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Tenement houses, New York City, ca. 1935, photo by Arnold Eagle. Please see my article.
EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The theme of this issue, like many others, could be passages. The most obvious examples would be obituaries, a mainstay of our journal. By honoring departed Association members, we also honor our community.

This issue's photo essay may also serve as a belated farewell. It sheds light on numerous Jewish organizations, once forceful and feisty, that have perished. These organizations remind us that every need or cause seems timely—at least for a few years or decades, if not generations.

An article about Boy Scouts in Rhode Island further illustrates the theme of passages. Despite a century of Jewish participation and leadership, including many recent accomplishments, the heyday of Jewish Scouting has probably vanished. Fortunately, we Jews know too well that numbers alone do not confer value or legitimacy.

Several articles show that persecution, hardship, and danger may be transitory. Such daunting conditions, moreover, may lead to growth, opportunity, and resilience. Thus, for better and for worse, we are often unable to comprehend or judge the duration or outcome of many passages. For example, who could have known that our Association, founded six decades ago, would not only survive but prosper?

Numerous individuals sustain and elevate our journal. They include seasoned and new writers; our conscientious publications committee; my dear colleagues Bobbie Friedman and Anne Sherman; the professionals of Signature Printing; and, of course, you, our loyal readers and supporters. Another passage begins as we anticipate next year's issue.

[Signature]
Newman at Swan Point Cemetery, 1929
HONORING NEWMAN PINCUS:
CIVIL WAR VETERAN

James P. McGuire

Born in Providence, the author spent most of his youth in North Scituate before moving to Cranston in 1986. After graduating from Cranston High School East in 1992, “Jamie” studied at Pace University, in Pleasantville, New York, and earned his bachelor’s degree in communications and film studies at Rhode Island College.

McGuire then moved to Los Angeles, where he worked as a postproduction assistant and as an editor on several television programs and movies. A decade ago he returned to Rhode Island to pursue a career as an independent documentary and commercial producer. His return reignited his passion for American history and led to postgraduate study. While researching his brother-in-law’s genealogy, McGuire discovered that his own ancestors had served in the Civil War. As he explains below, he has devoted himself to commemorating the Union cause in Rhode Island and beyond.

While continuing his freelance work, McGuire serves as Salve Regina University’s resident film and video producer and its coordinator of social media initiatives. As an adjunct faculty member, he teaches a course on documentary filmmaking. “Jamie” resides with his wife and daughter in Providence.

In September 2011, I was driving down Reservoir Avenue from the Elmwood section of Providence to Cranston, when my eyes drifted, as they had many times before, to a small but pretty cemetery nestled next to the Route 10 on-ramp. I was aware of the fact that this was one of several Jewish cemeteries in Rhode Island. Today, however, it was not the vibrant green landscaping and austere mausoleums that captured my attention, but a small, star-shaped, military flag holder that was half-planted in the ground near a group of grave markers in the northeast corner of the cemetery.

Seeking to confirm my suspicions, I pulled into the
cemetery of Congregation Sons of Israel and David, consecrated in 1849, and found my way over to the artifact. Indeed, it was a Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) flag holder, placed in the cemetery by comrades of that order, to acknowledge the final resting place of one of their brothers who had faithfully served the Union cause during the Civil War. But I did not know with which grave the star belonged.

As a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (S.U.V.C.W.), and current Camp Commander of Governor Elisha Dyer Camp No. 7, Department of Rhode Island, I knew what I was seeing. It is a duty assigned to me by those very same men who planted that flag holder that drew me into that cemetery. When the old Boys in Blue of the G.A.R. began to recognize that they would need others to carry on their work and traditions after the last of them was gone, they turned to their cadet corps, the Sons of Veterans, and made that organization the successor and legal heir to their own.

The S.U.V.C.W. is a Congressionally chartered, lineal, fraternal, patriotic organization whose mission is to commemorate the men who fought to save the Union and to educate the public about the Civil War and its lasting effects. The organization works very hard to flag the graves of Union soldiers for Memorial Day, and holds that day sacred, as it was established by the G.A.R. itself. Through educational programs, the Sons seek to pass on the memory of the sacrifice of their ancestors to the American people as a reminder that the freedoms that we enjoy were not won easily, and that the enemies of freedom are not strictly external.

The largest undertaking of the S.U.V.C.W. is the Civil War Graves Registration Project. This massive effort is an attempt to locate the final resting places of all Union soldiers. Through compiling old records, researching family histories, and walking the cemeteries, many soldiers have been found and recorded, and given the honors for which they are entitled.

For myself, I have two great-great-great uncles, Jehu and Levi Long, who fought for the 47th Illinois Infantry and the 148th, respectively. Thanks to research and much effort, we have located their graves and registered them in the database accordingly. Jehu saw a great deal of action in the Western theater of the war, and was one of the first men to enter Vicksburg, Mississippi, after its surrender. He spent his later years as a resident of Nebraska, was a member of G.A.R. Heckathorne Post No. 47, and is buried in the cemetery in Sterling.
Levi, a draftee in 1864, spent his short but dangerous career demolishing railroad tracks and fighting off guerillas in Tennessee, while also keeping an eye on his wife’s youngest brother, Daniel Wann, another draftee. Levi is buried in the Perkins family cemetery in the hills of Bureau, Illinois, with a small, non-military marker that bears the inscription 148th Illinois Infantry. I have recently undertaken an effort to have this forgotten family cemetery surveyed and rehabilitated.¹

The G.A.R. marker in Israel and David’s cemetery propelled me on a mission once I realized that there was no possible way the marker could belong to one of the headstones in the vicinity of the discovery, and there was no soldier registered in the S.U.V.C.W. database at that cemetery. I intended to find out whose marker it was.

I immediately contacted the Dyer Camp 7 Graves Registration Officer, Brother Henry C. Duquette, and together, we began combing our resources for a clue. Henry, who had been examining old veterans’ grave index cards, came across the name of a Civil War soldier buried in the cemetery. But we were not sure if we were looking for Pincus Newman, Newman Pincus, Pincous Nieman, or Charles Newman, because all seemed to represent the same person in the U.S. Archives’ Civil War records.

So I went back to the cemetery in late October and began walking the section, row by row, with the caretaker. We knew the general area that we needed to look in, and by now, I had decided that the evidence pointed toward “Newman Pincus” as the soldier’s name. It did not take long to discover the headstone in the southeast quadrant. I was so thrilled to find the stone that I almost missed another amazing discovery: carved into the stone above the name “Pincus” were the letters “GAR.” The accompanying footstone also contained such a carving. Here was a man who held his association with the Grand Army of the Republic dear to his heart. I promptly recovered the G.A.R. flag holder and planted it aside the stone and decorated it with a flag.

But who was this man who, even in death, proclaimed his allegiance to his comrades and their shared experiences? Probably like many Americans, I did not even realize that there had been Jewish soldiers in the Civil War.

Approximately 10,000 Jewish soldiers served in the Civil War², with a North/South split of about 7,000/3,000 men.³ Considering that more than 1.5 million soldiers served in the two armies over the course of the war, some may consider the number of Jewish soldiers to be insignificant. On the contrary, the 1860 census reveals that the population of the United States was about 31.4 million, thus illustrating that about 4.4 percent of the total population served. The

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war's 10,000 Jewish soldiers represented 6.7 percent of the total Jewish population of about 150,000. Newman Pincus was one of this disproportionate number to offer his service to his country and risk his life for its principles.


Pincus was born on February 9, 1846 in Prussia and emigrated with his parents, Julius and Matilda, to the United States in 1850, where he was naturalized in 1856. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was a resident of Waterbury, Connecticut.

David Adelman, the founding editor of Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, wrote that Pincus, "before he was sixteen years of age, followed his older brothers to camp in New York... and tried to enlist in the army, like many boys about that age." Adelman added that Pincus's brothers "prevented his enlistment by disclosing his real age."

Undeterred, Newman eventually enlisted in New Haven on August 25, 1863 in the 14th Connecticut, which, having recently suffered major losses at Gettysburg, had a desperate need to replenish its ranks. With his unit Newman endured some of the most brutal fighting of the war, including the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg (all in Virginia). It is likely that Pvt. Pincus was present with his regiment at the surrender of General Robert E. Lee's army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

When the 14th was mustered out on May 30, 1865, several veterans, including Pvt. Pincus, were transferred to the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery. He served out his enlistment with Company G, until August 18, 1865, when, at age 19, he was honorably discharged at Fort Ethan Allen in Arlington, Virginia. There is evidence to suggest that after the war was over, Pincus served with the 12th New York State Militia.

After having summarized his career, it is also necessary for me to tell readers that I am in awe of what this man must have witnessed. Though spared the ravages of Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg, Newman joined the war effort as the level of brutality and and number of casualties began to skyrocket to ghastly levels. I will not presume to share the gory details of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania or other engagements in which Newman took part, but portions of these battlefields are known as "The Bloody Angle" and "The Slaughter Pen" to this day. Also bear in mind that more American soldiers, over 620,000 men, lost their lives in the Civil War than in every other American war combined through World War II.
By 1867, having relocated to Providence, Pincus was listed as a clerk in the city directory. In 1870 he became a charter member of B'nai B'rith's Haggai Lodge. He appears as both a clerk and a salesman in the 1876 directory. In 1880 he married Adelaide Henius, and they had two children, Matilda and Joel J. In the 1885 directory, the Civil War veteran was listed as the proprietor of A. Pincus & Company (Ladies and Gents Furnishings) at 354 Fountain Street. In 1910 the Pincus family is listed as residing at 58 Wilson Street, in the vicinity of Dexter Training Ground and the Cranston Street Armory, on the west side of town. In 1920 the family resided at 31 Marlborough Avenue in South Providence. This was only one block north of the new synagogue built by Congregation Sons of Israel and David, which became known informally as Temple Beth-El. Pincus served as secretary of the congregation (a voluntary position) from 1886 to 1901 and later as its financial secretary.

Newman Pincus was a member of G.A.R. Slocum Post No. 10. As Post Commander in 1929, he presided over Memorial Day services at Swan Point Cemetery.

Pincus passed away on December 20, 1932 at the age of 86, while serving as Senior Vice Commander of the Rhode Island Department of the G.A.R. His time with his comrades in the G.A.R. must have been very dear to him because he or his survivors were motivated to have the organization's name carved into his headstone and footstone. After having endured some of the most awful scenes of carnage during the Civil War, he also forged bonds with fellow veterans that few today will ever fully comprehend.

Having learned all of this, I was immediately moved to hold a Memorial Day service for Pvt. Pincus at Congregation Sons of Israel and David cemetery. On May 27, 2012, members of Elisha Dyer Camp No. 7, along with Rhode Island Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, gathered to pay their respects to a man who, being one of few, became one of many and joined the cause to preserve the Union and determine the fate of freedom in this country.

I kept in mind G.A.R. Commander-in-Chief General John A. Logan's General Order No. 11 of 1868: "Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor."

Rev. Ethan Adler (left)

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I then had the honor of placing a fresh United States flag in the Grand Army of the Republic flag holder that started me on this journey of discovery. The Hon. Mrs. Roberts and S.U.V.C.W. Department of Rhode Island Commander, Camp 7 Brother Henry C. Duquette, placed a beautiful bouquet of flowers over the gravesite, and honored guest Ethan Adler offered Hebrew prayers and reflections. Rev. Adler, the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth David in Narragansett, and also a close friend of my family, took great interest in my efforts to commemorate the life and service of Newman Pincus, and he genuinely moved the participants and attendees of the ceremony with his words. A detachment of the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry Regiment fired a ceremonial salute in honor of Pvt. Pincus with the kind of weapons that he would have used.

I have since driven by both of the Pincus family's residences and tried to imagine a very different city and a very different way of life. I have yet to visit the location of A. Pincus & Company. Nevertheless, I would like to imagine a proud and honorable businessman, with an air of wisdom about him and the look and bearing of a man that can only be associated with the Grand Army of the Republic. When we reach back into the past in search of the best parts of humankind, we often find that those who have been refined by fire and blood have the most to teach us. They have undergone a transformation that helps them to see far beyond
the boundaries of this life.

We do not know exactly how many Civil War soldiers are buried in Rhode Island. By some estimates, there are approximately 26,000! Thus far, the S.U.V.C.W. Graves Registration Database has recorded approximately 9,000. Many of these men, like Pincus, came from other states. There are of course many Rhode Islanders buried in other states and still others whose resting places will never be known.

How many stories are waiting to be uncovered and told? How many more soldiers have I overlooked while walking cemeteries with flags?

In cemeteries that have fallen into disrepair, the earth itself has claimed many headstones. For example, several Brothers of the S.U.V.C.W. and I recently excavated the stone of Francis Reynolds, a Civil War soldier buried in Oakland Cemetery on Broad Street in Providence. The headstone was located almost three feet beneath the surface.

It is my honor to report that Pvt. Newman Pincus, Co. K, 14th Connecticut Infantry, and Past Post Commander, Slocum Post 10, Grand Army of the Republic, has been properly identified and given the recognition that he earned and deserves.

Lest we forget the inscription on the Waterbury Soldiers' Monument, dedicated in 1884:

\[
\text{Brave men, who rallying at your country's call,} \\
\text{Went forth to fight— if Heaven willed, to fall!} \\
\text{Returned, ye walk with us through sunnier years} \\
\text{And hear your nation say, God bless you all!} \\
\text{Brave men, who yet a heavier burden bore} \\
\text{And came not home to hearts by grief made sore!} \\
\text{They call you dead and lo ye grandly live,} \\
\text{Shrined in the nation's love forevermore!}
\]
1 My connection to Corporal Levi Long afforded me the privilege of membership in the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Because so many young men died childless during the war, the G.A.R. determined that nephews of those who served would be counted as lineal. This was necessary to guarantee the organization's sustainability.

2 Although serving does not necessarily mean fighting, it is not difficult to identify the regiments to which this small population belonged. According to the National Archives, the vast majority (80%) of enlistees and draftees were infantrymen, and nearly all regiments saw action at one time or another.


Some recent useful studies are: Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, Jews and the Civil War: A Reader (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Sarna, When General Grant Expelled the Jews (New York: Schocken, 2012); and the entire issue of American Jewish Archives Journal, LXIV (2012). Barry Stiefel, one of the contributors to this issue, has written for The Notes.


5 David Adelman, “Early Days of the Providence Jewish Community,” Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, III (November 1960), 158.


7 Seebert J. Goldowsky, A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-Eli), Providence, Rhode Island (The Congregation, 1989), 34.

8 Goldowsky, 77, 170, 231, 254.

9 Adelman, 158.

10 Goldowsky, 34.

11 According to A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion, Part III (Frederick Dyer, 1909), Rhode Island furnished 25,236 fighting men to the Union cause. The estimate of 26,000 burials seems to assume that the greater portion of those Rhode Islanders who survived the war remained in the state until their deaths. This number also seems to indicate an even number of immigrants to and emigrants from Rhode Island. It must be noted that even a conservative guess of soldiers buried in Rhode Island (a number above 20,000) highlights the significant work that lies ahead for the S.U.V.C.W.

cemetery gateway, Congregation Sons of Israel + David
ANOTHER CIVIL WAR VETERAN:  
A GENEALOGICAL INQUIRY

George M. Goodwin

Samuel Rosenthal, my maternal grandfather's grandfather, served with an Ohio regiment during the Civil War. In Virginia he may have crossed paths with Newman Pincus of Connecticut and drank from the same stream.

My great-great-grandfather was born on March 12, 1835 in the town of Budinggen, in the German grand duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, northeast of Frankfurt-am-Main.¹ His father, Moses, was also born in Budingen in 1791 and died there in 1847. Moses's first wife, Bertha Ronneberger, gave birth to two daughters, Kalla (in 1822) and Karoline (1823-1849), before her death in 1828. Moses's second wife and Samuel's mother was Sara Eilau, who had been born in Lindheim in 1808 and died in Budingen in 1850.

Samuel was the eldest of at least three siblings: David, born in 1841; Dely, born in 1844; and Regina, born in 1847. It is not known whether they remained in Germany or journeyed to America.

In December 1857, Samuel sailed with 164 other passengers on the Eva Dorothea from Bremen to Baltimore. On the manifest, Budingen was listed as his last place of residence and book printer as his occupation.²

According to Rosenthal family lore, Samuel's ship sank near Baltimore harbor, and he was forced to swim ashore. A brief item in the December 9 issue of The New York Times reported that his ship, having run aground near Cape Henry, Virginia (east of Norfolk), would probably be a total loss. This mishap was also reported in the December 14 issue of the Baltimore American. The December 19 issue of that newspaper reported that the Eva Dorothea was so severely damaged that rescue plans were abandoned.³ Evidently, it had struck the wreck of another ship rather than run aground on a sandy bottom. The vessel's cargo could not be removed, but it was expected to wash ashore. Some passengers could have swum to land; more likely they were transported by a small vessel.

Although Samuel Rosenthal may have been taken to Baltimore, there is
I, Samuel Rosenthal of Cincinnati, this being in good health, both of body and mind, do make this my last will and thereby revoking all other wills by me at any time heretofore made.
no evidence that he lived there. According to the city directory of 1858, however, six men named Rosenthal were living in Baltimore. In 1850 there may have been 700 Jewish families in that city of 170,000 people. Perhaps a third of its population were German immigrants.

According to his response to a questionnaire printed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Pensions in January 1898, Samuel settled in Cincinnati by 1859. In that year he was married to Fannie (born Franzeska) Baum by a justice of the peace. The record of his marriage, he explained, had been destroyed in a courthouse fire.

The twelfth of thirteen siblings, Fannie was born on June 26, 1839 in the town of Alzey, also in the grand duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, northwest of Worms. Jews had lived in Alzey as early as 1260. As many as 30 Jewish families resided there in 1807.

Far more is known about Fannie's ancestors than Samuel's. Both of Fannie's parents, George Moses Baum (1788-1852) and Rebecca Mann Baum (1798-1851), had lived in Alzey. His given name was George Moses, but he took the Baum surname in 1808, following his oldest brother, Jacob Moses. A Napoleonic edict required Jews to use non-Jewish surnames. Two older generations of Fannie's ancestors had also lived in Alzey: her grandfather, Jacob Seligmann (1725-1773), and her great-grandfather, Seligmann Raphael (1695-1768). Fannie's great-great-grandfather, Moses Samuel (born 1660), and her great-great-great-grandfather, Moses of Geusingen (1611-1681), had lived in nearby Bad Krueznach. Many of Fannie's forebears had worked as cattle dealers and butchers. Alzey's Jewish community reached its height in 1880, when there were 331 Jews, who represented 6% of the local population.

Fannie's three older sisters may have been living in Cincinnati by 1859. Babetta, the eldest (born in 1818), was married to Jacob Sternberg (but he is not found in the city directory). The marital status of Henriette (born in 1832) is unknown, as is the marital status of Sarah (born in 1836).

Samuel Rosenthal was first listed in the Cincinnati directory in 1860 (along with four other Rosenthals). His occupation was not identified, but he worked at the northeast corner of Vine and Mercer Streets, in the central business district north of the Ohio River and south of the Miami Canal (which traversed the state). In 1861 he was identified as printer with a business at 187 Sycamore Street.

By 1820 Cincinnati had become known as "the Queen City of the West." Its Chestnut Street Cemetery, the oldest Jewish cemetery west of the Allegheny mountains, was established a year later. By 1840, Cincinnati, as a leading center for
slaughtering and processing pigs, was also known as "Porkopolis." Three decades later, as the hub of a vast regional trading network, the city became the sixth-largest in the United States. Its population was 115,000, only 1,000 less than New Orleans. Cincinnati remained one of the country's ten-largest cities through 1890.  

Between 1840 and the end of the Civil War, the city's Jewish community became the "largest, most influential, and prosperous" in the West. It grew from 2,800 members in 1850 to at least 7,500 (and possibly 10,000) in 1860. By 1860 Cincinnati boasted five Jewish congregations. It had more Jewish institutions than the rest of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky combined.

Samuel and Fannie Rosenthal produced eleven children: nine boys and two girls over 23 years. Presumably all were born in Cincinnati, and all lived into adulthood. The eldest child, Nathan, who was born in 1860, died in 1909 and was cremated. Abraham, the fourth child, who was born in 1866, also predeceased his parents, in 1913.

On June 13, 1861, Samuel, 26 years of age, enlisted in the 28th Regiment of the Ohio Infantry ("The Second German Ohio") at Camp Dennison (named after Governor William Dennison), on the outskirts of Cincinnati. He was five feet, six inches tall and had black hair and hazel eyes.

Samuel may not have known at the time of his enlistment that Fannie was pregnant with their second child and first daughter, Sarah, who was born in 1862. Or perhaps he knew but was nevertheless determined to defend the Union.

According to lists compiled by Simon Wolf, approximately 10,000 Jewish men served with Union and Confederate forces. The Union state with the largest number of Jewish soldiers was New York, with about 2,000 men. Ohio was second, with about half that number; Illinois was third, with about 700 soldiers. Wolf's lists show that 29 Jews served with Samuel in Ohio's 28th.

Samuel's military record shows that he was initially a sergeant in Company A. On June 3, 1862, he was promoted to second lieutenant in the same company. On October 1, 1863, Samuel was appointed first lieutenant of Company D and regimental quartermaster. On July 23, 1864, he was mustered out at Camp Dennison with the rest of his company. His regiment had suffered 434 casualties: 92 men killed, 169 wounded, and 173 "disabled by disease."

The major battles fought by Ohio's 28th were South Mountain and Antietam, both in the Maryland campaign, and New Market, in Virginia. South Mountain (known to Southerners as Boonsboro) was fought on September 14, 1862. As many as 28,000 Union troops vanquished 18,000 Confederate troops, who had invaded Maryland from northern Virginia. About 325 men were killed on each
side; at least 1,400 men were injured in each army. After the battle, 800 Confederate troops were missing; this was ten times the number of Union troops. South Mountain was a victory for Generals George McClellan and Ambrose Burnside (from Rhode Island) and a defeat for General Robert E. Lee.

The Battle of Antietam, fought on September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War and in all of American history. From the 75,000 Union troops and the 52,000 Confederate troops, there were approximately 33,300 casualties: 4,800 killed, 18,500 wounded, and 10,000 missing. As the Civil War expert, James M. McPherson, has explained, the number of casualties at Antietam was nearly four times the number of American casualties on D-Day (June 6, 1944). He also determined that the number of battle deaths in one day at Antietam exceeded the total number of battle deaths in all of the other wars the United States fought in the nineteenth century: the War of 1812, the Mexican-American
War, the Spanish-American War, and the Indian wars.24

At Antietam, Ohio’s 28th was the first regiment that “forded the creek above the stone bridge.”25 The regiment suffered 42 deaths and injuries.

At the Battle of New Market, fought on May 15, 1864, General John Breckinridge with 5,000 Confederate troops defeated 5,000 Union troops led by General Franz Siegel.26 The Union lost 800 men, compared to the Confederacy’s 600.

Samuel’s application for a military pension, filed on September 12, 1881, shows that he was disabled by chills and fever in June 1863, following the Battle of New Creek, in West Virginia. Subsequently, he suffered from symptoms “resembling rheumatism.” On June 16, 1864, shortly before his discharge, a horse kicked his right leg below the knee. This blow “totally” disabled him. Though not hospitalized, he was treated by three surgeons: Schoenbine, Denig, and Jenner.

Samuel’s application was successful, and he was paid $30 on a quarterly basis. A document from the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Pensions, dated December 1917, shows that his last payment was on June 4, 1917, two days before his death.

After his discharge from the Army on July 23, 1864, Samuel returned to his wife and two children. His third child, Henry, my great-grandfather, was born in Cincinnati on August 29, 1864. This date suggests that Samuel had enjoyed at least a short furlough from his regiment (or that Fannie was able to visit him near his encampment).

Between 1860 and 1870, Cincinnati’s population jumped from 161,000 to 216,000. After the secession of the Confederacy, the city lost its easy access to Southern markets, but manufacturing surged. Indeed, thanks in part to large government contracts, Cincinnati became the largest manufacturing city in the West.27 Its expansion was exemplified in 1866 by the completion of John Roebling’s suspension bridge over the Ohio to Kentucky (a precursor to his Brooklyn Bridge).

During the 1860s, Cincinnati’s Jewish community also grew significantly. In 1870 it reached 8,000 to 12,000 members (or as high as 5.5% of the total population).28 The most obvious symbol of the community’s prosperity was the construction, in 1866, of B’nai Jeshurun’s extraordinary home, “the Plum Street Temple,” under the leadership of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, the American champion of the emerging Reform movement. Under his leadership the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was chartered in Cincinnati in 1873, and its seminary, Hebrew Union College, opened there two years later.

There is no record of where Samuel and Fanny affiliated, but their son,
Henry, my great-grandfather, was eventually a leader at B’nai Jeshurun. (Another of my maternal great-grandfathers, Sigmund Rheinstrom, affiliated with that congregation’s Reform rival, B’nai Israel, which had built its own lavish downtown synagogue in 1869.)

By 1868 Samuel established a partnership with William Mecklenberg; their printing business, Mecklenberg & Rosenthal, was located at 203 Vine Street, in the central business district, until at least 1895. The business was known for: “Steam Job and Book Printers, Book Binders and Blank Book Manufacturers.” By the end of that decade, however, Mecklenberg died, and S. Rosenthal & Co. opened in the Butler Building at 15-27 West 6th Street. According to his obituary in the August 1917 issue of The American Pressman, Samuel, a widower, reported to his desk every morning until a month before his death on June 6, when he was 82 years of age. He was probably cremated. According to her death certificate, Fannie, who died on May 29, 1914, had been cremated.


Alas, there is no reason to believe that Samuel Rosenthal ever set foot in Rhode Island or elsewhere in the Northeast, but he may have enjoyed some associations with Rhode Islanders.

Solomon Pareira, who was born in Amsterdam in about 1810, married Miriam Halberstadt there. The 1880 federal census shows that Solomon’s parents and Miriam’s were born in France. The federal census of 1850 shows the Pareiras living in Providence with the first four of their twelve children. This census also shows that Solomon had lived in Germany. The eldest Pareira child, Isaac, had been born in 1838. The youngest, identified only as an “infant,” was a year old in 1850. In 1852 Solomon appears in the Providence directory. He operated clothing stores at 10 Broad Street and 16 Orange Street and resided at 66 Clementine.

Pareira became the leader of the city’s embryonic Jewish community. He gathered a minyan in his home by about 1844; five years later he was one of three Jews who purchased land for a Jewish cemetery in Cranston. In 1854, Sons of
Israel, a traditional congregation, was founded in Pareira’s home. He served as its first president, and in 1857 he transferred the Jewish cemetery’s ownership to the new congregation (which eventually became known informally as Temple Beth-El). In 1858, however, Pareira and his immediate family left Providence.

The Pareiras may have lived temporarily in several states, but they eventually settled in the boomtown of Cincinnati. First listed in its city directory in 1862, Solomon operated a clothing store on West 5th Street. The 1880 federal census shows that the Pareira’s daughter, Isabelle, had been born in Ohio in 1864.

Solomon, who remained on 5th Street for 25 years, was known primarily for his loan business. Mecklenberg & Rosenthal and then S. Rosenthal were located only a few blocks from his establishment. Cincinnati’s Gemilath Chessed (Hebrew Free Loan Society) was not established until 1891, so it is possible, at least in theory, that my great-great-grandfather borrowed some money from Pareira. More likely, my ancestor could have done some printing for the former Providence resident. But Samuel was a generation younger than Solomon, so I am also inclined to guess that, as his printing business steadily grew, Samuel’s income surpassed Solomon’s.

By 1887 Pareira was finished with the loan business. For better or worse, he reverted to selling clothes. The following year his business was located at 547 Central Avenue. In 1889 Pareira must have closed his business; only his home was listed at 86 Laurel.

Remarkably, in 1890, Pareira, at 80 years of age, turned up in Covington, Kentucky, where his trade was “clothing renovator.” The year and place of his death are unknown. Miriam is known to have died in Cincinnati on October 10, 1911; her burial place is also unknown.

In 1892 Sophia Pareira had been living with the Pareiras in Covington. In the Cincinnati directory of 1900, she is identified as Abraham’s widow, living at 677 West 4th Street. Perhaps he had worked in his father’s business many years earlier. There is also a listing for David A. Pareira, a clothier, in the St. Louis directory of 1881. Sophia died of pneumonia on November 15, 1904 in Cincinnati, but her burial place is unknown.
Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine whether Samuel and Solomon ever resided close to one another. As the primary Jewish residential area shifted over the decades, Samuel can be found at numerous addresses: south, north, and west of Canal Street. Around 1880, the Pareiras lived east of Canal on Oregon Street, in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, near the city's observatory. But by 1889, when they had moved to Laurel Street, they were living west of Canal.

It is not known if Samuel and Solomon ever belonged to the same congregation (or any congregation). Given their native tongues, I would guess that neither ever acquired more than a modest knowledge of Yiddish. To bolster his business, Solomon may have gained a better grasp of German.

My distant cousin, Mark Rosenthal of Los Angeles, a zealous genealogist, has conducted research in Budingon on several occasions. In May 1993 he made an amazing discovery in Springfield, Massachusetts, however. He met Lilli Rosenthal Halberstadt, who, with her husband, Manfred, had fled Germany to France in the late 1930s. Lilli was vaguely aware that a branch of the Rosenthal family had settled in Cincinnati, so kinship with Mark made sense to her. Lilli showed Mark a photo of her brother, Willy, and Mark agreed that they resembled one another.

Lilli had grown up in Budingon, where her father-in-law, Max Halberstadt, was a teacher and rabbi. Thus, could Miriam Halberstadt Pareira, who lived in Providence between 1838 and 1858, have been a distant Rosenthal relative from Budingon?

Of course Halberstadt is a not an uncommon Jewish name. Jews began living in this small city in Saxony as early as 1189. In 1699 it was home to 639. By the early eighteenth-century, moreover, Halberstadt's Jewish community was the largest in Prussia.33

There is another Halberstadt-Providence connection, for Miriam's brother, Leonard, lived here from about 1856 until his death on September 2, 1885 at 62 years of age. His wife, Esther, died in Providence on June 5, 1888 at 64 years of age. The couple is buried in the Dutch Jewish cemetery in Melrose, Massachusetts.34

Quite remarkably, a record of Leonard's draft registration in Providence on January 25, 1863 survives. Being 38 years old at that time, he was born in about 1825. His birthplace was Germany, he worked as a peddler, and he resided at

Pareira
165 Pine Street.

Like his brother-in-law, Halberstadt was in the clothing business. After Solomon Pareira's departure, he continued to operate a clothing store on High Street and then at 328 North Main. He lived with his family at 264 Pine.

As late as 1917, the Pareira and Halberstadt families were in close contact. Pareira's daughter, Mary, gave Halberstadt's granddaughter, Kate Slocum, the paper Ten Commandments that had been used in the minyan in Pareira's home. This extraordinary artifact was eventually donated to Temple Beth-El, where it is displayed in the Bernhardt History Gallery. Avis Gunther Rosenberg and her family are the only current Temple members who descend from the Pareira-Halberstadt clan.

I am of course proud of Samuel Rosenthal's numerous accomplishments, including his patriotic service in the Civil War. But I am also astonished that Samuel may have enjoyed a few Providence connections. The intersecting histories of the Rosenthal, Pareira, and Halberstadt families suggest, more than many of us would ordinarily imagine, that we Jews are mispacha. We drink from the same stream.

1 My genealogical research owes much to my grandfather's first cousin, Nancy Rosenthal Opperman, and my twin brother, Theo.

2 National Archives and Records Administration, passenger lists, film M255, reel 11.

3 Both references to the Eva Dorothea in the Baltimore American were found by F. P. O'Neill, reference librarian of the Maryland Historical Society, in May 1990.


6 The genealogy of the Baum family is based on research compiled by Martin Newman, a Baum descendant who lived in Alzey as a child and fled Germany for America in 1941. There is a possibility, however, that my great-great-grandmother descended from a different Baum family living in Alzey. According to information on her death certificate provided by her son, Benjamin, my Fannie Baum Rosenthal was born on June 5, 1839 (not 28). Her father was Nathan (not George). Thus, it would have been a further coincidence that the Fannie Baum in Newman's genealogy also married a Rosenthal in Cincinnati. But the situation is further complicated by another fact: In 1946 Martin Newman met David Rosenthal, Samuel and Fannie's son, on a visit to Cincinnati.

7 In 1933 there were 197 Jews in Alzey. None survived the Holocaust. "Alzey," 27.

8 The names and birth years of these women, based on Martin Newman's research, may be inaccurate. These could have been the sisters of a different Fannie Baum Rosenthal.

10 http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tbe08.tst

11 Mostov, 239.


13 Mostov, 175.

14 Mostov, 180.

15 Nathan's siblings in birth order were: Sarah, Henry, Abraham, Anna, Charles, Moses, David, Edward, Joseph, and Benjamin. Looking proud and prosperous, all the Rosenthal children posed for a photograph with their parents at the celebration of Samuel and Fannie's 50th anniversary in 1909. Like their father, five sons sported thick mustaches. Unlike him, two sons were bald. All the children wore boutonnieres or corsages.


17 Wolf, 333-5.

18 The 28th had only three other Jewish officers: Herman Koenigsberger, Jacob Lehman, and J. H. Moak. Wolf, as above.

The service of Marcus Spiegel, another Jewish officer from Germany, has been well documented through his letters. Born in Hesse-Darmstadt, northwest of Worms, in 1829, Spiegel followed his parents to New York City in 1849. Having settled with relatives in Chicago, he then became a peddler in Ohio. In 1853 he married a Quaker, Caroline Hamlin, who converted to Judaism in Chicago. Spiegel was naturalized in 1857. He and his wife settled in Millersburg, a town south of Akron, where he was a shopkeeper and postmaster. In December 1861, Spiegel enlisted in Ohio's 67th Infantry and later served in the 120th, which fought in many Southern states. He was particularly valiant at the Battle of Vicksburg, in Mississippi, fought from May 18 to July 4, 1863. Spiegel was killed almost a year later, in May 1864, after a Confederate attack in Louisiana during the Red River Campaign. After the war, his name was prominently inscribed on a regimental monument erected at Vicksburg. See: Jean P. Soman and Frank L. Byrne, A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).


21 Burnside (1824-1881), a native of Indiana, graduated from West Point in 1847. In 1852 he was assigned to Fort Adams in Newport and met his future wife from Providence. Burnside established the Bristol Rifle Works to manufacture the Burnside carbine, but the business failed, as did his Democratic candidacy for Congress in 1858. Although he is considered "a loveable incompetent" as a military leader, Burnside was later successful as a railroad executive. As a Republican, he served as Rhode Island's governor (1866-69) and a senator (1873-81). The three-story house that he built in 1867 at 314 Benefit Street still stands. Burnside was buried in Swan Point Cemetery.
(at Spruce and Hemlock Avenues), and Burnside Park was established in downtown Providence adjacent to the former Exchange Place (now Kennedy Plaza). A bronze equestrian statue, showing his unusual "sidewhiskers," was erected there in 1887.

22 Boatner, 21.

24 McPherson, xvii.

25 Reid, 195.

26 Boatner, 588.

27 Mostov, 215, 217.

28 Sarna and Klein, 181.


30 Pareira may have descended from Moses Pereira de Paiva, a late seventeenth-century leader of Amsterdam's Jewish community. In 1686 he led a delegation to the Jewish community of Cochin, India (then under Dutch rule), and later wrote a book about it. Walter J. Fischel, "Moses Pereira," Encyclopedia Judaica, 2nd ed., XV, 759.

31 Seebert J. Goldowsky, A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), Providence, Rhode Island (The Congregation, 1989), 4, 5.


33 Halberstadt, a world-renowned center of Torah study, was also the seat of Germany's Orthodox Jewish organizations until 1930. None of its Jews survived the Holocaust. Zvi Avneri and Larissa Daemmig, "Halberstadt," Encyclopedia Judaica, 2nd ed., VIII, 263.

34 Goldowsky, 7.

35 Goldowsky, 7.
MEMORIES OF MY PARENTS AND OUR FARM

Nathaniel I. Korman

By now, Hal Bloom's vivid stories of growing up in South Providence are well known to and much appreciated by our readers. More of his tender memories will be presented in future issues of our journal.

Now it is time to hear from Hal's brother-in-law, Nathaniel. Born in Providence in 1916, he died in Albuquerque in 2010. This is an excerpt from his memoir, *Memories of My Father*.

After graduating from North Attleboro High School, Korman earned a bachelor's degree at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a master's at MIT, and a doctorate at University of Pennsylvania. For a quarter-century he worked as an electronics engineer and as a think-tank leader at RCA. During the Cold War, he specialized in developing weapons systems; later he focused on private business ventures. Korman also lectured at Penn and received patents for television broadcasting from satellites and computer-based color correction for television and printing. Additionally, he served as an expert witness and technical consultant in patent litigation. His numerous publications include *The Evolution of Human Society* (Runamiro Books, 1998).

It may be amusing to learn that Nathaniel's engineering expertise was launched in boyhood as a chicken farmer.

MY FATHER

William Korman was born in 1887 in Kamenets-Podolsk, a small town in the Ukrainian province of Russia. By 1900 his family moved to Khotin, a fortified town on the southwestern bank of the Dniester River, about 15 miles to the south.

My grandfather, Menachem Mendel Korman, was a *Kohen*, so my father's early education focused on Hebrew and Talmud. Although impressed by Talmudists' precise reasoning, compassion, and high moral tone, he did not remain an observant Jew. Rather, he was guided by his own ideas and beliefs.

By his teenage years, secular studies dominated my father's attention. Fluent in both Russian and Yiddish, he became quite familiar with the works of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Pushkin. From concerts frequently given in Khotin, he
also came to love classical music.

Like his classmates, my father became very much aware of massive labor strikes and the resulting massacres. Though he had never experienced a pogrom, he was keenly aware of Cossacks’ power and ruthlessness. On one occasion, a Cossack rode through Khotin’s marketplace and stole a loaf of bread by impaling it with his sword. Uncomfortable with extremes, my father became a socialist rather than a Marxist or a communist.

Menachem Mendel Korman managed an absentee owner’s grain mill. So impressed by my father’s intense interest in machinery and milling, a visiting German maintenance engineer urged him to enter a German engineering school. My grandfather was opposed to any form of higher education, however. So, after completing his secular studies, my father had to seek employment.

Although he found a job with a local fabric wholesaler, my father found it prosaic. Especially with the threat of military service hanging over his head, he saw little reason to remain in Russia.
Although many details of his trip are lacking, he arrived in New York City, early in 1909, at the age of 21. Relatives who had preceded him offered to help with his transition to a new life.

"Soon, however, my father sought a less crowded and cleaner city. This meant a move to Providence, where other relatives lived." My father and a friend found that they could make a living by fabric sponging. It was a process of shrinking fabric before it was taken to a tailor or a seamstress, who would make fine clothes.

**MY MOTHER**

My father met an attractive young lady, Tillie Jacobs, a native-born American who lived with her parents at 198 Willard Avenue. I was told of just one of the topics that came up on their very first date: his ambition to own a farm. She was amenable. With this propitious beginning, their dating continued.

Many years later, I learned that the first date was very much suited to both
Mr. and Mrs. A. Jacobs
request the honored presence at the
marriage of their daughter
Tillie Jacobs
to
William Korman
On Friday, May 28, 1915
at 3:30 P.M.
at the South Providence Hebrew
Congregation, Willard Ave.

Bride's Residence:
198 Willard Ave.

Wedding of Celia Green and Melvin Korman, 1950, Ohawe Sholom, Pawtucket.
The author is in top row, third from right. His sister, Rosalie Korman Bloom, is in top row, second from left.
their characters. Neither parent was inclined to indulge in persiflage. Each came to grasp quickly what was in the mind of the other. His was a free spirit. He neither wanted to be exploited by others or to exploit them. Wanting to be free of crowds, he preferred working on his own.

My mother, too, was a nonconformist, who disdained the petty prejudices and quarrels she saw among her relatives and acquaintances. Though she was living with her older sister, she vehemently resented the efforts by Dina and her husband, Simon, to dominate and control her life. Her indignation knew no bounds at the accusations made after she returned from a canoe ride; her dress had become splashed with lake water. Later on, when mother's sister, Fanny, married a gentile, and the family cruelly ostracized her for that deed, Tillie became incensed. She faced them down while remaining on friendly terms with Fanny.

During their courtship, my parents laid down the foundations of their tremendous respect for each other. They also must have recognized how their differences complemented each other. While he was intellectual and analytical, she was outgoing and outspoken.

Their deep love for each other would enable them to overcome their one substantial difference. While she wanted to adhere to Jewish traditions, he believed that traditional practices had long been outmoded. Nevertheless, he later assisted her in keeping a kosher kitchen, even if it meant that, to build strong bones, we children were allowed to drink all the milk we wanted at any time.

After their marriage, she expressed a desire to attend High Holy Day services, but he grasped that his friends, who knew his true feelings, would ridicule him for doing so. Accordingly, Ma and Pa made an overnight boat trip to New York, where they could attend services unnoticed. Thereafter, she was content to observe the High Holy Days at home.

I'm getting ahead of my story, but Ma wished that I, her first son, go through a bar mitzvah ceremony. So Pa devised a plan whereby I could do without the intensive and lengthy drilling required in Hebrew school. He taught me at home to recite the prayers that would be said in the presence of a minyan rather than put on a show for a large audience of friends and relatives. Ma was satisfied.

**FLORIDA**

As my parents approached their wedding on May 28, 1915 at the South Providence Hebrew Congregation on Willard Avenue, my father realized that his earnings were insufficient to support a family. Accordingly, he left the sponging business and acquired a delicatessen on Willard Avenue in the heart of the Jewish shopping
district. My parents lived behind the store with their first two children. Unfortunately, the second child, Sidney, died in 1918, before his first birthday.

After the end of World War I, the business climate in the United States started booming. In particular, land sales in Florida were climbing spectacularly. Ma’s eldest brother wrote to urge my parents to join them in Florida and to participate in the fortunes that were being made.

Ma and Pa were adventurous spirits. They disposed of the delicatessen, bought a Willys Overland automobile, and set out for Florida. After their arrival, they found that reality fell far short of their expectations. Florida in those days was not what it is today; air conditioning did not yet exist nor was vermin-control practiced. This was particularly hard on Ma. Snakes, rats, insects, and filth were everywhere.

The debacle reached a climax when, as the result of an insect bite, Ma contracted blood poisoning in her arm. The local doctor thought amputation of the whole arm might be necessary, but the only doctor she could trust in such a vital matter was in Providence. Pa promptly put her and me, their four-year-old, on a train to Providence, and he sped for the same destination as fast as his Willys could take him. In Providence, Ma’s doctor was able to arrest and cure the infection.

BACK IN PROVIDENCE
When Pa arrived in Providence, he had to find an occupation. He took immediate advantage of a peculiar opportunity. Streetcar operators were on strike, and he was one of the few people who owned an automobile. So he ran a jitney service along the route of one of the busier streetcar lines, probably along Allens Avenue.4

Next, he needed a residence for his family. He wanted something more pleasant and up-to-date than could be found in the Jewish ghetto around Willard Avenue. His auto mechanic, who ran a garage on Allens, suggested the tenement where he himself lived.

Accordingly, in 1920, they rented the third floor of the tenement building at 10 Meni Court.5 This was in a short cul-de-sac off Thurbers Avenue, halfway between Broad Street and Prairie Avenue. The apartment was of recent construction; it had indoor plumbing, gaslight illumination, and central hot water and heating. During our residence there, the gaslight was replaced by electric lighting.

Although I was only four years old, I have retained some vivid memories of those days. I was enrolled in kindergarten at Thurbers Avenue School. My classmates were largely Irish Catholic, and I got along with them without any difficulty. After school I played with children my own age who lived on the same block. On
hot summer evenings, the family cooled off by riding out into the country on an open-air trolley. One of our downstairs neighbors, the auto mechanic, invited us to listen to a crystal radio that he had built to receive newly inaugurated broadcasts.

With the settlement of the trolley car strike, Pa started again to seek employment. He soon found another opportunity. Just as he had wanted to find a more up-to-date residence in South Providence, he thought about Jewish housewives who found themselves remote from ethnic food stores on Willard Avenue. Again, few families had automobiles for shopping excursions.

Pa set about to serve some of those needs using his Willys automobile. It was an ingenious idea because home deliveries had been limited to commodities such as milk and ice. Horse-drawn carts were ideal for that purpose but hopelessly inefficient when potential customers were thinly scattered over a large area.

Soon Pa’s route covered the whole of South Providence. His business quickly outgrew the capacity of his Willys, so he bought a small panel truck. In modern marketing parlance, he was successful because he had found a “niche” market and knew how to exploit it.

CASS STREET
After my sister Leah was born in 1921, Ma found that it was rather difficult carrying an infant up and down three flights of stairs. Fortunately, Pa’s business was by then established enough so that he could consider buying a single-family home. He was assisted by his uncle, Jonah Fidelman, who took up real estate in addition to his main business. Pa bought from him a new brick house and a garage at 28 Cass Street. It was located just a block away from the Broad Street entrance to Roger Williams Park.

When Pa considered how to make his business more profitable, he chose to enlarge the number of his products rather than his customer base. He saw that his best possibilities were high-value delicatessen items such as corned beef, pastrami, lox, and the like. These were products with which he was familiar because of his deli on Willard Avenue.

Because deli products are perishable, he needed an ice box for his truck. Because he could not find a ready-built ice box that met his needs, he sought a woodworking shop that could build one. I remember being with him in the shop when the box was being built. It was insulated with two-inch cork board and lined with copper and zinc. The drain pipe for melted ice went through the floor of the truck.

On Friday mornings, before the bulk of kosher deli sales were made, he
went to Kessler’s and Davis’s, adjacent to each other on North Main Street, where he bought his deli supplies at wholesale prices. I remember climbing over the “mountains” of boxed canned goods in these stores because wholesale supplies came in bulk.

Back home on Friday afternoons, Pa sliced up the lox and meats in quarter- and half-pound packets. Even the parchment wrapping paper, which came in large sheets, had to be cut to size. Pa made an ingenious tool that cut an entire loaf of cream cheese into quarter-pound squares ready for wrapping.

Our family lived in the Cass Street home for six years. Two more children were born: Melvin (in 1925) and Rosalie (in 1927). As the country was prospering, Pa’s business prospered with it.

He kept abreast of world and national news through his subscription to the liberal Yiddish newspaper, The Forward, as well as to The Saturday Evening Post and Time magazines. I became an avid reader by reading these magazines from cover-to-cover. I never became motivated to master Yiddish, even though I was enrolled for a while in the Arbeiter Ring school on Willard Avenue. Pa also enrolled me in Sunday school at the Reform Jewish temple, Beth-El, on Broad Street. I became extremely interested in biblical history.

BUILDING A FARM

Apparently, Pa had never given up on his dream of farming. He was merely biding his time as his savings accumulated and he formulated his plans. He didn’t discuss these plans with me because I was too young to understand such things. Many years later, however, when I was able to understand, I marveled at his thoroughness.

First he narrowed his field of interest to poultry farming. Next he educated himself on all aspects of this business. Years later I studied and used the literature he had accumulated, including a book on the Crumazone method, the Quisenberry course, and a mass of pertinent bulletins from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Finally, Pa put his planning in place by liquidating his retail delivery business, selling the Cass Street house, and renting a small farm.

Because spring was the natural time to start a poultry flock and finding and buying a farm would probably delay his start, Pa rented a farm as an interim measure. In February 1928 our family moved into a farmhouse in Riverside, just a few miles south of East Providence.

Pa had been attracted to this farm because of its chicken house, but it had to be given up within a month. The well failed, and the owner could not or would not make repairs.
A substitute farm was quickly found almost directly across the river in Lakewood. This house was much nicer. Because there was no chicken house, Pa quickly erected a small building to start with chicks. When they matured he shipped them off to the auction market in New York.

It was fortunate that Pa had begun on a small scale because he soon learned an important lesson at a relatively low cost. His shipment to New York had arrived on the same day as many other shipments, so his chickens sold for a fraction of the amount he would have earned on a better day. After the initial shock, Pa realized that he would have to market his chickens locally. Fortunately, he had the contacts and the ability to do just that.

I accompanied Pa on his many searches for a farm that would suit his long-term needs. Most properties he saw were inadequate because they were too remote from paved roads, lacked water or other facilities, were heavily wooded or had a dismal dwelling. Finally, he found what he was looking for at 16 Old Post Road in North Attleboro. Not only located on a paved road that was accessible to bus service, this farm had city water, electricity, and a telephone. The 16 acres of cleared land included a sizable barn, chicken houses, and a commodious house.

When we moved in the fall of 1928, our family included five children. Nearing my thirteenth birthday, I was enrolled in North Attleboro Junior High School. Leah, nearing her eighth birthday, was enrolled in Oldtown School. Melvin and Rosalie were still toddlers, and Arnold was an infant. Ann and Lois came along in the next few years.

Despite his careful planning, Pa was soon beset by many problems. The house's central heating did not function properly, so we had to rely on the kitchen stove and local space heaters. The previous owner had not paid his water bills for a year or more, so Pa had to pay them off because his lawyer had not done a proper search. And of course Pa had to get his poultry business started.

By the end of 1929, it became clear that he had other, more serious problems. The poultry business was not yet large enough to support itself. He would need additional sheds and coops to do this. As his savings to start up the business were running out, the stock market crashed.

Undaunted by these problems, however, he decided to return to his business of selling specialty foods from his truck. This would not only provide immediate income but it would establish customers for his poultry products. The relative who had bought his business two years earlier was incompetent, and he had to abandon his route after only six months. Pa found that his customers were more or less in place and happy to have him back.
For his supply of baked goods, he switched from Snell's on Willard Avenue to August Bakery in Pawtucket. August was better for him because of its location and also because it would help augment Pa's customer base. For his delicatessen supplies he used Dornbos, a Boston wholesaler whose trucks could drop off shipments at his farm while on route to Providence.

Now coming into my early teens, I was able to help out on the farm by tending to the chickens while Pa was tending to his route. Soon we acquired a cow, and I had to acquire the skill to milk and otherwise tend to the cow's needs.

Following Pa's lead, I also acquired skills in building design and construction. These included masonry, carpentry, metal working, electricity, plumbing, and roofing. His methods were simple but impressive. He taught me by example that if I ever needed to know how to do something I could find out by searching for and reading the appropriate books, bulletins, and periodicals. This lesson of self-reliance was never taught to me in school.

In those early years on the farm, the initial buildings were not spacious enough, so it soon became necessary to build additional chicken houses. However, money was scarce and improvisation was necessary.

Early on, Pa found Dick, an unemployed handyman. He was single and satisfied with a place to sleep, a supply of food, with which he could prepare his own meals, and a few dollars a week so he could booze up on Saturday nights with some of his cronies in Pawtucket. Dick was housed in a small room attached to the kitchen. He had a separate entrance to his room and never came into the house proper. Ma was a bit leery of him at first, but he never caused any trouble and turned out to be very valuable in maintaining and upgrading the farm buildings. In addition, Pa and I learned many practical building techniques from him.

Dick's first job was to carefully dismantle the large screened veranda that enclosed two sides of the house. Ma was quite pleased because the veranda, which had been little used, made the house's interior very dark. Pa was pleased because he now had much of the lumber he needed to build his new chicken house. The three of us—Pa, Dick, and I—pitched in and soon had the house built and ready for the chickens. Pa's design for a two-story, six-pen house, adequately served his needs for the next five years.

However, Pa found that many practical problems had to be recognized and solved before his farm could become successful. The first arose from the fact that there had to be a supply of cash to pay for the baby chicks and to feed them for the many months it took before there was enough product to replenish the cash supply. Four to six months were required to raise a broiler or fryer, and several months
more were required before a hen would even start to lay eggs.

In the early 1930s, the only kind of loan available to farmers like Pa was from the Morris Plan; but it required immediate payments of interest as well as principal. Several years had to pass before Roosevelt's New Deal recognized this common farming problem and provided low-interest loans that did not have to be repaid until a farmer's crop could be harvested and sold.

Pa was quick to recognize problems and was ingenious in devising solutions. For instance, when the new chicken house was only a year or two old, water leaks in the roof were noticed. Upon examination, it was found that sunlight heating and nighttime cooling were drawing up the roofing nails, and water was finding its way into the roofing nail holes. The solution: a new layer of asphalt paper fastened on top of the old but only with asphalt cement rather than nails.

A problem arose with the brooder heaters for new chicks. Initially, small coal-burning stoves were chosen. Electrical heaters were too expensive to operate; kerosene burners used wicks to feed the flames and had serious maintenance problems; and bottled gas was not yet available. However, one morning we found that a coal stove had overheated and burned a hole clear through the two-inch plank flooring of the building. The whole building might have burned down but for the nonflammable peat moss litter on the floor. Soon afterwards, kerosene burners came on the market, and they were purchased to replace all the coal burners.

Another problem became apparent when, at odd intervals, egg production suddenly and inexplicably would fall off. It would then slowly build back up. Pa was then buying his chicken feed from the farmers' cooperative, and the bags of feed were labeled with a list of the quantities of their ingredients. Following up on a sudden idea, he discovered from the labels that the fall-off coincided with a change in the ingredients. He knew that the cooperative would change its ingredients from time to time to take advantage of cost shifts. He also knew that he could buy the ingredients separately from the cooperative. So he bought a hand-operated mixer that would handle 50 pounds at a time. He proceeded to mix his own feed to his own formula. The extra work was justified by better egg production.

Later, as I was about to depart for New York City to visit my widowed Uncle Irving for a weekend, Pa asked me to get my uncle to take me to one of the secondhand shops on Canal Street to buy a secondhand motor to run the feed mixer. I knew enough about motors to get one appropriate for the job. When I returned home, I knew enough about rudimentary physics to design an appropriate system of pulleys to match the motor to the mixer.
I was pleased to put into use some of the things I had learned from reading science books in the public library, and Pa was pleased that I had developed the ability to do this job. He did not praise me for it, nor did I expect his praise. That was not his style. It seems that he regarded work as something that was expected of all of us, himself included. The reward for that work was only the satisfaction that came from the self-knowledge of a job well done.

After a while, Pa became aware of a marketplace opportunity. Kosher caterers for weddings, bar mitzvahs, and similar affairs needed to purchase a large number of identically-sized chickens for each affair. This was sometimes difficult on the open market just prior to an affair. Pa proposed to meet caterers' needs by starting the requisite number of baby chicks at a time calculated to bring them to the right size when needed. Because catered affairs were usually scheduled far in advance, caterers were only too happy to place their orders with him so that they could get exactly what they wanted, when they wanted it. Pa realized a considerable amount of business in this way and at premium prices.

As his market for fryers and broilers increased, a housing shortage for spring and early summer months developed. However, in those months chickens could be let out to range on the open fields. They could be housed overnight in portable shelters. Pa, not being satisfied with shelters he could buy, proceeded to create a design more to his liking. It proved to be a great success. Consisting of flat panels that could be hooked together for use in the field and unhooked for storage over the winter, the shelters were both inexpensive and easy to build and use.

**FARM LIFE**

I have reason to believe that Ma and Pa were primarily motivated to opt for farm life because they thought it would provide a better environment for their children's development— not because of Pa's earlier reactions to his life in New York City. In retrospect, I believe that Ma and Pa were also right about farm life because of the work habits and skills we were able to acquire at an early age. We children have been most fortunate to have possessed parents who were so inspired and dedicated on our behalf.

Our parents made life on the farm a wholesome experience for us children. First and foremost, Ma and Pa insulated us from fears about the ravages of the worldwide depression. Outside our cocoon, many people were losing everything: all their worldly possessions, their homes, their jobs, and all hope. Some people committed suicide. Ma and Pa, who were acutely aware of world events, must have had their moments of fear and uncertainty. But they successfully shielded us from
emotional upset.

In addition to feeding, clothing, and sheltering their children, Ma and Pa did all that was within their power to provide an environment in which each child could grow up and develop himself or herself to the maximum that innate abilities would allow. The most that our parents could do for us was to provide good role models; then each child had to be allowed to develop the course of his or her own future.

Life on the farm was enriching in many ways for us children. For example, we became more or less intimately acquainted with many kinds of animals that Pa acquired, at least in part, for our edification. In addition to the cow and chickens, there were dogs, cats, ducks, geese, a pig, and even a pony.

Our first dog, Rex, resembled a German shepherd. Rex and I not only played but wrestled together. He assumed the role of guardian when Ma put our infant sister, Ann, out on the porch for an airing in her baby coach. He would challenge every passerby, even though his barking awakened the baby. Subsequent dogs became pets for my younger brothers and sisters.

The ducks and geese were a sight to behold as they escorted their offspring to and from the pond and stream that crossed the farm. Papa goose was aggressively protective of his goslings. I remember once having to rescue my brother, Melvin, then only four or five years old, from the gander. Melvin’s curiosity about the goslings brought him too close to them, and the gander flew up onto his shoulders and started pecking away at his head. From this experience Melvin learned to respect the gander and keep a safe distance from the goslings.

The pony, which came later, was harnessed by Dick, our hired hand, to a makeshift cart. The younger children could amuse themselves by driving the pony cart about the farm. That form of amusement came to an abrupt halt one day, when the pony took it into his head to take a jaunt along Old Post Road towards the ice pond about a mile away. Judiciously, he avoided the road traffic by running over many of our neighbors’ lawns and gardens. He came to a halt only when the cart was accidentally wrecked. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. Melvin and Arnold pacified the neighbors by repairing their gardens. Pa disposed of the pony.

Later, Pa acquired an old pickup truck that was no longer roadworthy. It was called “the supercharger.” Not only did it prove useful for many farm chores, but it enabled Melvin and Arnold to master the mechanics of driving at an early age.

Although we resided on a farm, we were not isolated from normal human contacts. I soon made a few close friends through school and Scouting, though North Attleboro was several miles away. I was able to accomplish this partially
through the use of a bicycle, a gift from my parents that I had not asked for. Rex, the German shepherd, escorted me while I rode to school on Old Post Road. Although I had only two or three close friends, this seemed normal based on my experiences living on Cass Street. I also had only two or three close friends when I went away to college.

Because of Ma's gregarious nature and because of our spacious home and grounds, our farm became the setting for frequent informal family gatherings. In this way we played with our cousins and came to know them well.

The farm afforded many advantages over the city for growing youngsters. For example, the air was cleaner and homegrown food was more wholesome. There were also many tranquil places where a youngster could go to meditate without any distractions.

My favorite places were along the brook, either at the bridge or farther downstream on a piece of high ground in the midst of a tree-covered marsh. During winter, I found a small unused room in the house, which I equipped with a secret lock to insure my privacy. After I left home, Melvin discovered the secret of the lock, and he took over the room and its contents for himself.

**COLLEGE**

A serious challenge came in the summer of 1933, when I had been accepted for admission at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The first semester's fees for tuition, room, and board were well over $500— and payable in advance. The worst days of the Great Depression were upon us, and our parents did not possess that amount of money.

Nevertheless, on enrollment day, we went to the college hoping for a solution. The cashier told us that there were no scholarships for freshmen, and the best that the college could offer was a weekly payment plan. My parents accepted.

After a few weeks, however, they could not keep up the payments, and I had to come home. Strangely, I was not upset. I had lived a protected life and did not realize the implications for my future without a college degree. In retrospect, I am sure my parents were very much aware of and depressed by those implications.

Fortunately, after I left WPI, the cashier brought my situation to the attention of the dean. After reviewing my high school record, he decided that he could make an exception and awarded me a full scholarship if my parents could manage the rest of the costs. I don't know how they managed, but three weeks later I returned to college.
The following notes are the editor's.

1. William was first listed in the Providence directory in 1914, when he was a "proprietor" at 94 Snow Street and lived at 239 Plain Street.

2. The 1915 directory shows that William's partner was Jacob Cheilik, and their business was located at 139 Mathewson Street, room 607.

3. According to the 1919 directory, the Kormans lived at 190 Williard Avenue.

4. There is no reference to William (or his jitney business) in Providence directories until 1923, when he was listed as a grocer at 10 Meni Court.

5. This must have been a three-decker house built in about 1910 by a Jewish developer, Harry Weiss. The street was named after his wife, Meni.


7. William was not listed in East Providence's directories.

8. William was not listed in the North Attleboro or the combined directory for the Attleboros until 1933, when his occupation was "salesman." He was first identified as a poultry farmer in the 1941-42 directory. By this time the family acquired a telephone. Residences and farms on Old Post Road were not numbered, but the Kormans lived between Howard and Draper Streets.

9. The fifth child, Arnold, was not born in Providence. The youngest children were born in Providence: Ann in 1930, Lois in 1932.

10. Nathaniel was first listed in the 1935 directory as a student.

11. Dick was never listed in city directories as the Kormans' tenant.

12. The Morris Plan was a national loan program founded in 1910 by Arthur J. Morris, an attorney in Norfolk, Virginia. Before his election as governor of Rhode Island, Theodore F. Green was president of the Morris Plan Bankers' Association from 1900 to 1929.
FARM, TOWN, AND CITY

Rosalie Korman Bloom

It is tempting to introduce the author as Nathaniel Korman’s sister or Hal Bloom’s wife, but Rosalie is her own person. She has seen and experienced the world in ways that her male relatives could not. For example, her portrait of her mother is fuller and more vivid than Nathaniel’s. Perhaps resembling the painter Grandma Moses, she also retains a detailed vision of the landscape around her.

The theme of distance is fundamental to Nathaniel’s and Rosalie’s memories. Though now only a short walk from Emerald Square Mall, big box stores, and megaplex cinemas, the Korman children grew up within a relatively isolated and self-sufficient environment. Even if favorably disposed, there was no local synagogue with which the Kormans could have affiliated. Yet, they felt tethered to Providence’s Jewish community through social, ethnic, and commercial bonds.

Nathaniel’s and Rosalie’s memories may show some additional Jewish attributes. Without ever expressing regret or anger about life’s uncertainties or hardships, they have left testimonies to instruct and inspire younger generations.

Perhaps their attraction to uncluttered and unencumbered ways is also a Jewish attribute. As previously mentioned, Nathaniel retired to New Mexico. Having lived in or near several large cities, Rosalie and Hal now live in Greenfield Center, on the outskirts of Saratoga Springs, New York. They once lived in Providence, New York.

WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS

Weekdays started early on the farm! Ma and Pa got up around five o’clock. Ma would fire up the wood stove in the kitchen to prepare the morning meal. Pa would go out to feed our two cows in the barn. He also put out food for the dog and the numerous barn cats. There were many other chores to do before the day’s end, but most could wait until after breakfast. By the time breakfast was ready, all the children were up. The hired man had arrived to begin his chores for the day. The breakfast time for each child depended on what time we had to leave for school or work. When Ma was satisfied that everyone else had been fed, she sat down at the
table to enjoy a quiet meal.

Ma always had chores beyond just housekeeping and cooking. Because it was necessary, she sewed most of the girls' clothes. She did love to sew, and she had a single treadle sewing machine to help her. She took advantage of the fact that chicken feed bags were of a sturdy cotton. The bags came in various colors and designs—some suitable for dresses and some suitable for curtains and tablecloths. (I have to this day a maroon and white tablecloth that she made.)

By choice, Ma joined a group of women who were making mattresses for their own homes. It was a government-run program to aid low-income families. Six women were needed to make a single mattress. The women were provided with special needles, ticking, and filling to complete the mattresses. As part of the agreement, each lady had to promise to work together until each one had a finished product to take home. Sessions were held once a week. Finally, when all six mattresses were done, Ma was not only richer by having a “free” mattress, but richer by making a lot of new friends. It was almost like a quilting club, where women with similar interests gather to socialize as well as to produce a product to be proud of!

It was Ma's job to monitor the household income and expenses. Because of the Depression, it was difficult to make ends meet. Pa sometimes had to apply for loans to keep the business solvent. Some of those loans came from the Jewish Agricultural Society Fund and some from Providence's Hebrew Free Loan Association.

There were also some loans available from the federal government. By federal law, the agencies required that a farm qualified for assistance. Once a month a federal auditor would come to the farm and look at the records Ma provided. Before the auditor left, he would advise Ma and Pa on matters such as how to increase productivity, ways to economize, and suggestions for other government programs. Taking the auditor's advice, Pa could then apply and receive assistance for fuel oil as well as gas rationing vouchers for all the vehicles used to sustain the needs of the business.

After World War II started, farm profits increased because beef was in short supply. I remember the proud day when Pa came home to tell Ma that the farm business was making enough profit to warrant paying income tax!

Weekends on the farm were different from weekdays because there was no work or school for the children. The hired man worked for half a day. Pa did only the essential chores. When they were completed, he would go into North Attleboro to pay the telephone and electric bills. He would go to the post office to pick up the
Yiddish newspaper, The Forward, and other mail and packages that were being held for him. The North Attleboro Chronicle was delivered to the house.

If Pa had time, he might stop in to see Mr. and Mrs. Karman, who ran a dry goods store. Sometimes on his way back to the farm, he would stop to say hello to Mr. Suvall, who had a junkyard.

The Karmans' daughter, Adeline, was a year or two older than I. Occasionally, she and I would go to the Jewish Community Center in Providence together. At one of the dances, she met a sailor from Brooklyn. When he came home from his tour of duty, they became engaged. By that time, I had lost contact with her.

Ma took advantage of her day off in a different way. After breakfast, she would put on her "dress-up" clothes, her hat and her gloves, and take a bus to downtown Providence. She shopped for her own needs as well as the family's. When she finished shopping, she would take a trolley car to Prairie Avenue and Willard Avenue. Late in the afternoon, Pa would drive from the farm to pick her up. They schmoozed and shopped for fish or beef for a pot roast or to grind hamburgers. Sometimes they added calves liver if the price was right. Then they returned home refreshed and ready for the week ahead.

I have many fond memories of our connections with aunts, uncles, and cousins, who visited on a regular basis. Just about every Sunday afternoon, they would visit and stay until early evening. All of us cousins enjoyed all the jokes and teasing that went on all afternoon. We also played outdoor games on the lawn when the weather allowed.

The men would play poker, and the women would play bridge. As was her style, Ma would provide a buffet lunch complete with knishes, chopped liver, komischrot (fruitcake), and homemade challah. No party would be complete without homemade cinnamon buns, mohn cookies or hamantaschen that Ma was famous for! My mother, "the glue of the family," was a gracious hostess.

Pa's brother, Arthur, and his wife, Esther, also visited with us, usually on a weekday. They lived in Providence but had no children. Pa's other brother, Irving, and his wife, Jeanie, visited quite often. When she died at a young age, their son, Manny (who had been born in 1923), came to live with us. Uncle Irving found child care too difficult! With Manny in good hands, Irving decided to leave his job as a milkman and seek his fortune in New York City. He would visit us as often as he could. Later on, after he married Aunt Sonja, Manny was reunited with his father. They would visit on an irregular basis.
SCHOOL AND ITS ENVIRONS

Both of our houses in Attleboro, at 16 and later at 17 Old Post Road, were close to the corner of Draper Avenue, which went in a westerly direction towards U.S. Route 1. On the corner of Old Post Road and Draper was an old cemetery that was visited regularly by the local historical society. On the other corner was the estate of Senator Theodore Francis Greene.

Mel, Arnold, Anne, Lois, and I attended Oldtown School, which was a one-room, one-teacher schoolhouse for grades one through four. It was set back from the road with ample room in front for outdoor activities. The property on one side of the school housed the pastor of the First Congregational Church, directly across the street. The church property had a watering place for horses and an open-face structure in which the parishioners could park their buggies while attending services.

The schoolhouse was heated by a pot-bellied stove. The best things about the building were the indoor bathrooms in the back. They were unheated, but much better than the outdoor ones of old.

There were enough children in the neighborhood for two rows of desks for each grade, but there was no kindergarten. When Mel was in first grade, Mrs. McGivney asked my mother if I was interested in coming to school. I could sit with the first-grade children. She thought that Ma would have more time with only three young children to deal with.

As a result of her generosity, I was promoted to the second grade at the end of the year. Mel was rather upset about it because now I was always in the same grade as he.

The one-mile walk to school (snow, rain or shine) was very interesting because of the landmarks we passed every day. For example, there was an old, unused tavern. Supposedly, George Washington had visited there on his trips from Boston to the South during the Revolutionary War.

Just before the tavern was Mount Hope Street, which ran east towards Attleboro. On that street was a curious brick and mortar building, cylindrical in
shape. It had a heavy wooden door and small, slit-like openings on all sides. The Old Powder House was used as an arsenal for weapons during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.\(^5\)

Another interesting point was the pond at the corner of Old Post Road and Reservoir Avenue. The pond had a waterwheel, which was not operational. On the north side of the pond, there was a multifamily structure where classmates lived. It had once been housing for factory workers or ice choppers.

There was an operating lace factory. Years later, when I visited the site, its looms were intact. The mother of two of our classmates had worked there.

Not far away was the fire station. The second floor was a dance hall, with a beautiful hardwood, polished floor. When I was growing up, the hall was open for dancing on the Fourth of July. I suspect, in earlier days, it had been used on a regular basis.

Farther down Old Post Road was a general store run by a man named Sam. To our delight, he sold “penny” candy. These were red and black licorice, caramel candy, Hershey’s Kisses, and my favorite, Mary Janes. Small wonder that when we had a penny to spend we would ask permission to visit “our garden of Eden.”

Next on our daily trek were two dairy farms. One had a large herd of cows. The owner, a man from “the city,” was my father’s acquaintance. Across the street was a smaller dairy farm run by the father of Leah’s best friend, Irene Ouellette.

### AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

In 1943, three months after my sixteenth birthday, I graduated from North Attleboro High School. Two weeks after graduation, I left for Kingston to enroll in the summer session at Rhode Island State College (which became the University of Rhode Island in 1951). My major was home economics. I thought that the courses would give me lots of advanced mathematics. No! It was more “home” than “math.”

Pa hired a contractor to cut the chicken house in half and move it over to the new property on Old Post Road. I often wondered about this event because I was not at home to witness this miracle.

After a year at Rhode Island State, I enrolled at Pembroke, where I could get the courses I really wanted. I was a day student, commuting by bus. With
my scholarship money running out, I was unable to pay another year’s tuition. To make ends meet, I was working for Dr. Prager in the Department of Applied Mathematics. My meager salary could not help pay the tuition, however.

My Pembroke friend, Shirley Denmark, contacted me and asked me to go to see the Rhode Island State versus Brown football game on Columbus Day in 1945. We agreed to meet at the bus station in Providence. When I arrived at the station, I noticed a young man nervously pacing the floor. When Shirley finally arrived, she introduced me to that same young man, Harold Bloom. He was a student at Rhode Island State. Brown won the game.

During halftime, Shirley asked me if I would accompany Harold and her to a dance at the Jewish Community Center on Hope Street, provided that Harold could find a partner for me. My answer was, “Why not?” Harold rose to the occasion by calling one of his friends, Mufi Tatz. That evening we four were at the dance.

Part way into the evening, Harold suggested a change in partners because he and Shirley had an argument! All members were in agreement. So I spent an evening with two charming blind dates. Hal escorted me to the home of my sister, Leah, and her husband, Barney Kaplan, on Bogman Street in South Providence. Harold’s family lived on Robinson Street.

Several months later Harold and I started dating regularly. My blind date turned into the story of “Cinderella and Prince Charming.” You know, “If the shoe fits, wear it!” Our friendship ripened into a love affair.

By the way, Dr. Prager asked me to stay on after Harold and I were married in June 1948. I didn’t. As I write this reminiscence, Harold and I are celebrating our 64th anniversary. It’s been an amazing and wonderful journey!

The following notes are the editor’s.

1 Three Karmans—Herman, president; Aaron, secretary; and Louis, treasurer—ran Orient Brothers haberdashery at 32 North Washington Street in North Attleboro.

2 The cemetery was probably the Woodstock Garrison Burial Ground, established ca. 1676.

3 The school, built ca. 1828, was used until 1938.

4 The church was organized in 1712. The current structure, built ca. 1832, is located at 675 Old Post Road.

5 It was built ca. 1768.

6 William Prager (1903-1980), a gentile, fled his native Germany in 1933. He taught at Istanbul University before coming to Brown in 1941. In 1965 Prager became a professor at the University of California at San Diego, but returned to Brown in 1968 and retired five years later. Martha Mitchell, Encyclopedia Brunoniana (Brown, 1993), 445.
FORWARDING ADDRESSES UNKNOWN: 
LOST JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

B'NAT B'RITH, 
FOUNDED 1870

JEWISH MOTHERS' 
ALLIANCE. 
FOUNDED 1913

ALEPH ZADIK ALEPH, 
PAWTUCKET, 
FOUNDED BY 1929

PHOTOS FROM 
THE ASSOCIATION'S 
ARCHIVES

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY 
WOMEN'S COMMITTEE, 
FOUNDED 1947
Olneyville Hebrew Club, founded 1920

Maccabee Athletic Club, founded 1909

Sisterhood, Congregation Ahavath Shalom, founded 1897
PROVIDENCE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION, FOUNDED 1919

RHO PI PHI FRATERNITY,
DELTA CHAPTER,
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE OF PHARMACY,
FOUNDED BY 1928

JEWISH WOMEN'S CLUB,
FOUNDED 1925
25TH ANNIVERSARY
PHILOMATHIAN ASSOCIATION, FOUNDED 1910

PHILOMATHIAN

Congregation Shaare Zedek, Founded 1954

Baron de Hirsch Society, Founded 1893
Korean War Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., dedicated 1995
THOSE WHO SERVED: KOREAN WAR STORIES, PART II

Geraldine S. Foster

The first part of Jerry's article focused on Jewish Rhode Islanders who served as volunteers. Although the second part includes one more volunteer, it focuses on men who were draftees. They came from an astonishing variety of backgrounds, however. For example, a few were veterans of World War II, and others were not yet American citizens. Among the men sent to Korea, nearly half experienced the horrors of combat. Only one Jewish Rhode Islander is known to have lost his life there.

As mentioned in our previous issue, Jerry has righted a historical wrong. Not only has she cast light on a neglected war, but she has honored men who deserve our respect and gratitude. We salute them.

Born in 1928, Dr. Marshall Stein grew up in Yonkers, New York. His paternal grandparents, Isadore and Sadie, who had emigrated from Russia, settled on the Lower East Side around 1900. They moved to Yonkers because a doctor told them that their young son, Joseph, would die unless he lived in the country.

Marshall was a bar mitzvah at Agudas Achim, a congregation wavering between Orthodox and Conservative practices. He attended local public schools, was active in a Jewish club with many talented basketball players, and graduated from Yonkers High in 1945. He expected to be drafted, but hoped to complete a semester at Cornell.

After the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, Stein, a talented student, could focus on his studies. Having flirted with engineering, he earned a Cornell degree in chemistry in 1949. Not surprisingly, more than a few relatives encouraged him to become a doctor. Four years later, he graduated from New York Medical College in New York City.

Again facing the draft during the stalemated Korean War, Dr. Stein decided to enlist in the Navy. As a college student he had enjoyed working many summers in the Merchant Marine, despite a captain's determination to convert him, his first Jewish crew member, to Christianity. Dr. Stein also foresaw the benefits of the GI Bill. During an era when interns received no salary and residents received about
$25 per month, the military would pay for his residency. In order to obtain a medical license and join the Navy, however, he had to complete a one-year internship, which he did at Grace-New Haven Hospital.

Dr. Stein had already passed his Navy physical exam when a buddy in New Haven suggested that they spend a few days in Washington, DC. After arriving by car, the men parked near an Air Force building. When Dr. Stein had time to kill while his friend ran an errand, a lieutenant colonel approached him and asked whether he was in the service. Dr. Stein explained that he was a doctor preparing to enter the Navy. So the officer asked if he were married. If not, the officer would arrange for him to enter the Air Force and spend his honeymoon in Paris. Dr. Stein, who was engaged, immediately accepted the offer and in June 1954 became a captain in the Air Force.

After completing basic training for medical personnel at Maxwell Air Force Base, near Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. Stein expected to depart for Paris. When ordered to report to a base near San Francisco, he thought that a horrible mistake had been made. But only he was mistaken. Dr. Stein was flown to Japan and then to Seoul, where he met two other physicians who had also been promised Parisian honeymoons.

South Korea was still considered a war zone, which meant that he was authorized to carry a weapon. But the greatest danger, he explained, was shooting himself in the foot.

Dr. Stein expected to spend two years at Pusan Air Force Base, but soon after his arrival he was told by his South Korean servant that he would be reassigned within a year. Though Dr. Stein had not yet obtained a security clearance, many of the base's servants, who were fluent in English, knew far more than he.

The New Yorker spent most of his time treating venereal diseases; South Korea had the highest infection rate within the American military. Of course he was not trained to use antibiotics for this purpose, so he learned procedures from his corpsmen.

Within a year, Dr. Stein was sent to Winooski Air Force Base, near Burlington, Vermont, to complete his service. There he also treated venereal diseases and other drunken airmen injured in car accidents when returning from Montreal.

Dr. Stein, who turned down an offer to serve in the Air Force Reserves, was married to Helen a day after his discharge in 1956. Following a two-day honeymoon, the couple moved to Philadelphia, where he completed his residency and a year of research at Penn. The Steins' three kids were born in Philadelphia, and the young family moved to Rhode Island in 1958, when he accepted a position in a
private practice.

While insisting that he is not a veteran of the Korean War, Dr. Stein remains proud of his military service and his American citizenship. All four of his grandparents had survived pogroms in Eastern Europe. Indeed, his paternal grandfather had fled to America after facing seven more years of forced service in the Russian Army. Even in the 1970s, after Marshall and Helen had made plans to vacation in Europe, Helen's mother thought that they were crazy. This was the land of milk and honey.

THEY WERE DRAFTED
The first peacetime draft in United States history was enacted in 1940. Under the terms of the Selective Training and Service Act, all men between the ages of 18 and 65 were required to register, but conscription was limited only to those 19 to 26 for a period of 12 months. In 1941, with the onset of World War II, the period of service was increased to 18 months for men 18 to 45 years.

A new Selective Service Act, passed in 1948, required men 18 to 26 years to register for the draft. Those 19 to 26 were eligible for service, which required 21 months of active duty and five years of service in the Reserves.

After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the 1948 act was amended and in 1951 became the Universal Military Training and Service Act. Draftees, who were at least 18.5 years, were required to serve two years of active duty. As in the past, men who could demonstrate extreme financial hardships (in the support of others) could apply for exemptions. While enrolled in colleges, universities or other full-time training programs, students could also apply for exemptions.

Approximately 2.8 million men and women served in America's armed forces during the Korean War era. Of these, approximately 1.5 million men were draftees.

People who knew him from his youth described Alfred Silver as good-hearted, loyal, and quiet, a friend who always had a smile and a good word for everyone. He is also remembered for playing the drums.

Silver, who graduated from Hope High School in June 1947, was drafted more than three years later. He entered the service on October 20, 1950, when he was 22.
Lewis Weinstein, Hope High '49, was on leave from the Marines when he recalled meeting him at the Providence bus station shortly thereafter. Silver was home on emergency leave because his father, Morris, had just died. It was the last time the two high school friends saw each other.

After infantry training the young private was sent to Korea. "He was actually a rifleman," his Hope High friend Arthur Bergel said, "but his commanding officer felt he should also be trained to use the bazooka because Silver was very good in math. It was very dangerous. The bazooka was used against tanks, and to hit a tank, you had to be very close. If you don't hit it, the tank would run you over."

On August 27, 1951, Silver was ordered by the captain of his platoon to help rescue a group of soldiers trapped by enemy forces. He died trying to save their lives. His medals include: the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, and the Purple Heart. Silver is the only Jewish serviceman from Rhode Island known to have lost his life during the Korean War. This hero was laid to rest in Lincoln Park Cemetery.

In 1949, Donald Levine, a graduate of Syracuse University, was working for an advertising agency in New York City when he was drafted. He reported to Fort Devens, in Massachusetts, for processing and then traveled by troop train to Lompoc, California, to join the 40th Infantry "Sunburst" Division.

Following basic training, Levine received his orders. After a long and circuitous route, his transport ship reached its destination—Korea. Levine and his company participated in the landing at Inchon. He recalled having to climb down the side of the ship on nets while a shouldering full pack. The troops were warned not stop at any point in their descent because the next line of soldiers would step on their hands. Should a soldier slip or fall off the net, he was in danger of drowning because of his weighty pack.

During his arduous deployment, Levine was sent to Tokyo for rest and relaxation. A star tennis player, he was asked to participate in the Far East Command Tennis Tournament, which he won. He thought, "I had it
made.” He could play exhibition or tournament tennis for the Army. This would be his “out” from Korea, but he was sent back into combat.

Although Levine was asked to apply for OCS (officer candidate school), he did not want to reenlist for another two years. He was a combat platoon sergeant first-class when he was discharged at the end of 1951.

In 1956, having met Merrill Hassenfeld, the president of Hassenfeld Brothers (later known as Hasbro), Levine, who had returned to advertising, was recruited to develop new products for Rhode Island’s successful toy manufacturer. In 1963, while serving as Hasbro’s vice president and director of marketing and development, Levine became aware of a concept for a plastic doll resembling an American soldier. Levine saw it not only as a possible counterpart to Mattel’s enormously successful Barbie doll, launched in 1959, but as a way to honor American soldiers in Korea who had valiantly protected one another. Levine, who had enjoyed playing with toy soldiers as a boy, also recognized that a fully “articulated” or movable toy soldier, resembling an artist’s wooden mannequin, could be marketed as an “action figure.” Furthermore, a soldier doll, like Barbie, could be sold with a vast retinue of uniforms and equipment.

While searching for a name for the new doll, which could never be referred to as such, Levine saw the 1945 movie, “The Story of G.I. Joe,” on TV. He knew that such a name was just right.

After Hasbro purchased the concept and license for the toy soldier— for a mere $100,000— and patented the articulation system, G.I. Joe was launched in 1964. An immediate success, it has generated billions of dollars in revenues.

Levine, who left Hasbro in 1975, has developed several other ideas for toys and “action figures.” The latest series, portraying biblical characters and intended for Christian families, is called “Almighty Heroes.”

David Brandt was born in Breslau, Germany, when the Nazis were consolidating their power. His father was briefly sent to Buchenwald in 1938 and released with the warning that he had to leave Germany within two weeks. Only two places would accept him: Paraguay and Japanese-occupied Shanghai. He chose Shanghai. His wife and young children remained in Germany but three years later managed to join him after an arduous trip across Russia and Manchuria.

At first, life was not difficult for young David. Japanese soldiers, who taught him to play baseball, were generally friendly. He attended school. A friend’s father owned a pastry shop and café, where Brandt enjoyed working after school. His experience in the kitchen would serve him well later in life. After 1943, how-
ever, the more than 20,500 German, Austrian, and Russian Jews were enclosed within a ghetto. Permission was needed to leave.

Because of the vagaries of immigration quotas, Brandt received permission to come to the United States in 1948. His parents, born in Poland, met with quota restrictions. Unfortunately, they never left Shanghai.

With four friends Brandt came to San Francisco, where he was required to take an oath to defend the Constitution. He did not remain on the West Coast, however. Both his sisters had left Shanghai earlier. One lived in New York, the other in Providence. After sampling life in New York, he chose Providence.

Although not yet a citizen, Brandt had to register for the draft. He took his basic training at Fort Dix, in New Jersey, and was supposed to go to food service school. Instead, he was sent to Fort Devens. Because of his language skills, particularly his fluency in German, he thought that he would be sent to Germany. His orders came for the Far East.

In Korea, Brandt was assigned to the 176th Armored Field Battalion, a unit attached to the Oklahoma National Guard, which was sent to the front lines to support a South Korean division. Having become friendly with one of the cooks, he told him of his own experience as a cook. When a mess sergeant had to return to the United States, a captain asked Brandt to replace him.

Brandt and other mess sergeants tried to prepare one hot meal each day for American troops. Hot coffee had to be available all night for the artillery units. When the Chinese attacked (usually on the full moon), Brandt was given a field mission to pass ammunition to howitzers.

He spent nine months and 14 days in Korea. Upon his return to Providence, he went in uniform to the federal building to apply for citizenship. It was granted.

Brandt continued his career in the restaurant business as a chef and later as a chef/owner. He was the proprietor of Jed Hanley's Fore & Aft and David's Potbelly.

**Naftali (Marty) Weissman** left his native Poland in 1947. He was one of 25 students selected to attend a rabbinical college in England. A year later, he received a student visa to attend a yeshiva in New York City.

In 1951, despite his deferment, Weissman received a draft notice. It turned out to be a mistake, but at the time he did not realize this, so he reported as ordered. Because of a lack of recruits, Army inductees were asked to volunteer for the Marines. When nobody stepped forward, Weissman did. He had no idea of what the Marines were, however. He soon found out when he underwent basic training.
at Parris Island, in South Carolina. He received further training at a base near the Canadian border and finally at Camp Pendleton near San Diego.

In an interview published in the November 5, 1998 issue of *The Jewish Voice & Herald*, Weissman explained a colonel's request in San Diego. He asked Weissman to speak to soldiers and newspaper reporters about his experiences under the Russian occupation of Poland. The young Marine was under the impression that recounting his experiences would be useful and keep him in the United States. Nevertheless, he soon found himself on a troop ship bound for Korea.

Weissman spent six weeks on the front lines before it was determined that he had been drafted by mistake. As a religious student, he should have been deferred. Instead, he was brought to Japan to face questioning by military lawyers. Why was he so knowledgeable about the Russian Army? Why was he so friendly with American officers if he were only a private first-class? Would he fight for the United States or Israel if war broke out between them?

Soon Weissman received a letter showing his new classification as a displaced person rather than as a seminarian. Thus he became immediately eligible for the draft and was shipped back to Korea as a Marine.

Back on the front lines, Weissman served as a gunner; he was wounded and later promoted to company police sergeant. Weissman recalled some narrow escapes. One night when his bunker was shelled, a Marine sitting next to him was killed and another was wounded. On another occasion, when he and a fellow soldier were laying barbed wire, his comrade stepped on a mine.

In 1953 Weissman was discharged in California. Like David Brandt, he became a citizen under a law authorized by President Dwight Eisenhower which stated that any foreign born citizen who had served in combat could apply for and automatically become a citizen.

*Raymond Eichenbaum* was drafted in 1951 and discharged in 1953. Although he did not go overseas or see combat, he was considered a Korean War veteran.

Eichenbaum never told war stories about his experiences in the American Army. The war about which he spoke and wrote so movingly, so eloquently, was the Holocaust.
In March 1946, under the auspices of Providence's General Jewish Committee, Ray was brought to Rhode Island from a DP (displaced persons') camp. Seventeen years old and the sole survivor of a family that had perished in the Holocaust, he was placed with a local family in Providence. Speaking no English, he was enrolled in a remedial program at Nathanael Greene Junior High School. Ray's schooling had ended at age 10, when the Nazis entered his home city of Lodz, Poland, but he managed to graduate from Hope High School four years after his arrival. Although not yet a citizen, he had to register for the draft.

A phone call in July 2012 from James Glassock, an Alabaman, to Ray's widow, Alice, yielded some information about Eichenbaum's service. Glassock had found the Rhode Islander's name among his papers and wanted to reconnect with him, if he were still alive. Regrettably, Eichenbaum had died in 1993. Draftees, both men had been members of the 31st "Dixie" Infantry Division. Glassock mentioned that it was one of the Army's last racially segregated units.

After he and Ray had gone through basic training together at a base near Columbia, South Carolina, they were sent to Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, for...
maneuvers. Glassock recalled the cold that seemed bitter to a Southerner. Eight privates shared a tent heated only by a small fire. After Fort Bragg, the two friends were sent to different bases. Given his knowledge of languages, Eichenbaum was sent to a military intelligence school.

Fort Bragg had a special significance for Raymond Eichenbaum. One day before Independence Day in 1952, he became a naturalized citizen. His residence was given as Fort Bragg. Among his distinguishing features mentioned in the document were his complexion, height, hair and eye color, and his concentration camp tattoo and number.

After his discharge the following year, Eichenbaum served four years in the Army Reserves. Under the GI Bill, he earned a chemistry degree at the University of Graz, in Austria, where he met Alice, a chemistry student from Bulgaria who had also survived World War II and the Holocaust.

**Ed Fink**, born in Providence in 1928 was a bar mitzvah at Temple Emanu-El and an Eagle Scout. He graduated from Hope High in June 1946. Having been deeply inspired by his chemistry teacher, Grace Arnold, he majored in chemistry at Brown and received his B.A. degree four years later. Though active in Tower Club, a precursor of Hillel, he had little time for extracurricular activities. While living at home, he worked part-time in his father’s furniture business, as he had done in high school.

Putting hope aside, Fink knew, inevitably, that he would be drafted. Unlike a few of his friends who suddenly married, he was unable to get to “third base” with an exemption. He did apply for an officers’ training program, but was rejected. Fink thought that if he were only somewhat lucky, the Army would send him to Germany. But Lady Luck ignored him.

The late summer day in 1951, when Ed reported for duty, was the same day that his little brother, Mike, departed for his freshman year at Yale. It was also the day when the Finks’ middle son, Chick, enrolled at MIT after a year at Brown. Mrs. Fink was struck by a neighbor’s jolting remark: “It must feel like a death in the family!”

After basic training at Fort Rucker in Alabama, known to many as “Mother Rucker,” Fink sought advanced training in the chemical corps. This too eluded him. Having been shipped from San Francisco to Japan, he reached Korea early in 1952. He was about to be trained as a combat medic, when a colonel in the 17th In-
fantry, stationed at Chinch'on (southeast of Inch'on), needed a personal secretary. Having already received a security clearance and knowing how to type, Fink was selected and served as regimental historian.

Based on research conducted among combat units, the would-be chemist produced monthly reports, which were passed up the chain of command. There was no indication, however, that anybody read them. Despite the fighting around him, Fink never thought that he was in serious danger. Having been promoted to sergeant, he actually enjoyed one aspect of his assignment: the personal use of a jeep.

In 1953 Fink was discharged at Fort Devens. The Army, he explained, was merely "an episode" in his life. Though proud of his service, he had mostly tolerated it. He cogently remarked, "I may not have taken any prisoners, but I didn't lose any either."

Back home in Providence, Fink was conscripted into his father's business. "I felt stuck in the damn store," he recalled, "but it was also my duty as the first-born." Nevertheless, he did not give up on the idea of a career in chemistry.

Thanks to a fellowship from the National Science Foundation and continuing part-time work for his father, Fink, already married and a father, was able to earn a master's in chemistry at Brown. But he could not land a job in the corporate world, partially, he thinks, because of the era's anti-Semitism. Consequently, in 1962, he earned a teaching credential at Rhode Island College. In 2000, after having taught chemistry for 37 years at Cranston high schools, he retired. He believes that students loved him as much as he loved them.

Never once over the past half-century did Ed consider the possibility of joining a veterans' organization. But younger brother Mike proudly wore Ed's khaki jacket during his senior year of college.

Arthur Bergel, a Providence native and a June 1948 graduate of Hope High School, entered the Army in 1953. It is fair to say that he should not have been drafted. Although not married, a student, or critical to a business—all categories that allowed for deferments—he was the sole support of his widowed mother and two younger siblings. Since the age of 14, when his father died, he had been working weekends and after school at Stadium Hosiery Company, on North Main Street in Providence, to help provide for his family.

Although deferred twice before, he had to appear
before his draft board for a hearing. His claim of being his family's main support was met with skepticism. It was also a time toward the end of the war when casualty lists were long.

Bergel was inducted and sent to Fort Dix for 16 weeks of basic training. This was followed by leadership school, also at Fort Dix, which consisted of more intensive infantry training, including the use of weapons. The main point about leadership, he explained, was setting an example. He wore a shoulder patch on his uniform that stated “follow me.”

Bergel was then sent to noncommissioned officers' school at Fort Benning. The trip from New Jersey to Georgia aboard a troop train was a 24-hour poker marathon. The soldiers pulled the shades, stripped down to their underwear, and the game began. The players changed, but the game went on until the train arrived at the station.

Bergel explained that “noncom” school was very difficult. He had to learn map reading and sometimes act as company commander to take an objective. He also had to learn how to slide down a rope to cross a river, for example.

When Bergel, a corporal, was sent to Fort Bragg for reassignment, he expected to be shipped out to Korea. But the war ended three weeks before he was supposed to go overseas. Instead, he was sent back to Fort Benning to serve as an assistant instructor at the infantry school. He reported to William Odum, a first lieutenant, who is now a lieutenant general and an expert on the Russian Army.

Bergel said that Fort Benning, with its large, beautiful buildings, resembled the Brown University campus. “For me,” he said, “it was a college education.” He met some Korean Army officers who taught him some Korean words. He also met some Japanese policemen who came to train because Japan could not have an army. In the summer Bergel worked with West Point cadets, an elite corps who looked down on noncommissioned officers.

Bergel enjoyed playing cards and games and going into Fayetteville during his free time. He was also introduced to the world of affluent Jews in Atlanta. His mother had given him the name and phone number of one of his father's relatives who owned a large rendering plant. Sam Zipperman warmly welcomed the young man and invited him to visit his palatial home at any time. The first time Bergel met Zipperman and his wife was for dinner at a Jewish country club. He wondered why Jews needed their own club, so Zipperman explained. Bergel had already encountered the South's racial segregation and discrimination.

He also learned about another facet of discrimination in the shower one day. Bergel's aunt had given him a mezuzah, which he wore with his dog tags. One
day a Japanese-American soldier approached him. George Yamada had dropped out of OCS because of nasty remarks and other discrimination he had suffered. Noticing Bergel’s mezuzah, Yamada asked, “Are you Jewish?” Bergel replied affirmatively. “Boy, am I glad to meet you!” the young man said. Yamada was from New York and liked to go to Jewish delis. He knew of Leb’s in Atlanta, which Bergel also liked. Yamada explained, “I can’t go there by myself. If we go there next weekend, I’ll buy you a corned beef sandwich.” The two men became good friends and also enjoyed a French-themed night club downstairs from Leb’s.

Bergel finished his Army career at Fort Benning in 1955. When discharged, he was given $2,700 in cash for his savings and bonuses. The paymaster, a lieutenant, warned soldiers not to forget their money and “leave it on the table.” But Bergel did just that. When he picked up his big duffel bag and started across the parade field, the lieutenant came running after him. Bergel used the money to help his mother.

In retrospect, Bergel stated that he was glad to have been drafted. Although his first year was very difficult, he lived “like a king” during his second. Perhaps more importantly, the Army relieved him of some of his civilian responsibilities. The best he could do was send home half his monthly pay. Because Bergel never had the opportunity to go to college or hang around with friends, the Army allowed him to “raise hell with a bunch of guys.” It was the youth he never had.

Noah Temkin graduated from Hope High School in 1949 and completed two years at the University of Rhode Island before being drafted. As a private first-class, he was stationed primarily in Pusan, where he helped organize a congregation for Jewish servicemen. His work as a telecommunications specialist took him frequently to other parts of South Korea.

Temkin saw no combat because the truce had already been declared. He was able to travel to Japan and other Asian destinations, however.

Following his discharge in 1954, Temkin returned for his junior year at
URI. He stayed only a month, but long enough to meet his future wife, Joan Gabar, who was also enrolled in a statistics course. They were married at Temple Emanuel the following year.

While in Korea, Temkin had become very close to Jehan Rhee, an interpreter in his office. Their friendship lasted for many years. Indeed, the Temkin family arranged for Rhee to come to Providence to work in its wholesale tobacco and candy business and attend Noah's wedding. Rhee wanted to stay in America, but his family urged him to return to South Korea to marry a fellow citizen, which he did.

Dr. Banice Webber, born in Providence in 1925, is the oldest person in this study's small sample. This graduate of Classical High School began his Army service barely a week after his 18th birthday. He had already completed all his premed requirements in an accelerated program at Brown University and was accepted at Tufts Medical School. The Army, he was told, would honor that acceptance. He would be sent to the Army's special training program found in all medical schools. Accordingly, Webber volunteered, and a few days after his 18th birthday, he arrived at Fort Devens.

Webber was sent to Camp Grant, in Illinois, for medical basic training. Until his medical school classes began at Tufts in January 1944, he served in the hospital at Fort Devens, basically as an orderly.

World War II ended in August 1945, and Webber and his classmates were discharged from the Army the following year. In June 1947, after graduating from Tufts, he began a three-year internship at Cedars of Lebanon, a Jewish hospital in Los Angeles. Quite happy in Southern California, he considered settling there.

Due to the exigencies of the Cold War and the Berlin Blockade of 1948-9, however, the military faced a shortage of doctors. Consequently, a “doctors' draft,” which included dentists and other medical personnel, was enacted by Congress in 1950. Physicians who had not served during World War II or who had received part or all of their education while in the military could be called up for up to 21 months of active duty or five years of reserve duty. Some deferments and exemptions were possible. Dr. Webber registered for this draft in Los Angeles.

By the time the Korean War began in 1950, Dr. Webber had become a resident at Montefiore Hospital in New York City. Recognizing that he could be
drafted momentarily, he decided to join the Army Reserves. As a result, he was able to complete another year of residency before September 1952, when, as a first lieutenant he was called to active duty.

After a relatively short orientation at Fort Sam Houston, in Texas, Dr. Webber, soon promoted to captain, received his orders for Korea. Traveling there in November proved no simple matter, however. He had to fly from California to Wake Island and to a reception center in Japan. Then another difficulty arose. Because President-elect Dwight Eisenhower decided to fulfill his campaign promise to visit Korea, all air travel there was halted. Dr. Webber had to travel by train from Tokyo to Sasebo, on the southern tip of Japan, and then by boat to Pusan and then to Seoul. To reach the 11th Evacuation Hospital, then at Wanjoo, he flew on a Greek Air Force plane, which represented Greece's contribution to the United Nations' effort in Korea.

Dr. Webber, a surgeon, was assigned to a mobile Army hospital in central Korea, perhaps 15 or 20 miles behind the 38th parallel. Most patients were either surgical or orthopedic. Dr. Webber explained that ordinarily casualties would go to the advanced MASH (mobile army surgical hospital) before being evacuated back to his hospital. Then, depending on the severity of their wounds, they would be evacuated out of Korea to Japan or sent back to their units. If MASH units were too busy, the wounded would be sent directly to Dr. Webber's field hospital, which had over 100 beds. The entire hospital, including sleeping quarters, consisted of tents.

Dr. Webber remarked: "In my entire career I think it was one of the best hospitals I was in because all the physicians were well trained. There were many surgeons who had stories similar to mine, and there were some young faculty from medical schools."

An Army Surgical Research Unit was also connected to the 11th Evacuation Hospital. Some patients with severe wounds or others who suffered hemorrhagic fever, ended up with renal failure. They could be treated by dialysis, with an artificial kidney, which was a fairly new device. In fact, Dr. Webber's hospital had the only such equipment in the Far East. The hospital also had a fairly sophisticated laboratory for that era.

Dr. Webber was stationed at the field hospital for one year. He said that the most interesting part of his assignment occurred after the war ended in June 1953. A portion of the hospital moved to Panmunjom became the medical unit for the exchange of prisoners. The unit served American and some United Nations returnees, including a few Brits and Turks. Dr. Webber was able to speak with and treat some of these former prisoners.
Dr. Webber participated in a Passover seder in Seoul, which included several hundred Jewish service personnel. He did not encounter anyone he knew from Rhode Island while in service, but he did meet someone in Korea with a tie to Temple Beth-El. This was Rabbi Ron Soloff, a son of Rabbi Mordecai Soloff, who had been the temple’s educational director when Dr. Webber was in religious school.

When his year in Korea was up, no formal arrangements were made for Dr. Webber’s travel to Japan. He had to hitch plane rides to get to his next assignment, the Army hospital in Yokohama, where he spent about six months before returning to America.

On his return from Japan, Dr. Webber was stationed at Fort Lee, Virginia, where he also did “bread and butter” surgery. After his discharge from Fort Lee in September 1954, he finished his final year of surgical residency at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo.

Dr. Webber sums up his Army service as “a wonderful professional experience.” Although he had one more year to finish his surgical training, he had total responsibility for his cases. Regarding the balance of his military experience: “I was not too happy at the time, but in retrospect I think it was a worthwhile life experience.”

CONCLUSION

Of the 22 Jews from Rhode Island profiled in this study, 13 were volunteers. Of the sixteen men sent to Korea, eight experienced combat. Sadly, one man, Alfred Silver, was forced to make the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

Many of the Jewish Rhode Islanders who served in combat remember the ferocity of fighting and the bitter cold. Some were haunted by the casualties. Many combat veterans could not or would not speak about the details of their experiences; others could speak only to fellow combat veterans.

Most men who experienced combat or helped saved lives denied their heroism. The following remark seems typical: “I saw combat, but anyone who served in Korea or in this country should be proud of his service, and we should be proud of them.”

None of the Jewish Rhode Islanders declared his hatred of North Koreans or Chinese or his love of South Koreans. Rather, servicemen expressed their patriotism through their willingness to serve. As one veteran explained: “Nobody wanted to go, but it was the law, and you registered for the draft and you went into went the service. To serve my country was the right thing to do.”
Two men served in Korea as well as during World War II. It seems particularly ironic that three Jews in this study served in the American military before becoming citizens. Perhaps their experiences most vividly demonstrate fate's randomness. Or perhaps it was the absurdity of the physician who enlisted in the Air Force because he was offered a honeymoon in Paris.

Beyond experiencing countless hardships, many Jewish Rhode Islanders benefited from military service. While some men acquired professional skills, most gained self-confidence and a deep sense of camaraderie. A few men found adventure, and a few continued to serve in the Reserves. One serviceman influenced generations of boys through the creation of a doll.

Whether they fought in Korea or were stationed elsewhere during or after the war, our men must never be forgotten. They served honorably.

INTERVIEWS

David Brand
Lewis Weinstein
Arthur Bergel
Alice Eichenbaum
Joan Gray (for Noah Temkin)
Donald Levine
Dr. Marshall Stein
Edward Fink

July 12, 2011
July 19
July 28
August 1
August 1
August 15
July 25, 2012
September 19
FATE INTERVENED:
MAKING THE MOST OF THE ARMY

Ronald Zexter

Born in 1933, the author, sometimes known as "Z" and Ron, grew up in Washington Park in South Providence and on the East Side. His family belonged to Temple Beth-El on Broad Street. Following his discharge from the Army in 1956, Ronald worked briefly in his family's clothing business in Providence. A protégé of Martin Chase, he spent 35 years as a buyer of men's wear at Ann & Hope.

Ronald's wife, Eleanor, a Pembroke alumna, is fondly remembered for decades of teaching French and English at Hope High School and Nathan Bishop Junior High. The couple belonged to Temple Emanu-El.

Ronald and Eleanor moved to Los Angeles in 1993 to be close to their children and grandchildren, but often visited friends and family in Rhode Island. The Zexters seldom missed a high school reunion. Continuing to work as a sales representative to large retail chains, he still enjoys a variety of sports and plays tennis several times a week. Eleanor passed away in 2011.

In the 1950s, both during and after the Korean War, many graduates of the University of Rhode Island served in the armed forces. As a land-grant institution, male students were required to take Army ROTC courses during their freshmen and sophomore years. Students who took advanced courses during their junior and senior years sought commissions as second lieutenants when they graduated. These junior officers were required to serve two years of active duty.

Even in my immature, 18-year-old mind, I figured out that military duty would likely be better an as officer than as a private. Whether as a draftee or an enlisted man, a private was the bottom rank.

ROTC students at URI belonged to one of three groups: quartermasters (mostly business majors), engineers, and infantry (who were mostly athletes and macho types). Because of my business background, I chose the quartermaster corps for my four years of training. These included weekly classes and drills in uniform every Tuesday. (Somehow, I often found an excuse to miss them.) After my junior year, when required to go to summer camp, I was sent to Fort Lee, Virginia, where training in supply was emphasized more than combat.
To be honest, I wasn't much of a military man at this point. Sports and social life on campus were all-consuming.

Fate intervened. When I graduated from URI in 1954, our ROTC commanding officer, Major Hastie, called in a group of new second lieutenants trained as quartermasters. In his office he told us that we had been reassigned for active duty to the dreaded infantry because of officer shortages. We were to report ASAP to Fort Benning, Georgia.

My days of fun and games were over. In September, when I reported, I was totally unprepared for five months of advanced combat training at the infamous Infantry School. Most scary was the fact that if I didn't graduate from this intensive schooling, I would lose my commission and be sent home, where I could be drafted as a private. Then I would have to start over at the bottom.

With a lot of suffering, determination, and attitude change, I struggled through my training. In January 1955, when I graduated as a second lieutenant in the infantry, I was assigned to the Army's occupation of West Germany. This was my next step in becoming a responsible officer and a focused young man.

Military Air Transport Services (MATS) flew me to Rhein-Main Air Base, and I reported to a post near Bad Nauheim, about 30 kilometers from Frankfurt, just off the autobahn. My outfit was the 22nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, which was part of the Fourth Infantry Division. Famous during World War II, it had been the first Allied unit to land on Utah Beach during D-day. My commanding officer, Col. Max Schneider, was a Ranger hero who landed on Omaha Beach.

Despite my quartermaster background, I was immediately assigned to be an infantry platoon leader with long hours, very cold weather, and lots of regular Army officers, who were rigid and unyielding. I should mention that I had very few encounters with anti-Semitism. Most soldiers had never met a Jew. I always had many close Jewish friends at Nathan Bishop Junior High, Hope High School (where I played baseball and basketball), and URI, and I never worried about anti-Semitism.

I should explain that as an occupying force, the Army tolerated no nonsense from Germans. There seemed to be relatively few German men, however. So many had been killed during the war, and others who had been captured by the Russians returned in poor shape.

As I embarked on my assignment in West Germany, it helped me to survive knowing that the Army would send my car, a 1953 Chevy Bel Air, free-of-charge, and it would arrive at Bremerhaven shortly. I survived a brutal winter in "the field" and surprised myself by playing soldier well enough to satisfy "the brass."
My luck changed in the spring of 1955, when I bumped into an enlisted man from URI, a friend from the baseball team. He worked in the regimental athletic and recreation office on our post. "Mendy" Mendillo told me that the regimental officer of the post's baseball team was being sent back to the States for discharge and that his position would be perfect for me.

Through a lot of maneuvering I did become the regimental baseball coach and athletic officer. Instead of the icy Hessian countryside, my headquarters became a warm office in the post gym. Our games took us all over West Germany, and I was also able to venture elsewhere in my Chevy. I enjoyed traveling throughout Europe with passes and leaves made even better by free hops on MATS.

After the baseball season, I acquired a position as regimental boxing coach. I knew nothing about boxing, but with the help of a couple of highly trained young boxers and a weekend clinic in Munich, I directed a European championship team. It was fortified with some very talented boxers from the stockade, who returned to "the slammer" after the season. (This was a lot like a scene from James Jones' novel, From Here to Eternity, which was published in 1951 and became a movie two years later.)

Well, all good things come to an end. In the spring of 1956, three months before my discharge, I reached the rank of first lieutenant. My regimental commanding officer walked into my office and informed me that it was time to go back to "the field" and more military training.

During my last three months I served as executive officer and company commander of an infantry rifle company trained for combat. I was told by my battalion commanding officer that my performance was outstanding. I was extremely proud of that compliment, given how far I'd come from my early Army days.

I had gone full circle and learned so much about responsibility and leadership. I was no longer a 21-year-old with no real life experience.

Thank you, ROTC and the U.S. Army. You were and remain great influences in my life.

Zexter (right)
MY ODYSSEY

Peter Mezei

In November and December 2010, your editor recorded more than 10 hours of interviews with Mr. Mezei in his home. The following article, though not a verbatim transcript, contains many of his words and phrases. This autobiography, which focuses on such topics as the Holocaust, Hungary under communism, and the Cold War, may be one of the most dramatic and wrenching ever published in these pages.

My life has been so unusual that many readers may question my veracity. There have been occasions when I too have been unable to make sense of many twists and turns. Unburdened by philosophical or theological questions, I have always looked forward, taken chances, and moved on.

This will be the first time that I have presented my story to more than a few people. I often assumed that friends, neighbors, and colleagues—even those who notice my slight accent—would not care much about my tribulations or triumphs. I certainly have no need to garner sympathy or admiration.

For much of my life I have been defined by others as a Jew. As a result, I have sought to find my own meaning. This has been a difficult task for numerous reasons. While thankful for so much, especially America's freedom and opportunity, I do not believe that God saved or protected me. Religious people, however, are entitled to that view.

FAMILY AND WAR
My grandparents died before I was born, so I know little about them. My maternal grandmother was Ida Auspitz. This is not a typical Hungarian name, but it was known within the former Austro-Hungarian empire. She was probably born around 1870 and lived in Budapest. Her husband was a cobbler. They had three boys and six girls. My mother, Clara, was born in 1905. She did not have a middle name, and neither do I.

My mother's family was Jewish, but I doubt that they were highly obser-
vant. Most likely they experienced persecution. Jews in Hungary were treated better than Gypsies, however.

Grandfather Auspitz died at a young age. My mother, probably the youngest sibling, was the only one sent to an orphanage. This was a Jewish institution, and the prayer book that she left me may date from this era. Strangely, she never showed it to me during her lifetime.

The orphanage provided my mother with vocational training, which anchored the rest of her life. By 17 years of age, she launched her own business as a seamstress in Budapest. Within a decade she had hired an assistant, and by the late 1930s she prospered as the proprietor of her own salon. Mother’s first language was Hungarian, but she was fluent in Austrian-German because she traveled frequently by train to Vienna to purchase fabrics and enjoy opera. Mother knew some Yiddish words and phrases, but used them only occasionally.

My parents lived on the Pest (or eastern) side of the Danube, which was more commercial than residential. Their apartment was in the fifth district, the center of the garment trade. They lived a bourgeois lifestyle in a second-floor apartment, which also served as their salon. It was known by my mother’s name, Clara Fritsch, which is not a common Hungarian surname.

My parents’ corner apartment, in a building three or four stories high, had large bay windows and a view of a nearby square. I was told that the apartment had about 2,500 square feet. After the war, the Russians divided it into units for four families.

Documents show that I was born on Christmas Day, 1943. My mother always claimed, however, that this was a clerical error because I was born a day later. I have no recollection of my father, Ernő. He may have seen me on a few occasions during the war, when he was temporarily paroled from a slave labor camp in western Hungary. Conditions in the camp must have been unspeakable. He stopped eating and working in April 1945, only a month or so before the arrival of Russian liberators. He believed that my mother, my older brother Thomas, and I had perished.

My father must be buried in a mass grave in the town of Koszeg. A memorial stone was placed in the Jewish cemetery in Budapest in memory of all those who perished in that town. I have visited this large Jewish cemetery, a half-hour streetcar ride southeast of Budapest, several times since 1977. A Star of David is carved on its gate.
I have some distant Fritsch cousins living in Montréal. These were the lucky ones, who emigrated to Canada during the 1930s. I have never met them. My mother was able to contact them after she emigrated to New York in 1959, but she was rebuffed, probably because they feared that we would be an economic drain.

During the war Hungary, an Axis power, was heavily bombed by American and Russian forces. The bridges over the Danube in Budapest were destroyed. Civilians were forced to live in bomb shelters. I do not know how my mother kept us alive. She said that we ate heated rat meat and that my milk was warmed in a tin cup by candlelight. We were constantly seeking new hiding places to escape the bombings, death by Hungary’s Arrow Cross gangs, and the Nazis.

Eichmann did not enter Hungary until 1944, but his henchmen did not waste any time arranging for Jews’ decimation. I do not know any details, but I believe that we were protected by the Swedish embassy. This would have been due to Raoul Wallenberg’s heroism. I believe that my mother and I were arrested at least once and marched through the streets. Somehow, we escaped.

We were hidden by some Jews as well as by some courageous and righteous Christians who had worked for my mother before the war. I remember Clara Valler, who resumed working for her under the Soviet occupation (even though the self-employed could not hire others). Thomas, my brother, was born in 1931. Though seriously ill with colitis, he could have survived with the proper treatment. He died in 1946 even after numerous blood transfusions from my mother. As a Jew, he never received proper medical care.

SOVIET RULE
When it became evident that my father had not survived, my mother married Mezei, who had been my father’s friend. Somehow, he had survived Mauthausen, but he was a broken man. Before the war Mezei had been well connected, but now he was penniless. He had also been divorced and had a son, George, who was eight years older than I. He too lived with us.

I do not believe that my mother and stepfather ever loved one another. Rather, their union represented a business convenience. I do not know if they had a religious or a civil wedding. I have no recollection of ever entering a synagogue, though there had been many in Budapest, including one of Europe’s largest and grandest, the Dohány Street Synagogue (on the Pest side), which I visited decades later.

To avoid persecution and become more Hungarian, I received a Catholic
baptism. There was of course no reason for me to enter a synagogue. But I never attended church, either. Like Jews who had converted during the Inquisition, I became a "crypto" Jew. We considered ourselves Jewish, even if our only Jewish task was to hide our ancestry.

Mezei is a common Hungarian name meaning "from the fields." His family name, popular among Jews, had been Grunfeld (Greenfield).

Having learned his trade as an apprentice, Mezei was a tailor. Having become an excellent custom tailor, it seemed natural that he and my mother joined hands.

By 1947 my mother's business of custom-made women's clothing, which often required three fittings, was again successful. For a while I had a nanny who took care of me while my mother worked.

In 1949 our family moved to the Buda side of the city, which was considered more desirable because of its fresh air and more open spaces. My mother had very few possessions. Anything that had survived the war had been stolen by neighbors.

Our apartment, which my parents owned, was on the sixth floor of a building with 26 units. There was a half-floor of apartments above us. We did not own a refrigerator, so it was my job to purchase block ice and haul it upstairs. Kids were not allowed to use the elevator. The iceman always delivered in a horse-drawn wagon. We needed ice about every three days to chill our dairy products and meat. Nevertheless, my mother shopped for food every day.

I remember the most delicious rye bread. My mother would make the dough, and then I delivered it to a baker for baking. I used to nibble away at the heel as I delivered the still warm bread to our home. A seven-pound loaf would last four or five days.

In Hungary the biggest meal of the day is served at noon. Men drink a heck of a lot of beer and sometimes shots of slivovitz. Supper is a light meal, consisting of bread spread with chicken fat or jam, and tea. We were never hungry, and we never kept kosher.

Now I remember a funny story about food. Once Mezei brought home a banana. I had never seen one, so I took some bites without re-
moving the peel.

Two of mother’s brothers had perished during the war: one fighting on the Russian front, the other as a slave laborer in Germany. The brother who survived lived into the 1970s.

One of my mother’s sisters survived the war because she, a dancer, had emigrated to Argentina during the 1930s. She never married and died in 1995. Muci, the only daughter of another sister, barely survived the camps. In 1947 she also emigrated to Argentina. She died in 2004. In 1998 I had visited these relatives in Buenos Aires.

My mother’s four other sisters also survived the war. For many years the other sisters shared an apartment. My uncle joined them for meals because he too was unmarried at that time. Having had no vocational training, my aunts worked in menial jobs. One was a coat checker, another was a waitress, and one did most of the cooking. Although two of my aunts married, only one had a daughter.

One measure of my mother’s success was the custom-made clothes she fashioned for me. These were often made from the remnants of garments made for her best customers. So I was often dressed like Little Lord Fauntleroy.

Once I was severely punished by my stepfather when I accidentally tore a camel-hair coat while sliding down a muddy hill. He had no reservations about beating me. There were times when he beat George and me to a pulp. The welts on our backs were proof. My mother could not or would not intervene. Mezei was no doubt a deeply disturbed person, but I had no way of knowing this while still living under the same roof.

During the 1950s my mother and stepfather’s business truly prospered in an unexpected way. They had always been frustrated by broken zippers, so they began to import them. Somehow, they found a contact in New Jersey who could purchase zippers in Salvation Army thrift shops and ship them to Budapest. Then my mother and stepfather would wash and sometimes dye them before sewing them into new clothing. They were afraid of attracting attention to their booming business because admirers and detractors might alert the secret police. Eventually my mother and stepfather got out of the business of custom-made clothing and focused entirely on installing zippers in overcoats and boots.

We could purchase extra sticks of butter and extra allotments of meat. I was given piano lessons for three years, but had to practice in a neighbor’s home because she owned a piano. We were able to take one or two-week vacations in the country. For a while we had a maid, but this was especially risky because we knew that her boyfriend worked for the secret police.
There were perhaps only a dozen children living in our building. A boy and his mother lived next door to us, and we knew that they were also secret Jews.

I loved playing outdoors, especially in a small park behind our building. Budapest had numerous swimming pools, and I also learned to ride a bike. My favorite game was soccer, which I usually played after school until dark. Physical fitness was also a large part of my schooling. We ran, climbed ropes and poles, and vaulted over side horses.

I would say that I was a decent student. Like the boys and girls in my classes, I learned multiplication tables by constant, oral drilling. By the sixth grade I had learned geometry and trigonometry. Students who attended academic high schools would master calculus and advanced algebra. Hungarians love poetry, but the liberal arts were considered a luxury. Science and engineering are what mattered. The communists reasoned that these were the tools to build a new nation.

By the time I was 10, I got into trouble a few times at school. This could cause even deeper trouble for my parents, who, ever fearful of the secret police, would of course punish me. There were even instances of children who turned in their parents for some minor anti-Communist infractions. Arrests could lead to beatings or imprisonment in labor camps.

In the fourth or fifth grade, I was kicked out of my school and forced to attend another. I do not remember precisely why, but I threw an apple at a Russian-language teacher, who also happened to be Russian, and it splattered on a blackboard and on her face. A good little boy turned me in.

My mother and stepfather never belonged to the Communist Party, but I was of course indoctrinated to become a young communist. I wore the blue scarf of the Young Pioneers and would have received a red scarf when I was older. There were huge bronze statues and photos of communist heroes everywhere, and I easily recall seeing countless banners with red stars. Kids were required to learn the Marseillaise, that revolutionary anthem, but in Hungarian, not Russian.

Although I was taken to operas and plays, I became a movie fanatic (though none was from Hollywood). Some movies were made elsewhere in Europe, but most were Soviet propaganda. Many glorified the Russian Revolution.

There was no TV, but we did have a radio. We closed our doors and covered our windows when listening to Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America, which were broadcast from Vienna. We naturally believed Western propaganda, particularly during the turmoil of the 1956 revolution.
ESCAPE

Under the People's Republic, everybody feared the secret police and knew that elections were a sham. My mother and stepfather felt the stigma of being Jews, even if they didn't know how to be Jews. I think they hated communism mostly because they were entrepreneurs. They knew that they lived under a failed economic system, one that could not even produce zippers.

But I do not think that we hated Russians. Most soldiers, who were Ukrainians and Belarussians, did not hate us. Their barracks were on the outskirts of the city, and a few whom I encountered seemed quite friendly. Of course they loved being stationed in Hungary because they ate so much better than at home.

After the Revolution broke out in October 1956, I cannot say whether my mother and stepfather encouraged George to take up arms. They were probably never aware of any details. But once the uprising began to fail and we felt abandoned by the West and the United Nations, George, who had begun studying engineering, felt that he was in mortal danger. At the end of October he and his girlfriend, Lidiko, fled Budapest and were able to cross the border into Austria, as did tens of thousands of Hungarians. My mother and stepfather eventually heard a coded message over Radio Free Europe: “Bananas have arrived from Turkey.” This meant that George and his girlfriend had safely reached Vienna.

George and I were friends, but because of the difference in our ages, we did not share a deep brotherly bond. Of course I had no idea that he would try to escape to Austria and enter the United States, but my mother and stepfather gave me, a boy not yet 13, encouragement. Our apartment building had been shelled by tanks and mortars. I too had seen corpses in the streets and revenge taken by old people and children. But my mother and stepfather, who primarily wished a better life for me in the West, also made a careful calculation. They reasoned that the Hungarian government would not much care about a childless, elderly couple who might become a burden to the state. So perhaps they would eventually receive permission to emigrate.

I always knew that I was headed for America. Staying in Austria or moving to Britain, Canada or Argentina were simply not options. Although I had no idea of what to expect once I reached Vienna, I did have an escape plan.

I had a comrade, Arpád, a 13-year-old boy in our building who lived with a cousin. He yearned to be reunited with his father, who lived in West Germany.

We planned to take a train to Komárom, a city in western Hungary where my mother had friends. They were to feed and care for us for a day. Of course we had no luggage and brought only sandwiches and cookies to last the first day.
Although Arpád and I boarded the right train, we soon discovered that it was rerouted and heading in the wrong direction—southwest to Yugoslavia. By five that evening we reached the end of the line at Lake Balaton. We were the only passengers left in our car, so we climbed up into the baggage racks to spend the night. The next morning, we transferred to a train heading north, and then we were on our way to Komárom. By this time, however, my mother expected to hear from our friends that we had safely arrived. She must have been frantic.

When Arpád and I reached Komárom, there were Russian tanks surrounding the platform. Somehow, we were able to find my mother’s friends, who, after feeding and washing us, put us on a train that would take us close to the border.

When the train reached a small village close to the border, we got off and asked somebody in the street, “Where is Austria?” This was not as funny as it may sound because many escaping Hungarians who had walked across the border to Czechoslovakia were rounded up and sent back. We were told to walk towards a distant steeple located in Austria. At about eight in the evening, Arpád and I began our trek of four or five kilometers.

We walked through fields and forests and took cover whenever we heard noises. We were scared stiff but reasoned that border guards would not shoot children. By one in the morning, we began to enter a no-man’s-land. It was necessary to cross a stream, so, fully clothed and with teeth chattering, we swam across the icy waters. Only later did Arpád and I learn that there was a bridge 200 yards away.

When we heard Hungarian voices, we feared that we were still in our native land. But the voices came from Hungarian-speaking Austrian border guards patrolling with dogs. The guards proved to be extremely friendly—except for confiscating my set of genuine, German-made brass knuckles. Arpád and I were separated, but presumably he too was taken to a home where he was fed, bathed, and given warm clothes. I collapsed in a queen-sized bed covered with goose down. In the morning, more than a hundred Hungarian escapees were assembled. Arpád departed to West Germany, and I was put on a train to Vienna.

In the former capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire, I began a long process of becoming an American at the U.S. Embassy. It was easy for me to contact George and his girlfriend, who had arrived about two weeks earlier. I stayed with them and was happy drinking Cokes and reading magazines. Though not yet fluent, George had studied English with a tutor in Hungary and also knew Russian. I had taken some German lessons but knew no English. Although I felt quite anxious, there were hundreds if not thousands of Hungarians going through processing at this time. Those suffering from tuberculosis faced delayed departures.
I do not remember having any contact with Jewish organizations, such as HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which had helped Hungarian Jews after World War II. I was never asked if I were Jewish and, in most ways, I was not.

The three of us departed from Vienna on December 7 or 8, 1956. Austria was a neutral country, so we could not fly on an American military plane. Thus we boarded a four-propeller, civilian transport converted from military use. After refueling in Shannon, Ireland, we were headed for Gander, Newfoundland, but there were severe storms over the north Atlantic. This meant a detour to Santa Maria in the Azores and then flying to Gander.

This was of course the first time I had flown and, as we approached Philadelphia, I felt sick and began to hyperventilate, thus inhaling too much oxygen. After a flight attendant gave me even more oxygen, I became paralyzed. In Philadelphia I was taken off the plane on a stretcher and was hospitalized for three days until my blood pH level returned to normal.

NEW JERSEY, FLORIDA, AND MAINE

We refugees were taken to Camp Kilmer, a mothballed Army base in New Jersey, for further processing. I felt hugely disappointed by American food, not understanding, for example, that Wonder Bread was bread.

The most momentous event at Camp Kilmer was George and Ildiko's wedding. It must have been a civil ceremony, which enabled their joint relocation elsewhere. But the most wonderful experience for me was a daylong excursion to Manhattan, where I drank up the excitement of Times Square. Though I was dying to see a movie, especially a Western, this was not possible. Nevertheless, I thought that I had gone to Heaven.

Like all Hungarian refugees, we were given a choice of where to be resettled. The idea was to go to an underpopulated area, so the choices were: North Dakota, New Mexico, Arizona or Florida. We knew that Florida would be warm, so the three of us, under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, were sent by train to Miami. We were then taken to Fort Lauderdale.

With his engineering background, George hoped to find employment as a tool and die maker. When it became evident that no position was available, he became a stock boy in a market and earned the minimum wage. Within four months, George and his wife, who were then free to live elsewhere, moved to New York City.

The IRC planned to place me with a family for adoption. But I never considered myself an orphan. Much sooner than later, I hoped to be reunited with my mother.
Within six months, I was placed with three families, all of whom were kind and generous. But I ran away from all three. I lived for about three weeks in the palatial home of the Castro family, who had a furniture business. I remember their daughter, Bernadette, who became famous on television advertising Castro Convertibles.

I later stayed with another family for a few weeks, but my overactive mind thought that they wanted to kill me. I could not believe my first visit to an American supermarket; I thought that it was a set-up or a joke. I did not yet know any English words for food, but I was able to select some onions and bacon. I thought that the bacon, like that in Hungary, would already be cooked. So I tried to eat it raw.

Then I lived with an older couple, the O'Neills, until perhaps the end of April. By this time I entered the sixth grade. Though I could speak only a little English, it became clear to my teacher that I excelled in math. I was probably years ahead of my classmates.

The third time I tried to run away was when I took a cab to a Hungarian club in Miami. It turned out that the club was closed on Mondays, so there was nobody to pay the driver, and of course I did not have any money. I was again taken to a police station, which was followed by a newspaper story about my attempts to run away.

Then I was presented with an extraordinary—perhaps a magical—opportunity. Through the IRC, a man who ran a boarding school in Maine offered to enroll me. So in May 1957 I took several trains that brought me to Bath. I was then driven a short distance to Woolwich, where I became a student for two full years at Kennebec School.

Mr. William Beaney was the headmaster of a school that enrolled no more than 40 boys and one girl, a commuter. I eventually sensed that this was a dumping ground for children of wealthy parents. Regrettably, I learned very little in Kennebec's classrooms, but I became fluent in English and had an absolutely fabulous time. I learned to camp, fish, and hunt, as if I were Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn.

I remember being introduced to my first Thanksgiving. When told that this was an eating holiday, I ate until I got very sick.

Given the harshness of Maine winters, Kennebec relocated to St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. We occupied a former church complex in Frederiksted, whose
streets were unpaved. There were four boys to a room, and we did take classes, but kids spent most of their time swimming, snorkeling, spearfishing, and sailing. This was Paradise. On Friday nights we went to the movies, and on Sundays boys could go to church. There being no Jewish kids, I did not identify myself as one. I do not think that I was afraid of teasing or bullying because neither was allowed.

During the summer, Kennebec School relocated to Deer Island, New Brunswick, which is near Campobello Island and Eastport, Maine. This too was an absolute hoot.

I left Kennebec in June 1959. Only a few years later the school was shuttered. Still a dreamer, however, Mr. Beaney tried to open a professional theatre on Deer Isle. It too collapsed.

I did see him a year or two after leaving Kennebec. By this time I was living in New York City, and he surprised me with a visit. We took a walk and chatted, and then he gave me $50. This was on top of everything else he had already given me. I believe that Mr. Beaney later moved to the Midwest, where he passed away.

For most of my adult life I wanted to visit what remained of Kennebec School. An opportunity arose in 1986, shortly after I moved to Rhode Island. When I drove to Woolwich, however, I could not find the road I had remembered. A new one had been built. I eventually found what I was looking for, but there were only a few abandoned buildings.

I returned to the Bath area in 2008, hoping to find further evidence of my school. Unfortunately, there were no records in the Woolwich Historical Society. Only memories remain in the hearts of alumni.

NEW YORK CITY
I would have gladly remained at Kennebec, but I received word that my mother had received permission to emigrate. She was not allowed to take any possessions out of Hungary, however. Mezei did not arrive for another two months because he had been infected by tuberculosis at Mauthausen and was therefore quarantined.

I lived briefly with my stepbrother, George, and his wife, who had a small apartment on West 72nd Street near Central Park. At the time, this was a rundown neighborhood, which was partially razed when Lincoln Center was built. I slept on a cot in the living room. It was a thirty-block walk to Times Square, where I feasted on movies. A matinee cost only 25 cents.

Before moving to Garden City, Long Island, George found an apartment for my mother and me in Jackson Heights, Queens. I had the luxury of my own bedroom.
While living briefly in Fort Lauderdale, I had begun making money by redeeming empty bottles. So in New York I quickly began working as a newspaper delivery boy, distributing 140 papers per day, seven days a week, usually in the afternoon. I hauled the papers around in a wooden cart, which needed to be refilled on Sundays. I earned $120 per month, including tips. This was good money in 1939. Of course I had to collect payments apartment-by-apartment. Unfortunately, I learned how some adults, fabricating various excuses, could rip-off a paper boy. Nevertheless, I was soon able to buy my own clothes and eventually a portable radio and a 17-inch Admiral TV set. I also helped pay for groceries and rent. When Mezei arrived, I was close to 16 and he could no longer terrorize me as he had in Hungary.

My mother began working in the garment district, but after a week she decided that she would be better off working for herself. I helped promote her business by distributing business cards with my newspapers. The cards read: "The World Can Tell If You Dress Well: Clara Mezei, Dressmaker." Mezei helped with this business that operated in our apartment.

After the business became successful, we moved to a better apartment at 69-45 108th Street, in Forest Hills, to be closer to a growing circle of customers. My mother, at age 55, learned English from radio, TV, customers, and me, but she always spoke with a very obvious accent. Nevertheless, I was extremely proud of her for being far more than a survivor. As mementos of her life and work, I still have two of her sewing machines and several rolls of colored thread, which bind us.

In Forest Hills I began a new paper route. The summer of 1960 was the first of four that I spent working as a busboy or as a waiter at small hotels in the mountains. For three summers I worked seven days a week, twelve hours per day at a family-owned hotel in the Catskills. The last summer I worked at a hotel in the Poconos. I made good money, which, including tips, came to $400 per month.

I enrolled at William Cullen Bryant High School in Long Island City. After delivering newspapers and eating dinner, I devoted myself to my studies. I could not enjoy high school because I had almost no time for activities and clubs. I did have an Italo-American girlfriend, however. I may have had some Jewish friends, but we did nothing to acknowledge that fact.

I earned good grades and graduated in 1961. My scores on the Regents' exams were exceptionally high in history and chemistry, so I earned a full scholarship to New York University. This is when the Jewish part of my heri-
tage emerged. My mother and others urged me to become a doctor.

I commuted by subway to NYU’s beautiful Bronx campus, where premed courses were available. I gradually learned that I was not well prepared for such a rigorous curriculum, however. After working in the Poconos during the summer of 1962, I thought that I would do better taking courses in history and politics—perhaps in preparation for a career as a diplomat. By November, while seated in a lecture hall, I asked myself, “What am I doing here?”

THE NAVY
I knew that I wanted a fresh start and one far from New York City, especially if it brought adventure. My relationship with Mezei and his with my mother continued to deteriorate, but I probably deserve some of the blame.

The previous May, after a five-year wait, I had been proudly sworn in as an American citizen at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn. I did not need to be a citizen to enlist in the military, but citizenship would be required later for me to obtain a security clearance.

I thought that I would see more of the world in the Navy than in the Army. Given my experience with air sickness, I did not even consider the Air Force. So I went to a naval recruiting station and took a battery of tests. I did well on all the sections except the one dealing with tools. How was I to know the difference between a Phillips and a regular screwdriver?

Of course my mother was absolutely shocked by my decision to enlist, which required a four-year commitment. How would I get to medical school? While I waited to be shipped out to boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Base north of Chicago, I earned some money working at Macy’s on 34th Street. When I graduated from boot camp, I won the American Spirit Honor Medal. It was presented by an admiral. My mother, who attended the ceremony, was of course delighted.

Don’t ask why I volunteered for the submarine service. Although I had never seen a sub, I probably saw the 1958 movie, “Run Silent, Run Deep.” I was concerned about seasickness, however, and figured that it would be less of a problem under water.

After passing a test for claustrophobia, I was shipped to the submarine school at Groton, Connecticut, where, as a seaman, I was trained as a fire control technician. This has nothing to do with putting out fires; rather, I learned to maintain a computer system that controlled the firing of torpedoes. In 1963, computer technology was still so basic that it resembled systems used in World War II. I could see, however, that improvements were coming. For more advanced training,
I was sent to a Class-C school in Bainbridge, Maryland. Eventually, I would spend over two years in electronics and weapons control training schools.

Offered an assignment at Norfolk, Virginia or Hawaii, I naturally chose the base farther from New York City. Given the fact that I seldom do anything the easy way, I faced a problem reaching Pearl Harbor. When I went home to Forest Hills for a two-week leave, I spent everything I had earned on movies, restaurants, and a girlfriend. Thus, I had no way to get to San Francisco’s Naval Air Station. Fortunately, my mother advanced me $40, but I did not use all of it while hitchhiking across the country. When drivers saw me in uniform, they eagerly gave me rides and bought me meals. Truckers allowed me to sleep in their cabins. I actually arrived early in the Bay Area for my flight to Pearl Harbor.

During my first four months on Oahu, I could not have been happier. However, island fever eventually got the best of me because nothing there ever changes. The palm trees, sand, and ocean are always postcard-perfect. It is like traveling between tedium and monotony every day. Fortunately, I had numerous opportunities to leave “the rock” on various submarines.

Life onboard a submarine, known as a “boat” rather than a “ship,” was far easier than I had imagined. In addition to receiving higher pay for hazardous duty, a submariner eats far better than other sailors. Almost anything is available at any time. Once at sea on patrols, submariners could wear civilian clothes, as well as beards and crazy haircuts, as they alternate between four hours on duty and eight hours off (with no days-off). A different, first-run movie was shown every day (or night), and exercise was encouraged. There were plenty of books, and it was possible to take correspondence courses.

Limited drinking was also allowed; every Friday a seaman received two cans of beer in addition to whatever bottles he had stowed in his locker. I also became a highly-skilled poker player with sizable winnings.

There was some hazing during the first six months of a submariner’s assignment. During a period known as “qualification,” when seeking the coveted “dolphins” emblem, a new swabbie had to recognize every piece of equipment, including all valves and switches, while blindfolded. Some submariners flunked out.

Because patrols typically lasted 60 to 65 days, most men grew restless during the final weeks. One obvious explanation was the absence of showers. But weeks of
shore leave followed. In Japan, for example, there was wonderful food, especially fresh fruit and milk, but also bathhouses, babes, and booze. I also much enjoyed shore leave in Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Australia.

While stationed at Pearl Harbor, two buddies and I shared an apartment in Waikiki only a few blocks from the beach. I also owned a 1955 red-and-white Chevy. Life could not get much better. After two-and-a-half years, I reenlisted for six more.

What were we submariners actually doing while patrolling the coasts of North Korea, China, Russia, and southeast Asia? During both the Cold War and the Vietnam War, we engaged in espionage. Exploring Haiphong harbor, in North Vietnam, is a good example.

A submarine crew ordinarily had 85 men; while on patrol, however, we took on ten “ghost riders,” who were counterintelligence spooks. Using an array of technologies, we monitored land positions for radar stations, intercepted and immobilized foreign communications, identified potential targets, and took photos everywhere we went. Did I mention that the boats on which I served—*The Pickerel, The Greenfish, and The Ronquil*—carried nuclear torpedoes, known as “fish,” for antisubmarine warfare? Each fish, 21-inches in diameter, was as powerful as the A-bomb dropped over Hiroshima. Although we had to maintain complete silence while following enemy ships, we never fired on them. A greater danger would be accidentally ramming them (or being rammed). An excellent nonfiction book on what submariners did during the Cold War is Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew’s *Blind Man’s Bluff*, published in 1998.

Once my boat experienced an almost fatal mishap. Water is held in tanks to counterbalance the lighter weight of diesel fuel. While refueling, my boat accidentally took on too little fuel and too much water. A submarine normally submerges to 60 or 100 feet. A depth below 412 feet was prohibited for the old diesel boats. Judging from pressure gauges, this boat plunged at a very sharp angle to 950 feet. The crew could barely stand. The boat eventually began a steady ascent, but then fell back to 600 feet.

I am not a prayerful person, but almost all my mates suddenly found religion. Yes, I was horribly frightened. By contrast, escaping from Hungary had been a lark.

I steadily rose through the ranks, eventually to petty officer first-class. During more than eight years of active duty, I spent at least two years in training at numerous bases, including three more assignments at

*Pickerel*, 1965
Great Lakes. I was encouraged to reenlist, but I decided, despite the satisfaction and patriotism I felt, that it was time to move on.

I stayed in touch with a couple of buddies. In 1971, however, when I was discharged in San Diego, I went to visit my closest friend. His mother told me that he had been killed in a car crash only a few months earlier.

In 1965 I had met a young lady in Hawaii and became friendly with her family. While I was assigned to Great Lakes Naval Base, she found another man. But in 1967, when I returned to Pearl Harbor, I became involved with her older sister, Lee Hamm. She was a divorcee with a three-year-old son, Alan.

In 1969 Lee and I were married. She knew that I was a non-religious Jew, and I acceded to her request for a Catholic ceremony. It was a Hawaiian-style wedding with hula dancers. My mother definitely disapproved of the marriage, and her relationship with Lee worsened.

That same year my wife and stepson, whom I adopted, followed me to Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, south of San Francisco, where my boat was refitted. Our relationships were hardly strengthened when we lived for six months in a cockroach-infested Quonset hut. At that time I did not know that Quonset was an actual place in Rhode Island.

TEXAS

Given my decision to leave the Navy in 1971, I wanted to return to college and obtain an education. When I thought of studying business, a Navy buddy from Houston encouraged me to apply to the McCombs School at the University of Texas in Austin. It had a good reputation and the tuition was modest. I would be able to transfer a year's worth of credits from NYU.

Lee and I decided right away, with my mother's financial help, to purchase a two-bedroom house close to campus for $13,200. As a result, I qualified for in-state tuition. I also received a monthly payment of $280 from the G.I. Bill, and my wife worked as a secretary. I got around on a nifty, thrifty Honda 50 scooter.

When I began cracking the books in the summer of 1971, I was a bit worried about my abilities, but I soon determined that if I worked hard I could accomplish anything. At home I built a desk in a quiet area and treated it as my private submarine. By taking five courses per semester and four courses per summer, without interruption, I was able to earn a degree in two-and-one-half years and one with nearly perfect grades. Never was I distracted by Vietnam War protests.

Although initially attracted to marketing, I studied accounting. My grade point average over three years was 3.96 because I earned one "B." I considered
going to law school, but Lee and I could not afford that luxury. (In 1974 I earned a master's degree in taxation.)

Except for summer months, we enjoyed living in Austin, which is surrounded by lakes, rivers, and green hills. We liked the easygoing people and learned to enjoy country music. I still own a pair of cowboy boots. But our marriage suffered from our relationships with Alan. While Lee tended to pamper him, I was forced to become a disciplinarian. I wanted him to become responsible and work as hard as I had in high school.

My mother's marriage was under even greater stress. Whatever her relationship with Mezei, he felt betrayed because the streets of New York City were not paved with gold. He never learned much English. In 1973, feeling bitter and defeated, he returned to Budapest, where he committed suicide. I do not know where he is buried, and I am not sure that his own son, George, cared. I lost touch with him after he failed to repay a loan from my mother.

She tried living with us in Austin for a few months, but this did not work out. So she returned to her apartment in Forest Hills, where she was joined by her sister from Argentina.

ARIZONA AND ALASKA
I interviewed with two national accounting firms and received offers from both. Having accepted a position with Peat Marwick Mitchell, I was sent to Phoenix in 1974. My mother had visited a friend there and liked it, but she had not gone during summer.

My office was in a high-rise north of the old downtown. Fifteen people worked in the tax department, and the partner in charge was horrible. I felt that I did not fit in.

Fortunately, in August 1975 I was asked to volunteer for a three-week assignment with the Peat Marwick office in Anchorage, auditing the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. I immediately fell in love with the place and the firm with me. Alaska has no personal income tax; I would receive a significant raise; and the company would help sell our home in Phoenix. So what did I have to lose by relocating there?

The coastal city of Anchorage has virtually no humidity and generally not much wind. The air is crisp and clear. Winter is not as bad as one thinks, except an occasional week of frigid temperatures—20 degrees-below-zero—could grab one's attention. While working in Fairbanks, I once experienced a week of 40 degrees-below-zero, which is wicked cold. I still have my arctic parka with a fur collar, just in
case. But every season is beautiful. Summer, for example, has 19 hours of daylight.

Lee and I bought a home in the suburbs for $75,000, and we enjoyed splendid views of nearby foothills (10,000 feet) and more distant mountains (16,000 feet higher). And I soon became an outdoorsman— an extreme contrast to my life as a submariner. I loved fishing for salmon and trout, and this led not only to camping but portaging. With friends I hunted caribou and moose for food. With my Ruger .30-06 and my Magnum .357, I was adequately prepared. Moose meat is fabulous— much better than beef— and one animal can yield a thousand pounds.

When my mother asked why a nice Jewish boy needed guns, I replied, “Ask the Israeli Army.” She enjoyed visiting us twice a year, staying several weeks at a time. Her favorite Alaskan pastime was fishing for halibut.

Alaska does have business taxes, so my office worked with many banks and real estate developers. Only five percent of the state's land is privately held, however. I did work with development corporations belonging to Indians and Eskimos. This meant that I occasionally flew to see them on single-engine planes. Some could land on earth, the others on water.

Unfortunately, Lee and I continued to suffer marital difficulties. In 1978 I moved out of our house, but four months later I was persuaded to return. It soon became apparent that we could not sustain our marriage, and in 1980 we divorced.

Our son, Alan, dropped out of high school and joined the Marines, which was the best thing that could have happened to him. He later became an air traffic controller and then a crime scene investigator. Alan returned to Austin, got married, and has a child. Lee too moved to Austin, where she is married, ironically, to an accountant.

I met Maureen in 1979. Eight years my junior, she was an adventurer from Cape Town, South Africa, who was taking a six-month leave from her position as a hospital cytologist. After traveling by herself in South America, she went camping in many of America's national parks. She was visiting a friend in Anchorage when I met her at a reception hosted by friends of mine from another accounting firm.

Maureen's attempt at cross-country skiing on an Olympic course resulted in a seriously injured left leg. She returned to Cape Town for eight months of recuperation.

Within 48 hours of her departure, I telegraphed: "Please come back." We corresponded, but her parents thought that she was absolutely nuts to pursue a relationship with me. Maureen obtained an American visa that required her to marry within three months. We did so a few days short of that deadline in December 1980.

Only my mother came to Anchorage for the Catholic ceremony. Though
Maureen had studied in a convent school, she was not a religious person. Yet, her knowledge of the Hebrew Bible is far deeper than mine.

"We made our first trip to South Africa in 1982 and have gone there together four more times. Combining the best of Rio de Janeiro and San Francisco, Cape Town is spectacular. With good friends there, we have seriously thought about moving to Cape Town. Maureen holds dual citizenship, as do I. I have no idea why I acquired Hungarian citizenship in 2003 because I have never used my Hungarian passport to enter my former homeland."

Although apolitical while serving in the Navy, I have always been interested in politics. Partially because of my experience under communism, I am a staunch conservative who believes in a strong military. Though I believe in a safety net to protect the weakest members of society, I also believe that our welfare system is corrupt and that unions maintain a stranglehold over municipal and state government.

Whether or not my opinions were shared by many Alaskans, I was encouraged to join its World Affairs Council. I enjoyed the weekly luncheons, which often featured a Congressman, ambassador, consul general or journalist. Once I spoke about my life in Hungary. The Council's membership was a veritable who's who of Anchorage, though few Jews participated. No more than a hundred families belonged to the local synagogue. One of my colleagues invited me to visit, which I did, but never for services.

Being an accountant, I was elected treasurer of the World Affairs Council. Then, in a contested race, I was elected president. Maureen also participated in weekly luncheons, and in 1982 she was hired as the council's executive director.

That same year I was lured away from Peat Marwick (later known as KPMG) by a smaller firm specializing in taxation. Within another year, however, this firm merged with Laventhol & Horwath, a national leader slightly smaller than the "Big Eight."

Oil is Alaska's dominant industry, and prices steadily climbed until reaching about $45 per barrel in 1985. Then that market crashed, and so did the one for real estate. Much of our business suddenly dried up. I was one of two tax partners in the office. My counterpart, who had lived in Alaska much longer, wanted to stay. Never having had roots anywhere, I was willing to consider a transfer.

I would have enjoyed moving to Portland, Oregon, but there was no opening there. In the summer of 1986, Maureen and I liked nothing about our visit to St.
Louis, which my company had suggested as an alternative.

Meanwhile, I had become active in Alaska’s Olympic Organizing Committee, which hoped to attract the winter games some day. One member of the selection committee was Hungarian, so guess who was sent to woo him. Alaska is still waiting for its games.

**RHODE ISLAND**

Starting my own practice in Anchorage would have been disastrous at that time, so I was willing to consider an opening in Laventhol & Horwath’s office in Providence. Even though I had surely passed through Rhode Island on my way to and from Kennebec School, I could probably not find it on a map. I was hardly worried about transitioning from the nation’s largest state to its smallest. Once Maureen and I decided that we would relocate to Providence, we did not assume that it would be our last big move.

Of course my mother was absolutely tickled when we arrived here in 1986. I began visiting her at least once a month at her apartment in Queens, and we had seven good years together.

My mother was a remarkable woman, who always remembered my father and my brother, but was not haunted by the past. No doubt she felt some small measure of retribution when, during the late 1960s, she began receiving monthly payments from West Germany. She retired at 75, but continued to help a few customers who had become her closest friends.

Beginning in the 1960s, my mother made annual visits to Budapest, usually in September, primarily to see her four sisters and brother. She became an American citizen in 1964. My mother usually flew to and from Vienna, whose cosmopolitan atmosphere she remembered and still enjoyed, and took a train to Budapest. She could pay for her trips by smuggling in nylons, lipstick, ballpoint pens, and Levis. No customs agents ever gave her a hard time. Of course I was pleased to be able to help her financially, but in Budapest she was known as “the rich relative.” My mother died in 1993 at 88 years and is buried in Hungary with my brother, Thomas.

In 1987 I became the partner in charge of Laventhol’s tax department and eventually oversaw about 15 people. The firm’s clients had mostly been manufacturers of textiles, jewelry and corrugated boxes, but as those industries faded we assisted real estate developers, contractors, and healthcare providers. We also
helped several social service agencies—some Jewish—on a pro bono basis.

As my practice became more complicated by ever-changing government regulations, I found it less enjoyable. There was a considerable amount of stress, which would have been greatly compounded without a growing reliance on computers. At times I have thought that it would probably be more enjoyable bagging groceries at Stop & Shop, which I would surely do in an emergency. Beginning in 2009, as I approached retirement, I decided to cut back my hours.

It was far more difficult for Maureen and me to form friendships here than in Anchorage, where there are significant numbers of transplanted, including many oil workers from Texas. It sounds like a cliché, but so many Rhode Islanders establish lifelong friendships in grade school or high school. Raising kids would probably have helped build friendships, but this was not an option for us. Even today, though we have lived in our Pawtucket home for 22 years, our roots are relatively shallow.

I did become involved with many organizations, however. One was Education Rhode Island, whose goal was widespread reform. I eventually concluded that my efforts were as much fun as running into a brick wall. I became a board member of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and active in the city's Rotary Club.

Arthur Robbins, one of my first clients, became an extraordinary friend. I know that my life as a Jew would be quite different if a person like him had been my father or stepfather. In 1998, serving as my Pied Piper, he led me to the board of the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum, which became more accurately known as the Holocaust Education and Resource Center. Of course it needed a treasurer, and I was able to improve the organization’s finances and policies. I later served as vice president and as president from 2008 to 2010.

I have never spoken to students about my experiences—probably because I do not consider myself a survivor. These are people with tattoos who survived the camps. I do not have the right to compare myself to them. This would belittle and trivialize their experiences. I am even reluctant to call my mother a survivor, though she was forced to wear a yellow star. My mother lived in constant fear, as did most Jews and a great many Europeans, but she was not worked or starved to death.

I am not fearless, and I have never considered myself a hero. I have done my share of stupid things and regret them.

The Holocaust Education and Resource Center is not only important for educating gentiles about the consequences of hatred and racism, but also for educating young Jews. So many Jewish kids in Rhode Island live in a la-la land, lulled
into believing that they will always be secure. Perhaps I am somewhat paranoid, but anti-Semitism exists in this world. There is a never-ending battle to defeat it.

My mother had wanted me to apply for reparations, but I did not want blood money or anything else from the Germans. Nevertheless, about four years ago, I agreed to apply for a payment from the Hungarian government. The process dragged on much too long, and I finally said, “Leave me alone; you have all the records.” A few months ago I received a check for $1,900, which I promptly donated to the Holocaust Center.

Had I received a religious upbringing, I may feel quite differently about God. But I am an atheist, not an agnostic. This sounds like a criminal offense. It should not. I would never criticize anybody who is religious. Even though religion has caused immense hatred in this world, it can be a positive force. It can provide discipline, structure, and a moral compass. It can also provide a powerful social and ethnic bond. But I resent any religion that regards itself as superior to any other. Orthodoxy of any kind particularly rankles me.

This leads to a story about myself as Maureen’s spouse. When we moved to Rhode Island, she had no interest in resuming her career as a cytologist. Drawing on her experience with the Alaska World Affairs Council, she directed the Japan-American Society of Rhode Island, based in Newport, for four years. In 1991, while directing the Rhode Island Technology Council, she saw an advertisement for a position at Bryant College. For nearly two decades, Maureen has directed its Export Assistance Center, which expanded and became part of Rhode Island’s Economic Development Corporation. She frequently led overseas trade missions for business executives and government officials until her retirement at the end of this year.

In 1998 the Jewish Federation invited her to participate in a weeklong mission to Israel designed for influential Rhode Islanders. It was led by two key Federation volunteers, Edward Feldstein and Maxine Richman. Some other participants included: Father Philip Smith, president of Providence College; Ronald Gallo, president of the Rhode Island Foundation; Dr. Pablo Rodriguez, a leader of Planned Parenthood; and Aram Garabedian, a shopping center developer. I was invited to carry Maureen’s suitcase.

The trip to Israel was an absolutely fabulous experience. One of my favorite movies is *Exodus*, and I always thought of myself as sympathizing with Zionism, but the place grabbed me. I do not know how to explain that I could actually feel something intangible. The whirlwind mission included visits to Masada, the Golan Heights, and kibbutzim. The trip was a real eye-opener, which made me proud.
SAILING

In 1989, Maureen, who has always strengthened my self-confidence, gave me the idea of taking sailing lessons. I loved them, so of course we bought a boat. For many years we derived a tremendous sense of peace and pleasure sailing the waters of Narragansett Bay.

In 2007 we purchased a different kind of craft, a 36-foot trawler, whose maximum speed is ten miles per hour. We sailed this floating home from Norfolk up the Atlantic Coast, past the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, to Rhode Island shores.

After 37 years as an accountant, I plan to fully retire from LGC & D (formerly an office of Laventhol & Horwath) at the end of 2010. On Memorial Day of 2011 we plan to take the cruise of a lifetime on our boat, Duddon Pilot. (It is named after Maureen's mother's ancestral home in northwestern England on the Irish Sea). On a journey lasting more than a year, we will travel from Rhode Island to New York, up the Hudson River, across the Erie Canal, through Canada's northern canals, across Lake Huron and Lake Michigan to Chicago, down the Illinois River to the Mississippi, across the Tennessee River, across the Gulf of Mexico to Florida's west coast, spend a month in the Florida Keys, and then travel home up the Atlantic Coast. Yes, our boat has a full kitchen, heat, and air conditioning.

Beyond the fact that I was born in Hungary and spent my early childhood there, I have often thought of myself as a Gypsy: a traveler constantly facing new challenges and opportunities. With my best friend, Maureen, we have a few more adventures and opportunities ahead of us.
THREE JEWISH COMMUNITIES,
PART I: CANADA

Maurice Glicksman

The author is of course widely known for his brilliant scientific and academic career, which culminated at Brown with his service as a University Professor, Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of the Faculty, and Provost. He is also highly regarded in Rhode Island for his leadership of numerous Jewish communal organizations. Many readers of our journal enjoyed his article about stamp collecting in the previous issue.

Recently, Professor Glicksman completed a highly detailed and lengthy autobiography primarily for the benefit of his wife, Yetta, their three children, and their six grandchildren. Indeed, he considers his family his proudest achievement.

Although this autobiography will also hold special meaning for Professor Glicksman’s colleagues, protégées, and former students, several chapters tell much about the several Jewish communities in which he has been an active and proud member. I have selected three, Canada, Japan, and Rhode Island, to form a trilogy of articles.

As readers will see, however, even the designation of Canada as a single Jewish community is somewhat misleading. While Professor Glicksman’s vivid memories focus on Ontario, he actually portrays five of its Jewish communities: St. Thomas, London, Port Stanley, Toronto, and Kingston. In this sense, he has described a small solar system, perhaps resembling Rhode Island, whose even larger planets include North America and Europe.

Accordingly, I see these edited excerpts from Maurice’s autobiography as tiles within the shimmering mosaic of Jewish Immigration to Rhode Island. Previous issues of our journal have included reminiscences and family portraits by several professors, including Alice Goldstein, Maxim Shrayer, and Judith and Peter Wegner. Additional articles by or about other European emigrés include Betty Adler, Susan Brown, Leah Eliash, and Heske Zelemermyer. Over decades these pages have also featured many American-born emigrés to Rhode Island.

Our journal’s thousands of pages show that the flow of Jews to and from Rhode Island never ceases.
FAMILY BACKGROUND
My family's plight was similar to that of many Eastern European Jews who emigrated to America to find a better life early in the twentieth century. They were aided by relatives already in America and by organizations of immigrants from the same locale in Europe. While struggling to establish themselves, they remained loyal to whom and what they knew. Little could these refugees imagine how much opportunity awaited their second and third generations.

My paternal grandfather, Moshe Glicksman, who had lived in Kielce, in southern Poland, died when my father, Max, was seven. My dad left his home on his own during World War I. He was perhaps eighteen years old, but his false birth certificate took four years off his age. This was not an uncommon practice among Jews to delay conscription into the Czar's army.

My dad found a job in a leather factory in Germany to earn some money so that he could take a ship to Canada. His mother, Faige, and six of his siblings, Fishel, Harry, Libby, Becky, Sam, and Norman (a half-brother), had settled in Toronto years earlier.

As a result of his work in leather tanning, my dad suffered a deadened sense of smell and taste. Once in Canada he headed out West, worked as a cowboy, and earned extra money playing semi-pro Canadian football. On his return to Toronto, my dad went to work for his older brother, Harry, in his auto supply business.

My dad's younger brother, Sam, fell in love with Becky Lachowitz. But her parents, Abraham and Mindel (née Szejntag), were opposed to Becky marrying before her older sister, Fanny Bella, but to no avail. They were married in 1926, had two children (the first one did not survive early childhood), and Sam broke up the marriage and went off to New York in the early 1930s. My father fell in love with Fanny, and they were married in 1927. They had little formal education.

In 1914 my maternal grandfather, Abraham, had left home in Lomza, Poland to visit his brother, Mottel, in Toronto and worked in Detroit when World War I prevented his return to Poland. The rest of his family—his wife, Mindel, and their children, Fanny, Becky, Lou, and Molly—came to Canada after the war. My grandfather was a carpenter, and I remember him as a man of physical strength and high integrity. The family eventually bought and lived in a home on Markham Street in part of what was then Toronto's heavily Jewish neighborhood. Yiddish was the common language among the older generation, although English was understood and used.
GROWING UP IN SAINT THOMAS

I was born in Toronto in October 1928. In 1929 my parents and I moved 120 miles southwest to St. Thomas, Ontario, where my father helped open a store for new and used automobile parts. Having left the business with his older brother, he engaged in a partnership with Nathan Goldberg and Sam Cohen.

I gained a brother, Larry, in 1930 and a sister, Gail, in 1937. When I was approaching seven years of age we moved to nearby London, Ontario for one year, while my father established a second auto parts store, and we then returned to St. Thomas. In London I attended a small elementary school, where I was a second-grader in a class which covered grades two, three, and four. The next year in St. Thomas I was in fourth grade.

St. Thomas is the county seat of Elgin County, which stretches east-west centrally on the northern coast of Lake Erie, about one-quarter of the length of the coast. It is about in the center of a triangle at whose corners lie the large cities of Toronto, Detroit, and Buffalo, each about 120 miles away by automobile. St. Thomas was first settled in 1810, named for the developer of the area, Thomas Talbot, and incorporated as a city in 1881. When I lived there its major industry was railways, including the Canadian branch of the New York Central Railway, which offered shorter transport between New York and Chicago. I believe the population of St. Thomas was about 18,000 in the 1940s, and was most strongly of British Isles origin. London was the closest “big” city, eighteen miles away, with a population somewhere between 70,000 and 90,000 at that time.

At its height, the St. Thomas Jewish community consisted of 20 families. We came together for High Holiday worship in a rented hall, led by an Orthodox man from somewhere else, probably London. It had two synagogues, one Orthodox and one Reform.

When I was twelve, I traveled 36 miles round-trip on the electric London
and Port Stanley (L&PS) railway, weekdays and Sundays, to attend the heder attached to the Orthodox synagogue and prepare for my bar mitzvah. I remember my maternal grandparents coming to St. Thomas from Toronto to celebrate my bar mitzvah, and my meeting them at the L&PS station. Bar mitzvah study brought me closer to Judaism and to the London Jewish community, so that I followed that study by joining in Jewish youth activities (AZA, for example) in London.

We indulged in a number of things Jewish as a matter of course. My mother kept a kosher home, with separate dishes for meat and dairy, and a separate set for Passover. But we did not go to synagogue very often and worked on Saturdays. My father would buy chickens from the farmers, and he and I would take them to London to Rabbi Kirschenbaum, the shochet. I would watch him handle the chickens, slit their throats, and toss them into his yard. When they had stopped moving, my job was to take them across the street to a shed used for flicking the chickens, doing my best to give my mother a feather-free bird to put in the oven or use for chicken soup.

There was a kosher butcher in London, who supplied us with meat when it was available; it was rationed during World War II. We would also occasionally get a large carp, which my mother would let swim in our bathtub until she was ready to use it in making some months’ supply of gefilte fish. My favorite foods as a youngster, which I have seldom eaten since, included gribene (from chicken fat), kopffleish (a cow’s neck), calf lung, and kishke (from cattle). I still enjoy chicken soup with matzoh balls. I also developed a lifelong liking of the rear end (toches) of a chicken, duck, goose or turkey.

Before Yom Kippur, my father would take the kids out by the garage and shlug kapores with live chickens to remove our sins. The chickens’ fate was not always clear to us youngsters. It is possible that I flicked their lifeless bodies a day or so later.

I attended public schools in an area of St. Thomas which must have been developed right after the Crimean War. We lived on Alma Street, and my elementary school, Balaklava, was on the same block. The school had an enclosed chute, from the upper floors to the playground, which was an emergency fire escape. The bottom of the chute made a nice cavern for meetings and for beating up on kids. I suffered from bullying in the early grades: some of the boys teased me for my overweight appearance (much less flattering terms were used), and some of this was directed at my Jewish background (the more polite used “dirty Jew”).

My dad urged me not to accept these insults, but to fight back. I won few of these fights, but I found a more successful solution: two non-Jewish friends,
Earl Iredom and Don Padden, who were strong and did well fighting. They also appreciated the help I gave them with their school work. Earl was a farmhand when not in school. Don played football and hockey. My sport was basketball. Once it was known that teasing me got Earl and Don involved, I was free of the bullies. Earl and Don were good friends of mine well into high school. Unfortunately, Don died from a burst appendix when he was about 16 years old. Generally speaking, social relations with the non-Jewish kids were discouraged both by my parents and theirs.

I was a generally happy kid, enjoying much of school (mathematics, history, and the sciences) but less successful and happy with art, literature, and composition. In high school I felt that the teachers of art and English composition lowered my grades because they favored other students. My memory was good, so that I could memorize books, poems, and other written material quickly and do well on exams, but my interest in literature was strongly in science fiction. I recall a visit with my parents to the local library, to request access to the whole collection, because I had read all of the books in the children's section.

I recall an incident, when I was not yet 13, involving baseball. My father, brother, and I were listening to a live radio broadcast of the 1941 World Series between the New York Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers. I had developed a love for the Yankees, while my father and Larry hated that team. The game at Ebbetts Field that day was the fourth game, with the Yankees having won two of the first three. But the Yankees were losing 3-4, and the ninth inning was coming up. Larry and our dad said it was over (they were elated) and invited me to join them as they went out for ice cream.

But I stayed to the end. In the top half of the ninth inning, the first two Yankees made outs, and their third batter, Tommy Henrich, was called out on strikes, apparently ending the game. But the Dodger catcher, Mickey Owens, dropped the ball, and Henrich successfully made it to first base. The Yankees then proceeded to score four runs, to make the score 7-4. The shocked Dodgers could not score in the bottom half of the ninth, giving the Yankees a win and a 3-1 lead in the World Series. When my dad returned, he did not believe what I told him of the game's outcome and called the local newspaper (the *St. Thomas Times-Journal*) to verify my story. By taking the fifth game, the Yankees won the Series.

Ninth grade brought a choice of public schools: St. Thomas Collegiate Institute (STCI) or the Arthur Voorden School, a pioneering technical school aimed for those not intending a college education. I chose Collegiate, which meant five years of high school (through grade 13), but I did take classes at the technical school.
in woodworking and metal forming.

I found school easy and the upper grades boring because of the repetition of material. My final paper in ninth grade French was posted for years on the STCI bulletin board because of the large "100%!" Miss Padden had put on it. I enjoyed lessons in music theory, composition, and violin playing from the Catholic nuns (overseen by the University of Western Ontario in London). One Christmas concert I substituted for an ill choir director to lead her group in "Ave Maria."

Because of my interest in basketball I was also a member of an Anglican youth group. We met Sunday mornings in the church basement. After our meeting the rest of the group went upstairs to attend services, while I returned home.

Ninth grade brought on two other challenges, my bar mitzvah and "girls." The latter did not go as smoothly as the former. I made the mistake of chivalrously escorting a girl home from a dance, not realizing she had developed a "crush" on me. When I told her I was not interested in dating her, she wept in public and her friends shunned me. I ended up resigning from the basketball team because her father was the coach!

There was one Jewish girl in my class, and I gathered confidence to ask her out to a dance. My dad drove me to her parents' apartment, and gave me an abbreviated discussion—in "code" language—meant to educate me in sexual matters. The date was a disaster: I failed to tell Eleanor Kendall that I had never danced before! Embarrassed to find herself teaching me in public, she never accepted my later offers to take her dancing, although we did go to the movies together. We found little of common interest, and ended up friends. (She did invite me to her wedding some years later.)

After my bar mitzvah, I started working for my father and learned how to set up and keep a double-entry bookkeeping system for his business. On Friday nights and Saturdays I also worked as a clerk in Sam Shepherd's clothing store. What I earned was saved, so that I was able to buy a quite good violin, which now belongs to my violin-playing grandson, Sam Glicksman Veggeberg.

I joined the STCI Orchestra, conducted by my Latin teacher, Mr. Brown, and progressed to the concertmaster seat in my senior year. Fran Snow, a piano-playing schoolmate and neighbor, invited me to play sonatas with her. I enjoyed the music and the meetings with Fran and her mother, who always sat in the room when I visited.

Among many avocational interests, I also enjoyed games. My dad played pinochle with his friends, and I would sometimes be allowed to watch the game. We also played poker at home, with our pennies, nickels, and dimes. At the end
of an evening, my dad would make up the loss any of the kids had suffered. I also learned that I should not play poker because I could not keep a “poker face” and avoid signaling the quality of my hand! I taught my family to play bridge, but did not find an enthusiasm there to match my own.

THE WAR

Canadians understood that World War II had started in September 1939. At STCI in 1941, I voluntarily joined the Army Cadets, which also involved two weeks of boot camp during summer holidays. The Cadets had student officers, who were chosen by their teacher-advisor. I managed to reach the rank of major in my fifth year; the commanding officer, a colonel, was a student repeating his fifth year.

When I was about 14, I started a branch of the Canadian Air Force Cadets and built a quarter-scale Spitfire fighter airplane in our basement. It was an enlarged version of the balsa-wood models I had made and placed all around the house. The large fighter had to be dismantled to get it out of the basement!

Although the war was real to us, it did not touch our family life with conscripted service. (By the way, conscripts were allowed the possibility of limiting their service to North America.) The war affected my family mostly through food rationing and the heavier demand for used auto parts.

As far as I know, our close relatives who stayed in Poland—my aunt Sarah, her husband, and my uncle Willie—perished in the Holocaust. My nephew, Elliott Dater, discovered Sarah’s son, Meir Erlichson, living in Israel, and I visited him years later.

MY SIBLINGS AND GROWING PROSPERITY

Larry, my younger brother by 22 months, and I were competitive. When we lived on Alma Street in St. Thomas, we shared a double bed, and the imaginary line down the middle was a defensible wall. I was bigger and heavier, so our frequent fights were short in duration. When my parents bought a larger home on Wellington Street, we had separate bedrooms.

Larry did very well in school. He went on to college (University of Western Ontario, in London) and law school (Osgoode Hall, in Toronto), earning high honors and working hard to develop a highly successful law prac-
tice in Toronto. He has been married three times and has three children. Larry now lives with his good friend in Florida, but has not applied for American citizenship.

Gail was our "baby" sister, whom we all loved. But I left home for college when she was not yet nine, and saw little of her when I worked summers in St. Thomas. She attended the University of Toronto, which resulted in my mother moving there to make a home for her. My mother was ambitious for us all. My father commuted from St. Thomas on weekends.

My father, who worked long hours in his business, Detroit Auto Supply, seemed to enjoy what he was doing. He had a detailed knowledge of automobiles and their parts, but was less interested (and less skilled) in management. His partner, Nate Goldberg, lived in London and ran the business operation. My father seemed to be happy with this arrangement, but my mother felt that the partnership should be dissolved, so that my father would run the whole business. She handled the family's finances and managed to build up savings so that we could afford good cars, a nice home, and a summer home. Eventually (after I left St. Thomas), my parents bought the building the business had been leasing, and then bought out Mr. Goldberg and a silent partner, Sam Cohen, who lived in Toronto and had financed the operation at the beginning.

PORT STANLEY AND TORONTO
My parents bought a cottage in Port Stanley, nine miles south of St. Thomas at the junction of Kettle Creek and Lake Erie, where we spent summers. Because Port
Stanley was also a popular summer place for London residents, our home served as a meeting place for both Jewish communities. I enjoyed swimming in the lake, and I learned chess from a neighbor. Having set up a chess board outside his cottage, he invited visitors to join him in a game. At times we also entertained our relatives who came from Toronto for a week or two.

My "double"-cousin, Morrie (Moshe Chain), who was also a stamp collector, spent most of the summer with us. His parents, Sam and Becky Glicksman, were divorced when he was a babe, and his mother died when he was about ten years old. Consequently, he was raised by our Lachowitz grandparents, Abraham and Mindel, in Toronto.

My sister, Gail, met Leon Dater, a native of Detroit, in Port Stanley. They were married in Adath Israel Synagogue in Toronto after Gail graduated with a degree in psychology and child development. Gail and Leon made their working home in Livonia, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, specializing in teen relations, he reached the rank of detective lieutenant with the local police force. Gail pursued her teaching career while raising their three children.

For many years of my childhood, we spent Passovers with my mother's family in Toronto. We all crowded into my grandfather's house on Markham Street, and my grandfather led the seders. I picked up some facility with Yiddish. My parents were fluent in Yiddish and English, and I occasionally heard my father speaking Polish with some fluency.

I get to know, and love, my aunt Mollie, my uncle Louie, and his wife Martha Lackie, along with their sons, Bobbie and Howard. I also got to play with many of the kids who were my cousin Morrie's friends. I actually asked my aunt Mollie, when I was 9 or 10 and she was in her early twenties, to wait for me to grow up so that we could be married! She wisely ignored my request and married Max Wingust. Their daughter, Rosalind, never married.

I remember one Passover when I refused to go to Toronto because I had saved up my money to buy a typewriter and wanted to spend that time learning to type. My dad did the cooking, and my meal choice was bubbeles (matzoh-meal pancakes) or matzoh brai (matzohs fried with eggs). I loved both, and managed to get up to 70 words per minute on the manual Underwood typewriter.

My father's family and my mother's family, the Lachowitzes, did not socialize; in fact my maternal grandmother, Mindel, forbade us to see any of my father's siblings and their children. We rarely disobeyed that "order." The reason for this separation appeared to be related to my uncle Sam Glicksman deserting and divorcing my aunt Becky Lachowitz Glicksman. Nevertheless, my parents
did remain friendly with my father’s sister, Becky, who had married Irving (Izzie) Gluckstein and settled in Chatham, Ontario. I did not like this limited contact, but my life moved away from Toronto and I did not try to develop a better relationship.

YETTA
Early in the summer of 1944, on the day I returned from Army Cadet boot camp, I was sitting on the porch of our cottage when a small boy, Myron Leich, came by and asked me if I would like to meet some nice girls. He had been sent on an errand (costing one of the girls 10¢) to bring over my good-looking brother. I eagerly accompanied Myron to another cottage, where there were four very surprised young girls. We chatted for a few hours, and when I saw my brother Larry at supper, I told him of my adventure and of the girls interested in him. I also told him to stay away from Yetta Leich because I had found her interesting, and she was not the girl who had initiated the meeting.

Nevertheless, I had to convince Yetta that I was the right match for her. Her father, Sam, also played the violin, and we would get together to play duets in Port Stanley. But when we started playing, Yetta left the cottage, claiming that the screeching sound of our instruments was hard on her ears.

I was more successful getting her to go to dances. Port Stanley had a large bandstand and attracted large crowds to listen and dance to the music of Les Brown, Tommy (and Jimmy) Dorsey, the Glen Miller orchestra, and other big bands of the 1940s. Yetta and I enjoyed the music, the dancing, and Mackie’s orange drink (mostly water) served on the Port Stanley boardwalk.

OFF TO UNIVERSITY
I had been thinking about what kind of career I wanted to pursue, deciding first of all that I was not interested in going into the family business, or pursuing medi-
cine as my mother suggested. Physics intrigued me but also led to some frustration. I could not understand "action at a distance," and my high school physics teacher was of no help there.

I thus decided to become a civil engineer. During the summer of 1945, I got a surveying job with the city of St. Thomas, but my non-Jewish boss tried to discourage me from pursuing engineering. So did one of my parents' friends, a Jewish graduate civil engineer who was forced to become a merchant. Both gave me the same advice: there were no jobs for Jewish civil engineers, except in the few Jewish-owned architectural/construction organizations. I stubbornly decided that was a good reason for me to forge the way!

Queen's University, which had one of the top engineering programs in Canada, was 300 miles away from home, in Kingston, Ontario. At that time most seniors applied to only one university, so Queen's was my top choice. I was also interested in earning a scholarship (awarded strictly on merit in those years) and thus needed to do well on Ontario's provincial examinations. This also meant that I took an added exam, the "problems" exam, which was in mathematics and supplemented the usual algebra, geometry, and trigonometry exams. Students who did exceptionally well in mathematics usually answered all the questions perfectly on each of the three subject exams.

Doing well in the exams, I earned the top Dominion-Provincial Scholarship and the top Mathematics Scholarship. However, I could receive funds from only one: the Dominion-Provincial gave me three years of tuition, plus $100 each year for living expenses. I received another $100 from an Elgin County scholarship.

In 1946, in order to accommodate the large number of returning servicemen seeking a college education, Queen's University ran two student years each year; my classes ran October through March, five and a half days each week. When I entered the School of Science in October 1946, I was told that I was among only 75 of 1,000 freshmen who had come directly from high school. The rest were war veterans.

My plan to study civil engineering at Queen's was modified within two weeks of my arrival; I switched to engineering physics. It was more challenging, and I saw a hope of answering those nagging questions about "action at a distance." I also became quickly involved with the Queen's Hillel Foundation, located in its own building adjacent to the campus.

My introduction to the Kingston Jewish community was not a warm one, however. I went to the local synagogue for erev Yom Kippur, only to be told that I
needed to pay at the door if I wished to worship there that one night. At Hillel, I learned that the Kingston community wanted the Hillel rabbi to provide services. As far as I knew at the time, they did not support the Hillel program.

Queen's was also not a welcome place for Jews, particularly in the Medical School. Hillel was in a house adjacent to the campus, and we were welcomed to membership in the Interfaith Council on campus. But Professor Kropp, a Jewish faculty member in the Medical School, told me that each class was always exactly ten percent Jewish (6 out of 60). However, in the 1930s the faculty had noted that the major prizes for performance went almost always to the Jewish students. The faculty changed their selection process to make sure that the Jewish students admitted were not academically superior to the non-Jews, so that this overabundance of Jewish prizewinners decreased.

In my first years at Queen's I wrote letters to my mother in Yiddish, and her letters were also in Yiddish. My dad would drive me to the university and pick me up at the end of the term. At that time there were dormitory accommodations for only female students; males had to find room and board in various homes within walking distance of the campus. By the end of my freshman year, I had slimmed down and grown a beard. My girlfriend, Yetta, said she would not kiss a bearded young man: off went the beard!

As a result of my interest in playing contract bridge, I made friends early on with some freshmen from Montreal, several of whom would only eat kosher food. Their diet of fruit and vegetables did not seem healthy over a long period, and I consulted with the Hillel director, Rabbi Renov, about the possibility of establishing a kosher dinner option at Hillel. The rabbi enthusiastically recruited a retired Irish sea cook, who faithfully followed the kashrut rules he was given. My Montreal friends and I recruited 30 students who agreed to join the "kosher co-op," and most of them stayed with it through the academic year.

Rabbi Renov saw the appearance of so many Jewish men every evening as an opportunity for daily prayer sessions, and insisted on Minha/Ma'ariv services
before dinner. Unwilling participants came later and later, and dinner was served later and later every evening! I met with the rabbi to make clear that his insistence on *davening* before eating would "kill" the kosher co-op. He understood. Times were set and adhered to, so that the dinner was served at the announced time.

The Queen's Hillel was governed by a student board. I was elected to it in my first year, as "Freshman Representative." I started a new publication, the *Hillel Scroll*, as an outlet for student writing on Jewish subjects, and I edited it while I was at Queen's. By my third year at Queen's, I was president of Hillel.

The Hillel House also had an unfinished basement, which housed a ping-pong table. I spent many an hour there, trying to improve my game. I also enjoyed playing bridge, but for fun. An early experience at the Student Union had cost me money and had taught me not to play with strangers.

I also played in the Queen's orchestra, played touch football, served on the University Interfaith Council and found my non-academic activities taking up much of my time. In my freshman year, the big event was the Freshman Ball, held late in the second semester. I invited Yetta to be my date, but her mother did not approve of her sixteen-year-old traveling alone to a distant place, with no "adult" supervision.

I had become friendly with a Kingston High School senior, Dorothy "Dodo" Abramsky, who often showed up at the Hillel house. I introduced her to one of my freshman friends, Jerry Pollock, and the two of them hit it off, so that mentioning my girlfriend back home was taken well. She offered to host Yetta, and Mrs. Abramsky wrote to Yetta's mother, inviting Yetta to stay with her. I had a marvelous date for the Freshman Ball! And the chaperoning was long-distance, since Mrs. Abramsky took the occasion of the Ball weekend to visit friends out of town.

**TO GRADUATE SCHOOL**

At the end of my freshman year at Queen's, I stood second in the class, with a veteran taking first place. In my second year, however, I started to want to get away from Queen's: I found myself not challenged intellectually. At the end of my sophomore year, I slipped to sixth.

Undergraduates had no opportunity for research: at least, I could find none. A Hillel acquaintance, Alfred Bader, was a chemistry graduate student and a Holocaust survivor from Central Europe. He would make up a variety of esters, which he kept in his apartment, and add them to ethyl alcohol to provide his friends with tasty liqueurs. He also was enthusiastic about graduate study, and I determined to get to the graduate level as soon as I could. Having founded a highly
successful specialty chemicals company, Alfred later donated millions to Queen's University.

A quick survey led me to believe that the best physics department was at the University of Chicago, and I learned that it would accept graduate students who lacked a baccalaureate degree, on the basis of recommendations and their graduate entrance examination. I applied during the first half of 1948, and was given a date in the fall for taking the examination, which Rabbi Pimentel, the new Hillel director, proctored.

I had no problem with mathematics and science questions, but there were questions about architectural terms, art, and literature that elicited my guessing the answers. To my pleasant surprise, I received a letter from the University of Chicago, offering me admission to the graduate program in physics, with a fellowship providing full tuition and additional funds to cover my room and board. I immediately accepted, saying that I would appear in early January 1949 to start the winter quarter. The university's response, via the first telegram I had ever received, was a request for me to complete my junior year. It would be happy to have me matriculate in the fall quarter of 1949.

I completed my third year at Queen's, and then took off for Chalk River, Ontario, to work at its Atomic Energy Project, a heavy-water nuclear research reactor. I joined a small group of college seniors and graduate students who were budding physicists. I shared a house with Howard Petch, whose career would include the presidency of two Canadian universities, the University of Waterloo (Ontario) and the University of Victoria (British Columbia). My beer-drinking friend, Myer Bloom, ended up as a professor at the University of British Columbia. I learned about and performed research with Charles Millar and Alistair Cameron on the properties of a delayed neutron emitter $N^7$. The work needed continuation, so that I was invited to return to Chalk River the next summer. My observations ended up being part of my first research paper, which I coauthored with Millar and Cameron.

One of my visitors during the summer of 1949 was my girlfriend, Yetta, who had just graduated from London's Collegiate Institute. She came with her parents to see that part of northern Ontario, and to give us a chance to get together. Having planned for this meeting by buying a diamond ring, I surprised Yetta with my proposal of marriage. We spent time with her parents discussing a wedding, and decided it would be in London, Ontario, in June 1950, with a honeymoon at Banff/Lake Louise in Alberta. We were both excited, and discussed Yetta's need to get a visa to come to live with me in Chicago, after I embarked on my graduate work.
My dreams of becoming a physicist were about to be realized. My great-grandparents had been workers and my grandparents did not complete high school, which was also the case for my parents, although not for their younger siblings. My generation attended colleges and aspired to professional careers, even when retail business was involved. I had chosen to engage in science, which had also attracted some of my Jewish heroes, particularly Maimonides and Einstein, and I was aware of the large number of Nobel laureates who came from a Jewish heritage, giving me confidence that my Judaism would not prove a hindrance to any success I might achieve.

St. Thomas and Canada would no longer be my homes, however. Indeed, in 1980, when the St. Thomas Times-Journal ran a series about residents who "made it good" (I was one), there were no identifiably Jewish families living in the city.
MY CHAPLAINCY AT BROWN: AN EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT IN TIME

Rabbi Richard A. Marker

This article is the perfect sequel to Rabbi Laura Geller's in our 2010 issue. She helped recruit Rabbi Marker to Brown and became a Hillel director.

Toward the close of his article, the author explains that he departed College Hill to lead Hillel's Midwest regional office in Chicago. During his tenure there, he helped pave the way for Jewish federations to double their support for Hillel. While serving as Hillel's international vice president, Rabbi Marker established programs in Israel, Europe, and Latin America. Deepening his commitment to interreligious understanding, he also taught in Loyola University's theology department.

Since 1998, Rabbi Marker has lived and worked in New York City. After serving as the executive vice president of the Bronfman Foundation, he established a consulting firm to advise philanthropists and foundations. He has also chaired New York University's Academy of Grantmaking and Funded Education and written a book, Saying 'Yes' Wisely: Insights for the Thoughtful Philanthropist.

Rabbi Marker has traveled the globe in search of additional challenges. He has chaired the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, cochaired the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, and served on the steering committee of the United Nations' Coalition for Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding. He has lectured in nearly 40 countries on five continents.

Having left Brown 30 years ago, I continue to be surprised by the number of alumni and alumnae who find me, recognize me, or remind me of their student experiences. Clearly, it was a productive time on campus, and these periodic encounters with graduates have often inspired me to contemplate those years, 1971 through 1982.
CAMPUS ACTIVISM

I was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1971, but my work as a campus chaplain had begun three years earlier. Let us remember that the world was abruptly changing, and there were few models for the kind of work I wanted to do. Hillels were viewed as destinations, but in my eyes, students were the destinations. Long before Roe v. Wade (1973) and changes in New York law, I had become involved in abortion counseling after a group of students from Douglass College (the women's college of Rutgers University) approached me. A fellow student had died in a back alley abortion. At the height of the Vietnam War, I also became active as a draft counselor.

Rabbi Ben Kahn, who was the national director of Hillel, heard me give a talk at Rutgers. Shortly thereafter I found myself as the sole Jewish chaplain and Hillel director at Hofstra University on Long Island. Though a commuter school with no tradition of meaningful campus programming, Hillel regularly attracted 200 to 300 students for Friday evening services, which included meditation and chanting. (I had become a "guru" type of leader. As will be noted later in this article, I was too naive to understand that it was not an ideal professional model.)

Given my early career reputation, it was flattering but not so surprising to find myself recruited by Brown. The student who represented the search committee was Laura Geller. An important campus activist (and later my colleague as a rabbi and a Hillel director), she came to New York to invite me to campus.

ARRIVAL ON COLLEGE HILL

In understanding what attracted me to Brown, it may be useful to review my not-so-typical background. My family was totally assimilated; my Jewish explorations began at a Quaker prep school in Philadelphia. I was not involved with Hillel while an undergraduate at Penn, however. When I entered JTS, I had never even been inside a kosher home.

I doubt I was ever destined to become a congregational rabbi or fit into a standard Jewish communal category, so my very symbolic and widely celebrated role as the first university-employed Jewish chaplain in the Ivy League seemed in line with my personal identity. I am sure that today such an appointment wouldn't warrant a footnote. Brown Hillel was supposed to serve Rhode Island School of Design, but I was not paid by Brown to engage RISD students or faculty.

In 1971, Brown was heralding its significant transformation as a "hot" university through its new curriculum. Pembroke had also merged with Brown, and Dean Jacqueline Mattfeld was the highest-ranking woman in the Ivies. Because
there were already an Afro-American chaplain, a woman chaplain, an activist chaplain, and a resident Catholic chaplain, it seemed only right that there be a Jewish chaplain who was understood to be central to the University's mission.

Of course Hillel had been at Brown since 1947. Though only one block away, Hillel House (which had been dedicated in 1963 in honor of its primary donor, Samuel Rapaporte, Jr.) was perceived by most on campus to be miles from Faunce House (where the chaplains' offices were located). The founding Hillel director, Rabbi Nathan N. Rosen, was nearing the end of his tenure, and Hillel was perceived to be functioning in a previous era.

It may seem quite strange in 2012, but there was so much publicity surrounding my appointment that a few of the University's Jewish trustees actually spoke to me privately to express concern that it might lead to a backlash. They feared that Brown might be inclined to reinstitute quotas for Jewish students, quotas which were still in the recent memory of many. (Amusingly, 11 years later, those very same trustees came to ask me to reconsider my decision to move on.)

Things began to move quickly after I arrived. There clearly was a pent-up need and interest for an active Jewish life among students and faculty, and there was a very welcoming atmosphere elsewhere on campus. It didn't take more than a couple of months for Shabbat programming to grow, for other activities to develop, and for a sense of creative adventure to emerge. Within a couple of years, we had to use both Sayles Hall and Alumnae Hall as well as Hillel House for all of our High Holiday services. Needless to say, in the early years, I remained active in abortion and draft counseling. In keeping with the methodology I used before coming to Brown, I often met students on their turf—in dorm lounges, snack bars, and at my home.

FRIDAY GROUP AND FRIDAY SCHOOL
One of the most important developments of those first few weeks still exists. Shortly after my arrival, a few faculty families expressed a sense of feeling like outsiders in Providence's organized Jewish community. This situation led to the development of one of the country's first Jewish family education programs, although we didn't think of it that way. All we did know was that it didn't make sense to recreate the supplementary school model as it existed everywhere else. We needed to involve children and parents, use alternative pedagogy, and take advantage of the University's gifted environment. Thus the Friday Group and Friday School were born.

When I left Brown in 1982, they had grown to be one of the largest supplementary programs in New England, and I recently heard that it still exists, albeit
relocated. I wonder how many of the current families are aware of its early history. Indeed, some of today's leading Jewish educators, such as Doug (Dov) Lurea and Susan Ticker, were Brown students, and they got their start as teachers in this program.

At the very first parent education program, I learned an important professional lesson. At the time, I was only 26 and somewhat in awe of the world-renowned faculty who asked me to teach that session. Would I be credible to such a sophisticated group who had articulated their demand for excellence beyond that which they saw in the larger Jewish world? I have never forgotten the words of Prof. John Ladd of the philosophy department who, after I finished, said: “That was great but, please, next time, bring it down to our level.” That helped me realize that I was worthy to be where I was and that education needs to be knowledge-appropriate, not simply status-appropriate.

MORE INNOVATIONS
Another symbol of the energy around Jewish life was the creation of the women's minyan, which met virtually every Saturday afternoon from 1973 to 1978. Today, younger people may not fully sense what that meant. While, as a male, I was not welcome, I was well aware that a high percentage of the attendees had their first-ever aliyah, typically a deeply emotional moment. The minyan was featured in Brown Alumni Monthly and was covered in The New York Times.

Initially, in a more innocent time, there was an attempt to do everything according to halachic criteria. By the end, politics in the Jewish world had made efforts like this more “loaded,” and the attendees felt that it was more important to explore emerging Jewish feminist ideas than to try to satisfy a group of decision makers who were not in the room and who did not even fully endorse the project.

Today, voluntarism is almost a given in the active lives of young people. But when the Adopt a Grandparent project was instituted early in the 1970s, it was, as far as we could tell, the first of its kind in the Jewish campus world. Similarly, Hillel's Seder to Go was the first of its kind. It allowed groups of students to arrange for a full meal, including seder plates and haggadot, in their dorms. Often, there were as many as 15 to 20 student-run campus seders, which supplemented invitations for home hospitality and a larger campus seder.

During the early 1990s, Michael Steinhardt funded the much-heralded national Hillel Jewish Campus Service Corps. Recent college graduates were hired to work with students not visible within the Hillel orbit. During the '70s at Brown, we already had a similar program, albeit inconsistently. Recent graduates spent a
year doing what we used to call “outreach,” especially with first-year students who were often intimidated stepping foot inside Hillel House or even inside my home. (They were afraid of “catching” something.)

LABOR NEGOTIATIONS
During the mid-'70s, when the Jewish establishment was considered to be resistant to change and staff development, CAJE (originally known as the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education) had its first national conference at Brown. Hillel and I played a crucial role.

At the time, the union of campus workers was on strike. I helped negotiate a compromise that allowed CAJE to use Pembroke buildings, without Brown staff, and thus not be picketed. The plenary programs for 200 people (compared to the thousands who attended in later years) were to be at Hillel House. As a result of the compromise, I developed a relationship with union leaders. When classes began in the fall, they met with students at Hillel. The union liked this arrangement because it didn’t have to use a University-owned building, and the University liked it because it was on campus and not in the center of Providence. This enabled me to help end the strike.

I had learned that the union was committed to bringing its lowest-paid workers up to a certain minimal standard; the University kept resisting because it would have required an across-the-board increase that was too costly. One Friday, an hour before the next negotiating session, I suggested a solution to Merton Stoltz, the acting University president. Brown would commit to bringing the lowest-paid workers up to that minimum through a one-time salary supplement, and it would commit to an across-the-board percentage increase to those above it. The strike was settled that afternoon.

INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING
During my chaplaincy at Brown, I was a habitué of the Blue Room in Faunce House. Every morning at eight, there was an informal gathering of faculty, which the president usually joined; it acted as an informal kitchen cabinet. In a quiet way, these breakfasts allowed me to play a larger role in University policies and politics.

Within my role as a chaplain, I was also able to develop an extraordinary example of interreligious understanding. One of the Catholic chaplains, Father David Inman, and I developed a road show, demonstrating how abortion could be discussed within the authenticity of our own traditions but without politicization or name-calling. As this issue became politicized, and has sadly remained so, we
offered a different model of conversation. (Years later, as a member of the Catholic-Jewish Scholars' Dialogue in Chicago, I delivered a paper, “Theological Approaches to Abortion in the Jewish Tradition.” It led to a unique public statement, jointly endorsed, acknowledging that different theological traditions can lead to legitimately different understandings of the start of life and to appropriate behaviors.)

I am happy to report that there were many examples of that depth of mutual respect at Brown. However, in retrospect, I cannot help but admit that all of us were too slow to accept the new curse of HIV-AIDS, which another Catholic chaplain, Father Howard O'Shea, called to our attention even before it had a name. Alas, we were unable to realize what was unfolding before us. Who knows what role we might or should have played at that time?

DISCUSSING JEWISHNESS

One of the most significant projects that influenced my work throughout my career, even long after I left Brown, followed a conversation toward the end of my first year. A graduating Jewish senior, a well-known campus leader, confronted me with the accusation that I had never encouraged him and his friends to discuss their Jewishness. For the remaining years, I held what would now be called focus groups of second-semester Jewish seniors at our home on Cushing Street.

A very high percentage of students attended these teas, and I learned a tremendous amount about how little I really knew. For example, there would often be students who were at Hillel every day but defined themselves at “outsiders,” and others who did nothing more than attend High Holiday services who described themselves as “very active.” I began to see that “too Orthodox” was shorthand for the “very active”—even if those active students happened to be affirmatively Reform or secular. In subsequent years I have never forgotten that “insiders” and “outsiders” can mean different things, depending where one sits.

I was also able to see emerging changes in American Jewish life over those years. For example, the early years, 1971 and 1972, were still like the ’60s, and they were characterized by a rejection of parental and organizational values. By contrast, by the early ’80s professional and financial aspirations prevailed; students were less inclined to disassociate from societal norms.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

I have been told that, during my chaplaincy, more rabbinical students came from Brown than from any other college. There were also many Brown graduates who became communal leaders.
Now, it would be inaccurate and a bit of hubris to claim personal credit for having influenced all or even most of those students, but I am extremely proud of what was accomplished. Looking backward, it is clear that an atmosphere of effective and functional pluralism was created, and students felt empowered with professional direction. Excellence and exploration were fundamental to the creation of a model Jewish community, which consisted of new, returning, and graduate students as well as faculty, staff, alumni, and board members. Although we never assumed that a student's job was to "major in Hillel," we could demonstrate how Jewish and secular life were mutually compatible at the highest level. We didn't always achieve the ideal, but our constant striving must have been evident.

During the latter '70s, Hillel as a national system began to move from being a creature of B'nai B'rith to becoming a full community institution. The board of Brown Hillel came into existence under the thoughtful and caring leadership of Harlan Espo '48 and Gladys Kapstein '40. Hillel House also underwent its first renovation. In retrospect it was such a modest project, but it made a great difference in how historic Froebel Hall functioned.

During that period, 1978-80, I also served as president of the national Association of Hillel and Jewish Campus Professionals and was involved with many changes within the Hillel system.

My retrospective thoughts about Brown must certainly acknowledge the growth of Jewish studies (within the religious studies department and in other departments as well). Of course Jack Neusner was the most visible professor but there were many others who taught or were finishing their doctorates. There were, admittedly, times when boundaries became blurry, but on the whole, there was a healthy relationship between what was happening in the classroom and the larger curricular realm for which I had responsibility.

Since leaving Brown, I have also become aware that some of my personal experiences had an impact I didn't fully understand at the time. Our son, Adam, was born in 1974 with a congenital heart problem. Today, as frightening as it would be for anyone, a child with his problem would have corrective surgery within a few months. But the technology and skills were still new at that time, and we lived with a very trying reality until he had corrective open-heart surgery in his second year. Faculty and administrators were uniformly supportive. However, some students—thankfully only a few—sensed that I wasn't the same. In fact, I was reviewed for tenure during that time, and the reviewers had great difficulty putting their finger on why this small group of students were unhappy with me. It was only years later that I understood the toll that Adam's illness had taken. Fortunately, he is healthy
and now works as a public-interest attorney in Washington, D.C.

Adam's illness led me to become active in teaching medical ethics to groups of medical students, a role that proved invaluable when a Brown medical student suffered a tragic death. (As a chaplain, I was permitted to teach in any department which invited me. This allowed me to cultivate additional interests in intellectual history and postmodernism. A few years later the rules were changed, and newly hired chaplains, viewed as administrators, could not teach.)

In moments of rites of passage, the campus rabbinate is so different from the synagogue rabbinate. When I conducted a funeral, it was almost always a tragic death. If I conducted a wedding, it was almost always because of a very personal connection. Some of these very terrible and very wonderful memories stay with me.

TRANSITIONS

In 1980, leaders of the Sloan Foundation became aware that the education sector in particular, and the nonprofit world in general, were often headed by people with no management training. To improve executive leadership, it funded one-year executive management programs for up-and-coming leaders of the nonprofit world, held at Brown and Stanford. The program lasted only a few years, after which business schools discovered nonprofit executive management training.

During my year in the management program, I discovered that my passion for direct service was being replaced by my enthusiasm for executive leadership. Upon the program's conclusion, I realized that, even with tenure, it was time for me to explore next steps and stops.

The newly merged Midwest regional office of Hillel and the Chicago Federation campus system, then known as Hillel-CAYS, was almost universally considered unmanageable—just the right kind of challenge for me at that time. I ended up staying in Chicago for 13 years.

My time at Brown coincided with the late Arnold Jacob Wolf's tenure as rabbi at Yale. Although we had very similar political views, we had different philosophies of our work. He believed that his role was to be a thought leader and gadfly; I believed my role was to be a builder of community. History proved that I was more correct than he, but it took me until my last years at Brown to understand that he was not entirely wrong.

As I suggested above, before coming to Brown, I had, unwittingly, become a "guru" type leader and had a large following. In one sobering moment, however, I learned that I had not built a community but rather a cult of personality. It all col-
lapsed the day my appointment at Brown was announced. I swore that I would not allow that to happen again.

Thus when going to Brown I chose a more community-building role. It was the right concept but I had not fully understood that there is also an important role for the articulate setting of direction and a willingness to be “out front.”

By my last years at Brown, I had struck the right balance. But I have always felt a bit guilty that too many of those who graduated earlier never knew that part of me. Therefore, for all of our many successes over 11 years, the community never achieved all that it could have been. I would be less than honest if I didn't admit that a part of me felt like a failure every year at graduation ceremonies, when I saw how many missed opportunities for connection there had been.

In writing these retrospective comments, I must pay homage to so many who are no longer living but who were so crucial to my experiences. To name only a few, these included: Hillel board members Harlan Esco '48 and Gladys Karpstein '40; Jewish communal leaders Max Alperin, Joe Ress '26, and Bob Riesman; President Howard Swearer, Senior Chaplain Charlie Baldwin, and Archie Smith, the iconoclastic chair of Rhode Island's Public Utilities Commission. It is also important to recognize that Hillel's assistant directors, Jonathon Rubinstein, the late Maxine Kronish, and Howard Winnerman, were professional colleagues who did at least as much heavy-lifting as I.

When it came time to leave Brown, my Blue Room colleagues intervened with President Swearer, with whom I had become quite friendly. They asked that he consider awarding me an honorary degree. He pointed out, correctly, that I was only 37 years old and that the trustees wouldn't go for it. But he did honor me with an invitation to deliver the 1982 Baccalaureate Address, the first time in the twentieth century that an insider was given an invitation. It was a touching gesture, and a moving last moment for my 11 years at Brown. The moving van left for Chicago that afternoon.
THREE FAITHS WORSHIP CENTER

CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT and JEWISH STATIONS
on Mount Reverence, Champlin Reservation
form one of America's most distinctive and unique shrines
Dedicated, June 1959
WITHOUT LEARNING TO TIE KNOTS:
MY FOUR DECADES OF JEWISH SCOUTING
IN RHODE ISLAND

Jules Cohen

The author was vividly portrayed by Harris Weiner in the last issue of our journal. Now it is Jules's turn to tell us more about himself and a long and impressive tradition that his leadership represents. Many of his mentors and colleagues in Scouting are well-known within our community; other friends and associates will come into sharper focus. I imagine that numerous readers will recognize the challenge, fun, and brotherhood that they once experienced as Scouts. They will probably agree that Jules has earned a merit badge for Jewish historical writing.

In 1910, only three years after Robert Baden-Powell founded Boy Scouting in England, Rhode Islanders quickly realized the value of this youth activity. Troops began to form as a part of the Rhode Island Boy Scout (RIBS) program, and a state charter was granted in 1911. From 1912 to 1913, Col. Harry Cutler, a Providence jewelry manufacturer active in numerous national Jewish organizations, was Chief Scout of RIBS.

One of the first troops in Providence, organized by Dr. Max Gomberg (1875-1934) for Jewish boys, met in What Cheer Hall on North Main Street. Walter Adler (1897-1991), an early member, remained active in Scouts for much of his life. Herman Galkin (1898-1979), also a member of Dr. Gomberg's pioneer troop, became one of Scouting's most influential Jewish leaders. He organized and led at least five troops sponsored by Jewish organizations.

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA), also formed in 1910, was chartered by Congress in 1916 as an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, promote citizenship, and develop physical fitness. A year later, RIBS passed on the bulk of its activities, mainly the Scouting program itself, to BSA.
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Nevertheless, RIBS remained in business as the owner of various properties and to provide financial support. In short order BSA leaders were wise enough to obtain several additional properties. The jewel of these, begun in 1916, became the nationally prominent Yawgoog Scout Reservation, an 1,800-acre facility in Hope Valley.
For administrative purposes, the BSA is subdivided into regions, areas, and councils. In 1929, following the merger of several local councils, Rhode Island became known as the Narragansett Council. Through subsequent mergers, it includes areas of nearby Connecticut and Massachusetts. The Narragansett Council, whose offices were adjacent to Classical and Central High Schools for decades, is now headquartered in East Providence. Our Council happens to be one of the largest in the country because many states are subdivided into smaller councils. We Rhode Islanders are spoiled because our small size enables state leadership to convene easily. Imagine the problem in bigger states. In Maine, for example, leaders in Bangor often fly to Portland for meetings.

I should mention that RIBS still exists but has few meetings. Its leadership consists primarily of former council presidents.

EARLY DECADES IN RHODE ISLAND
In the early decades of Scouting in Rhode Island, Jews lived primarily in greater Providence but in several smaller cities and towns many congregations sponsored troops, which were for boys from 11 to 18 years of age. Some congregations later sponsored Cub packs, which were for younger boys. Tiger Cubs, a recent development, are for boys as young as six.

Eleanor F. Horwitz gathered a great deal of information about Scouts and their leaders, known as Scouters, for her important article, "Jews and the Boy Scout Movement in Rhode Island," which appeared in the 1977 issue of The Notes. She profiled five early Jewish troops in Providence. Troop 10, which began in 1919 at Providence's Peace Street School, was later sponsored by Temple Beth-Israel, Rhode Island's first Conservative congregation. Troop 5, organized in 1921, was sponsored by the Hebrew Educational Institute (later known as the Young Men's Hebrew Association) on Benefit Street. Troop 41 was organized in 1922 for the boys of the Jewish Orphanage, which was then located on North Main Street. Troop 50, begun in 1925, was sponsored by Temple Beth-El, the state's first Reform congregation. Troop 20, organized in 1927, was sponsored by Temple Emanu-El, the state's second Conservative congregation but the first Jewish house of worship on the East Side.

At one time Herman Galkin was the Scout master of supervisor of all five
Jewish troops and several more. For example, he organized a troop for wayward boys at the Rhode Island Training School in Sockanosset, which included some Jews. He also established Troop 14 at the Candace Street School in Providence. By 1923 Galkin initiated the practice of decorating the graves of soldiers in Jewish cemeteries on Memorial and Armistice Days. The same year his request to Scout officials to serve kosher food at Yawgoog was considered “impracticable.”

But not all Jewish boys joined Jewish-sponsored troops. Seebert Goldowsky, for example, began his nine-year involvement with Troop 1 at the Broad Street School in Washington Park in 1919.

Given an abundance of religious, Zionist, and athletic youth groups, one wonders why Rhode Island’s Jewish community became so quickly and enthusiastically involved in the Scout movement. Of course Jews are joiners, and Scouting had no restrictions against Jews. More importantly, Scouting, particularly for immigrants and their sons, represented a way to proudly participate in mainstream American culture and express their patriotism. Perhaps Scouting also helped Jews overcome a bookish and insular reputation. Most importantly, however, the organization was fun. While boys were challenged to become manly, men could resume boyish ways. Boys and men alike could venture beyond the confines and routines of their city-bound lives.

During both World Wars, Scouts helped the home front by collecting newspapers and tin cans and engaging in other civic activities. Many of these
Scouter Herman Gallin (right)

Memorial Day Services
In honor of the Jewish men who died in the World War
LINCOLN PARK CEMETERY
Wednesday, May 30, 1923
12:00 noon

Rabbi Israel S. Robins and Scouter Meyer Smith will officiate.
The principal speaker will be Lieutenant D. Gay, Schneider, and Lieutenant Samuel I. Keston, U.S. N. Y. Med. Corps, N.Y.

You are respectfully invited to honor the memory of the Jewish men who made their lives in honor of America.

Israel 1923, and prosperity.

These services will be continued under the auspices of the T. M. H.A. Boy Scouts.

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good deeds, which contributed to character-building, could easily be understood as mitzvot. Despite the fact that boys and fathers wore uniforms, saluted, and often marched in parades with flags and banners, Scouting was not designed as a military program. Rather, it represented an orderly progression of challenges and rewards.

Many Scouts did play heroic roles during World War II and the Korean War, and some were elected to high government positions. Two notable examples are John Chafee and Bruce Sundlun. In 1933, while the boys were playing hockey at Yawgog, Sundlun fell through the ice and Chafee rescued him. Always grateful to Chafee (a Republican), Sundlun (a Democrat) never ran against him.

In addition to patriotism, Scouting encourages religious reverence. The Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) award, begun in 1945, is earned by boys in sixth through ninth grades. Awards later offered to religious or Hebrew school students include: Maccabee for younger Cub Scouts, Aleph for older Cubs, Etz Chaim (Tree of Life) for older Scouts and, since 1960, the Shofar for leaders. Each award has a set of requirements, except for the Shofar, which is given to long-term volunteers. Every Scout must have an advisor, and during the glory decades of Jewish Scouting he was often a rabbi.

Evolvment of My Involvement
I was born in Chicago in 1933. When my father, Herbert, entered military service
just before Pearl Harbor, my family moved to Washington, DC and then to Alexandria, Virginia. During World War II, I joined a Cub Scout pack sponsored by my elementary school. I earned only a bear badge, however. Decades later, when I became a Scout leader, I maintained that I wore loafers because I never learned how to tie knots.

In 1946 my family moved to Rhode Island, but it was not until about 1969 that I returned to Scouting. When my older boy, Stuart, signed up for Cubbs, I agreed to serve as a volunteer. I had done so for other youth activities. Given the name Cohen, I was usually asked to serve as treasurer. That’s what I expected with Cubbs. Thus, I was surprised to be invited to serve as Cub master. I accepted the responsibility, but certainly didn’t know what it meant. Well, I obviously learned, because I served in that capacity for five years. By the time my younger boy, Peter, had joined the program, Stuart had moved on to a Scout troop.

Although neither boy lasted long in Scouting, I stayed on. I imagine I grew more knowledgeable about the camping program. As a result, it was a riot to watch younger fathers step in where I had been. Having a military background, however, I wasn’t completely surprised by what I experienced.

By this time, there were many more single-parent families. Cub Scouts, which was founded in 1933, created the role of “den mother.” Some women also began to serve as Cub masters and then even as Scout masters. Father-son events also accommodated mothers.

Every troop has a leader and a committee to support its program. So next I became a committee member.

Shortly afterwards I was asked to chair one of the Narragansett Council’s districts. Mine was West Shore, which included Warwick and East Greenwich. It was remarkable that at the same time my father was a Scout master in Chicago, I chaired the Pokanoket district, which included Aquidneck Island, Bristol, Warren, and East Providence. We may have been the only father-and-son district chairs in the country. Subsequently, I became the district commissioner, which meant that I was responsible for a group of Scouter’s who directly helped troops and packs.

MENTORS, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS
I eventually became acquainted with many Jews who played key roles in the Narragansett Council. I would like to briefly mention a few of these mentors, colleagues, and friends.

Walter Adler, a president of Temple Beth-El and a participant in many civic causes, served in leadership capacities for many years. In 1953, ten years after its
introduction to the Narragansett Council, he was the first Jew to receive the prestigious Silver Beaver award for “distinguished service to boyhood.” I recall Walter at the end of his days still doggedly going to Council board meetings—even though his health was obviously waning.

Dr. Melvin Hoffman (1925-1984) is memorable in many ways. Originally a member of Beth-Israel’s Troop 10, he became an Eagle Scout after World War II as a leader of Temple Beth-El’s Troop 50. Having been wounded on Iwo Jima, he was probably the only Eagle in Rhode Island who had previously received a Purple Heart. Dr. Hoffman returned to Scouting under the influence of Rhode Island’s legendary executive, J. Harold Williams, his patient. For 25 years Dr. Hoffman not only recruited physicians to serve weekly assignments at Yawgoog, but spent the first two weeks of summer there with his family. Although he could not think of a better place to celebrate his Fourth of July anniversary, his wife, Elaine, was less enamored with camping. In 1961 Dr. Hoffman, a true gentleman, was the founder and leader of an Explorer unit at Rhode Island Hospital that introduced older boys to careers in health care. Elaine established a college scholarship for Yawgoog staff in his memory.

The Galkin family has played a major role for years. The Galkin cabin at Yawgoog was built in 1981 in memory of that trailblazer, Herman, who is now probably leading Scouts on a heavenly hike. The cabin is used by developmentally-disabled boys, some of whom become integrated into regular troops. I still recall Herman’s brother, Joe (1910-1999), once a member of Troop 5 and the longtime executive of Jewish Federation, who served on the council’s board for years. I don’t think he missed many meetings and was a real asset.

Leonard Holland (1915-1998) belonged to Troop 14 at Candace Street School. Later a vice president of the Narragansett Council, he also received the Silver Beaver award. Len was a spark plug. The longest-serving adjutant general of the Rhode Island National Guard was quick to remind us that when a board meeting was called for 12:15 PM, it was now 12:16. Len was also a key element in School Night for Scouting, which was used for recruitment but also as a National Guard radio exercise. For obvious reasons, you didn’t want to be a guardsman who was
late going on the air.

Aaron Roitman (1909-1995), who had been a member of Troop 10 and later a Scout master, helped organize the "Together Plan," which launched 50 new troops in the late 1950s. Subsequently, he led the Narragansett Council's jubilee fundraising campaign, which reached its goal of $500,000 in 1960. A Silver Beaver recipient, Aaron was the first Jew to serve as Council president, from 1962 to 1963. He was as fine a gentleman as you would want to work with. In 1985, when I became Council president, he gave me a copy of Eleanor Horvitz's article and a bottle of champagne, his favorite beverage.

Stan Turco (1932-2010) was a former Scout master of Troop 50 and a recipient of the Silver Beaver award. He was the second Jew to serve as council president, from 1979 to 1982. He was my mentor and eventually made me the council's commissioner. I served in that capacity from 1980 to 1984. As the Council's third Jewish president, I served four more years.

In those years the Council had approximately 20,000 to 25,000 Scouts and 10,000 volunteer leaders. There were very few professional Scout leaders.

It is noteworthy to me that my Scouting activities brought me into contact with a rich array of Rhode Islanders. For example, I was often seated in the front row of a Catholic church or meeting hall and sometimes shared a head table with a bishop. I even received the St. George's medal, normally given to a Catholic layman for outstanding service. Through many levels of Scouting I was fortunate to make numerous friends whom I would otherwise not encounter. A few members of the Council's small professional staff have also remained dear friends.

Mike Fink, a frequent contributor to and a former editor of The Notes, was not only a member of Temple Emanu-El's Troop 20 but my Yale classmate (1955). Although it is well known that many Yale graduates have served as president of the United States, several Yalies have also served as president of the Narragansett Council. Paul Nicholson was the first, and I was the second. We were followed by Jon Farnum and Andy Erickson, and the next president will be George Shuster.

YAWGOOG

Among eight Scout reservations in Rhode Island, Yawgoog remains the camping jewel. It is the fourth-oldest continuously operating Scout reservation in the country. Since 1928 it has been rightfully known as a "Scout Adventureland Forever." By 1977, 250,000 Scouts from Rhode Island and numerous other states and countries had experienced Yawgoog's splendor.

Many old-time Scouts returning for a visit are often surprised by the reser-
viation's familiar appearance. Other alumni feel that Yawgoog is actually smaller than what they remembered.

Every summer since its creation, attendance at the Scout reservation has steadily increased. In 1951, there were 4,600 Scouts.

By 1959, however, it increased to approximately 6,500. There were more than 2,500 visitors on a typical Sunday.

In recent years more than 7,000 Scouts have spent a week at Yawgoog each summer. It may host more Scouts annually than almost any other reservation in the country. Beginning in 1985, however, due to a significant decline of Scouting in Rhode Island, approximately half the campers come from other states. Nevertheless, by that time approximately 300,000 Scouts had attended Yawgoog.

As early as 1926 the BSA had organized a national Jewish Committee on Scouting. In 1941 the Narragansett Council organized its own committee under the leadership of Jacob Temkin. In 1949 it raised funds to erect an outdoor Jewish chapel at Yawgoog. Services were led by visiting rabbis or laymen on Friday evenings and on Sunday mornings. Protestant and Catholic chapels would also be dedicated in 1950 as symbols of American religiosity during the Cold War and the Korean War. A mural that adorned the council's former offices in Providence portrayed the three chapels, which were known as the Chapel of the Ten Commandments, the Cathedral in the Woods, and St. John Bosco Chapel. Brandeis University's three adjacent chapels, forming a bold religious and architectural statement, were erected five years later.

Beginning in 1949 the BSA encouraged Israeli Scouts to visit American reservations. The first arrived at Yawgoog within a few years. Nine Israeli Scouts visited in 1955. Many others have made such visits, but logistics are often difficult to coordinate. The last visitor whom I recall was Ari. When serving on our camp staff, he was an officer in the Israeli Defense Forces.

Few records exist, but the peak year of Jewish Scouting at Yawgoog may have occurred around 1959, when Jewish boys comprised 2.3 per cent of campers. Catholics, who had feared Protestant proselytization in the early decades of Scouting in Rhode Island, comprised 66.4 per
cent. Thus, in 1959 there were half as many Protestants as Catholics.

In 1966, thanks to the Jewish Committee on Scouting, still led by Jacob Temkin, a new indoor Chapel of the Ten Commandments was erected atYawgoog. It was designed by Morris Nathanson, a Providence architect. Abbott Lieberman, who received the Silver Beaver award in 1967, was the committee’s next chair. His successor was Philip Lerner.

**A NEW JEWISH COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING**

When I was Council commissioner during the early 1980s, one of my gentile friends asked me how I felt about my religion. As I probed his question, it became apparent that he was telling me that Yawgoog’s Jewish chapel was in a terrible state and needed repair or replacement.

As I investigated the situation, it became apparent that the Council’s Jewish Committee on Scouting had dissolved long ago. So it was time to get to work.

Abe Aron (1923-1979), an old-time Scout master of Warwick’s Troop 1, which met at Holliman Elementary School, agreed to serve as chair. He was ably assisted by a committee that included: Stan Brier, a previous assistant Council commissioner from Providence and a Silver Beaver recipient; Dr. Marshall Bornstein, a former Scout master and a member of the commissioner’s staff from Pawtucket; and Jerry Aron, a former master of Temple Beth-David’s Troop 14, who was no relation to Abe.

The new committee decided to raise money to build a third Temple of the Ten Commandments. Yes, it was a log cabin—maybe the only log-cabin temple in the world—but it seated 80. By this time I was Council president, but I had no direct involvement with this project. The Jewish Committee on Scouting raised the money and built the structure. It was named in honor of Abe Aron, which he well deserved.

When the temple was built, we hired Rina Sky Wolfgang to serve as chaplain. At that time she was the Hillel adviser at the University of Rhode Island. Though not a rabbi, she was the daughter of Harry Sky, the well-known Conservative rabbi of Temple Beth El in Portland, Maine. Rina also taught Judaic studies at the Alperin Schechter Day School in Providence. In 1997 her son, Jacob, became the first Bar Mitzvah at Yawgoog.

After completing four years as Council president,
I was asked to assume the chairmanship of the Jewish Committee on Scouting. Abe had passed away, but I was fortunate to have an active committee and other supporters in the community. My committee included many experienced Scouters: Curt Abbott, who eventually succeeded me as chair; Jay Aron, Abe’s son, who became an Eagle at Warwick’s Troop 1; Jerry Aron; Howard Bromberg; Bea Ross, who was active on the Federation board; Steve Rottenberg; Stan Turco; and Howard Zisserson, whose love of sailing was enhanced by his Scout-acquired knowledge of tying knots.

The committee also included two close friends and fellow Scout masters, Peter Shore and Richard Applebaum, who had belonged to Beth-El’s Troop 40. For 25 years, beginning in 1981, they led troops and packs at the Jewish Community Center, Congregation Beth Sholom, and at the Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs in Fox Point and Wansuck. Indeed, Peter, an Eagle, is so thoroughly devoted to Scouting that he led troops while in college and law school and continues to be active in the North Attleboro district, where he lives.

Two additional committee members were rabbis. Marc Jagolinzer, who had been a Scout at Temple Emanu-El’s Troop 20 and the Jewish chaplain at Yawgoog for two summers while in college, helped establish a troop at his congregation, Temple Shalom in Middletown. Yossi Laufer of the Chabad Center of the West Bay also joined the committee.

In 2001, after about ten years as chaplain, Rina Wolfgang was succeed by Sol Goodman, a Reform rabbi. Many community members knew him as the chaplain of the Jewish Home. Still at Yawgoog, he has become its senior chaplain. Scouts and Scouters love him, and he has a wonderful way of explaining Judaism to gentiles.

Next door to the temple, a cabin was built for the chaplain and his family. Yes, it was a log cabin. Yawgoog is a unique Scout reservation in that it now has three chaplains in residence. Norman Cowan, formerly of Providence and a very successful orthopedist near Washington, DC, made a major donation toward the cabin; we named it in his honor. Dr. Cowan has been extremely charitable at Yawgoog in support of other activities as well.

At the same time we significantly expanded our temple, roughly doubling its capacity. Rabbi Goodman had been packing them in for years and we needed space. Friday night services are well attended. Jewish and gentle Scouts
also attend a Sunday service. Of course he lures them in with bagels; nonetheless, this is a very popular event.

I should add that we have received continuing support from the Bertram and Helene Bernhardt Foundation, which is guided by Melvin Zurier (who belonged to Troop 27 at Henry Barnard School) and Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman. We have also received grants from the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, now known as the Alliance.

With the hope of funding the Jewish chaplaincy for years to come, we started an endowment program. This remains an ambitious, long-term project.

SUCCESS AT YAWGOOG

Probably the best way to demonstrate our success at Yawgoog is to share some of Rabbi Goodman's comments from his annual report to the committee. It is wonderful reading and should be published for all to see. He describes how boys from more than 13 religions work together with little, if any, conflict. The three chaplains also work beautifully together. They share such responsibilities as blessings before meals, counseling boys, and conducting services, which are often ecumenical.

Some stories I can never forget. One year we decided that we should have kosher food available for those Scouts who needed it. Our Jewish Scouts did not come forth immediately to use these foods, but some Muslim Scouts did.

One evening Rabbi Goodman was closing up the temple and found a Scout leader sitting there and meditating. Though a Muslim, he found peace there. Probably the most wonderful Muslim story involves a young Scout who adopted the rabbi when other leaders were not sure of how to deal with this youngster. He followed the rabbi through his whole week at camp.

Rabbi Goodman has helped many Jewish boys achieve various awards, including the ultimate rank of Eagle Scout. By the way, Eagle is a permanent rank. We never comment on this award in a past tense. No matter how old, a boy is always an Eagle.

Unfortunately, the Narragansett Council no longer maintains a master list, so the precise number of Jewish Eagles will never be known. I imagine that there are several hundred.

CHALLENGES

I tried to determine how many Jewish boys are presently in Scouting in Rhode Island, but Scout leaders

Rabbi Sol Goodman in new chapel, Yawgoog

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no longer maintain a master list that includes Scouts' religions, so the number is unknown. I can only guess that there may be 300 to 400 Jewish Scouts and Cubs active at this time. They are outnumbered by Jewish Scouts from other states at Yawgoog.

Part of the decline merely reflects the state's shrinking Jewish population. But surely the postwar exodus of Jewish families from greater Providence to the suburbs and the exurbs was also a factor. (I moved to East Greenwich in 1963.) During the mid-1970s, when Temples Beth-El, Beth-Israel, and Emanu-El dropped their sponsorships of troops and packs, newer suburban congregations, which were smaller, were unable to pick up the slack. The decline of Jewish Scouting in Rhode Island was also due to a generational decline of leadership, which was further reflected in synagogue brotherhoods and other fraternal organizations. As a result, when Jewish parents look for Scouting programs they often end up with units sponsored by PTAs or churches.

Of course the decline of Jewish-sponsored troops and packs in Rhode Island reflects a national trend. In 1987, for example, only 304 of the nation's 130,000 Scouting units were under Jewish auspices.

Much of the decline has been due to increased demands on and conflicts in boys' schedules (as well as their parents'). Religious and Hebrew schools require much time, but Little League, Youth Soccer, and skiing have become more popular. There also seems to be much less time for music lessons or other hobbies. Drivers' education, television, movies, videos, computers, cell phones, and gaming are additional distractions. Although fewer boys are required to work part-time, college-prep courses and school sports have become ever more competitive and stressful. There is also the allure of Jewish and private camps.

Another factor contributing to the decline of Jewish Scouting in Rhode Island may have been Shabbat observance. Scouting events are typically held on Saturdays.

Although there are some Orthodox Scout troops in the Northeast, and a Cub pack had existed at Congregation Beth Sholom, none presently exists in Rhode Island. I believe the closest is in Sharon, Massachusetts. There is an Orthodox Scout camp in New York, where kashrut and other rules are followed.

By continually introducing new merit badges, however, Scouting endeavors to stay relevant. Nevertheless, beginning in the late 1960s, Scouting has probably suffered from its wholesome image and one that suggests regimentation. In 1999, during its third season, the televised cartoon series "South Park" satirized "Jew Scouts" who attended "Jewbilee." But portions of the show were funny.
Unfortunately, Rhode Island no longer has any troops or packs sponsored by Jewish organizations. Peter Shore and Richard Applebaum's pack at Beth Sholom, which endeavored to honor Orthodox standards even though the masters were Reform Jews, was the last. Most Jewish boys continue to participate in Scouting units sponsored by non-Jewish organizations. For example, Pack 88, hosted by the East Side's Central Congregational Church, has had many Jewish boys and leaders. Ironically, some help sell Christmas trees to raise money or march in the church's annual Scout Sunday. In 2005, when Abe Aaron's grandson, Abraham, became an Eagle at Troop 7 in Warwick, sponsored by Sts. Rose and Clement Church, he was the only Jew.

It seems odd that as Scouting struggles to survive and flourish, its plight may seem closer to Judaism's. Despite a continual need for redefinition and renewal, Scouts and Jews know that ideals, values, traditions, and rituals matter. Rather than emphasizing the immediate gratification of personal needs, Scouting and Judaism represent ways to see, understand, and serve a larger world. Both institutions are sustained through communities.

I do believe that Scouting is the greatest program around for many youngsters. I am still on the boards of the Narragansett Council and the RIBS. Believing that we do good things for so many young people, I plan to stay there as long as my health allows.
SEVEN ECCENTRICS

Michael Fink

Of course Mike needs no introduction in these pages. He is one of our journal's most faithful and fanciful contributors. I have a hunch that Mike is not only a spiritual but a hereditary descendant of Roger Williams, whom he portrayed in our last issue. Then again, given his love of South County, he may descend from a great Narragansett sachem. Mike's Native American heritage may help explain the tribe he has gathered around him and which he describes below.

The French call a brat an enfant terrible—a mamzer in Yiddish. The English call an outsider from the normal orbit or the inner sanctum of understated respectability an “eccentric”—a meschuggene in Yiddish. I seek to draw a magic circle around some local Jewish personalities who might help to define the quality of eccentricity.

For the purpose of this gathering of names and brief bios, I describe the conditions of eccentricity as: colorful in character, creative in performance, outgoing in behavior, and, perhaps especially, beyond the borders of socially acceptable parlor manners. Meschugge implies something crazy, unreasonable, daffy, while “eccentric” includes intelligence and purposefully rare choices that stand out from the crowd, often admirably. It takes courage to live eccentrically, more maybe in some decades than in others. For example, during the mid-century spell of Cold War fearfulness and HUAC repression, eccentricity was a refuge from the “age of anxiety” and the “silent generation.”

Is there a Jewish eccentricity that pertains to the special human condition of a people who, because of their role in history, must necessarily dwell on the edge, exiled from the ruling class, the majority, even by their own daily decisions? After all, Jews have a separate Sabbath, a lunar rather than a solar calendar; instead of taking off a hat in church, they put on a yarmulke, a kippah, a cap, in synagogue. Not to mention the rules of kashrut, the ritual of circumcision, and the quest for a messiah. They, or we, LOOK eccentric. Are the prophets or personalities in Torah in any sense “eccentric”? In the Diaspora, are the lusimenschen, the schlimazels, even
the wandering Jews, all, to a certain extent, eccentrics?

When I was a boy, my dentist, Arthur Stone, who lived across the street, the shared Creston Way/Memorial Road, played bridge with my parents, and grew corn, tomatoes, and radishes in his yard. He also labeled me an "eccentric." He used the term fondly, even respectfully. He meant it as a compliment of sorts, meaning I went my own way and thought up my own ideas, both hopes and fears, there in the chair of dread in his downtown dental office in the Cesar Misch building on Empire Street.

Most of the eccentrics I salute in the following pages are people who were drawn to me, or to whom I was drawn, because we shared a quality of eccentricity, a detachment from too much dependence upon the opinions of others, a willingness to stand apart and also laugh at ourselves. Laughter at others, however, is far from my point.

RAUL LOVETT

Raul Lovett (1934-1990) was a respected, beloved, and often renowned labor lawyer, a friend of the working class, my Hope High School classmate (1951), and a longtime cordial acquaintance of mine. Once upon his lifetime, he was mocked as a "Mickey Mouse" lawyer. How did he respond? He commissioned a Technicolor-brilliant, neon sign of the Disney rodent and put it right out in the front window of his office at the corner of Steeple Street, at Thomas Street and North Main, opposite the First Baptist Meetinghouse in America. It was an office building that rose from the drafting table of my brother "Chick," who wanted the colorfully varied glass windows to resemble a painting by Mondrian, so that the structure would differ from the mock-colonial architectural models of Providence's East Side.

Raul had a magnificent motorcycle, which he parked right at the entrance to his reception lobby. He also owned, at least for a time, a retired crimson fire engine, which made another loud, funny, and unexpectedly charming spectacle, waiting absurdly, perhaps defiantly, at that busy intersection.

Raul grew a Mosaic beard, which strangely delighted judges and attorneys. To me, he also looked a bit like King Solomon, sitting in wise but also witty judgment, authority, and accessibility, at his large desk that resembled Harry Cohn's of Paramount Studios. Upon its surface sat an empire of Mickey Mouse dolls, toys, and other souvenirs of that most essential logo of boyish Americana. Mickey Mouse indeed! Take that! From this bar he held court and dispensed justice.
There are innumerable telling and tellable anecdotes about Raul, but I shall stick to only a very few. When the RISD faculty went on strike in 1980 during an unexpected April blizzard, Raul loaned the new emerging union/faculty association the use of a large space on South Main Street, where meetings were held, posters and pamphlets created and distributed, and announcements sent to the press. Raul in that transformative season won the esteem and gratitude of the artist community that surrounded his enterprise there in the center of the campus.

Many readers may recall that after an Israeli conflict or war, Raul would volunteer to help out quite directly, and near the very front lines, by serving as a mechanic or by simply washing and tending the tanks and trucks. No Mickey Mouse Zionist either!

Larger than life, Raul achieved the status of “eccentric” in the very best sense of the word and the trait. He did the unexpected, not for the sake of showing off, but because he listened to his own inner genius, his yiddische nechama!
LEON SUKERMAN

Bernard Bell, who exhibits exceptional loyalty to countless friends and institutions (and sets a similarly impressive standard for sartorial splendor), introduced me to Leon Sukerman, who passed away in 2002. Bernie had befriended him through his frequent but begrudging participation in Hope Street’s Chabad House minyan. (Any discussion of Rabbi Yehoshua Laufer’s fabulous eccentricities would require an article of its own.)

Leon continually needed a ride to and from Chabad, but Bernie, whose blustering manner often conceals his innate kindness, developed an authentic bond through their mutual experiences during World War II. While Bernie was stationed with American forces in England, Leon fought with the Soviets on the eastern front and in the Polish underground.

I attended a remarkable event with Bernie and Leon sponsored by the Jewish Community Center. Russian-Jewish-New American veterans toasted May Day and victory over the Nazis. I put on my Uncle Sam Fink’s good conduct pin, and the medal-bedecked former Soviet troops, men and women in uniform, took me for a Yankee ally and asked me to join them in a l’Chaim with shots of good vodka. We also danced quickly to the tunes of an accordion.

Bernie and Leon, who were friends for only a year or two, also bonded over a need and a desire to speak Yiddish. Rabbi Baruch Goldstein, who often spoke about Holocaust history to my RISD students, also participated in some of these Yiddish discussions. Rabbi Goldstein may have thought that Leon exemplified the concept of meshuggene menschen found in every shtetl. Wasser Trager was a favorite example. Such a person carried water for everybody, but was too gentle or modest to care about small boys who made fun of him.

Leon was a small, lively, elfin, and puckish sort of person, who lived in a former convent on Summit Avenue. A former tailor (who referred to himself as a “designer”), he loved to dress up in fancy hues and to collect brilliant portraits and watercolors for his walls. He liked fancy ladies as well! He would station himself near the perfume counter at Nordstrom in order to meet them.

Bernie, then in his eighties, protected Leon from the troubles that always come to eccentric souls, the endless tsuris of wandering Jews. For example, he schlepped him to countless medical appointments and held his hand at Fatima Hospital during his final illness. Bernie and Rabbi Laufer, who masterfully irritate one another, arranged for his funeral at Sharon Memorial Park.

Bernie, who selected a silk handkerchief, invited me to take something from Leon’s room as a souvenir of his life and adventures. I was reluctant to do so,
but I took a pretty pastel picture of Marilyn Monroe. She was the very embodiment of America to Leon.

Mike, Joel + friend

JOEL BRAUDE
I met Joel Braude, a few years younger than I, for the first time on the streets of Jerusalem, in the summer of 1961. His father, Rabbi William G. Braude of Temple Beth-El, and his mother "Pey" had befriended me upon the start of my RISD life and career, and had urged me to visit Israel during sessions of the Eichmann trial.

My memory of encountering Joel is quite exact, like a clip from a movie. He wore sandals, and his big toe was shorter than his second toe! He had a big friendly grin and used his fluent Hebrew—but with a Providence accent—to purchase fruit and vegetables in an open market and order new delicacies and drinks at little restaurant tables.

Thanks to Joel, I saw the Holy Land from the back of a Harley. Like so many eccentrics, he drove a motorcycle, and he took me from city to city and beach to beach in the Promised Land. Yes, he often came late to fetch me to show me Canaan and Ein Kerem. But I was fortunate to experience Israel's Bar Mitzvah not from a pedantic guide but from a gifted eccentric.

Joel brought me to blind prophets, to survivors living in caves, to veterans of the War of Independence, and to acquaintances who were willing to debate with me all the issues of the moment. He handed me the book of witty essays by Ephraim Kishon, and I saw the humor and, yes, eccentricity, of the Jews of Independence and Freedom.

After Joel ran into some tsuris and returned to Rhode Island, he continued his habit of wearing a kaffiyeh against the strong summer sun and driving a bicycle or a motorcycle to run his errands on the streets named by that rabbinic, eccentric pastor, our founder and fellow refugee—Roger Williams! Joel and I resumed our
alliance, but now I served as his guide, introducing him to my sometimes oddball coffeehouse and saloon chums.

Like many readers of these pages, I attended the grand wedding of Joel and Rita Zemach at Temple Beth-El as well as the ceremonies that followed the births of their sons, Joseph and Jonathan. In 1996 I went to the ordination at Hebrew Union College in New York City, when he was transformed into Rabbi Joel I. Braude. Perhaps Joel inherited his eccentric and experimental life style both from his mother, with her artistic skills and her decorative talents—which entail a sense of play that may impress others as “eccentric”—and from his father, whose mixture of Reform scholarliness and Orthodox respect for tradition often surprised his congregation.

Once, during my spring break, Reb Joel telephoned to ask me, “Where in America would you like to spend a few days?” He fetched me in a car and we drove to New Orleans, and from there to Miami, where we visited a former student of mine, one George Duke, on a houseboat. Joel, a hitchhiker through Judaism, picked up various hitchhikers along the way. He even brought along a book, *Jewish Wit*, by the psychoanalyst Theodor Reik, to keep me amused en route.

Joel’s wacky combination of sincerity and theatricality is yet another definition of what I am calling “eccentricity.” Elie Wiesel, one of my guides to Jewish meaning and observance, suggests a Chassidic interpretation. Although specializing in mixed-marriages, whether on tropical beaches or diving out of airplanes, Joel may not be diluting the meaning of Judaism. To the contrary, he may be keeping at least a flame alive that might otherwise go out forever.

Although he has always maintained an apartment in Providence, there is a sense of exile, of diaspora, about Joel. He is currently divorced, alienated from his family, but, after a search among diverse lady companions, committed to a marital alliance with Paz, a Catholic, Hebrew-speaking woman in Manila, and Yoji, her teenage daughter, whom he accepts as his child. In 2011 Joel presented them to a gathering of cousins, neighbors, and acquaintances at a chairless, shellfish feast in East Providence. If that ain’t eccentric, colorful, and mystical...

**JIM WEISS**

Jim Weiss was one of four brothers who lived in the Jewish Orphanage on Summit Avenue, which in 1952 became the central entrance to the Miriam Hospital. Jim, who is my contemporary, did not remain with his older siblings but was sent to a series of foster homes. Like many eccentrics, he became a
collector—in his case, a collector of houses and a landlord precisely because he had not lived in a family home and indeed has no memory of ever seeing his mother.

Jim also collects paintings, many of which are nostalgic landscapes and portraits that recall a past of more solid times and structures. Patricia, his wife and fellow traveler in pursuit of happiness, is my former student and longtime friend. Having painted Jim's older brother, Ben, she asked Jim, the man she was soon to wed, to sit for a portrait. Their marriage represents a union that seems almost destined, another romantic answer to the loneliness of his boyhood.

Jim also obsessively collects watches. Patricia remarked, "You wouldn't believe how many he has, maybe to make up for lost time." He had a crush on her at Hope High School but waited many years until he found her in another chapter of his life. Jim's first watch, the one he had saved up for, was stolen during a burglary. In a verbal portrait, Patricia explained that her husband "has to gather things to feel rooted and secure."

Although Jim rebelled against his family's religion, he marvelously rediscovered it through Patricia! She clinked my glass at an Art Club luncheon with a clear and lively 'Chaim and is deeply interested in the welfare of Israel. There is a natural diversity of destinies within the frontiers of our School of Design, so the Weiss dynasty is part and parcel of Our Town.

CINDY HALPERN

I keep a shelf of travel books written by Cindy Halpern, a Baby Boomer who is a daughter of a Holocaust survivor and an American rescuer-liberator. Her daughter Robin and my son Reuben met in nursery school, and Cindy and I shared space among the pages of the Jewish Herald.

Cindy's story is full of losses and sorrows, including the passing of her brothers and sister, but her grown-up voyages in life also include victories of the spirit. She goes to countries to bring back the plight of her mother's people in Europe and publishes accounts in slim volumes that she sends to Rhode Island libraries. She also wrote about her fortunes—good and ill—in a column, "Brief Takes," in The Providence Journal.

In Rhode Island, Cindy partici-
pated in the formation of a Second Generation group, which accepted the burden, the responsibility, the mitzvah of remembrance and reminder. As the heiress to the lives and passages of both parents, she herself embodies both rescue and survival. Her daughter Robin edits, illustrates, and designs her books and thus joins her mother in a collaborative legacy.

Cindy is an “eccentric” or an outsider in yet another sense. She drove a taxi and wrote some fascinating journals about the lessons and insights she gleaned from cab-conversations. There is an innate irony, the wit of sharp observation, in every paragraph of her tales. An eccentric quality is intrinsic to her sensibility—or a sensibility is intrinsic to her eccentric quality.

ALTA
I know a lady who runs AWAY from money; the opposite of a gold digger. She signs her cards and letters sent to my RISD office as Alta, but then follows her Yiddish middle-name with “AKA Joanna Jefferson.”

But this former neighbor, now a lone wanderer, merits a title more than “eccentric”: perhaps something deeper down or perhaps higher up. Where is the fence that separates the dignity of “eccentricity” from the alarming indignity of “disturbance” or “imbalance”? There is no such chain-link or barbed wire, only degrees of consistency and inconsistency.

“Joanna” grew up just one house away from mine on Creston Way, in a charming stone cottage with blue shutters and flower boxes on the windowsills. Carefully tended blooms cheerfully greeted a friendly guest who might stop by.

“Joanna” was an only child, always fashionably garbed, smart in school as well as talented artistically. Yet there was always something edgy about her demeanor.

When her parents passed away, she did something quite bizarre. She put out on trash-collecting Mondays the prized possessions, gift-wrapped fine china, of her mother and father, and uprooted the flowerbeds. She proceeded to camp out in the nearby cemetery, North Burial Ground, a refuge for the homeless and the wildfowl and strays, and an occasional coyote. Neighbors, who sincerely cared for her welfare, would watch her with the backpack and folded tent, as she descended the hillside, looking neither to right nor left.

Alta did, however, send us messages, poetic epistles with sketches, rhymed memories of the histories of each household on the street, and declarations of her own progress along her strange personal pathway. When reading her plaints and studying her cursive calligraphy (in crayon or colored ink), one might go from
Dear Michael,

I thought perhaps to write to you at this time. I am remembering:
I remember Christmas, 1969—day that I worked for You, typed your Article. I was used to work on Christmas Day in Boston, 1961-1963, 1966-1967. I worked Saturdays, Sundays and as Weekend Relief Hostess in other Lobby of the Boston Hospital Women Living In Different Life

laughter to tears, from detached delight to profound sympathy, maybe on to a Chasidic, prophetic interpretation.

Sometimes Alta would hand-deliver these notes, leave them in a doorway, or even fling them at a storm-door, making a loud thud! I have saved every one of her wondrous documents, and store them in a desk-drawer in my home.

There is much more to Alta's tale. The lady was in fact an heiress. Lawyers pleaded with her to accept her legacy, the fortune that was their responsibility to convey, but she refused to accept any of it. Instead, she hiked over hill and dale and, eventually by bus, across this nation from coast to coast. She perpetually sent envelopes and gift-wrapped packages, but with absolutely no return address. I flattered myself that I was her confidant, but most likely there were others with whom she kept in long-distance touch.
Just after dawn, in March of this year, I found an unexpected golden sheet of Alta's cryptic, coded numbers waiting for me in an envelope at my RISD office. There was no name of the sender, only the embossed cancellation of "Sacramento CA 957." Inside were a gray watercolor of a jar of flowers, with "It's Spring!" written on a white square, and a photocopy of a dollar bill. On another page, written in her familiar hand, were "Some Wandering Thoughts," with good wishes for Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, and the forthcoming election season for one and all among us.

Alta cited "Existing Expenses" and multiple-decimal versions of the mystical number "six." Yes, six million has a dreadful Jewish significance. She closed with "Sixty Billion," then "Six Hundred Billion," and finally "Six Trillion Dollars."

How does it all add up? She converted from Judaism to Christian Science— in order to avoid medical treatments that might have restored her to ordinary common sense and cured her of "eccentricity." She could have reclaimed her youthful intelligence, artistry, and sociability, her place in the East Side or Jewish community. Instead, Alta chose her close-to-kabbalistic quest for a different order of meanings known only to her.

BLESSINGS
We have in our beloved folklore the foolish wisdom of Chelm. We have in our young sciences the Freudian study of the thin membrane separating individuality, eccentricity perhaps, and mental illness. For the purposes of this essay, with its emphasis on local Jewish history, the distinctions are less important than the contributions to our collective community of souls and spirits, of memories and legacies. We all have eccentrics on our blocks, in our family trees, among our saved letters and photograph albums of yore. In a wonderful but unknowable way, our Creator, maybe Himself an eccentric, has blessed us in eccentric ways.

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Many contributors to these pages have portrayed their youth or are young at heart. Except for winners of the Horvitz Prize for student research and writing, however, few of these authors have been as young (or wired) as Mr. Brown.

Since his childhood in East Greenwich, Mr. Brown has been captivated by humorous rhyme. Some of his major influences have been Ogden Nash, Dr. Seuss, Shel Silverstein, Tom Lehrer, and Weird Al Yankovic, but he also enjoys rap.

He probably stands alone in his search for reverence through irreverence. For him, this search exemplifies a philosophical difference between the sacred and the sacrosanct.

Extraordinarily committed to his interpretative work and the hope of its eventual acceptance, Mr. Brown has not been discouraged by temporary obstacles. While living in the relative serenity and isolation of North Adams, Massachusetts, he appears to relish mountainous challenges.

_From God To Verse_ was the first full-length book I ever started writing. By the time it was completed, it was the fourth one I had finished. This line-by-line rhyming interpretation of the Torah took me roughly a decade. But let me start at the beginning.

**CHILDHOOD**

I was born in Warwick in 1979, but I was reared in East Greenwich. Both of my parents were active in the local Jewish community in various ways, giving both time and money. My mother, Barbara Brown, always eager to help almost any community group, was generous to a fault. (I’m usually the one faulting her.) She worked for ORT, the West Bay Jewish Center, Temple Beth-El’s Sisterhood, and countless other Jewish groups.

I also remember my mother doing presentations about Jewish holidays at the public schools I attended. While we’d have big celebrations for Christmas and Easter, my
mother would teach my classmates about Chanukah traditions, from dreidels to latkes. While I'm not sure about the other traditions, the kids definitely appreciated the latkes.

My father, Jeff Brown, was also heavily involved in the Jewish community. He was a longtime member and occasional leader of Temple Beth-El's Brotherhood. In fact, my family's ties at that temple go back to my great-grandfather, Charles C. Brown, whose name is inscribed on two doors to the sanctuary. (The first was donated by his widow, the second by my grandfather, Howard G. Brown.) My younger brother Grant, was a bar mitzvah at Beth-El, and my sister, Halee was a bat mitzvah there. My parents are still members.

In spite of all these connections to Beth-El, my parents sent me to Temple Am David, in Warwick, because it had a preschool. They were sufficiently happy with Am David, so I continued in its Hebrew school.

I took religion very seriously. As a result, I would often get into arguments with rabbis and other teachers because I needed everything to make sense and fit together. I remember one discussion about the Chanukah story, when students were asked if we, like our ancestors, would abandon our beliefs if threatened with death. I was the only person in the class who answered no.

I would later walk away from most of these beliefs of my own free will. I was doing a lot of wrestling with tough questions, and the answers that people were giving me did not satisfy. I was especially having trouble accepting an omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent god, and squaring that idea with both free will and suffering.

A few years after my Bar Mitzvah at Am David, I was chatting with some classmates about our religions at a summer program in philosophy.

"I'm Jewish," I said.

"I'm agnostic," said one fellow.
“What’s that?”

“It means I don’t know whether there’s a god or not.”

It was a revelation for me, because I’d been feeling this, but didn’t know there was a term for it other than “bad” Jew. I began describing myself as agnostic. Because my patience for ritual is often limited, I quickly fell away from organized religion.

POETRY
As far back as I can remember, I have always been fascinated with poetry. Or, perhaps more accurately, fascinated with rhyme. (It would not be until much later in life that I grew to appreciate non-rhyming poetry.) I was reading at a very young age, and I always appreciated anything that rhymed. Humorous rhyming was best, which is why I moved from Dr. Seuss to Shel Silverstein and eventually to Ogden Nash, whose influence on me remains to this day in the form of an appreciation of a good end-rhyme (even if the meter has been made a complete hash.)

Perhaps my biggest poetic influence was Frank Jacobs. His name is not as famous as the aforementioned poets. But there’s a decent chance you have read some of his work. For decades, he wrote everything that rhymed in Mad magazine. Whether parodying the Beatles with fake TV commercials or borrowing from Edgar Allan Poe to write “The Reagan,” Jacobs made me realize that one could put anything into rhyme.

I was writing rhymes as far back as I can remember, from a collection of short birthday poems in second or third grade to a rap about Mr. Rogers a few years later. With practice, I became better at rhyming.

While in high school at Wheeler School in Providence, I also grew to appreciate Weird Al Yankovic (America’s premier song parody artist) and Tom Lehrer (a political satirist and an inspiration to Yankovic). They were deft at both clever end-rhymes and taking advantage of the song format. I won the election for sophomore class president by rewriting the lyrics to a Tom Lehrer song as a campaign song. (I invited him to attend my senior project, a performance of his works, but he gracefully declined.) To this day, my idea of success and fame is to hang out with Weird Al.

Being a professional poet, though, requires being paid. My big break was unquestionably in eleventh grade, when I wrote a letter to the editor of The Providence Journal. It was a long rhyming poem detailing the events of the O. J. Simpson trial. I remember my excitement hearing his message on my answering machine; he wanted to run my piece. The editor also said, “If you want to do another one
some time, send it in!"

I couldn’t wait. A few months later, I wrote another poem, which appeared in the paper and a check appeared in the mail. A month or two later, another poem. In 1997, during my senior year at Wheeler, I received credit for an internship in the Prajo’s editorial department. I was not only able to hang around a lot of very smart people, but I learned a bit about the publishing business. Additionally, I was able to write a rhyming political column every week about an issue discussed on the editorial page.

My internship ended when I enrolled at Williams College, but my column, “Issue of the Week,” written in epic limerick form, continued. It was immensely satisfying for many reasons, including the intellectual challenge, fleeting fame, and extra spending money.

I was devastated in 2000 when, after three years, my column was cancelled. Still, I am very grateful to the editor, Bob Whitcomb, for giving me my big break. I continued writing poetry throughout college, and was elected class poet. I was able to give a ridiculous rhyming speech at graduation in 2001.

BEGINNING FROM GOD TO VERSE

Although I had never taken courses in Judaic studies or poetry, I had a crazy idea upon graduation. I wanted to turn the entire Torah, line-by-line, into rhyming couplets. Having researched as much as I could online, it seemed that nobody had done it. I figured that I was just the guy.

I knew that the Torah project would be a lot of work. So rather than get a job right out of college, I took all my savings (and a generous grant from “the dad foundation”) and rented a house in Williamstown to try freelance writing full-time.

I had my plan for the book: wanting to make something that anyone—Jew or gentile, young or old—could appreciate. Although I wanted to use a variety of sources, I do not, regrettably, read Hebrew or Aramaic. So I had to use English translations. My parents owned the Jewish Publication Society’s edition of Torah. Because I wanted to get at the roots of Hebrew meanings, I accepted many recommendations and used Everett Fox’s translation of The Five Books of Moses. I also wanted a Christian perspective, so I borrowed a New Oxford Annotated Bible from a friend, as well as a King James version of The New Testament.

While excited about the project, I was also concerned about its magnitude and sacredness. Any sort of vulgarity was clearly unacceptable. I also didn’t want to use vernacular expressions that would lessen the feeling of importance or, worse yet, become dated. I wanted to do everything right, even if it took time.
It took time. It was very slow going at first. Working from my English references, it took me a few weeks to finish a draft of the first chapter of Genesis. If I had continued at this pace, even writing full-time, I would not have finished the book by 2010.

I had also foolishly presumed that Torah was a monolithic, inerrant writ. It had not occurred to me that English translations might differ in their interpretations.

Fox’s work was exceedingly helpful in this regard. His copious footnotes and explanations of the literal meanings of Hebrew let me understand the reasons for his choice of words and other translators’ choices. Still, I wanted to create a rhyming version of THE Torah—not a translator’s version—and how to get it across. Thus, word choice took on a whole new level of importance for me. For example, was God “creating” or had he “created” the earth? I looked at the texts, thought hard, and made decisions as best I could.

Of course, figuring out what I wanted to say was only half of the puzzle. The other half was fitting it into couplets in heptameter—a meter and format I had chosen not only because it seemed most appropriate for an epic work, but because it gave me much more leeway per line.

Although it had taken me three weeks to finish a draft of the first chapter of Genesis, I had not yet found my voice for this project. Was I going to do a transposition into rhyme that maintained the gravitas of the original? Or was I going to try to make it more entertaining along the way?

Thankfully, the puzzle of transposing into rhyme became slightly easier with practice. After a few months, I was drafting a chapter a week. As my work continued, I also managed to answer my question: I was creating both a serious and a functional transposition.

Some people reading From God To Verse, or hearing me read passages from it, have smiled or occasionally even laughed at some of the early passages, which have a Seussian tone. These readers and listeners are amused because a story we all know so well is retold in a slightly different manner, perhaps lending a new element of enjoyment. In other passages, however, I sought an appropriate level of gravitas.

Here is a passage from Genesis 3:

The LORD God then called out to the man and He said “Where are you?”
And the man then replied,
“I heard sounds of You. Since I am naked, I was afraid and I decided to hide.”
God asked, “Who was it that told you that you are naked (and caused you to want to be hidden)?
Did you eat from the tree of which I had commanded that eating was strictly forbidden?"
Man said, "It was the woman you gave to be with me, she gave me that fruit, so I ate."
And God said to the woman, "What's this you have done?" And the woman responded, "The
snake
Enlisted and convinced me, so I ate." And the LORD God then said to the serpent, "Because
You have done this thing, you will now be more cursed than any animal that ever was.
You will crawl on your belly, eat dust for the rest of your life.
Enmity I will spread between you and the woman, your offspring and hers;
You will wound their heel,
they'll wound your head."

As the Torah moved from stories to laws, especially in Leviticus, it became
more difficult for me to retell those sections in my own words. This meant holding
more closely to the language of the translations in front of me, not wanting to lose
any meaning.

DETOURS
I should probably mention that, after about a year of working full time on the proj-
et, my savings had run out. So I acquired a part-time job at a bookshop in William-
stown because I love books. As it turned out, this was little better than acquiring a
job at a slaughterhouse because one loves animals. I was in charge of unboxing, in-
ventorying, and shelving an infinity of textbooks, as opposed to trading bons mots
with customers and recommending new novels to amuse their literary palates.

I can't honestly claim that my job always left me exhausted, but I would
often come home and want to play a video game rather than working on From God
To Verse. So my progress slowed.

Part of my lack of enthusiasm stemmed from coming to terms with the
scope of my project. Most of my writings, with the exception of a few newspaper
articles, had some humor in them. This project constrained me greatly, and some-
times I felt the book was writing me.

I had been trying to make a living as a freelance writer, picking up various
odd jobs online, and writing an occasional newspaper article for the Berkshire Advo-
cate. Aside from my stint at The Providence Journal, I didn't have a lot of bylines or
experience, so it was very difficult to get hired. (Come to think of it, it's still difficult
to get hired. Would-be writers, beware.)

But I finally got a job writing a book about weird groups around the coun-
try. This new project differed from FGTVC in three important respects: I had the
leeway to be funny; I had a deadline; and I was guaranteed to be paid. My first book,
Think You're The Only One?, was published by Barnes & Noble in 2004. (The weird
groups ranged from the Cheese Racing Association to the Dull Men's Club.)
By this time I had left the part-time job at the bookshop and began working full-time in customer service for a local dot-com. Nevertheless, by October 2005, I had finally finished my first draft of FGTV.

That November, as part of National Novel Writing Month, I wrote Shards. It was my first and only full-length foray into fiction, which I self-published.

Because there is a never-ending readership for Torah and the Hebrew Bible, I believed that a new rhyming translation would be very popular. So I pitched *From God To Verse* to dozens of agents and publishers. I was, as you might suspect, mistaken. Having met with nothing but rejection, I became somewhat discouraged. Nevertheless, I wanted to complete the project I had started.

Meanwhile, in 2006, I began work on another publisher-commissioned book, this one about odd things around Rhode Island. As a result of frequent trips home to do research and conduct interviews, FGTV was again put on hold. In 2007, however, *Rhode Island Curiosities* was published by Globe Pequot Press.

**REJUVENATION**

I decided not to accept any more book projects until FGTV was finished. By early 2008, though still without an agent or a publisher, I decided that short rhyming chapter summaries were a compelling idea. Oddly enough, writing these summaries thoroughly renewed my interest in the project, which had begun seven years earlier.

There was a joy to be had fitting each line of Torah, each commandment, each “begat,” into a proper meter. I had finally recaptured the sense of excitement that had originally driven me.

I eventually decided to put the main text of *Genesis* online, making it available to everyone for free. (The rhyming summaries, meanwhile, would remain available only in print.) After Rosh Hashanah in 2008, I began posting one chapter of *Genesis* per week. In September of 2009, when this work was complete, I began preparations for self-publishing.

In September of 2010, I released the book that I had started nearly a decade ago. The main text of *Genesis* remains free on my Web site, www.GodToVerse.com, where the entire work can be purchased as well.

**THE BOOK AND ITS IMPACT**

For better or worse, my line-by-line transposition of Torah into rhyming couplets, remains, in my opinion, very faithful to the original text. For accessibility and enjoyment, FGTV is written in iambic heptameter. I hope that the large-print te-
Some people may ask whether it is disrespectful to turn Torah into rhyme. Of course much of it was written in rhyme. I think that engaging Torah in this manner is in keeping with Jewish tradition.

Fundamentally, I believe that there is an important difference between the sacred and the sacrosanct. The former is something to be revered, something holy, but something humans bring into their lives. The latter is something untouchable, something to be sealed away and kept pristine. In my opinion, Torah is sacred but not sacrosanct. I believe that within Jewish tradition, the best way to honor Torah is to wrestle with it, to try to understand it.

Although a few rabbis, scholars, and religious educators have had kind words for From God To Verse, most people seem disinterested. I admit some disappointment, but one's all-consuming pursuits are inevitably of much less interest to others.

It was a long, strange, arduous road, but I don't regret taking the time to write FGV. I am proud to have accomplished what I set out to do. It is a work that I consider bigger than myself, so I hope that people come to enjoy and appreciate it— even if it takes longer than my own lifetime for this to happen.
SHELTERING POOR AND STRIVING JEWS IN NEW YORK CITY, BOSTON, AND PROVIDENCE, 1863-1930

George M. Goodwin

Did most poor Jewish immigrants, who settled in Northeastern cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, languish in tenement houses? Was a tenement a barely habitable, multifamily dwelling or a particular building type? Did most Jews, like other struggling immigrant groups, flee tenements for apartment houses and then, perhaps in a following generation, achieve the American Dream of single-family home ownership?

While housing options for poor and working-class Jews varied significantly around the country, they also varied considerably within the Northeast. But population alone does not explain which housing options were available in many places. Consider such local factors as: geography, industrialization, immigration, public transportation, the portion of family income allocated to rents, methods of home financing, property values, zoning laws, suburbanization, and ethnic cohesion and discrimination. Thus, for a complex set of reasons, there were several building types, in addition to tenement houses, which sheltered Emma Lazarus' "huddled masses" and their progeny.

In New England, for example, one of the most economical and therefore common housing options was the three-decker house, a narrow, wood-frame building (with a flat or a pitched roof) accommodating one family per floor. Often a landlord and his family lived on the ground floor, the most desirable, but all families enjoyed front and sometimes rear porches.

Three-deckers, which proliferated between 1870 and 1930, were once vivid and powerful symbols. For some observers, they represented urban decay and immigrants' infiltration of growing suburbs. For others, three-deckers represented housing reform and upward mobility for property developers, landlords, and tenants.

Although housing options in Providence are emphasized in this study, they must be understood within larger contexts. Providence demonstrates, however,
that residential patterns cannot be measured only quantitatively. Cities are formed by neighborhoods, which, in turn, are shaped by individuals—with hands, hearts, and faces.

NEW YORK CITY
As early as 1840, Charles Dickens, no stranger to horrendous conditions, was appalled by Manhattan’s slums. (In his book, American Notes, he also condemned such building types as prisons and asylums.) Once-fashionable neighborhoods of brick row houses, the most common residential building type in many East Coast cities since the eighteenth century, were already decayed and dilapidated.

Tenement houses, typically consisting of four apartments on each of four to six floors, soon became synonymous with a new strain of slums. Since the 1830s, they had been built almost exclusively as predatory schemes to house poor people. Ironically, “tenement” was a new American term derived from medieval English for the abode of a person or a soul. A tenants’ riot in 1849 led to the first of many investigations by New York’s State Assembly.
As dreadful as they were, tenement houses were not yet New York City's worst dwellings, however. Shantytowns, home to approximately 20,000 squatters, had sprung up on undeveloped land—mostly on Manhattan's West Side. Some of these encampments, consisting of tents and hovels, endured well past 1873, when Mark Twain and Charles Warner's book, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-Day*, was published.

By 1863 there were approximately 15,400 tenement houses in New York City (which consisted only of Manhattan). More than 9,000 were located below Fourteenth Street, and these housed half a million people. Indeed, almost half of New Yorkers subsisted in tenements, including those in the area that eventually became known as the Lower East Side.

Smaller tenement houses fit within a standard lot size, 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep, which had been established in 1807 for row houses. (At that time, there were no provisions for water or sewage.) To maximize income from a single lot, a landlord may have erected a second, smaller tenement at the rear of his property. By the late 1870s, tenement houses were highly profitable, generating an annual
return of up to 25 percent for landlords.\footnote{7}

A tenement house at 97 Orchard Street (between Delancey and Broome),
built in 1863, was probably typical of the era. (Since 1992 this building has acquired
a name, the Tenement Museum, probably the only such museum in the world.)\footnote{8}
Before this five-story "walk-up" closed in about 1925 (because the owner refused
to install a toilet in every apartment), it had sheltered as many as 10,000 people in
about 20 "cold water" flats. In 1903, for example, the entire block, consisting of two
acres, was home to 450 families or 2,223 people.\footnote{9}

At this time monthly rents in this ward ranged from $5 to $45. The largest
number of apartments went for $7.50 to $8 per month; the second largest number
for $8.50 to $9 per month; and the third largest number for $11.50 to $12 per
month.

During the 1880s, wood and then coal-burning stoves replaced fireplaces
for heating and cooking. Bathing occurred in public and private bathhouses. After
1896, tenants paid for gas heating by inserting coins in kitchen meters. About this
time, inside running water replaced backyard spigots. In 1918, before the instal-
lation of electricity, the tenement house at 97 Orchard was illuminated primarily
by kerosene and oil lamps (rather than by daylight entering through windows and
transoms).

In World of Our Fathers, Irving Howe remarked that perhaps the worst assau-
tal on tenement dwellers was the stench.\footnote{10} But disease was rampant. For example,
in 1866 a cholera epidemic caused 1,200 deaths. Social diseases included suicide,
crime, juvenile delinquency, wife abandonment, and prostitution.

Before the State Assembly passed its first Tenement House Act, in 1867,
no indoor plumbing was required.\footnote{11} Reform meant one toilet (as opposed to a back-
yard outhouse) for every 20 inhabitants, but it was frequently located in the base-
ment. The act also mandated the construction of fire escapes, ceiling heights of at
least eight feet, and the ventilation of bedrooms and hallways. But such improve-
ments were required only for new construction, and regulations adopted by the
newly created Metropolitan Board of Health were not enforced by the Metropolitan
Building Department. The second Tenement House Act, in 1871, required fire
escapes in all buildings over two stories.

The next Tenement House Act, in 1879, which provided better access to air
and light, also required each apartment to have 600 cubic feet per inhabitant. But
this allocation had little effect on most Jewish families, which included, in addition to
parents and children, unmarried or widowed relatives as well as temporary lodgers.

New York City's Eastern European Jews were further exploited (usually by
Jewish contractors) when forced to establish sweatshops within their claustrophobic apartments. Semi-skilled and seasonal needle workers, who toiled an average of 72 hours per week, included a high proportion of women and children. Tuberculosis was regarded as both a Jewish and a tailors' disease.12

The Tenement House Act of 1887 required fireproof construction, air and light shafts, and a toilet for every two families, but only in new buildings. This act was soon revised, requiring only one toilet for every 15 occupants but at least one per floor. But by this time many “sanitarians,” convinced that the tenement house was an uninhabitable building type, urged that it should be abolished. Finally, in
1890, with the publication of Jacob Riis's muckraking book, *How the Other Half Lives*, illustrated with his own photographs, public opinion began to turn against tenement houses and the suffering they inflicted.

Did New York City's impoverished and brutalized Jewish tenement dwellers of the late nineteenth century have any housing alternatives (other than departing to smaller cities and towns)? When they gave it much thought, wealthy New Yorkers, like their peers around the country, believed that tenement dwellers could improve their lot through hard work and savings. But decent housing was never considered a human right or even a cornerstone of worker productivity. The best that most late nineteenth-century tenement dwellers could hope for was vacancies in lower-
middle-class boardinghouses, which were usually dilapidated row houses." Tens of thousands of Jews, resembling urban serfs, never escaped tenement-house incarceration.

New York's first apartment house cannot be identified, but the first generation of apartment houses, intended for middle-class and wealthier tenants, was built during the late 1860s and early 1870s. One of the first notable apartment houses was The Stuyvesant, a five-story walk-up on 18th Street, designed by the society architect, Richard M. Hunt. Another notable example was Haight House, a five-story, remodeled mansion with an elevator. Rents were $2,000 to $3,000 per year. By the 1880s, however, the construction of apartment houses for middle-class tenants surpassed the construction of tenements.9

By 1892, 75% of New York City Jews still lived on the Lower East Side. By 1903 only half lived there. At its peak in 1910, the wretched neighborhood was home to 542,000 Jews. The density of some parts of the Lower East Side surpassed Bombay and Calcutta. Indeed, in no previous era had so many Jews lived together.9

By 1916, however, only 23% of the city's Jews lived on the Lower East Side. As their circumstances improved (to at least lower-middle-class status), large numbers were able to move to thousands of new but quite modest apartment houses in Harlem, the Brownsville and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn, and the East Bronx. The expansion of the city's subway and elevated rail system also accelerated the exodus.

Nevertheless, the depravation and horror of living in dingy and moldering nineteenth-century tenements could never be forgotten. In 1930, writing in "Jews Without Money," Michael Gold described his childhood home as "nothing but a junk-heap of rotten lumber and brick." Without a trace of sentimentality, he recalled: "It was an old ship on its last voyage; in the battering winter storms, all its seams opened and wind and snow came through."10

BOSTON
Irish immigrants, arriving in Boston during the 1840s, crowded into tenements as well as crumbling single- and two-family houses and row houses in the North End (the oldest part of the city) and the West End.21 Many structures, which were routinely subdivided to accommodate more families, lacked proper light, ventilation, and sanitation. "The Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Tenements for the Poor," issued in 1846, represented the nation's earliest municipal effort to improve derelict housing.

"An Act for the Regulation of Tenements and Lodging-Houses in the City

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of Boston' was not passed until 1868, however. Based on New York City's Tenement House Act of 1867, it required fire escapes and minimal standards for light, ventilation, and sanitation, but did not differentiate between tenement and apartment houses. A tenement was defined as a dwelling for three or more families or with two families per floor and with cooking on the premises. A municipal Board of Health, established in 1870, required annual inspections. The first inspection showed that there were nearly 7,500 families or 31,500 individuals living in 1,100 tenements.

Although it had little immediate impact, Boston's building code, the nation's first in 1871, required that new tenements be constructed of brick. Nevertheless, a massive fire the following year destroyed 65 acres within the central city. Boston's board of building examiners was not established until 1913. Its zoning board, creating six "use districts," was finally established in 1924.22

America's first grand apartment house, the seven-story Pelham, was built in 1857 at the corner of Tremont and Boylston in Boston's Back Bay. Modeled after Parisian prototypes, the city's early apartment houses were known initially as "French flats" but they were also called hotels (in the French tradition).23 They were fashionable and luxurious lodgings, in which wealthy families occupied or shared an entire floor and servants were relegated to lower floors. The Pelham and other early apartment houses (as well as Boston's new city hall of 1862) had mansard or "French" roofs with numerous dormer windows. As was typical of the Second Empire style, a steeply pitched roof allowed for a building's entire top floor, once considered an attic, to become habitable.

When three-decker houses began to appear in Boston during the 1870s, they were built for many income levels.24 The most elegant and stately examples resembled small "French flats." Indeed, the three-decker house as a building type seems to have almost naturally evolved from Second Empire houses with three stories and from more modest examples of two-family houses with two-and-a-half stories.25

During the 1870s, however, only 11% of Boston's working-class families owned their own homes. Astonishingly, by 1920, the percentage had not changed significantly, only 18% of Boston's families owned their own homes. The national average was 46%.

Three-deckers, which were not defined by housing authorities as tenements until 1913,26 began to appear besides single and two-family houses in Boston's recently annexed towns to the south and west, such as Roxbury, Dorchester, Brighton, and Jamaica Plain (where prohibitions against wooden structures did not apply).
The expansion of Boston's horse-powered trolley system in 1873, moreover, created new "streetcar" suburbs only a few miles from the central city. Indeed, many three-deckers were built adjacent to trolley tracks. The electrification of streetcars in 1889 was primarily responsible for another wave of development. Outward growth was again accelerated nearly a decade later, when the nation's first major subway and elevated rail system was inaugurated.

Samuel B. Warner has demonstrated, however, that before 1903 the preferred residential type in Roxbury, West Roxbury, and Dorchester remained the single-family house. Of 22,500 dwellings erected in these suburbs between 1871 and 1903, 12,000 were for single-families; 6,000 were for two-families; and only 4,000 were for three-families. Five hundred houses built for four families or more could be easily identified as tenements. By 1900 only 25% of families living in these suburbs owned their own homes.

So why did three-deckers become so popular? They were economical to build, profitable to operate, and there were no restrictions against them. A typical three-decker required less property than a two-family house, and it could generate more rental income than a two-and-a-half story house. Although most owner-occupants of three-deckers could never afford to purchase single-family homes, they were able to obtain relative stability and comfort. Furthermore, landlords of three-deckers could provide for relatives, friends, and other acquaintances.

Warner reasoned that late-nineteenth-century suburban builders were at least middle-class because they needed capital to purchase land and finance construction through a complex web of individual lenders. Although it may have cost between $2,000 and $4,000 to build a dwelling, mortgages were available for only half of construction costs. During the late nineteenth century, before the widespread growth of building and loan institutions, mortgages from commercial banks had to be repaid within three to five years.

When researching her exhaustive dissertation on Boston's three-deckers, Diane R. Jacobsohn determined that between 1871 and 1903, 730 individuals or partnerships erected more than 2,000 three-deckers. By refining Warner's data, she revealed a steep pyramid of production. Although fewer than 10% of builders produced nine or more three-deckers, more than half of builders, 380, produced only one structure. A majority of builders between 1880 and 1930 were immigrants, with the largest numbers from Canada, Ireland, and Germany.

Given the absence of standard lot sizes in Boston during the late nineteenth century, the square footage or "footprint" of three-deckers varied. Typically, such structures were half as wide as deep or 25 feet by 50 feet. Jacobsohn examined
building plans between 1891 and 1895, which showed that the average area was 900 to 1,200 square feet, but the extremes were 600 and 2,000 square feet. Over the next decade, with the more common use of a dining room between the front parlor and the rear kitchen, the average area ranged from 1,000 to 1,300 square feet. Subsequently, three-deckers became somewhat boxier, though the vast majority were less than 50 feet deep. As circulation plans became more flexible, more amenities were included, but there were never more than three bedrooms and one bathroom per apartment.

Unlike their peers in New York City, many of Boston's immigrants and their children were also able to escape the strictures of tenement living by building or renting three-deckers in the suburbs. In the streetcar suburb of Dorchester, for example, well over 5,000 three-deckers were built—the largest number during the decade preceding World War I. Dorchester was unusual in that more than 65% of its builders were foreign-born.

Compared to many East Coast cities, however, Jews had been slow to arrive in Boston. In 1880 there may have been only 5,000, but they quickly assumed critical roles in the garment industry. By 1900 there were 40,000 Jews in Boston; a decade later there were as many as 65,000. Almost all who arrived since 1880 were Russian-born. (Fewer than half remained in Massachusetts, with one-third settling in New York City.)

At the turn of the twentieth century, Jews began migrating from the central city in two directions. The less affluent went north to Chelsea and Malden; the more affluent went south to Roxbury, West Roxbury, and Dorchester. In 1908, when a disastrous fire in Chelsea left approximately 17,000 Jews homeless, most migrated to Roxbury and Dorchester. Between 1910 and 1930, the Jewish population of the southern area surged from 12,000 to 77,000, representing approximately half of Boston's Jewish community. The neighborhood along Dorchester's Blue Hill Avenue became known as "Jewville."

By 1928, however, the construction of new three-deckers in Boston ground to a halt. The most obvious factor, in 1927, was an amendment to the city's zoning law, based on New York City's precedent, which restricted the height of two-family homes to 35 feet and prohibited the construction of three-deckers and houses with two-and-a-half stories. The construction of three-deckers also became less profitable. Jacobsohn explained that during the first decade of the twentieth century, inexpensive examples had cost about $3,000 (including land, materials, and labor). By 1919 most three-deckers cost at least $5,000. During the 1920s, average costs rose from $9,000 to $14,000. The rapidly increasing ownership of automobiles
also resulted in the development of more distant suburbs, where land was less
expensive and yards, driveways, and garages could be built.

Discrimination against immigrants and their children also intensified,
especially in Boston's fancier suburbs. Indeed, some of the strongest opposition
came from so-called reformers. As early as 1912, for example, Elmer S. Forbes
had written in his book, *Housing Problems in America*, that three-deckers were “the
joint production of the land shark, the shyster architect, and the jerry builder.”\(^{17}\) In
1916, a year after Brookline outlawed the construction of three-deckers, Prescott F.
Hall, the chair of its improvement committee, spoke on “The Menace of the Three-
Decker” at the fifth National Conference on Housing.

From data derived from the 1930 federal census, Patricia Raub determined
that, among 13 New England cities, Boston, Fall River, Hartford, and Worcester had
the highest percentages of three-decker houses (27% to 25%).\(^{18}\) Those with the low-
est percentages included Lowell, New Haven, and Springfield (all under 11%). The
percentage of three-decker houses in Providence was about 16% (the fifth-highest),
ranking slightly above Cambridge and New Bedford.\(^{19}\)

Well over 100,000 three-decker houses were probably built throughout
New England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps
a majority are still in use. In 2000, for example, they represented nearly 19% of
Boston’s housing stock. This was only a 2% decrease from 1974.\(^{40}\)

**PROVIDENCE**

As New England’s second largest city since 1830, Providence offers a useful com-
parison to and contrast with Boston and New York City. (Yet, most Jewish men
who settled in Providence before 1907 had lived at least briefly in New York.\(^{41}\) In
1900, Providence, an industrial colossus, was the nation’s twentieth-largest city.\(^{16}\)
In 1925, when the city’s population peaked at 268,000, Rhode Island was the state
with the largest proportion of foreign-born residents (33%).\(^{43}\)

Because approximately 60% of Rhode Island’s 125,000 wage earners la-
bored in factories employing at least 250 people, there were hundreds of smaller
factories in Providence (and hence no single factory district).\(^{44}\) As Raub explained
in her important study, this phenomenon, which was partially due to the construc-
tion of plants along three rivers, had a significant impact on property values. While
the most expensive undeveloped land was closest to the largest factories, the overall
cost of housing was relatively uniform.\(^{45}\) In Providence, unlike such manufacturing
cities as Lawrence, Lowell, and New Bedford, there was never a need for the larg-
est employers to construct workers’ barracks, the earliest of which were boarding-
houses for girls and women.46

Providence's compact size, consisting of about 18.5 square miles, also worked to its advantage. For example, a periphery of agricultural land could be continually developed for industry and housing. Although Providence established a public transit system, consisting initially of horse-drawn trolleys and then electric-powered streetcars and cable cars, its inhabitants ordinarily walked less than a mile to and from work.

During the late nineteenth century, Providence had a relatively small stock of single-family houses. In 1890, for example, they represented half of all dwellings. Remarkably, among the nation's 28 largest cities (with at least 100,000 inhabitants), only New York had a smaller percentage. The national average for single-family houses in the largest cities was approximately 75%.47

But Providence was exceptional in another sense: the number of two-family houses (divided vertically or horizontally and including grand as well as mundane examples) represented more than 40% of dwellings. The national average for this building type was slightly more than 15%.48 Thus, Providence, toward the end of
the nineteenth-century, was predominantly a city of single and two-family houses.

In 1890, despite the influx of immigrants, the percentage of houses in Providence for three or more families was 10% or slightly above average for the nation's 28 largest cities. But Providence had comparatively few large dwellings (for five or more families) and almost nothing equivalent to New York City's largest tenements. Thus, casual references by Jews and others to Providence's tenements are inaccurate.

Small numbers of three and four-story, brick row houses had been built in fashionable neighborhoods since the 1810s. Similarly upscale apartment houses, which were typically the same height, did not appear for another hundred years, however. The city's tallest apartment house for nearly a half-century was the eight-story Minden, constructed on the East Side in 1915.

It is not known when Providence's first three-decker house was erected, though several existed by 1890. There is no evidence that any were built for affluent families, as was the case two decades earlier in Boston. According to the 1900 census, there were approximately 1,300 three-family houses in Providence, though these surely included numerous two-and-a-half story dwellings. Nevertheless, to John H. Cady, a subsequent observer, the sudden proliferation of three-deckers represented "an invasion."

Remarkably, in 1908 more than 1,900 three-deckers were built. Cady commented that they contributed more to the "disfigurement" of the city and represented a greater fire menace than any other building type. Between 1911 and 1915, 760 more three-deckers were constructed.

In 1913, when Providence's last gaslights were removed and most narrow streets had become impassable, the city council commissioned its first urban plan. Two years later the new City Plan Commission presented its report, which emphasized Providence's density. It contained the smallest acreage of any American city with a population over 150,000. Its acreage was about half the size of a city with a population over 100,000. Noting that the local population has "long been boiling over," the commission proposed 83 improvements, which would rid the city of slum districts, increase property values in other districts, and result in a natural increase of 10,000 people per year. When its report was rejected, the commission disbanded.

In 1916, however, a group of 35 civic leaders, including the local president of the National Council of Jewish Women, became alarmed by the city's inferior housing conditions. Under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, the group formed the General Committee on Improved Housing and commissioned
a survey. John Ihlder, a former journalist in New York and the field secretary of
the National Housing Association, prepared an authoritative report, The Houses of
Providence: A Study of Present Conditions, which was published at the end of the year.

Ihlder confirmed that Providence faced a turning point. Unless citizens
and their representatives set minimal standards, housing conditions would surely
deteriorate. Ihlder was particularly fearful about overcrowding, which compound-
ed the dangers of fire and disease. He also explained that, like British volunteers
in the Boer War, only a tiny portion of Americans were fit for service during World
War I. Thus, housing was both a local and a patriotic concern.

Ihlder was also troubled by the inadequacy of assimilation or maintained
some personal bias against immigrants—perhaps both. He noted that among "a
wave after wave of aliens who had peacefully invaded" Providence, only "northern
peoples," such as Britons, Germans, Swedes, and Anglo-Canadians, were success-
fully Americanized. Consequently, his survey focused on Catholic immigrants—
French Canadians, Irish, Italians, Poles, Portuguese— and Jews. (Blacks, other than
dark-skinned Portuguese, were such a small and widely distributed group that they
merited little attention.) Ihlder observed, however, that Italians and Jews resembled
each other in their eagerness to buy existing houses or build new ones. Indeed,
they were willing to endure considerable hardships for potential profitability (but
not, evidently, for the stability, comfort, and pride of home ownership).

By 1900 there were approximately 2,000 Russian-born Jews in Provi-
dence—fewer than one percent of the city's population and less than one block of
tenants on the Lower East Side. Precise figures are unknown, but the state census
of 1905, which contained a question about religious identification, showed that
there were approximately 8,000 Jews. In 1910 the number of Russian-born Jews
in Providence was closer to 6,000, but the total number of Jews may have exceed-
ed 10,000. By 1927 there may have been 21,000 Jews living in the capital city.

Jews lived primarily in three neighborhoods, though they were not the
only residents of those neighborhoods. (The word "ghetto" never appeared in pub-
lished reports.) The two larger neighborhoods will be discussed in detail.

THE NORTH END
Since Irish families began arriving in the North End during the 1820s, it was the first
area of settlement for many immigrant groups, including Swedes and Armenians
at the end of the nineteenth century. Although accessible by trolley cars and later
streetcars along North Main, the North End could never be considered a streetcar
suburb similar to Roxbury, West Roxbury, and Dorchester. Always working-class
in character, its residents walked to nearby factories, stores, and bathhouses. Its dwellings initially included diminutive one-family cottages, larger wooden houses, and probably some multifamily buildings.

During the mid-1880s, when Irish families began moving to better neighborhoods, Russian Jews arrived in the North End. By 1890 there may have been approximately 90 families. Two decades later, there were more than 200 Jewish families residing in the North End, probably a majority of whom lived in three-decker houses.

In his 1916 survey of Providence’s immigrant neighborhoods, Ihlder selected the North End to portray the city’s Jews. He observed fundamentally that “the poor take what they can get, and the great majority of Jews in Providence are poor.” He neglected to mention another reason why poor Jews lived there: discrimination by gentile landlords in other neighborhoods.

Ihlder determined that in the neighborhood at the eastern end of Chalkstone Avenue (in the third ward), an average of 2.6 families lived in each dwelling. The least expensive rent for three rooms was $6 per month, and the average rent was $7. The most expensive rent for four rooms was $15, and the average rent was $10. These rents were slightly lower than those on the Lower East Side in 1903.

The housing consultant failed to explain the relative value of rents, however. According to a 1904 study by the United States Department of Labor, American families spent an average of about 44% of their income on food and an average of 18% of their income on rent. According to a similar study conducted in 1919 by the Department of Labor and the National War Labor Board, Providence families spent an average of 42% of their income on food and 12% on rent. (Additional expenses, in descending order, were for clothing, fuel, lighting, and savings.) Thus, a family earning less than $900 per year spent $11 per month on rent. A family earning more than $2,500 (and perhaps considered lower-middle class) spent $17 per month on rent.

Today the same neighborhood that Ihlder surveyed is located on the west side of Interstate Highway 95. Goddard is one of the longest of several one-way streets. Approximately 40 dwellings, primarily two-and-a-half stories, were constructed there during the 1870s and 1880s.

Only eight three-decker houses are extant. Their ownership can be traced through the records of plat 68 in the office of Providence’s recorder of deeds. Originally, James Hanley or Hope B. Russell owned the lots. The three-deckers, whose construction began in 1895, were wedged between the older dwellings.

Between 1904 and 1915, all eight lots had owners with Jewish-sounding
surnames. For example, in 1911 Samuel Goldberger and Rosa Rosner owned five of the properties. In addition to being a land speculator or property developer, Goldberger was a partner in a soft-drink supply firm. In 1911 he resided in a two-family house in a more affluent neighborhood near South Main.

Between 1904 and 1930, each of the eight properties on Goddard Street belonged to an average of 4.3 owners (individuals, couples or business partners). There were ten owners of one property, but only two of another. Surprisingly, one property changed hands four times during 1920. The owners were almost entirely people with Jewish-sounding surnames; a few exceptions were Armenians.

As measured in city directories at five-year intervals, only four owners actually lived in their three-deckers between 1905 and 1930. This may help upend the widespread belief that Jews were not absentee landlords. Two of the owners were widows, and both were present in 1930.

Jacob Primack, listed initially as a meat cutter, had quite an unusual record. In 1920 he had been both a tenant at 46 Goddard and the purchaser of 50 Goddard; in 1923 he sold that property but became a tenant in 1926 for four years. His record suggests a sudden economic rise and fall.
In 1900, even before there were Jewish landlords on Goddard, there were five men with Jewish-sounding surnames living as tenants. Reflecting a range of occupations and incomes, these included: Simon Kranz, a clothier; Harry Rosenhirsch, a bristle importer; Raphael Silverstein, an agent; Leo Winograd, a junk dealer; and Leonard Zisman, a lawyer. By 1915 almost all the tenants on Goddard had Jewish-sounding surnames, and this remained the pattern throughout the 1920s. Once again, residents held a wide variety of positions, including laborer, butcher, salesman, furrier, lawyer, and Hebrew teacher, again suggesting a spectrum of incomes. There were also many widows. Most tenants in Goddard's three-deckers remained for five years or less. While some no doubt suffered setbacks, others surely sought better accommodations (within or beyond Providence).

SOUTH PROVIDENCE

The city's second and larger area of Jewish settlement was South Providence, located one to two miles from the central business district. It too had been part of Roger Williams' "Grand Purchase" from the Narragansetts, but its most southerly section was ceded to the city of Cranston, which was established in 1754. Still rural during the 1850s, this area became gradually settled after the expansion of horse-powered trolleys. Following its annexation by Providence in 1868, it became a fashionable suburb, with stately, single-family houses built in Italianate and Second Empire styles along picturesque, tree-lined boulevards.

By the late 1870s and 1880s, however, South Providence became a middle-class neighborhood consisting largely of one-and-a-half story cottages. The owners of two-family houses (usually two or two-and-a-half stories) also provided rental housing to working-class tenants. Well before the electrification of trolley lines in 1892, Irish immigrants began settling in poorer areas of South Providence, which became known as Dogtown. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Irish were the dominant ethnic group and remained so until mid-century.

A few Jewish families settled in South Providence during the 1880s, but a larger community did not emerge until 1900, when immigrant Jews began replacing the Irish in Dogtown. This neighborhood east of Broad Street, which included such streets and avenues as Willard, Prairie, and Robinson, became the nucleus of the Jewish community and home to numerous Orthodox congregations. Sons of Israel and David, a Reform congregation that had built Providence's first synagogue in 1890, erected a new synagogue on Broad Street in 1911. Its members were relatively well-to-do, however.

By 1920 Jews had largely replaced the Irish within the crowded neigh-
borhoods of upper and lower South Providence. Although many men labored in nearby jewelry factories, including several owned by prominent Jews, some of the more prosperous, second-generation Jews had already begun following the Irish to the southwest neighborhood of Elmwood, which had been named for its major avenue.59

In 1922 Rhode Island's first Conservative congregation, Beth Israel, built a synagogue in Elmwood. Elmwood's Jewish population reached its zenith of about 1,850 in 1952.

In 1979 Alice Goldstein conducted the most thorough demographic study of South Providence's Jewish community. When comparing the mobility (or out-migration) rates of native-born Americans and Jews between 1900 and 1920, she found that they were somewhat similar. At the beginning of this period, all but a few Jews lived along five blocks of Willard Avenue (between Broad and Staniford Streets)70. They occupied 87 dwellings, which were mostly multifamily, but she failed to differentiate between boardinghouses, tenements, and three-deckers, suggesting that most structures were tenements. By 1911 Willard Avenue was almost
entirely Jewish, with families living in 148 buildings. Nine years later, Jews lived the entire length of Willard Avenue in 166 dwellings.\textsuperscript{7} Considering the growing scarcity of land and the need for maximum profitability, the vast majority of new dwellings must have been three-deckers. South Providence's few three-story, brick apartment houses were built for affluent tenants, particularly those with small families.

Regrettably, there is only one paragraph about three-decker houses in the most comprehensive guide to Providence architecture, published in 2003.\textsuperscript{7} When referring to examples found in South Providence, William McK. Woodward mentioned only Jewish developers and landlords. He seemed to suggest that Jews, in particular, were to blame for three-deckers' density and monotonous appearance. In 1916, however, Ilder had blamed Yankees for the profitable proliferation of three-deckers.

In 1979 Leslie Vollmert produced a more extensive and objective study of architecture in South Providence. She was able to identify a core group of Jewish builders: Nathan Wiesel, Harry Weiss, and Benjamin Rakatansky.\textsuperscript{7} By gathering information from city directories, house directories, plat maps, deeds, tax assessments, federal censuses, city vital records, and obituaries, profiles of these immigrant-entrepreneurs emerge. They will be discussed in chronological order.

Nathan Wiesel (also once known as Weasel) was born in about 1867 in Germany, where, at 21 years of age, he married Jennie, his Russian-born wife. All six of their children were born in Rhode Island between 1890 and 1899. In 1900 the Weiss family was living on Willard, and Nathan was working as a peddler. In 1907, after moving several times within South Providence, he became a grocer on Prairie Avenue and began purchasing undeveloped property in plat 53 with his wife.

Between 1906 and 1915, Wiesel built several three-decker houses on Croyland Avenue (three blocks east of Broad Street and one block west of Prairie). He owned some as late as 1920. In 1909, for example, Wiesel's six properties on Croyland were assessed at $18,640. Because the highest assessment was for $5,600, it suggests that some lots were not yet developed. In 1910 Wiesel purchased another property or three-decker at 22-24 Croyland that had belonged since 1907 to Harry Weiss.

Most of the subsequent owners of Wiesel's Croyland Avenue properties had Jewish-sounding surnames. Nevertheless, such owners did not include his sons, Harry and Morris, who sought perhaps a higher income through the pharmacies they owned in Elmwood.

In 1924, however, Nathan Wiesel was still actively involved in property
development. Evidently successful, he owned eight lots in five plats for a total tax assessment of $75,400. He was involved in several other businesses, including “provisions” and meat, during the late 1920s and 1930s. Wiesel remained in Providence until his death in 1931.

Harry Weiss was an even more ambitious developer, who fit Jacobsohn’s definition of a “prolific” builder in Boston’s streetcar suburbs. Very little is known about him, however. Both he and his wife were born in Russia in about 1872, and the first of their six children was born there. By 1902 the Weiss family was living in Connecticut, where the third child was born. Two years later the fourth was born in New York, and the last two were born in Providence in 1907 and 1908.

In 1907 Weiss was listed in the Providence directory as a contractor, builder, and painter, living at 377 Prairie Avenue. In 1909 the assessment for his lot and residence was $6,820. That same year Weiss purchased an illustrated advertisement in the city directory. For his last listing in the city directory, the following year, he described himself as a dealer in diamonds and jewelry. He was then residing at 984 Broadway in a three-and-one-half-story structure known as the Harry Weiss Block. He had constructed this residential and commercial Queen Anne-style building in 1909, two years before his death or sudden departure from Providence.

The enigmatic Weiss was best known for developing some of South Providence’s largest three-decker clusters on and perpendicular to Thurbers Avenue (east of Broad). Known as the Harry Weiss Tract, there were originally 21 lots, most of which had belonged to James Ripley since the 1870s. The three-deckers were typically built on lots of 2,400 to 3,000 square feet. Although it is not clear how many structures were built in 1909, Weiss’ tax bill of $1,496 represented a significant assessment of $90,660.

Weiss was responsible for developing two short streets, Meni Court (named after his wife) and Weiss Court, and sold the lots and buildings as quickly as possible, many within a year. With the exception of a few Armenian families, virtually all of the subsequent owners had Jewish-sounding surnames. After selling two structures on Thurbers Avenue to Harry Kaufman, Weiss repurchased them within a year and then sold them to Rosey Rosen within another year. In 1911 Weiss sold two three-deckers on Weiss Court and three on Meni Court to a couple who held them until 1937.

A third Jewish developer active in South Providence was Benjamin Rakatansky, who can also be considered a “prolific” builder. Born in Ukraine in 1893, he was the son of Edel Rakatansky (1866-1943), a builder, and his wife, Fannie. The family, which included three daughters, lived in London and Montreal before
emigrating to the United States in 1902. The Rakatanskys may have lived in Fall River before settling in Providence by 1914.\textsuperscript{75}

Benjamin, who never attended high school, became a tinsmith. Even after his marriage in 1916, he continued to live besides his parents in one of two houses they built on Robinson Street. By 1920, however, he identified himself as a contractor in the city directory. Rakatansky's tax bill in 1924 shows that he developed eight lots on Gordon Avenue once belonging to St. Michael's Church. Somehow gathering sufficient capital, he acquired all eight on the same day. Each lot was assessed for $680, and the three-deckers were assessed for $2,000 to $3,500. His total tax assessment for 17 properties in South Providence was $34,800.

This second-generation builder, who never considered himself a landlord, is best known for developing 16 identical three-deckers on Croyland Avenue, where Nathan Wiesel had been active. In 1924 he purchased nine lots from James and William Smith, and within two years sold all the three-deckers to individuals or couples with mostly Jewish surnames. The subsequent owners, most with similar surnames, held these properties for only a few years or as long as 30.

How was Rakatansky able to build his three-deckers so quickly? Raub believes that he developed an early system of prefabrication.\textsuperscript{76} Under the supervision of his uncle Morris, a carpenter, he employed as many as two-dozen workers, who erected numerous buildings simultaneously with electric table saws on site.

Though his truck proclaimed that "No Job Was Too Small," Rakatansky became moderately successful. By 1929 he built a three-story, six-bedroom home for his family on Shaw Avenue in the Edgewood neighborhood of Cranston. By 1933, however, Rakatansky's business faltered, and he was forced to relocate to one of his own unsold houses, two blocks south on Bluff Avenue. His business probably rebounded by 1937, when he relocated to Cole Avenue on Providence's East Side. Lacking an engineering background, he was unable to obtain even small commercial commissions, however. In 1933, Rakatansky, a widower who had been active in the labor Zionist movement, the Hebrew Free Loan Association of South Providence, and the Jewish Home for the Aged, moved once more to Miami Beach. He worked intermittently as a contractor until his retirement in 1960 and died seven years later. Having lived by his wits, he was also proud of his honorable reputation.\textsuperscript{77}

DEMISE, STAGNATION, AND RENEWAL
In 1923, in the wake of a severe recession and a bitter, statewide textile workers' strike that reflected that industry's steep decline, Providence's city council consid-
ered zoning laws. When approved the following year, as the population neared its zenith, a five-member zoning commission was established.78

A dwelling was defined as a building occupied by no more than two families: In contrast to a boardinghouse, each family was required to cook its own meals. Although three-decker houses were not identified as such, an apartment house was defined as a dwelling occupied by three or more families (each cooking its own meals) or a dwelling occupied by three or more individuals who shared a common heating system and a common dining room. Tenement houses were not defined, so, like three-deckers, they fell under the rubric of apartment houses. Indeed, until this time, tenants were of such little concern to the Republican Party, dominant throughout the state, that propertyless immigrants in Providence were unable to vote for city councilmen.79 Propertyless, native-born residents qualified, however, by paying a $1 poll tax.

Concurrent with Boston’s 1924 zoning laws, Providence was divided into five classes or use districts: dwelling, apartment house, business, and two industrial classes. Rigid restrictions were imposed on residential buildings’ height and square footage with the intention of separating dwellings and apartment houses (or protecting the property values of the former from the latter). For example, a dwelling, limited to two-stories, could not occupy more than 50% of its lot. An apartment house was limited to 70% of its lot. Thus, a relative moratorium on the construction of three-deckers and larger apartment houses prevailed until zoning laws were revised in 1949.

There can be no doubt that in 1923 such developers and builders as Nathan Wiesel, Harry Weiss, and Benjamin Rakatansky, as well as their commercial lenders, were well aware of the impending zoning laws. They must have hurried to initiate and complete their projects.

In Providence, unlike Boston’s affluent inner suburbs or newer streetcar suburbs, there do not appear to have been other strenuous efforts to blunt the influx of immigrants. In Rhode Island’s capital, such efforts would probably have been futile. Many immigrants and other working-class families were leaving the city, if not the state and region. The number of Jews continued to increase, however.

Compared to building types that had preceded them—row houses, boardinghouses, shanties, and tenements—three-decker houses, however modest, represented significant opportunities for Jews and other minority groups in New England. This was especially true when large numbers of apartment houses did not yet exist or were unaffordable. Through property development and the ownership of three-deckers, working-class families were able to enter the middle class
or secure a higher rung within it. Working-class tenants were also beneficiaries of this plain but unpretentious building type. In addition to improved lighting, ventilation, heating, and sanitation, they gained some measure of privacy, dignity, and pride. Indeed, these lackluster but utilitarian dwellings were the best to which many new Americans and their children could aspire.

Despite the never-ending evolution (and devolution) of urban life, including the rise and decline of public transportation, it seems highly unlikely that three-decker houses will ever disappear from New England. Because they represent the maximization of profits on small lots, there may be no incentive or zoning provision enabling a new generation of builders to tear them down and replace them with larger structures. The most dilapidated dwellings will be abandoned, and others will be razed to build schools, libraries, and social service facilities.

As new waves of immigrants aspire to single-family home ownership or seek rental income, they will probably rehabilitate many three-deckers. Indeed, as a measure of increasing prosperity or consumer indulgence, many units are now embellished with satellite television dishes. But as the American Dream of home ownership becomes ever more elusive and homelessness becomes ever more rampant, it seems shocking to acknowledge that individual apartments within three-deckers, like lofts within former industrial buildings, are now marketed as condominiums. On Providence’s East Side, for example, some units have sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

1 An excellent analysis of the single-family house as “the dominant symbol for American culture” is found in Jan Cohn, The Palace or the Poorhouse: The American House as a Cultural Symbol (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1979).


7 Cromley, 52.

8 For a discussion of the museum’s multilayered meanings, see: Jack Kugelmass, “Turfing the Slum: New York City’s Tenement Museum and the Politics of Heritage,” in Diner, et al., eds., 179–211.

9 See the map of the tenth ward, block number 1037 (on the west side of Orchard Street). First Report of the Tenement House Department of the City of New York, Vol. II (New York: Martin B. Brown Press, 1903).


11 Stern, 501. The following discussion of tenement house legislation is derived primarily from this source.

12 Howe, 149.

13 Hasia R. Diner has pointed out the desirability of Jewish boardinghouses in remote locations, particularly during the nineteenth century. Established even before cemeteries and congregations, they were often one of a Jewish community’s first “institutions.” Hasia R. Diner, A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880, Vol. II of The Jewish People in America, ed. by Henry L. Feingold (5 vols.: Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 89.

14 Cromley, 62. She claims that during the 1860s a middle-class income was $2,500 to $3,000, but this seems highly inflated.

15 Stern, 514.


17 Cromley, 129.


19 Rischin, 14.

20 Michael Gold, Jews Without Money (New York: Horace Liveright, 1930), 248. In one of the book’s final passages (p. 300), he quoted his broken and hopeless father, Herman: “I am just a poor little Jew without money. It is better to be dead in this country than not to have money.”

21 No example of a tenement house has been identified or discussed within studies of Boston’s architecture.


25 Two-family houses have also been referred to as double-houses, twin-houses, semi-detached houses and, in parts of Rhode Island, as "side-by-each."


27 Samuel B. Warner, Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 3. No doubt, tenement houses were also being constructed in these suburbs. When evaluating multiple-family housing in East Cambridge (part of the city of Cambridge), one architectural historian has contrasted tenements and three-deckers by their pretensions. "Three-deckers at least had some pretensions to architectural form and style. They were built with bay windows and entrance porches, and some of them had fairly elaborate coatings of Queen Anne or Colonial Revival trim, in vogue at the time (1885-1900). Tenements, however, the lowest rung on the housing ladder, had no such pretensions. Built with flat fronts, flat roofs, and an utter lack of ornament, in an age when the picturesque was highly valued, they housed the masses with the barest minimum of standards." Survey of the Architectural History in Cambridge, Vol. I: East Cambridge (Cambridge Historical Commission, 1965), 69.

28 Warner, 120.

29 Warner, 118-20.


32 William A. Braverman, "The Emergence of a Unified Community, 1880-1917," in Sarna and Smith, eds., 72. Howard P. Chudacoff has explained that the net increase of 85,000 in Boston's population between 1880 (363,000) and 1890 (448,000) represented several factors. The natural increase in population would have been 20,000, but the actual additional increase was 65,000. Chudacoff determined that although 158,000 families moved to Boston, 138,000 moved out. If families consisted of four or five individuals, then more than one million individuals were involved. The Evolution of American Urban Society (2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 113.


35 Levine and Hoffman, 35.

36 Jacobsohn, 328.
37 Jacobsohn, 339.

38 Patricia Raub, "Another Pattern of Urban Living: Multifamily Housing in Providence, 1890-1930," Rhode Island History XLVIII (February 1990), Table III, 5.

39 Kingston W. Heath, The Patina of Place: The Cultural Weathering of a New England Industrial Landscape (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), Table II, 130. Between 1893 and 1930, 2,083 three-deckers were built in New Bedford. The peak period of construction was 1908 to 1913, when at least 100 were built per year. Heath's book is particularly valuable for its anthropological approach to the continuing use of three-deckers.


41 David C. Adelman, who traced the naturalization of about 1,700 Jewish men in Providence courts before 1907, found that all but 81 entered the United States through New York City. The second largest group, 54, arrived in Boston. "Naturalization of Jews to September 26, 1906," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes (June 1954), 12-17. Examining the same data, Marvin Pitterman determined that about 75% of these men were from Russia, about 14% from Austria, and about 4% from Romania. Pitterman also found that the largest number of Jewish men, 373, were naturalized in 1893. The next largest years were 1891, 1895, and 1897. "Some Casual Observations," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes (November 1958), 47.


44 At about this time, there were more than 2,000 manufacturing "establishments" in Rhode Island. The peak number had been 3,400 in 1890. Donald B. Dodd, ed., Historical Statistics of the United States: Two Centuries of the Census, 1790-1990 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 332.

45 Raub, 8.

46 Rhode Island's oldest houses for mill workers were built in 1793 in Pawtucket, considered the birthplace of America's industrial revolution. Wright, 61.

47 Raub, Table I, 5.

48 Raub, Table I, 5.

49 The four-story Frances M. Andrews Row Houses, built on the West Side's Parade Street in 1878, became the Jewish community's Miriam Hospital in 1925. Jews never lived in the immediate neighborhood, however. In 1952, after a new Miriam Hospital was built on the East Side, the former row houses became a nursing home. They are still in use.

50 The Minder contained 24 units. By 1923, 20 apartment buildings were erected on the fashionable East Side. Five of these buildings contained up to nine units, and 15 contained between 10 and 18. Robert O. Jones, Historic and Architectural Resources of the East Side, Providence: A Preliminary Report (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1989), 38. The city's YMCA, a nine-story, hotel-like facility, had been erected west of the central business district in 1913. The 19-story Biltmore Hotel was built adjacent to City Hall in 1922.


53 Cady, 230.

54 Ihlder, 35.

55 Marian Misch of Providence was the national president of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1908.

56 Ihlder, 18-9.

57 In her comparative study of two Providence neighborhoods, Federal Hill and Smith Hill, Judith E. Smith found that Italian and Jewish immigrants, particularly during the 1920s, were successful in establishing new lives. Although she did not study tenements, three-deckers or other building types, she demonstrated in her sample of 162 Italian families and 72 Jewish families that Jewish men were far more entrepreneurial than Italian men. For example, 46% of Jewish men began working in Providence as peddlers and shop assistants compared to 6% of Italian men. Eventually, 41% of Jewish men became self-employed as grocers, butchers, fish dealers, and shopkeepers. Approximately half of Italian men were skilled craftsmen and artisans, earning relatively high wages, but only 6% were self-employed. Smith's data merely suggest, however, that Jews' entrepreneurial spirit extended to housing. Smith, *Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900-1940* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).


59 About 71% of Jews were born in Russia or Poland, and about 14% were born in America. About 94% of Russians living in Providence were Jews. Alice Goldstein, "Mobility of Natives and Jews in Providence, 1900-1920," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* (November 1979), 69.

60 Perlmann, 92. By examining the records of 12,000 Providence schoolchildren between 1880 and 1925, Perlmann was able to construct a sample of 561 Russian-born fathers living in Providence in 1915. He discovered that 71% of these men, the vast majority being Jews, were self-employed compared to only 20% of other immigrant fathers. Having also studied the 1900 census, Perlmann concluded that a city such as Providence attracted a higher percentage of entrepreneurial Jews largely because there were fewer opportunities for them in larger cities.

61 Sorin, 137.

62 William McK. Woodward, *Smith Hill, Providence* (Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, 1980), 3. Much of the following background information about the North End is from this source.

63 Ihlder, 23.

64 Ihlder was also unable to see Jewish settlement in the North End, particularly along North Main Street, in symbolic terms. The juxtaposition of humble and august structures, within the core of
Roger Williams' original colony, was exceptionally rich. Many Jews lived and worked within the shadows of the First Baptist Meeting House in America (rebuilt in 1775) and the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John (rebuilt in 1810). Jews also settled on Smith Hill, near the dome of the majestic State House (erected in 1901).

65 Tolder, 66.

66 Raub, 15.

67 Rosenhirsch, the bristle importer who lived at 10 Goddard between 1900 and 1930, was one of 30 founding members of Gemiluth Chesed, the Hebrew Free Loan Association, in 1903. Immigrants primarily from Russia, they had arrived in New York between 1879 and 1899. The vast majority, self-employed as shopkeepers or small manufacturers, had businesses along North Main Street. In 1923 almost half of the founders were still living and working in Providence. George M. Goodwin, "The Centenary of Hebrew Free Loan," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes (November 2004), 24-1-2.

68 Leslie J. Vollmert, South Providence (Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, 1978), 20. Much of the following background information about South Providence is from this source.

69 Robert O. Christensen, Elmwood (Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, 1979), 14. Much of the following background information about Elmwood is from this source.

70 Coincidentally, during the early decades of the twentieth century, Worcester's Jewish community settled on five blocks of Water Street on the city's East Side. A detailed study of the 1910 census revealed that 123 Jewish families or 723 individuals resided within 35 dwellings, containing 123 apartments, all of which were categorized as tenements. Dwellings ranged in size from 12 two-family units to 7 six-family units. There were 10 three-family dwellings. As many as 117 Jewish families rented apartments, but there were only six residential landlords. Among 30 landlords of commercial properties, 25 were Jews, but 19 (or 63%) could be considered absentee. Most Jews departed Water Street before the late 1950s, when the construction of Interstate Highway 290 severed it. Norma Feingold, Water Street: World Within a World (Worcester Historical Museum, 1984), 49, 52-4.

71 Goldstein, 70-1.


73 She also identified two less prolific Jewish builders, Sigmund Rosen and Abraham Spiegel, and two key gentile builders, Thomas Ray and George Youden. Vollmert, 40-1, 71-5.

74 Weiss Court no longer exists. Meni Court, presently identified as Mini on a street sign, has only a few dwellings.

75 Interview recorded with Ira Rakatansky, April 30, 2012.

76 Raub, 10.

77 Benjamin and Martha Rakatansky's son, Ira (born in 1919), became an architect. A graduate of Hope High School and Rhode Island School of Design, he also earned a bachelor's and a master's
in architecture at Harvard, where, during the mid-1940s, he became a modernist acolyte of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. Though never encouraged to join his father's business, Ira returned to Providence to establish his stylish, mostly residential practice. In 1955, when upwardly mobile Jews had departed South Providence to the East Side or southern suburbs, Rakatansky remodeled the former Temple Beth-El for Congregation Shaare Zedek and designed the Willard Shopping Center under the auspices of the Providence Redevelopment Agency. In 1958 he designed Temple Beth Am (now Am David) in Warwick, but he is also fond of his three churches. At 92 years of age, he still spends much of each day at his attractive office on Meeting Street in Providence, which he built in 1959. Ira’s son, Mark, is an architect who serves as an adjunct associate professor at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. Interviews recorded with Ira Rakatansky on April 30 and May 3, 2012. See also: John Caserta and Lynnette Widdier, eds., _Ira Rakatansky: As Modern As Tomorrow_ (Richmond, CA: William Stout Publishers, 2010).


A lot of people here cry and they need jobs... kids need to stay off the streets... they like sports and dancing... the YMCA closed so adults do not have a place for recreation.
THE BROAD STREET SYNAGOGUE:
REVITALIZING SACRED SPACE

Danielle Herzenberg

A native of Owings Mill, Maryland, the author and designer attended the Day School of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation (Reform) and graduated from Garrison Forest School. She earned a bachelor’s degree in studio art and art history at the University of Colorado, Boulder. In May, Ms. Herzenberg received a master’s in interior architecture from Rhode Island School of Design. Her thesis, consisting of more than 90 pages of text and images, envisions a new life for Congregation Shaare Zedek’s synagogue, the former Temple Beth-El, built in 1911 in South Providence. The following pages represent a few highlights This eye-popping thesis won RISD’s Outstanding Community Engagement Award. Before relocating to New York City to pursue additional cultural heritage projects, Danielle assisted the American sculptor Jim Drain on his commission for the new American Embassy in Rabat, Morocco.
Abstract

Old buildings are more than just material, they are objects that, over time, have stood as silent witnesses to human histories and hold the potential to reincarnate. The Broad Street Synagogue in Providence, RI is a repository of cultural remnants that tell a story through the materiality of the building.

These layers of history can be preserved while allowing room for future generations to continue the process of cultural layering.

Synagogue in Hebrew means “assembly.” This deacclifed building, as well as its context, has changed dramatically over time. To make this forgotten building a source of community gathering requires a reinterpretation of the meaning of synagogue.

Flowing water links together a group of people, connecting them in a singular experience much like collective prayer.

My thesis attempts to both honor the history of the building and imagine its revitalization through the addition of a swimming pool, offering an immersive, collective form of assembly.

In Jewish law, when a person dies, their body may not be left alone until they are properly buried. It is a form of respect, to ensure that their body is not harmed or desecrated while transitioning to final rest. Buildings should be treated similarly. After the Beav Street Synagogue died and its original function was lost, it was not paid proper respect, and instead the building was abandoned and subsequently brutally vandalized.

I was taken by the beauty of this decaying form.南部light broke through the stained glass windows, and reflected in puddles of rainwater warping the floor boards, brightly colored graffiti stained the walls, the mold spores that covered the interior, were equally as obscene as the original architectural details. In addition, the synagogue’s original mikveh bath was drained of all its water, a poignant gesture that left a deep impression in my mind. I began to understand the life-cycle of the building as one revolving around water: and my intuition became to reclaim its presence within the building so that it once again becomes a means of serving and healing the community.
Site background

The Broad Street Synagogue is located on the South Side of Providence in a mixed-used commercial and residential neighborhood within a half-mile radius to existing public service points, including elementary and middle schools, community colleges and universities. Youth in Action—an after-school program, health clinics, a homeless shelter, churches, St. Joseph Hospital, and a conflict counseling center. The area did not witness substantial development until the industrialization of the late 19th century, when it attracted Irish and Jewish immigrants.

A gym would be great... basketball! A pool and definitely computers!
This building has a story to tell. It's important to archive the ephemera left behind and create a place for new histories to be stored...A sound studio could be used to record oral histories of community members.
In Testimony Whereof, We have hereunto set our hands and seals.

11th day of September,

NAME. \[Signature\]

RESIDENT. \[Signature\]

Bernard Segal, 93 Arlington Ave.

Matilda Levine, 178 Whitmarsh St.

Alfred Rosen, 30 Fairview Ave.

Alter Rosenberg, 169 Reynolds Ave.

Reuben Kalbstein, 245 Morris Ave.
IN THE BEGINNING:
HOW OUR ASSOCIATION GREW AND TOOK ROOT

Geraldine S. Foster

One of the highlights of the 58th annual meeting was this report. Given her extensive involvement with and leadership of our Association over many decades, Jerry was of course the ideal person to deliver it. In her typically modest way, moreover, she chose to omit an important point. Her family’s service on our board has been passed to a third generation. Of course the election of our new president represents further contributions by another family to the organization’s well-being. Quite happily, our Association stands for both growth and continuity. Each thrives through the other.

In the beginning there were seven individuals: a lawyer, David Adelman; a rabbi, William G. Braude; a librarian, Matilda Pincus; a pharmacist, Beryl Segal; a professor, Israel Kapstein; another lawyer, Arthur Levy; and a businessman, Alter Boyman. They were the charter members of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Their mission was to collect, preserve, and publicize the story of Jews in Rhode Island. If mentioned in state histories, this story was seriously flawed or treated derisively; usually it was conspicuously missing. The charter members felt a sense of urgency about recapturing this history. They worried that many records of disbanded organizations were disappearing and that other records would fall victim to fire or flood.

The first meeting of the founding fathers and mother was called to order by David Adelman, president pro tem, on the evening of November 20, 1951 at the Rhode Island Historical Society’s John Brown House. They had a full agenda. They discussed and adopted a constitution; elected officers; fixed the salary of the secretary at $10 per annum; accepted in principle a logo to which a Hebrew word would be added by a three-member committee; authorized the purchase of supplies;
and appointed a committee to discuss the possibility of obtaining a headquarters at the Jewish Community Center (the old police station on the East Side). So began the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, the nation’s oldest state or local Jewish historical organization—indeed, the oldest, continuously operating local ethnic historical society in the United States.

The following month a letter was sent to selected members of the Jewish community, inviting them to join the Association. A dues schedule, listing six categories from $100 to $10, was enclosed. Those who responded were asked to indicate the category desired. There were 10 initial responses, though the categories they chose are unknown.

Regrettably, the Jewish Community Center could not provide a room for the Association’s exclusive use, but the Rhode Island Historical Society granted the use of John Brown House for meetings for one year. The Association would enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Society of the Cincinnati, the Sons of the American Revolution or any other patriotic organization. There was a fee of $100
for the year plus an agreement to recruit members for the Rhode Island Historical Society.

The Association's first formal (or annual) meeting was held on Lincoln's Birthday, 1953 at John Brown House. The speaker was Lee Friedman, president of the American Jewish Historical Society, which had been founded in 1892 as the first national, ethnic historical society. Following his talk, a reception was held in the dining room, which was tastefully decorated with red, white, and blue carnations in keeping with the wallpaper. Mrs. David Adelman presided at the coffee urn; Mrs. William Braude served at the tea table. Candles provided illumination. The consensus of opinion, according to the minutes, was that the program was interesting, dignified, and most enjoyable.

However, the Association faced a serious problem—the lack of a permanent headquarters to store records and archival materials and to provide an address. As early as 1955, the members of the executive committee discussed the need to purchase a house. The Jewish Community Center offered the use of a locked cabinet, but this was a hardly a boon to David Adelman, the trunk of whose car served as the repository of the archives.

Finding accessible sites for executive committee meetings also proved difficult. Minutes show that the committee wandered from John Brown House to Temple Beth-El to the Jewish Home for the Aged, where the Association received permission to store records. Committee meetings were also held in private homes, including Janet and Mel Zurier's. The Association entered into negotiations with Brown Hillel, but to no avail. Discussions also took place with the architect and director of the proposed Jewish Community Center on Elmgrove Avenue, but they came to naught.

In 1963, a dozen years after its founding, the Association rented quarters on the third floor of 209 Angell Street, above the medical offices of Dr. Seebert Goldowsky. These quarters were not easy to visit, however.

Then in 1975, the Association was granted the use of a two-room suite on the lower level of the new Jewish Federation building. At last, this was a permanent home, and one easily accessible by the public, but Federation leaders stated that the Association could never ask for a subvention.

While the Association was having difficulty finding quarters for its growing collection, one facet of its mission was proceeding apace. This was the publication of a journal devoted to the history of Jews in Rhode Island. The first issue of *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, consisting of 500 copies, appeared in June 1954. With the exception of 1961, when David Adelman, the founding editor, was
ill, the journal has been published every year (and sometimes twice a year). The second issue of The Notes was dedicated to the local celebration of the American Jewish Tercentenary, which had been sponsored by Providence’s General Jewish Committee, the forerunner of Federation. This issue contained several programs and speeches.

In April 1955, 150 copies of The Notes were distributed free of charge to boys becoming bar mitzvah, confirmants, and teachers, but it resulted in no new members for the Association. This experiment was never tried again, but a research scholarship fund established at that time has continued.

The Association’s membership reached 182 in 1956, due in large part to a novel idea. The membership committee invited selected individuals to a dinner at Ledgemont Country Club, where, presumably, the prospects were treated to a program and a persuasive sales pitch.

John Brown House, which had been the venue of the first annual meeting, continued as the preferred site until 1970, when the Association hosted an afternoon-through-evening program at Temple Beth-El. The Association’s 16th annual meeting was combined with the 6th annual meeting of the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies. This gala event included tours of the temple and various sessions. Each historical society held its own meeting before gathering for a kosher buffet dinner.

Six years later, a combined meeting of the Association, the League, Touro Synagogue, and the Newport Historical Society took place in Newport. The all-day session featured tours, lectures, and lunch.

And so the Association began and took root.

Over the years, the Association’s annual meetings, traveling from place to place, have presented a rich variety of interesting speakers. Our journal, The Notes, has grown not only in length but in stature. It is one of only three regularly published historical journals in Rhode Island. (The others belong to the Rhode Island and the Newport historical societies.) Eleanor Horvitz, who became our librarian after Dorothy Abbott’s retirement, wrote many articles for The Notes. These were truly a labor of love.

The Association’s membership is stable, and it has subsidized scholars and provided speakers for groups, schools, and other historical societies. As the archives have continued to grow, storage space was acquired in 1996. An even larger space has been rented since 2011. In 2006, entering the realm of cyberspace, the Association created its own Web site.

But there is always room for more of the stuff of history. If all this sounds
routine, it is not. History does not always repeat itself. There is always something new or interesting to come across our desk.

I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the Association's other major accomplishments. In 1988, for example, it hosted a national convention of the American Jewish Historical Society. With help from the society's part-time staff person in Waltham, our working committee of six carried it off. Everybody, including ourselves, was amazed by the results. We scoped out hotel accommodations and transportation, planned an exhibition about early businesses, displayed copies of The Notes, and planned a walking tour of Benefit Street. Florence Markoff gave a presentation at the convention's opening reception at Temple Beth-El. We also did something that no host-organization had done: arranged Shabbat home hospitality, which was greatly appreciated.

Then in 1992, with the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Black Heritage Society, the Association became a founding partner of Heritage Harbor, a history museum intended to reflect the state's diversity. Its home was supposed to be the old Shepherd building in downtown Providence. Three years later, when Narragansett Electric Company donated its decommissioned generating plant on the Providence River, there were 16 partners with a plan to open in 2001. Several members and friends of the Association made major gifts to Heritage Harbor. We await further developments.

Now three impressive publications bear our imprimatur. A paperback history, The Jews in Rhode Island, was published in 1985 as part of the ethnic heritage series celebrating Providence's 349th anniversary. In 1998 a pictorial history, Jews of Rhode Island: 1658-1958, was published by Arcadia Press. In 2004, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Notes and the 350th anniversary of the American Jewish community, The Jews of Rhode Island was published by the Association in cooperation with Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England. This monumental hardcover anthology belongs in everyone's library.

Now we have reached the age of 60. We have passed many milestones and have met many challenges. Age 60 in some cultures is considered a new beginning, the start of a new page of life. We have turned that page and started a new chapter and— with your help— our future accomplishments will be writ large and bright.

IN THE BEGINNING
RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
58th ANNUAL MEETING

Maxine Goldin, the Association's secretary, chaired the meeting held on April 29, 2012 at Temple Beth-El. More than 125 members and guests attended. Having completed 20 years of dedicated and effective service as our office manager, Anne Sherman was honored with poems by Maxine and Marilyn Myrow and received a bouquet.

President David Leach reviewed the organization's major accomplishments during his three years of leadership. These include stronger finances, a new storage facility, and the launch of a digitization project (through the generosity of the Bernhardt Foundation). David received a gift in appreciation of these efforts.

Several reports followed. Treasurer David Bazar remarked on the Association's finances. In order to reduce our dependence on endowment income for operations, current members must recruit new members and consider additional gifts. Speaking on behalf of Stanley Abrams, chair of the publications committee, George Goodwin thanked all those who contributed to our journal's success.

Past president Eugene Weinberg reported for the nominating committee. The new slate of officers and board members was installed by Dr. Morgan Grefe, executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Society. The society's president, Barry Hittner, was also a guest.

Incoming president Michael Schwartz spoke fondly about his roots in our Jewish community. His goals include a transformation of the Association's Web site and a larger membership.

Past president Jerry Foster, marking the Association's 60th anniversary, spoke about significant leaders and accomplishments. The founders would indeed be thrilled by their shining legacy.

The afternoon's featured speaker was Dr. Harris Gleckman, founder and shammus of Documenting Maine Jewry. Within a decade, our sister historical association has made phenomenal progress by collecting and disseminating documents and photos through its Web site (mainejews.org) and by recruiting volunteers.

Members and guests enjoyed a festive collation coordinated by Anne Sherman.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Breindel
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
IN MEMORIAM

OCTOBER 6, 2011 – OCTOBER 7, 2012

BAXT, VICTOR J., born in Providence, was the son of the late Herman and Etta Baxt. He was the husband of the late Edna Baxt.

A graduate of Hope High School, Mr. Baxt earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry at Rhode Island State College in 1938. Two years later he earned a master’s at Duke University.

He served in the Navy during World War II.

Mr. Baxt was hired by the late Albert Pilavin to head Thompson Chemical Company, which became Teknor Apex in Pawtucket. Mr. Baxt served the company for 65 years, eventually becoming president, vice chair of the board, and chair from 2003 until his death.

He served on the board and numerous committees of Miriam Hospital for four decades. He was the hospital’s person of the year in 2006. He served on numerous Jewish communal boards, including Federation, the Jewish Home, Jewish Seniors Agency, Tamarisk, and Temple Beth-El.

Deeply committed to his alma mater, Mr. Baxt established an endowed scholarship for undergraduate students in chemistry and chemical engineering at the University of Rhode Island. He created the Baxt Chair in polymer engineering and supported the creation of the Norman M. Fain Hillel Center. In 2011 this proud and loyal graduate received an honorary degree of doctor of science.

A nearly lifelong resident of Providence, Mr. Baxt also had homes in Newport and Palm Beach.

He is survived by his wife Gussie and their sons, Robert and Michael Chusmir.

Died on October 7, 2012 in Providence at the age of 95.

BRIER, MILTON I., born in Providence, was a son of the late Benjamin and Florence (Genensky) Brier.

A 1946 graduate of Moses Brown School, he served as a trustee. Mr. Brier was a member of the Class of 1950 at Brown University. For 32 years he was a partner in Brier & Brier Insurance Company.

A past president of Camp JORI, Mr. Brier was a member of Temple Emanu-El. He was also a member of Common Cause and a life member of the University Club.

A former resident of Narragansett, he was an All-American swimmer and a treasurer of New England’s Masters Swimming Association.

Mr. Brier is survived by his wife Zita and their sons, Neil and Jeffrey, and their daughter Judith Donnelly.

Died on June 19, 2012 in Providence at the age of 84.
FACTOR, JACQUELINE TEVEROW, born in Mattapan, Massachusetts, was a daughter of the late Abraham and Sarah (Tarnapol) Blicher. She was the wife of the late Joseph Teverow and the late Abraham Factor.

She grew up in Pawtucket and graduated from the University of Rhode Island. A lifelong learner, she had bounding intellectual interests, including Bible, which she studied with various groups. Mrs. Factor was a teacher and later a social worker for the state of Rhode Island.

Her numerous other interests extended to bridge, movies, theatre, music, family history, and relaxing in Narragansett. She maintained close friendships in Rhode Island and in Florida, where she moved in 1999.

Mrs. Factor was active in Jewish communal affairs throughout her life. As a young woman she led a Habonim youth group and later was active in Pioneer Women (now known as Na’amat).

Mrs. Factor is survived by her children, Paul, Joshua, Lee, and Philip. Died on January 8, 2012 in Boynton Beach at the age of 85.

FACTOR, SIDNEY W., born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was a son of the late Max and Fannie (Segal) Factor. He was the husband of the late Sylvia Factor.

Mr. Factor was a graduate of MIT and the Lowell Textile Institute (later known as the University of Massachusetts, Lowell). He settled in Providence in 1947 and taught mathematics at Tolman High School, in Pawtucket, until retiring in 1984.

Mr. Factor was a member of Temple Emanuel-El, Masons, and Knights of Pythias. He was a charter member of Seekonk Swim and Tennis Club. For more than two decades he was a volunteer at Miriam Hospital.

Mr. Factor is survived by his daughters, Maxine Kingsbury and Judith Factor, and his son, R. Maxwell, with whom he resided. Died on June 23, 2012 in Providence at the age of 93.

FOX, DOROTHY, born in West Warwick, was the daughter of the late David and Annie (Trebor) Frank. A year before her birth, in 1919, her father helped found Congregation Ahavat Shalom.

She was a graduate of West Warwick High School and expressed her creativity through playing and singing with young children.

Ms. Fox was a member of several congregations, including Temple Beth-El, Temple Beth Sholom, and Providence Hebrew Day School. At 83 years of age, she made aliya and found spiritual peace in Jerusalem. Ms. Fox was a life member of our Association.

She is survived by her son Joseph and her daughters, Joyce Starr and Jill Tobak. Died on July 5, 2012 in Jerusalem at the age of 91.
GEWIRTZ, SARAH, the daughter of Solomon and Esther Lando, was born in New York City. She and Cantor Naftali (Norman) Gewirtz, married for 65 years, made their home in a variety of places, including Providence from 1962 to 1976. Until the couple died, they never tired of telling everyone how much they were blessed by Providence.

She was survived briefly by her husband and their children, Shlomo, Martin, and Toby.

Died on June 16, 2012 in Deerfield Beach, Florida at the age of 88.

GEWIRTZ, CANTOR NAFTALI (NORMAN), the son of Mendle and Kate Gewirtz, was born in New York City. Though never orphaned, he and some of his siblings were required to spend several years in an orphanage.

Educated in New York City's public schools, he felt moved by classical music as early as fourth grade. As a child he worked in his father's dry goods store and briefly studied accounting at City College.

During World War II, he served with the infantry in France. He assisted Jewish chaplains with services or helped officiate in their absence.

Cantor Gewirtz was invested by Hebrew Union College and also studied at the American Theater Wing, both in New York City.

He served congregations in Silver Spring, Maryland, and in Bay Shore, Long Island, before being called to Temple Beth-El in Providence. The Gewirtz family left the congregation when they made aliyah.

Cantor and Mrs. Gewirtz later lived in Philadelphia and in 1992 settled in Deerfield Beach, where he continued to lead services.

Died on June 25, 2012 in Deerfield Beach at the age of 90. According to his son Shlomo, he passed away only three hours after shiva had ended for Mrs. Gewirtz. One of the Gewirtz children remarked: “Instead of two years of mourning and saying Kaddish, we have just one year for both. Now our mother was a very efficient lady, but this efficient, who knew? As usual, she probably said, ‘Hurry up, Tulie, you are late.’”

Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman, who arrived at Temple Beth-El in 1970, offered the following memories to the Gewirtz children:

“Your parents were well-known for their love of being Jewish. Your dad was a library of articles, insights, and wisdom that he loved sharing with everyone. Rabbi William G. Braude especially loved his puns every week at the Chumash-with-Rashi class. And that music was such an unbelievably natural part of this sweet and tender man almost goes without saying. I can still hear in my mind how he sang to our Rebecca when she was an infant. So he embraced with all his heart and soul and might his Yiddishkeit, humor, and singing.

And, oh, do I recall how your mom’s smile so lit up the room! She was a welcoming woman, a true kibitzer, a leader of Pioneer Women, too.

Together they were two peas in a pod, forging warm relationships and embrac-
ing Jews of all kinds and bringing them closer to where they could travel Jewishly. And to see how devoted your folks were to one another and to their family! It was a great marriage for me as a young rabbi to emulate. You are so lucky to have had them in your lives for as long as you did. May their memories be for a blessing.”

GOLDBERG, DR. NORMAN I., born in Providence, was a son of the late Louis and Mollie (Friedman) Goldberg.

After attending Providence College, he earned his dental degree at Temple University in 1943. During World War II, he served in the Army as a dental officer in the European theatre.

A pioneer in implant dentistry, Dr. Goldberg was a founder and a fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry. Having coauthored the first textbook in this field, with Dr. Aaron Gershoff, he lectured and taught in numerous countries.

While practicing dentistry in Providence from 1949 to 1998, he was a senior dental surgeon at Miriam Hospital, an assistant clinical professor at Harvard’s School of Dental Medicine, and a consultant to the Food and Drug Administration.

Dr. Goldberg was a member and a life trustee of Temple Beth-El. Following his retirement, he lived in Florida.

He is survived by his wife Phyllis and their children, Jeffrey Goldberg and Carol Friedman.

Died on September 13, 2012 in West Palm Beach at the age of 92.

HANNA, IRENE, born in Middletown, New York, was the daughter of Morris and Molly Jabitsky.

After graduating from Orange County Community College, she was a librarian in New York City libraries and enjoyed reading to youngsters. She enjoyed collecting cookbooks and exploring yard sales.

Mrs. Hanna is survived by her husband Alexander and their daughters, Pauline Finkelstein, Caroline Matera, Cynthia Goldman, and Heather Hanna.

Died on July 25, 2012 in Cumberland at the age of 80.

KAUFMAN, HOWARD S., born in Providence, was a son of the late Louis and Freida (Mencoff) Kaufman.

He graduated from Hope High School in 1948 and Providence College in 1952. He played basketball for the Friars.

Mr. Kaufman served in the Army during the Korean War. A co-owner of the former Globe Industries, he retired in 1978. He resided in Wellington, Florida.

Mr. Kaufman was a vice president of Temple Beth-El and served on the boards of Miriam Hospital, Jewish Federation, and Citizens Bank. He was a life member of our Association.
He is survived by his wife Rachel and their children, Evan and Deborah.
Died on April 28, 2012 at the age of 83.

KOLODOFF, GLORIA, born in Fall River, was a daughter of the late Charles and Rose (Zelniker) Kosofsky. She was the wife of the late Max Kolodoff and the late Selwyn Ackerman.

Mrs. Kolodoff was a bookkeeper for Carol Jane Creations. She belonged to Temple Shalom and Congregation B’nai Israel and was a life member of Hadassah.
Mrs. Kolodoff is survived by her children, Debra Ackerman and Barry Ackerman.

Died on November 17, 2011 in Warwick at the age of 83.

LEVIN, MILTON, born in Fall River, was a son of the late Michael M. and Bess (Eisenberger) Levin.

During World War II, he served as a staff sergeant in the Army Air Force. He flew 35 missions as a tail gunner in a B-24 Liberator.

He attended Brown University until his father’s death required that he enter the family business, United Supply Company. Having been a longtime resident of Providence, he retired to East Greenwich. The survivor of many illnesses, he was also an early beneficiary of open heart surgery.

Mr. Levin was a member of Temple Emanu-El, B’nai B’rith, Jewish War Veterans, and the New England Wholesalers Association.

He is survived by his wife Cynthia and their daughters, Miriam Sirota and Heather Paskin, and their son Michael.

Died on November 14, 2011 in East Greenwich at the age of 85.

MICHAELSON, JULIUS C., born in Salem, Massachusetts, descended from a dynasty of Lithuanian rabbis. He was the son of the late Carl and Celia (Cooley) Michaelson.

Mr. Michaelson, who was known as “Julie” and “Mike,” graduated from Hope High School in 1939. He began studies at Boston University, but soon became a first lieutenant in the Army during World War II.

Having graduated from Boston University Law School in 1947, he was a co-founder of the firm Abedon, Michaelson, Stanzler & Biener. He later practiced law with his son Jeffrey, retiring in 2010. Mr. Michaelson was president of the Rhode Island Bar Association from 1972 to 1973. As a specialist in labor law, he was general counsel to the state’s AFL-CIO.

In 1957 Mr. Michaelson, a Democrat, entered the political arena as a delegate to the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention. He served as senator in the General Assembly from 1962 to 1974. During this time he also earned a master’s degree in

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philosophy at Brown. His thesis dealt with the relationship between law and morality.

Dedicated to social justice, Mr. Michaelson led legislative fights for fair housing, open public meetings, and consumer protection. As chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he supported women's rights. The Michaelson Act acknowledged his efforts to obtain collective bargaining rights for teachers.

From 1975 to 1979, Mr. Michaelson served as Rhode Island's attorney general. The second Jew elected to this office, he defeated his predecessor, Richard Israel, a Republican and the first Jew.

In 1982 he ran for the U.S. Senate against the incumbent, John Chafee, but was narrowly defeated. In 2002, recognized as one of the leading elected officials of his era, he was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

Mr. Michaelson served on several government committees. In 1980, during the Carter administration, he was a delegate to the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation, which monitored the Soviet Union's compliance with the Helsinki Accords. During the Reagan administration, he served on the Foreign Service Grievance Board. During the Clinton administration, he was a member of the National Institute for Democracy, which promotes democracy in developing countries.

He was a member of Temples Emanu-El and Beth-El. Instrumental in relocating the Jewish Community Center to the East Side, he later served as president. He supported the Judaic studies program at Brown and was a member of Hebrew Free Loan of Providence.

He enjoyed skiing near his vacation home on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire and also played tennis.

Mr. Michaelson is survived by his wife Rita and their sons, Mark and Jeffrey. Died on November 12, 2011 in Providence at the age of 89.

ODESSA, ELAINE, born in New York City, was the daughter of the late Louis and Grace (Fortgang) Schoenfeld. She was the wife of the late Benton Odessa.

Mrs. Odessa, a graduate of Hope High School, was chair emerita of General Fabrics Company.

She was a pillar of Rhode Island's Jewish community. A president of its Sisterhood, she was also an honorary vice president of Temple Emanu-El. She was a president of the Women's Division and an honorary board member of Federation.

As a board member of the Jewish Seniors Agency, Mrs. Odessa was a founding member of Tamarisk. Her communal responsibilities also included membership on the board of governors of Miriam Hospital and president of the Roger Williams chapter of B'nai B'rith. Mrs. Odessa also served as an honorary vice president of Alperin Schechter Day School.

She was honored by the Jewish Theological Seminary, National Council of Jewish Women, and the national organization of Lions of Judah. When not performing
mitzvot, she enjoyed entertaining and summering in Narragansett.

Mrs. Odessa is survived by her daughter Susan Froehlich and her sons, Edward and David.

Died on March 12, 2012 in Pawtucket at the age of 79.

PASS, DR. HARRY E., born in Providence, was a son of the late Max and Minnie (Fish) Pass.

An optometrist in Providence for more than 40 years, he belonged to the Rhode Island and American Optometric Associations. During the Vietnam War, he served as a captain in the Army’s medical corps.

A former member of Temple Beth-El, he was affiliated with Temple Torat Yisrael.

Dr. Pass is survived by his wife Jeanne and their daughters, Jodi Gaess and Lori Pass.

Died on February 4, 2012 in Warwick at 70 years of age.

ROSEN, DR. THEODORE, born in London, was the son of Max and Sarah Rosen. In 1910 his family settled in Brockton, Massachusetts.

Having graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1933, he became an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist. He was a medical officer in the Department of the Interior’s Indian Service (later known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and in the Civilian Conservation Corps. During World War II, he served as a medical officer in the Navy.

In 1946 Dr. Rosen began practicing in Manchester, Connecticut. After treating approximately 30,000 patients, he retired in 1991 at 83 years of age. He also found time to write three books about science and history.

Dr. Rosen was a member of Congregation Beth Sholom B’nai Israel, in Manchester, and chaired the building committee for the current synagogue.

He is survived by his wife Gladys and their children, Theodore, Paula, Stanley, and Rachel. He was predeceased by his daughter Marjorie Thomas.

Died on February 1, 2012 in Manchester at 103 years of age.

SALTER, ELLIOT A., born in Providence, was a son of the late Nathan and Eva (Levy) Salter. He was the husband of the late Geraldine (Conheim) Salter and the late Helene (Yale) Salter.

A 1946 graduate of Brown University and a graduate of George Washington University Law School, he practiced intellectual property law with Julius C. Michaelson in Providence. He was a longtime resident of Barrington.

Mr. Salter is survived by his son Robert and his stepchildren, Doug Bonoff and Lauren Fessenden. He is also survived by his dear friend and caretaker, Alice Fisher.

Died on February 3, 2012 in Providence at 86 years of age.
SAPINSLEY, JOHN M., born in Providence, was the son of Milton and Elsa (Schwed) Sapinsley. A Renaissance man, he enjoyed success in numerous endeavors.

Mr. Sapinsley attended Hope High School and graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Brown University in 1942.

During World War II, he served with the Navy in North Africa, Sicily, Anzio, and Normandy, twice surviving the destruction of his LCT (landing craft, tank). He achieved the rank of lieutenant commander.

He became president of Crescent Company, an electrical wire and cable business founded by his father and later known as Carol Cable. As a member of the Young Presidents' Association, he took management courses at Harvard Business School.

At the age of 43 he retired from business, however, and pursued graduate studies in economics at Brown. He became an associate professor and vice president for academic affairs at Rhode Island College before his second retirement in 1987. A natural teacher and mentor, he continued to teach economics part-time at Brown and became an advisor to aspiring entrepreneurs through the Small Business Association.

Mr. Sapinsley served on the boards of numerous organizations, including Miriam Hospital, ACLU, and Roger Williams College (later University). He was a founding director of Common Cause of Rhode Island and was founding executive director of the Rhode Island Council for Economic Education. He was a member of Temple Beth-El and a life member of our Association.

Mr. Sapinsley and his wife Lila (whose successful campaigns for the State Senate he managed) endowed a theatre, Sapinsley Hall, within the Nazarian Performing Arts Center at Rhode Island College. He also wrote his memoirs.

He was a champion golfer at Ledgemont Country Club and enjoyed skiing. Mr. Sapinsley was president of Walker's Pond Conservancy, which protected Conway Lake in New Hampshire, where he had a vacation home.

Mr. Sapinsley is survived by his wife Lila and their daughters, Jill Mooney, Carol Rubenstein, Joan Lewis, and Patricia Levy.

Died on February 29, 2012 in Providence at the age of 89.

SILVER, DR. CAROLL M. was born in New Britain, Connecticut. He was the husband of the late Gail Silver and the late Macie Silver.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Columbia College in 1932, he also won the highest honors at the University of Chicago Medical School, from which he graduated in 1936. (He also won the prize for best pool player in medical school.)

During World War II, Dr. Silver served in the Army. He was chief of orthopedic surgery at the 180th Station Hospital in North Africa.

In 1946, with the late Dr. Stanley D. Simon, he established a practice in Providence. Eventually becoming the Orthopedic Group, in Pawtucket, it included the late Dr. Henry Litchman and Dr. Mehrdad Motamed.
Dr. Silver was chief of orthopedic surgery at Miriam Hospital from 1949 to 1969 and was a consultant to Rhode Island Hospital. He was a clinical professor of orthopedic surgery at Brown University Medical School from 1977 to 1985.

Dr. Silver enjoyed developing and teaching new surgical procedures. He pioneered the practice of early orthopedic intervention for patients with cerebral palsy. Dr. Silver was invited to lecture and teach in numerous countries. A Fulbright Scholarship brought him to the University of Sydney, for example.

He enjoyed sharing vivid slide shows of his travels with friends. He was a member of Temple Beth-El.

Dr. Silver is survived by his daughters, June Rogul and Susan Silver, and his son Paul.

Died on September 12, 2012 in Hollywood, Florida at the age of 99.

STANZLER, MILTON, born in New York City, was a son of the late Abraham and Dora (Finkel) Stanzler. He was one of the most remarkable Rhode Islanders of his generation.

Mr. Stanzler graduated from Hope High School, attended Rhode Island State College, and earned his bachelor's degree at Ohio State University. During World War II, he served in the Army and became an interpreter of Japanese.

Mr. Stanzler, who received his law degree from Boston University in 1947, was a cofounder of the firm Abedon, Michaelson (his law school classmate), Stanzler & Biener. A trial attorney from 1948 to 1991, he argued cases before the Rhode Island Supreme Court, the First Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. A heroic fighter for civil rights and an unflinching foe of discrimination, he was particularly proud of his efforts on behalf of women faculty at both Brown University and the University of Rhode Island. He took many cases on a pro bono basis, an underlying theme of both his life and career.

One of Mr. Stanzler's most significant accomplishments occurred in 1959, when, as a true conservative, he founded the Rhode Island affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. He was recently honored at the affiliate's golden anniversary.

Mr. Stanzler's courage and dynamism extended to politics. In 1972, for example, he was Rhode Island's Democratic National Committeeman at the Miami convention. He was also a delegate for the anti-war candidate, Senator George McGovern, who was two years younger and also passed away in 2012.

Mr. Stanzler was active in Rhode Island's Jewish community. He was president of the Jewish Community Center and chaired the Israel Bonds campaign. He received Federation's Joseph W. Ress Award and was a member of Temple Beth-El. He was a life member of our Association.

Another of Mr. Stanzler's significant accomplishments occurred in 1964, when he helped create Trinity Repertory Company. Having evolved from a troupe of amateur players at the JCC, it became a Tony-award winning professional theatre under his
presidency and Adrian Hall’s artistic direction. In 1968 he went with the company to the Edinburgh Festival, the first American theater group to perform there. Mr. Stanzler found time to write brief histories of his twin legacies, the ACLU and Trinity Rep.

His numerous other distinctions include the Rhode Island Bar Association’s Ralph Semonoff Award, recognition by the NAACP, and election to the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his wife Selma, his children Jonathan Stanzler and Jill Stanzler-Katz, and his stepchildren, Stephanie Pennzell and David Pennzell.

Died on March 6, 2012 in Cranston at the age of 97.

STRAUSS, RICHARD G., born in Providence, was the son of the late Conrad and Gertrude (Bazar) Strauss.

A graduate of Rogers High School in Newport, he earned a bachelor’s degree in business and marketing at the University of Rhode Island in 1955. At URI he was president of Alpha Epsilon Pi, a member of the rifle team, and trained with ROTC.

Active in manufacturing for more than 35 years, Mr. Strauss was president of Key Container Corporation until his retirement in 2005. An avid golfer and sailor, he belonged to Ledgemont Country Club, BallenIsles Country Club, and Palm Beach Yacht Club. He also enjoyed painting and dancing and belonged to Redwood Masonic Lodge. He was a life member of our Association.

Mr. Strauss is survived by his wife Sylvia, their daughters Debbie Strauss-Levine, Susan Harlam, and Laurie Strauss-Inman, and their son David.

Died on May 24, 2012 in Jupiter, Florida at the age of 78.

SUGARMAN, JULIAN G., born in Providence, was a son of the late Abe and Minna (Halm) Sugarman.

He was a graduate of Hope High School and Boston University and served as a second lieutenant in the Air Force during the Korean War.

Mr. Sugarman spent his entire career with CBS in New York City. Before his retirement in 1992 and return to Rhode Island, he was an editor and a producer for the CBS Evening News. Two of his Rhode Island Jewish colleagues in television news were the late Fred W. Friendly and the late Irving R. Levine.

Mr. Sugarman is survived by his wife Carol and their sons, Michael, Jeffrey, and Adam.

Died on November 19, 2011 in South Kingstown at 80 years of age.
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