinnati’s Rockdale Temple in 1911. Dr. Marcus and my maternal grandmother were classmates at the University of Cincinnati. He penned a loving remembrance of my great-uncle, Rabbi Edgar Magnin, for the Yearbook of the Central Conference.

In 1983, while a student in Jewish communal service at the Los Angeles campus of Hebrew Union College, I was privileged to eavesdrop on a Marcus lecture. Rather than expound on a minor facet of Jewish law or literature, he spoke in candid terms to a startled group of rabbinic students. His topic was personal demeanor: what young rabbis should wear, when to write thank-you notes, and how to comport with board members. He concluded with the observation that the rabbinate was an exceptionally rewarding profession, for it bestowed honor on men and women for being and doing good.

Dr. Marcus was predeceased by his immediate family. He leaves thousands of colleagues, students, and friends, who treasure him as a gentle patriarch.

George M. Goodwin
ERRATA AND ADDENDA

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 4

Front Cover
Front cover caption should read “Morris Perlow, produce dealer, on Duncan Avenue, Providence. Between 1903 and 1910.”

“Family Stores”
Ideal Distributing Co. (Finkler Family)
The city identified as Lawrence should read Lowell, page 464, lines 32, 34, and 37; page 465, lines 3 and 4.

Page 465, line 7, should read “fruit business.”

Page 466, third paragraph, line 1, should read Charlotte (Goldenberg) Penn; last paragraph, line 3, should read “Barton Street.”

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1, PART A

Page 8, fourth paragraph, lines 7 and 8, should read “Joseph Smith and Joshua Bell, early Jewish attorneys.”

Page 26, picture caption, should read “Harry Leach,” not Max Leach. The unidentified man was Stephen Oster.

Page 54, last paragraph, lines 3 and 4, should read “[Samuel Zurier] After Yale College, Yale Law School, and becoming a Rhodes Scholar.”
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Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Zurier
Speakers at Black-Jewish meeting, November 5, 1995: *Top left*, Rabbi Saul Leeman; *bottom left*, Jeane Wiley; *top right*, Cliff Montiero (with Rita Michaelson, program chairperson); *bottom right*, Morris Nathanson.

(See pp. 156-157)