

Generations:

JHSUM's 40th Anniversary
event at the Ted Mann Theater



FALL 2024

JHSUM Marks Milestone Anniversary

By Robin Doroshov

On Sunday, September 8, 2024, more than 400 people gathered at the Ted Mann Concert Hall at the University of Minnesota to celebrate 40 years of the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest. The event featured the premiere of the

film, *Those Who Serve*, and a moderated panel discussion featuring Maryland Congressman Jamie Raskin, Minnesota Secretary of State, Steve Simon, and Minnesota State Senator, Sandra Pappas. Robin Washington, an editor at large at *The Forward*, served as moderator and master of ceremonies.



Nearly 150 people gathered for a VIP reception

Continued from previous page.

Congressman Raskin, who represents Maryland's 8th Congressional District in the United States Congress, has strong ties to the Upper Midwest. His maternal grandfather, Sam Bellman, served in Minnesota's Legislature in the 1930s, and was only the 3rd Jew to ever serve in that body. Secretary of State Steve Simon, who formerly served in the Minnesota Legislature, has been Minnesota's Secretary of State since 2015. State Senator, Sandra Pappas, first served in the Minnesota Legislature, and has held public office in the state since 1985.

Panelists discussed the influence of Judaism in their public service in a lively conversation. While each had unique perspectives, there were some commonalities. All were influenced by the Jewish concept of *Tikkun Olam* — repairing the world. The event was recorded and can be viewed at www.jhsum.org/40th-anniversary-program.



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The Southside Neighborhood House 1920-1939

By Joshua Lazar, JHSUM Intern

The Founding: 1920-1922

In 1919 Sadye Kantrowitz became the President of the Minneapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. The Council recognized the need for a neighborhood center on the south side. Thus, a five-room apartment was rented in 1920, and shortly after a nine-room building was temporarily secured to establish the South Side Neighborhood House. The Neighborhood House quickly outgrew its small location and was relocated to Adath Jeshurun in 1925, after that congregation moved. From 1920-1939 South Side Neighborhood House became a hub for Jewish community and the leading project for the Council.

Although the Neighborhood House was established by a Jewish institution primarily with Jews in mind, the establishment catered to all people. Additionally, although primarily getting their participants from the south side of the city, north side residents also attended events at the Neighborhood House.

A Thriving House: 1922-1936

The South Side Neighborhood House was a place where disadvantaged youth could come to be tutored, study and have fun. However, the Neighborhood House quickly expanded its purview, and began to host clubs and activities for teens and adults. By 1922, before it had moved to a larger location, the Neighborhood House had eight boys and girls clubs, one mothers' club, two Americanization classes, one foreigners' club, weekly dances, weekly movies, gymnasium classes, a baseball team, sewing, crocheting, knitting, dancing, dramatic, and clay modeling classes, with thirty group leaders who volunteered to carry out the activities. Eventually they added a nursery school and a parental education program.

Soon, the House had expanded to the point where it had its own publication the S.S.N.H. Spectator, and had several sports teams, which recognized "All House Teams" as an honor. The Neighborhood House also had several thriving clubs. An article in the S.S.N.H Spectator, wrote about the Hanukkah



Adath Jeshurun Congregation, South Side Neighborhood House, date unknown. The Adath Jeshurun Congregation South Side Neighborhood House at 9th St and 12th Ave in South Minneapolis. During a time of growth during Rabbi Matt's years, holding classes and services in the rented Lagoon Hall on Hennepin Avenue from 1921-1927, the old synagogue building was sold to the National Council of Jewish Women to be used as the South Side Neighborhood House.

Courtesy of the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

celebrations of different clubs at the Neighborhood House, including the Blue and Whites, GWG's, Triple J's and Amigos clubs. This includes the Gemilus Chesed Auxiliary charitable organization sponsoring a women's Hanukkah luncheon and card party at the Neighborhood House in which 150 women were present.

The Amigos Club is an example of one of these clubs. It was one of the oldest and well-known clubs of the South Side Neighborhood House. The club began in 1932, and hosted dances, banquets, and parties. The club was known for their dances which attracted many hundreds of people to the Neighborhood House. Additionally, they helped contribute generously to the South Side Neighborhood House camp, the Jewish Federation and the Community Fund. The Amigos Club, was one of several clubs that were based in the South Side Neighborhood House.



Alpha Omega Club Hanukkah party, 1935. The Alpha Omega Club was a Minneapolis young people's social club. Worth noting is Sam Finkelstein, seated at center. Finkelstein was a driving force behind the success of the South Side Neighborhood House.

Courtesy of the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.

The End: 1936-1939

Toward the late 1930s the Jewish community that was near the South Side Neighborhood House, began to steadily diminish. In a 1936 Minneapolis Jewish Survey it was recommended that the House be discontinued. It was then decided that the South Side Neighborhood House merge with the Elliot Park Neighborhood House. Therefore, in 1939 the South Side Neighborhood House was discontinued. An honorary luncheon was held in honor of Sadye Kantrowitz, to celebrate her achievements in helping to establish and grow the Neighborhood House.

The South Side Neighborhood House was a place for youth, teenagers and adults to socialize, participate in clubs and activities, take classes, play sports, and be a part of a Jewish community.

Joshua Lazar is a Senior at the University of Minnesota, studying Sociology and Political Science with a Hebrew and Jewish Studies minor.

St. Paul Community Legacy Initiative

JHSUM is participating in the St. Paul Community Legacy Initiative – Life and Legacy Plus Program. As a partner, JHSUM has set a goal of 18 new Life Memberships, L'Dor Funds, or Legacy Gifts for the 2024 calendar year.

You can help us reach our goal by considering such a gift.

Contact us at history@jhsุม.org or 952-381-3360 to discuss options. *Thank you for being part of JHSUM.*



**JHSUM President
Jamie Heilicher**

The Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest is one of 15 community partners participating in the **Life and Legacy Project**, a program of the St. Paul Jewish Federation. This program helps regional Jewish organizations, including some synagogues, to grow their giving programs by providing education and support.

In the first year of this program (2023-24), JHSUM donors have helped us add eight new **Life Membership and L'Dor Funds**, and informed us of one future gift. These nine gifts earned the organization an additional \$3,600 in funds from the Life and Legacy program.

As we enter year two of program participation, our goal is to establish at least nine new funds and/or future gifts. The second program year runs from November 1, 2024 through October 31, 2025.

We invite you to consider establishing a **Life Membership** or **L'Dor Fund** at JHSUM. As you consider estate gifts, please keep us in mind. For further information, please reach out to Robin Doroshov at rdoroshov@jhsุม.org or call us at 952-381-3360.

Sholom Alliance History

By Ray Harris

In our country, the year 1968 is remembered as a year of great unrest — the Vietnam War — the contested national presidential election — the assassination of Martin Luther King, and rampant protests in many of our cities, e.g., Detroit, Los Angeles, and Chicago, to name just a few.

In Minneapolis, the protests culminated in the destruction and indiscriminate burning of the buildings on one of the main commercial streets — Plymouth Avenue in North Minneapolis. The civic response to the Plymouth Avenue destruction and fires was the formation of the Urban Coalition with highly respected businessman Sanford (Sandy) Bemis, Founder and CEO of Bemis Company as the leader, and my friend, Harry Davis — one of the era's most respected Black community leaders as its Executive Director. The coalition consisted of public and private groups, businesses, religious organizations, etc., who were to collaborate in providing a civic response of aid to the victims of the destruction.

Marvin Borman, Partner in the Maslon law firm and President of the Federation for Jewish Services (the "Federation"), asked me to represent the Jewish Community on the Coalition principally to assist the Jewish merchants on Plymouth Avenue who had lost their buildings and businesses in the recent fires.

While assisting the merchants, I was surprisingly deluged by many elderly, mainly Jewish, persons who pleaded with me for housing, financial assistance, and even food assistance. I reported to the Federation, primarily Marvin Borman and Sam Kaplan (the Maslon law firm), that I had uncovered a pressing community need: Jewish elderly — living in unacceptable housing, undernourished, fragile, and with very little financial ability to pay for their increasing requirements.

The Task Force

The first response was "The Sholom Home," a single residential building on Snelling Avenue across from the State Fair Grounds in St. Paul — not nearly large enough! Next, to understand the scope and magnitude of the problem, it was suggested that I set up a Task Force. The Jewish Community responded: The Task Force included: Arline Bloom, Mel Goldfein, Theresa Berman, Dutch Kastenbaum, etc. — three architects — Paul Pink, Bernie Herman, and Joel Glotter — Suzy Selcer, Harvey Ratner and me (Ray Harris) as Chair. We also had ample legal expertise

Groundbreaking held for seniors' apartments



Knollwood Place, rental apartments for senior adults, held groundbreaking ceremonies May 31 at its location on the Jewish community campus in St. Louis Park. The project is owned and developed by Community Housing and Service Corporation. Shown above are the CHSC past presidents, along with executive director Jon Weiss and current president Allan Swartz. Left to right are Mel Goldfein, Bernie Herman, Arline Bloom, Sandra Freidman, Weiss, Ben Steinberg, Ray Harris, Harvey Ratner and Swartz.

Photo courtesy of University of Minnesota Libraries, Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives.

available to our expanding group — Amos Deinard, Harold Field, Jr. (both from the Leonard, Street & Deinard firm), and, of course, Marvin Borman and Sam Kaplan.

The Task Force had regular meetings on the top of the old Nicollet Hotel where Nicollet Mall and Hennepin Avenues converged.

Prior to the formation of the Task Force, the only other Jewish person, I can remember, that was involved in the Plymouth Avenue aftermath was a well-known North Minneapolis resident — Hy Rosen. I believe that I was the only Jewish person, and for that matter, am the only member of the original Urban Coalition who is still alive.

The Task Force met and often discussed the myriad of actions that needed to be in a program for Jewish seniors. Coincidentally, in my day job (real estate), I received a notice that could be — and was — relevant to the senior program: The Villa apartments had just been foreclosed upon by Minnesota Federal Savings & Loan. The Villa Apartments consisted of nine buildings — a total of 159 apartments at 34th Street between Emerson and Dupont Avenues South — across the street from the Adath Jeshurun Synagogue.

The buildings consisted of small apartments — in good condition — and at decent rental rates. Minnesota Federal wanted to find a buyer or master-lessor for the nine buildings. My analysis of the price for the buildings was approximately equivalent to the total income that could be received from all of the units in all of the buildings when fully leased.

I asked myself “could we negotiate to master-lease the property and, if so, could we fully rent the buildings?” If that were possible, we would receive control of the nine buildings — 159 apartments — without any cost to the Federation. I decided to present the almost-too-good-to-be-true opportunity to the Task Force for their consideration.

Opinions of the Task Force and Federation executives varied from shocked, supportive, and opposed. Without permission of the Task Force, I negotiated with Minnesota Federal and convinced them to let us master-lease the property. The sole issue remaining was our ability to fill the buildings with tenants. Were there really Jewish seniors that needed rental assistance and financial help?

We Were In Business

We took over the lease and we were in the housing business! We hired Phil Seidenfeld as the housing manager. And we quickly filled all the vacant apartments with elderly Jewish seniors. The Jewish Community was now convinced that there was a strong need — not only for better affordable housing, but assistance with health issues, financial needs, and even better nourishment for our elders.

The Villa Apartments had proven the need. The Task Force, now transformed into a housing corporation (the Community Housing and Services Corporation), turned its attention to a holistic program — more housing, healthcare, a complete and comprehensive program to fulfill the needs of Jewish seniors. Our first project was to be more affordable housing units — a subsidized housing building: Menorah Plaza.

Harold Field, Sr. owned the St. Louis Park theater located on Minnetonka Boulevard adjacent to the St. Louis Park City offices. He was in the throes of closing the theater permanently and was interested in selling the entire property. The theater property, with its

ample parking area, was perfect for the Menorah Plaza building. I spent endless hours assisting Field in completing the sale of the property to become the first new housing project for the Jewish community. Financing for Menorah Plaza was accomplished with the welcome assistance of then-Senator Walter Mondale and the architects for the new building were the three firms led by the architects on the Task Force — Paul Pink, Bernie Herman, and Joel Glotter.

The completion of construction for Menorah Plaza was, as I remember, about 1981 — thirteen years following

the destruction of Plymouth Avenue — a joyous mitzvah!

At that point, I decided it was time to pass the baton — time for new leadership! The Sholom Alliance, now with a foundation of housing to serve our elders, was a reality and the comprehensive senior program — a desperately needed service — would follow.

Ray Harris has worked for more than 60 years to improve the quality of life in urban communities. A Stanford University graduate, Ray has focused on quality housing, area rejuvenation, convenient commercial areas, services to the elderly, and education.

Are you over 70 years of age and have an IRA?

If so, you may be able to support the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest AND potentially reduce your taxable income.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a tax-free transfer from an IRA to a qualified charity and can be made after age 70 1/2. It is not an itemized deduction so you can use the standard deduction and still get a tax benefit.

A QCD can work in tandem with a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) which is required after age 73 from retirement accounts such as Traditional IRAs. You are required to withdraw a certain amount each year and you pay taxes on those withdrawals unless you make use of strategies such as contributions.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution from your Traditional IRA can support JHSUM by:

- Reducing your taxable income — funds go directly from your IRA to JHSUM, reducing your taxable income.
- Satisfying Required Minimum Distributions — QCDs can be used to meet your RMD, avoid taxes on the withdrawal and avoid penalties which would be incurred if you failed to do the required withdrawal.
- Maximizing your charitable impact — JHSUM receives the full distribution tax-free.
- Supporting the mission of JHSUM.

Contact your financial advisor to discuss if this makes sense for you. If so, please consider using it to support JHSUM to help us further our mission of educating next generations on our unique Upper Midwest Jewish history.



Photo by David Holifield on Unsplash

On the road: Ashley, North Dakota

By Robin Doroshow, JHSUM Executive Director

This past May, I had the honor of accompanying members of the Sloven and Greenberg families as they visited Ashley, North Dakota. I jumped in for just one day of a more extensive tour of North Dakota undertaken by siblings, Saralee Sloven and Charles Greenberg. Saralee came from her home in Iowa and Charles traveled from California. Saralee was accompanied by her daughter, Ruth Sloven, and son and daughter-in-law, Jeff and Mary Jo Sloven. Charles brought along his daughter, Raschel Greenberg.

Before I met up with them in Ashley, the group traveled all over the state with stops including sites in Grafton, Devils Lake, Regan and Fargo.

Saralee and Charles shared memories of traveling in the family's 1925 Chevrolet from their childhood home in Grafton to visit their grandparents, Israel and Sarah Auerbach, who owned a general store in Ashley. The time to travel that distance of nearly 260 miles must have seemed like an eternity in those days before modern highway networks were established.

Saralee recalled that her grandparents, immigrants from Bessarabia, were living in New York City when the lure of the West and owning land, something Jews couldn't do in the Pale of Settlement, enticed them to go west and stake a claim on land in North Dakota. After three years of farm life on the homestead near Ashley, Israel and Sarah sold the property and opened a general store in town. She recalled hearing that her grandparents would "carry" farmers by extending credit until they were able to pay their bills after the fall harvest. Later, their son, Nate, would take over the store, along with his wife, Pauline, who was the daughter of Rabbi Julius Hess, Ashley's resident rabbi. Years later, Rabbi Hess, who served Ashley and Wing, North Dakota Jewish communities, became the first rabbi of the B'nai Isaac Congregation in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Saralee related a story about her grandmother, Sarah, who served as a translator for doctors attending women delivering babies in the area. Germans from Russia arrived and began homesteading in the Dakotas before the Jewish homesteaders, and many spoke only German. The doctors would frequently pick Sarah up on their way to deliver babies, so she could help mother and doctor



Greenberg and Sloven family members and JHSUM's executive director, Robin Doroshow



Saralee Sloven and Chuck Greenberg next to a sign from their grandparent's store at the Ashley Museum, Ashley, ND.

communicate. We can assume that Sarah's Yiddish and the German mother's German allowed them to communicate.

Chuck brought along a coin from the Auerbach store. There were various opinions as to whether the design on the back of the



Calendar plate from the Israel (Auerbach) store, Ashley, ND, 1914.

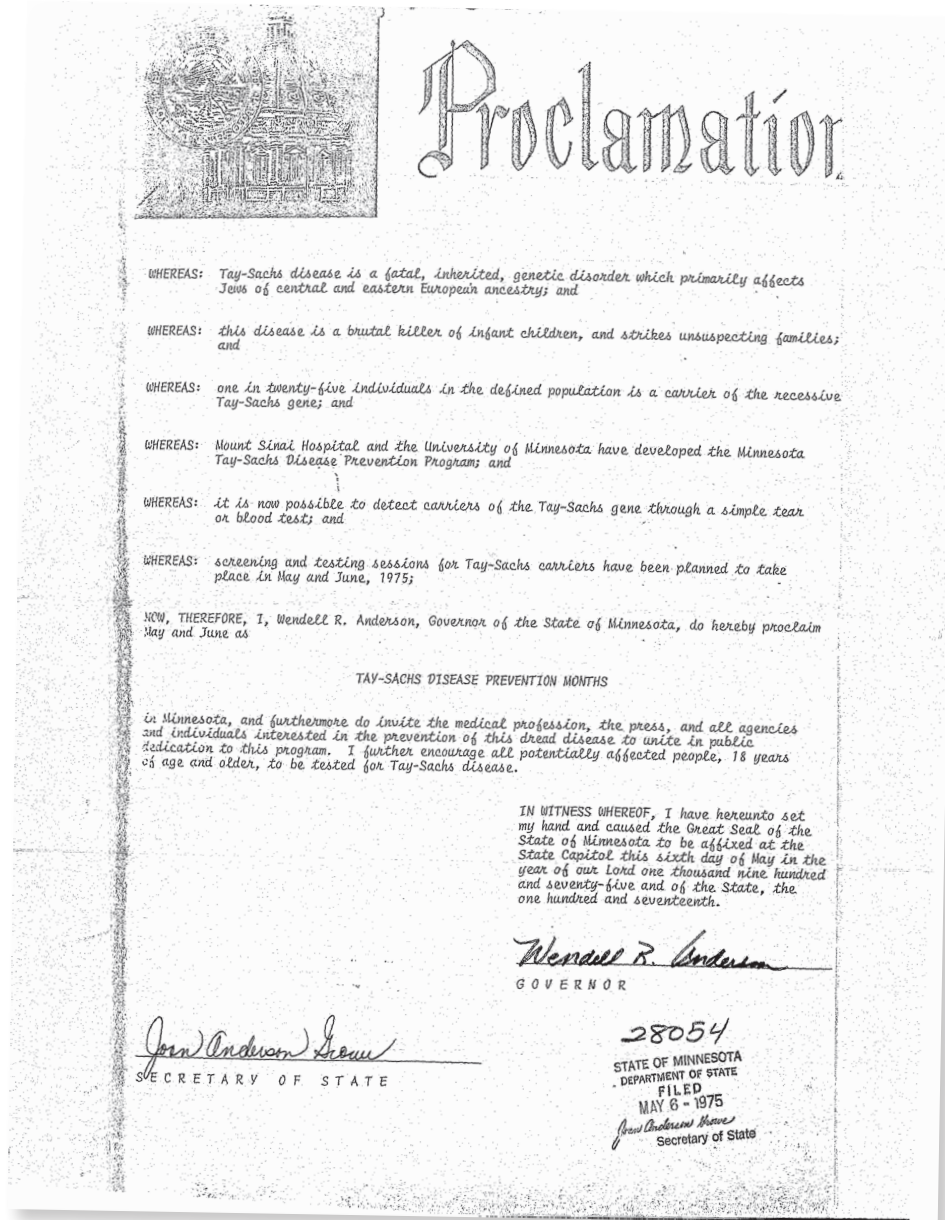
coin was an “A” for Auerbach or a plow, but it was agreed that these coins were given out by the store to customers to use on future purchases.

On my way home from Ashley, I decided to take a short detour to look for the Wing, ND Jewish cemetery. I always forget that distances in the Dakotas are not as close as they look on the GPS. After several hours and many wrong turns, I found myself in the middle of a field looking at the Wing Jewish cemetery.



Wing Jewish Cemetery, Wing, North Dakota.

It never ceases to amaze me that there were Jews in these remote areas when they were even more isolated than they are today, and that they maintained their Judaism as best they could, and made a life for themselves and their families.



Tay-Sachs Disease Prevention Months

Nearly 50 years ago, Minnesota’s then governor, Wendell Anderson, proclaimed May and June of 1975 as Tay-Sachs Disease Prevention Months. This proclamation came as blood and tear tests had recently been developed to detect carriers of this genetic disorder. As Jews are more frequent carriers than the general population, testing through Minnesota Jewish organizations took place at Hillel and the JCCs. **Thank you to Governor Anderson for moving forward this important public action.**

Regional History Presentation

Apr. 2, 2024 | Ridgpoint

Presentation and discussion on Aberdeen, SD research project that led to the JHSUM video *A Stop Along the Way*, and journal *Aberdeen: A Jewish History*.

Sophie Wirth Camp

Apr. 11, 2024 | White Bear Lake Area Historical Society

Sophie Wirth history presentation by Laura Weber, followed by a discussion in partnership with White Bear Lake Historical Society.

Viewing of *Summer Camps* video

Aug. 7, 2024 | Sholom East

Ice cream social and viewing of the JHSUM video *Summer Camps*.

Northside Tours

August Ongoing

August 2023, Sylvia Fine and Cary Shaich led a tour for the Burstein family reunion. Betsy Burstein Sitkoff said, “the tour was the favorite part of their incredible weekend.”

Premiere of *The Story of NAPCO*

Aug. 11, 2024 | MNJCC Sabes Center

Premiere of the first Jewish entrepreneur film from JHSUM, *The Story of NAPCO*, featuring the Rappaport family and their business NAPCO.

40th Anniversary Event

Sept. 8, 2024 | Ted Mann Concert Hall

40th Anniversary of JHSUM featuring Maryland Congressman Jamie Raskin, Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon, and Minnesota State Senator Sandra Pappas. See cover story for details and more photos.

Twin Cities Jewish Film Festival

Sept. 14, 2024 | MNJCC Sabes Center

Life. Lore. And the Lincoln Del film



Gary and Susan Rappaport.

Thank you for being a part of Jewish history

A couple of years ago, the leadership of JHSUM began thinking about Jewish entrepreneurship in our region, and we quickly realized that it was a bit of a phenomenon with dozens and dozens of very successful businesses with regional roots.



We embarked on a project to create short films to document these stories, and on August 11, 2024, we premiered our first film featuring local business success stories, *The Story of NAPCO*, highlighting the Rappaport family and their business NAPCO.

Not only did the Rappaport family find professional success with NAPCO, but their success fueled their philanthropy in both the Jewish and general communities, where they are leaders and examples of generosity.

JHSUM hopes to document more of these stories and honor the families behind the businesses. Please reach out to discuss how we can help you document your family's story at history@jhsum.org.



Nechama Founding members: Gene Borochoff, Seth Gardner, Todd Heilicher, Steve Lear. Moderator: Rich Kronfeld, Nechama volunteer.

kicked off the 2024 Twin Cities Jewish Film Festival, and was voted audience festival favorite.

Sept. 15, 2024 | MNJCC Sabes Center

Nechama, a film on the Jewish disaster relief organization founded in Minneapolis was premiered at the 2024 Twin Cities Jewish Film Festival. A pop-up exhibit and panel discussion accompanied the event.

Regional History Presentation

Dec. 15, 2024 | Or Emet Congregation

Presentation and discussion on Aberdeen, SD research project that led to the JHSUM video *A Stop Along the Way*, and journal *Aberdeen: A Jewish History*.

Finding Your Ancestral Town

By Susan Weinberg, MNJGS President

Do you know where your family came from before they came to America? Perhaps family lore reports a country or maybe a town with a rather unpronounceable name. There are some challenges to navigate in finding ancestral towns. Boundaries shifted with some frequency. Many Minnesotans have roots in Lithuania, but it may not have gone by that name at the time their family came over. Control of Lithuania was held first by Russia and later the Soviet Union, with a brief period of independence from 1918 until WWII. Independence was only regained in 1990 with the breakup of the Soviet Union. As a result, early records are likely to indicate Russia as the country of origin. Towns, too, may move between countries. A town that was once part of the Vilna Gubernia, the district that includes Vilnius, Lithuania, may now be a part of Belarus.

Broaden your search parameters

If you are searching for a particular town, realize that there were frequently multiple names for a town that might span various languages and time periods. On Jewishgen.org, you will find the Communities Database that will help you identify the town under its various guises.

The search for an ancestral town can often be found in documents in the United States. Many families lived in New York for some time. In those cases, it is helpful to seek NY marriage or death records which frequently will have parents' names and towns of origin. Typically, they chose to report the largest city in the region even if they originated in a small town within it. On his marriage record, my grandfather reported his birth in Warsaw rather than Radom, Poland, which was where I ultimately located his birth record. Radom is sixty miles from Warsaw. New York vital

record indices are easily located via stevemorse.org and scans of the original can be often found online at the Municipal Archives.

Census records will also be useful in your search. From 1900-1930 they will tell you when family immigrated to the U.S. and their naturalization status, although you may find a different year of arrival in each census. The 1920 census tells you the year of naturalization if they became a citizen.

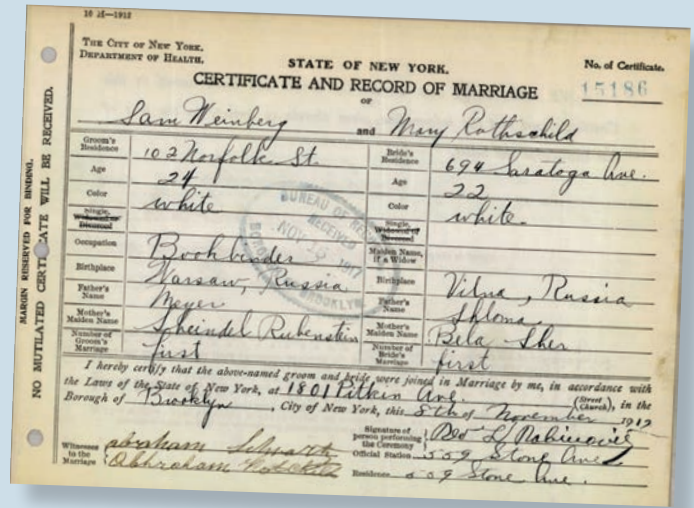
Assume numbers and names are imprecise and search for ranges around numbers and use wild cards to search for names as spellings were likely to vary. Suppose you are searching for an Abraham or an Abram. A search on Abra* will capture both names.

Prior to 1891

Prior to 1891 immigration manifests provide limited information. After 1891 they will provide the town of last permanent residence and by 1907, also the town of birth. Naturalization records will provide extensive information after 1906, related family members, town and year of birth, ship and port, and the name that they entered the U.S. under if it differed from the name they went by in the US.

After 1891

So, what if they came prior to 1891? Immigration records reported only the country, which in many cases was Russia or Austria, the two empires which controlled much of the territory. Naturalization records prior to 1906 were also quite skimpy, with no standardization of content across courts. The one



Marriage certificate of Sam Weinberg and Mary Rothschild found via stevemorse.org

common denominator was a renunciation of loyalty to the ruler of their original country.

All is not lost if family came before those times. If you have family buried in a cemetery in an area with a larger Jewish population, consider where they are buried in the cemetery. Often there is a burial society representing the common region from which they came. There they are buried with their former neighbors who immigrated to the United States. You may also find a mention of a town in a draft record or a will. Yadvashem.org is a useful database to search for parents or siblings who may not have come over but may have perished in the Holocaust. In fact, a surviving family member may have provided testimony on family members who perished and may have noted the town they came from.

Once you've identified who you are looking for and in what region, you can turn to JewishGen.org and search country databases on JewishGen.org or make use of their Unified Search which spans multiple countries. Links to all databases referenced can be found on the Resources page of MNJGS.org

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Executive Director
Robin Doroshow

Hard to believe that the 40th anniversary celebration is in the books, and what an event it was with Congressman Raskin, State Senator Pappas, and Secretary of State Simon discussing the influence of Judaism on their public service and the premiere of another amazing video, *Those Who Serve*, from the exceptional Dale Bluestein. This video, along with more than a dozen more, can be viewed at www.jhsum.org/videos.

I wish you all a happy Hanukah, and a happy secular new year.

Thank you for your interest and support of the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest.



Premack family celebrating Hanukah, circa 1950. Pictured are Bea Premack with children, Ellen, Judy and Paul. Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Photo courtesy of Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.