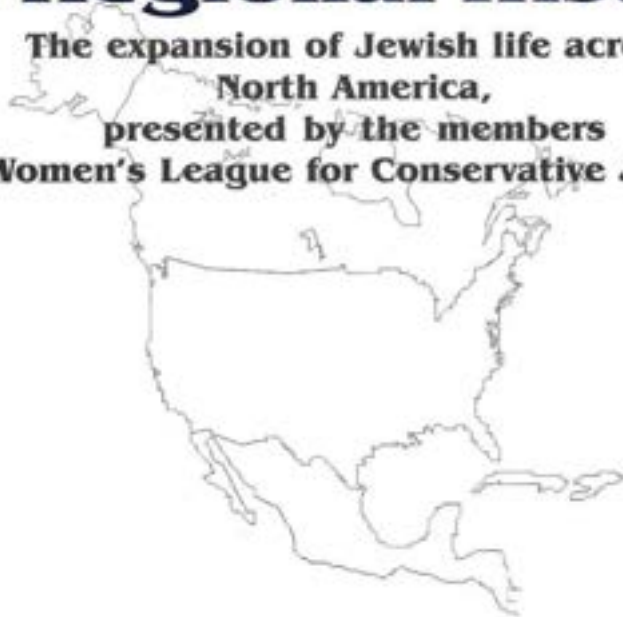


Beauty, Brains & Brawn **The New World Balabuste**

Women's League Celebrates 350 Years of Jewish Life in North America

The Regional Histories

The expansion of Jewish life across
North America,
presented by the members
of Women's League for Conservative Judaism



WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM
475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115
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ALL OF US TOGETHER
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Women's League for Conservative Judaism
Biennial Convention 2004 • Orlando, FL

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WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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Dear Women's League Members,

This 2004 Convention has offered us an enormous number of possibilities for study and enrichment. Among the most memorable is our celebration, in many forms, of the 350-year anniversary of Jews in North America. We have been able to present an unusual and visually compelling exhibit, *Beauty, Brains & Brawn: The New World Balabuste* that highlights the lives of 31 Jewish women, many of whose accomplishments might have disappeared into oblivion. We were able to collect and display an interesting array of cookbooks, some standard, some eccentric, but each offering a window into the private lives and kitchens of Jewish women. Finally, we collected from our Branches and many of our Sisterhoods, a wide range of histories of Jews and Sisterhoods in their regions.

This booklet is the culmination of the latter initiative, and a remarkable collection it is indeed. Little did we know that when we requested regional histories of our Branches, that many individuals would embrace this activity with a purposefulness and commitment that can only be described as astonishing. Our Branches found individuals who were able to navigate a labyrinth of lengthy (and often, tedious) history books, internet sites, and even oral histories to produce interesting histories of how, when and why Jews came to their regions, what institutions they produced, and what influential personalities emerged from their communities.

Many of our team of amateur historians dealt with Branches that comprised many states, local and ethnic disparities, and even regional conflicts between Jewish communities. But, because of determination and a pride in their work, we now have a complete set of immensely readable histories, filled with interesting facts and insights. As you read through these histories, you will find a striking array of stories and characters. For example:

- **Bertha Gold (Canadian Seaway):** At the Rabbinical Assembly convocation in Toronto in 1966, Lester Pearson, the Prime Minister of Canada, was awarded an honorary degree by JTSA Chancellor, Louis Finkelstein.
- **Marcie Schechter (Eastern Long Island):** Jews migrated to Long Island from the crowded tenements of New York City. They positioned themselves in communities along the Long Island Railroad lines, establishing post-war housing developments such as Levittown, that became a model for the future suburban housing boom throughout the U.S. She includes early Women's League history when the Long Island Branch, growing geometrically, split into three Branches in the 1950s.

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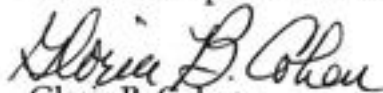
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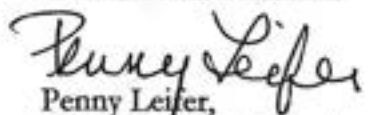
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- Phyllis Haas (Pennsylvania): Dr. Isaac Hays, an ophthalmologist and graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, made several significant contributions to the treatment of astigmatism and cataracts.
- Dr. Harrian Stern (Southwest) offers a rich and colorful presentation of the history and society of Jews in Mexico, a dynamic, yet under-reported community of Jews in North America.

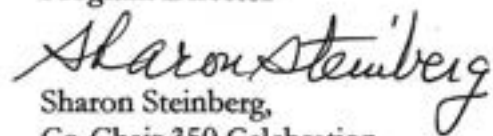
The entries are worth reading and discussing with your Sisterhoods. One of the goals of this celebration was to learn more about each other, all of us members of North American community that has benefited, so magnificently, from our new life in the New World, free of oppression, poverty, and civil disenfranchisement. These histories give us a view beyond our own back yards, into the world of gold miners, itinerant peddlars, and territorial politicians. From Montreal to San Diego, from Detroit to Mexico City, ours is a history worthy of writing, studying, celebrating, and teaching to our children and grandchildren.

Yisbar kobachem to all of our contributors, and happy reading to those fortunate recipients of the fruits of their labors.


Gloria B. Cohen,
International President


Penny Leifer,
Co-Chair 350 Celebration


Lisa Kogen,
Program Director


Sharon Steinberg,
Co-Chair 350 Celebration

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Canadian Seaway Branch
by Bertha Gold

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a massive exodus of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, fleeing persecution in their homelands changed the face of the Toronto Jewish community forever. From 1900 to 1921, the Jewish population of the city grew from 3,000 to 35,000, and many of these newcomers were destitute. Struggling to survive, often unable to communicate in English, and crowded into city-centre slums, they suffered on many fronts.

In the late 1950s, Canadian Jews began to establish new congregations in the suburbs and, in the large communities; they amalgamated old and unsuccessful congregations, transforming them into major new religious communities. This process led to a new prominence of Jewish congregations in Canada. To keep pace with the increase in Jewish population, the number of synagogues in Canada grew over the years. But between 1935 and the 1970s, not only has there been a statistical growth, but the newer scope and involvement of all members of the family must also be taken into account.

In 1935 there were 152 congregations in all of Canada – 140 of these were Orthodox and mostly small, 9 were Conservative and 3 were Reform. By 1960 these numbers had increased to 206 congregations; almost half of the additional synagogues identified themselves as either Conservative or Reform.

Every Conservative or Reform congregation was, in effect, a community with a synagogue-center program of cultural and education activities for the whole family, in addition to the ritual and religious life of a congregation. Each Conservative and Reform congregation had its own rabbi and almost all had their own schools and principals. Indeed, in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, some Conservative congregations even conducted day school programs either on their own, or jointly, with other Conservative synagogues in the area.

By coincidence, both Reform and Conservative rabbinical organizations of North America – the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and the Rabbinical Assembly (RA) – conducted their annual conventions in Toronto in 1966. Indeed, the highlight of the RA's convention was the academic convocation that took place at Beth Tzedec Synagogue. Lester B. Pearson, then Prime Minister of Canada, accepted an honorary

degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA) from its Chancellor, Dr. Louis Finkelstein, and so became an honorary alumnus of a prominent American Jewish institution of higher learning. Participating were scores of rabbis, former and present Canadians, who were trained at the JTSA.

Jews are increasingly prominent in virtually every branch of the retail and wholesale trades. Some operate national chains, such as Tip Top Tailors, People's Credit Jewelers, and Reitmans. In Ottawa, the Loeb family, and in Toronto, the Wolfes (Oshawa Wholesale) have done much the same for IGA, a chain of smaller super markets.

In every Canadian city, Jewish builders and developers have helped to revamp the local skyline with modern, high-rise apartments, office-buildings and suburban homes. By 1961, about one in seven Canadian Jews was a professional. Mr. Justice Bora Laskin, appointed in 1970 as the first Jewish member of the Supreme Court, was previously one of the country's outstanding academic lawyers. He is the author of widely read legal textbooks and has wielded great influence over an entire generation of Canadian law students.

Canadian Jews have also played a major role in promoting jazz, folk and rock groups and individual artists. Moe Koffman of Toronto is one of Canada's best-known jazz performers.

Jews of Central Branch

By Myrna Schwartz

- In 1754 Benjamin Franklin drew up a plan to move west. George Croghan was the first to make an expedition to the Illinois territory. The first expedition failed, but the second expedition succeeded. It was composed mainly of Jewish merchants. They were Moses and Jacob Frank of London, England, Joseph Simon and L.A. Levy of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- The only Jewish man known to have come to the Illinois territory prior to the admission into the union (August 26, 1818) was John Hays, a lieutenant in the American Revolution, and scion of one of the oldest and most patriotic American Jewish families. John Hays settled in Illinois as early as 1793 and served for twenty years as sheriff of St. Clair County in the southwestern part of Illinois.
- According to the scant records that are available, the first Jews to come to and settle in Chicago were J. Gottlibe (peddler), Issac Ziegler and Henry Horner (wholesale groceries), Benedict Shubert and Phillip Newbergh (tailors).
- The first minyan was held in 1845 above a store at Wells and Lake Streets. Those attending were four Kohn brothers, Phillip Newburgh, Benedict Shubert, Jacob Rosenberg, Henry Benjamin, Meyer Klein and S. Friedman. If one man had to leave they had to stop the service.
- The Kohn Brothers brought the first *sefer torah* given to them by their mother Deliah. It was from their native home in Bavaria.
- Even though there were less than 100 Jews in a population of 17,000, Lake Street, the main business thoroughfare, had a large sprinkling of Jewish establishments.
- Issac Wormser took the lead in establishing Chicago's first permanent organization, The Burial Ground Society (1847). The ground was bought from the city for \$46.00 per acre.

- The first congregation, Kehilath Anshe Maa'ariv (congregation of the men of the west) was founded on November 2, 1847. There was no accredited shochet. Abraham Kohn and his brothers were worried about their mother Deliah who was only eating bread and potatoes. They and nineteen others agreed to form a congregation. They hired Ignatz Kunreuther as the first *shochet*, reader and rabbi of Kam.
- In 1860 the city clerk was Abraham Kohn. He presented Abraham Lincoln with a flag with the inscription "Strong and of Good Courage." The flag is in the museum of the war department.
- Jacob Rosenberg and Levi Rosenfeld formed a partnership and started a dry goods business which was a very important part of Chicago life. They were married to the Reese sisters who were some of the first women volunteers in the area. They helped fund the first hospital and named it in honor of their brother Michael Reese. It is still one of the largest hospitals in Chicago.
- Henry Horner, grandfather of Judge Henry Horner, opened a grocery store at the corner of Randolph and Canal streets. He laid the foundation of the Chicago Board of Trade. He had a very large library and almost lost his life trying to save his collection during the Chicago fire.
- The first Jews to come to Chicago were German Jews who started everything. Later the Russian Jews settled on the west side, of Chicago. They were not readily accepted by the Eastern European Jews, but were finally recognized as good Jews in 1880.
- Today Illinois has Jews in every city and town. As of the 2002 census, there were approximately 270,000 Jews in the Chicago metropolitan area with about 125 synagogues. In the rest of Illinois there are about 8,000 Jews and 160 synagogues.

Central New Jersey Branch History by Marlene Oslick

Central New Jersey Branch is an offshoot of Northern New Jersey Branch. Our first Central New Jersey Branch President was Rhoda Nochumson Frazier in 1956.

Settlement of Central New Jersey was varied. Many residents of the more Northern towns moved there from Newark, Jersey City and Bayonne. The breadwinners in the families were often carpenters, restaurateurs, metal workers, and manufacturers of electrical appliances, clothing, hats, embroidery, lace and ribbons. Many work at the cosmetics, telecommunications, pharmaceutical and chemical companies in the area. Brand names of some of the products like the cigarette lighters, Ronson - from Aronson, were Jewish owned companies.

It is been said that the route of the Jersey Central Railroad was the path of settlement into the suburban towns. Some Jews were employed in trucking and shipping. There is a considerable amount of commuting to New York from the suburban towns along the Jersey Central and Shore Lines. Elizabeth, Rahway and Plainfield had Conservative Synagogues. Many Jews went to Elizabeth, Perth Amboy and Plainfield as merchants and professionals. Some business in New Jersey were started as pushcarts on Prince, Spruce and Barclay Streets in Newark. Merchants and professionals founded the synagogues in Linden, Union, Rahway, Asbury Park, Cranford and Woodbridge. In the Southern and Western towns of Central New Jersey, land was the drawing card. There were farms, many poultry and dairy farms and vegetable farms. Some of these are still in existence. Some of the land was later sold for housing developments, factories and more recently warehouses. There are several colleges and universities in the Branch area which have Jewish faculty members. Some of these schools have Jewish Studies programs.

The Shore area developed as resorts and commuter housing. There were kosher hotels in Asbury Park and Lakewood. (The kosher hotels that remain in Lakewood are now used exclusively by ultra Orthodox Jews.)

Staten Island is part of Central New Jersey Branch. Staten Island is a commuting community for many who work in Manhattan.

Trenton was a center of heavy industry. It had 2 Conservative synagogues, *Brothers of Israel* and *Adath Israel*. *Adath Israel* moved to Lawrenceville. Flemington is the center of an agricultural area and developed to provide services to the region. It now hosts a large outlet center, as does Jackson which is near Freehold and Lakewood. Now Central New Jersey has many kosher restaurants, delis and caterers.

Branch History-Metropolitan Branch

The first Jews in what is now New York City were twenty-three Sephardic refugees from Brazil who moved to the city in September 1654 and were granted asylum despite the protests of Governor Peter Stuyvesant. In the same year, the first congregation in the country, Shearith Israel was founded. It built its first synagogue building in 1730 on Mill Street just south of Wall Street and was modeled on the Sephardic traditions in Amsterdam. After many interim moves Shearith Israel relocated to 70th Street and Central Park West and is today commonly known as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. New York had the largest Jewish population in the colonies and most served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most Jews moving to the United States were Ashkenazim and most settled in New York City. Congregation B'nai Jeshurun was the first Ashkanazic synagogue and was founded by immigrants in 1821.

By 1850 there were fifty thousand Jews in the United States and approximately one third of them lived in New York City. Most had fled deprivation and prosecution in Germany and other countries of central Europe; many were peddlers, storekeepers, craftsmen and laborers, some eventually became wealthy manufacturers and financiers. By 1857 there were twenty-seven synagogues of different groups as well as forty fraternal organizations for education and mutual aid. The "Jews" Hospital (Now known as Mount Sinai) was founded in 1852.

The German Jewish immigrants and their families were very anxious to assimilate into the American way of life and their religious practices reflected this fact. Until 1880 they dominated most congregations in the city, and though there were some traditional synagogues in the city Reform Judaism predominated.. During this period a wealthy and prominent German-Jewish elite emerged in the city. Some of the better known were Jacob Schiff, Isidor Strauss, Oscar Straus, Adolph Lewisohn, Louis Marshall and Felix Warburg.

The character of the Jewish population of New York underwent a drastic change in the decades after 1880. Between the years 1880 and 1910 about 1.4 million Jews fleeing the persecutions and pogroms of Eastern Europe moved to the city and about 1.1 million remained. Most of these people settled on the Lower East Side of the city and lived in overcrowded walk-up tenements. Many of these people were peddlers or found work in the garment or tobacco industries. In stark contrast to the assimilated Jews of German descent, these newcomers were fervently Orthodox and many

worshiped in small synagogues that sought to preserve the traditions of the lands from which they had come. When the children of these immigrants, who had been educated in this country, grew to maturity many began to question and ultimately reject what they viewed as the "Old World" orthodoxy of their parents. In an attempt to find a way to integrate Judaism into American life the Jewish Endeavor Society was founded in the first decade of the twentieth century. It experimented with many different types of congregations, which sought to integrate Yiddish and English as well as modern and traditional elements of religious practice. This movement led to the development of the Conservative movement as well as modern Orthodox and Reform congregations throughout the country. The Jewish Theological Seminary had been founded in 1887 to train Conservative rabbis and though it started slowly it achieved great success starting in 1902 when it moved to 123rd Street to land donated by Jacob Schiff. Under the leadership of Solomon Schechter, Mordecai Kaplan and Cyrus Adler, the Seminary established itself as a preeminent institution of Jewish learning and of course continues to enjoy that reputation today.

During the early days of the twentieth century poverty and overcrowding in Jewish neighborhoods led to a demand for reform and an increased pressure upon the new immigrants to assimilate into the American way of life. German Jews, already well established and fearing that newcomers would threaten their position were the motivating force behind the establishment of such organizations as the United Hebrew Charities, the Hebrew Technical Institute, the Young Women's Hebrew Association and settlement houses like the Educational Alliance. These organizations sought to introduce "American" ways, especially the use of English and to improve the life of the people. During this time Russian-Polish immigrants were becoming an important political voice in their own right. Many were attracted to radicalism and socialism and the developing labor movement gave them the voice that they had been seeking. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the United Hebrew Trades attained the right to collective bargaining in 1910. Early Jewish office holders included Moritz Graubard (state assembly), Samuel Koenig (secretary of state of New York) and Meyer London the first socialism congressman from the Lower East Side.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Jewish influence was felt in the Bronx as well. Though the first documented Jewish family moved into the Bronx in 1760, the area contains two towns, known as Westchester and Eastchester and four manors, or large estates, owned and farmed by wealthy families. What is now the Bronx was comprised of most of what is now

the county of Westchester as well as the modern day Bronx. After the formation of New York City in 1898, when the outer boroughs joined with Manhattan as one city, and especially after the inauguration of the subway in 1904, many Jews fled the teeming tenements of the Lower East Side and relocated to the Bronx. They moved to the Grand Concourse, Fordham, Tremont and Morrisania and by 1930 comprised 49% of the population of that borough. Most of these people continued to work in Manhattan, but lived in the Bronx for the amenities which were provided by that borough.

Though prominent New York Jews are far too numerous to mention some early examples are Sophie Tucker, George Burns and Groucho Marx well known in radio, movies and television, scholars such as Irving Howe and Alfred Kazan, and politicians such as Herbert Lehman, Jacob Javits and Ed Koch.

Jews have long played an important role in the history of New York and hopefully will continue to do so for many years to come.

Lucy Becker

Park Avenue Synagogue

Womens' Evening Group

Jews in Hartford and Surrounding Areas

As early as 1659, according to official documents in Connecticut, there was a man named "David the Jew." He was a lonely itinerant peddler with a pack on his back, selling his wares from house to house in communities near Hartford. He did not have a full name, but came to these shores in search of freedom from religious and political persecutions or, he had not mastered English to make himself understood, or, officials could not pronounce his name.

In the 1600's, J.H. Trumbull, as history explains, "the peddler gentile or Jew engaged the watch and care of authorities forthwith." The peddler could not sell to anyone when heads of families were not there. "David the Jew" ignored the law and was fined 20 shillings shortly thereafter.

About 1669, there was a list of families in Hartford with a quantity of grain including "Jacob the Jew" and "David Jew." Was this the same peddler "David the Jew"? He was listed among the 121 inhabitants recorded in Town records.

Hartford welcomed a distinguished visitor from New Amsterdam in 1670 by the name of Assur Levy, one of the original 23 settlers of the Dutch colony and was the first Jew in America to contend successfully for the Jew's right to bear arms in the New Amsterdam militia. Levy also fought for them to vote.

In 1788, an article appeared in the Connecticut Courant that read, "Tea and Sundry Articles of West India and Day Goods Are Sold at the Cheap Stores at the Front of Jew Street". Another article read "For Sale by Caleb Pond on Jew Street, Excellent Molasses, St. Croix Rum, Brown Sugar, Nova Scotia General Store and Groceries" (North Part of Hartford).

The next reference to Jews in Hartford and surrounding areas was in 1818 when there was considerable discussion at the Constitutional Convention held in same. "No preference shall

be given to any religious sect or mode of worship." Mr. J. Edwards was suggesting Legislature to tolerate the Jews and Mohammedans and would not infringe on their privileges the amendment carried.

Under the leadership of Thomas Hooker, the Hebrew Bible was cherished and Jewish traditions were studied and held high in esteem. In 1818, the ratification of the Connecticut Constitution was on the end of Congressional government in the state. The new Constitution did not provide that "Jews" enjoy the same and equal powers, rights and privileges of every society or denomination of Christians.

The early Hartford City Directories contain many Hebrew names that attest to the fact that Yankee Colonists were influenced by the Bible in their choice of names – Amos, Aaron, Benjamin, Israel, Isaac, Jesse, Jacob, etc.

The founding fathers were thoroughly indoctrinated with Hebraic ideals such as Justice, Sanctity of Law, and love of freedom. All of this that happened in Hartford substantiates the observation attributed to the British historian William Lisky who commented, "Hebrew mortar cemented the foundations of our American Civilization."

Many Jews from Germany started arriving in the 1840's and thus came into being Congregation Beth Israel, Ararat Lodge and B'nai Brith and the Deborah Society. Meyer Stern was the first rabbi.

Morris I. Strauss was the first Cantor and shohet in the Hartford area. IN the next 3 years, in a rented hall on Main St., the congregation paid \$200 a year for rental. The first Hebrew Teacher in the area was Lazuris Mosbacker. The first Hebrew English school was on Frankfurt street.

About 1800 when restrictive legislation was exacted against Jews in Eastern European countries, and pogroms and other forms of persecution akin, thousands of Jews fled to seek haven in United States. The lines inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty so aptly applied. The Jews came in great masses from persecution, rich and poor, young and old, many professions including Scholars, labourers and craftsmen.

They had no intention of returning to their countries of birth. They were to start a new life.

The solidarity of these Jews manifested itself into "Ladsmanshaften" i.e. (native countrymen's societies). The synagogues they established in Connecticut were known as Polish, Ltivische, Romanishce, Ludmir, Austrian and Koretzer. In 1942, refugees from Nazi Germany organized a synagogue called "Tikvaoh Chadoshoh" – new Hope!

WHO WAS WHO

Charles Abuza came to the US in 1855. Born in Odessa, Russia, father of Sophie Tucker. He came to Boston and settled in Hartford, CT.

Beatrice Fox Auerbach – Born in Hartford 1887. Working side by side with her father Moses Fox, she became president of G. Fox Company and under her direction, the store became the largest privately-owned department store in the country.

Eda Yelenofsky Baggish – Born in Germany, came to Connecticut and was the charter member of the Beth Hamidrash Synagogue in Hartford.

Harry Barley – Physician. Born in 1898, graduate of Yale and the University of Maryland Methodist School. He was chief dermatologist at Mr. Sinai Hospital in Hartford, CT.

Gershon Cohen – born in Vishinke, Poland in 1870. He came to the U.S in the 1890's because a shohet moved to Tarrington, CT and later back to Hartford. He taught Hebrew at the Talmud Torah in Hartford and also the South End Talmud Torah.

Noah D. Cramer – Born in Russia 1911. He studied voice and came to US singing and officiating at Synagogues in New York, Boston, Holyoke, Mass and Hartford and became a full time canter at Tifferes Israel.

Gustave Flingold born in Russia 1883. Came to US in 1893 – graduated from Trinity College receiving numerous awards. Became principal of Bulkely High School in Hartford where he remained until he died in 1948.

Anna Hoffberg born in Russia 1898. Came to Connecticut in 1926 and lived in the town of Colchester and very active Jewish social service and other educational organizations. Religious, culturally and socially, she was devoted to her faith and her principle. There was not a Community agency or cause that did not benefit from her services and commitment.

Herman P. Kopplemann – Born in Odessa 1880. Came to Hartford with his parents at age 2. He began selling Newspapers at age 8 and in late 1890's founded the firm H.P. Koppelman. He and his heirs then became partners of this firm which was the leading firm and distribution of Newspapers and Magazines in the state. He was very active in the City council, worked for the "people" and helped improve working conditions. He was elected to the House of Representatives and in 1919 to the Senate. He was very active in Jewish efforts, founding member of the Emmanuel Synagogue in Hartford. He was Vice President of the United Synagogue of America and secretary of Board of Overseers of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Evelyne D. Rubenstein – Born in Hartford in 1905. Graduate of University of Connecticut in 1928. She was a Vice President of the National Women's League for Conservative Judaism, served on the head since 1949 and served on several key committees such as the Torah Fund of the JTS. President and founder of Camp Ramah in New England, raised several thousands of dollars for scholarships at this camp in Palmer, Mass. She was co-author of the Jewish Cookbook for United Synagogue Youth. The Connecticut Region of USY gives a scholarship in her name and was included in the 1965 edition of *Who's Who in World Jewry*. She organized the Braille Project for Connecticut Branch of the National Women's League (now Known as Women's League for Conservative Judaism).

There are thousands more people hat have made this beautiful state of Connecticut what it is today. I could not possibly have listed them all. I hope you enjoy these words of Wisdom and facts about Jews in Connecticut.

The Jews of Eastern Long Island

By Marcalynn Schechter

The history of the Jews of Long Island is varied and interesting. Beginning as early as the 1880s, small numbers of Jews left the crowded environment of New York City, or came directly from Ellis Island. Taking their customs and traditions with them, they emigrated to a vast area of flat greenery, fishing villages, small towns and potato farms, called Long Island. These intrepid people ventured as far north and east as Riverhead, Sag Harbor, 'the North shore' area in what is now Port Jefferson, as well as Setauket, Smithtown, Kings Park and Huntington.

They settled and established communities there and as far southeast as Patchogue and Amityville. The families prospered by establishing business that met the needs of their communities, in such areas as clothing, food, rubber, paint, hardware, carpentry, and other building trades. Always mindful of their background, they encouraged their children to study their traditions while becoming part of the larger surrounding community. Many went on, as the years passed, to become doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, engineers, etc., and remained on Long Island to live and work.

A synagogue was established in 1887 (North Shore). Others were built in 1903 (Patchogue), 1904 (Kings Park) and 1907 (Huntington). Some were built with the sweat, toil and perseverance of many local families who banded together in order to perpetuate their Jewish life. Others were constructed through the generosity of Baron deRothschild, who had embarked upon a program funding Jews to establish themselves in places other than the over-crowded immigrant settlement areas in New York City. Sisterhoods were established. Jewish women needed each other's company to help them preserve Jewish life.

This same pattern took place in other areas of Queens and Long Island. A great factor in this migration was the expanding Long Island Railroad. Communities sprouted up around the newly built railroad lines and stations. Highways and expressways were built and expanded, as the century progressed and automobiles became important in peoples' daily lives, thus enabling them to move ever further eastward.

Jews ventured to Jamaica and other areas in Queens. They went to the town of Hempstead. They moved to the city of Glen Cove. They moved to Great Neck in the north and headed for the area in the south that was to become known as the Five Towns (Hewlett, Cedarhurst, Lawrence, Woodmere and Inwood). They settled in an area on the ocean, Long

Beach (soon to be named the city of Long Beach) and Rockaway. Once arriving in these towns, in small numbers at first, they started businesses, prospered and established themselves as respected members of their new communities. They founded congregations in all denominations of Judaism, and they formed women's groups.

By the time Women's League for Conservative Judaism was created by Mathilde Schechter in 1918, there were small and far-flung communities all over Long Island. New congregations housed in storefronts, firehouses and other tiny building had been formed. Some designated themselves as Conservative and affiliated with the fledgling movement. Their women's groups joined the new women's organization. Women's League created one Branch for all of Long Island.

During the 1920s, prosperity was at an all-time high. Many more Jewish families left the five boroughs of New York City and moved to Long Island, where they could own their own homes and land. Heads of households commuted to work in Manhattan, via the Long Island Railroad that was rapidly expanding. Jews moved into the already existing communities, near the railroad and highways, where there were already-established Jewish institutions. Long Island began to be called "the suburbs," and the term "bedroom community" was first use.

During the 1930s and '40s, with the onset of World War II, and employment available in the burgeoning defense industry, more Jews move to Long Island, along with thousands of others of all faiths. There was employment in every walk of life.

World War II ended, and returning soldiers needed housing for their growing families. Many, in Brooklyn and Queens, lived in Quonset huts. Builders on Long Island perceived a market for housing. In the late 1940s, the newly-built Levittown was an overnight success, with its identical houses selling out immediately. Other communities and developments flourished, first in Nassau County and then Suffolk County.

Industry prospered in these post-war years. The defense industry, no longer operative, became the aeronautical industry. The general population on Long Island grew tremendously, reaching two million residents by the late 1970s. The current population is more than two and a half million.

The Jewish population increased dramatically, as well. Thousands of Jews lived everywhere on Long Island. Some joined the throng of commuters while other found work on Long Island, as new businesses started or enlarged.

The Jews of Long Island and Women's League

By the 1980s there were more than two hundred thousand Jews living on Long Island. They moved to established communities with Jewish character. Some moved into communities on Long Island's "gold coast" that had been previously restricted, while others moved to new and upscale communities. As new communities grew up next to existing ones, there was an increased need for more Jewish institutions. Jewish community centers began to sprout up, as did new businesses, aimed specifically for a Jewish clientele. Some congregations grew out of existing ones so that their members could live nearer to the synagogue. Many affiliated with the Conservative movement, and their women joined Women's League.

In the mid 1950s, it became obvious to the Long Range Committee of Women's League that there was a rapidly growing Jewish population on Long Island and that a single Branch was no longer sufficient to adequately serve the future needs of an expanding membership.

After several months of diligent effort, Long Island was divided into three Branches: North Shore Long Island, South Shore Long Island and Eastern Long Island. The three Long Island Branches were chartered and recognized as separate entities for the first time at the 1958 Women's League Biennial Convention in Florida.

Eastern Long Island Branch began with 19 Sisterhoods. They included the towns of Amityville, Babylon, Bayshore, Bethpage, Farmingdale, Hicksville, Huntington, Jericho, Kings Park, Levittown, Lindenhurst, Massapequa, Patchogue, Plainview, Riverhead, Setauket, Smithtown and Westbury. Later, Sisterhoods from Commack, Deer Park, Dix Hills, Hauppauge, Manetto Hill, South Huntington and Woodbury (the most recent affiliate) have affiliated with Women's League and this Branch. There were 26 Sisterhoods in Eastern Long Island Branch at its peak.

At the same time, it became clear that the Jewish population was changing. Jews began to leave some of the communities as their group dynamics changed. Over the decades, the Jewish population has shifted. When, for a short time the defense industry foundered, many people, including Jews were transferred to other states.

There are many unaffiliated Jews, as well as a high number of intermarriages. Long-standing members of congregations and Sisterhoods have passed away. Some older people have remained on Long Island, but have moved to communities that cater to their needs as seniors and have not chosen to join congregations and Sisterhoods. Others retired and moved to warmer climates and to other countries, such as Mexico and Israel.

The result of this has been a marked decrease in the Jewish population in some areas of Eastern Long Island. Some congregations have closed their doors or merged with others as the Jewish population has dwindled, and Sisterhoods have done the same.

Other areas of Eastern Long Island have seen an increase and rebirth of its Jewish population. Young families are moving back to Long Island, buying their parents' homes. Congregations are being revitalized, as are the Sisterhoods. At present there are 21 Sisterhoods in the Eastern Long Island Branch. In the near future, Deer Park (Suffolk Jewish Center) will join with Dix Hills (Dix Hills Jewish Center). We look forward to exfoliating Kings Park Jewish Center's revitalized Sisterhood.

Over the years, many women from our Branch have served and continue to serve Women's League on the national level in several capacities:

Evelyn Seelig, a member of Eastern Long Island Branch, from Temple Beth Torah in Westbury, served as past International President.

The current International President, Gloria Cohen, is from Temple Beth Shalom in Smithtown.

ELIB has always brought new and innovative programs and ideas to its membership. Our support for Torah fund grows stronger each year. We continue to study and enhance our Jewish ness. It is one of our goals to continue to perpetuate Judaism in all aspects of our lives and look forward to many more years of involvement with Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

Jews of Eastern Pennsylvania
by Susan Sultanik

If you divide the state of Pennsylvania into thirds going east to west, you will find the Eastern Pennsylvania Branch of WLCJ encompassing the eastern third of the state excluding Philadelphia County, Bucks County, and some parts of southeast Montgomery County.

The Eastern Pennsylvania includes the city of Lancaster, an unlikely landmark for Jewish history in North America. Before our country's independence, Lancaster was an important outpost of what was then the frontier. The oldest inland city in the United States, Lancaster drew those with a taste for adventure and an eye for making money in the lucrative Indian trade.

Among those who came in the late 17th and early 18th centuries were a number of Jews. However, few of these Jewish pioneers stayed long enough to settle or to put down roots because there were seldom, if ever, enough Jews to form a minyan. Most peddled their wares in the frontier but settled their families in the bigger cities. That was the case until English-born Joseph Simon arrived in Lancaster in 1740. The first minyan in the American West was held in his home in 1743. Simon himself, a frontiersman and Indian trader and one of the largest land owners in Pennsylvania, employed expeditions led by the famous Daniel Boone to open the Western trading routes.

Joseph Simon is the grandfather of two important women in Jewish American history. His granddaughter, Rebecca Gratz, was a renowned Philadelphia beauty who founded the first Jewish religious school in America. Richea Gratz, another of Simon's granddaughters, was the first Jewish woman in the United States to attend college.

Up until the end of the eighteenth century Jewish immigrants entering the Pennsylvania communities were largely of eastern European origin. However, a steady stream of Jewish Germans entered during the first forty years of the nineteenth century seeking refuge from persecution in the freer air of Pennsylvania. Many of those immigrants interested in establishing business contacts made Pennsylvania their home. Those who sought a commercial role in medium-sized communities did especially well. For example, by 1900 some of the larger stores in Harrisburg were owned by the families of the original German Jews.

As a result of the German Jewish migration into Pennsylvania a number of synagogues were established. The early synagogues include Congregation Brith Shalom in Easton

established in 1839 and Ohev Shalom in Harrisburg established in 1851. Synagogues in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Reading, Pottsville, and Allentown were soon to follow.

Beginning in the late 1870s a wave of Russian Jewish immigrants, forced into eastern Europe to escape the anti-Semitism of the Russian Empire, streamed into the US. The new immigrants took jobs as peddlers in the small communities or worked in sweatshops in larger cities. By 1910 one hundred thousand new eastern European Jewish immigrants settled in communities throughout Pennsylvania.

Today, Jewish communities in the larger Pennsylvania cities and suburbs are thriving. The smaller communities are another matter. With the rise of the shopping malls and large warehouse marketers has come the demise of the independent retailer. The children and grandchildren of peddlers who opened small businesses have closed their doors and have moved to the larger cities. Many synagogues have closed, a few are still struggling to stay open but young people do not see a future settling in the small communities of their parents and grandparents.

Even though Eastern Pennsylvania Branch is comprised of a few small, struggling Jewish communities like York and Williamsport, we also include vibrant and growing communities like those of West Chester and Wilkes-Barre. All communities in Eastern Pennsylvania take pride in their heritage and the part they played in the early days of developing the character of this new land. The Jews of Eastern Pennsylvania today also take pride in their native son, Dr. Ismar Schorsch, the present Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

History of the Jews of Florida By Alison Salomon

The rich legacy of the Jewish community in Florida can be found in every region of the state. As a people, Jews have contributed dramatically to Florida's economy, culture, and government and by creating institutions that allowed their heritage to flourish and their identity to strengthen.

Oral history tells us that Jewish history in Florida may have begun as far back as 1565 when Jewish conversos are believed to be among the earliest settlers of St. Augustine. However, during Spanish Florida, Jews were prohibited from legally settling in Florida and practicing their religion. Documented Florida Jewish history began in 1763 when the British assumed sovereignty over Florida and Jews were free to settle legally. Sephardic Jews Joseph de Palacios, Samuel Israel and Alexander Solomon arrived from New Orleans and acquired land and property in Pensacola. Isaac Mendes arrived from Jamaica in 1766 and in 1783, a Polish Jew named David Moses was known to be operating a hide store in St. Augustine.

During the 1800's, Florida history was written by many different Jews. There was Captain Abraham Massias, hailing from South Carolina, who commanded the American occupation forces at Fernandina. Moses Elias Levy purchased more than 50,000 acres of land in north central Florida in order to build a home and school for Jewish refugees. The town of Micanopy now marks one of the boundaries of this land and the University of Florida, in Gainesville, sits atop another. The first female Jewish Floridian, Virginia Myers, was born in Pensacola in the 1800's and another Myers, Abraham C. Myers, a West Point graduate, served as quartermaster during the Second Seminole Indian War. Florida continues to honor Myers to this day, as the city of Fort Myers is named after him. In 1845, Florida becomes the 27th state, and David Levy Yulee becomes the state's first U.S. Senator. He helps to write the state's constitution. Not only does he serve the state in a political seat, but also he builds the first railroad across the state from Fernandina to Cedar Key. Levy County honors him by carrying his name today. In 1857, the state's first Jewish institution, the Jacksonville Hebrew Cemetery was opened. Jacksonville also sees the arrival of the Dzialynski family during this century and welcomes the first male Jewish Floridian, George Dzialynski. There are still descendants of this family living in Jacksonville today. While Jews were serving on both sides of the

Civil War, the first B'nai B'rith lodge was organized and the first synagogue, Temple Beth El, was incorporated, both in Pensacola. Henry Brash was the first of over eighty Jewish men and women to be elected to the position of Mayor in the state of Florida. He served his town of Marianna. The first Jewish school was established in Tallahassee in the late 1800's as many Jews began to immigrate to Florida from Romania and Eastern Europe. Near the end of the century, Congregation Ahavath Chesed is formed in Jacksonville with Morris Dzialynski, the city's mayor, serving as president of the synagogue. Other events seen near the end of the century include a heavy peddlers tax levied in Key West that has some Jews opening stores while others migrate to Miami and Tampa. More and more Jews begin to settle in South Florida as Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast railroad reaches Miami, however, the majority of the Jewish population remained to the north with 40% of the state's 10,000 Jews living in Jacksonville at the turn of the century.

In the early 1900's, Florida has six Jewish congregations, Eddie Cohen's birth marks the first bris in Dade County, B'nai Zion becomes Miami's first congregation and David Sholtz, of Daytona, is elected Governor. In Miami, twelve of the sixteen earliest businesses were owned by Jews, and Isador Cohen is one of the signers of Miami's charter. Florida's economic boom continued after the First World War ended, well into the "Roaring Twenties." Miami Beach became known for its casinos and nightlife. In the 40's, Miami replaced Jacksonville as the city with the largest Jewish population at 5,000. By 1940, there were about 25,000 Jews in Florida. More than 10,000 Cuban Jews seek freedom in Florida in the 50's and with the invention of air conditioning and jet planes, many more Jews immigrate to Florida from all over the world during the middle of the century. By the 60's, the Jewish population had grown dramatically to over 175,000. In 1968, Dr. Marshall W. Nirenberg, of Orlando, is awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology. He is a graduate of the University of Florida. In 1974, Richard Stone, a third generation Florida Jew, is elected U.S. Senator.

Today, Florida serves as home to over 750,000 Jews, the third largest population in the country. South Florida has the largest concentration of Jews outside of Israel. Jewish influence continues to be a part of everyday life in Florida. As more and more Jews settle in Florida, organizations are formed to meet the educational, social, health and recreational needs of the community, from birth to death.

The Jews of Hudson Valley

By Ruth Rosenfeld

The expulsion of Jews from Spain and England led to the migration of Jews to New York. As of 1777 New York was the only state to concede full political equity to Jews. The Jews of Westchester did not arrive in a group and they did not settle in clearly defined areas. Traditional Jewish surnames appear suddenly in colonial records early in the 17th century without any explanation of their ancestry or method arrival. Still deeds of land transactions that are recorded in the Westchester County office indicate presence of Jews in Cortlandt, Rye, Eastchester, New Rochelle and Phillipsburgh (Yonkers).

In the early 18th century some New York City Jews like Moses Levy, Mordecai Gomes and Judah Hays bought summer homes in the County and before the middle of the 18th Century full time Jewish residents began to appear, the earliest record being Ralph Jacobs of rye, prior to 1736.

For the most part the first full time settlers were Yiddish speaking Ashkenazim from central Europe. Few in number with their homes spread across 500 square miles they formed no communities of their own. They maintained their religious identity as best they could without rabbinical guidance, performing daily prayers and observing holidays and Kashrut.

With the birth of Westchester County in 1683, Richard and Jacob Abrahamson of New York City received a joint license to purchase 300 acres each along the Hudson near present day Peekskill. In 1639 Jonas Broncke and wife moved from Manhattan to purchase 500 acres for a farm from the Indians. Following Broncke's success other Manhattanites began a slow but irreversible process of converting into farms the primeval forest land of what became Westchester County. Rye attracted more settlers than other Westchester County towns because of its location on Long Island Sounds, and its excellent road system.

Moses Levy, one of the wealthiest Jewish merchants in the colony acquired 60 or 70 acres of upland property in what is now a part of Rye. This 1716 transaction was the first purchase by a definitely identified Jew. Westchester's most durable Jewish family is the Hayes family, also land owners in Rye. In 1723 Jacob Hays became the first naturalized Jew in Westchester, and bought 40 acres of land in White Plains. David Hays, son of Jacob, is the central figure in the history of colonial Westchester Jewry. His daughter, Abigail, made the first confirmed intermarriage by a Westchester Jewish woman with a non-Jew. His son, Jacob, married at least two non-Jewish women. Only David's descendants have maintained their Jewish identity and Westchester residency to this day. No other Jewish family in Westchester can claim the Hay's family's almost two and one half centuries of continuous residence and religious integrity.

The few Jewish settlers in Westchester were widely dispersed over almost 500 square miles. For almost two hundred years there was no Jewish community in the County. Until the American revolution Westchester Jews relied heavily on their affiliation with Congregation Sheareth Israel in New York City. Judaism survived in the

absence of synagogue largely through the availability of standard prayer books (David Levis' multi volume "Form of Prayer" and Isaac Pintos' 1761 translation of the holiday prayer book.

Despite their miniscule numbers the Jews of Colonial Westchester engaged in nearly full spectrum of commercial activity. The wealthiest among them, Moses Levy, Judah Hays and Mordecai Gomes, were overseas traders.

When political parties began to form in the 1790s the Jews of Westchester and New York leaned toward the party of Jefferson, then called the Democrat-Republican Party, or Republican Party.

The participation of most Jews in the revolutionary cause was quite active. Of the 43,645 fighting men from New York Westchester contributed 2,854 men, among which were 23 definitely identified as Jewish. The revolution had a devastating effect upon Jewish education. Severed from Sheareth Israel which fled New York City during the British occupation, Jewish youth had only their parents to teach them their religion.

The Jewish presence in Westchester began to erode as we entered the 19th century. During the century's first 3 or 4 decades not more than a dozen and a half families were identifiably Jewish. In 1847 with construction of the New York and Harlem railroad imminent Benjamin Hays built a large white wooden 3 story hotel close to the family homestead. In this imposing edifice David Hays operated a kosher hotel.

Sampson Simson, a Hays contemporary, was one of the outstanding American Jews of the 19th century. The Simson family owned 160 acres in Yonkers which became a family compound. Sampson was reared in a family of affluence and refinement. Admitted to Columbia College at 15, he was the third Jew to graduate and at his commencement ceremonies in 1800 delivered a speech in Hebrew entitled "Historic Traits of the Jews from their 1st settlement in North America".

In the early years of the 19th century Westchester County bachelor Sampson Simson was a devoutly observant Jew. At the age of 65 Sampson turned his energies to philanthropic concerns. In 1853 he helped found and donated the land for the Jewish Hospital in New York City, known since the Civil War as Mount Sinai. In 1852 he donated land in Yonkers to the Jewish Theological Scientific Institution. J&S later sold the land for its first funds. A modest flurry of printing and publishing sponsored by Jews. In the early 19th century Moses Lopez published a newspaper, "The American Patriot", and also did job printing. S. Marks & Son published the first issue of the Westchester and Putnam Sentinel in 1830, a paper where Whig sympathies broke the traditional Jewish association with the Democratic party. The Farmer's Almanac is another of several published works by that firm.

From 1820 to 1897 there were major changes in Westchester. Population grew from a few thousand persons in a frontier society to 100,000. By the end of the century three rail road lines were present in the County.

In the 1850s national, state and county Jewish population exploded. During the same period Westchester County grew by more than one hundred percent. After war broke out in 1860 Jews joined the military in about the same proportion as their neighbors. In Westchester there were 40 – 50 civil war enlistees. Jews who died in defense of the Union include Moritz Lowenstein, a German immigrant, who ultimately settled in Mount Vernon. Bernard Baruch of Rye saw action in the bloody battles of Fair Oaks and Antietam. The conditions of Jews in Westchester worsened during these years due in some measure to four incidents: (1) General Grant ordered all Jews out of the military depot of Tennessee (2) 3 letters demonizing the Jews from General Sherman to Secretary of the Treasury Chase were published and received wide attention (3) another General accused Jewish soldiers of being cowards and (4) Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's running mate and successor, made anti-Semitic remarks on the floor of the United States Senate. These attacks energized latent Judenphobia in Westchester and may account for the spread of discriminatory practices after the Civil War.

The County's Jewish population plummeted. This diluted the Jewish presence in Westchester to political insignificance. It insured a century of Republican party hegemony in Westchester. By 1880 Jews had established a toehold in many Westchester Towns, and the population that was estimated at 1079 was poised for communal development.

The 1880s was a pivotal decade, the start of Jewish communities in the County. Political, psychological, structural and demographic factors in the County, State and nation would facilitate this process.

By 1920 the percentage of Jews raised to between five and six percent from just under one percent in 1880. The large majority were Ashkenazic Jews, refugees from east central and eastern Europe. America offered religious freedom, equal protection under the law, political liberty, and educational opportunities. From the point of view of the largely Protestant Westchester elite Jews were just one more necessary unsavory foreign element infiltrating their presence. Jews became petty merchants with a clientele of working class East Europeans. In 1900 Adolph Klein, an enterprising business man, became a banker, owned a travel agency, and through his travel agency hired lawyers to investigate the whereabouts of uprooted family members. Once permission was given for immigration, the sponsoring family deposited money with the Klein bank which sent their relatives prepaid tickets.

In 1908 Lillian Kasindorf Kavey joined her husband in Portchester where he was already established as an itinerant clothing merchant and shoe salesman. She formed a loan company and travel agency that was so successful that her husband sold his dry goods business in 1916 to help his wife found a private bank. Their sons entered the business then called Kavey & Sons. Their banks flourished until the Great Depression, the travel agencies until the 1990s.

The first Jewish communities were in the river towns – Yonkers was the only sizeable city. By 1919 Yonkers Jews grew to 5000.

In central Westchester the New York and Harlem Railroad united several rural hamlets into Mt. Kisco. In 1910 they pooled their resources and formed the Mt. Kisco Hebrew Congregation. Mt. Vernon was largely a residential city which became industrialized due to its accessibility to the immigrant labor force of New York City. By 1918 there were 2800 Jews there and three synagogues – one for each religious denomination.

The importance of White Plains was not only in its location of the railroad lines, it was the seat of the County government. One innkeeper was Leopold Kohn, known as Admiral DAT. He and his wife were midgets who settled in White Plains after 15 years with the Barnum and Bailey circus. He was a very successfully real estate tycoon but did not forget his Jewish origins. He helped create the first Jewish congregation in White Plains. In 1915 White Plains was incorporated as a city.

Immigrant Jews unwilling to settle for employee status turned to peddling and junk collecting. As they accumulated money these immigrants opened retail shops, and soon become factory owners. Textile and hat factories were most common among Westchester Jewish owned plants. Cigar making was a Jewish occupation at the turn of the century as well. Jacob Wolf, founder of the Knights of Labor with Samuel Gompers, opened a small cigar store in 1885 – ten years later he helped organize the Metropolitan Cigar Company. During the 1890s clothiers and realtors were the pillars of the White Plains Jewish community. During the pre-war era the number of Jewish professionals was small. Jewish doctors before the Great War had to face the prejudice of hospital medical and lay boards. The number of Jewish physicians practicing in Westchester during this early period was roughly one to a village and two to a City. Annabel Helena Jacobson became the first woman dentist in Yonkers. Throughout their history as soon as Jews earned a livelihood they established institutions for the promotion of Jewish learning. Cemeteries and Synagogues were established. Congregation Ohab Zedek in Yonkers, a congregation in Mt. Vernon, a congregation in Port Chester and another in Yonkers secured property for its cemetery through Bernard Baruch who donated a large parcel of land. By 1920 Westchester Jewry had organized no fewer than twenty congregations – three reform and the remaining seventeen traditional.

Jewish secular organizations founded in Europe acted as social welfare agencies and performed many duties for the community. In Westchester women formed such groups as the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent and Aid Society and combined Jewish tradition with American. Members of these first Westchester Jewish societies were relatively prosperous women, many of German Jewish stock. As soon as they could Jewish women from Eastern Europe formed their own societies. These Jewish Ladies Aid Societies were offshoots of Synagogue congregations. Some communities established branches of national Jewish lodges, and formed Workmens' Circles. Many Hebrew Aid Societies formed and sustained clubs for youth. In 1915 Mt. Vernon and New Rochelle established old age homes. The Westchester branch of New York Montefiore Hospital opened in Mt. Kisco in 1901, eventually growing to eleven buildings. In 1918 the newly formed New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies was formed.

A Jewish elite began to build substantial estates. Prominent among them were members of the Scheff Newburg clan of White Plains, Nathan Strauss, Adolph Lewisohn of Ardsley and others in Yonkers. All gave generously to local Synagogues. Some upper middle class Jews established reform congregations in Mt. Vernon, Yonkers and New Rochelle. During the 1920s Westchester County acquired a reputation as America's prime suburb. Though a small percentage of the 1940 Westchester population of 573,558, Jews were active forces on every Main street in the County.

World War II helped Westchester Jews to a better position than ever before in their history. The County's postwar population surged. By the late 1950s they numbered 116,000 – 15.5 percent of the total. It peaked in the 1970s. As their numbers increased after the War, Westchester Jews demanded that they be judged by talent and achievement and not by ethnicity or religion. Jewish physicians led the way. By 1972 Jews were at the forefront of Westchester medicine. It was in the judiciary that Jews were represented most consistently. Societies for the Arts have functioned in Westchester for 100 years and since World War II Jews have been among their most active supporters. Westchester was also home to Jewish publishers, writers, rabbis, artists, and art collectors with national and international reputations. In the postwar era Conservative Synagogues became triumphant. Westchester's first permanent Reconstructionist congregation, the brain child of Mordecai Kaplan, espoused religious naturalism.

Jewish day schools began to appear. The Westchester Day School opened in Mamaroneck, and in 1965 Rabbi Max Gelb of White Plains opened the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester. Classes met in his temple, Temple Israel Center, until 1971. Under the administration of Dean Max Gelb and his wife Leah the school flourished.

The Jewish population declined from close to 120,000 in the late 1950s through the late 1970s to 92,000 in 1990 – a twenty three percent drop. Nevertheless, contemporary Jews are at home in Westchester County. In every city and village with a visible Jewish presence schools close on the High Holy Days – and adjust their schedules for Passover. Despite their diminishing numbers, Jews figure more prominently than ever before in most businesses, law, politics, medicine, higher education, publishing, the arts and entertainment.

Kipot Branch History – The Jews of Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio and Western Pennsylvania
By Yael Tischler (List College 2007)

Jews have lived in Kentucky since its creation. The first Jews, of Sephardic origin, were merchants. Notable pioneers include the Gratz family, who came from Philadelphia to set up trading posts along the Ohio River. By the 1840's Jews were arriving to Kentucky in large numbers, primarily from Germany. Since in most of Europe Jews could not own land, they did not come as farmers, but as peddlers and shopkeepers. In the mid-nineteenth century, synagogues began to form. The first synagogues of Kentucky were very traditional, but most slowly adopted Reform practices. The larger community of Kentucky was usually accepting of Jewry, but in cases where they were not, Jews developed their own institutions to account for this. For example, when the local country clubs did not admit Jewish sportsmen, the Jews formed their own Standard club. Kentucky Jews have long been advocates of their co-religionists. In the years before and after World War II, Kentucky Jews brought several German immigrants into their community. In the 1970's and 80's, as American Jews lobbied for the release of Soviet Jews, Kentucky opened its arms to many Russian Jewish families. Today Kentucky sports a culturally and ethnically diverse Jewish community.

The initial wave of Jewish immigration to Indiana began in the 1760's, as Jewish traders, businessmen and land dealers moved across barely-inhabited territory along the developing trade routes into the Midwest. The first Midwestern Jews were American-born, descendants of Sephardim who made their way to the English colonies from Spain and Portugal to escape forced conversion, death and expulsion. The majority of the mostly male early immigrant population rapidly assimilated into American society, giving up many aspects of Jewish culture and marrying outside of their faith. Some Jews quickly rose to prominent positions in Indiana. Case

in point – politician Samuel Judah, a Rutgers graduate, a supporter of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic cause, served six terms in the Indiana House and was eventually elected Speaker. Other Jews came to Indiana, as they did to Kentucky, as peddlers and traders. In mid-nineteenth century, a wave of German Jews came to Indiana, seeking freedom from the restrictions the government had imposed on them in their home territory. The German Jews brought with them the Reform tradition, which became very widespread in Indiana, established successful businesses and traded in small crafts, such as soap making. In Fort Wayne, the first formal Jewish congregation in Indiana was established. The first Jewish marriage in Indiana performed by a Rabbi took place in 1849 in Madison. Though Jewish immigration to Indiana never reached the heights that other states did, their presence was significant nonetheless.

Jews also lived in Ohio from its establishment in 1803. However, most Jews came to Ohio in the period following the Civil War. Cincinnati, as the largest city of Ohio, was the center of its Jewish community. The first congregation was established there in 1824. Like in Kentucky and Indiana, most early Jews were peddlers and storeowners. Also similarly, most Jews adhered to the Reform tradition. One of the most famous Jews of nineteenth century Ohio was Reform Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who founded the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873. In 1875, he established Hebrew Union College, the first Jewish seminary in the United States, and served as its first president. He also helped form the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Because of the charter granted to Quaker William Penn by Charles II in 1680, which incorporated a guarantee of religious freedom, many sects settled in Pennsylvania. This included the Jews. The first recorded permanent Jewish resident of Pittsburgh was Samuel Pettigrew, who settled in the town in 1814 and later served as mayor. It was not until 1842, however, that the

first *minyan* took place in the region. With the building of the railroad in 1849, Jewish settlement began to increase. In 1854, a group of Jews, who met in a room over the Vigilant Fire Department, organized itself as Congregation Rodef Shalom. In 1861, they moved into a building on Hancock Street, the first synagogue in Pittsburgh. The numbers and significance of Jewish population increased with the outbreak of the Civil War. Ten Jewish men from Pittsburgh fought in the War. Many Jewish women were part of the Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the Red Cross. The United Hebrew Relief assisted returning soldiers and their families. In 1877 Rabbi Markowitz led the first of many Orthodox congregations. Western Pennsylvania has spawned many a famous Jew, including dramatist George S. Kaufman and Jonas Salk, discoverer of the polio vaccine.

JEWS IN MICHIGAN

Long before Michigan was a state, even before it was part of what would become the United States of America, there was a Jewish presence.

In 1761, Ezekiel Solomon, a German-born frontiersman, settled in the wilderness of Michigan at Fort Michilimackinac. Fellow members of the Montreal Jewish congregation joined him there within a year: Chapman Abraham, Gershon Levi, Benjamin Lyon, and Levi Solomons. Shortly after, Abraham moved to Fort Detroit, the oldest city west of the Appalachians.

By 1763, both Solomon and Abraham had been captured and released by various Indians in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War (the French and Indian War).

For several decades, these Jews far from home worked as fur traders and suppliers, establishing themselves and their businesses at the strategic Great Lakes trading posts.

In 1846, Ernestine L. Rose, daughter of a rabbi, herself a social reformer and abolitionist, visited Detroit and addressed the Michigan House of Representatives on the subject of women's suffrage, 65 years before the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution!

It was not until 1848 that a Jewish cemetery was first established in Michigan, in Ann Arbor. Shortly after, in 1850, the first Jewish congregation – Beth El – was formed in Detroit. They set up a school and purchased land for a cemetery, formed a society that cared for the sick and the poor, and hired a Rabbi, who performed all the traditional ritual functions.

And so began the established Jewish community in Michigan. By the time the Civil War began, there were 750 Jews living in Michigan. A split occurred within Beth El between the Traditionalism of its founders and the surging Reform movement. In 1861, seventeen members left and founded Shaarey Zedek. In the first years of the Twentieth Century, Congregation Shaarey Zedek would change itself from Traditional or Orthodox to Conservative as it became one of the founding Congregations of the United Synagogue.

The histories of these two Congregations are visible throughout Detroit in buildings they occupied and then left as they grew in the burgeoning

industrial city. In 1880 the Jewish population was 1000, in 1900 it was 10,000, and by 1914, there were 35,000 Jews living in Detroit.

Jews spread throughout Michigan as the lumber and mining industries grew – Jews moved to the smaller cities and towns, first as peddlers, then as storekeepers and merchants, such as Winkelman, Himelhoch, B.Siegel, Leopold, Cohodas, Saulson, and ultimately as professionals. Small synagogues exist today throughout both the Lower and Upper Peninsulas of the state – the remnants of once-thriving though small Jewish communities.

Many noteworthy Jews have risen to prominence: Henry Butzel served as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court; architects Albert Kahn and Louis Redstone, who left their mark on buildings throughout Detroit, Michigan and the world; Rabbi Judah Levin who was also a mathematician and invented the first adding machine which also subtracted; Rabbi Leo Franklin, friend of Henry Ford, who tried to temper his anti-semitism; labor leaders including Irving Bluestone and Myra Wolfgang; baseball player Hank Greenberg; David Hermelin, businessman, philanthropist, and U.S. ambassador; Bill Davidson, businessman and owner of the Pistons basketball team; Meyer Prentis, treasurer of General Motors in the mid 20th century; Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig, Holocaust survivor, who established and built the first Holocaust museum in the United States; Emil Heineman, Underground Railroad conductor; Ossip Gavrilovitch, first conductor of the Symphony;

The Jewish community continues to thrive in Michigan to this day with a current population of about 100,000 in metropolitan Detroit alone. Their influence and talent is felt throughout the US and the world as Michiganders have followed their dreams in fashion design, moviemaking, acting, writing, to name just a few.

Sources: Adele Staller, former pres of MI Jewish Historical Society; Ruthe Goldstein, docent and tourguide, Jewish Detroit; Judith Levin Cantor, historian and author; and others.

Ruth Miller Marcus
Michigan Branch

History of the Jews of Midwest Branch
Prepared for Women's League Celebration of the 350th Anniversary
of the Arrival of Jews in North America
by Beverly Jones, Agudas Achim Sisterhood, Iowa City

Jewish settlement in the Midwest Region began soon after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 when settlers began crossing the Mississippi River into Missouri and the St. Louis area. Settlement increased greatly from the 1830's through the 1850's as the population moved both northward along the Mississippi River into Iowa and Minnesota and westward into the interior of those states. The gold rush of 1859 brought Jewish settlers into the mining camps of Colorado, and Jews reached Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the 1870's and 1880's.

The first Jewish settlers came from central Europe: Alsace, Germany, Austria and Bohemia. German-Jewish immigration increased greatly following the revolutions that swept Europe in 1848. Almost all of these early settlers made their way as peddlers. Within a generation, they became the merchant class owning dry goods stores, clothing stores, hotels. Every town seemed to have one or two Jewish families, and they often held prominent positions within their communities. Joseph Philipson, who arrived in St. Louis in 1807, was that city's first permanent Jewish settler and the first American merchant in the area. Other members of his family soon followed, and they became prominent in the business community. William Krause, who arrived in Des Moines at the time of Iowa statehood in 1846, was involved in the incorporation of the city and helped to establish its first public school. Moses Bloom, who arrived in Iowa City in 1857, became a successful merchant, served as mayor from 1873-74, and was in the state legislature. Jacob J. Noah was instrumental in working for Minnesota statehood, and was secretary of its constitutional assembly when it became a state in 1858.

Russian-Jewish immigrants began arriving in large numbers in 1881 after the assassination of Czar Alexander II led to the rise of murderous pogroms throughout western Russia and Ukraine. While many Russian Jews arrived in the Midwest as itinerant peddlers or tailors, many others were resettled by various Jewish immigrant and benevolent aid societies into

agricultural communities, primarily in western Minnesota, Manitoba and Saskatchewan . In 1881, there were 33 Jewish families in Manitoba, mainly in Winnipeg. Between May and June, 1882, the Mansion House Committee settled 340 Jews in Manitoba. In that same year, the Jewish Farm Project's New Jerusalem community was established in Saskatchewan. Other agricultural communities followed into the early 20th century. Most of these agricultural communities quickly failed, and the residents gravitated to the cities. Many of the men found work laying track for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Those communities that were initially successful did not survive the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl conditions, and the changes in farm mechanization that marked the 1930's.

As the Jewish population of the Midwest grew, so did its institutions. The first sign of Jewish settlement in a town was usually the establishment of a cemetery. The formation of a benevolent society was soon followed by the incorporation of the synagogue. The first synagogues in the Midwest were established in the mid-to-late 19th century. St. Louis had a synagogue in 1841, St. Paul in 1856, Des Moines in 1870, Kansas City in 1870, Minneapolis in 1877; Winnipeg in 1890, Saskatoon in 1912, and Colorado Springs in 1903. Next came the religious schools. The larger cities had Jewish newspapers and Jewish Welfare Boards in place by the early 20th century, and Jewish day schools by the mid-20th century. By mid-century, most Jews in the Midwest lived in major urban centers; 98 percent of the Jews of Missouri currently live in the St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan areas. Similar percentages exist for the Jewish populations of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Tur Malke
Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Montreal

by Leona Eligberg

When Canada celebrated its 125th birthday and Montreal its 350th, the Jewish community of Montreal commemorated 230 years with an exhibit entitled "*Tur Malke*: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Montreal." Now close to its 250th anniversary, the Jewish community in Montreal continues its own proud and unique history and experience.

Eastern European immigrants to Montreal named their benevolent society *Tur Malke*, or the royal mountain. Taken from the Aramaic of the Babylonian *Talmud* referring to Jerusalem and its surrounding mountains, this name became synonymous with Montreal's Mount Royal, located in the middle of the city.

Old Montreal 1750-1900

The first Jews arrived in this area from England in 1768. In 1777, they established Canada's first synagogue, Shearith Israel, today's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

When Ezekiel Hart was elected to the Quebec Legislature in 1807, French nationalists refused to allow him to take his seat because of the religious nature of the required oath. In contrast, an 1831 bill in Parliament allowed Jews to register their own births and deaths, thus marking the beginning of the Jewish fight for full human and civil rights in Montreal and the province of Quebec.

One of the earliest Jewish Montrealers was Moses Judah Hays, chief of police from 1849 to 1862, who installed the city's first waterworks. Mrs. Clarence Isaac de Sola (nee Belle Maud Goldsmith) founded several organizations to assist Jewish working women. She served as president of the Victorian Order of Nurses and as a member of the Montreal branch of the Women's Press Club and the McGill Alumni Association. Rabbi Abraham de Sola, professor at McGill University and president of the Natural History Society of Canada was the first Jewish minister in North America to receive such a public appointment.

Montreal's Jews have maintained their adherence to the intrinsic values of Judaism: *kehila* (community), *tzedakah* (good deeds) and *limud* (study). When the early immigrants gained influence and affluence, they moved westward to the mountain and became known as the "uptowners." They established synagogues such as Shaar Hashomayim and Temple Emanuel of Liberal Judaism. Their

benevolent societies were the forerunners of today's Federation CJA, formerly the Allied Jewish Community Services.

The ranks of the less affluent "down-towners" swelled between 1890 and 1911 with waves of immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe.

The Main 1900-1945

The area surrounding St. Lawrence Boulevard, between the French East End and the English West End, was home to immigrants of many ethnic backgrounds. The Jews of this area, known as the Main, became involved in many aspects of city life, promoting active trade unions and public education. They established Hebrew day schools and afternoon schools, the Jewish Public Library, and the Canadian Jewish Congress. In 1912, Abraham Blumenthal was the first Jew elected as alderman in Canada. In 1914, Louis Rubenstein, former Canadian, U.S. and world figure skating champion, was elected to the Montreal City Council.

The richness of the Montreal experience has always provided inspiration and material for artists of all genres. William Raphael is considered to be the first Jewish artist in Canada. Sarah Fisher, an international opera star, sang *Lakmé* at the Monument National Theater in 1918. The Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1940 by Ethel Stark, violinist and conductor. Montreal poets and authors including A.M. Klein, Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton, Shulamis Yellin, Ted Allen, Jerry Wexler, Saul Bellow and Mordechai Richler. Artists include Ernst Neuman, Louis Nuhlstock, Jack Beder, Sam Borenstein, A. Bercovich, Harry Mayerovitch, Sylvia Ary, Moe Reinblatt, Ghitta Caiserman, and Rita Briansky. Dora Wasserman's Yiddish Drama Group of the Sadye Bronfman Centre presents plays by Yiddish authors as well as translations from other languages such as the Yiddish translation of Michel Tremblay's play, "Les Belles Soeurs" (The Sisters-in-Law).

Snowdon and the Neighborhoods West

Montreal is home to the third largest Holocaust Survivor group and has a recently refurbished world class Holocaust museum. The remnants of European Jewry which survived World War II, the large migration of the *Sephardim*, Jews from North Africa, and more recently, Jews from Ethiopia, Russia and Argentina comprise the waves of immigrants to Montreal.

In addition, a large Hasidic community has grown in the *Outremont* section of Montreal. Each group adds to the diversity, complexity and cultural complexion of Montreal Jewry. Montreal's Jewish community is unique in its atmosphere and aura, where the past is treasured and the future is celebrated.

The Jews of New England **By Ronni Karlsberg**

The New England Branch of Women's League covers the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont. One of the largest hubs of Jews in the New England area is Boston, the capital of Massachusetts.

The history of the Boston Jewish Community goes back as far as 1796 when Israel Baer Kursheedt arrived in Boston to find only one Jewish family in town and no synagogue. In 1821, the Jews of Massachusetts were granted full rights of citizenship in the Commonwealth. Records show that in 1840, less than 40 Jews lived in Boston.

The community continued to grow and in 1843 the Kahal Kadosh Ohabei Shalom (The Holy Community Lovers of Peace) Synagogue was established in the South End, followed by the founding of the first Jewish cemetery in 1844. Growing even more, in 1851 the Ohabei Shalom congregation moved into a larger building, boasting of a membership of 125 Jewish families.

During the next several years, various groups of Jews moved into the Boston area – German Jews founded Temple Israel; East Prussian Jews founded Die Israelitische Gemeinde Mishkan Israel; Dutch Jewish began the Beth Eil congregation in the South End. By 1861, there were nearly 1,000 Jews in Boston. By 1869 new Jewish immigrants arrived from the Russian Empire: White Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. Others came from the Austria-Hungary Empire as well as Greece, Turkey, Syria and Morocco.

From 1875 to 1900, several Jewish associations and organizations were established in the Boston area. These included the Young Men's Hebrew Association, the Home for Aged and Infirm Hebrews, The Hebrew Industrial School (with a focus on teaching Eastern European girls how to cook and sew), and the Boston Council for Jewish Women. By 1900, there were approximately 40,000 Jews in Boston.

In the years to follow, the Vilna Congregation, the Harvard Menorah Society and the Federated Jewish Charities were formed. From 1910-1920 Jews began moving to the South End of Boston as well as Roxbury, Blue Hill Avenue, and Grove Hall. Still, the heart of the Jewish community remained in Boston, with the establishment of the Beth Israel Hospital and Hebrew College. As the Jews began moving further and further out from the heart of the city, (1920-1940) the Associated Synagogues of Greater Boston was formed, as was the Jewish Community Council.

During the 1950's and 1960's the Jewish community of Greater Boston continued to expand. The areas of the largest number of Jewish families became Brookline, Newton, Marblehead, Swampscott, Randolph, Sharon, Framingham and Needham, as well as Boston and Cambridge. By

1981 the Synagogue Council was formed to unite Jewish community centers, synagogues and the Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

By 1987 over 6,000 Soviet Jews arrived in Massachusetts, settling in Allston-Brighton, Sharon, Malden and Newton. These communities, like all the other Jewish communities continued to increase until the present time, when there are approximately 227,000 Jews in the Greater Boston Metro Region.

It is worth mentioning several important Jewish Bostonians who made a difference in the Jewish communities in Boston and world wide.

- Leopold Morse – first Jew elected to US Congress from Massachusetts (1876)
- Elihu Stone is made Assistant US Attorney for Massachusetts (1922)
- Abraham Ratschesky is appointed ambassador to Czechoslovakia by Herbert Hoover(1930)
- Frances Slanger serves during the Normandy invasion, where she treats over 3,000 casualties before being killed. She was the first Jewish nurse killed in battle. (1937)
- Felix Frankfurter appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court (1939)
- Charles Wyzanski became the first Jewish judge of the US District Court of MA (1941)
- Abram Sachar becomes president of the newly opened Brandeis University (1948)
- Boston Philanthropist Kivie Kaplan becomes the national president of NAACP (1966)
- Frances Slanger, a nurse with the 45th Army Field Hospital was killed in Normandy in October 21, 1944.

NY STATE BRANCH & 350 YEARS OF JEWS IN NORTH AMERICA

by Lois Silverman and Ellen Jadd

The Sisterhoods of today's NY State Branch are located along the site of the old Erie Canal System which was the first waterway built in the early United State to open the western frontiers-then the Ohio Valley, Illinois, and Michigan. This system of waterways consisted of the Erie Canal and several lateral canals including the Champlain, the Oswego and the Cayuga-Seneca. With the exception of Binghamton and Elmira, every major city in New York falls along the Erie Canal, with nearly 80% of Upstate New York's population living within a 25 miles of the Erie Canal.¹ A similar statistic is true of Upstate NY's Jewish population.

Though most of the earlier Jewish immigrants settled in New York City, a few wandered beyond its limits. Spanish-Portuguese were in Albany as early as 1658. One such settler was Asser Levy who is listed in city records of 1661 as an owner of real estate in the trading post called Albany, NY;² he was granted burgher rights which included being consulted when community decisions were made.³ Yet few Jews are chronicled in what was the colonial frontier before the establishment of the US Republic or the building of the Erie Canal.

Following the War of 1812, improvements in maritime technology and transportation, particularly the use of steam, increased the number of Jews immigrating to New York City from Central Europe. This swelling of New York City's Jewish population and the opening of the Erie Canal encouraged the more adventurous amongst these immigrants to seek a better life in the significant Jewish communities developing along the canal in cities such as Albany, Troy, Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Niagara Falls, and Buffalo and smaller towns such as Herkimer and Auburn between 1820 and the Civil War; likewise Ithaca grew around the Cayuga-Seneca.⁴ With the construction of the railroad on a route parallel to the canal, more Jewish immigrants, just as immigrants of all ethnic and religious groups, pushed westward sharing the restlessness of the times and the urge for better economic opportunities.⁵

Along the canal and railroad lines, each city offered different opportunities. Troy became the worldwide center of machinery manufacturing. Schenectady was dependent mainly upon one industry, and progressed more slowly in comparison with its neighboring city Albany; when the large forerunner of General Electric opened near the canal more Jewish immigrants especially from Germany came and stayed. Amsterdam became a center of the carpet weaving industry. Utica became known for its textile mills. Syracuse became a center of the salt and chemical industry and grew rapidly as did its Jewish community. Rochester became a great industrial city and a center of the clothing industry. Buffalo outstripped most of the cities of NY State because of its rail and water-borne commerce and later because of its electric power and chemical industries.⁶

The story of each community is unique, and yet there are common threads. At first these immigrants were itinerant peddlers to the growing cities along the canal. These young men served the local farm community by bringing wares from the New York City. Over time, many peddlers brought their families to live in the communities which they served and became merchant owners of small stores.⁷ They soon became numerous enough in each community to establish cemeteries, religious schools, and congregations.

The years between 1845 and 1860 saw many religious organization being established in the cities along the Erie Canal. The first congregation, in Schenectady was Sharai Shomayim, founded in 1857 largely by German Jews. Utica's Jewish community dates from 1847 with the first synagogue established in 1848. The first settlement of Jews in Syracuse probably predates 1839, and a religious organization was established there in 1846.⁸ Rochester dedicated a synagogue in 1848.⁹ Temple Beth El, which is still in existence and whose Sisterhood is affiliated with WLCJ, was the first synagogue founded between New York City and Chicago in 1847.¹⁰

The most important Jewish lay leader in New York state outside of New York City during the pre-Civil War period was Mordecai Manuel Noah, playwright, impresario, soldier, adventurer, and diplomat.

In 1825, Noah saw a opportunity to rescue the Jewish people from their world-wide oppressions by settling them in a new homeland on Grand Island, in the Niagara River opposite Tonawanda, now part of Buffalo. Noah persuaded a Christian friend to purchase over 2000 acres of land on the island to lay out a city which he named Ararat, an allusion to his own name. He then appointed himself its first governor. In 1825 he went to Buffalo to dedicate his new "Israelite city." There were not enough boats to permit an actual crossing to the island, and so the cornerstone of this project was brought into an Episcopal church.¹¹ There a dedication ceremony took place with Mr. Noah as governor delivering a long speech, in which he invited world Jewry and American Indians, whom he believed to be the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, to settle in this new city of Ararat. No Jew ever settled on Grand Island; neither did any Native American. No house was ever built there, although a temporary monument which has since been destroyed was erect.¹²

Although the idea sounds preposterous today, Selig Adler, historian of the Niagara region's Jewish experience, pointed out that the plan was not as absurd then as it seemed today. The terminus to the Erie Canal was close to Grand Island, an island which sits between two peaceful countries. Jewish communities worldwide might have contributed capital, settlers, and labor, but there was little enthusiasm and much ridicule for this project from Jews and non-Jews.¹³

Jews of NY State have contributed much to their respective Jewish communities

as well as to Judaism and their country.

SYNAGOGUES OF NY STATE BRANCH AND THEIR DATES OF FOUNDING

City	Synagogue	Yr of founding	Yr of WL Affiliation
Amsterdam	Cong. Sons of Israel	1887	1937
Auburn	Cong. B'nai Israel	1921	1923
Buffalo	Temple Shaarey Tzedek	1920*	1927
DeWitt	Cong. Beth Sholom/Chevra Shas	1962/1977*	1965
Herkimer	Temple Beth Joseph	1937	1945
Ithaca	Temple Beth El	1924	1956
Niagara Falls	Temple Beth Israel	1898	1938
Rochester	Temple Beth David	1954	1954
Rochester	Temple Beth El	1915	1920
Schenectady	Cong. Agudat Achim	1895	1933
Syracuse	Temple Adath Yeshurun	1867	1921
Tonawanda	Temple Beth El	1847	1921
Troy	Temple Beth El	1929	1929
Utica	Temple Beth El	1919	1921

*merged congregation

1 <http://www.canals.state.ny.us/cculture/history/>

Binghamton and Elmira are on the Chenango Canal.

2 http://www.wikiseach.net/en/wikipedia/h/hi/history_of_the_jews_in_the_united_states_colonial_era_1.html#Up-State%20New%20York%20Settlements.

Between that 1661 and the early nineteenth century there are no records of any other Jewish settlers in Albany; in fact there were not enough Jews there to form a congregation until 1838 or have a rabbi until 1846.

3 Jewish Encyclopedia.

4 Lance J. Sussman, Department of History, Binghamton University State University of New York, Binghamton, NY.

5 Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn, The Jewish Community of Utica, 1847-1948.

6 Ibid.

7 <http://www.uticaod.com/news/specialreports/fromfarawaylands/timeline.htm>

8 http://www.wikiseach.net/en/wikipedia/h/hi/history_of_the_jews_in_the_united_states_colonial_era_1.html#Up-state%20New%20York%20Settlements

9 Kohn.

10 Houses of Worship: A Guide to the Religious Architecture of Buffalo, New York, by James Napora. Master of Architecture Thesis. Found at Buffalo Central Library

11 Rabbi Lee J. Levinger, PhD., A History of the Jews in the United States by. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York, 1971 Scott Eberle and Joseph A. Grande in Second Looks: A Pictorial History of Buffalo and Erie County, state that bad weather kept him from holding dedication ceremonies on Grand Island.

12 Ibid.

Today the Ararat Stone is now a part of a permanent display at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society's Neighborhood presentation on Grand Island.

13 Eberle and Grande.

A History of the North Shore Long Island Branch
Of
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

On Thursday, December 21, 1950, the first annual all day conference was held by the Long Island Division of the Metropolitan Branch of National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America. It consisted of forty-three active sisterhoods, representing 10,000 Long Island women. Mrs. Philip Kinberg was President.

A letter dated October 24, 1952 was sent to Mrs. Kinberg, by the Executive Council of National Women's League, stating it has "granted a petition of the Long Island division of the Metropolitan Branch that it be given separate Branch status". We came into being at the convention November, 1952.

As time went on, the Long Island Branch, which was comprised of Queens and all of Long Island, became too big. There were too many sisterhoods and the traveling between all of them was too far. The solution was to create three branches, the North Shore Long Island Branch, the South Shore Long Island Branch and the Eastern Long Island Branch.

As of November, 1959, the North Shore Long Island Branch consisted of thirty-eight sisterhoods. There were two branch conferences, one in the fall and one in the spring. In 1961, only the Spring Conference was retained and it ran for two days. With the Spring Conference of 1974, the North Shore Long Island Branch affiliation name was no longer National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America. It became part of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, our own delegated women's organization.

The first volume and the first edition of the Voice was November 1963, when Lillian Katz was President and Lily Lasky was editor-in-chief. Here we are forty-one years later still reading the Voice, still meeting, still looking for new ideas, new insights and taking advantage of our meetings, workshops and seminars.

Through the years our branch has had monthly meetings consisting of workshops, and dynamic speakers, discussing the current interesting topics of the day, or specifics of our branch activities. We have a dinner that recognizes women who work for Torah Fund. We also recognize the women who work hard in their sisterhoods and we glean ideas from them so other sisterhoods can benefit.

In recent years our Branch has changed. In Queens especially, the population has changed. Immigrants from Asia and Africa have caused the Jewish neighborhoods to suffer, and synagogues have either merged or closed. The result is that our Branch has Only twenty-five sisterhoods at present.

This year finds the North Shore Long Island Branch women still "learning, living, linking and sharing" and being an integral part of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

Gladys Blumenthal

The Jews of Northern California by David Eliaser

"There is Gold in California!" With those words came a flood of people from throughout the world to stake their claims. Many of the Jews who came did not actually pan for gold themselves; rather, many came to serve as shop owners and suppliers to those in the gold fields. The most famous of these merchants was Levi Strauss who developed a line of strong pants made of denim for the miners. His company became a fixture in San Francisco, producing clothing in the city until last year.

Religious services were held in the City in 1849. By 1851, there was a Jewish community in San Francisco consisting of a kosher butcher, Jewish cemetery and congregation (Emanuel of primarily those of western European and Sephardic origins) with 42 members. A second congregation (Sherith Israel which served Jews from eastern Europe) had formed by the middle of that year. By 1855 French Journalist, Daniel Levy wrote the following words back home, *"Among all the areas in the world, California is possibly the one in which the Jews are more widely dispersed. I do not know of one village, one hamlet, one settlement of any kind, either in the North, mining area, or the South, the region of Ranchos, where they have not established themselves."* Jews could be found among the early settlers of Marysville, Sonora, Columbia, Nevada City, Placerville, Stockton, Jackson, and Mokelumne Hill. Jewish brothers Charles and Michael H. deYoung in 1965 found Northern California's premier daily newspaper, the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Since Jews spread themselves throughout Northern California, they never concentrated themselves into separate neighborhoods. Because Jews were all over the place, new practices became necessary. The early congregations formed with Orthodox principles evolved into Reform congregations. Even today, immigrants from the East Coast have difficulty adjusting to Jewish life in Northern California. By the 1880's there were significant permanent synagogues built in San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, Oakland, San Jose, and San Leandro (a building that still exists at the site of affiliated Conservative congregation, Beth Shalom).

Since the beginning, Jews have been leaders of commerce and civic affairs. Store names such as I Magnin, Joseph Magnin, and Gottlihalts had their origins in Northern California. Adolph Sutro became mayor of San Francisco in 1894. Having made his money developing a specialized tunnel technology for draining mines in the gold fields, he settled in San Francisco. At one time Adolph Sutro owned one-twelfth of the acreage of San Francisco. He purchased the Cliff House in the early 1880s, and one thousand acres of land facing the ocean, now called Sutro Heights. He built the Sutro Saltwater Baths and planted Sutro Forest.

Northern California is the proud home of California's two U.S. Senators, Dianne Feinstein (from San Francisco) and Barbara Boxer (from Marin County). They are part of a long line of Jewish women active in community affairs. Forty-four percent of Congresswomen serving California between 1920 and 1990 were Jewish. The nation's first Jewish congresswoman was Florence Prag Kahn. When her husband died in 1924, a special election was held and Kahn began her first term in Congress. A Republican conservative, Kahn was the first woman to serve on the Military Affairs Committee, where she worked for the military installations of her district. She played a major role in shaping the infrastructures of the area. Her mother, Mary Goldsmith Prag was one of three Jewish women who were leaders in the women's equality movement. She was a leader for equal pay for men and women teachers, secured the right for married teachers to work and began a movement to establish California's teacher pension system.

A contemporary of Mary Goldsmith Prag was Polish-born Hannah Marks Solomons. In 1868 she presided over the first Jewish fund-raising fair in San Francisco. She was a co-founder of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of San Francisco, which worked across class lines to improve working conditions for women. Her daughter, Selina Solomons was a leader in the movement that concluded with women gaining the right to vote in California in 1911.

Stretching back to its historical roots, the Jewish community continues to flourish in unique ways. Today, there are about a quarter million adult Jews in this region. Jews make up between two and three per cent of the total Northern California population. There are two major Jewish museums. With over 30,000 objects in its collection the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley is the third largest Jewish Museum in the country. The recently renamed Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco now focuses its commitment to present contemporary perspectives on Jewish art, history, culture, and ideas through exhibitions, educational activities, public programs, discussion, and debate. There is an expansion in the numbers of Jewish day schools and vibrant programs for Jewish teens. The West Coast's oldest Jewish Community Center has reopened with a large modern facility in San Francisco.

The Jewish population continues to be spread throughout Northern California. Therefore regional Jewish newspapers, such as the *Jewish Community News of the Silicon Valley* and regional organizations including Women's League provide a necessary link for Jews who have scattered throughout Northern California.

Northern New Jersey Branch History

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, New Jersey was an agrarian state, sparsely populated by farmers from European nations. They were helped monetarily by government agencies to settle the land. The only other major industry were the silk mills of Paterson and vicinity.

We have since become the home of the Pharmaceutical Industry, Publishing companies, Home Office of Worldwide Corporations, Manufacturing Houses, Universities and the "Gateway to New York City, Connecticut, and all points east, west, north, south.

When Mathilde Schechter "21" founded Women's League her "friends" from New Jersey helped in every facet of work as a State Branch. The Miriam Sisterhood of Oheb Shalom Synagogue in West Orange joined on June 10, 1918 to become the first Sisterhood in our August group.

In 1929, Northern New Jersey became a Branch in its own right, as the state was broken up into the Northern, Central and Southern New Jersey Branches.

Our territory contained farmland, summer recreation areas, big cities and the Route 17 highway which led to the Catskills. The Jewish people from New York had to travel Route 17 to reach upstate New York vacationland and capital of their state, Albany. These travelers recognized the beauty of New Jersey and began to move west, over the Hudson River to be close to the city but live in the "country," or suburbs. In fact, we have often been called the "Bedroom" of New York City.

As a Branch we have been loyal workers in the Vineyards of the Lord and Women's League. We have held National Office and Chairs since our founding and always volunteer our time and services to the National office when needed.

Our history is rich with active Synagogues, Sisterhoods, Solomon Schechter Day School and High Schools and devotion to Conservative Judaism. We have lent our women to many and varied religious and secular organizations and businesses where the teachings and activities of Women's League have aided them in doing and accomplishing in their respective activities.

Women's League is the mirror through which we see ourselves, and our place in the sun that is Conservative Judaism.

Evelyn Auerbach

Jews of the Pacific Northwest by Marla Weiner

The first Jews to reach the Far West were young men from the southern German states seeking relief from oppression and new opportunities. Having little capital many became itinerant pack peddlers, wandering from town to town selling what they could. However it would not be long before Jews were involved in every aspect of economic growth. The west held unlimited possibilities and it was said that anyone with a dollar in his pocket and an idea in his head could try something that he had never tried before. Jews found roles to play in banking, agriculture, ranching, rails, road building, real estate and other enterprises simply by responding to local needs.

In 1849 the first Jewish settlers of note came into the Oregon Country. They were German Jews Jacob Goldsmith and Lewis May. They stayed in what is now Portland, Oregon for about two years and were followed by Simon and Jacob Blumauer who opened a general store in what is now downtown Portland. They quickly established themselves as pillars of the community. Simon was even President of Temple Beth Israel, the first Jewish house of worship in the Pacific Northwest.

Oregon saw its share of colorful Jewish settlers. Among them were Henry Heppner and Aaron Rose, for whom the towns of Heppner and Roseburg are named. Heppner donated monies to build schoolhouses, roads and the local fort. Aaron Rose also was involved in road building and public works. He eventually served in the territorial legislature. Bernard Goldsmith fought Indians, made a fortune, and served as Mayor of Portland from 1869-1871. The State of Washington also saw its share of colorful characters with the likes Morris Sachs, a resident of Port Townsend who was elected a superior court judge on the promise he would end games of chance such as faro, a promise he abandoned the minute he took office.

The 1880's saw a new wave of immigration to the west from Eastern Europe. Rumanians, Poles, and Russians came west looking for opportunities. They built synagogues, created B'nai B'rith lodges, built a Jewish Community Center, and formed service organizations like Parkway and Rambles. A few years later another migration,

this time Jews from the Isle of Rhodes and Turkey formed the vast Sephardic communities of Oregon and Washington.

The Jewish community of Oregon has always been politically active. Since the 1860's there have been 21 mayors of fourteen Oregon cities and towns. Jews have been active in the state legislature. Julius Meier served as Governor from 1930-1934 and helped stabilize the state's economy. Neil Goldschmidt, former mayor of Portland became Secretary of Transportation under the Carter Administration. In 1956 Richard Neuberger, a liberal Democrat from Portland was elected to the US Senate. He helped personify the identification of Jews with the state's values of conservation and reform.

The Jews of Western Canada
by Yael Tischler (Vancouver, B.C.)

In Russia, in 1881 when revolutionaries assassinated Czar Alexander II, the country was plunged into turmoil. The reactionary government blamed the Jews. The first large-scale pogrom occurred and the government passed the anti-Semitic "May Laws." Jews all over Russia began to immigrate in large numbers.

The first Jews arrived in Western Canada because of the immigration policy of Sir Alexander T. Galt, the Canadian High Commissioner in London, who wanted to attract settlers to farm the territories newly opened up by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. In May and June of 1882, the first Jews arrived in Western Canada via Winnipeg, Manitoba, the so-called "Gateway to the West." They established themselves as farmers, first in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but slowly spread westward to Alberta by the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1894, the first High Holiday service was held in Calgary's old Masonic Hall. In 1908, Alberta's earliest Jewish colonies founded a Jewish school, the Tolman School, in Trochu. Trochu's most famous teacher, Elias Senagus, also doubled as a traveling *shohet* and *mohel*. In 1917, as a result of a community effort, Trochu built a synagogue beside the school.

Few Jews crossed the Rocky Mountains into British Columbia, a province "traditionally inhabited by rugged individualists." Yet, remarkably, some Jews fit into this mold. Of note are Philip Alderberg, Justice of the Peace in the Peach River District,

circa 1915, and Hannah Director, chairwoman of the Board of School Trustees in Prince George, and the first Jewish woman elected to public office in Canada. Hannah Director and her husband, Isadore, later moved to Vancouver where they founded British Columbia's first Anglo-Jewish newspaper in 1925.

From 1933-1948, due to active fascism and anti-Semitism in the country, Canada admitted an embarrassingly low number of Jewish immigrants. Yet, with the war over and Israel established, Canada again changed its immigration policy. Today, the Canadian West is alive with Jewry, most of whom came in the wave following the war.

Today, the Pacific Northwest remains an area of increasing Jewish population. It is an area of great beauty from the plains of Alberta to the Rocky Mountains, to the thundering Pacific Ocean. Its cities are welcoming and offer a full and vibrant Jewish life.

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HOW THE WEST WAS WON (JEWISH THAT IS)

by Marjorie Pressman - May 2, 2004

Los Angeles was founded September 4, 1781 by Spaniards who named it El Pueblo de nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles, the town of our Lady the Queen of Angels. From the beginning the area was multi-racial and was controlled by San Gabriel Mission. During this rancho period Catholicism predominated. The first known Jew - Jacob Frankfort arrived around 1848 after the Mexican war. After a peace treaty with Mexico was signed California became a state in 1850.

At the time of the Gold Rush in 1850 there were 8 recognizable Jews in Los Angeles. Young Jews came to seek their fortunes. By 1860 there were 5,000 Jews in the city. Many were merchants - with names such as Lazard, Kremer, Elias, Meyers, Newmark. The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed in 1871, later to become Jewish Family Service. Although there was some anti-semitism, Jews rose to positions of leadership in the general community - Maurice Kremer was first city treasurer in 1859, and in 1870 there was a Jew in the Police Department. Meyer Newmark was City Attorney in 1862, and there was a Jew on the first City Council. It is interesting that before there were synagogues there was the first Jewish Cemetery in 1885 at Chavez Ravine (now the home of the Dodgers baseball team). The first temple (reform) was B'nai B'rith Temple, later to become Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 1st orthodox synagogue, the Olive Street Shul, opened its doors in 1903, and Conservative Sinai Temple in 1906 welcomed its first rabbi, Isidore Myers, whose daughter Carmel became a Hollywood movie star.

The first wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe began in 1880. The turn of the century greeted the rise of Jewish neighborhoods and establishment of major Jewish organizations Jewish Home for the Aged, City of Hope (to deal with tuberculosis) the Jewish Federation and Vista Del Mar Orphanage. Boyle Heights and West Adams emerged as centers of Jewish Life. By 1920, the Jewish population numbered 20,000, with

post World War I producing another influx, swelling the numbers to 70,000. The Jews made contributions to the movie industry, education, real estate, manufacturing, banking, fashion and apparel, medicine and law and broadcasting.

Post World War II brought another increase, when many soldiers saw California, liked it and came to settle, swelling the ranks along with 30,000 survivors, to number over 150,000. Some early names of leaders included Ben Platt and his Music Co, becoming a part of the May Co., Ben Meyer and Union Bank, Julius Fligelman and L.A. Period Furniture, Dr. Louis Reynolds, and many Jewish names in film industry, such as Jesse Lasky, Samuel Goldfish (Goldwyn), Adolph Zukor, Marcus Loew, Louis B. Mayer, Carl Laemmle and the Warner Brothers. Jews were not accepted in cultural and social clubs and not prominent in politics. The first woman elected to the City Council, some 45 years ago, was young and Jewish and a long-time member of Temple Beh Am, Rosalind Wyman. Since that time more Jews have entered the political arena.

In the 1940's synagogue life grew from 5 conservative synagogues, a like number of reform, a few Orthodox to a vibrant Jewish community, now with a population of 600,000, surpassed in numbers only by New York, which seemed to fulfill the 1945 prophecy of Dr. Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who said: "In the near future there will be three main foundation stones for the Jewish people: Jerusalem, New York and Los Angeles."

The Pacific Southwest Branch of Women's League was founded in 1946, with Mrs. Augusta Kohn as founding president. She was the wife of Rabbi Jacob Kohn, rabbi of Sinai Temple. His first assistant rabbi was Jacob Pressman, whose wife, Marjorie immediately became active in Women's League. When she asked Mrs. Kohn, "Do you have a Torah Fund chairman?" Mrs. Kohn responded, "We do now - it's YOU!!

The branch started with 5 Sisterhoods, and through the years it has grown to a present total of 43, although there were as many as 55. Our branch encompasses Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada.

In 1947, the concept of a University of Judaism (proposed by Dr. Mordecai Kaplan), under the leadership of Dr. Simon Greenberg, the Vice Chancellor of the Seminary, Rabbi Moshe Davis and Rabbi Pressman as the first registrar, began to be realized. The first Chairman of the University was prominent movie producer, Dore Schary. Although reluctant to accept the position he was challenged by the young Rabbi Pressman who said he would come to Schary's Brentwood home twice a week and tutor his children if Schary would accept. Schary said "I accept the package".

The development of the school had a great impact on the activities of the Conservative Synagogues and Sisterhoods. It gave us an address, a place to have meetings, classes and a focal point for raising funds for Torah Fund. Our first Torah Fund event took place in 1947 in a beautiful garden setting with 200 women (from 11 Sisterhoods) present and a total of \$2000 raised.

Over the years the University "home" moved from 612 S. Ardmore to Sunset Boulevard (the former Hollywood Athletic Club) to their final home on Mulholland Drive where we still have our offices. We have had 31 presidents, a group that is cohesive to this day, who try to meet once a year.

In 1953, for the first time, one of our board, Marjorie Pressman, was invited to New York to participate in a panel for Torah Fund. We were finally on the map and National began to take the "Wild West" seriously and we were recognized for our zeal in the cause of Jewish education.

We have shown remarkable growth and strength. By 1956 we were 28 Sisterhoods. The jewel in the crown of our events was in 1956 when we had two days of luncheons at the famous Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel, honoring Cecil B. DeMille when he produced the film "The Ten Commandments". Charlton Heston accepted the award for DeMille on the second day. The late actor Jeff Chandler appeared in our program both days. In attendance were 1100 women. Over the years we had some prominent honorees - Monty Hall, David Hartman, Ruta Lee, Marilyn Hall, Lew Ayres, Steve Allen, Zubin Mehta, Gordon Davidson, Michael Tilson Thomas, Nehemiah Persoff, Dore Schary among others. We gradually phased out the big hotel luncheons and opted for Torah Study Days as culmination of our Torah Fund events.

We have seen the emergence of significant institutions - Camp Ramah in Ojai, California, Los Angeles Hebrew High School, several day schools: Akiba Academy (Sinai Temple), Rabbi Jacob Pressman Academy (Beth Am), Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School, day schools at Adat Ari El, Valley Beth Shalom.

We take pride in our developing new young leaders, in our role as #one in Torah Fund, and funding the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, which is emerging as a significant Rabbinical School and see a future for our Conservative Movement here in Southern California.

History of the Jews in San Diego

Since 1850 Jews have contributed greatly to San Diego. Louis Rose was the first Jewish settler. At various times Rose was postmaster, a member of the school board, city council and board of supervisors. He donated land for the first Jewish cemetery and helped found the first Jewish congregation, Adath Jeshurun, in 1861.

This later became Congregation Beth Israel, whose first president was Marcus Schiller. In 1889 Schiller presided over the building of the first Temple Beth Israel which is still in existence and part of the collection of Victorian buildings in Heritage Park. Schiller, who arrived in San Diego in 1856, was elected twice to the City Board of Trustees and was instrumental in setting aside 1400 acres of land for Balboa Park, the home to many museums and the world famous San Diego Zoo.

The first recorded Jewish religious observance (*Yom Kippur*, 1851) in southern California was held in the home of Lewis Franklin who was the first Jewish attorney in San Diego. He and his brother, Maurice, owned the largest structure in Old Town, the three-story Franklin House, which was a hotel, saloon and pharmacy.

As the Jewish population grew, so did the ancillary groups. Federated Jewish Charities, later the Jewish Welfare Society, was founded in 1912. The forerunner of the San Diego Jewish Press Heritage began publication in 1914. Many other institutions included: United Jewish Fund, later to be United Jewish Federation (1936); Hebrew Home (1944); the first Jewish Community Center (1946); and Jewish Family Services (1962). Jewish educational opportunities expanded with the founding of San Diego Hebrew Day School in 1963 and the Judaic Studies Program at San Diego State (1970) and University of California San Diego (1977).

In 1930 the Jewish population in San Diego was 2,000. Today's Jewish community of over 80,000 continues to contribute to the quality of life in San Diego, just as the original pioneers who have left their mark on our daily lives. There are over 25 congregations, ranging from Humanistic Judaism to *Orthodox*. There are several day schools in the city. The community sponsors Jewish events throughout the year, including a film festival, a book fair and an arts festival. San Diego has had Jewish congressional representatives, superintendent of schools, a sheriff, and a mayor.

Finally, in 1980, the Jewish Historical Society of San Diego was founded. Thanks to Stanley Schwartz and that group who provided material for this article.

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350 years of Philadelphia Jewry

Little has been written about the early Jews of Philadelphia that their real contributions as persons and as a religious community have been overlooked. From the earliest days they were like other men and women who built our nation: some rich, more poor; some enterprising, many satisfied with little; some pious, others without religious feeling; most of them patriotic, a few indifferent – in this case Jews – clothed in the dignity of citizenship and enjoying the satisfaction of worshipping freely;

As the third largest Jewish Community in the United States, Philadelphia has played a major role in helping to shape American Jewish life. Some of the most influential, if still largely unsung American Jewish figures made their homes in Philadelphia: Hyam Salomon, Financier of the Revolutionary War; the great founder and innovator, Isaac Lesser; Rebecca Gratz, believed to be the model for Sir Walter Scott's Heroine in "Ivanhoe"; Mayer Sulzberger, the first president of the American Jewish Committee; Cyrus Adler, a leading light of the Jewish Theological Seminar and Dropsie College; the great film pioneer Siegmund Lubin; talented artists as Clifford Odets, Noam Chomsky, I.F. Stone, Marc Blitzstein. Here major national institutions, including the Conservative movement, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Publication Society, Dropsie and Gratz Colleges, and the American Jewish Historical Society were conceived or founded. Here the first sermon in English was preached, here the author of "Hatikvah" lived and here the hymn "Adon Olom, was composed.

The first Jewish family arrived in 1735, Nathan and Isaac Levy, American born merchants from New York. As the numbers increased communal religious services were formed out of which Mikveh Israel, a Sephardic congregation, grew in the late 1770s. Both Nathan and Isaac Levy originally founders of Mikveh Israel, were later among the founders of Rodeph Sholom which began as an Ashkenazic Orthodox synagogue, by the end of the 19th century, Rodeph Sholom as decidedly Reform. Those arriving in Philadelphia during the eighteenth century were largely merchants and importers of goods from England, and the East and West Indies.

Prior to the War of Independence Jews could not participate in the political life of Philadelphia, nor were they allowed to hold office, for the Christian oath had to be sworn to. Yet, the trend for fuller freedom inherent in the Revolution promised much. A change in the economic aspect of the Philadelphia Jewish Community had taken place as a result of the steady immigration. There were now Jewish cordwainers, soap and starch makers, glaziers, peddlers, and other petty tradesmen. A tiny Jewish proletariat formed a nucleus within the larger colonial proletariat. It was these men who formed the backbone of the community. In the busy commerce of the capital they competed with non-Jews and offered their service to all. The records show ten Jewish brokers and forty Jewish merchants active in Philadelphia, men of "high visibility".

An immigrant from Westphalia, Isaac Lesser, was named Hazan of Mikvah Israel in 1829. Isaac Lesser was considered the greatest creative force of 19th century Jewry. He was responsible for the development of the printing of Hebrew language books. He founded the "Occident and American Jewish Advocate, the nation's first English-Jewish publication. His "Hebrew Reader" of 1838 was credited as the first juvenile speller for Jews in America, and his was the first translation of the Pentateuch as a bilingual, vocalized text. In 1845 he launched a new organization, The American Jewish Publication Society to provide a publication under Jewish auspices.

At the same time he advocated an all-day Jewish school to answer the need for a program of Jewish education. In this effort he was joined by Rebecca Gratz who has already founded the first non-synagogal Jewish charitable organization in the United States – The Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, to aid poor Jewish families. She recognized the need for providing Jewish education for the poor and together with women of Mikveh Israel, founded the Hebrew Sunday School Society – free and open to all, especially girls. With Lesser's backing among others, Rebecca Gratz opened the Jewish Foster Home. As the numbers of immigrants grew, there were a number of poor, destitute homeless children who needed a home as well as a religious education.

Free resumption of Trans Atlantic shipping was bringing new immigrants from Europe and among these were, of course, Jews. As Jews always took care of their own, the Jews of Philadelphia were determined to do what they could. As Jews in need always went to the synagogue for help, Mikveh Israel organized a new society, the Esrath Orechim or Society for the Destitute Strangers – the first Philadelphia Jewish charitable organization and the earliest one in America was created, and Hyam Salomon was its treasurer. His estate continued to underwrite the "tsedaka" of this society.

The original Pennsylvania Constitution contained a section denying Jews the right to hold office in the General Assembly. Petitions were filed and ultimately; the restriction was eliminated. An interesting result of the removal of political and social prejudice, a large percentage of the descendants Philadelphia Jews became Christians, through intermarriage, there being more Jewish young men than Jewish young women.

In the fields of authors, actors and patrons of the arts, the Jews of Philadelphia were participants, but not largely originators. The pattern of Jewish cultural life remained the same, due in measure to the small size of the community, absence of scholars with time to devote to scholarship and the direction of individuals towards establishing themselves and becoming Americans. The generation of Isaac Lesser would bring the change. Now they were found on the Boards of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, libraries, Trustees of University of Pennsylvania.

The native-born generation quickly and easily made its way in the social and business life of the city. Like any other Philadelphians, they were of colonial stock. They achieved position and affluence, but they also inherited and maintained the respect which the Christian majority rendered them as Jews. Not handicapped by language difficulties, they were also to participate fully in the typically American game of politics as soon as they had the qualifications of age. They went to universities and became doctors and lawyers; they were placed on the board of directors of Philadelphia corporations; they helped found art academies and libraries, joined the army and navy when a war came, and promoted and contributed to civic enterprises of all kinds.

One of the most outstanding Jewish doctors in this period was Isaac Hays, a graduate of the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, an ophthalmologist, the first to prescribe cylindrical lenses to correct astigmatism and inventing a knife-needle to operate on cataracts. A multifaceted person, he lectured on natural science as a member of the Academy of Natural Science, became one of the original members of the Franklin Institute, one of the founders of the American Medical Association and wrote its code of ethics. Various Jews entered the allied fields of medicine, pharmacology, the education of the deaf.

The structure and social composition of Philadelphia Jewry were greatly changed, as was American Jewry in general, by the waves of Eastern European immigration that began on a large scale in the 1880s. The vast increase in Jewish population in Philadelphia from an estimated 15,000 in 1880 to 70,000 in 1904 and 200,000 in 1920 – changed not only the size but the norms of Jewish expression, including religious expression. The thousands that poured off boats settled in blind, bantox alleys with hydrants and cisterns in a small area of South Philadelphia, to become Philadelphia's equivalent of New York's Lower East Side. They were spared tenement living because of the city's pattern of row houses. They were different kind of Jews – in addition to being poor, they dressed differently and spoke a strange language – Yiddish. Many practices what seemed a primitive form of Judaism. Between 1880 and 1900, more synagogues were founded than the city could boast in its entire history. The services were in Hebrew, but the pronunciation and intonation were different – the services more personal, less inhibited and to many, quite indecorous.

Most of the "older elite" worried about how the Russian Jews would affect their own standing in the community. Part of the reason for their movement north and west of Broad street was to get away from the "blight" that hit the Street in the form of a "diaspora from the ghetto" In spite of the limitations of background and the difficulties of adjustment, the newcomers possessed "total commitment to Jewish identity, complete faith in the American promise and an almost inexhaustible source of repressed energy."

A rich and vital cultural life flourished in Hebrew and Yiddish. A lively Jewish press emerged. Immigrants and their children attended lectures in English and Hebrew at the YMHA and patronized the Jewish Theatre. Organizational life in the city took on a new vigor. Major new business enterprises came into being. From the onset, despite the feelings of distaste, the older German elite came to feel an obligation to help their poor cousins. There was no mistaking the patronizing quality of this work. Philadelphia's upper class recognized Russian Jews were destined, in the words of Henry Morias, to be "representatives of the race of Israel in the United States". Another factor driving this effort was the sense of common peril growing out of a rising tide of anti-semitism. Upper-class and seemingly well integrated German Jews soon learned that a Jew is always a Jew and is an outsider.

These sociological and psychological changes propelled the Philadelphia Jewish elite into its most creative period of community development. Its leaders played the most significant role in developing many major institutions of Jewish life as a way of reaching and attaching the newcomers to Jewish life: i.e. The American Jewish Committee, The Jewish Theological Seminary, Gratz and Dropsie Colleges, Jewish Publication Society. Philadelphia Jewry was a community of the continuity of traditional cultures.

In the period between the wars many of newcomers had moved out of working-class occupations into white-collar jobs and business of their own, moving out of the "Ghetto" to other areas of the city. By this time also, the pattern of anti-semitism and social discrimination had developed. The upward mobility, particularly of "foreigners" created a very real anxiety about the Jewish "invasion". Doors were closed to positions in law firms, banks. Segregation appeared on college campus and restrictions existed on entrance to medical and dental schools. It was left to the Jewish community to develop their own social clubs, law firms, banks, and large businesses such as large supermarket chains, theatres, real estate development, and yes, even hospitals. The Jewish Hospital, (Albert Einstein Medical Center) was one of the answers.

As the battle against anti-semitism merged with the concern for civil rights, liberal politics became the secular passion of the Jewish community. By the mid thirties Jews had begun to desert the Republican Party and enlist in the New Deal Democratic Party. Caught up in their upward climb in American life, Jews nevertheless threw themselves into a variety of liberal, social and political causes. This relationship with the political Left was to become a source of controversy. By the late 1940s as the Cold War with the Soviet Union heated up, the Communist Issue came forward. Jews in Philadelphia were thrown on the defense during the McCarthy Red Scares of the 1950s. The vast majority of the Philadelphia Jews were not Communists, but a high proportion of Philadelphia Communists were Jews. The havoc caused at this time led to the formation of the Americans for Democratic Action, a consequence of broad significance to the Philadelphia Jewish Community.

The ADA broadened the interaction of Jews with important elements of the WASP society. Jews from immigrant and working class background were able to broaden their civic skills by interacting with business and civic leaders, an entry into modern society. With the heightened civil rights atmosphere of the early 1960s racial and religious barrier became incongruous. Beginning in the mid-1960s to the next decade, changes slowly became more apparent both in employment opportunities and social acceptance and through the 70's and 80's the number of Jews in major law firms, socially exclusive clubs, and like large-scale business organizations, rapidly increased..

At the same time Jews began to move out of the inner city into all outer reaches of the city as well as the surrounding suburbs. In the decades following WWII there appeared to be decline in anti-semitism. This led to a growing affluence in the Jewish Community. During the decades from 1960 to the present time, Jews have moved in the main stream of every aspect of community life in Philadelphia. They became prominent in civic philanthropy, contributing to major cultural venues and educational institutions at the highest level. The expansion of the Jewish role in Philadelphia arts and culture was preceded by social changes on the college campuses, in the political arena and in organized charity. Universities had heavier Jewish enrollment, people whose contacts were previous limited were working with a new Democratic coalition of Jews and Old Family Philadelphians. The joining of the Jewish Federation with the United Way integrated the city's philanthropic work.

The cultural life of Jewish Philadelphia was always an important aspect of Jewish life: music, operatic and Yiddish Theatre, "Tummlers" in vaudeville, long before Jewish entrance into American Society. But with the advent of advancement, the level increased with the investment of sums at an astonishing level. Jewish Philadelphians developed radio and TV broadcasting, produced the TV Guide (America's largest circulation magazine), underwrote various regular concert series, founded the Pennsylvania Ballet and underwrote the Planetarium, as well as major exhibits at the Art Museum, and these are just a few. In the "popular arts" Jews represented most of Philadelphia's impresarios, promoters, etc, as well as most of past movie theaters. The Philadelphia Orchestra has always had a sizable percentage of Jewish artists. The story of Jewish involvement and leadership in the cultural life of Philadelphia is evidence of the determined efforts of the Jewish Community to gain acceptance into the society at large.

They "arrived" in the political life of Philadelphia with the election of Jewish representatives in the City Council, State and National Senators and Congressmen as well as the Mayor of Philadelphia and later Governors of the State, and Judges of the Common Pleas Court.

The religious character also established itself as a major influence on the Philadelphia Jewish community. The number of synagogues increased in all areas of Jewish life. Philadelphia became a major center for Conservative Judaism, which it helped pioneer, as well as the establishment of large Reform and many Orthodox

congregations. The growth of Reconstruction Judaism led to the establishment of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Seminary in the suburbs of Philadelphia.

The issue of Zionism was always a debated subject among Philadelphia Jewry from the earliest time. Much effort was undertaken to help those Jews caught in Europe during the Holocaust, but in trying to get release of Jews, shipment of arms, etc to "Palestine" and immigration to the United States of survivors. Those who were one apathetic to the idea of Jewish Homeland, were now convinced of its necessity after the Holocaust, but not for themselves. For the masses of Philadelphia Jews, Israel would be an "article of faith" and after, 1948, support as an "insurance policy" against extreme anti-semitism, and a central pillar of Jewish activity.

In the late 1970's Philadelphia Jewry faced the influx of around 6000 Soviet Jews, Chosen by them "because it has a large Jewish population and cultural attractions such as museums, musical activities and a reputed Old World atmosphere." Reunion with relatives already living here was also a major factor. Most Soviet Jews coming to Philadelphia were very well educated and highly acculturated into Russian/Soviet culture, some with a strong sense of their Jewishness as a reaction to anti-semitism. Integration into the Philadelphia Jewish community faced many problems and despite the progress this group had made through the years both economically and socially the two communities still remain largely distant from each other

Toward the end of the 20th century the Jewish population of Philadelphia has begun as more and more Jews move out of the city to the outlying areas of Chester, Bucks and Montgomery Counties. The Philadelphia Northeast, which had the greatest concentration has shown the largest loss. Demographics have caused the closing of some synagogues and mergers of others with synagogues in other areas. Only Center City with a population of older professionals, empty nesters and young singles has shown an increase. In addition, the increase in the intermarriage rate has brought about a lower engagement of Jewish engagement. The bright spots are the bursts of Jewish intellectual and cultural vigor in the American Jewish History Museum and revived Philadelphia Jewish Archive Center. Jewish studies exist at Drexel, Temple University and University of Pennsylvania, and thriving Jewish Day Schools, Conservative and Orthodox

In a city with a long history of high social barriers and forbidding aristocratic pressures, Philadelphia Jews, over the many years of their settlement in the city, became a force to reckon within the cultural, political and economic life of the region. From the poorest neighborhoods of original immigrant settlement in South and West Philadelphia, Jews have made the move from "outsiders" to "insiders" Philadelphia Jewry has played a proud role in recasting the Jewish Community in America.

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SEABOARD BRANCH, WLCJ

Submitted by Estelle Jacobs, Adas Israel Sisterhood, Washington, DC, 2004

We span the East Coast beginning directly below the Mason-Dixon Line in Maryland, founded 1634, through Virginia, the first of the thirteen colonies and founded 1607, to North Carolina, founded 1653. Our Branch also boasts the inclusion of our Nation's Capital.

Jews made their first appearance in Baltimore, Maryland previous to the American Revolution but their entry was sporadic until the early days of the Republic. Although Benjamin Levy is known to have settled in Baltimore by 1773, the foundations of the early community were laid in the 1770's with the settlement of the Etting and Solomon families of Pennsylvania. Baltimore's entire Jewish population in 1790 may have amounted to no more than thirty individuals.

Notables:

Henrietta Szold, 1860-1945 Hadassah's founder, was a native Baltimorean.

David Einhorn. When David Einhorn unsparingly denounced slavery as the cancer of the country from his pulpit in Baltimore, Maryland, he placed his life in danger from a mob and had to flee to Philadelphia. This was but one in a long series of controversies for the radical Reform Rabbi and theologian.

Isidor Rayner: -1850-1912 Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Isidor Raynor has the distinction of having been the first Jew to be suggested for the candidacy of the president of the United States.

The early life in Virginia was very rural and consisted mainly of landowners and laborers. There were few opportunities for Jews to ply a trade. Also, the Jews didn't come to Virginia in numbers until after the Revolution. The colony had an established church and the population from the start was not as mixed as other colonies, but rather homogeneous. The colony was, therefore, far from inviting to Jewish settlers both from a social and economic point of view. Congregation Beth Shalom was organized in Richmond shortly after the Revolutionary War. The service was that of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, though many of the organizers were of German origin. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Richmond's congregation was the youngest in America. Only one Jew, Isaiah Isaacs, is known to have been a permanent resident prior to the Revolution. As late as 1782, it had no more than a half dozen identifiable Jewish souls.

Notables:

Isaac Leiser, 1805-1868 One of the most notable Jewish personalities of the nineteenth century, was born in Prussia and came to the United States in 1824. Following the assassination of Lincoln, Leiser officiated at the Jewish community's memorial service for the slain President in Washington, D.C.

-Rachel Levy-1769-1831-Monticello, Virginia, the home and burial ground of President Thomas Jefferson, is also the last resting place, one hundred yards away, of Rachel Levy, mother of a unique figure in American history, Commodore Uriah P. Levy.

Sir Moses Jacob Ezekiel-1844-1917-Knighted by the emperor of Germany, the king of Italy, close friend of Franz Liszt and King William 11 of Wuertemberg, Ezekiel in his day was compared to Michelangelo. Both he and his father were born in Richmond.

Jews have called North Carolina home since 1585, when Joachim Ganz arrived on Sir Walter Raleigh's second expedition to the New World. The Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina was created to preserve and share the four-hundred year old story of Jews who have lived in the Tar Heel State ever since.

The Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and Rosenzweig Gallery, through its collection and outreach programs promotes understanding of the Jewish people by educating Jews and the general public on the history, culture, and religion of the Jewish people and by encouraging appreciation of the beauty of Jewish ritual and practice

In 1815, Alfred Mordecai, the son of a middle-class Jewish family from Warrenton, N.C., applied as a cadet to West Point, "a bold bid for a Jew." Despite high odds, Alfred was accepted- another step in the complex assimilation of the Mordecai family into U.S. society.

Beth El is a pluralistic community and welcomes members who have diverse backgrounds, ideas, levels of knowledge, and observance. We are a traditional Conservative congregation and a member of the Seaboard Region of United Synagogue.

Notables:

Kitty Hawk, North Carolina was the site of the first air flight and Arthur Welsh, a Jew and a member of Adas Isreal Congregation in Washington, D.C. was on the Wrights' team.

Welsh became interested in aeronautics after he observed Orville Wright's flights at Ft. Myer, VA, in 1909. In 1910, Orville and Wilbur Wright accepted him into their first flying class, where he worked closely with them, first as a student and, subsequently, as a pilot and instructor at the Wright Flight School in Dayton, OH. Among the people Welsh trained were Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, who later became a five-star general and U.S. Army Air Chief of Staff during WWII.

In 1912, the Wrights sent Welsh to the U.S. Army Signal Corps in College Park, MD, to serve as a civilian test pilot for a new plane for the War Department. On June 11, 1912, Welsh, accompanied by Signal Corps Lt. Leighton W. Hazelhurst, was attempting to complete final military tests of the Wright Model C airplane when the airplane buckled under its 450- pound load. Both men were killed instantly, the first-ever fatalities at College Park.

In the 1840's some German Jews came to Washington, D.C., mostly people who had family ties in Baltimore. Washington was slow to attract settlers and for good reason. The capital city, with meager commerce and no industry, held little attraction for business people who were seeking to make their way through commerce.

In 1852, twenty-one newcomers established Washington Hebrew Congregation. At first they were not allowed to incorporate or own property but by 1863 they had grown strong enough to receive permission from Congress, which was always a problem, to purchase a church at 8th and H Streets, N.W.

During the Civil War, as during most war periods, an influx of Jews came into Washington but they didn't stay and, by the end of the war there were only 300 Jewish families in Washington. Most of them lived around what was called the 7th Street corridor: 8th, 7th Streets, G and Eye Streets, near the site of Washington Hebrew Congregation. It was founded as an Orthodox synagogue but eventually moved to ultra reform. *A storm of protest arose and in 1869, an organ and a choir being the main 'bone' of contention, thirty-five respected members seceded, including the major religious functionaries, the shamas and the schochet, as well of some of the congregation's founders. This group founded Adas Israel Congregation. In 1876 the first Adas Israel synagogue was dedicated by President Ulysses S. Grant at 6th & Eye Sts., NW.

*Today, Adas Israel has an organ and a choir.

Notables:

Cyrus Adler: 1863-1940: Received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in Semitics, the first American to be granted a degree in this subject and taught Semitics at Johns Hopkins while serving as a curator of the National Museum in Washington, D.C.

Note: It is almost impossible to describe my journey of discovery researching the history of the Jews in my Branch over the past 350 years. When I first accepted this 'mission', I had no idea where it would lead. I had no idea of the pride it would engender in my American heritage much less my American Jewish heritage. Although the other Branches can take pride in the role the Jews played in their history, those Branches among the original thirteen colonies have a special history. Most, if not all, immigrants entered this country through ports on the East coast. If Women's League hadn't envisioned this, the 350th celebration of Jewish emigration to America, if Lisa Kogen, Program Director for WLCJ, and Myra Promisel, President, Seaboard Branch, hadn't enlisted me to write the story, I would never have been educated to our beginnings. Thanks also must be extended to Marci Lavine Bloch, Librarian at Adas Israel Congregation. She not only supplied me with more books than I could comfortably carry home but gave me a website for further research, <http://ajlsc.org/colweb.htm> After all of my delving into our history, it was a challenge to keep this report to under 500 words. (And I didn't) Ten thousand words would not have been enough to adequately report the impact that we Jews had on the development of our Colonies and the impact that we had on the our advancement in the culture and commerce of America. When you have the time, read any one of the sources I have listed or visit the website mentioned in my note.

Sources: *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654-1820*, Eli Faber; *Her Words Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present*, Hasia R. Diner & Beryl Lieff Benderly; *The Jewish Experience in America*, Abraham J. Karp; *The Record*, Publication of The Jewish Historical Society of Greater. Washington; Louise Sindler, Editor; *The Jews of Washington; A Communal History Anthology D.C.*, David Altschuler; *Guess Who's Jewish in American History*, Leonard Koppman and Bernard Postal.

JEWS OF LONG ISLAND'S SOUTH SHORE AND BROOKLYN

Prepared by Rhoda Agin, Branch President

Jews have been on Long Island since Colonial times but it wasn't until the late 19th Century when Eastern European Jews began arriving in numbers that Jewish communities began to grow and congregations were founded. The first congregation on Long Island was Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn in 1851. Other early congregations in South Nassau included Temple Israel, Rockaway Beach, 1900; Nassau County Hebrew Association, later Temple B'nai Sholom, Rockville Centre, 1906; Congregation Beth Israel, Hempstead, 1908; Temple Israel of Lawrence, founded in Far Rockaway in 1908 and relocated to Lawrence in 1930; and Shaaray Tefila, Lawrence, 1909. In 1927 the leaders of B'nai Sholom helped found the South Shore Communities Hospital. In 1950 the first Conservative day school was organized at Temple Beth El in Rockaway Park, the first in a network of Solomon Schechter Day Schools.

In the 1920's Jews became the target of the Ku Klux Klan. At a Freeport rally in 1922 a newspaper reported, the robed speaker "was attacking the Jew – as an individual, habits, politics and method of living....He stated that two-thirds of the advertising in the papers was controlled by Jews."

Long Island's Jewish communities remained small in the years between the two world wars. By the late 1930's there were still fewer than 18,000 Jews in Nassau County. The real boom for Jewish congregations on Long Island came after World War II with the suburban building boom, the G.I. Bill that made home ownership affordable, and the resulting baby boom that swelled congregations to the breaking point. But as the baby boomers left home for college or careers and settled elsewhere and their parents retired and moved, Long Island's Jewish population began to decline, and some congregations had to adapt or close. Some merged and others switched affiliations – Beth Emeth in Hewlett switched from Conservative to Reconstructionist, while the Conservative Elmont Jewish Center installed a mehitza and became Orthodox in order to attract a growing population of young Orthodox families in that area. A

Jews of Long Island's South Shore and Brooklyn

similar Orthodox migration, primarily from Brooklyn, was taking place in the Five Towns (Hewlett, Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Lawrence and Inwood) and West Hempstead. To further attract Jewish families West Hempstead, Oceanside, Franklin Square and the Five Towns constructed *eruv*s.

In the Five Towns the influx of young Jewish families from Brooklyn and the establishment of such yeshivas as Hebrew Academy of Five Town and Rockaway in Cedarhurst, led to some clashes with the more established, less observant Jewish population there, some of whom said the Orthodox were attempting to impose their beliefs on them.

Perhaps the most significant Jewish presence in Brooklyn currently is that of the ultra-Orthodox, the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidim of Crown Heights, the Satmar Hasidim of Williamsburg and the Bobov Hasidim of Borough Park. The Satmars have been in Williamsburg since 1920 and are known for being vehemently anti-Zionists. It was in 1940 that the head of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidim moved from Russia to Brooklyn's Crown Heights to escape religious persecution. The 1960's saw the Bobov Hasidim move into Borough Park, greatly changing the nature of that established Orthodox and Conservative community. Brooklyn was ideal for such ultra Orthodox sects for several reasons. First, it was conveniently accessible for the European immigrants who were poor since the housing and cost of living were cheaper in Brooklyn than Manhattan. Second, living piously in closed communities enabled Orthodox Jews to minimize exposure to the secular way of life of the City. In many respects the Hasidic communities in Brooklyn resemble that of the Eastern European Shtetl's of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Russian Jews have settled in the Brighton Beach area of Brooklyn, now called "Little Odessa" with stores, nightclubs and funeral parlors all modeled after those left behind in Russia.

The story of the Jews of Long Island's South Shore and Brooklyn is dynamic and fluid, constantly changing to meet the needs of our people.

The Jews of the South by Catherine Morgan

In 1776, there were only 3,000 Jews in the thirteen colonies, and five Jewish synagogues. During the Revolutionary War, about 500 Jews lived in the South. Two of the five synagogues were in the South: Mikvah Israel in Savannah, Georgia, and Beth Elohim in Charleston, South Carolina, established in 1749. Mikvah Israel was formed after the birth of the first "white" child born in Georgia, Philip Minis, on July 11, 1734.

Today, Jews comprise less than 1% of the Southern population. Although an extreme minority, the Southern Jewish population made, and continues to make a mark in Southern life. Research on the Jewish settlers in the South is scarce. The population in most Southern states was less than one-half a percent of the total population. In addition, assimilation was widespread, as was intermarriage. Conversos and Marranos often continued to lead dual lives or became assimilated altogether.

The first Jewish settlers in the South landed in Georgia in 1733. Various reports indicate that this group were "foisted" on the colony. The colony's trustees prevailed on the proprietor, Governor James Edward Oglethorpe, to remove the Jewish colonists immediately. The Governor, however, determined that the Jews had a right to settle in the community, and provided parcels of land for them.

Although Georgia can claim the first colonists, Charleston, SC, records a "handful" of Jewish residents as early as 1695, and 68 Jews in 1776. When differences between the German Jews and the Portuguese and Spanish Jews led to hostility, Jews from Savannah fled to Charleston. Restrictions on trade and slavery in Georgia also encouraged Jews to move to South Carolina.

South Carolina was the first community in the new world where Jews could vote. It was also the first place to elect a Jew to office in American history. Francis Salvador was elected as his district's representative to the First and Second Provincial Congress in 1774.

Abram Mordechai, a true "Indian trader", lived among the Creek nation for some 50 years. He opened a store and gin on the bluffs just below the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, which is the site of the present-day Montgomery, Alabama. According to legend, Mordechai was once asked why he lived among the Creek. He said it was because they were Jews. His evidence was a shout that ended one of the corn dances, "Yovohoka", meaning "Great Spirit". Mordechai was certain the root was of "Yovohoka" was "Jehovah" and "Yahwe" (Golden, 29).

In North Carolina during the colonial period, one person is listed as Jewish. By 1868, the state's constitution was amended to permit Jews to hold public office, through the efforts of Jacob Henry. Henry had been elected to the House of

Commons, in the lower chamber of the State Legislature. However, he was unable to "affirm the truth of the Protestant religion or the divine authority of the New Testament", as indicated in North Carolina's Constitution (Dinnerstein, 47). His powerful argument to the legislature persuaded the legislators to reject the resolution that would have deprived him of his seat.

Florida's first US Senator was also the first Jew ever elected to the United States Senate, in 1845. David L. Yulee was instrumental in bringing Florida into the union. Born David Levy, he took the family name of Yulee (or Eulee) after being elected to the Senate, at the request of his gentile fiancée. His father, Moses Elias Levy, an observant Jew, contributed greatly to the early history of the territory of Florida.

Louisiana prohibited Jewish communities until 1803. The territory issued a "Code Noir" in 1724, which included as its first article the expulsion of all Jews from the territory. Although the United States Constitution prevailed over the local law, it wasn't until 1868 that the Louisiana Constitution recognized the right of every person "to worship God according to his conscience" (77).

Judah Touro arrived in New Orleans in 1801 and opened a store. He volunteered for the War of 1812, during which Touro was wounded and left for dead. After the war, Touro remained in New Orleans. He purchased a church, and had it dedicated as a synagogue in 1850—the Congregation of the Dispersed of Judah. In 1852, he purchased an estate and converted it to a hospital, which he gave to the city. The Touro Infirmary continues to serve the city of New Orleans to this day.

While Louisianan law did not recognize the right of Jews to worship, nevertheless, it elected Judah Philip Benjamin to the United States Senate in 1852. Just prior to taking office, Benjamin was also nominated as an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, an honor which he declined. It's in another role that Benjamin is remembered, however. After the election of President Lincoln, Benjamin was one of the earliest "secessionists". He was appointed to the Confederate cabinet as attorney general, and later, (Confederate) President Jefferson Davis appointed him Secretary of State. Benjamin was not the only Jew serving in the cabinet; David Camden de Leon also served as the Surgeon General of the Confederate Army.

After the Civil War, many Southern Jews left the South for jobs in the North, for economic reasons. Other Jews made their way back down south, as peddlers. Some peddlers stayed, opening what became known in the vernacular as "Jew stores"—dry goods and sundries stores. These stores were competition for factory or company stores. Still, many Jews continued to work for Reconstruction. Among these were Dr. Bernard Baruch of Charleston, SC, Samuel S. Fels of Yanceyville, NC, and Adolph S. Ochs, of Chattanooga, TN.

At the turn of the 20th century, Atlanta saw a large influx of Russian Jewish immigrants. These immigrants were among the thousands fighting for jobs in the city. Industry was a hard sell in the South, and wages were low.

One of the lowest points of Jewish Southern history occurred in Atlanta in 1913. A 13 year old factory worker, Mary Phagan, was found murdered, her body mutilated. Seven people were arrested, including Leo Frank, the superintendent of the factory where Mary worked. Frank was portrayed as a "northern, Jewish industrialist". Mayhem erupted in Atlanta. Newspapers called Mary Phagan a martyr to greed; others deplored the factory conditions. Anti-semitism was preached from the pulpits. In the end, Leo Frank was convicted of the murder and sentenced to death. After appeals, the sentence was commuted to life in prison. Two months later, a mob broke into the prison, captured Frank and lynched him. Frank received a posthumous pardon in 1986. Both the Anti-defamation League and the Knights of Mary Phagan (later the Ku Klux Klan) were born from this tragedy.

Today, the area of Southern Branch has 174,500 Jews, a number that is still less than 1% of the total population. Florida, in contrast, has 620,000 Jews. There are 67 synagogues in six Southern Branch states, and another 70 in Florida.

Sisterhoods from seven states make up our Southern Branch: Alabama, Florida (panhandle), Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Resources:

Jews in the South, ed. by Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973

Our Southern Landsman, Harry Golden, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974

Web site: The New Georgia Encyclopedia <
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Home.jsp>>

Web site: The Jewish Virtual Library <
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/usjewpop.html>>

Web site: LookSmart < <http://search.looksmart.com>>

A History of the Jewish Communities of Southern New Jersey
By Rhoda Freedman

The Southern New Jersey region extends from Mt. Holly to Cape May. It encompasses the counties of Burlington, Camden, Ocean, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem and Gloucester.

There were cattle dealers in Burlington County who were in the forefront of establishing synagogue life in Mt. Holly along with Jewish storekeepers. In small towns along the Delaware River, the Jewish merchants founded storefront synagogues, which no longer exist.

Camden, New Jersey had a very large population. This population moved from the constraints of the city into the surrounding suburbs. Cherry Hill is where they settled, and they are now moving on to Voorhees, and Mt. Laurel. Cherry Hill now has three Conservative congregations, two Reform congregations, four Orthodox congregations, and a *mikveh*. The Jewish Community Center of Camden County is located in Cherry Hill.

Atlantic City was known as "the lungs of Philadelphia." It was a summer home for Philadelphia's Jewry. It once had kosher bakeries, kosher hotels, delicatessens and kosher restaurants. Change was inevitable with the aging of the community and the shifting of the Jewish population (and the appearance of the Casinos). The population moved "down beach" to Ventnor and Margate.

Many Jewish immigrants became farmers. Almost 90% of the chicken and egg farmers and dairy farmers in the mid twentieth century were Jewish. They settled in South Jersey. Their children and grandchildren entered the professions and the arts. The smaller communities where they lived have not survived.

The German Jewish philanthropist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch established agricultural colonies such as Alliance, Woodbine, Carmel and Rosenhayn. The farmers organized coops and agricultural schools, thus contributing to agricultural science and the state's status as the Garden State.

The synagogues of Gloucester County were brought into the South Jersey sphere of events with the formulation of the Gloucester-Camden-Burlington Counties Jewish Federation.

The first African-American Jewish community in America was established by Rabbi Abel Respes in Elwood, New Jersey in 1962 and adopted the name of *Adat B'nei Mosheh*. They built a *mikveh*. Rabbi Respes sought to immigrate to Israel, but the Law of Return was enacted against him even though the Board of Rabbis in New York converted him in 1970.

Southwest Branch History

From as far west as El Paso, Texas; to the south in another country, Mexico City, Mexico; and back to the United States going east to Shreveport, Louisiana and Tulsa, Oklahoma; Jewish people have inhabited these areas long before Women's League for Conservative Judaism began in 1918. It is gratifying to know that Jews still live in and around these areas, though smaller regions in each state seem to be dwindling in numbers. Because of this phenomenon, we know the value of those who have planted Jewish roots of knowledge and devotion in our "far flung" truly international Southwest Branch of Women's League for Conservative Judaism and are grateful for them.

Jews In Mexico

Jews first arrived in what is now Mexico at the beginning of the 16th century with Cortes, the Spanish conqueror. They came thinking that this way they could evade the infamous Inquisition. However, shortly afterwards, the Inquisition was established in the Kingdom of New Spain – as it was called up to the time of Independence – and it was ruthless in eradicating what they considered a heresy of the worst kind. In 1596, one of the greatest autos-da-fe was held in the presence of most of the population and it marked the end of clandestine Jewish life in Mexico. From then on, Jews redoubled their efforts to remain under cover and for all practical purposes disappeared from Mexican history. It is only in very recent times that some people have appeared in various areas claiming descent from these ancient "Marranos".

Modern Jewish life reappeared at the turn of the 20th century. Jews began trickling in from Syria and Turkey. Some men came from the United States trying to

evad military service during World War I, reminiscent of their refusal to join the army in Russia. Some French Jews came representing French commercial interests as well. Later on, after the quota was closed in the States, many Jews arrived from Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Hungary and other places considering that this was the closest place to the US so they would eventually be able to get there. However, once they began earning a living, learning the language and getting settled, they realized they were here to stay.

At the beginning, they began selling whatever they could get their hands on as happened throughout the American continent. They had small stands in the outskirts of markets, pushcarts or went around in the countryside selling on the installment plan. They became a regular feature in Mexico and eventually people stopped looking for their horns or tails. The word "judio" (Jew) had such a negative connotation that they were called Turkish, Russian, Polish, etc. and the preferred word among Jews was Israelite. It was only much later, when Jews had established themselves as ordinary, responsible citizens that the word "judio" began to be used in everyday life.

The Jewish community was, and in many ways still is, divided by Kehilot. That is, the origin of the group commands the belonging. There are Ashkenazim, Sefaradim (meaning mostly Turkish, Bulgarian and Greek all Ladino speaking) and Arabs, that include people from Damascus and Aleppo in Syria as well as Lebanon. Each one of these groups has its own synagogue(s), social services and Rabbi.

The newest additions have been the two Conservative temples, one of which, Beth Israel, began some fifty years ago and at the beginning was only English speaking which was very much of a deterrent for most Mexican Jews. About ten years later Bet El was

established. It grew by leaps and bounds because it filled a need of the Jewish community. Although most members are of Ashkenazi origin, its population is very diverse. It embraces Jews from all over regardless of their origin. Men and women do sit together but it is far from egalitarian. This is still very much of a macho country.

The one institution that encompasses all the Jews in one single place is the Centro Deportivo Israelita (Jewish Sport Center) that holds various types of activities: sports, cultural, Zionist, mass events and even weddings. It has been very much of a landmark for almost 60 years.

There are some 40,000 Jews in the whole country. Commerce and manufacture are the main activities but there are many professional people and more and more of them work for the government and hold some elective post, a situation that is great departure from earlier times. The Comité Central is the head of the community at large and is the official representative before the government for anything that has to do with religion, relations with government representatives and any problematic situation that might arise.

There are large numbers of day schools with every kind of characteristic. Some are religious, some more than others, some teach Yiddish and some Hebrew, so there is a school for every taste. Most Jewish children attend one of these schools. There are some Kosher restaurants and one can find almost any Kosher product as well as meat and poultry in all the supermarkets that cater to the Jewish population.

Jewish life in Mexico is very active. There are constant events, conferences, meetings, etc. The community as a whole is totally Zionist, although it is divided, as in everything else, into the various branches of Zionism. However, relations are very good among all the groups. To sum up, the Jewish community in Mexico is a very vibrant

community that, in spite of its small size, has managed to make great contributions and gain prominence in all walks of Mexican life.

Beth Israel joined Southwest Branch and WLCJ 07-19-57 with Bet El joining in 2002. Two branch conferences have been held in Mexico City with a third in the talking stages.

Jewish history in Texas began for much of the same reason that brought Jews from Spain to Mexico City

Jews in Texas

In all probability, there were Conversos, or secret Jews, among the Spanish soldiers and conquistadors who came to this area now called Texas in the mid 1600 and 1700s. Also, a Spanish Land Grant that extended from Tampico Mexico to what is now San Antonio, Texas and then west to the Pacific Ocean, was given by King Philip II to a New Christian of Jewish decent, Don Luis de Carvajal. It is thought that the first settlers of Jewish descent to enter the American Southwest were probably Carvajal's colonizers fleeing the stake. These secret Jews settled in South Texas and New Mexico.

The Inquisition, began in Spain in 1492, extended to lands where the Spanish landed, including Mexico. The Holy Office of the Inquisition began in Mexico in 1571 and continued in the New World until 1802. The escape to Texas was a natural, and although Texas at that time belonged to Mexico, it was far from Mexico City and the seat of the Inquisition.

The first Jew to Texas who can be named is Samuel Isaacs, a settler who came with the Stephen F. Austin Grant in 1821. Americans began immigration into Texas for opportunity beginning in the 1820s and 1830s. The "second wave" of Jewish

immigration was also underway; and early settlement was in southern and coastal Texas. After the Battles for Texas Independence, in which several Jews took part resulting, in 1836, in Independence, the then Republic of Texas advertised and promoted immigration as people were needed to settle its vast area. Settlement in north Texas was not made possible until after the 1840s with the defeat of the Indian population. Texas joined the Union in 1846.

In 1900, Congregation B'nai Zion was organized in El Paso, Texas, first as a traditionally orthodox synagogue but then later changed to a conservative congregation. During World War II, service men were stationed at Ft. Bliss, who later became active members of B'nai Zion. Today this over one hundred year old congregation is thriving and active within the secular and Jewish community.

The Galveston Movement was a great boon to Jewish immigration to Texas. Jacob Schiff's plan to steer Jewish immigrants away from the crowded Eastern coast resulted in what would be called the Galveston Movement. After much study, the port of Galveston was chosen due to the prominence of the Galveston rabbi, Rabbi Henry Cohen, who was English-bred and a fluent Yiddish speaker, as well as a nationally known humanitarian. So with Rabbi Cohen, rail connections and an available port, the immigrants were diverted to Galveston and then individually sent to various towns in Texas and also the mid-west. The period was 1907-14 and approx. 10,000 Jews came through Galveston.

Leon Dyer was one of those Jews who were active in the Texas Independence Movement. His sister Rosanna Dyer Osterman had married Joseph Osterman in 1825 in Germany and moved to Galveston in 1838 to be with her brother. She brought a rabbi to

Galveston for consecration of the Jewish cemetery there in 1852 and the first religious services in Texas were held in her brother's home on Yom Kippur in 1856.

The oldest synagogue is Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, founded and chartered in 1859. Its services were Orthodox, but the congregation later became Reform. The Houston Jewish Cemetery was consecrated in 1854, but, possibly, one also in 1844. A Cemetery in San Antonio was dedicated in 1855, and in Jefferson, a river-port town, in 1862. Congregation B'nai Israel was organized in Galveston in 1868 and their first building was built in 1870. This is the oldest Texas Congregation established as Reform. The third oldest chartered Jewish congregation was established in 1870 in Brownsville (on the Mexican border) founded by Simon Mussina who came to Texas in 1837. The fourth oldest was Congregation Mt. Sinai, Jefferson, Texas in 1872. Congregation Shearith Israel, Conservative was chartered in Dallas in 1874.

Rabbi Heinrich Schwarz, great grandfather of Dallasite and nationally known Robert S. Strauss, came to Hempstead, Texas in 1873 and may have been Texas' first ordained rabbi.

Jews, as well as everyone else, came to Texas for economic opportunity and the first Railroad from Houston to Corsicana and further to North Texas in the 1870s attracted many would-be merchants, but Jews also came for their health, or, in many cases, because relatives or landsmen were already here. Many came through the ports of New Orleans or Galveston.

A big spurt in Jewish population occurred after 1960 when many former servicemen who had trained in Texas decided to leave the crowded conditions and cold weather of northern cities for the warmth and opportunity of Texas, and almost all stayed.

There has also been an internal migration. Originally, almost every Texas town had at least one Jewish family and store. After the 1950s, the movement to the large cities resulted in towns with no Jews left and closed synagogues.

Conservative Sisterhoods in Texas began to affiliate with the Sisterhood of America which would later become the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. The very first one was B'nai Zion from El Paso in 1921 and continues even today with Bet El, in Mexico City joining in 2002.

Traveling on to the state of Oklahoma to the small town of Ardmore where the first Jewish house of worship was established in 1899, but Jews actually settled there as early as 1870. There is also the connection of Jews coming from Texas and Galveston migrating on into Oklahoma just as Jews went from Mexico City into Texas.

The celebrated April 22, 1889 land rush, which opened Oklahoma for settlement, brought Jews from Kansas into Guthrie, Ponca City and Blackwell. Rosh Hashonah services were held in Oklahoma City in 1890.

The first Oklahoma Jew on record, however, appears to be one Boggy Johnson, a Civil War veteran who settled in Indian Territory shortly after the War Between The States, and married an Indian girl of Chickasaw parentage. His nickname stems from the Boggy Depot, a U.S. government installation in the southeastern part of our state.

Several historians point out that before this time Jews traversed the plains of Oklahoma.

In 1830, Jewish settlers in Arkansas came into the area from Fort Smith to do business with the Indian tribes.

Because New York City and the Eastern seaboard were overcrowded with newly-arrived Europeans, this agency was established to bring the refugees into Texas and the Southwest.

Galveston, Texas became a famous port of entry for them and, as they acquired sponsors, they proceeded on their way.

In 1908, a year after Oklahoma statehood, the Rev. M. Himmelstein succeeded Mr. Racow. He had come to the United States from Barisseev, Russia and was a son of Rabbi Himmelstein of Warsaw, Poland. Between 1906 and 1916, there came into the city families from many states: Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and from the East.

Two conservative synagogues remain very active today in Oklahoma. Emanuel Synagogue Sisterhood joined Southwest Branch and WLCJ in 1944 with B'nai Emunoh following in 1956. Branch Presidents have come from both Sisterhoods

Congregation Agudas Achim was founded one hundred years ago in Shreveport, Louisiana. Northern Louisiana used to be part of Southwest Branch, but due to a dying congregation it is no longer.

Southwest Branch was officially organized in 1948 with Sisterhoods from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. By 1951 Arkansas was no longer part of this Branch. In 1954 Southwest Branch consisted of Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico which was only for a short time. Our International Branch became official in 1958 when Mexico affiliated with Texas and Oklahoma. Northern Louisiana made us a complete Branch in 1959. Southwest Branch is "large-in-area" with strong, dedicated women to our Jewish values making our communities better informed and better places to raise families. We are proud of our Southwest roots and our Jewish pioneers.