

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CENTRAL JERSEY



Spring 2013

NEWSLETTER

Nissan-Iyar

Come Aboard Our Next Jewish Heritage Trip

Join with other JHSCJ members on
Tuesday, May 7, 2013
as we visit

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL (The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue)

Congregation Shearith Israel (the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue), founded in 1654, is the oldest congregation in America. Built in 1897 on the upper West Side of Manhattan, this beautiful building features neo-classical architecture and windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The congregation houses a number of historic treasures, including Torah scrolls damaged during the Revolutionary War, and regularly uses an Omer Board dating from 1730.



NARRATED BUS TOUR of JEWISH HARLEM

During the early part of the 20th century, Harlem was home to the 2nd largest Jewish community in the United States, a hub of industry, artistry and wealth. The facades of the grand buildings which remain give echoes of their Jewish heritage.

“Reading the Visual/Visualizing the Text” at the

JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Installations by five contemporary artists forge a collective path through JTS, inviting visitors to see Jewish texts and traditions within the academic and sacred spaces of the JTS campus. The installations by Danielle Durchslag, Tobi Kahn, Rachel Kanter, Jill Nathanson, and Ben Rubin are paired with facsimiles of manuscripts and photographs from the world-renowned JTS Library and its Rare Book Room collections.

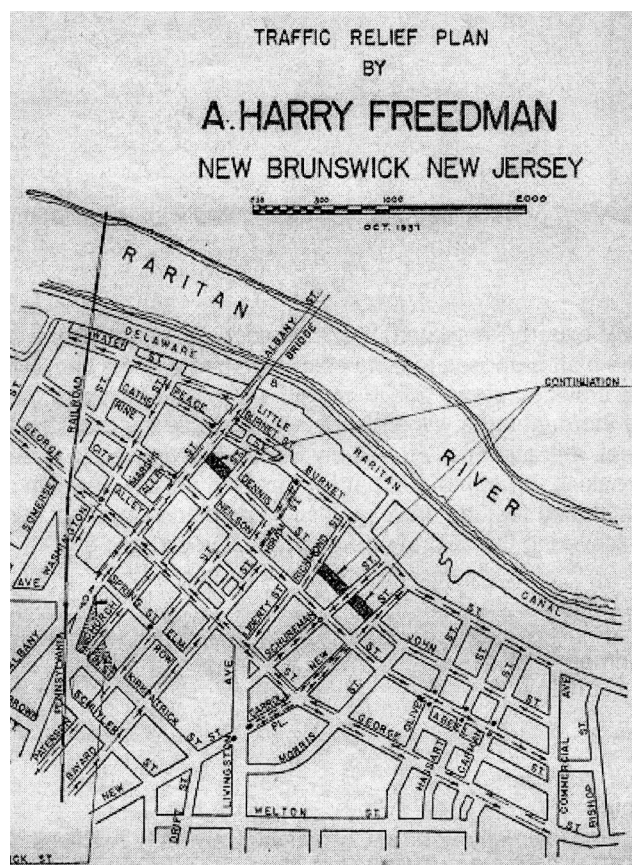
Trip Details

The bus will pick up passengers at two locations--the Sears parking lot in New Brunswick at 8:30 a.m. and the Concordia Shopping Center lot in Monroe Township at 9:00a.m. Lunch at the Jewish Theological Seminary is included in the cost. We will return home by 5p.m. The cost of the trip is \$45/members and \$55/non-members. Please fill out the coupon on Page 5 and return to the JHSCJ office with your check by Friday, April 26.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In the fall of 1937, the city of New Brunswick was grappling with a severe traffic problem. Mayor Frederick F. Richardson declared that the city would never “rank in importance and attain its greatness as long as traffic is constricted to a snail’s pace” throughout the downtown business area. The difficulties arose not just from the volume of traffic, but also from narrow streets with cars parked on both sides. The New Brunswick Sunday Times reported that there was insufficient space for two cars to pass each other and that “there have been many cases where both drivers were too stubborn to give way and traffic movement was tied up for a half hour.”

A. Harry Freedman, owner of Freedman Motor Service and a prominent member of the Jewish community, came forward with a solution to alleviate traffic congestion downtown. He proposed a system of alternating one-way streets, with only George and Albany Streets, the two main streets in the city, accepting two way traffic. He further suggested that stop signs be installed at particularly heavy intersections to keep traffic moving smoothly. The “Freedman Plan” was favored by the newspaper for its simplicity and low cost, estimated at under \$1,000 for one-way signs and one-side parking notices. The plan was subsequently implemented and is still in use in downtown New Brunswick today.



The Jewish Historical Society Seeks Artifacts and Archival Material

Does your family have a story like the one above? The Jewish Historical Society of Central New Jersey continues to build its collection of original photographs, documents, and artifacts relating to Jewish life in Central New Jersey. In order to continue to document our community accurately, authentically, and powerfully, the Society seeks original material. We are looking for letters, diaries, original works of art and music with a local connection. Clothing, home movies and other artifacts would be welcome additions to our archives. The Jewish Historical Society assumes full responsibility for its long-term care and storage and commits itself to making this material accessible to the community. Please call Debbie Cohn at 732-249-4894 if you have something that you think we might be interested in for our collection.



SUPPORTED BY THE
JEWISH FEDERATION
OF GREATER MIDDLESEX

EDITORIAL STAFF

Contributors:

Nathan Reiss
Deborah Cohn

Graphic Artist Deborah Cohn

CONTENTS

Archival Additions	Page 3
Donations.....	Page 5
Jewish Indian Chief	Page 4
Editorial Page.....	Page 2
From the Archives.....	Page 2
Heritage Trip.....	Page 3
Lecture Series.....	Page 3
Perth Amboy Book.....	Page 5
Tributes.....	Page 5

JHSCJ OFFICERS

President	Nathan M. Reiss
Vice President	Harvey Hauptman
Secretary	Gloria Cohn
Treasurer	Philip Cantor

American Jewish Experience Lecture Series 2013

The American Jewish Experience Lecture Series will begin its 16th consecutive year in April. A complete schedule is given below. **PLEASE NOTE:** The Monroe Township location has been changed to the office of Jewish Family & Vocational Services in the Concordia Shopping Center. The lectures are free to the public, although donations toward our operating costs are greatly appreciated.

<p style="text-align: center;">Series #1 Jewish Family & Vocational Services 52 Concordia Shopping Center (intersection Perrineville and Prospect Plains Rds) Monroe Township</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lectures are held on the 2nd Monday of the month* (*note date change in June) 10:00-11:30 a.m.</p> <p>April 8 Philip Cantor <i>Sholem Aleichem and You</i></p> <p>May 13 Heather Kibel <i>The Jews of Cuba</i></p> <p>June 3* Rabbi Philip Bazeley <i>How the Jews Changed the Mafia</i></p> <p>July 8 Mona Shangold, Marilyn Millet Goldberg, Jane Sanders Leal <i>The Perth Amboy Jewish Community: From Immigrants to Heroes and Celebrities</i></p> <p>August 12 Hazel Stix <i>The Jewish Community of Princeton</i></p> <p>Sept. 9 Dr. Marcia Midler <i>Bella Abzug: Feminist Firebrand, Passionate Politician, Force of Nature</i></p> <p>Oct. 14 Harvey Hauptman <i>Legal Eagle David Wilentz: Prosecutor, Power Broker, Patriarch</i></p> <p>Nov. 11 Jason Gosnell <i>The Merging Synagogue Phenomenon</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Series #2 Highland Park Conservative Temple/ Congregation Anshe Emeth 201 South 3rd Avenue, Highland Park</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lectures are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month* (*note date changes May, June, and September) 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon</p> <p>April 17 Philip Cantor <i>Sholem Aleichem and You</i></p> <p>May 22* Heather Kibel <i>The Jews of Cuba</i></p> <p>June 26* Rabbi Philip Bazeley <i>How the Jews Changed the Mafia</i></p> <p>July 17 Mona Shangold, Marilyn Millet Goldberg, Jane Sanders Leal <i>The Perth Amboy Jewish Community: From Immigrants to Heroes and Celebrities</i></p> <p>August 21 Hazel Stix <i>The Jewish Community of Princeton</i></p> <p>Sept. 11* Dr. Marcia Midler <i>Bella Abzug: Feminist Firebrand, Passionate Politician, Force of Nature</i></p> <p>Oct. 16 Harvey Hauptman <i>Legal Eagle David Wilentz: Prosecutor, Power Broker, Patriarch</i></p> <p>Nov. 20 Jason Gosnell <i>The Merging Synagogue Phenomenon</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ARCHIVAL ADDITIONS</p> <p>Thank you to Steven and Ann Saltzman of Temple Sholom of Scotch Plains (formerly Plainfield), for donating copies of "Temple Sholom Topics" from September 1968—March 1973. The Saltzmans are currently putting together an exhibit honoring Temple Sholom's 100th Anniversary, and have been doing research in the JHSCJ archives. The exhibit will open on Thursday, Nov. 7, at the Plainfield Library.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH FOLLOWS H.P. LECTURES</p> <p>For those who attend the American Jewish Experience Lecture Series in Highland Park, Jewish Family and Vocational Service invites you to join in a glatt kosher lunch immediately following the lecture. Please let JFVS know that you would like to stay for lunch by calling them in advance at 732-777-1940.</p>

Don Solomon, Jewish Indian Chief

From the earliest contact between North American Indians and white European settlers, the Europeans held the upper hand. Almost unremittingly, the Europeans imposed their idea of private ownership of land on the Native Americans, obtaining it from them by purchase, stealth and war. Virtually every Indian tribe in North America found its contacts with white settlers painful, if not fatal, and few Indians trusted or respected, much less loved, the white men and women they knew.

One exception to this generalization was Solomon Bibo, a white trader who won the trust and affection of the Acoma Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. In 1888, “Don Solomon”, as he was known to the Acomas, became governor of the Acoma Pueblo, the equivalent of chief of the tribe. Remarkably, the Acomas asked the United States to recognize Bibo as their leader. Even more remarkable is that Bibo was a Jew.

Solomon Bibo was born in Prussia in 1853, the sixth of eleven children. In 1866, two of Solomon’s brothers ventured to America and settled in New Mexico, which in 1848 had become part of the United States after being first a Spanish colony and then part of Mexico. Initially, the older Bibo brothers worked for the Spiegelberg family, pioneer Jewish merchants in New Mexico, but moved on to the tiny village of Cebolletta, where they set up a trading post to exchange goods with the Navajos. In 1869, at the age of sixteen, Solomon Bibo left Germany for America. After spending some months on the east coast learning English, he joined his brothers in Cebolletta.

All three Bibo brothers developed reputations for fairness in their dealings with the local Indian tribes, who used to bring the Bibos the farm produce they grew. In turn, the Bibos, under contract to the U.S. government, supplied the army forts in the area with this produce. The Indians were paid a fair price by the Bibos, which encouraged the Indians to improve their farming techniques. The Bibos also became deeply involved in mediating the many disputes over land ownership that arose between the Indians and the Mexican residents of the area, who for centuries had coveted the Indians’ lands. They also tried to intercede with local white Americans (Anglos) who tried to purchase Indian lands at below market prices. The Bibos were considered pro-Indian and were not particularly embraced by either the Mexicans or their fellow Anglos.

None of the Bibos became more endeared to the Indi-

ans than Solomon was to the Acomas. In 1882, he arrived at the pueblo and set up a trading post. He learned Queresan, the Acoma language, and helped the tribe fight its legal battles to restore its traditional lands. By treaty in 1877, the Acomas had been granted 94,000 acres of land by the U.S. government, far less than the Indians thought they were entitled to according to historical evidence. The Acomas were determined that they should lose no more than had already slipped through their hands.

To accomplish this end, in 1884 the tribe decided to offer Bibo a 30 year lease to all their land, in exchange for which he would pay them \$12,000, protect their cattle, keep squatters away and mine the coal under the Acoma lands, for which he would pay the tribe a royalty of ten cents per ton for each ton extracted. Pedro Sanchez, the U.S. Indian agent from Santa Fe, learned of the deal and, jealous of the success of the “rico Israelito” (rich Jew), tried to get the federal government to void the lease.

The Bibo family fought back. Simon Bibo petitioned the Board of Indian Commissioners in Washington to the effect that his brother Solomon’s “intentions with the Indians are of the best nature and beneficial to them because the men, women and children love him as they would a father and he is in the same manner attached to them.” In 1888, convinced finally that Bibo had acted honorably, the Indian agent for New Mexico wrote, “To the people of the pueblo of Acoma, having confidence in the ability, integrity and fidelity of Solomon Bibo...I hereby appoint [him] governor of said pueblo.”

In 1885, Solomon married an Acoma woman, Juana Valle, granddaughter of his predecessor as governor of the Acoma Pueblo. Juana was originally a Catholic, but observed the Jewish faith and raised her children as Jews. In 1898, wanting their children to receive a Jewish education, Solomon and Juana relocated to San Francisco, where he invested in real estate and opened a fancy food shop. Their oldest son was bar mitzvah at San Francisco’s Ohabei Shalome, and the younger attended religious school at Temple Emanuel. Solomon Bibo died in 1934, Juana in 1941. Solomon Bibo, governor of the Acomas, America’s only known Jewish Indian chief, is buried with his Indian princess in the Jewish cemetery in Colma, California.

Reprinted with permission from the American Jewish Historical Society.

DONATIONS

Thank you to our generous Life Members who help support our Archives Development Fund:

Lew and Ada Bloom
Mr. & Mrs. Terrill Brenner
Philip and Jane Cantor
Joe and Debbie Cohn
Doris Kahn-Gunsher
Renee & Herman Harris
Barnett and Diane Hoffman

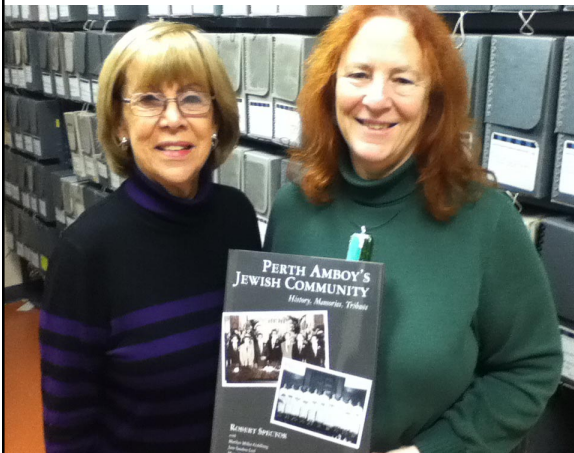
Mr.s & Mrs. Leonard Littman
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Livingston
Sara Maskin
Elizabeth & Larry McCandlish
Barbara & Kurt Nathan
Ruth Marcus Patt
Nathan & Rose Reiss
Susan Schwirck

Edna Sherber
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Ferman
Mrs. Goldie Taub
Georgia Weiner
Adelaide Zaboren
Ann Zar Taub
Leo Zuckerman

TRIBUTES

From	To	Occasion
Adelaide Zagoren	In honor of Ruth Marcus Patt	
Jerry and Doris Kahn Gunsher	David Weintraub	In memory of Russell Weintraub
Irma Rockoff	Judy Targore	Refuah Shelaymah

As Promised.....



Marilyn Millet Goldberg arrived at the offices of the JHSCJ several months ago with a donation to our library. *Perth Amboy's Jewish Community: History, Memories, Tribute* by Robert Spector is everything that Marilyn, Mona Shangold, and Jane Sanders Leal have been promising it would be: a beautiful, full-color book full of wonderful photos and memories of Perth Amboy's vibrant Jewish community. You can obtain your own copy by contacting Marilyn Goldberg at marilynmgpa@aol.com, or phone 609-655-2351.

Marilyn Goldberg and Debbie Cohn at the JHSCJ Office

RESERVATION FORM for the trip to New York City--Tuesday, May 7, 2013

Return by April 26 to the JHSCJ, 222 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ reservations (\$45 for members, \$55 for non-members)

I will meet you at **Sears Lot at 8:30 am** _____ **Concordia Shopping Center Lot at 9:00 am** _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Sandwich Selection: _____ Tunafish Salad _____ Egg Salad _____ Greek Salad Wrap

Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey
222 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

(732) 249-4894
WWW.Jewishgen.Org/JHSCJ
E-mail: info.jhscj@gmail.com

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
New Brunswick, NJ
Permit No. 217

For your convenience, this form is for your tributes.
--

TO: Name : _____
 Address : _____

FROM: Name : _____
 Address : _____

Enclosed: \$_____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____ Other: _____

*Major featured articles and events from this newsletter are available on our
web site: www.jewishgen.org/jhscj approximately two weeks before it reaches you by mail.*

