Over the past year, JHSUM continued its tradition of excellence with a series of high-quality publications, exhibitions, workshops, and events celebrating our rich Midwestern Jewish heritage. We fielded hundreds of calls from researchers and welcomed many more meaningful artifacts into our comprehensive archives. By partnering with other active organizations and talented individuals, we broadened our efforts to bring Jewish history to life for current and future generations.

In September, we published Prairie Perspectives: Our Jewish Veterans Remember World War II, a volume of personal recollections by local Jewish war vets, as part of our acclaimed biennial journal series Upper Midwest Jewish History. The outcome of a three-year oral history project, Our Jewish Veterans celebrates the memories and insights of veterans, now in their 80s and 90s, whose stories, if left untold, could soon be lost forever. Veterans also gathered to participate in three well-attended panel discussions at the Sabes JCC, the St. Paul JCC, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

A high-quality touring exhibit, Seeing World War II Memories: The Upper Midwest Jewish Story, which includes collage, oral histories, photos, journals, letters and memorabilia, also toured the Sabes JCC and the St. Paul JCC before taking up permanent residence on our website, www.jhsom.org. Presented in a richly textured, interactive format, the exhibit can now be viewed 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, from the comfort of home.

In January, we warned things up with a wine- and chocolate-tasting event and lecture offered in partnership with the Sabes JCC, Daughters of the Holy Congregation, the Jewish Singles Collaborative, and the Jewish Historical Society of Minnesota. "Get Your Feet Wet in Hot Chocolate!"—A New Menu for American Judaism" featured a lively presentation by Jonathan Sarna, professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, on what it means to be Jewish in America today and the multiplicity of choices for defining one's Judaism in the context of personal history and beliefs.

Winter also brought the opportunity for a hands-on art and genealogy activity at the Sabes JCC led by artist Susan Weinberg. Community members of all ages exercised their creativity by making colorful, family-inspired collages using family photographs, maps, letters and personal images. The workshop complemented Weinberg’s exhibit, Putting a Face on Family History: The Paintings of Susan Weinberg, in the Tychman Shapire Gallery. During its six-week run, the Weinberg Exhibit attracted audiences from around the region intrigued by the intersections of history, research, and art.

In March, we traveled to the University of Minnesota to co-host Out of the Boxes and into the Archives: Celebrating the Life and Work of Max Lowenthal with the University Archives. Lowenthal, a Minnesota native and U of M grad, played a key role in the Truman administration's recognition of Jewish and was responsible for the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Thanks to the generosity of the Harold Rosenthal family and the dedicated efforts of JHSUM exhibit curator Susan Hoffman, Lowenthal’s complex and storied archives are now accessible to the broader community for both scholarly and general research.

Curated by Kate Seech under the aegis of JHSUM, We Couldn’t Live at Home, written and produced by Jonathan Berman, presented a story of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. "Leaving Home" created by Seech’s volunteer work with homeless youth in North Minneapolis, the exhibit emphasized the connections between homelessness in the past and homelessness today and featured photos by acclaimed photographer Wing Young Huie.

North Side enthusiasts had another cause for celebration in 2008—JHSUM’s release of We Know Who We Were: Memories of the Minneapolis Jewish North Side on DVD, making this popular documentary available to a wider audience. A June walking tour of the old Jewish North Side, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation, also gave community members the chance to see and share stories about the neighborhoods that thousands of Midwestern Jews called home.

More than 140 people donated 384 unique artifacts to JHSUM’s Kaplan Family and Berman Family archives in 2008, including clothing, photographs, books, and papers. Our staff kept busy providing resources to more than 200 research questions on topics ranging from the history of the Synagogue Youth Organization in the 1950s to the rescue of German relatives during WW II to a rare architect of Hollywood—for local expertise on 1960s Jewish St. Louis Park, to support the Coen Brothers’ upcoming film A Serious Man.

In August, we said goodbye and thank you to Dr. Linda Mack Schell, who for 22 years served as director of the Jewish Archives and director of its programs. Linda’s dedicated efforts transformed JHSUM from a small group of people discussing history around a table to a professional, dynamic organization with a national reputation for excellence. To honor Linda’s many contributions, JHSUM has established the Dr. Linda Mack Schell Research Award Endowment Fund to support scholars and ensure that JHSUM’s diverse collections will be used to interpret the rich story of Upper Midwest Jewish life for many years to come.

Katherine Tate, Executive Director
Susan Hoffman, Archivist
Julie Tambash, Member Resources Coordinator

JHSUM is a partner agency of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation and the United Jewish Fund and Council of St. Paul.

From Strength To Strength: 2007-2008 saw JHSUM’s largest and most successful annual campaign to date. Many new endowment campaigns were also established in 2007-2008.

Donations enable JHSUM to tell the stories of our community for the benefit of future generations. Donations can be made through cash, appreciated stock, IRA, bonds, savings or retirement accounts, life insurance or bequests.

Contact Katherine Tate at (952) 381-3363 or ktate@jhsom.org to make a donation. Memberships and contributions can also be conveniently processed online at www.jhsom.org.

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Without these generous gifts, our work would not be possible.

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