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Front Cover

The photograph of the Caesar Misch Building appears through the
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RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES

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RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

130 SESSIONS STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02906

RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
130 SESSIONS STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Over the years the *Notes* have been devoted to articles on Jewish institutions and individuals in Rhode Island. Your current editor intends to continue the editorial policy that has won for this journal no little distinction since its inception. At the same time we will occasionally publish pieces of merit that do not follow the usual pattern; Marvin Pitterman's study of Sicilian Jewry* (November 1979), for example, was well-received by many with *European Roots*. Again, in this issue Rabbi Braude's discussion of the fruits of his study group should be of interest to our membership. Variety, it is hoped, will only enhance the *Notes'* academic standing.

A.C.S.

*It was recently reprinted in *The Jewish Digest*.

MARION L. MISCH — AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN

by ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

"She was a very proper lady, and highly respected."¹ "She was a very assertive girl, obviously single-minded, aggressive. She was a 'grande dame' to the public."² "An imposing lady — physically and psychologically."³ "She was a great pal and had such a soft lap!"⁴ "She is a public spirited woman, clear of vision, sincere in purpose, courageous and sympathetic."⁵

These few brief allusions to Marion L. Misch hardly describe this woman of enormous culture, intellect and leadership; this woman far ahead of her time; this Renaissance woman.

Marion L. Misch was born on May 13, 1869 in Newark, New Jersey. (Her obituary in the *Providence Journal* of January 19, 1941 lists her place of birth as Allentown, Pennsylvania). She was one of five children, a brother, Milton, sisters, Marguerite, Gertrude and Harriet, born to ex-Alderman Louis Benjamin and Rachel (Pulaski) Simon. Little is known about the parents who immigrated to this country.

Her nephew, Louis B. Simon, had one note of interest about his grandfather, Louis Benjamin Simon. "My grandfather immigrated from Germany when quite young and served in the Civil War as a drummer."

The family moved to Pittsfield, Massachusetts when Marion Misch was very young, and she grew up in that town. She was educated in the public school system and attended Normal School (teacher training college). Louis Simon was in the clothing business and it is conjectured by Marion Misch's family that she may have met her husband, Caesar, when he traveled to that town. He also was involved with the merchandising of clothing.

Of her life in Pittsfield there is little record. There is, however, the following story of how she organized the first Jewish Sabbath School in Pittsfield at age twelve.⁶ (Another source refers to her age as fourteen in this incident).⁷

"An interesting incident is told by Cowan in his memoirs. About 1881, Rabbi de Sola Mendes received a letter from a twelve year old girl in Pittsfield, asking for an outline for religious instruction that she would be able to follow, as there was no opportunity for acquiring a Jewish religious education in her town. Rabbi Mendes cooperated wholeheartedly, launching what amounted to an elementary correspondence course with one pupil. The child profited by the novel opportunity and herself conducted a religious school of 20

children before she was 15. She subsequently became a school teacher, and later as Mrs. Caesar Misch of Providence, one of the national leaders of Jewish womanhood.”

Evidently Rabbi Mendes kept in touch with Mrs. Misch throughout her marriage for a telegram from the Rabbi was found in a scrapbook which she kept on the occasion of her husband’s death in 1908.

As Marion Simon she taught in the public schools of Pittsfield until her marriage on September 3, 1890 to Caesar Misch, a Brooklyn New York merchant. The couple lived in Brooklyn for about ten years. They moved to Providence when Caesar Misch established a department store, and Mrs. Misch entered at once upon her career in local affairs.⁸

An interesting personal note about the marriage was related by her oldest granddaughter, Dorothy. “She (Marion Misch) told the story that in the early days of her marriage she served Caesar potatoes fixed the same way two days in a row, and he told her, “Madam, there are 50 different ways to serve potatoes,’ and it never happened two days running the same way again.” Dorothy commented, “So there was definitely a discipline there, a demand there not for just the average — no excuses.”

There is a record in the *Providence City Directory* for 1899 of Mr. and Mrs. Caesar Misch, together with their coachman, James Rogan, living at 601 Elmwood Avenue. The directory of the previous year had listed a family named Bedell as occupying the home at that address.

“The house was big and light and airy with vast rooms and vast windows. It had a huge barn in the back. Daddy (Walter Misch) had a pony cart. It was long before people had motor cars. It must have been quite a sizeable house for today there are a block of stores and an apartment house on the site. But I never remembered the grounds as having been terribly huge. There was Scott the butler and the cook. I would assume there was somebody else.”⁹

“What I remember best about the huge house was the music room and the game room. There was an enormous collection like stuffed animal heads and one of my earliest recollections was playing on two rugs — one a polar bear and one a tiger skin rug. I remember my sister Dotty daring me to put my hand in the tiger’s mouth. There was a huge collection of all kinds of memorabilia — little statues. One which caught my fancy was a procession of ivory elephants.”¹⁰

Marion and Caesar Misch had two children, Walter Percy, born in 1891 and Dorothy Louise born on May 25, 1896. Dorothy Louise died at age 22 on July 21, 1918. Walter was to outlive his mother by 16 years. He died on February 2, 1957. Walter married Ruth Capron Greene on May 31, 1916. She died on February 14, 1973. They had six children, the first child, Walter H., died 19 days after birth on February 1, 1917. There followed: Dorothy L. (July 15, 1921); Robert C. (October 27, 1923); W. Richard (April 12, 1927); Donald W. (January 1, 1929) and Marion R. (January 29, 1931). All the grandchildren were born long after their grandfather, Caesar's, death.

Available information for the period of Marion and Caesar's relatively brief marriage is concerned primarily with Caesar. His history is a fascinating one, and obviously he had a great influence on his wife, Marion.

CAESAR MISCH

Caesar Misch was born in Berlin, Germany on August 25, 1857. The son of a wealthy German merchant, he was educated in his native country and for a time held a commission as Second Lieutenant in the German Army. He came to America about 1888 and settled first in Newark, New Jersey where he engaged in his first business venture in this country, opening an installment clothing house. (He was reputed to be an innovator in offering installment purchasing). He soon transferred his business to Brooklyn, New York. In 1892 Providence appealed to him as having business possibilities capable of development and he opened a store in that city at 545 Westminster Street. Meeting with success, he conceived the idea of establishing auxiliary stores in neighboring cities. Pawtucket was the first of these, opened in 1895, followed by the Worcester store a year later, and then in quick succession by the stores in Lowell, Mass., Hartford, Conn., Holyoke, Mass., Manchester, New Hampshire, Brockton, Mass., Bridgeport, Conn. and New York City, the last being established about the year 1901.

He incorporated the business under the name of Caesar Misch, Inc., avoiding the name "company" in connection with his enterprises in deference to a deep-seated dislike of the idea. The corporation was capitalized for \$350,000. In September 1900, work was begun on the new six story Caesar Misch building at 398 Westminster Street, into which the Providence store, the headquarters of the entire business of the concern was moved on July 1, 1904.

The corporation owned the building and operated all the ten stores. By

Caesar's death in 1908 some of the stores had been sold to other parties although still doing business under the name and good will of Caesar Misch, Inc. At least three of the chain, however, were still owned by the corporation of which Caesar Misch was President and Treasurer.¹¹

A review of the tax assessor's records reveals the following facts about the building at 398-402 Westminster Street. The area was designated as Plot 24, Lot 405. The Jones Estate Company owned the land in 1890 and sold it to Caesar Misch in 1900. It became the Caesar Misch estate in April 1909 and Caesar Misch, Inc. June 1909. There was a transfer under Marion L. Misch's name in 1914 and appeared in the records under her name until her death in 1941, whereupon the title was under the name of Walter P. Misch, Trustee estate of Marion L. Misch. It was sold to Midtown Realty Company in April of 1941 and bought for \$90,000. by Jan Chin in June 1944. His title was changed to Jan Chin, Inc. in March 1948, and upon his death Wah Chin Chin took title on January 4, 1972. The title has now come full circle with the purchase by Harold J. Harris on November 1, 1977 of the building. He is doing business as "The Caesar Misch Realty Company."

"The Vanity Fair Amusement Company is the only other enterprise of importance with which Mr. Misch was prominently identified. His connection with that undertaking arose out of financial interests which he held in the original company that operated the resort last season when the re-organization took place last fall. He was made the President of the company."¹²

When questioned about what the Vanity Fair Amusement Company may have been, his grandson Richard was under the impression that it was an amusement park which had been destroyed by a large spectacular fire. Caesar Misch suffered a rather severe loss on it. A recent newspaper reference described the Vanity Fair as follows:

"...an amusement park in East Providence on the east shore of the Providence River. Providence Mayor Patrick J. McCarthy gave the opening address and the Salem Cadet Band was there to provide the music when the park opened on May 25, 1907. The park lasted for just a couple of years. In addition to its ballroom it boasted an open air circus and scientific exhibits, including an 'incubator building' where the latest scientific device designed to save the lives of 'mites of humanity' (babies) was displayed, according to information at

the Rhode Island Historical Society Library. Vanity Fair was operated by the Vanity Fair Co., which had offices in 1907 in the Banigan Building at 10 Weybosset Street, moving in 1908 to the Caesar Misch building at 400 Westminster Street."¹³

It was reputed that Caesar Misch was very well read and could converse in many ancient and modern languages and quote the Greek and Latin poets with fluency, while his fund of general knowledge covered a wide range of subjects. He was a 32nd degree Mason, a member of Redwood Lodge A.F. & A.M., No. 35 and a member of Congregation of Sons of David, which at the time of Caesar Misch's death was located at Friendship and Foster Streets. He also held membership in the Rhode Island Businessmen's Association, the Providence Board of Trade and the Economics Club.¹⁴

Obituaries appeared in local newspapers and in Boston, New York City and French newspapers as well. "Mr. Caesar Misch, whose sudden death has prematurely ended an exceptionally useful life and cut short a successful business career, had been established in this city but a comparatively short time. Yet his energy and enterprise, his strong personality, his engaging qualities, his active mind and wide and intelligent sympathies had won him a place of no little prominence in the community to which he came a stranger and an alien."¹⁵

"The funeral of Caesar Misch was held from his late home, 601 Elmwood Avenue at 10:00 A.M. The services at the home were of the simplest nature, and were conducted according to the Reformed Jewish ritual. Present at the bier of the dead man were sorrowing friends who completely filled the large residence and overflowed in the streets. Many of his employees were present as well as Mayor Patrick J. McCarthy and other dignitaries."

"The handsome casket was almost buried beneath a wealth of beautiful floral tributes. . . Rabbi Henry Englander, pastor of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David conducted the services at the House. . . The Rabbi was a personal friend of the deceased, delivered a brief and heart-felt eulogy, in which he viewed the career and life of the dead merchant. . . He referred to his magnanimity and nobility of soul. . . spoke of his many unostentatious charitable activities, his vigorous personality, his unquestioned ability and his gentle and genial temperament. The funeral cortege started from the home at 11:00 A.M. and proceeded to Reservoir Avenue to the cemetery of the Congregation Sons of David and Israel where the interment took place."¹⁵

Rabbi Englander's eulogy was inspired by the following scripture: David lamenting the death of Abner, who had been a general in Saul's army exclaims, "know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen today in Israel." The analogy was made to Caesar Misch whom the Rabbi termed not merely a follower of men, but a leader who was forever planning, suggesting but not yet thrusting his opinion and forcing his viewpoint upon others against their will.

Notice of Caesar Misch's will, having been filed, appeared in the *Providence Journal* of July 30, 1908. Marion L. Misch was the executrix of his last will and testament. The will in essence revealed a \$10,000 bequest to his son, Walter, when he reached 26 years of age; \$25,000 left in trust income to support his daughter, Dorothy; to his wife, income from the estate. These bequests were only to be fulfilled if after paying off all the just debts the balance of the estate amounted to \$125,000. At the time of the notice the estate was evaluated at \$189,620 and his personal estate fixed at \$20,000.

A laudable comment on Caesar Misch's character is contained in this excerpt from his obituary which appeared in the *Evening Bulletin* of July 28, 1908: "Since Mr. Misch's death many have learned for the first time that with the utmost unostentation he had been carrying on a broad philanthropy which had made itself felt in many places in Providence. So quietly was the work done that few except the recipients of his kindness knew of his good deeds, but since his death the evidences of his work have cropped out."

MARION MISCH, BUSINESS WOMAN

Richard Misch, a grandson, was under the impression that the substantial business which Caesar Misch left went on quite successfully after his grandfather died. Marion Misch continued to live in the large home at 601 Elmwood Avenue with her two children. Walter, who attended Worcester Prep School, entered the 1912 class of Brown University, upon his graduation.

"She succeeded to the business of her husband, became president and treasurer of Caesar Misch, Inc., Department Stores (1908-1936); President and Treasurer of Walmar, Inc., leased department operators with leased departments (men's shoes, hats, furnishings) throughout New England."¹⁷

"Caesar did not leave a manager (that is hearsay) — he left everything outright to my grandmother. Members of his

family and members of her family were involved in various stores. Whether she had a general overseer for all this, I assume she must have or she would not have had the time to do all the extensive traveling. And then she had time for all that community work. But her brother, Milton, managed one store. Her brother-in-law, Herman, managed another. His brother George managed another. It was in the family. The clothing store took up the first two floors of the building and commercial offices were located on the upper floors. Then when I came into the picture and was old enough to go in I would look for a dress and a pair of shoes. I used to love to play around the office, and visit with the office staff. . . People would come in and put \$2.00 down and pay \$2.00 a week."¹⁸

Robert, another grandson, described the balcony of the store. It was there that his grandmother and father had two roll top desks. He was under the impression that his grandmother may have set the policy of the business and that his father did the managing. But this was later on in Walter's life. Evidently Marion Misch and her son held opposite points of view on many issues. A high-spirited young man, Walter seems to have often caused his mother's disapproval. "My father was sort of a playboy. What he did to earn a living, for my grandmother would not support him (after one of their altercations) was to play semi-professional baseball. . . After joining the Army he was a clerk in the Quartermaster Corp. (World War I), located at the docks of Hoboken, New Jersey. He talked there to the Colonel, and when he found out that my father attended Brown University, he arranged for him to receive a commission and he spent the war traveling back and forth to France. . . When he became commissioned, my grandmother decided to own him again, and yet there was always conflict between them."¹⁹

Dorothy was under the impression that he tried to maintain his independence for a while after he and her mother were married, but when her mother became pregnant, he capitulated and felt that it was the practical thing to do, (to go into the business with his mother).

The progress of the business is not well documented but evidently the clothing (at this point they were limited to menswear — haberdashery, underwear, etc.) business was a victim of the depression of the 1930's. The business was sold to another group who owned stores throughout New England. Richard added the information that his father and grandmother started leasing departments in the stores, some of which were owned by the people whom they had sold this business to. They had probably half a

dozen of these departments leased in stores, and when the owner of these stores decided not to renew these leases the business was terminated. Much to the chagrin of the grandsons, Robert and Richard, as they reminisced, Marion Misch turned down an offer of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars for the business before its decline. That was real money in those days. Her refusal to sell was against her son's advice.

Dorothy's information about that period: In answer to the question of whether she, Marion Misch, were a victim of the depression, she answered, "Oh, certainly, the business was. A lot of people did not have the foresight to weather that sort of store. She had the whole say to herself, and she ran the entire financial show. Where she got her advice and whom she relied upon for advice, I have no idea."

When the business no longer existed Walter went into the mail order business for the sale of men's shirts. That had to be terminated due to the shortage of material during World War II. The 1950 Historical Catalog of Brown University listed Walter P. Misch as follows: Office Manager, the Egry Register Company in Massachusetts.

MARION MISCH-WORLD TRAVELER

To illustrate the number and extent of Marion Misch's travels, her granddaughter, Marion Ruth, compiled a list of her travels. The information was derived from postcards which she sent to her brother, Milton and his wife, Helen.

Soon after Caesar's death she took her first trip abroad with her son Walter. This was in June of 1909. "It was on this trip my father told us that he would smoke cigarettes on the other side of the boat from where his mother was," said Robert. From June until they sailed home from Paris on August 4th, Marion Misch and her son went to Chester and Stratford-on-Avon in England; and to the countries of Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Italy and Switzerland.

The summer of 1910 saw Marion and her son again traveling abroad to different countries — Wales, Isle of Man, Ireland, the Faroe Islands via Iceland to Norway, and to Denmark. In Germany they visited different sections of that country than they had the previous year. An interesting comment about Oberammagau was made by Marion Ruth Misch. "Grandma commissioned an artist in the town to make slides of the Passion Play and color them. Photos were forbidden. . . Don't know what she made of what I am told is the rampant anti-Semitism of the Oberammagau Passion Play. Possibly she looked on it as a cultural

artifact left over from the Middle Ages. This trip seems to have ended at Pompeii in Italy."

Another area of the world was covered in a July and August vacation in 1911. She went to Arizona, California, the Orkney Islands, Hawaii and Lake Louise in Canada.

Her next trip was of six month's duration. They traversed many countries — Spain, Tunisia, Italy, Germany, France, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Greece, Syria, Belgium. There were interesting comments about some of these countries. About the Nile — "It's wonderful. I can't believe I am here" (they rented a houseboat to float up the Nile). Re Jerusalem: "Every step here is interesting."

Marion Ruth believes that sometime there must have been a visit to Kenya. "Dad (Walter) told me of being very young when they stayed with a British couple at their plantation. The Watusi arrived on their usual rounds and Dad made friends with the chief's son. They nicked their wrists and mingled blood to become ritual brothers. Grandma let him go off for a visit in the bush for some days. Hospitality included a temporary wife. He did not tell me if he took full advantage of the opportunity, but did say he discretely decided to say nothing to his mother regarding the "wife."

A few months after her 6 months' trip, Marion Misch was boarding another ship, this time to Algiers (she had been there that January), and India and Ceylon. They visited such romantic places as the foothills of the Himalayas and Calcutta. "I remember my father talking about Tibet and the Dalai Llama. My impression was that they went to Tibet, but I am not sure of this. There is no postcard."

Continuing from India in January of 1914 postcards arrived stamped from Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, China, Manchuria. They returned via Vancouver and Alaska.

Undoubtedly World War I intervened in any further traveling, for the next postcard is dated June 30th 1924 from Summit, Alaska. In 1925 there seemed to have been journeys to exotic lands — New Zealand, Tonga, Australia, (She traveled through Australia from August through early October.) In November they arrived in Luxor (again she is enjoying the Nile), Khartoum and Jerusalem.

A 1927 trip took Marion Misch through the Canal Zone on to Peru, Chile and Brazil.

It may be assumed that 1928 was Marion Misch's last extensive journey for no postcards are in evidence after her trip first to England then on to Madeira, Union of South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya, Palestine, Syria, Turkey and Paris.

Her granddaughter, Dorothy, related: "She traveled somewhere every year. Wherever she went she took pictures. . .she was a serious photographer. . .she would have slides of her snapshots made and also take movies. She would give lectures to various organizations. I do not know why she was asked, whether it was to make the program interesting that day, or whether it was for fund-raising purposes — or what, but she did that for many years, and she always had a photographic record of her travels. . .I remember watching her at a couple of these travelogues — she would have a little metal clicker — and a long pointer — and stand there looking as though she had control of the whole world — or at least her corner of it — no stage fright, nothing, and I would be so proud of her. . . And I remember the stereopticon and all the slides. It was just fascinating."

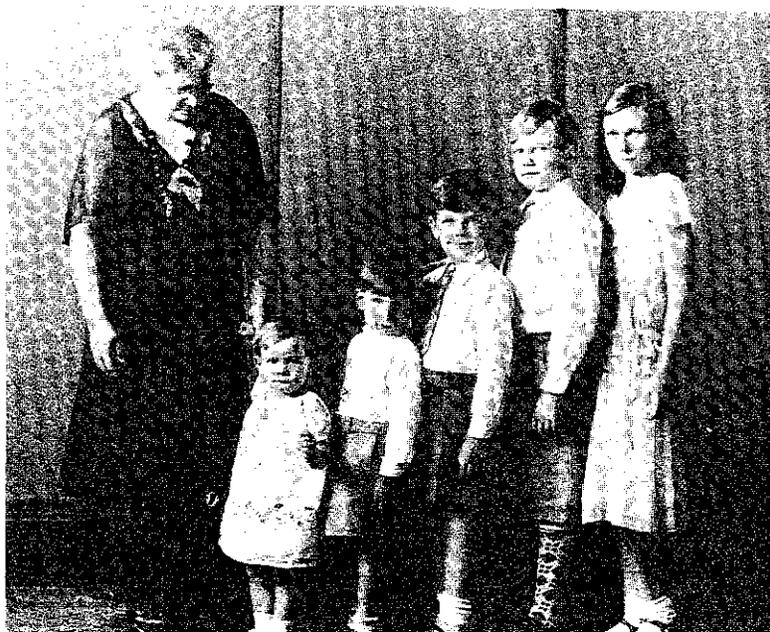
When discussing her trips, her grandchildren still marveled over her lack of fear when she traveled in areas where few travelers ever went.

Among other memorable experiences which Marion Misch had was an audience with the Pope. She is seen in a film made in Palestine showing the original Hadassah Hospital. She witnessed General Allenby coming into Jerusalem. She rode a camel in Egypt. She also traveled extensively in the United States. "Just picture this 150 pound plus woman on a little donkey teetering down the rim of the Grand Canyon — but she did it. She would not think of not doing it!" exclaimed Dorothy.

Naturally, Marion Misch traveled abroad by boat in the early 1920's. Dorothy remembers what a thrill it was for her to go with her father to New York to the Pier to meet her grandmother when she might be coming back from some exotic trip like a Safari in Africa.

At least two of her travels were recorded in the *Providence Journal*. "Mrs. Misch Tours Raratonga. Rhode Island Woman writes of Education Work among South Sea Islanders."²⁰

"Mrs. Caesar Misch, ex-president of the State Federation of Women's Clubs and Rhode Island Women's Club and Honorary President of the Providence Section, Council of Jewish Women, who, with Miss Bertha Hatton Smith, is making a round-the-world trip, writes from the South Sea Islands a graphic account of the educational work being done among the natives of Raratonga.



Marion L. Misch with her five grandchildren. L. to R.: Dr. Marion Ruth Misch, Dr. Donald W. Misch, W. Richard Misch, Dr. Robert C. Misch, Dorothy L. Misch Winer.



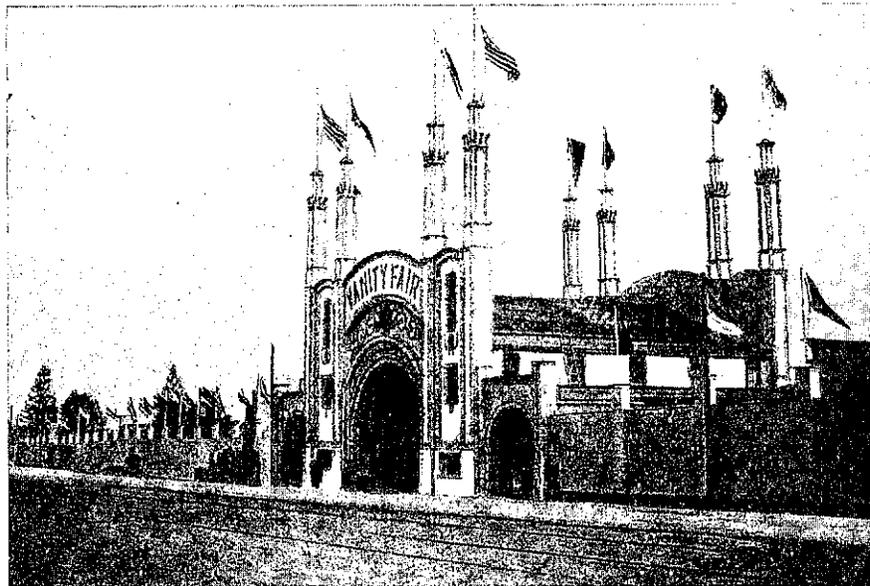
Ruth Capron Greene Misch (Mother of 5 grandchildren, wife of Walter P.)



MISCH FAMILY IN BERLIN

Top row: L. to R.: Caesar Misch, Mr. Blumenthal (Emma Misch's husband), Mrs. Robert Misch (Betty), her daughter, Lucie Misch, Robert Misch, Sigmund Misch.

Front row: L. to R.: Marion Misch, Emma Misch Blumenthal, Emma's two daughters, (Caesar Misch's mother) Katie & Eva, Clara Misch (married name unknown), Mrs. Sigmund Misch.



Administration Building, Vanity Fair, Providence, R.I.



Marion L. Misch (Mrs. Caesar)

The Raratonga native is one of the gentlest in the Pacific Island. Men, women and children wave greetings and smile and call a 'good morning' as the Japanese call their 'Sayonara.'

The chauffeur who drove Miss Smith and me around the island (only 20 miles in circumference) was a half-caste schoolteacher who had been trained in New Zealand, which has the protectorate of the island. There are on the island six schools, four Government schools for half-castes and natives, one school for white children and one Catholic mission school. The government schools are taught by half-caste school teachers with a white man at the head. . . The children go to school for 10 months of the year. . . These schools were started in 1914 and so far no higher education has been attempted. . . School is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 14."

The report contains the information that the natives do not like to wear clothing and wear only a breach cloth. They sleep on the ground under the skies or in a thatched hut with all sides exposed. Hygiene was one of the subjects being taught in the schools.

Mrs. Misch concluded her account with the following: "We have touched at two islands, Tahiti under French rule and Raratonga under New Zealand. In both we found plenty of motor cars but in both they were American."

The second headline: "Mrs. Misch tells of African Trip. Entertains 300 Temple Beth El Sisterhood Members with Illustrated Travelogue."²¹

"Speaker takes audience to Budapest, Constantinople, Palestine, Nile Valley and South Africa. . ." Mrs. Misch's story described a trip through Africa, explaining in detail life and customs, especially of South Africa, the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town and the other colonies of the Union of South Africa, Victoria Falls and the Nile River. Palestine and Constantinople were also among the places described by the speaker.

Mrs. Misch was especially interested, she said, in noting changes in the cities and communities of Palestine since her visit there three years ago. She told that the City of Jerusalem, now occupied by the Mohammedans where three years ago the British were in control, is not a clean city now, as it was formerly.

“The colonies of Palestine, which are developed on a communistic basis is succeeding, mentioning especially, one such community where the dairy products are considered the best in Palestine and are used entirely in hospitals where only the pure food can be used.

Damascus under French occupation is somewhat gloomy, Mrs. Misch said, Constantinople presents a strange aspect as a European city instead of Turkish. Budapest is inhabited by a people who are looking forward to the time when Hungary can win back the territory taken from her at the end of the World War.”

It seems obvious that Marion Misch never traveled for purely relaxing or entertaining reasons. Her adventures, her experiences were all sources of learning and were carefully documented on film in order to share them. Her intellectual curiosity knew no bounds. She seemed to have described and shared a phenomenon like the great pyramids of Egypt with the same enthusiasm as she did some small work of nature. It is a wonderous picture to conjecture — this large, very much in command woman, bustling about from country to country with an entourage of porters to tote her large and heavy steamer trunks.

MARION MISCH, EDUCATOR

Marion Misch trained to be a schoolteacher and taught in the Pittsfield schools. Her grandchildren attest to the fact that she assumed that role during her lifetime. She was constantly teaching and directing them.

“She was really involved with us — a superb grandmother. She was very teacherly. We were taken to the opera at a ridiculous age. (That destroyed my love of the opera.) As far as education was concerned, I could go along with that. I was having difficulty in school. I had an eye injury at an early age. She saw to the fact that I got tutored, and was checked on an almost daily basis, ‘Did he go today?’ She really took over, and saw that things got done. It wasn’t enough that she gave her opinion on a subject, but she followed it through and saw that it happened. . . .She would invite us by sending a written invitation and you were expected to reply in kind — as if you were in the British Court. That had to do with manners. I remember her teaching me how to eat a soft boiled egg, ‘in case,’ Marion Misch said, ‘you were invited to Buckingham Court.’ ”²²

“She was very firm in her convictions and ideas. She certainly did try to influence us. I remember once when she was on the school committee, I was in the 9th grade at the time, and the civics book we were reading had some passage in it she did not particularly approve of, and thought it could be construed as anti-semitic, and she politicked around until she got it deleted, I believe.”²³

Her youngest grandchild, Marion Ruth Misch, wrote of her grandmother’s influence on them in the foreword to her dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., February 1975.

“This work is dedicated to my first teacher, my grandmother, Marion Louise Misch. Her activities ranged from music to fine arts, to literature, to business, to world travel, to local and national community service — but her great talent was as an educator.

Her five grandchildren have done a wide variety of things. Three of us have chosen science. Dr. Donald W. Misch is a physiologist. Dr. Robert C. Misch became a clinical psychologist many years ago — a path he then lit for me. All, I think, benefitted from her breadth of mind, high standards and constant keen interest in the world. She sustained these throughout her life from when, at age 18, she travelled New England founding Jewish Sunday schools, through her experiments at the turn of the century with motion photography, through managing Children’s Year for Franklin Roosevelt to devising special Peter Rabbit stories when we were all little to teaching us about agricultural innovations. . .the art of Origami. . .“good” and “bad” microbes. . .how an opera could be sung about beggars as well as kings. . .a host of wonderful things.

She died when I was 9 years old and she far too young, at the beginning of her old age, teaching me about hummingbirds that last summer before her cancer dulled all keenness the only way it could.

The legacy she left her family was that this world is a richly diverse place in which to explore and discover new things.”

Many years before Marion Misch became involved with the supervision

of her grandchildren's intellectual and cultural lives, she continued with her original interest in the curriculum of a religious school. The result of that interest was two publications: (1) *Selections for Homes and Schools* compiled by Marion L. Misch, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia 1911 and a much smaller text, (2) *Children's Service for the Day of Atonement* written and compiled by Marion L. Misch, published by the press of Fox and Saunders, Inc., Providence, R.I., 1907.

Fortunately there is a copy of the latter book on file in the Temple Beth El Library. The *Providence Journal* of September 29, 1907 reviewed this book as follows:

"One of the latest additions to the list of books by Rhode Island writers is a *Children's Service for the Day of Atonement* written and compiled by Marion L. Misch of this city. The hymns, responsive readings and addresses, admirably arranged as they are can scarcely fail to accomplish the purpose for which the pamphlet was prepared. Mrs. Misch speaks in the first place of the fact that the ritual was written at the request of Rabbi Henry Englander of the Congregation Sons of Israel and David, and adds: 'It is put forth in the hope that it will help to arouse the religious interest of the children in the Day of Atonement, the most solemn service of the year in which in the past they have had little or no interest. This book, adapted to the needs of the young and fitted to prepare them for a fuller observance of the Sabbath of Sabbaths in later years, furnishes a good illustration of the change which has been wrought within a few decades in the methods and ideas of child training.' "

Mrs. Misch has performed the task which she set herself in preparing this little volume excellently."

An examination of this book also brings out the fact that Mrs. Misch's intent was to replace the 'recess on the Day of Atonement, that is, the period between the morning and afternoon service. She set a precedent for future services on the Day of Atonement.

The selections she chose contain sermons easily understood by children.

For example: Rabbi: O eternal One Our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

Children: Out of the mouths of children, Thou foundest strength.

There is also admonishment in the following passages:

Rabbi: . . .with the influence of this day upon you when you look around and see your parents and friends happy that they are 'at one with God' can you keep in your hearts any sin or wrong doing? If you have been untruthful, if you have been disobedient to parents or teachers, if you have been thoughtless in word or deed, confess your faults and begin the new year with the determination to be obedient, thoughtful. . .

Selections for Homes and Schools contained the following preface by Marion Misch. "On taking up the work as Chairman of the Committee on Religious Schools of the National Council of Jewish Women, the compiler found that there was room for a collection of the sort here represented. The object is to provide material for home reading and for recitation in Jewish Religious schools, Junior sections of the Council of Jewish Women, and other Jewish organizations. It includes a number of short simple verses for the younger generation which will bear repetition.

The youthful verses of Mrs. Hemans, Ruskin and the Davidson sisters have been included, not for any intrinsic literary value, but to show children the trend of thought of others of their age.

Not only poems on biblical subjects have been included, but also selections that include some moral truth and tend to rouse healthful thoughts in the child's mind. When more than one selection on the same subject is given, it was to provide a number from which to choose, to allow the teacher to arrange a symposium on the subject or show how different authors treated the same theme.

The selection is an interesting combination of Jewish and Christian sources. Examples from the Table of Contents are: United Society for Christian Endeavor, "Trust"; a poem by Mary Frances Butts; poems by John Westall, American Unitarian Association; "Solomon and the Sower" by N.L. Frothingham. This book is divided between Tales from the Bible and the Talmud. She also included selections from works by such authors as Emma Lazarus, John Browning, Alexander Pope, Henry W. Longfellow, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

The subject matter is varied. There are themes on kindness to animals, a child's thought of God, the Jewish race, sin, temptation, humility, friendship, deceit, contentment, anger. She also included poems concerned with the Jewish holidays of Yom Kippur, Passover, Shabuoth, Rosh Hashanah.

Marion Misch did not confine her teachings to religious school subjects. On her thoughts about book censors there is the following headline in a newspaper article: "Parents, Better Book Censors than Statutes," says Mrs. Misch.²⁴ "Rhode Island Federation of Women's Clubs President Disapproves New York's Method of Solving Problems." In this article Mrs. Misch declared that spiritual home training rather than legislation such as proposed in New York state to suppress objectionable books was the answer. She further declared, "No law will force anyone, child or adult to be moral." . . . "Laws can punish lawbreakers, but only true spiritual home training can prevent lawbreakers." The law in New York which was seeking the endorsement of all the women's clubs was endorsed by many who claimed that "Women all along have been standing for clean plays, and clean pictures and now that this pernicious thing has been brought to our attention we are going to get support for the bill sponsored by the 'Clean Books League.' There were others, however, who thought like Marion Misch. She answered those who would support the bill by saying that no law would keep "trashy and spicey" books from being sold illicitly and no law would" force anyone, child or adult, to be moral. Laws can punish lawbreakers, but only true spiritual home training can prevent lawbreakers."

Marion Misch's views on scholarships were voiced in a headline, "Mrs. Misch speaks on Scholarships."²⁵ At the New England Conference of State Federation of Women's Clubs in Hartford, Connecticut, Mrs. Misch opened the discussion on Americanization. She is quoted as saying, "In a discussion of scholarship and loan funds, I tried a plan whereby a loan made to a girl is paid, not to the loaner, but to another girl who needs the money for schooling and by the latter to another girl, and so on, in a sort of endless chain." She thought that the plan had worked out well. There is no record that this suggestion was ever adopted.

The School Board

It is not surprising that with her experience and reputation as an educator that Marion Misch was urged to serve on the school committee. The date was March 2, 1925. Headlines in the *Providence Journal* of that date read: "Mrs. Misch urged for School Board. Prominent Clubwoman and Music Patron Consents to be Candidate from District C." "Mrs. Caesar Misch, prominent clubwoman and patron of music has yielded to the pleas of a group of citizens in Wards 8 and 9 and consented to become a candidate from District C for membership on the new school commission created by the adoption of the Strayer School Act," The long and prestigious list of clubs over which Mrs. Misch presided was than enumerated.

“In connection with her club work, she has delivered several lectures on child education, in particular to spiritual training. Her most valuable contribution to music has been the extension of the facilities of her music room on Elmwood Avenue and the manual organ contained therein to any reputable musical organization in the city for the advancement of the art.”

Her appointment lasted for one year and in the *Providence Journal* of November 3, 1926 is the news that “Mrs. Misch again wins school post.” “First of seven members of the new committee re-elected unanimously. She received 10,194 votes.” This was for a six year term.

Marion Misch was a very conscientious member of the school committee according to the records of the school committee.²⁶ A review of the roll call lists contained in the minutes of the school committee meetings revealed that Mrs. Misch was rarely absent. Many of the Resolutions were made by her. Meetings were held almost every two weeks so that in the years she served — 1925 until November 1939 — she devoted much of her energies toward this endeavor.

In the 1933 election for school committee Mrs. Misch found herself opposed for the first time. The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Archives contains a scrapbook compiled by the Caesar Misch Building superintendent, a Mr. Phillips. Her grandson, Richard, gave this scrapbook to the Association. In this volume Marion Misch’s whole campaign may be followed: *Providence Sunday Journal*, October 29, 1933 — “Election for School Post in District C. Slated November 7th” — “Mrs. Misch candidate for re-election opposed by Thomas P. Gallagher. Mrs. Misch, a member of the school committee for the past eight years declares she is seeking reelection on her record and the conviction of her supporters that she is singularly well qualified to meet the most important problem of the Providence public schools, that of reconciling the interest both of the children and of economy.

Mrs. Misch’s own campaign speech is excerpted as follows:

“I have a particular interest in the district I live in and represent. I was happy to have had part in securing the new Roger Williams junior high school and the addition to the Broad Street school in the district. . . . Since I have been on the School Committee a large part of the school plant has been remodeled or rebuilt. As a substantial taxpayer I realize the cost of these projects but believe that the education of our children to meet the complex problems of our modern age

demand the best school plant and the most modern equipment that we could afford. . .The tendency in any time of financial stress is to economize on education. Wise economy is essential, but false economy will take from the child of this generation a precious right which can never be restored. . .They must, if only for health's sake, have in their schools proper housing, proper lighting, proper ventilation, and they must be protected by medical inspection from contagious disease. Above all, they must have the best and most efficient educational methods and the best teachers obtainable. Teachers must be selected not only on scholastic ability but to impart knowledge, to interest the children and maintain discipline."

Various influential people spoke on Marion Misch's behalf. "Dr. Clarence A. Barbour, President of Brown University, yesterday endorsed the candidacy of Mrs. Marion L. Misch. . .he praised her service as a member of the committee."²⁷ Former State Treasurer, George L. Clark, said, "no reason for any change." Support was given by the leaders in the Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. Therese F. Wachenheimer and Mrs. Florece P. Wise.

While Mr. Gallagher held rallies, Mrs. Misch spoke extensively before various organizations and clubs. She was also endorsed by the 10th Ward councilman and by the President of the Rhode Island Congress of Parents and Teachers, Mrs. Samuel L. Lapham. Mrs. Lapham pointed out that although Dr. Strayer's recommendation had been for three women on the school committee, Mrs. Misch was the only woman on the committee. She added the thought, "I believe that a woman on the School Committee is the heart of the Committee. I think Mrs. Misch has proved that. She has shown it in many ways. If she is not re-elected, it will be a terrible catastrophe in the city. . .Mrs. Misch has always taken a warm interest not only in affairs of her own community, but also of the entire city. There is not anything that I can say high enough in praise of Mrs. Misch."

The President of the Rhode Island State Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. James C. Carmack, spoke in Mrs. Misch's behalf, emphasizing other qualifications.²⁸ "Mrs. Misch now has grandchildren in the public schools . . .She is a large taxpayer, and is therefore interested in an economical administration of the school system. . .She has studied the school systems of Australia, England and many cities of the United States. She is recognized, not only in Rhode Island and New England but in many other states of the nation as an educator and as a leading, superior type of woman."

An editorial in the *Evening Bulletin* of November 1, 1933 brought out the fact that under the Strayer law candidates for school committee have to be nominated by petition and their names must appear on the primary and election ballots of school board elections. They took exception to Mrs. Misch's opponent, James P. Gallagher for he was being backed openly by the 11th Ward Democratic Club which held rallies on his behalf.

On November 2, 1933 the *Evening Bulletin* devoted space to other persons who desired the election of Marion Misch — Dr. Walter E. Ranger, State Commissioner of Education, and Arthur Henius, Chairman of the N.R.A. Compliance Board in Providence.

There was an attempt on the part of her opponent to prove that Marion Misch only paid taxes on 51 Empire Street (the Caesar Misch building) as a business, but she proved she did have her residence in the building, which would make her qualified to run from School District C.

As the election day approached, another headline announced, "Hundreds Endorse Marion L. Misch. Men and Women in School District C and other parts of the City for Candidate." Hundreds of names were listed of those residents who lived in the Washington Park, South Providence and downtown sections which made up her district, and who endorsed her candidacy.²⁹

Also in the same newspaper were the biographical sketches of Marion Misch and her opponent, James P. Gallagher. Mr. Gallagher, who attended the primary grades of the city school system, had unsuccessfully run on the Democratic ticket for Alderman. In contrast were Marion Misch's qualifications. As her term on the school committee had come to a close, she was engaged in a study of how the schools could reduce their expenses (under the then unemployment and reduced incomes) without impairing the services which have given them rank in the school systems of the nation.

Further information about Marion Misch came to light in this article. It was learned for the first time that when she finished the Pittsfield Normal School she taught in an ungraded school of that city. When the city organized its first grade school, Mrs. Misch was selected as one of its first teachers, assigned to grades 4 and 5. Her interest in music gave her her first experience in the then new departmentalization idea. She was a pioneer in that field, specializing in public school music instruction. The article also points out her interest in education after her marriage and the birth of her children. She studied the school systems of Australia, England, France and Germany and lectured and wrote on child training in this country, Europe, China and India.

More of her accomplishments as a member of the school committee were pointed out. She was the originator of the plan to connect every school in the city, including the smallest with telephones, foreseeing emergencies. She began her reform work on the school committee with visits to school buildings and was in large part responsible for the improvement in sanitation in the schools. Child health had always been of prime concern to her.

For more than 15 years she had been active in social service work for children. A member of the Providence Playground Commission under Mayors Dyer and McCarthy, she was also local chairman of the "Back to School" drive during the war. In that period she also served as a \$1.00 a year worker in child welfare for the United States Government.

This biographical sketch offered the information that she had served on the Executive Board of the International Council of Women and attended meetings at the Hague, Holland. She was also Vice President of the National Old Glory Club, elected when the society was organized in Boston to teach proper use of the American flag. Concluding information revealed the fact that she was taxed on \$411,720 of real estate and \$4,300 intangible property, as an executrix under her husband's will, she was taxed on \$46,000, intangible and on the business firm, \$24,000 tangible.

Throughout this campaign there were many references in the local newspapers to the fact that Thomas F. McHugh, Secretary of the Finance Committee of the Democratic City organization was soliciting Anti-Misch funds. He had approached many department heads in City Hall for contributions to that fund.

In the files of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association are letters from Marion Misch thanking David Adelman for his help in her 1933 School Committee campaign. He had sent her two lists, one of potential contributions and the other of potential workers. Her letter in that instance is as follows:

November 10, 1933

My dear Mr. Adelman:

Words are so futile in trying to express my appreciation of what you have done for me in the past few weeks. To my inexperience you brought knowledge; to my impetuosity you brought a sobering influence. Throughout the entire campaign your help was of incalculable value.

Again thinking you, I am.

Marion Misch won that school board election by a slight lead (she was 40 votes behind in the unofficial tabulation but after a recount was declared elected by 113 plurality), but she was not so successful in the race of 1939. She lost in the school election primary of October 10, 1939. Mrs. Mary E. Fogarty, who had never held office, was an office employee at Davol Rubber Company, and who was prominent in Catholic Women's Circles, won 2728 votes. Her opponent in the November 7th election would be Earl C. Sylvander, former Republican and member of the Common Council. Heresay at the time and recalled by Mrs. Misch's grandchildren was that this primary and her loss was a "put-up" job. There was a concerted effort to replace her with a Catholic woman. There is even reference (unconfirmed) of a person who worked for her campaign, but actually was on her opponent's side.

It is apparent that in the 14 years in which she served on the School Board, she had made very valuable contributions to the upgrading of the school system of Providence.

MARION MISCH — THE FEMINIST

"Of course she was a suffragette," said Marion Ruth Misch to her sister and brother as they were discussing their grandmother's feminist leanings. On another occasion her granddaughter Dorothy recalled, "She must have been in parades, for one of my mother's aunts told me she remembers seeing my grandmother at the head of a parade (presumably suffragette) and my grandmother told me later she had seen my mother's aunt standing on the sidewalk and she (the aunt) made a face at her."

Other comments from her grandchildren: "She was a terrific feminist," said Ruth (Bob's wife), "She was the original feminist. She would make Bella Abzug look quiet," said Richard. Bob: "She could be so detached and free of the usual conventions. And she was very rational, I think. My grandfather must have given her great latitude for the husbands of that age would not normally do that."

"Vividly, this came to mind the other day," said her granddaughter, Dorothy, "I was still in my teens and we were discussing divorce, and she said that she felt that marriage should be very difficult and divorce very easy. Now that was a long time ago. She recognized some of the ills."

"Mrs. Misch Aids Memorial." "Mrs. Caesar Misch of this city is on the committee of 100 prominent women of the country who are working to secure contributions for a memorial to the men of America who went down with the Titanic. It will probably be in the form of an arch and will be erected on a site to be donated by Congress in Washington, D. C. Mrs.

John Hay, widow of Secretary of State, John Hay, is chairman of the committee."⁸⁰ Mrs. Misch served with prominent women such as Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Mrs. Charles W. Fairbanks, Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, Mrs. Grover Cleveland and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst. It is interesting to note that only women were permitted to subscribe to the cause. There was one man in the movement, Edward Stellwagen, President of the Union Trust Company of Washington, who was treasurer of the committee.

"Mrs. Misch Lauds Women of the Bible," "Depicts Old Testament Heroines as molders of history of Jewish Race."⁸¹ This speech was delivered at Temple Beth El before more than 500 members of the Providence Section, National Council of Jewish Women and their guests. She spoke about these women as the prototypes of the women of today. "These famous women of the Hebrew race were revered, respected and intellectual women of flesh and blood" . . . "superficial opinion only could be responsible for the idea that Jewish women of antiquity were looked down upon or were the mere chattels, playthings or slaves of the men of their times." . . . "No nation so viewing the women would have been responsible for Proverbs 21 to which Jewish women are pictured as esteemed not only supreme in their households, but as direct agencies for influence upon the affairs of the times. . . "The Bible brings these women close, and one sees them as intensely human, with the same loves, the same impulses and passions of women of all ages.

Accompanying Marion Misch's recitation were the portrayals of Women of the bible — Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and Hannah, as epitomes of maternal love, as teachers learned in the law, and as prophetesses. The dramatic story of Esther and the tale of Ruth, written as propoganda to offset the teachings of Ezra, were recounted.

While Marion Misch explained the symbolism of the Temple with its seven-branched candlesticks, the everlasting light before the tablets and the presence of the Covenant as a realistic background for her portrayals, the pageant was performed in the background.

Mrs. Misch contrasted the woman of today with these Biblical women, declaring that every woman who aids legislation for the good of her country today is but a follower after Miriam, while every teacher in the schools is a modern Huldah. The influence of women on legislation was as great then as now, although modern women have the ballot.

Another example of Marion Misch's feminism was demonstrated in her school committee campaign of 1933. A headline in the *Providence Journal*

of November 6, 1933 read as follows: "Declares she does not want to be returned to school committee merely as woman." "I do not want to be returned as a woman unless I am a better qualified candidate than the man" . . . "The only reason I want to go back is a love for the work."

MARION MISCH — MUSIC LOVER

Reference to Marion Misch's love of music at an early age has already been noted. There were many facets to her involvement with music. In her home she had a large music room with piano, pipe organ, violin, cello and possibly a harp, according to her granddaughter, Dorothy. This room she put at the disposal of the Federated Clubs, according to a newspaper reference in 1923.³² "the attention of the programme committees of the different clubs belonging to the Rhode Island State Federation has been called to an offer made by the State President, Mrs. Caesar Misch, as a contribution from the State Federation to the community in line with the effort which is being made by the music department of the General Federation to increase public interest in good music. Mrs. Misch offers, without charge, the use of her music room at 601 Elmwood Avenue to any federated club for an afternoon or an evening meeting at any time after November 1" . . . The one exception was Tuesday evenings which were to be devoted to a weekly operalogue for music students under the auspices of the music department of the State Federation.

Another article³³ referred to these Tuesday evening programs: "famous Operas to be discussed." "President of State Federation of Women's Clubs plans Series of Talks. — Music Lovers to Benefit." "Plots and Scores of well-known works to be analyzed — French and Italian classics topic of Mrs. Caesar Misch." These were scheduled from November 6th to May 6th. The purpose was for opera lovers and music students to receive a clearer understanding of the plots and music of famous works. The speakers were to illustrate their remarks with selections from the operas under study. Tickets for these Tuesday evening "operalogues" were free and transferable. The one stipulation was that any unused tickets were to be returned so that another music lover might use them.

The opening of this Music room was publicized in the newspaper.³⁴ "New Music Home Formally Opened." "Musical is held in spacious room recently completed by Mrs. Caesar Misch. Organ Recital is given." "A new and helpful addition to the musical resources of this city was made last evening with the informal opening of the recently completed music room at the home of Mrs. Caesar Misch. . ." The article furnished the information that the Music room was not only available to the clubs of the

Federation, but also to any club in good civic standing for the furtherance of their musical work.

There were 150 guests at the initial performance in the Music room, which featured William E. Zeuch, organist of Boston, assisted by a Mrs. Fournier, Contralto and Willard C. Amison, Tenor Soloist.

The second invitation musicale was held the following Tuesday. Many guests heard for the first time the new pipe organ, which was one of the principal features of the room's equipment.

Marion Misch was not only very generous in donating the facilities of her music room, but in sponsoring unknown talent as featured artists at her musicales. It was said that she helped sponsor Igor Gorin to this country. He was given his first job as cantor of Temple Beth Israel. Mrs. Misch introduced him at a performance in her home.

Mrs. Beryl Segal recalls that Arthur Einstein, the pianist, was fortunate in having the opportunity to show his talent before an audience at the Misch home. He spoke to Mrs. Segal in glowing terms about the elegance of the home with its well-equipped and magnificent music room.

In this Music room there was also a phonograph with many records. Richard, her grandson, spoke of how they would never dare touch any of her precious mementos without permission. However, she had certain phonograph records that she felt would be entertaining for children. For example, the children could play the recordings of Eddie Cantor. These delicate records were very valuable to her and yet she wanted her grandchildren to be exposed to music and allowed them to handle certain records. In those days records were made of shellac and shattered when dropped. Dorothy, recalling her grandmother's love of music said, "Music, of course, was always a big thing with her. She would incorporate all of that into her house. We were encouraged to have piano lessons, but it never seems to have amounted to much with us."

The extensive collection of records found a good home. It is interesting to note in the June 1941 issue of the *Brown Alumni Monthly* the following information:

"A collection of 6200 phonograph records and 800 items of printed music, ranging from the folk songs of New Zealand to Italian and German operas seldom heard in this country, has been presented to Brown University by Mrs. Henry W. Sackett of Providence in memory of her late husband, a Brown alumnus of the class of 1894.

The collection, formerly the property of Mrs. Caesar Misch of Providence has been received by the Department of Music and has been used by the department this year to broaden its field of instruction and to increase the variety of music available for listening groups.

The addition of the recordings alone has increased our library of recorded music to 10,000. . .the opera section of the recordings is unusually comprehensive and would be almost impossible to duplicate.

Among the unusual records are those of speeches or readings by eminent statesmen, orators, actors and others. The group contains recordings by the late King Albert of Belgium, Edward VIII in his speech of abdication, Winston Churchill, Ghandi, the Aga Khan, Lindberg, George Bernard Shaw, John Barrymore, Dame Nellie Melba and many others. Indian songs make another remarkable group."

As President of the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs Mrs. Misch championed the cause of ending the monopoly of symphony programs by the Boston radio stations.³⁵ "Believing that thousands of Rhode Island residents, unable to hear Boston Symphony concerts broadcast through Boston radio stations, would enjoy such concerts broadcast through Providence stations, Mrs. Caesar Misch of this City. . .is endeavoring to secure this result. Success, she says, depends largely upon the demand for such broadcasting, and she therefore asks Rhode Island citizens who favor her plea for such local broadcasting of the concerts to communicate with her." In her efforts, Mrs. Misch contacted a Mr. W.S. Quimby, sponsor of the symphony orchestra in Boston, who was very sympathetic to her request and desirous of cooperating with her.

It was typical of Marion Misch that she pursued any cause which she wanted to promote with great zealously. She contacted Boston radio station WNAC and the Providence Station WEAN, owned by the Shepard Company. The problem seemed to be that telegraph wires were used in broadcasting the symphony in Boston itself, but this method was too expensive to use for such a long distance as Providence. The telephone company did not have any connections which used telegraph wire.

While President of the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs, Marion Misch was quoted in the *Providence Journal* of May 6, 1926. "Exploiting Music Teachers Scored." "Mrs. Misch urges incompetent tutors be prevented from ruining talent." At the annual meeting and luncheon of

the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs, Marion Misch made a plea to music teachers of Rhode Island "to grade their profession so that incompetent instructors shall not be allowed to wrongly instruct and falsely encourage pupils of music" . . . decrying self-exploitation in music Mrs. Misch said that there were some teachers she wished could be put out of the State. . . "It is a shame. We cannot condemn too strongly the teachers who are ruining the voices and ability to play instruments of our young people. . . We have no means of saying whether or not a teacher of music is fit. If the teachers themselves would organize a committee to decide on some standard, maybe we would be able to save many young people sad disappointment."

A very interesting commentary on modern music was then made by Mrs. Misch. "The time has come when we should decide just how far we want to go. We are coming to the ultra-modern music in America. I am no modernist. I do not want to lose the melody of the old music. I do like the modern music, but not that which has no message, which plays to the gallery." She concluded her speech with the following: "Among the aims of the Federation during the coming year should be the spreading of more frequent knowledge of good music, encouraging young artists financially in their own studies." It was at this annual meeting that Marion Misch was re-elected President for another term.

In the *Providence Journal* of May 8, 1925 there is contained the information that Marion Misch offered her resignation as President of the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs, as she was planning to travel abroad. The board voted that the organization should be conducted by the vice president during her absence. They would not accept her offer.

Other music clubs with which Marion Misch was connected were the MacDowell Club, the Chopin Club and the Schubert Club.

MARION MISCH —
A VERY INVOLVED AND CIVIC-MINDED WOMAN

Reference was made by her grandchildren to Marion Misch's affiliations with so many clubs. Richard facetiously remarked that if a club were being organized there was never a question of who would be president (that position was so often held by Marion Misch) but who would be vice president. Research reveals that she was also president of several existing organizations.

On her death a formidable list of organizational positions held by Marion Misch was included in her obituary.³⁶ "She was active in Jewish and non-sectarian charitable, social and educational organizations and

was prominent as a friend of music. 'Round the world travel, writing and lecturing had also occupied her. At the time of her death she was an honorary president of the Providence Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, a past President of the National Council of Jewish Women, past President of the Rhode Island Federation of Women's Clubs, the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs and the Quota Club and past Matron of Pawtucket Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. She was one of the founders of the Plantations Club and first vice president of the Jewish Orphanage.

Other sources listed more affiliations. For example, the *Dau Blue Book of Providence, R.I. 1920* (assumed to be similar to a Social Register) enumerated the following: the MacDowell Club, the Metacomet Golf Club, Rhode Island Women's Club and To Kalon Club of Pawtucket. Another source³⁷ adds the following: past President, Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association; past President, Sisterhood, Temple Beth El; past director, National Federation Temple Sisterhoods; director, Providence Association Organizing Charity; Director, Providence District Nursing Association; vice-president, Providence Civic and Park Association; director, Providence Association for the Blind; member, Board of trustees, Temple Beth El. There were also clubs and organizations in which she only held membership such as the Miriam Hospital; Jewish Educational Center; the Players; Ezrath Nashim, Jerusalem; Providence Safety Council; Providence Mothers; and the National Travel Club.

In another biographical sketch³⁸ there was the interesting information that Marion Misch was a Republican, that she had been a delegate to the International Council of Women of the World held at the Hague in 1913, that she had served as a dollar-a-year worker on Child Welfare during World War I, and that she belonged to the Tiverton Women's Club.

The North End Dispensary

Although the exact dates of Marion Misch's involvement with the Providence Section of the National Council of Jewish Women is not known, there is documentation that she was involved with the formation of the North End Dispensary under its aegis as early as 1907. A small pamphlet entitled: "Charter, Constitution and By-Laws and History of the North End Dispensary, Providence, R.I., published in 1913 relates the formation of this clinic.

In December 1907 Dr. J. Edmund Brown suggested to Mr. Caesar Misch the advisability of opening a free dispensary in

South Providence. Mr. Misch brought the matter to the attention of the Providence Section of the Council of Jewish Women and on January 10, 1908 at a special meeting of the Executive Board held at the home of the president, Mrs. Isaac C. Ottenberg, the matter was brought up for consideration. . . "They decided upon the rooms in the North End Working Girls' Home, 49 Orms Street, which were hired at a rental of \$25.00 per month, including light, heat and janitor service. At its inception Mrs. Misch was Chairman with her committee, Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. Ottenberg, Mrs. Loeb, Mrs. Jessel and Mrs. Cohen."

Their charter, dated September 29, 1911 read, "for the purpose of providing medical aid and surgical treatment for the poor and needy sick of all denominations, and for the transaction of other matters connected with or incidental thereto. . ."

In an interview with Marion Brooks Strauss whose mother, Catherine Brooks, was one of the founders of the North End Dispensary, it was learned that the Marriot Hotel is now on the location of the Dispensary. Mrs. Strauss commented: "My mother used to go there every blessed day." . . "Mrs. Misch was the guiding light and my mother ran the dispensary."

Council of Jewish Women³³

There is a fascinating picture of Marion Misch portrayed in all her elegance wearing a large picture hat. This appears in a newspaper, *The Jewish Exponent of Philadelphia*, dated December 8, 1911, which devoted an entire page to the Triennial Convention of the Council of Jewish Women. Marion Misch was the president of the National Council, her term of office 1908-1911. This was the 6th triennial convention which included delegates from 24 states and Canada, comprising 53 senior sections and 16 junior sections. An exhortation appeared in this article from the Social Committee requesting that all ladies remove their hats before entering the hall of the reception as it was level and they would cut off visibility. Hats were to be left in the dressing room. Since Mrs. Misch must have been on the podium presiding over this convention, she may have been allowed her large picture hat.

Information contained in this newspaper indicated that the convention must have been a very controversial one. Various sections of the National Council such as ones from Toledo, Washington, Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, Baltimore and other cities were ready to secede from the National

Council. Evidently they took exception to the activities of the Executive Secretary, Miss Sadie American. From Marion Misch's comments in answer to these secessionists it is evident that she responded in a rational, clear-thinking and lucid manner.

The eventual outcome of this divisiveness is not available, but it would seem that whatever the outcome Marion Misch must have proven a fair arbitrator. A 1919-1920 booklet published by the Providence Section, Council of Jewish Women listed her as chairman of a committee called, "Peace and Arbitration." State Federation of Woman's Clubs

State Federation of Women's Clubs

With her picture prominently displayed, the headline read, "Mrs. Caesar Misch heads State Federation of Women's Clubs."⁴⁰ The annual meeting at which she was elected was held at the Edgewood Yacht Club at the invitation of the Edgewood Women's Clubs. Her term of office was from 1922-1925. A surprise innovation in the afternoon's program was a song composed by Mrs. Misch in honor of her predecessor, Mrs. Frank Gibson.

From the *Providence Journal* of January 18, 1941 there is a reference not only to Mrs. Misch's presidency of the State Federation of Women's Clubs from 1922-1925 but also to her rather advanced views about parent responsibility.

"In her final report as president of the State Federation, in a day when the 'flapper' was a problem, Mrs. Misch offered the suggestion that the wrong generation was being blamed for flapperism, indicating that parents must share culpability."

A few months later a reception was given for Mrs. Misch by her friends in the Council of Jewish Women. "Speeches in Rhyme Tell Federation Head of Esteem in Which she is Held by Friends Here."⁴¹ It was held in the vestry of Temple Beth El. "Following the singing of a song written by Mrs. Archibald Silverman and sung by Mrs. Cecilia Parvey, with Mrs. Milton Sapinsley at the piano, Mrs. Alvin T. Sapinsley recited a number of clever verses extolling Mrs. Misch's versatility as a speaker, who, as the lines said could talk on anything 'from Chinese to the tariff' with equal ease. Mrs. Misch's biography, also in rhyme, was recited by Mrs. Maurice L. Fox, accompanied by illustrated drawings by Mrs. George Wise." Mrs. Misch responded in metrical rhythm as she thanked the members for their loyalty and support and the tangible evidence of their esteem in the diamond set pin which was recently given her by the organization.

Three years later Marion Misch was given another surprise luncheon which was graphically described in the newspaper.⁴² This luncheon was held in the Weber Duck Inn under the sponsorship of the Council of Jewish Women, the North End Dispensary and the Sisterhood of Temple Beth El.

“Mrs. Caesar Misch who leaves for a month for a trip to the South Seas and Australia, was the guest of honor. . . Tables for the large party were arranged in a hollow square. . . At the head table with the honor guest sat the new and retiring presidents of the three organizations represented. Among them were: Mrs. Harry Wachenheimer, Mrs. Louis Sundlun, Mrs. Isaac Gerber, Mrs. S. A. Markoff and Mrs. Maurice L. Fox. . . An attractive souvenir programme of the occasion contained an acrostic poem on Mrs. Misch’s name and a number of songs paying tribute to her and wishing her a ‘bon voyage’. . . These were sung between courses, with Mrs. Saul Rothschild as leader and Mrs. Samuel Starr at the piano.”

A leather case for her valuable papers was the gift presented to Marion Misch.

From the program, a copy of which is on file at the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, the acrostic is quoted:

Charade

My first is in Music, a thing to adore
My second’s in Art, which never does bore
My third’s in Religion, a loyal upholder
My fourth’s in Interest, which couldn’t be bolder
My fifth’s in Organ, of which she is fond
My sixth’s in Nature, which she can expound

My seventh’s in Musician, accomplished in that
My eighth’s in Intelligence, of which it’s a fact
My ninth’s in Sisterhood, her aid she did lend
My tenth’s in Council, a much needed friend
My eleventh’s in Help, the Dispensary may share

To any who need what she has to spare
My whole is the name of our guest of honor
May long life and health be showered upon her.

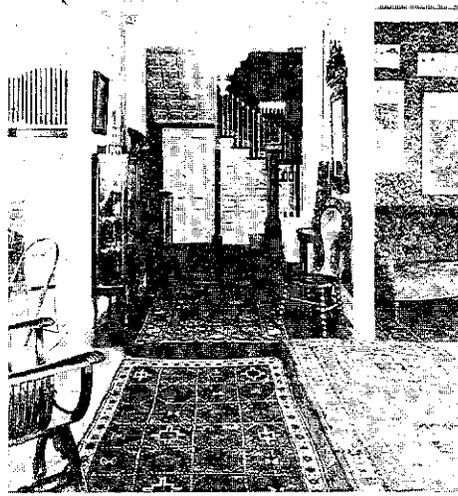
Other organizations honored Marion Misch. On October 1, 1927 a newspaper story contained the information that the Rhode Island Club



Caesar Misch



Walter P. Misch in World War I uniform.



Hallway — Misch Home, 601 Elmwood Ave.,
Providence (organ pipes may be seen).



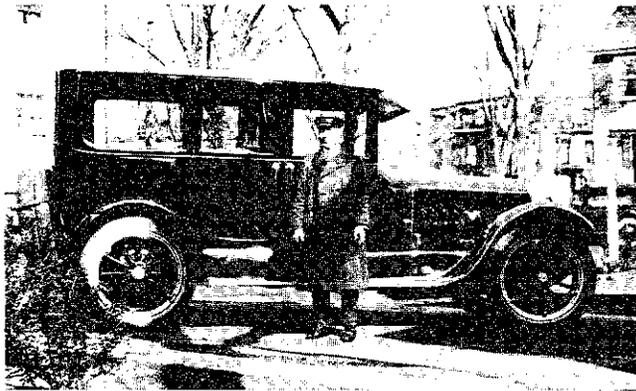
Trophy Room — Misch Home, 601 Elmwood
Ave., Providence.



LOUIS BENJAMIN SIMON FAMILY
(Pittsfield, Mass.)

Standing: Marion Simon Misch, her son, Walter P., Milton Simon, Helen Strauss Simon (Milton's wife), Herman Walder (husband of Gertrude Simon Walder).

Seated: Hattie Simon (with child), Mrs. Louis B. Simon (mother), Louis B. Simon (father), holding one of the Walder children; Marguerite Simon, Gertrude Simon Walder.



Rogers (Misch chauffeur, butler) in front of Misch car, a Peerless.



In Chapel of Temple Beth El Ancient Chanukah oil lamp.



On wall of Temple Beth El a Painting of the Prophelt Eliazah.



In library of Temple Beth El Ancient Megillah.

Women honored Marion Misch at the New England Conference of Women's Clubs in Burlington, Vermont by appointing her vice chairman of the session. "Mrs. Misch is a former state president of the Rhode Island Federation and one of the outstanding club women of New England."

As keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Providence section of the National Council of Jewish Women Marion Misch expressed her views about the status of women's clubs at that time.⁴³ She "declared that present economic conditions follow the inflexible rule of flux and contrast in nature. Only the superficial observer views the isolated moment as the whole of life and regards today's affairs with unlightened pessimism." She drew an analogy between conditions in the economic world and depression among women's organizations and declared "today offers a challenge to women to forget their former theory of what clubs owe them and go into the ranks for the service they can extend." She concluded her speech with the words, "Contrary to the belief of some women club life in the United States is anything but on the wane. New enthusiasms, new interests, new trends are inevitable."

MARION MISCH — HER JUDAISM

A strong desire to learn more about her religion prompted Marion Misch to write for information on starting a religious school, as cited earlier in this profile. There is no information about her parents' attitude toward Judaism, but since they lived in an area of few, if any Jews, Marion Misch sought to import available formal religious instruction. She demonstrated an adherence to the practice of Judaism all of her life, although a large portion of her club activities were with non-Jews. As Marion Strauss said, "I know personally that when I was teaching I would have Friday night performances. She would not attend. She always said, 'anything but a Friday night.' That was Temple night." "Her interest in Judaism was a cultural thing. She never kept a Kosher house. She would send to Virginia for smoked ham, and yet would come into our house and take over Mother's kitchen to prepare a Seder. The German Jews were the first to latch on to Reform Judaism, but still it was very important to her to be involved with being Jewish."⁴⁴ Her granddaughter, Dorothy, called her "such a Yankee type Jew."

Evidently she and her husband, Caesar, joined Temple Beth El when they moved to Providence, and she maintained an active interest in the Temple throughout her life. She served as one of the early presidents of Temple Beth El Sisterhood, and it is reputed that she was the first woman on the Temple Beth El Board. Her son, Walter, was confirmed at Temple

Beth El and appears in the Confirmation Class of 1905 reproduced on the back cover of Volume 2, Issue No. 1, June 1956 of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*.

She was very unhappy when her only son, Walter, married a non-Jew. Grandson Robert said, "Our mother was not Jewish, had been divorced. She came from a prominent family. Her father, Jerome B. Green, had been a surgeon in the Civil War. His first wife had died. He is listed in the Massachusetts Historical Society as a direct descendent of General Nathaniel Greene. He remarried in his 60's. He died when our mother was 13. When she married our father, my grandmother disowned him." However, he related that when his father was commissioned in World War I, his grandmother and he became reconciled. Evidently there were strained relations between Marion Misch and her daughter-in-law. She took it upon herself to teach her grandchildren about their Jewish heritage and sent them to Temple Beth El Religious School.

In 1911 Marion Misch, as President of the National Council of Jewish Women, presided over the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia, which has been noted earlier. While in Philadelphia she was asked to be the speaker at the Sunday Discourse, December 17th, service at Temple Keneseth Israel. A copy of her discourse entitled, "Judaism, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," more than any other evidence reveals what may have been her views on Judaism.

"Our neighbors are often at a loss what to name us. When they speak in contempt, they will call us Jews, when they are friendly, they call us, erroneously, Hebrews or Israelites." She explained the derivation of the words, saying that "We have no longer a nation of Israel, we no longer wish to be considered a 'people from beyond' hence, today we are Jews rather than Hebrews or Israelites, and we glory in the name. "But even with its loss of nationality, Judaism retained its entire code of laws, so that those who believe that not one precept ever given can be neglected, still have in their observance many national laws. Legislation and religion were closely interwoven in the early life of the Jews that modern commentators are prone to look up on our early faith as a system of laws, a religious legislation rather than a religion. But it was ever a religion close to the hearts of the people, a practical religion which regulated every action, and yet a religion of the home; a religion preaching love of God and love of one's neighbors. It has changed and developed as the world has changed and

developed. . . It has never been a stagnant religion nor a unit in religious observance. . . Religion is not intrinsically a matter of dogma. Its main object is to induce man to walk in the light of God and to do right. . . It is this belief in God as the God of all mankind which has kept Israel from becoming a proselytizing religion. . . 'Man is made for two worlds, the world that now is and the world that is to come' and thus came the thought of a future life and of immortality. But Judaism does not rest upon this idea. Its aim is rather to make the world a kingdom of truth and righteousness. Just as Judaism differed from the pagan religion of old so it differs from the dogmatic religions of today. . . whether we believe with the Orthodox in a personal Messiah, a descendant of the House of David, or whether with the Reform branch, we wait for a Messianic era, we all look for a gradual evolution into a reign of peace, virtue and righteousness when there will be a complete development of the divine in man. . . Modern Judaism differs from most other religions in that it has no creed which must be accepted to secure future salvation. . . Judaism is so largely a system of human conduct. . . The Anti-Semites of to-day bring against us charges of exclusiveness and a 'hatred of mankind.' These unfounded charges are not new. . ."

Marion Misch pursues the subject of the two factions of Orthodoxy and Reformed Judaism. "We have the very few and rapidly diminishing congregations of Spanish and Portuguese Jews who are consistently Orthodox, and who live their Judaism to-day as did their forefathers before the Inquisition. Like these Sephardim are some of the Orthodox Ashkenazic congregations, composed of immigrant stock more or less recent, but unfortunately we have still another type of Orthodoxy — a type which is only perfunctorily religious, where practice and precept do not go hand in hand, where the commands of cleanliness of heart and body are more honored in the breach than in the observance. . . the old Jewish ideals of home life no longer act as a deterrent against wife-desertion, and where the children intoxicated by the breath of liberty, roam from home and its influence. It is in this strata that we find the preponderance of marriages outside the faith. Then we have the congregations which are in turmoil of transition, whose furious battles are waged as to hats off or on, which are usually settled by leaving it to individual preference, and permitting every man to be a law unto himself."

Marion Misch elaborated on Ethical Culture, which she termed an offshoot of Judaism, but numbering among its adherents many not born of the House of Israel. . . She spoke of the temples taking on the roles of social service agencies. . . “In the question of Judaism to-day we must decide our attitude toward ceremonials. . . ceremonials must still be an important part both of ritual and home. . .” She concluded: “The Judaism of to-day is flourishing. We may not have students like those of old, who were willing to starve and to endure untold privation, not for a coveted diploma or to perfect themselves in a lucrative profession, but purely for the love of God. We may not have the aristocracy of learning instead of wealth. We may not to-day call the man unlearned in the law of ham-oretz, a man of earth. But we have to-day a strong religion which is taking a firm hold upon our youth as well as upon our men and women. . . As I look into the future, I see the Messianic era close at hand. I see not one universal form of worship, because I believe with Moses Mendelssohn that one religion is not good for all peoples, just as one set of laws would not fit all nations. But I see universal secular and religious peace.”

Rabbi William G. Braude knew Marion Misch only for the last nine years of her life since he came to Temple Beth El in 1932. When asked about Mrs. Misch's relationship to the Temple he made the following comments:

“She was the only woman for years who was a member of the Board of the Congregation. In those years for a woman to become a member of the Board of the Congregation was an exceptional thing, but, of course, she had been president of the National Council of Jewish Women and a member of the School Committee, as you know.”

“At services she had a terrible voice — a great basso.” It is interesting to note that her grandson, Robert, also spoke about this trait: “I remember being in Temple with my grandmother and being embarrassed. You know how people sing. You could hear this soprano going clear out, and wouldn't even know what the tune was. That was on Broad Street (the Temple).”

The Rabbi recalled one incident in which he and Mrs. Misch had dined together and were leaving: “We had dinner on a Sunday at David Fink's — I think she and I were the only guests. As we walked out, she stopped

me. She had a preemptory way of putting questions. She said, 'Now, what does "you shall bind them as a sign upon thy hand and as a frontlet between thy eyes" mean?' I sort of hemmed and hawed a little bit because I was put upon the carpet. I wasn't conscious of having done anything wrong, and said I suppose the tfilen. And she said, "Do we put on tfilen?" "Never," I said. "Well, then," she said, "well, then, those words should be stricken from the prayer book." . . . It was an age where you felt you could cope with anything by striking it out, just eliminate it, breaking it up, and in later years, you liquidate. You start and you stop. But things are not that simple. The fact is that this new edition of the Union Prayer book has that reference to tfilen in it. (*Gates of Prayer*, New York 5735-1975 - pages 48 and 49.) This dogmatic reading of Reformed Judaism was characteristic of the time. In life there is always change."

MARION MISCH — HER ATTITUDE TOWARD DISCRIMINATION: HER GENEROSITY

"I can remember Dad on a Sunday taking Grandma and me by car to a large black Congregational church in downtown Providence where she spoke every so often. I had asked her if this was the first time she spoke there, and she said, no, she had done it before." This was one incident Dorothy recalled. Another episode in which her grandmother again demonstrated her lack of prejudice: "Back at the end of the 1920's or possibly in the early 30's she and a black woman friend of hers went into a downtown chain restaurant and sat down to be served. I guess there was a bit of hustle and bustle and the manager said, 'Mrs. Misch, we will be delighted to serve you, but I am sorry we cannot serve your companion.' So grandmother got up and stalked out with her friend."

Her grandson, Robert, made these comments about his grandmother's lack of prejudice. "She was actively interested in supporting Blacks. When they could not get work as artists, she would have one of her gatherings — as many as 150 people — so they would get better known. She was a sort of latter day abolitionist. A real patron of the Arts. There were a lot of Jews who were involved with interracial activities with Blacks.

"Ban upon Jewish Teachers Denied!" "Mrs. Misch declares there is no such discrimination in Providence."⁴⁵ The story which followed these headlines related to a conference of New England Section of National Council of Jewish Women held at the Narragansett Hotel. Mrs. Misch in a speech before the conference asserted that she did not believe that the almost country-wide discrimination against Jewish girls who seek

positions as school teachers was prevalent in Providence. Those who spoke following her disagreed. One woman referred to a poll undertaken in 38 states by sections of the Council which showed conclusively that Jewish girls have encountered difficulty in securing teaching positions. Many concurred with her report.

It is difficult to know whether Marion Misch was colored in her views about lack of discrimination in the above situation because she herself felt the lack of it in her own life. She was completely at ease with all peoples regardless of their race or religious beliefs.

It is also evident that she had a feeling for those less fortunate than herself.

"Mrs. Misch Hits Rule on Garbage."⁴⁶ Her objection was contained in the following story: "The recently enacted regulations requiring the draining and wrapping of garbage for collection were criticized yesterday by Mrs. Caesar Misch, school committee member and prominent figure in women's activities, in the course of a talk before the Women's Republican Club of Rhode Island. . .she had seen many households in which the mere expense of buying a ball of string would be a hardship."

"She sponsored people from Germany occasionally," recalled her granddaughter, Dorothy. "She would sign for them. And we had a German maid in the house for awhile, and she spoke no English. The only time my mother could have any communication with this girl was on Sundays when Grandmother would come for dinner. She would do the translating and issue the orders for the week. That did not last too long. . .I would say that she had a strong sense of community responsibility — and social responsibility overall. I think she felt more responsibility for people who were less fortunate than she, than she would to her peers."

Marion Misch just did not speak out about her concern for the less fortunate. She was generous with her worldly goods. Her aid to the struggling artist has been cited. In that connection her granddaughter, Dorothy, recalls her grandmother helping herself to two of her evening gowns — she took them because she was sponsoring a young woman artist who did not have a suitable gown for her debut, Marion Strauss recalls her mother's telling her that when she was born Mrs. Misch supplied her layette.

There are many stories about the students she assisted in the field of music. She also established a prize at Brown University for excellence in preparatory study of German. In that connection there is the following

recollection. However, in this instance there was a rather unfavorable reaction to Marion Misch not encountered in any of the other sources.

“In 1927 when I entered Brown I took the German entrance examination and I was notified that I had won the Caesar Misch prize for excellence in German. I received a letter from Brown telling me to please call Mrs. Misch at her residence and to make an appointment as she would like to present the certificate and award of \$50. personally. This I did and a week later. I took two streetcars and went up Elmwood Avenue to a site just below Park Avenue, and at that time that portion of Elmwood Avenue was made up of stately New England homes, — lots of elm trees and lawns. . . I entered a typical New England stately home situated on a stately lot and it could have come out of a painting by Currier & Ives. I rang the bell and was admitted. After a wait of 15 minutes down came a ‘grande dame’ . . . She was dressed not in high fashion, I through rather oldfashioned, and she smiled very benignly. My first impression was that here was a lady with whom one had to reckon. She invited me into her sitting room, and sat down and asked me to tell her something about myself. I told her all about myself and she was very charming and seemed to be very interested. However, I had the inescapable impression that there was a frosty air about her and that she was somewhat patronizing. . . However, she continued to tell me all about her travels and about her interests in young people, awarding them prizes for excellence and that included music, literature, German, and other things. . . Well, I thanked her very much for the prize and I thanked her for the check and started to leave rather before she dismissed me. Finally, my impression was that here is a woman who is aloof, who is wealthy, who is used to the good things in life, and who has patronizing air about her. However, there was inescapable charm about her, and I must admit that my feelings were somewhat dichotomous.”⁴⁷

The above excerpts from Dr. Field’s tape represented his first impression upon meeting Marion Misch. By coincidence his life became involved with Mrs. Misch. There was the occasion on which he participated in a contest on “What Judaism Means to Me” at Temple Emanu-El. Mrs. Misch was one of the judges. Most significant was the fact that he met and married her niece, Mildred Simon. Dr. Field spoke about his wife:

“Mildred said, ‘you must have heard of my aunt, Mrs. Caesar

Misch — in fact I lived with her.' Then I told her I had gotten the Caesar Misch award. That's quite a coincidence because here I had met Mrs. Misch and at that very time she had been talking to me Mildred was as far as I can figure out now, at that very moment, living in that house. She had come from Hartford to live with Mrs. Misch and study with a piano teacher, Mr. Pickering, of Providence."

Dr. Field summarized his feelings about Marion Misch's generosity in the following thoughts excerpted from his tape.

"In the days she had money, she gave a lot of money, and she gave prizes, and helped people who needed, and especially musicians, some people in college. . . My impression, and it is my impression, that she did all this because of the honor it accrued to her. . ."

Tangible evidence of Marion Misch's generosity may be seen at Temple Beth El.

Located in the Chapel of the Temple is a beautiful Chanukah oil lamp. The inscription under it reads: "In use in a Spanish Synagogue in Constantinople, Turkey for over 400 years. Presented by Mrs. Caesar Misch, February 1929."

Displayed in a glass case in the Temple library is a "Megillah taken from Spain to Morocco during the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492." It was presented by Mrs. Caesar Misch in November 1913. An additional note to the inscription contains information from a D.A.M. Haberman, librarian at the Schochen Library, Jerusalem. He examined the scroll in 1959 and thought it was of more recent origin, probably of the 19th Century and probably from Iraq or another country other than Spain.

Hanging in the archival section of the Temple library is a painting of the Prophet Elizah. Inscribed below are the words: "Presented to Temple Beth El February 1931 by Dorothy Louise, Robert Caesar, Walter Richard, Donald William and Marion Ruth Misch." These were Mrs. Misch's five grandchildren.

MARION MISCH — HER LEGACY AND FINAL IMPRESSIONS

"Marion L. Misch dead at Age of 71." "Former Teacher became Business Executive, School Official, Writer, Lecturer."⁴⁸ "Mrs. Marion L. Misch, whose energetic devotion to public affairs, club work, and business

had made her one of the city's best known women, died last night in the apartment where she lived in the Caesar Misch building, 51 Empire Street. She would have been 72 on May 13. Since November, she had been seriously ill."

On file in City Hall, Providence, R.I. is Marion Misch's death certificate with the following information. Died January 18, 1941; daughter of Louis B. and Rachel Simon; buried in Sons of Israel and David Cemetery; Milton Simon, brother; cause of death — Ca. of Stomach. The certificate was signed by Dr. E. A. Field. Funeral Director — Sugarman's.

Marion Misch left little in the way of worldly goods. A codicil to her will filed on July 24, 1940 revealed the appraisal of her estate to total \$2,422.81 plus some jewelry and other personal possessions. Her legacy was in the intangible — the impact which she made upon her grandchildren and the impact which her active leadership in non-sectarian charitable, social and educational organizations made.

The warm feelings her grandson, Robert, have for his grandmother have been expressed in his many anecdotes about her. Here are conveyed the deep love and affection that was her legacy to him.

"There was great emphasis on manners and doing the proper thing and yet she was lovable. I have nothing but the fondest memories — really, no matter how strict or tough she could be. She was warm and very affectionate. . . She would take me to lunch and stick me in one of the nickel or dime movies, and then I would go back on the street car. Our house was at one end of the line, and she lived at the other end. This was the Saturday treat."

Robert cherishes a letter written to him on his first birthday. Marion Misch was not a letter writer yet in this instance she expresses her hopes and aspirations for her young grandson.

601 Elmwood Avenue
Providence, R.I.
October 21, 1921

My dear Little Grandson,

Tomorrow you will be one year old — your first milestone on life's journey, and the enclosed \$50.00 is to be added to the bank account which your father has already started for you.

Perhaps some day when you are older you may understand what I shall

tell you now. Perhaps when you are older, you may make a little ceremony on your birthday and may read these words each year. —

The words are these — You hear an honored and beloved name. Your grandfather, Caesar Misch, coming here from Germany, with generations of culture and education as his family inheritance, was a patriotic American, for he soon became imbued with the ideals of America. He was generous to a fault giving freely and liberally to the poor and to all worthy causes, to which he also devoted his keen brain and far seeing mind. He was interested in all the higher things in life, mental, moral and spiritual. He was gentle with the gentleness of the strong. He was a kind, loving father and he would have loved you and Dorothy dearly.

I would wish for you nothing better than to have you grow to be like him. May God watch over you and may you be a blessing to your parents and an asset to the Community.

With deep love,

Grandma.

Her grandson, Richard commented: "She was quite generous. She could not say 'no' to anybody's hard luck story.

From her oldest grandchild, Dorothy, came the following impressions: "Well, I was very much involved with her, of course. She was a very imposing woman. I think she was very typical of her generation — of a matriarch — there was a lot of warmth and there was a lot of steel. And things should be done according to certain prescribed rules and regulations — certain social rules and certain personal rules. There was no excuse for boredom, no excuse to be tardy. There was practically no excuse for anything. And if one is sick, one just works it out. One must not give in to feeling ill. As I said, an imposing lady physically and psychologically. Very imposing."

From her youngest grandchild, Marion Ruth, were the impressions left her by her loving grandmother — the advice, "Create your own activities;" "She opened up new and exciting things." A trip to the market (at that time it was the down-town Weybosset Market) was a learning experience. The fruits and vegetables became a lesson on agriculture whereas the meat counter was used to demonstrate how meat is cut.

Excerpted from lengthy reminiscences about her grandmother are the following comments by Marion Ruth, her youngest grandchild.

Referring to a set of recipe cards left by Marion Misch, she writes.:

“They seem notable only for a slight international flair, taking the basics of cooking for granted. . . Altogether this leaves an impression that this woman who had had servants in the kitchen most of her life took a close interest in cooking.” . . . One recipe is a reminder that she had a way with servants, and that they remained loyal to her. . . This is the recipe for Maryland Upsidedown Cake. When she lived in the Caesar Misch building, her former butler Scott used to visit from time to time and bring this cake, his specialty. Each time, the initials of a grandchild would be ‘hidden’ in the design of pineapple pieces, cherries and nuts, and we would guess whose they were. . . I remember Scott as tall, spare and gentle; very respectful of Grandma and at the same time with much affection for her.”

Other comments regarding her grandmother: “As you know, I only knew grandma as a child of less than 10, and was intensely attached to her. Even so, I recall a certain grande dame rigidity. . . She kept giving me things that pointed out that the world is full of people with different customs; books about children around the world; a wonderful set of 24 dolls in authentic folk costumes of different lands complete with booklets about each country; children’s soap with pictures that went through the entire bar with nursery story pictures from different cultures — Chinese dragons, Japanese holiday dolls, German gnomes, English elves, a leprachaun and a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. And my favorite Peter Rabbit with Beatrix Potter illustrations, but in French: Flopse, Mopse, Queue-de-coton, et Pierre in the jardin of Monsieur MacGregor!”

Marion Ruth summed up her feelings in the following paragraph:

“She was also probably responsible for imprinting in me that to be Jewish was to be privileged: to be part of an ancient culture that had been satisfying the peoples of all types to be concerned with living an upright life in which doing constructive things for other individuals and for the community was prime. And that in the process of all this, one both did one’s duty and had fun all while living up to a supremely important tradition. But there were a lot of other traditions around too, and that one had better have an open mind about people. The most important thing was to be the right kind of human being.”

The following recollections by her grandson, Donald,⁴⁹ reflect the same

feeling of affection expressed by the other four grandchildren. From his young-boy point of view Donald Misch presents his impressions unique to his own relationship with his grandmother.

“It’s strange and interesting for me to remember ‘Gramma’ Misch. Strange because I really knew her so little for how close we were. It’s also interesting to realize that all I knew of her was from her very later life. In spite of that limitation, the strength of her personality was still obvious to me in those first years of my childhood before she died.

All of my remembrances are colored by the fact that Gramma was a very self-sufficient person. She maintained herself in the small apartment of her office building in downtown Providence, apparently the only residence in an otherwise commercial building.

This apartment contained the distilled essences of her life, the most treasured remains of a large and luxurious household. In it were many books in glass-doored cases, shelf upon shelf of classical records, many of them operas. In one corner of the long narrow living room were two huge carboys with goldfish in brilliant color and variety. Next to these was a large lighted tank of guppies. The floor was carpeted in deeply hued oriental rugs.

The small bedroom, in line with the living room, could hardly contain more than the bedstead and at the foot, underneath the window, a table with a hotplate. Beyond the bedroom was the small closeted bath. When one or more of us visited overnight, we slept on the couch in the living room and folding cots — always an outing! During the daytime on these visits I went with Gramma to her office and busied myself with pencil, crayons, ruler and sometimes with the typewriter. I remember Miss Robideau, the bookkeeper, wearing celluloid cuffs and Gramma with a green celluloid eyeshade. It seemed to me that this was the indispensable uniform required to do “business,” whatever that might be.

Later, when I was in school at Sharon, Massachusetts, in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades I remember trips by train to Providence. These started at the small almost always empty station in Sharon. The clacking of the wheels always built up a

feeling of expectation and excitement which reached a peak by the time the train arrived at Union Station in Providence. It seemed huge and immensely awesome whether crowded or almost empty. The short trip through the familiar down-town area with its single sky-scraper and time-worn stores was, for a few years, my second world away from school. It was a special place to go between boarding school and summer camp.

Then came Gramma's illness and finally her death, the first I had known. There was the confusion and intimidation of a funeral held in style. The eulogies, the unaccustomed presence of relatives and the many strangers-to-me made me realize that Gramma had touched and known so very many more people than just our family, and it was a surprise. Perhaps it was then that I first became aware, in a small way, of her position in the community.

Marion Misch's nephew, Lewis B. Simon (son of her brother, Milton)⁵⁰ wrote, "She was my favorite aunt — loving, with a warm, musical, chuckling laugh always ready. She was very overweight until her last illness. . . In general, my memories of Aunt Mamie, as we called her, were (and remember these are through the eyes of a 14 year old) of a wonderful loving woman with a museum-like home and an electric car and Japanese chauffeur. Mil (his sister, Mildred Simon Field) was full of praise for Marion's skill at the organ and Viola-Cello."

To Helene Donig Bernhardt, Marion Misch, her mother's contemporary, was a lady who was "50 years ahead of her time, and very bright."

Marion Brooks Strauss, described Marion Misch, her mother's contemporary and good friend: "She was austere in manner, and yet underneath kind and gentle. She was always in command. When she was on the school committee and risking the criticism and dislike of others, she would use no influence whatsoever. She was very strong of principle. She had a good sense of humor too. When she set her mind to do something, she did it. There were no two ways about it. . . I know that she was big enough to laugh at herself. I remember one story she told about herself publicly. She was introducing a woman of note in the community and with all the fervor she had — her inimitable fervor — she introduced her as 'the most notorious woman in the community.' She said she was something of a malaprop, as she laughed at herself." . . . "I remember at my wedding. It was about the hottest day of the year. After the very last words the Rabbi said there was a clap of thunder. And quick

as a flash, Marion said, 'Even the heavens applauded!' " "She had a magnificent voice. All I can think of was another Eleanor Roosevelt, except that she was much better looking. . .She was a renowned speaker. She had a magnetic voice. There was such a beautiful musical ring to it. . .I felt that her beautiful voice had not been cultivated, that it was natural."

"As far as my impression of her," said Dr. Eugene Field, "it's bent because of the way she handled our association and you will have to take that into account. She obviously could give a marvelous impression, and everyone said she was a 'grande dame' which she probably was."

Rabbi William G. Braude's⁵¹ recollections of Marion Misch were based, he said, from the point of view of a young Rabbi relating to an older woman, a woman now "no longer a person of means." "I did not particularly like her. She was a pre-emptive person. I didn't have anything against her." . . "She gave the feeling of rigidity but this may have been a mask put on for me. I was a very young Rabbi at the time I knew her. You were bound to respect her."

Rabbi Braude was asked to officiate at her funeral. He was ill in bed with a high fever. However, he felt he had to conduct the final service for Marion Misch — he could not do otherwise for a woman for whom he had so much respect.

Excerpted from the sermon which Rabbi Braude gave on January 21, 1941 at the funeral of Marion Misch follow:

"Thirty years ago Marion Misch put together inspirational selections for homes and schools. They were published by the Jewish Publication Society.

This afternoon instead of following the usual service, I shall read to you selections from her own book. I believe they will convey her life and the aspirations which guided it.

'She had a deeply religious philosophy. She looked upon herself as a creature of God, rarely regarded herself as the great Marion Misch, and was ready to do His bidding. This poem indicates her faith.'

(The first stanza of the poem "My King" follows)

"Ere time began, ere age to age had thrilled,
I waited in his storehouse, as He willed;
He gave me being, but my years fulfilled,
I shall be summoned back before the King."

"Time was a passion with her."

(the first stanza of Thomas Carlyle's poem, *Today*, is quoted:

"So here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?"

The Rabbi pointed out her love of travelling. "She traveled widely —almost all over the world. It was more than mere indulgence for her. In the great expanses of the earth she beheld and worshipped the wonders of God."

(A poem, *Beautiful Things* by Ann Taylor followed. Quoted here are the first and last stanzas of the poem.)

"What millions of beautiful things there must be
In this mighty world! — who could reckon them all?
The tossing, the foaming, the wide flowing sea,
And thousands of rivers that into it fall.

O yes they are glorious, all to behold,
And pleasant to read of, and curious to know,
And something of God and His wisdom we're told,
Whatever we look at — wherever we go."

The Rabbi next referred to Marion Misch's love of children. "She loved children. She loved to share with them her knowledge and convictions. Marion Misch lavished great and wise affection upon her own grandchildren. These lines give the quality of her guidance."

A Short Sermon

Children who read my lay,
This much I have to say:
Each day, and every day,
Do what is right!
Right things in great and small,
Then, though the sky should fall,
Sun, moon, and stars, and all
You shall have light!
This further I would say:
Be you tempted as you may,
Each day, and every day,
Speak what is true!

True things in great and small,
 Then, though the sky should fall,
 Sun, moon, stars and all,
 Heaven would show through!

Life's journey, through and through,
 Speak what is just and true;
 Do what is right to do,
 Unto one and all;
 When you work and when you play,
 Each day, and every day,
 Then peace shall gild your way,
 Though the sky should fall."

By Alice Cary

The first paragraph, quoted here from a poem by Hannah Flagg Gould revealed, the Rabbi said, perception of immortality which gave meaning and anchorage to her life.

"Alone I walked the ocean strand,
 A pearly shell was in my hand;
 I stopped, and wrote upon the sand
 My name, the year, the day.
 As onward from the spot I passed,
 One lingering look behind I cast,
 A wave came rolling high and fast,
 And washed my lines away."

Rabbi Braude concluded his sermon with the words that Marion Misch was "enraptured not by the eloquence of Plato, the torrents of Homer, the sermons of Seneca, but the ancient yet ever young wisdom of the Jew."

This portrayal of Marion Misch is based on impressions and recollections from those who loved her and those who shared her life in her many and varied activities. Much information about her life and travels was documented in newspaper accounts. Recorded facts about her life were found in vital statistic records, encyclopedias and similar documents.

In retrospect, almost forty years after her death, Marion Misch still emerges as the extraordinary woman who in 1911 said⁵² ". . . We must live more in and for the present, that we must be judged by what we are and not by what our ancestors were. But to live our lives intelligently, we must have a proper perspective of the forces which combined to make us what we are today."

EPILOGUE

Marion Misch would have been proud of her five grandchildren. They are responsible and caring members of their respective communities. Three of the grandchildren received Ph.d's in their chosen careers. As of this date, in addition to the grandchildren, there are now 12 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great grandchildren who survive this extraordinary woman, Marion L. Misch.

NOTES

1. - Interview with Mrs. Bertram Bernhardt on June 30, 1980
2. - Interview with Robert C. Misch, Ph.D. on May 3, 1980
3. - Interview with Dorothy Louise Misch (Mrs. S. Robert Winer) on May 28, 1980
4. - Interview with Marion Ruth Misch, Ph.D. on July 13, 1980
5. - *Providence Journal*, October 31, 1933, Reverend Maurice W. Barrett
6. - *A Chronicle of Boston Jewry* by Alfred Ehrenfried, University of Massachusetts, Boston Library, 1963
7. - *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Sponsor's Edition, P. 580
8. - *The Providence Journal*, January 19, 1941
9. - See Note #3
10. - See Note #2
11. - *Providence Journal*, July 25, 1908
12. - Ibid
13. - *Providence Journal*, June 6, 1980
14. - See Note #11
15. - *Providence Journal*, July 27, 1908
16. - Undated, unknown newspaper in scrapbook kept by Marion Misch on her husband, Caesar's death
17. - *Who's Who in New England*, Vol. 3-1938
18. - See Note #3
19. - See Note #2
20. - *Providence Journal*, August 16, 1925
21. - *Providence Journal*, January 8, 1929
22. See Note #2
23. - See Note #3
24. - *Providence Journal*, March 29, 1923
25. - *Providence Journal*, September 18, 1924
26. - Records of the Providence School Committee:
 - (1) 1929 - 1933, Series BB
 - (2) 1933 - 1937, Series CC
 - (3) 1937 - 1941, Series DD
27. - *Providence Journal*, October 30, 1933
28. - *Providence Journal*, November 1, 1933
29. - *Providence Journal*, November 5, 1933
30. - *Providence Journal*, June 4, 1912
31. - *Providence Journal*, February 24, 1927

(Notes Continued)

32. - *Providence Journal*, July 1, 1923
33. - *Providence Journal*, October 20, 1923
34. - *Providence Journal*, November 2, 1933
35. - *Providence Journal*, January 9, 1927
36. - *Providence Journal*, January 19, 1941
37. - *Who's Who in American Jewry*, 1935
38. - See Note #17
39. - Material on the National Council of Jewish Women taken from file kept by Mrs. George Brooks
40. - *Providence Journal*, July 12, 1922
41. - *Providence Journal*, October 31, 1922
42. - *Providence Journal*, May 26, 1925
43. - *Providence Journal*, May 3, 1932
44. - See Note #3
45. - *Providence Journal*, November 8, 1929
46. - *Providence Journal*, December 3, 1927
47. - Taped reminiscences from Dr. Eugene A. Field - August 8, 1980
48. - See Note #36
49. - Written by Donald W. Misch, Ph.D., August 25, 1980
50. - Letter written by Lewis B. Simon, August 9, 1980
51. - Interview with Rabbi William G. Braude, August 1, 1980
52. - *Judaism, Yesterday, To-Day, To-Morrow*, A Sunday Discourse before the Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, Pa., by Marion L. Misch

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A Children's Service for the Day of Atonement, written and compiled by Marion L. Misch, published by the press of Fox and Saunders, Inc., Providence, R.I. 1907.

Judaism, Yesterday, To-Day, To-morrow, A Sunday Discourse before the Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, Pa., by Marion L. Misch.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for the cooperation given to me by the family of Marion Misch. In interviews, by letters, by telephone communication, memoirs and personal feelings were shared with me. Precious pictures were loaned for reproduction. The following list does not reflect the work and time devoted by Mrs. Misch's devoted family in their endeavor to aid me in my profile of Marion Misch. It merely documents the source of information.

Interview with Robert and Ruth Misch; W. Richard and Dolly Misch on May 3, 1980.

Interview with Dorothy Louise Misch on May 28, 1980.

Interview with Marion Ruth Misch on July 13, 1980.

Letter from Donald W. Misch, August 25, 1980.

Interview with Marion Brooks Strauss on July 25, 1980.

Interview with Rabbi William G. Braude on August 1, 1980.

Cassette Tape received from Dr. Eugene A. Field on August 8, 1980.

Letter from Lewis B. Simon on August 9, 1980.

My appreciation also for the cooperation extended me by Helene Bernhardt, Mrs. Maryland Estes, Librarian of Temple Beth El, and Celia Low.

RESOLUTION

The following Resolution, written by Louis Baruch Rubinstein, was read by Dr. Albert Salzberg at the annual meeting of the Association:

The Officers and Members of the Executive Committee of the RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION on behalf of its entire membership, have unanimously adopted the following RESOLUTION

Whereas, our ancient sages in their pristine wisdom have proclaimed the inherent strength of any human being who attains the age of eighty years, and since such attainment is particularly noteworthy when each one of those eighty years have been carried by an individual with Honor, Integrity, Productivity, and Unselfish Labor for the Information, Edification and Benefit of Human Kind, and

When such a man has, in addition to many other specific and noteworthy endeavors, labored in the vineyards of this Association from its very inception, thus gaining the additional accolade of being a FOUNDER, and

Although having been born and raised in an atmosphere and surroundings utterly different from the environs in which he has made his mark during his adulthood, he has been able so to amalgamate the basic qualities of the land of his birth with that of this Promised Land, as to cause the resultant product to be greatly admired, respected, and loved, and

Having welded together a scientific mind with a literary quality

BERYL SEGAL

has not only adapted the best of both worlds to his life style, but has been able to enthrall his many friends and readers with such vivid reminiscences of the Shtetel, as to create a nostalgic glow to those who remember, and a feeling of pride in those who are decendants of the Shtetel inhabitants, and

By virtue of his vast and deep interest in everything that pertains to the Heritage and Traditions of his people, he has been able to communicate his Love and Energy and Desire to search further for the Judaic roots, not only to his children, who have absorbed the love of Tradition, Education, and Communal Service and sense of history but to many others in the community at large, and

Since together with his beloved wife

CHAYA SEGAL

whose intelligence, knowledge, and devotion to her people matching his own, both now occupy a position of Reverence in this community

NOW THEREFORE:

the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee on behalf of the members of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

HEREBY RESOLVE TO HONOR
BERYL SEGAL

by publicly proclaiming his many Talents, Virtues, and Abilities and, on the occasion of his reaching the Age of Strength, pray that Our Father in Heaven continues to bestow upon him the blessing of Good Health and Happiness so that he may continue to enjoy life with all the members of his family for many, many more years to come.

Done at Providence, Rhode Island this 18th day of Iyar, 5740 corresponding to the fourth day of May, 1980.

Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky
Secretary

Marvin Pitterman, Ph.D.
President

AGENDA FOR THE RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL
NOTES DURING THE 1980's

by BERYL SEGAL

(Shortly before his death, Mr. Segal submitted the following pages to the editor.)

We had a tacit understanding in the early years of the publication of these *Notes* as to what was proper and what was improper material for the journal. We are attempting to write history, David C. Adelman repeated again and again. We are not journalists. Therefore, we do not write about anything in the community until at least fifty years have elapsed since the founding of the institution or the event. I understood him well. I am engaged in journalistic work of sorts. A journalist writes about things of the moment. His job is to encourage any innovation that promises to further the cause of the community. Historians evaluate that event in the light of passing time. They do not encourage or discourage anyone or anything. A journalist very often shows his prejudices, but an historian must submerge all personal feelings, opinions, and biases. He must be objective.

In recent days we have witnessed a fad for finding our "roots." A few years ago hardly a week went by without someone trying to find his roots in Providence. Without having more information than the name of an ancestor, the person would expect to fulfill at the Jewish Historical Association his needs for roots. I usually referred such a letter writer to a genealogical society. This is not the stuff our association was made to supply.

Then came the fad of oral history. Every student who had a paper to write would grab a tape recorder and corner some older people to ask them to tell all about their lives. This fad, unfortunately, is still very much alive. It even found its way into the *Notes*. It is probably a good method for high school students to excite them to learn the immediate past of their community, but it is not material for the *Notes*. We must distinguish between mature history and personal trivia.

These simple precautions should help us to write real history. Some of the topics that come to mind, waiting for the probing scalpel of the historian are:

1. From the early days of the fledgling Jewish community something of an unsolved mystery remains. In 1854 a charter was granted by the General Assembly for a Congregation Sons of Israel. This is the first congregation in the life of Providence and Pawtucket. But in 1874 we read

of the merger of the Sons of Israel with the Sons of David. Hence the name of the combined congregations, Sons of Israel and David, more popularly known today as Temple Beth-El.

Now all the records are silent about the second congregation, as if it fell down from the sky. Who were the people of the Sons of David? Where did they meet? While we know of all the halls and meeting places of the Sons of Israel, we know nothing of the Sons of David. If they existed separately prior to 1874, why didn't they, too, apply for a charter? It is especially puzzling since this group seems to have been inclined toward Reform, and they must certainly have known where to apply to obtain a charter for their group. Should we just throw up our hands and forget about the whole thing, or should we continue searching? Maybe somewhere some one has documents relating to the Sons of David. What eluded others may reveal itself to new searchers.

2. Judaic Studies under Dr. Jacob Neusner at Brown University are still in their infancy. But there were other Jewish scholars from abroad and from American universities who came to Brown and set up Judaic studies during their stay. Such men as Dr. Salo Baron, Dr. Gershon Sholem, and Tigel Yadin came as scholars in residence at Brown. Before our time there were others. Rabbi Jessler and Rabbi David Blaustein both of Temple Beth-El were on the staff of the Department of Semetic Studies. Information about these men can be obtained from Rabbi Braude as well as the archives of the University. The paper can be an exhaustive study of Jewish Studies in the pre-Neusner period. The time is long overdue.

3. Bryant College, as is well known, was the brain child of a family of Jews. Under their directorship Bryant developed from a small business school to become one of the better schools of its kind in the state. A study of the growth of Bryant College would be a legitimate topic for inquiry for the *Notes* and would make an excellent opportunity for one long associated with the school, Mrs. Robert Hochberg.

4. Alice Goldstein in her recent contribution to the *Notes* (November, 1979), an excellent study of the mobility of natives and Jews in Providence, deals only with the years 1900 to 1920. Today, sixty years later, Jews have abandoned the North End and South Providence, settled in the East Side, and gone to the new so-called suburbs, Cranston, Warwick and beyond. Barrington has a fine Jewish community, and Rehoboth, Massachusetts is opening up to Jews. The time has come for a similar study of that migration, a migration out and upward.

5. Ida Silverman (Mrs. Archibald) was a traveling lady. She was seldom at home. And always she traveled for the cause of Zionism. Ida left

albums of letters and newspaper clippings about her talks in South America, Africa, Europe, and of course, the United States. These albums also contain photographs of herself and of the great people of our time. The albums were left in the care of Joseph Galkin who kept them under lock and key and would not let anyone touch them. I had the privilege of examining them while sitting in the offices of the old Jewish Federation in the Strand building. I was particularly interested in a full page from the *Providence Journal* in which Mrs. Silverman, a native of the North End, gives a pictorial description of the synagogues of the city.

Wherever these albums are, whoever has them in his possession, it is time for the *Notes* to reprint the story that Ida tells of the synagogues before the pictures lose their clarity and the printed page becomes brittle.

These are some of the things I would like to see in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* during the 1980's. Such studies will also be in conformity with our original concept of our mission. I have no hesitation in saying that under Dr. Albert C. Salzberg the *Notes* will maintain the same degree of excellence set by the previous two editors, David C. Adelman and Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D.

THE MISHNAIC LAWS OF PURITY* —
THEIR APHYSICAL CHARACTER

by RABBI WILLIAM G. BRAUDE

When Leslie Gutterman came to Temple Beth-El in 1970 he wanted to study certain Rabbinic texts which the Hebrew Union College required for an advanced degree. The texts included parts of Maimonides' Code, excerpts from the Shulhan 'Aruk, and selections in Mo'ed, "Seasons," the second division of the Mishnah (Literally "teaching" or "repetition." The collection of legal traditions [explaining or supplementing the laws of the Pentateuch] in the form compiled by R. Judah the Patriarch at the end of the second century C.E.).

I was very happy to join Rabbi Gutterman in such study, and co-opted Bishop Knute Ansgar Nelson (retired Roman Catholic Bishop of Sweden) and Brother Caedmon Holmes, both residents and instructors at the Portsmouth Abby, Portsmouth, R.I. The two were good friends with one of whom, the Bishop, I had studied in earlier years when he was my pupil in beginners Hebrew at Brown in 1938-40. Since that time the Bishop's knowledge had grown immensely. He never ceased — night or day — reading and poring over Hebrew texts. His younger colleague, Caedmon Holmes, whom he taught Hebrew, was only one of a number of monks as well as young students at the Abbey to whom the Bishop imparted his love and understanding of our sacred tongue. The Bishop also started a collection of Hebraica and Rabbinica in the library of the Portsmouth Abbey, hoping to make the Abbey a center for Hebraic studies.

The Bishop and the monk, it goes without saying, were fervid students spending many hours in preparing for the passages in Mishnah and other texts Rabbi Gutterman and I were to study. They had to do so not because their Hebrew was limited. It was not. But the subject matter, such as rubrics in Jewish liturgy, was both complicated and difficult for men who, as adults, sought to learn the details of the Jewish prayerbook. One of the men told me that each would spend by himself some five hours in preparation, and after that the two would meet for another five hours in joint session. No wonder that when they came for the weekly period of study in my home, their mastery of both text and matter was thorough, at times overwhelming.

The Bishop, it should be added, is extraordinary in intellect, piety and presence. But for the onset of illness, he might have become a cardinal.

I often wondered what impelled him, as well as his friend and disciple, Brother Caedmon, to such intense interest in, one might even say,

*These laws and their implications apparently had some currency in the Mediterranean world of the day. Thus the Latin *contaminare*, "to contaminate," is said to be made up of the particle *con*, and the Hebrew *tame*! "be impure, defiled," a derivation which I found in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence, in a dictionary of English etymology. Regrettably I made no note of the author and of the place and year of publication.

obsession with Hebrew studies. So one day while visiting him at the Lady of Fatima Hospital, I asked, "Why?" Lifting his tapering fingers, a cardinal's fingers, the Bishop replied in his quavering voice: "In these days of religious anarchy, we must go back to the Hebrew truth." Then I understood. In the Roman Catholic Church there have always been two schools of thought and faith — the Hellenic, grounded in the Church's Greek origins, and the Judaic, ever seeking to burrow in and recover the treasures of Rabbinic learning. The Bishop and his disciple, Caedmon Holmes, represented the second school.

Before long, others joined us: Gladys (Mrs. Sherwin) Kapstein, Rabbi Lawrence Silverman of Plymouth, Mass., Rabbi James B. Rosenberg of Barrington, R.I., Joe Davis, son of Professor Philip and Hadassah Davis and grandson of Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Isaiah Segal, since deceased, and his wife, Anna. Going beyond the original assignment to Rabbi Gutterman of selections in the Mishnah division of "Seasons," our group finished all of it, and then, at the suggestion of Brother Caedmon, began the study of *Kodashim*, "Hallowed Things," the Mishnah's fifth division. No doubt he wanted to study this particular division because certain elements in the mass, in the use of incense, in priestly attire go back to regulations set down in that division, the one which describes the ancient rites in the Temple in Jerusalem.

During the study of *Hullin*, "Animals killed for food," the third tractate in the division of *Kodashim*, the tractate setting forth the dietary laws, we reached a chapter which deals with the thigh muscle that is on the socket of the hip (Gen. 32:32). Jewish dietary regulations prescribe its removal from the animal's hip, and, unless it is removed, a Jew will not eat rump steak even of an animal that is slaughtered properly. Not one of us had training in anatomy, nor had seen an animal's thigh muscle. Fortunately, the late Isaiah Segal used to be a shochet (kosher slaughterer), and so one day he and his wife brought a specimen of such a muscle. As I recall it, it was about nine inches long, at least two inches wide, and about a half-inch thick.

In time we reached *Kinnim*, "Bird offerings," the eleventh and final tractate of *Kodashim*. *Kinnim* is the name given to a pair of sacrificial birds, turtledoves or young pigeons which, in the days of the Temple, were offered up by those too poor to bring animal sacrifices in expiation of certain offenses and of certain conditions of uncleanness. Of such a pair of birds, one was designated as a sin-offering and the other as a burnt-offering. The designation, once made, "hallowed" the particular bird for

either offering, a “hallowing” which could not be altered at will. Should one of the birds in a pair escape — and all precautions notwithstanding, birds will fly off — the steps prescribed for identifying the bird which escaped, and/or substituting another so that the mixup be rectified, are occasionally as complex, as intricate as a problem in chess. No wonder that all of us were lost in the prescriptions enjoined to correct the ritual consequences brought about by a bird’s escape from one bird-pair and its perching with another. Brother Caedmon did not give up. He came one day with wads of vari-colored paper, each wad representing a bird in flight or a bird with the pair to which it had been designated. By moving about the wads of paper in keeping with Mishnaic prescriptions, we were able to figure out the proceedings followed with regard to bird-offerings when the original designation of any of the birds became uncertain or confused.

After we completed *Kodashim*, Brother Caedmon suggested we study *Tohorot*, “Cleannesses,” or “Purities,” the sixth division of the Mishnah. Its laws and regulations constitute a code of Levitical purity. Even in the days of the Temple most of its regulations did not concern the common man, unless he was to visit the precincts of the Temple, or come into contact with consecrated food. Nor did these laws apply outside the Holy Land. After the Temple’s destruction they have, on the whole, fallen into disuse, even in that land. The exceptions are the laws concerning a menstruant and a priest’s refraining from coming into a cemetery or having contact with the dead. These regulations remain valid for all times and places.

The aforementioned laws were not studied in Talmudic academies, possibly because the destruction of the Temple made them obsolete, and their revival in the future was not expected. The longing for purity, to be sure, continued, but the Messiah’s coming would, it was believed, remove all sources of ritual pollution — the unclean spirit would pass out of the land (I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud*, Seder Tohoroth [London, 1948], p. xvii).

Hence there is relatively little Talmudic discussion of this division of Mishnah, thus leaving much of its contents unelucidated and unexplained. Little wonder that our small company which assembled week after week for the study of *Tohorot* (the Mishnah’s sixth division) faced innumerable and often all but insuperable difficulties. The nature of realia — utensils, garments, weapons — referred to, baffled us, as did the intricacies of various regulations. We were in the dark and had to hold hands, so to speak. Only thus did we come now and then to comprehend the subtle and delicate reasoning of the Sages of Mishnah.

“The Mishnaic Laws of Purity — their aphysical character,” the essay which follows these introductory remarks, is the result of the intense discussion in our small company, each of whom, in one way or another, contributed his bit. I can still recall our joy and delight when an apparently obscure passage became clear as a morning without clouds.

THE MISHNAIC LAWS OF PURITY

In the Mishnaic world of purity terms of such as viri, bacilli, germs, or radiation do not apply. To illustrate:

Metal vessels which contract uncleanness through contact with a corpse or carrion require immersion. In resorting to immersion we are in familiar territory — washing, disinfection. But when we come to clay vessels which have contracted such uncleanness, washing them will not do. To become clean, they must be broken } שכירתן היא טהרתן (Kel 2:1); and the sherds of such broken vessels are insusceptible to uncleanness. Now bacilli or radium will affect alike all utensils, clay or metal, whole or broken.

Another illustration: Utensils made of metal must be completely finished, finished in every detail before they become susceptible to uncleanness. Before becoming susceptible such vessels must be smoothed, or adorned with the designs intended for them or trimmed round, or hammered out. Wooden utensils, even when unfinished, are susceptible to uncleanness and can be rendered unclean. And the reason: Metal utensils are made for formal occasions when the owner would be reluctant to use them unless these utensils were finished in every detail — in workmanship and design alike. On the other hand, wooden vessels, even if they still require smoothing down, or adorning with designs intended for them, or planing, or polishing are at once susceptible to uncleanness, because the owners who are likely to use these wooden utensils at informal occasions, and are therefore not as particular about their appearance (Hul 1:6, b.Hul 25a-b).

Note the considerations: Use of an article determines its susceptibility to uncleanness, and not at all the ferocity — to use modern terms — of the attacking virus, or the strength of the dose of radium.

This brings me to a major requirement for susceptibility to uncleanness. The utensil must be within human ambience, ambience in a strictly utilitarian sense. Thus the belt about my middle is susceptible to uncleanness but if some belt maker chose, for ornamentations sake to put a ring around the belt, the ring would not be susceptible.

A utensil to be susceptible to uncleanness must be immediate and not

mediate in its human use. Hence the covers of wine and oil jars which having receptacles are defined as vessels and as such one would expect them to be susceptible to uncleanness, are not in fact. They are (Kel 2:5) not, because they serve exclusively the vessels they are placed upon or over, and hence insofar as human use is concerned are not immediate, but mediate. A ring for my finger is susceptible to uncleanness. But the very same make of ring intended for an animal would not be susceptible (Kel 12:1).

Such human use must be of a practical kind. Hence children's toys appear to be insusceptible.

That which a person sits on or lies upon must be *intended* for such use to become susceptible to uncleanness. Hence, if a man with a flux, one who suffers from gonorrhoea, sat or lay upon a utensil such as a bagpipe, he does not convey uncleanness to it (Kel 20:2).

There must be some assurance for continuity in the use of a utensil. Hence "an improvised seat in an area where workers may say to the man who would use it, 'Get up and let us do our work' is insusceptible to uncleanness" (Kel 20:3).

Furthermore to be susceptible to uncleanness the utensil must not be excessive in size so that it is not portable. Hence, a cupboard, or the tank of an Alexandrian ship [a large ship intended for long journey] that has a flat bottom and carries a minimum of 40 *seah* (the bulk of 144 eggs multiplied by 40) are insusceptible to uncleanness (Kel 15:1).

Moreover if the utensil is fixed on the ground or attached to a wall it is not susceptible to uncleanness (Kel 11:2, Mik 4:1).

The utensil, as we said before, must be within the range of human use, which brings me to a kind of paradox. But before speaking of it, I must define *Midras* (lit. "place of treading"). It denotes an uncleanness of the first degree (אב הטון זאה) contracted by an object on which a man suffering from flux, from gonorrhoea sits, lies, rides upon or leans against.

Now to the instance which is a kind of paradox: a harlot's shift that is made like network [and is of course transparent] is not susceptible to uncleanness (Kel 28:9). Since her shift is so thin it is not fit to be sat on, and, therefore, not susceptible to *midras* uncleanness; and since it is transparent, it is not deemed a garment, and, therefore is not deemed susceptible to uncleanness through contact with a corpse.

The paradox is made even more vivid in another mishnah (Kel 24:16).

“Three different laws apply to head-nets. A girl’s is susceptible enough to *Midras* uncleanness — presumably because it is substantial enough to be sat on. “An old woman’s is susceptible to corpse uncleanness” — presumably because the old woman wishing to be protected from the cold makes her head-net so heavy that it is in effect a garment; and finally “a harlot’s head-net [which is so flimsy] is free from all uncleanness.

Human ambience always involves purpose, intention. And before a utensil is held susceptible to uncleanness, the utensil’s owner must intend to use it. Hence by way of illustration. A three-legged table one of whose legs was lost and therefore cannot be used becomes clean if it had contracted uncleanness; or if clean, is no longer susceptible to uncleanness. If a second leg was lost, it is still clean. But if the third leg was lost so that having no legs at all it can be used as a low table, it remains unclean if it had contracted uncleanness; or is susceptible to uncleanness when the owner has the intention of using it in its legless condition. R. Jose to be sure maintained that no intention is necessary (Kel 22:2). But such is not the law. The fact that the table top can be used is not sufficient to make it susceptible to uncleanness unless the owner intends to do so.

Three more illustrations of the importance of intention in determining susceptibility to uncleanness: A wooden spindle which has no receptacle cannot contract uncleanness, but a metal spindle hook can. Now say a spindle hook was sunk into a wooden spindle which was in a tent under the same roof with a corpse. If the factors determining susceptibility to uncleanness were purely physical, then the wooden spindle in which the metal hook was sunk would provide protection from corpse uncleanness for the hook within it. But in fact it does not: Because the spindle hook is of value to the owner who therefore both intends and, of course, is able to extract it from the wooden spindle, the spindle hook though sheltered by the wooden spindle, contracts uncleanness from the corpse under the roof which provides “shelter” for the corpse and the spindle hook (Kel 9:6).

Another illustration of the need for intention in determining susceptibility to uncleanness is drawn from the regulations concerning food. The rule is that whatever is not ordinarily food for human beings is not susceptible to uncleanness unless it is so specifically designated. For instance: If a pigeon fell into a winepress, and one intended to get it out and give it to an idolater who goes without saying is not concerned about the laws of *sehita*, the pigeon becomes susceptible to uncleanness. But if one intended it for a dog, the pigeon is not susceptible to uncleanness (Toh 8:6).

An even more dramatic illustration of the power of intention is seen in connection with the precautions observed to maintain the cleanness of the water mingled with the ash of a red heifer and used for lustration. The precautions are extraordinary, proscribing among other things any kind of contact with a human being whose status of cleanness is at all subject to question. Hence we are told that if one merely intended to drink the water which contained the ash of the red heifer with or without expressing such intention, R. Eliezer ruled that the water becomes invalid. To be sure, the practice follows R. Joshua who said that intention alone, expressed or unexpressed, is not sufficient to make the water unusable. The flask containing it, must be tipped (Par 9:4).

The aphysical character of the Mishnaic laws of purity is equally, if not more, manifest in the phenomenon of leprosy when it appears in human beings, in houses, or in a house in the city of Jerusalem.

First a word about the nature of the disease referred to in Scripture and Mishnah as leprosy. It is not Hansen's disease which only through a linguistic accident came to be known as "leprosy." The Hebrew צרעת, translated in the Septuagint as "Lepra," denoted a mild physical disorder in the course of which the skin becomes scaly — a kind of psoriasis. As a matter of fact, Hansen's disease is unknown in Roman, Greek, and Hellenistic writings. It would appear that the disease came from the Far East into the Near East and Europe no earlier than the third century of the Common Era. Later in the Middle Ages when European authors began to translate Arabic texts into Latin they used the word lepra for the Arabic name given to Hansen's disease (Yaakov Tas, *Encyclopedia Biblica* [Jerusalem, 1965] columns 776-78).

Be that as it may, in the Mishnah, curious rules, utterly aphysical, are laid down with regard to the disease.

Take for example suspicious discoloration of the skin in a bald spot on the top of the head. With regard to diagnosis of such discoloration — white streaked with red — the head is divided into two areas: One area is from the crown of the head sloping backward to the cartilage of the neck; the other area from the crown sloping forward to the hair above the face, specifically above the eyebrows (Neg 10:10). To be declared leprous such discoloration in a bald area of the head must be of a minimum size, an area equal to a Cilician bean split in two. Now suppose that discoloration were in the exact middle of the pate of the head — half in the rear area of the head known as the scalp, and the other half in the forward area, the forehead part — the two parts may not be combined to reckon the discolored area as

making up the minimum required for the discoloration to be declared leprous or unclean.

Now, I ask, what difference does it make? For us a disease is a disease is a disease, even if it strikes simultaneously the forehead and scalp areas of the head. But not for the teachers in the Mishnah. Insofar as diagnosing leprosy on a bald spot in the head is concerned, the forehead area and the scalp area are apart. When the suspicious spot is in both areas of the head, the spot is deemed to be not one but two, and hence, even if of the minimum size, deemed to be clean.

Take another matter, not in a bright spot on the head of a man or a woman who is bald, very likely on in years. But a bright spot, a discoloration on the face of a young man. Ordinarily, such an incident would immediately call for inspection by a priest who might, if in his opinion the symptoms demanded it, order the young man to be isolated, and, after a week or two, if such discoloration persisted, declare the young man to be leprous ritually unclean.

But now suppose the young man were a groom about to be married. In our society the marriage would, I imagine, be postponed until the groom were declared free of disease. But such postponement, in our eyes eminently sensible, is not followed in the world of the Mishnah. "A bridegroom," we are told, "on whom a leprosy sign has appeared is exempt from inspection during the seven days of the marriage feast" (Neg. 3:2), whether the leprous sign has appeared in his person, his house or his garment. Under no circumstances must the joy of the occasion be marred. During the seven days of feasting neither groom nor bride must be subjected to the inconveniences or restrictions which go with uncleanness.

Take another matter which I will illustrate by way of a famous story in connection with an exposition in Paris during the 19th century. A man is said to have come from the Orient to a hotel in Paris, taken ill, and his disease diagnosed as leprosy. In order to avoid the possibility of panic, authorities stepped in and, believe it or not, had the man vanish, so to speak, into thin air. His identity was so thoroughly eliminated that it was as though he had never existed.

Now take a roughly comparable occasion in Jewish life — a pilgrimage festival in Jerusalem while the Temple was standing. Suppose during such a season a man or a woman developed leprosy signs, like the groom during the seven days of feasting, he or she was not at that time to have the sign inspected by a competent priest. By such an expedient his joy and the joy of his family might be interfered with. Under these circumstances,

considerations such as infection, spread of disease, considerations familiar to us, apparently played no role according to Mishnaic regulations in the diagnosis of the disease whose occurrence led to ritual uncleanness.

Besides leprosy of a person, there is also leprosy in a house — peculiar discoloration in its walls. Here, too, aphysical considerations are brought in. To contract leprosy, a house must have four walls. Therefore “a round house, a triangular house, or a house built on a ship, on a raft . . . does not contract leprosy uncleanness” (Neg. 12:1).

Moreover, here, too, human ambience is required. Hence the walls of a cattle-stall cannot contract uncleanness (Neg. 12:4).

Now suppose the house in which leprosy signs appeared and were so diagnosed is a domicile with four walls and therefore to be demolished. But the house has an upper room. Then the beams which sustain the upper room are allowed to the upper room (Neg. 13:3). They need not be dismantled when the lower room is pulled down; but may be pinned under and left in position. If the leprosy sign appeared in the upper room, the beams are allowed to the lower room (*ibid.*), and are to be saved when the upper room is taken apart.

Suppose further the house had four walls, was used for human habitation, but was located in Jerusalem, or outside the land of Israel, then discolorations in its walls of a kind which ordinarily might be designated as “leprosy” is completely disregarded. Scripture speaks of the possibility of leprosy only in houses located in the land “which I give to you for a possession” (Lev. 14:34), which you possess. Hence, say the teachers of the Mishnah, a house outside Palestine, located in a land which Jews do not possess is excluded from the possibility of leprosy. So, too, is a house in Jerusalem (Neg. 12:4). Only a house in a city where individuals have rights in perpetuity to property is subject to the possibility. But not Jerusalem which during the division of the land was not divided among the Twelve Tribes; and is therefore a place where no individual owns property in perpetuity.

We have spoken sufficiently of leprosy in houses to be made aware of the fact that considerations other than physical determine the diagnosis. Now a house, if declared leprous, must be demolished. But a human being who is leprous or a utensil which is unclean may, in order to achieve cleanness, be immersed in a *mikveh*. In order that such immersion be effective, nothing must be allowed to interpose between the water and the body of the person or the utensil. Here, too, physical factors only do not determine what is deemed to interpose and thus to hinder cleansing. As in other

instances, intention governs the matter. Suppose a table, a board or a couch have become unclean and are to be immersed; and suppose further that these articles are covered in part with pitch or bitumen. Then, if the table, the board, or the couch are usually kept clean, and the stain causes annoyance, the pitch or bitumen which covers the utensils is deemed to be interposing, and if the utensil is immersed with such stains upon it, it remains unclean. But if these utensils are usually allowed to remain dirty, the stains of pitch and bitumen upon them do not interpose, and the utensils when thus immersed become clean.

Also if stains of pitch or bitumen are found on beds belonging to a householder who is fastidious about the tidiness of his furniture, the stains are deemed to interpose, and therefore hinder the bed's cleansing through immersion. But if such stains are found on a bed belonging to a poor man who does not mind them, they are not deemed to interpose, and therefore the bed if immersed though thus stained, becomes clean (Mik. 9:5).

In sum: From every area of the Mishnaic laws of purity illustrations may be drawn to demonstrate that physical factors which we speak of as viri, bacilli, or radiation are not decisive. The decisive factors are aphysical elements such as human ambience, and intention, elements closely allied to disorientation which is the consequence not of bacilli or the like, but of man's proneness to sin.

The Mishnaic laws of purity move in a kind of Platonic world. Ideas imprinting themselves on matter determine טומאה and טהרה, uncleanness and cleanness.

OUR RABBI WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION —
A WORLD WAR II REMINISCENCE

by RABBI ELI A. BOHNEN

Not long after the United States became involved in World War II, and many Jewish young men were being drafted into the Armed Services, it was clear that there would be a need for Jewish chaplains. The Rabbinical Assembly called a conference of its members to discuss steps to be taken to provide Jewish chaplains for the several branches of the military. At this conference, held at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the assembly voted to institute a draft of its own, since the law did not permit clergymen to be drafted by the government.

First to be called would be single rabbis, then married rabbis with no children, then men with one child. The opportunity was given to choose the branch of service. I indicated that I would want to be in the Navy.

When my turn came, I found that my orders were to report to the Army Chaplain School at Harvard University. It surprised me to learn that I was not being sent to the Navy. However, I proceeded to put my affairs in order, to arrange for a rabbi to replace me in my pulpit in Buffalo, and to find housing for my wife and daughter, who was then three years old.

Some time later, I discovered why I had not been sent to the Navy. The Jewish Welfare Board had been designated as liaison between the Jewish community and the Armed Forces. It became aware of the fact that there were many army divisions with hundreds of Jewish men without Jewish chaplains. Milton Steinberg, of blessed memory, was appointed by the JWB to make a tour of the military units to convince the Generals to request Jewish chaplains. One of the divisions which Steinberg visited was the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division, which had over four hundred Jewish enlisted men in it.

As Steinberg reported the conversation with General Collins he quoted him as saying that before he became a general, Collins has served with another division which had a Jewish chaplain. This chaplain caused so much trouble that he determined never to have one if it could be avoided.

Milton Steinberg and I were good friends; in fact he had officiated at my wedding. It was he who convinced Collins of the need for a Jewish chaplain, and I was ordered to report to the 42nd Division, with a rank of First Lieutenant, to train in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Harry Collins looked like a general. He was tall, handsome; indeed he became known to the troops as Hollywood Harry. I could not have asked for a more understanding general. He responded to my requests on behalf

of the Jewish Displaced Persons whenever a matter concerning them was involved. He became a good friend. Some time after my arrival in Muskogee, I was summoned by him. In the course of the interview, he said rather sternly: "I know that there exists, in some divisions, what your people call anti-Semitism. It will not be tolerated in my division. Should it crop up, I will hold you personally responsible if I am not made aware of it immediately. If it does occur, I will hit the S.O.B.'s so hard they will not know what struck them."

I recall a case where a Jewish soldier was going to be court-martialed. The soldier was not a native American; he was a German refugee and was serving in the division as an interpreter who interrogated German prisoners. The charge brought against him was that he had gambled with enlisted men, which was against the rules. He was tried by the Judge Advocate-General, who was, I suspected, an anti-Semite. The Jewish soldier was put in the stockade as a prisoner, to await trial, and he sent for me. I went to the General and asked him for leniency. The General said he would personally attend the hearing, to which he asked me also to come. As the hearing progressed, it became evident that the young man was indeed guilty. The Judge Advocate-General asked for a sentence of six months and a day in prison. The General turned to me and asked if there was anything I wished to say in rebuttal. "Sir," I said, "there is no doubt that the soldier is guilty but the 'Judge' is advocating an unreasonable punishment. According to the law, if the punishment were as advocated, it would mean he would be sent back to Germany, the land of the Nazis. It would disqualify him from ever becoming an American citizen. In effect, it would be a life sentence." The General thought for a moment and then said: "Chaplain, you are right. We will give the soldier the minimum sentence. We won't prevent him from becoming an American."

When the time came to go overseas to join the Seventh Army, the Division was divided into two parts. One was to remain behind for a few weeks, and the other would proceed to France.

I was with the unit that would not leave immediately. This assignment gave me the opportunity to celebrate Chanukah with our Jewish soldiers in the U.S.A. The Jewish community of Tulsa was most generous and sent us a large supply of gifts to distribute to our soldiers. Our division had a portable press, so we were able to print beautiful Chanukah greeting cards in color for the men to send home, something they greatly appreciated.

I was then informed that our unit would be on board trains going to the port of embarkation on Christmas Day. I would be the only Chaplain for all faiths on board the train. I realized that this meant we would have a very unhappy and miserable passenger list. To be away from home, going to war, on Christmas Day was enough to destroy anyone's morale. Again I turned to the Tulsa Jews and asked for Christmas gifts. Once again they responded with an unbelievable amount of items for the men. The problem now was, how could a rabbi handle Christian services? Fortunately, I found a Catholic soldier who was able to conduct a service and a Protestant who could lead the members of his faith. The prayers were more meaningful than ever before, because many of us wondered who would return home and who would lie in a military cemetery in Europe. These services were conducted in an open area alongside the train tracks, after which the soldiers returned to the train. The Division Band was in my car. I had the men come to this central car, sing carols, and receive the Christmas gifts given by the Tulsa Jews. They were distributed by my assistant, Eli Heinberg, who had managed to find a Santa Claus suit, which raised the morale of the men.

We embarked for France. The voyage was uneventful. Soon after our arrival, the Assistant Division Chaplain left for medical reasons and I was asked to take his place, with a promotion to the rank of Major, something that came as a complete surprise to me. I heard that the chaplains of the four battalions in the Division objected to my appointment. They claimed that it should go to a Christian chaplain since the Christians were in the great majority. I went to the Division Chaplain and told him that I had no ambitions for an army career and that I would be perfectly willing to have one of the other men given the post. He was taken aback and asked me how long I had been in the army, and said that by now I should know that a promotion is not an invitation to be accepted or declined. It was an order from the General.

Later I was told that the General had called in the colonels who were the commanders of the four chaplains. He said that he had heard they had threatened to complain to Catholic hierarchy about the Jewish chaplain's promotion. The General told the colonels that if such a complaint were made, he would have them court-martialed for insubordination. The General went on to say that he had confidence in me that the interests of all faiths would be served. The Division Chaplain later told me that the General had heard of how Christmas was observed on the trains and of the gifts that each soldier had received and of the services which were held for all three faiths en route.

One of the highlights of our experience in Germany was the Passover Seder which was held in the town of Dahn. Preparations had been made for the observance of the Holiday. However, the Haggadahs which the Jewish Welfare Board had ordered for us did not arrive in time because our army was advancing rapidly. Fortunately, we had one copy of a J.W.B. Haggadah. We used the Division's offset press to print portions of the Seder for the men. A copy of this "Rainbow Haggadah" is now at the Seminary Museum in New York. It was included in Professor Yerushalmi's collection of Haggadahs published by the Jewish Publication Society in 1975 — because it was the first Hebrew publication in Germany since the beginning of the war.

One of my unforgettable memories of my army days concerns a soldier whom I will call Captain Fields, although that was not his real name. It was my custom, while in Germany, to pay regular visits, together with my assistant, to the men in the front lines. We would talk to the men and we felt it made them feel good that someone of their own faith was interested in their well-being.

As we spoke to a group of Jewish soldiers, they asked us if we knew Captain Fields. I told them I did not know him. They said he was the bravest man they had ever known. He did not send them into battle; he led them. They asked me if I knew if Captain Fields were a Jew. I told them that I did not know, for I had never seen him at services.

The next time we visited the company, we found the men deeply depressed. Their beloved Captain had been killed in action. After each battle, the Protestant chaplain, the Catholic chaplain and I would visit the temporary cemetery in which the recent casualties were buried. We were given a list of the names of these men. As we approached the grave of a man who was of our faith, we would step forward and recite a prayer, while the other two clergy would step back and wait. The graves were marked by wooden slabs upon which were attached the soldier's "dog tags" indicating his name, serial number and religion.

As we looked down our list, the name Fields soon appeared, and I said, "I believe this is one of my boys," bending down to look at the dog tags. To my surprise, I saw a "P" for Protestant where I had expected to see an "H" for Hebrew. "My mistake," I said, and the Protestant chaplain came forward and read a prayer.

Whenever a soldier was killed in action, a letter would be sent to his parents informing them that their son was buried in a military cemetery and that a reverent service had been conducted by a chaplain of his faith.

The letter said that it was hoped that this fact would bring some measure of consolation to the bereaved family. The General had assigned me the task of writing these letters for his signature. Thus a letter was sent to the mother of Captain Fields indicating that her son had received a Christian burial.

Several weeks had gone by when I found in my mail a letter from Mrs. Fields. She wrote that her son was a Jew, that he had become Bar Mitzvah in his temple, and that she would want a correction made on the dog tags. She went on to conjecture that while her son was a brave man and was not afraid of dying, he did fear capture and torture by the Nazis because he was a Jew. I responded to her letter assuring her that I would see to it that a Jewish service would be held for her son and that the designation on the dog tag would be changed to "H" for Hebrew.

The 42nd fought its way from Marseilles across France, into Germany, and then Austria. We moved from one town to another until on May 8, 1945, the Rainbow Division, with the 3rd Division, took Dachau. My assistant, Eli Heinberg, and I entered the notorious concentration camp immediately after its surrender. As I wrote to my wife, what I saw there gave me material for nightmares for the rest of my life. The living survivors looked worse than the corpses, which were piled up ready for the crematorium.

After the surrender of the German forces and the end of the war, I was given leave to go to Switzerland for a brief vacation. On the train, I met a young lieutenant who had recently arrived from the U.S. He told me he had been assigned to Dachau in command of the German P.O.W.'s who had not yet been sent home. Their job was to maintain the grounds. I asked the lieutenant if the gas chambers and crematoria were still there or if they had already been dismantled. He looked at me as if I were a little child, and in a very patronizing tone said: "Come, come, Chaplain. Surely you don't believe that there were ever gas chambers in Dachau! You know, we had our propaganda just as the Germans had theirs." I couldn't believe what my ears were telling me.

As soon as I returned from Switzerland the first large contingent of Jews arrived in Salzburg. The General summoned the commanding officers of the Medical Battalion, a Jewish captain, who was the General's personal physician, and me. He told us that he had just come from the D.P. camp where the Jews were in the majority and found it in a very chaotic state. It was filthy and not fit for human habitation. He then assigned me to work with the Jewish Displaced Persons and ordered us to go to the camp and make up a list of what would be needed to make the place

livable. The three of us proceeded to the camp and found that the General had not exaggerated. We drew up a list of what was needed and brought it to the General, who handed it to his G4, the supply officer. The officer turned pale and said: "Sir, how can I get all these things? Austria has collapsed; its economy is in chaos. How can I get all this?" The General said: "I have Jewish friends back home. I know that they live clean lives in clean homes. I am ordering you to get the items on the list." The officer snapped to attention, saluted, and said, "Yes, Sir."

At first the Jews and the Yugoslavs were herded together. There was no love lost between the two groups because the Jews had good reason to believe that the Yugoslavs had collaborated with the Nazis.

One day I received a shipment of candies from the U.S.A. which I had requested for the D.P. children. I was standing and distributing the candies indiscriminately when the mother of one of the Jewish children pointed to a Yugoslav child and said: "Don't give him any candy. He's a Yugoslav." I answered rather sharply: "But he's only a little child. What harm is there in giving him candy?" The woman responded with bitterness: "It's easy for you to talk like that. Your wife and children are safe at home in America. Look over there at the child's mother. Look closely at her skirt. What do you see?" "Why, it's a Tallis," I exclaimed. "Of course, she cried, "it's a Tallis, and you can be sure that the Jew who wore that Tallis was murdered by a Yugoslav who wanted to bring home a gift for his wife. The little boy to whom you gave the candy will grow up and be a murderer of Jews like all the rest of the Yugoslavs."

A large proportion of the Jews had come to Austria as a way station to Italy, which was regarded as a stepping-stone to Palestine. One of the problems that we had to cope with was boredom. Eli Heinberg, my assistant, was very innovative. In civilian life, he was an industrial engineer. Before long, he had set up a trade school, classes in English and classes in Hebrew.

I had called upon the Jewish soldiers in the Division to write to their families to send me food, clothing, cosmetics, books, etc., to be distributed to the D.P.'s. Credits were given for work in the camp, for tailoring, for shoe-repairing, etc. With these credits the D.P.'s could go to the shop we set up, and purchase the items which had been received from America.

The response to the requests by the soldiers for items for the D.P.'s was overwhelming. One day three freight cars addressed to me came to Salzburg. Indeed the goods arrived in such quantities that I was visited by a colonel of the Inspector-General's department, who was investigating

the possibility that a Black Market Project was under way. I convinced him that I was working with General Collins's blessing. He then told me that he himself was a Jew and that I should keep on doing what I was doing.

It would be a mistake to assume that everything went smoothly. When an Israeli, a member of Haganah, visited the camp, he told me I had been accused of diverting new clothing for my own use and substituting torn and used clothing. I found some solace in the thought that Moses had to protest that he had never stolen anything that belonged to his people. It was not a bed of roses and there were many evenings I came home drained and discouraged. But in retrospect, I thank God that I was able to be there when my people needed me.

We were indeed fortunate that General Collins was in command. I had to meet with him frequently to solve the many problems which continued to arise. While I tried to keep the General informed about every aspect of the Jewish situation, there were many times when I did not tell him everything that was taking place.

One of the problems was that of cleanliness. The Jews were housed in abandoned barracks and crowded together. The result was that none of the inhabitants of the barracks took responsibility for keeping the rooms clean. I recall one episode that left me completely frustrated and on the verge of despair. A young lieutenant knocked on my door. I asked him to come in and saw that he was distraught. He told me that he was in charge of the Jewish barracks and that the General was coming to inspect the quarters. He said that he had never seen such filth. There was excrement on the floors, on the walls and even on the ceilings. He said the General would accept no excuse for such a situation. "Chaplain, it will be my neck. Please help me."

That very morning the General had awarded me the Bronze Star medal for meritorious service. I was still wearing my dress uniform with my new medal. I told the lieutenant that I would gather the Jews together and try to have the place cleaned up. I called a meeting in front of the barracks and told the D.P.'s that the General was coming and they owed it to him to clean up the area since he had been so good to them. Their answer was: "We worked enough when we were in the concentration camps. We won't work any more." Nothing I could say would move them. As a last resort I told them of how I had been honored with a medal by the General. It called for a celebration. I was going to celebrate by cleaning their barracks and wiping up the excrement, myself. I proceeded to take off my dress jacket

and began to walk to the barracks when two young D.P.'s ran out from the crowd and seized me. They shouted: "No rabbi of ours is going to clean our filth. We will do it."

One of the things a soldier learns, regardless of his rank, is that you do not just walk in upon a general. The procedure is that you go to the office of the chief of staff, which is next to the general's, and ask permission to speak to the general. The chief would then ask you what your business is. If he thinks the matter needs the general's attention, he will give you permission to knock on the general's door. If he thinks someone else can handle the matter, he will direct you to that person.

When Collins realized that the Jewish D.P. problem was a serious matter that needed careful attention, he gave me special instructions. If I had a problem concerning Jewish D.P.'s, I was to walk through the chief's office, into the general's office, without asking for permission. I mention this fact to indicate how seriously General Collins treated the matter of Jewish D.P.'s.

Since problems came up almost every day, I was a frequent visitor to Collin's office. I had the feeling that whenever I went through the chief's office without asking permission that he was looking daggers at me.

The military authorities had established strict orders that there were to be no unauthorized parades or demonstrations in the D.P. camps. We were able to restrain some of the hot heads in the camp who wished to protest the conditions under which they lived. When we heard that an Anglo-American Commission was being sent to survey the conditions, we anticipated trouble. I was sure that the D.P.'s would ignore the rule against demonstrations. I felt that if a demonstration were held and ignored, nothing serious would happen. The General became aware of the situation and summoned me to meet with him. I pleaded with him to look the other way and let a Jewish captain handle the situation. The General said: "Chaplain, do you realize what you are suggesting? You are asking that I turn over a General's responsibility to a Captain. I can't do that." However, he did take my advice to ignore the demonstration and ordered his men to be calm and do nothing to bring about a confrontation. The next day the General summoned me again. He spoke in very sad tones. He said that he was doing everything he could in behalf of the Jews and he expected them to appreciate it and not create additional problems for him. Fortunately, after a few days the situation became less tense and we breathed more easily for a while.

The Jews of Austria had been divided into two camps: One was in

Salzburg, where I was stationed, and the other was in Linz. The over-all headquarters were in Vienna, under the jurisdiction of General Mark Clark. General Collins of the 42nd was in command of the Salzburg area and another General was in command of the 3rd Division in the Linz area. There was a distinct difference in the way the 42nd Division operated and the way the 3rd Division operated. General Collins had his finger on the Jewish situation. He knew what the problems were and he had his staff officers keep him informed. In Linz the General let his subordinates handle everything, while he paid little or no attention to the day by day problems that arose. In the 3rd Division there was no contact with a Jewish Chaplain as there was in the 42nd Division in which I was a part.

The inevitable riot broke out in the Linz camp. Mark Clark was furious. He saw it as a reflection on his leadership and he decided to call together all the officers in charge of the Jewish camps in Austria. We were called at midnight and told that we were going to be traveling to Vienna. Everyone in the Division who had anything to do with the Jewish D.P.'s was ordered to join a caravan of military vehicles. The General and his aide were in the lead. As we proceeded, the General sent his aide back to each car in turn, to bring the officer in it to join him. Each officer was closely questioned on everything he knew about the Jewish D.P. situation. The General extracted every bit of information he could get. This process went on throughout the night until we arrived at Mark Clark's headquarters. We were given a little time to freshen up. The meeting took place in the Board Room of the Rothschild Bank. Mark Clark came into the room and we all jumped to attention. He apologized for making us drive through the night. Then his voice became harsh. He said he had deliberately made us travel all night because we had disobeyed his orders about the D.P.'s. "I know why you have not obeyed my orders. It is because you are not in sympathy with them. I want you to know that I don't give a damn whether you approve or not. You will obey them." He then proceeded to question the officers of the 3rd Division about their knowledge of the D.P. situation. Most of them could not answer his questions. They did not know how many D.P.'s there were in their area. They did not know what the conditions were. In short, they had not familiarized themselves with the situation in their camp. After interrogating the officers of the 3rd Division, Clark turned to General Collins. My General knew all the answers. What he had not known before the riot in Linz he had learned as he questioned his officers on the Midnight Ride. Twice he turned to me to amplify his answers. Mark Clark made no secret of his displeasure and annoyance with the officers of the Third Division. He called out to General Collins, "Harry, come with me," and putting his arm around the shoulders of the

General, he walked with him into his private office leaving the officers of the Third Division like beaten dogs. It was a great day for General Collins and it was a great day for the Rainbow!

The General asked me to have lunch with him together with the General of the 3rd Division. I was most uncomfortable during the luncheon because the General of the 3rd Division was obviously angry. I did not understand why he was so bitter. It wasn't until I returned to Salzburg that I was told that while General Collins was commended for his handling of the D.P. program, the General of the 3rd Division, whom I choose not to name, was relieved of his command and demoted in rank.

As a result of the meeting in Vienna, the lot of the D.P.'s was greatly improved. D.P.'s were moved into decent housing, food was better, barbed wire was removed and they were treated with greater consideration.

My last official act before leaving for the U.S.A. was to make preparations for the observance of Passover. A delegation of bearded Jews approached me and asked to have the General give them a field of wheat, a mill for grinding the wheat and a bakery for baking Matzot. I told them I had made provisions for Matzot and had already made all the plans for Passover. There was no need to bother the General. They objected to this, saying that they could not use machine made Matzot. I confess I was annoyed by what I regarded as nit-picking and told them they would have to make do with the Matzot I had arranged for. I left for the port of embarkation believing I had done everything necessary for the holiday. Some weeks later the Chaplain who replaced me wrote that the bearded gentlemen had not accepted the idea of using the Matzot for which I had arranged. Somehow, they had gotten to General Collins and he had given them the field, the mill and the bakery. When I read the letter I could not help saying to myself: "Never underestimate a stubborn Jew."

As I bring this report to a close I want to pay tribute to my assistants, Eli Heinberg and Joseph Samelson, who worked along side of me in my efforts on behalf of the Jews in the D.P. camps. Their tasks were not easy but their dedication to their Jewish brethren overcame all the difficulties with which they were confronted.

THE HEBREW FIRE LOAN ASSOCIATION, 1938-1950

by MARVIN PITTMAN

Gemilath Chesed Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence has continued to perform vital services for the citizens of Rhode Island since its inception in 1903. The aim and purpose of Gemilath Chesed is to help needy individuals to earn an honest living without recourse to charity.

In accordance with the constitution of the Gemilath Chesed "all funds shall be used solely for the purpose of loaning money to persons in need of temporary aid,"¹ except sums essential to pay expenses of maintenance and operation of the Association. Over the period studied, loans to recipients ranged from \$20 to \$500.

No interest was levied on any of the loans. All approved loans required a minimum of two endorsers; emergency loans of less than \$50 could be obtained on the signature of the borrower.

Payments on loans were expected to be repaid within fifty weeks. Thus a \$500 loan would require weekly payments of \$10; however, if necessity precluded completion of payments within the allotted time period an extension could be granted. Weekly payments as low as twenty-five cents were frequent especially in the early period.

An analysis of the Association's Minutes from 1938 through 1950 shows several major themes. Paramount was the approval or disapproval of applications for loans. Second was the constant drive to increase its membership and preparation for their annual meeting. Third was the need to collect dues from members and insure that delinquent accounts fulfill their obligation to repay their loans.

Over the period studied, the number of approved applications ranged from a low of 101 during the World War II year of 1945 to a high of 457 in 1939 and 1940. (See Table A). The sums allocated were lowest during 1945 and highest in 1940. Apparently people found employment during the war period and the needy always required some assistance. Notice the sharp decline in loans granted from 414 in 1941 to 265 in 1942 continu-

ing downward throughout the war years and the constant increase in the post war period. As anticipated, the dollar sums loaned also declined during the war years to rise again in the post war years.

TABLE A
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM LOANS WERE GRANTED

Year	Number	Amount in Dollars
1938	428	77547
1939	457	73334
1940	457	83846
1941	414	79248
1942	265	57639
1943	280	39240
1944	122	28896
1945	101	24450
1946	116	32355
1947	133	33725
1948	164	55035
1949	194	61710
1950	199	56787

(Source: Minutes 1938-1950)

Many individuals had their loans secured not by two endorsers but by collateral. If the collateral had to be appraised or reappraised the loan was held up until a new appraisal was completed. Refusal also occurred when the application claimed that real estate was owned by the seeker of funds but investigated found it not to be true. The character of an individual was a prime consideration in granting approval of the loan.

Disapproval of loans occurred in larger number during the early period studied with fewer in the later period. Among the reasons for disapproval of a loan the most persistent was the absence of two endorsers. Sometimes there was a request for another additional endorser or a new endorser to acquire the approval of the Board of Directors in granting the loan.

For example, in 1938 new endorsers were requested in 35 applications and 18 others were asked for two new endorsers. Occasionally a minor, who was not eligible for a loan, was rejected. On rare applications the word "rejected" appeared with no further explanation. Referral to the Investigation Committee was a frequent decision. In the vast majority of

cases, after the applicant complied with the suggested request of the Board, a loan was granted. Only in one case did the applicant after disapproval remove his request for a loan.

Among the stated reasons for the disapproval of a loan were the following:

1. Requires two new endorsers
2. new endorser required
3. endorser unacceptable
4. referred to investigating committee
5. not eligible as no real estate taxed to him
6. minor cannot make an application
7. loan must be made in husband's name (housewives frequently received loans)
8. claim to own property, no such tax
9. tabled until collateral reapproved
10. endorser refused to sign (one case)
11. rejected unsavory record
12. disapproved collateral on two accounts — duly notified
13. checked with employer — found not employed as stated
14. lack information on application and no endorsers
15. purpose of loan not satisfactory.

Table B illustrates the varied occupations of individuals whose loans were funded. The year 1938 was selected primarily because the Minutes also included the occupations of all endorsers as seen in Table C.

From a perusal one can see the variety of skills and trades engaged in by both loaners and endorsers. As one would anticipate, since loans were granted to immigrants to enable them to earn a livelihood, peddlers were the largest recipients numbering 29, while salesmen with 27, and grocery with 23 followed. Other occupations in double figures included: liquor store 16, housewife 15, dry goods 13, tailor 13, insurance 12 and meat market 11. Occupations which may seem surprising were chauffeuring, constable and egg chandler.

Endorsers were as varied and ran the gamut of American enterprise as those to whom loans were granted. The largest number of endorsers were in the following occupations:

Clothing	35	Furniture	20	Junk	15
Jewelry	33	Market	20	Peddler Fruit	12
Dry Goods	28	Real Estate	18	Liquor Store	12
Tailor	26	Salesmen	17	Variety Store	11
Grocery	26	Insurance	16	Painter	10

The largest number of loans were secured by collateral (53). Interestingly only a few individuals were in the professions such as drug store 14, lawyer 9, physician 8, dentist 4, accountant 5, teacher 2, with one each in the following: music teacher, optician, dietician, chemist and chiroprapist. No bankers or stock brokers were endorsers.

TABLE B

OCCUPATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS LOANS GRANTED 1938

Antiques	2	Carbon Products	
Automobile Repairs	1	Carpenter	2
Auto Suppliers	1	Cattle	2
Baker	1	Chauffeur	
Bakery	4	Chemicals	2
Bar Room	1	Chiropodist	
Barber	2	Cleaning	5
Beverages	2	Clerk	4
Blacksmith		Coal and Oil	3
Bleach Water Dealer		Collector	3
Bookkeeper	6	Commercial Signs	
Bottles		Constable	
Boy's Camp Manager		Coppersmith	
Bread Route		Counter man	
Burlap Bags		Cotton Piece Goods	
Butcher	2	Cut Rate Store	
Cabinet Maker		Dentist	
Cafe		Dressmaker	2
Canvasser		Drug Store	4
Capital Social Club		Drugs and Novelties	2
		Dry Goods	13

TABLE B CON'T.

Egg Chandler		Machines Mdse	
Electric Company worker		Market	7
Expressman		Mattress Co. Worker	
Factory Foreman		Meat Market	11
Fish Dealer		Merchant	3
Fish Market		Men's Furnishing and Grocery	
Fruit Department Manager		Men's Store Manager	
Fruit Store	2	Millinery	3
Furniture	6	Municipal Worker	
Furrier	4	Musician	
Garage		Novelties	
Gas Company employee		Novelty Boxes	
Gasoline Station		Nurse Student	
Glass		Old Gold and Silver	
Glassware		Optometrist	
Glazier	2	Painter	9
Government job		Pants Manufacturer	
Grocery	23	Paper Route	
Handbags		Parking	
Hardware Store		Patent Medicines	
Hebrew Teacher		Pawn Shop	
Housewife	15	Peddlers	29
Importing		Dry Goods	8
Incinerator Worker		Fish	
Insurance	12	Fruit	14
Iron Worker		Grocery	
Jewelry	5	Household Merchandise	
Jewelry worker	3	Junk	3
Junk	4	Woolens	
Jewish Baths		Periodical Store	
Laundry Route		Photographer	
Laundry Worker		Picture Operator	
Leather Goods		Plumber	2
Leather Novelties		Poultry	7
Linoleum Layer		Radio	
Liquor Store	16	Railway Mail Clerk	
		Real Estate	6

TABLE B CONT.

Retired	4	Textiles	
Restaurant Worker		Textile Novelties	2
Rubber Worker		Tinsmith	
Rug Cleaning	2	Tires	
Saleslady		Tire Shop Clerk	
Salesman	27	Truck Driver	
Secretary	2	Undertaker	
Second Hand Clothing		Unemployed	6
Shamus-Sexton	4	Upholsterer	5
Sheet Metal		Used Car Dealer	2
Shipping Clerk	2	Variety Store	3
Shoeket Shoemaker	8	Vending Machines	
Shoe Store	4	Wastes	3
Sign Painter		Watch Repairer	3
Silk Merchant		Wholesale	
Spa	3	Candy	
Stitcher	2	Delicatessen	
Tailor	13	Electric Commodities	
Taxi Cabs		Window Cleaner	
Tea and Coffee Route		Yard Goods	
Teacher			

TABLE C

OCCUPATIONS OF ENDORSERS OF LOANS 1938

Accountants	5	Collector	2
Advertising		Contractor	9
Antiques	2	Confectioner	2
Auto Cars	2	Constable	
Auto Parts	4	Cotton Broker	
Auto Repairing	4	Cotton and Yarns	2
Auto Supplies	3	Cottons	
Badge and Emblems		Creamery	3
Bags and Trunks	3	Curtains	3
Baker	6	Delicatessen	4
Bakery		Dental Laboratory	
Banana Dealer		Dentist	4
Bar Room		Department Store Buyer	
Beauty Parlor		Dietician	
Bookkeeper	2	Diner	2
Bottling Company		Dress Shop	
Burlap Bags	2	Drug Store	14
Butcher	7	Dry Goods	28
Candy	4	Eggs	
Candy and Tobacco		Electrical Contractor	
Canvasser	2	Factory Employee	2
Cap Manufacturer		Factory Manager	
Carnivals		Floor Covering	
Carpenter	3	Florist	
Cash Registers		Fruit Dealer	13
Cattle Business	6	Furniture	20
Chemicals	2	Furniture Fixtures	
Chemist		Fur Shop	3
Children's Wear		Furrier	3
Chiropodist		Garage	3
Cigar Store	2	Gasoline Station	9
City Clerk		Gas Station Attendent	
City Employee		Glass	2
Cleansing		Grain	
Clerk	5	Grocery	26
Clothing	35		
Club			

TABLE C CON'T.

Handbags	2	Newspaper Worker	
Hats		Novelties	2
Hay and Grain	2	Office Cleaning	
Home Furnishing		Optician	
Hosiery	3	Overall Manufacturer	4
Housewives	5	Painter	10
Intern		Paper Box Company	
Insurance	16	Paper and Twine	
Insurance Broker		Parking Autos	3
Investments		Pawn Shop	3
Jewelry	33	Peddler	15
Jewelry Shop	3	Dry Goods	3
Jewelry Worker	2	Fruit	12
Junk	15	Periodical Store Manager	
Laundry	3	Physician	8
Laundry Route	3	Piano Teacher	
Lawyer	9	Pleating Company	3
Leather		Plumbing and Heating	
Leather Findings	4	Post Office Clerk	
Leather Novelties	3	Poultry	
Liquor Store	12	Produce Market	
Machinist		Provisions Manager	
Market	20	Printer	6
Mattresses	6	Publisher's Agent	
Meat Cutter		Radiators	
Meat Concession		Real Estate	18
Meat Market Manager		Retired	9
Merchant		Restaurant Equipment	2
Metal Dealer		Roofing	
Mill Supplies		Sales Company	
Mill Worker		Sales Manager	
Motor Service		Salesmen	7
Music Teacher		Saloon	
Musician		Security	53
Narragansett Brewery		Sheet Metal	4
Employee		Shocket	3

TABLE C CON'T.

Shoe Buyer		Trucking	4
Shoe Dealer	2	Trunks	
Shoe Jobber		Undertaker	6
Shoemaker	6	Uniforms	2
Shoe Store	2	United Produce Co.	
Shipping Clerk	4	United Utilities Manager	
Soda Bottling	8	Upholsterer	3
Spa	7	Used Cars	3
Stationery	2	Variety Store	11
Stationery Store		Wall Paper	
Store Fixtures		Wastes	9
Superintendent Factory		Watch Company Foreman	
Tailor	26	Wholesale	24
Tallow Dealer	2	Beer	4
Taxi Cabs		Delicatessen	
Teacher	2	Dry Goods	
Teller	2	Tobacco	
Textiles	2	Fruit	5
Tinsmith	3	Furniture	2
Tires		Grocery	8
Tires and Garage		Millinery	
Tire Shop	3	Shoes	
Tobacco	3	Wine Company Manager	
Tobacco Store		Window Cleaner	3
Tool Maker		Yarns	3
Torpedo Station Employee			
Transportation	2		

To provide the vital funds to enable the Association to perform its function, membership contributions were essential. Although the annual membership dues were and remain \$3 per year, admonishment and constant reminder to contributors seemed necessary. To insure membership fees a collector was employed at a monthly compensation of \$20 plus 25 per cent of the dues collected weekly.²

Over the years a secretary was employed to receive payments from recipients of loans and to keep the essential records. In 1937 she received only \$18 per week, but by 1950 the compensation was \$35 weekly.

During 1938 the total income from dues was \$3,183.05 of which 34.5 per cent or \$1,085.59 was paid to the collector.³

Six officers and 18 directors guided the activities of the Association. The Board of Directors met weekly to consider applications for loans and other sundry activities.

Joseph Kroll, a leading spirit of the Gelimath Chesed, had served as president in fourteen different years and while president went to his eternal rest on September 10, 1938. In recognition of his valuable and unselfish devotion to the Association it was voted that a "Memorial Fund be established to be called the 'Joseph Kroll Memorial Fund,' the said fund to be a separate fund to be loaned to worthy individuals up to the sum of \$50.00 who under ordinary circumstances could not obtain the loan. The sum of \$1,000 to be set aside from the general funds of the Association to start the said-fund."⁴ In addition to the original sum set aside for the Joseph Kroll Memorial Fund, over \$300 was donated by various members.

At the 37th Annual meeting held on February 5, 1939 the following resolution was read:

WHEREAS, the GEMILATH CHESOD Hebrew Free Loan Association of Providence, in annual meeting assembled at Providence this 5th day of February, C.E. 1938, pausing in the midst of its annual program, is desirous of dedicating this meeting to the beloved and blessed Memory of the late JOSEPH KROLL; and WHEREAS, the life of Joseph Kroll, abundant as it was with testimony of his fine character, his passion for self-sacrifice, his devotion to the theory as well as the practice of GEMILATH CHESODIM, more accurately demonstrates the inherent greatness of the man, than can any mere words and phrases; and

WHEREAS words of praise, extolling the virtues of the late JOSEPH KROLL would be as futile as the words of a child, telling of his love for his parents, as unsatisfactory as an infant attempting to dispute its crying

need for maternal care; so therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Secretary of this Organization be, and hereby is, instructed to inscribe the name of JOSEPH KROLL on the margin of each and every page of the minute books of this organization, from this date on, until further order of this body, that the name may always be present with us, even as his precious Memory shall always be with us, guiding our destiny — that in so doing we may be honored by the late JOSEPH KROLL, whose Memory was so honored by the man, that we of this Organization cannot truly honor him as well; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Secretary be, and he hereby is, instructed to send a true copy of this RESOLUTION to the widow of the late JOSEPH KROLL.

During World War II Board Members volunteered for civilian defense work as a group. It is interesting to note that \$500 was invested at 2½ per cent interest with government insurance from a local savings bank with a proviso that if it were withdrawn prior to six months they would receive no interest.⁵

War bonds and stamps were sold at the annual meeting.⁶ During January, 1942 the society sold \$350 in defense stamps. Also all members of the Association were exempt from paying dues while serving in the Armed Forces of our country.⁷ A Tablet containing the names of members serving in the Armed Forces and sons of members was hung in the office. At the annual meeting February 6, 1944 a Service Flag with names of sons and daughters in the Armed Service was displayed.

One effect of World War II was that the Association's office was not heated on Sundays due to lack of fuel.⁸ As a result the office was closed on Sundays, at first during the winter months then due to general conditions for the duration of the war.

Post war plans were discussed in depth during 1945. After numerous suggestions the Board on June 20, 1945 unanimously voted to grant all veterans a six months extension before requiring payment on any loan. On February 25, 1948 this rule was amended stating that "veterans be ruled as civilians in the future."⁹ Thus ended the war activities of the society.

Donations became a small but vital means to augment the Association's funds for loans. Table D shows the total donations as recorded in the minutes over the years.



JOSEPH KROLL
Honorary Director for Life

PRESIDENT

1907, 1908, 1912, 1914, 1916, 1922, 1924, 1927, 1928, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1937

THE HEBREW FREE LOAN ASSOCIATION
OF PROVIDENCE

גמילות חסדים

• •

invites you to the

Fortieth Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 1, 1942

at TOURO HALL, 88 Mathewson Street

• •

Reports of officers and committees, nominations, balloting
on officers and such other business as may regularly
come before this meeting will be considered.

• •

The meeting will be called to order 2:30 p. m. sharp.

SIDNEY L. RABINOWITZ, President

DAVID SWARTZ, Secretary

TABLE D
DONATIONS YEARS 1938-1950

YEAR	AMOUNT IN DOLLARS
1938	248.
1939	160.50
1940	246.35
1941	206.50
1942	406.
1943	406.14
1944	674.
1945	547.
1946	273.
1947	889.
1948	307.
1949	354.
1950	215.

A typical list of reasons indicated for the donation contributed and amounts are in the tables following.

TABLE E
DONATIONS AND REASON INDICATED FOR YEAR 1942

REASONS	AMOUNT IN DOLLARS
Bar Mitzvah	15
Birth grandson	7
Donations	219
For annual report book	25
Memory deceased	5
Two of \$5 each for flowers sent by Society when ill	10
Will to Society	125
TOTAL	<u>\$406</u>

TABLE F
DONATIONS AND REASON INDICATED FOR YEAR 1949

REASONS	AMOUNT IN DOLLARS
Anniversary	15
Chanukah	10
Donations	66
Engagements	25
Memory deceased	103
Weddings	35
Will	100
TOTAL	\$354

These lists contain the typical reasons for donations to the various Jewish organizations. The large amount in 1947 reflects a bequest of \$500 left to the Gemalith Chesed.

Retention of members was a problem. For example, on January 19, 1940 it was reported that 126 members stopped paying dues. The Board made an effort to contact personally all 142 persons who had not renewed membership the past two years.¹⁰ Over the ensuing years whenever the collector could not obtain the membership dues the Board endeavored to visit the delinquent members.

To honor the memory of Joseph Finberg for his handsome bequest a recommendation was made to establish the "Joseph Finberg Memorial Fund for loans between \$51 and \$100 inclusive."¹¹ This was unanimously approved at the following weekly Board meeting with the stipulation that the Fund be started upon receipt of the bequest. Two years later after the Probate Court released the funds the Joseph Finberg Memorial Fund was established with \$2,000 from the legacy.¹² Six months later the first loan from the Fund for \$100 was granted to a shipping clerk.¹³

As economic conditions improved during the war period the need was felt to increase the size of the maximum loans. Loans had ranged from \$20 to a top of \$300.¹⁴ At the annual meeting on February 2, 1941 the motion to increase loans to \$350 was approved and passed by the Board on March 19, 1941. The first \$350 loan was granted on March 28, 1941.

By 1943 the top loan was increased to \$400.¹⁵ Finally in 1946 the amount of one loan was raised from \$400 to \$500¹⁶ and on April 26, 1946 the first \$500 loan was granted. Over the ensuing years the \$500 maximum loan was maintained.

By 1947 the Association had three funds:

- 1) The General Fund from which larger loans up to \$500 were granted;
- 2) the Joseph Kroll Memorial Fund granted loans up to \$50; and
- 3) the Joseph Finberg Fund for loans ranging from \$51 to \$100.

Being a member of the Board required constant diligence. Absence for three consecutive meetings caused a seat to be declared vacant, and frequent vacancies occurred.

Many prizes for the annual raffle were donated by members of the Board.¹⁷ As inducement to increase membership Board members offered prizes of \$25 War Bonds to any individual who brought in 40 members or more.¹⁸

One persistent problem confronting each loan society is the collection of delinquent accounts. Although the net percentage loss has been less than 1 per cent nevertheless a constant effort was made to seek repayment from those in arrears.

On December 8, 1937 the board "voted to authorize (attorney) to proceed to collect the following outstanding monies as best he can."¹⁹ Following this statement two names were listed. At the May 31, 1939 meeting three names were read as delinquent in their accounts. A week later it was reported that one account endorser who was in New York City would be seen upon returning to Rhode Island while the other two borrowers could not be located.

At most Board meetings delinquent names were read and assigned to members for their personal attention. Occasionally accounts were turned over to the chairman of the delinquent committee for legal action.²⁰ In a typical case periodic requests were made to have an extension granted.²¹ A week later the current payment due was received with a promise in the letter to continue sending \$5 every other week to complete the amount due.²²

Generally, good progress in collecting amounts in arrears was reported. The president of the Association called "attention on comparison of loans granted to the present that few losses occurred considering the amount of loans granted."²³ Thus from its inception the Society had "small loss on its records."²⁴

A major effort to augment funds for the Association was the annual raffle. Profits for 1938 amounted to \$621.90.²⁵ The winner of the raffle,

Governor Quinn, returned his first prize and in token of appreciation for this action the Board of Directors "presented him with a fine travelling bag."²⁶ In the 1941 Raffle the total raised was \$771.50 with donations of \$60 and prizes costing \$38. During the World War II period a \$50 War Bond was the first prize.

A good source of income was the Memorial Tablet upon which names of deceased loved ones were inscribed after a minimum donation of \$25.

To augment the total membership three classes were adopted on March 21, 1945: (a) regular members with annual fee of \$3 (b) life membership at \$50 and (c) junior membership at \$1 per year.

In 1944 300 new members joined the Society.²⁷ A year later there was a net gain of 305 members.²⁸ At the annual meeting February 3, 1946 it was announced that 163 new members were added to the rolls. It was reported at the annual meeting in 1947 that 1632 members were on the roster, of which 11 were life members and 25 juniors.²⁹ In 1948 new members increased by 219 of which 12 were junior and 13 life members.³⁰ An additional 172 members were added to the fold in 1949.³¹ Thus the increase in membership was constant.

In 1914 the largest loan was \$100. Since then the Organization has granted more than 32,277 loans amounting to better than \$4,500,000. Individual loans today can run as high as \$2,500. The growth and continuation of the Association stem from the dedication of individuals who believe in the ideal of aiding their fellow man.

NOTES

1. Minutes, Feb. 1, 1950.
2. Ibid., Jan. 12, 1938
3. June 5, 1938
4. Jan. 22, 1939
5. Feb. 1, 1942
6. Feb. 7, 1942
7. Feb. 7, 1942
8. Nov. 25, 1942
9. Feb. 25, 1948
10. Jan. 19, 1940
11. Oct. 10, 1945
12. Jan. 15, 1947
13. June 11, 1937
14. Jan. 26, 1938
15. Feb. 7, 1943
16. March 20, 1946
17. May 26, 1943
18. Feb. 6, 1946
19. Dec. 8, 1937
20. March 20, 1940
21. April 3, 1940
22. April 17, 1940
23. March 2, 1949
24. Feb. 5, 1950
25. Nov. 9, 1938
26. Nov. 2, 1938
27. Nov. 8, 1944
28. Feb. 4, 1945
29. Feb. 19, 1947
30. Feb. 15, 1948
31. Feb. 6, 1949

IDA SILVERMAN: NOBODY'S PUPPET

by HELEN MORRIS

For nineteen centuries, Jewish people all over the world remembered the promise that their God had made to them; that history would not be complete until they were restored to their homeland. The hopes that they held were not always of a self-governing state in Palestine, but the idea was present in the tradition. The idea of exile had become something very familiar and in fact comfortable to most, and many underwent extreme political and personal persecutions in the lands outside Palestine. They were often hated in their adopted homes because of the stubbornness with which they would cling to an ancient and foreign religious and social tradition.

Because of these and other reasons too complex to be dealt with satisfactorily here, Zionism always existed in some form, whether a spiritual longing, or an intellectual ideal. But the beginning of modern Zionism was marked by the slow transition of the Jews into the political systems of the countries they inhabited. With the Enlightenment, Jews began to share the rights of their Gentile neighbors, and, with the gradual receipt of a public voice, the Zionist call was able to be heard. The essence of modern Zionism was that it existed as more than mere ideas; it was organizations and people. The first event of public vociferation was in Basle, in 1897, at the First Zionist Congress, which met shortly after Theodore Herzl published *Der Judenstaat*.

The aims of the First Zionist Congress were to establish the ideology behind the movement they were sure they would begin:

Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organization and bringing together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps toward obtaining government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aims of Zionism. 1

The aims thus verbalized by the First Congress were kept alive by

subsequent annual Congresses, and by the institutions which grew out of them. The story of American Zionism is most often told as the story of the various organizations which at first modelled themselves after the European leadership, but which finally dominated the Zionist world both financially and politically. Those organizations and the men and women who participated in them were of wide and various cultural interest and background, touching almost all strata of American Jewish life, often in harmony, but sometimes in opposition.

In studying American Zionism, one must be mindful of several sources. What one tends to go to first is the organizations and their leaders. This is a natural and a valid place to begin an historical investigation. However, it is also important to round out one's knowledge by trying to get the view from the middle and the bottom. The American Zionist movement struggled continuously to unify its ranks. There were probably as many things unaccomplished as there were things achieved in the years between 1909 and the mid 40's, and it may also be safe to say that the majority of these delays were caused not by the simple lack of funds, but by the pride of and tensions between the leaders of the world's agencies. Diplomacy was a rare quality in the leaders, so full were most of them with unidirectional emotional energy.

The American repercussions of the European organizing trends began to take shape in the 1890's, when small local federations sprang up in New York, Boston, and the Midwest. It was recognized early that these miniature groups of Zionists would not constitute a powerful faction in the world picture until there was a nucleus and a membrane to unify their motions. But the complications were numerous. It was no easy task to unify American Jews because of their diversity of background. There were Zionists of all kinds in America, ranging from the established Germans, to the Socialist sweatshop workers on the Lower East Side. Yet despite the inevitable complexities, the need for one Federation of American Zionists prevailed, and it was established in 1898, in time to send delegates to the Second Basle Congress.

The early years of the Federation were a preshadow of the hostility and painful ups and downs that Zionism would see through the years. And "in the years before the First World War, the FAZ led a precarious existence, time and again nearly torn apart by tensions between it and its constituent societies, or undermined by a vacillating policy on the part of the World Organization."² The Jewish population of the U.S. was not well enough established, for the most part, to put time and money into a cause that had only indirect immediate benefits. Of those who had a love for Zionist aims,

only a small number was actually involved in a federation. Naturally, the Federation which was designed to bring American Jewry together could not hope to succeed without firm financial backing. The pressures exerted on the Federation by the lacks of the Jews (of united interests, time, energy, and money) and by the internal weaknesses (lack of true administrative leadership) led to its collapse in 1914. Other Zionist organizations still survived, and competition also contributed to the downfall of the first centralization scheme.

During World War I, Zionism in the U.S. continued to survive at the local level. Its substance was still most strong in the minds of the most powerful and vocal individuals. Louis D. Brandeis, Julian W. Mack, Stephen S. Wise and Henrietta Szold still stand out as four of the most influential elements of Zionism in America.

Brandeis had been born and raised in Kentucky, and sent to Harvard to study Law. He had never joined a synagogue or publically proclaimed his Judaism in any way until 1913 when he attended a meeting in Boston (where he had a prestigious law practice), of the executive board of the FAZ. After a moving speech by Nahum Sokolow, Brandeis enthusiastically thanked him, saying, "you have brought me back to my people."³ Brandeis proceeded, from that point, to equate Judaism and Zionism; for him, there could be no separation of the two, and he saw neither as possible outside of Democracy. In his mind, "The highest Jewish ideals are essentially American in a very important particular. It is Democracy that Zionism represents. It is the social Justice which Zionism represents, and every bit of that is the American ideals of the twentieth century," which led to his ever-quoted maxim, "To be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists."⁴ Brandeis helped thus to iron out some of the many contradictions that patriotic Jews felt there were in being American and contributing to the building of another nation. Brandeis was prominent in American society as a Supreme Court Justice during the Wilson administration, which subtracted from the actual time he was able to give to the Zionist movement, so it was Julian Mack who held the important position at the head of the Zionist organization, from 1916 on. Stephen Wise was Rabbi of the bastion of Reform in New York, Temple Emanu-El, but his strongest drives were love of Jews and love of American, more than religious love. His Zionism resembled Brandeis' in both magnitude and philosophical color.

Henrietta Szold began to play her part in the "Brandeis group" in 1909 when the Federation elected her honorary secretary, in an attempt to bring the administration of the organization into reality. But her primary

concern was for the then miserable living conditions in Palestine, and in 1912, she helped found a New York women's organization (Hadassah) to begin immediately with the improvement of health and sanitation there. Shortly she became national president of the group, which had chapters all over the East. The strength of her organization was that "rather than talk about vague abstractions like self-emancipation and spiritual centers, the Hadassah leaders have always emphasized specific, concrete tasks." The contribution she made to Zionism is almost unaccountable for its enormity. It gave Jewish women a role in the fulfillment of ideals, as well as making substantial progress in the Middle East, which helped stir up enthusiasm and backing in America. "She epitomized Brandeis' hope of bringing America to Zion. . .and because she had so much more of a Jewish background than he did, she was able to bridge the two. . .which, in the end, he could not do himself."⁵

Hence it was Hadassah and other small organizations, and individual men and women who stood out because of their administrative skills that transmitted most of the Zionist impulses to the hearts of American Jews. Many were directed to Zionist action by these external signals, but the fervor which kept them going through the many trials always came from a deep internal conviction that a Jewish state was fundamental to the survival of the people. Most did not find themselves involved in a divine mission at all; their purpose was humanitarian and historical. The national organizations were rich and participated in by a wealthy elite, but local chapters gave Zionism a popular chance. Evidence of this is the establishment between late 1914 and early 1916 of eight new chapters of Hadassah, almost doubling its influence. There were new chapters in the Midwest and in the East. The second chapter to be founded in New England was in Providence, through the efforts of Mrs. Archibald Silverman.

Her thirty-third year, 1915, was a turning point for Ida Silverman. She had been born in 1882, in Kovno Lithuania, and brought to the U.S. when eight months old. Of her eight brothers and sisters, she was the youngest, and the only one to survive past childhood. Her family lived in New York until 1892, and then moved to Providence, where they were the only Jews in the neighborhood. Orthodox, and a Talmudic scholar, her father raised her until she was fifteen, when he left her orphaned. "She inherited a love of Judaism and Zionism which were, and always will be synonymous to her." She was bright and from an early age, loved and "showed a natural aptitude for elocution."⁶ At eighteen, she married Archibald Silverman, a



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jeweler two years older than herself who, with her, became involved in work for Jewish orphans. He became a trustee of the orphanage while she organized and presided over the Ladies' Auxiliary. Although she had four children herself, she could not live with the thought of *any* children suffering and gave time and effort to philanthropic causes rather than fussing excessively over internal affairs of her household.

The Silvermans became acknowledged locally as philanthropic leaders. Not only did they head the orphanage, but Mr. Silverman also had an important role in the local American Jewish Relief Committee, and the congregation of the Reform Temple Beth El. Ida Silverman watched the progress of the Zionists and was both vocal and verbose in her praise of their movement. For this, she received criticism; the Council of Jewish Women told her "she owed it to her *family* not to jeopardize her social position by working for an 'unpopular,' unfashionable cause like *Zionism*, a cause that was doomed to failure, since it would *never* amount to anything."⁷ Clearly, Zionism was not regarded enthusiastically by the Jewish majority in 1915, but as Henrietta Szold's campaigns through Hadassah flourished, Ida Silverman recognized the time for action, and so Hadassah came to Providence.

Early in the 1930's, Mrs. Silverman set down her beliefs in her Affirmation and Confirmation of Faith. These were the expressions of her "Jewish heart," laid on paper, which were the directives for nearly all her letters, articles, and speeches. She seldom took notes with her to a podium, so well did she know her reasons for standing behind one. She had a knack for eloquent story-telling, and was a gifted propagandist. Her motivations were her deep pride and love of Jews and Jewishness, not a set of ethics well thought-out and intellectually supported. The heat of her convictions, though, meant the success of her endeavors, and is revealed in her writing:

Affirmation of Faith

Why I am a Zionist

- 1- Evidently I was born a Zionist. Hence am one through *heredity*.
- 2- Was taught *love* of Zion by a Talmudic father:-
 - (a) To *love* the land of my people Israel — *God-given* and *God-promised*;
 - (b) To *want* it not through *fear* but through *pride*.
 - (c) To *believe* in the prophesies and their fulfillment.
 - (d) To *have faith* that only from out of Zion shall come the word. . .
 - (e) that just as we, the *People of the Book* wrote the *one Book* that gave civilization to an unenlightened world, so will we commence to

write other Books to teach civilization once again to an uncivilized world!

- 3- All of above reasons and beliefs, coupled with the fact that we have been designated the Eternal People (“Am Yisroel’Chai”), and history having proven that all our enemy-nations — those that sought to destroy us — have themselves been destroyed, make my faith a *real, a practical, a logical way of life for me the Jewess and the Zionist!*

Confirmation of Faith

- 1- “Not by might but by right!”
 (a) ... Israel has outlived the *strongest nations throughout history*, all of which tried to exterminate this weak minority.
 (b) ... How the nations have “blessed” the Jewish people — perhaps that is the cause of the chaotic state of our world to-day.
- 2- I have always believed and proclaimed “never will there be peace on earth and goodwill toward men” until the Christian world makes peace with the Jew. Words *alone* though momentarily well-intentioned won’t do; *acts, deeds* must follow and then the joyous miracle will occur!⁸.

With incredible energy, Mrs. Silverman burst onto the Zionist scene. Over and over, she was called “the foremost woman orator,” or “a national Zionist leader,” and between 1915 and 1919, she must have gathered around herself a strong following. The many Zionists who admired her for her vigor worshipped and idealized her; those who still found Zionism questionable or repugnant opposed her bitterly. But she managed in any way, to make her name very well known, and in 1919, she received her first national recognition, when she was elected honorary vice-president of the American Jewish Congress. Those years of defensiveness about her Jewishness and her Zionist fanaticism evaporated into the glory of an honored place in an American national movement. She lectured and travelled confidently around the United States and around the world, speaking ardently to those who shared her hopes.

The American Jewish Congress had wound along a rocky road before reaching *terra firma*. It had been the outgrowth of a Zionist effort to centralize Jewry after the failure of the FAZ. Going against the Zionists all along had been the staunch and largely assimilated Reformers, who also had the bulk of American Jewish wealth. The organization of the aristocracy, the American Jewish Committee, began to dedicate itself and its finances to the relief of European, and not Palestinian Jews during and

after the war. The relief committee of the Zionists (the Provisional Committee) could not maintain its own against such wealth, and began to make moves for a joint agency, since all the sources were the same. But "Jews undoubtedly had the right to look after their own interests; that consideration, after all, had prompted an original organization of the American Jewish Committee. But the methods had to be discreet and subtle so as not to call attention to Jews as a group."⁹ The leader of the AJC was Louis Marshall, governed by a spirit of moderation, who opposed the formation of a congress, because it would give "blatant and flamboyant orators an opportunity to make themselves conspicuous for a moment, irrespective of the permanent injury which they inflict upon Jewry."¹⁰ Delays and back-and-forth politicizing lasted throughout the war, with Brandeis trying to satisfy the AJC and the Zionists at once, but finally, it was shown that the cautious and nearsighted ways of the AJC had to be superceded by the Congress, and so it was. In 1916, delegates from all strata of Jewish life came together and constructed a plan for electing the Congress. In 1917, the U.S.A. entered the war, and the Congress was delayed until the end of international friction. When the Congress finally was elected, most of the major offices were filled by Zionists, with the vestigial loyalists to the AJC being bound to follow the majority.

When Mrs. Silverman came to the Congress in 1919, it was well enough established to confer prestige upon its members. But its members were numerous and widespread. There were honorary vice presidents in most states, more than one in some, and their existence did not exclude the existence of other prominent Zionists outside the auspices of the Congress itself. Since the aims of the Congress were not specifically Zionist, there was still room in America for a multitude of organizations devoted by varying means to the same cause. The Zionist Organization of America was, in 1919, the parent organization of Hadassah and numerous other specialized agencies. Organized early in 1918 by Brandeis, it was to be the

"single national organization, to which every Zionist in the country would belong directly. . . members would belong to local Zionist chapters that would definitely be subservient to the ZOA. . . existing clubs and societies would have an opportunity to work out their own problems and goals, but with the definite understanding that the ZOA held responsibility and authority for Zionist policy in the United States."¹¹

The plurality of Jewish and Zionist organizations in the U.S. created a favorable environment for Mrs. Silverman. It allowed her to speak as freely as she wanted, sometimes recognized as a Hadassah figurehead,

other times pegged in her role as an American Jewish Congressperson. The advantages were that she seldom had to take a formal stand within all the power-playing of the world leaders, because her positions were honorary (as opposed to organizational). Her position, to be sure, was not unique. There were probably hundreds or thousands of other Zionists who believed more strongly in the right of the Jewish people to a homeland than in anything else, and harbored disregard for the intricacies involved with the execution of the ideal. She was not alone in her multiple memberships, either. Her intense emotional character in fact demanded that her influence be as widespread as possible, and her skills and achievements depended upon that vehemence in her character. Her whole intention was to make emotional waves; the leaders of Zionism recognized this early and employed her to their advantage.

How good she was for Zionism is thoroughly debatable. She was just the kind of person the temperate Louis Marshall feared most might ruin the respectability of American Jews. But to the Zionist Jews such as Rabbi Wise, and to Chaim Weismann, although she was far less intellectual than they, she was a godsend. Money was always a central factor. She had enough of her own to travel to all parts of the world, and she was great at raising it.

From 1919, when she was elected to be an honorary Congressperson, on through the nineteen-twenties her role in the movement was one of reaching down to the Jews who had perhaps joined the ranks but not yet given, and pulling them up into the force of the movement. She was an agile mediator between the actual leaders of organizations, and the people who became the organized fabric, but she tended to be more respected and well-known among the lowly than in the circle of the management. It was always through her stirring words, either written or spoken, that she contacted and won new followers.

To the *Jewish Tribune* in April, 1923, she wrote, "To me Judaism cannot be split up and hyphenated." All, she said, should be bound together by love. There must be no separation of American Jews from the rest of Jewry, and American Jews especially must take care not to put being American before being Jewish. Jews are bound by blood, regardless of their nationality, and "religion, like love, is based on sacrifice; the greater the sacrifice, the more enduring the love." The important thing about being Jewish is maintaining Jewishness and helping each other. The purpose of her reacting thus to the popular concept, "American Judaism" was to make a pitch to those Americans lest they forget the others who they might save through their wealth.

She spent her years before 1925 working as a Hadassah lady, travelling in New England, attending conferences and rallies, and making speeches. But in 1925 she made her first visit to Palestine ever, and came back with a whole new kind of inspiration — the eye-witness experience. She had gone over to witness the opening of the Hebrew University, and when she returned, she composed two lectures “Man cannot live on bread alone” and “Some of my impressions of Palestine,” which she used informally for her talks that year, and which were excerpted in Zionist periodicals. Her impressions of Palestine:

...As we left Haifa for Jerusalem, we noticed beautiful red-roofed houses, fine, fertile farms, and as a contrast, dirt hovels and unkempt land. Upon inquiry, we learned that the nice looking villages are Jewish colonies, clean and progressive, while the mud houses belong to the Arabs who are as primitive in their mode of living as they were 2000 years ago. . . The Jews have always been great builders. . . Today in Palestine the Jews of the world have their opportunity to prove that they are builders. The nations of the world are watching us to see how we make use of our opportunity. If we fail it will be the blackest day in the history of Israel. But there will be no “if” in Zion.¹²

On her trips to Palestine, Mrs. Silverman made reports of the conditions of the colonists' lives. She would tabulate numbers of cattle, chickens, trees, and people in each settlement, and fill in gaps with descriptive notes. There were hundreds of settlements, each with a name, of Jews who had come from Eastern Europe seeking refuge. They planted almonds, oranges, lemons, olives, grapes and tobacco. They were given an acre, a tent, farming implements and six weeks' rations, costing a total of \$250. The Zionists had managed, by the time Mrs. Silverman visited, to settle 150,000 pioneers this way. But there were 8 million Jews left who were starving in Europe, and Palestine was not yet wide open as their haven. Thus Mrs. Silverman gained a detailed perspective which was useful in stirring up support. She could expound on the nobility and stoicism of the pioneers, meanwhile making a clear point of the desperate needs still to be met. The Jews who settled in Palestine desired nothing more than an agricultural land in which to carry out their daily needs, not an industrial nation to vie with the established powers. Zionist objectives reflected these wants; they were agricultural rehabilitation, medical concerns, and development of only the simplest, most necessary industry, such as electricity. Such were the points made by Mrs. Silverman as she went around the U.S. founding new chapters of Hadassah and speaking at

Temple gatherings or conferences of local Zionist groups.

To look at Mrs. Silverman's activity in the Zionist movement does not reveal the power struggles at the top. Although she held powerful positions, she never enjoyed the responsibility of administrative tasks; she was too busy travelling. She was the darling of the United Palestine Appeal, which had been the funding power of the Zionists since 1925, and had been the major support system of Hadassah. In 1926 and '27 the efforts she made to raise money for the UPA were always in Hadassah's name, and very important to her success was defining Hadassah to her audiences: "In America, Hadassah confines its efforts principally to matters of education; in Palestine to health problems. One cannot conceive of the problems which faced the people of our nation when they returned to their own country."¹³ She had been to Palestine and seen the problems — she had seen the infant mortality rate drop from 70% to 30% as Hadassah taught Jews and Arabs the principles and practices of sanitation. Hadassah was everywhere in Palestine. She spoke this gospel all over the U.S., and the United Palestine Appeal did very well.

Meanwhile, as a member of the American Jewish Congress, she was receiving publicity for their efforts to end Rumanian persecution of the Jews. The purpose of the Congress had been said,

"To further and promote Jewish rights, to safeguard and defend such rights wherever and whenever they are either threatened or violated; to deal generally with all matters relating to and affecting Jewish interest."¹⁴

Its principles led the Congress to denounce Rumania for the failure of its government to "protect the lives, property and reputation of its Jewish citizens and for its refusal to obey the provisions of the international guarantee of Jewish rights accepted by the people of Rumania in 1919."¹⁵ The Congress was busy also with the censure of the U.S. for legislation "which unreasonably restricts immigration (by) demanding modification of the present law."¹⁶

The years 1927-28 stood out in Mrs. Silverman's career as ones for learning the international intricacies of Zionism. She began to recall the Balfour Declaration of 1917 in her speeches more often than before, realizing that the progress of the upbuilding had been steady, but very slow. In Savannah, she spoke alongside Sir Wyndham Deedes (once chief secretary of Palestine and a distinguished military leader), who expressed considerable trust that the nations of the world would not interfere drastically with England's plan to fulfill her obligations in Palestine. He

spoke optimistically, verifying Mrs. Silverman's reports that Jewish traditions, customs and atmosphere already dominated. Mrs. Silverman also attended the World Zionist Congress in Basle that year, and heard the illustrious leaders give their optimistic reports from all over the world.

Her appeals for Hadassah continued just as strongly, yet she never ceased to emphasize the large ideals over the small. To a meeting of Hadassah in Boston, she said, "without Zionism there can be no Hadassah," as if some were so mistaken that they saw Hadassah as an end in itself. She warned Americans against taking such an isolationist view: "The Jews who build so lavishly in this country where they dwell are content that the homeland they are building should be made up of ruins and humble structures. This attitude is especially pernicious, since Palestine is being closely watched by the fifty-two countries which signed the Balfour Declaration."

Massive drives for the Appeal were launched throughout 1928, in the midwest and in Canada. Goals were set high, and the money came in in spurts. The Appeal had under it five funds: the fund for colonization, education and immigration, the Jewish National Fund, the land-buying agency, Hadassah, and the university fund. Palestinian Jews, all aspects of their lives, in fact, depended upon these funds. The progress, naturally, was painfully slow. The main thing American Jewry had to realize, other than the basic importance of Zionism, was that it could not go anywhere without their help. Yet not every Jew was to go to Palestine, and Mrs. Silverman had to remind them that "the prophecy was for a 'remnant of Israel' . . . I have had Jews say to me in the U.S., 'America is my Zion and Washington is my Jerusalem.' How terrible! There is one Zion and that is the Zion of our forefathers." Clearly, Mrs. Silverman did not subscribe to Brandeis' way of seeing America as the crux of Jewish dignity.

The ZOA's convention in 1928 was the scene of an administrative clash which Mrs. Silverman could not avoid noticing. The controversy was over the present administration's handling of funds. Louis Lipsky, the president, had been Brandeis' replacement in 1921, and in those seven years, there had been a serious debt accumulating. Bringing the Hadassah fund drives under the same control as the Keren Hayesod had created competition and had alienated the many valuable female bodies of Zionism. Lipsky saw Hadassah "as adherents of the despised Brandeis position, while they mistrusted his proposed reorganization that would deprive them of their power and purpose."¹⁷ Such a loss of popularity was drastic for Lipsky, and the membership of the ZOA declined, while Hadassah boomed. "Throughout the decade, periodic attempts to reach a

'modus vivendi' between the two groups foundered upon the resoluteness and independence of Hadassah, and the administrative incompetence of the Lipskyites."¹⁸ The Brandeisists who had left when Lipsky came to manage the ZOA were still members, and many of them were working to establish an Agency which would include non-Zionists. They were not so opposed to Lipsky as they were to his policies (or lack thereof), and there were movements to oust him from his office. Stephen Wise, who was still active in the ZOA, was one of those avid Zionists who sympathized with Lipsky for his singleminded determination, but who had the perspective of the businesslike Brandeis faction. Brandeis himself was aware of the high salaries of the Lipskyites, and the poverty of Palestine which they purported to be funding, and later was responsible for an auditing committee. The chaos of the Zionist ranks — the polarization of loyalties and power, the competition for funding, the falling off of financial support and the fluxes in membership — brought enormous pressures upon Lipsky at the convention of '28, and some of the delegates realized that to oppose his re-election would be the only way of revitalizing the Zionist cause. Lipsky could no longer benefit American Zionism, with his capitulation to the World Zionist Organization, which was run in Europe by Chaim Weizmann with many of the same flaws. There had to be more careful budgeting as there had been in the Brandeis years.

The issues and proceedings of the ZOA convention of '28 epitomized all the struggles of the movement. On the one hand, there was the group in power, allegedly mismanaging the organization but trying to maintain some kind of unity through authority. This group was quite idealistic in its outlook; Lipsky would avoid references to the internal controversy and stress the bright side: "that clot in our system" — worry over ill-health in Palestine — "the source of aches and pains, has been dissolved . . . every report speaks of recovery, . . . life and refreshing enterprise . . . payment of dues to the unemployed which was a humiliation for two years is almost over."¹⁹ The opposition, however, based on a judge's report made to Chaim Weizmann, recommended that those charged with "irregularities" not be administrators, or on committees. Stephen Wise, although not outwardly leading the movements toward ouster, was a critical voice; the important thing was not to destroy the principles of Zionism. He even defended Lipsky's character as "not an administrator but a writer of great power and an extraordinary propagandist,"²⁰ and suggested that Lipsky be relieved of an executive burden. Emotions ran high in debates; suggestions were made that the ZOA be restructured into varying committees and seats (for one of which Ida Silverman was nominated); endless attacks and defenses were made on the basis of the judge's report:

that it was the best source by which to make an objective evaluation, or that it didn't give Lipsky enough credit for the \$15 million he had raised for the Zionist cause. The outcome of the controversy finally meant the retrenchment of Lipsky loyalism, and he was voted back to power.

Lipsky's credibility was never quite the same after the charges were brought against him. He got the presidency of the ZOA back, but his authority amounted to less than it had before. He headed an organization which had nine separately chaired departments, and he still had to contend with the ladies' organization. The energy with which the anti-Lipsky claims were made allowed the Hadassah workers to open their mouths in opposition. At their convention, also, turmoil prevailed. Lipsky went there to talk them into reverence to Zionism, which he felt was best shown by devotion to the ZOA's authoritative will. But when he got there, he found the women's group split over the same basic issues. Irma Lindheim, the president, was charged with disloyalty to the cause, because she and Henrietta Szold were vocal about their questions concerning Lipsky's competence. The women of Hadassah reacted in two ways to these developments: first they nominated Mrs. Silverman for the presidency, then (after she refused to run) they re-elected Irma Lindheim.

Both the ZOA and Hadassah held their conventions in Pittsburg in July. Mrs. Silverman was there despite, mysteriously, her resignation as Vice President of Hadassah two months earlier. At the convention, she took the opportunity to scorn the leaders of Hadassah, charging them with "pernicious slander" and other subversive activity against the ZOA. She made a zealous case for the organization's authority, she was outraged by Hadassah's apparent overspending on administration, and she named the New York leaders as the cause of the withdrawal of many important members. "Many women have found it impossible to put up with the methods of the inner group of Hadassah, those 'bosses' in New York, most of whom have never organized one chapter and never raised one dollar for Hadassah."²¹ She added that all these women seriously harmed money-raising efforts to reconstruct Palestine because they themselves are bossy and unpopular there too.

Mrs. Silverman's one scrape with real authority revealed some important qualities of her Zionism. Her work in the ZOA, the Congress and Hadassah had always been in publicity. Never had she been met with concrete tasks of administration. The fact that she vehemently refused to accept any real responsibility (such as the presidency of Hadassah) could show several things. She may have been aware of the many limitations such a role would put on her exciting travels; she may have feared for her

own lack of ability to do a better job; she may have thought the problems of budgeting and ordering of labor to be hopelessly insoluble. She knew her skills were her passion and her charisma, and she both desired and enjoyed autonomy. Organizations were necessary for others, and she recognized their value when she saw a medical center springing up in Palestine, but she could only support them by giving them her name and her spirit, not her daily intellectual energy. By speaking out against politicizing of any kind, by upholding Lipsky's authority, she was taking a kind of stand which she never had stood in before. She proved herself to be in the camp of the masses. She identified herself more strongly than ever with the multitudes who were so filled with the idea that they could barely schematize. She deterred the cause in the same way that the World Organization under Weizmann had been doing.

The entire Zionist world wanted one thing; everyone agreed on that. But Brandeis was the only leader who wielded lots of power and still tolerated diversity and inconsistency among the ranks of the supporters. Weizmann, Lipsky, and those like them deluded themselves, thinking that all of Jewry should be united in opinion and behavior, that everyone should go about winning Zion by one specific course of action.

By 1928 the American Zionists had a strong self-perception; they understood what their inner problems were, and how those snagged the ideal as it progressed toward realization. They were conscious of divisions and obstacles. What was difficult for them to know was how to overcome their differences. Finally in 1930, an agreement between the Lipsky and the Brandeis factions was reached and there was new optimism. But as the economy fell, and as Hitler rose, totally new international factors began to influence the work of the Americans.

Mrs. Silverman's life changed in those years between 1929 and 1932. Despite the stock market crash, she began to take yearly trips by air to the Holy Land and would spend six months outside of the U.S. travelling, doing the work she had done inside the country — raising money. In Palestine, she would observe the strengths and the shortcomings of the University, she would react to the conflicts (which were increasing in frequency and intensity) between the Jews and the Arabs, and she would continue to substantiate her reports with personal experience and opinion. But the success of her fund-raising schemes lagged far behind their mark of ten years earlier. To export funds seemed more ludicrous than ever to the masses. But in Ida Silverman's intuition, the need was greater than ever.

When an attack on Zionism appeared in the *Menorah Journal* in 1931, Mrs. Silverman immediately reacted. In articles appearing in the *Providence Herald* and *The Jewish Advocate*, she wrote as a member of the Council of the Jewish Agency (the organization which united the Zionists and the non-Zionists for Palestine), and justified the Zionists' belief in miraculous things and their perseverance in a depressed era. Responding to the claims that the Zionists were self-interested hokey capitalists wining and dining their way around the world, she asked what good it could do to slander. Nobody ever said the Zionists were infallible.

They have never pretended to be great financiers, politicians, etc. The evidence of the financial genius of the Zionists lies in the fact that most of them are "kaptzonim," in worldly goods. They are, however, most of them, rich in dreams and in idealism. Somehow or other, money and idealism rarely go hand-in-hand.²²

Dreams, she said, are worth as much as hard-nosed practicality. The important thing is that all Jews eventually share in the joy and glory of Zion, and until then, they should "lay aside pessimistic fears, inferiority complexes, fault-finding and hyper-critical judiciary attitudes."

How different her perspective was from those efficient economic forecasts of the Brandeis group! She was epitomizing the popular idealism which was an essential part of the movement but which repeatedly took the helm and ran it aground. Her "Yiddishkeit" was exactly what attackers of Brandeis said he lacked, and what attackers of Weizmann and Lipsky counted as a gross impediment. It was one element of American Zionism which was borrowed from the universal character of Judaism, and it created whatever bonds there were between American Zionists and those in other countries.

Because of this general, fanatic idealism and energetic faith, Mrs. Silverman fit in wherever she went. In the years after the depression, the Jewish National Fund response began to pick up. Hitler's popularity was an awakening to American Jews, and they began to act with more alacrity on the needs of their European counterparts. As Palestine was being flooded illegally with refugees from Germany and Poland, Mrs. Silverman's pleas grew stronger and her tales of woe more heart-rending than ever. On the international scene, the Zionists began to pressure Great Britain into letting more Jews settle. The Palestinian Jews, habitating a country which was free of the shackles of deficit spending and unemployment, were contributing to the relief of the immigrants with remarkable

generosity. Zionism in the 30's was a global issue, and the definitions which divided American Zionism from World Zionism had to slacken under the pressure to accommodate the increasing numbers of emigrants from Europe.

Throughout the 30's, Mrs. Silverman gave glowing reports of the virtuous character of the Palestinian Jews and their ideals. The presence of the Jews in that land was a gracious one. "With courage and faith many urban dwellers went out on the land to till the soil and build a firmer foundation." Since 1925, the Jews had brought education, health and industry to an Arab land, and tried to live there peacefully. "Eretz-Israel is without a doubt the bright spot in the Jewish world." The Arab hostility of 1937 which took the form of riots and vandalism, Mrs. Silverman regarded as the fault of the Arab national leaders, actually manipulating the masses (who naturally felt gratitude to the Jews for building up and improving the land) into false nationalism. The British plan to partition the land into Arab and Jewish blocks would be a dismal failure, because the groups were symbiotic. The Arabs needed the example of the stalwart and heroic Jewish builders, nobly reconstructing a desolate land while constantly under the threat of having it all taken away. The British Exchequer had the power to cut off funds and endowments, and it was the task of the Jewish colonists to prove that they were worthy of support. The original settlers were chosen carefully, trained and healthy, but by 1939, hordes of Jews were pouring into Palestine, broke, lame and ill, demanding aid from those already there, struggling to maintain the prosperity of their young establishment.

Mrs. Silverman's fervor increased in the late 30's and into the 40's, as she was approaching the age of sixty. As the war raged, organized Appeals set higher goals, and international pressure was put on Great Britain for her promises. Everywhere Ida Silverman went, she was reminded of the desperation of her people. In Poland, she spent a month studying the problems of poverty and suicide; she saw that the hope of the Jewish race rested in its children. The UPA organized a drive for Youth Aliyah, which by the end of 1940 had (with Mrs. Silverman's widespread support-mustering) transported 7,000 children from Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania into Palestine. Those youths arrived there to find better conditions than they might have dared hope for:

Due to the recent opening of the medical department with its modern hospitals and labs, an opportunity has been created for refugee doctors, who, having helped to make Germany the medical center of the world will now be able to contribute their

genius as Jews to the creation of a new medical center while they help in the upbuilding of Jewish culture in the Jewish homeland.²³

The changes in international Zionism through the 30's — the growing recognition of its benefits — gave Ida Silverman just the kind of independence which had been hard to come by in the 20's. She went where she wanted — everywhere. She crossed submarine-infested oceans, and escaped Hitler's influence by just a few days at times. In the U.S. the National Conference of Christians and Jews organized a fund drive, which Mrs. Silverman took pleasure in promoting. In 1941, she went to South America, where she would speak in Hebrew and Yiddish, while investigating the Baron de Hirsch colonies. She found the Jews in the Latin countries to be fervently religious and Zionist, many of them having immigrated from Eastern Europe. In 1942, she spent several months in the British Isles, trying to awaken those wealthy Jews to their responsibility, appealing ruthlessly to their consciences:

And the tragedy of it all is that it is very largely the fault of you Jews yourselves. From 1917 to 1938 we had an open door in Palestine, but the Jews who could well afford it, simply did not understand. . . Had the rich Jews of the world only understood, had they only come forward with the money to pay for emigration and for the land which Arabs were willing to sell, think of the countless thousands of our race who would have been spared the persecution of Hitler and the horrors of the Gestapo. . . The more money he has, the more the Jew shrinks into himself.²⁴

By the end of the war, Mrs. Silverman was over sixty years old, and she began to slow down. After the state of Israel was established, she and her husband continued to support it through building funds. They helped to found, and sat on the Board of the Sharon Hotels, and she served on a Commission (the Herzlia Development Company) which sought to make Herzlia "The Garden City of Israel." Her interest in Israel was as real after it existed as it had been when she was working to make it happen. Her husband died in 1966, and in 1972, she went to live there permanently. Two years later, she died and was buried in a cemetery at the Mount of Olives, outside of Jerusalem. In the two years of her life which she spent in Israel, she helped to erect eighty synagogues. The United States honored her as one of the most active Zionists that ever lived, and Israel remembers her in the University, the hospitals, and in several groves bearing her name.

It has already been said that Mrs. Silverman was not a Zionist leader. She was well known, and her name carried with it a good deal of persuasiveness; nevertheless, she did not run the show. She was a tool, yet no one organization dictated her moves about the world. She had important friends, and she was given special treatment by governments of this country and of others. Insofar as she kept her aims general, she was always able to fulfill her purpose, and keep her optimism high, which proved to be an indisposible advantage in the end.

FOOTNOTES

1. Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1975), p.24
2. Ibid., p. 99
3. Ibid., p. 126
4. Ibid., p. 128, 129
5. Ibid., p. 143, 144
6. Ida Silverman, unpublished autobiographical outline, 1967
7. Ibid.
8. Ida Silverman, unpublished written declaration, 1930's
9. Urofsky, p. 174
10. Ibid., p. 174
11. Ibid., p. 253
12. Ida Silverman, "Some of my impressions of Palestine," 1923
13. Ida Silverman, "Man cannot live on bread alone," 1925
14. *The American Jewish Yearbook* (New York: Jewish Publication Society. 1927-28) vol. 29, p. 159
15. Unnamed periodical, Washington D.C., 1927
16. Ibid.
17. Urofsky, p. 343
18. Ibid., p. 345
19. Louis Lipsky, at the ZOA convention, July 3, 1928

Footnotes Continued

20. Stephen Wise, at the ZOA convention, July 3, 1928
21. Ida Silverman, at the ZOA convention, July 3, 1928
22. Ida Silverman, *The Providence Herald*, Feb. 21, 1931
23. Ida Silverman, before a congregation at Brockton, Ma., 1940
24. Ida Silverman, Dublin, Ireland, 1942

Afterword/Descriptive Bibliography

The details of Ida Silverman's career were found amassed in her scrapbooks, donated to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. Although the books are dense storehouses of information, many of the clippings were without dates, and most of them did not reveal the names of the periodicals they were cut from. She went to Congregations around New England, the East Coast, the Midwest, and other areas of the U.S.A., and the local evening news might describe her and throw in a quote or two. She went to conventions and Congresses which received more coverage, for the numbers involved. At times she herself would write editorials and send them to Providence papers, or Jewish publications. It is impossible to infer precisely how well known she was from such a melange of anonymous clippings. It is also very difficult to document her words in any traditional literary way. I have done what I thought would give the clearest and most accurate information about her, and I relied heavily on *The American Jewish Yearbook* for clearing up my own confusion about some dates and events. To get the overall perspective on Zionism, I used Melvin I. Urofsky's book, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Anchor Books, Garden City, N. Y., 1975), which gave a very detailed history of the administrative struggles of the organizations, and which upheld the "Brandeis Group" as the winners of the cause.

Note—

Helen Morris, a non-Jew, prepared this paper for a Judaica course at Brown.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was held on Sunday afternoon, May 4, 1980 in the auditorium of the Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence and was called to order by the president, Dr. Marvin Pitterman at 2:50 P.M.

Mrs. Samuel Kasper, Treasurer, reported in the treasury a balance as of January 1, 1980 of \$4,546.02. This is exclusive of the endowment funds: Life Membership, the Benton H. and Beverly Rosen Book Fund, the Seebert J. and Gertrude Goldowsky Research Scholarship Fund, and the Erwin E. and Pauline Strasmich General Fund.

Mr. Louis I. Sweet, Finance Chairman, projected an income in 1980-81 of \$10,000, anticipating a surplus for the coming year.

Dr. Pitterman announced that the Oxford Press, which had been publishing the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* since 1958, has gone out of business and another printer must be found. It is hoped that one of equally high caliber will become available.

Librarian, Mrs. Abraham Horvitz, in her report gave excellent examples of how the Association's archives are used.

Dr. Albert Salzberg, Editor, reported that the next issue of the *Notes* will include the following papers: Rabbi Eli Bohnen's experiences as a chaplain in World War II; Melvin Zurier's on Mark Twain and the Jews; Dr. Bartholomew Schiavo's on the founding of the Hebrew Day School; Florence Markoff's based on oral history; Benton Rosen's on a Jewish fraternity at Brown University; Rabbi William Braude's on Talmud studies; and Mrs. Horvitz's on some aspect of local history.

Dr. Pitterman reviewed what is being accomplished by the Association and brought up the need for enlarging the membership roster and for more active participation by the membership.

Mr. Melvin Zurier, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, read the names of the twenty-one members recruited since February. Dr. Seebert Goldowsky made the motion, which was seconded and passed, to express deep appreciation to the Abraham Samuels for the gift of the portable alter. Having read the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee and hearing no counter-nominations, Mr. Zurier made the motion that the secretary cast one ballot for the slate. It was seconded and passed. The officers are: Dr. Marvin Pitterman, President; Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Vice President; Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Secretary; and Mrs. Samuel L. Kasper, Treasurer.

Dr. Pitterman read an encomium for Mr. Bernard Segal, who had retired from the Executive Committee of the Association, and Dr. Salzberg presented a resolution composed by Louis Baruch Rubinstein honoring Mr. Segal. A rising vote of acclaim followed the reading of both pieces.

The Tenth Annual David Charak Adelman Lecture was given by Elinor Joan Grumet, Ph.D. A Hunter College A.B. and Iowa University Ph.D., Miss Grumet, who is currently a Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in the Religious Studies Department at Brown University, dealt with "The *Menorah Journal* and the Apprenticeship of Lionel Trilling." The *Menorah Journal*, originally a newsy periodical dealing with Jewish historical subjects, was founded in 1915 and became the forerunner of *Commentary* magazine. It had a very active literary life which came to an end in 1931. Lionel Trilling was involved in it from 1925 to 1931, and Eliot Cohen was managing editor at the time. It was a cultural endeavor, not Zionist, nor was it religious or Jewish study for its own sake.

A lively question period followed the talk, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 P.M. Collation was served by Mrs. Marvin Pitterman who was assisted by Mesdames Ellis A. Rosenthal, Albert C. Salzberg, Bernard Segal, Joseph Strauss, Louis I. Sweet, and Melvin L. Zurier.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky
Secretary

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

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

1. *Jewish Digest*. XXV:II July-August 1980, pub. by Jewish Digest Association, Bridgeport, Connecticut. 96 pages, paperback.
Pages 52-60. "Why there are no Jews in Sicily, by Marvin Pitterman, reprinted in condensed form from the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 8, No. 1, pages 99-118, titled "Sicilian Jewry" in the original.
2. *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875*. Ed with notes and introductions by Morris U. Schappes. third edition Schocken Books, New York 1971. Second printing 1976. 766 pages, paperback.
Many items, too numerous to mention, relating mainly to 18th century Newport.
3. *Richmond's Jewry 1769-1976*. By Myron Berman. Pub. for the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond by the University of Virginia, Charlottesville 1979. 438 pages, Hard cover. Page 513 and 351 (n. 41) Items showing the close relationship among Colonial Jews, both referring to Newport.
4. *Jewish History Atlas*. 121 Maps from Biblical Times to the present. Revised edition, by Martin Gilbert, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc. New York 1977. 121 maps, hard covers. Map 45. The Jews of Spain and Portugal 1000 to 1497 and the emigration to America. Map 47. The Jews in the Americas 1492-1654. Shows Newport, Rhode Island. Map 61. The Jews of North America 1654-1860. Jews from Surinam and Curacao form second Newport community in 1680.
5. *Search for the Family*. A Chronicle of the Tzvi Hirsh Shulkin and Gelye Devorah Rosen Family and those related to them. By Salyann Amdar Sack, Ph.D. and Mark Weiss Shulkin, M.D. Marshal Press, Bethesda, Md, 1980. 176 pages, hard cover. Contains a brief history and genealogy of the family. Pages 70 and 171. Entries for several family members, born, living, or buried in Cranston.
6. *American Jewish History*, V. 69, No. 3, March 1980. Pub. by the American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Ma. Page 383. Under "Judaica Americana" is listed Vol. 7, No. 4, Nov. 1978 issue of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* and a summary of its contents.
7. *American Jewish Year Book 1980*. American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society. 455 pages, hard covers.
Pages 32 and 33, footnotes 9 and 10.
Quotes Professor Sidney Goldstein of Brown University respecting "Trends in Jewish Philanthropy."
Page 359. Lists *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* under "Jewish Periodicals."
8. *Who's Who in American Jewry., 1980 Edition, incorporating The Directory of American Institutions*. Pub. by Standard Who's Who, Los Angeles, Ca. 726 pages, hard covers.
Contains entries for a number of prominent Jews of Rhode Island. There are several obvious omissions. Pages 701 and 702. Listing of Rhode Island Jewish Institutions. Necessarily incomplete.
9. *Bristol (R.I.) — Three Hundred Years*. Ed. Susan E. Cirillo. Franklin Graphics, Providence, R. I. 1980.
236 pages, hard covers. Page 94. Illustration of the United Brothers Synagogue and a brief notation thereon.
10. *The Student as Historian Learning History through a Variety of Local Experiences*. A guide book for teachers. By Natalie Robinson, Margaret Newcomer, and Hadassah Davis. Pub. as part of project "Rhode Island and its New England Neighbors," administered by School One, Providence, R. I. 1980. 44 pages, soft covers. Page 23. Describes six-week project at the Providence Hebrew Day School, part of seventh and eighth grade United States History Courses, relating to a study of immigration.
11. *America: History and Life*. Part D. Annual index with list of Periodicals. Vol. 16 Part D. 1979. Pub. by American Bibliographical Center of ABC-Clio, Inc., Santa Barbara, Ca.
Several Rhode Island Jewish authors are listed in Author Index and several Rhode Island Jewish historical subjects are listed in Subject Index. References are to *America: History and Life*, Parts A, B, and C, which are essential for detailed identification of the subject matter.

NECROLOGY

COHEN, JOSEPH, born in Fall River, in 1895, son of the late Louis L. and Fannie Cohen. He lived in Providence since 1934. A charter member of Temple Beth El, he also was a member of Congregation Agudath Achim in Taunton. Mr. Cohen was a past national president of the American Institute of Scrap Iron & Steel. He served in the Navy during World War I. He was a 1919 graduate of Brown University. He also attended the U. S. Naval Academy.

Mr. Cohen was a principal figure in the development of India Point Park. Before April 1968, his company owned a 2.7 acre tract there on which it operated a scrap metal yard, one of several owned by the firm in New England. When a park was proposed in the 1960's as a replacement for the scrapyards, Mr. Cohen agreed to a swap for a parcel at Fields Point.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island June 12, 1980.

FINKLE, SELMA, wife of Archie Finkle, daughter of the late Dr. Abraham and Rose Hurwitz, was born in Boston, Mass. 1908.

She was a former officer of the Meeting Street School and past president of the Providence Section of the Council of Jewish Women.

Mrs. Finkle was a graduate of Radcliffe College, class of 1928, and attended the New England Conservatory of Music.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island on October 28, 1980.

LEVY, HARRIET DIMOND, widow of Arthur J. Levy, daughter of the late Rachel Dimond, she was born in Providence in 1898. A past president of the Women's Advertising Club and past president of the Providence Chapter of the Women's Division of Brandeis University, she was a member of the latter's national board.

Died in Providence, Rhode Island October 28, 1980.

MARGOLIS, MAX, born in Lithuania December 4, 1903, son of the late Mendel and Miriam Margolis. He had lived in Cranston and West Warwick for 48 years. He was the founder and president of Maxine from 1941 until he retired two years ago. He was a member of Temple Beth Torah, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, West Warwick.

Died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on February 7, 1980.

MOSKOL, HAROLD, born in 1909, was a Providence resident most of his life. A former state legislator and assistant attorney general, he died of injuries suffered when he was struck by a van.

A Providence Democrat he served in the House and Senate of Rhode Island. He was a 1929 graduate of Brown University, and was graduated from Harvard Law School in 1932. Mr. Moskol was a member of the American Bar Association and the Rhode Island Bar Association. A member of the Touro Fraternal Association and Temple Beth El, Mr. Moskol was a director and past secretary of the Jewish Family and Children's Service.

He died in Providence, Rhode Island on October 5, 1980.

SAUNDERS, ABRAHAM, born in Providence February 1911, son of the late Isaac and Mary Saunders. Before retiring six months ago, he was the owner and operator of Apex Optical Co.

Mr. Saunders was a member of Temple Emanuel, of the Redwood Masonic Lodge and was a captain in the Army during World War II.

He died in Providence Rhode Island August 31, 1980.

SEGAL, BERNARD "BERYL," born in Russia in 1900, he was a son of the late Aaron I. and Rachael Segal. Mr. Segal was chief pharmacist at Miriam Hospital for over 30 years. He was also a well-known teacher and columnist. He taught Yiddish at the Workmen's Circle School, later teaching Hebrew at Temple Beth El Religious School and the Hebrew High School of the Rhode Island Bureau of Jewish Education.

He was the author of many published stories and plays for children, written in Yiddish, Hebrew and English. He wrote a textbook for the Rhode Island Bureau of Jewish Education entitled, "Know Your Community." As a columnist he wrote "One Man's Opinion" for the *R.I. Herald*, and for the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, "Your Medicine Chest."

Mr. Segal did extensive research and writing for the historical *NOTES* of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, of which he was a founding member.

He was educated at the Kamenetzer Yeshiva in Russia, later receiving his B.S. from Brown University in 1927, his M.S. from the University of Rochester in 1932, where he was inducted into Sigma Xi and his Ph.D. from the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy in 1940.

Necrology

One of the first members of the Board of the Bureau of Jewish Education, he was a member of the Temple Beth El, the Jewish Home for the Aged, the Arbiter Ring, and the Brown Club.

The recipient of the Brown Bear Award from Brown University, he received various awards from the State of Israel Bonds, the Farband Poale Zion, the Jewish Historical Society, the Organization of Rehabilitation Through Training, the Bureau of Jewish Education, Temple Beth El and the Rhode Island Bicentennial Committee.

He died in Providence, Rhode Island September 7, 1980.

Errata, November 1979

Volume 8, No. 1

Page 44 *Abraham Goldstein* should read *Charles Goldstein*

Page 128 last line *Joel G. Braude* should read *Joel I. Braude*

Vertical line of text on the left side of the page, possibly a page number or header.



Beryl Segal
(1900-1980)