

# Generations:



FALL 2021

## Telling “small history”

By *Robin Neidorf*

*An interview  
with Dale Bluestein,  
maker of JHSUM’s  
documentary series*

For more than two years, filmmaker Dale Bluestein has been working on video documentaries for JHSUM. Over that period, one important realization has sometimes kept him up nights:

“It’s got to be right,” he said. “So many people who have lived much of this history are luckily still with us. So I want to make sure I get it right.”

There’s a lot to “get right” when condensing decades of diverse experiences, across such a broad swath of farmlands, mining country, cities and time. In fact, it was this wealth of material that inspired the series to begin with.

The impetus came when Dale worked with JHSUM to create the flagship video documentary, “It Happened Right Here,”

**Photo:** Documenting the grave markers at the Sons of Jacob Cemetery near the “Garske” Community, Devils Lake, ND



Bea Premack being interviewed in 2019 in the sanctuary of B'nai Isaac Synagogue in Aberdeen, SD. Bea and her husband Herschel continue to keep B'nai Isaac open as an operating synagogue even as Aberdeen's Jewish population has diminished. B'nai Isaac Synagogue has been in continuous operation at its current location on Kline Street for more than a century.

which debuted at the organization's 35th anniversary celebration in 2019. His business, PartnershipMEDIA, has a "sweet spot" in crafting mission-and-message videos for gala events.

"There's an art to that form," he comments. "You've got a ballroom with 500 people. You'd better grab them pretty early and hold on to them and then leave them with something wonderful — sometimes a laugh or a tear or a great finish or a resounding silence. When the lights come up, you want them to be inspired, changed. There's a tight structure to that."

This nice thing about a tight format is that it focuses the mind. The hard part is how much nuance is left out by necessity.

"We finished making that video, and I still had a ton of material," Dale remembers. "I told Robin [Doroshov], 'This stuff is too good; we've got to make more of them.'"

### Free-rein storytelling

Time passed... funding was secured... and eventually Dale hit the road again with his cameras and notebooks to capture interviews, images and history of Iron Range mining towns and Dakota farming communities and the urban worlds of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

"It turns out that free rein can be almost paralyzing," he laughs. "Where do you even begin to tell all that history?"

The entry point turned out to be what he refers to as "small history": A cemetery left behind by a now-defunct Jewish farming community. A small-town synagogue lovingly restored. The matching of a 100-year-old photograph with the same streetscape today. Stories of social justice clubs. Of Jewish summer camps.

Over time, all of this material coalesced into a series of documentaries. Most are largely location-based, focusing on

the Dakotas, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth/the Iron Range, and two are centered around specific themes — summer camp and repairing the world.

### Getting it done

If "get it right" has been one core principle of the project, the other could be "get it done."

"There's never going to be 'totally complete' when you're telling history," Dale comments. "I have to be prepared for people tapping me on the shoulder and saying, 'Why didn't you talk about this?' or 'You left out...'. But that's the reality — it could always have more detail; it could always be longer. You could always go down this pathway or that one. But having the 'done' quality is almost as important as having the 'totally complete' quality, you know?"

Throughout the process, Dale has found himself a student of history as well as its storyteller. "Everything I've put into these videos are things that I learned myself. I've often been fascinated and inspired and touched — even coming away with a revelation of sorts, the kind of 'I had no idea...' reaction."

And so another objective has been to build this fascination into the product: "My goal is to make the kind of documentary video that I'd like to see." He's making good on this goal. Pull up a chair and pass the popcorn.

### SHOWTIME: ON DEMAND

As of publication, JHSUM has produced five documentaries, which can be viewed at [jhsุม.org/videos](http://jhsุม.org/videos):

- It Happened Right Here
- It Happened Right Here - The Dakotas
- It Happened Right Here - St. Paul
- B'nai Abraham - Virginia, Minnesota

Two more videos are due for release this Fall.



**JHSUM President  
Jamie Heilicher**

Throughout COVID-19, record heat, drought, and continued civil unrest, JHSUM continues to collect the stories of today as well as those of yesterday. Our mission focuses on examining how the Jews of the Upper Midwest impact the lives around us, and how we have been shaped by the region. We look forwards, backwards, and sometimes even sideways to make sure we are around to continue this mission, and we count on your help to keep things going.

As important as it is to collect the stories, we also have to be sure they come alive. Take the time to review our series of video documentaries, which can be found [jhsุม.org](http://jhsุม.org). Our goal is for these videos to help future generations understand how we got here, what happened when we got here, why we struggled, and how we succeeded as a community. Learn and be proud of our heritage!

***Thank you for your continued support.***

# A window into the past

*By Katy Berg, JHSUM Intern*

Everyone who sees the stunning eight-foot stained glass window seems to have the same first thought, “Are you sure that was in a synagogue?” While at first glance it may look like something you’d find in a grand cathedral, the Guiterman Memorial Window, generously donated to JHSUM by Ira Kipp, was once prominently displayed in the third Mount Zion Temple in St. Paul. From its creation in 1904, to the present day 117 years later, the window continues to capture the attention of all those who see it and serves as an important memento to the history of Mount Zion.

In 1856, Mount Zion became the first Jewish congregation in Minnesota, predating statehood by two years. By 1904 when the third temple was completed, the congregation had grown considerably from its humble beginnings of only eight families. Famed Minnesota architect, Clarence H. Johnston Sr., was selected by prominent members of the congregation to design the building.

## **Guiterman Memorial Window**

During services on May 7, 1904, the stained glass window was dedicated in honor of Alexander and Lina Guiterman, the parents of member Leo Guiterman of the Guiterman Bros. clothing company in St. Paul.

Designed by the prominent American stained glass artist William Willet, the window depicts the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. It was originally a circle design, with the shape of the Star of David separating the window into 13 panels. Now, only the central hexagon shaped panel depicting Isaac and Rebecca remains intact. Willet’s Gothic Revival style is prominently displayed in the design, which calls to mind images of Medieval European architecture and aesthetics.

## **After the third temple**

The window did not make the journey from the congregation’s third temple building to its current fourth. By the early 1950s, the growing Mount Zion congregation was in desperate need of a new and larger space.



German-Jewish architect Erich Mendelsohn, famous for his modern and streamlined designs, was hired for the job. Mendelsohn’s vision, however, did not include the traditional stained-glass windows. Rabbi Gunter Plaut wrote to Mendelsohn, expressing his desire for the window to be included in the new temple. Mendelsohn responded with a two-page list of reasons for refusing, citing technical difficulties in removing and reinstalling it, and for several aesthetic reasons. The window was removed from the third temple building in November 1954 and cared for by Ira Kipp before being donated to the JHSUM.

The window shines on as an intriguing piece of Mount Zion’s story. While only 50 years passed between its construction and closure, the Mount Zion’s third temple building existed during a time of massive change in the world, and for the broader Jewish community especially. Perhaps that explains in part why Mendelsohn wished to look forward into the future rather than back into the past. The Guiterman Memorial Window represents a time of transition and shifting identity for Mount Zion and for the larger Jewish community. It is a beautiful piece of art, but also an incredible piece of history.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to extend a special thanks to the following individuals for their assistance on this project: Ira Kipp, Mary Ann Wark, Rabbi Adam Spilker, Kate Dietrick of the Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, Dr. Natan Paradise of the University of Minnesota’s Jewish Studies Department, and the staff and board members of the JHSUM.

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**Katy Berg is from Crookston, Minnesota and is a rising Junior at the University of Minnesota. She is majoring in History with an emphasis on late modern Europe and minoring in Jewish Studies.**

## Upcoming Events

### JHSUM Annual Meeting

**Sunday, Oct. 17, 2:00 pm CST**

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting. Details to follow on [jhsun.org](http://jhsun.org)

### Shared Experiences: Jewish Women and Small Communities

**Nov. 14, 2:00 pm CST**

Join moderator and musical guest, Elisa Korenne, for the third installment of our three part panel series featuring Jewish women who grew up in small communities. Elisa moved from Brooklyn, New York to New York Mills, Minnesota, where she is the only Jew. Elisa Korenne is a Yale graduate, author and award-winning songwriter. Register at [www.tinyurl.com/sharedevent](http://www.tinyurl.com/sharedevent)

## Ongoing

### Oral histories during COVID

JHSUM continues to document the experiences of clergy members and Jewish organizations during COVID. If you are interested in being interviewed please contact us at [history@jhsun.org](mailto:history@jhsun.org)

## Past events

### Video release: "It Happened Right Here – St. Paul"

The latest in JHSUM's documentary series has been released, this video examines the very early days and history of Jews arriving and creating community in the City of St. Paul. View this and others in the series at [jhsun.org/videos](http://jhsun.org/videos)

### Panel discussion: Shared Experiences

Elisa Korenne facilitated two discussions with panels of Jewish women who grew up in small communities. Each panelist shared their unique experiences and discussed their memories which shaped their lives. A new set of panelists were featured at each event viewed by hundreds of JHSUM friends and members all over the country.

Past events can be viewed on our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/JHSUMchannel](http://youtube.com/JHSUMchannel)

## Dear JHSUM members, donors and friends,

I'm very excited to be the new Development Director for JHSUM. Since I've started in May, I have learned so much about the region. I made the trek to the Sons of Jacob Cemetery near Devils Lake, North Dakota, and met with a few descendants of the original Jewish homesteaders. I then read about a homesteader's experience in Rachel Calof's autobiography Jewish Homesteader on the Northern Plains — a story quite different from the urban settlement tales of my own grandparents. It is a powerful story, with many more waiting to be told.

A bit about my story: My father was an academically trained historian and professor before he took over the Shinder's bookstore from his father and uncles. Our family life and travels were full of stories and history lessons — a legacy of generations past. From this foundation, I learned how key elements from the past — political events, cultural values, personal experiences and generational differences — inevitably shape the future.



**Development Director  
Juliana Sellers**

By bringing me on the team to handle fundraising, our Director, Robin Doroshov, has more time to dedicate to other moving parts of JHSUM — writing a book about a small town in our region, for example! It's a lot of fun hearing about her writing process and I look forward to her book coming out later this year. We'll be announcing a release event, and I hope you'll plan to join us.

I strongly believe that giving should be a fulfilling experience for the donor, and a successful partnership begins with projects that resonate with a donor's individual interests, values, or history. It's a powerful experience to express gratitude to the community in which we may live out our daily lives, raise our kids, or bury our parents. As Development Director, I will seek out corporate, foundation and government support for JHSUM, but our lifeblood is YOU — your current and planned gifts as individual donors. When I work with a donor one-on-one, I want to hear their stories, thoughts and dreams for this region. I want to hear what they'd like their legacies to be. Together, we will shape the perfect gift for JHSUM that provides sustenance for the organization and a spark of joy for the donors.

Very soon I will be putting together a fundraising committee that will be introducing new people to JHSUM. If you are interested in joining this committee, or know of a good candidate, please contact me. I would be happy to speak with you/them about the volunteer role and responsibilities associated with it.

With the High Holidays upon us, please join me in supporting our important mission this year. I'm happy to speak with you about ways to maximize your philanthropy in 2021. You may reach me at [jsellers@jhsun.org](mailto:jsellers@jhsun.org). Together, we will preserve, honor and share our history.

**Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year,  
Juliana Sellers**

# From the archives:

News from the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries

## Digitizing hidden collections

By *Kate Dietrick*

*Archivist, Nathan and Theresa Berman  
Upper Midwest Jewish Archives*

In any archival collection, there are bound to be hidden materials, unidentified and languishing in a box, just waiting to be discovered. In the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives we have three boxes full of photo negatives, 35mm slides, lantern slides, and glass plate negatives, containing hundreds of images with little identification attached to them.

Unlike physical photographs, you can't write identifying information on the back of a negative or a 35mm slide. Therefore, the contents of these three boxes of materials were a muddled mystery for many years. Some of the negatives contain labeling identification — negatives with photographs related to Camp Butwin, Mount Sinai Hospital, and the St. Paul Jewish Community Center, to name a few. Other negatives and slides are simply labeled "Binder 1," with numbers on them that we do not understand. Because of this, these boxes of materials were entirely unusable, to both staff and researchers. Until now.

Thanks to funds from the Oren and Sharron Steinfeldt Family Foundation, the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives is working to not only identify but digitize previously unidentified, and thus hidden, images.

Our digitization project aims to research these slides and negatives — what they are and where they are from — and lift them out of obscurity. We began the project in early 2020, briefly placed it on hold during the pandemic and are now continuing our efforts. Previously we did not have the time and resources to fully



This slide was identified as Harold Kaplan from Kaplan Metals in St. Paul. Identification thanks to Bob Kaplan and Myrna Orensten.

research and untangle these materials to improve access to and discovery of these images. With the funding, a hired staff member can research the negatives, determine who donated them, identify what the image is of, and cross reference it to existing collections when possible. This process is done using multiple sources within the archives. Additionally, when just a bit more information is needed, we have asked community members who

have ties to an organization for their expert knowledge to fill in the gaps.

The identified images will then be digitized and described using accurate information to allow researchers to search for and find the photographs on our digital platform, UMedia. These newly identified images should be uploaded online this fall. To view all of our digitized photographs, visit [umedia.lib.umn.edu](http://umedia.lib.umn.edu).

### QUESTIONS?

To learn more about the Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, visit [www.lib.umn.edu/umja](http://www.lib.umn.edu/umja). Or contact archivist Kate Dietrick at [diet0134@umn.edu](mailto:diet0134@umn.edu) or 612-625-0192.

# Exploring deeper into restrictive covenants

By Robin Doroshov

In our Fall, 2020 Generations newsletter article, *Mapping prejudice: Restrictive Covenants, Generational Impacts*, we learned about Dr. Kirsten Delegard's team and their groundbreaking research project to build the first comprehensive map of racial covenants, focusing on Hennepin County.

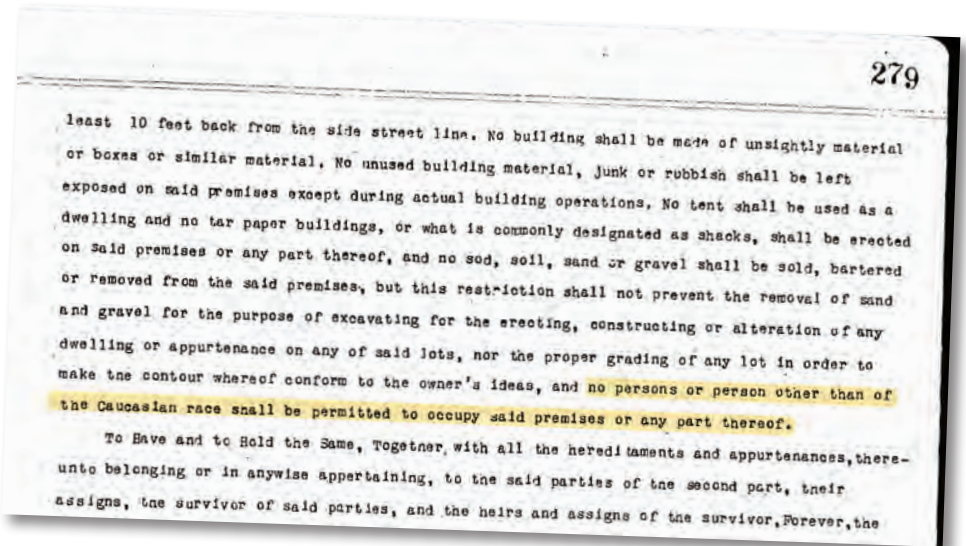
While virtually all of the covenants explicitly restricted African-Americans from the properties, a small percentage of covenants specified restrictions of Jews or those having "Semitic blood or descent." Many covenants restricted "Orientals," which may have been intended to include Jews.

A look at our home address showed a blanket covenant restricting the property to Caucasians. Again, whether Jews were considered Caucasian is up for debate.

While these covenants have been illegal for decades, their very presence in our property records is unsettling. Luckily, there are processes to remove these archaic and odious clauses.

If you own property in Hennepin County and want to find out whether your property has such a deed recorded against it, go to [mappingprejudice.umn.edu](http://mappingprejudice.umn.edu).

Scroll down to the map. Click on the "Explore" button on the main map page. Click on the magnifying glass icon in the lower left-hand corner. A "search" box will then appear. Enter an address in the search box. Select the search icon and then enter any address in Hennepin County to see whether a racial restriction was attached. Click on the property parcel to display the text of the covenant and



Portion of deed on Robin Doroshov's home in Golden Valley.

## To learn more about the Mapping Prejudice project go to [mappingprejudice.umn.edu](http://mappingprejudice.umn.edu)

the date it was put into place. If restrictive covenant language does exist on the property address you enter, that language will pop up next to the pin on property address. The appearance of just the pin indicates that no restrictive covenant language was found on the recorded deed on that property address.

### Discharge your covenant

If you find a restrictive covenant on your property, the State of Minnesota has established a process for "discharging" this covenant. Forms need to be notarized before they can be submitted. For some types of properties, e-filing is available.

You can find the forms and instructions for this process, including the types of titles that can be handled through e-filing, as well as contact information if you have questions by visiting [www.hennepin.us/residents/property/real-estate-recording-information](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/property/real-estate-recording-information).

If you live in Golden Valley or Robbinsdale, you have a bit of leg up regarding the process. Just Deeds, a program that began in Golden Valley is now also available to Robbinsdale property owners. For further information go to [www.goldenvalleymn.gov](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov) and search for "Just Deeds".

**Renew your membership today!**  
**Not yet a member? Join us today!**

Use the enclosed envelope to renew or start your membership and include "Membership" on the check's memo line, or go to [www.jhsum.org/membership](http://www.jhsum.org/membership).

# The Galveston Gateway

By Susan Weinberg, MNJGS President

Between 1899 and 1914, 1.7 million Jews emigrated from Europe with the vast majority coming to America. With this influx of Jewish immigrants, there were several efforts to move them out of New York and into the central United States. The impetus was to avoid drawing attention to this seemingly foreign population and triggering antisemitism, never far beneath the surface. In our last newsletter we wrote about the Industrial Removal Office, a program that assisted with securing jobs and transportation out of New York. Jacob Schiff, its founder and a noted philanthropist, also founded another point of entry for Jews through Galveston, Texas, providing \$500,000 to support the effort. He had observed that once Jews arrived in New York the familiarity of the Jewish immigrant community often held them there. He realized the point of intervention needed to come before they got to New York.

## Why Galveston?

Galveston already was a busy port and train terminal so it could easily move immigrants across the country. It also had another advantage, Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston's B'nai Israel, a highly respected British-American rabbi, was committed to helping the new Jewish immigrants. Over a seven-year period, he and his assistants greeted each ship of immigrants. Often he would board the ship to speak with the immigrants and personally welcome them in their own language.

Schiff and Rabbi Cohen were hardly acting alone: The London-based Jewish Territorial Organization and the Jewish Emigration Society of Kiev recruited immigrants to make the journey through the Galveston Gateway. The Jewish Immigration Information Bureau was

STATE	CITIES	1907		
		men alone	families	total persons
Minnesota	Chisholm	2		2
	Duluth	11	3	23
	Eveleth	3		3
	Hibbing	1		1
	Minneapolis	32	4	52
	St. Paul	21	1	23
	Virginia	1		1

Galveston, Texas, U.S., Jewish Immigration Records, 1901-1917.

Courtesy of American Jewish Historical Society, accessed at Ancestry.com

responsible for helping to place these new immigrants into employment, making use of a network of field representatives throughout the United States.

## Support on arrival

After docking, the immigrants would undergo a medical examination. For those that passed, the next step was an interrogation by the Immigration Inspector and a bag inspection. Bags were then transported to the nearby Bureau headquarters where the immigrants received a bath, a kosher meal and the distribution of mail.

Jewish immigrants were given Yiddish newspapers and leaflets that addressed how to behave in America, as well as the core tenets of the U.S. Constitution. They were then interviewed about occupation and desired location. Their skills were matched with requests for occupational skills from the Bureau's network. Railroad tickets were purchased, supper provided and the immigrant was provided with enough food to last to his destination.

The first ship arrived in Galveston on July 1, 1907. By 1914 when World War I forced the closure of the program, 10,000 Jews had come through the port, 997 of whom found their way to Minnesota. Aside from those who remained in Texas, only Missouri and Iowa received more.



## Building community

The Jews who came through Galveston were often more pioneering in nature and landed in communities with a much smaller Jewish presence. Upon settling, they began to focus on earning enough to live on while saving money to bring family over. They did this through jobs such as tailors and dressmakers, merchants, carpenters, butchers and blacksmiths. These jobs typically paid a few dollars a month in Russia, but in America a shoemaker could make \$10 a week while carpenters could make between \$12 and \$25 weekly.

## Special challenges

Deportations from Galveston were higher than New York, in part because the longer sea voyage was harder on immigrants' health. Furthermore, the lower volume of immigrants through the port allowed for more scrutiny. It was felt that the Department of Commerce and Labor was unsympathetic to the immigrants and would hold up boatloads and deport larger numbers for questionable reasons.

When investing in Galveston, Schiff had an original objective of 20,000 immigrants. However, the 10,000 who were supported by the program seeded larger communities as they earned good wages, bringing their family and drawing friends from Europe.

JEWISH  
HISTORICAL  
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*Upper Midwest*

Eloise and Elliot Kaplan Family Jewish History Center  
Jay and Rose Phillips Building | Barry Family Campus  
4330 S. Cedar Lake Road | Minneapolis, MN 55416

[www.jhsum.org](http://www.jhsum.org)

CHANGE SERVICES REQUESTED



**Executive Director**  
**Robin Doroshov**

There are so many exciting changes at the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest! JHSUM has hired its first Development Director, Juliana Sellers (see article p.4) We have also benefited from the talents of our summer intern, Katy Berg (see article p.3). Both Juliana and Katy have brought so much to our community, and we are thrilled to have them on our team.

You may also have noticed that JHSUM has expanded our use of video as a method of capturing and sharing stories. The professional talent behind this project is Dale Bluestein — learn more about his process and the documentary series in this issue's cover article. We are beyond grateful to have Dale working with us.

***Shana Tovah to all. Wishing everyone a new year of peace and good health.***



**Willard Finberg blowing the shofar at Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1956.**

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