

To Our Readers . . .

From its inception, the editors of this journal have kept two primary objectives in mind. They have aspired to publish scholarly essays that (a) enhance our understanding of the American Jewish experience and (b) appeal to a popular audience. The vast majority of the articles in our journal are based on original research with primary documents that frequently (though not always) come from the holdings of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA). At the same time, this journal has always striven to ensure that any interested reader would be able to benefit from its historical fare. These two objectives are hardly mutually exclusive, but if an academic journal hopes to appeal widely, its editors must continually be attentive to these ambitions.

One measure of a journal's success in fulfilling this twofold mission may be gauged by the size of its readership. This particular volume of our journal will be delivered to a list of more than six thousand subscribers. Beyond this, a countless number of readers will read this edition of the journal on The Marcus Center's website (www.AmericanJewishArchives.org) where, for the past six years, a complete electronic version of each successive volume of the journal has been published. These statistics lend support to the claim that *The American Jewish Archives Journal* is probably the most widely read academic periodical dealing with the history of American Jewry in the world. In achieving this distinction, it is our hope that the content of our journal has indeed been composed of articles that meet the highest scholarly standards, while concomitantly being appealing and accessible to any adult reader interested in the history of Jewish life in America.

Over the years, this journal has frequently published articles that have ploughed new soil in the field of American Jewish history. For example, in a fascinating essay titled "Jewish Pioneering in American Social Welfare" (June 1951), Abraham Cronbach published an impressive list of American social welfare initiatives and institutions that were based on efforts first piloted within the American Jewish community. Joseph Guttmann's article, "Jewish Participation in the Visual Arts of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America" (April 1963), represented an early attempt to analyze the pre-twentieth-

century contributions made by Jewish artists, sculptors, and architects. It is interesting to note that this journal's first substantial essay on Jewish women in America was Stanley R. Brav's "The Jewish Woman, 1861-1865" (April 1965). Brav's pathbreaking analysis of the various roles that American Jewish women played during the Civil War era was based on a wealth of interesting data he discovered in the pages of the *Israelite*, the *Occident*, the *Jewish Messenger*, as well as in a variety of published and unpublished primary documents. Many of the personalities mentioned in Brav's article would be fruitful subjects for new research projects.

More recently, Jeffrey Gurock's analysis of the Orthodox rabbinate in America, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886-1983" (November 1983) offered an original and valuable interpretive framework for understanding the historical development of American Orthodoxy. The following year (November 1984), a scholar named Stephan F. Brumberg published what may have been the journal's first in-depth analysis of the reciprocal relationship between New York City's Jewish immigrants and its public schools during the first few decades of the twentieth century. These essays – and many other similar examples that could also have been cited – have enlarged the historical landscape of American Jewish history, while simultaneously spurring researchers to move forward in new directions.

The articles in this newest edition remain faithful to the same philosophy that has guided the editors of this journal from its beginning. Nearly twenty years after he first published an essay in the pages of this journal, Professor Stephan Brumberg reprises with a case study on the Cincinnati Bible War (1869-1873). This analysis not only expands our historical perspective on the continuing debate over the role of religion in public education, but it simultaneously sheds light on the ideological struggles the American Jewish community faced as it became increasingly allegiant to the mission of public education during the last half of the nineteenth century. In another case study appearing in this edition, Dr. Steven Fine examines the history of Philadelphia's Henry S. Frank Memorial Synagogue. In doing so, Fine contributes to our understanding of how Jewish architects and lay leaders developed a sense of Jewish "Visual Arts" (to recycle a term Joseph Guttman introduced forty years ago) at the dawn of the twentieth century.

In featuring a selection of excerpts from a relatively new AJA acquisition – a collection of World War II letters written by Rabbi Morris Frank (1906-1947) – the journal maintains its longstanding practice of publishing noteworthy primary source materials from its holdings. With an introduction and helpful annotations by Dr. Frederic Krome, managing editor of our journal and academic associate at the AJA, these interesting letters should serve as a reminder that new perspectives on the history of American Jewish life await us as more primary source material finds its way to archival institutions and research centers.

I also call our readers' attention to the section in this issue titled "News from The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives," wherein a remarkable roster of new acquisitions to the AJA's holdings can be found. In this same section readers will also find a brief digest of the AJA's ever-expanding genealogical resources.

Finally, this volume contains a memorial tribute to a former associate director of The Marcus Center—Rabbi Dr. Stanley F. Chyet (1931–2002). Though Professor Chyet's scholarly and professional achievements transcend the field of American Jewish history and the world of the American Jewish Archives, it is no exaggeration to state that he was one of the most influential figures in the fifty-six-year history of this institution. Stanley Chyet was also an aficionado of Hebrew literature, and so it seems quite fitting to memorialize his legacy at the American Jewish Archives by quoting the words of the medieval Hebrew poet, Abraham ibn Ezra:

He is gone but the shoots that he planted in the morning of
life...the thoughts of his mind remain and will live forever.¹

GPZ
Cincinnati, Ohio

NOTES:

1. Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 42, no. 4 (June 1958): 211–15.