

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

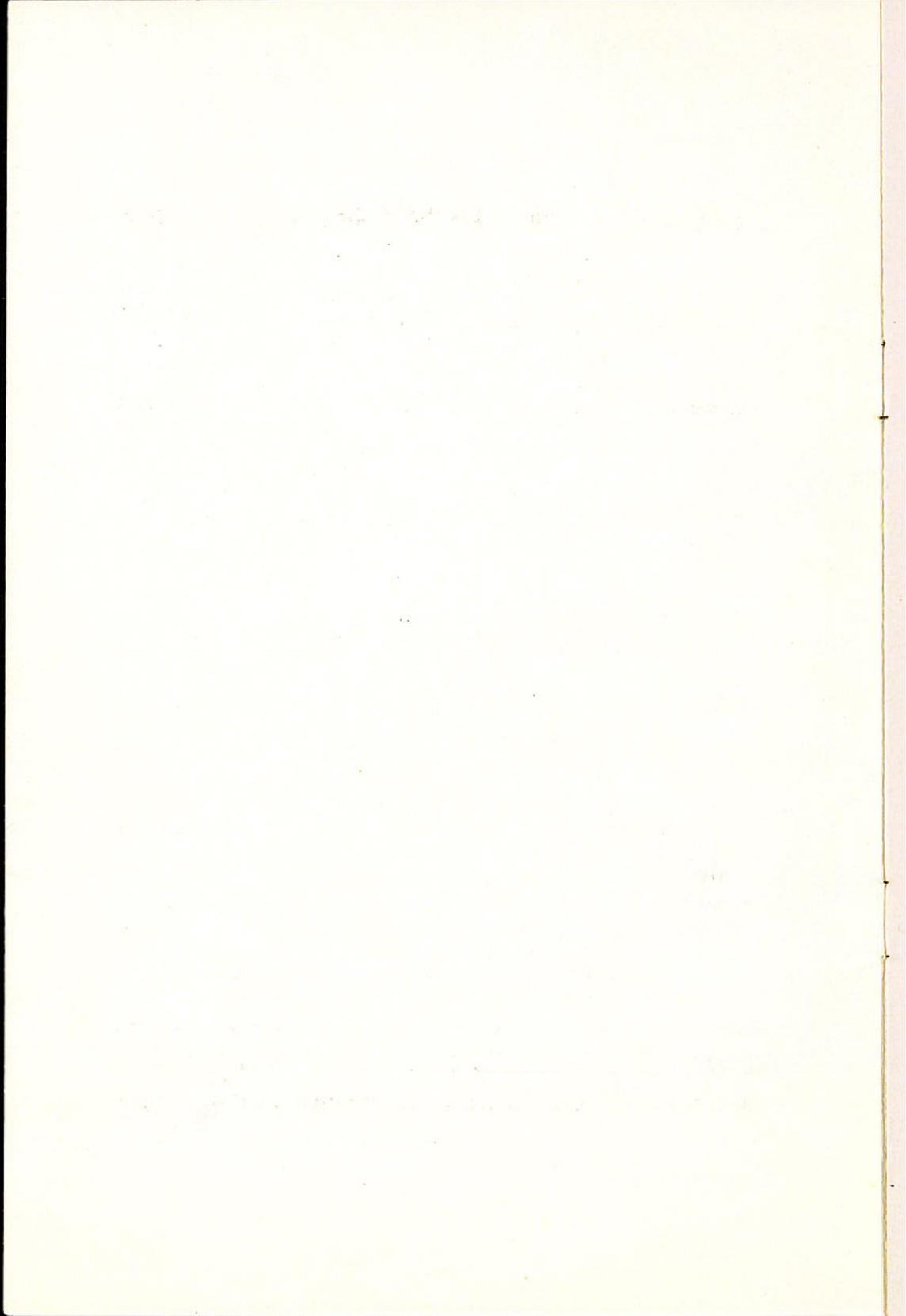


November, 1964

Kislev, 5725

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN





# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

... אשר ישאלו בניכם מחר את אבותם ... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."  
— Joshua 4:21

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# *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

8801 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan, 48202

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## Ezekiel Solomon Historical Marker Dedication

by LAWRENCE A. RUBIN

*Executive Secretary, The Mackinac Bridge Authority,  
St. Ignace, Michigan*

The warm sunshine of a sky blue clear day was not enough to offset the chill wind that swept down from the north across the Straits over Fort Michilimackinac on Sunday, May 31, 1964.

It was definitely topcoat weather as a handful—literally a handful—of Michigan Jewish residents gathered to dedicate a historical marker to Michigan's first Jewish settler, Ezekiel Solomon. As in the days when Solomon was considerably outnumbered by non-Jews as a resident of the Straits area, so again were the Jews with a penchant for history outnumbered in the ceremony to honor a distinguished pioneer.



Left to right: Lewis Beeson, Executive Secretary, Michigan Historical Commission; Walter J. Murray, Chairman, Mackinac Island State Park Commission; Allen A. Warsen, Honorary President, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan; Dr. Eugene T. Petersen, Director of Historic Projects, Mackinac Island State Park Commission.

## EZEKIEL SOLOMON HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

According to schedule, the ceremony began at 2:00 p.m. with Dr. Eugene T. Petersen, Director of Historic Projects for the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, acting as master of ceremonies. He described rather briefly Ezekiel Solomon's role as a participant in the massacre which took place on June 2, 1763. He related some of the incidents in the life of Ezekiel Solomon which have been so brilliantly researched and written about by Mr. Irving I. Katz of Temple Beth El, Detroit.

Dr. Petersen then introduced Mr. Lewis Beeson, Executive Secretary of the Michigan Historical Commission, who described briefly the program of placing historical markers around the State and congratulated the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan for its participation in the marker program by donating the plaque describing the highlights in the life of Ezekiel Solomn.



Left to right: Leo F. Boissineau, descendant of Solomon; Walter J. Murray, Chairman, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, and son Jerome; Dr. Irving I. Edgar, President, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan; Mrs. Irving I. Edgar; Lewis Beeson, Executive Secretary, Michigan Historical Commission; Dr. Eugene T. Petersen, Director of Historic Projects, Mackinac Island State Park Commission; Jonathan D. Hyams, Treasurer, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan; Allen A. Warsen, Honorary President, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan; Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Rubin and son David, members of Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

Michigan Senate

**Senate Resolution No. 121**

Offered by Senator Charles S. Blondy

**MEMORIALIZING MICHIGAN'S FIRST JEWISH SETTLER AND THE  
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN.**

WHEREAS, On Sunday, May 31, 1964 the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will dedicate and present to the Mackinac Island State Commission for the people of Michigan an historical roadside marker commemorating Michigan's first Jewish resident and survivor of the Massacre of 1763 at Fort Michilimackinac, Mackinaw City, Ezekiel Solomon; and

WHEREAS, Ezekiel Solomon was a native of Berlin, Germany who had served with the British army, and arrived at Michilimackinac in the summer of 1761, becoming Michigan's first known resident of the Jewish faith. He was one of the most active of the Mackinac fur traders until his death, about 1800. During the Revolutionary War, he and other hard-pressed traders pooled their resources to form a general store. In 1764 he was one of an eight-member committee to regulate trade in the Mackinac area. His business took him frequently to Montreal, where he is believed to have been buried and where he was a member of Canada's first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel. Those are substantially the facts embodied in the commemorative marker which the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will present to the state; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED BY THE SENATE,** That its members congratulate the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, Dr. George S. May, research archivist of the Michigan Historical Commission, author of the marker's text, and Mr. Allen A. Warsen whose efforts were chiefly instrumental in producing the marker commemorating Michigan's First Jewish Settler, Ezekiel Solomon, for their joint efforts and gift to enrich the wealth of Michigan's historical mementos of interest and her heritage; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Adopted by the Senate, May 28, 1964.

*Beaugh J. Kenyon*  
Secretary of the Senate.

#### EZEKIEL SOLOMON HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

Dr. Petersen then introduced Mr. Allen A. Warsen of Oak Park, Michigan, Honorary President of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and prime mover in the successful effort to obtain a marker commemorating Michigan's first Jewish resident, pioneer fur trader and merchant of northern Michigan. Mr. Warsen then made the following remarks:

"Ezekiel Solomon, who bore the names of a prophet and a king, was a pioneer, a chaltz, as a pioneer is called in Israel. Just as the "chaltzim" have converted marshes and a wilderness into a modern, dynamic land, so have Solomon and the other European pioneers with their courage, daring and energy gradually brought about the conversion of this beautiful, God given land into the modern State of Michigan, a state famous for its great culture, great men and great institutions.

"But Solomon was also a Jew. And as a Jew he pioneered in opening new frontiers for his oppressed, persecuted and down-trodden brothers.

"It was an irony of fate that the first Jew in this new land was also one of the first victims of a pogrom, the massacre of 1763.

"This marker is not just a monument in memory of a person. It is a symbol! A symbol of a country where people of all creeds live, work and create in harmony and peace.

"And so on behalf of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan I now dedicate this historic marker to the memory of Ezekiel Solomon, and present it to the Mackinac Island State Park Commission."

The marker was then unveiled by Jerome Murray, son of Mr. Walter J. Murray who, as Chairman of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, accepted the plaque which is placed on the grounds of the restored Fort Michilimackinac, and is an installation under the jurisdiction of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. Chairman Murray indicated his pleasure in participating in the marker dedication and highlighted the fact that in this great country of ours it was fitting and proper than on the same day that "we dedicate

#### EZEKIEL SOLOMON HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

a plaque to a Jewish settler we also observe a Catholic Mass being held for the first time in nearly two centuries on the exact site where Mass was said in the original Church of Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac. This Catholic church has been completely restored as was when the Fort was a thriving military and trading center, and Ezekiel Solomon, although a devout Jew, urged the British Government to permit a priest to be assigned to the Fort and contributed to his support.”

Members of the Historical Society attending the plaque dedication were: Dr. Irving I. Edgar, Vice-President, and Mrs. Edgar; Mr. Jonathan D. Hyams, Treasurer; Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Rubin and son, David J., of St. Ignace.

## *Centennial of Montefiore Lodge, Free Sons of Israel*

by IRVING I. KATZ  
*Executive Secretary, Temple Beth El  
Past President, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

On December 4, 1964, Montefiore Lodge No. 12 of the Fraternal Order Free Sons of Israel, Detroit's fourth oldest Jewish organization, will reach its 100th birthday. The following article is written in commemoration of this centennial.

Jewish fraternal orders began their existence in the United States in 1843 and grew out of the need of the immigrant population for friendship, cultural expression and material benefits in an environment that reflected their social and economic backgrounds. While the Orders were established primarily for mutual aid, many of them had altruistic purposes of national and international scope.

### FIRST FRATERNAL ORDER

The first Jewish fraternal order to be established in the United State was B'nai B'rith, founded in 1843. The American Jewish community at that time did not exceed 25,000 persons, many of them immigrants, with New York claiming forty per cent of this number. What there was of organized Jewish life centered around the 34 synagogues scattered throughout the country.

Except for a few burial societies there were no philanthropic or educational agencies detached from the synagogue. Neither was there any provision to aid immigrants to adjust themselves to the American scene, nor to minister to their social and economic needs.

The Jewish immigrants found a community rent by bickering and jealousies that impaired its potential ability to provide the newcomers with material assistance or cultural stimulation in any effective measure. Jews coming from one part of Europe had little or no contact with those originating in other parts. Dutch, English, Polish, Bohemian and German Jews, each with its own ritual and separate and tightly knit community, dismayed some of the younger and better educated among the German newcomers and they recognized that the times called for a new type of community organization.

## CENTENNIAL OF MONTEFIORE LODGE, FREE SONS OF ISRAEL

The leader of the small group, Henry Jones, therefore proposed to found a society which "based on the teachings of Judaism, would banish from its deliberations all doctrinal and dogmatic discussions and by the practice of moral and benevolent precepts bring about union and harmony among the Jews." This meant the creation of something entirely new in Jewish life—a Jewish fraternal and service organization with a program sufficiently broad and flexible to embrace all aspects of Jewish life and to win the adherence of all elements in the Jewish community.

The ideals and objectives of the founders of B'nai B'rith were forcibly stated in the preamble to the first Constitution: "B'nai B'rith has taken upon itself the mission of uniting Israelites in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity; of developing and elevating the mental and moral character of the people of our faith; of inculcating the purest principles of philanthropy, honor and patriotism; of supporting science and art, alleviating the wants of the poor and needy; visiting and attending the the sick; coming to the rescue of victims of persecution; providing for, protecting and assisting the widow and orphan on the broadest principles of humanity."

### SECOND FRATERNAL ORDER

During the two decades preceding the Civil War the Jewish immigration from Germany was under way and the American Jewish community had grown to about 150,000 in a total population of a little over 31,000,000. At least two-thirds of the Jews in the United States at this time were recent immigrants.

The second oldest Jewish fraternal order to be organized in the United States was Free Sons of Israel. It was started in New York City on January 18, 1849, by nine Jews who sought to remove from the Charter of the City of New York the restrictions against the consecration of grounds for burial purposes, so that they could own a Jewish cemetery. Their efforts were successful and the nucleus for an active fraternity was formed. It followed very closely the general pattern of organization of B'nai B'rith.

The First Constitutional convention of the Order was held March 10, 1849. One week later the motto of the Order was evolved: "Friendship, Love and Truth," and provisions were made for sick benefits and burial ground privileges. At the third meeting, held

## CENTENNIAL OF MONTEFIORE LODGE, FREE SONS OF ISRAEL

the following week, the constitution and ritual were adopted. Death benefits were established in 1871.

During World War I approximately \$1,000,000 was raised by the Order in Liberty Bonds, and during World War II the Order gave its full measure of support to the war effort.

At the triennial convention in 1920, it was decided to admit non-participating or social members in order to permit youth, with its initiative, energy and enterprise, to become affiliated with the Order.

Non-sectarian in its beneficences, the Order has given moral and financial support to hospitals, homes, charitable institutions and national and international relief drives. In 1929 the hospital relief fund was established. Following legislation at the convention in 1942, which provided for the enjoyment of equal rights by the social membership class with that of the benefit class save that of insurance, Districts 1 and 2 were abolished in 1945 and in place thereof 10 Districts were established, each in charge of a district deputy.

The Order has at present a membership of about 10,000. It provides protection to the families of members through the medium of its insurance class. Sick benefits, cemetery rights for members and their families, old age and convalescent homes and home for the incurables, under the supervision of the foundation fund, are provided.

### MONTEFIORE LODGE ORGANIZED

A lodge of the Free Sons of Israel, "Montefiore Lodge No. 12," was organized in Detroit December 4, 1864, the first and only lodge of the Order in Michigan. The articles of incorporation of the lodge, filed in the county clerk's office on February 1, 1866, read in part:

#### ARTICLE I

"Philip Goodman, Simon Cohen, Samuel Knoll, Abraham Heller, Benedict Wiseman, L. Labold, M. Malsh and 16 other inhabitants of the City of Detroit, County of Wayne, and State of Michigan, have with the intention of forming a corporation for beneficent purposes . . . accepted the following articles of Union and Agreement.

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### ARTICLE II

The Corporation formed in conformity with the above mentioned Act and in consequence of these articles of Union and Agreement shall be entitled "The Montefiore Lodge No. 12 of the Independent Order of the Free Sons of Israel."

### ARTICLE III

The object of said corporation shall be to relieve the members in case of sickness and to aid and assist the widows and orphans of the brethren of the Lodge and in case of decease of a member of the Lodge or any of his family, provided as long as he is entitled thereto by the laws, to give them decent burial upon the burying grounds of the corporation.

### ARTICLE V

No person can become a member of this corporation who is under 21 years of age or over 45 years who is not of Jewish birth and professes the Jewish faith and who is not free from all bodily disease."

The early history of Montefiore Lodge No. 12 of the Free Sons of Israel reveals that it was run on lines similar to those of B'nai B'rith. Members donned regalia corresponding to their degrees, the officers wearing special regalia. Inner and outer guards stood on duty during meetings; the password had to be given before a member of the lodge could be admitted.

A special ritual was provided for swearing in new members; there was a song of the Order which was sung on special occasions. Every six months new officers were chosen, their titles were hidden behind such symbols as N. G. and V. G.

All the minutes ended with the motto: Freundschaft, Liebe and Wahrheit (Friendship, Love and Truth). Funerals were attended en masse.

Special committees were appointed to visit the sick; if their report was favorable, sick benefit was granted. When a member died, his widow and orphans received support from a special widows fund. A member who was in need did not receive aid from the lodge

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treasurer, but his members extended aid to him from their own funds.

### CEMETERY PURCHASED

Shortly after its founding, the Montefiore Lodge purchased burial grounds at Mack Road and Mt. Elliott in Hamtramck. This was the first time in the history of the Jewish community of Detroit that an organization other than a synagogue purchased cemetery grounds for the interment of its members and families.

In the 1880's, the lodge acquired rights to burial in Section E in Woodmere Cemetery which it still holds. The remains of deceased at the old cemetery were transferred to Woodmere.

The minutes of the Montefiore Lodge reveal that there was a friendly relationship between the members of the lodge and lodges of other Jewish fraternal orders, such as Pisgah Lodge of B'nai B'rith and Nathan Lodge of the Order Keshet Shel Barzel (Iron Knot).

Special meetings of the three lodges were held to arrange funerals of members, especially officers and trustees. A number of joint affairs were also held, such as the one in 1892 when a joint celebration was held in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America.

### EARLY PRESIDENTS OF LODGE



Abraham Anspach   Simon Heavenrich   Herman Krolik   Philip Weiss

The earliest minutes of the Montefiore Lodge have, unfortunately, been lost and a list of presidents for the first 13 years is not available. The following presidents headed the lodge since 1877, some of them several terms: Abraham Anspach, Louis E. Rosen-

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feld, Herman Krolik, E. H. Van Baalen, Moses Marx, George Morris, Phillip Weiss, Bernard Marx, Simon Heavenrich, Ludwig Kohn, Simon Cohen, Emanuel J. Cohen, Joseph Lichtenstein, Louis Meyer, L. Blumberg, Sigmund Simon, Isidore Frank, J. Grabowsky, Ben Marx. Also Cheri Mandelbaum, Edmund M. Sloman, Isaac Grabowsky, Jacob Tobin, Benjamin D. Marx, Leo Michelson, Arthur A. Gottesman, Max Michelson, Joseph Mellenoff, Carl C. Meyers, Dr. S. B. Danto, James Kates, Albert Blitz, Bela Jacoby, Adolph Goldberg, Maurice Merker, Sigmund Schor, Leo M. Brown, Saul M. Lewis, Maxwell Emmer, Leon Schembeck, Everett Behrendt, Marvin Hyman, Milton Gottesman, Horace Haber, and the present incumbent, Rubin Leipzig.

Montefiore Lodge is at present a social and fraternal lodge with a membership of 100 comprising both men and women. It still maintains the insurance feature of its program.

The main project of the Montefiore Lodge at the present time is to provide camperships at the Fresh Air Society for underprivileged children and to make contributions to the Penrickton Nursery.

## *Society to Hold Forum Meeting at Jewish Book Fair, Nov. 14*

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has been invited to conduct a Forum Meeting at the Jewish Book Fair on Saturday, November 14, at 8:30 p.m., at the Jewish Community Center, Curtis and Meyers. Our speakers will be Morris Garvett, prominent communal leader, on "The Development of Jewish Education in Detroit." Allen A. Warsen, Honorary President of our Society, on "Dramatic Episodes in Michigan Jewish History" (Mr. Warsen will speak in Yiddish), Dr. Irving I. Edgar, President of our Society, on "Early Jewish Physicians in Michigan." Mrs. Ettie Raphael, Vice-President of our Society, will preside.

An exhibit of material dealing with the dedication of the State Historical Marker to Ezekiel Solomon this summer, supplemented by documents of the trading operations of Solomon from the Collection of Irving I. Katz, will be on display.

You and your friends are cordially invited to attend.

## *Message From Archives Committee*

Dear Friend:

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is pleased to inform you that a long-awaited hope has now become a reality.

In order to preserve valuable records and documents pertaining to the history of the Jews in Michigan and to make the same available to historians and students, our Society has been fortunate in being able to enlist the cooperation of the Detroit Public Library in designating the world famous Burton Historical Collection as the repository of Michigan-Jewish Archives. All material will be catalogued by professional archivists.

We are certain that you will want to share in this significant undertaking and that you will welcome this opportunity to ensure the permanent safekeeping of your valuable records (charter, constitution, minutes, membership records, cemetery records, dedication and anniversary booklets, photographs, family correspondence, diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks, naturalization papers, military records and medals, personal souvenirs, etc.) by making the same available to the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan for deposit at the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library where they will be available for your use and for the use of interested persons in the community.

Therefore, we are looking forward to a telephone call from you to discuss the material you have available. Please call Trinity 5-8530 at your earliest convenience or write to 8801 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, 48202.

We hope to hear from you very soon.

Sincerely,

IRVING I. KATZ, Chairman  
Archives Committee

MRS. IRVING I. EDGAR, Co-Chairman  
Archives Committee

## *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was organized for the following purposes:

1. To foster the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the history of the Jews in Michigan.
2. To encourage all projects, celebrations, and other activities which tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish History.
3. To foster all effort to create a wider interest on the part of Michigan Jews in the growth and development of their respective Jewish communities.
4. To cooperate with national Jewish historical societies.

Annual membership dues to individuals, libraries, and institutions are \$5.00 per year. Dues and contributions to the Society are deductible for income tax purposes.

*Michigan Jewish History*, a semi-annual journal, is sent to each member. Contributions are invited. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor, 8801 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, 48202.

