

## 1905-1938

Because the records of the Jewish Community Center of Portland prior to 1938 are not available, this summary is based upon the reading of random material and conversations with some of the people involved.

The precursors of the Jewish Community Center were the Young Men's Hebrew Association and the Young Women's Hebrew Association. About 1905 the first organization of Jewish youth of Portland took place when an association was formed by a group of sponsors which included Dr. John L. Davis, Samuel Sacknoff, H. Cain, and Harry Taylor.

They met in the back room of the furniture store at 65 Middle Street owned by Harry Taylor. After three or four informal meetings in the back room and in the homes of the sponsors, the association obtained rooms at the Bernstein Building at the corner of Middle and Temple Streets.

By 1909 the association was incorporated as the YMHA of Portland. The membership and active support of older men in the community were sought and the scope of the organization's work broadened. As a representative Jewish organization, the YMHA was recognized by the state. At last, there was a focal point for the Jewish youth in Portland.

After a transition period during which the association leased the entire upper floor of the Boyd Building at the corner of Middle and Exchange Streets, the YMHA started a campaign in 1913 to raise funds for the purchase of a permanent home. As a result of the combined efforts of the Jewish community, sufficient funds were raised to purchase a two-story dwelling located at the corner of Locust Street and Cumberland Avenue.

Unfortunately, this project was a financial failure and the organization was forced to move in 1916 to rented quarters at the corner of Temple and Federal Streets. Here the YMHA flourished and enjoyed its greatest success and expansion.

When our country entered World War I, the YMHA organized a military company of sixty young men under the leadership of Sgt. Henry N. Ebert of Fort McKinley, bought \$3,000 worth of Liberty Bonds, and contributed generously to the Red Cross Fund. Over one-third of the members joined the National Guard and other military bodies. Consequently, membership in the YMHA was depleted by enlistment in the Army and Navy and the quarters were abandoned.

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Anna Matson



Ida Goffin



Israel Bernstein



Gertrude Kramer

Parallel to this activity of the young men, the YWHA was founded. In 1907 a handful of far-sighted young women met in a dark and dingy room on the fourth floor of a building located at Exchange and Middle Streets and organized the first YWHA in the city. With Mrs. Louis Matson as its first president, the progress of the group was steady. Its aims were first to aid destitute children and then to build a home for the aged in Portland. It was active for ten years until 1917 when the war intervened.

It was not until 1920 that a concerted attempt at reorganization was made. By 1922, through the renewed interest of Portland Jewry, a successful drive was launched to attempt to purchase a permanent building. Miss Ida Goffin, elected president of the YWHA, was joined by Maurice Rudman and Israel Bernstein in urging the purchase of a building on Wilmot Street. At last — the Jewish youth of Portland had a club house!

Then began a period of unprecedented activity for the YWHA. It inaugurated groups of juniors and intermediates, extending to the Jewish girls from six to sixteen their first opportunity for organized activity — social, cultural, and educational — sponsored by a local Jewish organization. With the aid of Miss Bessie C. Tellan, director of the YWHA Junior and Intermediate Clubs, they attained a membership of 150 girls. Girl Scout groups were organized by Mrs. Abraham Kramer. The Business Girls group was very active and sponsored many functions.

During the existence of the Wilmot Street Community Center, the YWHA devoted the greater part of its program to its supervision and welfare. It concerned itself with the housing of the numerous activities for the young people, for their needs, equipment, education, and entertainment. It recognized its responsibility in the finances necessary to keep the building open.

When in 1937 lack of funds threatened the closing of the Wilmot Street Community Center, it was the YWHA who called a conference of Jewish leaders and laid the groundwork for a campaign to raise the money necessary to save the building.

It was this campaign that brought to the Portland Jewish community the realization of the need of a Center equipped and designed to fill the needs of every Jew in Portland.

When fifteen people met at Louis Bernstein's house at Falmouth on November 1, 1937 to discuss whether or not the Jewish people of Portland should purchase the Pythian Temple on Cumberland Avenue, there were many doubts.

Morris Sacknoff stood up and said, "At this time there isn't a Jewish-community-owned building in Portland that has a mortgage on it. We have paid them all and we can do the same for a Jewish Community Center. Let us decide now to buy this building."

The building was bought, the campaign was successful, and intensive preparations were made to remodel it to the needs of a meaningful and well-rounded Community Center program.

The summer of 1938 was a very busy one, with meeting after meeting, plans proposed and discarded, decisions to be made. For instance, it was decided to have bowling alleys installed on the fifth floor. A professional architect's opinion was that the room was inadequate. But, our own Abraham Seigal undertook the project and produced a blueprint of the room which included bowling alleys, a handball court, and room for a pool table.

There were many problems and frustrations, but the building was opened on schedule on November 13, 1938. From these modest beginnings, the Jewish Community Center was established at the present site.

As you turn the following pages, the history of the ensuing twenty-five years will unfold before you, testifying to the Center's enviable record of service to Portland Jewry.



Morris Sacknoff



Abraham Seigal



Let Me In!!

# Hon. Louis Bernstein

1938 - 1942

Honorary President

Twenty-five years ago we opened the doors of the Jewish Community Center and dedicated ourselves to service, in its broadest sense, to the community at large.

Now we can turn the pages of history to review those twenty-five years. It is a refreshing and rewarding experience.

On March 6, 1938 we began a campaign for the building fund and by March 20 we were able to report that the city had responded nobly. The campaign had gone over the top.

For the first time, a full-time Executive Director was hired. The Center was fortunate in obtaining the services of Norman Godfrey who was one of several applicants. Under Norman Godfrey's capable direction a full schedule of cultural, educational, social, and athletic programs were instituted for all age levels.

Although from the beginning the principle was established that no religious services should be held in the Center, there was a thriving Sunday School for children which, at that time, filled a community need.

It was decided that all sectors of the community could come to the Center. Its membership was open to all.

Many non-Jewish organizations met in the Center building: the City League (soccer), Armenian Relief Corps, the Catholic Parochial Club, Maine Association for the Deaf, and the Negro Association, to mention only a few.

A Good-Neighbor meeting was held in February 1940 which was attended by 225 members and their non-Jewish friends, at which time the Rabbi and representatives of the Catholic and Protestant faiths spoke. More than any other previous meeting did this make friends for the Jews and the Center.

The Center Women's Club was particularly active serving the youth of the Center. Among many other activities, the women formed a literary group within their membership as well as a very capable Caterer's Club, the latter a money-raising project.

During the early days of the Center funds for our ambitious program were often a problem and sometimes we had to struggle to make both ends meet. But we persevered. We found ways to raise the money we needed to meet our commitments and our payroll.

During the war years, which followed early the dedication of the Center, we played an all-important part in the USO.

The Center Bulletin, especially "Avromchick's Column" followed all of us in the service to the four corners of the globe and kept us informed of the happenings on the home front.

The Center nurtured, mothered, and housed many of our present existing Jewish organizations, catering to the needs of our youth, adult, and golden-age group (the latter in conjunction with the Council of Jewish Women). The Center was, and is, the focal point of Jewish participation in the life of our community.

The Center has developed leadership for our many civic organizations, giving three chairmen to the Greater Portland Community Chest and United Fund drives in the short span of nine years.

We must stress that the Center is not in competition with any group or organization. The Center has, does, and will work in harmony with other organizations for a better and fuller community life.

The Rabbis recognize the need for Center programs in addition to the activities carried on by the Synagogue. Quoting the late Dr. Joshua Loth Liebman, "The Jewish Center is an instrument for the attainment of physical, recreational, and educational health-mindedness as American Jews." Dr. David de Sola Pool said, "We need the Jewish Community Center as a supplement to the Synagogue, augmenting the work of the Synagogue;" and Rabbi



Louis Levitsky, one of the leaders of the Conservative Rabbinate puts the Center on a par with the home and the Synagogue in the responsibility for the "enormous problem of raising our young people to useful and dignified life in this country."<sup>1</sup>

We know where we have been for the past twenty-five years. Have we accomplished enough? Do we know where we are headed? Do we have a valid program? Of course, no organization ever does enough. There is always room for improvement of services. At the present time, the Center is contemplating a survey which, in time, will find the answers to these questions in concrete form. I, as an individual, am confident that our leaders will find the true answers and that our community at large will support their findings.

I congratulate the officers and directors, both past and present, for their individual and collective contributions to the noble cause over the past twenty-five years. They have earned the right to celebrate with joy and happiness the silver anniversary of the founding of our Jewish Community Center. May it be the inspiration for more fruitful, successful, and rewarding work and labor over the next quarter of a century.

— HON. LOUIS BERNSTEIN

1. From the records of the National Jewish Welfare Board.

OFFICERS 1938: Vice-President, Mrs. Edward Berman; Treasurer, Edward J. Berman; Secretary, Mrs. Theodore Wasserman; Clerk, Maurice Davis.

OFFICERS 1939: Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Edward J. Berman, Leo Golodetz; Treasurer, Edward J. Berman; Secretary, Mrs. Louis Matson; Clerk, Maurice Davis

OFFICERS 1940: Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Edward J. Berman, Leo Golodetz, David Ebenstein; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.

OFFICERS 1941: Vice-Presidents, Leo Golodetz, Morris Cox, Mrs. Edward J. Berman; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.



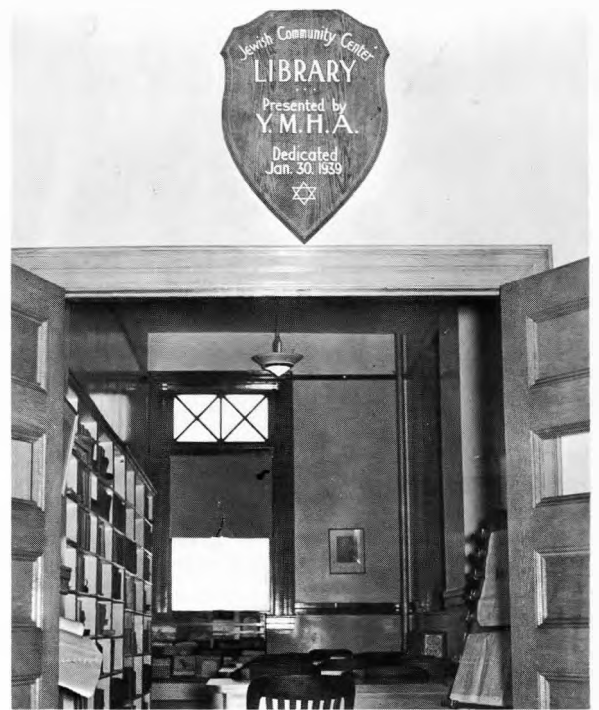
Girl's Basketball Team: front row l. to r., Evelyn Hugo (Finkelman), Ruth Mack, Dorothy Chase (Millman), Hazel Seavey (Brenerman); back row l. to r., Sarah Mack, Estelle Edison, Frances Rudstein, Adelaide Baer.



Bazaar 1940.



Site of present gymnasium as it appeared in 1938 as combined gymnasium-auditorium.



Library presented to Center by Young Men's Hebrew Association 1939.



New Year's Dance 1939.



Edward Shapiro, author of "Avromchick's Column".



**Edward Berman**  
1942 - 1945

Louis Bernstein, the Center's first president, entered the military service in 1942, and at a meeting of the Center Board of Directors on May 27, 1942 he was elected Honorary President for life. At the same meeting, Edward J. Berman was elected to succeed him in the presidency.

"Louis Bernstein had the effrontery to enlist in the service of the United States," Berman recently recalled, "and dumped the presidency and the whole thing into my lap. He left me with a great big mortgage, which I got hunchbacked carrying."

This self-effacing, humorous recollection doesn't tell the whole story. It especially leaves untold the growth and expansion of Center activities during this period. We mention only a few of the highlights.

In the summer of 1942, after much preliminary planning, a Men's Club was organized in the Jewish Community Center. This group fulfilled important social and philanthropic needs and met with great success.

Because of the special demands of the war period, the Center became involved with USO work. In October 1942, Julius Greenstein reported that an Army and Navy Committee was functioning under his direction. It had been given financial support by the National Jewish Welfare Board to assist in USO work.

"USO became very active," Edward Berman remembers. "We were much concerned about keeping the Center's doors open almost around the clock. Ultimately, we established a fully-staffed USO service sponsored by and in conjunction with the Jewish Welfare Board. It was through the USO that we first met Vic Taylor, who later was to become Executive Director of our Center."

On May 5, 1943 Edward Berman was re-elected President of the Center. During this period, aside from meeting the demands of the war effort, the Center concentrated on developing programs for the young people of the community. The Sunday School continued to grow steadily. In July, Center Youth activities were organized under the direction of Max Fischman.

When Ed Berman was re-elected on June 13, 1944, the budding programs of the previous year were already blossoming, and the Center was emerging from its period of growing pains and awkwardness.

In October 1944, Dr. Benjamin Zolov reported that the Sunday School had sixty-three children, organized in three sections. Serving as teachers were Mrs. Lillian Jacobson, Mildred Kaplan, and Mrs. Irwin Altman.

Early in 1944 the basement of the Center was set aside as a Center Youth Lounge and the necessary repair and installation work was begun. This Lounge was dedicated at the end of the year at which time Center Youth reported ninety members of high-school age. The Lounge was supervised at all times by a member of the Center Women's Cub. Proceeds from the canteen, operated by high-school girls, were to be used for improvements.

When Edward Berman completed his service in the spring of 1945, he had every right to be proud of the accomplishments during his presidency. Center membership had exceeded four hundred and fifty, Sunday School and youth programs had grown, the Center Men's Club reported a membership of one hundred and fifteen, with an average of sixty-five attending weekly suppers; and the Center had made an admirable contribution to the war effort.

— MAURICE DAVIS

OFFICERS 1942: Vice-Presidents, Barnett I. Shur, Morris Cox, Mrs. Maurice Davis, Ralph Lampport; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.

OFFICERS 1943: Vice-Presidents, Barnett I. Shur, Sumner Goffin, Philip Reuben, Ralph Lampport; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.

OFFICERS 1944: Vice-Presidents, Barnett I. Shur, Philip Reuben, Maurice Ross, George I. Lewis; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.



Free membership to returning servicemen: front row l. to r., Maurice Ross, Louis Bernstein, Maurice Kane, Dr. Henry Tabachnick; back row l. to r., Jack Branz, Harold Ross, Arnold Potter, Joseph Taylor, Irvin Herman, Donald Kaplan.



Election Committee checking ballots 1942: clockwise, Arnold Goodman, Maurice Davis, James Ross, Maurice Kane, Irving Rothstein.



Sunday School 1943: front row l. to r., unknown, unknown, Barbara Sohn, Kenneth Waxman, Phyllis Fink (Brynes), Stephen Halpert, Esther Sohn, unknown, Elaine Appel, Leonard Nelson, Muriel Tabachnick (Shapiro), Mrs. Benjamin Zolov; back row l. to r., Inez Bernstein, Shirley Kaplan, Bernice Boxstein, Shirley Levine, Seldon Kates, Mildred Kaplan (Drees).



Billiard Room 1943.



Business Girls 1945: front row l. to r., Frances Rudstein, Helen Mack, Ruth Mack, Annabelle Boxstein; second row l. to r., Gertrude Seavey, Shirley Spector, Ethel Levine, Bettina Levine, Eleanor Rappaport, Estelle Edison, Rose Lerman, Eleanor Edison; back row l. to r., Dorothy Brinn, Eleanor Serulnick, Leona Edison, Charlotte Zimmerman, Ethel Farber, Marcia Simansky, Beatrice Lerman, Beatrice Lerman.



Women entertaining at U.S.O. 1944: front row l. to r., Harriett Kroot (Weisman), Gladys Potter, Mildred Brenner (Schwartz), Ruth Carlin (Finn), Dorothy Cohen, Ina Schatz (Weissman), Annabelle Boxstein (Mack), Rae Modes (Woolf).



## Barnett I. Shur

1945 - 1947

The war years had come to an end as I began my term as president and the Center was faced with the many problems of returning to a peacetime program for its members and the community. The transition was eased by the activity of a most interested Board of Directors.

The Sunday School, Workshop, Men's Club, Athletic Committee and Social Committee were led and staffed by enthusiastic chairmen and hard-working committees, and the Center seemed bursting through its very walls. The Center Bulletin, which chronicled the events of the Center, was probably the most eagerly read local publication of our people. Edited by Earl Aronson, then A.P. editor for Maine, and Harry Van Dernoot, the U.P. Editor for Maine, it had the professional direction which made its reading a true delight.

It soon became apparent that the Center needed a summer day camp program. Under the able guidance of Dave Astor, the first steps were taken to establish a Center Day Camp which has since developed into one of the most outstanding camps of its kind anywhere in the country.

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Because the activities of the Center were so extensive, it was not long before it was admitted to the Community Chest. Our acceptance by the Chest not only gave us cause to be proud but also made us recognize that responsibilities went hand in hand with Chest membership. For the first time in its history, the Center was placed on a sound financial basis which made it unnecessary for the Board to expend its energies in annual fund-raising events and made it possible for the Board to concentrate its attention on program and services.

In the midst of this extensive program, our first Executive Director, the beloved Norman Godfrey, was stricken with a fatal illness and the leaders of the Center undertook to carry on the administrative duties for which they had been so ably prepared by the example of Norman.

It seemed as though everyone responded to the challenge of leadership in order that the Center should continue to progress along the lines that Norman had developed. Busy members of our Board spent innumerable hours at the Center so that the Center could maintain its high standards during this critical period. No president could have received greater cooperation.

We were most fortunate in securing the services of Victor Taylor who, in October 1946, was chosen to succeed Norman Godfrey as Executive Director of the Center. Throughout the years, Vic has continued to maintain the high standards that all of us expect of our Director, and has been able to adapt the Center's program activities to meet the needs of the changing times.

Looking back over 25 years' history of any organization leaves one with many poignant and happy memories. Happy in the sense of having worked with so many fine and interested people, poignant in the sense that some of them are no longer here.

It was a wonderful experience to have been President of the Center during these exciting years and to have worked so closely not only with Norman and Vic but also with so many community-minded people. My term of office left me with fine memories and with the feeling that the Center was an integral part of our community life.

— BARNETT I. SHUR



Sunday School 1947: front row l. to r., Nancy Fleischer, unknown, Leonard Slosb, Pam Drogin, Joel Polisner, unknown, Constance Weisberg, Deborah Zolov; l. row l. to r., Steve Van Dernoort, Bruce Schatz, Elaine Brenerman, Jeffrey Weinst, Linwood Fleischer, Marjorie Goldberg, Cynthia Merdek, Joan Taylor.

OFFICERS 1945: Vice-Presidents, Hyman Mersky, Harry Botwick, Philip Reuben, Maurice Ross, Harold Nelson; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Morris Greenberg.

OFFICERS 1946: Assistant to President, Sumner Goffin; Vice-Presidents, Sidney Wernick, Hyman Mersky, Maurice Ross, Philip Reuben, Charles Cohen; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Clerk, Maurice Davis.



Girl's Gym Class 1945.



Purim Carnival 1946.



Community Chest Float 1947.



## Harold Nelson

1947 - 1949

My administration began in June 1947 and continued through June 1949. Serving with me were Vice-Presidents Harold Potter, Sumner Goffin, Mrs. Caspar Sutton, Arnold Goodman, Philip Reuben, and Maurice Davis. Jules Greenstein was Secretary and Samuel J. Cohen was Treasurer.

Victor Taylor, Executive Director, had already familiarized himself with the community. His capacity for hard work and understanding of others was a great asset to the success of my administration.

The idea of a summer day camp, explored during the previous administration, now became a reality. A camp site was purchased with money from the Norman I. Godfrey Memorial Fund founded by me but supported by many.



Day Camp Clean-up Crew 1948.

During this period USO activity came to an end at the Center. Attention was now directed towards the new and special internal needs of the Center. Membership reached an unprecedented high under the leadership of Irving Small and new programs and facilities were made available to the members.

The new, modern, safety elevator was completed. The welfare of our membership was helped further by the improvement of the fire escapes and the installation of fire crash doors.

A new kitchen, the most modern in New England, was installed as was the Arts and Crafts Room, built and equipped under the direction of Mrs. Abraham Simonds. The Photography Room was established and meetings were held there under the direction of Sidney Wernick.

The Center assumed an added responsibility in the community when it established a Blood Bank under the direction of Mrs. Harold Nelson and David Astor. The Center served the entire community nobly through its cooperation with all state agencies when the forest fires were raging throughout Maine during 1947.

Under the direction of Mrs. Caspar Sutton, the first Adult Education Institute was offered with the cooperation of the Orthodox and Conservative rabbis.

The Center's Symphony Orchestra was organized under the direction of Dr. Saul Polisner. The first Family Picnic took place under the direction of Dr. Henry Pollard. A Parents' Committee was founded by the Center Day Camp electing Ezekiel Rich as its first president.

Emphasis on the youth of the Center was very strong throughout this entire administration. It was during this time that the first "Youth Week" was held.

The custom of making monthly awards to outstanding Center members was started. The Center's Bridge Tournaments grew and flourished. A Gift Shop was established in conjunction with the Center Women's Club. It was during this period that retirement and insurance benefits were extended by the Board to all eligible Center employees.

And who can forget "Presidents' Night" held on March 27, 1948? A night of fun, frolic, and laughter!

I was very happy when my two years of service as President of the Center was completed, for my administration was not only a busy and active one but an administration of many firsts, some of which still exist to the continuing benefit of our membership.

— HAROLD NELSON



"Presidents' Night" 1948: standing l. to r., Frances Marcus, Sidney Greenberg, Eddie Victor, Dorothy Potter, Yudy Elowitch, Frank Laben, Dorothy Cohen, Gerald Sheriff, Lennie Stein, Manny Brooks.



The Center Symphony, continuing under the chairmanship of Dr. Saul Poliser, offered our members many evenings of pleasurable listening and were frequent guests of organizations outside the Center.

In 1949 the Cub Scout program was introduced with Mrs. Gerald Slosberg and Mrs. Earl Brand as the first Den Mothers. Duplicate Bridge was also newly introduced under the chairmanship of Caspar Sutton. Many of us can still remember the frequent call of "Mr. Director!"

For the full three years of Harold's term, Dr. Cyrus Briggs, Chairman of the Athletic Committee, came to almost every board meeting with a plea for more locker space and more showers. Invariably his request was referred to the Budget Committee, and, just as invariably, turned down.

Father and Son Night, Sports Night, and the New Year's Eve Dance were innovations of this period which have remained as annual events. The only problem with the first New Year's Eve Dance in 1951, when the Arnold Goodmans and the Edward Rodmans were co-chairmen, was where to put all the people.

Edward Rodman, the year before, had chaired a dance to benefit the March of Dimes. He turned over to that organization a check in the amount of \$1,738.04, the largest single contribution made.

Center Youth, broadening its horizon, became very active on the New England scene. They first played host to the Haverhill Center Youth and in 1952 held the New England Center Youth Convention here. At this time, Leonard Nelson was elected President of the New England Association of Jewish Center Youth Councils.

While we're on the subject of youth, do you remember "Old Timers' Night" under the leadership of Abraham Seigal?

Recognition in the center movement was given to many of our members during this period. Barnett I. Shur was re-elected President of the New England Section of the Jewish Welfare Board in 1949 and Mrs. Arnold Goodman was elected a member of the Executive Committee of that organization. In 1951, Barney was elected National Chairman of Field Service of the Jewish Welfare Board, Harold Potter was elected to the National Council of the Jewish Welfare Board, and Major Louis Bernstein was elected a Director on the National Board of the Jewish Welfare Board.

The site for the Day Camp had already been purchased, a mortgage taken, and the Norman I. Godfrey Memorial Fund established for paying off the mortgage. Contributions of no less than \$100 were solicited for this fund and through the arduous and untiring efforts of such men as Harold Nelson and Edward Sacknoff pledges were brought in amounting to over \$13,000.

There ensued the many clean-up and paint-up days and nights spent at the camp under the direction of Zeke Rich, the years of hard work put in by David Novick overseeing the work of the contractors, and the many meetings held by David Astor as Chairman of the Center Day Camp Committee. There were many and varied financial reports to be considered in those days. Typical was a report on supplies including such items as jugs, whistles, cups, tissue, tennis balls, and ——— worms, totalling \$47.77.

The **piece de resistance** of this period in the Center's history was, of course, the Bar Mitzvah Week which began on January 27, 1952 to celebrate the thirteenth year of the Center's existence. A special activity was slated for every single night of the week, activities involving every facet of the Center, climaxed by the long-to-be-remembered Founders' Banquet. Dave Astor was chairman of this Herculean task and was honored for his outstanding work at a special meeting of the Board of Directors. All former directors were invited to this meeting. One hundred and five people attended, some of whom had served as directors for thirteen uninterrupted years.

In reviewing these years of vigorous activity, there is so much to remember, so much of which to be proud, so many to whom we are indebted — not the least of whom is Harold Potter himself.

— MRS. PHILIP SCHILLING

OFFICERS 1949: Vice-Presidents David Astor, Clarice Shur, Dr. Henry Pollard, Abraham Seigal, Maurice Kane, Julius Greenstein; Secretary-Clerk, Morris Cox; Treasurer, Samuel J. Cohen; Assistant Treasurer, Lester Willis.

OFFICERS 1950: Vice-Presidents David Astor, Maurice Kane, Julius Greenstein, Dr. Henry Pollard, Clarice Shur, Abraham Seigal; Secretary-Clerk, Morris Cox; Treasurer, Lester Willis.

OFFICERS 1951: Vice-Presidents Irving Small, David Astor, Maurice Kane, David Novick, Freda Schilling, Leo Golodetz; Secretary-Clerk, Morris Cox; Treasurer, Lester Willis; Finance Committee Chairman, Samuel J. Cohen.



341 Club 1950: seated, Everett Perlman and Jean Gordon; standing l. to r., Ben Romanow, Lollie Levenson, Vivian Goldfarb, Miriam Kaatz, Charlotte Cutler (Silver), unknown, Harold Modes.



Bar Mitzvah "Fralich" 1951: standing l. to r., Judy Venner (Halpert), Dr. Gerald Rosen, Frances Stern.



Executive Officers 1951-1952: seated l. to r., Freda Schilling, Harold Potter, Leo Golodetz; standing l. to r., Maurice Kane, Morris Cox, Irving Small, David Astor, David Novick, Lester Willis.



## Morris Cox

1954 - 1956

When I was installed as President of the Center in June 1954, my life was made an open book. The occasion was the Center's first Installation Ball and my past was laid bare in a program entitled "This Is Your Life." Dave Astor, undaunted by the results of a ski accident, hobbled around stage on crutches as the program's producer and M.C.

Installed with me that night were Vice-Presidents, Dorothy Goodman, Doris Laben, Ezekiel Rich, David Astor, Harold Ross, Benjamin Yormack; Treasurer, David Novick; and Secretary-Clerk, Philip Schilling.

In reviewing the minutes of meetings held during my two years in office, I noted that particular progress was made during that time at the Center Day Camp. The camping season was extended from six to eight weeks, and the first arrangements were made for picking up the campers near their homes rather than at the Center.

New innovations at the Center included the construction of an office on the second floor for use by the Activities Director, a survey of the Center's insurance coverage, and the formulation and adoption of a personnel code which established specific work rules for staff with definite provisions for holidays and for vacation and sick leave.

It was during this period that discussions were first held about the possibility of closing the Center on evenings and Sundays during the summer months. This suggestion met with much vocal objection and criticism, but the suggestion was finally adopted. Everyone will agree that it has worked out well, resulting in a saving to the Center, to United Fund, and to the community.

After meeting with representatives of the various organizations using the Center's facilities, new rates were established for such use. The Center's dues were also increased.

During my tenure of office, a committee was appointed to study the advisability of a change-over in the Center from a fiscal to a calendar year. It was apparent that there were many problems to overcome in order to make this change and it took a great deal of time to accomplish it. The results have been extremely beneficial, however, to the Budget and Finance Committee, the Membership Committee, and to United Community Services.

The many adult activities and youth programs, the New Year's dances, and programs celebrating Jewish Book Month and Jewish Music Month were continued during these two years with great success.

A vital issue, which first came under discussion during my presidency, was a Self-Survey of the Center. Such a study is a very large undertaking, and in another article appearing in this Year-book, you will be reading my thoughts on the reasons and needs for such a survey.

In conclusion, I simply want to remind the Center membership that the Center has made terrific progress over the years as a result of the cooperative efforts of all of its officers, its staff, and this membership. I, therefore, urge you to look forward to the future with hope and confidence that the Center can and will play an even more important role in the community.

— MORRIS COX

OFFICERS 1955: Vice-Presidents, Gladys Potter, Marion Lerman, David Astor, Benjamin Yormack, Ezekiel Rich, Harold Ross; Treasurer, Arnold Goodman; Secretary-Clerk, Philip Schilling.



C-day (dues collection) Breakfast 1955.



Morris Cox's Installation Program "This Is Your Life"  
Morris Cox and David Astor.



Executive Officers 1954-1955: seated l. to r., Benjamin Yormack, Doris Laben, Morris Cox, Dorothy Goodman; back row l. to r., Harold Ross, David Novick, Philip Schilling, David Astor.



Tween-Age Installation 1956: seated at head table l. to r., Leslie Perlman, Steve Goodman, Jim Baker, Nancy Sax, Paul Hirsch, Richard Cohen (face hidden), Stanley Schatz, Sharon Sher, Eric Sacknoff, Gail Fineberg, Harriett Caplan.



Membership Chairmen 1956: Samuel M. Cohen and Bernard Zade.



## Arnold Goodman

1956 - 1958

The first activity taking place during my term of office was an auction netting \$667.01, with Bill Slade and Violet Davidson as co-chairmen. Just about everything imaginable went under the hammer except the building itself. All proceeds were turned over to the Day Camp.

Since I was still available (not having been auctioned), an Installation Dance was next on the agenda. Chaired by Barney and Winnie Plavnick, two hundred and forty-seven attended.

It was at this time, too, that Jim Connolly joined the staff as Athletic Director.

Reconstruction of the shelter at the Day Camp was completed, helped no little by the voluntary contribution of Saul Chason and David Rubinoff of Plummer's Insurance whose check for \$1,000 was gratefully accepted. The beach, too, was made larger.

The first Family Night was held in December 1956. Two hundred adults and children attended this joyous affair which was co-chaired by Ernie and Millie Baker and Sam and Lenore Burokoff.

The Center Toastmasters Club received its charter. Its members learned how to speak and, more important, when to stop. Jules Krems was its first president.

(Continued)

Center Youth membership reached one hundred and fifty-five, fifty-one of them freshmen. Play Center membership was one hundred and fifty.

Paul Royte became Activities Director for one year before going back to school for further study.

With Bert Silverman and George Robinson as co-chairmen, the New Year Bulletin raised a net of \$5,256.23, the largest sum raised to date.

Development of an Endowment Plan with the Center as beneficiary was inaugurated.

Workshop, under Sam Burokoff, proved its popularity as five hundred and seventeen Senior and forty-three Junior memberships were sold for their memorable productions.

An outstanding affair was held in May 1957 honoring Vic Taylor on his tenth anniversary as Executive Director of the Center. The testimonial dinner and program was chaired by Mrs. Arnold Goodman and Mrs. Herbert Stern.

The Center Women's Club, for which the Center can always be thankful for so many things, raised the necessary funds which made the burning of the mortgage of the Day Camp shelter possible. This kind of burning leaves a warm glow long after the fire goes out.

A Masque Ball, first in a decade, was an artistic success.

A combination vic and hi-fi set was presented by Center Youth.

A public address system was also installed in the building.

In 1958 the Golf Class proved so popular that it had to be moved into three rooms to accommodate all the would-be Palmers.

I left on almost the same note as I entered — another auction. This one was held at Lakewood Pavilion, North Windham, under the chairmanship of Moe and Frances Strock. Approximately \$1,000 was raised for the Day Camp.

Now I joined the growing list of former presidents after two very satisfying years.

— ARNOLD GOODMAN

OFFICERS 1956: Vice-Presidents Sumner Bernstein, Sophie Hirsch, Donald Nelson, Gladys Potter, Ezekiel Rich, Harold Ross; Treasurer, Arnold Briggs; Assistant Treasurer, Barney Zade; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.

OFFICERS 1957: Vice-Presidents Sophie Hirsch, Harold Ross, Donald Nelson, Carl Webber, Frances Stern, Samuel Burokoff; Treasurer, Barney Zade; Assistant Treasurer, Joseph Taylor; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.



Executive Officers 1956-1957: kneeling, Harold Ross; standing l. to r., Ezekiel Rich, Sumner Bernstein, Bernard Zade, Morris Cox, Sophie Hirsch, Gladys Potter, Betty Sax, Arnold Briggs, Arnold Goodman.



Masque Ball 1958.



Burning Center Day Camp Mortgage at Center Women's Club Donors Dinner 1958: l. to r., Arnold Goodman, Evelyn Silverman, Carl Webber.



Bulletin Staff 1957: l. to r., Maxwell Weisenthal, Dean Silverman, George Robinson, Alvin Mersky, Marvin Gould.



First Day Camp Auction 1956: l. to r., William Slade, Julius Silverman, Violet Davidson, Jack Rubinoff.



Testimonial Dinner for Victor Taylor 1957: seated l. to r., Marian Taylor, Victor Taylor, Barnett I. Shur; standing l. to r., Arnold Goodman, Evelyn Silverman, Leonard Katowitz, Ezekiel Rich.



## Harold E. Ross

1958 - 1960

As a young adult, I moved with the Center from Wilmot Street to Cumberland Avenue and, from that time until I moved from Portland was very fortunate in having served the Center in many capacities. I assumed the office of President in June, 1958 and in glancing back over those two years of my tenure, I recall many innovations.

A Hospitality Committee was formed to greet newcomers to our city and to make them welcome. This was done by the sending of a plant which was followed by a personal visit.

A survey of our Center was instituted to look into all aspects of programming and building.

Because of the difficulty in obtaining personnel, the scarcity of ads, and the rising costs of publishing, the weekly Bulletin became a bi-weekly Bulletin. At the same time, a charge for personal announcements was made.

In order to facilitate our working with United Fund, the Center year was changed finally from a fiscal year to a calendar year. At the same time, dues were increased. Intermediate memberships were dropped, as these had been a sore spot in our membership structure for some time. Before long, these memberships were converted to family memberships, thereby bringing increased revenue to the Center.

(Continued)

Center Youth was moved from its quarters in the basement to newly decorated quarters on the fifth floor. This move gave our youth much-needed space and facilities to better enable them to carry out their programs.

Adult activities, which had become practically non-existent, were stimulated with three excellent programs, presented to our membership free of charge. Workshop, which had been functioning as a separate organization, was integrated into the overall Center program and functioned under an appointed chairman.

The handball court was repaired and again put into use. Half of the area formerly occupied by Center Youth was partitioned off and a work-out room installed. An entrance from the men's locker room was re-opened to give direct access to the workout room.

On June 26, 1960, after much planning and diligent work on the part of the committee, the Center Day Camp, which was and is today such an integral part of the Center, was dedicated to the memory of the late Norman I. Godfrey, the Center's first Executive Director. At the same time, the Recreation Building, donated in memory of David Novick, was dedicated in ceremonies attended by over five hundred people.

A change in the constitution and by-laws was voted which stated that a duly-elected President will automatically become a member of the Life Board of Directors. This was done so that future presidents would not be faced with the necessity of running for re-election to the Board of Directors while serving as President.

On this, the twenty-fifth year of the Portland Jewish Community Center, I look back upon my term as President as a most gratifying experience, and one which I shall always treasure.

— HAROLD ROSS



Executive Officers 1959-1960: seated, l. to r., Dr. Harold Woolf, Bea Schatz, Harold Ross, Betty Sax, Sam Burokoff; standing l. to r., Donald Nelson, Joseph T. Frances Stern, Bernard Zade, Carl Webber.

OFFICERS 1958: Vice-Presidents Samuel Burokoff, Carl Webber, Donald Nelson, Frances Stern, Bea Schatz, Dr. Harold Woolf; Treasurer, Barney Zade; Assistant Treasurer, Joseph Taylor; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.

OFFICERS 1959: Vice-Presidents Donald Nelson, Samuel Burokoff, Cuddy Cohen, Dr. Harold Woolf, Bea Schatz, Sophie Hirsch; Treasurer, Joseph Taylor; Assistant Treasurer, Manuel Young; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.



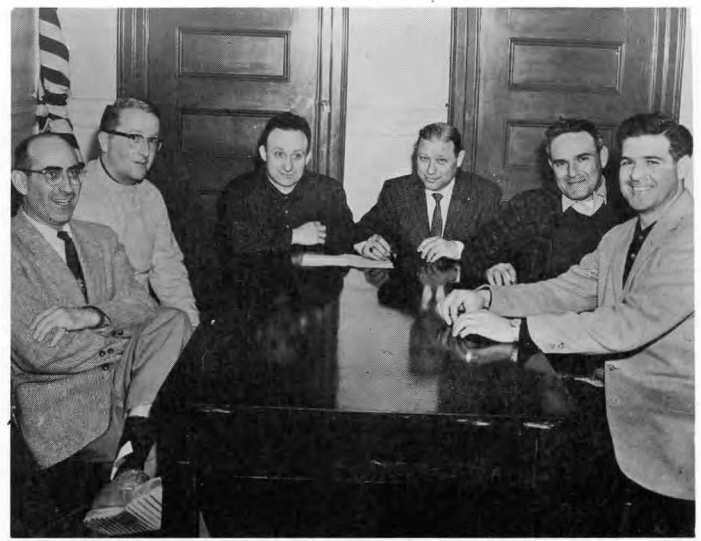
Father and Son—Sports Night Committee 1959: seated l. to r., Abe Zimmerman, Gersh Finkelstein, Saul Brenerman, Max Crasnick, Julius Silverman; back row l. to r., Jonas Klein, Martin Clenott, Robert Litman, Dean Silverman, Dr. Gerald Rosen, Sonny Reuben, George Bress, Robert Reef.



Day Camp Dedication 1960, dedicating David Novick Building: l. to r., Mim No..., Harold Potter, Barnett I. Shur, Harold Ross, Rabbi Bekritsky.



New Year's Eve Dance Committee 1958: front row l. to r., Rose Brinn, Sally Lourie, Adele Mack, Frances Stone; second row l. to r., Bea Bornstein, Marian Taylor, Dorothy Millman, Selma Cope, Bea Schatz; back row l. to r., Gerald Cope, Joseph Schatz, Herbert Schwartz, S. Richard Mack, Russell Bornstein, David Millman.



Father and Son—Sports Night Awards Committee 1960: l. to r., Dean Silverman, Alston Leland, Gersh Finkelstein, Saul Brenerman, Harold Ross, Robert Reef.



## Donald Nelson

1960 - 1962

A great deal took place within the framework of the Center during the years 1960 through 1962.

Center Day Camp continued to grow. Enrollment reached a total of one hundred and sixty children in the summer of 1960 and one hundred and seventy children in the summer of 1961.

Our physical facilities at the Day Camp were expanded. Through the generosity of the Center Women's Club, an Administration-Infirmery Building was added. The Barnett I. Shur family donated another building in memory of the late Annabelle Shur Pollard.

Our Center New Year Bulletin continued to be a major source of income and, in 1960 we reversed what had been a continuing downward trend in Bulletin income.

Our Adult Activities program expanded and book reviews, study groups and literary presentations enjoyed increasing success, reaffirming our belief that there is a return of interest in this type of programming.

During this period, the Jewish Community Center was honored by the election of one of its past presidents, Harold J. Potter, to the high office of President of the New England Section of the National Jewish Welfare Board. He was the second Center past president to be so honored. Shortly after his election to this office, the passing of Harold J. Potter shocked our entire community. His wisdom and guidance have been sorely missed.

The Testimonial Dinner given in honor of Morris Cox was one of the outstanding affairs to be held at the Community Center during my administration. Approximately two hundred and seventy-five people turned out in June of 1961 to pay honor to a man who devoted so much of his time and effort to our community.

In the spring of 1961, Phil Cofman came to our Center as Activities Director and Day Camp Director. Our athletic program prospered and achieved almost national prominence.

The Center softball team became League champions. With increased participation in the New England Basketball League, our basketball team achieved significant prominence by our Center winning the Northern Section of the Jewish Welfare Board Basketball League championship. The volleyball team won national "B" divisional honors at Lynn.

The Center Executive Committee, realizing the importance of the Center Women's Club to the Center, made recommendations that the Center Women's Club President be part of the Executive Committee. This close liaison has served to our mutual benefit since.

Whatever was accomplished during my term of office was due in great measure to those people who were installed as officers along with me: Vice Presidents Sophie Hirsch, Honey Cox, Mildred Baker, Bernard Goodman, Cuddy Cohen, Robert Reef; Clerk, Betty Sax; Treasurer, Joseph Taylor; Assistant Treasurer, Manuel Young; and my Executive Vice President, Samuel Burokoff.

In closing, I note with interest that in 1962 the idea of a special 25th Anniversary New Year's Bulletin edition was initiated, to be designed in the form of a souvenir yearbook. I am happy to see that it has become a reality and that I am able to contribute to it this resume of my years in office.

— DONALD NELSON



Executive Officers 1960-1961: seated l. to r., Donald Nelson, Betty Sax, Honey Cox, Mildred Baker, Cuddy Cohen; standing l. to r., Sam Burokoff, Robert Reef, Bernard Goodman, Joseph Taylor.



Testimonial Dinner for Morris Cox 1961: l. to r., Barnett I. Shur, Judge Edward Gignoux, Morris Cox, Honey Cox.



Checkers Exhibition with Champion Tom Wiswell 1960.



Oaks League Champions 1962: front row l. to r., Dean Silverman, Gersh Finkstein, Phil Cofman, Steve Brickman, Jim Baker, Eleanor Reuben, Sonny Reuben, Robert Litman, Batboy Steve Cope; back row l. to r., Alston Leland, Larry Plavnick, Lenny Berman, Elliot Sprince, Steve Goodman, Mel Zimmelman.



Preparing Shur Building for opening at Day Camp 1961: l. to r., Custodian Harlan Chaplin and George Shur.



Scout Officials meet with Center President 1960: clockwise, Robert Sax, Ernest Baker, Donald Nelson, Philip Finn.





## Samuel Burokoff

1962 - 1964

This past year we have presented you, the membership, a very strong and well-rounded program catering to the needs of youth through Golden Age, inclusively.

Soon after the election of officers and members of the Board of Directors, we proceeded, with clear purpose in mind, to formulate the programming for the year. The Executive Board met early in the summer and announced the appointment of the many committee chairmen preparatory to moving into high gear with the opening of the fall season.

Meanwhile, our co-chairmen of the New Year's Bulletin, Dr. Harold Woolf and Sidney Levine, were working furiously for publication by the High Holidays.

Under the Vice-Presidency of Gerald Cope and chaired by Selma Cope and Ann Rothstein, the Book Fair, attended by some seven hundred people, was held at the Center for an entire month. This project, presented as a community effort with every organization in the city participating, was a very great undertaking for the Center. The display of rare and modern books, manuscripts, and coin collections was priceless. Added highlights to the Book Fair were the book reviews given by both Rabbi Bekritsky and Rabbi Sky.

During this time, the Center was privileged to present to the membership Mr. Arthur Bennett Lipkin, conductor of the Portland Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Lipkin spoke on the subject of "Music and You." As new residents of Portland, we were delighted to have them join our membership.

In November, Gerald Sheriff assumed the office of Activities Director. In the short period of time that he has served in this capacity, he has proved himself more than worthy of the trust and faith we placed in him.

Heralding the year 1963, and the beginning of the Center's twenty-fifth year, was the glamorous New Year's Eve Ball set in a Latin American motif.

The Center Day Camp was enlarged by the most generous gift by Mr. and Mrs. William Cohen and their sons, Richard and Bernard, of the deed to the property adjacent to the camp.

An important constitutional change took place during the past year regarding the election of Board members. Thirteen members are elected now by the incumbent board, rather than election of seven-teen members by the general membership as was formerly done.

It was felt that this new method would strengthen the makeup of the Board of Directors.

The program commemorating Jewish Music Month was outstandingly chaired by Yudy Elowitch; and Betty Sax once again planned and produced an excellent "Third Seder." Both evenings were tremendously received.

I have highlighted only a few of the programs and activities of the Center this past year. It is important to remember that the Center is nothing without the officers, directors, committees, chairmen, and workers who form the hard core and backbone of the Center. These are the people who perform their tasks so well, with little noise or fanfare. These are the people who oversee the Day Camp, Membership, Scouting, Youth Groups, Golden Age, Budget, Men's Club, Adult Education, Blood Bank, Athletics, Socials, Picnics, and the physical welfare of the building through the House Committee. These are the unsung heroes of your Center.

A supper meeting was held in March with Vice-Presidents Mildred Baker and Winifred Plavnick serving as hostesses. We were privileged at that time to be visited by Sanford Solender, Executive Vice-President of the National Jewish Welfare Board, who was our guest speaker. His speech before the Annual Meeting of United Community Services at lunch the same day reflected a great deal of pride upon Portland Jewry. His talk before the Board of Directors of the Center that night on "The Role of the Jewish Center in Jewish Communal Life" was superlative. His closing remarks dealt with need of a survey of our own Center.

You have heard a great deal about a survey. It appears now that it is to become a reality. This is the initial step in the ultimate goal of having a **new Center**. All our dreams and hopes for the future as they concern the Center are wrapped up in the results of this survey. Only with your utmost cooperation during the next few months will these dreams become a much-needed reality.

To Vic Taylor and Jerry Sheriff, the officers and Board of Directors, to all chairmen and their committees, I thank you for this year. It has been most enjoyable and gratifying to me to have served as your President. Without you, I could not have done it; but, since our common purpose is the **Center**, we shall attain even greater heights together.

— SAMUEL BUROKOFF

OFFICERS 1962: Vice-Presidents, Charles A. Cohen, Bernard Goodman, Robert Reef, Gerald Cope, Mildred Baker, Winifred Plavnick; Treasurer, Joseph Taylor; Assistant Treasurer, Manuel Young; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.

OFFICERS 1963: Vice Presidents, Charles A. Cohen, Gerald Cope, Morris Lerman, Robert Litman, Winifred Plavnick, Beverly Boxstein; Treasurer, Manuel Young; Assistant Treasurer, Joseph Schatz; Secretary-Clerk, Betty Sax.



Mr. and Mrs. William Cohen giving deed to Center Day Camp for property donated by them.



Center Officers for 1961-1962: Manuel Young, Samuel Burokoff, Bernard Goodman, Robert Reef, Mildred Baker, Charles A. Cohen, Betty Sax, Gerald Cope, Winifred Plavnick, Joseph Taylor.



Center Officers for 1963-1964: Gerald Cope, Charles A. Cohen, Robert Litman, Morris Lerman, Manuel Young, Joseph Schatz, Beverly Boxstein, Betty Sax, Samuel Burokoff, Winifred Plavnick.



Mrs. Gerald Cope and Mrs. Irving Rothstein, Co-Chairmen for Book Fair 1963.



Winners of Poster and Essay Contest held during Book Fair 1963: Phyllis Schultz, Sharon Taylor, Peter Milstein, Brewster Branz (making presentation), Linda Cox, Michael Chandler, Glen Kaplan.



Third Seder—Alfred Goldman, Marion Taylor, Szloma Pasencier, Frances Elowitch, Mike Weissman, Betty Sax, Sylvia Woolf.



New Year's Dance Committee: Norman Reef, Joseph Schatz, Carl Lerman, Shirley Lerman, Dave Millman, Charlotte Silver, Morris Lerman, Marvis Cohen, Patty Reef, Bea Schatz, Dorothy Millman, Bea Bornstein, Lillian Lerman.