FRONT COVER: Jewish Community Center, Benefit Street Building after Remodeling circa 1949.
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209 ANGELL STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND

BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

The new building of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island was dedicated on June 13, 1971. A handsome modern structure with spacious lounges, numerous classrooms, olympic-sized swimming pool, and facilities for many and varied activities, it was the culmination of years of dreams and of devoted hard work by the Jewish men and women of the state.

I. THE EARLY YEARS

The Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, officially incorporated in December 1925 as the “Jewish Community Center,” had its origin, as did so many other Jewish Community Centers throughout the United States, in the YMHA and YWHA movement. We learn that, “The Center had its antecedents in the YM and YWHA’s which were organized and reorganized a number of times to meet the then current needs of Jewish young men and women. The first mention of an active Providence YMHA appears in minutes of a meeting of ‘Y’s’ in Philadelphia in 1880. The next reference to a ‘Y’ was in 1889. Official state charters were granted to the YMHA by Rhode Island in March 1912 and to the YWHA in March 1914. Both were later incorporated into the HEI (Hebrew Educational Institute) and the present Center.”

In an original charter presented to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association by Mr. and Mrs. Bertram M. Brown, Charles P. Bennett, then Secretary of State of Rhode Island, certified that Leonora Gribinsky, Lillian Bearman, Jennie Bearman, Nettie Kaminsky, Bella Josephson, Rebecca Brown, and Sarah Pearlman had filed for and been granted leave to form a corporation under the name of “The Young Women’s Hebrew Association,” in order “To work for and bestow the proceeds of such work among poor and needy persons and to do other charitable work.” This document bore the date March 13, 1900.

Two years earlier on New Year’s Day of 1898 the Young Men’s Hebrew Association had been chartered for “Social, beneficial and literary work and endeavor.”

Both organizations (whether their existence was in fact continuous is not now clear) received new charters some years later under slightly different designations. “The Providence Young Men’s Hebrew Association” received a state charter on March 19, 1912 in order “To engage
in work of an educational, athletic, social and philanthropic nature", and "The Providence Young Women's Hebrew Association" which was chartered on March 31, 1914 "To promote the moral, physical and social welfare of young women".

The role of the early Providence YMHA is cited in a Jewish Welfare Board Study conducted in 1934. According to this account: "The YMHA traces its history back to 1896 [it was actually chartered in 1898], when it was organized as a social club. In 1907 it conducted a religious school in cooperation with the B'nai B'rith. It was then known as the Hebrew American Club and occupied quarters in the downtown section [of Providence]. . . . The YMHA, which immediately preceded the Jewish Community Center in continuous existence, was organized in 1919 with 150 members." The accuracy of this statement may be questioned, since as previously noted The Providence YMHA was chartered in 1912. The Hebrew American Club was in fact chartered on July 23, 1910 "To enlarge the growth and development of mind and body, to produce better citizenship, and to promote a spirit of brotherhood and sociability among its members." A "Hebrew Educational Alliance", however, was chartered in 1907. In 1915 both the YMHA and the YWHA had quarters at 230 Westminster Street which would have been between Eddy and Union Streets in downtown Providence.

With a view to developing a “Modern” Talmud Torah* and providing a central Hebrew School building the “Hebrew Educational Institute” was chartered on April 16, 1914 “For Hebrew religious and literary education, moral, intellectual and physical culture.” The new organization sought suitable quarters.

A news story in the Providence Journal of June 4, 1914 headed, “Hebrew Institute Obtains Buildings”, described the purchase of the Bailey W. Evans Homestead on 65 Benefit Street. The purchase price was $20,000. This sum, which would “establish a Jewish Center for moral, mental and physical culture”, was still to be raised. Many persons were expected to aid in this endeavor, with a campaign extending through July 4 of that year. The Evans Homestead consisted of two buildings, the main three story brick house fronting on Benefit Street and in the rear a two story brick building, which would be made over into a school. The larger building, which was to be a center for varied

*A Talmud Torah (literally “Study of the Torah”) was a community supported Hebrew religious elementary school, in contrast to a Cheder which was supported by tuition.
Jewish activities, would contain an auditorium, a free library, a reading room, free employment bureau, free loan association, social rooms for young men and women, a free legal advice department, a federated charities office, and administrative offices. The rear school building would contain eight rooms and an office for the principal. The news article explained that religious education would be conducted according to the modern methods and classes would be held after public school hours. In no way would this education compete with public school. The school would develop branches on Orms and Howell Streets.

The Hebrew Educational Institute obtained a state charter in 1914 "For Hebrew religious and literary education, moral, intellectual and physical culture."

By 1916 the Hebrew Institute was ready to join forces with the YMHA. The Providence Journal of October 23, 1916 carried this story: "Two Hebrew Organizations Plan to Consolidate Soon. YMHA and Education Institute will Join Forces." It was anticipated that the YMHA would move from its present quarters now at 128 North Main Street to the Home of the Educational Institute in the Evans Mansion at 63 Benefit Street. The following officers were elected: President, Morris Grossman; Vice President, Henry Kominsky; Recording Secretary, Philip Zawatsky; Financial Secretary, Herman Siegel; Corresponding Secretary, Michael R. Cohen; and Treasurer, Nathan Temkin. Temkin was also delegate to the second triennial convention of the National Council of the YMHA and Kindred Associations of America held in New York that November.

The Providence Journal of November 21, 1917 reported that the Hebrew Institute had opened its membership campaign with twelve teams of workers to canvass the Jewish people of the city and a goal of 2000 members. They had as their objectives the creation of a "bigger and better institute" which would be "a greater force in the Jewish-American community." The article noted that the center received educated members of its race as well as immigrants and attempted to fill the educational, social, and religious needs of all classes. They accomplished this through the Talmud Torah Department, which was a free Hebrew school providing instruction calculated to give a better understanding of Jewish life and history. In addition, there were several young men's and young women's clubs, boys' and girls' departments, and classes for older people. Philip C. Joslin was chairman of the membership committee. He had on his committee: Col. Harry Cutler, Rabbi Israel S. Rubinstein, Doctor J. N. Blumental, Sol S. Bromson,
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Miriam Hellinger, Max L. Grant, J. H. Gunther, Abraham Jacobs, Harry Lyon, Phillip V. Marcus, Herman Rosenthal, Jacob Silverman, and Barney Taber.

Five days later the Providence Journal reported that 500 members had been obtained on the first day of the campaign, with additional names added daily. Dues were $3, $5, $10, and $25 per year, according to class of membership. It was indicated that the enthusiastic response was evoked by the inspired speeches delivered at the opening dinner and descriptions of the purposes of the campaign and the good work accomplished at the Institute among the "Hebrews".

According to the 1934 Jewish Welfare Board study, the arrangement among the two "Y's" and the Talmud Torah was a "loose arrangement". At the time of the purchase of the Benefit Street building the YMHA and YWHA had been occupying rented quarters. They elected a joint board of directors consisting of 21 members selected at large from the Institute and three members from each department, i.e., the YMHA, YWHA, and the Talmud Torah. The 1921 officers of the amalgamation were: Samuel Cohen, President; Samuel Priest, 1st Vice President; Philip Joslin, 2nd Vice President; Adolph Ginsburg, 3rd Vice President; Nathan Hilfer, Secretary; and Samuel Galkin, Treasurer. The Welfare Board study noted, however, that "The four organizations—the Hebrew Educational Institute, the Talmud Torah, the YMHA, and the YWHA—continued to meet in the same quarters as separate entities until the fall of 1925. . . ."

In 1922 A. A. Finklestein of the Institutional Synagogue of New York City was appointed Executive Director of the Hebrew Educational Institute on Benefit Street. The Providence Journal of October 5 reported that plans were under way to give him a formal welcome at a reception in his honor. One of his first duties would be to organize the YMHA and YWHA into groups and clubs. It was believed that his background in YMHA work would aid him in accomplishing this reorganization.

Fortunately the minutes of the Hebrew Educational Institute for the period 1920 through 1924 are still available for study. They commence with the Annual Meeting of January 20, 1920. Philip C. Joslin presided. The YMHA membership had grown from 15 to 168 members and that of the YWHA from 51 to 200. The group was small, but very active. Dances were held every Saturday night and lectures every Sunday. A billiard room was in use, and the installation of a bowling alley was
Jacob I. Cohen
Community Center Director 1926-1948
contemplated. They hoped to raise enough money to pay off their mortgage. Discussion of ways in which to raise this money and money for other purposes comprised the major portion of these minutes. In 1920 a ball netted $449.22. Whist games were also cited as a means of raising money.

Vandalism, it appears, has always been a problem. In August of 1920 “it was reported that during the vacation of the Talmud Torah and the absence of a janitor some children broke into the Institute, destroyed records, vouchers, and bills belonging to the office. They stole pool balls, sticks, tickets, playing cards, candy, popcorn, crackerjacks and damaged the typewriter.” A committee was appointed to take up the complaint with parents and to protect the rights of the Institute.

Problems continued to arise within the “loose arrangement” of the three organizations. Carl Jagolinzer reported that at a meeting of the YMHA it was moved and carried that the “YMHA sever all connections with the Hebrew Educational Institute, provided suitable arrangements could be made whereby the YMHA can remain in this building as a separate organization”. The Talmud Torah reported the critical condition of its group due to the absence of a principal. The teachers could not perform their duties properly, and attendance was decreasing. This situation was resolved somewhat the next month when a temporary principal was appointed from the office for an extra $5 per week compensation.

Interest in the community was apparent. For example, Herman Galkin organized a boy scout group and urged the committee to invite boys in the military service to homes during Passover. Galkin was also concerned about the Jewish boys in Sockanossett School, the juvenile reformatory at Howard, Rhode Island.

Donations from the various synagogues were received each Yom Kippur eve. In addition, money raising affairs included such imaginative endeavors as a carnival, a motor boat party, a minstrel show, and a husking bee, the latter netting $85.37. Activities, both social and charitable, were typical of the period, such as a “Victrola” concert, and lectures on Americanization, Jewish History, and health matters. Armistice Day on November 11 was observed by a memorial service. Chanukah was celebrated at the Hope High School. Entertainment was provided for the children of the Jewish Orphanage, and a smoker was held for the “Brown University boys”.

In 1922 a Junior Synagogue was organized, made up of the group identified as “Juniors” and the Boy Scouts. Religious services on Satur-
days were held from 9 to 10 A.M., followed by a discussion of topics of
Jewish interest from 10 to 11 A.M. A notice went out that "All boys of
the neighborhood are welcome." By the end of that year courses were
offered in business administration, Hebrew, Yiddish reading and writing,
Principles of Judaism, and domestic science. There were two orchestras,
a junior and a senior group. Clubs included a "musical culture" group,
the "Y" players, and a debating society.

At the Annual Meeting of January, 1923 it was disclosed that the
Talmud Torah had been forced to close because of lack of funds, but
through the always energetic efforts of the Ladies of the YWHA it was
now reopened. The same ladies had also established a girl scout troop.
Because of continuing disharmony among the three constituent groups
a resolution was adopted at this meeting to merge the three into one
strong central body. A committee was appointed to study the problem
and take action on the resolution. In the following month Finklestein
resigned.

Evidently the YMHA still desired to be autonomous despite the reso-
lution. In April of 1923 they declared in a statement that the "YMHA
be the recognized young men's organization in the Institute to arrange
and conduct only for the Jewish young men educational, social, athletic,
civic and other activities that will tend to develop Providence's Jewish
Youth into 'better Jews, better Americans'". They were willing to
contribute financially to the Hebrew Institute and to meet at 65 Benefit
Street.

II. THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER 1925-1934

By 1924, the last year of the Hebrew Educational Institute at 65
Benefit Street, references were now being made to the establishment
of a Jewish Community Center in the City of Providence and the need
for one to be built in the near future. A fund raising drive was planned
for the early part of 1925.

One of the last official acts of the Hebrew Educational Institute was
adoption of the following resolution: "The Hebrew Educational Insti-
tute, representing 500 men and women of Providence wishes to place
itself on record as being unalterably opposed to the future restriction
of immigration as per the Johnson bill now before Congress, in view of
the fact that it is discriminating and un-American. . . ." In spite of the
fact that World War I had depleted the membership of the YMHA,
and neighborhood changes had decreased the enrollment of the Hebrew
School, the Hebrew Educational Institute survived until 1925.
Following the national trend toward the formation of Jewish community centers throughout the United States, the Jewish Community Center of Providence was founded in October, 1925. Isaac Woolf, President of the Hebrew Educational Institute, and many young leaders were responsible for its formation. In connection with the new organization, now to be known as the Jewish Community Center, a recently completed gymnasium at the Benefit Street location was dedicated. The Providence Journal for three days, October 10, 11 and 12, devoted much news space to this event. Mayor Joseph H. Gainer and Jacob Asher of Worcester were the principal speakers at the exercises. Rabbis Israel S. Rubinstein, Samuel M. Gup, and Morris Schussheim, and Philip C. Joslin, Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, were also on the speaking program. In the Providence Sunday Journal of October 11 an almost full page spread contained these headlines: “Gymnasium added to JCC. Renovated Building on Benefit Street to be Dedicated Today. Scope of Work of Organization, formerly called Hebrew Educational Institute, to be Increased. Entire Families will Profit by Programme of Education and Athletics Proposed.” The article went on to explain the purposes and goals of the Center: “All are to participate not only in religion and educational activities, but in vocational and club work, including Americanization, civics and domestic science; also in gymnasium work and physical culture to strengthen their bodies. . . . The new work for the Hebrew Educational Institute was decided upon about one year ago, when the idea was conceived of adding to the plant a gymnasium. This was to be placed in charge of a paid physical director, while a general secretary was to be engaged to take charge of the work to be embraced by the enlarged program. Almost from the first the Young Men's Hebrew Association and the Young Women's Hebrew Association came in as constituent parts of the association, lending their assistance for the promotion of the work. Each of those bodies is now deeply interested in the newer undertakings of the institute, now the JCC. This afternoon many of the Jews of Providence will participate in the formal dedication of a $25,000 gymnasium which building has been provided and is to be completely outfitted that the Community Center can conduct the physical culture work.” Joseph Finberg of Attleboro, Massachusetts and Alvin T. Sapinsley of Providence were in charge of arrangements for the building and its equipment. The gymnasium was originally the old stable at 65 Benefit Street. The Dedication Committee was chaired by Max L. Grant with Jules P. Goldstein, Samuel M. Magid, Samuel Stein, Edward Radding, and
Bernard Goldowsky as committee members. Abraham Resnick, executive secretary of the Brockton, Massachusetts YMHA, was to be general secretary of the Jewish Community Center.

In addition to describing the whole physical education program, the Sunday Journal enumerated other educational opportunities, such as classes in household arts, millinery and dressmaking, Jewish history, Hebrew, Yiddish and Jewish literature, public speaking, handicrafts, and commercial subjects, and also participation in lectures and debates. A member could choose to act in the little theatre, participate in the work of a choral society, or play in an orchestra. Leaders' and teachers' courses were to be offered. Of practical service to the Jews of Providence were classes in citizenship, civics, Americanization forms, and naturalization. Vocational guidance was also offered.

The role of the Jewish Welfare Board in aiding the formation of the Center was described in this same article. Benjamin Rabinowitz of the Board had worked among the various YMHA groups of the country in order to help them become affiliated with the Jewish Community Center undertakings. This movement would hopefully "so interest the Jewish families that they will look to the local organization as the very best recreation and educational center, the aim of which is to keep the boys off the street. If the heads of families can be made interested, it is argued that they will bring their children under the influence of the Community Center, which . . . means everything counting for good citizenship."

The dedication must have been considered a success for the Providence Journal of October 12 reported that an appeal for $25,000 resulted in pledges of $14,179 in less than one half hour. At the dedication ambitious plans for construction of a group of buildings to cost $500,000 were revealed.

Abram Resnick, the first executive secretary, explained that the "greatest problem would be to educate the community to an understanding of the concept of the Center." The program, he went on, would be threefold — one segment set up for the general community, one for the general membership, and one for the junior membership.

In January of 1926 the Talmud Torah moved out of 65 Benefit Street and occupied space in the Howell Street Synagogue. The role of the Jewish Community Center was now being formulated. The idea of a Sunday School was introduced, undoubtedly to provide religious studies to replace those formerly offered by the Talmud Torah. There is
reference to the formation of a Federation of Jewish Charities, and the Jewish Community Center offered its facilities for the purpose of calling together all Jewish welfare organizations. The YWHA was still reporting under its own aegis, and we learn that Gertrude Tarnopol was in charge of its Minstrel Show, which cleared $1700. The YWHA was proud of the fact that it would soon celebrate the eleventh anniversary of its founding. The summer program of the Jewish Community Center had been a success in its first year, with a summer playground program highlighted by a picnic at the farm of Joseph Finberg.

In November, 1926 Resnick was succeeded as Executive Director by Jacob I. Cohen. In his first monthly report Cohen wrote of the need for volunteer club leaders and also told of the Center's first radio program on Radio Station WJAR. This was in the form of a Chanukah program.

In these the infant years of the Jewish Community Center, there was constant change in the emphasis of priorities as its role continued to be undefined. For example, an offer by boxer "Young Montreal" (Maurice Billingkopf) of a gift to the Center of a large quantity of gymnasium, locker, and other equipment was accepted, but Cohen in his executive director's report of September 1927 went on record as saying he was not opposed to athletics, but felt the primary object of the Center was to serve as a social and educational outlet. For this purpose a radio program was introduced as a means of bringing the center to the people of Providence. Most important that year was the opening of a branch library in the Center with the cooperation of the Providence Public Library. Music, as well as books, was to be offered the membership through a violin and piano instruction program. For fifty cents a child could have a violin or piano lesson for one-half hour, or an hour's instruction for one dollar. Sadie Taber, Rose Millman, and Benjamin Premack were the instructors. It was in this year also that the men's club of the Jewish Community Center was newly organized to take the place of the YMHA. It would be conducted under the supervision of the Executive Director.

In spite of funds given to the Jewish Community Center from the budgetary allowance of the Providence Community Fund ($12,985), the Center was beset by financial difficulties. It was found necessary to take out a mortgage on the Center property for $4,000 and to reduce the programs to a minimum because of the restricted budget. In a 1927 flyer for membership enrollment, Jules P. Goldstein, chairman of the membership drive, stated: "The purpose of this drive is to increase
the number of contributing and participating members by enrolling as many as we possibly can to subscribe an annual payment. This will insure a steady income to support activities that are conducted in our own city for our own community. The moral, social, educational, and recreational development of the youth of our Jewish community should be a matter of civic and personal pride to all of us.\textsuperscript{14} To give this emphasis, Cohen requested a playroom with ample games, such as chess and checkers, for the many boys who came in daily. He hated to turn them out into the street. He ended his report with this tribute: “Mr. Max L. Grant, our President, has been an inspiration at all meetings.”\textsuperscript{15}

The facilities of the Jewish Community Center now were fully engaged. There were sixty-nine different activities in the building, including Young Judea, Camp Fire Girls, Boy Scouts, Jewish Choral Society, Junior Hadassah, and Workmen’s Circle. Also there were a library, a baby welfare clinic, a junior playroom, and a poolroom. Religious services were held on Saturday mornings. The many lectures offered were thought to be the best selling point during membership enrollment.\textsuperscript{16} The Center played a major role in assisting numerous transients, both young and old, who came to Providence from all over the country. Cohen recommended that the Center operate an employment bureau to assist both the transient and local persons, with the cooperation of the many Jewish employers in the city.\textsuperscript{17} A rule was established to require a physical examination for all children before any gymnasium activities were permitted. Through the services of doctors and dentists such as Doctors Banice Feinberg, Henry L. C. Weyler, Louis I. Kramer, Perry Bernstein, Joseph B. Webber, Philip Dorenbaum, and James C. Krasnoff, many medical problems, including malnutrition, were discovered. This led to consideration of establishing a clinic.\textsuperscript{18} There were problems in obtaining volunteers as leaders during 1928, but the Brown University Christian Association helped alleviate the situation by supplying volunteer club leaders. Again, Joseph Finberg’s philanthropy was cited. The summer playground was outfitted with fine equipment which he had donated. A milk program was added in the summer (free, or if one could pay there was a charge of one or two cents per cup).\textsuperscript{19}

A homey touch is found in the minutes of a board meeting held during 1928 recorded by Arthur J. Levy, acting secretary: “Following the meeting Mrs. Feinberg was hostess at a buffet supper served to the board, including some of the hostess’ exclusively patented strudel.”\textsuperscript{20}
Executive Director J. I. Cohen wrote at the end of that year: "Situated in one of the oldest Jewish communities in the United States, the Center is the youngest institution in the city. . . . The Center fills a definite need in the community. Otherwise, why would hundreds of men and women, boys and girls come to us to seek recreation, companionship, friendship, pleasure, and education. Larger numbers will come as our program becomes more attractive, as our building becomes more pleasant and comfortable."

In 1929 a Sunday School program was initiated with a registration of 175 children. The school held classes from kindergarten through the eighth grade to graduation. Many children who enrolled were new to the Center, and the Board hoped thus to introduce them and their parents to the many activities offered by the Center.

Cohen commented on the problem faced by the Center in having to compete with "talkies, automobiles and radio." He noted, however, that the Book Review and the Jewish Problem courses had done reasonably well, although attendance was not as good as at social activities such as dances.

As early as December, 1930 Cohen wrote in his Executive Director's report: "Daily this building is getting more and more crowded. . . . Difficulties are already encountered in satisfying the desires of various groups for space. . . . We are rapidly reaching the saturation point—the point beyond which it will be almost unwise to accept more members for we are not able to serve them." In another report he complained that the building was poorly located geographically. "Women especially find it difficult to climb over the hills." He hoped for a new building within the next five years.

The effects of the depression of the 30's could be felt in all the Centers. In the Jewish Community Center of Providence evidence appeared in an Executive Director's report of 1932: "With the unemployment situation there must be a check on all who are able to pay so that they do not abuse the privilege" Or in this comment by Cohen in 1931: "Today with hundreds of young men and women without occupation and bored with time hanging heavily on their hands, the Center begins to occupy a more prominent place in the lives of these people. . . . After gloomy and probably discouraging days looking for a job they come here in the evening to be refreshed and strengthened for another day. Thus we keep them morally and physically strong. . . ." In the annual meeting report of 1931 President Goldstein stated that the Unemploy-
The Jewish Community Center of R. I. 157

The Jewish Community Center of R. I. 157

ment Relief Fund had sent them a man for hire so that now some much needed repair work could be done to the Center's buildings and grounds. There were 225 students in Sunday School. Anyone could attend, even if unable to pay. Contributions came in to the playground—lollipops from Charles Silverman, ice cream from Saul Abrams, and cake from Abe V. Flink.

This chapter closes with the formation of the Women's Committee of the Jewish Community Center and the initiation of a study of the Center to be conducted for the Jewish Welfare Board by Louis J. Kraft.

III. TWENTY YEARS AT 65 BENEFIT STREET — 10 YEARS AS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

"... the building at 65 Benefit Street was dedicated to SERVICE 20 years ago when our old friends and relatives realized that the Jews in Providence needed and deserved a place where they could learn to live together regardless of their positions in society, or the length of their years in the city. These pioneers in Social Service had the modern viewpoint 20 years ago when they established a place where the youth and adults could develop self-reliance, build character, where morale could be strengthened and food for the mind served. They realized the desire of Jews to be together in a Common Meeting Place, and they appreciated that by offering a place for the youth to affiliate they were building a Community spirit for the years to come. The high ideals of the founders 20 years ago were passed on to a younger group in 1925. For the past ten years the Center in its new form has been carrying on with an ever increasing desire to be of service to the community and willingness to be the link that binds all Jews of the city together into a REAL COMMUNITY!" This is part of a message from the Center President of 1934, Milton C. Sapinsley, which was contained in a booklet, "Center Doings."

This report was followed by one from J. I. Cohen, Executive Director: "Twenty years ago a group of public spirited citizens bought our main building to carry on a general program of Jewish Educational, Recreational and Cultural activities. For a period of eleven years until 1925 the Center was known as the 'HEBREW EDUCATION INSTITUTE'. In 1925 the name was changed to the 'JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER.' It was more than a change in name—it was a radical departure in point of view, method of work, and scope of activities. THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER in Providence is one of a large chain of similar institutions throughout America that have one definite purpose in mind — TO BRING TOGETHER EVERY MEMBER OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY UNDER ONE CENTRAL JEWISH AUSPICE — A CENTER BY ALL AND FOR ALL."

Cohen further explained the last statement. The Jewish Community Center had been organized to serve as a meeting place for the entire Jewish community of Providence. It counted within its membership persons from all walks of life and every part of the city. It conducted an extensive program for children, offered activities for youth, had a place for the parent, and provided these adults with a varied program. As of that date it had over 100 organized activities catering to many human needs and desires. The Baby Health Clinic, which had opened in 1927, took care of 622 babies during the 1933-34 season. Mothers from the neighborhood who were unable to go to a physician could come to the Center weekly and have their babies weighed by a physician free of charge. Doctor Banice Feinberg was the Clinic's first physician. That year also the Center could boast a membership of "almost 1400", making it the largest Jewish unit in Providence. Almost 80,000 persons had passed through its doors in one year. It had a professional staff equipped with the background and knowledge to direct its activities. Its Board of Directors was composed of Jewish leaders in the community. All of this was done at the modest cost of $15,000 gross — of which more than $4,000 was paid by those who took part in the activities, leaving a net cost to the community of only $11,000. Cohen was justifiably proud of this record.

Max L. Grant, whose name was associated with the Center from its inception, wrote the following tribute to it in the same booklet:

WHAT THE COMMUNITY CENTER IS—WHAT IT IS NOT

NOT merely a building of stone and mortar — BUT the building of men and women.

NOT an institution for those poor in material resources — BUT those rich in ambition for physical, spiritual and intellectual advancement.

NOT a lounge for the idle — BUT the work-shop for the busy.

NOT a dream of to-morrow — BUT the life of today.

NOT merely a playground for children — BUT the meeting ground for young and old.

NOT a theory of a few — BUT the conviction of the many.
NOT a partisan in discussion — BUT the home of discussion.4

The religious school in 1934 reported that 4,816 students had attended its sessions during the year. It had 22 instructors and offered courses for students from 6 to 16 years of age. In the spring of 1934 the largest class, comprising 6 boys and 8 girls, was graduated.5

An interesting account of the Purim Day Masquerade with its election of Queen Esther noted that this event attracted city-wide attention. In 1933 practically every Jewish home received a miniature megillah* and in 1934 a replica of a Haman tasch** was mailed. Freda Simon was elected the first queen.6

In 1934 the Jewish Welfare Board carried out its study of the Jewish population in Providence, devoting a large section to the Jewish Community Center. It described in detail the physical structure of the building at 65 Benefit Street and considered it very well kept in spite of the difficulties in maintaining an old, non-fireproof structure. It made suggestions about improving the heating system, adding a permanent stage to the gymnasium, and more locker room space. The Center was commended for its attendance figures, which reflected an active interest on the part of the membership as well as good use of the facilities. The chief handicap to further growth was lack of modern facilities, leading to a recommendation for a new building, preferably centrally located with a branch for South Providence, which should have a part-time director. The report concluded: "A modern Jewish Center will be no experiment, but the logical outgrowth of the mature interests of the Jewish community and of its sustained encouragement to the many worthwhile endeavors that have developed in more recent years in response to the needs of the Jewish youth and the requirements of a harmonious, united Jewish community."7 However, because of economic conditions, a suggested $500,000 center was delayed in favor of a fund raising campaign for renovation of the Benefit Street building.

Arrangements for a South Providence branch were made in October of 1934, at a cost not to exceed $100. Rooms were used evenings at the Talmud Torah (the South Providence Hebrew Educational Institute located at 129 Chester Avenue), at the South Providence branch of the Public Library, and at the South Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association. There were no charges for these facilities.8

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*Scroll containing the Book of Esther.
**Triangular filled cake, served during the Purim festival, literally "Haman's Pocket."
An interesting note in the Director's report revealed that the Center had obtained the services of Edward I. Friedman, a former intercollegiate wrestling champion (now an attorney), to teach wrestling if the Center would buy him a suit for $10 to “safeguard him from infections from mats which are not too clean.” Another small item reflected the changing mores of 1934, with J. I. Cohen reporting that “A number of young ladies, some of whom are as young as 16 or 17 years of age, desire the privilege of smoking in the building. We are making ourselves unpopular by asking them to refrain from such a practice. . . .”

Two fires in 1935 caused by a defective chimney raised the question of the safety of the structure. A committee was set up to investigate the entire main building. It was also noted that the children's program was late in getting under way due to that year's severe outbreak of infantile paralysis. It was characteristic of the times that help to work in the Center was obtained through the WPA (Works Projects Administration). The weekly Saturday evening dance was discontinued, since attendance had substantially fallen off. Informal dances had given way to the radio, the automobile, the “talkies”, and dine and dance spots.

The question of girls smoking was still an issue in 1936, but now there was a more tolerant attitude with talk of providing them with a lounge. The Executive Director wrote: "How prudish or modern can we be in the face of the changing world and changing by both sexes". There was a complaint from the 15-17 year olds that the center's 11 P.M. closing time on dance nights was too early.

By 1937 the Board had concluded that plays brought in more money than operettas, as evidenced by the successful performance of “Counsellor-at-Law”, which had netted the Center $420.

IV. BAR MITZVAH YEAR OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER — 1937

The Providence Jewish Community Center was now one of 300 centers in the United States. It was affiliated with the Jewish Welfare Board and belonged to the New England Association of “Y’s” to which it played host that year. Seventy-five per cent of the Center’s budget was covered by the Providence Community Fund. Since 1925 the Center had attained recognition by both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities for providing indispensable services to young and old. It was commended not only for its Sunday evening programs and religious
school, but for its daily educational programs as well. Yet it still operated on a $15,000 budget and in a 70-year-old building.

The summer program had expanded in 1938 with the use of the Beach Pond Camp facilities, which the Jewish Community Center could use for two weeks during the summer. Seventy-two children were accommodated, some free through the assistance of such organizations as the Jewish Family Welfare and the Council of Jewish Women. Nine counselors were engaged as well as a Jewish cook. They conducted Friday night services. The day camp comprised a six week program of five days weekly from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. The charge for the day camp, if the parents could pay, was $2 per week per child. That summer 125 children were accommodated with total payments of $74.

The fall program was once again delayed because of the Great September Hurricane and flood.

V. 1939-1940 BUILDING EXPANSION

Under the leadership of Milton Sapinsley and Samuel Workman a $75,000 fund-raising campaign was conducted in early 1939 to provide for a new gymnasium-auditorium and extensive renovations to the main building. The main entrance would be reconstructed so that the entrance would be at the basement level, creating a four story building. There would be a general lounge room, a woman's lounge room, an auditorium holding 200, a new stage in the auditorium, shower and locker rooms, a gymnasium, expanded health and meeting rooms, and changes in the boiler rooms. The cornerstone for the expansion was laid on November 26. However modest the new facilities would be, it was felt necessary to stimulate a revival of interest, particularly since world conditions had made imperative an expanded role for the Center. (It was also raising money for the United Palestine Appeal and the Joint Distribution Committee). A fire in December did enough damage to the gymnasium so that public school gymnasiums had to be used.

VI. THE WORLD WAR II YEARS

The role of the Jewish Community Center during this period was varied. It offered to the newly arrived refugees from Poland, Austria, and Germany free memberships for one year. Rabbi David De Sola Pool, speaker at the dedication of the renovated quarters in 1940, spoke of the fear of extinction of Europe's Jews.
Laying Of Cornerstone

of The New Center Auditorium - Gymnasium

Sunday Afternoon, November 26, 1939 at 3 o'clock

Indoor Program

1. Opening Remarks - Samuel Rosen, Chairman Cornerstone Committee
2. Invocation - Rabbi Morris Schussheim - Temple Beth Israel
3. Star-Spangled Banner - by Jewish Center Orchestra and audience
4. Mr. Rosen presents Samuel H. Workman - President Jewish Community Center
5. Selections by the Jewish Center Orchestra, under the direction of Benjamin Premack
6. Brief Greetings by:
   - Judge Philip C. Joslin
   - Max L. Grant
   - Milton C. Sapinsley

7. Address - Archibald Silverman
8. Hatikvoh - Jewish Center Orchestra and audience.
9. Benediction - Rabbi Israel M. Goldman - Temple Emanuel

Outdoor Program

1. Placing of steel box containing Center records into foundation by Samuel Rosen, Samuel H. Workman and Saul Abrams
2. Placing of the Cornerstone in position - Milton C. Sapinsley, Max L. Grant, Jules P. Goldstein and Samuel Soforenko
3. Placing of mortar around the Cornerstone - Mrs. Isaac Woolf
4. Blessing over the Cornerstone - Rabbi William G. Braude - Temple Beth El
5. Closing remarks by Samuel Rosen

Copy of this program, written on parchment together with other records, is being placed in the foundation as a reminder to future generations of this afternoon's event.

Providence, Rhode Island
Dedication of World War II Honor Roll at the Jewish Community Center.
To all Jewish servicemen away from home and stationed in nearby military camps membership privileges were automatically extended. Weekly Saturday dances were resumed, attracting many of the young men. Servicemen had their own recreation room and canteen in the Center. They were even provided with a small dormitory to accommodate those who could not get back to their camps on late Saturday nights. On an average about 300 servicemen per week attended the Center. Cohen wrote in 1943: "65 Benefit Street has become a popular number with Army and Navy men as our neighbors on Benefit Street daily can testify. In every military camp in Rhode Island and even in Massachusetts it is well known that we are always ready with counsel, recreation, and hospitality". These out-of-state servicemen undoubtedly took the place of the large number of members who had been drafted or enlisted. The names of the latter were listed on an honor roll at the Center. By September of 1944, 500 names were on this roll, including two with gold stars. Cohen described a new difficulty in this way: "With the complete loss of young male members and the growth of our female membership . . . additional problems [are] created by the girls being interested in only one activity". However, they undertook to make the most of this situation by making attendance compulsory at a series of lectures sponsored by the YWHA on how to deal with the servicemen. The Center also issued a mimeographed newspaper called "Mail Call" which was sent to all members in the service, keeping them abreast of activities at the Center.

The expanded facilities had come at a most opportune time to accommodate the servicemen. The building was, for example, the scene of a second Passover seder sponsored by the Army and Navy committee of the Jewish Welfare Board. There were other manifestations of the war. The Center was obliged to compete with the high salaries offered by industry for office and maintenance help. Operating on the home front the Center assigned air raid wardens, received information on how to perform in case of blackout and air raid tests, and conducted Red Cross classes. With the return of the servicemen and women free memberships for at least six months were granted without regard to whether they had been members in the past.

In the meantime Center activities and plans went on as before the war. The Sunday evening programs attracted standing-room-only audiences. In 1943 a "Life Membership" program was initiated with a charge of $500 for each life member, and a goal of $25,000.
VII 20TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING

On Wednesday evening, May 9, 1945 a program was presented to commemorate 20 years of growth of the Jewish Community Center. Honored were the previous presidents, the late Isaac Woolf (President of the Hebrew Educational Institute from 1922-1925); Max L. Grant, first president of the modern center from 1925-1929; Jules P. Goldstein, president 1929-1934; Milton C. Sapinsley, president 1934-1938; Samuel H. Workman, president 1938-1944; and the then current president Saul Abrams, who had first been elected in 1944. A brochure distributed at this meeting revealed that a 1942 fund raising campaign (in addition to the gymnasium-auditorium campaign of 1939) had reduced the mortgage and provided for a beautified Center. “Since the outbreak of World War II”, it was reported, “the Center became the headquarters for many war activities and particularly attractive for men and women in uniform from all over the world. 570 young members of the Center are now in the Armed Forces of our country.” As part of the exercises there was a dedication of the Benjamin N. Kane Library, and also of additional honor roll names of members in the service. Accompanied by the orchestra, the audience closed the meeting with the singing of “God Bless America.”

In 1945 J. I. Cohen resigned after twenty years as Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center. During October of that year his successor, Simeon Kinsley, presented his first report to the Board and in December wrote: “I had the supreme experience of a new center executive — both janitors quit and both furnaces broke down all in the same day”. He went on to explain that the center had had to close for half a day to spot gas the building as a defense against rodents. He was looking for a “pied piper”, but urged a building campaign in the spring.

In spite of problems with the physical structure, the Community Center had accommodated 2,000 adults and 1,500 children in February. Among the programs offered were contract bridge for adults and a swing band for youngsters. A nursery school opened in February under the financial sponsorship of the Women’s Association. Also in that month a large advertisement in the Jewish Herald announced a membership campaign. “The Jewish Community Center is an agency serving every age and every section of Jewish life. It meets the needs of every age for supervised leisure time. It develops human personality and cultivates citizenship along sound lines. It upholds the basic concepts
of democracy and encourages freedom of expression. This invitation to join the Jewish Community Center should be accepted by everyone interested in building strong men and women, both physically and mentally. It should serve as the opportunity to support an agency of recognized civic value."

During Kinsley's years as Executive Director (1945-1949) need was felt for a South Providence program. Saturday night canteens had been held at the Sons of Abraham Synagogue located at 362 Prairie Avenue, and day programs with both Jews and non-Jews attending were presented in Roger Williams Junior High School on Thurbars Avenue. J. I. Cohen conducted the South Providence extension activities, which cooperated with South Providence temples and synagogues and men's clubs. Also in South Providence a day camp was held in an open area opposite the Elmwood Avenue entrance to Roger Williams Park. Jewish Community Center children were no longer sent to the Beach Pond Camp, and Camp Centerland now carried on its activities in Goddard State Park. The Children's Theatre, which could no longer hold performances at the Benefit Street building because of the parking problem, moved to the Plantations Auditorium on Abbott Park Place.

The next Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center, Morris Kritzman, came to Providence from the Trenton, N. J. YMHA. With Kritzman's arrival in 1949 the need for a re-evaluation of the role of the Center in the Jewish community was recognized. What to do about the Sunday school with its enrollment of only 35 students? What to do about the Zionist groups which wanted to use Center space? These and other questions could hopefully be answered by a "Self-Study Survey" to be conducted under the direction of Kritzman at the Jewish Community Center and Joseph Galkin of the General Jewish Committee.

VIII. THE 50's, AND THE CENTER HAS A NEW HOME

At the Executive Board meeting of September 23, 1950 it was concluded that a new building campaign should start in the spring of 1952, a date that would not conflict with The Miriam Hospital's anticipated building fund drive. After many months of study and search for a proper site the following transaction was offered: to exchange the property on Benefit Street for buildings and lots on Sessions Street which had been an abandoned police station. It was also voted that the Jewish Community Center obtain a mortgage loan not to exceed $40,000 on the property to be acquired. Architect Henry
Turoff proposed a plan for converting the main existing structure into an administration and club room building and the garage into a youth canteen. His plan would cost approximately $32,000. By September of 1951 the total cost for renovations, furniture, and improvements was estimated to be $55,000.

While negotiations were under way for a new center on the east side of Providence, an offer was received from the Jewish War Veterans for the use of their building as a south side neighborhood center. It was estimated that a capital expenditure of $5,000 would be necessary if it were to be used.

The proper location for a Jewish Community Center had always been a debatable question. As late as March of 1952 ex-president Saul Abrams expressed the view that the Jewish Community Center should have been established in the downtown area of Providence and thus would have become the social and cultural center of the Providence Jewish community as early as the 1920's. He stated further that the Center for years had the "power in Providence" in the field of adult programs with its lecture series, its musical presentations, and theatrical productions. Because the Center was "stuck at 65 Benefit Street" its adult membership and program dwindled and was taken over by Temple and Synagogue sisterhood and brotherhood programs. Because of the subsidy from the Community Chest and its "undesirable" location, the young people who went to the Center were labeled as underprivileged. On the plus side, he recalled the work of J. I. Cohen, Gertrude Tarnapol, and Simeon Kinsley, all of whom did great service for the youth and whose USO and camp programs were to be commended. From these programs came many leaders in the community. He hoped they would learn from these comments so that the new center would stress the importance of greater support from a large enrollment in adult programs of the Women's, Parents' and Men's Associations, all of which should underwrite expenses not met by the General Jewish Committee.

There was more analysis of the purpose and needs of the Jewish community as reflected in a "Report of the Self-Survey of the Leisure Time Needs of the Jewish Community of Providence, Rhode Island" resulting from a 1951 study. The study, conducted under the auspices of the General Jewish Committee, stated: "The Jewish Community Center, as the agency with competence and experience in Jewish leisure time programming, which cuts across all religious and organizational lines, should offer an overall program of sufficient variety to..."
The Jewish Community Center of R. I.

Providence Young Men's Hebrew Association Conference 1914.

Boy Scout Troop 1929.
Center Sewing Class 1928.

Community Center Cooking Class 1929.
The Jewish Community Center of R. I.

Confirmation Class 1937.

Crowning of the 1948 KKK Queen, left to right: Charles Broude, Florence Spater, Rhoda Zeidel and Roslynn Chase.
Building on Benefit Street housing the Hebrew Educational Institute, YMHA, YWHA and Talmud Torah prior to remodeling.

Sessions Street building of Jewish Community Center after conversion from police station.
World War II servicemen from the Yankee Division guests at regular Saturday night parties.

Jewish Community Center Orchestra 1936.
Benjamin Premich, Director.
Center Players 1948 rehearsing for "Heaven Can Wait".

Children in Center Library at the Benehlt Street building.
The Jewish Community Center of R. I.


South side building of Jewish Community Center 1955.
Stable of Benefit Street building after conversion to gymnasium.
The Jewish Community Center of R. I.

appeal to the many different interests and needs of the Jewish people. The program of the Jewish Community Center should strive to serve the entire Jewish community and particularly have facilities located in the East Side, South Providence and North End. It should serve all age groups from pre-school children to the older adults. . . . [It] should institute immediately a year-round recruitment and training program for leaders and program specialists who are to work with children and youth groups."

The Executive Board in June 1952 voted to establish a Health Club in the Jewish Community Center. It became the George Triedman Memorial Health Center through a donation of $3600 from Mrs. George Triedman, his widow, and the trustees of the George Triedman Memorial Fund. A progress report by Kritzman in October of 1953 stated: "We have our Sessions Street building. We have our mortgage. We do not have our gym. We have no facility in South Providence. We have no facility in the North End". The solution to the south side facility was solved the next month when the Center was given the Potters Avenue Police Station, which was to be vacated, for a rental of one dollar per year. It was necessary, however, to replace the boiler and make repairs in the building, monies for which were acquired from the Providence Community Chest and the General Jewish Committee.

With the completion of repairs at the Sessions Street building, requests for use of the building came from other Jewish organizations. For example, in 1956 Temple Emanu-El requested use of the Center facilities for additional space in which to hold services on the High Holidays. This was granted.

In 1957 Morris Kritzman left the Providence Jewish Community Center after having served as its Executive Director from 1949. Often during Kritzman's years as Executive Director, the Executive Board minutes revealed differences of opinion on vital Center matters between him and the Board of Directors, the Center staff, and the Jewish Welfare Board of New York. At one point the Board recommended that his contract not be renewed after its expiration. Since his many and considerable contributions to the Center were recognized, it was urged that he be given every possible assistance in obtaining other employment. Peter Bardach reported early in 1953 that he had had contact with the New England section of the Jewish Welfare Board and stated that that organization could not send any more professional workers.
because of the friction existing in Providence and the possibility of
these professionals not getting along with the Director.\textsuperscript{12} However, the
differences must have been settled to some degree, inasmuch as Kritzman
did stay on year by year until his ultimate departure in 1957.

Doctor Bernard Carp came to Providence in 1957 to replace Kritzman
as Executive Director of the Providence Jewish Community Center.
With the expanded facilities of the Sessions Street Center and with
Carp's high ideals for it, the Center News (the Jewish Community
Center's news bulletin) and the minutes of the Jewish Community
Center board reflect the continuously active programs. A summer
nursery school opened with the help of parents.\textsuperscript{13} The baseball league
opened its 1957 season with more than 300 men and boys enrolled.\textsuperscript{14} In
October the first meeting of the Mr. and Mrs. Club was held.\textsuperscript{15} Tween
and Teen Age canteens were also formed.\textsuperscript{16} By the start of 1958 there
was difficulty in placing all who applied for the nursery school and
teen-aged girls' groups.\textsuperscript{17} Also filled to capacity was the initial JAC
training program.\textsuperscript{18} Camp Centerland won American Camping Association
accreditation, the only day camp in Rhode Island to be so ac-
credited.\textsuperscript{19} Sample quotations from a series of articles written by Carp
titled "The Modern Jewish Community Center" will give a picture of
the busy and varied program of the Center in those days. "Even with
our present serious limitations, the Center is a busy place. Just glance
at last week's Center News issue. In one single seven-day period in our
two buildings you will note these headlines: 'Jewish Family Service
Director Speaks to Leaders' Institute', 'Be an Actor --- Join the Center
Players', 'Junior High School Teen Tips Discussion', 'Young Adults
Run Sunday Night Dance', 'South Side Parents Discuss . . .', 'Teen
Washington Trip . . . ', 'Classes Re-register for Ballet', 'Modern Dance,
Painting'. These are only a FEW of one week's activities." In addition,
among those groups meeting at the Center that week were "the B'nai
B'rith Youth Groups, the Councilettes, the eight Girl Scout and Cub
Scout troops . . . the regular East Side and South Side Golden Age Clubs."

Although the Jewish Community Center had been in this building
only six years, Carp recognized that it was not adequate. In the same
series of articles he wrote, "25,000 Jews . . . in a metropolitan area of
over 750,000. Its Center is now in two converted police stations on the
East Side and South Side of town. The story of Providence is still to
be written. . . . Will it tell how Providence has met the challenge of
providing a wholesome Jewish environment for present day American
youth and adults?"
Confirming the sentiments of Carp, a motion was adopted at the executive board meeting of May 13, 1959 that a new building fund planning committee be appointed to plan and organize a building fund campaign to include the present mortgages and to notify and advise the General Jewish Committee and United Fund of the Center's intentions to conduct a building campaign in 1962. In subsequent minutes are found references concerning the acquisition of a new site. Charles J. Fox, president in 1960, indicated the importance at that time of the Center's obtaining land for future development purposes. The possibility of remodeling the Brown University gymnasium for a Center building was discussed; it was felt that the Brown land near it should be bought in any event.

IX. THE COMPLEX ROLE OF THE CENTER IN THE 60'S

By the 1960's the role of the Center, always a dynamic one, was meeting the needs of its members in different ways. The Center on Sessions Street no longer had the role of a settlement house to Americanize and take care of the immigrant Jew who came into the port city of Providence. It no longer had as a major function the providing of services to the men and women in the Armed Forces. Carp, always aware that the basic philosophy of a Center was related to social work, reported on the changing population patterns, the higher standard of living, and the shifting needs of that population, creating new challenges. There was constant pressure for more and better services for Jews of all levels using the Center. There was a great need for better physical facilities (the Center was still using the Nathan Bishop Junior High School gymnasium on Elmgrove Avenue) and equipment, and also for stronger community involvement. There was a further problem in evaluating the usefulness of the South Side Jewish Community Center because of a population shift.

Through the talents of Robert Borod, Robert Kaplan, and Norman Tilles a very professional performance of the comedy “Bells are Ringing” was presented on April 6, 1961. This stage show netted the Center in excess of $1500 for camp scholarships. However, the performance of “Guys and Dolls” the following April involving similar hard work did not produce similar financial results. It was decided to close the book on musicals as money-raising endeavors.

Emphasis on musical programs was due largely to Carp's knowledge and background in music. There was a music appreciation series
under Doctor Morton Gould. A Jewish music festival and a permanent Jewish Music Council was organized by Carp. In 1963 as part of that year’s National Jewish Musical Festival theme, “Bridging Israel and America through Music”, Carp was invited to lead a national group of musicians and music lovers to the Music Festival in Israel. Also during that year for Open House three “Pops” concerts were presented with a 25 piece orchestra and Barbara Orson as vocal soloist.

The Century Club made up of $100 contributors reported a growth from 59 members in 1959 to 104 in 1962. Its primary purpose was to balance the budget and to help amortize the mortgage. The chairman of this group of civic minded citizens was Bertram L. Bernhardt. Members of his committee were Murray Halpert, Louis Handwerger, Max Leach, Joe Ross, and Meyer Tanenbaum.

During these years smoking again became an issue. While formerly it had been a moral question of young girls smoking in the corridors and at public meetings, interest was now directed to the health aspect of smoking. It was argued now that youth in the Center should refrain from smoking because of the danger to their health.

Another pertinent issue during the decade was the Center’s stand on Civil Rights. The Jewish Welfare Board requested affirmation by the Jewish Community Center of Providence of equal rights for members of all religious, ethnic, and national groups. This was followed by a public re-affirmation of the Center’s policy as an agency designed primarily to serve the Jewish community, but welcoming to its membership everyone without regard to color, creed, or national origin.

The 39th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Community Center, held on May 27, 1964, took the theme, “The Center in Transition.” “As part of this program, we recognize the great contribution of our fathers, fifty years ago, in founding the YM-YWHA and the Hebrew Educational Institute, which merged into the present Center in 1925. In their day, our Founders served their community well. This work we have continued. The facts . . . show that they began one of the most significant and widespread of the Jewish community services that we have today. It has changed and grown through the years, constantly alert to the needs of the day. . . . We intend to intensify our services as we have done in the past year, but we must also be prepared for a year of transition.”

At the 40th Annual Meeting a steering and executive committee was authorized to carry out necessary clearances with the communal agencies
involved to determine needed facilities, program, location, and cost of a new center. Originally this had been allocated to the Century Club. By 1966, after many months of seeking an appropriate site for the new Center, it was decided to exchange the Center's present property for a major parcel of land owned by the City bordering on Sessions Street and Elmgrove Avenue.

A most important function of the new building would be to provide facilities for the Golden Agers. A study undertaken by the General Jewish Committee of Providence had included an evaluation of the Golden Ager program of the Jewish Community Center. At that time neither the South Side nor East Side programs provided daily lounge facilities, although weekly meetings with programs were held. It was reported that staff was aware of the program limitations, the minimal participation, and inadequacy of the buildings. It served over 325 persons, mainly from among the older, less acculturated Jewish groups. It was explained that "At present many will not affiliate with it because of the image conveyed by limited activities." The General Jewish Committee through a special grant provided transportation so that some residents of the Jewish Home for the Aged could attend. The study concluded that the new Center should make an effort to reach the segment of older people not now attending the program: namely, the more affluent, acculturated older persons, the segment of older people more rooted in an immigrant culture, and a third segment which consisted of the more isolated and withdrawn individuals.

While concern with financing and planning of the new enlarged facilities was uppermost, it was clear from items in the weekly Center News that the Center was continuing to be very active and productive. Headlines such as these appeared: "Enlarged waterfront, more area at Camp Centerland," "South Side Nursery School initiates Morning Sessions," "Trips Offered: to Bermuda, Washington, D.C., for SrHi Group," "Summer Cross-Country Tour," "Center Joins R. I. Fine Arts Council," "Program of First Annual Jewish Music Concert," "Senior Adults Gold Nuggets present, 'L'Chai-im'."

An important motion was adopted at the November 19, 1966 Executive Board Meeting ordering that, since the Center now served all of Rhode Island, the name be changed to THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND.

Early in 1967 a building fund campaign was set for the spring of
that year with Bertram L. Bernhardt as general chairman, Max L. Grant as initial gifts chairman, and Harry Licht as chairman of the building committee. Lester Millman was chosen as architect. Consideration was given at this time to making provision in the new building for the offices of the General Jewish Committee. Later, space for other Jewish organizations such as the Bureau of Jewish Education, the Rabbinical Council, and the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was considered. Because of high cost of construction the initial plans to provide such space had to be abandoned.

An event occurred in the Middle East in 1967 which had far-reaching effects on the Jewish people throughout the world. Because of the Six-day War between Israel and the Arab nations, all plans for the new building were temporarily halted. A Special Resolution adopted by the Board of Directors stated: “The Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island agrees to delay further active solicitation for new building funds while giving complete support to all-out efforts of the state of Israel until this crisis has passed.” Although all energies would now be directed toward aiding the people of Israel, it was made clear that interest in the new building would be sustained and that there would be periodic reviews with the General Jewish Committee concerning the proper time for resumption of campaign activities.

By September 22, 1967 President Sidney Meyer announced that the Center was now ready to resume campaigning for the new building. Ground-breaking ceremonies were scheduled for the spring of 1969. Among decisions that had to be made for the new building was consideration of a recommendation by the Rabbinical Council that a ritual bath (Mikvah) be included in the new center. However, due to lack of funds space for the mikvah could not be considered.

Before the end of 1967 the sale of the South Side building to a non-profit charitable foundation, Ulpan*, was authorized. It was agreed that the Older Adult program be allowed to continue in this building one day per week. The year 1967 closed with a report from the building fund campaign committee indicating that the fund had passed the $1,125,000 mark.

In 1968 a champagne ball with comedian Sam Levenson as the chief attraction, held for those who had pledged $500 or more to the building fund, was considered highly successful.

*Talmudic Hebrew meaning “Study Group.”
The Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island continued to be involved with Jewish problems throughout the world. Members joined the march to protest suppression of Russian Jewry, and sponsored a Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Program with Tuviah Friedman, the man who had tracked down Adolph Eichmann, as guest speaker. The Center also co-sponsored the Israel Independence Anniversary celebrations. There were symposia on such timely subjects as sex education, narcotics, alcohol, and tobacco, and a series on "Judaism for Now."

On May 2, 1969 the new Center building contract was awarded to Molony & Rubien Construction Company, and on May 18 groundbreaking ceremonies were held.

X. 1971 AND THE DREAM IS A REALITY

With Dedication Day scheduled for June 8, 1971 a goal was set of 1250 family unit members plus individual memberships in the various categories. Carp was requested to discuss with the Rabbinical Council of Rhode Island the question of "sabbath programming." The various types of membership with extra Health Club membership were determined. As the day for dedication drew closer, a gala benefit dinner dance was held at the Kirkbrae Country Club on April 3. By April 8 the charter member enrollment had ended and the "Open House" phase begun. Every Jewish family in the area was to receive an invitation to attend one of the Open House tours. By May 27 over 600 had attended tours of the new building.

The Dedication Day Exercises started with a 2 P.M. special tour and reception for the staff and members of the Board of the Centers in the Northeast Region of the National Jewish Welfare Board. This was followed by a dedication of the Mezzuzah* on the Center doorpost and with exercises and speeches by various key members of the dedication committee. The eventful day closed with a dedication dinner dance. During the week open house was held under the auspices of the following groups: Monday: Children's Open House and Senior Open House; Tuesday: Community Friendship Night; Wednesday: Senior Adults' Open House and Junior Highers' Open House; Thursday: Pre-Schoolers' Open House, Center Sports Award Night; Saturday: Singles' Dedication Dance; Sunday: Young Adults' Open House program.

The importance of the new Jewish Community Center building to the Rhode Island community was emphasized in various remarks de-

*Literal Hebrew: "Doorpost." A small oblong container affixed to the door-jamb, containing a rolled-up paper with verses from deuteronomy.
livered on Dedication Day: Harlan J. Espo, President, said: "This is an historic day in the evolution of the Jewish community of Rhode Island. After years of hope and planning, a dedicated and enthusiastic group has made possible the construction of the modern Jewish Community Center that we will dedicate today. . . . We have some insight as to what a force for growth and unity in the Jewish community this Center will eventually represent. It will be our task now to serve that community, unite that community, and exploit that community's resources for dynamic improvement. . . ." Bertram L. Bernhardt, Chairman of the Building Campaign: "Nearly 2,000 Rhode Island families have contributed to the financing required for the construction, furnishing, and equipping of this new Center building. The result is what we dedicate today. . . . More work and more dollars will be required to complete the task we have undertaken." And from Doctor Bernard Carp for whom this day had a special significance: "Herzl once said, 'If you will it, it is no legend.' Today there is the State of Israel. Here, too, in Rhode Island through persistent determination our dream has become a reality. After 46 years of living in buildings originally designed as homes and police stations, the Jewish Community Center finally has its own specifically planned facilities which provide opportunity for the highest expression of its hopes and aspirations. . . ."4

The new Center pool opened on July 6, 1971, and shortly thereafter the Center's Health Clubs. Sabbath (Saturday) afternoon activities were now being held. They included use of the pool, gameroom, and the health clubs. Lectures and discussions on Judaic subjects were also offered on the Sabbath. During the first year in the new building the wide variety of programs was a reflection of the expanded facilities. A highlight event of the year was the Israel Anniversary Festival held in the new Center on May 7, 1972. Itzhak Rabin, Ambassador to the United States from Israel, was guest speaker.5

Despite the new building many of the same problems which had existed in the two previous "homes" of the Jewish Community Center had to be faced. Need for money and for more members was still present. The Center Membership Committee had a goal of enrolling 300 additional families as Center members.6 Volunteers to aid with programs and to serve on committees must be recruited.7

Carp, who was credited with being "the man who built the new center",8 decided on early retirement as of May 1, 1971. He gave this reason: "As I began approaching this 15th Anniversary, I began to
do some deep soul-searching and finally came to the conclusion that it is now time for the Center to seek some new and fresh executive guidance and direction." In appreciation for his devotion to the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island he was given a testimonial at a program on May 14, 1972 which followed a brief annual meeting.

Carp's successor as executive director, Sigmund J. Hellman, assumed his new duties in August of 1972.

It is likely that the new Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island will have a far greater role than before in its service to the Rhode Island Jewish community. The precepts expounded by Louis Kraft in an earlier day for Jewish community centers throughout America seem appropriate. It shall serve "... as the agency to turn to to meet needs for recreation and informal education activities for all age groups, wherever the need exists ... to deal dynamically with the problems and needs of purposeful Jewish living ... in the larger setting of the American and World society ..." And, he added, "the key word is ‘involvement’ — involvement of our centers, of the lay leadership, the membership, involvement not limited to adopting resolutions, but in programs of education and appropriate action."¹⁰

NOTES

CHAPTER I.

¹Brief History of the Jewish Community Center of Providence, Rhode Island (Issued by the Center on mimeographed sheets in workbooks—1964)

Further history of the YMHA from

The Development of the Jewish Community Center, Purposes, Principles and Practice. Selected Papers of Louis Kraft. Published by the National Association of Jewish Center Workers, New York City.

1854—first YMHA organized in Baltimore, Md. 1857—Augusta, Ga. YMHA. 1858—Buffalo, N. Y. 1859—Cleveland, Ohio. 1861—Syracuse, N. Y. 1862—Louisville, Kentucky. 1874—New York City. 1875—Philadelphia. "The Association was organized for the purpose of cultivating and fostering a better knowledge of the history, literature and doctrines of Judaism; to develop and elevate our mental and moral character; to entertain and edify ourselves with such intellectual agencies as we may deem fit, finally and above all it is our mission to promulgate the sublime and eternal principles of Judaism to the world, and when necessary to defend though honorably and peaceably, the faith of our ancestors." Association of YMHA’s of New England, 1911.


⁴Providence Journal. October 5, 1922. P. 24. A. A. Finklestein had been Assistant Superintendent and Employment Secretary of YMHA on 92nd Street in New York City. During the war he had been in charge of the Jewish Welfare Board at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. At the end of the war he was Executive Secretary of the YMHA of New Brunswick until 1919.
HEBREW EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE MINUTES 1920-1924
Executive Board Meeting Minutes

1/15/21
2/24/21
3/10/21
4/14/21
5/2/21
6/26/21
7/29/21 (Annual Meeting)
8/12/21
9/10/21
10/12/21
11/26/21
12/20/21 (Annual Meeting)
12/1/22
12/26/22
3/29/22
4/14/22
11/2/22
1/29/23 (Annual Meeting)
2/25/23
4/24/23
18/24/24
30/29/24 (Annual Meeting)

CHAPTER II.

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES 1925-1937

1/14/26
2/11/26
3/11/26
5/28/26
6/26/26
8/9/26
9/28/26

8 Providence Journal, 11/2/26, p. 4. "Jacob I. Cohen, a Brown graduate, who recently received his Master's Degree, comes to Providence after serving as Director of Activities in the Jewish Community Center of Buffalo, New York." Cohen served as Executive Director from 1926-1945. The next Executive Director was Simeon Kinsley (1945-1949), who graduated from Harvard College in 1929, received an Ed.M. from Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1937, worked as a principal of schools, USO National Director of Program, and worked on the National Jewish Welfare Board. From 1949-1957 Morris Kritzman was Executive Director. Graduate of William and Mary College, Boston University School of Education and School of Social Work, and Portia Law School (Boston, Mass.). Consultant on intergroup relations for several New England states, he came to Providence from Trenton, N. J., where he was director of the Trenton, N. J. Jewish Center. Bernard Carp (1957-1971) graduated in 1930 from the Juilliard School and Teacher's College of Columbia University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education. In 1936 he received his Master of Arts degree from Teachers College of Columbia in the Speech Arts. In 1945 he earned his Ph.D. from Columbia. He was director of the Jewish Community Center in Troy, N. Y. and also in Staten Island, was supervisor for the USO-JWB, and field secretary for the JWB working in the New York State section. The present director, Sigmund J. Hellmann has a Master's degree in Social Service from Boston University and a BA from Hamilton College. He has been assistant executive director of the Jewish Community Center of Trenton, New Jersey, joint program supervisor at the Jewish Community Center of Chicago. He came to Providence after serving as executive director of the JVC Camps Arthur, Reeta, and Beker.

Executive Director Report 12/9/26
Executive Board Minutes of 1/6/27
Executive Director's Reports of 9/14/27
Executive Director's Reports of 11/17/27
Executive Board Minutes of 2/14/27
Executive Board Minutes of 10/20/27
Flyer for Membership Enrollment January 27, 1927 to February 26, 1927.
Executive Director's Report 12/12/28
Executive Director's Report 3/21/28
Executive Director's Report 5/28 (i.e. May 1928)
Executive Board Minutes of 10/10/28
Executive Director's Report of 6/20/28
Executive Board Meeting of 6/19/28
Executive Director's Report of 12/12/28
In book by Kraft (see Note 1, Chap. I) there is a reference to the effect of the depression on Jewish Community Centers throughout the United States. There was more attendance for "free" activities, but drop-off in paid attendance and dues. The members seemed more interested in simpler forms of activity and in more informal types of recreation. The Centers threw open their doors wide for those who could pay and those who could not in a desire to mitigate in some measure the effects of emotional strain upon individuals due to the depression.

CHAPTER III.

Booklet: Season 1933-34 CENTER DOINGS. A comprehensive report of activities at the Providence Jewish Community Center during the season 1933-34 with data on past season. The Center is now preparing to celebrate its TWENTIETH anniversary of present building and TENTH anniversary of Center activities.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.

The following have held the office of president of the Jewish Community Center beginning with 1945:

Raymond Franks 1948-1950
Saul Feinberg 1950-1953
Julius Michelson 1953-1955
Peter Bardach 1955-1956
Milton Stanzler 1956-1958
Louis Handwerger 1958-1959
Charles J. Fox 1959-1961
Harold Stanzler 1961-1963
Murray Halpert 1963-1964
Sidney Meyer 1964-1968
Harlan J. Espo 1968-

PROGRAM: 20th ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING

Life Members Auditorium—Jewish Community Center
65 Benefit Street, Providence, R. I.
Wednesday Evening, May 9, 1945 at 8:30 o'clock

CHAPTER VIII.

Executive Board Minutes of 5/29/51: “The Jewish Community Center convey to the City of Providence Lot 141 on Assessor’s Plat 10, as said plat stands on 5/1/51, said lot 141 containing approximately 23,145 sq. ft. of land, together with all the improvements thereon, being the building at 67 Benefit Street now known as the Jewish Community Center and as consideration for said conveyance, to receive from City of Providence conveyance of Lot 151 on Assessor’s Plat 7, as said Plat stands 5/1/51; said lot containing approximately 15,000 sq. ft. of land together with portion of Lot 7, on Assessor’s Plat 7, as said Plat stands 5/1/51, known as the Sessions Street playground and containing approximately 48,922 sq. ft. of land, a total area of 68,922 sq. ft. of land together with all the improvements thereon, particularly the building formerly known as the 8th Precinct Police Station at 170 Sessions Street.”

“Statement of Purpose of the Jewish Community Center”

“The Jewish Community Center should seek to develop a broad program which shall contribute to the personal growth and happiness of Jewish people and their identification with the community. It should be dedicated to the principles of Judaism and democracy. The Jewish Community Center should serve all age groups, both sexes and those with varying points of view... it should be considered the ‘larger home’ of the Jewish community... it should be educational in character.”
The Jewish Community Center of R. I.

4Executive Board Minutes of 12/10/52
5Executive Board Minutes of 11/13/52
6Executive Board Minutes of 10/14/53
7Executive Board Minutes of 11/18/53
8Executive Board Minutes of 6/9/54
9Executive Board Minutes of 8/8/56
10Executive Board Minutes of 1/14/53
11Executive Board Minutes of 9/11/57
12Executive Board Minutes of 5/24/57
13Executive Board Minutes of 10/25/57
14Executive Board Minutes of 10/22/57
15Executive Board Minutes of 1/17/58
16Executive Board Minutes of 6/27/58
17Executive Board Minutes of 9/20/62
18Executive Board Minutes of 6/20/63
19Executive Board Minutes of 4/11/62
20Executive Board Minutes of 4/12/61
21Executive Board Minutes of 4/11/62
22Executive Board Minutes of 10/15/58
23Executive Board Minutes of 1/13/60
24Executive Board Minutes of 1/22/64
25Executive Board Minutes of 4/29/64
26Executive Board Minutes of 5/26/65
27Executive Board Minutes of 6/29/66
28Executive Board Minutes of 1/13/67
29Executive Board Minutes of 1/17/67
30Executive Board Minutes of 3/25/66
31Executive Board Minutes of 5/16/66
32Executive Board Minutes of 12/27/66
33Executive Board Minutes of 1/13/67 and 1/17/67

CHAPTER IX.

1Interview with Dr. Bernard Carp on 11/18/71. Also Board Meeting Minutes of 9/20/62.
2Board Meeting Minutes of 6/20/63
3Board Meeting Minutes of 4/11/62
4Board Meeting Minutes of 4/12/61
5Board Meeting Minutes of 4/11/62
6CENTER NEWS—Volume 1957-1962 10/6/61
7CENTER NEWS—Volume 1957-1962 2/6/62
8CENTER NEWS—Volume 1957-1962 4/5/63
9CENTER NEWS—Volume 1957-1962 9/13/63
10Board Meeting Minutes of 6/26/63
11Board Meeting Minutes of 1/22/64
12Board Meeting Minutes of 1/22/64
14Board Meeting Minutes of 5/25/65
15Board Meeting Minutes of 6/29/66: “approval proposed of the Jewish Community Center for the construction of a new Jewish Community Center of approximately 72,000 sq. ft. of floor space to be built on the site acquired from the city of Providence on the northeast corner of Elm Grove Avenue and Sessions Street.”
16A Study of Jewish Community Services for the Aged in Greater Providence—sponsored by the General Jewish Committee of Providence, November 1965. Section entitled: “The Jewish Community Center,” p. 27.
17CENTER NEWS of 6/11/65
18CENTER NEWS of 12/5/65
19CENTER NEWS of 1/28/66
20CENTER NEWS of 2/25/66
21CENTER NEWS of 3/25/66
22CENTER NEWS of 5/16/66
23Board Meeting Minutes of 12/27/66
24CENTER NEWS 1/13/67 and 1/17/67

BROCHURE: “Let’s Finish the Job—NOW” listed following chairmen of building campaign.
Bertram L. Bernhardt—General Campaign Chairman
General Co-chairmen: Sidney Meyer, Merrill L. Hassenfeld, Edwin S. Sofoenko
Honorary Chairman: Max L. Grantly
Chairman, Board of Trustees: Joseph W. Ress
Treasurer: Milton C. Sapinsley
Assistant Treasurer: William B. Glass

Leadership Gifts Division: David Meyers, Chairman with Max Alperin, Mrs. Philip Dorenbaum, Lawrence A. Paley, Robert A. Riesman and Samuel Rapaport, Jr. as Vice Chairmen

Business and Industry Division: Clarke Simonds, Chairman and Clarence H. Gifford, Jr. and John Simmen, Co-chairmen

Advance Gifts Division: Peter Bardach, Chairman with Louis Handwerger, Dr. Samuel Pritzker and Martin Goodman as Co-chairmen

General Solicitation Division: Chairman, Haskell Wallick; Co-chairmen, Harlan J. Espo and Sol White; Vice-chairmen, Jeremiah J. Gorin, Marvin Grabel, Karl Foss, Raul Lovett and Mrs. John Yashar.

Building Committee: Harry Licht, Chairman and Alex Rumpler, Co-chairman

CHAPTER X.

Board Meeting Minutes of 3/17/71

Executive Board Minutes of 4/16/69

Special Resolution in Executive Board Minutes 6/1/67

Executive Board Minutes of 2/12/69

Executive Board Minutes of 12/13/67

Executive Board Minutes of 11/8/67

CENTER NEWS—12/21/67

CENTER NEWS—4/11/68 and 4/18/68

CENTER NEWS—8/14/68

CENTER NEWS—4/4/68

CENTER NEWS—3/28/69

CENTER NEWS—4/18/69

CENTER NEWS—5/2/69 and 5/16/69

Kraft (See Note 1, Chapter I)
MARTIN CHASE — GRANDFATHER OF DISCOUNTS

By Marvin Pitterman, Ph.D.*

Martin Chase, who resided in Providence, Rhode Island from his sixth to his sixty-fifth year until his untimely death on December 24, 1971, was the "Grandfather of Discounting." During 1953, in a former textile mill in Lonsdale, Rhode Island, he opened the first modern true discount operation in the United States.

Prior to that date organizations such as Korvette, Masters, and Two Guys had discounted appliances, musical records, and similar brand-name merchandise in little hole-in-the-wall stores or in lofts, but no revolutionary marketing pattern had been established. Martin Chase originated and promulgated the type of discount operation which eventually set the pattern for modern practice in this field — the lower-price department store with little or no service.

In the Ann & Hope textile mill building he initially occupied 5,000 square feet of space, fitting it out with pipe racks and shopping carts but little else in the way of fixtures. Common control check-outs were installed. Another innovation in discount operations was the policy of permitting merchandise to be returned for cash refund, provided the price tag or sales tape were presented. Originally the mark-up was no more than 20 per cent, while the normally accepted mark-up was between 30 and 40 per cent. These basic policies have continued as the foundation of modern "discount" store operation.

Born in Kiev, Russia in 1906, young Martin came to Providence when his parents immigrated to the United States. Unlike his five brothers he did not follow his father, Morris, into the Chase Auto Body Works business. He exhibited the desire and willingness to venture into the merchandising world at an early age. Martin preferred personal selling to repairing automobiles, having an inner urge to try out new ideas and innovations.

During the early 1920's Chase began his career in merchandising by working in a clothing store on Richmond Street (Roger's Brothers) operated by his father-in-law, Samuel Newberger. In 1925 he was appointed store manager of Fintex, one of the originators of one-price ($23.50 per suit) men's clothing stores. He remained with them until the Great Depression caused Fintex to go bankrupt, after which he became manager of the Howard Clothes Providence store.

*Professor of Finance, University of Rhode Island.
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes

Martin Chase
1906 - 1971
By 1933 Chase was determined to enter into his own business venture. As he stated it, "People thought I was crazy. The banks had closed, and to many it looked like the world was coming to an end. However, I thought it was an appropriate time."

Always having the desire to put some of his ideas to work, he opened a small clothing business with a limited capital investment of $3,000. At the depth of the depression, he felt that several factors were favorable for starting a new operation. Prices of men's clothing were tumbling; store fixtures could be obtained on time; and people were seeking well-made low-cost clothing.

The new venture remained viable until 1938, when the impact of credit clothing stores began to affect cash operations materially. This forced him to seek a new concept — why not open a men's clothing store which provided such exceptional values that the average retailer could not compete?

Thus Marty's Clothing Mart, located on Baker Street near Eddy Street and adjacent to the then Big Chief Market, was opened. Three innovations were characteristic of the operation:

1. Selling prices were set, not by the usual percentage mark-up, but on a per unit mark-up.
2. Inexpensive pipe-rack fixtures were used for display purposes.
3. A "no alterations policy" was set.

The Mart continued successfully until 1944. Drastic changes were then occurring in the men's clothing business because of the large number of men entering the Armed Forces and the drainage of raw materials occasioned by World War II.

Chase was now determined to enter into a more profitable venture. While operating the clothing store, he purchased a factory in Norwich, Connecticut producing tinsel ribbons and corsage ribbon for florists. However, since the daily 55 mile drive was tedious and inconvenient, he sought a plant closer to home.

The Ann & Hope Textile Mill, which the United States government had taken over for a tractor repair center for the duration of the military conflict, was located in Lonsdale, a locality in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Martin purchased this mill for $307,000 with the intent of moving his ribbon operation from Norwich. Requiring only 35,000 square feet of space for ribbon manufacturing purposes he leased out
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes

The Ann & Hope Mill before conversion.

Original Ann & Hope Store located in Valley Falls, Rhode Island.

Ann & Hope Store located in Warwick, Rhode Island.
the remaining space. By 1946 there were 34 tenants, whose combined payroll approximated $6 million. This benefited Rhode Island in the golden post-war years. However, newer technology brought rapid changes. By 1950 a novel and cheaper ribbon appeared on the market, consisting of cut strips of fabric with fused edges. This innovation caused Martin to liquidate his ribbon manufacturing business.

Again he sought a new venture, and at the same time, one in which he could use the abilities of his elder son, Irwin. He stated: “Every place I went, every business I looked at, everyone was trying to get rid of a lemon. We weren’t interested in buying a lemon, so I said to my son, ‘Why don’t we try what I originally tried in 1938? Why not try selling merchandise at a discount?’” Thus came into being the concept of the Ann & Hope discount operation. In time it became Rhode Island’s largest volume department store. It was the beginning of the shopping cart discount store development that swept the entire nation.

In the autumn of 1953, utilizing space on the third floor of the building housing his manufacturing operation, Chase began to sell the excess ribbon on hand. In addition, he sold greeting cards from a recently purchased firm. Initially all of the merchandise was sold to the employees of the tenants in the Ann & Hope Mill complex.

Sales increased fantastically. Those working in the mill brought their friends. Bargains were available. The news spread. Chase added goods produced by other manufacturers in the Ann & Hope mill complex. Also house dresses produced by a Fall River friend to be retailed at $2.98 were offered at $2.19. At this bargain price Ann & Hope sold 100 dozen dresses within a short period. Gradually more soft goods and housewares were offered for sale. Hard goods and appliances were eventually added. All goods were sold on a pick-it-out-yourself, pay-cash, carry-it-home basis.

By the following April the store was moved to the basement of the building, space which a twine manufacturer had now vacated. This site, which is the lower level of the present Cumberland store, has an area of 450,000 square feet in contrast to the original 5,000 square feet. During Mothers’ Day week of 1954 Ann & Hope sold $3,450 worth of merchandise. In that year the sales volume ran to six figures, and by the end of the second year of operations into the millions. During 1969 the original Lonsdale store and the seven-year-old Warwick store grossed more than $40 million. In March of 1970 a large operation was initiated in Danvers, Massachusetts.
At the time of this writing discount merchandising, following many of the patterns set by Chase in his Lonsdale store, has almost overtaken department and specialty stores as the leading form of merchandising in the United States. Chase literally showed many of today's big discounters how to do it. Almost every significant discounter, including many from foreign nations, visited Martin Chase at Ann & Hope prior to setting up his own operations. Drawing their original inspiration from him, they came to seek his advice, and to study his methods. Among them were Leo Hartfield of Hartfield, Zodys, Lloyd Yoke of Kresge, Sumner Feldberg of Zayre, and Sidney Mittleman of Spartans.

The Mass Merchandising Research Foundation at a dinner closing its New York Convention in April 1968 honored Martin Chase for having "set in motion a tide of low margin retailing which revolutionized the distribution system of the U. S. and greatly extended the purchasing power of the American Consumer." At this "Evening with Marty" his sons, Irwin and Samuel, represented him, since Martin was convalescing at his home after a serious surgical operation. However, the entire program was heard by him in his living room by telephone lines connected to loud speakers.

In December 1969, following another operation, Chase became paralyzed from the waist down. Through physical therapy and self-determination he regained use of his muscles and could move around to a limited extent with the aid of a walker, although he spent his last years in a wheelchair. Always confident, he exclaimed that "If you've got the will to want, you'll get there." Constantly he remained a believer in and encouraged competition. "Some people say it's too crowded as soon as another store opens up across the street. I say the more stores the better. In the end the best merchants will survive."

Chase kept Ann & Hope as a family business. However, he did not neglect the community in which he lived. The then Governor John H. Chafee appointed him to the Rhode Island Commodores, a committee to attract business to the state. He was a member of the Rhode Island Expenditure Council and the Warwick Technical Advisory Council. In addition, he was a member of the Board of the Massachusetts Retailing Institute, the General Jewish Committee of Rhode Island, and the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island. He served on the Board of Trustees of Temple Beth El and was a member of the Redwood Lodge 35 AFAM and of the Ledgemont Country Club.

Since Martin Chase began his discount operation in 1953 at Ann &
Hope, discount stores had become quite a bit flossier and fuller. The basic concepts of individual customer selection of merchandise, low mark-up, shopping carts, open rack merchandising, rapid and easy exchanges of purchased merchandise, control checkouts, cash sales, and carry-it-home-yourself still remained the underlying tenets of modern "discounting" and of Ann & Hope.

Later Ann & Hope carried an abundance of hard goods, including many national brands. Credit cards were accepted. Only during the first few months of operation were manufacturers' closeouts a major part of the merchandise offered. Ann & Hope continued to operate the lowest priced stores in its trading area. Conditions favored more than ever the big volume, low-overhead, one-stop establishment.

"Grandfather of Discounting" was a well-deserved title for Rhode Island's Martin Chase.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTES

\[\text{Forbes, Jan. 1, 1970, p. 208}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Forbes, ob. cit.}\]
\[\text{Providence Journal, ob. cit.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]

APPENDIX A

A Tribute to Martin Chase

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Mass Retailing Institute.

Whereas 15 years ago Martin Chase exercised visions of industrial statesmanship and recognized a novel possibility of bringing great benefits to the people of America and, indeed, to all the people in the Free World, and—

Whereas having implemented the vision by building the first discount department store and developing it into an object of great success, said
Martin Chase generously and without reward or gain decided to share his discovery with others by teaching them his methods and his newly gained knowledge, and—

Whereas because of this selfless inclination by said Martin Chase the discount department store concept was adopted gradually throughout the United States and eventually across much of the world, and—

Whereas as a result, an industry was spawned that in 1971 enjoyed sales of $30 billion, employed some 900,000 people and created additional millions of jobs in manufacturing, transportation and building, and—

Whereas this new industry, conceived and nursed to life by said Martin Chase, has raised the living standard of some 42 million families in the United States alone, we, the members of the Board of Directors of the Mass Retailing Institute, do hereby—

Resolve to recognize officially said Martin Chase as the discount department store industry's founder.

Given this tenth day of February, 1972.

Signed by all officers.

Kurt Barnard  
Executive Vice President
L. W. Rixe  
2nd Vice President
T. H. Kaufman  
Secretary

Edwin Spector  
President
Official Seal
of Mass Retailing Institute

Abe L. Marks  
Founding President
Herbert Fisher  
1st Vice President
Chester W. Patterson  
Treasurer

APPENDIX B

In merchandising, as in other endeavors, brilliant ideas have often been foreshadowed by the contributions of others. Morris Beranbaum is reputed to have originated the concept of the open rack display of men's suits at discount prices in the Providence area. Morris' Clothes Shop, which he established after World War I at 101 Richmond Street, is still in business. He started out at 75-77 Manton Avenue in 1918, but the following year moved to 93 Richmond Street. The establishment has been at its present location at 101 Richmond Street since 1920. During the 1930's it used the more elegant name, Morris' Clothes Shoppe.

An even earlier experiment in open racks and packing case display was undertaken by the late Joseph Samuels before the turn of the century. Samuels started in business at 176 Weybosset Street in 1897. Soon thereafter he went into partnership with his brother Leon as J. Samuels & Bro. The business later took the now familiar name of The
Outlet Company, flourishing seventy-five years later at the same address. This type of merchandising in the early days was considered so disreputable that the newspapers of the area would not accept their advertising. The advertisements were displayed in front of the store with the bold headlines: “The [names of newspapers] would not accept these ads!”

There were also examples elsewhere in the country of open racks and discounting in the women’s fashion field. Charles Loehmann, the 78 year old chairman of the board of Loehmann’s, began buying up overcoats from manufacturers on Seventh Avenue in New York’s garment center in 1920 for the firm started by his mother. Loehmann’s, now 29 stores, have operated for 50 years on the principle of open racks, low overhead, and no refunds, charge accounts, orders, alterations, or deliveries.

Martin Chase, incidentally, started in business for himself in 1934 as Chase Clothes, Inc. at 195 Weybosset Street. In 1939 he changed the name to Raleigh Clothes, Inc., but was still at the same address. Marty’s Clothing Mart was first listed in 1940 at 139 Baker Street in Manucenter (an early example of small business industrial zoning).—Ed.

NOTE


APPENDIX C

The respective roles of Martin Chase and his son Irwin Chase in the conception and development of the Ann & Hope enterprises are presented in a different light in available documents.—Ed.

The following observations are extracted from the decision of Justice Weisberger of the Rhode Island Superior Court in the matter of Jill F. Chase versus Blackstone Distributing Company, et al., Civil Action No. 69-4017, delivered on February 3, 1971, relative to the ownership of certain stock:

“...In the early 1950’s, after Irwin Chase had completed his military service and his education, he went to work with his father [Martin], who was then operating a number of businesses, but particularly the ribbon business. After he had been with his father for some short time, the father proceeded to liquidate his enterprises, and particularly the ribbon business. Thereafter, Irwin Chase decided to launch off into
an enterprise of his own. He began selling ribbon in bag lots to employees of his father's tenants. When I say his father's tenants, I am mindful that his father was a member of the corporation, and I am referring to the father simply as a matter of convenience.

"The sale to the employees was sufficiently productive so that Irwin branched out into other lines. Finally, he expanded his business and found it necessary to move into the basement of the Ann & Hope former mill buildings. Business grew, and the future seemed sufficiently bright so that Irwin instructed his attorney . . . to incorporate; and this was duly accomplished.

"The new corporation resulted in a spectacular increase in the discount business, so that Irwin Chase in a matter of a few years, about three or four years, in 1957 or '58, found it feasible to take his father into the business, and indeed, to pay him a substantial salary of approximately $33,000 a year. All of the enterprises prospered, and by 1961 it was determined that a new store should open in the city of Warwick.

"Meanwhile, both Irwin Chase and his brother Samuel, who was about nine years his junior, were working in the business. . . .

"Now, although Martin Chase was not active in the founding of the business, because of his other rather important engagements, he became quite interested in the Ann & Hope enterprise during the latter fifties, participated actively both as to employees and as to third parties. He was given a number of honors and subjected to a number of interviews relating to his business, but the Court finds that at all times mentioned herein and pertinent to this controversy, Irwin Chase was the managing and operating head of all of the Ann & Hope enterprises.

"Among these enterprises, though certainly not the only one, was a corporation known as Blackstone Distributing Company, which Irwin Chase had formed in order to take advantage of its ability to purchase certain items which a discount corporation, one that was clearly labeled as a discount corporation, could not purchase. The decision was made that Blackstone Distributing Company would own the stock in the new store, and that it would in fact be the owner of the new enterprise which was contemplated for Warwick.

"Although Martin Chase was not an owner of stock in this business, and particularly not in Blackstone Distributing Company, the relationship between Martin and his children was an exceptionally warm one, and there was a great deal of attention paid to the wishes of Martin
Chase. Among his wishes was an expressed desire that Irwin should share his good fortune with his brother and sister, and that it would be Martin’s desire that the new Warwick store be owned equally by the three of them. As matters stood at the time of the expression of this desire, Irwin Chase owned sixty shares of Blackstone Distributing Company. His mother, Helen, owned twenty shares and his brother, Samuel, owned twenty shares.”

Further facts of similar bearing were elicited in the opinion of Justice Kelleher when the case was taken to the Rhode Island Supreme Court on appeal (No. 1369—Appeal, August 21, 1972):

“During his life, Martin had been involved in a variety of commercial endeavors. In the early 1950’s his main interest was the manufacture and sale of Christmas ribbon and greeting cards. Irwin was working with his father. Martin began the liquidation of the ribbon business.

“At this time, Irwin started to sell Martin’s surplus ribbons and cards to the people who were employed in the many businesses located in buildings which were the site of what was the Ann & Hope Mill. The mill complex, which was owned by the corporation in which the father had an interest, is situated in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Irwin’s ribbon and card business became so successful that he began to sell other products. The business expanded and, in time, it took over the entire basement of one of the mill buildings. This endeavor featured a minimum markup in the retail price and it is recognized in the retailing industry as one of the first of the many discount stores that are available to today’s shopper. The growth experienced in Cumberland was such that the many related facets of this enterprise have taken over the entire complex.

“On February 8, 1954, Irwin filed a notarized statement with the Cumberland Town Clerk which described him as the sole proprietor of Ann & Hope. Further success led to incorporation. This occurred on August 26, 1954. The corporate name was Ann & Hope Factory Outlet, Inc.

“During this time, Ann & Hope made a special effort to sell goods that were fair traded at a price much lower than the stipulated minimum retail resale price. This policy caused a problem because many suppliers or distributors would not sell to the so-called discounters as they made a concerted effort to keep their goods out of stores such as Ann & Hope. As a countermeasure, Irwin decided to form a new corporation whose sole function was to act as a purchasing agent for Ann & Hope. The
corporation was called Blackstone Distributing Co. and it was formed on November 1, 1955. The articles of incorporation authorized the issuance of 600 shares of no par value common stock. One hundred shares were issued. The organizational minutes of the corporation show that Irwin purchased 60 shares, Sam purchased 20 shares and Helen, their mother, purchased 20 shares. Irwin was elected president. Sam became vice-president. The mother assumed the office of treasurer and Irwin's attorney, who was one of the incorporators, was listed as the corporation's secretary.

"By 1961, Irwin's initial venture had won widespread acceptance by the buying public. He then decided that a second Ann & Hope store would be opened in Warwick, Rhode Island. Sam was also active in the business. . . . Martin, the father, had also assumed an executive role. The stock certificates . . . describe him as the treasurer of Blackstone."*

Commenting on this controversy the author states: "These issues are highly legalistic. The legal organization of store ownership really has nothing to do with the ideals of the discount operations. These definitely were developed in toto by Martin Chase and not by his son Irwin."

"*Discount Store News, for April 22, 1968, reported that the two stores had attained an annual sales volume of $27,000,000. Several trade publications were introduced into evidence for the purpose of showing that the father was the guiding genius behind the Ann & Hope success story. Irwin testified that Martin's participation, as reported in the press, was a public relations effort to counter an advertising campaign by a competitor who had publicized his mother. Ann & Hope decided to project a father image. The trial justice believed Irwin."
HOW JEWISH PARTIES FARED IN THE RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT: 1870-1912

BY MELVIN L. ZURIER, ESQ.

In Volume 1, No. 1 (June 1954), pages 8-10, of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, the late David C. Adelman undertook to list cases involving Jews in lower Rhode Island courts, going back to 1739. Unfortunately, none of the decisions in those days were reported. The first reported decisions of the Rhode Island Supreme Court commence with Volume 1 of Rhode Island Reports and begin with cases decided in 1828. These decisions, based largely on prior decisions of American and English courts in other cases, in turn formed the precedents for future decisions by Rhode Island courts — part of the general process known as “the common law.” (Supreme Court decisions are those in which a case has been decided by at least one and sometimes two lower courts, and is being reviewed on appeal. The appeal deals only with legal issues — whether the lower court erred. It is not a new trial with witnesses, evidence, and related procedures.)

The writer has examined some of the earlier decisions of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, mainly as an exercise in curiosity, to see how parties fared who bore Jewish sounding names. For this purpose, the arbitrary cutoff date of 1912 (Volume 34 of the Rhode Island Reports) was selected.

It is not surprising that in the earlier years there were few such cases — for a number of reasons. Until the 1880’s, of course, there were few Jews in Rhode Island — few Jews, few cases. Adelman’s article, based on a review of city directories, estimated there were about 500 Jewish persons in Providence and Pawtucket in 1877.¹

Further, reported cases usually (though not always, as will be shown) involve matters where the amount involved is worthy of litigation all the way to the Supreme Court. Only a small percentage of cases begun in a lower court find their way through one or two trials with transcripts, and then are briefed and argued in the Supreme Court. Most cases are discontinued or settled along the way. Few Jews in Rhode Island during the period through 1912 owned much property. They were mainly merchants, peddlers, small shop-keepers. Their problems were rarely of such principle or complexity that they could not be resolved short of the Supreme Court. Indeed, the experience of the immigrant, perhaps having difficulty with the language and strange customs of his new country, was probably to mistrust and avoid courts.
The earliest reported Rhode Island decision the writer could identify was a case decided in 1870. Schlesinger & Blumenthal, wholesale liquor dealers from New York, sued a retailer from Woonsocket for goods sold. While the jury in the lower court found for Schlesinger & Blumenthal, on appeal Justice Durfee of the Supreme Court, writing for the court, ordered a new trial because of an error the trial judge made. We do not know what happened at the new trial.

In 1894 the Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision in favor of Isaac Hahn against his landlord. Hahn sustained damages because his business was interrupted by the landlord's failure to make certain repairs.

In 1895 the Supreme Court considered the case in which a customer of Leopold Goldstein, a jeweler, filed a criminal complaint against Goldstein. He charged Goldstein with substituting a less expensive stone in a pin left with him for repair. The charge was proven to be false. Thereupon Goldstein brought suit for malicious prosecution. The court reversed the verdict for Goldstein, holding that the defendant's complaint, while false, was made upon probable cause and was hence not "malicious" in the eyes of the law.

That same year Max Nathanson, a Rhode Islander, brought suit against Jacob Spitz, a Bostonian, and Spitz's partner, Samuel Adams. The partners had failed to make good on payment of a check given to Nathanson. Nathanson thereupon had Spitz arrested while he stopped off in Rhode Island, even though Spitz's partner Adams was apparently still in Massachusetts. The issue raised by the appeal was whether a partnership could be sued when only one of the partners was served with process within the State. Chief Justice Matteson held that the case could proceed against Spitz. The case was otherwise notable because the lawyer for Max Nathanson was J. Jerome Hahn, son of Isaac Hahn, plaintiff in the earlier case. J. Jerome Hahn later became Rhode Island's first judge of Jewish descent. One wonders why father Isaac did not see fit to engage his son as his own lawyer.

In 1899 the Supreme Court upheld a decision against one Aaron Silverstein. (Silverstein had been arrested after failing to pay money owed to Plaintiff.) Another 1899 case of some notoriety found a jilted female suing and recovering a substantial judgment in the lower court ($12,500) against Benedict B. Lederer for breach of promise of marriage. Benedict appealed. The issue before the Supreme Court was whether...
the remarks made by the Plaintiff's lawyer to the jury were proper.
He said

"Gentlemen, outside New England, if that man (Lederer)
had done what he has to this woman, he would have been
hanging, or he would have had daylight let into him by
many indignant citizens. Read the newspaper and find
where the men outside of Rhode Island are allowed to live
where they have done what Lederer has done."

Justice Stiness, perhaps responding to the sympathies aroused by the
Plaintiff who found herself with child, concluded that the evidence
of seduction was so substantial that the jury would not have been
influenced improperly by any argument of counsel.7

Other cases of lesser notoriety during this period saw a new trial
granted to a party who had allegedly wrongfully taken certain goods
belonging to Esther Herscovitz, as trustee;8 a complaint upheld against
Lederer Realty Corporation by a party injured by walking on Mathew-
son Street in Providence when a rain trough with snow and ice collapsed
on top of him;9 a claim against Louis Silverman of Providence, a con-
tractor, for failure to pay for materials;10 a claim by Jacob Berger against
the Pennsylvania Railroad for failing to deliver bales of feathers;11 an
action by Sigmund Rosen to keep in prison a defendant who owed
Rosen money;12 a verdict upheld in favor of William Podrat against a
railroad which lost a shipment of dry goods destined for Podrat's store
in Wakefield;13 and a claim of Louis Bolotow of Cumberland sustained
over his opponent's claim of inadvertence and mistake.14

Three cases, only fragmentarily reported, indicate interesting human
confrontations involving Jews and the Supreme Court. In 1902 the
court had to consider the validity of a complaint against a certain
faction "for forcibly entering and detaining the Jewish Synagogue in
Newport". The court found the complaint technically improper. The
reported opinion, unfortunately, does not discuss the underlying con-
troversy giving rise to the lawsuit.15*

The case of Abram Baran vs. Max Silverman16 found the court order-
ing a new trial in a case that started in "a building upon Hilton
Street in the City of Providence, customarily visited by Jewish people
of the neighborhood for the purpose of taking baths."

*The background of the case is engagingly set out in Adelman's Article, "They
While Baran was engaged in bathing his minor son, he was struck on the ear by a pail of water (including the pail). Silverman claimed the pail was not thrown but slipped from his grasp. The court ordered a new trial when the jury's award reflected erroneous instructions by the trial judge.

Another case, tantalizingly incomplete in its reporting, involved an action by Esther Goldberg against Annie Berman. The suit was one for slander. Esther was awarded a verdict of $200 against Annie. The court upheld the verdict, noting gallantly:

"Scandalous charges concerning virtuous women should not be lightly treated."

(But we are not told what imputation was made on Esther's virtue.)

Only two cases involving criminal charges against Jewish persons appeared to have reached the Rhode Island Supreme Court during this period. One involved a conviction of the defendant for participating in the theft from a railroad car of 1648 pounds of cotton worth $164.25.

The other case sets forth a much more tragic situation — and the court's decision in reviewing the evidence is unusually detailed and revealing of the rare occasion in which argument led to violent crime between two Jewish immigrants in the North End of Providence. Max Epstein and Abraham Zarrinsky were fellow workmen and friends. One July night in 1901, they returned to Zarrinsky's attic room at 2 Bulfinch Court to spend the evening. Zarrinsky had about $200. There was also a bottle of liquor present. A quarrel ensued. The following account is that of Justice Tillinghast:

When the parties entered Zarrinsky's room for the night, he locked the door, according to the testimony of the defendant (Epstein), and put the key in his pocket. He then took two drinks from the bottle of alcohol, as the defendant testifies, and invited him to drink therefrom, but he declined. At about 2:30 o'clock on the next morning a man named Kwasha, who occupied the tenement beneath Zarrinsky's room, heard a noise in said room and heard a call for help. He did not recognize the voice but shortly afterwards Zarrinsky came downstairs and said that the defendant had taken his money and gone out.

Kwasha then ran out and found (Epstein) lying on the ground, between the house and the fence, quite badly injured. His collar bone was fractured, he had a cut on his head, was bleeding from one ear and appeared to be in great pain. During the combat in the room Zarrinsky was heard by some of the people below to cry
out, 'What are you licking me for; you have got my money!' and on being asked by Barnett Kwasha, from the window of the room below, what was the matter, Zarrinsky replied: 'There is a murder up here; he is taking my money and is licking me.'

Shortly afterwards Zarrinsky brought down pieces of a broken bottle and said in the presence of the defendant, who was then lying on the ground where he had fallen: 'With this bottle he struck me.' He also said that the defendant had taken his money, whereupon the defendant answered: 'I ain't got the money.' Zarrinsky was pale and had marks on his head, and the defendant, in addition to the injuries above specified had an injury on his side.

Both parties were then taken into custody by the police, placed in the patrol wagon and taken to the police station, where the defendant was laid upon the floor and Zarrinsky was seated in a chair. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Griffin, the police surgeon, was called to the police station, where he examined the injured parties; and they were then removed to the Rhode Island Hospital, where Zarrinsky died, from the effects of the injuries received in said combat on the morning of July 28, 1901.

The legal issue in the case was whether the evidence given by Zarrinsky in Epstein's presence prior to Zarrinsky's death (and not refuted by Epstein) could be considered as evidence of Epstein's guilt. Of course, if the case were tried today, the police would have been obliged to see that Epstein were furnished with a lawyer, warned of his rights, and otherwise protected. However, in 1901 the law had not then reached such a state of sophistication. Nevertheless, the court reversed Epstein's conviction for murder and ordered a new trial — mainly on the ground that it did not appear that Epstein, an immigrant only six months in America, really understood what was going on at the police station.

1912 is purely an arbitrary date to terminate discussion — but it is believed that this recitation of some cases in some way reflects the experience of Jews in Rhode Island during this period. These Jews were, in the main, immigrants. They were unfamiliar with courts and complicated legal procedures — hence the reason for the relatively small number of decided cases in this span of more than four decades.

The succeeding years have seen a sharp increase in the number of cases involving Jewish litigants in Rhode Island. Perhaps this in turn reflects more recent Jewish experience as Jews have become more accustomed to going to court. The Rhode Island Bar has today a substantial number of Jewish lawyers. Jewish judges are represented on virtually all courts in the state, and Jews have become deeply in-
volved in the type of commercial and property transactions that give rise to disputes ultimately winding up in the courts.

NOTES

2Schlesinger & Blumenthal vs. Stratton, 9 R.I. 578 (1870)
3Hahn vs. Billings Brothers, 18 R.I. 551 (1894)
4Goldstein vs. Foulkes, 19 R.I. 291 (1895)
5Nathanson vs. Spitz, 19 R.I. 70 (1895)
6Shaw vs. Silverstein, 19 R.I. 500 (1896)
7Mainz vs. Lederer, 21 R.I. 370 (1899)
8Herscovitz vs. Guertin, 22 R.I. 594 (1901)
9Keeler vs. Lederer Realty Corporation, 26 R.I. 524 (1904)
10Anderson vs. Silverman, 27 R.I. 151 (1905)
11Berger vs. Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 27 R.I. 583 (1906)
12Rosen vs. Bliss, 30 R.I. 555 (1910) Mr. Bliss’ lawyer was Philip C. Joslin, later Republican Speaker of Rhode Island House of Representatives and still later Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court.
13Podrat vs. Narragansett Pier Railroad Company, 32 R.I. 255 (1911)
14Bolotow vs. Barnes, 32 R.I. 533 (1911)
15L. Napoleon Levy vs. Fischel David, 24 R.I. 249 (1902)
16Baran vs. Silverman, 34 R.I. 279 (1912)
17Goldberg vs. Berman, 34 R.I. 488 (1912)
18State vs. Shapiro, 29 R.I. 133 (1908)
19State vs. Epstein, 25 R.I. 151 (1909)
FROM PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND TO YOKOHAMA

BY BERYL SEGAL

Samuel Mason, brought to this country as a boy of eleven, was born in 1880 in the city of Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania. The family, with relatives in Providence, gravitated as was customary to the place where they had friends, townspeople, or relatives.

Concerning his early life in Providence we know that he was a bookkeeper at 102 Charles Street and a boarder at 9 Bark Street. Neither of these street numbers in the North End of the city is any longer in existence. We also know that at an early age Samuel became interested in people. He was among the founders of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, a forerunner of the Jewish Community Center, and advocated physical fitness among its members. Seven organizations concerned with physical fitness convened in Newport, Rhode Island in the summer of 1901 to exchange ideas relating to their common interest. During the convention Mason dispatched a letter to Doctor Theodore Herzl, the Father of Modern Zionism, informing him of the meeting. We do not have the text of the letter, but we have the reply of Doctor Herzl (see R.I.J.H. Notes 4:193 [89], No. 2, Nov. 1964). The original of the reply is now on exhibit in the Theodore Herzl Museum in Israel.

Mason was also one of the founders of the Touro Cadets, a semimilitary youth organization, involved with drills, uniforms, marches, and parades in the military fashion. He soon became Captain of the Cadets and during the Spanish-American War in 1898 offered to the governor of Rhode Island the services of the group to fight for its country. The Cadets were about to be shipped to Cuba when the war ended, and the Jewish unit was dispersed.

We next discover Samuel Mason in Boston. With a change of domicile his interests also changed. He recognized an opportunity for Anglo-Jewish newspapers and hence founded two, The Boston Israelite and The Rhode Island Register. However, all efforts to obtain information about these weekly publications were in vain. Neither the Boston Public Library nor the Library of the American Jewish Historical Society has any relevant information.

From Boston Mason moved to New York where he continued to utilize his journalistic skills. He first became editor of the Jewish World, an Anglo-Jewish weekly; later managing editor of the Tageblatt, an Orthodox Yiddish newspaper; and finally news editor of the Morning Journal, a religious Zionist newspaper.
Samuel Mason as a young man.

Mr. and Mrs. Mason, 1941. (Taken in Daytona Beach, Florida)
In 1907 Mason entered a new field of activity that was to absorb him until his death in 1950. Perhaps his work on the newspapers had made him aware of the problems of immigration to America, particularly among the Jews fleeing from Russia. Those were the years of the great waves of immigration of Jews from Russia to the United States. It was after the pogroms in Kishinev, Odessa, and Kiev. Jews by the thousands came by steerage to the shores of this country. The American Jewish community was mobilized to help the newcomers, who had neither financial means nor trades and did not know the language of their adopted country. Many of them had only the names of relatives in America, and connections had to be made between them and the immigrants. The task was enormous, and the Jewish community was not prepared for it.

There were two organizations in New York whose purpose it was to aid the immigrants. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, a relatively new organization, was founded in 1902, and the Hebrew Sheltering House Association, much older, in 1884. Mason, manager of the former since 1907 at a salary of $35 a week, is credited with effecting a merger of the two organizations in 1909 under the name of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America (HIAS) and became its general manager. This organization, which is still in existence, had on its board men of such fame as Jacob H. Schiff, Louis Marshall, Oscar S. Straus, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, to mention but a few. In 1914 he resigned from the office of General Manager and became a member of the Board of Directors, but kept up an active role in the organization. (See following page)

HIAS had a hand in receiving and finding homes for hundreds of thousands of the Jewish immigrants who fled to the United States from Russia prior to the outbreak of World War I. On November 16, 1917 Mason, now chairman of the HIAS Committee on Foreign Operations, embarked upon a mission to Japan, where many Jewish and non-Jewish refugees were stranded. Upon arrival in Yokohama on New Year’s Day, 1918 he found the Royal Hotel there filled with refugees, cared for by funds provided by Moissei A. Ginsberg, a Russian industrialist who resided in Japan at that time. The refugees were idle, hopeless, and in a state of confusion. Three local organizations vied with one another for the care of the refugees. Mason immediately took over the building, had it renovated, and installed sanitary facilities. He arranged for hospitalization of the sick, and vaccination and disinfection of all of the refugees. The American Consulate in Japan cabled all relatives in
The Board of Directors of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America have received with deep regret the resignation of its General Manager, Samuel Mason.

His tireless energy, unflagging zeal, loyal devotion, and whole-hearted attachment to the cause of Jewish Immigration

Samuel Mason
in his capacity as General Manager

During the last six years, has secured for the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, a place of high distinction on the roster of national bodies accomplishing Jewish work in the United States.

His resignation is accepted solely because the Directors realize that in a like new calling he is about to enter, he will be better able to render more invaluable service to the cause of Jewish Immigration. In his present position, he carries the cheerfiest wishes of the Directors of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America and the blessings of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants whose path toward material prosperity and Americanization has been made easier by Samuel Mason and his work.

In evidence of its appreciation and in its high opinion of Samuel Mason, the Board of Directors do hereby elect him a Director in place of the late Jacob Schlesinger, of blessed memory. The Board of Directors hereby welcome Samuel Mason as a colleague and trust that it shall have for many years the benefit of his Wise Counsel and Ripe Experience.

July 4th 1914

Leon Sanders, President

Signatures:

Isidore Hershfield
Herman Bernstein
B. B. Berkowitz
Jacob Masel
Morris Asolinsky

Leon Sanders, President

Committee

Honorary Secretary

Certificate presented when Mason resigned from the office of General Manager.
From Providence, R. I. to Yokohama

the United States, advising them of refugees sheltered in the Royal Hotel. Connections were established through HIAS, and reservations were made with steamship companies for passage to ports in the United States and Canada.

Mason also went to Harbin (now Pinkiang), Nikolsk (Nikolayevsk), and Vladivostok, where he sought out stranded refugees. He set up The Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in the Far East, and worked to assist refugees in Siberia as well.

Everywhere he went letters of introduction preceded him from Schiff, Strauss, or Marshall to the American Consulates or to the authorities in Japan. These letters opened many doors to Mason in Japan, and resulted in thousands of immigrants being brought to the United States. HIAS became the symbol of hope for refugees from the Revolution in the Far East.

A moving story is told of the daughter of one of the most vicious of anti-Semites, A. S. Suvorin, the publisher of the infamous ultra-conservative newspaper Novoye Vremya (New Times) in St. Petersburg. A refugee with her children in Japan, she had fled from the wrath of the Soviet government because of the sins of her father. When her funds began to dwindle, she left her children in the care of a governess and traveled to the United States. The governess died in the meantime, and the children were left alone and penniless. HIAS took the children to the Yokohama shelter and located their mother in the United States. She asked to have her children sent to her. HIAS took no revenge for the evil deeds of their grandfather; for HIAS they were children in need of help.

The grateful mother wrote to HIAS: “And to think that I was one of the biggest stockholders in Novoye Vremya and my father was always a bitter anti-Semite.” These same Semites gave her children food and shelter and helped to reunite them with their mother.

Samuel Mason replied: “Our aim is purely humanitarian. We firmly believe in the brotherhood of men.”

If only their grandfather could have heard of this in his grave!

Mason became ill upon his return to the United States, so that his report was read by HIAS President John L. Bernstein at a meeting at Cooper Union on October 12, 1918. By November 1918, however, now again a member of the HIAS executive staff in the newly created post of managing director, he recovered sufficiently to leave once more for
the Far East. This time he concentrated his activities in Siberia. He established in Irkutsk a Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in Siberia and the Urals in order to help wives and children of American residents join their families and to discourage the emigration to the United States of those not likely to be admitted.

During the ten years of turmoil, from 1909 to 1919, HIAS had registered almost half a million immigrants to the United States. Mason maintained a close relationship with the HIAS organization as a member of its Board until his death in 1950, at the age of 71.

Thus ended the life of an immigrant of the North End of Providence who had himself helped bring hundreds of thousands of immigrants to the United States.

SOURCES
1. Doctor William Fain, a nephew of Samuel Mason, in personal conversations.
2. Communications from Shirley Kublin of Sharon, Mass., niece of Samuel Mason, who supplied the pictures and letters of introduction.
3. Some biographical notes by Mark Mason, son of Samuel Mason.
5. Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, 4:193 (89), No. 2, Nov. 1964.

APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

New York, Nov. 5, 1917.

Junnosuke Inouye, Esq., President,
Yokohama Specie Bank
Yokohama, JAPAN

Dear Mr. Inouye:

May I be permitted to introduce to you the bearer of this letter, Mr. Samuel Mason, a Director of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, who is visiting your country for purposes which he will himself more fully explain to you, and in which I thought your influence and advice might be of advantage to him.

If I add that I am personally desirous of extending every possible aid to Mr. Mason in the object of his visit to Japan, I feel assured in advance of your good will toward him, which I know will be of great value to him.
From Providence, R. I. to Yokohama

Thanking you, therefore, in anticipation for your kind reception of Mr. Mason and assuring you of my readiness to reciprocate at any time, I am, with cordial greetings,

Yours most faithfully,

(Signed) Jacob H. Schiff

New York, Nov. 5, 1917.

Dr. Y. Ono, Vice President,
Industrial Bank of Japan, Ltd.,
Tokio, JAPAN

Dear Dr. Ono:

May I be permitted to introduce to you the bearer of this letter, Mr. Samuel Mason, a Director of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, who is visiting your country for purposes which he will himself more fully explain to you, and in which I thought your influence and advice might be of advantage to him.

If I add that I am personally desirous of extending every possible aid to Mr. Mason in the object of his visit to Japan, I feel assured in advance of your good will toward him, which I know will be of great value to him.

Thanking you, therefore, in anticipation for your kind reception of Mr. Mason and assuring you of my readiness to reciprocate at any time, I am, with cordial greetings,

Yours most faithfully,

(Signed) Jacob H. Schiff

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington

November 7, 1917.

The Honorable
Roland S. Morris,
American Ambassador
Tokyo.

Sir:

At the instance of the Honorable Abram J. Elkus, lately Ambassador of the United States to Turkey, I take pleasure in
introducing to you Samuel Mason, Esquire, of New York City who is about to go to Japan for the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, to make arrangements for extending relief to destitute persons.

I commend Mr. Mason to your attentive consideration, and I cordially bespeak for him all appropriate courtesies and assistance.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) Robert Lansing
(Secretary of State)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Washington

November 7, 1917.

No. 53990/109

To Whom It May Concern:

This will introduce to you Mr. Samuel Mason, who is a citizen of the United States, and who represents the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America. He is very much interested in the question of immigration, so far as it affects the United States, and is visiting Japan at this time in connection with the Jewish refugees from Russia who, it is understood, have recently been congregating in the city of Yokohama. His mission is not to induce immigration, but to convey to those whom he meets a knowledge of the immigration laws of the United States, and the mental, moral and physical conditions which operate to debar aliens from admission to this country, so that such persons may not make a useless voyage in furtherance of their natural desire to escape undesirable conditions with which they are surrounded.

The Department of Labor has jurisdiction over the subject of immigration to the United States, and it is very much interested in the subject-matter of Mr. Mason's visit to Japan. Any courtesies extended to him will be highly appreciated by this Department.

(Signed) Louis F. Post
Assistant Secretary of Labor

* * *
To the Jews of Japan.

Dear Friends:

The bearer of this letter, Mr. Samuel Mason, of New York City, has long been connected with the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, an organization which has performed excellent service in looking after Jewish immigrants who come to the United States and enabling them to enter upon American life and to become good and useful citizens, and at the same time to maintain their Jewish traditions. Mr. Mason informs me that he is about to visit Japan for the purpose of looking after a large number of Jewish immigrants from Russia and other countries, who are now stranded in Japan on their way to America. He desires to be helpful to them and to make it possible to relieve them from their present straits. Any assistance or courtesy that you may extend to Mr. Mason will be greatly appreciated, not only by me personally, but by our coreligionists in America.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Louis Marshall
President, American Jewish Committee.
OUR DUTY TO INSTRUCT: REFLECTIONS ON TOURO SYNAGOGUE

BY SAUL VIENER

"When we reflect on how much it is our Duty to Instruct Children in the Path of Virtuous [sic] Religion. . . ."

Rabbi Lewis, Reverend Katz, Mr. President, Mr. Mayor, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, these few phrases are no doubt familiar to many of you because they are part of an appeal which nine Newport gentlemen submitted to their brethren in New York City on March 21st, 1759, seeking financial help in order to erect a synagogue, this beautiful and hallowed sanctuary where we have assembled.

There may be some among you, however, who are unfamiliar with the 1759 appeal, but certainly there are few present who are not familiar with the concepts on which, according to Jewish tradition, the world rests: Prayer, Education, and Philanthropy. It was true in 1759; it is true today. For these very reasons I am grateful for the opportunity of reflecting upon such matters at Touro Synagogue, this historic site, and upon this significant occasion, the George Washington Letter Exercises. I am grateful to those who invited me, as I am grateful to the Almighty for having brought me to this moment.

Let us now reflect on how much it is our duty to instruct our children—and ourselves.

The men and women who sought refuge in Newport in the early years were not unlike the Children of Israel. The settlement of Newport, and the beautiful story of the establishment of a congregation, and then a synagogue, are appropriately and significantly related to the opening Scriptural passages read yesterday in our synagogues—"When thou art come in unto the land which the Lord God giveth thee." And then there follow certain clearly outlined instructions. The local founders, upon their arrival, proceeded to carry out the Biblical injunctions, particularly, the erection of a sanctuary to the Lord.

Later, we read that Moses and the elders commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you this day." The rabbis tell us that thus it becomes the duty of each individual Israelite to guard, and defend, the precepts of the Torah and to secure their observance.

An Address delivered at the George Washington Letter Ceremonies, August 27, 1972, at Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island; Auspices of the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue.
The parallel experiences which different generations of Jews have shared cannot be lightly dismissed. History is part of the totality of Jewish experience, for it was the people Israel who became the author of the idea of history as the guide to the generations of men. Incumbent upon the Jewish historian today is the task of understanding the past and interpreting it to his contemporaries. Therefore, we return to the Newport experience not only to commemorate the founders of Touro Synagogue, but also to reflect upon our responsibilities—today—here and elsewhere.

As you have gathered from the kind introductory remarks, I have come to you from Richmond, Virginia, a community distinguished also by a history, portions of which helped mould our American democracy. Associations between Virginia and Rhode Island have been many—both in the historical development of our nation, as well as in religious matters. A sister congregation of Yeshuat Israel is part of that history.

Richmond's K. K. Beth Shalome was dedicated in 1789, only months before George Washington responded to the splendid and meaningful letter from the pen of Moses Seixas. The genius of President Washington's letter, his dedication to religious liberty and the freedom of all men, remains an eternal beacon, and has brought us here today. Beth Shalome, too, along with the other congregations then established, congratulated the first President and was, in turn, the recipient of similar expressions of liberty and religious freedom.

To interject a personal note, there are Washington associations which mean a great deal to me, not only as a Virginian, but as one who was born and raised in a small town in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia which had been laid out by George Washington's brother, Charles, who also gave his name to my home town, Charles Town. Another brother, Samuel, also resided there. Their homes, still standing, were the scenes of many interesting and significant historical events. Consequently, the influence of the Washington family was ever present in the days of my youth.

To add another personal note which binds me to Touro Synagogue and this occasion is the fact that Charles Town is only fifteen miles from Shepherdstown, West Virginia where I attended college and whence came Rezin Shepherd, the devoted friend of Judah Touro.

However, enough of that . . . to return to Beth Shalome, this House of Peace stands no longer. In 1898 it merged with Congregation Beth
Ahabah, which had been established in 1841. Its simple, yet impressive, synagogue was unfortunately demolished in the 1920’s.

There were associations, also, between Richmond and Newport families. To Richmond came members of the Hays and Myers families, who had resided in Newport and Boston. And to the burying ground at the head of this street some of them came back to rest. A member of these families, Mrs. Edward Cohen, a one-time resident of Richmond, upon learning of the reconsecration of the Newport synagogue (in 1883), offered the congregation two sets of silver bells which had once adorned the Torah scrolls, and had, undoubtedly, belonged to her family who had carried them away when they moved South.

For many years, the story of Caroline Myers Cohen has been of considerable interest to me, and perhaps it will be to you as well. Furthermore, it may have meaning to those of us who are Jews living in this 7th decade of the 20th Century.

In 1913, Caroline Cohen privately printed a history of her family, for, as she explains in the Foreword:

"At this date there remain of the families of Myers, Hays, and Mordecai, including the writer, only five persons professing the Jewish faith; and as within a few years these five will have passed away, and with them, all understanding of the family conditions in the four preceding generations, it is well that this chronicle should be preserved."

Mrs. Cohen lived another fifteen years and died in 1928, five days after her 84th birthday. Thus, one whose life and experiences linked the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries was no more. Her story, written with admiration, affection, and with an element of regret and sadness, provides us with many impressions, and much to contemplate. Through the courtesy of her great-nephews I have been able to read and re-read this chronicle. Let me share with you a few excerpts from this record.

"The year 1707 [the story begins] is the earliest date recorded in the three families with whom the following chronicle concerns itself. It is that of the birth of Moses Mordecai, of Bonn, Germany. The year 1720 begins the record of the Hays family in this country, and 1723, that of the Myers family, when Myer Myers, of New York, was born."

[I might add that both men were Caroline’s great-grandfathers. Myer Myers married twice and had 12 children]. The story continues:

"During the Revolutionary War Mr. Myers was living with his family
in New York, and was obliged to fly with them from the British, who were investing the place, in 1776. They went to Norwalk, Conn. reaching that town with much difficulty in wagons, over rough roads; and there was born in April, 1776, my mother's mother, Rebecca, afterwards Mrs. Mordecai, who was my authority for this small incident. They fled from Norwalk a little later, but remained in Connecticut until the war ended, when they returned to New York, where Mr. Myers plied his business of silversmith . . . for many years. . . .”

His widow, Joyce, died in Richmond in 1824, at the home of her son, Moses Mears Myers. The latter and his older half-brother, Samuel, had married two Boston sisters, Judith and Sally Hays, daughters of Moses Michael Hays, whose sister, Reyna, had married the Reverend Isaac Touro. The two young couples, who had been married on the same day, moved to Richmond soon after marriage.

“Moses Michael Hays [Caroline writes] was a man of genial nature and fine intellect, admired and respected by the communities of Newport and Boston, where he lived.” Mrs. Cohen then proceeds to provide us with a detailed description of Hays and his wife, Rachel, who had been a Myers. A portrait of their son, Judah, and one of their daughter, Judith Hays Myers, are today in the possession of family members in Richmond.

“The Hays family [Caroline continues] lived for some years at Newport, R. I. where all but the two eldest children were born, and then removed to Boston, where they enjoyed the best society of the day. After the death of the parents, the single daughters, Catherine and Slowey, removed to Richmond where their sisters had settled . . . Judah, their brother, drowned at St. Augustine, Florida, in 1832.” His remains were brought back here to Newport as were those of Catherine and Slowey some 20 years later. They now rested with their parents and their sister, Rebecca, who had died in 1802.

Included in the chronicle is an excerpt from the Boston Transcript of 1912, entitled “Notes on the Hays Family of Boston.” Almost a century later we find additional tributes were paid to Moses Michael Hays, and references were made to his children in Richmond where “there were several Jewish families and religious services were maintained.” Catherine Hays passed away in January, 1854, and, tradition says, it was the same day on which her cousin, Judah Touro, died.

Tradition also holds that Catherine and Judah were in love, but their families disapproved because of their close relationship. One
wonders about this story because in actuality many of these cousins did marry. In any event, as you know, Judah bequeathed her $5,000.29

The slender volume goes on to record marriages, births, deaths, and other significant events, as well as the gradual disappearance of the Jewish component. For example, Richea Myers, one of Myer Myers’ daughters, married a prominent Richmonder, Joseph Marx. Five of their six daughters became Christians.30 Their Myers and Mordecai cousins either married non-Jews or converted, as did Rachel Mordecai Lazarus on her deathbed in 1838. Later her daughters followed her example. Caroline recorded that Rachel’s sister, Ellen, “also at this time abandoned the old faith, which had never been a ‘faith’ for her.”31

Thus, Caroline’s chronicle makes a compelling story of these three inter-related families and their total assimilation. But, in truth, her story must have meaning to anyone concerned with the Jewish experience in America — and the preservation of Judaism on this continent.

It would be presumptuous for me to profess extensive historical knowledge in the presence of many scholars who are here today. And, perhaps, it would be presumptuous for one such as I to assume the role of a religionist. However, there appear to be certain impressions, certain conclusions, which one might glean from Records of the Myers, Hays, and Mordecai Families. Indeed, one may well inquire, “Why was not Judaism a ‘faith’ for Ellen Mordecai and her relatives?”

When we pause to reflect on the beginnings of this historic congregation, we cannot help but wonder at the great courage of many of these men and women, former Marranos, who had willingly reaffirmed their Judaic beliefs, and embarked on creating a new life in conformity with the laws of Moses and Israel.

The preservation of the Touro Synagogue and the fact that it is a viable congregation today is of considerable significance — not only do we see evidence of historical preservation, but also a sanctuary where our heritage has been preserved, transmitted, and, further, enriched.

My friends, the American Jewish community today faces a challenge quite different from that of the Newport founders. Instead of a reaffirmation of Jewish belief, our open society is witnessing the disappearance of Jewish family life and of Jews themselves. There is so much ignorance, illiteracy, and indifference. Will our experience be that of those about whom I spoke a few moments ago? Whatever the forces which affected those early Richmond families, at least there did arise
Our Duty to Instruct: Reflections on Touro Synagogue

one voice who felt compelled to preserve a record, an understanding of the preceding generations. Will we have at least one voice left?

In every generation, Judaism finds it necessary to restate in the language and terminology of that particular generation the basic concepts of Judaism, and its posture vis à vis the challenge posed by the culture of that generation. It would seem, perhaps, that in this “City by the Sea” it may have been less difficult to transmit those beliefs and the historic heritage of the American Jew. Nevertheless, to many the synagogue as we know it is not a national shrine — and even more regrettable, the synagogue is no longer a personal shrine for the young, the middle-aged, or the old. How we conduct ourselves, and what we do to bring “Vertuous Faith” to our people is of the utmost concern to me, an American Jew, in this year, 1972.

As I draw near the end of my remarks, I would invite you to return once more to the history and traditions of this great congregation. In the year 1763, on the first day of Chanukah, all the Jews of Newport, and many of their non-Jewish friends, assembled in this sanctuary for the dedicatory ceremonies. At the appointed time, when the doors of the synagogue were closed, and complete silence reigned within, three knocks were heard upon the closed door. The knocking came from without, we are told, in accordance with an ancient ritual. After these knocks were sounded, the voice of the Reverend Isaac Touro was heard reciting, in Hebrew, portions of the 24th Psalm.  

One hundred and twenty years later, on May 25, 1883, on Friday afternoon, when the synagogue was reconsecrated in the presence of a crowded congregation, a ceremony similar to that of 1763 was conducted. This time the minister was the Reverend Abraham Pereira Mendes, some of whose descendants are present today, and with him were his two sons, also rabbis. Again, the three knocks were sounded, and there followed, as before, the soaring Hebrew phrases, “Open to us the gates of righteousness, we will enter them and praise the Lord.”

Now, almost 90 years later, we find ourselves in this holy edifice to contemplate the meaning of these dedicatory ceremonies; the history of the Touro Synagogue; and through these, the Jewish experience in the United States. Although the records of this congregation refer to the three knocks as an “ancient ritual”, I would like to think of them as the three aforementioned concepts upon which this world rests: Prayer, Education, and Philanthropy, all of which motivated the Colonial Jews in this city to erect a synagogue and instruct their children in the path of “vertuous religion.”
It would seem to me that each of us must clearly comprehend — and willingly accept — the premise and the firm belief that we are not isolated human beings operating in a void, but that we are products of the past, and builders of the future. How can we move forward without remembering? In his message to this Congregation, President Washington admonished the 1790 Jews — and also us, today — that, "If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail."

Already in our day, there exists a blank in the memories of many of our youth, and even my generation, who know nothing of the Holocaust, wherein 6,000,000 Jews were sacrificed — one third of a people — and beyond that, even 5,000,000 Christians suffered a similar fate. The enormity is beyond our grasp. However, the recounting of Jewish history cannot be the recitation of a martyrology alone, but, in truth, the Jewish people can take great pride in its pioneering contributions to civilization, beginning with the religion and ethics of the Bible, and continuing with many vital services, and communal innovations throughout the ages, even unto today.

Essentially, we are dealing with human beings, when we try to recreate the past. If, as a result of reflecting upon the vicissitudes of those who lived before, we realize our common humanity, then we shall have learned a most significant and useful lesson from the contemplation of history.

My friends, there is a knocking without, and voices can be heard — we must open the gates.

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NOTES

1Gutstein, p. 89.
2Ibid., p. 88.
3Deuteronomy XXVI, 1. Hertz, p. 859.
4Deuteronomy XXVII, 1. Hertz, p. 862.
Our Duty to Instruct: Reflections on Touro Synagogue

8Ibid.
9Marcus, p. 223.
9Gutstein, pp. 212, 213.
9Ezekiel & Lichtenstein, pp. 236-238.
9Gutstein, pp. 223, 224.
9Ezekiel & Lichtenstein, p. 256.
10Ibid., p. 258.
11Mrs. Cohen was the daughter of Samuel Hays Myers and Eliza Kennon Mordecai Myers, who were first cousins. Her father was a grandson of Myer Myers, the Colonial silversmith, who was also Eliza’s mother’s father.
Edward Cohen was the grandson of Israel I. Cohen, who was in Richmond by 1784, and whose brother, Jacob I. Cohen was the second Jew to reside permanently in Richmond. Jacob’s first wife was the widow of Moses Mordecai. Caroline’s husband was prominent in banking circles in Richmond. They were married in 1855 and had no children. Cohen died in 1888.
(From Ezekiel and Lichtenstein).
12Gutstein, pp. 266, 267.
14Ibid.
15Stern, p. 156.
16Dr. Daniel D. Talley III, Dr. Lilburn T. Talley, and Edmund Myers Talley.
17Records, p. 5.
18Ibid., p. 5.
19Ibid., p. 6.
20Ibid., p. 6.
21Ibid., p. 9.
22Gutstein, p. 229.
23Records, p. 6.
24Ibid., p. 7.
25Ibid., p. 9.
26Gutstein, pp. 317, 318.
27Records, p. 10.
28Ibid., pp. 15, 14, 15.
29Ezekiel & Lichtenstein, p. 145.
30Records, p. 7.
31Ibid., p. 30.
32Gutstein, pp. 98, 99.
33Ibid., pp. 266, 264.
WHERE CREDIT IS DUE
JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO LIFE IN NEWPORT
BY FRANCINE GAIL HELFNER

The story of the Jews of Newport was filled with the terror and persecution of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. After being ostracized from Brazil and New Amsterdam in 1658, and having heard of the religious freedom offered by Roger Williams, the Jews made their way to Newport, Rhode Island.

These settlers were educated, with a background in science, culture, economy, and politics and therefore were recognized and respected by all local groups. At this time Jews, not allowed to engage in commerce because of the British edicts, therefore undertook agrarian responsibilities.

As these acts caused much hardship for the Jews, many left Newport not long after their first arrival. In 1663, however, King Charles II of England proclaimed religious freedom as the basis of individual rights; and in 1677 there was once again evidence of a Jewish community when a plot of land was purchased for a cemetery (Fig. 1).

As the years progressed, the Jewish community strengthened, and many Jews became involved in trade—local, foreign, and intercolonial—which began to show indications of success. Other Jews were soap boilers, workers in brass, and merchants.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a large group of Jews arrived from Curacao in the West Indies. Previously having lived in Holland and having skills in commercial endeavors, the Dutch government asked them to aid the settlement of Curacao to improve the commerce and well-being of the island. The Jews found Newport to be a flourishing city with potential to become a bustling metropolis.

The local Jews were also active in manufacturing. In 1705 Jews introduced the manufacture of soap into the colonies, established iron and brass foundries, and engaged in tailoring and silvercrafting. The Rivera family built the first spermaceti factory in Rhode Island, which soon surpassed other industries. Moses Lopez engaged in the manufacture of potash, and James Lucena introduced the true method of making Castile soap. Aaron Lopez, the colonial “Merchant Prince”, had many ships venturing to all corners of the earth for trade. All of these industries encouraged economic prosperity and more commercial activity.

Read at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Touro Synagogue, National Historic Shrine, Inc., August 27, 1972.
Thus, the Jews contributed to the prosperity of the Newport community, often working with non-Jews on projects of organization which proved to be successful. Jacob Isaacks, a local Jew, is reputed to have found a method of distilling fresh water from the ocean. He prepared a bottle and presented it to President Washington. It was submitted to the House of Representatives in 1791 and given to Thomas Jefferson for evaluation; however, this invention proved to be unsatisfactory.

The Jewish businessmen were precise and scrupulous in their dealings, which gave them respect and reverence from the Christian community.

The Jews of Newport were no different from the other local inhabitants in apparel and appearance. The wealthier men wore aristocratic dress with the white wig, but few grew beards. A German officer remarked that these Jews were "not like ours known by their beards and clothes but dressed like other men, and their women are in the same French style as the women of other religions."

In 1759 the Newport Jews undertook the responsibility of building a synagogue and a school for the religious instruction of their children. Although they lacked the necessary funds, various appeals were made to different congregations. The synagogue was completed and dedicated in 1763, designed by Peter Harrison, the noted colonial architect, who combined the Georgian style of architecture and the traditional synagogue of the Spanish-Portuguese Jews (Fig. 2).

These Jews also contributed to the development of colonial art and culture. Before the American Revolution, Gilbert Stuart was encouraged by the Newport Jews to continue his painting because they recognized his ability and genius.

When the Redwood Library was founded in 1747, many prominent Jews such as Moses Lopez, Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, and Abraham Hart were among its first members. Other Jews donated money for the purchase of books.

Upon arrival in 1658, the early Jewish settlers are said to have introduced the craft of Masonry on this continent and worked the degrees in private homes. About a hundred years later, King David's Lodge and St. John's Lodge were formed, with a large Jewish membership in both lodges. Moses Seixas, a prominent Jewish citizen, helped to establish the Grand Lodge of Masons in Rhode Island. He also organized the Bank of Rhode Island and carried on the business at his home. The position as cashier of the bank was held until his death in 1818.
Fig. 1. Jews' Cemetery (1972).

Fig. 2. Touro Synagogue (1972).

Fig. 3. Aaron Lopez House on Thames Street before demolition. (Old photo in the Newport Historical Society.)
Fig. 4. Abraham Rodrigues Rivera House (1972).

Fig. 5. Pollock House (1972)

Fig. 6. Moses Levy—Moses Cisterns House (1972).
Fig. 7. Jacob Rodrigues Rivera House, before demolition. (Old photograph in the Newport Historical Society.)

Fig. 8. Samuel Lopez House, before demolition.
Fig. 9. Nathaniel Hart House, moved back from 53 Washington Street and turned end on. It was owned briefly by Abraham Rodrigues Rivera.

Fig. 10. Isaac Touro's House at 46 Division Street.
Fig. 11. Map of Newport showing the location of the sites identified in the photographs (Figs. 1-10).
In 1761 the prominent Newport Jews organized the first Jewish Men's Club in America. This organization was for social purposes only and had no connection with the synagogue. In fact, synagogue matters were forbidden to be discussed at these meetings.

The Revolutionary War interrupted the prosperity of Newport and with the occupation of the British forces, many Jews left town, settling in other colonies in search of peace and shelter or joining the army for the American cause. Newport's trade declined, but never again reached its previous grandeur. After the war several Jewish families returned to Newport; however, by 1822 many had died or moved away to New York.

Thus, the Jewish community of Newport, which had prospered and helped the colony to become a great commercial and cultural center, left only a few reminders of its presence that did not become erased with time.

From my research I have identified a number of the many Jewish residences in Newport. Several have been destroyed and some families were tenants, so that there is no evidence of their presence. Some records were kept during the French occupation, and the locations of several Jewish homes were mentioned. Reverend J. J. Lyons, during his stay in Newport, referred to some of the homes also. I have discovered that some of his information was incorrect.

The following are the results of my survey:

Aaron Lopez lived at 201 Thames Street. A storeroom was downstairs while his family resided on the upper floors. This house was demolished during the redevelopment of downtown Newport (Fig. 3).

Abraham Rodrigues Rivera resided on Parade Street, now known as Washington Square. It was the site of meetings at which Brown University was organized. It is now occupied by the Newport National Bank (Fig. 4).

The Pollock family lived at 3 Chestnut Street at the corner of Chestnut and Third Streets in the Point Section. Although the house is still standing, it has not been restored (Fig. 5).

The house at the lower end of Touro Street was originally occupied by Moses Levy, but upon his death it was acquired by Moses Seixas. Seixas, who founded the Bank of Rhode Island, carried on business on the lower floor, and lived with his family on the upper floors. Later it was the home of Commodore Oliver H. Perry. The Salvation Army is now located here (Fig. 6).
Hyman Levy lived on Touro Street on the present site of the Viking Hotel parking lot. This house burned down in the 1800's.

Jacob Rodrigues Rivera lived on Washington Street next to the Hunter House. During the French occupation, Brigadier de Choisy quartered his troops in this house. This house was later demolished when the Old Colony Railroad bought the land (Fig. 7).

The present site of the Savings Bank of Newport on Washington Square is where the house of Samuel Lopez stood (Fig. 8).

Nathaniel Hart lived at 53 Washington Street near Elm Street. This house is still standing (Fig. 9).

During the Revolution Reverend Isaac Touro rented a house from George Buckmaster at 46 Division Street. This house has not been restored but is standing (Fig. 10).

Jacob Hart resided at Washington and Willow Streets. This house has been moved to 30 Walnut Street. During the war he rented five rooms from Metcalfe Bowler on Jews' Street, now known as Bellevue Avenue.

The Judah family lived at the foot of Thames and Farewell Streets. Since they were tenants, the exact location of this house is unknown.

At the site of the yard, west of the North Baptist Church on Marlborough Street stood the residence of the Myers family. Mordecai Myers, a distinguished officer in the War of 1812, was born here.

The Hays family lived on Broadway, but the exact location is unknown.

Jacob Isaacks lived on Thames Street next to Joseph Cozzen's Hatter's Shop and next to the home of Captain John Collins, but this site is also unidentified.

Abraham Sarzedas lived on Easton's Point, the Point section of Newport, in the former home of Thomas Pate, but this location is not known.

Several Jews owned houses although they did not live in them themselves.

Moses Levy owned a house on Elizabeth Street, formerly known as East Griffin Street, but since the homes on this street have not been identified, no positive statement can be made.

At the present site of St. Paul's Methodist Church stood a dwelling place and snuff mill. It was owned by a Lopez family, and then Jacob
Rodrigues Rivera bought the property. Rivera also owned a house on Franklin Street on the present site of the United States Post Office and a house on Washington Street known as the Benson House.

These men have left their mark on the history of Newport. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Emma Lazarus were so moved by the final resting place of some of these men that both expressed their feelings in poems about the Jewish cemetery in Newport.

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**NOTES**

1Ref. 5 (Gutstein), pp. 156-157. (Gutstein gives the address as 131-133 Thames St. Antoinette Downing gives it as 201 Thames St. The latter number is clearly visible in Fig. 5, Ed.).

2Records of the Newport Historical Society.

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4Ref. 5, pp. 156, and records of the Newport Historical Society.

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Mrs. Gladys Bolhouse, Newport Historical Society
Mr. Stanley Ward, Newport Historical Society
Almost a century and a half ago the legislature of the State of Rhode Island took action which time has shown to be an example of great kindness. While the bequest by Abraham Touro in 1823 for the purpose of perpetual endowment for the maintenance and care of the physical structure of Congregation Jeshuat Israel in Newport was the fundamental reason for its preservation during that part of the nineteenth century when there were no Jews living in the city, of equal significance was the willingness of the Rhode Island General Assembly to accept responsibility for the fund. This trust most certainly was not undertaken with a view toward currying political favor. There were very few Jewish votes to be courted. It would seem that the legislature might have refused to accept trusteeship, using as an excuse the doctrine of separation of Church and State. At any rate the General Treasurer of Rhode Island has protected and nurtured the assets of this bequest for nearly one hundred and fifty years. During this period some very small fees and modest taxes have been assessed by individual agents and by the City of Newport, but there has never been a monetary charge imposed by the government of Rhode Island for services rendered. This could justifiably be considered among the “most unsordid” acts in Rhode Island legislative history.

From the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island pertinent sections of the title “Abraham Touro Fund” (1823) read:

"Whereas, it has been made to appear to this General Assembly, upon the representation of Titus Weeks, Esq., executor of the last will and testament of Abraham Touro, Esq. of the city of Boston, in the state of Massachusetts, that the said Abraham by his last will bequeathed a legacy in the following words, viz.: . . . . 'I give ten thousand dollars ($10,000) to the legislature of the state of Rhode Island for the purpose of supporting the Jewish synagogue in that state, in special trust to be appropriated to that object in such manner as the said legislature, together with the municipal authority of the town of Newport, may from time to time direct.'"

This account is of especial current interest, as the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue National Historic Shrine, Inc. is planning a major fund-raising campaign to finance repairs to the iron and granite fences bordering both the Synagogue and cemetery properties in accordance with detailed specifications and recommendations of the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, based on its meticulous studies.—Ed.
"Therefor, be enacted by the general assembly . . . that said legacy and trust be accepted."

The act provided that the income from the fund be used for the maintenance of the synagogue building and the burial ground. It decreed that expenditures were to be approved by a board of the congregation and presented through the Town Council of Newport. Further it was stated: "... and whenever there shall be no person of the Jewish persuasion residing in Newport and qualified and authorized to have the care and superintendence of said synagogue, said council shall appoint some suitable person. . . ."

With few exceptions the net worth of the Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund has grown consistently in terms of dollars since 1823. Large expenditures have been necessary on occasion; but, on the whole, growth in total value has persisted. In view of the inflationary pressures on the economy over the years, it would seem that the custodians have acted with prescience throughout. There is some irony in the fact that, while the original ten thousand dollar bequest has grown to a balance in 1971 of approximately $138,069, the perpetual erosion of the buying power of the dollar has hardly more than preserved in rough terms the original purchasing power of the annual income (Fig. 1).

The oldest official comment about the Fund discovered by the writer appeared in the Rhode Island Colony Records, dated May 1825. It stated in part: "Resolved that the Town Council of Newport be authorized to draw on the General Treasurer for the interest of the Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund, or so much thereof as shall be necessary to put said synagogue and the fence around it in complete repair."*

Another item of special interest included in the General Treasurer's Report to the General Assembly dated May 1835 was his review in part of a report from the Newport Town Council: "... and for repairing four manuscript copies of the Pentateuch in New York, provided said manuscripts, when repaired, shall be deposited in said synagogue where they belong. For the purpose of repairing said manuscripts they wrote to the person in New York in whose possession they are, and informed them of the condition on which same would be repaired, but

*Extensive repairs were carried out during the period 1827-29 with funds drawn on income from the bequest by the Town Council of Newport. The expenditures amounted to $3,482.58. Of this sum $1,174 was obtained by loan pending accrual of further income by the fund. See Restoration of the Touro Synagogue, R.I.J.H. Notes 3:106-131 (No. 2, Oct. 1959), by Esther I. Schwartz.—Ed.
have never received any answer from them, and said manuscripts have never been repaired."

Among special items taken from Reports of the General Treasurer to the General Assembly for the period from 1838 to 1856 are the following:

(1838) Town Tax $39.20
(1842) Cash balances:

| Bank of Rhode Island | $14,677.52 |
| Newport Bank         | 3,553.23  |

18,030.75

(1843) Total expenditure for fence $7,114.41
(1847) Town Tax $77.20
(1851) Investments in Bank Stocks:

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<td>Newport Bank, Newport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lime Rock Bank, Smithfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and uninvested balance of $295.23

(1853) Paid to Phillip Stevens, agent $74.99
(1855) Town Tax 43.50
(1853) "Repairs and painting of synagogue and for reservoir for water" 1,575.38

(1856) City Tax $120.00

The investment policy for the greater part of the life of the fund has been conservative. In keeping with sound fiduciary tradition the portfolio included bank stocks, municipal bonds, and savings accounts. In recent years, however, some of the methods used would have seemed heretical to our forefathers. Rhode Island statute in 1961 allowed common stocks to be included in state-controlled permanent funds. Of late high-interest-bearing commercial paper has been included in the Fund. America's wars have had their impact. From 1919 to 1931 government Victory Bonds, the financing instruments of World War I, were included. War Bonds of World War II made their appearance in the portfolio in 1943. Increase in United States Bond holdings is evident during both the Korean conflict and the involvement in Vietnam.

Three schedules summarizing the financial data are published with this paper. Table A gives a random accounting of the net worth in the early years as shown by reports of the General Treasurer that are available. In Table B are shown totals by year (1859-1907) without a breakdown into components, while Table C renders a comprehensive analysis of the fund assets by category of investment from 1908 to 1971.
NOTES

1 This should not be confused with the Judah Touro Ministerial and Cemetery Fund which was placed in the trust of the City of Newport in 1879. Original amount of the bequest was $10,000. The Newport Financial Report of June 30, 1971 shows that the principal amount of that fund was $68,025 as of that date. During the fiscal period ending on the aforementioned date $2,894 was expended.

2 Reference is made here to statement by Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Minister, in 1947 to the announcement of the Marshall Plan for European economic recovery. He hailed the establishment of the program as “the most unsordid act in history.”

3 Pertaining to this matter we quote from a letter to the writer by Bernard Kusinitz, currently Historian of Touro Synagogue: “At present there are six Torahs in the Ark in the Synagogue, one of which is over four hundred years old and is kept separate from the others. It is impossible to differentiate between the others in reference to their source of origin and date of arrival. There are no written records here to clarify the situation. Moreover, although there are indeed signs of repair on some of the scrolls, there is no way of knowing if they are the ones referred to in the 1835 report of the Town Council to the General Assembly.”

4 This was probably a local tax on intangibles.

5 From the Newport Mercury, June 25, 1842: “Mr. Cranston (the Mayor) asked authority to expend interest on the erection of a fence around the Synagogue similar to that erected around the cemetery.” In the same publication on July 9, 1842 it was reported: “Town Council, under the authority given them by the General Assembly have contacted Isaiah Rogers of Boston to enclose the Synagogue lot with a substantial stone wall and iron fence. The contract is for the sum of $6,835 and work is to be completed by the last of October.”

This appurtenance still stands. Actual expenditure of $7,114 was slightly higher than amount of contract indicated above.

6 Refer to footnote.

7 On this and some other occasions during the latter half of the nineteenth century a modest fee was paid to private persons for financial services to the fund. Maximum amount ever charged in a single year was $100.

8 During the period 1859 through 1875 assets were represented by these bank stocks:

| 30 shares | Manufacturers Bank | $3,277.25 |
| 32 shares | Merchants Bank | $1,738.27 |
| 20 shares | Weybosset Bank | $1,095.14 |
| 10 shares | Roger Williams Bank | $841.50 |
| 24 shares | Commercial Bank | $1,501.00 |
| 200 shares | Blackstone Canal Bank | $1,090.97 |
| 18 shares | Lime Rock Bank | $926.40 |
| 34 shares | Arcade Bank | $1,806.53 |

(All the above were located in Providence)

21 Newport Bank, Newport | $1,291.85 |

Total $17,488.91

9 It could not be determined from available records why there was a rise of nearly twenty per cent in the net worth of fund at this point. In the reports of 1906 and 1907 mention was made of the fact that the following banks were in process of liquidation, suggesting that a profit may have been realized:

Weybosset National Bank (20 shares)
Lime Rock National Bank (18 shares)
Fig. 1. The increase in value of the funds since the original Touro bequest in 1825 closely parallels the rise in consumer prices over the same period.
The Touro Jewish Synagogue Fund

TABLE A

Reports to the General Assembly (state legislature) by the Town Council of Newport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net Worth</th>
<th>Year</th>
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TABLE B

Reports of General Treasurer.

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THE FUNERAL OF JUDAH TOURO
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, JUNE 6, 1854*

The following votes in relation to the Funeral of the late Judah Touro, having been passed by the late Council, June 5th, 1854, the invitation was extended by Mayor Cozzens, to the Delegation and Executors on their arrival, and they were conducted to the Touro House, where arrangements had been made for their reception.

WHEREAS, The late Judah Touro, of New Orleans, by his munificent donations and bequest to this city and various institutions within its corporate limits, has warmly and particularly manifested his attachment to the place of his nativity, and whereas the mortal remains of the said Judah Touro will arrive here to-morrow morning for their final sepulchre,—therefore,

Resolved, That the Executors of the said Judah Touro, and such of the members of the Jewish faith as may accompany his remains to the city, be and they are hereby invited to become the guests of the city during their stay here.

Resolved, That His Honor the Mayor, be and is hereby requested to extend this invitation, as above provided for.

At 10 o'clock, A.M., on the 6th June, the Executors with a delegation of Jews called upon the Mayor,—Aldermen Hunter and Birkhead, and Councilmen Taylor, Sherman, Tisdale, and Slocum, being present. The Rev. Dr. Raphall, in behalf of the Jews, said:—

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT:

We are deputed to wait on you by the delegations of various Jewish Congregations and Institutions now assembled in your city, to join you in the last marks of respect to the mortal remains of a man who was at once, a native of your city, a member of our faith and a friend to the whole human race. As the act of God can do no wrong, it does not become us to repine at the loss both you and we have sustained; but since it is our sad duty to attend to the grave the remains of Judah Touro, it is no small source of consolation to us that this duty has to be performed here, for the friendly feelings that subsist between the Jews and the city of Newport, the State of Rhode Island, are not of recent date. We bear it in greatful [sic] memory that even in this great Republic, the glorious home of Freedom, Rhode Island was the first State that proclaimed religious equality, and thus gave the fullest recog-
nition to the rights of conscience and opinion in every man. During
the more than a century and a quarter, that Jews resided in this city,
the connexion between them and your fathers was one of peace and
good will. They ranked as citizens, as merchants, as members of society,
among your foremost men; and when the vicissitudes and changes atten-
dant on the war of Independence induced them to remove from
here, they left behind them a reputation for integrity and benevolence
that you have recorded in the history of your city; while on their part
they expressed their high opinion of your integrity and liberality by
entrusting to your care the consecrated building in which they wor-
shipped God, and the hallowed spot where rests the ashes of those who
were nearest and dearest to them. And the manner in which you have
discharged that trust, shows how worthily that confidence was bestowed.
The good feeling between you and us is thus to both a precious in-
heritance; and while it must be to you a source of sincere gratification
that your fellow townsman, absent upwards of half a century, should,
dying so far away, still have afforded you such strong proofs of affection,
it is to us an equal source of gratification that you enter so fully into
our feelings on this occasion. Mr. Mayor, we beg to acknowledge the
receipt of your communication, to thank you for the excellent measures
you and the council have adopted, and to assure you of our readiness
to co-operate with you in doing justice to the memory of a good man,
who even in his last moments retained that love for his neighbor of
every creed and heritage that can only be felt by the whole-souled
Republican.

When Dr. Raphall concluded, Mayor Cozzens replied as follows:
REV. SIR AND GENTLEMEN:—

On behalf of the authorities and citizens of Newport, I receive with
pleasure, the delegation and the Executors of the last will of the late
Judah Touro, and his sympathizing brethren of the Jewish Faith, who
have now visited our city in charge of the last mortal remains of this
eminent and beloved philanthropist, for the purpose of their being
entombed among his ancestors.

It is an impressive though melancholy duty which consigns to its
last resting place all that remains of a once numerous and happy
family, who for a long series of years were closely identified with this
city, and whose interest and affection has been so long continued by
him whose death we now lament. Our city and State, the home and
birth-place of religious toleration has opened wide her doors to Jew
or Gentile. The ceremonies of this deeply interesting occasion will long be remembered by our citizens, as we have so many instances of his generous character so permanently and prominently before us; the Jewish Synagogue and Cemetery have, by the liberality of himself and his brother Abraham, been endowed with ample means for their preservation; and I assure you, sir, that the city authorities of Newport will hold in respect and veneration the sacred trusts which have been and are now being committed to their charge.

FUNERAL OF MR. TOURO.

The funeral of the late Judah Touro was solemnized same afternoon; the procession was the longest which has been seen here for many years. The streets were crowded with people, the stores all closed, and the bells tolled. About one hundred and fifty Jews were present from various parts of the country.

The City Council assembled at the City Hall, and marched in procession to the Synagogue, the gallery of which was already densely crowded with ladies, and there were thousands on the street who could not gain admission. The coffin stood in front of the reading-desk.

Soon after the arrival of the city government, the Rabbins and other Jews came in procession, the former taking seats in the desk. As soon as the Synagogue was filled, the doors were closed, and thousands remained outside until the ceremonies were concluded.

The services were conducted by the Rev. J. K. Gutheim, of New Orleans, in Hebrew and English. In this address, which was excellent, he paid a glowing and eloquent tribute to the memory of the departed.

The following clergymen were present:—Rev. Dr. Raphall, Rev. S. M. Isaacs, Rev. Ansel Leo, Rev. J. J. Lyons of New York, Rev. J. K. Gutheim of New Orleans, Rev. Joseph Sachs of Boston, Rev. Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia, and Rev. H. A. Henry of Buffalo, nearly all of whom were in their robes. Delegations of Jews were present from Boston, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Buffalo, and Philadelphia, to all of which places Mr. Touro made bequests.

At the conclusion of the services at the Synagogue, the procession was formed in the following order:—Rabbins and Jews from abroad; City Marshal; Mayor; City Clerk; City Treasurer; Board of Aldermen; City Sargeant; President of Common Council; Clerk of Common Council; Common Council; Redwood Library Corporation, preceded by the
President and Directors; Protection Company, No. 5; Citizens and Strangers.

It moved through the streets, as previously announced, to the Cemetery, where the remains were consigned to their native dust. The Rev. Mr. Leeser delivered a very appropriate and eloquent address. After the coffin was deposited in the grave, the Rev. Mr. Isaacs deposited upon it a quantity of earth which was brought from Jerusalem for the purpose, at the same time uttering a few appropriate remarks. Prayers were then offered at the graves of the members of the family.

Thus closed these interesting and mournful ceremonies; and thus was laid in the grave the last, we believe, of the Touro family.
JEWS AND THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY
RHODE ISLAND AND FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS
By Erwin Strasmich

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the old cliche Jews always have major economic power, but, certainly, such was frequently not the case in the history of the Rhode Island textile industry. In fact, the Jews who figured importantly in the history of local textiles began as men with little or no financial resources—with nothing but thrift, tenacity, and courage. They entered a declining, even dying, business which non-Jews had originally founded and then abandoned only long after it had lost its easy profitability. With little but courage the Rhode Island Jews made a success where others encountered only failure.

Textile mills, once flourishing and prosperous in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, are now mainly historical remnants. The booming and bustling factories of the 1930s have become deserted and decrepit buildings. This paper is an attempt to recreate the fascinating life of early mills in this area and to present an informative discussion of their owners, many of whom were ambitious and successful Jewish entrepreneurs.

The bold and aggressive merchant Moses Brown of Providence, who was identified with the East India trade, began cotton manufacturing in Rhode Island in 1788. Brown financed Samuel Slater, who then built a mill in Pawtucket with new machines. This simple beginning created an industry which grew uninterruptedly for 135 years. The introduction of English machinery and the invention in 1793 of the cotton gin (through which a thousand pounds of cotton were cleaned in the time formerly taken to clean five or six pounds) gave an immediate impetus to the cotton industry. Local men, guided by Samuel Slater, began their own plants.

Early workers were mostly Irish immigrants, but by 1929 (according to the “New England Cotton Textile Industry” by J. Hubert Burgy) nationalities represented in various Blackstone Valley Mills were: French 28.8 per cent; Portuguese 2.5 per cent; Polish 5.2 per cent; English 22.4 per cent; Hebrew .15 per cent, and Russian .04 per cent.

The textile industry (woolen and cotton) spread with an uninterrupted growth throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania during the nineteenth century. It expanded rapidly until World War I.
Strength and growth were encouraged by the federal and state governments, which provided capital and legislation to protect the infant industry against foreign competition. In 1805 the total consumption of cotton in the U. S. was approximately 1,000 bales. By 1816, 90,000 bales of cotton were used.

In 1812 there were thirty-three factories in Rhode Island with approximately thirty thousand spindles and twenty factories in Massachusetts with over seventeen thousand spindles. The cotton base was firmly established, and the woolen industry also entered the area. At the time of Slater's death in 1835 the textile industry was solidly established. By 1909 Providence, Rhode Island produced thirty-seven million dollars worth of textile materials; Woonsocket, Rhode Island twenty million dollars; Fall River, Massachusetts fifty-six million dollars. These figures were enormous when one considers that no industry existed until Slater established his mill in 1788.

Early bold investors had choice locations for water power and selected sites at the junction of rivers and at falls. Physical descriptions of most mills were similar: granite, quarried from ledges within a few hundred yards of the building sites, was used to construct four or five story high factories.

As an example of the growth of the industry and its impact on the communities involved, the leading city of Lowell in 1911 had over seventy-one thousand spindles, twenty thousand looms, and $12,900,000 capital invested. Leading producers were located in Philadelphia, Lawrence, Fall River, New Bedford, Lowell, New York City, Paterson, Manchester, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. The convenient location of water power sites in these cities provided a logical setting for the textile industry.

At this time the woolen and hosiery goods industries were centered in Philadelphia; New York City claimed the garment trade; Fall River was the leading cotton producing center; and New Bedford the greatest producer of fine cotton goods. Lawrence manufactured worsted material; and Paterson, New Jersey was the silk center. Bristol County, Massachusetts, which is comprised of Fall River, New Bedford, and other small towns, had forty-three per cent of the total spindles in all of New England by 1928. The combined value of production in Lawrence, Fall River, Lowell, and New Bedford was over two hundred and eleven million dollars in 1935. This clearly indicates the concentration of the cotton textile industry in this area.
Textile manufacturing, as described above, encompasses broad woven cloth (woolens, cottons, rayons, sateens,nylons), carpets, cordage, twine, sewing thread, jute linens, commercial fishing nets and seines, curtains, cotton smallwares, dyeing and finishing, hosiery, knit goods, suit manufacturers, woolen and worsted manufacturing, wool felt goods, and hats. Also, many other facets of textiles, with which the layman is unfamiliar, include allied and auxiliary items such as braiding (elastic, candle wicking, oval rugs, sleeving wire, hose, cables, tapes); rope, twine, and cordage; webbings, shoe lacing and embroidery; and vinyl coated and plastic fabrics backed with textile items (cloth, rugs and carpeting, weaving, and braiding).

In the 1930s the territory within a thirty mile radius of Providence was the greatest textile center in America. One realizes the enormous concentration of the textile industry as one travels on Interstate Route 95 through Pawtucket and Providence, Rhode Island; Interstate Route 195 through Fall River, Massachusetts; and Interstate Route 93 through Manchester, New Hampshire. The mills, resembling bee-hives, once employed thousands of people, housed millions of spindles and thousands of looms, and produced millions of yards of material. The textile industry, in value of output, was second only to the food industry.

With the numerous Jewish names today connected with the textile industry, one might think that they had always been a part of the great industrial surge in this area. This assumption, however, is erroneous. Most Jews in the late 1800s and early 1900s had minimal influence in the economic and financial spheres. Rather than invade the factory, they shrewdly chose, at first, to work independently. As one writer described it: "The Russian Jews, steadily increasing in number, avoided the factory, as much as possible and became small retail dealers, or preferred the smaller industries where there was some hope of individual enterprise in the near future. Thus we find among them many hucksters and peddlers, tailors and tailoresses, boot and shoe makers and repairers. . . ."* The reason for this was that foreigners entering the job market in this country had many economic and social disadvantages. Well-established men controlled business interests long before the immigrants arrived, preventing their facile upward mobility. Only unskilled positions were available to them at first. Yet, amazingly, by the 1950s a large segment of the cotton and woolen industries was controlled by Jews, a newly arrived immigrant group. They accomplished this remarkable

feat through first buying and selling items manufactured by the concerns they later controlled, and by purchasing used equipment from mills and revitalizing it for their own use. These early efforts were incredibly strenuous, but determination and fortitude prevailed. It is remarkable that in just thirty years the control in each of the afore-mentioned industries in this area had been acquired by Jews, either by direct control of assets or by the purchase of mill properties.

Unfortunately, following their initial spectacular success, mills in the Southeastern area of New England began to decline after World War I. They continued to leave the area during the thirties, and, in spite of a surge of prosperity during World War II, the pattern of movement of textile mills from New England to the South increased in the fifties. By 1960 there were few cotton mills left in the entire area. This exodus was the result of competition from the South, where labor was much cheaper, cheap foreign imports from Japan and Hong Kong, and uneconomical operational methods on the part of the mills themselves. The remaining manufacturers, now chiefly Jewish, made specialized items which, while competitive, were also unique.

During the 1920s and 1930s, while mills closed and ceased operations, the abundance of available floor space and willing laborers was exploited by the garment industry. Shops from New York, besieged by labor problems, and desiring to acquire low-priced manufacturing space and an available supply of relatively low-priced unskilled labor, moved to this area. Today there are over fifteen thousand persons employed in the garment industry in Fall River. Jewish entrepreneurs purchased the granite and brick mills and leased, sub-divided, or sold them to apparel or needle trades industries.

It is pertinent to examine more closely the needle industry in this area, because it was such an important factor in Fall River's industrial life. From a small beginning in the 1930s, the sewing industry has steadily grown and has provided jobs for hundreds of women. Lack of additional workers alone prevented it from overtaking the textile industry in importance. Payrolls show the needle shops as close behind textiles in volume for these years. Without the sewing industry Fall River would have suffered a complete financial collapse (thousands of women were employed in sewing shops during a period when there was limited male employment because of mill closings). During the late 1920s and the national depression in the 1930s, the city had defaulted on its bonds and actually went bankrupt. A commissioner, appointed by the governor of Massachusetts, ran the city.
These shops produced house-dresses, cloth hats, better dresses, sweaters, pajamas, underwear, trousers, curtains, dress sportswear, rain coats, and a myriad of other products processed from textiles. The curtain factories alone can illustrate the success of the sewing industry. "Fall River's curtain plants turn out some of the finest products made in the country, supplying many of the largest retailers". Other industries now utilizing mills in the area are braiding, dyeing and finishing, automobile tires, battery cases, retail outlets, abrasive wheels, yarn spinning, candy, boxes, lamps, plastics, luggage, plating, file folders, potato chips, rubber thread, disposal cans, webbing, and electronics. The industrial diversity filling the empty mills enormously helped the economy of the area, since it no longer depended on one or two industries with low wages and limited economic power. Various municipalities raised their low tax base.

Jews continue to contribute to and operate the textile industry. Curiously, Jews usurped most gentile oriented companies in the last fifty years. Such men as the venerable and outstanding Albert A. List, now of New York City, formerly of Fall River, controlled the goliath of the woolen and worsted industry, William Whitman Company of Lawrence.

**Albert A. List**

Albert A. List and his brothers, William and Joseph, began their business careers in the grocery business. Born in 1901, List established his business with his two older brothers in 1917. They became involved with used textile machines and were associated with and acquired financial interest in a number of companies: National Refining Company, Cleveland, Ohio (through List's direct association with international financier Cyrus Eaton); List Finance Corporation; Albert Realty Company, Albert Warehouse and Realty Company Incorporated, and Otis Crescent Corporation.

In the mid 1930s List established an industrial real estate business which specialized in finding uses for vacant mills idled by the Depression. He then purchased several of the larger textile entities in New England which had been the original foundation of the American woolen and worsted industry. For a number of years he ran Arlington Mills, Nashuena Cotton Mills, Monomac Mills, Nonquit Mills, and William Plastics. In addition, List became involved in financial operations similar to today's conglomerates. For example, under his guidance U. S. Finish-

The Gera Corporation.

One of New York's leading philanthropists, List has contributed most notably to artistic, educational, and religious institutions—$1,000,000 to the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, another million to the New School for Social Research, and $600,000 to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and its Jewish museum. The Albert A. List foundation has aided in the rapid development of many cultural activities. Through his contributions he sought to enrich adult life by encouraging institutions to undertake imaginative and far-reaching artistic and educational programs. He also contributed funds to the Mount Sinai Hospital for hematology research and to the Massachusetts General Hospital for a research fellowship program. He also contributed largely to the new Albert and Vera List Art Building at Brown University.

II. NARROW FABRICS

Because of our personal interest in narrow fabrics, we have assembled the story of this specialized branch of the textile industry as a separate section of this history of the Jews in the textile industry in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. This story had its beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the National Tubing Company in Providence. The more general account of Jewish involvement in the textile industry of this area will then be developed chronologically.

NATIONAL TUBING COMPANY

Isaac Hahn established the National Tubing Company, located on Sabin Street, prior to 1885. It engaged in the manufacture of flexible tubing for illuminating gas appliances. The business was an outgrowth of an earlier enterprise which fabricated silk, worsted, and mohair braids for the general trade and for his own retail establishment, which dealt in laces and gloves. Hahn, the father of Superior Court Justice J. Jerome Hahn, died in 1909. (See R.I.J.H. Notes 4:517, No. 4, Nov. 1966 and also back cover.)

I. MILLER & SONS

Another pioneer in the field is I. Miller & Sons, formerly the Pawtucket Vienna Braid Company located at 18 Broadway, Pawtucket, and established in 1908. In 1920 it had twenty braiders and sold direct to the trade. Now operated at 99 South Bend Street, Pawtucket by Charles
H. and Alan J. Miller, sons of founder Isaac Miller, it manufactures elastic braids for the apparel industry.

GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY

The narrow fabrics industry required less capital than weaving wide goods. An investment of fifty thousand dollars would sustain a mill of fifty to one hundred employees.

Narrow fabrics are classified as cotton small wares. They comprised only seven per cent of the total value of New England cotton manufactures in 1925, but total output of the region represented over sixty per cent of the national output. Small wares are considered narrow, woven, or braided fabrics, such as webbing, tapes and cords, elastic and nonelastic, and mill banding, ruffling, edging, figure labels, flat and round braids, cords, and shoe and corset laces.

This industry was concentrated in southern New England. Rhode Island with sixty-six establishments contributed forty per cent of the New England output in 1925. The greatest production occurred in the Providence-Pawtucket district, where an abundance of skilled labor, proximity to finishing plants and markets, and availability of raw materials from local mills favored greater output.

Braided rugs were an important factor in the narrow fabrics industry. Abraham Percelay and his brothers Jacob and Joseph began the manufacturing of braided rugs in 1918. The rugs were braided from odd lots of yarns and sewing threads, and made very handy small rugs. This item sold heavily during the depression and reached a high mark during the 1950s in conjunction with the Old Homestead and Americana look. Percelay is credited with creating a tufted type rug. Abraham Percelay conducted his business under the title Grand Mars Rug Company in Pawtucket, assisted by Joseph Percelay. Later he operated Associated Textiles with plants in Central Falls and Woonsocket. Jacob Percelay founded Troy Yarn & Textiles in Pawtucket in 1943, operating at 603 Mineral Spring Avenue with his sons Morris, vice president, and Merrill, secretary. They produced oval braided and chenille novelty rugs. They also established Fairlawn Spinning Co., which commissioned spinning of woolen and worsted yarns. The center for machinery for the braided rug industry is currently in the Pawtucket-Valley Falls-Central Falls area.

Another contemporary braiding company is Adler Brothers, operated by Berhard and Morris Adler of New York, and Arthur M. Radlauer,
who also established Atlas Braiding Co., Inc. of Valley Falls. This company, founded in 1927, manufactured shoe laces until World War II. It remains a dominant concern in this field supplying elastic braids for underwear and foundation garments throughout the United States. Other officers of the firm are Oscar Adler and Edwin I. Adler.

Also operative in this field is the Ross Matthews Corporation, established in 1922 in Providence and currently located in Fall River. Founded by Max Strasmich, who was formerly associated with Heywood Narrow Fabric Co. of Fall River, it is now operated by his sons, Fred and Erwin Strasmich. The Narragansett Braid Mills, Inc., established by the Silver Brothers of Boston, is currently in operation at 161 Rand Street in Central Falls, producing elastic braids.

The International Stretch Company, formerly Commercial Braid Co. established by Max Cohen and his sons Lester, Arthur, and Martin, has had a remarkable development. Currently listed on the New York Stock Exchange, it is a conglomerate of several allied companies in various locations. It produces elastic braids, tapes, webs, broad woven fabrics, and extruded rubber thread. Martin Cohen is acting president.

The braiding field includes many shoelace manufacturers. A prominent one is Lincoln Lace & Braid Co. of Providence, located at 61 Ponaganset Avenue. It is managed by Benjamin Gittleman and his son Robert M., in association with his brother, Sidney Gittleman, and Julius Freedman.

Automatic packaging was a unique innovation in the shoelace industry. Packaging of laces had previously been effected manually. Nathan Berk, of Berk Lace & Braid Manufacturing Company, conducted his business in Providence and then Pawtucket for forty years until he sold it in 1962. He received credit for inventing the first automatic shoelace paring machine in the industry. Another shoelace and drawcord manufacturer was the Biltmore Textile Co., now named William M. Jette & Sons, Inc., of Providence. This oldtime concern was originally founded by Hyman G. Goldsmith and was purchased by his son, the late Milton J. Goldsmith. It is currently operated by Milton's son, Sidney J. Goldsmith, and Robert Yetra.

Pawtucket Braid and Line, Inc., 28 Bailey Street, established 1882, was incorporated in 1920, with J. Solomon as secretary.

**Concord Webbing Company**

The Concord Webbing Company, Inc., 120 Main Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is a manufacturer of narrow fabrics. Eugene L. Aaronson
is president and treasurer, Adrienne (Mrs. E. L.) Aaronson, vice president and secretary.

This fine narrow fabric company, moved from New York to Pawtucket in the 1940s, was ably managed by the Aaronsons. Their chief products were Venetian blind webbing. The company was discontinued in 1963. Irving and Ada Rosen were the former principals.

**American Insulated Wire Corp.**

The American Insulated Wire Corporation, Providence, a giant in the wire and cable field, had its origin in shoelace manufacturing. Wire and cable are technically affiliated with textiles, as they utilize cotton and rayon yarns in braiding, serving, and winding.

This company, founded in 1919, was incorporated in 1921 by Jacob Kenner, president, and Barney Kenner, secretary and treasurer. It expanded into the production of silk, cotton, insulated wire, cable, radio, and phone cords. Financial assistance by Samuel Littman of New York City in the late 1920s enabled the conversion to wire production. It was subsequently sold to the Leviton Interests of Brooklyn, New York in 1937. It now operates as a subsidiary of the Leviton Manufacturing Co. and occupies the former General Cable buildings at 36 Freeman Street in Pawtucket. This outstanding company manufactures rubber covered flexible lamp and heater cords, rubber and plastic building wire, and weather-proof wire and cable, as well as telephone and communication cables. In the late 1960s sales were $45,000,000. Employment is 1100. Ira S. Galkin, president and chief executive officer, is assisted by his sons, Herbert and Arnold, and by Hyman Galkin. With additional plants at Pawtucket and Hills Grove, the concern engages heavily in government work.

**Other Enterprises**

Narragansett Thread Co. of Fall River was an early producer of cotton and silk yarns. Simon Shatkin was secretary and buyer. The company was incorporated in 1920 with capital of $55,000.

Providence Fabric at 107 Stewart Street, Providence was another early narrow fabric company. Managed by A. A. Levy, it produced shoelaces and cotton and silk braids on 400 braiders.

Taunton Manufacturing Company, a good-sized entity, wove tire fabrics. Incorporated in 1920 in Pawtucket, it was located at East River and Waterman Streets, Providence. Victor E. Meyer was president; Emanuel Berstein, secretary; and Paul Sussman of New York, treasurer.
Waldman Mfg. Co., 127 Blackstone Street, Providence, established by Samuel Waldman, was one of the larger braiding companies of the early nineteen-twenties, manufacturing shoelaces, braids, and tapes on 500 braiding machines. Waldman had originally dealt in wastes, rags, and yarn. At present, Waldman’s son, Edmund, runs Walco Electric Co. at 803 Allens Avenue, Providence, which is an outgrowth of this business. Waldman’s son-in-law, Abel S. Gurwitz, specializes in selling braiding equipment for the Halsey Company. He is one of the few dealers offering this type of equipment in the United States.

Alvin T. Sapinsley was secretary, treasurer, and buyer for the Arch Narrow Fabric Co., 444 Wellington Avenue, Cranston, which, with A. E. Levine as president, was incorporated in 1920 with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars. This company, manufacturer of braids, corset laces, darning cotton, and balling, was a successor to AAA Spool & Winding Company, an earlier braid manufacturer. Sapinsley, now an attorney in New York City, left the firm in the early 1930s. His nephew, John M. Sapinsley, was head of the company then called the Crescent Co., until it was renamed the Carol Cable Co. in 1967. It is now a division of Avnet Inc., located at 249 Roosevelt Avenue, Pawtucket. Crescent, which supplied automotive wire cable, had been founded by the able Milton C. Sapinsley.

Another shoelace and drawcord manufacturer was the Colonial Braid Company, 467 Mill Street, Pawtucket, incorporated in 1916. Sanford H. Cohen was president, treasurer, buyer, and superintendent. Its products included trimming, braid, and shoelaces, produced on 300 braiders. It was affiliated with the Attleboro Braiding Company of South Attleboro, Massachusetts.

Atlantic Tubing & Rubber Co.

Atlantic Tubing & Rubber Company, Inc., Mill Street, Cranston, Rhode Island, an old established firm, was originally acquired by Philip P. Weinstein, who died in 1941. It has since been controlled and operated by his sons William P. Weinstein, Sidney Weinstein, and Harold A. Winstead. William P. Weinstein served as president until his death in 1964. Winstead is chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

The company occupies 35 acres of land with over 500,000 square feet of floor space and employs over 400. It utilizes some 500 braiding machines. The chief products are rubber and plastics, including all types of hose, plastic film, sheeting, vinyl asbestos, and floor coverings.
Certainly one of the leaders in the vinyl products field, it has operated on a profitable basis for many years and in 1967 fabricated products having a value in excess of twenty million dollars.

**ROYAL ELECTRIC COMPANY**

This company which employs over 1,000 workers, manufactures wire and cable for the electrical industries, coaxial cable for television, extension cords for industrial and household uses, power supply cords for original equipment, and other wiring devices.

In the late 1950s Royal became affiliated with the giant International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, the largest American owned international enterprise. It engaged in the development of manufacturing, installation, and operation, as well as maintenance of, electrical and telecommunications systems and equipment. At one time it was the sole wire and cable manufacturing associate of ITT in the United States.

Max Alperin and Robert Riesman, board chairman and president respectively, head the management team of this very outstanding company. The company was founded by Joseph and Myer Riesman in 1921 in Chelsea, Massachusetts with six employees.

In 1933 the Davis-Jones Wire Company plant in East Providence, located at the present site of Fram Corp.'s world headquarters, became available as a going concern. Purchased by Royal it began production of wire for its own needs and the building of a line of wire and cable for the electrical industry. It has since branched into a large production of Christmas tree lights and wire for the holiday season. Besides additions subsequently made to the East Providence building, it occupies over 415,000 square feet of space in Pawtucket. There are also subsidiary plants in Lonsdale and Woonsocket and in nearby Massachusetts.

The company employs a large battery of braiding machines, plyers, and twisters, utilized in the manufacturing of wire and cable—thus its relevance to the textile industry. *(Prov. Sun. Journal, June 22, 1958, Business Section, pp. 14-15).*

**HAMILTON WEB CO., INC.**

This company is located in Hamilton, North Kingstown. Martin Nelson is president and treasurer and Nathan Berlin, vice president. They acquired the business in July 1951 from the Greene family who controlled this old company for four generations. Hamilton manufac-
tutes woven narrow fabrics, including tapes, webs, and belting with jacquard patterns utilizing cotton, rayon, silk, and synthetic fibers. It employs 85 persons with 3000 spinning spindles and 1250 twisters, occupying 95,000 square feet of space. It is one of few plants equipped with electrical generators to supply its own power.

**Hope Webbing**

Hope Webbing Division of Chelsea Industries, Inc., 1005 Main Street, Pawtucket manufactures cotton and synthetic braids. There is also a branch located at 120 Webster Street. This well established company was purchased by David and Frank Casty in the 1950s and merged into Chelsea Industries in 1964, with several affiliated companies. The stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Diverse braids are produced for shoes, electrical insulation sleeving, and military and industrial uses. Norman S. Dunn of Woonsocket is executive vice president and treasurer and a director of Chelsea Industries. Hope employs approximately 350 at both plants.

**Elizabeth Webbing Company**

Elizabeth Webbing Mills Inc., is located at 521 Roosevelt Avenue in Pawtucket. Martin Lifland is president and chief executive officer; Irwin Sparr, vice president and secretary; and J. William Pinkos, vice president. They are narrow fabrics manufacturers, producing woven tapes, sleeving, and webbing. Sales volume is approximately $5,000,000.

Lifland purchased the present plant in March of 1959 and subsequently moved the business from Central Falls to the larger quarters in Pawtucket. Several associated companies are affiliated with Elizabeth including the Blue Ribbon Textile Corporation (1937), managed by J. William Pinkos.

This company sells to over 1,000 accounts in the United States. In the late 1960s they enjoyed a sizeable government contract, supplying webbing for troops in Viet Nam.

**III. PRE-WORLD WAR I**

1900 - 1919

**Samuel Priest**

An extraordinary man, Samuel Priest, unlike many others in the field, did not reach success by taking advantage of low-priced corporate stock or idle mill space. He had first engaged in the waste and rag
business at 357 Canal Street in Providence as early as 1888. He founded the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company in the Belfont section of Cranston in 1912. This business continued until 1937.

Priest was a prominent member of the Jewish community in Rhode Island. Born in Vilna, Lithuania, he lived in the Providence area for forty-five years, residing part of this time in Cranston. He attended the public schools in Providence. As a result of his involvement in the mill remnant business, he built up a considerable trade with headquarters on Canal Street, Providence.

His association with mill owners and the remnant trade brought him into contact with executives of the booming textile industry in the Rhode Island-Massachusetts area. Through these connections he was encouraged to found the printing company which developed very rapidly. Substantial employment is indicated by a sensational payroll holdup of $12,000 on April 15, 1922. He was also owner of the Berry Spring Mineral Water Company of Pawtucket, and the Providence Pipe and Sprinkler Company.

His wife, Pearl Raphael Priest, continued his various manufacturing enterprises after his death in 1926. Pearl Priest acted as president and treasurer until the sale of the business in 1937, when it was no longer possible to continue operation of the plant on a profitable basis. Mrs. Priest continued to manage Berry Spring Mineral Water Company and the Providence Pipe and Sprinkler Company.

Both husband and wife were prominent philanthropists to various charities in Providence and Cranston. An outstanding woman, Pearl Priest was one of few females in full command of a large enterprise in the United States. Born in Detroit on August 13, 1872, the daughter of Robert and Anna Raphael, she graduated from Randall College, Wetherford, Texas. She generously donated a recreation house to Cranston High School and a chapel at Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick, in memory of her husband.

Archie Joslin, son-in-law of Priest, became President of M. Lowenstein and Sons and headed the largest finishing plant in the world at Rock Hill, South Carolina. His early experience at Imperial Print Works undeniably contributed to his later success.

*Priest finished fabrics on a commission basis. It appears that the textiles were stretched in the processing. There is an apocryphal story that he would have the fabrics carefully measured before and after finishing. He would remove the overage and sell it on his own account — a convenient method of increasing profits. The custom is not unknown at the present time. Ed.*
AUSTIN T. LEVY

Austin T. Levy was a truly progressive reformer, and his advanced concepts in business and philanthropic contributions will long bring honor to his name. Born in New York City on December 16, 1880, he was orphaned at an early age. He attended the College of the City of New York and later worked as an office boy for a New York linen goods importer. He was also a cloth buyer for a men's clothing manufacturer, and soon established himself in business as a woolen commission agent.

He formed Stillwater Worsted Mills in 1907 and purchased combing and yarn mills in Harrisville, Rhode Island. All of his mills were incorporated in 1912 into Stillwater Worsted Mills, Inc., the stock of which was offered to employees who became the company's officers and directors. By 1921 the Stillwater Worsted Company, which was undoubtedly the outstanding company in the worsted field, produced men's worsted wear on two hundred broad looms and processed its own dyeing and finishing. Over eight hundred people were employed at this operation. The company sold directly with New York offices at 25 Madison Avenue.

A highly profitable company, it reached a peak in sales during the Korean War, and in 1951 its income exceeded twenty-seven million dollars. The current decline in demand for its cloth has reduced its income to approximately nine million dollars.

Stillwater Worsted Company, known also as the Harrisville Company, at one time had twelve plants located in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Virginia. They manufactured worsted cloth and wool tops as well as commissioned combed tops, while specializing in the production of uniform and blend cloths. Several side branches exist: weaving plants in Craigsville, Virginia; a dyeing and finishing plant at Goshen, Virginia, a yarn plant at Augusta Springs, Virginia; and a large combing plant at Harrisville, Rhode Island.

When he became interested in the Bahamas (see below) the humane Levy noted the lack of available dairy products for the islanders. He promptly established a model dairy farm and contributed produce to the islanders. He imported Jersey, Hereford, and Guernsey cows and bulls and some Rhode Island red hens! His efforts were instrumental both in convincing the British government that the Bahamas had an agricultural potential and in aiding the economic development of the islands.

Levy's just and humane ideas had far-reaching effects on workers. He advocated improved working conditions and shortened hours of
labor in order to provide more effective productivity. Cooperative ownership of business enterprises, today considered a novel idea, was one of his more radical proposals. A full-time industrial nurse was added to his personnel, one of the first instances of this practice in Rhode Island. His company also established the first profit-sharing plan in Rhode Island. Throughout his life Levy wrote and lectured on economic subjects, particularly the importance of industrial relations and adequate wages. Levy's solution for America's nagging unemployment problem was a reduction of working hours with increased wages. Certainly not a typical employer's conclusion!

Levy's philanthropic activities are too extensive to enumerate. Fascination with houses led him to build proper housing units in Harrisville. His wife stated, "Every house he built had to have one or two apple trees planted because, he said, children must have apples to eat and trees to climb."

His business interests never precluded his involvement in other areas of activity. Indeed, the quiet town of Harrisville owes most of its public buildings to Levy's generosity. Together with his wife, he donated all the money needed to construct the Jesse A. Smith Memorial Library, the Town Office Building, the Assembly Building, and the Ninth District Court House in his home town of Harrisville. On October 12, 1950 he turned over a $75,000 Post Office Building to the federal government and donated another $200,000 for the completion of a gymnasium and athletic field for the town high school. In 1958 a school was dedicated to his memory, contrary to his policy of complete anonymity during his lifetime.

The bulk of his estate was given to the June Rockwell Levy Foundation, Inc., in honor of his wife, to insure continuation of charitable work. June Levy, in recognition of her work for the Infant Welfare Association in the Bahamas, was awarded the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. At the time of his death, Levy was in the process of withdrawing from the textile enterprises and leaving stocks and sales offices to his workers. His activity in the Republican party prompted him to run for the United States Senate from Rhode Island in 1950 at 69 years of age. In short, Levy was a generous philanthropist.

Levy did not consider his philanthropies paternalistic. He claimed it was good business which paid off in profits. According to his concepts ownership implied the responsibility of active leadership. Wealth was merely a trusteeship which one accepts while alive.
Levy's varied interests prompted him to establish a cattle and poultry business in the Bahama Islands where he had his winter home. He also established the Harrisville Co., a subsidiary of the June Rockwell Levy Foundation, Inc., with a current value of over six million dollars. This company engages in wholesale cattle and poultry products. A holding company, it sells produce and imports groceries and cheeses. Its present holdings are at Eleuthera Island and Hatch Bay, where the company owns several thousand acres set up at a plantation with six hundred head of cattle and sixty thousand hens. Holdings in the Bahamas also include a sales agency, boat lines, a stevedoring firm and a power company.

Also involved with the Levy interests are David Albert, a senior partner in the Z. Albert & Sons Co. in New York, Jack Albert, Eugene Albert, Donald P. Bertch, and Alex Cohen, all active and participating directors of Stillwater Mills. (Providence Sunday Journal, Oct. 22, 1950, p. 1).

**American Silk Spinning Company**

This company was founded in 1909 by Edgar J. Lowenstein and his associates, taking over a mill (formerly known as the Oriental Mill property) located at Admiral and Whipple Streets, Providence. Lowenstein who had had experience in silk spinning mills in this country and in Europe, set up this plant with the best equipment possible.

It spun silk and produced silk yarns, natural or dyed, in skeins; on cones, tubes, cops, and spools; and in warps for weaving, knitting, embroidering, sewing, and insulation. The mill employed 300 persons in 1911.

Lowenstein, who changed his name to Lownes, was survived by his sons Albert E. Lownes and the late, Edgar J. Lownes, Jr.

The company was sold to the Top Company, Inc., of Boston in 1959. In 1967, when its name was changed to Top Fibers Company, it had an annual volume of over $3,000,000 with extremely profitable operations. It now distributes to worsted mills and is also a merchandiser and processor of synthetic fibers. Arthur I. Darman is president and Morton H. Darman vice president. (Board of Trade Journal, April 1910, page 151, and June 1911, page 266).

**S. Horvitz & Sons Inc.**

S. Horvitz & Sons Inc., is located at 345 Barton Street, Pawtucket. David Horvitz is president and Abraham Horvitz, treasurer and secre-
Jews and the Textile Industry

Darlington Textile Company

Darlington Textile Company of Pawtucket, producers of elastic cloths for corsets, girdles, slips, and shoes, was incorporated in 1912 with capital of $10,000. President Joseph Siegle managed the production of cotton and silk corset cloth on 51 looms. Officers of the firm are A. C. Menschik, chairman; N. F. Schloss, president; L. Rantenberg, vice president; and F. H. Schloss, treasurer and secretary. The company moved to New Jersey in 1929. However, they maintained an elastic yarn and thread plant, The Rumford Rubber Co., in East Providence, which produced rubber thread for the New Jersey and Pawtucket mills. Doctor A. D. Schneider, then president, liquidated the plant in 1963.

Arthur I. Darman

The Darman family name is well known throughout the Rhode Island community. Arthur Darman arrived in this country in 1901 at the age of 11 and continued his education in the Woonsocket public schools. At an early age he joined a theatrical company to become an actor. He then pursued the hotel and restaurant business successfully in a number of cities: Chicago, Quincy, and Springfield, Illinois; and St. Louis, Missouri. He returned to Woonsocket in 1914 to enter the woollen business with his father. Phenomenally successful, he became a large dealer in wool wastes, wool tops, and similar products. Darman required larger quarters, and in 1917 erected the Darman Building at Railroad and Arnold Streets. It was then considered one of the handsomest business houses in Woonsocket. A leading citizen in Woonsocket for over fifty years, he has been active in philanthropic and communal services.

His son, Morton H. Darman, who continued his father's interest in the textile industry, is now chairman of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers. Born in 1916, Morton has been associated with his father in the Arthur I. Darman Co. as vice president and assistant
treasurer since 1937 and as president since 1954. From 1941 to 1945 he served as a major in the United States Army. Arthur I. Darman Co. Inc. was another of the companies which in 1955 merged into the Top Company Inc. Morton Darman was president of that concern and also a director of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co., Providence, R. I. He is in charge of sales and general management. (*The History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, by Thomas Williams Bicknell, vol. 5, part 2, pp. 505-506. American Historical Society, N.Y., 1920*).

**Young Bros. Mattress Company**

Young Bros. Mattress Company, Inc., located at 25 Charles Street, Providence are manufacturers of mattresses and upholstered furniture, couches, and chairs, utilizing cotton stuffing. The company, originally started by John Young in 1917 was incorporated in 1924 with Samuel and Morris Young as additional officers.

It is currently managed by James Young, president; Samuel Young, vice president and treasurer; and Murray Burrows, secretary.

**I. Medoff Co.**

I. Medoff, founded over 50 years ago, is today a leader in fashion fabrics for retail sales. Their fabrics are sold to fabric shops, and to chain, variety, department and specialty stores in this country, as well as in foreign markets. The company had once sold bathing suits, blankets, curtains, bed sheets, pillow cases, and synthetic yarn goods. Prior to 1948 the company sold primarily to New York and Boston jobbers. But changes were imperative in order to remain in today’s competitive market. The organization has been credited with innovating fashion and design trends. The firm has many subsidiary companies under the same management. Sinclair Industries, which sells griege goods for fashion and industrial converting, operates a separate sales office in New York. From humble beginnings this fine company is now a leading converter of cottans, blends, and synthetic piece goods.

The persons operating this outstanding company have contributed greatly to its success. Israel Medoff, founder and chairman of the board, controlled the multi-million dollar enterprise which converts and sells millions of yards of cloth each year.

Samuel J. Medoff, his brother, joined the firm in 1941 and became vice chairman of the board and treasurer of the company and its subsidiaries. President of the company and a vice president of subsidiaries
is Martin Goodman, who joined the firm in 1948. Louis I. Sweet, a member of the company for over forty years, is a vice president together with Samuel Castleman, also a veteran of forty years of service. (Woonsocket Call, Aug. 15, 1959, p. 11).

**Nedra Mills**

The development of spun silk, yarns, nets, and voiles contributed to progress in the weaving field. By 1934 several small companies in this field were in operation.

Nedra Mills, established in Pawtucket, had a capital of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Incorporated in 1919, H. B. Feldman was its president; Hyman Werner, treasurer; and Jacob Werner, secretary. The company produced silk and cotton corset brocades on seventy-five looms. Arden Mills, Inc. in New York City acts as their selling agent. By 1934 this company had expanded to one-hundred-and-thirty-five looms, managed by J. J. Feldman, and was one of the earlier mills to operate outside the production of narrow fabrics. Until this time most companies were restricted to small wares.

**Maplewood Yarns**

Earle P. Charlton had established Charlton Mills Inc. in Fall River in 1910. (He also owned the E. P. Charlton Company 5¢ & 10¢ stores, which sold out to F. W. Woolworth Co.). It manufactured mops, mop yarns, braids, and waste yarns. Jacob Weiner of Fall River later acquired the company, which ran continuously until his death in 1967 under the trade designation of Maplewood Yarns. He also owned a processing company in the dyeing and finishing field which did commission dyeing of yarns and threads.

An intense and ambitious man, Jacob Weiner needed no formal education to operate in business. His payroll at one time exceeded $17,000 weekly! He purchased new high-pressure packaged dye machines for his dye house and invested more than one-hundred-fifty-thousand dollars in modern equipment. It became a progressive, up-to-date dye house for package dyeing and processing.

**IV. PROSPERITY AND DEPRESSION 1920 - 1939**

**Reuben Abrash**

The vital force and keen guidance of Reuben Abrash has kept running one of Fall River's few remaining mills, the thirty-seven year old
Abdon Mills Corporation, 170 Globe Mills Avenue. Its specialized weaving operations produce filament fabrics, i.e. decorative fabrics, taffetas, twills, and satins. The mill manufactures linings and fabrics for luggage. The highly sophisticated and automated plant has the latest model Draper automatic looms. Formerly Elgin Silk Mills, it was established in 1920 with capital of one hundred thousand dollars by Samuel Abrash, president, treasurer and buyer, assisted by George Abrash and Arthur Black, superintendents. Before the advent of rayon, seventy-five employees wove broad and dress silks on seventy-five plain and twenty box looms. Sales offices were maintained at 225 5th Avenue, New York City. This was the only silk manufacturer in Fall River at that time. Since 1935 it has been under the Abdon management and employs one-hundred-and-twenty-five workers. Reuben Abrash's tenacity and versatility have enabled this company to survive today's competitive and trying times.

**John Marks Company**

John Marks in the late 1920s founded in Central Falls the John Marks Company, dealers and converters of cotton and synthetic yarns. He was assisted for many years by Leo Glass. Marks died in 1969. The company is presently managed by Leo Marks, president, assisted by his sons Michael and Richard.

**Cadillac Textiles**

It is most difficult to compete with such giants of the textile industry as Burlington Mills, J. P. Stevens, and Cohn Hall Marks. Yet the Schwartz Brothers, Harry A. and Samuel, have for many years operated a successful textile weaving operation, Cadillac Textiles Corporation, producers of synthetic piece goods and tricot fabrics. Founded by David Schwartz, it is at this writing over fifty years old. David Schwartz started his business career in Paterson, New Jersey in the early 1900s as a textile weaver. At that time Paterson was America's leading silk city. Harry Schwartz had been employed by Cadillac since 1921, and was in complete charge of the plant until he retired in 1969.

Samuel has been employed with Cadillac since 1923 and was earlier identified with the company's sales offices in New York City. The company moved to Pawtucket in 1928, and switched to synthetic fabrics in the early 1930s (formerly having woven silk fabrics). The operation is unique in that the bulk of the nation's textile production is now in
the south. A prosperous plant, it operates 842 looms. Its 300 employees provide a boost for the Rhode Island economy.

Eugene Schwartz, Harry's son, is vice president of manufacturing. The Schwartz clan has run a successful business with management investing capital over the years in new equipment, which enables them to compete with the south. Also employed by the company are Thomas H. Schwartz, grandson of Samuel, and Eugene, son of Harry. (Prov. Sunday Journal, March 14, 1971, Business Section, p. 10).

HASSENFELD BROS.

The Hassenfeld brothers, Hillel and Henry, began their careers as jobbers and converters of cotton goods, wiping cloths, mill remnants, and leatherette novelties at 213-217 North Main Street, Providence. Subsequently, together with William Horowitz, they established in West Warwick, Rhode Island, a finishing business under the designation H & H Mfg. Co. It produced piece goods with 525 looms.

The company subsequently evolved into a toy and pencil manufacturing establishment under Hassenfeld Brothers with a large factory on Broad Street, Providence. It later developed into the giant Hasbro Toys and Hasbro Industries, now listed on the New York stock exchange. The company is ably run by Merrill I. and Harold Hassenfeld. (Providence Sunday Journal, March 14, 1971, Business Section, p. 10).

ABRAHAM A. WEISS

Abraham A. Weiss was founder and president of Vogue Textiles, Inc. of Pawtucket, which manufactured fluorescent fabric safety materials. He was also founder and partner of Vogue Antiques of Pawtucket, and formerly head of the Safety Flag Co. of America in Central Falls. Weiss came to Fall River from Paterson, New Jersey in the 1920s. He was associated with silk and rayon weaving operations and owned a weaving facility in Pawtucket during the late 1940s and early 1950s. This was subsequently phased out. He later entered the fabric safety field, manufacturing items for highway safety. He died August 31, 1968.

PEERLESS WEAVING CO.

Peerless Weaving Co. of Pawtucket, under the management of Abe C. Fine, manager and secretary, and Harry L. Fine, president, was another successful weaving operation in rayon and synthetics. This company was sold to southern interests in the late 1940s. The operation
was extensive with a production of 422 broad looms, employing over 270 workers.

**Allie Zura**

Allie Zura, a prominent Jewish real estate operator, lived in Providence for most of his life. He headed several real estate firms in Providence, among them the Alice Building, Inc. His strong interest in real estate lasted for twenty-one years. Zura was also a member of the California Wine Company. He purchased several large mill properties in Providence and Pawtucket.

In 1927 Zura was named in a $200,000 suit with two other Providence men, brought by the Royal Trust Co. of Montreal. Zura and his partners allegedly agreed to purchase $400,000 worth of various liquors held in King's bond at a Canadian warehouse. Zura vehemently denied doing anything illegal or dishonest, and the case was dismissed from court.

Zura actively participated in Jewish affairs in Rhode Island. He worked for synagogues and Jewish charities. He was a founder of Temple Emanu-El and a principal benefactor of the Hebrew School of the congregation Sons of Zion on Orms Street. He died in 1940 at the age of 50.

While Zura was not personally engaged in the manufacturing aspects of textiles, he was among the pioneers in purchasing mill properties, which ultimately led to the revitalization of textile manufacturing in Rhode Island.

**Lebanon Knitting Mill, Inc.**

This company, originally the Hope Knitting Mills, was founded in 1927 by Leo Grossman. In 1937 the name was changed to Lebanon Knitting Mill, located at 719 School Street, Pawtucket. Clinton Grossman is president and chief executive officer; Stanley Grossman, treasurer; and Edward Grossman, vice president. Albert Grossman is in charge of the West Coast Sales Corporation, and Max Grossman heads the sales office in New York City. Leo Grossman died on June 9, 1967.

Lebanon Knitting Mill, Inc. produces tubular fabrics, primarily in worsted jersey cloth and double knits utilized by dress and outerwear manufacturers. Plant capacity is 10,000 pounds weekly. Sales in 1967 were over $20,000,000. This company, by far one of Rhode Island's outstanding textile enterprises with 700 employees, recently merged
with the giant Genesco Corporation, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. This organization includes other related companies in New York and California, as well as Peter Karen Mfg. Co., in Lincoln, and Lincoln Spinning Co., Inc., 165 York Avenue, Pawtucket.

**ATLANTIC KNITTING CORP.**

Another outstanding knit goods producer is Atlantic Knitting Corporation, located at 385 Charles Street, Providence. Founded by Joseph M. Finkelstein, the company concentrates on the knitting of woolen, worsted, and rayon fabrics. A. Archie Finkelstein is president, and Louis Mirman, treasurer.

**ELIAS REISS**

Elias Reiss and his associates purchased the Seaconnet Mills on East Warren Street, Fall River in 1927. He served as its president and principal executive officer with the assistance of David Ginsberg, agent. Five hundred operators were employed in manufacturing of combed and fine cotton cloth. Seaconnet remained under Reiss’s control until May of 1945, when it was purchased by Jacob Ziskind.

It was sold to the Millville Manufacturing Company of Millville, New Jersey through the intercession of Jacob Ziskind, who transferred it to the new owners. It continued to manufacture fine combed and carded fabrics under the new management of Richard D. Wood of Philadelphia, president of the Millville Manufacturing Company and new president of Howard-Arthur Mills, and John R. Mason, vice president of Millville, managed by the able Henry Speier, also employed by the Reiss interests.

Seaconnet Mills possessed 47,200 spindles and 1,400 looms. Elias Reiss’s large and impressive cotton mill ran full force until operations ceased in the late 1950s. He was also instrumental in locating the I. Schneirson & Sons plant in Fall River. This was reputed to be the largest ladies’ underwear manufacturer in the world.

Textile executive Elias Reiss was born in Stanislau, Austria-Hungary, October 25, 1860, son of Simon and Esther Reiss. In 1882 he emigrated to the United States where he worked for his older brother in New York City. He eventually started his own shirt manufacturing enterprise in which he performed all operations from cutting to trimming. His business eventually expanded to include two large buildings and several thousand machines. The firm merged with Bernheim, Dryfuss
& Co., and he was appointed executive in charge of manufacturing. Reiss simultaneously formed the St. John-Reiss Co. The firm, which converted cotton goods, was later renamed Elias Reiss & Company.

Shrewdness and foresight allowed him to suffer little during the depression, and he began to devote his attention to other business interests. The defunct Seaconnet Mills in Fall River were revitalized under his skillful management. Renamed the Howard-Arthur Mills, it manufactured cloth and yarn for the civilian market and produced cloth for the manufacture of military uniforms.

Reiss Factors Corporation, of which he was president, served as factors in sales of textiles. He also was a director of the Manufacturers Trust Co. and the Graham-Newman Corporation of New York City (brokerage firm).

Reiss engaged extensively in philanthropic activities. He was the first treasurer of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities during 1914-1924 and a trustee of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York. He served as a board member of the Jewish Education Society and was vitally interested in the New York Guild for the Jewish Blind. The United Palestine Appeal, which he helped to organize, later became the United Jewish Appeal. He also acted as a charter member and treasurer of his congregation, Temple Shaari-Zedek of Brooklyn, New York.

Reiss was married to the former Rose E. Fassbinder and had two children. His daughter married Jerome A. Newman, another well-known textile manufacturer and mill financier. It is impossible to overestimate the power and influence of Elias Reiss in the textile industry. (National Encyclopaedia of American Biography, James T. White & Co., N. Y., 44:485, 1962).

ROBISON RAYON COMPANY, INC.

Robison Rayon Company, Inc., Atlantic Yarns Division, is located at 86 Crary Street in Providence. This fine commission dyeing plant, which occupies 125,000 square feet of floor space and employs 900 workers, is visible to motorists passing on the west side of Interstate Highway 95. They are well known dyers of synthetic yarns, dyeing skeins and cakes as well as twisting filament yarns, distributed throughout the United States, with over 1,000 accounts in the weaving, knitting, and general industrial fields. It is currently managed by Fred Diamond, chairman of the board, Arthur Malina, president, and Benjamin Charmis, secretary and treasurer.
Atlantic was founded in 1928. The Robison Rayon Company, formerly located in Pawtucket and operated by the Wyers of Boston, was established in 1900. The plant was managed by Raymond G. Franks. The Atlantic Rayon Corporation, a pioneer in the field of dyeing special silk was subsequently acquired by the Malina interests.

Robison Yarns was sold to the Malina interests in 1954. This outstanding company has sales of over $5,000,000 and is a highly successful organization.

JEROME A. NEWMAN

Jerome A. Newman, son-in-law of Elias Reiss, easily developed an outstanding reputation in his own right. A practical businessman, he competently handled many intricate business manipulations.

His firm belief in the industrial opportunities of Fall River awakened a dormant city. He purchased the Algonquin Printing Company with confidence in its successful revival and expansion. Shares of stock were sold at $305 per share, and the purchase price was around $2,732,000.

Questioned about his decision to enter Fall River's textile industry he declared: “I think Fall River has made a most remarkable comeback in the past ten years. I think that Fall River does not today need to take a back seat to any industrial New England community. Fall River has certainly done a remarkable job.” (Fall River Herald, Sept. 26, 1939). How Fall River eagerly desires to hear words like these repeated in today's depressed times!

Newman was also treasurer of the Merchants Manufacturing Co. at 615 Bedford Street, Fall River in 1930.

His early life in Fall River made him keenly aware of the business opportunities available. He began his career in the brokerage business of Graham, Newman & Co. and acquired interesting experiences through this work. He actively supported the combining of Utica Knitting Co. with Flagg Knitting Co., which later became a part of the giant Genesco, Inc. Graham, Newman & Co. gained control of the old Philadelphia & Reading Co. and bought the Fruit of the Loom franchises and the Pontiac Bleachery, Warwick. They disposed of the bleachery in 1971

STANDARD ROMPER CO.

Louis Russek is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the Standard Romper Company of Pawtucket and Central Falls. In 1967 the then current assets showed a net worth of over $13,000,000.
The company manufactures children's wear, creepers, children's play garments, boys' polo shirts, and blouses made from knitted and woven fabrics, sold under the well-known trade names of "Stantogs" and "Health Tex". Health Tex is now listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

Other officers of this most successful company are Alexander Kourland, secretary; Leon Gould, treasurer, and M. Hurvitz, a director. The current president is Arthur Hurvitz.

**Warren Handkerchief Co.**

Warren, Rhode Island houses the Warren Handkerchief Company which continued until 1965 to produce satins on their own looms, under the guidance of Albert J. Mann. During the past thirty years they have purchased handkerchief cloth and discontinued weaving. One of the few handkerchief companies in existence, it directly evolved from the original company.

John Howland and Russell Wheaton started a cotton and linen handkerchief firm in the early 1900s in Warren. Howland & Wheaton operated for many years as a partnership. In the 1930s Saul E. Rains assumed control and incorporated the business under the name of S. E. Rains Co. with executive offices in New York City. This company is still in business. Warren Handkerchief was a contractor for S. E. Rains.

**David Dwares**

David Dwares gained prominence in the Southern New England area in both textiles and real estate. Born in Russia, he was educated in the Providence school system. He made his first investments in industrial property and machinery during the late 1920s. His ventures and properties included Greene & Daniels Realty Company, Pawtucket, embracing the United States Finishing Company complex on Prospect Street. He owned and operated the Slater Dye Works at 727 School Street in Pawtucket, which his son, Donald, now manages. Dwares also purchased Dempsey Bleachery and Dye Works.

Damar Wool Combing Company Inc., established in 1903, was under the control of the Dwares family from 1941 until 1959. Dwares purchased this company from the Cudahy Packing Company in 1940, leased the plant to Armour & Company in 1943, but continued to operate it under his ownership. After his death in 1946 the company
was operated by his widow, Mrs. Martha Finegold, and her son-in-law, Bernard Wasserman. This company engages in wool combing with 140 employees.

Slater Dye Works Inc., employing 85 persons, dyes, finishes, and bleaches cotton and synthetic fabrics on a commission basis, selling to textile converters, chiefly in the New York City area. Occupying 60,000 square feet of space, its facilities have a maximum output of approximately 1,000,000 yards weekly.

David Dwares' original venture into investments in machinery soon developed into real estate and operation of mills. He shrewdly took advantage of declining values during the business depression of the thirties. His ability and sound judgment brought him great success, which, unfortunately, death cut short. His farsightedness in purchasing industrial properties revitalized these empty structures into growing entities, employing thousands of people, exemplified by the Union Mill properties in Fall River. In addition to conversion for industrial applications, they also contained restaurants and retail establishments.

After his death in 1946 at 45 years of age, his estate was run by Martha Feingold, his widow, and Jacob Goodman, his attorney, who increased the real estate holdings originally established.

Dwares' father, Samuel Dwares, and his brother Louis owned and operated S. Dwares & Son, jobbers of metal, remnants, and machinery.

Another brother, prominent in the textile field, Nathan Dwares was head of Royal Yarn Company. He and Louis purchased the well-known Cooper-Kenworthy Inc., a dyeing concern of Providence. The Royal Yarn enterprise is a leading dealer in yarns and twines, ably managed by William Forman, a nephew.

Martha Feingold, would make women liberationists beam with pride. A capable woman, Mrs. Feingold ably managed the Slater Dye Works, Inc. of Pawtucket from 1946 to 1959, and presided over Textile Investment Co. of Pawtucket from 1946 until her death in 1972.

Sol Koffler

Sol Koffler is founder and president of American Tourister Co., producers of luggage. While not directly involved in textiles, he purchased two former Berkshire Hathaway textile plants, one housing the main offices and warehouses in Warren and the other in Albion. The company was founded in Providence in 1932 and later moved to
the former Arctic Mill of the B. B. and R. Knight Co., West Warwick.
In 1969 American purchased the former Steere Mill of the Wanskuck
Co. in Providence. These four former textile units have given the com-
pany approximately 1,000,000 square feet of additional space. They
currently employ approximately 1,000 workers.

The Wanskuck mill formerly housed the Nyman Mfg. Co. The
latter company, headed by Robert C. Nyman, are manufacturers of
dpaper cups.

ALVIN SOPKIN

Alvin Sopkin, born in Bayonne, New Jersey in 1901, became a promi-
nent manufacturer, philanthropist, and civic leader.

He was chairman of the board of the Wentworth Mfg. Co., a multi-
million dollar business which produces inexpensive women’s dresses.
In 1934 Alvin and his brother Henry moved the company from Chicago
to Fall River in order to take advantage of the abundant supply of
both labor and manufacturing space there. The plant now operates
in Lake City, South Carolina.

HYMAN AND MYER SOBILOFF

Hyman Sobiloff was a highly successful and enterprising manufac-
turer. His talents were applied not only in the business world, but
in the creative arts as well. For which accomplishment would his fame
endure—his extraordinary wealth, his many corporations, or his sensi-
tive and artistic poetry? It is difficult to encompass the versatile activities
of this extraordinary man.

Hyman Sobiloff, born in Fall River in 1912, was a prominent indus-
trialist, philanthropist, and author. He helped found the Albert Ein-
stein College of Medicine in New York and the Technion-Israel In-
situte of Technology. He was also founder and trustee of the National
Foundation for Research in Allergies in Boston.

Sobiloff was chairman of the board of several corporations, including
the Lorchfield Corporation, the K.H.T. Corporation, W. & J. Sloane
International of Naussau, the Biederman Furniture Co., Scruggs Van-
derwoort, and Barney, Inc.

He also was director of many corporations. He was chairman of the
board, chief executive officer, and director of Marshall-Wells Co. He
was a member of the Funk Foundation, Medical Research Inc., and
Barney, Inc.
His book of poems, "Dinosaurs and Violins", was praised by both Conrad Aiken and Oscar Williams. Convinced that poetry could be portrayed through motion pictures and television, he made several short films, one of which was an Academy Award entry while another was entered into the International Film Festival in Venice.

Sobiloff's untimely death at the age of 57 years was unfortunate. His brother, Myer Sobiloff, also distinguished himself in textiles and in ventures with his brother. The Sobiloff brothers became involved with textiles early in their careers when they participated in curtain production.

After graduation from Harvard in 1938 Myer developed widespread business interests. He worked actively towards the economic and cultural resurgence of Fall River. He initiated the Greater Fall River Industrial Development Corporation plan. Pope John XXIII awarded him a medal “for distinguished service to the community”. He serves on the board of advisors at Stonehill College and is a director at Temple Beth El, Fall River.

PANSY WEAVING MILLS

Pansy Weaving Mills, 297 Barton Street, Pawtucket, is a major supplier of rayon and synthetic blended fabrics utilizing rayon, nylon, and other synthetic fibers, fabricated into greige goods used in coats, dress linings, luggage, lingerie, and blouses, and by related trades and converters.

This establishment occupies 100,000 square feet of space. It is headed by Neil Pansey, president and chief executive officer. Pansey founded the company in 1937 with $5,000 of savings. The company has been growing progressively stronger financially since that time. In 1967 sales were reputed to be over $5,000,000 annually, with over 150 employees.

Herbert Pansey was one of the principals of Bay State Mills, Central Falls. He was originally from Paterson, New Jersey where he had early silk textile experience.

In 1945 Neil Pansey was joined by his father, Herbert Pansey, in a partnership interest. He is assisted by Alvin W. Pansey, his brother, as plant superintendent and by Roy Pansey, a son.

EMPIRE WOOLEN MILLS

Empire Woollen Mills, 640 Winter Street, Woonsocket, are manufacturers of better grade men’s and women’s woolens, worsted, and uniform
cloths produced on 52 automatic looms and selling to the cutting up trade throughout the United States. It has 124 employees and sales offices in New York City. The company is managed by Maximillian Gottlieb, a graduate of the University and Textile School, Vienna, Austria. He was associated with this line in both Austria and England from 1923 to 1932. Mrs. Ilona Gottlieb is a graduate of the High School of Art of Vienna, Austria and was active as a designer for British Woolen Company of America, Ltd. She fulfills a similar role at Empire Woolen Mills.

**Edward Goldberger**

Edward Goldberger heads the well-known textile company of M. Lowenstein & Sons with headquarters in New York City. He is currently treasurer, secretary, and a director and has been a top executive there for the past thirty-four years.

He was born in Providence, Rhode Island, received his A.B. degree from Brown University and his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1931. He practiced law during the 1930s with the firm of McGovern and Slattery in Providence. After his marriage into the Lowenstein family, he joined the firm upon his father-in-law’s death.

M. Lowenstein maintains offices at 40th Street and Broadway in New York. This fine company had a record volume of $376,500,000 in 1969. Its diversified products include various fabrics: domestics, curtains, draperies, knitted fabrics, and carpeting. Lowenstein, which finishes about 700 million yards of textile fabrics annually, is one of the largest textile printers in the world.

**Jacob Ziskind**

The late Jacob Ziskind of Tiverton, Rhode Island, who was born in 1899 in Lowell, Massachusetts, was one of the most phenomenal individuals in the textile field. He revitalized Merrimac Mfg. Co. of Lowell which until its liquidation after his death in the late 1950s was one of the oldest, continuous manufacturing companies in America. This company, which supplied corduroy to the automotive industry, employed over twenty-two hundred people. In addition, Ziskind controlled manufacturing companies, machinery, mills, and entire corporate entities. His astonishing rise has become a modern legend.

The son of David and Rose Ziskind, he left Boston University after the completion of his freshman year and entered the family business
in Lowell. It traded in junk and reclaimed metals. Later in the 1930s he moved to Fall River, where the textile industry was creaking slowly to a halt, and one mill after another was being deserted. He founded, and was president and treasurer of, Crescent Corporation in Fall River (formerly Textile Machinery & Supply Co.). This company refurbished and resold textile equipment.

The scope of Crescent Corporation's activities is illustrated in the *American Wool and Cotton Reporter* of July 12, 1951: "During the past five years, this outstanding machinery firm has consumed about 3,750,000 board feet of lumber in crating and boxing machinery for shipment. More than 150,000 pounds of nails, 450,000 feet of waterproofing paper and 5,000 bails of wood shavings were used during that period."

At the height of its operation, Crescent Corporation occupied more than 2,500,000 square feet of warehouse space. The organization re-established plants, and provided employment in machine shops, transportation, supervisory, and technical work.

Fortunate stockholders, thanks to Ziskind's practice, were able to convert their old rundown plants and mills into cash. Whenever equipment was in need of revitalization, he saved it and made it productive again, thereby permitting several establishments to operate on a profitable basis. Crescent Corporation was the largest firm of its kind. It exclusively bought and reconditioned textile machinery and auxiliary items. Foreign as well as domestic markets purchased its supplies.

One of Ziskind's earliest acquisitions was the Royal Weaving Company acquired from Jerry Newman. His operations became so extensive, and the need for financial assistance became so great, that the First National Bank of Boston agreed to finance his undertakings. An initial loan of $300,000 permitted him to pursue his brilliant career of acquisition of properties.

He purchased Potter & Johnson of Pawtucket, manufacturers not only of textile equipment but also of machine tools. He saved the rundown, bankrupt company which he ably managed for several years, eventually selling it to Pratt & Whitney. At present the building houses ITT -Royal Electric and Hasbro Industries.

Furthermore, Ziskind practiced liquidation and revitalization, cleverly transforming these plants into successful corporate entities which turned out millions of dollars worth of textiles at a substantial profit. One outstanding example of such revitalization from Ziskind's early career
was the purchase of the American Print Works and Fall River Iron Works (a major textile Co.) which later, through his aggressiveness, were sold to the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio. This sale permitted the continued operation of these vast plants, which were until the early 1960s Fall River’s leading employer.

The successful management and subsequent sale of the following companies took place under Ziskind: Stevens Mills, Fall River, operated under Cabot Manufacturing; Verney Corporation of Canada; International Braid Company of Sainte Rose, Quebec; Rain Beau Products Company of Canton, Massachusetts (a large nationally known fishline concern); International Braid Co., Providence, Rhode Island; Ansonia O. & C. Company, Ansonia, Connecticut; and Delite Fabrics Company of Westerly, Rhode Island. The Ansonia O. & C., which later moved to East Taunton, Massachusetts, manufactured broad woven elastic goods for swimwear and was known as Ansonia Mills Inc. (David Squire, president; L. K. Berkowitz, chairman and treasurer).

Additional concerns in the textile field involving Ziskind’s efforts were the Esmond Mills, Esmond, Rhode Island; Pierce Brothers, Ltd. and Nonquitt Mills, New Bedford, Massachusetts; Lone Star Cotton Mills, El Paso, Texas; and Barnard Mills, Fall River, Massachusetts.

Crescent Corporation built a $300,000 Southern facility which housed offices, machine shops and reconditioning equipment at Spartanburg, South Carolina. In addition to this division, which opened just prior to Ziskind’s death, he owned several warehouses located in Henderson, Kentucky; Gaffney, South Carolina; Columbus, Georgia; Florence, Alabama; and McCombs, Mississippi.

When Jacob Ziskind died in 1950 at fifty-one years of age, his business was assumed by Edward J. and Abraham Ziskind. Edward succeeded as president, and Abraham became treasurer. Leon Bakst, a resident of Providence and a most able manager, assisted by Larry Weltman, ran the company during his lifetime.

Throughout his life, Ziskind inconspicuously donated money to various charities and schools. His major contribution was to medical research, and The New England Medical Center benefited greatly by his generosity. He left one-half of his large estate to philanthropic and educational institutions. The Jacob Ziskind Trust for Charitable Purposes, established by Ziskind, was administered by his sister, Mrs. Sol W. Weltman, and Abram Berkowitz, who acted as trustees. This fine trust has contributed greatly to philanthropic causes in the medical field through disbursements to hospitals and laboratories. Institutions
which benefited are the Pratt Diagnostic Clinic, Boston; Jacob Ziskind Research Laboratory, Boston; Beth Israel Hospital, Boston; St. Anne's Hospital, Fall River; the New England Medical Center; and Boston University.

The life of Jacob Ziskind is the history of his liquidation of factories and their rebirth into profitable and successful firms. Ziskind's skillful policies prompted the rebirth of properties, expanded their operations and wages, and multiplied their annual sales. To accomplish his goals, Ziskind worked sixteen hour days, seven day weeks, year in and year out. He made a success of the business and in doing so contributed to the rebuilding of the textile industry in New England. (National Encyclopaedia of American Biography, James T. White & Co., N. Y. 38:56, 1953).

V. WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

MARTIN CHASE

Martin Chase, named by Forbes Magazine (January, 1970) as "The Grandaddy of all Discounting", well deserved his reputation. Chase was certainly a leader in his field with great vision and creativity. He was Board Chairman of the Ann & Hope Stores, a retail outfit grossing millions of dollars, truly a phenomenon in retailing, with locations at Cumberland and Warwick, Rhode Island, as well as a new complex in Danvers, Massachusetts. Chase's beginnings in the Ann & Hope Mills in Cumberland, as described elsewhere in this issue, subsequently grew to three locations, housing retail operations which grew out of the original mill buildings.

Chase had originally purchased a factory in Norwich, Connecticut which was making tinsel ribbon and corsage ribbon for flowers. The company in 1945 was moved to the Ann & Hope Mills in Lonsdale, which he purchased for $307,000.00. More than adequate for the needs of the Norwich operation, he leased the remainder out to tenants.

Ann & Hope proved to be a good investment. By the end of 1946 there were thirty-four tenants occupying the building with a payroll for the entire building complex running to approximately six million dollars. In the early 1950s Ann & Hope was Rhode Island's largest volume department store. It pioneered in discounting and the use of shopping carts, an idea that was later copied throughout the country. In April 1954 the store moved from the original location on the third floor of the mill to the first floor.

In 1969 the Company grossed more than forty million dollars through Lonsdale and Warwick operations.
Chase’s son Irwin is president, and son Samuel, vice president and merchandising hard goods manager. Sol Alpert, a son-in-law is assistant to the general manager and in charge of maintenance and facilities. Chase died December 24, 1971. (Providence Sunday Journal, Dec. 25, 1971). (See also pages 191 and 303 of this issue).

**PROVIDENCE PILE FABRIC CORPORATION**

The company was founded by the late Louis J. I. Symonds in 1945 as General Textile Mills Inc. in Pawtucket. Symonds ran this very successful company, including subsidiaries, until his death in 1959. The name was changed to Providence Pile Fabric Corp. in 1947. It occupied 120,000 square feet of space in Pawtucket, but subsequently moved to the former Berkshire Hathaway buildings at 941 Grinnell Street, Fall River, Massachusetts. This very large textile mill complex was formerly known as Berkshire Mills Plants A & B. The company, which moved to Fall River in 1967, also operates a dye house in Woonsocket. It recently acquired the Wm. Whitaker Co. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the oldest continuously operated textile business in the United States, founded in 1795.

This company was ably managed, after Louis Symonds’ death, by Bernard K. Symonds, who died on May 14, 1965. Alan E. Symonds is currently president and chief executive officer; I. Jerome Stern, secretary; Charles C. Goldfarb, executive vice president for sales; Harry Vengerow, treasurer; and Herbert S. Chase, vice president.

Annual sales are reputed to be over $20,000.00. The chief products are pile and flat fabrics manufactured from mohair, rayon, and blended yarns. These products are sold world-wide in the international market. The company is currently one of the leading manufacturers in Fall River. With a weekly payroll of $175,000 for 1200 employees, it is Fall River’s largest employer. It’s products are used in the upholstery and decorative trades. According to Alan Symonds, “We make more upholstery fabric than any company in the world.” (Bristol, Feb.-March, 1972, p. 17.)

**S. GRANOFF MFG. COMPANY**

S. Granoff Manufacturing Company is located at 420 Pine Street, Central Falls. It is managed by Samuel Granoff, president, and G. Sidney Granoff, vice president and treasurer. It is engaged in the manufacture of knitted fabrics and in yarn sales. An affiliated company is the Ajax Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of knitted fabrics, including
cloth meat bags, stockinettes and tubings, wiping cloths, and polishing and specialty cloths.

The Granoff family was engaged in the textile business as early as 1946. The corporation received its charter in 1956.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL AND CO.

Sidney Blumenthal and Co., Inc., founded in 1899, had plants in Valley Falls and Woonsocket as late as 1947. They manufactured mohair and fancy yarns. They later moved to Rocky Mount, North Carolina. In 1947 the officers were S. Blumenthal, chairman; H. H. Schell, president; A. Blumenthal, vice president; E. Blumenthal, secretary; and G. Beisheim treasurer.

JOSEPH H. AXELROD

Joseph Axelrod, a native of Newton, Massachusetts became a dynamic leader in the textile field. After graduation from the University of Pennsylvania, he invested $500 with his father, James, a cloth merchant of Boston. They formed the Airedale Worsted Mills, Inc. in Woonsocket, which wove worsted fabrics on second-hand machinery. They subsequently added Lippitt Worsted Mills, Jeffrey Finishing, and Dorlexa Dyeing and Finishing Company. The zenith of his manufacturing career was the purchase of Crown Manufacturing Company in Pawtucket, a large complex for producing woolen worsted cloth. By 1947 gross sales of the Axelrod interests totaled $37 million dollars with net profit of $5.5 million dollars.

Crown Manufacturing Company, dubbed by his employees Crown College, was a uniquely progressive innovation. Its ivy covered walls and manicured landscaped lawns resembled a typical New England college. Axelrod was called “Prexy”, the office manager “Dean”, and superintendents “Professors”; lavatories were marked “Boys” and “Girls”; and the employees were called “Students”. In order to boost production, Axelrod established a school in textile procedures, and the workers in fact became real students.

Axelrod also had controlling ownership with Fisher Abramson of the famed Wamsutta Manufacturing Company of New Bedford, outstanding for its Wamsutta percale sheets and pillow cases. This company was subsequently purchased by M. Lowenstein & Sons, and Axelrod joined the far flung Lowenstein operation. (Time Magazine, Feb. 2, 1948.)
MACK KAHN

Mack Kahn, although not a resident of Rhode Island, was an outstanding figure in this region’s textile growth. A venerable personality in the textile field, he helped revitalize a decaying industry. He controlled, along with extensive interests in New Hampshire and other areas, the Wanskuck Mills, Inc., in Providence, a producer of heavy damask and nun’s habit cloth, subsequently liquidated in the 1950s.

His foundation garment business with the trademark “Flexees” brought him great prosperity. His brassiere business, which he started after World War I with army savings, eventually became a forty million dollar enterprise. In addition he sold swimsuits and piece goods. At one time, Kahn controlled thirteen northern mills worth forty million dollars.

Unfortunately, this company ran into financial difficulties during the 1950s and was forced to liquidate. The Flexees name and production were maintained. Disappointment was sharp, since eight million dollars was spent in an improvement and revitalization program. Flexees once controlled Caltex of California in Los Angeles, one of the West’s largest swimwear producers.

Kahn utilized several buildings in the huge Amoskeag Mill complex in Manchester, New Hampshire, formerly the world’s largest cotton textile company. He established a piece-goods factory in Manchester, New Hampshire in 1941. His modern equipment produced the only extruded latex rubber thread utilized in the industry, and he was one of the first to have a vertical textile operation. Called “the Savior of Manchester industry”, he concentrated his businesses solidly in that area, employing 5,000 at one time. (Time magazine, Oct. 22, 1951).

ANDREW WORSTED MILLS INC.

Andrew Worsted Mills Inc. is located in Pascoag. The late Irving H. Hilleson was president, Irving Gordon, vice president, and Upton Hilleson, treasurer. The firm was incorporated in Rhode Island in 1949. Irving Hilleson had spent most of his career in the worsted industry, identified with the Union Shirt Company of New York City until 1944. This company does commission weaving of broad woven woolen and worsted, cotton and blend fabrics, as well as dyeing and finishing all of its output. Employing over 180 workers, it occupies approximately 160,000 square feet in a five story granite structure in a rural area of Rhode Island, utilizing an unlimited supply of water from an adjacent pond.
The company now also has plants in Woonsocket, Vermont, and the South.

Sterling Pile Fabrics Corp.

Sterling Pile Fabrics Corp., located at Stevens Street, Fall River, founded by Jacob Ansin in 1949, was a producer of pile fabrics. This fine company operates as a converter of men’s and women’s fabrics. Its trade name is Sterling Wale.

Jacob Ansin had been associated with leather, pile fabrics, and converting of shoe fabrics in Boston for many years. The plant currently employs 180 people, with sales of over $3,000,000 annually. Lila Ansin is presently the company clerk.

Walter Marshall Spinning Corp. of R. I.

This company, located at Pocasset Avenue in Johnston, are spinners of worsted yarns. Acquired by Meyer Scher in 1950, the company now has approximately 350 employees. Sales in 1967 were $7,000,000. Martin Bruestein is president; Art Siegel, treasurer; and Edward Siegel, secretary.

William Heller, Inc.

William Heller, Inc., spinning division, 159 Singleton Street, Woonsocket, spins knitting yarns. Ben Heller is president and Ann Greenberger, secretary. The company in 1957 employed 63 workers utilizing 3,880 worsted ring spindles. The company was later sold.

Allentown Mills Inc.

Allentown Mills Inc., was located on Oak Hill Road (Allentown) in North Kingstown. Max H. Furman was president and treasurer. The company wholesaled broad woven cloths. The operation commenced in early 1951 and was discontinued in 1966.

Max H. Furman, who came to this country as a youth from Russia, had been a jobber of woolens in New York City. He also had textile interests in Norwich, Connecticut. His wife, Fannie M. Furman, had been active in management. The plant occupied 78,00 square feet of floor space.

Ace Dyeing & Finishing Company

Ace Dyeing & Finishing Company, 125 Providence Street, West Warwick engaged in cutting, dyeing and finishing of corduroys for jobbers and manufacturers. Managed by Sol Barrish, president and treasurer,
and Mrs Freida Barrish, vice president and secretary, it was incorporated in 1951. This company did one million dollars worth of sales with 37 employees in 1967.

**Parflex Rubber Thread Corp.**

Parflex Rubber Thread Corporation, 50-54 Valley Street, Providence was incorporated in 1952. Hyman Weissman is president, Morton J. Africk, vice president, and Harry Hirsch, treasurer. They are producers of latex rubber thread utilized in the textile industry. This thread is produced by extruding liquid latex. This company, occupying over 40,000 square feet of area, was one of the few independent latex thread producers in the country at the time of its incorporation.

**Barney Goldberg**

Although Barney Goldberg was not directly involved with textile manufacturing, his name cannot be disassociated from this field.

A progressive businessman, Goldberg early realized the potential value of factory space as mills closed down in the 1950s. He and his brothers established corporations which owned the Warwick Mills complex in West Warwick, the former Crompton Mill, the American Screw Co. buildings, and the Sprague Street and Geneva Mills properties in Providence. The purchase price of the Warwick mills was approximately $250,000. For these and other vacated mills, Goldberg and his brothers, Philip, Leo, and Thomas, found new tenants.


**A & C Woollen Mills Inc.**

A & C Woollen Mills Inc., located at 725 Branch Avenue, Providence are commissioned weavers of woolen and worsted fabrics for customers located throughout the United States. The company was incorporated in Rhode Island in 1954. It is managed and operated by Claus Mayer, president, and Mrs. Helen Mayer, treasurer.

**Standish Mills Inc.**

Standish Mills Inc., Maple Street, Esmond is managed by Harold E. Hirsch, president. It was founded in 1955, and employs some 150 persons. They are producers of rayon, cotton, and elastic fabrics. David Hirsch, a brother of Harold, is also identified with the company.
WOONSOCKET SPONGING INC.

This company, located at 149 Singleton Street in Woonsocket, was incorporated in 1957. It is engaged in examining, shrinking, flame-proofing, waterproofing, mildewproofing, and mothproofing cloth. Robert A. Glashow is president and treasurer, and M. H. Hutt, vice president and plant manager.

PONTIAC PRINTING WORKS

The famous Pontiac Printing Works, located in Warwick and established in the early 19th century, was owned and operated by the venerable Jack A. Goldfarb of New York City. It adopted the Fruit of the Loom banner, and in 1960 was sold to Northwest Industries, headed by Hyman Haber, vice president and treasurer, and Morris Blackman, secretary.

For many years this finishing plant was the largest roller printing firm in Rhode Island. It employed nearly 600 persons, operating 24 jigs, and three dyeing and eight roller printing machines. Charles Swartz of Providence managed their New York sales office. The firm ceased production in 1970.

HANORA LOOMS INC.

Hanora Looms Inc. is located on Mill Street in Oakland. The company manufactures woolen and worsted cloth for women’s wear, occupying 100,000 square feet of space. Officers of the company are Gerland Stone, president; Sam Silverman, vice president; and Irving Katz, secretary and treasurer.

This company, formed in 1960, currently produces over $1,000,000 annually in sales, and employs 250.

JOAN FABRICS CORPORATION

In 1968 Joan Fabrics Corp. of Lowell, Massachusetts moved into the old Sagamore Mills in Fall River. They also operated a plant in Nasonville, Rhode Island. Headed by Harold Ansin, president and chief executive officer, this up-and-coming concern has sales of over $30,000,000, manufacturing pile fabrics. It operates with modern machinery and equipment to produce furniture and upholstery fabrics, synthetic and pile carpets, and tufted pile fabrics for the outerwear and automotive industries, employing over nine hundred in all plants. It was founded in 1908 by David Ansin under the name of Royal Waste Co., Boston and
operated by the Royal Textile Co. from 1922 to 1957 in Woonsocket. In that year the company name was changed to Joan Mills and the business was moved to Lowell, Massachusetts.

Harold Ansin, the current president, is the son of David Ansin. Other officers include: Lawrence J. Ansin, vice president; Arthur Zellers, sales manager; Joseph L. Ansin (son of Harold), vice president; and Evelyn R. Ansin, clerk.

RECENT ARRIVALS

Recently several new enterprises in the industry have been established. Among these is Tectra Industries of West Warwick, a division of Weaving Corporation of America. Located in the old Crompton Mill complex at 100 Pulaski Street, it is managed by Jack Cohen and manufactures elastic webbing.

Another is Highland Textile Printers Company, Inc., located at 50 Aleppo Street in Providence and owned and operated by Benton A. Odessa. This company processes and dyes cotton piece goods.

Harry Ball of New York and his sons, Robert M., Marvin, and Jerome, recently purchased the American Textile Company properties at 250 Esten Avenue, Pawtucket. The Ball interests are leading producers of fabric quilting for outerwear.

VI. CONCLUSION

The complexity of the story, the constant shifting of company ownership, the short duration of some businesses, and the difficulty at times of establishing the Jewish identity of owners make it inevitable that some Jewish textile enterprises will have been missed or overlooked. The possible omission of individuals or businesses from this roster is inadvertent and is in no way a measure of their importance or their contributions to the industry.

In this essay I have been able only to sketch the uniqueness of Jewish participation in Rhode Island textiles. Hopefully, others will continue this line of fascinating research in more depth. Such an historical enterprise is particularly valuable to us because it prevents us from losing our past and from forgetting our leaders. Many of us can—and should—contribute to such a needed history of Jewish involvement in the local textile business. We knew the people and the corporations involved; and if we do not memorialize them, no one ever again will be able to do so quite as well.
Jews and the Textile Industry

GENERAL SOURCES

4. Fall River, Massachusetts City Directories.
5. Providence, Rhode Island City Directories.
6. Herald News, Fall River, Massachusetts, various issues.

APPENDIX A

Waste and rags were often regenerated into new yarns. Many of the dealers in these goods found their way into more advanced branches of the textile industry. The lists are extracted from various editions of Davison's Textile Blue Book or the American Wool and Cotton Reporter (1920).

WASTE DEALERS — 1906

PROVIDENCE

S. Klein Co., 108 Chalkstone Ave.
Louis E. Robinson, 20 Market Square
W. B. Sweet, 169 Canal St.
Morris Winograd & Son, 3 Lopez St.

WOONSOCKET

M. Greenberg & Co., 25 Polo St.

WASTE DEALERS — 1911

PROVIDENCE

B. Goldstein, 166 Chalkstone Ave.
Grant Supply, 205 Weybosset St.
Joe Levy, 245 North Main St. (also rags)
Samuel Priest & Co., 357-359 Canal St.

WOONSOCKET

Louis Darman, 119 Fifth Ave. (rags)

WASTE DEALERS — 1913-1914

PROVIDENCE

B. Goldstein, 156 Chalkstone Ave.
Grant Supply Co., 204 Westminster St.
H. Mendelovitz, 39 N. Davis St.
New England Metal Co., 15½ Douglas Ave.
Samuel Priest & Co., 357 Canal St.
Henry Priest, 108 Printery St.
Samuel Waldman, 181 Blackstone St.
M. Winograd & Son, 1 Lopez St.
WASTE, YARN, RAG DEALERS — 1920

PROVIDENCE

S. Backman & Sons, 11 Shawmut St.
A. Goldberg, 178 Holden St.
B. Goldstein, 19 Ormsbee Ave.
Abe Heller, 18 Montgomery St.
Kapland Remnant Co., 163 No. Main St.
S. Klein & Sons, 108 Chalkstone Ave.
Martin Lippman, 327 Canal St.
H. Mendelowitz, 39 N. Davis St.
Jacob Perclay, 302 No. Main St., Pawt.
Henry Priest, 58 Printery St.
Samuel Waldman, 131 Blackstone St.

FALL RIVER

Nathan Bernstein, 1470 Pleasant St.
D. Rachlin & Sons, 173 Quarry St.
Lesser Goldman, 10 Purchase St.
J. Osiason, 164 Broadway

WOONSOCKET

J. S. Blumenthal, Commercial Bldg.
L. Darman & Co., 50 Commercial Bldg.
Arthur J. Darman, 245 Railroad Ave.
Charles T. Priest, 1006 No. Main St.

WESTERLY

Max Lahn, 21 Broad St.

WASTE DEALERS AND DRY GOODS — 1925

PROVIDENCE

S. Bander & Co., 49 Smith St.
Blumenthal Wool Stock Co., Inc., 308 So. Water St.
Samuel Dwares & Sons, 10 Ambrose St.
Samuel Ganzler, Inc., 108 No. Main St.
B. Goldstein, 19 Ormsbee Ave.
Kapland Remnant Co., 42 Weybosset St.
Chas. R. Kapstein & Co., 19 Harrison St.
Joseph Levy & Son, 240 No. Main St.
Ralph R. Levy Textile Co., 270 No. Main St.
Henry Priest, 66 Printery St.
A. S. Ralph, 97 Canal St.
Raphael Fabric Co., 187 No. Main St.
Barnet F. Rosen, 360 No. Main St.
M. Ross & Co., 315 Canal St.
George Samperl, 70 Calverley St.
Samuel Waldman, 131 Blackstone St.
Henry Weiner, 175 No. Main St.

WOONSOCKET

Sam Golden, 55 Polo St.
Woonsocket Supply Co., 125 So. Main St.
YARN DEALERS — 1930

CENTRAL FALLS

John Marks (Cotton, Woollen), 416 Mill St.

PAWTUCKET

Ralph R. Levy Textile Co., Inc., P. O. Box 962
Percelay Yarn Co., 302 No. Main St.
M. Ross, Inc. (Max Ross, Buyer), 29 River St.

PROVIDENCE

Dwares & Co. (David Dwares, Buyer), 60 Printery St.
Eastern Yarn Co. (I. J. Glantz, Prop.), 27 No. Davis St.
Heller & Michaelson, 96 State St.
Sam Mencoff Co., 101 No. Main St.
Royal Yarn Co., 31 Pettis St.
Samdperil & Granoff (Cotton, Worsted, Silk), 231 Douglas Ave.
Sam'l Waldman, 131 Blackstone St.

APPENDIX B

Additional textile firms not mentioned in the main text doing business at various times during the period 1914 to 1964. Listed will be the names of the companies, location, senior officer, product or operation, and years of establishment and incorporation when available. The year in parenthesis will identify the issue of Davison's Textile Blue Book from which the data were extracted, e.g. (D. 1957), or American Wool and Cotton Reporter (A. 1920).


Areco Silk Co., 110 Tweed St., Central Falls, R. I. Rudolph Sarengo, pres. and treas. Broad silks Inc. 1921. (D. 1925)


British Woolen Co. of America, Ltd., 89 Allen St., Woonsocket, R. I. Max Berglas, pres. Women's suiting's and coatings. (D. 1944)


Devontex Fabrics, Inc., 11 Broad St., Valley Falls, R. I. Michael Wallenstein, pres. Silk and cotton corset cloth. Inc. 1919. (D. 1925)


Duro Finish Corp., 110 Chace St., Fall River, Mass. L. Goldberg, treas. Rayons, cottons, and mixtures. (D. 1964)


Eagle Weaving Co., Inc., Central Falls, R. I. Simeon Sackers, pres. Silks, georgettes, etc. (A. 1920) (See also Marstan Corp.)


Eureka Warping, Winding, & Slashing Co., Valley Falls, Cumberland, R. I. S. Gordon, vice pres. Winding and warping on commission. (D. 1964)


Fairhope Fabrics, Inc., Stevens St., Fall River, Mass. H. Gross, pres. Curtains, laces, nettings, dish cloths, etc. (D. 1957)


Hoffman Lion Mills, Inc., 129 Brookside Ave., West Warwick, R. I. J. Kingston, chrmn. and pres. Clothes lines, sash cords, mops, braids, etc. (D. 1964)

Industrial Dyeing Corp. of America, 48 Broadway, Pawtucket, R. I. Louis L. Wisner, pres. (D. 1925)


Kahn Silk Co., 25 River St., Pawtucket, R. I. Broad silks. (D. 1925)

Kruger, H., Co., 207 Pleasant St., Pawtucket, R. I. Broad silks. (D. 1929)

Lady Fabrics, Inc., Pawtucket, R. I. Max Schifflman, pres. Tubular elastic cloth. (D. 1938)

### Jense and the Textile Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>President/Owner</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Date of Incorporation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L. G. Silk Co.</td>
<td>104 Hartwell St., Fall River, Mass.</td>
<td>Arthur Black</td>
<td>Broad silks.</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Textile Works, Inc.</td>
<td>Jesse St., Fall River, Mass.</td>
<td>M. Britt</td>
<td>Broadlooms and silks.</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Textile Mills, Inc.</td>
<td>770 Main St., Warwick, R. I.</td>
<td>Morris Warhaftig</td>
<td>Broad silks and rayons.</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcy Fabrics Co., Inc.</td>
<td>99 Irving St., Fall River, Mass.</td>
<td>Jeannette Shapiro</td>
<td>Ribbons, bindings, tapes.</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marstan Corporation</td>
<td>1 Bridal Ave., Warwick, R. I.</td>
<td>L. J. Miller</td>
<td>Broad silks and rayons.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. S. D. Woolen Mills, Inc.</td>
<td>150-158 Middle St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>W. Schlesinger</td>
<td>Broad silks.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namquit Worsted Co.</td>
<td>Bristol, R. I.</td>
<td>Martin Rubinstein</td>
<td>Men's fancy worsteds and piece dyes.</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Braiding Co.</td>
<td>9 Calendar St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>S. C. Kaufman</td>
<td>Braids and braided rugs.</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Hosiery Mills</td>
<td>39 Charles St., Providence, R. I.</td>
<td>J. F. Morris</td>
<td>Converters of cotton, warps.</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Printed Tape Co.</td>
<td>30 Hamlet St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>P. Farago</td>
<td>Non-woven tapes from cotton, rayon, and fiberglass.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Silk Company</td>
<td>Friendship Drive, Westerly, R. I.</td>
<td>J. F. Morris</td>
<td>Woven rugs.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oresman Mills, Inc.</td>
<td>100 Pulaski St., Warwick, R. I.</td>
<td>H. Hassenfeld</td>
<td>Dyers and finishers of rayon linings, pure dye silks.</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawtucket Braided Line Co., Inc.</td>
<td>28 Bailey St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>Henry Solomon</td>
<td>Woven rugs.</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawtucket Braided Rug Co., Inc.</td>
<td>106 Broad St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>R. I. S. C. Kaufman</td>
<td>Woven rugs.</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawtucket Textile Co.</td>
<td>170 Front St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>Charles C. Herman</td>
<td>Conveters of cotton, % warps.</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennial Dye &amp; Print Works</td>
<td>West Warwick, R. I.</td>
<td>Herman Geller</td>
<td>Commission piece goods, dyeing, printing, and finishing, silk and rayon.</td>
<td>1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. K. Rug Company</td>
<td>17 Newell Ave., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>Joseph Priest</td>
<td>Woven rugs.</td>
<td>1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontiac Weaving Corp.</td>
<td>Valley Falls, Cumberland, R. I.</td>
<td>R. Scher</td>
<td>Satins and taffetas.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quidnicker Dye Works</td>
<td>Division of H. &amp; H. Mfg. Company</td>
<td>Hassenfeld</td>
<td>Dyers and finishers of rayon linings, pure dye silks.</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island Waste Co., Inc.</td>
<td>335 Barton St., Pawtucket, R. I.</td>
<td>R. I. Morris Goldstein</td>
<td>Carding, dusting cotton, rayon and worsted waste.</td>
<td>1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. = Date of Incorporation)
Roaring Brook Spinning Corp., 292 E. School St., Woonsocket, R. I. A. E. Goldstein.
pres. Wool and synthetic batting, wool blends, and carpet yarns. (D. 1964)
Samoset Cotton Felt Mills, 1583 Broad St., Central Falls, R. I. Charles S. Manekofsky,
pres. and treas. Cotton felt batting and waste, wool waste and yarns. (D. 1944)
Schoen, Carl, Silk Corp., Main St., Valley Falls, Cumberland, R. I. C. Schuett, sec.
Dress and necktie silks. (D. 1925)
Slater Spinning Co., 335 Barton St., Pawtucket, R. I. A. & N. Goldstein, partners.
Spinning of woolen yarns. (D. 1944)
card lacings and bandings, elastic and metallic braids, corset and shoe laces, flat
braids, venetian blind cord, ric-rac, misc. trimmings, twisted cotton ropes.
est. 1885. Inc. 1919. (D. 1957)
Sol-Fab Mfg. Co., 125 Thames St., Bristol, R. I. I. L. Solomon, pres. and treas. Wool,
rayon, and cotton braided rugs. est. and Inc. 1944. (D. 1961)
Solway Dyeing and Textile Co., Pawtucket, R. I. Lewis Levi, pres. Fancy cloths,
dyeing and bleaching cotton yarns, skeins and warps, specialty, fast colors for
cross dyeing and bleaching, also mercerizing. Est. 1901. Inc. 1906. (A. 1920)
(D. 1929)
Standard Thread Converting Corp., 225 Conant St., Pawtucket, R. I. Founded by
Benjamin M. Cohen. Finish threads. (D. 1957)
Standish Mills, Inc., Maple St., Esmont, R. I. H. E. Hirsch, pres. and buyer. Plain
and jacquard acetates, rayons, nylon, dacron and fine cotton fabrics. (D. 1964)
Star Silk Mills, Inc., 190 Anawan St., Fall River, Mass. Louis Ginsberg, pres. and
treas. (D. 1945)
State Silk Mills, Inc., Roosevelt Ave., Pawtucket, R. I. Herbert Pansey, pres. and
supt. Broad woven silks. (D. 1938)
Stoughton Mills, Carolina, R. I. E. Bromfield, buyer. Reworker of wool and rayon
fibers. (D. 1939)
(D. 1930)
Traymor Mfg. Co., 175 Conant St., Pawtucket, R. I. I. Gilman, pres. Tapes and
webbings. (D. 1957)
Brocaded fabrics, damask rayon piece goods, upholstery fabrics. Inc. 1914.
(D. 1925)
United Nets Corporation, 583 High St., Central Falls, R. I. Joseph P. Isaac, pres. and
treas. Silks and velvings. Inc. 1916. (D 1925)
United Wadding Corp., 229 E. School St., Woonsocket, R. I. A. E. Goldstein, pres.
Wool batting, wool blends. (D. 1961)
(D. 1930)
Wakeford Mills, 80 Vineyard St., Pawtucket, R. I. Charles Josephson, pres. Rayon
weaving. Est. and Inc. 1949. (D. 1961)
lines. (A. 1920)
Woolens and blends, also nylon blends for weaving and knitting. (D. 1964)
Westover Fabrics, Inc., W. Warwick, R. I. David E. Seidman, pres. Rayon piece
goods. (D. 1944)
Wolf, A., Company, Inc., Hillsgrove, R. I. A. Wolf, pres. and treas. Broad silks,
artificial silks. Inc. 1924. (D. 1928)
Woonsocket Spinning Co., 115 Ricard St., Woonsocket, R. I. Howard Korn, v. pres.
Yarn Silk Corp., 18 Main St., Pawtucket, R. I. J. Colin, pres. Inc. 1929. (D. 1938)
FALL RIVER 1930

Since this is the only city map in Davison's Textile Blue Books, it indicates the unique position Fall River enjoyed as a leading producer. The majority of the mills here illustrated were owned by Jewish businessmen, who either used them to house their own operations or leased them to others. Mills on the map not identified were destroyed by fire or razed for road construction and urban renewal, or were owned by non-Jews. (See Appendix C)
APPENDIX C (See map page 295)
FALL RIVER MILLS—1936-1969

NARRAGANSETT MILLS: 1567 No. Main Street, purchased by Aaron Dashoff in 1952, now owned by the Salmanson interests, Leonard I. and family, Providence. North Section at 1641 No. Main Street, purchased by Alpert Bros., Inc., tobacco wholesalers.

SAGAMORE MILLS: A complex of several mills liquidated in the mid 1960s by United Industrial syndicate; Harry Lebensfeld and A. Leonard Lewis; now comprising several companies occupying these premises: Trina, Inc.; Ace Plastic; Joan Fabrics; Foster Spinning; and Sagamore.


JOAN FABRICS: 1822 No. Main Street, Harold Ansin. Manufacturers of corduroy, plushes, and pile fabrics. (See Sagamore Mills).

FOSTER SPINNING: Originally part of the Sagamore complex, housing Fall River Florist Supply Co., Inc., 119 Cove Street. Owned and operated by Joseph Koppelman. (See Sagamore Mills).

SAGAMORE: 44 Probber Lane. Housing Harvey Probber, Inc., a leading manufacturer of custom and distinctive furniture. (See Sagamore Mills).


ALGONQUIN MILLS: 371 Bay Street and 1 Middle Street. Formerly housed Crescent Corp. (Jacob Ziskind) and now the home of Slater Paper Box Co., operated by Charles W. Stampler.


ABDON MILLS CORP.: 170 Globe Mills Avenue, Reuben Abrash, president. Rayon weavers.

LAUREL LAKE MILLS: 951 Broadway. Home of the nationally known United States Luggage Corp. Sidney S. Feinberg, president; Steven Feinberg, general manager.

MILLS No. 4 & No. 5 — FALL RIVER IRON WORKS: 18 Pocasset Street. Multi-tenanted by several textile firms and finishing plants.
Formerly owned by Myer Markell and sons, Robert and Edward. Sole owner since 1968, S. Alexander Ross, of Manufacturers Realty Corp.

LAMPORT, INC.: MILL No. 3 — FALL RIVER IRON WORKS:
Anawon Street. A leading supplier of over-the-counter piece goods. Sam Lamport, New York City.


BOURNE MILLS: Fall River-Tiverton, Rhode Island line. Real Estate Investment, partial owner, Irwin Chernick, attorney, Lincoln, Rhode Island.


RICHARD BORDEN MILLS: 440 Rodman Street. Owned on an investment basis by Robert J. Cohen, and housing the well-known Arlan's Department Store, which is now a national chain discount store and an early participant in this field. Herbert Palestine, president.

LUTHER MILLS: 387 Plymouth Avenue. Operated by Lester Martin interests, and sold in 1949 to Hyman Miller, president, High Point Paper Box Corp.


PILGRIM MILLS: 847 Pleasant Street. Home of Louis Hand, Inc. Largest manufacturer of curtains and draperies in the United States. Brick construction, one of the last mills built in Fall River.

HARGRAVES MILLS: Grinnell Street. Louis J. Symonds, Providence, with B. K. Symonds, and Allen E. Symonds, now chief operating officer. Formerly a Berkshire-Hathaway complex.

DAVIS MILLS: 749 Quequechan Street. Division of United Merchants and Manufacturers, Inc. Vast textile operations throughout the United States. Formerly housing finishing and dyeing operations for United Merchants, now manufacturer of pigment for screen dyeing processing. Architecturally one of the most appealing mill structures.

BARNARD MILLS: 641 Quarry Street. Real Estate investment owned by Isadore and Gabriel Samdperil, Providence. Multi-tenanted. Originally operated by Crescent Corp. (Jacob Ziskind) as their main warehouse. One of the city's older buildings.


HARGRAVES MILLS No. 1: 451 Quarry Street. Owned by Leonard I. Salmanson interests, Providence. Known as the Northern Warehouse building, housing several garment and curtain companies. Also located at the site of the quarry utilized by its adjacent neighbor, Barnard Mills, for stone used in the construction of both buildings.


FLINT MILLS: 69 and 135 Alden Street. Large complex of several buildings owned for real estate investment by M. Joseph Madowsky. Building at 69 owned by the Fall River Knitting Mills, well known knitter of sweaters with a retail showroom, operated by the Reitzas Associates, headed by Sidney Reitzas.

KERR THREAD MILLS COMPLEX: Formerly the home of the giant American Thread Mills. Real estate investment owned by
Joseph M. Linsey, Boston. Originally purchased by Harold Kenner, Melvin Berry, Louis M. Graboys, Providence.

TRANS-AMERICAN SPINNING MILLS, INC., 73 Martine Street. This section owned by Charles Weinstein, Brookline, Mass. WAREHOUSE SECTION, rear 81 Martine Street. Houses UNITED TEXTILE MACHINERY CORP. Purchased by Leon Bakst and Emil Shapiro, Providence, textile and machinery dealers.

STAFFORD MILLS: 40 County Street. Complex housing a large furniture store and garment factories. Owned by Leonard Salzman interests, Providence.


HEYWOOD NARROW FABRIC CO.: 85 Portland Street. Owned and operated by the Tilly Realty Corp. for investment purposes. Multi-tenanted.


FALL RIVER BLEACHERY MILL COMPLEX: 994 Jefferson Street. Owned by George Litchman and Sons, operated by Sanford Litchman. Woolen yarns dealers.


GRANITE MILLS: 52 Twelfth Street. Dora Radovsky and Associates. Razed 1962 for an A & P Super-Market. Housed several of Fall River's early underwear and dress manufacturers. Located in the heart of the city. Was the home of Cotton City Wash Frocks, Benjamin Green proprietor, manufacturers of underwear and dresses. Benjamin and Joseph Kravif, operating as Kravif Mfg. Co., Inc., were one of the early garment producers, located in this building.

CRESCENT MILL: 30 Front Street. Original home of the Crescent Corp. plant headed by Jacob Ziskind, used for warehouse and general offices.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
BY SEEBERT J. GOLDSKY, M.D.

Recent acquisitions in the Library of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association containing items of Rhode Island interest and a listing of these items:

   - Chronology, containing several Newport items. 1-5.
   - Judah Touro will. 77-83.
   - Population of Rhode Island. 120.
   - Selected Bibliography of American Jewish history. 122-128.

   - Rabbi Englander goes to Providence. 157.
   - G. George Fox visits Harry Cutler in Providence. 284.

   - Many Rhode Island items, too numerous to list.

   - The Rabbis and Ezra Stiles, by Arthur A. Chiel. 294.

   - Abraham Rodrigues Rivera, Isaac Elizer, and possibly others of Newport naturalized. 106, and notes 5 and 6.
   - Sloop *Mary* arrives in N. Y. from R. I. 110.
   - Jewish community life in Newport. 147 and n.
   - Jewish patriots and Tories in Newport. 150-153.
   - Aaron Lopez loses his fleet. 155.
   - Jewish Tories of Newport. 158.
   - Ezra Stiles attends Synagogue. 160 and n.


   - (Gift of Mr. Edward Flanagan of the Oxford Press.)
   - Cutler Jewelry Co. 302.
   - Joseph Heller & Co. 108.
   - S. & B. Lederer. 317.
   - William Loeb & Co. 115.
   - Schwartzkopf & Solinger. 30.
   - Silverman Bros. 232.
   - Fred M. Swartz. 227.

A. J. Benjamin, East Greenwich, retail.
C. F. Sulzner, Narragansett Pier, retail.
Jacob Abisch, Providence, mfg.
Eckhardt & Cohen, Providence, pearl goods.
Julius Eichenberg, Providence, precious stones.
Henry Lederer & Bro., Providence, mfg.
S. & B. Lederer, Providence, mfg.
Leeder & Bernkopf, Providence, precious stones.
John Nelson, Providence, retail.
Louis Stern & Co., Providence, mfg.
Maurice Sundelovitz, Providence, retail.
M. Tannenbaum, Providence, retail.
Jacob Beringer, Westerly, retail.
A. Collitz, Woonsocket, watchmaker.
H. Fellman, Woonsocket, optician.


*Jewish Messenger*, pub. in New York City, had one subscriber in Kingston. R. I. p. 7.

*Occident*, pub. in Philadelphia, Penn., had four subscribers in Rhode Island, p. 14.
THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was held in the Library of the Rhode Island Historical Society, 121 Hope Street, Providence on Sunday afternoon, May 14, 1972. After the President, Mr. Jermone B. Spunt called the meeting to order at 2:35 P.M., the Secretary, Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky read her Annual Report. Mr. Spunt reported on the sudden illness and hospitalization on Friday of Mrs. Nancy Halverson Schless and her inability to fulfill her commitment as the scheduled speaker of the afternoon. The secretary read a letter from Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, highly laudatory of the Notes, publication of the Association. Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, Treasurer, reported a grand total of $2,795.94 in the treasury, and Mr. Sweet, Finance Chairman, was able to project a balanced budget for the forthcoming year.

Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky gave a progress report on his assignment as editor of the Notes. Melvin L. Zurier, Esquire, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers for election: Erwin Strasmich, President; Benton H. Rosen, Vice-President; Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Secretary; and Mrs. Louis I. Sweet, Treasurer. With no counter-nominations, the secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for the entire slate.

Substituting for Mrs. Schless as annual meeting speakers and thereby serving as the Second Annual David Charak Adelman Lecturers were two of the Association's own Executive Committee members. Mr. Strasmich, newly elected president, read a paper in progress on “The Jews in Textiles in Rhode Island.” A very extensive study of the part the Jews played in the textile industry in the New England area, it dealt also with the related fields of garment-making, braids and elastic braids, elastic, shoe laces, tapes, and threads. Interested comment followed Mr. Strasmich’s presentation. Mr. Zurier, also using a paper in progress, dealt with the subject of how the Jews fared in the Rhode Island Supreme Court from 1870 to 1912. His information was gleaned from the Rhode Island Reports, Volume 94 (1912). Highly informative and sometimes amusing, this talk also evoked spirited interest in the audience. Both Mr. Strasmich and Mr. Zurier were commended by Mr. Spunt for serving so well as proxy speakers at the last moment. Both papers will appear soon in an issue of the Notes.

After the program was completed, members and guests were served a collation for which the Mesdames Goldowsky, Bernard Segal, and Sweet were hostesses.

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NECROLOGY

SYLVIA L. (DELFINO) BROMBERG, 18 Lladnar Drive, Lincoln, Rhode Island, wife of Malcolm C. Bromberg, daughter of Michael and the late Eva (Shapiro) Delfino, mother of Howard M., Arnold R. and Judith A. Bromberg, sister of Daniel Davis.

Died in Lincoln, R. I., October 6, 1972.

MARTIN CHASE, born in Kiev, Russia, April 26, 1906, the son of Morris and Fannie Chase. He attended Hope High School, participated actively in athletics, and was an all-state guard from 1922-1924.

Board chairman of Ann & Hope Stores, he was recognized nationally as a pioneer discounter, whose business techniques revolutionized discount retail merchandising. In 1968 he was honored at the annual convention in New York of the Mass Merchandising Research Foundation for having set in motion a tide of low margin retailing which revolutionized the distribution system of the United States and greatly extended the purchasing power of the American consumer.

Active in many community and philanthropic affairs, he was a member and former board member of Temple Beth-El.

Died in Boston, Massachusetts, December 24, 1971.

ARTHUR J. LEVY, born in New York City, January 25, 1897, the son of Jules and Sophie (Stern) Levy.

A 1919 graduate of Brown University, he received his law degree from Boston University, serving as secretary of his class. He was recently appointed to the Boston University National Alumni Council. Founder of the Jewish Family and Children’s Service (formerly the Jewish Family Welfare Service), he served as its president for the first twenty years of its existence. In 1944, the Providence Journal-Bulletin presented to him the Sixth “Roger Award” for good citizenship. At one time he had been a sportswriter for the old Providence Tribune.

In 1951 he was appointed to the Commission to Consolidate State Laws. He was editor-in-chief of the Rhode Island Bar Journal from 1952 to 1954. From 1960 to 1969 he was president of the
Rhode Island Bar Association, served as a member of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association, and was a member of the Advisory Committee of the Federal Tax Institute of New England.

He was a charter member of the Jewish Historical Association, was elected its first treasurer, and from 1955 to 1963 served as a member-at-large of its Executive Committee. He was a member of the law firm of Levy, Goodman, Semenoff and Gorin. He was a past president of the Temple Beth-El Brotherhood and honorary trustee of the Temple. He was also a trustee of The Miriam Hospital.

He was a member of the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island, the Brown University Alumni Association, Brown Club of Rhode Island, Touro Fraternal Association, Roger Williams Lodge No. 1184 B’nai B’rith, and Overseas Lodge No. 40.

Died in Providence, November 18, 1972.

HARRY J. LICHT, born in Providence, Rhode Island, November 11, 1910, the son of Jacob and the late Sarah Licht.

A brother of Governor Frank Licht, he was educated in the Providence public schools and attended Northeastern University. He was associated with Jacob Licht, Inc., Licht Industries, the Wilkinson Company, Jali Realty Corporation, Lyman Associates, Summer Realty, Inc., Mortgage Guarantee and Title Company, and Ten Keys, Inc.

As a well known civic leader, he was instrumental in developing the Nicholson File plant into an industrial center. The conversion at the time was considered a classic example of what can be done with the physical properties abandoned by a long-established firm which has left a community.

He was the chairman of the Jewish Community Center Building Committee and was a member of Temple Emanu-El.

Died in Boston, Massachusetts, October 16, 1972.

SAMUEL H. NATHANS, M.D. of Westerly, Rhode Island, born in Boston, Massachusetts, August 4, 1906, the son of the late Isaac and Mary (Blonder) Nathans.
One of Rhode Island's better known anesthesiologists, whose medical career spanned a period of 38 years, he was a former chief of anesthesia at Westerly Hospital. He and his wife, Jean (Shain) Nathans, were former owners and certified managers of the Watch Hill Road Nursing Home, which they had converted from a carriage barn on the former Tristam Babcock estate located between two coves of the Pawcatuck River to a 60 bed facility described as one of the residential showplaces of Southern Rhode Island.

A graduate of Boston Latin High School and Harvard University, he received his medical degree from Tufts University in 1933. He opened his office in Providence for the general practice of medicine following his internship at the Fall River (Massachusetts) General Hospital. He served in the medical outpatient departments of The Miriam and Rhode Island Hospitals.

He served two tours of active duty in the U. S. Army, and was also a medical officer from 1935 to 1937 at the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp in Escoheag. He had specialized in anesthesiology since 1945, after studying under several leading authorities in that specialty.

Participating diligently in all affairs of the Westerly Hospital, he served a particularly active role on the building committees which developed its extensive modernization and expansion programs. He was a charter member and past secretary of the Rhode Island Society of Anesthesiologists. For six years he was the Rhode Island-Connecticut director for the American Society of Anesthesiologists. He was an ardent sailor and a photographer of some merit.

Doctor Nathans was a past president of the Westerly Lodge of B'nai B'rith and a member of the Congregation Sharah Zedek Synagogue in Westerly.

ISAAC HAHN—PIONEER JEWISH TEXTILE MANUFACTURER

Isaac Hahn, the father of the late Justice J. Jerome Hahn, was the first Jewish textile manufacturer in Rhode Island. A brief sketch of his career appeared in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 4:517, November 1965. Hahn, a native of New York City, opened a retail store dealing in kid gloves, laces, and dress trimmings at 148 Westminster Street in Providence (later 175 Westminster Street) around 1870. His retail store was not listed in the City Directory subsequent to 1886.

About 1884 he became treasurer of the National Tubing Company, "Manufacturers of Flexible Tubing For Gas Portables, Gas Stoves, Speaking Tubes, Elevators, and Medicinal Purposes," according to an advertisement appearing in the *Rhode Island Business Directory* for 1890 (Briggs Co., Boston, publishers). Samuel Barr, secretary and later treasurer of the company, claimed to be the holder of relevant patents issued in 1881, 1883, and 1884. As noted in the advertisement of 1885, Hahn was also listed as president of the corporation. It is suspected that Barr supplied the technology and Hahn the capital.

From 1889, Hahn was also listed as a manufacturer of braids. Both processes, i.e. the braids and the net-like covering of the rubber tubes, were related narrow fabrics. Barr removed to New York City about 1890, after which Hahn remained as apparent proprietor of both enterprises, at least through 1904, and probably until his death in 1909. The National Tubing Company, at first located on Dyer Street, later removed to Sabin Street. Several locations are listed for his several enterprises but 43 Sabin Street was Hahn's headquarters from 1893 until his death. In 1894, according to Davison's *The Blue Book of Textile Manufacturers*, Hahn was listed as a manufacturer of braids, employing 75 hands, and operating 1,100 braiders. Whether this involved only one or both enterprises is not clear. In any case it would appear that he ran a fairly respectable business.

As stated elsewhere, prior to his death on March 12, 1909 he also had become a very substantial operator in real estate and mortgages. (See also page 254 of this issue and opposite page.)—Ed.
ISAAAC HAHN,
MANUFACTURER OF
SILK, WORSTED AND MOHAIIR BRAIDS.
NO. 14 SABIN STREET.

From Providence City Directory 1888.

ISAAC HAHN, President.
SAMUEL BARK, Secretary.

NATIONAL TUBING COMPANY,
Manufacturers of
FLEXIBLE TUBING.
For Gas Portables, Gas Stoves, Elevators and Medical Purposes.
383 & 384 DYER STREET, PROVIDENCE, R.I.

From Providence City Directory 1885.

Outside Back Cover: YMHA Baseball Trophy 1912
Names on Plaque:
Samuel A. Cohen, Mgr.
Players
J. Field, Captain
D. Agronick
C. Bander
B. Bookbinder
J. Brown
W. Mackalovitz
H. Samuels
H. Winkler
A. Samuels
J. Samuels
E. Klien (sic)
N. Gordon
A. Cohen
C. Kapstien (sic)
M. Torgan
L. Agronick
J. Jagolinzer
New England Championship Trophy
Won by The Providence Y.M.H.A. Base-Ball Team
At Field Day
Of the Associated Y.M.H.A's of New England
At Wakefield Mass Sept. 2 1912
Samuel S. Eaton Manager

Winn's
J. Trulfit, Capt.
E. M. White
W. B. Callahan
A. M. V. Butler
J. F. Brown
J. M. Whyte
H. C. Lemon
M. Winfield
J. Howard

Winn's
Geo. A. Pinkston, 1st Base
F. M. Neve
J. F. Gardiner
W. M. Gardiner
H. G. Davis
K. J. Morgan
R. G. Shaw