

TO OUR READERS...

According to the Senegalese environmentalist, Baba Dioum (b. 1937), human beings conserve only what they love, and they love only what they understand, and they understand only that which they are taught.

Even though Mr. Dioum did not have American Jewish history on his mind when he first framed his penetrating adage in 1968, there can be no doubt that he has captured in words a fundamental truth that sheds light on the archival enterprise. Human beings strive to preserve and sustain that which they love. The desire to preserve the building blocks of history is fueled by the sentiments of love and respect we feel for our heritage. If our historical perspective is dim, then our interest in preserving the past ebbs and wanes. It is this educative process that enhances and enriches our appreciation of the past. In short, by teaching history we deepen our understanding of past, which leads to a greater love of our heritage. And those who love the past will be instinctively devoted to its preservation.

Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch (1851-1923) argued that Jewish history was “the store-house from which we can draw power and inspiration.” The fundamental purpose of this journal is to deepen our understanding of American Jewish history. Its contents are intended to bring new information to our readers. The more we understand our past, the more dear it becomes. The more we read, the more we are inspired to preserve our history.

The American Jewish Archives is a cosmos of historical data without which this journal (not to mention reams of books and scholarly articles) could not be published. Together, the AJA and the AJAJ constitute a living cycle of historical activity: the journal’s articles bring us historical knowledge, which deepens our appreciation for the past and compels us to preserve it.

This journal takes pride in publishing the research of veteran scholars like Professors Naomi Cohen and Edward Shapiro along with the work of younger scholars like Professors Jonathan Krasner, Zohar Segev, and Gur Alroey. Dr. Cohen’s article provides us with a fine analysis of the *Ark*, one of the earliest magazines for American Jewish children. This article contains much valuable information about youth

culture during the early years of the twentieth century, as well as how adults advised a new generation of American Jews to behave.

Dr. Shapiro's interesting analysis of Newark, New Jersey's Jewish Vocational Service sheds light on the demographic and sociological transformations that took place in the years following World War II. In the wake of the suburbanization, acculturation, and latitudinarianism that affected Jewish life in the 1950s and 1960s, the primary mission of the Jewish Vocational Service shifted. Instead of focusing on vocational placement and guidance, the JVS began to address the needs of second and third generation American Jews and, significantly, non-Jews who increasingly relied on the JVS for educational counseling, programs for the elderly, the disabled and, during the 1970s, vocational activities that were intended to meet the needs of new Russian immigrants who came to the United States during the late 1960s and 70s.

Dr. Krasner's stimulating essay on the Jewish Chautauqua Society offers readers an explanation as to why the hopes of JCS's founders failed to flourish. Even though the JCS would not succeed in becoming American Jewry's premier instrument for the advancement of Jewish education, many of its pioneering efforts would blaze trails that benefitted successive generations of Jewish educators. Meanwhile, Dr. Segev offers readers a fresh look at how Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's political and ideological *weltanschauung* influenced his work as a Zionist leader. Silver's political objectives, Segev opines, are best understood when viewed as an expression of his commitment to an American Jewish brand of Zionism. Gur Alroey's comparative examination of immigration to Galveston and Palestine during the great era of migration (circa 1881–1914) reminds us that not every East European Jew went to New York city via Ellis Island.

The late Rabbi Sidney Greenberg pointed out that Carl Sandburg's first novel was titled *Remembrance Rock*. The novel is about a man who faithfully places a handful or two of dust he has collected from a diverse array of historically significant sites under a massive boulder that sits in his garden. The story's protagonist goes out to sit near this boulder — his "Remembrance Rock" — in order to draw inner strength from this unusual historical shrine.

At one point in the novel, Sandburg's protagonist reflects thoughtfully on the meaning of his Remembrance Rock:

Their visions [come] through... They live in the sense that their dream is on the faces of living men. They go on, their faces here now, their lessons worth our seeing. They ought not to be forgotten — the dead who held in their clenched hands that which became the heritage of us, the living.

This journal remains dedicated to the notion that the lessons of the past are worth our seeing; they ought not be forgotten. This instruction will lead to understanding and appreciation. In this way we preserve the past and make it “a heritage of us, the living.”

GPZ
Cincinnati, Ohio