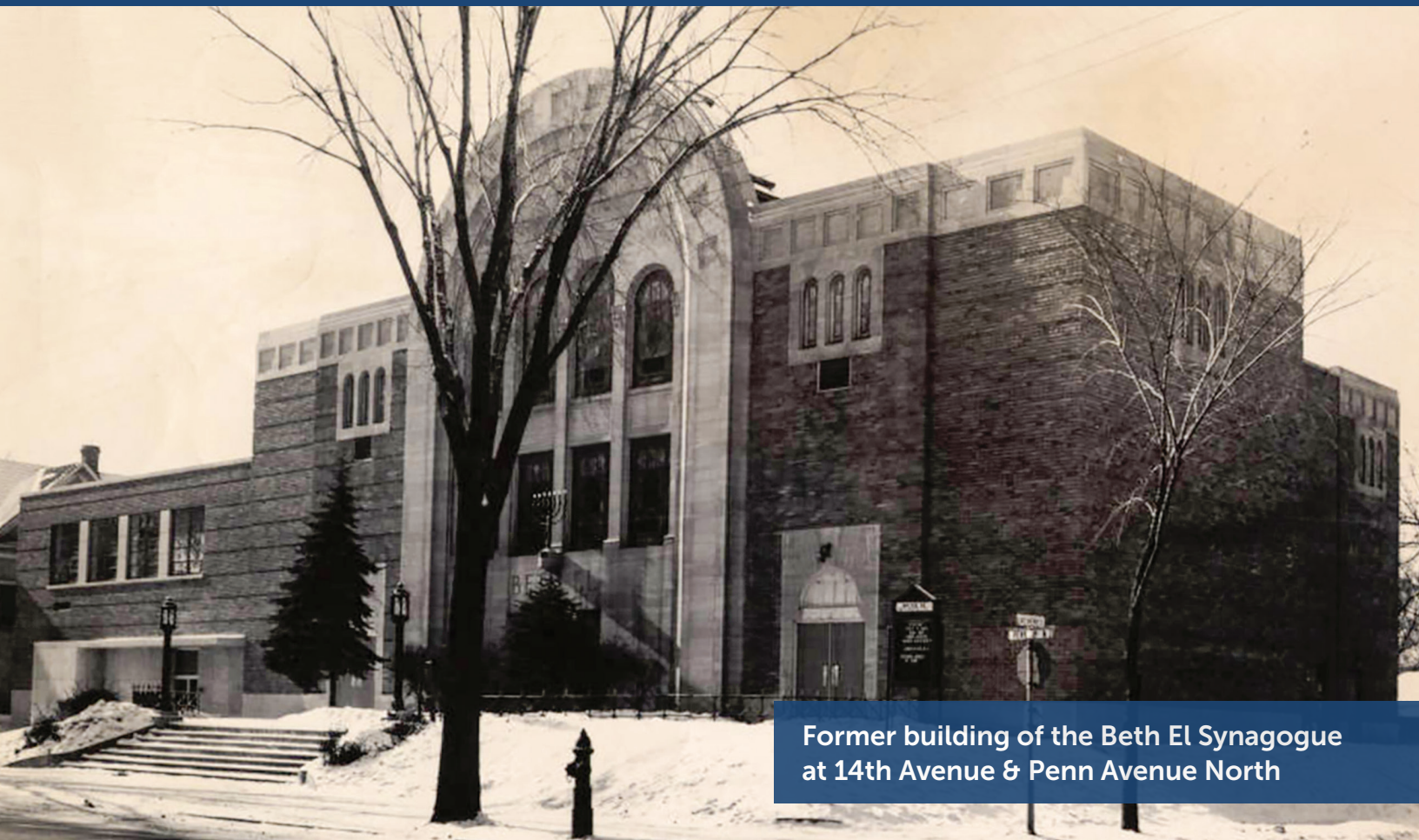


Generations:



Former building of the Beth El Synagogue
at 14th Avenue & Penn Avenue North

FALL 2025

The Jewish Northside of Minneapolis

By Robin Doroshow

Memories of the old Northside of Minneapolis animate many conversations when elders reminisce about the days when the neighborhood was heavily Jewish. Not only did many Jews live in the neighborhood, but Jewish-owned businesses abounded. All of this,

and several synagogues within walking distance.

The majority of the Jewish community decamped to St. Louis Park and other suburbs several decades ago, but the memories live on, and they are rich and sweet, whether we were there, or we are learning about it now.

see p2 for more Northside memories

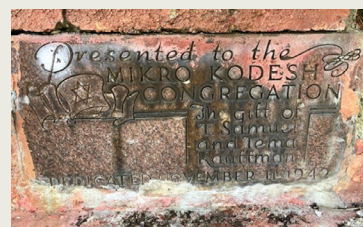
Elwood shul steps



Volunteer-led tours of the old Northside

The Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest is pleased to offer guided tours of the Northside neighborhood through the lens of Jewish history. The Northside of Minneapolis was the storied neighborhood of Jewish immigrants and their children. While no longer a Jewish neighborhood, we provide information about what was once a thriving and rich area with synagogues, kosher grocery stores, Jewish delis, and community centers.

If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to us at history@jhsum.org or 952-381-3360.



Sixty-nine years ago, Joyce Dechter and Martin Walter Orbuch exchanged vows at the Mikro Kodesh Synagogue in north Minneapolis. The ceremony was officiated by Rabbi Nahum Schulman and Cantor Morton Pliskin, and was witnessed by more than 200 guests—family and friends gathering to celebrate the beginning of their life together.

Recently, Joyce returned to the the old Mikro Kodesh building on a Northside walking tour, revisiting the place where she had not only been married, but had come of age. Mikro Kodesh had been a cornerstone of her teenage years—not just a house of worship, but a second home. She attended services regularly, participated actively in youth programs, and even babysat the daughters of Rabbi Schulman.

While on the tour, Joyce noticed a stone partially hidden beneath overgrown weeds. As the greenery was cleared away, a profound memory resurfaced—the building's dedication cornerstone. Engraved in its surface were the names of Samuel (Psychia) and Tema Kauffman, Joyce's aunt and uncle, who had generously paid off the synagogue's debt. Their act of kindness ensured the congregation could thrive free of a mortgage.

New cohort of volunteers

Long time tour leader, Sylvia Fine, has given a great gift to the community by leading walking tours of the neighborhood which highlight the old Jewish community. She has also helped with training a new cohort of tour guides so that JHSUM can continue to offer tours to those interested in seeing the old Northside through the lens of decades past, while interacting with those who now call the neighborhood home.

Kosher Pickles at the Minnesota State Fair

by Doris Rubenstein

The French have a saying that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” Well, things are changing at the Minnesota State Fair, and especially for people who make authentic, no-vinegar kosher dill pickles, they’ll never be the same.

In 2024, for the very first time since the Fair was founded in 1859, “our” pickles were allowed to be entered and judged in the Creative Activities competition. It was exactly twenty-five years since I started my campaign to have these delicacies be a part of the Great Minnesota Get-Together. The moment finally arrived. It was a group effort in the end.

For those who don’t know (or have been living under a rock somewhere around Minnehaha Falls): for years, the powers-that-be at the Fair’s Creative Activities department considered such pickles (like your bubbie made in her basement, or you got at the Lincoln Del) as too dangerous to eat since they were contaminated with various fungi and other unhealthy critters that lay at the bottom of the jar. They didn’t know that

this “gunk” is actually the result of fermentation and is really, really good for you! I mean, today people call it Kombucha and sell it in fancy stores like Whole Foods.

Baruch haShem, times DO change and, in the fall of 2023, the *Star Tribune* ran an article about new leadership

in the Fair’s Creative Activities department. Shortly afterward, I called the Fair and asked for an appointment with these new directors. I wasn’t sure how they’d react to just a common citizen like me, so I asked someone with *yichus* in the Minnesota Jewish world to join me: JHSUM’s own Robin Doroshow, who happens to be a pickler herself! We arrived at the State Fair office fully armed with two ring-binders full of information about the pickle war, including articles about the play based on it, letters from disgruntled persons whose pickles had been rejected time and time again, and—of course—some samples of “our” pickles.

To our surprise, the new staff members had no knowledge of any of this State Fair fermented pickle history. Not only were they unaware of the controversy and the play, but they’d also

never tasted such pickles before in their lives!

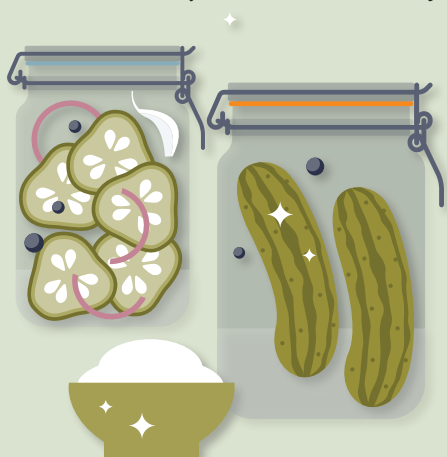
How could these two St. Paul natives have survived without frequenting Cecil’s Deli at least once? It took no time for them to agree that a new category should be made for such a food—but still avoided calling them “pickles.” The category would be “Fermented Foods” and include such comestibles as cucumbers, kimchi, sauerkraut, and vinegar. We took what we could get and ran with it. I offered to recuse myself from competition to serve as a judge. I didn’t want someone who’d never eaten this kind of pickle to choose the blue-ribbon winner!

The Creative Activities department publishes a “premium book” on line, listing all of the various foods, arts and crafts that are judged by their volunteers; each has its own category number with a list of what is and is not allowed in the product to be judged and includes when, where and how products can be brought to the Fairgrounds for judging. Our “fermented cucumbers” were number 1275. The catalog comes out in May, and the judging takes place in early August. It took quite a bit of promotion in the Jewish community to get the word out: requests for synagogues to announce it in their bulletins; posts in the Local Kosher Twin Cities Facebook page, and more.

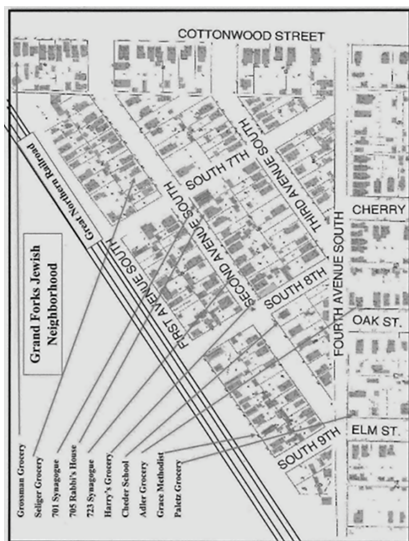
In the end, my co-judge Aviva Breen and I had only three entries to judge. We gave out awards and breathed a sigh of relief.

It was a start. No matter how few entries there were, the taboo on our kind of kosher dill pickles was broken. The *Star Tribune* ran a great article with a picture of Aviva and me with the “winning” jars of pickles. Minnesota Public Radio did an interview. Jared Kaufman, a Jewish journalist with the *Pioneer Press* wrote about this development in August of 2024.

I started promoting the 2025 competition the next day.



In 2008, Doris's pickle recipe was included in the official Minnesota Sesquicentennial cookbook *Make It Minnesotan* and was sent to bookstores across the state to promote it.



Other NDSU Press books with Jewish history of interest

Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota, by William C. Sherman

"You Have Been Kind Enough to Assist Me": Herman Stern and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, by Terry Shoptaugh

Still, by Rebecca Bender and Kenneth Bender

Little Jerusalem: The Grand Forks, North Dakota, Jewish Neighborhood, 1874–1950

by Kenneth L. Dawes

ISBN 978-1-946163-71-4

Release date: February 2026

200+ pages, photos, index, bibliography

North Dakota State University Press

Kenneth Dawes opens his book about the Jewish community of Grand Forks, North Dakota, with a story that situates him firmly as a resident and neighbor. In his youth, he worked as a newspaper carrier for the Grand Forks Herald from 1946 to 1951. His paper route and his home—rented from Rabbi Benjamin Papermaster—were located in the same Jewish neighborhood about which he writes today. Knocking on the doors of his newspaper subscribers to collect the thirty-five-cent monthly fee, he met most of the families in their homes. Now nearing ninety years of age, he says, “Sometimes when I can’t sleep, I mentally walk my old paper route . . . I can still visualize many of the people, the houses, and even some of the neighborhood pets I knew along the route.”

Relying upon memory, Kenneth is today somewhat like Rabbi Isadore (Isaac) Papermaster (1887–1957), who in his later years wrote an unpublished manuscript—mostly from memory—to preserve the story of Jewish settlement in the Dakota Territory. Titled “Isadore Papermaster Reminiscence,” the manuscript of about fifty pages aided Dawes’s narrative about the first- and second-generation Jews living in Grand Forks. But as Professor Emeritus in the studies of sociology at University of North Dakota, Dawes also sought and found multiple Jewish organizations, history books and articles, newspapers, and primary documents to flesh out the narrative. The result is a scholarly treatment, yet a sensitive and informed portrayal of the Jewish community.

At North Dakota State University (NDSU) Press, we are proud to be the publisher of *Little Jerusalem* as a fine example of our mission to publish books that address regional life directly, as the subject of study. Such books contribute to the scholarly knowledge and public consciousness of region, which we define as the Red River Valley, the state of North Dakota, the Great Plains (including the plains of the United States and the prairie provinces of Canada). When NDSU Press received Dr. Dawes’s manuscript, we were delighted to find that the work fits our mission perfectly, and it addresses subject matter that has not had a lot of attention. Dawes provides a brief introduction to the arrival of mostly Russian Jews in the northern Dakota territory, people who had been sponsored by relief agencies. Although they were by and large not farming families, many successfully proved up their homesteads and then moved to cities. In North Dakota, those cities were predominantly Fargo and Grand Forks.

Dawes then focuses his attention on the urban congregations and culture, particularly the leadership of Rabbi Benjamin Papermaster—whose Grand Forks congregation also served Bismarck, Dickinson, and Minot, North Dakota—and the history of the B’nai Israel Synagogue in Grand Forks. Dawes also interprets the differences between Russian (more conservative) and German (more liberal) Jews, which eventually led to split communities in Grand Forks and in Fargo. Dawes’s inclusion of a substantial bibliography and a glossary of Yiddish terms complement the interest and reader-friendly aspects of this book, adding to the substantial contribution *Little Jerusalem* makes to this little studied subject of history.

Suzanne Kelley, PhD

Publisher, North Dakota State University Press

Program Director, Certificate in Publishing www.ndsupress.org

Upcoming Events

CELEBRATING

100

YEARS OF MINNESOTA BBYO

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE A HISTORIC 100 YEARS OF MINNESOTA BBYO! ESTABLISHED IN 1925, BBYO IS STILL GOING STRONG 100 YEARS LATER.

MORE DETAILS TO COME

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 - 7 PM

MINNESOTA JCC
SABES CENTER MINNEAPOLIS

  CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

100 YEARS STRONG

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP, A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY

Grand Opening of the Exhibition and Video Installation, Steinfeldt Gallery at Capp Center, Minnesota JCC – December, 2025

Faith in the Press: Jewish Printing and Printers in the Twin Cities, 1890-1950

Presented by the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries

Curated by Kate Dietrick, Archivist, Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, and Dr. Noam Sienna, Jewish Scholar

February 16th – May 15th, 2026, Elmer L. Andersen First Floor Gallery

Jewish Cooking event

JHSUM partnering with Upper Midwest Jewish Archives University of Minnesota Libraries and the Minnesota Historical Society, as part of their "Julia Child: A Recipe for Life" exhibit.

May 28, 2026, MNHS – 3M Auditorium

Keep up to date on JHSUM happenings by signing up for our emails.

Sign up by visiting this link: tinyurl.com/3kybvz3p.

On the road:

Amherst, Massachusetts

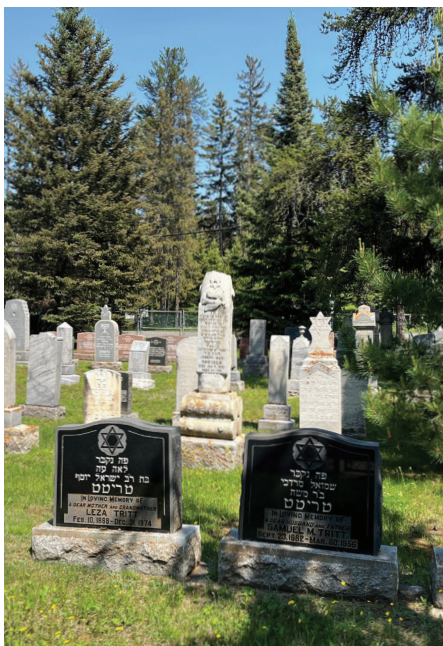
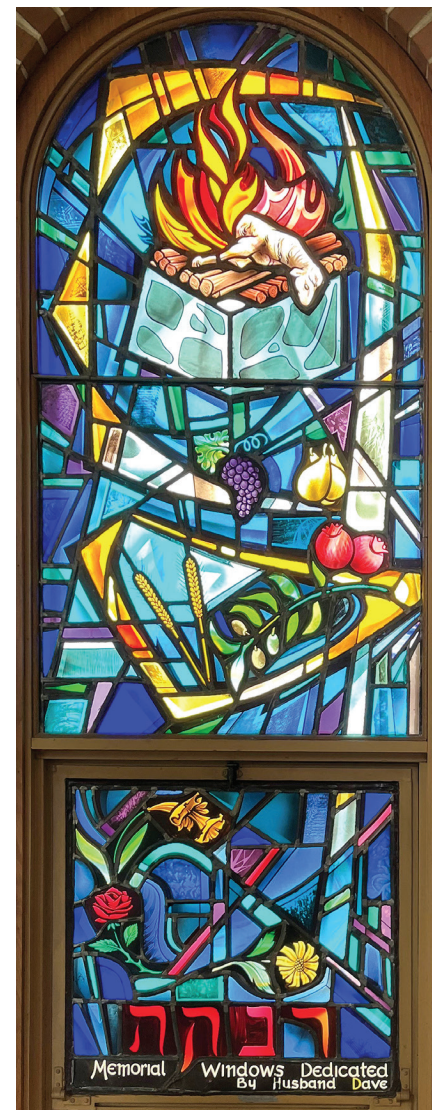
This year brought several travel opportunities. In late April I had the chance to spend a week at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst Massachusetts. The brainchild of Aaron Lansky, the center celebrated 45 years in 2025. This trip, my second to the YBC, couldn't have been more educational and enjoyable. I landed in an intermediate level class, but I am an advanced beginner, at best. Thankfully my classmates were patient and the instructor, Kolya Borodulin, was exceptional! Borodulin, a native of a small town near Birobidzhan in the former Jewish Autonomous Oblast in far eastern Russia, brought amazing energy to the weeklong course on the life and work of Sholom Aleichem. Conducted entirely in Yiddish, it took great focus, as well as studying each evening, to keep up with the work. If you ever have a chance to learn with Kolya, I highly recommend that you take the opportunity. When he isn't teaching at the YBC, he is the director of Yiddish programming and a master Yiddish teacher at the Workers Circle in New York City.

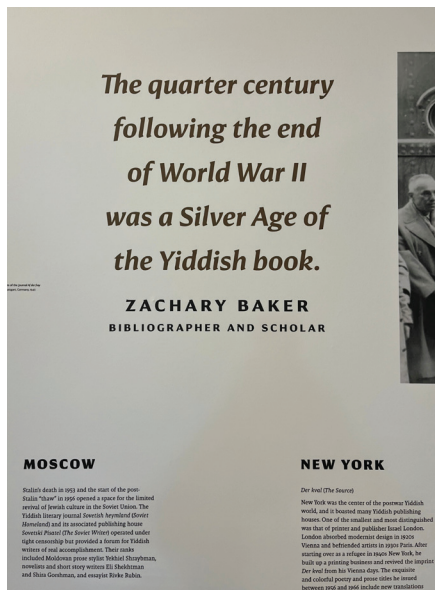


Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

July took me to Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. While not far north of the Minnesota border at Grand Portage, in some ways it seemed a world away. As always, I am on the lookout (actually on an active hunt) for Jewish historical and current life. On our first full day in Thunder Bay, as we drove toward the fabulous Kakabeka Falls for a hike, we saw the Shaarey Shomayim of Thunder Bay cemetery.

The following day, we mapped our way to the Shaarey Shomayim synagogue building. Upon arriving there, we learned that the building is rented out to a daycare, and services are held only on occasion. The kind staff of the day care allowed us to come in and see the space, which had a midcentury vibe.





**JHSUM President
Jamie Heilicher**

JHSUM President's Post Fall 2025

It seems to me that we are regressing back to scapegoating minorities for today's problems.

Have we not learned anything from the past?

Part of our Mission is to tell our stories so that those who come after us can learn from them!

We need your help!

To continue to collect and tell the stories of Jews in the Upper Midwest. We are currently seeking sponsors to help create a sustainable organization for years to come.

Please join us in realizing our mission!

Sincerely,
Jamie Heilicher

Hurley, Wisconsin

In August, I had the honor and pleasure of joining our JHSUM board member, Joanne Sher and her husband, in Hurley, Wisconsin for the Leon Lewis exhibit opening ceremony and dedication of the historic marker in his honor. The marker was made possible by Jerry Klinger of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation. The warmth of the Hurley community was overwhelming, and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Leon Lewis were honored to be part of this wonderful event.



JEWISH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY *of the*
Upper Midwest

Eloise and Elliot Kaplan Family Jewish History Center
Jay and Rose Phillips Building | Barry Family Campus
4330 S. Cedar Lake Road | Minneapolis, MN 55416

www.jhsum.org

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Executive Director
Robin Doroshov

As the weather turns a bit crisp, I begin to think of Rosh Hashana, and when I think of Rosh Hashana, I think of what I want to serve for dinner! Lately I've enjoyed trying various Sephardi and Mizrahi recipes, but I still love a great holiday brisket and tzimmes.

Speaking of Jewish food, I had the pleasure of writing an article for the Summer, 2025 edition of *Ramsey County History*. My article wasn't specifically about Ashkenazi, Sephardi or Mizrahi foods, but centered on the Jewish deli experience. It was a pleasure to work with my cousin, Dr. Rick Doroshov, and highlight his four years behind the deli counter at Cecil's in St. Paul. You can find that article at: tinyurl.com/ehjk9er3.

Shana Tova to our community. Wishing all a peaceful new year.



**Cecil's Deli was opened in 1949
at 651 Cleveland Avenue South,
where it still resides today.**

Courtesy Becca Leventhal Kvasnik.