

# The Little Jew Was There

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SIGMUND SHLESINGER

BURT A. SIEGEL

American Jewish history is more than a study of broad trends and patterns; it is also a composite portrait comprised of the lives of individual Jews. Each life, whether heroic, near-heroic, or quite ordinary, offers the historian something in his attempt to assess the full significance of the American Jewish experience. Indeed, history may reveal more when it focuses upon the individual than when it abstracts him and subsumes him under a mass of interpretations and theoretical constructs.

### HARDTACK AND COFFEE

The life of Sigmund Shlesinger is of special historic interest because of his role in a harrowing, dramatic Indian battle. This youthful adventure makes his life quite extraordinary in the annals of American Jewry, since few Jews entered into American culture in so striking a manner. Born in Hungary on December 29, 1848, Shlesinger came to America in 1864. Like most immigrants of that period, he remained in New York City, where he worked for a year as a horse-car conductor. The New York "ghetto" could not hold him, however. Eager to break out of its confines and no doubt to seek an economic opportunity elsewhere, Shlesinger soon departed for the rustic, rowdy, rapidly expanding West of the 1860's. In New York, he had met a merchant from Leavenworth, Kansas, and went west to enter his employ.

Shlesinger worked as a clerk in Leavenworth for one year, but Leavenworth could hold him no more than New York. During this time, the Union Pacific Railroad, the economic lifeline of the West,

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Mr. Siegel, a senior student on the Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is a former editor of *Variant*, the student body publication.



*Courtesy, Jewish National Fund*

Dr. Chaim Weizmann  
"One of the great men of this age"  
(see pp. 4 ff.)



*Courtesy, The Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*

President Harry S. Truman  
"The most powerful single man in the world."  
(see pp. 4 fl.)

was under construction, and in 1866, the track of the railroad reached Junction City, Kansas. Shlesinger heard the rumors of astonishing business success for merchants who supplied the railroad construction gangs and the military men guarding them from Indian attacks. Soon he was to be found among the throngs of seekers after quick fortune. He remained in Junction City for a time and then moved on to Salina, Kansas. Not finding the fortune he sought, he began a kind of nomadic existence, moving with the construction gangs and soldiers along the grading of the railroad. He described the unsettled conditions in these words:

This was new country. Towns sprang up overnight. Communities moved houses and effects in a few days to any locality that seemed promising to become the end of the track and a prospect for trade with the railroad employees.<sup>1</sup>

Shlesinger engaged in numerous minor, rather lackluster, commercial ventures. In Hays City, Kansas, he met Abraham Hyman, and the two opened a small cigar store with a stock worth about five dollars. The young men also peddled newspapers and periodicals together in the army camps and forts of the frontier. Among their customers were General George A. Custer, "Buffalo Bill," and "Wild Bill" Hickock. Shlesinger also worked as a clerk in a clothing store, as a barkeeper in a tent liquor house, as a waiter in a tent hotel, and as a clerk in a grocery. He shoveled on the railroad, cooked for teamsters, night-herded mules for contractors, and teamstered mules hauling stone from a quarry. In later years, he would recall with amusement some of his other abortive business endeavors:

Here [in Hays] I entered upon several ventures, such as a bakery with a capital of a few dollars. I procured a piece of tent cloth and a couple of store boxes and fitted up a store room. About a dozen loaves of bread and as many pies represented my stock. A few of each were sold, the rest eaten. This wound up the business. I obtained a recipe to brew beer which I brewed in a wash boiler on a wood fire on the open prairie, the product proving a menace to the health of the venturesome customers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Shlesinger, "Scout Shlesinger's Story," *Beecher Island Annual* [BIA], V (September, 1917), 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

Success eluded Shlesinger. After two years of such business disasters, he found himself virtually penniless. There remained only one means of securing any sort of dependable income — the military.

In the summer of 1868, I was entirely out of funds, living on hardtack and coffee most of the time, going from camp to camp looking for something to turn up, but no chance of employment came. About this time, General Forsyth was organizing a company of frontier men to scout for Indian warfare. I eagerly sought an engagement, and succeeded through the influence of C. W. Parr, post scout at Fort Hays.<sup>3</sup>

#### SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS A MONTH

The Western Plains were, at this period of American history, the scene of bloody confrontations between the white frontiersmen and the Indians who inhabited the area. Relations between the two groups were exacerbated in particular after the Civil War, when the Union Pacific Railroad was being constructed. To the Indians, the coming of the railroad and the consequent settlement of the territory spelled the loss of their hunting grounds. They tried to sabotage railway construction and sought to obstruct white settlement of the area. One economic interest collided with the other, and the almost inevitable consequence was war. As part of the United States Government's overall attempt to push the Indians back, General Philip H. Sheridan directed Colonel George A. Forsyth to organize a troop of fifty scouts to guard the white settlers against the Indians of the prairie. It was with something less than enthusiasm that Forsyth accepted Shlesinger into his band of scouts:

[Shlesinger] seemed to be inferior, and in all respects unfit for service; a Jew, small, with narrow shoulders, sunken chest, quiet manner, and pipey voice, [and] but little knowledge of fire-arms or horsemanship; he was indeed unpromising as a son of Mars, and, after forty-nine had been obtained, was accepted only that he might be counted on the rolls to make up the fifty and thus enable the expedition to start.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> James B. Fry, "The Island of Death," *Army and Navy Magazine* [*ANM*] (August 26, 1893).

War Department records supply some details of Shlesinger's career as a scout:

The following named scouts were employed of Major Henry Imman, A. Q. M., Fort Harker, Kansas, under date of August 28, 1868, for service among hostile Indians under command of Bvt. Col. G. A. Forsythe, Major, 9th Cav. Those scouts that received \$75 per month furnished their own horses and equipment. [The list of scouts is given here, including the entry: "Schlesinger, S. \$75"]

The above named men are all reported on the September accounts of Maj. Imman as having been on duty during the month, on the 17th of which was fought a battle with the Indians near the Arickaree Fork of the Republican. Their service terminated at various dates.<sup>5</sup>

The \$75 which Shlesinger received in wages, less the money he had to pay for his horse, must have seemed like a fortune to the penniless boy who had come to the West to seek his share of America's economic boom. The narrow-shouldered, sunken-chested Jew saw his military employment as a chance for real adventure. Although it seemed to seasoned veterans unlikely that he could achieve success as a scout, Shlesinger himself apparently had confidence in his abilities.

Although I had no military experience, I was fairly well inured to prairie life, acquired by my two years of knocking about on the frontier, so that the prospect of this campaign did not deter me from entering cheerfully upon the expected adventure, perhaps because I did not know what was coming.

However "inured" he might have been, Shlesinger did not anticipate the severity of the rigors which he was to face. He describes his initiation as a scout with his characteristic amused self-mockery:

I will never forget this first day's ride! I was not used to the saddle; my equipment, consisting of carbine, revolvers, saddle bags, roll of blankets, etc., were always where they should not have been. I could not adjust them so they would be comfortable; my horse would not stay with the column but forged ahead being a fast walker, causing me to be ordered back into line several times. My bridle arm became stiff and lame in the effort to obey; every bone in my body began to ache; the ride and the day

<sup>5</sup> RG 92: Records of the Quartermaster General: Consolidated Correspondence File: Forsyth Indian Scouts, January 29, 1925.

seemed never to end, and with every mile of travel my misery was bordering on torture.

At the end of the first day's ride to Fort Wallace, the scouts camped at the edge of the Salina River. Shlesinger was detailed for guard duty, but fell asleep from complete exhaustion and slept at his post throughout the night. He was not relieved by another scout, and "the suspicion still abides that all the rest of our comrades must have had troubles of their own." In addition to the physical distress which Shlesinger suffered, he also had to endure incessant ridicule from a fellow scout, of whom Forsyth would subsequently write:

Something of a joker, he was rather inclined to guy and poke fun at some of the odd characters of the command, and especially at a young Jew of about nineteen or twenty who had been enrolled at the last moment at Fort Hays to complete the complement of fifty men.<sup>6</sup>

The battle at the Arickaree Fork of the Republican River in 1868 was the crucial test of Shlesinger's endurance and mettle and the scout band's claim to later renown. The scouts were on the track of a band of Indians who had killed two teamsters near Sheridan, Kansas, thirteen miles northeast of Wallace. Traveling along the north bank of the Republican River, the scouts found an Indian encampment. Tracks were in evidence which led to the Arickaree, the middle fork of the Republican. On September 16, the scouts halted in a valley opposite a sandy island some 200 feet long.<sup>7</sup> The next day, they were attacked by a large band of Cheyenne and Sioux under the leadership of Chief Roman Nose. Before the Indians reached the valley, the scouts withdrew to the sandy island. On the first day of battle, during the first hours of fighting, three of the scouts were killed and a number wounded. The siege lasted until September 21, when the Indians withdrew, and it was not until September 25, that the scouts were rescued by troops of the 10th Cavalry. Five scouts had been killed, and seventeen had been wounded.

<sup>6</sup> Shlesinger, "Story," *BIA*, V, 44-45; George A. Forsyth, "Thrilling Days in Army Life," *BIA*, V, 15.

<sup>7</sup> The island was later named Beecher Island after one of the scouts, Lt. Frederick R. Beecher, a nephew of Henry Ward Beecher. Lt. Beecher had died in the battle.

Throughout the fierce battle and the grinding siege, Shlesinger, it is evident, proved himself the equal of all the men in the band. He displayed such fortitude and strength that Forsyth marvelled:

... as for the little Jew! well, the Indian that from dawn to dusk was incautious enough to expose any part of his person within the range of his rifle had no cause to complain of a want of marked attention on the part of that brave and active young Israelite. . . . In fact he most worthily proved himself a gallant soldier among brave men.

Shlesinger, however, spoke rather less exuberantly than Forsyth about the deadliness of his rifle:

Only in one instance do I suspect of having done personal execution. In the south channel of the then dry creek was a tree trunk, evidently floated there by a flood. From this stump came many shots, to the annoyance of Lou McLaughlin and myself. McLaughlin was wounded . . . and I employed my tactics of suddenly going up in the air and firing at the stump. After several shots the sniping from that direction ceased.<sup>8</sup>

#### SCALPT THREE INDIANS

When Shlesinger joined the scouts, he began keeping a diary of his experiences. The diary records in terse, simple, imperfect language the observations of the nineteen-year-old immigrant:

Friday, August 28, 1868

I Put my name down for Scouting. Drawed Horses.

Saturday 29

Drawed arms & Grubb. Started at 4 o clock P. M. Struck the Salina Reiver at 11 o clock in the night. Haevy Rain all night. I was detalet for Guart.

Sunday 30

Startet at 8 o klok. Raining all Day. Stop for Rest at 12 o klok.

Monday, August 31, 1868

Found a desertet Indian Camp.

Tuesday, September 1

Travalt as usal. No Wood.

<sup>8</sup> Forsyth, "Thrilling Days," *BIA*, V, 15; Shlesinger, "Story," *BIA*, V, 46.



Wednesday 2

Struck the Beaver Creek. Plenty Plums & Grapes.

Thursday, September 3, 1868

Got out of Grubb.

Friday 4

Was purty hungry.

Saturday 5

Got in a Hay Camp. Little to eat. Charget on Haymakers. Sposed to be Indians on there return from Ft Wallace. One of our Boys was trown from the Horse, badly injurd. Arived in Fort Wallace at 12-2 o clock in Night.

Sunday, September 6, 1868

Tuck it easy in Wallace.

Monday 7

Stopt in Wallace.

Tuesday 8

Slept With Franklin in Pond City.

Wednesday, September 9, 1868

Prapaiert to leave in the morning of the 10th.

Thursday 10

Left Wallace for Sheridan. Mexicans had a fight with Indians. 2 of them were killt. We tuck up the Indians trail Leading North. Found 2 Wagons & Catle which the Indians drove from the Mexicans.

Friday 11

Lost Trail. Marcht on.

(September 12-14, 1868, no entries)

Tuesday, September 15, 1868

Our Grubb is nearly all out.

Wednesday 16

Seen signal Fire on a Hill 3 miles off in evening late.

Thursday 17

About 12 Indians carched on us. Stampeedet 7 Horses. 10 Minuts after, about 600 Indians attacktet us. Killt Beecher, Culver & Wilson. Woundet 19 Man & Killt all the Horses. We was without Grubb & Water all Day. Dug Holes in the sand whith our Hands.

Friday, September 18, 1868

In the night I dug ny hole deeper, cut of meat oof of the Horses [cut off meat off of the dead horses] & hung it up on Bushes. Indians made a charge on us at Day brake but retreatet. Kept Shooting nearly all day. They Put up a White Flag. Left us at 9 o clock in the evning. Raind all night.

Saturday 19

The Indians came back again. Kept sharp shooting all day. 2 Boys startet for Fort Wallace. Raind all night.

Sunday 20

Dr. Moore died last night. Raining part of the Day, snow about 1 inches thick. Indians Kept sharp shooting.

Monday, September 21, 1868

Scalpt 3 Indians which were found about 15 Feet from my hole consealt in Grass. [Evidently he hoped to receive a bounty for the scalps].

Tuesday 22

Killt a Coyote & eat him all up.

[September 23-25, 1868, no entries]

Saturday 26

Got relief, grub and soldiers.

[no entries until October 9, 1868]

Friday, October 9, 1868

Mess No. 5: L. A. McLoughlen, S. Shlesinger, S. E. Stillwell, P. Trudel, A. L. Pille, C. De Wald, P. Seggerson, Fisher, E. A. Clark. Drawed Rashens.

Sunday 11

Started in persuit of Indians that have been seen 10-15 [miles] below Hays, but could not find them. Returned at 11 o clock back to Fort.

Monday, October 12, 1868

Laid over in Camp.

Tuesday 13

Started from Hays. Campt on the smoky [Smoky Hill River] near a train.

Wednesday 14

Travelt 35 miles. Campt on Walnut Creek.

Thursday, October 15, 1868

Went up the Walnut. Raining all day and all night.

Friday 16

Killt a Bufflo. Rain part of the day and night.

Saturday 17

Wind. Rain. Campt on Monument Station slept in a Duby [an adobe hut?]

Sunday, October 18, 1868

Travelt 40 mile. Campt near Castle Rock station; no supper & no fire.  
Killt a Bufflo & antilope.

Monday 19

Campt on the smoky. Travelt 40 miles. Scouted ahead. Killt antilope.  
Travellt 12 miles without Brackfast. Made fire at Castle Rock.

Tuesday 20

Returned to Fort Hays. Sounded. [He probably means safe and sound.]

Wednesday, October 21, 1868

Left my Company and took leave of Scouting.<sup>9</sup>

[no further entries]

After the scout band was rescued at the Arickaree, Shlesinger remained for a time at Fort Wallace, where he was visited by Abraham Hyman, his friend and former business partner in Hays City. Hearing of the battle, Hyman wanted to see if Shlesinger had been wounded. The scout band was reorganized under a Lieutenant Papoon, but Shlesinger's diary indicates, as we have seen, that he went on only two more expeditions with the men. After five years in the West, he decided to return to New York City. When he arrived there, however, no one would believe what he reported of his part in the Indian battle. His friends "listened as to a fairy tale, but their looks and demeanor plainly indicated that I must be an awful story teller." When he displayed relics of the battlefield, he was asked how much they had cost!<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The original document, which is reproduced here *in toto*, is in the files of the American Jewish Archives. Prof. Jacob Rader Marcus, Director of the Archives, located the diary after an intensive search. In 1951, Mrs. Horace Hart, of Rochester, N. Y., a distant relative of Shlesinger, directed Dr. Marcus to Shlesinger's daughter, Mrs. Max Frankenberger, of Charleston, W. Va. Mrs. Frankenberger turned the diary over to the Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Sigmund Shlesinger to Jack Peate, in *BIA*, V, 50.

## THE LITTLE JEW WAS THERE

Shlesinger stayed in New York City for only a short time. Again he uprooted himself, moving this time to Cleveland, Ohio, which became his permanent home. In Cleveland, he started a small retail cigar business, and the ill luck of his youth seemed to vanish as his business steadily expanded. He eventually opened a wholesale tobacco establishment and found a secure niche in commercial activity. He married Fannie Flesheim, of Cleveland, on May 28, 1874. During the years that Shlesinger was working in Cleveland and raising his family there, his days on the frontier continued to provide him with an unusual set of associates and experiences for an American Jew. As in New York, so in Cleveland, when he told his tales of the prairie, he sensed a vague disbelief in his listeners. Curiously enough, however, Shlesinger was not alone in seeking some indisputable proof of his adventures as an Indian fighter. Quite independently, another American Jew had begun searching for the identity of the Jewish lad who had proved himself such an able Indian fighter.

The years after the battle — which became known as the Battle of Beecher Island — saw the story of the charges and the siege greatly romanticized and embellished with grandiose exaggerations. The drama of the battle lent itself to unabashed fictionalizing and generated a plethora of newspaper articles and dime novels in which the authors' fantasy all but eclipsed truth. In August, 1893, however, an article by General James B. Fry was published in *The Army and Navy Magazine*. These verses were included:

When the foe charged on the breastworks  
 With madness and despair,  
 And the bravest souls were tested  
 The little Jew was there.

When the weary dozed on duty  
 And the wounded needed care,  
 When another shot was called for  
 The little Jew was there.

With the festering dead around them  
 Shedding poison in the air,  
 When the crippled chieftain ordered  
 The little Jew was there.

Henry Cohen, the noted rabbi of Galveston, Texas, was intrigued by the reference to "the little Jew" and began inquiring into the matter. Cohen was informed by Major General L. M. Oppenheimer, of the Texas Volunteer Guard, that Forsyth had included a roster of the scouts in an article for the June, 1895, issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. The name "S. Schlesinger" appeared on the list.<sup>11</sup>

Shlesinger, too, had seen the article. It was the proof he had been seeking. "Here, at last, was a corroboration." On July 10, 1895, he wrote Forsyth to express his gratitude for his account of the conflict. Forsyth replied in a letter:

. . . . If the article I wrote for Harpers entitled "A Frontier Fight" had not been cut down one-third, owing to want of space, you would have been still more gratified with it as I said a good word for you especially as well as for several others who were with us in the fight. . . .

But Cohen was still searching for the man. He wanted to know more about him, and a letter to Forsyth, now a general, elicited this reply:

My Dear Rabbi Cohen:

Pardon my delay in answering your inquiry of December 7th regarding Mr. Samuel [*sic*] Schlesinger, who served under my command in the Western frontier in 1868, and who was with me in my fight with the Sioux Indians in the Arickaree Fork. I was very busy when I got your letter, and it was put aside to answer, but in some way I allowed myself to forget it — not intentionally, I assure you, for I have a high admiration of the courage and splendid pluck and endurance of young Schlesinger on the occasion above mentioned. Schlesinger was a mere lad at the time, probably nineteen or twenty years of age. He had never been in action prior to our fight with the Indians, and throughout the whole engagement, which was one of the hardest, if not the very hardest ever fought on the Western plains, he behaved with great courage, cool persistence, and a dogged determination that won my unstinted admiration, as well as that of his comrades, many of whom had seen service throughout the War of the Rebellion on one side or the other. I can accord him no higher praise than that he was the equal in manly courage, steady and persistent devotion to duty, and unswerving and tenacious pluck, of any man in my command. It is a real pleasure for me to state this fact. When I wrote the account of my fight on the Arickaree Fork for publication, I took especial pains to com-

<sup>11</sup> Fry, in *ANM* (August 26, 1893); George A. Forsyth, "A Frontier Fight," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (June, 1895), pp. 42-62.

mend some of my men, but the article was too long and was cut somewhat by the editor. I especially mentioned the pluck and endurance of this young son of Israel, and spoke of him as a worthy descendant of King David.

In the summer of 1895, a short time after I had written the account of my fight that appeared in *Harper's Monthly*, I was abroad, and while there I had a letter from Mr. Schlesinger, who is a merchant in Cleveland. I am looking forward to meeting him some day with great satisfaction.

I am, sir, with sincere respect,

Very truly yours,

Geo. A. Forsyth.

Forsyth's letter and Fry's article provided Rabbi Cohen with enough material for a study which he published under the auspices of the American Jewish Historical Society in 1900. Cohen, however, continued his search for the Jewish scout, and it was no doubt with a feeling of great anticipation that he addressed Shlesinger at Cleveland in January, 1900:

Dear Sir:

Will you kindly answer the following questions? Are you the Mr. Shlesinger that participated in an Indian fight at Arickaree Fork of the Republican River in 1868, under Gen. Geo. A. Forsyth?

A prompt reply will

oblige Yours Truly

H. Cohen

P. S. It may interest you to know that I have contributed an article on the subject for the publications of the American Jewish Historical Society. H. C.

Finally, the man had been found, and to the rolls of Jewish history was added the identity of another significant, unique character.<sup>12</sup>

Shlesinger never lost his interest in the Battle of Beecher Island and tried to keep in contact with his fellow-participants. He corresponded with several and enjoyed pleasant days with others whom he met at the many annual commemorations of the battle. His scouting experience assumed a substantial place in his life, particularly in terms of the friendships which he had forged on the prairie.

<sup>12</sup> Letter to Jack Peare, *BIA*, V, 50; Forsyth to Shlesinger, August 15, 1895; Forsyth to Cohen, December 27, 1897; Henry Cohen, "A Brave Frontiersman," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, VIII (1900), 60; Cohen to Shlesinger, January 23, 1900.

. . . Forsyth Scouts passed through a fiery ordeal that kindled eternal affection in the breasts of the survivors toward each other and their families, an affection that is surpassed only by a relation or closest ties of blood. Such, at least, is my own experience adduced by my own sentiment. . . .

#### A BUCKSKIN JACKET

His great enthusiasm for keeping in contact with the men he had encountered in the West was the source of many interesting experiences for Shlesinger. One such incident occurred when "Buffalo Bill," whom Shlesinger had known in Hays, brought his show to Cleveland. There were two camps, one for the white performers and one for the Indians. Shlesinger immediately went out to the white camp to see if he might chance upon someone he had met on the plains. He approached one of the men and asked him if he happened to know any of Forsyth's Scouts. The man replied that he himself had been among the troops who rescued the scouts from the island. The man, John Nelson, invited Shlesinger to come to his tent and meet his wife. Shlesinger, of course, was overjoyed at a chance to reminisce about the battle and the rescue. He was surprised, however, when Nelson brought him to the Indian camp; Nelson had married an Indian woman.

The two men sat for hours engrossed in telling their tales, while the Indian woman sat brooding. She spoke no English and seemed to be harboring a sullen resentment. Shlesinger wanted to return Nelson's hospitality and continue their conversation, so he invited the couple to come to his store the next day. That day, during the conversation, Nelson turned to his wife and began speaking to her in her language. Suddenly he turned to Shlesinger and asked which of Forsyth's scouts had worn a buckskin jacket. Jack Stillwell, Shlesinger replied, had always worn such a jacket. Nelson looked at his wife and spoke to her excitedly. The woman began talking to her husband very joyfully. Shlesinger was naturally curious to know what had happened. It seemed, Nelson explained, that his wife had seen a man in a buckskin jacket kill an Indian during the battle. She had always assumed it was Nelson, because he, too, had had such a jacket. Learning now from Shlesinger that one of the

scouts who actually fought in the battle also wore a buckskin, Mrs. Nelson was finally convinced of her husband's innocence.<sup>13</sup>

Shlesinger wrote a major account of the battle for Cyrus Townsend Brady, and in his *Indian Fights and Fighters*, Brady had this to say of Shlesinger:

. . . one of the bravest, where all but one were heroes, was a little, eighteen-year-old Jewish boy, who had begged to be enlisted and allowed to go along. He had been the butt of the command, yet proved himself a very paradigm of courage and efficiency when the fighting began.

The qualities of tenacity and resolution which Shlesinger had displayed on Beecher Island were devoted, during his years in Cleveland, to the welfare of the Jewish community. He became a respected philanthropist and community leader, particularly concerned with pioneering efforts to reform the social welfare system from one in which the disadvantaged were given a dole of money and hurried away, to one in which rehabilitation was the primary concern. He held numerous positions of leadership, including the vice-presidency of The Temple, the presidency of Cleveland Lodge No. 16 of the B'nai B'rith, the presidency of the local lodge of the Knights of Pythias, and the presidency of the Hebrew Relief Association for twenty-one years. He was one of the organizers of the Hebrew Free Loan Association, the Educational Alliance, the Federation of Jewish Charities, and the Hungarian Benevolent and Social Union.<sup>14</sup>

Feted and honored by his community, Shlesinger had many hours of satisfaction in his later years, but he was probably most deeply happy on an afternoon in September, 1927. Bernard B. Given, one of Shlesinger's friends, arranged a surprise meeting with his old friend of the plains, Abraham Hyman. Shlesinger had not seen him since Hyman's visit to Fort Wallace shortly after the battle. Shlesinger was thrilled to see his friend. As the men sat and talked, the onetime Indian fighter was flooded with memories of his youth. The Beecher Island experience fascinated him to the last. The battle's sixtieth anniversary fell on September 17, 1928, and Shlesinger was

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Jack Peate, *BIA*, V, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Indian Fights and Fighters: The Soldier and the Sioux* (New York, 1904), p. 110.



eagerly planning to attend the commemoration. He died, however, on April 20, 1928, at the age of 79.

Shlesinger's life was in many ways typical of the life of the Central European Jewish immigrant. Coming to a strange land with hopes of a good life in the New World, he struggled for financial security. He was deeply concerned about the survival of Jewish life and, simultaneously, about rooting himself and his children in American society. And yet his life was not really typical at all. Because of his adventures in the West, he became intertwined with lives and exploits which catapulted him almost immediately into both the reality and the myth of America's pioneering heritage.

AN ARCHIVES AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY ON JEWISH  
AND NEGRO INTERACTION IN AMERICA

An archives has recently been established on the campus of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, under the sponsorship of the newly created Center for Inter-faith Studies, which Rabbi Martin M. Weitz serves as Director. It proposes to collect, classify, and organize a permanent archives based upon procedures utilized by the American Jewish Archives.

It requests records of rabbis and laymen, correspondence, clippings (with dates and sources clearly indicated), photographs, and all other material on any phase of Jewish and Negro interaction in America. This basic record, it is hoped, will be complete, adequate, and available for special research and for general reference currently and in the future. All who have such material, if they do not care to part with the originals, are urgently invited to send them to Rabbi Weitz for photoduplication, so that they may become part of the record in the newly created format of Archives on Jewish and Negro Interaction in America.