Our History:
20 Years and Growing
1984-2004
The Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest is Born

Founded in 1984 as the Minnesota Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest (JHSUM) quickly assumed its unique role among the region’s Jewish community agencies. At its core, the Society was a safe, organized repository for Jewish historical materials of all types. Without proper storage and preservation, these artifacts—serving as precious windows to Jewish heritage—would likely have been lost forever.

Equally critical was the task of the Society to interpret Jewish history and educate new generations about the ways in which their forebears adapted to life as the “Frozen Chosen.” JHSUM has sponsored two decades of dynamic public dialogue, exhibits at major venues, and high-quality publications ensuring that the lessons of our past can help future generations understand their roots when forming their Jewish identity.

But the Society’s impact is broader than perpetuating a Jewish sense of family and belonging. Jewish tales of community-building and assimilation are unique, but woven throughout is a thread of human values that transcends any one religion or group. Through the Society, the wonderful stories of Jewish Midwesterners are presented to audiences both regionally and internationally. Through interfaith projects, in particular, the Society has become a key player in fostering healthy community relations.

{ 1966 }
Theresa Berman begins working to create a Jewish Community Archives in Minnesota.

{ 1984 }
Under the leadership of Sharron Steinfeldt, the Society’s early founders are spurred to action following Dr. Marilyn Chiat’s Minnesota Settlers Project.

The Minnesota Jewish Historical Society is founded. First address is a mailbox c/o JCC Minneapolis at 4330 South Cedar Lake Road.

Theresa Berman, Norman Diamond, David Krawetz and Idell Silberman are among the founders and serve as early presidents.

{ 1986 }
The Society is awarded a major development grant from the Greater Minneapolis Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. This enables the Society to engage historian Linda Schloff as the first part-time staff member.

More than 200 individuals sign on as charter members of the Society.

Society settles in new home at Hamline University’s Bush Library in St. Paul.

The newly-formed Minnesota Jewish Historical Society is part of a growing movement among Jewish people to gather and record their local history.”

—Excerpt from the first newsletter of the Minnesota Jewish Historical Society, Spring 1985.
**Mission**

The purpose of the Society is to promote the vitality and continuity of Jewish culture in the Upper Midwest through preservation, interpretation and education.

**A Legacy of Strong Leadership**

**First Board of Directors (1984)**

Members outside Twin Cities identified by city

- Sharron Steinfeldt, President pro tem
- Idell Silberman, Vice President
- Lionel Davis, Secretary
- Melvin Goldfein, Treasurer
- Gene Rosenbloom, Legal Advisor
- Roland Minda, Public Relations
- Michael Baker
- Theresa Berman
- Esther Capp
- Bert Cooper (Albert Lea)
- Lois Devitt
- Walter Eldot (Duluth)
- Sada Goldberg (Winona)
- Leo Gross
- Viola Hymes
- Mirchel Kirshbaum
- David Krawetz
- Irving Kutoff
- Sandra Lowenstein
- Nancy Markowitz
- Daniel Milavetz (Virginia)
- Frances Minda
- Erta Fay Orkin
- Marvin Pertzik
- Leah Raskas
- Harry and Miriam Rosenthal
- Linda Schloff
- James Shelt Ullman (Rochester)
- Carol Wirtschafter
- Advisory: Hyman Berman,
  Marilyn Chiat and Rhoda Lewin

**Past Presidents**

- Sharron Steinfeldt (President pro tem)
- Theresa Berman
- David Krawetz
- Norman Diamond
- Idell Silberman
- Sharron Steinfeldt
- Erta Fay Orkin
- Bill Wolpert
- Katherine Tane

**Spotlight**

Linda Mack Schloff, PhD
Director, Historian, Archivist

For more than twenty years, Linda Schloff has made innumerable contributions that have shaped the Society into a professional, vital community organization. Linda volunteered early on to organize the first archival donations. In 1987, she became the Society’s first archivist and developed the programs and institutional systems that would serve the Society for years to come. As director since 1994, she has curated major exhibits, written numerous articles, published the Society’s journal, and managed the office, among many other duties. Founding member Theresa Berman summed it up this way: “Without Linda, we wouldn’t have developed into what we are today.”
Growth and Critical Acclaim

{ 1992 }

The Society changes its name to the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest (JHSUM) to reflect the expansion of its collection to include the Dakotas, Western Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Along with this expanded scope comes growth in staff. Linda Schloff is promoted to director. An administrative assistant is added.

Late 1990s: Genealogy programs led by Arthur Kurtzweil and Bruce Kahn.

{ 2000 }

Collaboration with the University of St. Thomas, the Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Learning, and the North Side’s Ascension Parish creates service learning projects to explore the history and changes at the parish and in the neighborhood.

UNPACKING ON THE PRAIRIE

The Society’s most ambitious undertaking in the 1990’s was an exhibit in partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society focused on Jewish women in the Upper Midwest. Unpacking on the Prairie opened in 1996 at the Minnesota History Center to great acclaim. Lectures, a Jewish women’s art exhibit and other programs throughout the year rounded out the experience. A traveling version of the main exhibit toured for seven years and the award-winning Web exhibit –www.jewishwomenexhibit.com– remains an important resource today. Unpacking on the Prairie co-chairs were Bobby Cohen and Shirley Rosenblum.

NORTH SIDE PROJECT

JHSUM produced a televised documentary video about a large Jewish neighborhood, We Knew Who We Were: Memories of the Minneapolis Jewish North Side, in 2000. Reva Rosenbloom chaired the Northside Steering Committee.

JEWISH TEEN LIFE

In 2003, the Society mounted the exhibit Jewish Teen Life in the Twin Cities, 1945-1970 in collaboration with the Minnesota Historical Society.

Steering committee included (back row left to right) Barbara Friedman, Bobby Cohen, Lisa Heilicher, chair. (Front row) Beryl Berke and Sharyn Effress Pesses.

PUBLICATIONS

JHSUM has published three issues of its journal, Upper Midwest Jewish History, and continues to publish a semi-annual newsletter, titled Generations. In celebration of its 20th anniversary in 2004, the Society relaunched its website –www.jhsum.org— to include online exhibits, searchable collections, teacher resources and up-to-date program information.
Major Funders
Governor Elmer L. Andersen
Fern Badzin
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June and Sidney Barrows
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Lyle and Janis Berman
Nathan and Theresa Berman
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Minnesota Historical Society
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Mary Ann and David Wark
David Weiner
Gloria and Howard Weiskopf
Elaine and Marvin Wolfenson
Helen and Leo Wolk
Women's Endowment Fund of the
Minneapolis Jewish Federation

Archival Collections
Sharron and Oren Steinfeldt Family
Photography Collection
Oral History Collections

Selected Family Histories
Rachel Calof
Meier Calof
Amos Deinard
Goldfine Family, Duluth
Diane Harris
Ruth Peilen
Gene Rosenblum
Rabbi Bernard Raskas
Ida Sanders
Silberstein family, Duluth
Helen Wolk

Regional Holdings
Ackerman Family South Dakota Collection
Duluth-Superior
Iron Range
Minnesota Settlers Project
North and South Dakota
Rochester
Southern Minnesota

Institutional Holdings
Adath Jeshurun Congregation, Minneapolis
Adath Jeshurun Synagogue, St. Paul
Bet Shalom Congregation, Minneapolis
Beth El Synagogue, Minneapolis
Beth El Women's League, Minneapolis
B'nai Emeth Synagogue, Minneapolis
Gedaliah Leib Synagogue, St. Paul
Herzl Camp
Hillel Foundation
Jewish Community Center of St. Paul
Jewish Community Center of Minneapolis
Jewish Home for the Aged of the Upper Midwest
Jewish Family Service of St. Paul
Jewish Vocational Service of St. Paul
Keneseth Israel Congregation
Minneapolis
Minnesota Historical Society
Mount Sinai Auxiliary Foundation
National Endowment for the Humanities
Numero-Steinfeldt Foundation
The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation
Mount Zion Congregation, St. Paul
Shalom Home, Inc (Home for Aged)
Sons of Abraham Synagogue, St. Paul
Sons of Moses Synagogue, St. Paul
United Jewish Fund and Council of St. Paul
Talmud Torah of St. Paul
Talmud Torah of Minneapolis
Temple of Abraham, St. Paul
Temple Israel, Minneapolis

Organizational Holdings
B'nai Brith
Hadassah, Minneapolis chapter
Hadassah, St. Paul chapter
Hadassah, Upper Midwest Region
Habonim
Industrial Removal Office
Minnesota Rabbinical Association
Mount Sinai Hospital Auxiliary
National Council of Jewish Women, St. Paul Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Minneapolis Section

Sons of Abraham Cemetery
Soviet Jewry Collection
Theodore Herzl Society
Women in World War II
Zionist Organization of America, Minneapolis District

The Society welcomes donations of archival materials from individuals and organizations. Contact us for details.
{2001}

Fire at Bush Library forces move to temporary location at Sholom Home East. No collections are damaged.

Society research center opens at University of Minnesota's Andersen Library through the efforts of former Governor Elmer L. Andersen and Rabbi Bernard L. Raskas.

{2002}

Collections housed at the U of M named the Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives.

{2003}

JHSUM offices, named the Eloise and Elliot Kaplan Family Jewish History Center, move to new headquarters on the Barry Family Campus at 4330 South Cedar Lake Road.

New archival space named the Lyle Berman Family Archives of the JHSUM.

{2004}

JHSUM creates new administrator position. Katherine Tane joins staff to manage Society's growing operations.

Society launches new website www.jhsum.org

International Presence

The Nathan and Theresa Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives housed at the University of Minnesota's Andersen Library provide an internationally recognized wealth of regional Jewish historical material. Accessed by students and scholars locally and worldwide through the Internet, the collections and their location at the university are a jewel in the Society's crown.

Synergies on a Jewish Community Campus

With support from the Minneapolis Jewish Federation's Securing Our Future Capital Campaign, the Society's move to the Barry Family Campus put JHSUM on the Jewish community map for the first time. The Eloise and Elliot Kaplan Family Jewish History Center is situated on a campus with many other major Jewish organizations, including the Sabes JCC, the Minneapolis Jewish Day School and the Talmud Torah of Minneapolis. Opportunities for collaboration abound, and inter-generational programs are already underway.

Today, JHSUM is well positioned to carry the Society's mission into the 21st century. The archives are blossoming, programming is expanding, and the Society's impact in the community continues to grow.

Take your place in history!

Become a JHSUM member. Your membership ensures that Jewish history will be safely preserved and made available for research, educational programs and exhibits for years to come.

Put history in motion through a designated estate gift or stock transfer. Consider becoming a life member or starting a named fund or endowment. Contact us for more details.
In America

“People were FREE”

Here personal accounts of immigration and settlement

Upper Midwest Jewish History

The journal of the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest

VOLUME 11, SUMMER 2001
See history in motion! Click on www.jhsum.org

Central Contact Information:

Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest
The Eloise and Elliot Kaplan Family Jewish History Center
Jay and Rose Phillips Building
Barry Family Campus
4430 S. Cedar Lake Road
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Tel: (952) 381-3360
Fax: (952) 381-3361
Email: history@jhsum.org
Web: www.jhsum.org

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