



**RHODE ISLAND
JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES**

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FRONT COVER

Max Perlow, produce dealer, on Crawford Street, Providence. Between 1903 and 1910.

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RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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FROM THE EDITOR

NOTES ON THE NOTES

This year's "Notes on the Notes" is devoted to the memory of a person who was a key figure in the study of American Jewish history and genealogy and, of particular interest to our readers, a good friend to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association - Rabbi Malcolm M. Stern.

Rabbi Stern died on January 5, 1994, at the age of seventy- nine. *The New York Times* called him not only a historian of American Judaism but "its premier genealogist" and described his book, *American Families of Jewish Descent*, first published in 1960, "the most valuable research tool in the field of American Jewish history in many years." This book was the basis for Steven Birmingham's best-selling book, *The Grandees*. The third edition of Stern's book, which contained 50,000 names, was published in 1991 under the title *First American Jewish Families*.

Rabbi Stern also had a distinguished rabbinic career, served as director of Rabbinic Placement for Reform Judaism for many years, and was on the faculty of the New York School of Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion. He was a Trustee and former vice president of the American Jewish Historical Society and recipient of its Lee M. Friedman Distinguished Historian Award. He was past president of the American Society of Genealogists, the Jewish Genealogical Society, and the Jewish Historical Society of New York.

The files of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association show that Rabbi Stern's relationship with and help to the *Notes* and its editors and to our organization go back to the 1950s. In 1970 he spoke on "Newport Jewry — Whence and Whither" at the sixteenth annual meeting of our Association, which was held jointly with the sixth annual meeting of the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies. His lecture was printed in the *Notes*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 313-326. He also was the principal speaker in 1975 at a combined meeting of the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies, the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue National Historic Shrine, Inc., and the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

For the 1988 issue of the *Notes* (Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 163- 175) Dr. Stern wrote an article on "Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim in the Colonial Era." During the period of work on this article, he and I became warm telephone friends. I regret that I never had the opportunity to meet him in person. The sympathy of members of our Association is extended to his wife, Louise, his brother, Edward, and all his loved ones.

Judith Weiss Cohen

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THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS TO AQUIDNECK ISLAND THE TOURO CONNECTION

BY MORDECHAI ARBELL

At the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the majority of those that did not convert to Christianity found their way to Portugal. (It is very difficult to give absolute numbers, since estimates vary, but it is generally deduced that about fifty percent converted and the remaining fifty percent dispersed: fifty to eighty thousand to Italy and the Ottoman Empire, twenty to thirty thousand to North Africa and eighty to one hundred twenty thousand to Portugal.)

In Portugal the order of expulsion in 1496 coincided with the forcible conversion of the majority of the Jews there. Portugal's King Manuel I did not want the Jews to leave his country, and when he saw large numbers of Jews preparing to depart instead of converting, he ordered, with the aid of his army, their massive conversion. Since there was no Inquisition then in Portugal, Jews could continue practicing Judaism, if they did so in secret. Officially they were Catholic.

The Inquisition was installed in Portugal in the mid- sixteenth century. Large scale persecution started against those who were officially Catholic but still were practicing Jews, bringing about a renewed exodus of Jews from the Iberian peninsula. These Jews tried to settle in the Protestant areas of Western Europe — Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Copenhagen. Some passed through France, temporarily settling in Bayonne and Bordeaux. From there they tried to reach the newly discovered Americas, where they hoped they could find peace.

When the Dutch founded their colony in the northeastern part of Brazil, Jews from Amsterdam and from Hamburg started settling there in 1624. With the years their numbers grew, and they became the majority of the free population in the cities of Recife and Olinda (called Mauricia by the Dutch). Their total number is still controversial. However, in the 1640s, there were more Jews in Brazil than in Amsterdam. The estimate is between twenty-five hundred and three thousand, a significant number in the American colonies of those times. Some Dutch narrators, for example Johan Nieuhof, whose account of travels to Brazil was first published in 1682, put their number at more than five thousand.

In Dutch Brazil (Pernambuco) the Jews specialized in growing sugar cane and invented new systems of sugar refining. This activity brought an unprecedented prosperity to the colony. At the same time it also led to a series of attacks by the

Mordechai Arbell was the fourth Touro National Heritage Trust Fellow. He received a three-month fellowship in 1993, administered by the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, for research on some aspect of the Jewish experience in the Western Hemisphere prior to ca. 1860. This article is based on Arbell's presentation in the Touro Synagogue on November 30, 1993. Arbell is a former Israeli ambassador, research fellow at Hebrew University, and advisor to the World Jewish Congress.

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Portuguese forces, who strived to recapture their lost territory in Brazil. The Jews joined the Dutch forces in repulsing the Portuguese attacks, and when, in 1654, the Dutch forces were ready to surrender, the Jews continued fighting. "Better to die here with a sword in hand than be burned at the stake by the Inquisition in Lisbon" were the words of a Jew quoted by a Dutch officer.

After the final surrender by the Dutch, the Jews were given a limited time to leave Pernambuco. Another Jewish exodus began.

The more affluent Jews and the chief Haham (Rabbi) Aboab da Fonseca could return to Amsterdam. Another group of Jews reached the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, where, in spite of the opposition of the Jesuit Fathers, they were given permission to settle. In a short time they managed to build large sugar plants and to invent systems of cocoa processing. Among other things, they exported chocolate to France and, today in Bayonne, at the entrance of the street of the pastry-makers is an inscription saying that French pastry was originated by Spanish-Portuguese Jews.

The period of prosperity in the French islands did not last long. In 1685 King Louis XIV signed the Black Code, which ordered the Jews to leave the French colonies within a period of three months.

Another group of Jews from Brazil went to the Dutch colony of Essequibo (later, British Guiana and today the Republic of Guiana) where they joined Jews from Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Salé (Morocco) who had already settled there.

The Jewish settlement on the banks of the river Pomeroon in Essequibo was called *New Zealand*. It quickly flourished. One of the inventions of the inhabitants was the processing of vanilla. They also specialized in vegetable growing and agro-industries. The settlement was considered by the Dutch to be the most flourishing of their colonies. A disastrous British attack in 1666 destroyed New Zealand. The Jews managed to flee, part of them to Surinam, where other Jews had already settled.

A similar fate befell the Brazilian Jews who settled in Ramire on the island of Cayenne (a Dutch colony at that time, today French Guiana). The Dutch retreated from Cayenne in 1664, this on the condition that the rights given to the Jews by the Dutch would be respected. The French promise was not kept for long. In 1671 Jews were prohibited from observing Judaism publicly, and in 1685 they had to leave Cayenne in accordance with the "Black Code." They managed to trek through the jungle to Surinam.

Unlike the French, the Dutch and British authorities were interested in attracting Jewish colonists. They saw the Jews' stay in Brazil as a highly successful venture.

The Dutch issued a series of official orders giving the Jews full civil rights — the

right to build synagogues, to have schools and tribunals, and the right to observe the Sabbath. Not to be outdone, Francis Lord Willoughby, British governor of Surinam (later to become Dutch Guiana and today the Republic of Suriname) gave the Jews almost identical rights.

Therefore, when Jews from Brazil arrived in Surinam, joining their brothers who had settled there already in 1639, they were able to form a Jewish semi-autonomous region on the banks of the river Surinam, called until today "Joden Savanne" (the Jewish Savanna). The refugees from Essequibo and Cayenne also reached Surinam and settled in the region, planting their produce in a series of plantations and operating numerous sugar mills. In the capital of Joden Savanne, called Jerusalem on the Riverside, the beautiful synagogue Besacha ve Shalom was erected in 1671 with settlements surrounding it bearing Biblical names like Carmel, Beersheba, Mahanaim, and Sukkot.

In Surinam, Jews were the majority of the white population. In the nineteenth century, with Europe producing its own sugar and tropical produce available in Africa for the European markets, the Jewish region started to decline. Jews moved to the capital of Surinam, Paramaribo, where they still maintain a community.

The Jews who went from Brazil to Barbados encountered a completely different climate. They were limited in their rights, they could not have plantations, they could not hire other white people, they were levied special taxes, and the British merchants resented the Jewish presence, accusing Jews of unfair competition. A group of Jews decided to move on, and they reached Newport in Rhode Island and settled there.

We know of Arao Burgus, who was from a family that trekked from Spain to Portugal, from there reached Amsterdam and then moved to Brazil, where Arao was born in 1625. He reached Barbados in 1649, and we find him in Newport in 1679. We also know of Mordecai Campanal, who had a similar history and reached Newport in 1679. He was one of the purchasers of the plot on which is situated the Jewish cemetery.

By a quirk of fate a group of Jews striving to reach Surinam from Brazil, after a series of adventures better called misadventures, reached the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, to become the first Jews of New York, and to found the Congregation Shearith Israel.

Brazilian Jews also settled in the island of Curaçao, where they joined Jews who had been there since 1639, the majority from Amsterdam. Later they were joined by the Jewish evacuees from the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. In this small island the Jews had to abandon the plantation economy. They transformed the island into a commercial and maritime center. The island became very prosperous,

and the Jewish community, representing the majority of the white population, became the center of Jewish life in the West Indies. They founded rabbinical schools and took care of the needs of the Jewish communities in the area. They proudly call themselves the "Mother Community of the Americas."

In the year 1693, during a disastrous epidemic in Curaçao, a group of ninety Jews left the Island to settle in Newport. Among them was Ishack de Afraham Touro, nephew of Eliahu Hizkiao Touro, one of the first Jews from Amsterdam to settle in Curaçao.

Curaçao's Jewish community shared its prosperity in maintaining Spanish-Portuguese Jewish life. It supported rabbinical schools in Jerusalem, helped together with Surinam to build the Shearith Israel synagogue on Mill Street in New York, and funded together with the Barbados community the building of the Mikve Israel synagogue in Philadelphia. The condition for their funding was that Sephardic custom should prevail in these synagogues, and the custom is still maintained to this day.

Therefore, it was natural that the Curaçao Jewish leaders agreed to the petition of the Newport Jewish community to help pay the mortgage on the Newport synagogue, Nephutzei Israel (later Yeshuat, today called Jeshuat Israel or the Touro Synagogue). They contributed to the Synagogue in 1759, 1761, and 1768. The only thing they asked was that every year in the Kol Nidre service the Newport community would bless Mikve Israel of Curaçao. I hope it is still done in Newport.* It is done in New York and Philadelphia.

The island of St. Eustatius came to a special prominence in the eighteenth century when it became the commercial center of the Americas. Its natural port, its stores and warehouses, became centers of export from North and South America to Europe and vice versa. In several years it was called the Golden Rock, for the riches accumulated in this minuscule island where the Jews were the majority of the population.

This island maintained contact with Newport, the center of commerce with the West Indies. Several Newport Jews settled there. We note at least two marriages of Newport Jews:

1788—Samuel Moses Frank from Holland to Breina Hart of Newport

1796—Samuel Frank [possibly second marriage] to Mahettibel, daughter of Sheprah Hart from Newport

In 1766 Mr. Solomons from St. Eustatius presented a Torah scroll to the Newport synagogue. The special connection between the island and Newport led the St. Eustatius Jews to mobilize to send a supply of provisions to the American revolutionaries. The British captured numerous ships on the way to New England

* Editor's Note: Touro Synagogue sources say it is not.

which were owned and captained by St. Eustatius Jews. In order to stop this flow, the British Admiral Rodney attacked the Dutch island in 1781, caused much destruction, arrested all the Jewish males and dispersed them to other British possessions, and confiscated their property, leaving their wives and children destitute on the island. Years after, some of them found their way to the island of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands and to Savannah, Georgia.

Today in the Caribbean very few Jews are left. Their cemeteries and the sand-covered floors in the synagogues try to tell us their story. In the same way the old Jewish Cemetery in Newport on Touro Street is the witness to the history of the first Jews in the Americas.





Dr. Morris Lebow in his dental office, 139 Orms Street, Providence, 1917.

JEWISH DENTISTS OF RHODE ISLAND

BY ABRAHAM SCHWARTZ, D. M. D.

The great Jewish migrations to America in the latter nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century consisted mainly of masses of the downtrodden seeking a better life. Most passed through the portals of Ellis Island with minimal belongings, hoping to make their fortune in the fabled "land whose streets were paved with gold." How to make a living was solved by becoming peddlers, owners of "mom and pop stores," tailors, shoe repairman, printers, tinsmiths, butchers, junk dealers, and artisans of every stripe as they struggled to plant roots in the new land, raise families, and improve their lot. Education, except for religious instruction given to male children, to prepare them for economic and cultural advancement was often minimal, though the immigrants' aspirations for their children could not be dulled.

Thus it is startling to find in the records of the Rhode Island Board of Licensure in Dentistry for the years 1900 to 1910 ten recognizable Jewish names of dentists licensed to practice in this state. Three were graduates of Harvard Dental School. Five were graduates of other dental schools. Two received their training in preceptorships. In spite of the often hostile college treatment of Jewish applicants, many were already achieving a place in the dental profession. This trend accelerated with the licensing of sixteen Jewish dentists from 1911 to 1919, seventeen from 1920 to 1929 and thirty-three from 1930 to 1939. The number increased in the decades which followed.

The scarcity of reference records makes it impossible to learn very much about these early dentists. It is probable that one of the first Jewish dentists in Rhode Island was one Bernhard Cohen, who began his practice in Pawtucket in 1903¹ and was a congregant of Temple Beth-El (having been interred in its cemetery). Albert I. Pobirs, listed in the records as Pobirsky, graduated from the Baltimore College of Dentistry in 1905. He practiced for many years in the Douglas-Orms Street area. Samuel Finklestein graduated from the Philadelphia College of Dental Surgery in 1907 and opened his office in the then dignified Caesar Misch Building.

Among Finklestein's patients was a budding young engineer, one Benjamin Rouslin. Samuel Rouslin, his son and himself a dentist, recounted how his father was dissuaded from an engineering career by Dr. Finklestein. He convinced his young patient that Jews did not have a future in engineering. But why not go into dentistry?² Benjamin Rouslin went to Dr. Finklestein's alma mater (later to become Temple University Dental School) and graduated in 1913.

Like many dentists of that period, Dr. Rouslin opened his office in the living room

Abraham Schwartz, D. M. D., retired from the practice of dentistry in Providence in September 1994. He held Rhode Island Dentistry license number 1183.

of his home — on Prairie Avenue and Robinson Street, where his son, Samuel, was born. To avoid forced military service in the Russian Army, Nathan Rouslin had abandoned his family and sweetheart in their small village near Kiev in the Ukraine. He then made his way across Europe to England and then to New York City. In due time he sent a ticket for passage to America to his beloved, but, according to family legend, she in Nathan's absence was already "taken." The ticket was used instead by her sister, Annie, who married Nathan on her arrival in America.

Annie Rouslin gave birth to Benjamin in a small apartment on Broome Street on the lower East Side on New York City. A movement sponsored by wealthy assimilated Jews to disperse Jewish immigrants from the city to a rural setting in New Jersey or New England induced the Rouslins to move to Colchester, Connecticut, to establish a chicken farm with funds provided for them. A few years later city life beckoned. Nathan and Annie moved to Providence to set up a small grocery store on South Main Street close to Wickenden Street. They named it Rouslin's Public Market.

After a few years on Prairie Avenue, Dr. Benjamin Rouslin moved to the Caesar Misch Building, where he continued to practice for most of his career, part of it with Dr. Samuel as his associate. An interview with Dr. Sam revealed his father as a "consummate eclectic dentist; he tried every new wrinkle."

The Rouslin family made a marked contribution to Rhode Island dentistry. John J. Rouslin, brother of Benjamin, was a graduate of Tufts University Dental School in 1919 and practiced general dentistry in Pawtucket until his death in 1954. There was also Benjamin's son, Dr. Samuel Rouslin, mentioned above, and Dr. John's son, Richard, who practiced general dentistry in Cranston until his death. Until the development of programs to train specialists after World War II, general dentists performed all the necessary treatment required by patients. Dr. Benjamin Rouslin represented this genre.

There are other names of Rhode Island Jewish dentists in the early 1900s which bear mentioning, though this list is not meant to be all inclusive. Dr. Mark Tishler, Harvard, 1908, maintained offices at 1 School Street in Newport until the late 1940s. He was the president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1937. Harry Parvey, a graduate of Philadelphia Dental College, 1907, maintained an office in downtown Providence. Dr. Morris Lebow, Baltimore Medical College, Dental Department, 1912, became a general dentist with offices on Thayer Street. Philip Dorenbaum, Tufts Dental School, 1923, was a general dentist. Soon after graduation, he, as well as Dr. Lebow, attended advanced classes in orthodontics. They were the first Jewish specialists in this field in Rhode Island. Dr. Lebow was elected president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1935, the first of Jewish ancestry to win this office.



Dr. Ilie Berger.

A dentist who came to be known as one of the deans of Rhode Island dentistry was the famed Dr. Ilie Berger. The records of the Board of Licensure in Dentistry list "Ilie Berger, no degree" licensed in 1909. Because of Dr. Berger's intensive training under preceptors (among them Dr. Samuel Fine, the father of Sylvia Fine, the wife of actor Danny Kaye) and his academic credits at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and at the College of Dental and Oral Surgery in New York City, Dr. Albert L. Midgley, chairman of the Board of Licensure in Dentistry, thought that Dr. Berger deserved to be licensed without further delay. He prevailed on the other members to grant Dr. Berger his license based on demonstrated ability.³ Dr. Berger's illustrious career justified Dr. Midgley's confidence in him.

Dr. Berger was born in 1884 in Galatz, Romania, but while he was an infant his family moved to Bucharest, Romania's capitol. A brother, who was to become the Royal Family Dentist, taught his younger brother the technical intricacies of dentistry. At age seventeen, Ilie emigrated to Montreal. He refined his technical skills in the offices of three different dentists before moving to Brooklyn, New York.

On the advice of a family friend he relocated to Providence, Rhode Island. His first office was on Prairie Avenue in South Providence. He also had offices in downtown Providence and on Atwells Avenue. He established his permanent home and office in a stately old house at 176 Waterman Street on the East Side of Providence. He employed Dr. Walter Nelson, who later became a prominent dentist in his own right.

Dr. Berger's inquisitive and inventive mind soon turned to methods of restoring dental function where large numbers of teeth were missing. Dentists in the 1920s and 1930s constructed various types of removable partial dentures which were often rather primitive by today's standards. Patients experienced difficulty chewing, speaking, and maintaining good oral hygiene. Often these appliances produced further tooth loss. Full dentures seemed the only long-term solution. With ingenuity and creativity, Dr. Berger designed long-lasting fixed bridges. Eventually this technique in the hands of other pioneers in New York and other metropolitan areas, became known as oral rehabilitation or reconstruction. As newer methods for casting crowns were devised and plastics came into vogue, permanent bridgework could be constructed which not only functioned well, but was cosmetically attractive. Dr. Berger participated in this advancing technology, which was accompanied by the discovery of xylocaine, local anesthesia, and the evolving high speed rotary instrumentation in the late 1940s ushered in an era of truly painless dentistry.

Dr. Berger was intensely devoted to Jewish and other civic causes. His colleagues in the Jewish Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity and he were prime movers in the establishment of the Dental School at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The writer, on a trip to Israel, was not surprised to find Dr. Berger's name emblazoned on a plaque in the Dental School foyer as a charter contributor to the School. Dr. Berger was invited to present lectures and demonstrations in France, Romania and Israel as well as in the United States.

Two Jewish dentists who were destined to have a major impact on Rhode Island dentistry for many years were Archie Albert and James C. Krasnoff. They graduated from Harvard Dental School in 1921 and 1927 respectively. After graduation from the Dental School, Dr. Krasnoff was selected to participate in the Grenfell Labrador Mission. The forbidding climate of Labrador was no obstacle as he sped about in his sled to attend to the dental needs of the natives. A year later Dr. Krasnoff established his practice in downtown Providence in the Union Trust Building. He became the third Jewish dentist to become the president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1946.

The marvels of dental quality and innovation are accepted matter-of-factly by the contemporary patient. Yet for patients and dentists of this earlier period great discomfort and long dental sessions were needed to complete treatments. The inadequacy of the only available local anesthetic, novocain, provided short and

incomplete anesthesia for reconstructive procedures, and the low-speed instruments and diamond-encrusted burrs available at the time necessitated long appointments to obtain only partial goals. Dr. Krasnoff was said to have overcome these problems with a dedication to perfection and a gentle compassionate attitude toward his patients.

Dr. Krasnoff served as Chairman of the Dental Department of The Miriam Hospital for many years. During his tenure distinguished clinicians were asked to appear in the Sopkin Auditorium to deliver learned papers on various dental themes. Dr. Laszlo Schwartz, an expert and textbook author on tempero-mandibular problems and function, appeared with Miriam Hospital clinicians in one presentation.

Dr. Archie Albert was a veritable dynamo in dentistry and the community. His practice in Pawtucket was overloaded. To accommodate the large numbers of persons needing dental treatment, Dr. Albert enlisted young dentists to serve internship-like periods in his office. Dr. David L. Field, Dr. Alfred Jaffe, and Dr. David Troup, among many others, started their dental careers in his office. Dr. Albert was one of the earliest chiefs of The Miriam Hospital Dental Department. He headed the department for about thirty-five years. In 1951 he was elected president of the Rhode Island Dental Association following by one year the presidency of Dr. Simon Ozarin, a dentist from Newport. Dr. Albert also was a long-term chairman of the Rhode Island Board of Licensure in Dentistry as well as an influential member of the American College of Dentists. Dr. Albert was a candidate for State Representative in Providence's Fourth District in 1956 and 1958, losing each time, unfortunately. He also made an impact on the Alpha Omega Jewish Dental Fraternity, which elected him as its national president.

In 1957 Dr. Bernard C. Friedman ascended to the presidency of the Rhode Island Dental Association after practicing dentistry in Newport since 1924. Dr. Friedman arrived in Newport as an immigrant at the age of 10. He was educated at Rogers High School and the Boston School of Pharmacy, but he decided to transfer from pharmacy to Tufts University Dental School in 1919. He graduated in 1923. After a one-year residency at the Forsythe Dental Infirmary, he opened his office on Ayrault Street in Newport. He was the first dentist to provide school-clinic dentistry in Portsmouth, Little Compton, and Middletown, Rhode Island.⁴

In 1930, at a time when the United States economy was entering the deepest depression in its history, a unique philanthropic venture was begun by a merchant bent on providing dental service for indigent children. Colonel Joseph Samuels, the founder of the Outlet Company, contributed \$300,000 to erect and equip a clinic to be named the Joseph Samuels Dental Clinic of Rhode Island Hospital and also pledged an additional amount to endow and maintain the clinic. The clinic was

completed and dedicated in 1931. For his dedication to the needs of poor children and his magnanimity, Colonel Samuels was named an honorary member of the Rhode Island Dental Association and given a medal for his generosity. At his death in 1939, the colonel bequeathed an additional \$250,000 to the clinic. His family also made additional annual gifts of \$10,000.

Samuel Gorfine graduated from Harvard Dental School and was licensed to practice in Rhode Island in 1928. Recognizing the needs of the inner-city population, he opened his office on Atwells Avenue, the heavily Italian-populated area in Providence. He was joined in 1930 by his brother Isadore S. Gorfine and in 1938 by a second brother, H. Lewis Gorfine. The three brothers later engaged the services of Dr. Hyman Goldstein to help with their heavy patient load. These four Jewish dentists (Dr. Goldstein's name was excluded from their dental signs) catered to a predominantly Italian clientele. Dr. Goldstein, in an interview, said "the Gorfine brothers had a tremendous practice built on low fees, time payments, and their own laboratory. They had very good Italian-speaking dental assistants and worked long hours, being open seven days a week and nights until the last patient left."⁵

In 1930 Henry Helfand, a graduate of Tufts, established his office in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. He practiced there until recent years. Dr. S. Robert Sadwin also practiced in Woonsocket until he decided to make a major shift in his life and settled on a kibbutz in Israel.

In 1933 A. Budner Lewis, whose address was listed as 359 Blackstone Street in South Providence, was licensed. A graduate of Tufts, he began a distinguished career first as a general dentist and later as the first in periodontal diseases in Rhode Island. He received special mention in the Diamond Jubilee Year Monograph for winning the first award in the Scientific and Health Section of the American Dental Association meeting in Boston in 1947. He had prepared plaster plaques colored in oils depicting the evolution of dental practice since 200 b.c.e.⁶

Many more Jewish young men entered dentistry in the thirties and during the World War II years. It was a period of a golden age of dentistry ushered in by the development of antibiotics, especially penicillin, and superb local anesthetics, the first of which was xylocaine, discovered by Swedish scientists in 1946, and the evolution of air-driven rotary turbine ultra-speed instruments. The period was also marked by the advances in dental education in great part through the efforts of Dr. Henry Goldman, a distinguished Brown University and Harvard Dental School graduate. Dr. Goldman made his first impact as a professor of oral pathology at Harvard. His herculean efforts and talent for raising money gave birth to the Boston University Graduate School of Dentistry. This school was instrumental in training large numbers in the science and arts of periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, and implantodontics. In layman's terms these specialists are the practitioners in gum

diseases, root canal therapy, crown and bridge reconstruction services, and the placement of dental implants. Orthodontics or "braces" also entered its own golden age.

Although there were trained orthodontists in previous years in the persons of Dr. Morris Lebow, Dr. Raymond Webster, Dr. Philip Dorenbaum and others, formal post-doctoral training on the university level was instituted with the end of World War II.

Two Rhode Island native Jewish sons who were graduates of these programs decided to return to Rhode Island to begin their careers. Dr. Alfred Jaffe studied at Columbia School of Dentistry. His first office consisted of a few small rooms in Providence in a Waterman Street building, but he soon attracted a sufficiently large clientele both in Providence and in a part-time office in Newport to justify the purchase of a building on Ives Street adjacent to Dr. Ilie Berger's former office. Trained in up-to-date diagnostic and treatment protocols which included cephalometric and panoramic radiography, Dr. Jaffe became a force in Rhode Island orthodontics.

Dr. Eugene Nelson received his training at Tufts Graduate School of Orthodontics. Armed with the same background and skills as Dr. Jaffe, Dr. Nelson soon achieved similar success, leading to the construction of a medical-dental complex at the corner of Cooke and Waterman Streets, where he practiced until his retirement. He became president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1963, a year in which major changes were successfully accomplished. Many young dentists, inspired by Dr. Jaffe and Dr. Nelson, came to practice orthodontics in Rhode Island. Some were proteges of Dr. Jaffe, whose generosity in providing experience to new graduates aided them on their career paths.

An additional note about a Rhode Island orthodontist is in order. Dr. Fred Alofsin was both a practicing orthodontist and Mayor of Newport for a number of years, and in 1967 was president of the Rhode Island Dental Association.

The post-World War II years witnessed a change in the attitudes of hospital administrations in the matter of appointments. St. Joseph Hospital readily accepted Jewish physicians and dentists in its internship programs. Dr. Edward Brown, a graduate of Tufts in 1933, was appointed to the dental internship program, according to Dr. Philip Gordon, who followed Dr. Brown in the program for the year 1934-1935. After completing his internship, Dr. Brown opened an office above Barney Goldberg's pharmacy at the fork of North Main and Benefit Streets. World War II interrupted Dr. Brown's career, but at the end of the war he returned to this location. (Many future dentists, however, benefitted from World War II by being selected to attend dental school through the ASTP program at American colleges.) In 1955, because of his reputation as a skilled dental surgeon, Dr. Brown was

appointed Chairman of the Dental Department at St. Joseph's Hospital and served in this capacity for twenty years.

The specialty trend accelerated after the close of the war. Most treatment for gum diseases had been provided by the general dentist. Dr. A. Budner Lewis was the sole practicing periodontist in the state at this time. Realizing the need for additional periodontists in the state, Dr. Philip Schuback established an office in Providence. In 1964 Dr. Paul L. Segal, after completing his training in periodontics at Boston University, established an office at 243 Waterman Street. His acceptance by the community permitted him to relocate to more spacious quarters on Dudley Street. Ten years later he built an office building on Gano Street and added two periodontists to his staff. Dr. Segal's results created wide recognition that there was, indeed, help for those suffering from periodontal lesions. The enhanced demand soon attracted other Jewish periodontists and, recently, the first female specialist in this field. Dr. Segal was a ground-breaker for other periodontists. He has been on the staff of dental schools and was president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1991.

In like fashion, Dr. Edwin S. Mehlman paved the way for endodontists in this state. Dr. Mehlman was the first post-doctoral trained endodontist to come to Rhode Island. He trained at Boston University, and began his career in 1965 in Providence. He was president of the Rhode Island Dental Association in 1986-1987. He was installed as first vice-president of the American Dental Association on October 26, 1994.

Near the end of World War II, an idea germinating in the mind of Dr. Norman Goldberg came to fruition. On his return from the service, he decided there must be a way to aid full-denture wearers who could not tolerate these prostheses because of poor ridges or inability to master the use of the appliances. His concept was based on the principle of implanting a stainless steel framework to fit the bony ridge and attaching a superstructure to four posts protruding from the implant itself. He hoped the problem of retention would be solved effectively and provide the patient with a well-functioning masticating apparatus. Oral implants of one kind or another had been unsuccessfully tried in the past. Dr. Goldberg invited his colleague, Dr. Aaron Gershkoff, to join him in clinical trials. Their successes far outnumbered their failures as they improved their technique and the methods for making the framework.

Patient acceptance of the implants was phenomenal even when a failure necessitated a replacement. According to Dr. Goldberg, patient reaction was "enthusiastic to delirious." The dental implant revolution that originated in Rhode Island had begun. Dr. Goldberg became the first president of the newly established American Academy of Implant Dentistry, headquartered in Chicago. The modern variations in implants, especially tubular systems which attain fixation by means of

osseointegration or growth of bone through the interstices of the tube implant, are offsprings of the experiments of Drs. Goldberg and Gershkoff. Dr. Gershkoff was invited to join the staff of Boston University Graduate School of Dentistry, now known as the Henry Goldman School of Dental Medicine. In 1968 he was promoted to the rank of Professor of Implantodontics. Dr. Goldberg was appointed to the teaching staff at Harvard School of Dental Medicine. A treatise by the two dentists, *Implant Dentures-Indications and Procedures*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1957, is a basic text heralding in the implant age in dentistry.

As invitations to lecture all over the world arrived in their offices, both dentists made many foreign trips. Dr. Gershkoff was asked to fly to Teheran to treat the Shah's sister. Later the two dentists were invited to present a lecture series in Australia. Only Dr. Gershkoff was available. As a result, Dr. Goldberg and his wife were not on the airplane taking off from the Fiji Islands with Dr. Aaron and Miriam Gershkoff as passengers for their trip home. The plane plunged into the ocean to a depth of 10,000 feet. Sadly, no bodies were ever recovered.⁷

This article has presented a general overview of the role of Jewish dentists in Rhode Island dentistry from its earliest recorded beginnings. Unfortunately, it could not cite every dentist who may have in some respect had an influence on the progress of dentistry in Rhode Island. All of the dentists mentioned are male, but a future history will cite the fact that there are at least five Jewish women serving as dentists in Rhode Island at the present time.



NOTES

- ¹ Records of the Rhode Island Board of Licensure in Dentistry.
- ² Interview with Dr. Samuel Rouslin, July 1994.
- ³ Abraham Schwartz, "Albert L. Midgley, A Profile," *Harvard School of Dental Medicine Alumni Bulletin*, March 1961.
- ⁴ Letter from Dr. Charles M. Friedman, 1994.
- ⁵ Interview with Dr. Hyman Goldstein, June 1994.
- ⁶ *The Rhode Island Dental Society Notes*, Diamond Jubilee Year, 1953, page 3.
- ⁷ Interviews with Dr. Norman Goldberg, August and September, 1994.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following: Eleanor F. Horvitz, Dr. Alfred Jaffe, Bernard Kuznitz, Samuel Friedman (Newport), Dr. Samuel Rouslin, Dr. Norman Goldberg, Dr. Philip Gordon, and Dr. Hyman Goldstein.

APPENDIX

Early Rhode Island Dentists Known To Be Jewish or with Jewish-sounding names — Rhode Island Board of Licensure in Dentistry listing and registration numbers.

1. 1888 Benjamin Jacobson, DDS, 276 Westminister Street, Providence
2. 1902 Harry B. Schuman, DMD, Harvard, 1902,. Cert. #312
3. 1903 Bernhard Cohen, DMD, Harvard, 1903, Pawtucket, Cert. #333
4. 1905 Albert Pobirsky, DDS, Baltimore College, 1905, Cert. #372
5. 1907 Samuel Finklestein, Jr., DDS, Philadelphia College of Dental Surgery, 1907, Cert. #406
6. 1909 Ilie Berger, no degree, Providence, Cert. #461
7. 1910 Jacob Nathaniel Blumenthal, no degree, Hartford, Connecticut, Cert. #459
8. 1910 Mark Tishler, DMD, Harvard, 1908, Newport, Cert. #460
9. 1910 Israel Myer Shallen, DMD, Tufts College Dental School, Woonsocket, R. I., Cert. #467
10. 1910 Harry Parvey, DDS, Philadelphia Dental College, 1907, Providence, Cert. #469
11. 1910? Herbert Nathan Brown, DDS, University of Maryland, 1910 Pawtucket, Cert. #488
12. 1911 Louis Levy, DDS, Baltimore Medical College, Cert. #500
13. 1912 Charles Chester Bronstein, DDS, New York College of Dental Surgery, Cert. #507
14. 1912 Morris Lebow, DDS Baltimore Medical College, Dental Dept. Cert. #509
15. 1913? Philip Phyneas Epstein, no degree, Woonsocket, Cert. #523
16. 1913 Israel S. Woiler, DDS, Cincinnati College of Dental Surgery, Cert. #526
17. 1913 Benjamin Rouslin, DDS, Philadelphia Dental College, Providence, Cert. #549
18. 1915 Jacob Helfinbein, DMD, Harvard, Fall River, Cert. #571
19. 1915? Noah L. Morin, DDS, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Cert. #574
20. 1915? Carrie L. Wolf, DDS, Tufts Dental School, Providence, Cert. #582
21. 1916 Julius B. Goldsmith, DMD, Harvard?, Newport, Cert. #594
22. 1916 Harry Charren, DMD, Tufts Dental School, Providence, Cert. #599
23. 1917? Philip Kramer, no degree, Providence, Cert. #612
24. 1918 Israel Levin, DMD, Tufts Dental School, Providence, Cert. 625
25. 1918? Allen R. Tetlow, DMD, Tufts Dental School, Providence, Cert. #?
26. 1918 Lewis M. Forbes, DMD, Harvard, Providence, Cert. #631
27. 1919 Herman Melkowitz, DDS, New York College of Dental Surgery, Cert. #638
28. 1919 John J. Rouslin, DMD, Tufts Dental School, Pawtucket, Cert. #641
29. 1919 Abram Zwoden, DMD, Tufts Dental School, Providence, Cert. #652



The Crown Shop, children's clothing store owned by Jacob Scribner, shown with a clerk, on 249 Atwells Avenue, Providence, R.I., in 1933.

FAMILY STORES

BY ELEANOR F. HORVITZ AND GERALDINE S. FOSTER

"The American Jew," Nathan Glazer stated, "tries to avoid getting into a situation where discrimination may seriously affect him...[He] prefers a situation where his own merit receives objective confirmation, and he is not dependent on the good will or personal reaction of a person who may not happen to like Jews. This independent confirmation of merit is one of the chief characteristics of business as against corporate bureaucracy."¹

For Jews of the first decades of this century, working in a corporate bureaucracy was hardly an option. However, Glazer's statement regarding the desirability of business, particularly a business of one's own, was indeed relevant. As Irving Howe observed, "To shake loose from the domination of a boss, ... to take the risks of using one's own wits and gaining the rewards of one's own work — this became a commanding desire among the immigrant Jews"²

Joel Perlmann, in his in-depth study of ethnic differences in schooling and social structure, 1880-1935, found that Russian-born Jews were heavily "concentrated in the skilled trades and in commerce — and especially in commerce." He said, "In discussing commerce I do not mean to imply that the Jewish immigrants were well off; as often as not they were peddlers, and there is every indication that those who had their own small stores had also started as peddlers. But the concentration in commerce meant that they were differently situated than other groups, possibly in ways that made a difference for later work." He found that in 1915 in Providence seventy-one per cent of the Russian Jewish immigrant fathers were self-employed, compared to twenty per cent of other immigrants.³

To have in hand the key to one's own business, to be one's own boss — despite the long arduous hours, the risks, the low returns — that represented freedom and possibilities for bettering one's life. Finding the crannies within the world of business often shunned by others or filling perceived needs within the Jewish community or outside it, the immigrants seized the opportunities whenever or wherever they presented themselves. Whether moving from peddling to a shop or using skills acquired in Europe, the new entrepreneurs depended on their wits, on *mazel* (luck, Hebrew), and on the help of family members, particularly wives.

This article describes fourteen such businesses in existence in Rhode Island prior to 1940, the earliest of which was opened in 1896. Although prior German and middle European immigrants to Rhode Island also engaged in commerce almost exclusively, there was no way to ascertain to what degree they involved members of the immediate family.

Eleanor Horvitz is Librarian-Archivist, and Geraldine Foster is a past-president of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

BACHMAN'S AND THE CROWN SHOP

The Outlet Company opened for business on a now forgotten date in the fall of 1894. On that very same day, Abraham and Nettie Bachman inaugurated their men's shop at 243 Atwells Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island. After several years of peddling, that is, selling and delivering with a horse and wagon, Abraham Bachman had accumulated the means to finance their venture. The Federal Hill site was chosen with a great deal of forethought. This was the area where the Italian immigrant laborers working on the East Side tunnel lived. They needed good quality work clothes, of the sort the Bachmans planned to offer along with haberdashery items and ready made men's apparel.

"They carried the best quality brand names, so people came in and trusted them. No credit, paid strictly cash," recalled Milton Scribner, grandson of Abraham and Nettie Bachman. "My grandfather never learned to read or write. He had a fantastic memory, kept everything in his head. He knew the cost factor of nearly every single item there. He could add without using paper and pencil."

The long, narrow store was located on the first floor of a building which also housed two tenements. The Bachmans and Milton Scribner's family lived on one floor; his uncle Louis and his family occupied the other. "Nettie Bachman worked right along with her husband," Scribner stated. "In addition, she cooked all the meals in her kitchen and brought the food downstairs to the store. That way they did not have to leave the store for lunch, and sometimes even for dinner." They lived there until the early 1920s, when the Scribners and the Bachmans moved to Gallatin Street.

The store was in many respects a family enterprise. In addition to Abraham and Nettie Bachman, their son Louis, daughter Dora Scribner, and son-in-law Jacob Scribner all worked there. Mrs. Scribner's role entailed what might be considered "customer relations" rather than sales. Her son described her as having "a wonderful personality. People loved her." After a while Jacob Scribner noticed that the neighborhood needed a store specializing in infants' and children's clothing. To fill this need he opened the Crown Shop. Milton and his brother Herbert assisted him there, as did their mother Dora, once again in a non-sales capacity.

Milton Scribner's young years were spent in the home and store of his grandparents. "I grew up in the *shmatte* (rag, Yiddish) business. I remember selling cufflinks and Arrow collars, which were stiff and which one would attach to a shirt. I was doing that at the age of six, I think." The adjacent alley sometimes served as Milton's playground. It was there during slack hours that a salesman taught him to play hockey.

While they lived on Atwells Avenue, the family never took vacations. "Their

whole life centered around the store and family," according to Milton Scribner. The long store hours — eight in the morning until eight at night, every day except Sunday and the Jewish holidays — precluded much socializing during the week; Sundays usually meant an exchange of visits with family and close friends.

There was a feeling of cooperation among the Jewish merchants, particularly those in similar situations. Scribner mentioned the Fain family (Fain's Department Store, Charles Street). If either store needed a particular item, the other would supply it if possible. They frequently exchanged information and helped each other.

Saturday night the family gathered around the dining room table to count the week's receipts. It was a ritual to see how much money was brought in for the week, Scribner remembered. A large portion of the receipts was composed of gold pieces, legal tender at the time.

Milton Scribner worked in his father's store until he went to college. Since he had to earn money for his tuition, he sold Fuller brushes door-to-door, conducted a magazine route, and worked Saturdays at the Outlet Company for two dollars a day. He also worked for Horvitz Brothers Wholesale as a salesman. One of the items, Segal Blades, did not sell well. To build up the demand he persuaded college classmates to go to various drug stores and ask for the item. Later Scribner would visit the store. He did very well, using that ruse.

When asked if he resented having to work in the family store or being unable to do something he particularly enjoyed because of work, Scribner replied that he did at times but it was part of his growing up. His grandfather expected him and his younger brother to be available.

The Crown Shop closed its doors in the late 1940s, Bachman's in the following decade. Abraham Bachman's son Louis conducted the business for a time after his father's death. Both Milton Scribner and his brother Herbert became merchandise managers for major retail outlets.⁴

FAIN'S DEPARTMENT STORES, INC.

Barnet Fain was the first of the Fain family to migrate to the United States from Russian Poland in 1878. Gradually he sent for each of his brothers and sisters. Barnet set Nathan up in the business of peddling pots and pans, which he carried on his back. Nathan married Lena about the turn of the century. Having graduated from his peddling days, Nathan, together with his wife, established a neighborhood dry-goods store in the Eagle Park section of Providence. They were in that store for only one year, when they moved to 598 Charles Street. In about 1913 they moved to 602 Charles Street and in 1922 moved their residence from the tenement above the store to Warrington Street in the Elmwood section of Providence.

Nathan and Lena had two daughters, Dora and Jeannette, and, later twin sons, Leonard and Alfred. Alfred Fain recalled the story that his mother had been working in the store, went upstairs to their living quarters and there delivered to both her and her doctor's surprise, twins. A single baby had been anticipated.

When asked who took care of him and his brother Leonard, Alfred Fain answered, his sister Dora (almost ten years older than the twins). His mother was always in the store, and his sister was like a surrogate mother. The boys began to help out in the store on weekends and when needed, and their sisters also worked in the store. The Fain Department Store was truly an all-family business.

The store held a unique position in the all-Italian neighborhood. Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents shopped there for their clothes as well as for maternity, baptism, first Communion, confirmation, wedding and even funeral garments. Lena Fain made herself an integral part of the Italian neighborhood and could communicate with her customers in Italian. There was no question that Leonard and Alfred Fain as adults would continue to work in the department store. In January 1969 thirty years after the twins started working full time, there was a huge fire in the store caused by a malfunctioning oil burner which had exploded. It took nine months, but they rebuilt and reopened.

The Fain family built their reputation on carrying brand-name merchandise and developing a rapport with their neighborhood customers. They changed with the times. They introduced charge accounts. They had sales; they built a prosperous business.

Alfred and Leonard decided in 1982 that after working for fifty-three years in the store founded by their parents, it was time to retire. Newspaper accounts of the closing stated that their customers were "devastated at the loss of their neighborhood department store," but the twins felt it was time for them to end their "tied down" status and explore new adventures in living.⁵

COHEN FAMILY FLORIST BUSINESSES

Aaron Cohen always loved the outdoors. He had an affinity for growing flowers and vegetables. During his long life he earned his living by engaging in that which he found most enjoyable. Born in Ukraine, Russia, in 1888 or 1889, Aaron Cohen immigrated to the United States with his parents, Jacob and Bella, a brother, William, and sister, Pauline, around 1908. Two of his siblings had died in Russia. Two more children were born in the United States. Unfortunately, Jacob Cohen died at a young age, and Aaron, as the oldest child, took on the responsibility of the family.

While in his teens Aaron worked for Koppelman's greenhouse in East Providence

but left in 1918 to enter the Army as a cook during World War I. After his discharge he returned to the florist business, employed by Hoffman Greenhouse on East Avenue in Pawtucket. On June 18, 1918, he married Nettie Paster, daughter of Herman and Clara Cohon Paster. She was born in Lowell, Massachusetts. The Paster family had moved to South Providence from Lowell. Herman served as a deputy sheriff for the Superior Court. Nettie was working as a bookkeeper for Belcher & Loomis Hardware Co. when she met Aaron. Unlike Aaron, whose only education was obtained through night school, Nettie had a formal education, graduating from Technical High School in Providence.

Aaron's brother William worked for T. J. O'Connell, who had a shop in downtown Providence and greenhouses on Blackstone Boulevard. In 1920 Aaron and William decided to establish a florist business. They bought a greenhouse on Lowell Avenue in Providence, owned and operated by Ernest Carl Ennis and his son, who had started the business in 1888 as a greenhouse and garden center. At first they called their new venture Cohen Brothers, but in 1931 they changed the name to Lowell Avenue Greenhouses, Inc.

Aaron's and William's interests in the various facets of the florist business made for an excellent partnership. William was the designer, the retail florist, and a very good teacher in the art of flower arrangement, although as his nephew Maurice explained, "He was also a very strict teacher. You didn't just start with designing. You came in and did a lot of menial work." Aaron worked in the greenhouses and during the summer months cultivated and grew flowers on the large land area in back of the greenhouses. Only during the busy holidays did he help in the store.

Aaron's wife, Nettie, and William's wife, Rose (nee Blackman) worked in the flower shop during holidays and when needed. At the beginning of the florist business, the Cohen brothers operated a greenhouse business almost exclusively, selling potted plants to other florists, but in the late 1920s they branched out to supplying flowers for weddings and for other occasions.

Twin sons are involved in two of the early Jewish family businesses in this study. Like Nathan and Lena Fain, Aaron and Nettie Cohen had twin sons. Nettie Cohen worked in the greenhouse planting geraniums on the day in 1921 just before she gave birth to her twins, Gerald and Maurice. A single baby had been expected. Their third son, Herbert, was born five years later in 1926.

During their early years their mother went into the store to do the bookkeeping on a regular basis. Their father hired a couple, Hans and Martha Kaempfe, who had come from Germany to learn the florist business. They worked for the Cohens from 1922 to 1928 and stayed with the boys when their mother was needed in the store.

The twins began helping in the business at the age of eleven, working weekends,

holidays and during the summer. As they grew older, they were given more responsibility. As in the case of the Fain twins and the department store, there was no question but that Maurice and Gerald Cohen as adults would continue to work in the florist business. Neither twin ever considered any other line of work. After they went to work on a full-time basis, Maurice had Mondays and Thursdays off, while Gerald was off on Wednesdays. If there was an occasion on a Sunday such as a wedding, the boys were required to work on that day as well.

The store was situated below street level on Lowell Avenue, and the house in which it was located was raised to accommodate living quarters above it for the Cohen family. There were two greenhouses and a small greenhouse to which the store and home were attached. These greenhouses were originally heated by coal, later converted to oil heat. Maurice Cohen remembered the many nights the temperature in the greenhouse would fall too low and an alarm would go off in their home. His father would spend the rest of the night in the boiler room of the greenhouses. Eventually William and Aaron built identical houses on Lowell Avenue for their respective families. They were always within close proximity to the business.

During the summer months, they transferred the plants and bulbs from the greenhouse to the outside. They grew a great variety of gladiolus, asters, and other flowers, some of which were sold to wholesale distributors. For example, they sold snapdragons and delphinium to McCarron Florist. Aaron also raised many vegetables — corn, lettuce, cucumbers, and tomatoes — exclusively for the family's use.

Because the greenhouses had to be checked daily during the winter months, the parents rarely took a vacation during that season. However, they did vacation, often with friends, in the summer months, the partners taking vacations at separate times.

The Cohens always enjoyed an excellent reputation as florists. They had a large neighborhood trade. It was a neighborhood of mixed nationalities — German, French, English and Polish. Gradually they acquired a Jewish clientele. In the early days of their business a bouquet of flowers sold for \$1.50, funeral pieces for three dollars. Fashions changed with the years. In the beginning they dealt with loose flowers or hand-tied bouquets, but then came innovations such as new methods for preserving flowers, for fashioning them with moss, wires, and water tubes. A large part of the business involved working with funeral directors.

Maurice said they had a good life, with time for the parents and sons to be together as a family in a lucrative business. Unlike other parents who were tied down to their businesses, Aaron Cohen was able to have a normal life with his family. He was always very punctual and conscious of time. No matter what he might be doing in the flower shop, he went home at noon to have his mid-day meal. Dinner was served

at six o'clock, and his son recollected, "If you weren't at the dinner table, you didn't eat."

After graduation from high school the twins worked full-time, primarily in the greenhouses but in the store if needed. There was a hiatus when the twins were in service during World War II, Maurice with the Army's Antiaircraft Artillery Division, and Gerald with the 9th Air Force.

In 1951 Gerald and Maurice decided to start their own florist business, called Twin Florists, and opened a shop on Park Avenue in Cranston. Their father and uncle continued with the Lowell Avenue Greenhouses until William died in 1966. But Aaron ran the store (the land was sold in 1971) until 1980 when he joined his sons in their business. Aaron died in 1984 at the age of 95. In 1988, Maurice decided that after a total of fifty years of working in both his father's and his own business he was ready to retire. He did so, but his brother stayed on with new owners of Twin Florists. Only brother Herbert did not devote his life to the florist business, but helped out when his brothers were in the armed service.

Twin Florists was sold in 1988 to the son of an employee.⁶

THE FELDMAN FAMILY BUSINESSES

The Feldman family's two daughters grew up under entirely different circumstances. Louis Feldman, who emigrated from Russia to Providence in the 1890s, earned a living by peddling fruit and vegetables from a horse and wagon. As his brothers joined him from Russia, he opened two grocery stores in Providence, one at 139 Broadway and one at 323 Pine Street. In 1910 he married Ada Zinn. They set up housekeeping at 15 Lyall Court not far from the grocery stores. It was not long before Ada took over the management of one of the stores. Because of the long hours the store Ada ran was open, the care of her first daughter, Frieda, had to be left in a hired girl's hands. According to Frieda's recollections, there were many traumatic situations during her mother's absence. When no help was available, her mother took her to the store. As a school-aged child, she realized, she envied a fellow classmate whose mother was home when she came in from school.

In contrast to the circumstances under which Frieda grew up, the younger daughter, Eleanor, was born during a marked change in the parents' lives. They had sold their stores to invest in three buildings with three tenements each, located at 8, 12, and 16 Portland Street, Providence. Just as Louis had the foresight to create a mini-chain of grocery stores which were managed by his brothers, he now envisioned renovating these buildings into rooming houses with furnished apartment facilities. Some became single rooms with gas for cooking (electricity had recently been installed), and a bath and toilet on each floor shared by the occupants of the single rooms. There were also apartments comprised of bedroom, living

room, kitchenette, and private bath.

Ada continued to share the work involved in her husband's business, but, instead of working in a grocery store, she helped manage the apartment houses. That entailed renting the rooms, cleaning between occupancies, providing the linens, laundering curtains, and at the same time, shopping and cooking for her family. But there was one important difference as far as the children were concerned. The younger daughter was raised in a home from which her mother worked. During a rather severe illness, the younger child had the comfort of her mother, who moved her into the parents' bed. During the day, Mrs. Feldman stayed in the room while sewing curtains for the apartments.

The younger daughter remembers a normal childhood, building forts in the backyard after snowstorms, playing with neighborhood children, sharing her father's love of animals — they had a dog, cats, birds, and goldfish. Her own project was mice, found under a pile of logs in the backyard. Her mother was always home when she returned from school, and as long as one parent was on call for the tenants, her mother was free to take her shopping, and her father could take her on delightful excursions — to the circus, on a rowboat in Roger Williams Park, to vaudeville shows. It was also a pleasant break for her father, who worked extremely hard, firing up the boilers for heat at five a.m., doing all the physical maintenance of the buildings by himself. It was also possible for the older daughter and her mother to attend concerts at Infantry Hall while the father "sat" with his younger daughter. The family could now eat together, interrupted only by a tenant's problem, which seemed inconsequential after a home life that was almost non-existent in the grocery store days.

The Feldman-owned apartments were sold in the 1950s and subsequently demolished as part of city redevelopment.⁷

JOSEPH MITTLEMAN, BUTCHER

The year was 1909. Joseph Mittleman and his wife, Rose, together with their year-old son, Irving, immigrated to the United States from Ukraine, Russia. It was becoming more and more difficult for Joseph to make a living in Russia. He hoped for a better future like that which his brothers Harry and Max had attained in Providence, Rhode Island. Each owned his own meat market on Chalkstone Avenue.

Joseph had no problem making a living, for he continued to pursue the trade he had learned in his native country. His father had operated a slaughterhouse and a retail business, employing his three sons. It should be noted that no Jew was allowed to own a slaughterhouse or farm land; both had to be leased from the Russian government.

Joseph worked for his younger brother, Max, for two years and, when a store became vacant at 66 Chalkstone Avenue, he rented it. He paid forty dollars for the fixtures, which included a walk-in cooler, cooled by several blocks of ice; a hanging scale, a beam scale for weighing incoming beef, and a tree trunk which served as a butcher block. After one week in business Joseph discovered that the profit realized in running his own business netted him one dollar more than he had earned as his brother's employee. He remained an entrepreneur.

The store was located below street level. The family rented the three-room tenement above the store. There were no indoor toilet facilities, but an outhouse in the back yard.

Approximately four years later, Joseph moved his store to 72 Chalkstone Avenue, which also included three rooms in back as living quarters. Three daughters were born there. Five years later Joseph and Rose were in a position to purchase the property and to move to a second-floor tenement.

The life of a butcher entailed long hours. Joseph would arise between two and three a.m. to fill orders for a seven a.m. delivery. The store remained open until eight p.m. "It was not unusual for customers to call any time up until midnight for orders they wished delivered the next morning," commented his son, Irving Mittleman. "Since my father had gone to bed, it was my duty to answer our home telephone extension and record the orders in Yiddish." The business was closed on the Sabbath and all Jewish holidays. Joseph attended Friday evening and Saturday morning services accompanied by Irving. The only time the family ate together was on Friday night, Saturday, and the Jewish holidays.

As business improved and Joseph prospered, he replaced the cooler with an electric refrigerator which cost eight hundred dollars. He hired one man for home deliveries and one man as an assistant.

Rose stayed in the store when Joseph went home for his meals. She also worked in the store during the time he went to the slaughterhouse in Pawtucket to purchase beef. It was necessary to employ a butcher on a temporary basis on the few occasions when Joseph became ill.

Rose devoted herself to housekeeping, cooking, caring for the children, and assisting in the store. She had no time to belong to organizations, except the Pioneer Women (now Na'amat), but could not attend meetings.

"My father, however, was one of the earliest members of the Hebrew Free Loan," commented his son. Irving recalled the plight of the fruit peddlers who earned their living by selling produce from horse-drawn wagons. Not having sufficient money to buy their produce, they would approach his father at the beginning of the week

for a loan. At the end of the week the loan was repaid with no interest. Such was their way of life; they helped one another. This precept led to the formation of the Hebrew Free Loan.

About his childhood and his sisters, Irving Mittleman said, "We never knew what the word *neglect* meant." His parents worked long hard hours to earn a living so that their life would be more comfortable in their older years and so that they might provide for their children's futures.

Joseph Mittleman did not want his son to become a butcher, but circumstances decreed otherwise. Irving Mittleman continued in the same occupation until his retirement in 1967. He became an employee of the State of Rhode Island as an inspector of meat in markets and restaurants.⁸



Esther and Fred Adler, 1916.

ADLER'S AND BRODSKY'S

Fred Adler was an engraver who worked in the jewelry trade, a seasonal and often unpredictable business in which to earn one's livelihood. During a down time in 1918, Adler's brother-in-law, Harry Kotlen, suggested that he open a dry-goods store. Kotlen already owned such a business in Providence, operating first from a store on Charles Street near Randall Square, then on South Main Street, before moving to a downtown location.

Robert Kotlen related his father's story of the opening day of his business on Charles Street. After paying the rent and fixing up the store, he had no money left for stock. All he could afford was a box of white socks and a box of black socks. To make the place look well stocked until capital could be found, his friend, Sigmund Saltzman rode his motorcycle from store to store picking up empty boxes which they used to fill Kotlen's temporarily bare shelves. The story illustrates the precarious situation of many of these entrepreneurs — short on funds, long on hope and ingenuity.

Adler first conducted his new business from the Charles Street address, perhaps as Kotlen's partner for about a year and a half, according to Carl Adler, and then moved to Atwells Avenue. Unhappy with difficulties he encountered in doing business there, he founded Adler's Army and Navy Store at 173 Wickenden Street in 1919. The store has remained in the same location, enlarged to include an adjacent store, ever since. A hardware section opened in 1951.

"Doing business during the 1920s and '30s was very tough," according to Carl Adler. "Almost impossible. How my father managed, I never could figure out. However, since my father was an engraver, he would go to some of the jewelry factories and they would give him work, and he would do it at the store, and wait on trade in between."

Carl and Irving Adler began working in the store on Saturday afternoons at about age ten. They never resented having to work nor did it interfere with activities they enjoyed because it was just one day a week. The store's hours — eight a.m. to seven p.m. Monday through Friday, Saturday until ten p.m. — precluded the family eating meals together. When the family vacationed in Conimicut for the summer, Carl Adler recalled, his father commuted each day. His first car was a Ford. "In order to pay for it, he ran a jitney service from the Outlet Company store in downtown Providence, out Broad Street and Elmwood Avenue. He charged five cents for each person and dropped off passengers on the way to Conimicut. He did this until the car was paid for." Adler did not drive during the winter.

Esther Adler did not participate in the business until the beginning of World War II. Rather, she performed the more traditional role of women: keeping house, raising

the children, doing good work for community organizations.⁹

At Conimicut Esther Adler took charge not only of her two boys but also the son and daughter of her good friend Sarah Brodsky. Mrs. Brodsky had to work in the family business, Brodsky Brothers.

Anna Brodsky Musen stated that Brodsky Brothers began as a carriage store. Her father, who learned the trade at a cousin's company in New Jersey when he came from Europe, assembled the reed buggies to order, one at a time, at a small store at 649 Westminster Street. When he found he could order bodies made of other materials which could then be put together more easily and also allow a variety of styles, he graduated to a larger space. The business grew and grew. Since he was now working eighteen hours a day, Sarah Brodsky had to help him and wait on trade.

Samuel Brodsky added baby furniture, then toys. At Christmas time, Anna Musen recalled, the small store "was wall-to-wall with people. Shelves were packed from floor to ceiling with merchandise. Items hung from the ceiling. You could hardly walk through the store." Anna and her brother both worked, and extra help had to be hired. Customers could put deposits on merchandise up to three months before Christmas and then claim the items, adding to the hectic pace of the season. Because of the popularity of their "lay-a-way" plan, Brodsky annexed the store next door. He was an innovator in his chosen line of business.

Brodsky Brothers was sold in 1937 to Samuel Brodsky's nephew Max Bender, who kept the name "Brodsky's" for as long as he continued the business.¹⁰

Adler's Army-Navy department still occupies a small section of the Wickenden Street store. Since the post World War II decade, most of the retail space has been given over to hardware and home decorating departments. The third generation of Adlers now participates in the family business.

PEARLMAN SHOE STORES

Ida Esther Mines Pearlman was born in the winter of 1897 in the small village of Bialystok, Russia-Poland. Her father, Moshe, was known as the strongest man in the village and organized the young men to fight the Cossacks when they got drunk and invaded the Jewish section. He wanted to escape the pogroms and, hearing good things about the land of America, decided to see whether he could earn a living there for his family. So he set out alone in 1903, going first to relatives in New York City, followed a few months later by his wife, (Itka Soroh, name changed in America to Anna), and his children. Eventually they all settled in Fall River, Massachusetts, where Moshe set up a shoe repair business. The family soon grew to six children, Ida being the third.

From her early years Ida was a very bright, determined, and enterprising girl,



Ida Pearlman.

often being the child whom the family (poor financially and limited in their experiences with the non-Jewish world) sent out to deal with shopping and other errands because she knew how to stretch a dollar. To earn extra money she sold magazine subscriptions door to door and went through all the textile mill factory buildings in Fall River selling magazines to the workers. She became the leading saleswoman in the nation of the *Literary (Gazette) Digest*. When her son Thomas was out raising money for the Providence Hebrew Day School in about 1975, Morris Horovitz, Jr., retired head of the Fall River Paper Company, told him a story. He said that when he was a young man in 1916 working with his shirt off in a foundry with 140 degree temperature, a young lady came in to sell him a magazine subscription. "That young lady was your mother, Ida."

It was her outstanding ability as a student that changed her life the most. She was the head of the class of 1916 at Durfee High School in Fall River. In recognition of her academic talents, her principal insisted that she go to college and obtained for her a full academic scholarship to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Her father and mother strongly preferred that she not go away nor go to college at all. "Why should a nice Jewish girl go away to a college?" was the prevalent view of immigrant parents. Nevertheless, she was put on the train with her parents' tears in their eyes.

It was at the University of Michigan, while majoring in journalism, that Ida met her future husband, Israel P. Pearlman, from Detroit. In 1920, Israel and Ida Mines Pearlman graduated from the University of Michigan. Ida Pearlman was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Israel Pearlman had been a pre-medical student; however, Ida

persuaded him to go East after graduation to enter the business world.

Israel and Ida Pearlman opened Sterling Shoe Store in the space adjacent to Loew's State Theater in Providence. They were the first tenants in the building on Weybosset Street. "My father always enjoyed working in the shoe business," Ben Pearlman stated, "but he worked very hard." The business prospered and within a few years, in 1924 or 1925, the Pearlmans opened a second store, Gilmour's Pretty Shoes, on Westminster Street at the corner of Pie Alley. That shop carried only women's shoes, hosiery, and handbags. In 1935, a third store, also named Sterling Shoes, was opened, this time in Boston's Copley Square. Once a week Mr. Pearlman traveled to Boston by train to confer with the manager and check on the store's progress. Ben Pearlman recalled accompanying his father on some of those trips.

Israel Pearlman was the shoe buyer for all the stores in addition to overseeing both Sterling Shoe Stores. Ida Pearlman was the buyer of hosiery and handbags. Gilmour's Pretty Shoes was her domain. She worked there six days a week. Ben Pearlman said that his mother, a pleasant, outgoing person, had a steady stream of friends visiting her at the store.

From the outset Ida Pearlman took charge of advertising for Sterling Shoes. Ben Pearlman was told that she was one of the original radio advertisers for (he believes) WJAR. She also developed their slogan "Sterling Shoes delight the eye and comfort the feet." Beginning in the 1930s, when she was not selling or preparing copy or buying merchandise, she kept busy writing letters to the editor of the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* in defense of Jewish interests in Palestine and in Europe. "She was going to defeat the Arabs with her pen. She received acknowledgment from the *Providence Journal* that she was the most prolific letter writer they ever had," he stated.

There was always help in the house, at one time as many as three, to assist with the large Pearlman family of eleven children. "My mother and father would go to work every morning and drop us all off at the old Henry Barnard School," said Benjamin Pearlman. Later, he recalled walking from Classical High School to work at the store downtown and then coming home with his parents. Often they stopped to shop on Willard Avenue where Mrs. Pearlman was "everyone's best customer.... Summers we had a house in Island Park [in Portsmouth, Rhode Island] because part of my mother's family also had homes there. In spite of the fact that it was at least an hour and a half drive each way from the summer house to work, they commuted every day."

Their busy work schedule and large family did not permit much time for socializing or organizations. Every two months, Pearlman recalled, his parents drove to Fall River, parked their 1932 La Salle automobile near the dock, and boarded the Fall River Line boat for an overnight trip to New York City. They

usually spent two nights in New York. He also remembered how the whole family piled into the back of the La Salle with its monkey seats. During spring and fall it was a ritual to drive to Fall River on Saturday night for a Chinese dinner with Jello for dessert.

Israel Pearlman worked hard but found an outlet in athletics. He regularly walked from the store on Weybosset Street to the YMCA to play volleyball. When the family moved from South Providence to the East Side, he became active at the Jewish Community Center athletic program held at the Nathan Bishop Junior High School gym. Because of his participation in sports, all the boys were interested in athletics. He set the pattern that many of his grandchildren have also followed.

Gilmour's Pretty Shoes came to an end in 1950. Ida Pearlman conducted the original shoe business after the death of her husband and spent all of her days in Sterling Shoes, except for some trips, right up until the time of her death at the age of 93 in 1990. Even while she lived at the Jewish Home for the Aged in her last years, she went to work daily in a wheelchair. After the Providence store closed in 1990, Benjamin Pearlman opened a shoe store in Warwick, using the name Sterling Shoes. It is now conducted by his son Michael. The other Pearlman children all entered various professions, not including retailing.¹¹

LIGHTMAN'S DELICATESSEN

Lightman's was a fixture of the Willard Avenue shopping area before World War II. It was the largest of a number of stores that catered to the needs of the Jewish households in South Providence and beyond with a line of delicatessen, smoked fish, cheeses, canned goods, and specialty items. The 1937 Providence City Directory also lists the following delicatessen/grocery stores: Gold's, Diwinsky's, Greenstein's, Ackerman's, and Wax's.

Solomon Lightman, proprietor, became a grocer in a roundabout way. In his shtetl in the Ukraine, his family, the Schmucklers, had owned a small dry-goods store. The anarchy that prevailed after the Russian Revolution spawned pogroms, while the success of the Communists posed a threat to people like Lightman, labeled *bourgeois*. Concerned for the safety of his family, Lightman arranged for a secret departure. In the middle of a blizzard one night in 1920, he, his wife, their children, and Mrs. Lightman's mother crossed the border into Romania, and after some frightening experiences, finally arrived in the United States in May of that year. Because the immigration officer could not pronounce *Schmuckler*, Hyman, a brother who had preceded the rest of the family, took his mother's maiden name, Lichtman, later anglicized to Lightman. The other two brothers also adopted the name.

The family came to Providence because Hyman Lightman had already settled

there. Solomon Lightman's first business venture was a little candy store in Olneyville Square, where his brother owned a dry-goods shop. Julius Lightman recalled that his father had hired a young girl who chewed gum constantly. Watching her chew, he thought she was eating candy all day long and hence his profits; she did not last as his employee.

Solomon Lightman did not remain in Olneyville very long. He opened a small business at the corner of Hilton Street and Willard Avenue. Although he initially operated it as a candy store, Lightman, who had a great fondness for Jewish music, added a record department. Julius Lightman described the listening area. "Built into the store was a place like two telephone booths where customers could hear the records. Each one had a crank-style phonograph, not electric in those days. We did a good business in records. Then radios became very popular, and people said 'who needs records?' They discarded them."

Lightman brought in a line of delicatessen, then canned food, appetizers, fruits and vegetables in the 1930s. "We worked very hard in the store. We opened very early, six or seven a.m., and we could work until midnight on Saturday nights. Friday nights we were closed. At the beginning we served sandwiches, but as we got bigger, we gave that up. The store was enlarged a few times."

Solomon Lightman and his wife, Eva, stayed in the store all day. As long as she lived, Mrs. Lightman's mother, Mary Orodener, affectionately known as *Momke*, did all the cooking and baking for the family, looked after the house, and watched over the children. Julius went to work after school and on weekends, then full time after graduation from Technical High School. He stocked shelves, waited on trade, did the buying at the produce market, drove the truck, delivered orders. Then a succession of delivery boys eased that burden. Jean Diamond Feldman remembered her mother, Rose Lightman Diamond, helping on Saturdays and before holidays, and Benjamin, the youngest son, filling in when needed.

"Nothing came prepared or packaged in those days," Julius Lightman said. "Corned beef came in a barrel. We cooked it ourselves. We made our own pickles, sauerkraut, pickled tomatoes, and pickled watermelon. We all pitched in to prepare them. Everything had to be cut to order. Customers wouldn't accept it any other way. And we had barrels of herring. Customers always wanted one from the bottom."

"But," he continued, "Passover was the worst. We got an order a month ahead. Only the matzo came packaged. Everything else had to be weighed and put into bags. The macaroons used to come stuck to paper, and you had to tear them off." Jean Feldman described the stacks of cartons of matzo reaching to the ceiling and recalled pasting labels on the repackaged Passover supplies. The store was closed during Passover. That week the interior received a new coat of paint.

Eva Lightman had a special rapport with the customers. She also had a flair for pungent Yiddish descriptions of the taste and quality of the products she sold. Although her phrases do not translate well into English, her customers understood and appreciated their wit. Among the food she herself prepared were baked beans which, Jean Feldman stated, she brought to the bakery across the street after the bread baking was finished so that they could cook slowly in the big ovens.

Jean Feldman has very happy childhood memories of hours spent in her *Zayde's* (grandfather, Yiddish) store, cutting herself a slice of lox or corned beef at will, sampling the dried fruit stored in special drawers, accompanying the delivery person on his route in the truck, seeing the crowds of people shopping on Willard Avenue on Saturday night. "You had supper and then went shopping on Saturday night. It was a social occasion. The whole family went."

When Julius Lightman was discharged from the army after World War II, Lightman's had already been sold to Charles Pollack. Difficulties entailed in obtaining foodstuffs and keeping the business going without Julius contributed to the decision. However, Julius Lightman stated, it was the untimely death of a beloved only daughter Rose Diamond that sapped the family's interest in continuing and gave impetus to their decision. Julius Lightman subsequently opened a package store.¹²

L. ZURIER DRY GOODS

Frances Cohen and her sister Rose arrived in the United States in 1910. An older brother, Sam, already settled in New York City, sent them the passage money. The two young women chose to settle in Providence, where they had relatives, the Gabrilowitz family. One of them, "Tante Shenke" (Sarah Gabrilowitz Epstein) and her husband, Hyman Epstein, conducted a dry-goods business at 199 Willard Avenue. Since their family had owned a small dry-goods store in Europe, Frances and Rose Cohen decided to open a similar business themselves.

"Consider how remarkable it was," Melvin Zurier said. "Mother and her sister Rose coming to a strange country, having some basic knowledge of merchandising but not speaking the language. Mother would have been about fifteen, her sister a few years older. I believe they started their store immediately. My uncle Sam or Tante Shenke may have helped them get started since they had been here a little longer. But imagine — learning the language, learning the business customs, how to order merchandise, how to pay for it, how much to charge the customers, how to budget for rent, expenses in running the store, living expenses...."

Frances and Rose opened their dry-goods store next door to Cohen's (no relation) Delicatessen on North Main Street, where they sold underwear, stockings, cloth, thread, and related items. One day a gentleman came into the shop to buy a

handkerchief. He purchased one at the stated price and then left. He returned the next day for another, then again on the third day. Frances had been waiting on him, and she began to suspect that something was in the wind. When he came back yet a fourth time, she inflated the price tenfold, which would have represented a good part of a day's pay. When he paid without protest, she knew it must be love. Louis Zurier and Frances were married in 1921. He gave up his job at Brown and Sharpe to work in the store.

Some time between 1925 and 1930, the Zuriers moved the store to 1072 Chalkstone Avenue, where the sign over the store read L. Zurier Dry Goods. Rose Cohen had also married in the interim and moved to New York, where she and her husband opened a dry-goods store. Chalkstone Avenue was an all-Italian neighborhood with two or three Jewish merchants such as Mount Pleasant Hardware, first called Sam's Hardware, owned by Samuel Elman.

The Depression years were difficult. To augment the family income, Louis Zurier took merchandise from the store and began a peddling route in the country. Driving his blue Plymouth, he called on people to sell them cloth and other dry-goods items. In those difficult economic times, he would come back not with money but with eggs or a chicken or vegetables. "One of my fondest memories as a kid," Melvin Zurier stated, "was when my father would take me with him to the farms. Rhode Island had many farms then. His customers loved him." In 1936 or 1937 Louis became a driver for the Morris Solomon Casket Company. However, when World War II started, he returned to Brown and Sharpe as his contribution to the war effort.

The store hours were long, especially on Saturdays when people were accustomed to shopping in the evening. "Growing up, all of us lived in the store on Chalkstone Avenue, and my sisters worked in the store after school and on Saturdays," said Zurier. The family actually lived on Mulberry Street, having moved there from Edgewood because Frances Zurier wanted the children to attend Henry Barnard School. Melvin, the youngest of the three siblings, was left in the charge of his older sisters, Hilda and Rosalind, both very mature, or his mother would take him with her to the store. A back room provided space where they could eat meals and where Mrs. Zurier could cook and bake. When the bell over the front door sounded, she went to take care of her customers. In between the cooking and the customers, she planted tomatoes in the space in back of the block of stores. Unlike his sisters, Melvin Zurier did not work in the family store. At age thirteen or fourteen, he went to work weekends for Bernard Goodman and then for Eugene Freedman, both dry-goods wholesalers.

Louis Zurier was a gregarious person who was involved in a number of organizations. Mrs. Zurier was a most unusual woman, Melvin Zurier stated. "She was the glue that held the family together." She occupied herself with her family and

her business. Being relatively unschooled, some night school classes perhaps, she put a premium on education and carefully monitored her children's progress at school. Except for Sundays, when as a family they visited or received visits from relatives or a few close friends, there was little time for socializing.

"It was a way of life and no one felt poor or deprived," was Melvin Zurier's comment.

Louis Zurier died in 1944, Frances a year later. The business was liquidated.

MRS. ROBINSON

A chance circumstance led to the family business of Bess and Matthew Robinson and their son, Erwin. Bess had severe hay fever. Her doctor suggested she go to the White Mountains during the height of the hay fever season to alleviate her symptoms. Taking her young son with her, she went to the White Mountains early in August of 1928. There she took a position as clerk in a linen shop. The owners had several wealthy clients who came from the Providence area. When Bess was ready to return to Providence, the owners suggested that she represent the linen business, using their merchandise to fill orders.

The offer came at a fortuitous time. Matthew had been working for his father, Jacob Robinson, in a dry-goods store on North Main Street. However, problems with his eyes interfered with his ability to drive, and the family had to re-think their financial situation.

From 1929 to 1936 Bess conducted her business by setting up appointments and calling on her customers at their homes. She brought samples of merchandise and took orders. In 1936 she opened up a shop in Wakefield, Rhode Island. Two years later she moved to the Wayland Square area of Providence to Room 3, 201 Wayland Avenue, over what was then the Weybosset Market. She called her store *Mrs. Robinson*. In 1945 she again moved, across the street to 206 Wayland Avenue.

Erwin Robinson married and left for overseas duty during World War II. His mother waited for his return, anticipating that he would join her in the linen-lingerie business. Erwin had been a salesman before his military service and enjoyed that type of work. After he was discharged from the Army, he took a sales job with Longine-Wittnauer. His mother asked him to give up that job and join her establishment. He initially refused, for he found the long, narrow store physically constricting.

Liggett's Drug Store, which occupied the large corner space at Wayland Avenue and Angell Street, was about to leave. Bess Robinson decided to occupy that store. Erwin, therefore, agreed to join her, and in 1951 they moved the store to the former Liggett's space. People said that the beautiful displays in the store windows of Mrs.

Robinson enhanced the charm and elegance that was the Wayland Square shopping area.

Erwin, who had felt that working with one's family had its disadvantages, said later, "I am sure that Mom and I did each other some good."

Mrs. Robinson had a unique business. She filled the trousseau requirements of the very wealthy and stocked very beautiful linens embellished with the finest embroidery.

In 1928 when Bess Robinson needed a car for her initial venture in the linen business, the bank would not lend her the two hundred dollar purchase price for the used Nash automobile she hoped to purchase. The reason, according to Erwin, was the bank's policy; they would not extend credit to a woman. She needed the signature of a man who would be responsible for her debt. Through the kindness of a man who was known at the bank and who was willing to sign for her, she obtained her loan.

The bank's policy notwithstanding, Bess was an excellent business woman. At one time she had twelve employees on her payroll. Originally her list of customers was provided by her contact in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, whom she represented. She forwarded the orders to New York to be filled. Soon the New York company informed Bess that she was doing more business than the New Hampshire store. She would not change, however, for the owner had been so good to her. When he died, his wife turned over the entire business to Bess.

Bess, who enjoyed playing bridge, had no time to do so except for an occasional evening game. Much of her time was spent in traveling to New York to buy stock for her store. She was accompanied on the buying trips by her good friend and sister-in-law, Nettie Leichter. It was reputed that during their buying trips the other buyers would watch them place their orders because they had such impeccable taste. Erwin remembers the two women's absorption in their business. He would pick them up at the Union Railroad Station in Providence when they returned from a buying trip. On one occasion, they were so engrossed in conversation that he watched in amazement as they continued to talk while the train pulled out for Boston.

On July 13, 1973, Matthew, who had been so supportive of Bess during their marriage and who had helped in the store in many ways, died of a heart attack. Eight years later Bess fell and broke her hip. Erwin Robinson sold the family business in 1985 after his mother became incapacitated and it became apparent that the next generation planned to pursue other careers. On December 17, 1987, Bess died at the age of 89. "She was known throughout the country and abroad for her exclusive trousseaus," her obituary stated.

THE RUBIN-OELBAUM BUSINESS (HALL'S DRUG STORE)

Around the time of the Sruel Oelbaum interview in May of 1994 the history of the drug store he described came to an end.

The Rubin family immigrated to the United States, not once but twice. When Sruel's grandmother found that she was pregnant, she did not want to have her child (David) born in the United States, so she returned to Russia to give birth, around 1907. Her previous children, Jack, and Sruel's mother, Clara, were born in Russia. His grandfather first supported his family as a peddler, using a pushcart for his wares.

Sruel's uncle David Rubin took a two-year course in pharmacy around 1924. His uncle Jack was deprived of that education because there was only money for one brother to attend the School of Pharmacy in Providence. David's first job was as a pharmacist for the Liggett's Drug Store chain. In 1931 Jack and David opened their own store, called the Good Samaritan Pharmacy, in the Washington Park area, on Montgomery and Broad Streets near the Palace Theatre. When the brothers opened the store, their father retired as a peddler and helped his sons in the business.

The Good Samaritan Pharmacy was truly a family business. Jack and David were equal partners. David was the licensed pharmacist. Clara did the bookkeeping but was not a partner. Their father had the important job of making the syrups for the soda fountain. The chocolate syrup was made in a crock. The coffee syrup was prepared in a big metal pot in the cellar of their house. The base was a simple syrup, the coffee, Autocrat, and most important of all, the formula a secret.

Sruel remembers that the family had drug stores in East Greenwich and also near E. P. Anthony on Thayer Street, probably for a short time.

In 1931 the Rubins moved from the Washington Park area to the East Side of Providence, where they opened a store at 149 Elmgrove Avenue. They were the first tenants in the building, which was owned by Leo Logan. They named the store Hall's Drug, Inc. When asked the origin of the name, Sruel said it might have been a reaction to the length of the name of their first pharmacy — the Good Samaritan Pharmacy.

The soda fountains at both stores served food. Sruel described the menu at Hall's: hot dogs, hamburgers, Western and turkey sandwiches. The turkeys were prepared in the store in large pots using only boiling water and kosher salt. And, of course, they had the mainstay of a soda fountain — ice cream. Sruel was sent as a teenager to the Hood Ice Cream plant to learn the art of preparing ice cream items — cabinets, sundaes, and sodas.

During the years of World War II many adjustments had to be made. David was

in the service for three years between 1942-1945, doing duty as a pharmacist. Jack served at a local base for only a few months because of his age. Clara and Jack had the responsibility of the drug store with the occasional help of a part-time pharmacist. She worked long hours in those days. However, there was support through their extended family. An aunt relieved his mother in the store, and another aunt lived with them and helped take care of the housekeeping and cooking.

Sruel was fortunate that his grandmother was able to take care of him. His grandparents, Solomon and Pearl Rubin, occupied the first-floor tenement, and the Oelbaums lived on the second floor. The grandmother did the cooking, and Sruel commented, "Once she found out you liked something, you had that every day." She saw that he got off to school and greeted him on his return. His grandfather did the food shopping for the family. He liked to take the bus from their Narragansett Avenue home in Edgewood to the Willard Avenue shopping section. He went early in the morning to avoid the women who shopped later than the seven a.m. opening time of the stores. In spite of poor eyesight his grandfather used the buses constantly, even making the daily deposit for the Elm Grove Avenue store at the downtown bank. Sruel was very attached to his grandfather, accompanying him on his food shopping expeditions and to the Robinson Street Shul, where he was one of the eight or nine who sat on a bench made to hold six people.

The war years brought problems. Liquor was sold in the drug store following the end of Prohibition. David as pharmacist could have two liquor licenses, *A* if food was sold on the premises and *E* for alcohol used in making up prescriptions. In his absence they were not able to use the *E* license.

Sruel's father, Henry Oelbaum, was not associated with the drug store, but Sruel commented, "My father was a prince to put up with what he did." During the three years David was in service, Clara worked in the store from seven in the morning until eleven at night. On Sundays she closed early — 8:30 p.m. His father helped her when he was not working at his job with Hasbro, where he was employed as a superintendent and then as head of purchasing. After the war, Clara's life reverted to the few days of work a week required to take care of the paper work. She even found the time to do some organization work. By that time the family had moved to the East Side of Providence.

Sruel began to help out in the store when he was about twelve years old. His sister, Dorothy, worked on the soda fountain. Sruel continued to work weekends until he went to college. Although he had learned much about pharmacy work through the "hands on" method under his uncle David, he enrolled in the pharmaceutical course at the University of Rhode Island and received a Bachelor of Science degree.

The lives of the various members of the family were dependent upon the demands of the drug store. Nobody in the family had any particular job except for David, who

filled the prescriptions, and Clara Rubin, who did the bookkeeping. "You did everything from washing the floor," said Sruel. Even their personal life was affected. His father's vacation was predicated upon his mother's bookkeeping schedule for the store. David Rubin's wife worked side by side with him. Jack felt that he might have sacrificed the most. He had to give up going to shul, for someone had to stay in the store. Sruel felt that his uncle Jack made these sacrifices because someone had to do it for the family.

Neither of Sruel's uncles had any children. When they retired in 1968, it seemed inevitable that Sruel, with so many years spent in the business and with his degree in pharmacy, would purchase the business. In May of 1994 the store closed and an article appeared in *East Side Monthly* headlined, "Hall's Drug — the End of an Era." Oelbaum still works as a pharmacist.¹⁵

THE BROMBERG FAMILY BUSINESS — BENNY'S

The Bromberg family business is one of the few studied which is still in existence. From one store which opened in 1924 on Fountain Street in downtown Providence to sell automotive supplies, it grew and flourished. Today there are thirty-one stores in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and nearby Connecticut.

In about 1908 Malcolm Bromberg's grandfather, Max Bromberg, came to the United States with his family. Max was a Hebrew teacher at the Howell Street Synagogue. His son, Benjamin, married Flora Wolf. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, but her family moved to Providence when she was a young child. She was one of the earliest and youngest graduates of the original Bryant & Stratton Business School. She was a co-founder with her husband (for whom Benny's is named) of their business and remained intimately involved with it during her lifetime.

Flora's first position in the business was as bookkeeper. She then became the buyer for the toy department. Eventually she was in charge of the office of the business's distribution center.

As children, Malcolm and his sister, Barbara, were cared for by hired help and then by a live-in housekeeper. The business, as he described it, "went on night and day." Even after store hours, it was not unusual for salesmen to come to their home. Malcolm remembered how they spread their merchandise on the living room floor. Benny, with his religious background, felt that if a salesman came to their home from out of town, he was always their guest. He had his meals with the family. A lot of business had to be transacted at night, for there was no time in a one-man store during the day. His grandfather would have preferred that the store be kept closed on Saturdays, but since most of their business was done on that day, they had no choice but to keep open. Benny's closed on Sundays.



Interior of first Benny's store at 79 Fountain Street, Providence, November 8, 1924, Benjamin Bromberg standing at right in front of the counter.

As the business started to grow, Benny hired his brothers as employees of the store. The concept of Benny's as a family business began with Benny, his wife, and his brothers. Benny's parents also participated. His father recited a prayer before the opening of a new store and, upon his death, his mother continued the practice. She also cut the ribbon before the opening of a new store, and upon her death Flora assumed the honors.

Malcolm started working in the store when he was twelve or thirteen years old. He worked weekends straight through high school. His first jobs were to sweep the floors, unpack the merchandise, and put wagons together.

The original store was in a space leased from *The Providence Journal* at 87 Fountain Street, which eventually became the site on which the present Providence Journal was built. Malcolm remembers that during the Depression when President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared a bank holiday, his father cashed *The Providence Journal* employees' checks. Since Benny's was always run on a "cash and carry" basis, cash was available.

Benny's moved from Fountain Street to a little store on Washington Street, back to Fountain Street, and again to Washington Street. Their expansion was a gradual evolution. Even before World War II there were fourteen stores.

Benny's always changed with the times. For example, since early automobiles did not come equipped with bumpers, running boards, or luggage racks, these automotive items were carried in stock. They did a big business in tires, since 1920s tires were not very substantial and required frequent replacement. The early version of car radio was one of the automotive supplies sold.

Before World War II, business was quiet in the automotive business during the months of November and December, so Benny's added a line of toys. During the war, gasoline was rationed, and automotive sales fell. That led to the addition of another line — sporting goods and bicycles.

Malcolm Bromberg felt that he had a normal youth. He was with his parents both in the store and at home.

Malcolm Bromberg now heads Benny's; his two sons and his daughter are all actively involved in the family business.¹⁶

KAUFMAN'S FISH STORE

“Any business where you sell food, you are going to make a living.’ That was the advice given to my mother, Annie Lury Kaufman, by her mother. And she sold my mother on the idea of buying this fish market,” stated Martha Kaufman Sonion. Located on Willard Avenue near Prairie Avenue, Providence, it was situated “in the busy section, close to the synagogues, where people congregated.”

Neither Joseph nor Annie Kaufman had prior experience in the business of buying or selling fish. Joseph Kaufman had arrived in this country with no trade, so he turned to peddling. When he became ill, Mrs. Kaufman had to become the breadwinner, a blow to his pride. Martha Sonion remembered her mother sitting at the kitchen table until two or three a.m. working on jewelry. In those days, she stated, Brier Manufacturing Company used to give out home work. Mr. Kaufman would go to the factory with a large bag, fill it with jewelry to be worked on at home, and return the finished work the next day. The amount of money he received depended on the number of pieces completed. In that way the family survived.

The Kaufmans bought the fish store in the latter part of the 1920s. The store was “just a little hole in the wall,” said Martha Sonion. “It had one big window, the size of three standard windows. In that window was a big galvanized container where the fish, packed in ice, were displayed. There was a great big wooden ice-box in which more fish was stored, also packed in ice. We had a little coal stove to keep the place warm, and just one little counter — one part to clean the fish, another little

section to wrap the fish. My mother cleaned the fish, scraping them with old-fashioned tools. And there were the weighing scales. There was no cash register; money was kept in a drawer." Another fish store closer to Gay Street had tanks with live fish from which the customers could make a selection, but Kaufman's did not. Their fish was "nice and fresh, but not alive."

The store was open all day Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Friday mornings. Whatever was left after Friday was sold at a very low price or given away to the poor. Then the store was cleaned and scrubbed.

Eli Kaufman, who worked at the store while in high school, stated that salt-water fish was brought directly to their store from the boats by the wholesalers. He said "I can still see the boxes of fish lined up on the sidewalk outside the store — scup, mackerel, butterfish, flounder, halibut. You could buy three pounds of scup for twenty-five cents.... People bargained over the price, trying to get a few cents off." Martha Sonion recalled early morning trips her father made before holidays to the fish pier on Atlantic Avenue in Boston or to New Bedford to pick and choose exactly the kind of product he wanted. Mr. Kaufman delivered orders to customers, and during summers he had a route in Conimicut and Oakland Beach, where customers bought fish from the selection available in the truck. Eli Kaufman later drove the route during the summer season.

"My mother had a sweet disposition. Customers would call out to her 'Mrs. Kaufman, I want from the middle [of the fish].' 'Mrs. Kaufman, I want the tail [end].' 'Mrs. Kaufman, I have a baby at home. Take me first.' And she tried to accommodate them all." Mrs. Sonion stated.

Before the Jewish holidays, there was bedlam as customers lined up outside for their turn to make a purchase. Then every housewife made gefilte fish. Mrs. Kaufman supplied her recipe for those who did not know how to make it. Martha and her sister, Jeanette, cashiered; Eli helped take care of trade. One year, Martha Sonion recalled, her brother decided to impose some order and handed out numbers on slips of paper to people waiting in line. It was an idea whose time had not yet come, at least not to Willard Avenue, because there was "such a mix-up, such confusion!"

Eli Kaufman conceived the idea of printing up some of Mrs. Kaufman's recipes, such as the one for gefilte fish, to pass out to customers. He also created their slogan: "For a tasty dish, use Kaufman fish."

"I don't know where my mother got the energy to do all she did," Eli Kaufman stated. "She took care of the store, a home, three children, and a sick husband with whom she often had to stay up all night." "We all helped out" according to Martha Sonion. "On Thursday nights we cleaned the house for *shabbos* (Yiddish pronun-

ciation for *Shabbat*). On Friday she made the gefilte fish and baked a one-egg cake. She prepared the chicken and soup plus meals for Saturday. And everything had to be spic-and-span. She used Kirkman's soap and a scrub brush. Despite the demands on her time by the business and the need to tend a sick husband, she was always available to her children. However, there was one occasion when she could not be, Martha Sonion remembered. "She was heartbroken because she could not be home to see me dressed for my prom. She sent an aunt to help me get ready so I wouldn't feel alone."

Kaufman's closed in the 1950s because of the illness of Mr. Kaufman. Mrs. Kaufman could no longer continue the business and care for her husband. Mrs. Sonion and her brother, Eli Kaufman, had other interests.¹⁷

THE KAPLAN FAMILY — BAKERS

To be a baker is one of the most difficult occupations of those studied in this research. Stanley Kaplan's recollections of the family bakery business dated back fifty years to when he was nine years old. His grandfather and father had emigrated from Russia to Providence, Rhode Island, in 1902. His father, Barney, had learned the baker trade from his own father and worked in several bakeries throughout the city. In 1929 he opened his own bakery at the corner of Prairie Avenue and Bogman Street in South Providence. Stanley told that the family lived in back of the bakery, that they next moved to a nearby shed, and then, as he described it, "we got fancy and moved to a tenement on Bogman Street."

Both parents had to work hard — the father baking in the back of the store and the mother waiting on customers in the front. The hours required were especially difficult. Preparations for baking began at eight p.m. and continued through the night. Customers arrived as early as six a.m. Mrs. Kaplan was in the store ready to wait on them. Mr. Kaplan would have left to go to sleep. As they acquired a full route of customers, Mrs. Kaplan had to come in even earlier to pack up orders for delivery. They could not afford additional help, and Mr. Kaplan had to delay his sleep until he delivered the orders. Stanley Kaplan remembered accompanying his father on his route before he went to school. "This was during the Depression, 1930. The only difference between us and many other families was that we always had food on the table," he said.

Not only did they work long hours but it was a seven-day-a-week business. They were never closed on Saturdays. During the year the only time the bakery was closed was on the High Holidays and during Passover. The family could not sit down together for meals because the store was open until nine at night. Stanley ate with his aunt, and whoever came into the house sat down and ate with them.

There was help from the extended Kaplan family. An aunt relieved his mother in

the store. His father's sister lived with them on Bogman Street and was in the house when Stanley returned from school. She also helped with household chores and cooking. His grandfather lived on the first floor of the three-tenement house.

Questioned about time to play with neighborhood children, Stanley answered, "Not that much. I did not stay young too long." He was working in the store at ten years old, and by the time he was fourteen or fifteen he knew the business pretty well. By eighteen and a half he was already married. His father had joined Sons of Abraham on Prairie Avenue, and it was Rabbi Chill of that synagogue who married him and his bride, also eighteen.

Stanley's brother Harold, seven years younger than he, did not get involved so early in his life with the bakery business, but eventually he did learn it and is also a baker. His other brother, Robert, seven years younger than Harold, never took up the trade.

When business improved, Barney Kaplan purchased the building which housed the bakery. The family was able to make arrangements to lead an easier life. In 1946 they sold the bakery to Benjamin Matusow and moved to Cranston. Stanley and his wife continued to live in South Providence for eight years, and then they too moved to Cranston.

Barney Kaplan did not retire when he sold his bakery, but went to work for Stanley and then opened up the Rainbow Bakery on Reservoir Avenue, where he worked until his death. Stanley worked for August Bakery in Central Falls for a few years and then started and ran a small business in Buttonwoods for about eight years. In 1980 he moved to his present location on Hope Street in Providence.¹⁸

Stanley Kaplan's only son, Barry, works with his father in Kaplan's Bakery on Hope Street. Daniel Kaplan, another son of Barney Kaplan, owns Barney's, bakery/delicatessens in Cranston and Pawtucket named for Barney Kaplan. His son Bruce and daughter Michelle work in the business. Thus three Kaplan generations have pursued the trade of baking, its inherent hardships not withstanding.

IDEAL DISTRIBUTING CO. (FINKLER FAMILY)

Louis Finkler's origin, like that of so many Jews who became owners of their own businesses, was Russian. At about fourteen he immigrated to the United States with one of his brothers and settled in Lowell, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, his brother fell off a bicycle and was killed. Eventually other members of his family joined Louis in Lowell, while two brothers settled in Brooklyn, New York. The relatives who were able to leave Russia depended on passage money sent by Louis and the siblings who had prospered in their business in the United States. Louis bought a three-tenement house in Lowell for himself and for immigrant relatives to live in



Louis and Dora Finkler, 1942.

until they could be self-supporting. That was hard on his native-born bride, who knew no Yiddish to communicate with her husband's family.

Louis owned a successful department store in Lowell. However, his prosperity was not to last, for the city of Lowell was hard hit by the crash in 1929. A new location and way of making a living had to be found by the Finkler family, which now consisted of his wife, Dora, and their two daughters, Charlotte and Barbara. They joined his brothers in New York, who were in the boot business, but after six months decided to settle in Providence, where Dora's family (the Shindlers) lived.

The family rented a tenement on Sackett Street in a neighborhood with a number of Jewish families. Louis sold products house-to-house, a popular occupation during that period. The customer paid fifty cents per week on account towards purchases. As daughter Barbara related, "Many times when the customer did not have the money, my father gave it to them."

Eventually Louis decided to open a store. He rented one of two little stores at 187 North Main Street, a barber occupying the adjacent store. When the barber moved out, Louis took over the space to make one large store. He called his wholesale business the Ideal Distributing Company. The stock included all items normally carried by drug stores — medications, toothpaste, bobby pins, safety pins — except for prescription drugs. Barbara remembered that they bottled their own pine oil in a room on the second floor of the building. "It was cold there. I would sit up there

for hours bottling, labelling, and packing the bottles in boxes." Their margin of profit was small between the cost imposed by the supplier and the amount the wholesaler could charge his retail customers. The volume of business necessary to earn a living came from long hours of hard work.

Dora Finkler arranged her day so that she took care of her housework in the morning and then went to the store, bringing her husband's lunch. She did all the bookkeeping. Barbara had vivid memories of her father's dictating letters to her mother. She typed them in correct English, but he took exception to her interpretation of what he had said in his broken English, resulting in many arguments. Dora stayed in the store all afternoon, and they returned home together. When the girls came home from their nearby school, they checked in with their mother's good friend, Rena Tanenbaum.

Every Saturday morning the girls went to services at Temple Beth-El on Broad Street and then walked through Public Street all the way to Cranston, past the Niantic section, to the home of their grandparents, the Shindlers, in Arlington, Cranston. Louis and Dora joined them later for a big dinner. That was the Saturday routine. Barbara and Charlotte remembered their grandparents with great fondness. It was their grandmother who gave them their ten-cent allowance with which they could attend movies at the Liberty Theatre.

At about sixteen, Barbara began to work in the family store. Her sister, Charlotte, never was involved in the business. Barbara's duties were to stock the shelves and assist at the cash register. Upon graduation from high school, although she had been admitted to college, she realized how much her father needed her and did not attend college. It was just about then that he opened a second store, United Novelty, located near Ideal Distributing. This store carried items which produced higher profit — paints and toys. Barbara agreed to run that store on a full-time basis.

When asked how she thought her mother managed with the housework, cooking, and her work at the store, Barbara answered, "Well, I guess she managed; I never remember her being miserable. She never seemed that unhappy. That was her job, I guess." The store was open six days a week, so that the family had Sundays to spend together. However, there was little time for socializing with friends or recreation. There was an occasional couples bridge game, mostly with cousins. She could not recall that her parents ever took vacations.

They were, however, very much involved with Dora's family. She was the oldest of thirteen children, eight of whom survived. Mr. Shindler owned a manufacturing business called Bugle Toy on Joy Street in Pawtucket which made noise-makers for holidays. He was also an inventor. He would sit for hours and work on a certain type of whistle. He traveled all over the United States with his heavy metal sample case and was very successful. He brought home from his manufacturing plant items such

as whistles for his daughters to test or help assemble. Only one daughter joined his business.

The Finklers visited with the grandparents on their free Sundays as did other members of the family. Mr. Shindler had purchased a large home in Arlington, Cranston, originally owned by the brew master of a nearby brewery. Barbara described the mansion with its frescoes, double living room, large kitchen with sofa, pantries, and fireplaces decorated with beautiful tiles from Germany. The kitchen was located in the basement, where her grandmother did the cooking. The Shindlers also had a big home at Narragansett Pier where the grandchildren were invited to spend a much cherished week.

When Louis Finkler became ill, Barbara and her mother ran one of the stores by themselves. It was very difficult, as Barbara remembered. She would go to the store by herself to make a coal fire, go home and make another coal fire, drive her mother to the store, and then the two women stayed in the store all day. Barbara went to Boston to do all the buying. Louis Finkler died on March 6, 1943, during World War II. Barbara and her mother planned on turning over the business to Barbara's and Charlotte's husbands on their return from service. The men did take over the business, but they did not keep it very long. The sons-in-law preferred to pursue other interests.

Barbara Finkler Long and her mother successfully carried on with Ideal Distributing Company following the death of Louis Finkler in 1943. The company was liquidated in the late 1940s.¹⁹

PAULINE'S DRESS SHOP

In 1931, during the Depression, after their first two children were born, Fred and Pauline Greifer opened Pauline's Dress Shop in the Alice Building at 236 Westminster Street, Providence. Fred Greifer had moved to Providence from New York City in 1927 on an assignment to manage a store called Diamond Brothers. Before her marriage in 1927, Mrs. Greifer worked at her mother's millinery shop, often going out on the road to sell hats to other stores in Providence and Fall River. As the oldest of six children, she also had responsibilities at home.

When Greifer lost his job, his father-in-law suggested that they open a dress shop across the hall from Lee's Dress Shop, owned by Benjamin and Lee Brookner (Pauline Greifer's brother and sister-in-law). The two stores would complement each other since they would each carry a different line of women's clothing. Customers not finding what they wished in one store might be attracted to the other, offering additional possibilities for business.

Pauline's at first carried a full line of women's clothes including wedding gowns. Fred Greifer did all the buying and kept the books while Pauline took charge of the

selling. Two of their children, Leah Greifer (Abrams) and Burton, occasionally assisted on Saturdays and before holidays, but, generally, Mrs. Abrams stated, they were busy with school and homework during the week. Saturdays were for playing with friends, going to the movies. "Our parents never depended on our help in the store."

"My mother was a great planner and organizer," Mrs. Abrams continued. "She had to be in order to keep a household going, with four children. She took the streetcar to work every day after we went to school but came home to make lunch for us, then returned until closing. There was always someone at home. When we were all of school age, we had a sitter named Milly who lived near us on Comstock Avenue." When Mrs. Greifer returned home at night, she prepared dinner, then began cooking for the next day's meals. Each child had his or her duties. "We did not have to be asked; we knew it was expected of us."

The Greifers owned a car, used only on Sundays. It was a day for visiting family who lived nearby. In pleasant weather they often took a ride to Goddard Park. Summer vacations were spent at Narragansett Pier, first at Mittler's, then in a rented house. Since their parents commuted to work, they had a live-in sitter, but Leah and Burton shared much of the responsibility for the younger siblings.

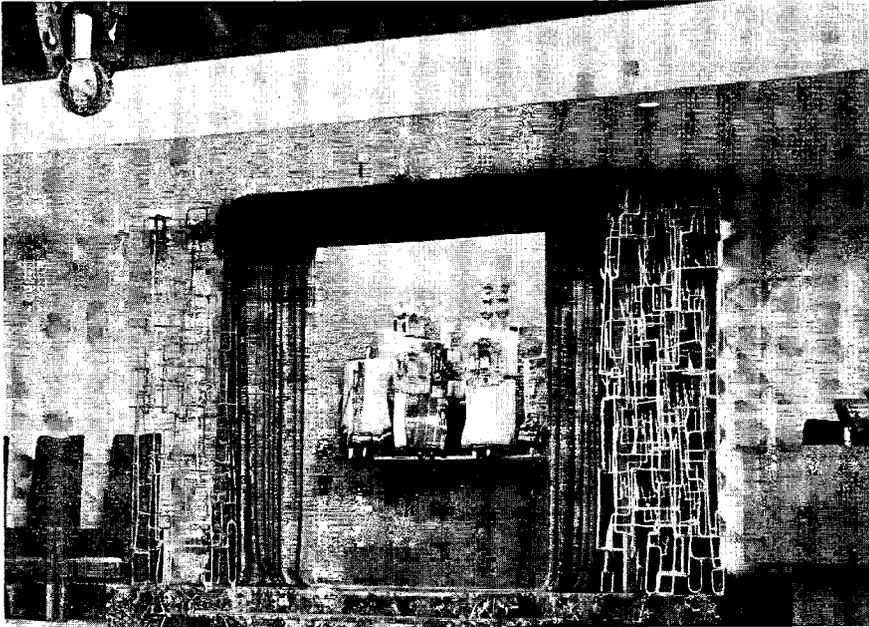
Leah Abrams stated that she and her siblings never felt deprived because their parents both worked. Although they had friends with whom they played bridge or visited, her parents were mainly content to stay home. The family had dinner together evenings, then listened to the radio. "We had quality time together."

Pauline and Fred Greifer decided to retire in 1959 after 28 years in business in the same location. Their retirement lasted one year. They reopened their shop in the Lapham Building and subsequently moved to Garden City, Cranston.²⁰

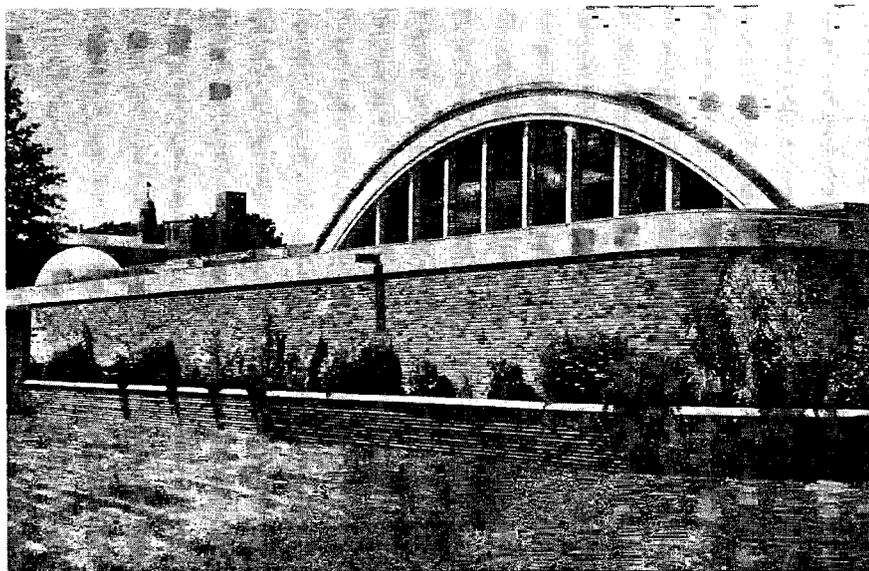


NOTES

- ¹ Nathan Glazer, as quoted in Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanich, Inc., 1976, p. 140.
- ² Howe, *ibid.*
- ³ Joel Perlmann, "Beyond New York, A Second Look," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Part B, pp. 375-388.
- ⁴ Interview with Milton Scribner, May 4, 1994.
- ⁵ Interview with Alfred Fain, June 22, 1994; *Providence Evening Bulletin*, March 10, 1969.
- ⁶ Interview with Maurice Cohen, May 26, 1994; *Evening Bulletin*, June 28, 1982.
- ⁷ Recollections, Eleanor Feldman Horvitz.
- ⁸ Letter from Irving Mittleman, May 16, 1994.
- ⁹ Interview with Irving and Carl Adler, May 10, 1994.
- ¹⁰ Interview with Anna Brodsky Musen, August 5, 1991.
- ¹¹ Interview with Benjamin Pearlman, January 17, 1994, and memoir by Thomas W. Pearlman.
- ¹² Interview with Julius and Terry Lightman, February 15, 1994, and interview with Jean Diamond Feldman, June 25, 1994.
- ¹³ Interview with Melvin Zurier, May 25, 1994.
- ¹⁴ Interview with Erwin Robinson, May 23, 1994.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Sruel Oelbaum, May 25, 1994.
- ¹⁶ Interview with Malcolm Bromberg, June 24, 1994.
- ¹⁷ Interview with Martha Sonion and Eli Kaufman, May 5, 1994.
- ¹⁸ Interview with Stanley Kaplan, December 20, 1993.
- ¹⁹ Interview with Barbara Finkler Long, June 7, 1994.
- ²⁰ Interview with Leah Greifer Abrams, May 22, 1994.



Sanctuary, Temple Beth-El, with open Ark, sculptures, and Eternal Light.



Exterior, Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Avenue, Providence, R.I.

PERCIVAL GOODMAN'S TEMPLE BETH-EL IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

BY GEORGE M. GOODWIN

The third building constructed by Providence's Temple Beth-El, designed by Percival Goodman between 1947 and 1952, is noteworthy in several ways. The structure was one of the first modern synagogues in New England. When erected midway in his career, it helped Goodman launch his specialty as a synagogue designer. Over thirty years, he built more synagogues than any American and perhaps more than any architect.¹ The Beth-El design is also important because of its rich documentation. Numerous letters and oral history reminiscences show that a modern design was not initially sought by temple leaders and that the selection of an architect was perplexing.² Forty years after its dedication, however, Beth-El remains a functional, beautiful, and much-admired building.

THE FRIENDSHIP STREET SYNAGOGUE

Temple Beth-El, officially known as Congregation Sons of Israel and David, is Rhode Island's second-oldest Jewish congregation. Organized informally in the 1840s under the leadership of Solomon Pareira, Sons of Israel was chartered by the General Assembly in 1855.³ Sons of David, chartered in 1871, merged with sons of Israel in 1874. The congregation's early members included Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Most were merchants who had gathered for worship in private residences before renting downtown halls for services and classrooms. One of the congregation's early homes was the former St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Not until 1890 did Sons of Israel and David erect its own building. Located at Friendship and Foster Streets, it was known as the Friendship Street Synagogue. Designed by the local architect Wilmarth Colwell and costing approximately \$14,000, it was built of brick, stone, and slate in a vaguely Romanesque style. The Friendship Street Synagogue seated 410 congregants on the main floor and 85 in the balcony, and included an organ and choir loft. When the new building was dedicated, there was a full day and evening of celebrations, attended by numerous dignitaries, including former governors, Supreme Court judges, city fathers, and Christian clergy. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the great shaper of the Reform movement in America, gave the major address. The Friendship Street Synagogue resembled many parish churches of its day, and in 1909 it was sold to the Swedish Baptist Church. Seventy years after it was built, the building was demolished to make way for an interstate highway.

George M. Goodwin, Ph.D., of Providence, Rhode Island, is the consultant in art and architecture of the *American Jewish Archives* and archivist of Temple Beth-El. This article is adapted from "The Design of a Modern Synagogue," published in the Spring/Summer Issue, 1993, of *American Jewish Archives*.

THE BROAD STREET TEMPLE

Less than fifteen years after its dedication, the Friendship Street Synagogue was inadequate for its congregational needs. Membership had grown to more than 250 families, and 130 children squeezed into the few Sunday School classrooms. The neighborhood in downtown Providence had also deteriorated. Rabbi Henry Englander, after being accosted by a prostitute, threatened to leave unless a new synagogue were built in a better neighborhood. In 1910, accepting a professorship at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College, he made good on his threat.

In 1911, Rabbi Englander returned to Providence to participate in the gala ceremonies marking the dedication of the congregation's second home. He remained a close adviser to Sons of Israel and David, and was consulted many times regarding the selection of his successors. Englander was present in 1932 at the installation of his student William G. Braude (1907-1988), who served the congregation until his retirement in 1974, the longest tenure of any rabbi in Providence and one of the longest in New England.⁴

With the dedication of the brick, terra cotta, and concrete structure at the corner of Broad and Glenham Streets in the Elmwood neighborhood of Providence, Sons of Israel and David became known as Temple Beth-El. The new temple, designed by local architects Banning & Thornton, was built in a Classical Revival style, perhaps based on William Walker & Son's interpretation of Mount Zion Temple in St. Paul, Minnesota.⁵ With its imposing portico of Corinthian columns and capitals supporting a pediment with cornices and moldings, the synagogue resembled a Roman temple or, at the very least, other symbols of civic authority, such as banks, libraries, and courthouses. Among Providence's churches, it was an architectural cousin to Hoppin & Field's First Church of Christ Scientist, erected on College Hill in 1913. Far larger than the Friendship Street Synagogue, Beth-El also had seating on its main floor and balcony. A choir loft and an organ flanked the white onyx ark, which was decorated in a Neoclassical style, imitating the Georgian vocabulary of Newport's Touro Synagogue. Downstairs were a social hall, offices, and seven classrooms, as well as a library, which, until the establishment of Judaic studies at Brown University, was the best of its kind in Rhode Island. The new Beth-El cost \$75,000.

Located on the south side of Providence, the temple occupied a religiously mixed neighborhood. Most of its members lived nearby, many within walking distance. Farther south was Willard Avenue, easily identifiable by its numerous Orthodox congregations, Jewish shops, and three-decker tenements. For new Americans and their children, Beth-El was a potent symbol of the established Jewish community.

VISIONS OF A NEW BUILDING

By the 1940s, it became necessary for Beth-El's leaders to think about a new and larger temple. The Elmwood neighborhood had begun to deteriorate, a pattern which accelerated. Approximately half of the congregation's members had already moved to the East Side, and many others dreamed of the possibility. Many Beth-El parents, not eager to send their children to religious or Hebrew school on Broad Street, enrolled them in satellite programs established at local public schools. Rabbi Braude, who had earned his doctorate at Brown and taught occasional courses there, moved near the campus when he was married in 1938 to a Pembroke College student.

During the Depression and the war years, though the need to build a third home for Sons of Israel and David was evident, the congregation lacked the financial resources. Though membership was stable and included a number of successful businessmen, particularly in retailing and jewelry manufacturing, the congregation was not wealthy. The tiny staff was modestly paid, and annual budgets were only miraculously balanced.

A new home for Sons of Israel and David moved beyond the realm of wishful thinking in January of 1942, with the death of John Jacob Rosenfeld. A journalist, lawyer, and Republican Party leader, Rosenfeld was the last surviving grandchild of Cantor Abraham Jacobs, who had led Sons of Israel in the 1860s. A widower and childless, he left his estate of approximately \$200,000 to Beth-El in memory of his mother, Anna, and wife, Mary Elizabeth. The gift, intended for the construction of a religious school and known as the Rosenfeld Memorial, had been cultivated over many years by Rabbi Braude.

THE SITE

When the mortgage on the Broad Street Temple was paid off at the end of 1943, a search for a new property commenced. Though downtown Providence was the location of the First Baptist Meeting House (1775), Beneficent Congregational Church (1809), St. John's Episcopal Church (1810), and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (1889), congregational leaders focused their efforts on the East Side. The suburbs south of Providence seemed remote and uninviting, and the Jewish community was still clustered within the city. The East Side offered quiet, tree-lined streets, good public schools, an easy commute to downtown, and an aura of upward mobility.

In April of 1944, the Beth-El board approved the purchase of two adjacent sites, costing \$46,000, at the northwest corner of Butler and Orchard Avenues, near the southern terminus of Blackstone Boulevard. A cottage built in 1839 for the Moses Brown farm was still in use.⁶ The parcels comprised 90,000 square feet, abundant

space to erect a new complex. A number of churches were located in the neighborhood. Immediately to the west of the site was St. Martin's Episcopal Church, an English Gothic Revival-style edifice, erected in 1916 but considerably older in appearance. In May of 1944, the vestry of St. Martin's wrote to the temple board, unanimously extending its welcome. There have been cordial relations between the two congregations ever since.

QUESTIONS OF STYLE

Although he was a master of the written and spoken word, Rabbi Braude was never a student of the visual arts and architecture. He was aware, however, that the appearance of the new Beth-El would be symbolically important. Though he favored a handsome building set unobtrusively in its neighborhood, he otherwise seemed open to considerable possibilities. Most likely, Rabbi Braude was not aware of the emerging world of avant-garde architecture — there was not yet a single important modern building in Providence and only a few in Boston — but he did appreciate the need to think seriously and systematically about alternatives. It is not clear that the temple's lay leaders were as prepared to think in such theoretical or imaginative terms. Either curious himself or feeling personally responsible for the Rosenfeld Memorial, Rabbi Braude, a de facto member of the building plans committee, seized the initiative.

In 1944 he started to read about the strange world of modern architecture. Rabbi Braude did not make notes on his reading, so it is not known whether he was even aware that Frank Lloyd Wright, at seventy-seven years of age, was not only active professionally but would have been a very logical and perceptive candidate for a synagogue commission. In 1953, Wright was approached by Congregation Beth Sholom in suburban Philadelphia, and the synagogue he designed is considered one of the outstanding religious buildings of the postwar era. Indeed, Beth Sholom and Touro in Newport, built in 1763, are the only two American synagogues represented through models in an exhibition of thirteen synagogues at Tel Aviv's Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Diaspora.

In April of 1944, Rabbi Braude also began to seek advice from friends and colleagues who had recently constructed new buildings. Rabbi Abraham Feldman of Hartford recommended Charles Greco of Boston, who had designed Beth Israel in 1936 in a popular style based on Byzantine sources. Greco had also designed "The Temple," Congregation Tifereth Israel in Cleveland, and the community building of Mishkan Tefila in Boston. He responded to an inquiry from Rabbi Braude, pointing out his firm's experience with five other synagogue projects. Braude's antennae even spread to the West Coast. Rabbi Edgar Magnin invited him to visit the monumental and eclectic (Byzantine-Moorish-Gothic) Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles, completed in 1929, the heyday of Art Deco. Commenting

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A new home for Sons of Israel and David moved beyond the realm of wishful thinking in January of 1942, with the death of John Jacob Rosenfeld. A journalist, lawyer, and Republican Party leader, Rosenfeld was the last surviving grandchild of Cantor Abraham Jacobs, who had led Sons of Israel in the 1860s. A widower and childless, he left his estate of approximately \$200,000 to Beth-El in memory of his mother, Anna, and wife, Mary Elizabeth. The gift, intended for the construction of a religious school and known as the Rosenfeld Memorial, had been cultivated over many years by Rabbi Braude.

THE SITE

When the mortgage on the Broad Street Temple was paid off at the end of 1943, a search for a new property commenced. Though downtown Providence was the location of the First Baptist Meeting House (1775), Beneficent Congregational Church (1809), St. John's Episcopal Church (1810), and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (1889), congregational leaders focused their efforts on the East Side. The suburbs south of Providence seemed remote and uninviting, and the Jewish community was still clustered within the city. The East Side offered quiet, tree-lined streets, good public schools, an easy commute to downtown, and an aura of upward mobility.

In April of 1944, the Beth-El board approved the purchase of two adjacent sites, costing \$46,000, at the northwest corner of Butler and Orchard Avenues, near the southern terminus of Blackstone Boulevard. A cottage built in 1839 for the Moses Brown farm was still in use.⁶ The parcels comprised 90,000 square feet, abundant

space to erect a new complex. A number of churches were located in the neighborhood. Immediately to the west of the site was St. Martin's Episcopal Church, an English Gothic Revival-style edifice, erected in 1916 but considerably older in appearance. In May of 1944, the vestry of St. Martin's wrote to the temple board, unanimously extending its welcome. There have been cordial relations between the two congregations ever since.

QUESTIONS OF STYLE

Although he was a master of the written and spoken word, Rabbi Braude was never a student of the visual arts and architecture. He was aware, however, that the appearance of the new Beth-El would be symbolically important. Though he favored a handsome building set unobtrusively in its neighborhood, he otherwise seemed open to considerable possibilities. Most likely, Rabbi Braude was not aware of the emerging world of avant-garde architecture — there was not yet a single important modern building in Providence and only a few in Boston — but he did appreciate the need to think seriously and systematically about alternatives. It is not clear that the temple's lay leaders were as prepared to think in such theoretical or imaginative terms. Either curious himself or feeling personally responsible for the Rosenfeld Memorial, Rabbi Braude, a de facto member of the building plans committee, seized the initiative.

In 1944 he started to read about the strange world of modern architecture. Rabbi Braude did not make notes on his reading, so it is not known whether he was even aware that Frank Lloyd Wright, at seventy-seven years of age, was not only active professionally but would have been a very logical and perceptive candidate for a synagogue commission. In 1953, Wright was approached by Congregation Beth Sholom in suburban Philadelphia, and the synagogue he designed is considered one of the outstanding religious buildings of the postwar era. Indeed, Beth Sholom and Touro in Newport, built in 1763, are the only two American synagogues represented through models in an exhibition of thirteen synagogues at Tel Aviv's Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Diaspora.

In April of 1944, Rabbi Braude also began to seek advice from friends and colleagues who had recently constructed new buildings. Rabbi Abraham Feldman of Hartford recommended Charles Greco of Boston, who had designed Beth Israel in 1936 in a popular style based on Byzantine sources. Greco had also designed "The Temple," Congregation Tifereth Israel in Cleveland, and the community building of Mishkan Tefila in Boston. He responded to an inquiry from Rabbi Braude, pointing out his firm's experience with five other synagogue projects. Braude's antennae even spread to the West Coast. Rabbi Edgar Magnin invited him to visit the monumental and eclectic (Byzantine-Moorish-Gothic) Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles, completed in 1929, the heyday of Art Deco. Commenting

on the temple's most unusual feature, figurative murals throughout the sanctuary, Rabbi Magnin explained that the services of a great artist would also be required. "Otherwise," he wrote, "it would be better to have none."⁷

In December of 1944, Rabbi Braude sought advice from the distinguished art and architectural historian, Professor Richard Krautheimer of Vassar College. One of the leading emigré scholars, Krautheimer (1897-1994) was a medievalist who later joined New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, one of the stellar art history faculties in this country. Writing that there was essentially no such thing as Jewish architecture, Krautheimer explained that synagogue designs always reflected the prevailing styles of a time and place. Beyond the liturgical and ritual needs of an individual congregation, Krautheimer recommended a design that was "modern, simple and dignified." Implicitly criticizing the work of Gropius, the Bauhaus, and the International style, Krautheimer remarked that "modern architecture need not give a religious building the looks of a factory." A modern synagogue, the historian theorized, "can be just as dignified and inspiring as the Altneuschul at Prague was in its time."⁸

THE SEARCH FOR AN ARCHITECT

Krautheimer seemed reluctant to recommend specific architects. He did mention Erich [Eric] Mendelsohn (1887-1953), a German modernist who had achieved critical and commercial success in Berlin in the 1920s and early 1930s, and afterwards built extensively in Palestine and England.⁹ Mendelsohn, probably the leading avant-garde Jewish architect in the world, had emigrated to New York City in 1941. The year before he had already enjoyed an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Lacking other commissions, Mendelsohn was about to launch his American career as a specialist in synagogue design.

By July of 1945, Rabbi Braude was still pursuing possibilities. Less concerned with obtaining the names of suitable candidates, he was sorting out the issues presented by the building itself. He wrote to Dr. Franz Landsberger (1883-1964), former director of Berlin's Jewish Museum and curator of Jewish art at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Rabbi Braude was considering two separate structures, a temple and a "school house," as well as several styles, such as Byzantine, New England Colonial, and "functional," which was his rubric for modern. Braude was also undecided as to the advantages of hiring a prominent architect from out-of-town or a local architect who would be readily available for consultation and supervision.

Dr. Landsberger, a consultant in synagogue architecture to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, eagerly offered his advice. Though aware of Greco's work in Hartford and Cleveland, he clearly favored a modernist. Landsberger mentioned Mendelsohn, but he was unsure if his landsman would be interested or

available. Landsberger offered to contact Mendelsohn on Beth-El's behalf.

Not yet satisfied with the ideas presented to him, Rabbi Braude broadened his search, never mentioning in his correspondence the existence of a trustees' building committee. In December of 1945, he sought the advice of Professor Salo Baron of Columbia, who, in turn, recommended his distinguished colleague, Professor Meyer Schapiro (b. 1904) of the art history and archaeology department.¹⁰

A medievalist who was equally devoted to modernism, Schapiro acknowledged the difficulty of Braude's dilemma: finding an architect, preferably an American, who could seek some balance between tradition and innovation.¹¹ Schapiro recommended Percival Goodman, a New York architect whom he had known for fifteen years. Goodman later became his colleague as a professor in Columbia's School of Architecture. He seemed particularly well qualified because of the work he was undertaking for the Jewish Theological Seminary, transforming Mrs. Felix Schiff Warburg's Fifth Avenue mansion into The Jewish Museum.¹²

ERICH MENDELSON

Mendelsohn met with Beth-El's building committee in March of 1946. Unfortunately, there are no minutes of the meeting. Judging from Mendelsohn's letter to the committee's chairman, attorney Arthur Levy, the meeting was far from perfunctory. Most likely, the committee had still been considering a neo-Colonial style, which would have complemented the Grand Revival-style homes on Orchard Avenue. If not outraged by this line of thinking, Mendelsohn was hardly sympathetic. In his letter to Levy, Mendelsohn delivered a short but sharp dissertation on the inevitability of modernism.¹³ It was a strong letter, somewhat sarcastic in tone, offering no basis for compromise.

No doubt, Mendelsohn had fought what he referred to as "the battle of the styles" all too many times, but much earlier in his career. If a client was attracted to Mendelsohn's work, it was on the basis of Mendelsohn's zealous embrace of the present and his decisive rejection of tradition. Mendelsohn probably thought that Providence was a city mired in its architectural history and that Beth-El's building committee, which did not include an architect or modern art collector, was a timid, if not provincial, group.

There is perhaps another reason why Mendelsohn's presentation must have been jolting and upsetting. Though not a practicing Jew, the architect had some strong ideas about Judaism. Like architecture, he saw it in ideal terms: as a fresh, vital, and powerful force that was constantly evolving. Offering a critique of neo-Colonialism but also tossing a grenade at St. Martin's, Mendelsohn stated in his letter: "A Temple for you in harmony with the residential surroundings would mean not to erect a medieval fortress from which to enforce our faith, but rather to think of an open and

flexible plan, an organic integration of all its different uses where Jehovah could truly reside *in our midst*."¹⁴ The word "organic" was of fundamental importance. Not only did it evoke the philosophy of Wright, one of Mendelsohn's heroes,¹⁵ but it is a key to the ultimate success of the Beth-El design.

At the end of March of 1946, Arthur Levy's building committee wrote a report to Beth-El's board of trustees.¹⁶ Four architects had been interviewed: Robert Cohn, the designer of Temple Emanu-El in New York; Charles Greco, who designed the temples in Cleveland, Hartford, and later Worcester; and Benjamin Moscovitz, a consulting architect for Macy's then at work on the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. The fourth, Mendelsohn, was described by Levy as "one of the most noted architects in the world," whose work in St. Louis, Cleveland, and a possible temple in Washington, D.C., was mentioned. The selection of Mendelsohn, however, would commit Beth-El to "contemporary architecture," a decision that the committee felt reluctant to make. Levy's committee asked the board to decide whether the design should be contemporary, Byzantine, Moorish, or New England Colonial.

As a further indication of the building committee's indecisiveness, Levy explained that since one-fifth of an architect's preliminary fee had to be paid if his services were terminated, the cancellation of a contract might cost \$5,000. On the assumption that the architect's fee would have been six percent to ten percent of the building's cost, this makes it evident that the committee was envisioning a building that might cost \$500,000 or more.

Rabbi Braude, in a memo to Levy, decided that the committee should retain only an architect with synagogue-building experience, which would rule out any local professionals.¹⁷ Further, the authorities whom he had consulted not only favored a contemporary style of architecture, but strongly recommended Mendelsohn; Goodman seemed a logical second choice to him because of Schapiro's recommendation.

THE SEARCH CONTINUES

The minutes of the April meeting of the temple board do not reveal the depth of discussion, although a preference for a contemporary style was expressed. Without endorsing either Mendelsohn or Goodman, Levy's committee was advised to consider other possibilities.

Consequently, Levy invited Eliel Saarinen (1873-1950) of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and William Wurster (1895-1972), dean of the School of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as consultants. Both declined.

To generate additional names, Levy turned to Albert Simonson, the dean of the Rhode Island School of Design, who had so favorably endorsed the selection of

Mendelsohn. Not expressing disappointment over the committee's lack of enthusiasm for Mendelsohn, Simonson provided seven more possibilities.¹⁸ Goodman was among the first group of four.

Another turn of events helped determine the outcome of the future temple. In late 1946 and early 1947, Beth-El became the beneficiary of a second bequest, even greater than John Rosenfeld's, which gave the building project enormous momentum. Alphonse J. Lederer, a Providence native who ran a successful jewelry-manufacturing business based in New York city, was the grandson and great-nephew of Sons of Israel founders. In July of 1946, Lederer, who had never married and lived with his mother near Orchard Avenue, committed suicide. When Lederer's mother, Julia, died six months later, his estate passed to the temple. Its ultimate value was more than \$500,000. Lederer, like Rosenfeld, though not active in the congregation, had been befriended by Rabbi Braude.

Thus, in the spring of 1947, it appeared that without yet embarking on a capital fundraising campaign, Beth-El had among its assets more than \$750,000. This amount was based on both the Rosenfeld and Lederer bequests and an estimated \$50,000 from the sale of the Broad Street Temple.

Though perhaps exceptional in financial well-being, Beth-El was not unique in its need for architectural guidance. Responding to inquiries from dozens of congregations, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations sponsored a two-day symposium in New York City in June of 1947. "An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow" was a forum at which numerous architects, artists, and UAHC officials shared their ideas and optimism for the new buildings of the coming decades. None could have predicted that hundreds of synagogues and other Jewish communal buildings would indeed be constructed during the next twenty years.

Beth-El was represented in New York by A. Henry Klein, a member of the building committee and temple vice-president, as well as by Pearl Braude, the rabbi's young wife. A 1940 Phi Beta Kappa graduate, she was a devotee of the arts, particularly dance, music, and design.¹⁹ Perhaps more than the members of the committee, she grasped that Beth-El stood on the threshold of a wonderful opportunity: to build in functional terms but also provide sensory stimulation and pleasure. At the symposium, she was particularly impressed by the presentation made by Percival Goodman and joined him and the distinguished sculptor Jacques Lipchitz (1801-1973) for lunch. Goodman and Lipchitz conversed in French, though Lipchitz, who had lived in New York during the war years, also spoke English. Most likely, Mrs. Braude thought, all three could have communicated, at least haltingly, in Yiddish.

BETH-EL MAKES ITS CHOICE

In late May of 1947, Levy had already written to Goodman, inquiring as to his interest in the Beth-El commission.²⁰ The chairman of the building committee described the temple as "an old reformed congregation" contemplating "a substantial enterprise," which would include a sanctuary, a school building, and a "community house." Levy further explained that his committee was inclined to follow a contemporary design "but nevertheless, with appropriate New England conservatism."

Goodman finally met with the building committee on July 21, 1947.²¹ Most likely, he presented photographs of his work and spoke more generally about his philosophy of building. Up until this time, however, Goodman had not yet completed a synagogue, though he had three commissions in various stages. As a result of his moving presentation at the New York symposium, he had been approached by three congregations: Baltimore Hebrew, B'nai Israel in Millburn, New Jersey, and Beth Israel in Lima, Ohio.²² Struggling in a general commercial practice, Goodman suddenly found new opportunities presented to him.

No doubt Goodman made a positive impression in Providence. Immediately after his visit, Levy began to check his references. Stephen Kayser, curator of New York's new Jewish Museum, supplied a glowing letter.²³ Under difficult circumstances, he explained, Goodman had skillfully remodeled the Warburg mansion. Kayser was impressed with Goodman's thoughts about synagogue design and also with his character and sense of responsibility. Having studied Mendelsohn's design for Cleveland's Park Synagogue, the curator thought that Goodman could do as well or better. Kayser, a German emigré, also believed that an American architect should be given an opportunity to express his own "interesting" and "fertile" ideas. "I am convinced," he wrote, "Goodman will do a splendid job." The next day Kayser sent Levy a list of thirteen references for Goodman, including former clients, such as Dr. Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Goodman was now emerging as the front-runner in Beth-El's search. None of Dean Simonson's several candidates received further consideration, and Mendelsohn was not asked to give more detailed ideas nor provide drawings. Chairman Levy wrote to his committee in August of 1947 with one more suggestion, however. While on vacation near Burlington, Vermont, he had noticed a striking new church, built of brick and wood, and with little exterior decoration other than a simple cross placed over the main entrance.²⁴ He sent postcards of this unidentified church to his committee members, noting that its simplicity followed many of Goodman's ideas. Levy was probably not aware that St. Mark's Catholic Church, designed by Freeman, French, Freeman, had attracted national attention and was the subject of a five-page photo essay in the July 1944 issue of *Architectural Forum*.²⁵ In 1952, the

Burlington architects built a new home for Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, a pioneering Vermont congregation.

In October of 1947, after three years of exploration, Beth-El's building committee unanimously recommended the employment of Percival Goodman to the full temple board.²⁶ Chairman Levy wrote that "contemporary is the style taught in substantially all schools of architecture in the United States today" and that at the symposium in New York sponsored by the Union, no other style had been considered or discussed. "Whether we are right or not," he concluded, "all the world seems to agree with us."

Levy then outlined Goodman's qualifications, identifying his age, forty-three, his teaching position at Columbia, and his recent experience, including the design of the Jewish Community Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Clearly another factor weighed heavily in Goodman's favor. Levy explained that the Beth-El commission is "the job which Mr. Goodman wants to do more than any other in his career and we believe he will give us not only all the services of a skilled and competent architect but all the enthusiasm which we could hope to get from any one."

Levy then reported on Goodman's fee, six percent of the total cost of the building, then calculated at \$1 million, a schedule of payments, and a timeline for the preparation of working drawings and specifications. Levy estimated that construction could begin in about a year. Concluding his report, he commented that the success of the design would depend both on the architect's skill and the amount of thought contributed by his client.

At its November meeting, the temple board approved the committee's recommendation. Goodman gladly accepted the offer, replying in his letter, "I honestly think that we are going to make some history on this building."²⁷

PERCIVAL GOODMAN

Though Goodman seemed not only a logical but a highly attractive choice as Beth-El's architect, the board did not know how the architect himself had been led to the commission. Until the Jewish Museum experience, Goodman had been a largely disappointed and frustrated designer who had few ties with the organized Jewish community and little personal interest in spirituality. Even more than the temple leaders who had retained him, he was searching for a new and deeper form of expression.

Born in New York City in 1904, Goodman had a difficult and troubled childhood.²⁸ His father, Barnet Shatz, was an auctioneer of estate goods, such as antique furniture and furs. His mother, Augusta Goodman, was descended from a Dutch Jewish family that had settled in New York in about 1808. When Percival was seven

years old, his parents divorced. Barnet ran off with an actress to South America and was never heard from again. Percival, his older sister, Alice, and his younger brothers, Paul and Arnold, lived precariously, moving to a different apartment at least once a year.

At thirteen years of age, refusing to take money from his mother, Percival left home. Though an avid reader, he had already dropped out of school. Goodman began working (for \$6 a week) as an office boy in the architectural office of his uncle, Benjamin Levitan. At first a floor sweeper and then a copier of blueprints, he soon learned the fundamentals of drafting.

A precocious and ambitious architectural student, he was hired as a draftsman by Grunenberg & Reichstag, a firm which built tenements in the Bronx. By deleting such details as fire escapes, Goodman made mundane structures look pretty on paper. He continued his studies at New York's Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, which was modeled after the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, where many of his instructors had studied. Thus, Goodman, trained in the Beaux Arts style, was unaware of the emerging *avant-garde* either in America or Europe. Goodman embraced academic art and architecture when another employer, John Peterkin, encouraged him to study at the Fontainebleau *École des Beaux-Arts*, where he spent three summers, beginning in 1920. At eighteen years of age, Goodman was married to an American, and he soon became a father. Goodman was widowed at age twenty, and his infant son, George, was reared by his wife's family.

Goodman planned to live in France as long as possible. In New York, he twice competed for the Paris Prize, a scholarship awarded by the Beaux-Arts Institute. In 1924, he was eliminated in the early rounds of the competition. The next year, determined to win, he advanced to the final round of required drawings over a three-month period. He defeated three finalists, including Louis Kahn (1901-1974), who at the height of his career and following his death has been hailed as one of the modern period's greatest architects. One of Goodman's four presentation drawings, a virtuoso display of draftsmanship on the subject of "A Summer Capitol for the United States," was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and shown in 1988 in an exhibition of recent acquisitions.

A Francophile, Goodman remained in Paris three years. Though he did not consider himself an expatriate, he hoped to remain indefinitely. He met many famous writers and artists, such as Cocteau, Hemingway, and Man Ray, but thought little of it. More importantly, while abroad he was exposed to the International style of architecture. Though largely oblivious to Gropius's Bauhaus and its impact, Goodman was deeply impressed by the work of Le Corbusier (1887-1965), particularly his drawings entered in the competition for a Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva. Goodman saw much of the simplicity of modernism as a

reflection and an outgrowth of classical tradition.

He returned to New York in 1928 and established a partnership with Jay Whitman, an American friend from Paris. Specializing in interior design for retail businesses, their firm was an immediate commercial success, employing a staff of thirty in its offices on West 57th Street. By 1932, when Goodman saw the exhibition on the International style organized by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson for the Museum of Modern Art, Goodman knew that he had become a modernist. He claimed, however, that he was never purely interested in style, but in style as a means of expressing a larger idea.

Goodman's brother, Paul, was a leader of the New Left and counterculture of the 1950s and 1960s. His book *Communitas*, illustrated by Percival, was a bold manifesto on public and private ownership of property and means of production and became a classic of utopian thinking (University of Chicago Press, 1947). Paul had been a Bar Mitzvah, but Percival had received no religious education. He had worked in Jewish firms and had mostly Jewish clients, but was in few other ways associated with Jews. The persistent anti-Semitism he encountered in France was his closest identification with Judaism.

Percival Goodman's desire to grow Jewishly occurred as a result of the Holocaust and Israeli statehood. When he was hired by the Jewish Theological Seminary to build the Jewish Museum, he reached a personal turning point. Goodman felt embarrassed by his ignorance but challenged to express architectural ideas conducive to Judaism. Ironically, when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organizing its symposium on synagogue design in 1947, Goodman was invited to attend as a Jewish architect. He accepted the invitation with the provision that he could lecture.²⁹ Convinced that Judaism celebrated the written word at the expense of visual imagery, his lecture on "The Holiness of Beauty" was pivotal: it transformed his career and, through his work, the postwar American synagogue became enriched and ennobled.

GOODMAN'S PLAN

In November of 1947, as soon as he had been selected as Beth-El's architect, Goodman sent a detailed questionnaire to the temple's building committee.³⁰ Divided into three parts — "The House of Worship," "The House of Assembly," and "the House of Study" — it suggested that the structure should be divided accordingly. There were more than forty questions whose answers would help the architect shape and color his ideas.

Only Rabbi Braude's questionnaire survives, with his preferences showing the nucleus of the building that was eventually constructed. For example, Rabbi Braude requested seating in the sanctuary for 500 congregants. High Holy Day seating for

1,500. He visualized an ark for six to eight Torah scrolls; the *bimah* (platform in synagogue, Hebrew) would accommodate eight chairs. There would be two lecterns: one for preaching, the other for reading. Space would be required for an organ as well as a grand piano and stringed instruments. Rabbi Braude preferred a social hall equipped with a stage, but no permanent seating. He requested meeting rooms for various groups, such as Boy and Girl Scouts, but he did not care for bowling alleys, as Goodman had suggested. The area most difficult for Rabbi Braude to envision was, surprisingly, the religious school. He could not predict the number of classrooms needed nor their configuration. Braude noted that the need for nursery and kindergarten classrooms would require further discussion.

There were two important areas missing from Goodman's exploratory questionnaire. The first was a library. The second was a chapel.

In November of 1949, Goodman presented his concept of the temple's design to the congregation's board of trustees. A cardboard model had been fabricated to demonstrate his ideas.³¹ The design represented a simple and harmonious structure, imaginative but not radical. Goodman's plan emphasized the integration of the structure's three major functions: prayer, study, and sociability. Approximately 300 feet in length and 100 feet at its greatest width, the synagogue's spaces flowed easily and unobtrusively. Occupying a parklike setting, with lawn, trees, shrubs, and flowers, the temple was intended to have a distinct identity yet relate to its residential surroundings. If not readily identifiable as a synagogue, it was surely not a church of any denomination.

The third home built by Congregation Sons of Israel and David was inviting, unpretentious, and self-confident. Goodman's vision of a modern synagogue was fresh, strong, and dynamic.

After the concept was approved by the board, it was presented to the full congregation at its annual meeting the following month. Described by Chairman Levy of the building committee as "the finest Temple in the United States," it received broad and vigorous support.³²

FINANCING THE NEW BUILDING

Despite this enthusiasm, however, financing remained an obstacle. In June of 1949, the architect had estimated that construction costs would run \$830,000 (or \$1.10 per cubic foot), but this figure included neither his fee of six percent nor the costs of engineering, furnishing, landscaping, or art. These additional expenditures would run \$250,000.³³

It became apparent to temple leaders that though the Rosenfeld and Lederer bequests would serve as financial cornerstones of the building program, a capital

campaign of \$400,000 or more would be required. Yet the timing of such a campaign was less than ideal. Jewish needs overseas were extraordinary, and Rhode Island had not yet developed a strong network of Jewish social service agencies.

Fundraising for Beth-El was considered by many temple leaders to be burdensome. The presidency of the congregation was thus regarded as much a task as a privilege. With the explicit agenda of completing a capital campaign, Walter Sundlun, a former president, was persuaded to return to office. To this day, Sundlun remains the only Beth-El president to have served two nonconsecutive terms. His son, Governor Bruce Sundlun, is the only second-generation president in the congregation's history.

Despite Walter Sundlun's determination, fundraising was difficult at best. As of May of 1951, pledges totaled \$179,000. There were fifty-eight pledges of \$1,000 or more. Six of these pledges were for \$5,000 or more, and three were for at least \$10,000. The three largest gifts were \$20,000 from the temple sisterhood, \$17,500 from one family, and \$10,000 from the temple's brotherhood. Percival Goodman pledged \$1,000.

Two and one-half years later, in November of 1953, the building campaign had grown to 361 pledges of \$242,000. There had been little growth at the upper end of the scale; the pledge by the sisterhood remained the largest.

CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

In September of 1951, four years after an architect had been hired, the congregation finally voted unanimously to enter into contracts for the erection of the new building.³⁴ The cost was not to exceed \$1,200,000, with additional expenses budgeted at \$250,000.³⁵

There was one further impediment to construction, however. During the Korean War, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Production Authority controlled the availability of metal, particularly steel, copper, and aluminum. Consequently, Goodman's design was altered to rely less on steel and more on reinforced concrete. The federal government's authorization to obtain these precious materials was not granted until March of 1952, with construction to begin in July of that year.³⁶

On June 30, 1952, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Orchard Avenue. More than 250 temple members attended. Temple officers posed for photos wearing hardhats. Even Rabbi Braude sat on a bulldozer to record the festivity of the moment.

September 20, 1953, was another momentous occasion, when the cornerstone of the new temple was laid. Once again, there was a parade of speakers, ceremonial handshakes, mugging for photographs, and expressions of progress and nostalgia.

The president of the confirmation class spoke, as did two temple elders, both of whom had been present at the dedication of the Broad Street Temple in 1911.

DEDICATION CEREMONIES

In the spring of 1954, during its ninety-ninth year, Congregation Sons of Israel and David departed its second home and entered its third. The last Shabbat services at Broad and Glenham Streets were held on April 16 and 17. Virtually the entire membership attended the bittersweet ceremonies. On Sunday, April 18, the first day of Pesach, the congregation's Torahs were removed from their stately ark and driven by limousine to Orchard Avenue, where they were marched into the new sanctuary, led by officers, board members, and a color guard of veterans.

The new Beth-El celebrated no fewer than six ceremonies of dedication. The first, for the congregation itself, was on Friday, April 23, 1954, the seventh day of Pesach. There was a ceremonial kindling of the Eternal Light, and an address was delivered by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. A children's service of dedication was held Shabbat morning. On Sunday, April 25, the Rosenfeld and Lederer Memorials were consecrated, as symbolic keys were presented by Norman Fain, chairman of the building committee, to President Sundlun and Rabbi Braude.

During the following three weeks, there were four more dedications, each intended for a special group within the Jewish or larger community. There was a galaxy of speakers, including the governor of Rhode Island, the mayor of Providence, educators, rabbis, ministers, and priests. The oldest confirmands of the congregation were honored. President Eisenhower, unable to attend, sent a congratulatory message.³⁷

Percival Goodman, looking young and fit, spoke at the dedications. His design was soon published in leading architectural journals, including *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture*.³⁸ In the spring of 1955, when *Life* magazine published a five-part series on "The Great Religions of the World" (later made into a book), the section on Judaism featured a short text and five photos of the new Beth-El. In its hundredth year, Sons of Israel and David represented the forefront of growth and the promise of renewal within liberal Judaism. Indeed, in 1954 and 1955, the congregation played a key role in Rhode Island's celebration of the American Jewish Tercentenary, which focused on the settlement of Newport.

THE BUILDING DESCRIBED

As a modern building, Beth-El lacks the solemnity, and perhaps the authority, of traditional religious architecture. It is physically and emotionally accessible, however. The temple is orderly but not stuffy, friendly but not chatty. It conveys a

quiet dignity, eloquent in its understatement. The exterior walls, built of Ohio brick and trimmed with Indiana limestone, are plain and modest.

Visitors and longtime congregants alike are often surprised by the spaciousness of the main worship hall, remarkable for any period or style in Rhode Island. Approximately 100 feet long and 80 feet wide, the sanctuary seats nearly a thousand. The arched wooden roof, of lamella design, rises 32 feet, but appears even loftier. The trusses of the copper-sheathed roof form an intricate diamond pattern, the primary decoration of the interior. Abundant natural lighting is provided by two arched clerestory windows, 12 feet high, on the north and south walls of the sanctuary. At the east end is the raised platform of the *bimah*, which nestles the ark.

Goodman's ingenuity is further demonstrated by his solution to the challenge of High Holy Day seating. The common device of a collapsing wall between sanctuary and social hall or foyer is avoided. Rather, he created additional space for seating by flanking the northern and southern sides of the sanctuary with eight classrooms, whose walls, when folded, allow for 600 temporary seats.

Beth-El's meeting hall, to the west of the foyer, is another spare, open space, 70 feet long and 60 feet wide. It can seat 350 for dining and 600 for educational and entertainment events. Even more restrained in its decoration than the sanctuary, the meeting hall has a ceiling supported by wooden beams and, running the length of the north wall, a bank of windows and glass doors that open to a patio and garden. A large, full-service kitchen is nearby.

Beth-El's chapel, also radiating from the foyer, is used for weddings and, without interruption since 1955, for a daily minyan. Compared to the quiet grandeur of the sanctuary, the chapel, seating about 100 congregants, conveys a feeling of intimacy. If any part of the temple suggests more traditional synagogue architecture, it is the chapel, with its small copper dome. The dome, resting on a band of glass, also provides soft illumination. The chapel is adorned with a simple cedar ark, a rosewood reading table, and a north wall decorated with a diamond-patterned grill. The Eternal Light, brought from Broad Street, hangs on the east wall beneath the inscription *Shaddai*, meaning "The Almighty." Like the sanctuary, the chapel has its own secluded choir and organ loft.

Goodman's architecture embraces many art forms. Though the sanctuary resembles a theatre, it reflects the warmth of a home. The acoustics are outstanding. A child's song or a shofar's blast resonates throughout the room. Though not visible from the pews, the temple's professional choir and organist — and an occasional harpist, cellist, or flutist — can be heard clearly. Over twenty years, many of the world's finest musicians have performed in public concerts sponsored by the sisterhood.

In sound and silence, Beth-El's sanctuary is a serene place. Though protected from the commotion of the workaday world, it celebrates nature. The sky, clouds, and trees are visible through the large arched windows. Flashes of lighting and explosions of thunder offer momentary but exciting distractions. Brilliant light and falling darkness animate the room.

ARTISTIC ADORNMENTS

As both a traditionalist and a modernist, Goodman saw architecture as giving unity to the other visual arts. Decoration is integral to his design.³⁹ From his earliest contact with the building committee, Goodman advocated an art budget of five percent of total costs.⁴⁰ He dreamt of employing some of the most luminous Jewish artists to embellish and vivify the synagogue. Goodman hoped Lipchitz would carve bold, symbolic sculptures for the southern and eastern facades. Two rectangular slabs of stone, visible today, would have supported such images. The facades look bare without these sculptures.

Judging from sketches found in fundraising materials, Goodman had even more specific plans for magnificent, tapestry-like designs by Marc Chagall (1887-1985). In the sanctuary, large drapes beneath the arched windows, concealing folding classroom walls, would have portrayed biblical heroes and stories. Goodman calculated that the cost of such designs would be \$100,000, and he made tentative plans for their manufacture by an order of French nuns.⁴¹

But art of this quality was simply beyond the comprehension and reach of his clients. Goodman nevertheless sought brilliant, not subdued colors. He chose a rich gold for the sanctuary carpet and a deep purple for the upholstery. The curtains covering the ark, designed by the prominent textile artist Dorothy Liebes (1899-1972), were an inky blue. The drapes beneath the arched windows, in lieu of Chagall's figures, were solid bands of color. At the rear of the sanctuary, Goodman placed two mural-like panels of stunning red marble — with veins of green, brown, and white — to support memorial plaques that are rotated throughout the year.

The sanctuary's clerestory windows were not left unadorned. They were sandblasted with biblical verses selected by Rabbi Braude. The Hebrew calligraphy and Jewish motifs were designed by another prominent Jewish artist, Ismar David.

While preserving the spaciousness of the sanctuary, Goodman foresaw a need for symbolic sculptures. Three leading sculptors received commissions. The most daring pieces are the columns flanking the ark by Ibram Lassaw (b. 1913). Their design was based on passages in Exodus selected by Rabbi Braude.⁴² When illuminated from below, the spidery bronze forms, entitled "Pillar of Fire" and "Pillar of Cloud," seem to convey a sense of infinite time and space. Lassaw's pieces were considered among his best and were selected by the Museum of Modern Art

for exhibition at the Venice Biennale of 1954.⁴³

The Eternal Light, welded from sheet steel and copper by David Hare (1917-1992), seems to vacillate between representation and abstraction. It has a rough, unfinished quality, at odds with the sanctuary's more refined ambience. Hare's seven-branched menorah, displayed like a bas-relief on the left side of the *bimah*, is a dazzling piece of sculpture. It not only functions as a candelabrum, but evokes an ancient Mediterranean past through its resemblance to a nautical vessel.

Also commissioned through the Kootz Gallery was a large bronze *hanukkiya* (Hanukkah candelabrum, Hebrew), mounted on a stone pedestal, by Herbert Ferber (1906-1991). Displayed adjacent to the temple's main entrance, the piece is the focal point of Hanukkah celebrations, when, despite cold weather, children and parents gather outside to light the candles and sing the traditional blessings and holiday songs.

Adding further color and glow to the new Beth-El were mosaic panels crafted by Walter Feldman (b. 1925), an art professor at Brown University. Portraying biblical stories through complex imagery, there are three mosaic medallions embedded in the temple foyer, four more in the front patio.

In a further break with convention, Goodman refrained from decorating the temple's exterior with such obvious Jewish symbols as a Star of David or the Ten Commandments. These symbols appear more subtly in Ismar David's windows and can be seen from Orchard Avenue when the sanctuary is illuminated. An inscription carved on a beam over the main entrance reads simply: "Lord, Thou has been our dwelling-place in all generations." (Psalm 90).

Even today, one of the remarkable features of Beth-El's decoration is the unobtrusiveness of plaques. Most Jewish communal buildings are encrusted with them. There are only two carved inscriptions on the Orchard Avenue exterior, recording the Rosenfeld and Lederer Memorials. While there are many names throughout the temple's interior, all are tiny in scale, some barely noticeable. The idea was to preserve the beauty of the architecture and also, in keeping with Rabbi Braude's outlook, to enforce modesty upon donors. Further, there are no painted portraits or bronze busts. A small photograph of Rabbi Braude was only recently hung in the temple library, which had been named in his honor in 1967.

FORTY YEARS AFTER

Solidly built and well maintained, the temple complex has undergone minor changes since 1954. After forty years on Orchard Avenue, Temple Beth-El — both the congregation and its building — is a landmark on Providence's East Side. Only a few score families remember the old temple at Broad and Glenham. Most

congregants who are aware of the older building assume that it, like the Friendship Street Synagogue, has long since been torn down. Fortunately, they are mistaken, because the old temple not only stands but is still in use. Purchased by a consortium of Orthodox synagogues in the spring of 1954, the Broad Street Temple became Congregation Shaare Zedek and has been carefully maintained. Today as few Jews live in South Providence as in some Eastern European communities, however.

Looking back, Beth-El's move to the East Side of Providence was not only inevitable but overdue. The East Side needed a Reform congregation, but given the scale and expense of the new Beth-El, it could never have supported two. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the further dispersal of Providence's Jewish community was not foreseen.

Now, a half-century since Rabbi Braude began his search for an architectural style, it is evident that he had embarked on a journey not merely to clothe the exterior of a new building but to help define and shape an institution. His path toward modernism now seems totally logical and necessary. To have built in a manner evocative of some earlier time and place would have been a serious mistake. On the one hand, Temple Beth-El would have been somehow relegated to a safe, predictable existence, more comfortable with a nostalgic past than an unfolding future. On the other hand, the congregation would have lost an opportunity to achieve an excellence provided by thought, imagination, and freedom. In retrospect, Beth-El's quest for an architectural identity was an exciting adventure, more successful and fulfilling than anybody would have dared predict.

Throughout the years, Goodman remained particularly proud of his design of Temple Beth-El.⁴⁴ Though he was aware of some imperfections, he considered the commission one of the best of his career in terms of site, budget, and freedom of expression. Beth-El was also meaningful to him because of the cohesiveness of its design. Nevertheless, though he grew closer in his respect for Judaism, Goodman remained both an architectural and a religious maverick. To the end of his life, he was privately outspoken, eager to criticize all with whom he disagreed and any note of hypocrisy or artifice. Though Goodman did not worship God, he saw divinity in men and women, most notably his wife, Naomi. He was not a prayerful man, but he provided resonance for others' prayers.

Most likely, Congregation Sons of Israel and David will occupy its place on Orchard Avenue far longer than any of its previous locations. Presently, a move anywhere else seems implausible. But if further growth necessitated a new wing or an unforeseen bequest offered a guest house for visitors, in what style would it be built? Surely the postmodern era, with its many leading Jewish architects, would present numerous possibilities. One design might use as a springboard the neo-Colonial styles of the neighboring residences. Another design might take for its lead

the neo-medievalism of St. Martin's Church. A third possibility would be a departure on the Victorian buildings of nearby Lincoln School. Percival Goodman's Beth-El would be a difficult building to reinterpret, because it represents a clear, honest, and humble search for truth in its time.



NOTES

- ¹ For introductory references on American synagogue design, see Alexandra Shecket Korros and Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Synagogue History: A Bibliography and State-of-the-Field Survey* (New York: Markus Wiener, 1988). For a list of extant synagogue buildings, see Mark W. Gordon, "Rediscovering Jewish Infrastructure: The Legacy of U.S. 19th Century Synagogues," *American Jewish History* 75, no. 3 (March 1986). The most distinguished nineteenth-century American architect of synagogues was Dankmar Adler (1844-1900), the son of a rabbi, who built four synagogues in Chicago, of which two survive, both as Baptist churches. See Charles E. Gregersen and Joan W. Saltztein, *Dankmar Adler: His Theatres and Auditoriums* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).
- ² The Beth-El Archives (hereafter cited as Temple Archives), contain extensive correspondence files of Rabbi William Braude and other files of Arthur Levy and Norman Fain. Among a large collection of oral histories recorded by the author between 1988 and 1990 were interviews with Lillian Braude, Pearl Braude, Norman Fain, Percival Goodman, Ibram Lassaw, and Macie Fain Silver. The Beth-El commission is probably one of Goodman's best-documented synagogue designs.
- ³ For a comprehensive history of the temple, based largely on minutes of board meetings, see Seebert J. Goldowsky, *A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El)*, Providence, Rhode Island (Providence: Beth-El, 1989).
- ⁴ For autobiographical essays by Rabbi Braude, see "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8, no. 3 (November 1981) and 8, no. 4 (November 1982).
- ⁵ Beth-El's architectural dialogue with Mount Zion was resumed in the 1940s with Mount Zion's architect, Erich Mendelsohn.
- ⁶ The William J. Harris House stood in a dilapidated condition at the rear of the temple parking lot until it was demolished in 1994.
- ⁷ Temple Archives, May 16, 1944.
- ⁸ Richard Krautheimer, *Mittelalterliche Synagogen* (Berlin, 1927).
- ⁹ For Mendelsohn, see Bruno Zevi, *Erich Mendelsohn* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1985); idem, *Erich Mendelsohn: Opera Completa* (Milan: Etas/Kompass, 1970); Sigrid Achenbach, *Erich Mendelsohn: 1887-1953: Ideen, Bauten, Projekte* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1988); *Erich Mendelsohn: Complete Works of the Architect: Sketches, Designs, Buildings*, English trans. of 1930 German ed. (Princeton Architectural Press, 1992).
- ¹⁰ Temple Archives, December 3, 1945.
- ¹¹ Ibid., December 14, 1945.
- ¹² The Jewish Museum's addition of 1953 was recently rebuilt by Kevin Roche, the Pritzker Prize winner, in a French Gothic Chateausque style to mirror the original mansion built in 1908.

- ¹³ Temple Archives, March 19, 1946.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., March 19, 1946.
- ¹⁵ Mendelsohn first met Wright at Taliesin, in Wisconsin, in 1924. They met again, at Taliesin West, in Arizona, in 1941 and 1946. See Zevi, *Erich Mendelsohn* (Rizzoli), pp. 199-201. Also: Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright: Letters to Architects* (Fresno: California State University Press, 1984).
- ¹⁶ Temple Archives, March 25, 1946.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, March 13, 1946.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, June 4, 1947.
- ¹⁹ Oral history interviews with Pearl Braude, recorded by the author on November 15, December 11, and December 22, 1989, in Providence.
- ²⁰ Temple Archives, May 27, 1947.
- ²¹ Ibid., July 12, 1947.
- ²² The exact chronology of Goodman's earliest synagogues is difficult to establish. Beth El in New London, Connecticut, completed in 1950, was probably first; B'nai Israel in Millburn was completed in 1951; and Beth El in Springfield, Massachusetts, was completed in 1952. Goodman's Providence synagogue stands today as the earliest and perhaps best example. The New London synagogue, diminutive in scale, received a large and provocative addition by Paul Rudolph in 1964. The Springfield synagogue, destroyed by fire, was rebuilt by Goodman in 1968.
- ²³ Temple Archives, August 5, 1947.
- ²⁴ Ibid., August 11, 1947.
- ²⁵ I would like to thank William Goss, the archivist of the Diocese of Burlington, for the identification of the church and its architects.
- ²⁶ Temple Archives, November 3, 1947.
- ²⁷ Ibid., November 6, 1947.
- ²⁸ Oral history interview with Percival Goodman, recorded by the author on May 12, 1989, in New York City, shortly before the architect's death. Copies of the tapes are available at American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati; Avery Architecture Library, Columbia University, New York; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; and Architecture Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. For additional information about the Goodman family, I am indebted to Professor Taylor Stoehr of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, who is a specialist on Paul Goodman.
- ²⁹ Evidence suggest that Goodman's desire to speak was not only a matter of happenstance. Along with Franz Landsberger of Hebrew Union College, Mendelsohn, and the architect E. J. Kahn, Goodman had been invited to respond to an article by Rachel Wischnitzer, "The Problem of Synagogue Architecture," which appeared in the March 1947 issue of *Commentary*. Goodman's response, "Creating a Modern Synagogue Style," appeared in the June issue. Percival and Paul Goodman later wrote "The Modern Artist as Synagogue Builder," *Commentary*, January 1949.
- ³⁰ Temple Archives, November 17, 1947.
- ³¹ A reproduction of Goodman's model is found in Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture*, p. 151
- ³² Temple Archives, December 4, 1949.

- ³³ Ibid., December 4, 1949.
- ³⁴ Ibid., September 9, 1951.
- ³⁵ The final cost of the new temple, including construction, architect's fees, engineering, furnishings, landscaping, and art, was \$1,490,812.72. A mortgage of \$500,000 was required.
- ³⁶ Temple Archives, March 22, 1952.
- ³⁷ Ibid., April 1, 1954.
- ³⁸ See *Architectural Record*, December 1955, and *Progressive Architecture*, October 1954. Three of Goodman's synagogues — Baltimore, Springfield, and Providence — were featured in "Five Contemporary Synagogue Pulpits." *CCAR Journal*, October 1956.
- ³⁹ Avram Kampf wrote that Goodman was chiefly responsible for the revival of synagogue art that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Further, according to Kampf, this achievement is as significant as Goodman's designs of individual synagogues. See *Jewish Ceremonial Art and Religious Observance* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 37.
- ⁴⁰ Temple Archives, November 3, 1947.
- ⁴¹ Norman Fain, chairman of the building committee, believes that his greatest mistake in completing the temple within its budget was the omission of the Chagall drapes. Oral history interview with Norman Fain, recorded by the author on May 31, 1989, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.
- ⁴² Oral history interviews with Pearl Braude.
- ⁴³ Lassaw's first solo exhibition in New York was with the Kootz Gallery in 1951. Lassaw also made sculptures for the Goodman synagogues in Cleveland and St. Paul. Perhaps his finest ensemble of sculptures — an Eternal Light, a menorah, and an enormous exterior relief — were for Goodman's synagogue in Springfield, Massachusetts. See *Ibram Lassaw: Space Explorations: A Retrospective Survey, 1929-1988* (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum, 1988). Also: Oral history interview with Lassaw, recorded by the author on September 25, 1988, in East Hampton.
- ⁴⁴ Oral history interview with Percival Goodman.

JEWISH VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II — PART I

The following two oral histories were transcribed, condensed, and edited from over forty interviews conducted by Pearl F. Braude of Providence, Rhode Island. More of these interviews will be published in future issues of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* as space permits and as funds become available for transcriptions. The original tapes and transcriptions are on file in the archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

WALTER H. WEINBERG

Walter Weinberg was born in Providence February 6, 1923, and died May 20, 1990. He was interviewed a few months before his death.

PEARL BRAUDE: When did you go into the army, when did you start your training, and tell us something about your experiences?

WALTER WEINBERG: I went into the army in February of 1943. I was then a student at the University of Michigan. I knew that I would ultimately be involved in the war on the horizon. I originally attended the University of Rhode Island. I was interested in flying and at the college they had something called the Civilian Pilot Training Corps, which involved classes in Meteorology and Navigation. I forget how many times a week we would get up at five o'clock and fly Piper Cubs out of Hillsgrove. In those days, you learned to fly and then you soloed after eight flying hours and then they issued some sort of a certificate.

PB: A pilot's license after eight hours?

WEINBERG: A license to fly solo is what you would call it. You could fly without an instructor by your side.

PB: This was around 1941 or '42?

WEINBERG: (Nods.) Then I transferred to the University of Michigan [in] Ann Arbor. My original college class was 1944, but I did finish up at Brown University with the Class of '47 because of the war.

PB: So you went from the University of Rhode Island to the University of Michigan and then you went into the war and then you went to Brown University?

WEINBERG: I was in Michigan for one semester. Then, while in this Civilian Pilot Training Program, I remember signing something saying that if they wanted me I would volunteer for the Army Air Corps, which I did.

PB: So you left Michigan to enter the Army?

WEINBERG: I think I went straight from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Miami Beach. I went through Basic Training and volunteered for the Army Air Corps. There are

all these tests, and so on and when you are accepted for the Army Air Corps, you are then sent to Primary Flight Training. Primary Flight Training was in Texas. I got my wings in March of 1944. It took a whole year for all the training.

PB: Were you trained in every aspect of the flying: the bombing, the sighting, etc.?

WEINBERG: No, just the flying.

PB: Suppose something happened to the person in charge of releasing the bombs?

WEINBERG: As I recall, I'm not 100 percent sure that I am remembering all these little details, but I think the bombs could be released from the cockpit.

PB: So in other words, you knew how to do it?

WEINBERG: Sure, you push a button. ...

PB: ... After a year of training, in 1944 you were shipped out?

WEINBERG: No, then they sent us to some place in South Carolina where they made up the crews. They put all these people together and formed the crews and then there was crew training ... [for] a number of months, in Avon Park, Florida, flying practice missions around Florida. ... Once we were sent to Havana as part of a good will gesture. They put us up in some fancy hotel, which was quite interesting.

PB: So this was well into 1944. Did you fly in your own plane to England?

WEINBERG: The way it worked was, the new B17s coming off the production line would be checked out and so on and then a crew would take the new plane and fly it over, never having flown it before. We watched a lot of training movies. We left from Savannah and went to Bangor, Maine, stayed over, had more briefings and saw films on what it was like to fly in the North Atlantic. We went from Bangor to Goose Bay, Labrador; we were weathered in there for two weeks. We played ping pong, drank coffee, and read.

PB: Weathered in, meaning it was too foggy to fly?

WEINBERG: It was bad weather, foggy, snow. ...

WEINBERG: ... We went from Goose Bay to Iceland and from there we finally went to an airfield in ... [Great Britain]. ... We were attached to the 390th Bomb Group. We were at an air base near a little town called Flamlingham, which was in the southeast corner [of England] about ten or eleven miles from the Channel. The closest major town was Ipswich.

PB: You were stationed there and then you started making your missions over Germany?



Walter H. Weinberg.

WEINBERG: We started in October of 1944. I flew 30 missions. As far as memorable missions, there was one mission to Hamburg where we lost an engine and had to come back with only three engines. Most of the time we got flak. We got hit, but they were inconsequential holes in unimportant places. I had one or two missions to Berlin. We were 30,000 feet in the air, so we couldn't see very much. As you are climbing up, when you pass the nine or ten thousand foot mark, you put on oxygen because they were not pressurized cabins as they are today.

PB: So nothing really devastating happened on any of your missions, no one was ever hurt or killed? Nothing happened to you or your part of the plane?

WEINBERG: No.

PB: How many people were on your plane?

WEINBERG: There was a pilot, a co-pilot, a navigator, a bombardier, a radio operator, a tail gunner and a gunner.

PB: The first mission you went on, were you really scared? I'm referring to the first real mission, not counting the practice missions.

WEINBERG: Scared, it wasn't really scared in that sense. It was a feeling of, you were doing this and if something happened, something happened. There was certainly nothing you could do about it, so you accepted it.

PB: Did you feel that the war was a good war?

WEINBERG: The feeling was one of doing the right thing, this was life and death,

the end of western civilization. The propaganda work that cranked up really did a good job, but I felt it was true anyway so I didn't have to be propagandized.

PB: After six missions, you got some sort of citation?

WEINBERG: After five or six missions, it was almost automatic, sort of a recognition that you had flown five or six missions and they gave you an Air Medal and after five or six more, they gave you an oak leaf cluster to add to your Air Medal. The Air Medal ... sits in a little box someplace, but there is a ribbon that one wears on the uniform and then these oak leaf clusters are added. Doing thirty missions, I received five or six of these. ... My experience was worthwhile.

PB: How did you feel about yourself after the war? Some people were depressed, some people were let down.

WEINBERG: Since I was not involved in the real miseries, [and] it was a clean war, which was my reason for going into the Air Corps to begin with. I felt good about myself. It certainly increased my self-confidence. On the other hand, my friend Will Robin [from Providence] who was in the Infantry, I think it was during the Battle of the Bulge and he had gotten a really severe case of trench foot, which is some sort of a gangrenous infection or condition and there were a lot of amputees from this kind of thing. Anyway, Will wound up in a military hospital in Wales. Somehow I got word and I went to visit him in the hospital where he spent weeks.

PB: Did you have to have periods of rest?

WEINBERG: I think the policy at the time was that after ten, fifteen, twenty missions, they sent you to what they called the "Rest Home," which was a big, palatial, mansion type place like Brideshead but on a much smaller scale. This was near Oxford. We were there a week.

PB: What was your rank?

WEINBERG: First Lieutenant. As a matter of fact, you start out as a Second Lieutenant and at some point you get to be a First Lieutenant.

PB: So you went to the "Rest Home" for a week. Did you get around England at all?

WEINBERG: I went to London on pass maybe three, four, or five times during the time that I was there.

PB: Where you there during the Blitz or had it already stopped?

WEINBERG: The Blitz, there may have been a few stray ones. The Z-Bombs were even worse than the Blitz since there was no playing there, they just fell....

PB: Did you get to know any of the Jewish community in England?

WEINBERG: No, not really. I have a vague recollection, on one trip to London I sought out a synagogue but that was it.

PB: So you were there until the end of the war, until V-E Day and then were you mustered out?

WEINBERG: Then we had to sort of hang around and wait around for transportation home. We were on the ocean, on the liberty ship coming home, ... when they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. We were sure coming back that we were coming back to go to Japan or the Far East, a place no one really wanted to go.

PB: Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences?

WEINBERG: The only thing is way back in late August or early September 1945 at Fort Devens, we were mustered out and I decided I would take advantage of the GI Bill and finish up my schooling at Brown. I dressed myself up in all full regalia with all of my medals and all of my transcripts and marched myself into the Admissions Office and my recollection is that I was sort of accepted on the spot. I stayed in Rhode Island instead of returning to Michigan because I wanted to be home for a while.

STANLEY GROSSMAN

Stanley Grossman was born on June 28, 1919, in Providence, Rhode Island.

PEARL BRAUDE: Stanley, you were telling me ... that you graduated from Lehigh University in 1941 and then went to your family business office in New York. Then you decided after a little while in New York that there was going to be a war and that you should volunteer.

STANLEY GROSSMAN: The first camp was Camp [Croft] in South Carolina. Then I went to Fort Benning in Georgia.

PB: To become?

GROSSMAN: An Infantry Officer, 2nd lieutenant in the infantry.

PB: And there you sent for your wife-to-be, bride-to-be, Hazel?

GROSSMAN: And we got married by a justice of the peace. Then found a Jewish chaplain, so that we have two anniversaries, the third and fourth of April. We went to New Orleans for our honeymoon weekend. I enlisted in the Cook and Bake School while I was there so I could get some time off.

PB: Now you told me earlier that you deliberately volunteered to go to the infantry and the reason that you decided not to go into another area was because you were afraid that you might get involved in the Quartermasters Corps and you did not want

to be accused of ... because you were Jewish ... of being ... sort of making it soft for yourself.

GROSSMAN: I guess I was sensitive about it. ... most of [the people who] were in the textile business were going into the Quartermasters where they probably were better qualified to serve.

PB: And they did a good job.

GROSSMAN: I'm sure they did.

PB: ... But you felt sensitive about it ... and so you volunteered for the infantry. How long were you in the South and how long were you and Hazel together before ...

GROSSMAN: It might have been six months to eight months. We were shipped to Langstown, Virginia, which was an embarkation point and from there we went to ... somewhere ... in New Guinea. ... On any movements that we made ... the only way you could get through ... there were no trails or paths ... we had to cut our way through with machetes, which was miserable but what we were trained to expect for jungle warfare.

PB: Were there some engagements in New Guinea?

GROSSMAN: We had some engagements, mostly along river banks. We were on one side; the Japanese were on the other side. There were incursions back and forth across the river. It was a scary and miserable existence for a month or so that we were there.

PB: And then? ...

GROSSMAN: From there we were shipped to Morotai. By that time I might have been a captain. I came out as a captain, went in as a lieutenant. This was the 31st division; it was a Southern division.

PB: Oh, yes, you were telling me ... you were one of the few Jews in there ...

GROSSMAN: There were no Jews in my company. And I don't remember any others Jews [in the area]. There must have been, but I didn't know of them.

PB: ... And then you also told me that being a damn Yankee was in fact ...

GROSSMAN: That was more embarrassing ... more difficult to be with. ... They didn't know much about Jews anyway, so —

PB: But the Yankees they resented?

GROSSMAN: We were too liberal and we accepted the blacks too easily, and we

didn't understand their [problems] down there.

PB: So you were now in Morotai ...

GROSSMAN: We landed and as I told you ... [General MacArthur] said that if it hadn't been real warfare he would have made us do it over again because it was such a poor landing assault.

PB: There were no casualties?

GROSSMAN: Minimum resistance and there was no combat to speak of in Morotai. It was planned to be a jumping off place for the Philippines. We just established camp there and stayed a few months, learned to live with the natives.

PB: Now, there you did become friendly with some people?

GROSSMAN: Yes, the natives were very friendly. They took us fishing. They got us papayas and coconuts and all the things that were endemic to the natives.

PB: Now you did tell me something about the women, the condition of the women.

GROSSMAN: They had a very lowly position. My friend, whose name I can't remember ...

PB: One of the natives?

GROSSMAN: Yes, when he went out fishing, his wife would put him on her back. He'd go piggyback so he didn't get wet. She would bring him out to the boat.

PB: And then, so from Morotai ... you said there was very little action.

GROSSMAN: Yes, and we went to ... landed in Luzon ... which was in the southern part of the Philippines. That is where we had most of the action for the 31st Division. And it is where ... I ended up with, I think, less than twenty-five people in my company ... after ... as we were not getting any replacements.

PB: But you started with how many?

GROSSMAN: A full complement, and I don't remember exactly how many are in a company any more, but it might have been a couple of hundred.

PB: And so these people were just killed ...

GROSSMAN: They were killed; they were diseased. There were self-inflicted wounds. There were psychos. Conditions were ... horrible. Food was C-rations and K-rations. But it was a mental strain which some people just couldn't take ... I think quite a few people got out on what they call Section 8's and shipped out to their hospitals ... came down with all kinds of malaria, diseases. ... Some might have

been on purpose because if they stopped taking their Atabrine, they would come down with chills and fever. ... It's like quinine. That's what we took. There were a lot of rumors spread that we would become impotent if we kept taking it. Maybe some of the soldiers stopped taking it because of that reason. We tried to explain this was just Japanese propaganda.

PB: They tried to kill you off that way.

GROSSMAN: Yes.

PB: Tell me about ... some of the ... combat experiences ...

GROSSMAN: The two combat experiences other than the routine things that I remember were ... One was ... on the side of a road someplace in the Philippines ... when we came under attack and one of my officers was shot in the stomach. It didn't look like a major wound, but when we turned him over it was a very large hole ... the entry hole in the stomach. Anyway, he didn't come through, and it was very upsetting at that time because we didn't know where the fire was coming from And I do remember, as little as I can remember, that I was hoping that I would get hit or get wounded in some minor way so that I could get the hell out of this terrible mess.

PB: Is that ... when Paul Kenner [Providence native] came?

GROSSMAN: No that was when we were ... in bivouac someplace; not while we were in combat. Bivouac is when we'd probably be stationed along a defense line, and we'd stay there for a week or two. We'd build wires and set up machine guns. [Paul] came to visit because I guess he heard that the 31st Division was there.

PB: ... and he knew you were in it.

GROSSMAN: He was in the Air Corps and ... he was just ... aghast ... at the conditions ... that the infantry was living in. We made comparisons of how the Navy lived, too. They ate much better than we did, and their living conditions were better.

PB: Now, what was the other experience you had?

GROSSMAN: The other experience was near the end of the war, I think. We were on patrol in a river bed someplace in Luzon, and we came under fire. My point man was wounded. So we were held up by machine gunfire. We withdrew and went off to the side. Called for artillery fire to try to knock the machine gun nest out. We did finally get some artillery. But then, to make sure before we proceeded down the same creek, I asked for volunteers to go around the side.

PB: Another side?

GROSSMAN: Yes ... into the woods ... to flank it. And ... I didn't get any volunteers so I had to take it upon myself to lead. Four or five us went. I tossed a couple of grenades into the source of fire and we were able to proceed from then on. That night we had another incident ...

PB: Wait ... So what happened then? Because of that, you were given ... ?

GROSSMAN: Because of that, when we got back to [not that] bivouac, I don't know when it was, [I was] awarded the Silver Star, and those who went with me, I think, got Bronze Stars. Oh, that night ... yes ... we got out of the river bed and went to some high ground to camp overnight and ... [by our own artillery] and we lost a few more men.

PB: When you did ... as the leader of the four or five people who followed you when you received that Silver Star, you found ... you did find ... the Japanese, the enemy. ... You made contact ... as far as you know.

GROSSMAN: Yes, as far as we know, because when we proceeded we didn't come under fire. Either we had knocked them out or they had withdrawn to their flank so that the men behind us were able to continue. I swore at that time ... I would fight for peace at all times and that I would insist that our representatives go on K-rations and C-rations for a while ...

PB: Just to see what it was like.

GROSSMAN: By this time the war was winding up in the Pacific ... We didn't get out until the war was over.

PB: Then you came to San Francisco and came home.

GROSSMAN: Came home and came down with malaria. Probably had it all the time I was over there.

PB: But you stopped taking the pills when you got home.

GROSSMAN: Yes, and ... it surfaced, and the only ... you have to just let it burn itself out.

PB: But you did go to a Veterans' Hospital.

GROSSMAN: Yes, because the local doctors didn't recognize what the trouble was.

PB: When were you mustered out? ...

GROSSMAN: It was the end of the year [1945]. Scott Ricky was eighteen months old when I first saw him. So it was twenty-seven months ...

PB: Did you ever have to be in the ... sick leave or ... anything of that sort during the whole period?

GROSSMAN: Oh, yes. I broke my leg.

PB: When was this?

GROSSMAN: Before I went overseas. In the United States.

PB: How long did it take to get better, to mend?

GROSSMAN: A few months.

PB: And then they, they sent you off.

GROSSMAN: I only can remember one person. Oh, I can remember a ... few people ... but [one I] had contact with is now a bishop ... and he's in Michigan. His name is John Black ... And I know that he's involved with Rabbi ... Wayne Franklin. ... He's in this group that's trying to find out about anti-Semitism. ...

PB: And also ... You said there were no instances that you can remember of any kind of anti-Semitism.

GROSSMAN: No ... no, I can't. I remember more in college than I do in the war.

AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR - By direction of the President under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin 43, WD 1918), a Silver Star is awarded by the commanding General, 31st Infantry Division, to the following named officer ...

Captain STANLEY GROSSMAN, 01295366, Infantry, United States Army. For gallantry in action near Malaybalay, Mindanao, Philippine Islands, on 29 May 1945. Captain GROSSMAN commanded the rifle company which was leading a battalion advance over difficult terrain along a narrow trail at the bottom of a deep gorge when it encountered fire from an enemy 37 mm gun and two machine guns and suffered several casualties. After artillery and mortar barrages had been placed on the heavily fortified and well camouflaged enemy positions with seemingly little effect, Captain GROSSMAN, after placing volunteer riflemen to cover him and to divert the enemy fire voluntarily and with utter disregard for his own safety slowly crawled forward through the dense undergrowth toward the enemy positions. Expertly and courageously he advanced, knowing that at any moment his movements might be observed by enemy snipers, and when he was only ten yards from the 37 mm gun positions, raised up and accurately threw a grenade through the aperture of the emplacement killing the crew and putting the gun out of action.

Because of his great courage, outstanding devotion to duty, and aggressive leadership he inspired his men to push the attack, over-run and destroy the enemy positions, and gain the objective. This act reflects great credit upon Captain GROSSMAN and upholds the highest traditions of the Service.



BROWN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES

The University is preparing to issue the Decennial Edition of the Historical Catalogue. It will be esteemed a favor if you will promptly fill out and return this leaf to MISS VAUGHAN, KEEPER OF THE GRADUATE RECORDS, BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

Jan 15 '04

CLASS ~~Columbia College. 1871~~

FRATERNITY
Φ.Β.Σ

FULL NAME Oscar Solomon Straus

PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH New York 23/1850

PARENTS Lazarus + Sara Straus

PREPARATORY SCHOOL Columbia Grammar School N.Y. City

DEGREES (with source and date of each)
Columbia A.M. 1873; Columbia College Law School L.L.B. 1873; Brown University.

PROFESSIONAL OR OFFICIAL POSITIONS HELD (with dates)
U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary to Turkey 1887-9
" " " " 1897-1900
Ditt. D; Washington + Lee "
L.L.D.; Pennsylvania "
L.L.D.

Member of the Permanent-Court-of Arbitration at the Hague, appointed by President Roosevelt to fill the vacancy caused by the death of ex-President Harrison (1902).

PRESENT OCCUPATION AND BUSINESS ADDRESS

Merchant + Lawyer
42 Warren St. New York

MARRIAGE (to whom with date)
Sarah Waxenberg

CHILDREN

Two daughters and one son
Mildred, Alice, and Roger Williams Straus

PUBLICATIONS

The Origin of Republican Form of Government - with U.S., 1886
Roger Williams the Pioneer of Religious Liberty, 1894
The Reform of the Consular Service
The Protection of Naturalized Citizens Abroad, etc etc etc
Religious Liberty in the U.S., 1896.

NAMES (WITH RELATIONSHIP) OF ANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY WHO HAVE BEEN OR ARE CONNECTED WITH THE UNIVERSITY

KINDLY GIVE NAMES OF ANY OF THE EARLY STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY (WHETHER GRADUATES OR NOT) CONCERNING WHOM YOU CAN GIVE DATA

DATE OF SIGNATURE Jan 15/1904 Oscar S. Straus

PERMANENT ADDRESS TO WHICH UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS SHOULD BE SENT
42 Warren St. N.Y. City

Handwritten curriculum vitae submitted by Oscar Solomon Straus, January 15, 1904, from Brown University Archives.

OSCAR SOLOMON STRAUS AND BROWN UNIVERSITY

BY SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

That Oscar Straus received an honorary degree from Brown University has been previously noted in the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*.^{*} That he appears to have been the first Jew to receive an honorary degree from Brown and the first Jewish donor to the University since Colonial times have not been mentioned. That he had a continuing interest in the University is little recognized.

Straus, born in Bavaria in 1850, came to America at the age of four and settled in Georgia with his family. They moved to New York City in 1865, where they established an importing business and later became the owners of R.H. Macy and Company.

Educated in private schools, Straus received his undergraduate and law degrees from Columbia University. After practicing law in New York for several years, he eventually devoted his full time to the family businesses. His later life was devoted to public service and philanthropies, both Jewish and nonsectarian. He wrote a number of books on American political philosophy and history. Pursuant to this interest, he published a biography of Roger Williams, to whom he became devoted because of Williams's teachings on religious freedom and the separation of church and state. While completing this work in 1894, his third child and only son was born. He named him Roger Williams Straus, after his hero. The book was titled *Roger Williams, the Pioneer of Religious Liberty in the United States*.

Early in 1896, probably aware of the earlier provisions of Brown University establishing religion freedom for students, on January 19 he wrote as follows from New York to Brown President E. Benjamin Andrews, with whom, so far as we know, he had no previous association:

My Dear Mr. President:

It occurred to me that perhaps the best use that I could make of the Royalty that I am receiving on my life of Roger Williams would be to place it in your hands to be used as a prize for the best essay upon the development of religious liberty in the United States, to be competed for under such regulations as the president and trustees of the University may prescribe. What do you think of this suggestion? If you think well of it, I should be pleased to place \$200 on the receipt of your answer in your hands for this purpose. I have a deep sentiment in all that appertains to Roger Williams, and believe in this way the principles to which the life of this great pioneer of religious liberty was devoted, would be in a degree promoted; however, I bring this idea before you for your advice.

I observe that you are to lecture on Jan'y 30th before the Long Island

^{*}Shalom Goldman, "Christians, Jews, and the Hebrew Language in Rhode Island History," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 11, No. 3. pp. 351-352.

Historical Society on Roger Williams, and I promise myself the pleasure of hearing you, as I am a member of the Society. Trusting that you will pardon me for the trouble this inquiry may give you,

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Oscar S. Straus

President Andrews directed the letter to Professor John Franklin Jameson, professor of history on the faculty (1881–1901), with this notation: "Dr. Jameson: Do you think this could be used to promote historical interest in Brown?"

Apparently Andrews's reply to Straus was favorable, as Straus wrote to President Andrews on January 22, 1895:

My Dear Mr. President Andrews:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 21st and am gratified to know that my suggestion in respect to a prize essay on the development of religious liberty in the United States meets with your approval. My meaning, which perhaps I did not make sufficiently clear, was to place in your hands \$200., to be competed for under such regulations as you and the trustees of the University may make. In order that the matter may be entirely clear, let me say that this is not an annual amount, but a single amount, to be offered for the best paper upon the subject, competition to be open to all.

The object I had in view was to expend the proceeds of my book or the royalty as received from time to time in furtherance of the principles to which the life and work of the great founder of Rhode Island were so nobly devoted.

Enclosed, I beg to hand you my check for \$200.00. The praise you so generously bestow upon my life of Williams I appreciate most highly. If your reading of the book suggests any criticism, I trust that you will have no hesitation in giving me the benefit thereof, as I am conscious of defects which I am desirous of remedying at some future time in a revised edition.

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Oscar S. Straus

Andrews again directed this letter to Professor Jameson with this notation: "My dear Dr. Jameson, Will you alone or in conjunction with Munro [Wilfred Harold Munro, then associate professor of history at Brown, 1891-1899], take time and devise a plan for this which will best carry out the idea and at the same time best help your department."

Later that year at its annual Commencement, Brown University awarded Straus the honorary degree of Litt. D. in recognition of his sympathetic biography of Roger Williams. It was the first of several honorary degrees he would receive during his

lifetime. During the Commencement dinner Straus, in a fervent address, spoke of Roger Williams as his hero and stated that, if it had been in his power to choose a birthplace in America, it would have been in the Commonwealth founded by Roger Williams, the apostle of freedom.

Straus lived for another thirty years following these events, busy years filled with high accomplishments. There is evidence of his continued interest in Brown. In the Brown University Archives is a handwritten curriculum vitae submitted for the 1904 Historical Catalogue of the University to which is appended his impressive signature.

On May 3, 1926 Straus, in his 76th year, passed away suddenly of a heart attack. His death was widely mourned. President Calvin Coolidge sent the following telegram to Mrs. Straus:

News of the death of your husband was a great shock. As Minister and later as Ambassador of Turkey, as Secretary of Commerce and Labor, and as a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration of the Hague, he rendered unselfish service. His contribution and devotion to the public welfare and to humanity will remain as an example to others. Please accept my sincere sympathy.

The following appeared in *The Providence Journal* of May 12:

Under the terms of the will of the late Oscar S. Straus, distinguished Jewish citizen of New York ..., Brown University will receive ten thousand dollars. It is a gracious gift.

Mr. Straus came to have a great interest in Rhode Island and particularly Roger Williams, about whom he wrote an interesting book and after whom he named a son. Mr. Straus and the son attended a midwinter Brown dinner in this city years ago. In 1896 the college had awarded him the degree of Doctor of Letters.

Brown will cherish the Straus gift, which was announced yesterday, for much more than its pecuniary value. It has a genuine sentimental worth.

Thus is chronicled the devotion to Brown University of the eminent Oscar S. Straus, a non-alumnus of Brown, inspired by his devotion to Roger Williams and religious freedom.

☆

SOURCE

Most of the material for this essay was derived from the file on Oscar S. Straus in the Brown University Archives. I am much indebted to Martha Mitchell, Brown University Archivist, for her generous assistance in leading me to these sources.

THE FIRST JEWISH PROFESSOR AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

BY SEEBERT J. GOLDOWSKY, M.D.

The Colonial charter of Baptist-founded Brown University (1764), in the spirit of religious toleration engendered by Roger Williams, provided that "into this Liberal and Catholic institution shall never be admitted any Religious Tests, but on the Contrary, all the Members here of shall forever enjoy full, free, absolute, and uninterrupted Liberty of Conscience ... And that Youth of all Religious Denominations shall and may be freely admitted to the Equal Advantages, Emoluments, & Honors of the College ..." With regard to faculty, however, the provision was slightly modified: "... the Places of Professors, Tutors, and all other Officers, the President alone excepted, shall be free and open for *all denominations of Protestants*.* The President, must however "forever be of the denomination called Baptists." He was customarily a Baptist minister.

Possibly through oversight, the religious restriction for faculty was long not enforced. The first Jewish faculty member, in fact, was Rabbi David Blaustein, the respected spiritual leader of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. Blaustein, assumed his duties there in 1892. Blaustein was listed as Instructor in Semitic languages for the years 1897-1899, although he left Providence in 1898. Blaustein, who received his education in Germany and attended Harvard for three years, received an A.M. degree from Brown in 1898, although he had not previously earned an A.B. The departmental report to the President that same year stated: "By the appointment of Rabbi David Blaustein as Instructor in Semitics, it has been possible to extend the number of technical courses so as to anticipate increasing demands. For the first time in the history of Brown, classes have been conducted in Assyrian, Aramaic, and Syrian." That he taught Hebrew is likely. Whether he was the instructor in the other languages is not clear.

During the same year "A valuable gift of technical Semitic books, secured in Germany by Mr. Jacob Shartenberg of Pawtucket, has added very materially to the efficient equipment of the Semitic section." Shartenberg, a prosperous merchant of Pawtucket, was a prominent member of Blaustein's congregation, and Blaustein's intercession is surely suggested. In 1898 Blaustein left Providence to become superintendent of the Educational Alliance of New York, undoubtedly lured there by its president, Isador Straus, elder brother of Oscar Straus, the first Jew to receive an honorary degree from Brown.

In the ensuing years several other Jews appeared on the faculty roster. Nathan Stern, rabbi of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, was a lecturer in Biblical Literature during those same years, later becoming a rabbi, in New York. Percy Marks, popular novelist and author of *The Plastic Age*, was an instructor in

*Emphasis added.

English from 1921 to 1924. President William H. P. Faunce did not look favorably upon him, whether because he wrote "racy" novels or because he was a Jew. Bessie Bloom Wessel was a Lecturer in Social Research at Pembroke College from 1925 to 1928.

But the real breakthrough came with I.J. (Israel James) Kapstein. Born in Fall River, Massachusetts, in January 16, 1904, he lived for a time in Boston and came to Providence in 1916. He attended Candace Street Grammar School, where he met his lifelong friend, humorist S.J. Perelman, Brown Class of 1925 (he did not graduate). After graduation from Providence Classical High School, Kapstein attended Brown and graduated in 1926. While in college, he wrote for the literary supplement of the *Brown Daily Herald*, contributed to the book review page of the *Brown Jug*, the students' humorous magazine, was editor of *Casements*, the Brown Literary magazine, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

After graduation, with a literary career in mind, he moved to New York and worked for Alfred Knopf, the publisher, where he was assigned to the textbook department. He and Perelman roomed together in Greenwich Village and wrote short stories, which did not sell well. Perelman later went on to his own brilliant career.

English Professor George Wyllys Benedict invited Kapstein back to Brown in 1928 as an instructor in English. He received a Master's degree in 1929 and a Ph.D. in 1937, both at Brown. He was, in due course, promoted to assistant professor, associate professor in 1943, and full professor in 1951, the first Jew to receive tenure and to obtain that high rank.

That a Jew did not belong to a "denomination of Protestants" had not been noticed during the past half century, or, in fact, the religious requirement for faculty had been forgotten.* Until Kapstein was appointed associate professor in 1943, no Jew had risen that high. Perhaps his prospective promotion had stirred up some memories, for in 1942 the charter "after a general discussion of the matter" had been duly amended (only the third amendment to the Charter in 180 years) to read: "... no denominational qualification shall be required to make any person eligible to hold the office of Trustee, Fellow, President, Tutor, or other office in Brown University." Brown had, at long last, gone the whole distance.**

Kapstein continued to write, and his 1941 novel, *Something of a Hero*, made the best-seller list. He collaborated with Rabbi William G. Braude in a translation of the

*Editor's Note: The religious requirement was also forgotten for a Catholic, Charles Arthur Lynch. He was named an instructor in Greek and Latin classics in 1927, assistant professor in 1935, associate professor in 1944, and full professor in 1961.

**In 1926 the Charter had been amended to dilute the religious requirement for Trustees and to eliminate it entirely for the President.

Hebrew *Peshta de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbath and Festival Days*, which was awarded the 1976 National Jewish Book Award. He was a founding member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association in 1951. In 1960 he was sent by the State Department to Vietnam where he taught American literature at the University of Saigon. He was a popular member of the faculty and was elected "favorite professor" by the Pembroke students several times. He retired from the faculty in 1969 and passed away in Providence on August 5, 1983, at the age of 80.



SOURCES

- ¹ *The Charter of Brown University with Amendments and Notes*, pub. by the University, Providence, 1945, p. 36.
- ² *The Historical Catalogue of Brown University 1764-1934*, Providence: Brown University, 1936, p. 1558.
- ³ Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D., *A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: the Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David*, Providence: pub. by the Congregation, 1989, pp. 125-160.
- ⁴ Martha Mitchell, *Encyclopedia Brunoniana*, Providence: Brown University Library, 1993, pp. 323 & 463.
- ⁵ *Annual Report of the President of Brown University*, 1898, p. 69.
- ⁶ Necrology of Israel James Kapstein, *R.I. Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1983, pp. 115-116.

The author is indebted to Martha Mitchell, Archivist of Brown University, for her invaluable knowledge, intelligence, and patient assistance in preparing this paper.

THE RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION A STATUS REPORT

BY JUDITH WEISS COHEN

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association (RIJHA) is the oldest local Jewish and oldest local ethnic historical society in continuous operation. Though the organization was founded in 1951, the first annual meeting was not held until 1954. This fortieth year since these official meetings were initiated is a good point to take stock of the Association and present a status report to all its members.

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association was chartered by the state of Rhode Island for the following purposes: "To procure, collect, and preserve books, records, pamphlets, letters, manuscripts, prints, photographs, paintings, and any other historical material relating to the history of the Jews in Rhode Island; to encourage and promote the study of such history by lectures and otherwise; and to publish and diffuse information as to such history." The chief functions of RIJHA are to engage in research, to publish, to provide a repository for its collections, and to educate and to promote a climate which encourages its work.

MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Association, which had 44 members in its first year, in 1994 has 700 members, a 20 percent growth in the past three years. Annual dues are \$20 for institutions, \$25 for an individual; \$30, family membership; \$40, sustaining; \$60, patron; \$100, guarantor; and \$500, corporate membership. Life membership is \$350. Donations provide the only other funding source thus far for the Association. RIJHA is governed by officers and an executive committee who are elected at the annual meeting. The executive committee meets three times a year.

STAFF

The staff consists of three persons. The office manager works part-time. The librarian-archivist and editor of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* are consultants who receive small stipends. The editor is responsible for seeking out writers and evaluating articles submitted, copy editing, proofreading, and arranging for printing for the *Notes*, as well as other copy editing and proofreading for the Association and, recently, for grant writing. The librarian-archivist maintains the records and archives; visits and talks to possible donors to seek acquisitions; answers requests for information by phone and mail; helps visitors to the office access data; supervises volunteers in processing, sorting, and listing donations to the collection; and writes articles and gives speeches on Rhode Island Jewish history and on RIJHA. Volunteers fill some of the gaps in providing service.

LOCATION AND SPACE

The Association is housed in a brick building at 130 Sessions Street, Providence, shared with the Bureau of Jewish Education, the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. The Federation provides RIJHA free rent and house-keeping services.

The space consists of two small rooms. One room, 350 square feet, is used for administration, office equipment, reference library, archival file cabinets, processing of acquisitions, and modest research space. Most of the collection is shelved in the other room, 200 square feet. Both rooms are air-conditioned, and RIJHA is presently monitoring temperature and relative humidity in the archival area with a view to making improvements if necessary. RIJHA also maintains 250 cubic feet of space in a storage locker for artifacts such as plaques and military uniforms which are not as subject to deterioration as papers and photographs.

DESCRIPTION OF ARCHIVES

RIJHA's archival holdings are made up of approximately 1000 cubic feet of photographs, documents, memorabilia, and newspaper clippings gathered from a variety of businesses, synagogues, and organizations, many of them now defunct, and from individuals. While most of the material dates from 1870 to the present, several items date from the 1700s. Most of RIJHA's archival holdings document the Jewish experience in Rhode Island, but a small portion of the collection reflects life in the immigrants' native lands.

Notable holdings include the following:

- King David Masonic Lodge, Newport, ledger sheet of expenditures to needy persons, 1700.
- Hand-written letter from David Ben Gurion, first prime minister of Israel, to Ida Silverman of Providence, leader in the Zionist movement.
- Fifty pages of photocopies of an 18th century collection from Touro Synagogue in Newport, dedicated in 1763, the oldest synagogue building in the United States, a National Historic Shrine, and still the home of an active Orthodox congregation.
- Social welfare records of early Jewish benevolent societies and records of ongoing institutions.
- Personal papers consisting of passports, naturalization records, and marriage and birth certificates documenting early Rhode Island Jewish settlers.

- Papers, scrapbooks, minutes, and newspaper clippings documenting the history of Rhode Island Jewish religious organizations, some of which have merged with other institutions or have been closed.
- Large collection of information on and photographs of early Jewish businesses in Rhode Island.

Files are maintained of local Jewish newspapers. In addition to print material, the collection also contains audio and videotapes of oral history interviews, slides, and an assortment of artifacts such as altar cloths, candlesticks, prayer books, military souvenirs, plaques, and statuettes.

Among the comments RIJHA has received praising the collection are: "It is a small collection, but shows consistent growth as the Association pursues an active collection policy"¹ and, "Your collection is one of the most significant in the State."²

Typical users of the collection:

- *Individuals*: For a genealogist from Los Angeles, RIJHA sent a copy of a business directory listing his great-grandfather and a "charming engraving ad." Provided information on the first Jew in Providence (1838) for a family tree. Found in records of the now-defunct Jewish Orphanage the date an orphan lived there to help him with Social Security application.
- *Scholars*: A historian from Clark University writing a book on Jewish loan societies relied on several collections of loan records at RIJHA. After an exhaustive search at archives throughout the country, she found at RIJHA the only records of a Hebrew free loan society founded by women to lend money only to women. An anthropologist used RIJHA to enrich her understanding of the Rhode Island Jewish community of the past for a book on life in a nursing home.
- *Authors*: Joan Nathan, author of *Jewish Cooking in America*, used RIJHA's collection of cookbooks compiled by Jewish organizations. Among other books in which the authors acknowledged the assistance of the Association are *Aaron Beck*, by Marjorie Weishaar, and *S. J. Perelman — A Life*, by Dorothy Herrmann.
- *Institutions*: Provided information on Portuguese Sephardic Jews in Rhode Island to the Jewish Museum in New York.

RIJHA also maintains a modest research library consisting of reference books, old city and business directories, and relevant publications and journals such as *American Jewish History*. The collection is heavily used. In 1993 telephone requests for information, two-thirds of them from out of state, numbered 119. Thirty-five

persons visited the collection to do research or to ask for information, and twenty-three mail requests were received.

The condition of the materials is generally good, and steps have been taken to improve the building and storage environments. RIJHA recently requested two evaluations of its collection. The first was a General Preservation Survey, Northeast Document Conservation Center, in 1992, which concluded that

In general, the staff of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association are using storage and handling practices that will contribute to the preservation of their collections.³

A number of steps have been taken since this survey to remedy deficiencies noted for high-priority action. A program has begun to monitor the climate in the archives room, materials which were not in archival quality storage boxes at that time have been stored properly, and photocopies of deteriorating materials have been made on permanent durable paper. The report serves as a blueprint for further action as staff limitations allow.

Another survey requested by RIJHA was conducted in April 1993 by Denise J. Bastien, Graphics Curator of the Rhode Island Historical Society, to assess the condition of the photographic materials on display. She found the materials to be at minor risk, and the Association is acting on her recommendations.⁴

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

In addition to work associated with collection and archives, the organization's activities include the following:

Publications: RIJHA's chief publication, the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, is a scholarly historical journal issued annually since 1954. In some years an additional issue is published. Subject matter ranges from Jews in 17th and 18th century Newport, Rhode Island, to the development of Jewish institutions in the wider Rhode Island area up until about 50 years ago and descriptions of early Jewish neighborhoods, businesses, customs, synagogues, families, and individuals. Every fourth year the *Notes* contains a four-year index, and a cumulative index was published for the years 1954-1978. "The circulation list for this volume is impressive, including international addresses and scholars."⁵

RIJHA also publishes, three times a year, a newsletter which includes news about the organization's activities and reports from the president, editor of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, the librarian-archivist, and membership chairman. Acquisitions and usage of the archives are described, and families and organizations are encouraged to donate papers.

Lectures: RIJHA holds two meetings a year, one the organization's formal annual meeting, which are open to the public and feature lectures by noted speakers and scholars. Between 100 to 200 persons attend each meeting. Exhibits of materials from RIJHA's archives relating to the subjects of the lectures are displayed at the meetings.

Trips: A program of trips to historic Jewish sites began in 1994 with an all-day bus trip to New York City to visit the Jewish Museum, the Tenement Museum, and the old Jewish neighborhood of the Lower East Side.

Research scholarships: From time to time RIJHA provides research scholarships to students in history at local universities. This research has resulted in exhaustive bibliographies of materials in Rhode Island depositories relating to Rhode Island Jewish history, comprehensive demographic data, and histories of neighborhoods, organizations, and institutions.

Exhibits: As part of its mission to diffuse information on Rhode Island history RIJHA provides archival material for exhibits by other organizations. Recent such exhibits were:

- "Vanishing Rhode Island," Slater Mill Historic Site, Pawtucket, R. I. Photograph and research assistance
- "Life Cycles," Rhode Island Historical Society. Lent 1903 wedding invitation.
- "A Matter of Simple Justice: 100 Years of Women's Higher Education in Rhode Island, 1892-1992," Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research, Brown University. Photograph and research assistance for exhibition catalog.
- "Father Flanagan and Henry Monsky, Men of Vision: the Special Friendship between Boys Town's founder and a great American Jewish leader," co-sponsored by RIJHA and the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island.
- Temple Emanu-El, Providence, exhibit for 70th anniversary. Lent slides and photographs.

RIJHA also has developed and shown a traveling exhibit of photographs, slides, and accompanying narrative on old Jewish businesses.

Speeches: RIJHA officers and the librarian-archivist frequently give speeches at meetings of state and local historical associations, and synagogues and other Jewish organizations.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

RIJHA maintains close relationships with a number of organizations. It holds memberships in the Rhode Island Historical Society, New England Archivists, the American Jewish Historical Society, the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies, the American Jewish Librarians Association, and the Jewish Publication Society, and the librarian-archivist belongs to the Rhode Island Chapter of the Association of Jewish Librarians. RIJHA is also active in a local group of ethnic and historical organizations which is studying, under the leadership of Albert Klyberg, director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, the possibility of establishing a state-wide heritage center to combine offices, archival and preservation space, and museum and exhibit areas for the public.

The Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and other agencies in the building which houses RIJHA are close partners. A letter from Steven A. Rakitt, executive director of the Federation states:

The Jewish Federation of Rhode Island serves as the central fund-raising, community planning and community relations arm of the organized Rhode Island Jewish community. Crucial to the success of future volunteer and professional leadership is an understanding of our community's past, captured and explored so well by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association stores the historical records of the Jewish Federation and makes them accessible to historians, researchers and the general community. We are turning to the Association for assistance and programming as we prepare for our upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration, commencing January 1995.⁶

The Jewish Community Center provides free space for all meetings; the Bureau of Jewish Education library supplements RIJHA's reference collection and its librarian serves on the RIJHA Executive Committee and provides valuable assistance with research and exhibits; and RIJHA refers some offerings of material better suited to the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum to that agency.

RIJHA has close ties with local universities and colleges. Relationships with Brown University's Departments of Sociology and History, the Program in Judaic Studies, and the libraries are especially warm. Two members of the Brown University faculty presently serve on the Executive Committee and offer frequent advice and assistance. A number of faculty members have given lectures at RIJHA meetings and have written articles for the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. Brown University students often serve as unpaid interns for the *Notes*, for research, writing articles, and copy editing. The University Archivist has written an article for the *Notes* and provides generous assistance to researchers. The president of the University of Rhode Island has written a *Notes* article, and a faculty member will

speak at a 1995 meeting. Other local college volunteers are a Providence College faculty member who assists with proofreading for the *Notes* and a faculty member of the Community College of Rhode Island who serves on the Association's Publications Committee and also provides proofreading assistance.

FUTURE PLANS

For some time officers and staff have been aware that there were significant barriers to access of the Association's collection by nature of how it is organized and by the fact that the librarian-archivist must spend much time in helping visitors find material in the archives. Researchers have often spoken on the need for better access to the collection.

It was very clear to me, however, that there was a wealth of other material just waiting to be used, but that it needed better cataloguing.⁷

With some improvements in cataloging and computer retrieval this collection would become even more valuable to local and national scholars.⁸

RIJHA's president, Aaron Cohen, in his installment address, May 15, 1994, told the members that

I would like to begin the computerization of our archives and library. We have computerized our membership records and financial information and also have added word processing. We should soon take the next step of computerization of the records of our collection to make it easier for researchers to find materials. We were recently asked by the Library of Congress to have the Association included in its database of historical records. Having our records listed in detailed order on a computer record would enable us to be included.

The 1992 evaluation of the Association's collection by the Northeast Document Conservation Center stated that the

... primary concern for this collection is the lack of formalized collections management policy. The materials themselves are in adequate condition and the staff has shown good initiative in educating itself about preservation issues. The best physical care, however, will be wasted if proper intellectual control is lacking.

Current control systems ... are functional for a repository of this small size, but will become cumbersome and unwieldy as the collection continues to grow and the staff experiences turnover and growth. Equally important, if the collection is not well documented in writing, information will be lost with staff change.

It is essential for the Association to educate itself about conventional professional archival practices, and to begin to use them in the descriptions

of their collections. Systems that have been used to catalog materials in the past must be documented (written down) so that information about the contents and location of collections is not lost when staff changes take place.⁹

The evaluation also spoke of the need to export data through automation: RIJHA needs to be part of a national system so that researchers around the country know what we have.

RIJHA has been acting on the evaluations the organization requested, as time and money have permitted, but a new catalog system and automation of the records cannot be accomplished without outside funds. For these reasons the Association in October of 1994 submitted a grant application to a federal agency for funds to have the collection professionally catalogued and automated.

Forty years after its first annual meeting, and forty-three years after its founding, the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association received many letters in support of its grant application. In one of these letters Michael Feldberg, executive director of the American Jewish Historical Society, wrote:

... the records of Jewish life in New England are particularly important for what they tell us about the complexity of the American Jewish experience. The Sephardic Jewish community of Newport became an important element of New England commerce in the eighteenth century. These early Jews played a role in shaping American society well before the later waves of Central and Eastern European Jewish immigration with which we are more familiar. The Rhode Island Jewish community played a leading role in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in developing models of community based philanthropy, such as the federation of Jewish charities to support social service agencies, a forerunner of the United Way.

... [your] archives reflect these and many other important contributions Jews have made to the state's diverse cultural heritage, as well as to the richness and variety of Jewish experiences in the United States.¹⁰

*

NOTES

¹ Mary Beth Nelligan, Northeast Document Conservation Center, General Preservation Survey report, March 16, 1992.

² Albert T. Klyberg, executive director, Rhode Island Historical Society, letter to Aaron Cohen, August 14, 1994.

³ Nelligan, *ibid.*

⁴ Letter from Denise J. Bastien to Aaron Cohen, April 30, 1994.

⁵ Nelligan, *ibid.*

⁶ Letter from Steven A. Rakitt, executive director, Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, to Aaron Cohen, August 19, 1994.

⁷ Letter from Jane Lancaster, Brown University, to Aaron Cohen, August 18, 1994.

⁸ Letter from E. Pierre Morenon, Rhode Island College to Aaron Cohen, August 26, 1994.

⁹ Nelligan, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Letter from Michael Feldberg to Aaron Cohen, August 30, 1994.

BOOK REVIEW

Encyclopedia Brunoniana, Martha Mitchell, Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Library, 1993.

BY KNIGHT EDWARDS

This garden of delights will be — nay, is — a special treat for the entire Brown community. Alumni/ae will particularly take pleasure in it, but friends in the community, as well as students, their parents, alumni parents, faculty, administrators, and educators generally will find in it a cornucopia of useful information about dear old Brown.

Martha Mitchell, University Archivist, labored for five years to compile a volume which will be an essential part of every Brunonian's personal library.

Of course, you could possibly borrow a copy from your local library (librarians, please note) but you will run a substantial risk of mounting overdue fines. This is not a book for a one-time "read"; you will want a copy of your own for ready reference and for browsing.

My browsing started by my random choice of people I knew, or had read about or heard about. I know quite a few; I graduated from Brown during World War II; my father was Class of 1919; my wife and I are Class of 1945; my older son is Class of 1976; my son-in-law graduated in 1966; and my grandfather, for whom I was named, Albert Knight Potter, 1886, was on the faculty from 1898 to his retirement in 1935. Using the index sometimes, and sometimes going from topic to topic and name to name, I found more details — significant, trivial, amusing, affecting, pleasing — than I had hitherto known, or hoped to know, about Alma Mater.

Biographies of faculty? Yes, in abundance, from the 18th century (David Howell) to the 1990s. *Presidents?* Yes, from Manning to Gregorian, sixteen sprightly essays which would make a book in themselves. *Administrators?* yes, from, e.g., Reuben Guild (librarian 1848-1893) to, e.g., Robert Reichley (1968 to date, with his various titles).

Jewish names? Yes, by the score, among them Elmer Blistein and Blistein House, named in his honor; Percy Marks, S. J. Perelman, Aaron Beck, Samuel D. and Murray A. Cohen, I. J. Kapstein. You will certainly find many more.

Campus publications? Yes, many now long defunct, with accounts of their rise and fall and names of their contributors. One, prophetically entitled "Folio No. 1," mimeographed only a single issue in December, 1931. Its contributors included J. Saunders Redding, '28.

Knight Edwards received his LL.B. from Harvard in 1948, and practiced law in Providence until his retirement in 1988. He has been a member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association since 1975.

Athletics? Yes, in exhaustive detail. Five pages on football, one half on cricket (in the 1950s), three and a half on baseball, four on rowing (crew) — I shall not try to catalogue the rest. Women's varsity sports are included in separate accounts under each sport.

Admission? Yes, indeed. Included are a concise history of Brown's past, beginning with its founding (under "Founding"), then, under "Admission," an account that lists all the gory details.

In the very beginning, applicants were examined by the President and were required to be proficient in Greek (the Greek Testament) and Latin (Cicero and Virgil). By 1783, added as requirements were "the rules of Prosody in Vulgar Arithmetic." Applicants then also had to provide "... suitable Testimony of a blameless life and conversation."

Not until 1850 were the admission requirements substantially modified. Under Wayland's "New System" [sound familiar?], candidates for A.B. and M.A. degrees continued to be examined as before, but B. Phil. students were free of the Latin, Greek, and "Ancient Geography" requirements. They were examined "... only so far as to ascertain their ability to pursue the studies of the class or classes which they propose to enter." And they could obtain the Ph.B. in three years.

Following criticism by President Robinson in 1875, the Ph.B. rules were changed in 1876 to mandate four years, and some Latin. Further changes followed in 1911. Ph.B.'s were last awarded in 1938.

In alphabetical order, between "Jewett, Charles Coffin" and "(The) John Carter Brown Library," is an article entitled simple "*Jews*," reporting that the original Charter specified "Youths of all Religious Denominations shall and may be freely admitted ..." In 1770, to remove all doubt, the Corporation voted "That the Children of Jews may be admitted into this Institution and intirely [sic] enjoy the freedom of their own Religion, without any Constraint or Imposition whatever." But despite this apparent open gate, no Jew was admitted until Israel Strauss, 1894, enrolled. [After the turn of the century, Jewish enrollment increased. These men were commuters ("carpet baggers") and were "... not readily received into the social life of the college." They were barred from the existing fraternities. It was decades later — 1929 to be precise — that the University recognized a Jewish fraternity, a chapter of the national Pi Lambda Phi. The article dispassionately states earlier attempts by Jewish students and alumni (and, later, Arthur Garfield Hayes) to persuade Dean Randall and others. One would like to see a transcript of the Spring, 1929, conference, attended by University representatives and counsel, including Hayes, the civil libertarian. It was within weeks of that conference that the Brown Corporation voted "... not ... to forbid the formation of a group, having

neither racial nor sectarian restrictions, solely on the ground that the membership of such a group is of one race or faith.”]

Martha Mitchell’s research also covers fraternities, the Tower Club, the coming to Brown in 1947 of the Hillel Foundation, and the appointment in 1971 of the first university-sponsored Jewish chaplain.*

I close with a selection of presidential *quotable quotes* from *Encyclopedia Brunoniana*. First, from President Wriston:

“A committee is not a good instrument for final judgment.”

From President Keeney:

“One of the joys of the life of an educator, particularly a president, is the amount of free advice he gets.”

And from President Swearer:

“... I think a university president can have his or her greatest impact by bringing people together and convincing them to do what they would like to do anyway.”

*The entire *Jews* chapter was printed in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 11, No. 3, November 1993, pp. 292-295.

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RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

FORTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 15, 1994

The Fortieth Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, Sunday, May 15, 1994, at the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by the co-chairperson for the day, Charlotte I. Penn. She called on Stanley Abrams, retiring president, for greetings and the annual report. Mr. Abrams summarized events of the past year and thanked the staff and all who had cooperated so well with him during his three-year tenure. The complete report is attached.

Dr. Alfred Jaffe, treasurer, reported that the Association's financial health remains good. He said that dues are the principal source of revenue and that the greatest expenditure, publication of the *Notes*, is over and for the rest of the year the Association has only the basic usual expenses. The full financial report is on file in the Association office.

Eleanor F. Horvitz, Librarian-Archivist, reported on acquisitions and the many requests for material in the Association's archives. Among them was for a photograph for the Slater Mill exhibit "Vanishing Rhode Island" and the research for an article about Mary Grant in *The Providence Journal*. A copy of Mrs. Horvitz's report is on file in the office.

Judith Weiss Cohen, Editor of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, told of some of the articles that will appear in the next issue and some that were being researched. She is still looking for new writers for future issues. A copy of her report is on file in the Association office.

Charlotte Penn, chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for the year 1994-1995, as follows: President, Aaron Cohen; First Vice President, Herbert Brown; Second Vice President, Charlotte I. Penn; Secretary, Sylvia Factor; Assistant Secretary, Lillian Schwartz; Treasurer, Dr. Alfred Jaffe, Assistant Treasurer, Herbert Rosen; Bernard Kusnitz, Honorary Board Member. The other members of the Executive Committee are listed in the slate filed with this report and on the second page of this issue of the *Notes*. There being no counter-nominations, one ballot was cast for the entire slate, and the new officers were elected. Melvin Zurier was then called on to install the new officers formally.

Aaron Cohen, the new president, took over the gavel for the meeting and named two presidential appointments to the Executive Committee: Eugene Weinberg and Dr. Abraham Schwartz. He addressed the audience, telling of his hopes and plans for the Association during his term. He paid tribute to Stanley Abrams for the excellent job he had done for three years and presented him with a gift. The full text

of his remarks is on file.

Mr. Cohen then turned the meeting over to Geraldine Foster, who introduced the guest speaker, first giving tribute to the late David Adelman, for whom the annual lecture is named.

The speaker for the Twenty-fourth Annual David Charak Adelman Lecture was Dr. Lynn Davidman, whose subject was "Bringing the Women In, A Wider View of Jewish Life Past and Present." Dr. Davidman has degrees from Barnard College, the University of Chicago Divinity School, and Brandeis University and is an assistant professor of Judaic Studies at Brown University and a visiting scholar on women and religion at the Center for the Study of American Religion at Princeton University. She has received many grants and awards, including a National Jewish Book Award for her book *Tradition in a Restless World*. Her lecture was most interesting and very well received.

A short question and answer period followed. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m., and an excellent collation was enjoyed. The exhibit for the meeting featured photographs and memorabilia highlighting the major role of women in the funding and growth of Jewish institutions in Rhode Island. The exhibit was assembled by Toby Rossner, Eleanor Horvitz, and Maurice Cohen.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Factor, Secretary

COKIN, SARAH, born in Providence, a daughter of the late Oscar and Rachel Diamond. She was a buyer for the former Kay's-Newport Store, Providence, and retired in 1948..

Active in several organizations, she was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Sisterhood, the Women's Associations of The Miriam Hospital and the Jewish Home for the Aged, the National Council of Jewish Women, and Pawtucket Hadassah.

Died in Providence on March 19, 1994, at the age of 78.

DRESSLER, SIDNEY, born in Providence, a son of the late Joseph and Sarah (Wiseman) Dressler. He had been president of Colfax for the past 20 years.

Mr. Dressler attended the University of Rhode Island. He was a past chairman of Israel Bonds in the State of Rhode Island. He received the Man of the Year Award from the Boston Bakers Club. Affiliated with many diverse organizations, he was a member of the board of directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island and was named a member of the Miriam People Founders Club of The Miriam Hospital.

Mr. Dressler was a member of Temple Beth-El and Temple Sinai, Ledgemont Country Club, and Redwood Lodge 35, AF&AM. He was an Army veteran of World War II.

Died in Boynton Beach, Florida, on January 11, 1994, at the age of 69.

GERBOFF, MAURICE L., born in Providence, a son of the late Meyer and Bessie (Grabofsky) Gereboff. Mr. Gereboff owned the Leonard Service Station, Smith Street, for 43 years before retiring in 1976.

Mr. Gereboff was a member of Temple Emanu-El and Kulanu. He was also a member of the Providence Hebrew Day School, and Redwood Lodge 35, AF&AM. He held membership in the Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association and Temple Am David.

Died in Providence on May 31, 1994.

GERSTEIN, SAMUEL M., born in Providence, a son of the late Isaac and Anne (Kadsevit) Gerstein. He was president and owner of the former Red Fox Ginger Ale Company in Providence before retiring in 1984.

A graduate of Bentley College, he was a past president of the Rhode Island Chapter, Bentley Alumni Association, and an incorporator of the college. He was past president of the Rhode Island Bottlers Association.

Mr. Gerstein served as a member of the board of directors of the Touro Fraternal Association, the Metacomet Country Club, and Temple Emanu-EL.

He held memberships in several organizations, including the Roosevelt Lodge 42, AF&AM, and the Palestine Shrine, B'nai B'rith, the Providence Hebrew Day School, and the Jewish Home for the Aged. Active in the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, Mr. Gerstein had been in charge of its D-Day campaign.

Died in Pawtucket on October 24, 1994, at the age of 80.

MEDOFF, SAMUEL J., born in Woonsocket, the son of the late Abraham and Rose (Guzner) Medoff. Mr. Medoff was vice chairman and treasurer of the former I. Medoff company, which manufactured fashion fabrics for the retail trade. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, he received a law degree from Northeastern Law School.

He served several terms as president of congregation B'nai Israel and was one of four honorary presidents of the congregation.

Vice chairman of the endowment fund for the Jewish Home for the Aged, he was a member of its board. He was also a member of the overseers board and a trustee of The Miriam Hospital, where he served as finance chairman. He was a past president of the Woonsocket Lodge No. 989, B'nai B'rith.

Mr. Medoff was also involved in Woonsocket's civic activities. In 1958 he was named to the nine-member Woonsocket Charter Study Commission to review proposed changes in the city's Home Rule Charter. He was vice president of the Woonsocket Citizens Housing Corporation, and in 1983 he was made an honorary member of Union St. Jean Baptiste, the first non-Christian to be so honored. He was a Life Member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Died in Providence on March 9, 1994, at the age of 90.

SCHWARTZ, SAMUEL, born in Paterson, New Jersey, a son of the late David and Nettie Schwartz. He was president of Cadillac Textiles, Inc., in Cumberland, Rhode Island, until it closed in 1986.

Mr. Schwartz was past president of the Daughters of Miriam Center for the Aged in Clifton, New Jersey, where the Esther and Sam Schwartz Building was named for him and his wife. He was a former board member of Barnert Memorial Temple, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey; Barnert Memorial Hospital,

Paterson; the YM-YWHA of North Jersey in Wayne, and Planned Parenthood of Passaic County, New Jersey.

Died in Clifton, October 4, 1994, at the age of 86.

SILVERMAN, IRWIN N., born in Providence, a son of the late Archibald and Ida (Camelhor) Silverman. He was president of Westminster Motors, Providence, from 1946 until 1955. He later held a position with the State of Rhode Island, Office of Statewide Planning, from which he retired.

He was a volunteer at The Miriam Hospital and was associated with Hamilton House.

Died in Hartford, Connecticut, on February 5, 1994, at the age of 91.

SMITH, MORTON, born in Providence, a son of the late Joseph and Sarah Smith. He was a 1937 graduate of Brown University. Mr. Smith was president and chief executive officer of Morton Smith, Inc., and Medway Marine Corp., from 1950 to 1990.

Mr. Smith was considered a behind-the-scenes force in Rhode Island politics. An accomplished pianist, he was active in a wide range of cultural and civic organizations. He was a life trustee of The Miriam Hospital and an honorary trustee of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra.

He was also a trustee of Bryant College, the Rhode Island Arts Foundation in Newport, and the International Tennis Hall of Fame. He was a former trustee of Butler Hospital and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. A former president of the Providence Preservation Society, he was a member of the Clambake Club, the Hope Club, and Bailey's Beach. He was a member of Temple Beth-El.

Died in Providence on June 2, 1994, at the age of 78.

WERNER, BELLA G., born in Newport, a daughter of the late Samuel and Annie (Brenner) Gold. She was a graduate of Emerson College in Boston.

Mrs. Werner served as vice president of the Newport chapter of Hadassah and was past president of the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue. She was a treasurer of the Newport Chevra Kadisha and financial secretary of the Touro Ladies Auxiliary. She served on several boards of directors, including the Sisterhood of Temple Shalom, the Women's Division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, and the Jewish Planning Council. She was a member of the Newport Historical Society and B'nai B'rith. She was also a long-time member of Congregation Jeshuat Israel of Touro Synagogue, where she had taught Sunday School.

Died in Newport on April 4, 1994, at the age of 71.

ERRATA AND ADDENDA

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 2

"Necrology"

Page 257, lines 21 & 23, (Basil Temkin) should read "A member of the Board of Trustees of The Jewish Home, she was serving as president of the Women's Association at the time of her death."

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 3

"Cantors, Choirs, and Choral Societies"

Page 335, sixth paragraph, line 3, should read "Cantor Meyer Smith."

Page 337, picture caption, should read "1946."

Page 339, picture caption, line 1 — woman seated at left is Natalie Percelay.

"The First 100 Years of the National Council of Jewish Women"

Page 363, picture caption, lines 2 & 3, (third woman) should read "Rose (Mrs. Isaac) Gerber."

FUNDS AND BEQUESTS OF THE RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

FUNDS

SEEBERT J. AND GERTRUDE N. GOLDSKY

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JEANNETTE S. NATHANS

B. RUBY WINNERMAN

RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL NOTES

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Procession at dedication of Temple Beth-El at 70 Orchard Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, April 18, 1954. Shown carrying the Torahs into the new building are, l. to r., Samuel Goldin, David C. Adelman, Joseph Finkelstein, Beryl Segal, and Rabbi William G. Braude. Adelman was the founder of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. He and Segal and Braude were charter members of the Association and writers for the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*. See "Percival Goodman's Temple Beth-El," pp. 470-492.