

L'Dor V'Dor

from generation to generation • the newsletter of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society

Jewish Families Thrived in Nebraska Communities

Editor's Note:

In the summer 2008 issue of this newsletter, we presented a snapshot of the Jewish communities of Nebraska's Panhandle, focusing on several families who lived there in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

In this issue, we move to other parts of our state, to three towns along or near what today we call the I-80 corridor, McCook, North Platte and Hastings. Drawing on census records and reminiscences of former residents and their descendants, we also move to another time—the first 30 years of the 20th century.

During those three decades, Omaha had a Jewish population of a few thousand; Lincoln was home to several hundred. The Jewish population of Denver, Colo., also numbered in the thousands. Small in size compared to Jewish communities of the east and west coasts, these communities nevertheless were (and are) large enough to sustain synagogues and other organizations typical of active Jewish communities.

But Jewish families who settled in central or western Nebraska had to travel hundreds of miles east or west to attend formal holiday or Sabbath services. What children learned about Judaism was limited to what their parents could teach. Families did, however, find communities in which they were welcomed and able to prosper financially.

Among the few Jewish families of early 20th century McCook was that of David and Rae Diamond. McCook is 15 miles from the Kansas border and less than 100 miles east of Colorado. David and Rae Diamond moved there, according to their granddaughter, Gail Wishnow, after a debt owed to David was paid in farmland near McCook.

An hour north of McCook, North Platte was a thriving community of about 4,600, including a substantial number of recent arrivals from all over the world. New Americans from Canada, England, Germany, Denmark, Greece and Japan worked as laborers, porters, hotel cooks and waiters, bricklayers, telephone linemen, locomotive firemen, railroad machinists and farmers. Boarding houses were home on weekends to men who made their living as traveling salesmen. But in this southwestern Nebraska

melting pot, rarely were there more than 50 Jewish residents at any one time.

Putting down roots, though, were the families of brothers Joe and Hyman Hirschfeld, natives of Denver and co-founders of department stores in North Platte, Ogallala and Kearney. Joe's daughter and grandson, Barbara Hirschfeld Rubin and Michael Hirschfeld, tell the story here of "Mister Joe's" legacy of generosity and philanthropy from his years as a businessman and community leader in North Platte.

Among Joe's acts of kindness during this lifetime was that of staying at the side of Louis Lipshitz and the end of Louis' life, even though they didn't know one another well, until arrangements could be made for Louis' funeral in Omaha. Louis' daughter, Marjorie Lincoln, remembers that kindness well. She also remembers that North Platte was a pleasant community during her childhood, even though it wasn't one that included proximity to formal Jewish institutions.

Our eastern most stop on this journey is Hastings, where Herman Zuber made a living in the industry in which several Jewish entrepreneurs across Nebraska found success, scrap iron and metal. Herman's eldest son, Morton, continued operating the family business until 1995.

The Nebraska Jewish Historical Society is grateful to the Special Donor-Advised Fund of the Jewish Federation of Omaha and to Morton Zuber, Omaha, for their support of this project.

NJHS MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society is to preserve the histories of the Jewish families who settled in Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa. The NJHS will promote the acquisition, cataloging and use of the collected materials which depict this history by: participating in conferences; issuing publications to members and professionals; fostering research; and promoting museum projects and related education and cultural activities.

**Membership Envelope Enclosed
In This Edition**

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McCook—David and Rae Diamond

David Diamond is remembered for his entrepreneurship in McCook, in Red Willow County, as well as for efforts he undertook so that its few Jewish citizens could attend religious services in their town.

David had been born in Krakow, Poland. He and Rae (Friedner) were married in Liverpool, England, where Abraham Friedner, Rae's father, was a shochet. Together David and Rae immigrated to Illinois where a brother of David's lived. Their first child, Jerome Harry, was born in Illinois.

When David was paid a debt he was owed with Red



David and Rae Friedner Diamond owned a retail store in McCook, Nebraska.

Willow County farmland instead of cash, the young family moved to McCook. Because David knew nothing about farming, he rented the land to a local farmer. He and Rae opened a dry goods store in downtown McCook that sold, among other things, clothing and flour. David was proud of the fact that he sold shirts and neckties to U.S. Senator George Norris, who was from McCook. Until 1903 when the Diamonds could afford to move to a separate dwelling, the growing family lived above the store. Daughters Bernice, Dorothy, Ruth, Evelyn and Shirley were born in McCook.

"Living in McCook was not such a happy time for my grandmother," her granddaughter, Gail Wishnow, who lives in Lincoln, said. "She had come from an observant home. Settling in McCook must have been very hard with so few other Jewish people there." Keeping kosher was not practical when the nearest kosher markets were in Denver. Meat could be shipped by railroad, but it was spoiled and inedible by the time it reached McCook.

One of the stories Gail heard when she was growing up was that on at least a few occasions, the Diamonds' store doubled as a temporary synagogue.

The names of those who attended the services have not survived for the re-telling. Perhaps attendees included Paul Rosenberg, who, according to census records, was a "hired man" on a farm in Red Willow County. Others who were present may have been Hyman and Fannie Gold-

ansky and their sons Gundell and Stanley, or Morris and Molly Kramer and their son Louis. Hyman Goldansky was a locomotive engineer; Morris Kramer was a dealer in hides and furs.

What has survived for the re-telling is that the services were possible because David located a rabbi in Lincoln who could travel to McCook with a Torah.

During his years in McCook, David also operated a dairy to which farmers brought milk and cream to be tested. He served as water commissioner. Rae taught herself math and reading while helping her six children with their homework.

In 1919, the Diamonds moved to Lincoln where their children could attend synagogue regularly and have friends who were also Jewish.

The high standards Rae and David set for their children's education and accomplishments were evident as all six children finished college at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Harry became president of Gooch's Foods in Lincoln. Bernice (Katskee), Dorothy (Bergen), Ruth (Levinson), Evelyn (Wittman) and Shirley (Frank) all went on to obtain master's degrees and lead in their chosen professions. Bernice was a social worker and Dorothy taught music. Ruth, who studied with Martha Graham, taught physical education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and started the modern dance program there. She then taught at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln until her retirement. Evelyn taught English and Shirley was a nurse. The only one of the daughters who is still living, Ruth, will turn 98 in 2009.

With Rae's encouragement, Ruth and Shirley served overseas during World War II, Ruth in the Red Cross and Shirley as an army nurse.

In Lincoln, David went into the wholesale flour business. He died in 1936. Rae died at age 90 in 1964. David's heirs still own the farm near McCook; it is farmed

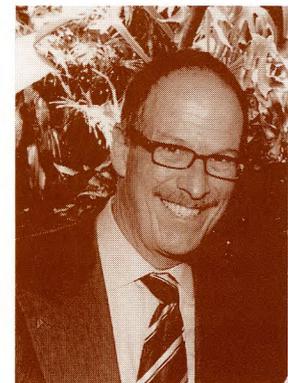


The Diamond daughters with their mother. From left, Bernice Diamond Katskee, Dorothy Diamond Bergen, Ruth Diamond Levinson, Rae Diamond, Shirley Diamond Frank and Evelyn Diamond Wittman.

by descendants of the same family that originally rented the land from the hard-working man from Krakow.

North Platte—Michael Hirschfeld

My Jewish Family in North Platte, Nebraska As I Remember It With My Aunt Barbara Hirschfeld Rubin, by Michael Hirschfeld



Michael Hirschfeld

How did it happen that my grandparents, Joseph and Grace Harris Hirschfeld, ended up spending almost their entire lives in the small Nebraska town of North Platte?

Joe Hirschfeld and Grace Harris were both American-born, she in Denver in 1890, he in Cincinnati in 1891. They met in Denver, married there and soon thereafter moved to San Francisco, where Joe's older brother Harry was achieving success as a tailor.

Joe was a streetcar conductor. In 1910 he and Grace welcomed into the world my father, Moses Benjamin (Beryl) Hirschfeld. When my father was a baby, Joe and Grace returned to Denver, possibly to begin a new life away from the devastation of the San Francisco earthquake of 1907. By 1912, the young family opened the first Hirschfeld Company in Cedar Edge, Colorado. The old wooden building next to a raised wooden walkway was reminiscent of a frontier town out of my grandfather's favorite show, Gunsmoke.

My uncle Mendel was born in Cedar Edge in 1912. My aunt Bobbie Hirschfeld Rubin said the family was considering purchasing a clothing business in Grand Island, but stumbled upon a store for sale in North Platte while taking the train east.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Joe and an older brother, Hyman, bought the building and the business in North Platte and in 1918 opened what would be the first of two Hirschfeld stores in North Platte. In 1930, the original building was moved into the street while a new store was built on the site. Over the decades the Hirschfeld Company also expanded with stores in Kearney and Ogallala.

Everyone in the family worked at "the store." At first on Saturday nights and later on Thursday nights, all of my aunts and uncles met at my grandparent's home after work for dinner. It was a family business typical of small town America.

Grandma and Grandpa settled and began to raise their growing family in North Platte. Besides my dad, brothers and sisters Mendel, Betty Lou, Barbara, Shirley and Leon-

ard were all raised in that small Nebraska town.

Aunt Bobbie shares that it was a very close family in North Platte. They always were identified as being Jewish, though the only Jewish education they had was celebrating High Holy Days in the house, Hanukah and family dinners and whatever else they learned around the family dinner table. Nothing was kosher, nothing orthodox, though there was never pork in the house. After all, Joe and Grace were both raised in families already assimilating into American society. Aunt Bobbie shares that there was never talk of the old country or relatives from Europe, though I remember as a child Grandpa and Grandma visiting cousins here in L.A. who had foreign accents. North Platte was a typical small American town and the Hirschfeld family was very comfortable there. Aunt Bobbie also shares that life was good and that she only encountered anti-Semitism once in her life.

Grandpa didn't speak Yiddish or read Hebrew particularly well but he taught his children to be proud of their heritage and to hold their heads high. He always wore his "Jewish hat" and it was well known that he was a Jew.

There were a few other Jewish families in North Platte in the early days. Aunt Bobbie remembers them and I even knew a few of them. The Stone family owned the drug store and in the earliest days Uncle Hy and Aunt Esther lived there too. Grandma's cousins, the Pizer family, also lived in North Platte, but we don't know if the Pizer family being in North Platte had anything to do with the Hirschfelds settling there. Julius and Annie Pizer were in North Platte as early as the turn of the century. Julius and Annie Pizer operated a dry goods business in North Platte before 1900; their children Mamie and Harry were born there in 1894 and 1898.

The Lipshitzs and the Lustgartens were also in N.P. They were in the junk business. Aunt Bobbie thinks that maybe they bought that business from Aunt Annie Pizer.



Joe Hirschfeld, far right, assisted with a community center groundbreaking in North Platte.

During World War II, North Platte hosted the “Canteen” and troop trains stopped regularly for entertainment, relaxation and something to eat. Aunt Bobbie remembers that on certain nights different ethnic groups brought food for the boys. On some nights the Jewish women of the town, few though they were, came together to feed the passing troops.

Until the new highway was built in the 1960s the main east-west road went right through town and traveling salespersons often came through North Platte on their way to points east or west. The Hirschfeld home was open to those Jewish traveling salespersons whether they needed a place to stay or a warm meal. Many became lifelong friends of my grandparents. The Gotliebs, Katskys, Fensens and Doc and Shana Fishbein were all close family friends. Some ended up settling for a time in N.P. while others were just passing through.

I usually visited North Platte over the Christmas vacation in the winter or during the summer. My older brother Harlan had begun that tradition when I was too young to travel there. We took the train and arrived after a long day and one and one-half nights. I remember the train conductor once asking me if I was Joe Hirschfeld’s grandson. He obviously knew Grandpa. We stayed with our grandparents at 621 West 4th Street, a modest home by today’s standards.

I also remember when my grandparents came to visit us in the 1950’s, arriving at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles after the long train-ride from North Platte. They visited us regularly here in Los Angeles where my father settled after the Second World War and opened a small medical practice in the then sleepy town of Santa Monica. Grandma and Grandpa exited the train, she with her stole and Grandpa in his three-piece suit and hat, almost always with a big cigar in hand.

It is interesting that my Grandfather, who passed away a week or so before John F. Kennedy in 1963 became a civic leader in the North Platte community. I am told that his father Isaac instilled in his children that it was their responsibility to be civically engaged, to care for the less fortunate and to be an advocate for justice in the world. I was very proud of my grandfather who was this major player, as we would say today, in the North Platte community. He was active with the Salvation Army, the Community Chest, the local hospital board and the Chamber of Commerce. He had a weekly radio show and was a highly respected community leader. I remember during the Christmas holidays holding his hand as we walked to the Salvation Army where he passed out shiny new dimes and apples to those in need. It was a big deal in those days.

Aunt Bobbie remembers Grandpa’s generosity. In the 1990’s she

received a letter from a man who wrote that in 1944 his father needed a suit for a graduation but had no money to pay for one. Mr. Joe, as he was affectionately called, gave him the suit and told him to pay whatever he could. Fifty years later he found and communicated with Aunt Bobbie to thank her for the good deed performed by her father those many years before. This was by no

means an exceptional story, as Joe Hirschfeld’s generosity was well known in the North Platte community.

Joe Hirschfeld’s generosity extended even to Germany after World War II. In preparation for this article we discovered two letters written to Mr. Joe in 1947 and 1953 from a husband and wife in Dresden, Germany, who had been given some old clothes by an American serviceman. The suit had the Hirschfeld label in it; this German man wrote to Mr. Joe asking for further assistance. Evidently

Grandpa did send him clothes because another request came in 1953.

I believe that Grandpa’s commitment to helping others came from the teachings of his father, Isaac Mendel. On Isaac’s gravestone in Cincinnati it is written, “May God and people be blessed by my sons.” It was the teaching of Tikkun Olam, the repair of the world, I believe, that silently shaped Joe Hirschfeld’s life.

Many decades later as I became heavily involved in researching my family roots, I wondered how it was that this Cincinnati, Ohio, family whose parents were immigrants from Riga, Latvia, had ended up in North Platte, Nebraska. A younger brother A.B. Hirschfeld stayed in Denver and started the A.B. Hirschfeld Press that flourishes to this day under the leadership of A.B.’s grandson, A. Barry Hirschfeld. Another brother Emil stayed in Cincinnati along with a sister Rae Hirschfeld Rubin and another brother William. The eldest brother, my great uncle Harry, ended up in Los Angeles. And the Hirschfeld Company of North Platte founded



Hirschfeld family, North Platte, Nebraska 1920s: Joe, Beryl, Bette Lou, Leonard, Grace and Mendel.



Among boys who spent their youth in North Platte were Beryl Hirschfeld, second from left, Lawrence Block, in front of bicycle, and Leonard Hirschfeld, far right.

in 1918 still operates to this day under the leadership of my cousin Alan Hirschfeld.

I have since discovered and befriended many others in our extended family whose ancestors had been in the USA as long as our side of the family. And, in an example of how truly small the world is, Lawrence Block was raised in North Platte and became the Rabbi of the local Temple in Santa Monica, California, the temple in which I grew up.

I don't believe that there was much of a Jewish life in the Hirschfeld home though all of the children knew that they were Jewish. There were no Christmas trees and the family celebrated the Jewish holidays around the dining room table. The boys were Bar Mitzvah in Denver after studying at home in North Platte. The youngest girls, Bobbie and Shirley, were sent to Denver to meet nice Jewish boys. Both did.

Now the family is spread all over the country. From the arrival of my great grandfather, Isaac Mendel Hirschfeld and his young bride, Dora Seligsohn Hirschfeld, in Cincinnati in 1887, now more than six generations of Hirschfelds are scattered around the country. While I grew up in Los Angeles and am a city-boy, many in the family have roots in small town America. I think the common thread must be the Jewish values which lives in all of us as they have been passed down from generation to generation. Justice, charity, caring for those less fortunate and faith in our family and our community are the values that shaped the Hirschfeld family and will live on through the generations.

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Lipshitz Family—North Platte

North Platte, according to a family story recently re-told by his daughter, Marge Lipshitz Lincoln, became her family's home by happenstance.

Marge's father, Louis Lipshitz, supported his family by traveling across Nebraska, buying scrap metal to re-sell at a profit. While traveling in about 1917, he found himself stranded in North Platte.

"Dad was out buying junk and got stuck in a snow-storm in North Platte," Marge said. "The people were kind to him there." Details of the kindness that Louis encountered in North Platte haven't survived with the story. Whether he was loaned money, given food, shelter, or all three, isn't known. But whatever the kindnesses were, they made enough of an impression on Louis that he chose to move his family to a North Platte. By doing so, he increased the number of Jewish families there from six to seven.

Born in Russia, Louis had immigrated to Fremont in 1900 with his wife, Sarah, and an infant daughter, Fannie. Louis worked as a peddler. Another daughter, Rosella, was born in 1907.

Marge said the family was able to settle in Fremont with the assistance of a Jewish man already there by the name of Kavitch.

Meanwhile, a young widow, Celia Lepack, also a native of Russia, came to this country with her son, Ralph, after Celia's husband had been killed in a pogrom. She came to Omaha in 1913 where she had sisters, Rebecca Hurwitz and Jenny Hasson. Celia supported herself and Ralph by working at the Itan Biscuit Company in Omaha.

Louis Lipshitz was widowed when his wife, Sarah, died from complications of a tonsillectomy.

Introduced by members of their extended families, Louis Lipshitz, single father of Fannie and Rosella, and Celia Lepack, single mother of Ralph, were married.



Marge (Lipshitz) Lincoln and her niece, Shirley Bordy, were raised together in North Platte.

After the fate-changing snowstorm and Louis' decision to re-settle his family in North Platte, a son, Morris, was born in 1918, followed four years later by daughter Marge. Census records listed Louis as "owner of a junk shop" in 1920 and a "junk dealer" in 1930.

"We had a very loving home," Marge said. "Even though we had step-siblings, we never had any reason to believe we weren't real brothers and sisters."

If Louis had been looking for a community with large or close-knit Jewish community, he would have settled elsewhere. Out of nearly 5,000 residents, the few Jewish residents of North Platte were Joseph Stone, owner of a drug store; Irwing Laff, a telegraph operator; Julius Lustgarten also a junk business owner; and Hyman and Joseph Hirschfeld, clothing store owners. Idella Laff and Delores Lustgarten were schoolmates of Morris and Marge Lipshitz. Louis daughter from his first marriage, Fannie, and her husband, Abe Bordy, also lived in North Platte with their daughter, Shirley, and son, Gene. Fannie and Abe operated retail stores in North Platte, Merna, Broken Bow and Columbus.

(In earlier decades, Harry Block and William Gellar, brothers-in-law who had emigrated from Russia I about 1880, owned a clothing store in North Platte. In 1900, Julius Pizer and Sam Richards, both born in Russia in about 1870, were selling "dry goods" there.)

"We always knew we were Jewish. Our parents subscribed to a Jewish newspaper. They spoke Yiddish when they didn't want us to understand what they were saying," Marge said. "But the only way we celebrated holidays was by Mother fixing traditional dishes. Our father would go to Omaha to buy matzoh for Passover."

Whether or not she was preparing for holiday celebrations, cooking was Celia's primary main occupation. As did other cooks of her background and era, Celia rendered her own schmaltz from chicken skin for fat she used in baking and cooking. She made her own noodles, mixing egg and flour on a board, "resting" the dough under a cloth for several hours, then rolling out the noodles with the rolling pin she had brought from Russia.

"Mother's generation didn't cook with recipes," Marge said. Celia followed the principles of "shitteryne," a word Yiddish dictionaries define as "a little of this, a little of that, a little of something else, without measuring."

The rolling pin Celia brought from Russia is a valued possession of one of her great granddaughters, although no one has yet been able to duplicate Celia's skill with homemade noodles. Or cinnamon rolls, cookies, chocolate cake, kreplach (meat dumplings), or lemon pie, for that matter.

"I tried her recipe for kreplach once," Marge said. "I ended up with flour from ceiling to floor. I never tried that again."

Marge's husband, Norman Lincoln, still remembers the cookies Celia baked and sent him when he was stationed in New Guinea during World War II. Marge and Norman were married in 1943 while he was on furlough from Camp Roberts in California.

Celia also was a master at cooking fish that Louis caught on his fishing trips he took in his Whippet automobile. And she cooked pheasants and other game that customers of Louis' gave him in gratitude for money he had loaned or credit he extended at his pawnshop for the guns they used in hunting. Louis also fermented wine in barrels in his basement, using Concord grapes he bought in Omaha.

Though unable to read or write English, Louis achieved success and earned the respect of all who knew him, Marge said. His bookkeeping was simple, with two columns, one for "money in" and another for "money out." If he needed to write a letter, he dictated it to Marge or Morris. They "didn't dare change anything" from what their father said, according to Marge.

"Dad was highly thought of," Marge said. "Besides being a junk dealer, he bought and sold hides and furs and owned a pawn shop. He had been a peddler until he got where he need to be to be able to buy a building. He was a strong man who worked hard, saved his money, bought war bonds and, when World War II started, was very proud of his sons and nephew in the service." (Nephew Gene Bordy died while serving his country during World War II.)

Louis and Celia, Marge said, were able to live comfortably and send two children to college.

"There were able to do this with money they saved, not necessarily money they earned," Marge said.

Marge also speaks with pride of the accomplishments of her brother, Morris. At the University of Nebraska, he was editor of the Daily Nebraskan campus newspaper, was elected Big Man on Campus, and was a member of the Innocents Society. Later he worked as a newspaper reporter in North Platte and Fremont, and for the Associated Press in Omaha, before working for several years in the import/export business. He was married to the former Helen Ellis.

Marge is especially proud that Morris served as president of Temple Israel in Omaha and of her own leadership roles at Temple "with no Jewish education except what we taught ourselves."

After Louis died in 1957, Celia moved to Omaha with the intention of living with Marge and Norman. But she moved back to North Platte, even though it meant living far from her children and grandchildren.

"She was miserable in Omaha," Marge said. "She said 'here I'm nobody. In North Platte, I'm a lady. I want to go back.'

"Living in North Platte was a good experience for our family," Marge added. "Even with only seven Jewish families there, I can honestly say that there was never a single time that we were shown anything other than complete respect."

Hastings—Herman and Morton Zuber

"In the United States, as in Europe...virtually the entire market in waste products, including iron, steel, nonferrous metals, rubber, paper and cotton residue was founded by Jews and remained within the Jewish economy."—from *A History of the Jews in the Modern World* by Howard M. Sachar.

Historians theorize that the connection between the American scrap industry and Jewish businessmen dates back to Europe. In the "Pale," a region that included territory of present-day Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belorussia, Russian Jews were excluded from many occupations by law. But they could buy and sell scrap iron, metal and rags. Many of today's Jewish residents of Nebraska trace their lineage to the "Pale."

Morton Zuber doesn't know whether his European ancestors were involved in the junk business. He does know that his father, Herman Zuber, immigrated to the United States in 1907 as a 15-year-old and was able to join his sister, Alte Friedman, in Fremont. (With the assistance of a Jewish philanthropic agency, Alte had been able to join her husband, Elias, in Fremont in 1906. According to records of that agency, three young sons made the journey with her.)

"Jewish people going into the scrap business stems back to many immigrants who started out as peddlers," Morton said. "While traveling from town to town, they could also pick up a few scraps of metal here and there, and then carry them back to larger cities to sell."



Herman Zuber in about 1915.

Herman learned that the competition for collecting scrap was heavy if one stayed too close to Omaha and Fremont. So he traveled across the state to towns like Kearney and Cozad, where he could buy, among other things, soda fountains to "scrap out" for block tin to sell to dealers back in Omaha. According to Morton, block tin is used for tubing and alloying with other metals. It was useful in soda fountains because it didn't corrode when it came into contact with the carbonated water that was used in making ice cream sodas. In the metals trade, it is more valuable than copper.

As a young man living in Fremont, Herman experienced success operating his own scrap iron and metal business before being drafted in 1918 and given 30 days to sell out and report for duty.

After returning from service during World War I, Herman owned a men's clothing store in Fremont. But a sudden collapse of economy put him out of business.

"There was a money panic in 1921," Morton said. "The banks demanded immediate payment for merchandise bought on credit." In a short time, Herman had lost his business and house. Once again, the scrap business beckoned as a way to start over with, literally, nothing.

A scrap yard owner in Hastings agreed to sell the business to Herman on monthly payments. The opportunity to return to the scrap metal business was the beginning of a long association between the Zuber family and Hastings.

"Herman Zuber's intent was to accumulate enough money to move back to Fremont or Omaha," Morton said. But one year led to another.

A town of 25,000 that is about 150 miles southwest of Omaha, Hastings had three scrap iron companies, all Jewish-owned, during the Zubers' time there.

End consumers of scrap products are metal smelters and steel mills which accept only railcar or semi-truck load quantities. The Zubers bought iron, copper, brass, lead, zinc, aluminum and other metals from their customers, then, once they had accumulated sufficient quantities, sold these materials to smelters and mills.

"Hastings was a scrap metal market center for central Nebraska and Kansas," Morton said. Customers from as far as Ogallala, Friend, Seward, Albion, Burwell and Broken Bow, Nebraska, as well as from several Kansas counties along the Nebraska border, brought scrap metal from their workshops, factories and farms to sell in Hastings.

These customers found Hastings to be a very competitive market for their materials; often the price they could get in Hastings from the Zubers or their competitors was higher than was being paid elsewhere—enough higher to justify passing by other towns that had scrap yards, even if they weren't as far to drive.

After serving in World War II and finishing a business degree at the University of Nebraska, Morton moved back to Hastings and assisted in his father's business. Morton sold Zuber Company in 1995 and retired to Omaha in 2000.

Morton's brother, Robert, moved to Omaha after finishing undergraduate and law degrees at the University of Nebraska. Their sister, Millie Bernstein, also attended the University of Nebraska and lives in Omaha.

Scrap, Morton said, is "feast or famine." Commodity markets fluctuate. Even in good years, according to Morton, the scrap business is "hot in summer, cold in winter and dirty all year 'round."

Letter From Executive Director, Renee Ratner Corcoran

The NJHS office has had a busy year providing services and programs that preserve the history of our community. We co-published a book, completed a documentary and received the Jewish Federation of Omaha 2007-2008 Community Service Program Award for the third year in a row.

"Doorway to Freedom, The Story of David Kaufmann", written by William E. Ramsey and Betty Dineen Shrier, co-published by the NJHS was released in July. The NJHS was honored to be a part of this project.

At the NJHS annual meeting in August we premiered "The Brandeis Story" a video documentary about the department store and family. Since that time we have had the opportunity to share the film with residents of the Rose Blumkin Home, Beth El Hazak, a reception funded by the Alan and Marcia Baer Foundation at Thunder Alley in Elkhorn, NE and a presentation at a YES luncheon at the "J" in December.

The NJHS received the Community Service Program Award for our exhibit There Was Film in the Camera, a photographic exhibit by the late Gary Gerelick. This was a display of over 500 of Gary's photos taken over many years at various community functions.

We have been reorganizing the Carl Frohm Archival Center. This has been a huge undertaking but well worth the work. Kathy Weiner, staff assistant, has enthusiastically been in charge of the project and just completed the largest section of our collection. Kathy has completed cataloging and placing in new archival folders and boxes the biographical and personal files. Recently she completed the Jewish military and veteran's files. "I really enjoy going through the biographical files and putting the families in order and I look forward to starting the next section of this process", says Kathy as she completed these tasks. We are grateful that our collection grows daily with donations of photographs and memorabilia about our Jewish families, synagogues, organizations and businesses of Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa. If you have items to donate please contact us. We are much in need of information about Jewish owned businesses.

Dottie Rosenblum, long time member of the NJHS staff is in charge of our tribute cards for celebrations or memorials.

Ben Nachman continues to amaze us all with his wonderful oral history interviews. We are so lucky to have him. He performs a very important service to the families of our community.

One of my favorite jobs is giving tours of our permanent exhibits in the hallways of the JCC and showing off the Dorothy and Henry Riekes Museum. Last year we had many visitors from around the country as well as senior groups, tourists and students visit the Museum. Everyone is always so impressed!!!



Thunder Alley event with George Shafer, Helen Epstein and Louise Abrahamson.



Kathy Weiner in the NJHS office.

It's That Time....

Renew Your Njhs Membership Today

Please find enclosed in this newsletter an envelope for your 2009 membership. Our memberships run on a calendar year from January 1 to December 31. We are requesting that you complete the information and return the envelope at your earliest convenience. Your membership is very important to us!!! As you know, the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society receives no funding from the Jewish Federation of Omaha and we depend entirely on memberships and donations to continue our important work.

If you know anyone in your area or any former Nebraskans who would like to become members please let us know or contact them directly and tell them how important it is to preserve our history for future generations by becoming a member of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society.

Thank you for your continued support. We need you to remain a vital part in our Jewish community.

Kevee Kirshenbaum
Membership Chairman

Dick Rochman
Membership Committee

Letter from the President Three's Company to Serve You

The best value for your NJHS membership is the services provided by the NJHS office staff. The office is dedicated to provide you with excellent customer service and are well recognized throughout our Jewish community. We are extremely fortunate to have three professionals --- Executive Director Renee Corcoran, Kathy Weiner, and Dottie Rosenblum that have collective service of more than 20 years in our office. The purpose of this letter is to applaud their efforts and to let the membership know how much we appreciate their quality work.

To illustrate the some of the services of our office, consider the following work accomplishments during 2008.

- NJHS Office Stats at a Glance
- 60 Accessions, this includes objects, photos & etc.
- Mailed out 330 tribute cards for birthdays, memorials, etc.
- 235 People visited Riekes Museum
- Processed 593 membership records into Past Perfect software
- Processed approximately 50 oral histories

It is my pleasure to work with the office staff and I encourage each of you to stop in the NJHS office and personally thank them for their service to our membership.

Ira Nathan
NJHS President

Grocery Store

Information Needed

The NJHS would like to hear from families with GROCERY STORE stories from the Omaha and Council Bluffs areas including photographs and memorabilia. We would like to do a project in the future about groceries. Please call Renee at 334-6442 or email njhs@jewishomaha.org for information.



Louis Sommer Grocery Store, 48th & Dodge (before the fire)



United Provisions- 4817 South 24th Street-Abe & Izzy Roffman

Don't forget the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society in your will.

Donations To The NJHS

ANNIVERSARIES: Denise & Jon Meyers, by Bob Belgrade; Bernice & Alan Wolfson by Phyllis Bittner.

BIRTHDAYS: Special - Midge Bowers, Phillip Greenberg, Joseph Greenberg by Rabbi Jerry & Cyrille Kane; Bob Batt, Dee Fox by Bob Belgrade; Lois Friedman by Lorraine Miller, Babe Nogg; Bob Belgrade by George Shafer, Sandra Belgrade Dennis & Pamela De Porte, Margo & Steve Riekes, Kim & Jay Noddle, Ann & Roger Suelter; Bea Premack by Debbi & Larry Josephson; Ida Epstein Halperin by Hannah Baum Oman; Dorothy Kotok by Karen & Oliver Pollak; Rita Binamow, Mike Abramson by Allan Handleman Family; Jack Epstein by George Shafer, Louise Abrahamson; Milt Saylan by George Shafer, Louise Abrahamson; Judy Simons by George Shafer; Lynn Cutler by Betty Cutler; Paul Epstein by Bob Belgrade.

RECOVERY: Myrna Kirshenbaum by Dottie Rosenblum; Bernie Altsuler by Etta & Bae Epstein; Sheldon Masnek by Bev Gilinsky; Lois Epstein by Doris & Al Abramson, George Shafer; Gloria Goldberg by Helen Rifkin; Mike Silverman by George Shafer.

IN MEMORY OF : Debbi Greene by Joan (Abrams) & Steve Subrin; Justin Greenberg by Rabbi Jerry & Cyrille Kane; Debra Lyddon Goldstein, David Friedland, Louise Martin by Bob Belgrade; David Friedland by Mickey Stern; Adam Jacobs by Harold Siporin; Morrie Shapiro by George Shafer, Debbi & Larry Josephson; Rose Ziegman, Hub Rosenblum by Roselle Pizer; Kathy Baer's father by Renee & Dan Corcoran; Leonard Muskin by Hy & Betty Polsky, George Shafer; Lois Stern by Don Stern; Frieda Krizelman by Helen & Tuffy Epstein; Sara Harding by Fran & Louie Blumkin, Sandra Belgrade, Bob Belgrade; Roz Friedman by Louise Abrahamson, Midge & Bill Bowers, Renee Corcoran; Sarah Lohrman by Midge & Bill Bowers; Joe Guss by Toni Victor & Barry Kaiman; Scott Grossman by Helen Rifkin; Ben Schneider, Marvin Suvalsky by Sissy & Howard Silber; Jerry Wasserman by Bev Gilinsky, Louise Abrahamson, Renee Corcoran; Milton Loss by Bev Gilinsky; Dr Robert Engel by Lisa & Alan Engel Family; Steve Parsow by George Shafer, Toni Rosen, Tony Roth, Bob Kaplan & Bernice Kaplan; Roz Zoob by Bob Belgrade, Dottie Rosenblum; Shelly Harris by Bob Belgrade, Renee & Dan Corcoran, Doris & Al Abramson, George Shafer; Audrey Shapiro by Debbi & Larry Josephson; Eva Handleman by Helen Rifkin; Doris Cohen by Renee & Dan Corcoran, Doris & Al Abramson; Harry Paskowitz by Debbi & Larry Josephson

OTHER: Gift Membership to Richard Josephson, by Debbi & Larry Josephson, New Home of Cherie & Sol Kutler by Doris & Al Abramson; Rachel Slosburg's engagement by George Shafer; Sandy Lipsman's Marriage by Helen Rifkin; B'nai Mitzvah of Naomi & Aaron Zipursky by

Helen Rifkin; New Year Greetings to Mr & Mrs Sheldo Cohen, Rose Davis by George Eisenberg.

From The Njhs Board Of Directors & Staff

BIRTHDAYS: Midge Bowers, Bob Belgrade, Lois Friedman, Milt Saylan, Jack Epstein,

IN MEMORY OF: Debra Lyddon Goldstein, David Friedland, Morrie Shapiro, Mary Fellman, Roz Friedman, Joe Guss, Leonard Kulakofsky, Robert Engel, Ben Schneider, Jerry Wasserman, Leonard Muskin, Max Falk, Steve Parsow, Hal Maller, Minnie Breslow, Sol Yaffe, Herman Goldstein, Roz Zoob, Sheldon Harris, Beatrice Schneider, Audrey Shapiro, Joanie Bernstein's nephew, Doris Cohen, Michael Hoberman, Irv Chudacoff.

OTHER: Congratulations: to Marty Ricks on his 10th Anniversary as Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation Director; to Jan Goldstein on her 10th Anniversary as Jewish Federation of Omaha Director; Grandson to Joanie & Terry Bernstein; Recovery of Mike Silverman.

IN MEMORY OF MARY ARBITMAN FELLMAN

FROM : Toby Fellman, Ann Kaiman, George Shafer, Sidney & Lynda Mirvish, Fran & Louie Blumkin, Sharee & Murray Newman, Shirley & Buddy Goldstein, Suzanne Richards Singer, Sheila Rosen, Mr & Mrs Kevin Saltzman, Charlotte Slutzky Koom, Etta & Bae Epstein, Vicki Perlmeter, Bob Belgrade, Bernice Kaplan, Bob Kaplan & Toni Rosen; Sylvia Jess, Jean Duitch, Nancy Rips, Beatrice Sommer, Marcia & Sheldon Kushner, Naomi & Neil Arnold, Caryn & Gary Rifkin, Ruthie & Merle Potash, Bill Manning, Ducky & Mike Milder, Bohler Engineering, Myrna & Kevee Kirshenbaum, Mr & Mrs Alan (Buddy) Goodman, Helen & Tuffy Epstein, Joanie & Terry Bernstein, Mary Holmlund, Jenna Kaplan, Kari Esther O'Leary, Katie Foss; Irene & Yale Gotsdiner, Ruth & Irwin Goldenberg, Marcia Civin Gallner, Leo Hill, Sue Goldhammer Schreiber, Helen Rifkin, Maxine & Joe Kirshenbaum, Alice & Murray Ehrinpreis, Kim & Jay Noddle, Mickey Stern, Bonnie Millender, Mr & Mrs C.Gerald Drucker, Audrey & Jim Foster, Stephen Karp, Tom Yee, Gail Wishnow, Max Neiden, Ferne Katelman, Eve & Fred Simon, Cantor Leo & Annette Fettman, Mary Wezelman, Betty Kelberg, Arnold & Wilma Fellman, Miriam R. Simon, Sam & Rosaline Epstein, CorVel Corporation, Hannah Baum Oman, Marty & Iris Ricks, Phillip & Gail Goldstein Raznick, Sara Cooper Meirovitz, Harriet Nathanson, Jane Goetz Critz, Heacox, Hartman, Koshmrl, Cosgriff & Johnson; Ross & Rose Goldware, Goulston & Storrs; James C. Alex and Bryan W. Anderson; Connie & Martin Rabinovitz, Sheila & Ed Doctoroff, Marshall & Barbara Kushner, Karen & Oliver Pollak, Jean Epstein, Ghita Bessman, Honey Lou Kranther, Ruth & Roy Belzer, Marcia J. Allar, Dottie Rosenblum, Renee R. Corcoran, Kathy, Harry & Max Weiner; Estelle Faier, Jonathan Rosenbaum, Phyllis Bittner, Marcia Cheney, NED Management; Attorneys & Staff of Fellman Law Group; Russ & Lori Clark & Family, Joel & Julia Helfman, Sieben Polk; Joel & M. E. Jarvis Pribnow.

Short Notes from the NJHS

New NJHS Board

New NJHS officers and board members were installed on Sunday, August 3rd at the annual meeting. New officers are: Ira Nathan, President, Gary Javitch, Vice President, Debbi Josephson, Treasurer, Rocky Stern, Secretary and Midge Bowers, Past President. New board members are: Michael Gendler, Dick Rochman and Beth Staenberg. Harold Mann, long time friend and supporter of the NJHS presented his nephew, Bob Belgrade with the Shirley Berman Volunteer Award. Following the presentations "The Brandeis Story" was premiered, a film depicting the story of the Brandeis family and department store. This was a community wide event followed by a dessert reception.

Oral History Update

The following interviews have been conducted by Ben Nachman and added to our collection of oral histories: Art Davidson, Jim Farber & Nancy Noddle, Paul Galter, Mace Jabenis, Sally Marer Jonisch, Lenny Lefitz, Suzi Seglin Mogil, Byron & Tiller Raznick, Shirley Raznick Schwartz, Jeanne Shechet, Joie Simon and the Zalkin sisters-Sandra Belgrade, Marcia Cohen & Linda Mann.

Please contact us if you are interested in doing an oral history interview. This is an excellent way of preserving the history of you, your family and the entire community.

The Historical Society has transferred all of our oral history interviews from VHS to DVD. VHS tapes disintegrate while DVD's last much longer. Having all the interviews on DVD makes them much more accessible to everyone. Copies of interviews now on DVD are available for \$15.00 each and can be obtained by calling 334-6442.

Aza Exhibit Set For Summer-2009

Next year is the 85th anniversary of AZA and to celebrate the NJHS and the Henry Monsky B'nai B'rith Lodge #3306 would like to mark the occasion with a special event. We are planning an exhibit and program for next summer. If you have AZA materials and/or would like to help with the event please call Renee at 334-6442.

Welcome New NJHS Members

We gratefully acknowledge and welcome our new members. Thank you for your generous support.

New Members

Jill Belmont
Howard & Sharon Epstein
Randy & Penny Endelman
Toby Fellman
Lesley Gendelman
Richard Josephson
Irvin Rushall
Tootie Simon

Life Member

Julie A. Rochman

2008-09 NJHS Officers

President: Ira Nathan

Vice President: Gary Javitch

Secretary: Rocky Stern

Treasurer: Debbi Josephson

Past President: Midge Bowers

Founders: Mary Fellman & Oliver Pollak

Board Members

Ron Brodkey
Michael Gendler
Stu Giller
Caryl Greenberg
Gary Javitch
Nan Katz
Sheldon Kushner
Max Neiden
Vicki Perlmeter
Caryn Rifkin
Dick Rochman
Larry Roffman
George Shafer
Beth Staenberg

Ex Officio

Louise Abrahamson
Bob Belgrade
Joanie Bernstein
Helen Epstein
Lois Friedman
Helen Rifkin

Board Advisory on Oral Histories

Ben Nachman

Board Advisory on Archives & Exhibits

Doug Hartman

Office Staff

Executive Director:

Renee Ratner Corcoran

Staff:

Dottie Rosenblum

Kathy Weiner

Moving? Please notify us of your address change!



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Omaha, NE 68154

Address Service Requested.

NJHS Offices: E-mail: njhs@jewishomaha.org • Phone: (402) 334-6441/6442 • Fax: (402) 334-6507



Nebraska Jewish Historical Society Donations

We have available for all occasions, cards for donations of \$5.00, \$10.00 and \$25.00 and up. Also available are packets of six (\$5.00 cards) for \$25.00. Please use the form below and we will send the appropriate card. Please make your checks payable to the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, 333 South 132nd Street, Omaha, NE 68154.

TO: Name _____
Address _____

FROM: Name _____
Address _____

ENCLOSED: \$ _____

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

OTHER _____

OR call the NJHS office at 334-6441 between 10:00 AM & 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday. Contributions can be made to the NJHS Fund or the Mary Fellman Permanent Enrichment Fund.