

RAUH JEWISH HISTORY PROGRAM & ARCHIVES

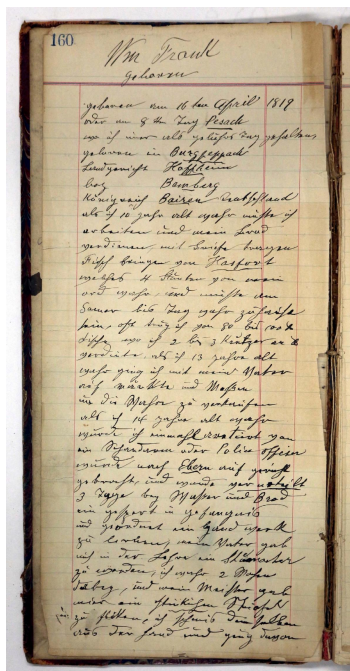
AN ENEWSLETTER OF THE HEINZ HISTORY CENTER

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Introducing: Memoirs



Life is always happening.

Only some of it ends up on paper. You're born, and you get a birth certificate. You die, and you get a death certificate. In between, your name ends up in all kinds of official records: census surveys, report cards, phone books, membership rolls, marriage certificates. You also make documents. You send letters, emails, or texts. Maybe you keep a diary. You take photographs, and other people photograph you. In time, these documents become "sources," and they form the basis of recorded history. Flip through the footnotes of any serious work about the past, and you'll find these sorts of sources referenced on every page.

"The Autobiography of William Frank"
—from Lehman Family Papers [MSS 1018]

But most of life is not documented.

How much of today has already
passed without any trace at all?

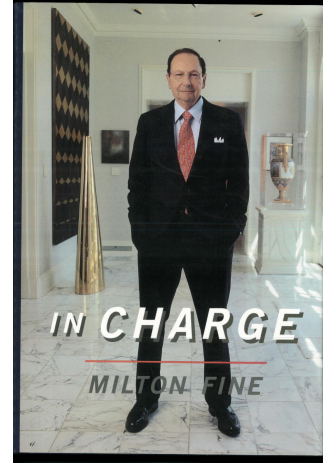
How many important moments in

your life exist only as memories?

And what about all the essential parts of life that are much bigger than moments—your ideas, your beliefs, your perspective, your sensibility?

How do those get remembered?

You have to find a way to get them down on paper, while you're still here.



"In Charge," by Milton Fine.



"Memories of Yesterdays"
—from Mollie Brunwasser Papers [MSS 502]

For our third annual community collecting initiative, we're going to look at one way of recording experiences that weren't documented as they occurred. All year, we'll be collecting and sharing **memoirs** of Jewish life in Western Pennsylvania.

For our purposes, this is a memoir: *A first-person account of real events written down some significant period of time after those events occurred.*

"First-person" excludes biographies written by someone else. Memoirs are subjective. They make no claim to independence or objectivity.

"Written" excludes interviews and oral histories. Memoirs emerge from the silent and solitary experience of sitting before a blank page.

"After" excludes journals and diaries, which are generally written as events are occurring. Memoirs usually come long after the events they describe. With that passage of time, memories can change, agendas can develop, and perspectives can form.

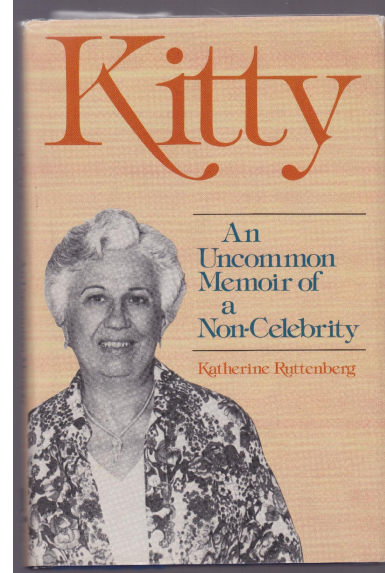
This definition highlights the literary quality of memoirs. They are literature written by people who are often overlooked by the literary world. With a memoir, anyone who writes can singlehanded add themselves to history.

Sources of historical knowledge are often analyzed by their closeness to the events they describe. Did someone involved in the events create this piece of documentation? And how soon after the event occurred was the document created?

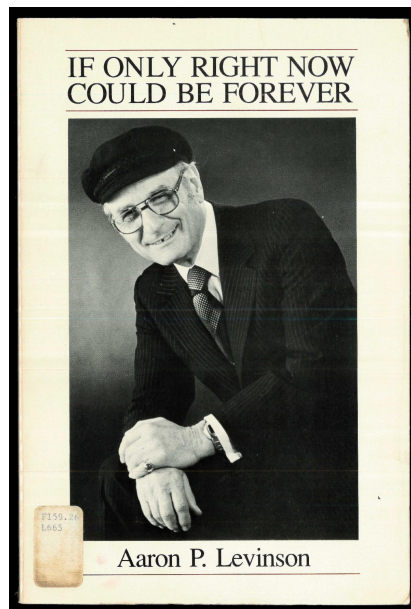
Memoirs are close to the events they chronicle and also far away. They are first-person accounts, but created well after events occurred. They

describe two points in time: the time they recount and the time in which they were written. Conflicts between those moments can yield insights.

As we review memoirs this year, we'll consider who wrote them, the circumstances under which they were written, and what happened next.



"Kitty: An Uncommon Memoir of a Non-Celebrity," by Katherine Ryttenberg.



"If Only Right Now Could Be Forever," by Aaron P. Levinson.

Some of the memoirs we'll review this year extend across multiple volumes, and some are only a few pages. Some were published, and some exist as a single copy. The earliest is from the late 19th century, and the latest was written within the past few years.

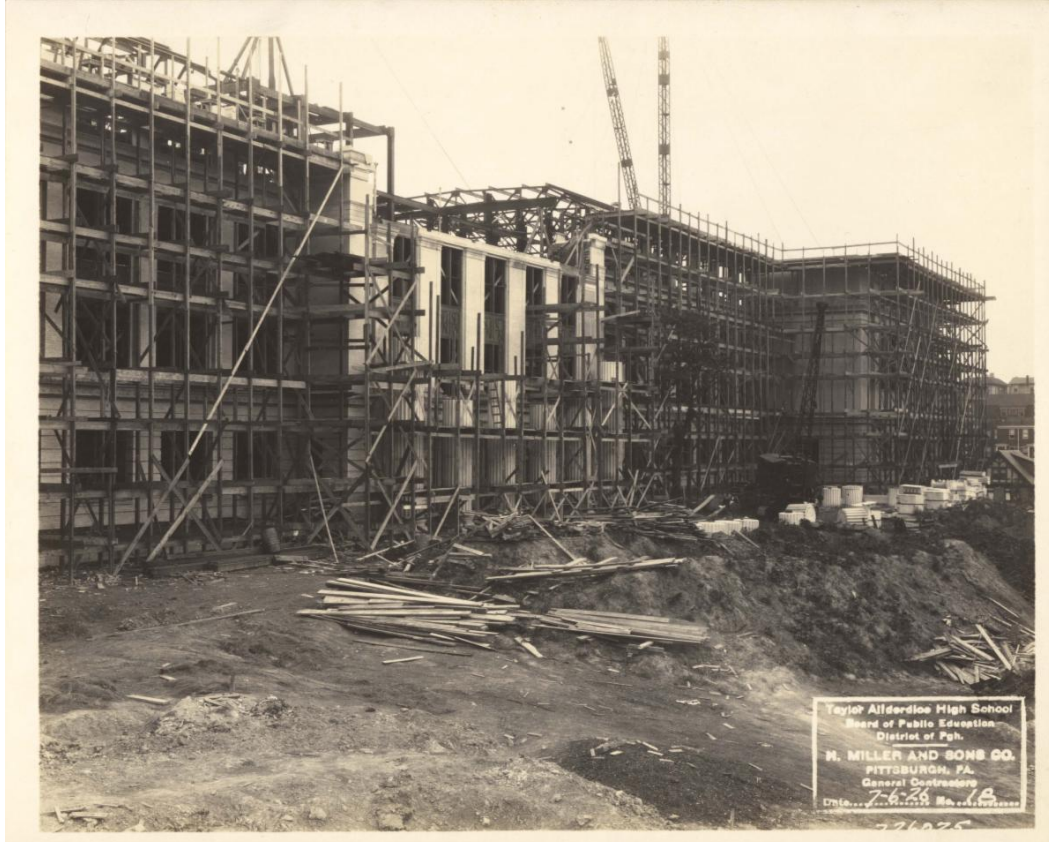
All of them are life stories written by Jewish people who spent some part of their lives in Western Pennsylvania.

We invite you to join us as we explore these memoirs this year. Maybe you have an old memoir written by someone in your family? Or maybe this is the moment you finally write your memoir? As you'll see this year, every life is a story worth telling.

Next week: **"The Autobiography of William Frank (1819-1891)"**

*All year, the Rauh Jewish Archives will be highlighting memoirs of Jewish life in Western Pennsylvania. If you would like to donate a memoir, or just chat about the stories you've read, **contact the archive** or call 412-454-6406.*

**New Collection:
H. Miller & Sons Photographs [PSS 74]**



Taylor Allderdice High School under construction, 1926.
—from *H. Miller & Sons Photographs [PSS 74]*

H. Miller & Sons was a leading contractor in Pittsburgh and the builder of choice for its Jewish community throughout the 1910s and 1920s. The **H. Miller & Sons Photographs [PSS 74]** contains two albums documenting more than a dozen construction projects between 1921 and 1928.

Included are local landmarks such as Taylor Allderdice High School, the sanctuary of B’nai Israel synagogue, the second Montefiore Hospital, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement House auditorium, the United Baking Company factory in the South Side, and the old Select Furniture Company building downtown.

The albums also document numerous residential projects. H. Miller & Sons built a 12-unit affordable housing development on Aliquippa Street in Oakland, an entire block of detached single family homes on Northumberland Street in Squirrel Hill, and the grand Terrace Court apartment building on Shady Avenue in Squirrel Hill. Exterior and interior images of a line of one-story model homes provide a rare glimpse of an idealized middle-class house from the 1920s.

Catalog

Exhibit

**Jewish Encyclopedia of Western Pennsylvania:
Bes Almon Society**



Row of 19th-century stones in the Bes Almon Cemetery.

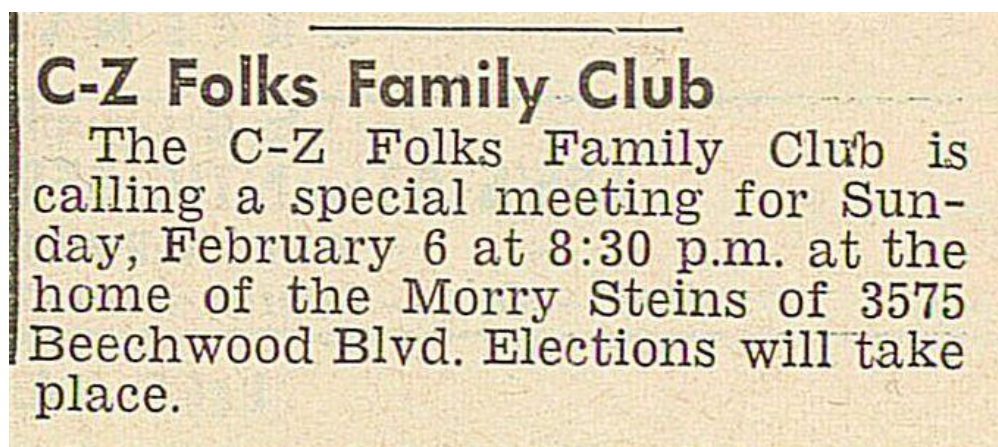
The Bes Almon Society was the first Jewish cemetery in Western Pennsylvania and is thought to be the first Jewish organization in the region. A group of 12 Jewish men founded the burial society in 1847 and soon purchased land on Troy Hill for a cemetery. It remained an independent entity until 1906.

Our new encyclopedia entry on the Bes Almon Society includes a map to the cemetery, organizational minutes, early interment records, an assortment of newspaper articles, and links to documents in other online repositories.

Exhibit

The Jewish Encyclopedia of Western Pennsylvania brings together numerous online resources into a clearinghouse for conducting research about Jewish history in this region. As we migrate information to this new website, we'll be announcing new entries and resources in this section of the newsletter.

Family Club: C-Z Folks Cousins Club



—C-Z Folks Family Club notice.
—from *Jewish Criterion*, Feb. 4, 1955.

The C-Z Folks Cousins Club met between February 1955 and February 1966, according to notices in the *Jewish Chronicle*. Surnames include Averbach, Caplan, Davis, Felser, Labowitz, Rosenfield, Silverman, Stein, and Zeligson.

The club most frequently met at the home of Morry and Lea Stein at 3575 Beechwood Blvd. in Squirrel Hill and occasionally at the social hall of Chofetz Chaim Congregation on Beacon Street. The club also held events at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, the Highland Park Farmhouse, the Highland Park Rhododendron Lodge, the Vogue Terrace, and Parkway Jewish Center.

No known records exist for the C-Z Folks Cousins Club. If you have any information about the club, please **email the archive** or call 412-454-6406.

Family Clubs

*The Rauh Jewish Archives is compiling a comprehensive record of Jewish family clubs in Western Pennsylvania. If you have information about a local family club or cousins club, please **email to archive** or call 412-454-6406.*

Name these faces!



—from *Ladies Hospital Aid Society Photographs* [MSP 0032]

The **Ladies Hospital Aid Society Photographs [MSP 32]** contains dozens of images from nearly 90 years of activities by one of the oldest Jewish women's groups in the region.

While most of the photographs are labelled, the group shot above is not.

It shows some 50 women and two men on the steps of a home. A note on the back reads "Ball workers Reggie Stern's Home," and the date



"1980." The notation likely refers to "A Masked Ball," a fundraising event hosted by the organization at the Hilton hotel on November 1, 1980.

While no masks obscure any of the faces in this photograph, anonymity currently obscures all the identities.

Do you recognize anyone? If so, drop us **a line** or call 412-454-6406.

Advertisement for "A Masked Ball"
—from Jewish Chronicle, Oct. 9, 1980

January 13 Black and Jewish Histories of the Hill District

REGISTER: rpr.world/hilldistrictpanel



VIRTUAL

Black & Jewish Histories of the Hill District

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13TH | 6 - 7:30 PM



TERRI BALTIMORE
Director, Urban Excursions, LLC



ERIC LIDJI
Director, Rauh Jewish Archives



NJAIMEH NJIE
Multimedia Producer



TYIAN BATTLE
Executive Director,
ACH Clear Pathways



**MODERATOR
D.S. KINSEL**
Co-Founder, BOOM Concepts

MLK Day Week of Service





As part of its Martin Luther King Day week of service, Repair the World is hosting a panel looking at the overlapping and diverging Black and Jewish histories of the Hill District.

The Rauh Jewish Archives will join ACH Clear Pathways Director Tyian Battle, Multimedia Producer Njaimeh Njie, and Hill District community leader Terri Baltimore to communal institutions, partnerships and tensions, migration, arts and culture, racial justice uprisings, and more. The panel will be moderated by BOOM Concepts Co-Founder D.S. Kinsel.

Register

January 19 JGS Presents: Dick Goldman



For many of us, our family names are clues to our ancestors' careers, personalities, characteristics, towns of origin or religious practices. Learn why, how and when we received our last names and what they can reveal.

"A Rose by Any Other Name" is the first in a series of programs about Jewish surnames presented by JGS-Pittsburgh over the coming months.

The program is on **Wed., January 19 at 7:30 p.m. ET** It's free for **JGS-Pittsburgh members** and \$5 for the general public. **Please register online.**

This is a virtual program. It will be recorded, and the recording will be made available for JGS-Pittsburgh members who are current on their dues.

This program is possible through the support of the William M. Lowenstein Genealogical Research Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation.

Register

Dick Goldman is Vice President and Membership Chair for the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies (IAJGS). He is responsible for programming at the Jewish Heritage Club in Valencia Lakes (Boynton Beach, FL) and is president of the community's Genealogy group. He served as president of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Maryland for a number of years, and has lectured widely and frequently. Dick and his wife Roz relocated to Florida in 2018. Since March 2020 he has offered programs using ZOOM, and he has been seen and heard by groups locally and throughout the country.

Dick is the retired General Manager of the Pearlstone Conference & Retreat Center in Baltimore (Jewish Federation) and was Director of Jewish Life and Camping Services at its JCC. He was the founding director of Youth Activities for Women's American ORT, led multiple trips to Israel, and is an award winning Jewish educator. After retirement he served as adjunct faculty at CCBC in Maryland teaching genealogy, and he continued to lecture on Jewish topics for numerous organizations. His graduate work took place at Hebrew Union College-JIR in New York City. During his 20-year 'secular' career he was the founder and president of two high-tech companies. Dick and Roz have two children and five grandchildren.

Help the Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project



CMU COLLECTIONS

PITTSBURGH JEWISH NEWSPAPERS

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

USING THE COLLECTION

FEATURED ITEMS

VIEW THE COLLECTION

About the Collection

The history of Jews in Pittsburgh began in the 1840's with a small community of primarily German immigrants, whose first communal action was the establishment of a burial society. By the end of the Civil War, there were two congregations, Rodef Shalom and Tree of Life.

The German-Jewish community was already quite prosperous when Jews from Eastern Europe and the Russian Empire began to arrive in large numbers in the 1890s. The influx of Yiddish-speaking Jews lasted until 1920, when immigration laws became more restrictive. During this thirty-year period, the number of Jews in Pittsburgh and the region grew dramatically.

The home page of the new Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project website, hosted by Carnegie Mellon University Libraries. The redesigned website is launching this month.

The Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project is likely the most widely used resource for conducting research about Jewish history in this region.

Launched in 2007, and expanded over a period of years, it now includes digital reproductions of four English-language Jewish newspapers—The Jewish Criterion, The American Jewish Outlook, the Jewish Chronicle, and the Y Weekly. These searchable issues begin in 1895 and continue through 2010, creating an invaluable tool for studying Jewish history and Jewish genealogy.

Carnegie Mellon University Libraries created the website, using materials and resources from the Rauh Jewish Archives, Rodef Shalom Congregation, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.

CMU recently moved the Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project to a different online platform. As with any change, this one will require people to learn a new system: the site will look a little different and will act a little different than the one we have become accustomed to using for many years.

The new system will be an improvement in some ways. But as with any change, it will also create new quirks and shortcomings to navigate.

At this early stage in the transition, CMU is asking for help. They want you to try out the **new site** and to **let them know** what you think about it.

These transitions can be exciting, and they can also be frustrating. The Rauh Jewish Archives is currently learning the new system, in order to help researchers make the switch over the coming months. We are always available to help you troubleshoot problems, and we hope to provide training workshops in the near future. You can **contact the archive** or call 412-454-6406.

Use the new
site

Submit feedback to
CMU

Tell your friends!



*[IMAGE: Marian Schreiber and employees at the Schreiber Trucking Company, c.1943—
from Schreiber Family Papers and Photographs, MSS 846.]*

If you like this newsletter, why not forward it to a friend? We want to share the story of Western Pennsylvania Jewish history with as many people as possible.

If you've received this newsletter from a friend or neighbor, and you want to read more, just click on the link below to start receiving future editions.

[Subscribe](#)

The Rauh Jewish Archives was founded on November 1, 1988 to collect, preserve, and make accessible the documentary history of Jews and Jewish communities of Western Pennsylvania. You can help the RJHPA continue its work by **making a donation** that will directly support the work being done in Western Pa.

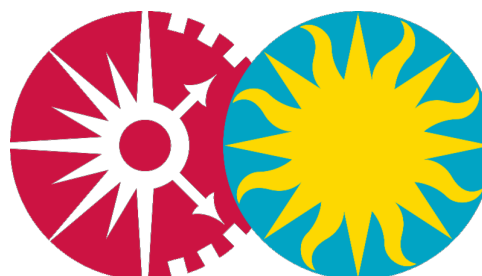
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Plan a Visit

Senator John Heinz History Center
1212 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222
412-454-6000

www.heinzhistorycenter.org



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History Center is the largest history museum in Pennsylvania and presents American history with a Western Pennsylvania connection.