

## JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE — A RETROSPECTIVE

By ELEANOR F. HORVITZ

The year 1989 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Jewish Family Service, founded on April 17, 1929, as the Jewish Family Service Society. For sixty years Jewish Family Service has carried out the mission stated by Arthur J. Levy, the agency's founder and first president, to strive to strengthen the Jewish family. The purpose was to administer "Family Welfare, Family Rehabilitation and conduct other Charitable Work."<sup>1</sup> Two important questions to be answered in this article are "Who acted as his 'brothers' keepers' before there was a Jewish Family Service?" and "How did the Jewish Family Service Begin?"

### BEFORE THE JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

#### *Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association*

The first known Jewish charitable association in Providence was the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, chartered on March 17, 1880:

For the purpose of visiting and granting weekly benefits to sick members and to assist the poor and needy. ... The preamble to the Constitution read as follows: "In order to follow the example of our noble mothers who always endeavored to the fullest extent of their ability to extend moral and material aid to their Heaven-born religion, to reach the hand of sisterhood to the lowly and humble, to strengthen and support the poor and needy, alleviate trouble and distress, and to practice charity and benevolence, we the Hebrew Ladies of Providence, R. I., do organize ourselves into association for these purposes ..."<sup>2</sup>

The Association was organized by Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David with a group of young women who had immigrated from Germany. Membership was a symbol of social prestige, and applicants were rigidly screened by an investigating committee.

Five years later, in 1885, the name was changed to Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association of Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>3</sup> The association was one of the organizations later involved in the founding of the Jewish Family Welfare Service.

Records of this organization have been well recorded and well preserved. The two most important committees were the Sick Visiting Committee and a Charity

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Committee which investigated all applications for relief. The needs of the Jewish community are revealed in these records. A small sum was given to a man to start a business, money was appropriated to help a woman and her children move to Chicago, and donations were given regularly to the Rhode Island Hospital. At almost every meeting the ladies were confronted with cases of distress. In 1904 they responded to a request by the Miriam Society of South Providence (predecessor of the Miriam Hospital Associates) for assistance to a hospital building fund and, after a hospital was established, they gave a yearly donation.

One fund-raising project was the production of a cookbook which realized money from advertisements as well as from its sale. Charity of the Association extended to people in need outside of Rhode Island, such as victims of the 1900 hurricane and flood in Galveston, Texas, and the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. However, "in the closing days of 1914 ... under the threatening shadows of a great world war, the minutes contained this wry comment written in biblical phrases: 'It was also spoken of that in spite of great needs abroad — charity be given at home first.'"<sup>4</sup>

*Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association and the  
Jewish Home For The Aged*

Almost parallel in time with the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association was the Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association, chartered on April 22, 1890. "To give aid and charity to the poor."<sup>5</sup> "During the first twenty years of its existence, in common with similar organizations of the period, the society was concerned in a rather diffuse manner with the care of the sick, infirm and destitute. What the women lacked in worldly goods, they made up in devotion and compassion. Monthly dues were set at thirty cents, a not inconsiderable sum ...."<sup>6</sup>

Disturbed about the lack of facilities for elderly Orthodox Jews in the early years of the 20th century, the Association formed a subsidiary organization in 1911 for the purpose of opening a center for these individuals under the Association's direction. The Association rented a cottage at 161 Orms Street for \$28 a month, collected household articles to furnish it, and, on March 27, 1912, "obtained a formal charter, incorporating the new unit under the title, The Jewish Home for the Aged by the Ladies Union Aid Association, to 'provide and maintain a home for the aged and infirm.'"<sup>7</sup> The small quarters were soon outgrown, and on June 14, 1914, a new facility was opened at 191 Orms Street, Providence, in a building purchased by the Association.

"In March 1924 the Association received a letter from the recently formed Jacobi Medical Club generously offering to the Home the services of the Jewish doctors of the community."<sup>8</sup>

As early as June of 1923 a prospective benefactor had suggested the possibility of a personal gift of \$50,000 for construction of a new building to house the elderly. The offer was accepted with the proviso that management be retained under the auspices of the Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association. On February 26, 1930, a group of individuals were given a charter to form the Jewish Home for the Aged Building Corporation. After a very successful building campaign, a new Home became a reality when twenty-five residents of the old building on Orms Street were transferred to the newly erected building on Hillside Avenue in Providence. On July 9, 1932, the name of the corporation was changed from the Jewish Home for Aged Building Corporation to the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly thereafter, on July 22, 1932, the name of the women's organization, which had been the Jewish Home for the Aged by the Ladies Union Aid Society, was legally changed to the Ladies Association of the Jewish Home for the Aged.<sup>10</sup> However, the Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association was still a viable and active organization and continued to meet at the Orms Street building.

Rose Sheffres (Mrs. Samuel Sheffres), who had served as president of the Ladies Union Aid Association for many years, said in her report at an annual meeting:

As we go back to the very humble beginning of the Ladies Union Aid Association we can only marvel at the accomplishments of the handful of women — who despite the fact that they had little time — yes, and little worldly goods, managed to find time to help others. In those days, most women raised large families, did their own sewing and baking — and then in a spirit of thankfulness for their own bounty, turned to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Festival Committee for State Institutions*

In addition to their concern with the Jewish aged, various members of the Ladies Hebrew Union Aid Association, as early as 1910, visited the State Institutions, or Howard, as they were then familiarly called, to help the residents.<sup>12</sup> Ladies Hebrew Union Aid was responsible for forming, together with the Montefiore Lodge Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association and the South Providence Ladies Aid Association, the Festival Committee for State Institutions. The Festival Committee was responsible for the Jewish Chapel, in which a Rabbi gave weekly sermons. These women were also available to provide for needs of the Jewish residents and to give parties for them.

#### *South Providence Ladies' Aid Association and the Jewish Orphanage*

Another early Rhode Island "brothers' keepers" organization was the South Providence Ladies' Aid Association, founded in 1908 on August 22, "To aid the

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worthy poor."<sup>13</sup> Less than two weeks later on September 2, several of the same incorporators signed a charter for "A Rhode Island Home for Jewish Orphans," "To support and maintain orphan children between the age of six and twenty-one."<sup>14</sup> The Home was established in the South Providence Hebrew Congregation building on the corner of Willard Avenue and Caswell Court, and in a few months seventeen children were living there. The women soon became disturbed over the operation and financial set-up of the Home and withdrew their support. However, a group led by Herman Paster obtained a charter, dated November 2, 1908, for the same institution, which they designated the Machzeka Hadas Home for Jewish Orphans, "To sustain, keep and educate Jewish Orphans."<sup>15</sup>

The South Providence Ladies' Aid now had a charter for an orphanage, but no orphanage. The assistance of the Montefiore Lodge Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association was solicited, and a second Hebrew orphans' home was established at 151 Orms Street. The two institutions were constantly in financial difficulties. Business leaders of Providence were called upon, and they prompted a meeting of a joint committee representing the two institutions. The two orphanages, the Machzeka Hadas Home for Jewish Children and the Home for Jewish Children on Orms Street, were merged. A new charter was obtained on July 28, 1909, for a Jewish Orphanage of Providence, "To provide for the wants of orphans, abandoned and destitute children, to provide for their education and maintenance, and to establish a home and shelter."<sup>16</sup> Women who were active in the orphanage, chiefly as fund raisers, were part of a group which was first called the Ladies' Auxiliary Society, later changed to the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island.<sup>17</sup>

To accommodate the children a large two and a half story Victorian mansion located at 1213 North Main Street was purchased. The children were transferred during the latter part of June, 1910.<sup>18</sup>

When the quarters on North Main Street became crowded, a tract of land located on Summit Avenue between Fifth and Sixth Streets was purchased for a building. That building was dedicated on October 5, 1924. The new Home with capacity for seventy-four children was a "modern, attractive, red brick veneer structure."<sup>19</sup>

A study of the history of the Jewish Orphanage seems to indicate that it was a successful solution to the problem of the orphans and the abandoned and destitute children mentioned in the charter. It also had another role for children who needed a temporary home during family crisis. They, like the permanent residents, were trained and educated during their stay.

The census of the Home, which had averaged 41 children during the first years

of operation on Summit Avenue, reached a peak of 46 children in 1927, remaining near this figure for a number of years. By January of 1943, though, the projection was that there might be not more than five or six children remaining in the building. It was then determined that the Jewish Family and Children's Service foster care program would assume the responsibility for orphaned Jewish children.

*Council of Jewish Women and the North End Dispensary*

The Council of Jewish Women, another all-woman organization, had a varied role: educational, social, and charitable. One very important accomplishment of this group was the opening in 1908 of the North End Dispensary of the Providence Section, Council of Jewish Women. A state charter was not obtained, however, until September 29, 1911, at which time the Dispensary had already functioned daily for some three years. The organization was chartered, "to provide medical aid and surgical treatment for the poor and needy sick of all denominations."<sup>20</sup>

Many Jewish physicians of the period subsequently served on its staff. The dispensary functioned daily for thirty years, finally going out of business in 1938, having outlived its usefulness.<sup>21</sup>

*Ladies Hebrew Aid Society of Pawtucket*

Much of the documentation of organizations available to future generations is in the form of charters, bylaws, and minutes. Often, however, the accounts of personal experiences of the founding men and women bring a much-needed feeling of their identification with us. For example, a history of the Ladies Hebrew Aid Society of Pawtucket is graphically portrayed in the following excerpts from a president's annual meeting report:

And so it came to Pass:

In the small community of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, situated on the banks of the Blackstone River and the home of the cotton industry a small group of Jewish people dwelled. It was in the year 1915. They had their small house of worship.

And it was good:

Whenever an act of charity had to be done in the community, or a stranger came into the land and was stranded for funds, the men got together and alleviated the condition.

And so it came to pass:

On January in the year one thousand and nine hundred and fifteen, one of the citizenry, one Abraham Goodman, now deceased, realized they needed the help of the women.

And it was good:

He called the women to a meeting at the little synagogue. And the

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women responded by leaving their homes and their children. They came to hear what the important meeting was about.

Mr. Goodman and Mr. Charles Kalman, the president of the synagogue at the time, explained the need for a ladies organization to help with the charitable work.

And so it came to Pass:

That the Ladies Hebrew Aid Society was born on January in the year one thousand nine hundred and fifteen.

And so it came to Pass:

The charitable work progressed. Families were reunited — coal and food were provided to needy. Stranded strangers, passing through our land were assisted. Many a day I can remember a stranger partaking of a meal at our table ... These women had charity in their hearts.<sup>22</sup>

The president spoke also of the help the women gave toward the war effort of World War I, of the money they raised for a new synagogue in Pawtucket, and of the large chandelier which they purchased to enhance the beauty of the synagogue.

The members of the Society also participated in the civic activities of their non-Jewish neighbors. They sent money to such diverse charities as the Memorial Hospital, the Cancer Drive, the Red Cross, and the Civic Music Association. They aided members of foreign birth to become citizens. Their deeds continued through World War II. And, as the president said in her report, "And it was Good."

#### *Other Organizations*

Approximately 46 other organizations were formed primarily to aid those in need, according to a study compiled by David C. Adelman for the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, No. 1, June 1956. The study consists of a list of charters granted to Jews either by the Legislature or by the Secretary of State under the General Laws. Undoubtedly, there were many other organizations which did not seek a charter and were organized in a less formal manner.

Several Young Men and Young Women Hebrew Associations were organized in Rhode Island. The earliest is the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Bristol, chartered April 30, 1896: "For social and benevolent purposes."<sup>23</sup> A Young Women's Hebrew Association, chartered March 13, 1900, set as its goal: "To work for and bestow the proceeds of such work among poor and needy persons, and to do other charitable work."<sup>24</sup> The YMHAs and YWHA's were the forerunners of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island.

*Jewish Federation Of Social Service*

On June 27, 1927, representatives of the Jewish Community Center, the Miriam Hospital, the North End Dispensary, the Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, and the South Providence Ladies Aid Society formed the Jewish Federation of Social Service, and on July 6, 1927, the Jewish Federation of Social Service accepted membership in the Providence Community Chest.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the organizations which had met on June 27, the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island was represented.

HOW THE JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE BEGAN

The minutes of The Jewish Federation of Social Service for February 8, 1929, note the appointment of a committee of five to prepare and execute plans for the formation of a society to replace the South Providence Ladies' Aid Association and the Montefiore Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association as family relief agencies for the Jewish people of Providence. Chosen from the three women's organizations to make up the committee of five were the following: Mrs. Estelle Einstein, Mrs. Philip Kramer, Mrs. E. Rosen, Mrs. Edward M. Finberg, and Mrs. S. Horenstein.

The Providence Community Fund, Inc., had requested that Jewish Federation of Social Service use its offices to form a new organization for charitable work. Arthur J. Levy chaired the committee which represented the three organizations.

The result of the work of the committee of five culminated in the formation of the Jewish Family Welfare Society, established on April 17, 1929, as reported at the January 29, 1930, Board of Directors meeting of the Jewish Federation of Social Service. In the interim, in April 1929, the Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association and the South Providence Ladies Aid Association had passed resolutions to discontinue all family welfare work and to amalgamate their organizations into the Jewish Family Welfare Society. The two women's organizations resigned as agency members of the Jewish Federation of Social Service, and the new Jewish Family Service Society became a constituent agency of both the Federation and the Providence Community Fund, Inc. Temporary bylaws were adopted, and the new Society was organized. A charter was granted on April 25, 1929. Arthur J. Levy was elected the first president and served for nine years. Jacob S. Temkin was elected at the 10th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Welfare Society on January 8, 1939.<sup>26</sup>

Sophie Rabinowitz Gordon acted as Executive Secretary for a short period in an office located in the Jewish Community Center building at 65 Benefit Street.

The first decade of Jewish Family Service was marked by an understanding of the importance of providing social service in addition to economic assistance to the

poor. It was a response to the economic needs caused by the Depression and by the repercussions from Hitler's regime as the first refugees began trickling into Rhode Island.

An examination of the first book of minutes of the Jewish Family Welfare Society (March 2, 1920, to April 17, 1929) reveals the continuous interaction between the organization and other established Jewish organizations. As early as March 2 in the first year the Society had been referred a case by the Jewish Orphanage. The Society soon realized that the aspect of its program dealing with social services was fully as important as its relief-giving measures.

The Board of Trustees, in April of 1930, recognizing the importance of providing social services in addition to economic assistance to the needy, named Jessie Josolowitz Executive Director to spearhead this commitment.<sup>27</sup>

Direct charitable work continued. The Jewish Family Welfare Society shared with the Ladies Union Aid the expense of providing Passover supplies for the State Hospital for Mental Diseases, a responsibility which the Festival Committee had borne alone.

The minutes of February 9, 1931, referred to clothing which had been collected and distributed among needy families. The society contributed toward repairs of the South Providence shelter, and transients who sought help from individuals were advised to seek that aid from the Jewish Welfare Society.

The problems of the Depression were reflected in several minutes of the 1930 decade, with the greatest number of requests being concerned with unemployment and job hunting. A committee was set up to deal with the unemployment problem.

By March of 1932 dentists were donating their services to clients referred by Jewish Family Welfare Society. In December of that year thanks were given to the Ladies Union Aid, the Montefiore Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, the South Providence Ladies Aid Association, and the Miriam Hospital Associates for aiding the Society by furnishing shoes, clothes, medicines, and glasses to families under its care. At the Annual Meeting of 1932 the cooperation received from the Providence Hebrew Shelter and the Sisterhood of Temple Beth Israel was acknowledged.

At the Annual Meeting the following year additional organizations were thanked for their cooperative efforts: the League of Jewish Women, for Passover relief with their donations, and the Council of Jewish Women for contributing to the Milk Fund.

The Annual Meeting minutes of December 17, 1934, reflected the same appreciation to the cooperating agencies. On May 20, 1935, the Executive Director, Jessie Josolowitz, reported the great value of the Jewish Family Welfare Society in the community.

The enactment of social service and Social Security legislation in the 1930s provided the Jewish family Welfare Society some help in aiding those in need, but, while relief could be obtained through public agencies, it was still the Society's responsibility to give care and services and in some cases supplementary relief to Jewish families on public relief lists.

The 1936 minutes referred to the important role the Ladies Union Aid had played in investigating transients in Rhode Island who wanted to return home and also in helping to finance their travel.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Jewish Family Service was continuing to cooperate with other organizations.

Jessie Josolowitz submitted her resignation on June 28, 1937, saying that "the purpose and scope of the society, as she saw it, was directed toward rehabilitation, building for independence and self-maintenance." Her report also contained the last mention of appreciation for the work of the other cooperating agencies.<sup>29</sup>

On December 27, 1937, Isadore Gandal succeeded Jessie Josolowitz as executive director. However, in his report at the annual meeting he made no mention of the cooperating agencies as Jessie Josolowitz had always included in her reports. It is, therefore, not clear what their involvement with Jewish Family Welfare Society actually was.

At the end of the first decade the minutes seem to indicate that the Jewish Family Welfare Society had taken over the responsibility of distributing the Moes Chitum\* funds for Passover supplies. They also arranged for Jewish children to attend the Beach Pond Camp.

The Jewish Family Service was beginning to become involved with the victims of Nazi Germany who came to Rhode Island, forecasting the role it would play in finding foster homes for refugee children and in the resettlement of Jewish families from war-torn Europe.

The many autonomous charitable agencies were fast becoming obsolete as the United Jewish Appeal conducted fund-raising and the Jewish Family Welfare took over the social service role.

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\*Also transliterated as *Moes Hütim* or *Maot Hütim*, literally "Money for wheat." Money given to the poor at Passover for the purchase of matzo, unleavened bread. (Hebrew)

## THE PERIOD 1939 - 1989

In the '40s the scope of the Jewish Family Service Society was enlarged to include psychiatrists as consultants. In 1942 a license was granted for services relating to children. A new responsibility for children emerged with the closing of the Jewish Orphanage and the need to arrange for adoption and foster care. The name of the agency was changed to Jewish Family and Children's Services to reflect the new emphasis. Under Joseph Galkin, Executive Director from 1942 to 1950, placement of refugees from the war in Europe and its aftermath was a key issue.

During the 1950s locating foster homes was still a priority, Homemaker Services were introduced and expanded, and additional emphasis was given to counseling. In 1960 the agency moved its offices from 65 Benefit Street to 333 Grotto Avenue.

The 1970s brought a new director, Paul L. Segal, and national accreditation. This decade was a busy time for the agency, with the promotion of Tay-Sachs testing in cooperation with The Miriam Hospital; a move to the present location of the agency, the United Way Building at 229 Waterman Street; and new programs for the elderly and for widows. With the ever-widening services there was another name change to Jewish Family Service.

During the 1980s the agency has developed the Family Life Education Institute, the Parent Exchange, Warmline, a kosher meal site for the elderly, and the Lifeline emergency response system, all while providing consultation services to communal agencies such as the Providence Hebrew Day School, the Solomon Schechter Day School, the Jewish Community Center, and the Bureau of Jewish Education. Of significant importance has been the role of the Jewish Family Service in the resettlement of the Jews who left the Soviet Union to reside in Rhode Island.

This brief history of Jewish Family Service exemplifies how Jewish women and men of Rhode Island, whether as individuals, members of organized charitable societies, or as associates of social service agencies, have continued over the years to be their "brothers' keepers."



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Portfolio, "60 Years Here For You," compiled by Jewish Family Service, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

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*Jewish Family Service*

Board of Directors, Jewish Family and Children's Service, April 17, 1944.  
 Front row, l. to r., Aronovitch Silverman, Charles Brown, Arthur Levy, Jacob Temkin, Alter Boyman, Leo Weiss, Archibald Albert.  
 Second row, l. to r., Benjamin Brier, Ruth Adelson, Sara Feinberg, Mrs. Ephraim Rosen, Helene Bernhardt, Rose Presel, Rabbi Morris G. Silk, Max Grant, Joseph Galkin.  
 Third row, l. to r., William Smira, Max Kestenman, Jacob Felder, Walter Strauss, James Goldman, William Herman, Harold Moskol.

<sup>4</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 4, Number 1, May 1963, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 4, April 1958, p. 242.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>11</sup> Speech presented by Rose Sheffres (Mrs. Samuel), President, Ladies Union Aid, at an Annual Meeting (1947?).
  - <sup>12</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 7, Number 1, November 1975, p. 160.
  - <sup>13</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 46.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>15</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 3, Number 2, October 1959, p. 89.
  - <sup>16</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 49.
  - <sup>17</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 3, Number 2, October 1959, pp. 94, 95.
  - <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 93.
  - <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.
  - <sup>20</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 56.
  - <sup>21</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 3, December 1957, p. 175.
  - <sup>22</sup> Speech delivered at the 1945 Annual Meeting of the Ladies Hebrew Aid Society of Pawtucket by the president, Bertha Sholes Lipson.
  - <sup>23</sup> *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Volume 2, Number 1, June 1956, p. 29.
  - <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.
  - <sup>25</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Portfolio, *Ibid.*
  - <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>27</sup> Minutes of Jewish Family Welfare Society, April 6, 1930.
  - <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, October 19, 1936.
  - <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, June 28, 1937.
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## A CENTURY OF JEWISH FERTILITY IN RHODE ISLAND

by CALVIN GOLDSCHIEDER, PH.D.

Patterns of reproduction and family size are issues central to Jewish continuity in its most basic form. The level of fertility is linked directly to population growth and indirectly to the Jewish family. Large family size has been linked nostalgically with the distant past, when the size of immigrant families was supposedly large and, by inference, warm and protective. More recently, small family size among American Jews has been associated with the demographic decline of American Jews, who, so it has been argued, are not reproducing themselves in sufficient numbers for population replacement. A systematic examination of what is known about Jewish fertility calls into question some of the more dire predictions about the erosion of Jewish population (Goldscheider, 1986a).

The data from the Rhode Island Jewish community surveys of 1963 and 1987 are particularly well suited to examine issues of Jewish fertility change because we now have an extensive sequence of data that allows us to reconstruct, over about a century, the fertility histories of Jewish women. Since the original study of Jewish fertility in Rhode Island was comprehensive and detailed (see Goldscheider, 1964, 1986b), systematic comparisons can be made that shed light not only on overall changes in fertility but also on patterns of fertility differences among Jews. Thus, we have the opportunity to re-examine a series of relationships for the same community, using similar methodological strategies, and thereby to reconstruct fertility trends and differentials among Jewish women for over a century. The Rhode Island data allow us to examine long-term trends in Jewish fertility, linking them to social and demographic changes in the community. We also explore variation in Jewish fertility within the community for these two survey periods, examining changes in the relationship between religious denominational affiliation and Jewish fertility and investigating the linkages between the changing patterns of labor force participation of women outside of the home and Jewish fertility and the potential for conflict between work and family roles.

### COHORT FERTILITY TRENDS

From the 1963 and 1987 surveys of Rhode Island, we constructed the average number of children born to Jewish women who were ever married, for those born in the last decades of the 19th century to the cohort of women born in the period 1963-69. We used the number of children expected as the basis for estimating the family size of those who had not completed their childbearing years — the last three

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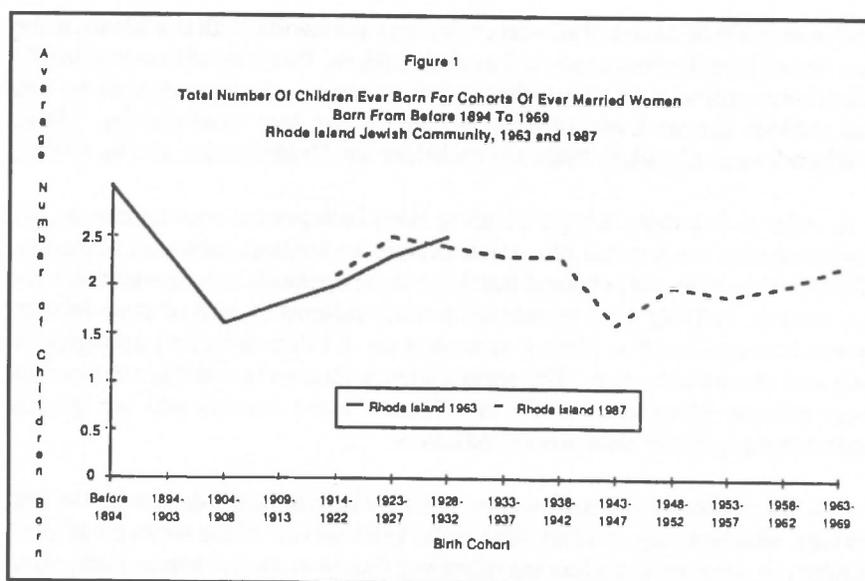
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cohorts (1953-69) of women in the 1987 survey (Figure 1).\*

What do these cohort data show about the variation in fertility over this period of time? Several important features of these data are noteworthy:

- (1) The family sizes of the older cohort of women, those born in the last decades of the 19th century, are the highest recorded for the entire range of cohorts—around three children. This characterizes the oldest cohorts in each survey. This is not a large family size by Eastern European Jewish standards or even compared with the women who were having most of their children in the latter part of the 19th century in the United States. These women not only survived to the 1960s and 1980s but were having their children for the most part in the first two decades of the 20th century.
- (2) A clear downward shift in completed family size characterizes the cohorts of women born after 1894, reaching a low of between 1.6 children and 1.8 children for the 1904-13 cohorts. These were second generation American women who were having their families in the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting the full impact of the economic depression on fertility levels and the timing of childbearing.
- (3) A recovery from these very low, below replacement levels of fertility may be clearly discerned in these data. The recovery is evident for the four cohorts born 1914-33 from the 1963 survey, increasing from 2.0 to 2.5. These were women who were having their families during the late 1930s and through the post-World War II baby boom. A similar increase is evident from the 1987 survey: cohorts of women born 1913-22 had 2.1 children, increasing to around 2.5 children for the 1923-32 birth cohorts. These birth cohorts of women were marrying after World War II (almost all between 1946 and 1958) and having their first child in the period between 1949 and the early 1960s.
- (4) The 1987 data allow for an examination of the follow-up of these “baby boom” patterns for the cohorts born after 1933. The two cohorts born 1933 to 1942 had an average completed family size of 2.3 children; family size declined to a low of 1.6 children for the women born in the early post-World War II period (1943-47), who were having their children during the 1960s and early 1970s. They were the

\*The concept “cohort” is used in this paper to designate a group of women born in a given period of time and, hence, exposed to similar experiences and pressures in their childbearing patterns. The two surveys overlap in the cohorts covered, allowing us to compare the fertility of several cohorts from each of these surveys. In every case, the approximate cohort overlap reinforces the consistency of the survey results, despite somewhat different methodologies and some variation in the study population covered. In no cohort fertility comparison were there any significant discrepancies between the two surveys. For example, the 1929-33 birth cohort of women reconstructed from the 1987 cohort had an average family size of 2.4. Both the 1914-22 cohorts reconstructed from the 1963 survey and the 1913-22 birth cohort of the 1987 survey had the same average family size of 2.1 children. The largest discrepancy between the two surveys was 0.2 children for the cohorts born during the 1920s.



offspring of the post-World War II baby boom; their parents had 2.4 children on average, but they are not likely to have more than 1.6 children.

(5) There are already indications from the 1987 Rhode Island survey of a new average family size emerging among the cohorts born in the late 1940s that indicate that the 1.6 average family size of the 1943-47 cohort was exceptionally low. Women born 1948-52 already had an average family size of two children by 1987, higher than the low levels of the 1943-47 cohort. Their younger sisters of the two cohorts 1953-62, those already married and those not married, are expecting to have around the same family size of two children.

Comparing these family size patterns and family size expectations from the 1987 survey data with results from the 1963 survey data on the Greater Providence Metropolitan Area shows a general stability in the overall low levels of completed and expected family size that has characterized the Jewish community over the last century: this low level has fluctuated around two children per family for the last several generations. The average family size of all ever-married women in 1963 was 2.1, as it was for the 1987 survey.

Assuming that the actual family size of the youngest cohort of Jewish women is very highly correlated with their expected family size, then average family size will remain at population replacement level for the Jewish community of Rhode Island.

The youngest birth cohort of all women that we can examine with confidence in the new Rhode Island survey expect to have 2.2 children. This level of expected family size is consistent with data from other Jewish community surveys and national data that indicate similar levels of expected family size (see Goldscheider, 1986a; Goldscheider and Mosher, 1988; Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1989a, 1989b).

In order to link these fertility trends to other indicators of societal change, we combined them in a way that allows us to capture the fundamental social, economic, family, and demographic changes that the Jewish population has experienced in the last century. In Table 1 we present the fertility patterns of each of these broader generations and describe selected aspects of the detailed social and demographic data that characterize them. The socioeconomic data were constructed from the more general information of the two Rhode Island surveys and are general approximations rather than precise indicators.

The first cohort combines all women who were born in the last decades of the 19th century, who were ages 65 and older in the 1963 survey. These women had three children on average. Fully four out of ten had four or more children and only three percent were childless. Most of these women were foreign born, married at around age 20, and had their first child 12-18 months after marriage at age 21 or 22. Few of these women worked after they married, but well over 95 percent married and very few were divorced. Women of this cohort averaged about eight years of secular education and even fewer years of formal Jewish education. About one-fourth had no Jewish education. Many of these women started out their married life with few resources and generally were better off economically than their parents but struggled to improve their standard of living. Those who went to high school, and those who had higher levels of education, married later (usually at age 24), and had fewer children (about 2.3) compared to their sisters who had less education, married much earlier, and had 3.6 children. The women of this cohort clearly wanted better for their children from the new opportunities emerging in American society. Most of these women were Orthodox in affiliation and in practice, and almost none married non-Jews.

This pattern sharply contrasts with the social, demographic, and fertility profile of the cohorts directly exposed to the economic depression in the late 1920s and 1930s in the United States, women who were born in the first decade-and-a-half of the 20th century. Those women had 1.7 children on average, fully 14 percent were childless, an additional 26 percent had only one child, and only three percent had four or more children. Thus, while four out ten women of the late 19th century cohorts had four or more children, four out of ten of the women of the depression cohorts had no children or only one child.

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TABLE 1  
Family Size Distributions and Selected Social and Demographic Characteristics  
of Five Birth Cohorts: Rhode Island Jewish Population

	Late 19th Century	Depression Cohorts	Baby Boom	1970s Cohorts	1990s Cohorts
<b>Number of Children*</b>					
None	3	14	5	7	14
One	9	26	7	18	10
Two	24	39	43	56	47
Three	25	18	35	13	20
Four+	39	3	10	6	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average	3.1	1.7	2.5	2.0	2.1
<b>Social and Demographic Indicators**</b>					
Age at Marriage	20	24	21	24	26
Foreign Born	80	25	10	3	2
2nd Gener.	20	65	45	20	10
3rd+ Gener.	X	10	45	77	88
Years of Education	8	12	14	16	18
% Never Married	3	7	5	11	15?
% Divorced	0.5	2.5	12	15	20?
Intermarried	1.2	5.6	6.6	20	25?
Orthodox	52	20	6	4	7
Reform	10	20	33	35	35
% No Jewish Education	25	25	18	15	13

\*For the 1990s cohort, estimate is based on family size expectations.

\*\* These indicators refer to women of this cohort.

Source: 1963 Survey of Greater Providence and 1987 Survey of R.I.

The women of this second cohort were largely second generation Americans, married at ages 23 or 24, and had their first child two to three years after they married, when they were around age 26. Some of these women worked during the span of time between when they were in high school and when they married, but only about 20 percent worked after they began to have children. Most were exposed to the hardships of the economic depression that had wiped out many of the early gains of their parents' generation. Almost all grew up in foreign-born families and associated their Jewishness with the "old world" of their immigrant parents' generation. Taking advantage of the access to public education and having parents who had sufficient resources to encourage even their daughters to spend a longer time in school, most of the women completed high school. And the more extensive their education, the later their marriage age and the fewer their children; the very clear inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and fertility (the higher the education, the smaller the family size) was weakening as almost all these women were under economic pressure to have very small families. Only a small proportion intermarried with non-Jews in this generation, but clearly more than in their parents' generation, and those that did were rarely integrated in the Jewish community. While most grew up in Orthodox homes, only about 20 percent remained Orthodox as adults, 20 percent were affiliated with Reform Judaism, and over half identified with Conservative Judaism. Still the level of Jewish education for these women was low, and one-fourth had no formal Jewish education.

The baby boom cohorts born in the mid 1920s through the mid 1930s increased their family size to 2.5 children, but did not return to the pattern characteristic of the pre-depression cohorts where large proportions of women had four or more children. A comparison of the family size distributions of the baby boom and depression cohorts shows clearly that the increase in family size among the former was the result of an increase in the proportion of two children and the near doubling of the percent of women who had three children (from 18 percent to 35 percent), along with the sharp decline in childlessness and the one child family. While the proportion with four or more children increased from 3 percent to 10 percent, there was no return to the significantly higher levels characteristic of the late 19th century cohort. The women who were having children during the baby boom were marrying at ages 21 or 22, earlier than those who were having children during the 1930s; they also were having their first child at an earlier age.

Increasing proportions of this cohort were third generation Americans, but an equal number grew up in households where their parents were foreign born. Higher proportions attended college, and many did not work while raising their families but returned to work, often part time, after their children went off to college or got married. The women who worked were largely in clerical and sales jobs, with teaching and social work their major professional occupations. Significant increases

were taking place in the level of their socioeconomic gains, reinforced by the stability of their life styles. Few of these women divorced, but many more did so than the cohort facing the economic depression; almost all married, and there were no indications of significant increases in the extent of marriage with persons who were not born Jewish. There were increases in both the level of Jewish education and in the proportion who identified with Reform and Conservative Judaism, with less than 10 percent identifying themselves as Orthodox. This period of upward social mobility placed almost all Jews of this cohort in the middle classes, with those left behind in the lower classes having fewer children than their sisters in the middle and upper classes. The traditional inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and fertility had weakened and tended to be positive.

The fourth cohort covers women who were having children in the 1970s (women who were born in the late 1940s and early 1950s). They reduced their family size by 20 percent from 2.5 children of the baby boom cohorts to 2.0 children on average. These birth cohorts of the 1970s were distinctive in the very high proportion with two children (56 percent), their higher level of one child families, and lower levels of the three or more child families. But they had not returned to the pattern of the childless family characteristic of the economic depression cohorts. These women were caught up in the major changes in the women's movement in the United States, questioning the traditional role of women in the household and traditional marriages in general. Fully three-fourths of these third generation Jewish American women had at least some exposure to college, and about half completed college. Many more viewed having children and family continuity as a role conflict with their individual independence and autonomy as women. Greater emphasis was placed by them on their careers, and new patterns were emerging of later marriage, increased divorce, and increased independence. Intermarriage with non-Jews increased significantly with this cohort, along with a continuing decline of affiliation with traditional Judaism, Orthodox and Conservative Judaism. More remained Jewish ethnically, in ways that were less "religious" and ritual oriented and less linked to the formal institutional and organizational structure of the Jewish community.

We obviously do not really know what the fertility levels will be of the generation born in the middle to late 1960s who will be having their families until the end of the 20th century. We also do not know the nature of their social and demographic patterns as these too will unfold in the course of the next two decades. We can estimate some of these future patterns on the basis of current characteristics, values, and attitudes.

One important implication of the current family size expectations of the cohort of the 1990s is that they, too, will have some distinctive patterns of fertility. It is likely that the level of their fertility will not be exceptional compared with the long-

term pattern of two children on average that has characterized this community and the American Jewish population as a whole for several generations. If the expected family size of women born between 1958-69 cohorts materializes in the 1990s, then the 2.1 children these women expect to have will be exactly at replacement levels. More of this cohort will be childless (a return to that feature of the depression cohorts), but significantly fewer will have only one child, and there should be a somewhat larger proportion who will have three or more children compared with the cohort of the 1970s. These women and men will marry significantly later than previously recorded cohorts, are likely to begin their childbearing in their early thirties, and divorce, remarriage, and intermarriage are likely to increase substantially. Almost 90 percent of these women will have gone to college, 75 to 80 percent will be working outside the home full time or part time, most during the period while their children are in school and growing up in their household. Most will have some exposure to Jewishness through formal Jewish education and are likely to continue their connections with the Jewish community. They are not likely to identify Judaism (*i.e.*, the religious element) as a major component of their Jewishness; if their current attitudes and values are indicative, they are likely to view the core of their Jewishness in terms of family connections and the State of Israel. They will have been exposed to an increasing number of years in formal Jewish education, and significant numbers will have visited Israel or at least will consider the State of Israel a major part of their Jewish identity. Less than 10 percent are likely to think of themselves as Orthodox, 40 percent will affiliate with Conservative Judaism, and about one-third will be Reform.

#### FERTILITY VARIATION AMONG JEWS

Four major sociodemographic changes have occurred in American Jewish communities that are linked to these fertility trends: (1) the transformation of the socioeconomic status of Jews, particularly their high levels of educational attainment and occupational achievement; (2) ecological changes and the residential dispersal of the Jewish community; (3) changes in the expression of Judaism and Jewishness; and (4) the revolution in women's roles. The broad societal level linkages to cohort fertility trends that we have examined can be translated into specific questions about fertility differentials at the group level. We review below four differentials that have been important in the study of Jewish fertility in the United States.

The major internal social class variations characteristic of earlier cohorts which experienced rapid generational economic mobility have all but disappeared among recent cohorts. Most young adult Jews have at least completed college, and in the Rhode Island data about half of the young adult men and women age 25-44 had been to graduate school; 40 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women were in professional occupations. And these are second generation college-educated men

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and women, the children of college-educated parents. Therefore, the social class variant in fertility operates within a very narrow range between those with some college education, those who completed college, and those with graduate school education. Indeed, not to have completed college is increasingly a rare event in the American Jewish community. The relationship between fertility and social class is no longer a low-middle-high comparison but a comparison among those whose life styles and values are from the lower middle to the upper middle classes. It is not surprising, therefore, that few family size differences can be documented that are statistically significant by these educational or occupational measures.

The shifting residential pattern — from urban to suburban and back to urban areas, as well as to new areas of residence that have lower levels of Jewish density — continues long term ecological processes characteristic of American Jews. There are areal differences in fertility, particularly between suburban and urban areas, but these are related in complex ways to Jewish fertility, reflecting the age composition and life course differences among areas and the selective migration of families (suburbs have younger families, and older persons are concentrated in urban places).

Two important sources of fertility variation — religiosity and the role of women — have changed over the last quarter of a century. In the 1960s, the results of fertility studies of the Jewish community of Greater Providence as well as in other United States communities pointed to a changing relationship between religiosity and Jewish fertility. Those who defined themselves as Orthodox or demonstrated other measures of religious observance (regular synagogue attendance or the regular performance of religious rituals) had a larger family size than those who defined themselves as Conservative or Reform Jews and who were less observant of religious rituals. These differences by religiosity were narrowing over the generations, as exposure to American society changed the religious life styles of all the Jewish denominations. Most, if not all, of the differences among Jews by religious denomination were a direct result of the social class composition of these religious categories. Thus, for example, few fertility differences among the various levels of religious observances remained after eliminating the effects of social class and generation. There was no indication from the data that religious ideological factors influenced the reproductive behavior of Jewish women in the United States (see Goldscheider, 1964, 1986b).

A quarter of a century later, the 1987 survey data showed (Table 2) that there were small and insignificant differences between the fertility patterns of those who define themselves as Conservative and Reform Jews. However, those who currently define themselves as Orthodox have somewhat larger families than Conservative and Reform Jews, a trend evident among those over age 65 as well as among those age

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TABLE 2

Average Family Size by Religious Denominational Affiliation,  
Cohorts of Women Born Before 1898 to 1953-1969;  
Expected Family Size by Labor Force Participation Of Women  
Rhode Island Jewish Population

Age	Birth Cohort	Orthodox (1963 Survey)	Conservative	Reform
65+	Before 1898	3.1	2.7	2.5
45-64	1899-1918	1.8	2.0	2.0
35-44	1919-1928	2.4	2.2	2.4
		(1987 Survey)		
65+	Before 1922	2.5	1.8	1.8
45-64	1923-1942	2.4	2.4	2.2
35-44	1943-1952	2.4	1.8	1.6
18-34*	1953-1969	2.5	2.0	1.9

\*The average number of children expected to all women was used for this cohort. Note that the number of cases for those who identify themselves as Orthodox is small and should be interpreted with caution.

Age	Birth Cohort	(1987 Survey)** Working	Not Working
40-44	1943-1947	1.5	2.2
35-39	1948-1952	1.9	1.9
18-34	1953-1969	1.9	2.0

\*\*Total number of expected children

Source: 1963 Survey of Greater Providence and 1987 Survey of Rhode Island.

30-39. For example, the average family size among women over age 65 who currently identify themselves as either Conservative or Reform was 1.8 children; among older Orthodox women average family size was 2.5 children. Among those age 35-44 the average number of children born among the Orthodox was 2.4 compared with 1.8 and 1.6 among the Conservative and Reform, respectively. The average number of children already born to women of the cohort born between 1948-57 (*i.e.*, who were age 30-39 in 1987) was 1.6 children for both Conservative and Reform Jews, while among the small number of Orthodox women, the average was around three children. The data on family size expectations of the youngest cohort are consistent with these conclusions: Orthodox women age 18-34 in Rhode Island expect to have 2.5 children, on average, higher than the 2.0 children expected by women who identify themselves with Conservative and Reform Judaism.

These data show, therefore, a very stable level of higher fertility among the Orthodox of the last several generations, of around 2.5 children, and some possibility that younger Orthodox women will have a slightly larger family size. This pattern combines with a tendency among the younger Orthodox toward a pattern of earlier marriage and early childbearing. Although small in number, Orthodox Jews in Rhode Island (and probably elsewhere) are contributing disproportionately to the population growth of Jewish communities in the United States.

A final consideration using the data on expected family size focuses on the impact of the changing labor force participation of Jewish women, their high rate of working outside of the home, and the potential conflict between these new work-career roles and childbearing. In the 1960s the proportion of women working who were married and in the childbearing ages was very low. The data from the survey in 1963 show that the labor force participation rate among women in their reproductive period was very low, around 20 percent, and lower than among non-Jewish women. Indeed, the small number of women who were engaged in work outside of the home in the 1960s precluded a detailed analysis of the relationship between fertility and labor force participation.

It was generally the case in the 1960s that family size was inversely related to the labor force participation of women: women who worked were likely to have fewer children. It was not clear whether the smaller family size of Jewish women who worked was an outcome of "work-related reasons" or whether the causal direction was in the opposite direction, *i.e.*, those with fewer children were more likely to work. Since those who were working were distributed among women both with higher and lower levels of education (the former were more career oriented, and the latter worked to make ends meet), it was difficult to disentangle the social class connection to the lower fertility of working women. In short, in the 1960s there was little basis from the data available to indicate that a critical factor in the lower

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fertility of Jewish women in general was the alternative roles to family that Jewish women in particular had uncovered through working in the labor force outside of the home. Nor was there evidence of a specific relationship between labor force participation and Jewish fertility that was critical in understanding the patterns of American Jewish fertility.

In contrast, the data from the 1987 survey suggest that there has been a major change in the extent and the patterns of relationship between fertility and labor force participation of women. First, there has been a major and dramatic increase in the participation of women in the labor force outside of the home. The survey documented that three-fourths of the women age 25-44 and 60 percent of the Jewish women age 45-64 were working for pay outside of the home.

The data point to a clear pattern of larger family size among women age 40-44 who are currently not working compared to the pattern for those working full or part time. Indeed, while women age 40-44 (the birth cohort 1943-47) had around 1.6 children, a particularly low level compared to earlier and later cohorts, women who are not working at all have an average of 2.2 children compared to 1.5 children for those women who are working full or part time.

However, this pattern among the older age cohort does not characterize women in the two younger age cohorts, ages 35-39 and ages 18-34. For those age 35-39, the average expected number of children is similar for women working full time, part time, or not working (1.9 children). For the youngest cohort (age 18-34), working women expected 2.1 children and non-working women expected 2.0 children. These data are based on expectations about completed family size and not actual behavior, and are limited by the small number of cases of non-working women available for analysis (since most of the women are now currently working). Nevertheless, it seems likely that the pattern of conflict between career and childbearing, between women's roles outside the home and having children, is no longer characteristic of younger Jewish women, even though it may have been characteristic of Jewish women in earlier cohorts. It appears from these data that the major increases in the work participation of Jewish women documented by the 1987 survey have not resulted in changes in expected family size, although it is likely to have affected the timing of both marriage and childbearing.

The major changes over the last several decades appear to have been in the timing of childbearing, which has been delayed along with the delay in age at marriage. Changes in the timing of when women have children are more characteristic of educated women and those with careers working outside of the home. These new family formation and childbearing patterns fit the high educational level of Jewish women in Rhode Island and their high level of labor force participation. However,

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the new roles that have become characteristic of Rhode Island Jewish women do not appear to have led to significant changes in the number of children expected.

The Jewish population in the United States has experienced major changes in the last century from an immigrant to a fourth generation community (Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1984; Goldscheider, 1986a; 1986c). Jews have become highly educated, affluent, and have developed new forms of expressing Judaism and Jewishness. In the context of these broad transformations, family patterns, including the number of children and the timing of childbearing, have been transformed as well. Fertility changes over the last century have in part reflected the broader changes characterizing the Jewish community, and in part have influenced those changes. These patterns of fertility fit into a broad social science framework that links demographic change to social, economic, and family transformations that have characterized the American Jewish community in the processes of integration and modernization.

The evidence we have presented shows that a century of cohort fertility trends and differentials reflects the contexts of American society and the distinctive socioeconomic and family patterns of Jews. Of critical importance for the analysis of fertility, as well as for family and fertility policies, is the emphasis on the changing roles of Jewish women and the impact of this revolution on recent demographic patterns. The data from several studies have revealed the adjustments American Jewish women and men have made to the challenges of both family and work roles. It is clear from these studies and the data that we have presented that there has been a rejection of the "traditional" family but not a rejection of new forms of family relationships that are more egalitarian. There is no evidence that the changes in family roles of women and men have resulted in a pattern of fertility decline that portends the demographic erosion of the Jewish community. It is clear that a critical theme in Jewish fertility studies is how the changing roles of women in the 1970s and 1980s have affected their family formation patterns and their family size. It is likely that Jewish fertility patterns (particularly the timing of childbearing and the relationships between specific socioeconomic factors and fertility, not necessarily the level of fertility *per se*) will remain distinctive, both relative to the non-Jewish American population as a whole and relative to earlier cohorts of Jewish families in the United States.



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The data presented in this paper were collected as part of a larger project sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and Brown University. The basic data and its methodology are detailed and described in Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988. Sidney Goldstein shared joint responsibility for collecting and organizing the data. I accept the responsibility for the specific data analyses and interpretations in this paper. Professor Frances K. Goldscheider provided helpful comments on an earlier draft. An earlier and more detailed version of this paper was presented at the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, August, 1989. Judith Cohen was helpful in recasting and suggesting revisions for this version.

A copy of the data from the 1987 survey has been filed in the North American Jewish Data Bank. A general report on the 1987 Rhode Island survey containing extensive descriptive materials on the community and its changes over the last quarter of a century is available in Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988. This volume also includes some general substantive comparisons between the findings of the 1987 and 1963 surveys and notes some differences in the survey populations covered and the different methodologies utilized. The 1963 survey of the Greater Providence Metropolitan Area was analyzed extensively in Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968, and reprinted in 1985. It also was used as the basis of a detailed descriptive report to the Jewish community in Goldstein, 1964. In addition, the fertility data of the 1963 survey were analyzed in detail and were reported on in a 1964 doctoral dissertation and in a series of articles in the 1960s. A reprint of the dissertation and a list of articles on Jewish fertility that used the 1963 data are reviewed and documented in Goldscheider, 1986b. This volume contains materials on Jewish fertility from the 1963 survey that were not previously accessible in published form, and includes a brief new introduction as well. An overview of the changes in the Jewish community over the last 25 years was presented in this journal in Goldstein, *et al*, 1988.

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Left to right, Michael Fink, Bernard Kusnitz; Sophia Porson, U. S. Department of State; President of Portugal Mario Soares, Dr. Maria Barros Soares.  
*Photo by Rafael Baptista*

## PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT VISITS TOURO

By MICHAEL FINK

Among the big Newport events of Sunday, June 25, 1989, the aftermath of the tanker oil spill in the harbor and the dedication of a monument at Brenton Point commemorating the Portuguese explorers of America, a happening of great significance to Jewry took place. President Mario Soares of Portugal took time and a detour from the day's parade route after the dedication ceremonies to pay a historic visit to the Touro Synagogue, the first visit by a foreign head of state to Touro, the oldest synagogue building extant in the United States and a National Historic Shrine. In 1790 George Washington visited Touro and put in writing his guarantee of religious freedom in the new land — "to bigotry no sanction." The little congregation to which he pledged and penned his promise included Portuguese refugees from the Inquisition who had fled the northern fastnesses of the Portuguese mainland above Lisbon.

Now, almost 200 years later, the President of Portugal apologized for his country's past persecution of Jews and visited Touro Synagogue. In the little village of Castelo de Vide, on March 17, 1989, President Soares declared that Jewish mapmakers made possible the "Great Discoveries" — a scientific pursuit of geographic truth. He grieved for the purge of Jews that depleted forever the intellectual life of his country. In the presence of the Israeli ambassador to Portugal and representatives of the "New Christians," secret Jews who practice behind closed shutters, he apologized publicly for the Inquisition and invited his audience to come out and renew their faith openly.

President Soares said in March: "The medieval Jewish quarter of Castelo de Vide bears witness to the presence of Jews in our country, from the earliest times of our nationhood. It demonstrates that Jews were an important component and made an invaluable contribution to our history. Unfortunately religious extremism, with the introduction of the Inquisition in Portugal, came, against our better traditions, to increase the persecution of the Jews. Their expulsion from Spain and Portugal ... constituted one of the principal causes of the decline of the Iberian peoples across several centuries."

He spoke of "the persecution of which the Jews were invariably the victims, throughout time, either by the Spanish or the Portuguese, successively or simultaneously requiring the forced conversion, burning in autos-da-fe, and exiling to the north of Europe some of the best Portuguese souls, where they greatly contributed to the progress and modernization of those countries that welcomed them."

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“With the Revolution of the 25th of April, 1974,” he said, “Portugal recovered its tradition of tolerance, coexistence with that which is different and respect for others. ... The Holocaust of the Jews ... teaches us what the extremism of inhumanity and fanaticism can do. ... Against the horrors of fanaticism, of intolerance and of inhumanity, there is only one possible answer: to affirm the critical spirit, the freedom of thought, respect for human rights, and the spirit of tolerance. In the name of free and democratic Portugal ... who through history knew dogmatism and oppression [I want] to reaffirm the values of liberty and human rights, making a solemn appeal to the ideal of respect for others, people or peoples.” He concluded: “In the name of Portugal I ask the forgiveness of the Jews for the persecutions of which they were victims in our country.”

Plans for the President’s visit to Touro resulted from my visit to Castelo de Vide the week following this historic speech, when I spoke to the Count of Botelho about the link between Newport and Portugal. When President Soares planned to visit Rhode Island, I received a message through the Count and the editors of *The Portuguese American Journal* in Providence asking that the President visit Touro. I called Bernard Kusinitz, President and Historian of the Synagogue. He composed an official invitation to the President on Touro stationery, which we sent by fax machine to Lisbon.

Joining President Soares at Touro on June 25 were the Count of Botelho, who was instrumental in organizing the Presidential visit; Dr. Maria Barros Soares, wife of the President; Sophia Porson of the United States Department of State, translating for the President; Goao Perreira Bastos, the Ambassador from Portugal to the United States, and his wife; Correia De Jesus, the Portuguese Secretary of State for Immigration, and his wife; Nunes Barata, the President’s chief of staff; and Carolina Matos and Jose Baptista, publishers of *The Portuguese American Journal*.

I spoke a few words about the ties of family and ritual of the Portuguese people here in Rhode Island to the great Jewish culture that once flourished in Portugal. Touro Rabbi Chaim Shapiro cited “the connection between our ancient roots.”

Kusinitz, in his official welcome to the President, listed the Spanish and Portuguese names of Mordecai Campanall, Moses Pacheco, Simon Mendez, Abraham Burgos, and Jacob Tinoco, who were among the first wave of fifteen families who came to Newport from Barbados in 1658. He referred to Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches, the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux, France, during World War II. “Defying his government’s orders, he, with his two sons, issued exit visas to enable people to leave France, cross Spain, and reach neutral Portugal, thus enabling refugees to escape Nazi Europe. All in all, they wrote some 30,000 visas in two days, including 10,000 for Jews. Sad to say, for his efforts

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Mendes died in disgrace and poverty in Portugal." But, Kusnitz explained, in 1987 President Soares posthumously presented the Mendes family with Portugal's Order of Liberty Medal at a ceremony in Washington, D. C. Kusnitz cited President Soares's words at Castelo de Vide and said, "Would that other heads of state — and religions, too — display the same moral courage, the historical insight, and love of humanity to say what should have been said long ago. ... With all the sincerity that I can command, may I say we accept your words in the spirit that they were spoken. To paraphrase what someone once said: many of us have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love. Ladies and Gentlemen, in the fifteenth century Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain had enough religion to hate, but not enough to love. In the twentieth century, Mario Soares has enough religion to love; and because of it, not the least inclination to hate."

"Therefore," he concluded, "it is not enough that we merely accept his words. Rather, we must build on the spirit of his love and tolerance ... I believe that through the strength of his character, the boldness of his ideas, and the clarity of his literary expression, history will link him to such men as the first President of the United States and to the Righteous Christians of our time. In so doing, I believe that history will indeed consider Mario Soares the George Washington of Portugal."

President Soares responded, without written notes, through his interpreter, about his "humble and modest" declaration in Castelo de Vide. He spoke contemplatively, with a melancholy mien. He compared his own pain as a victim of political tyranny to the sufferings of the Jews and urged upon us tolerance and fairness in all areas of human experience. The Jews, he said, "lived insecurely in the high mountainous ridges between Portugal and Spain, poised on the roof of the world." In his own time of exile and uncertainty, he determined to speak about their fate. He described the Jewish philosopher Spinoza as the interpreter of the Portuguese Renaissance. In conclusion, he drew a parallel between the beauty and dignity of Touro, which impressed and refreshed him, and the tiny restored hidden synagogue of Castelo de Vide.

As I look back on that historic day in Newport, my memory is scenic and symbolic. The sea beyond the rocks of Brenton Point — so delicate, so vulnerable to abuse. Freedom of worship, the right to live who you are — also noble and also fragile: endangered resources. These metaphors will last in my mind. President Soares brought something to Touro and Newport. He also took something from it, besides a plaque and a medal. He shortened our sense of history and time. The past, present, and future go round and round like points of a giant compass, an ancient star.



## TOURO SYNAGOGUE — 225TH ANNIVERSARY

A year of celebration in honor of Touro Synagogue's 225th Anniversary finished on a high note with three days of festivities, August 18 to 20, 1989. Highlights of the weekend included:

- A full schedule of Shabbat activities, developed by Rabbi Chaim Shapiro of Touro, including traditional religious services, kosher meals, a walking tour of the area led by Dr. Daniel Snyder (Executive Director of the Newport Historical Society), and educational and religious lectures given by Rabbi Shapiro.
- A Late Friday Evening Service-Oneg Shabbat conducted by Rabbi Shapiro, with the singing of Cantor Bernard Beer and a sermon by Rabbi Emeritus Theodore Lewis. Inspired by his citing of the qualities which led Touro's founding fathers to take the bold step of building their synagogue, the capacity crowd adjourned to the Community Center for fellowship and refreshments.
- A Gala Anniversary Ball at the Hotel Viking on Saturday night, chaired by Marcia Cohen, Barbara Epstein, and Bella Werner. The ballroom was decorated as a garden, with a delightful fountain gracing the entryway, balustrades lining the dance floor, potted trees and plants throughout the room, an elegant gallery area displaying some of Touro's artifacts, a magnificent ice sculpture of the synagogue, and on each table black lacquer branches supporting twinkling lights and exotic flowers. The evening's program featured an appearance by Newport's famous Artillery Company and reflections on Touro's significance by Bernard Wax, Director of the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Honorable Itzhak Oren, Consul of the State of Israel in Boston — as well as recognition of Touro's presidents, past and present.
- The Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue Members' Brunch and Annual Meeting on Sunday, conducted by President Burton Fischler, with reports by officers, discussions from the floor, and election of a new slate of officers.
- The Annual George Washington Letter Ceremony, with Milton Mitler as Master of Ceremonies, viola music by Rivka Golani, reading of the Moses Seixas Letter to George Washington by Seixas descendant Joshua Seixas Howard Fausty, followed by Harold Sebag-Montefiore's delivery of Washington's reply, and Fred Friendly's comments and reading of his very special letter written about the death camp at Mauthausen as World War II drew to a close.

The members of the committee which planned the weekend were Mr. Aaron J. Slom, chairman, and Mrs. Slom, Mr. and Mr. Bernard E. Bell, Dr. and Mrs. Elie Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dannin, Mrs. Samuel Endler, Mrs. Herbert Epstein, Dr.

and Mrs. Alan R. Feinberg, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Friedman, Mr. Joseph Galkin, Dr. and Mrs. Seebert J. Goldowsky, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Josephson, Captain Howard N. Kay, Mr. and Mrs. Norman H. Klein, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kusinitz, Mrs. Max Meierowitz, Dr. and Mrs. Irving Nemetzow, Mr. Zalman D. Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Riesman, Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Schechter, Dr. and Mrs. Naftali Sabo, Mr. and Mrs. Saul Schweber, Rabbi and Mrs. Chaim Shapiro, Mr. and Mrs. Earle Slom, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander G. Teitz, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob N. Temkin, and Mrs. Jack M. Werner.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Touro is not only the oldest synagogue in continental North America, but the “synagogue of dreams fulfilled.” It was built here in Rhode Island because of men who “dreamed of a religious freedom to be practiced within the framework of a dualistic society, where church and state would be completely separate and all men could walk as their consciences persuaded them — everyone in the name of his own God.”

—*Bernard Kusinitz, President, Congregation Jeshuat Israel*

On Chanukah we say, *Nes Gadol Hayad Sham* — a great miracle happened there. ... [Touro] has withstood the negative forces in human nature that would have us not have the freedom that we are here to celebrate today. Touro Synagogue, as an edifice, derives its strength from the spirit of those who enter it; its foundation is born of idealism and has been fortified through crisis. ... And make no mistake about it. History attests that religious liberty is a fragile experiment unique to this country, and that there are forces in human nature constantly seeking to undermine it. ... Our founding fathers recognized that we must guard religious liberty with eternal vigilance against tyranny and bigotry ... so that future generations, of any religion or none at all, may enter Touro Synagogue and echo: *Nes Gadol Hayad Po* — a great miracle happened here.

—*Burton Fischler, Past President, Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue*

— From Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue  
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## THE BROWN CONNECTION

By SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

While doing research for my forthcoming history of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, I was impressed by the fact that for almost a century there has been an affinity between the rabbinate of Providence, Rhode Island and the local academic community. The rabbis, with one exception, have been spiritual leaders of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), and the college, with two exceptions, was Brown University. This paper will merely catalogue the names of the rabbis, the name of the college, the nature of the affiliation, and the year. Other academic attainments of the subjects of this report can be readily obtained from available sources.

### TEMPLE BETH-EL

DAVID BLAUSTEIN — Brown University, A.M. 1898; instructor in Semitic Languages 1897-1899.

BENNETT GRAD — Brown University, graduate student 1900-1901; instructor in Semitic Languages 1900-1901.

GUSTAV NAPHTHALI HAUSMANN — Brown University, special student, registered in 1902.

HENRY ENGLANDER — Brown University, A.M. 1906; Ph.D. 1909; lecturer in Biblical Literature and History 1906-1910.

NATHAN STERN — Brown University, lecturer in Biblical Literature and History 1910-1915.

SIMON COHEN — Brown University, graduate student 1918-1919.

SAMUEL MARCUS GUP — Brown University, graduate student 1919-1920.

WILLIAM GORDON BRAUDE — Brown University, A.M. 1934; Ph.D. 1937; lecturer in Biblical Literature 1937-1942; Honorary D.D. 1955; Providence College, special lecturer in Religious Studies, 1970.<sup>1</sup>

LAWRENCE M. SILVERMAN — Brown University, A.B. 1965.

LESLIE YALE GUTTERMAN — Providence College, special lecturer in Religious Studies, 1984-1987.<sup>2</sup>

TEMPLE EMANU-EL

ISRAEL MAX GOLDMAN — Brown University, graduate student, Biblical Literature, 1932-1935; Honorary D.D. 1949.



NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Providence College lectures were sponsored and financed by the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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