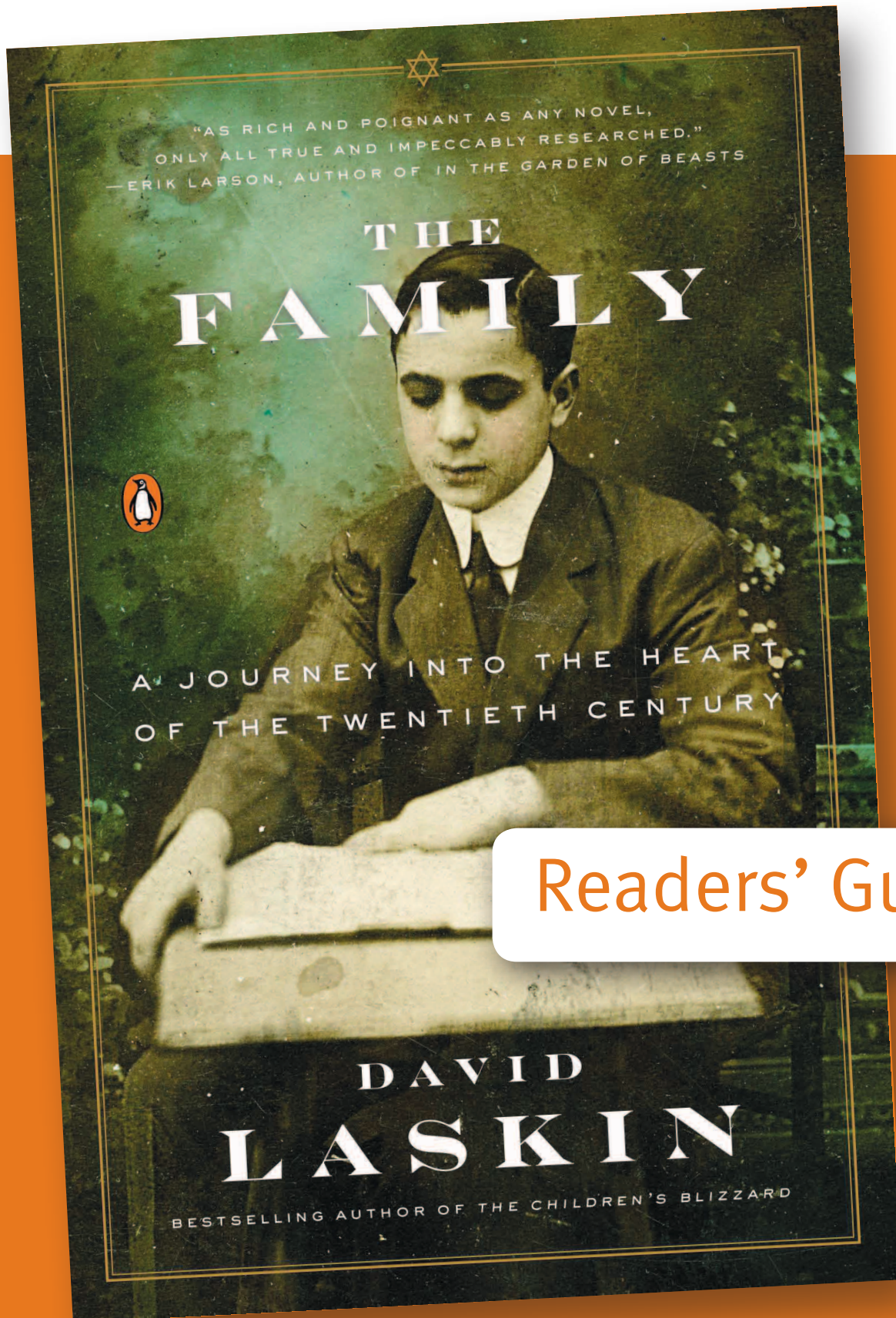


In celebration of Jewish Book Month 2014, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership presents

One Book | One Community



Readers' Guide

One Book | One Community is supported, in part,
by the **Robert & Toni Bader Charitable Foundation**.



**Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation
of Metropolitan Chicago**

JUF News
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One Book | One Community



Our thanks to the **Jewish Book Council**
for their help spreading the word
about **One Book | One Community**.

We are pleased to be working with synagogue partners
Congregation Etz Chaim and
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El
as well as our colleagues at the
Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.



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But this is not the story of
a life. It is the story of lives,
knit together overlapping
in succession, rising again
from grave after grave.

—Wendell Berry, *Rising*

JEWISH BOOK MONTH

NOVEMBER 16-DECEMBER 16, 2014
23 CHESVAN- 24 KISLEV, 5775



Artwork by Stella Cohen

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר

A tree of life to those who hold fast to it, and all who cling to it find happiness.



www.jewishbookcouncil.org

520 EIGHTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10018

Jewish Book Month

Jewish Book Month is an American-Jewish celebration of Jewish books. It is observed each year during the month preceding Hanukkah. It began in 1925 as Jewish Book Week when Fanny Goldstein, a librarian at the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, set up a display of Jewish-themed books.

In 1927, with the encouragement of Rabbi S. Felix Mendelsohn of Chicago, Jewish Book Week was adopted by communities across the country. At that time, it was scheduled to coincide with Lag B'Omer, a festival that traditionally honors scholars. In 1940, the timing was changed to precede Hanukkah to encourage the giving of Jewish-themed books as Hanukkah gifts. In 1943, Jewish Book Week was extended to the month-long celebration we mark today.

Visit jewishbookcouncil.org to learn more.

Everybody needs his memories. They keep the wolf of insignificance from the door.

— Saul Bellow



One Book | One Community

The selection of this year's **One Book** was a surprisingly difficult task. Our list of book possibilities continued to grow as we looked for a Jewish book that would resonate with our diverse community of readers. As we neared the end of our list, a very special book crossed our path, David Laskin's *The Family*.

This book takes the reader on a journey through the lives of a most remarkable Jewish family. Their story begins with a scribe, Shimon Dov HaKohen in the Pale of Settlement in the late 1870s. As one becomes acquainted with the patriarch and his immediate family, Laskin provides a clear and balanced history of Jewish life in the twentieth century, putting family life, professional life, and community life in real-time context.

As the political situation in Russia changes, so does the family's future. Life in Russia forces a generation of family members to leave the nest, some landing across increasingly fluid borders close to home, some moving to New York's Lower East Side, and others traveling to Palestine at the very beginning of the kibbutz movement.

As you read *The Family*, our decision to choose this particular memoir for the **One Book | One Community** program will become quite clear. These are just a few compelling reasons for this book's selection: the story is captivating, the quality of the writing is superb, and the historical content is painstakingly researched. Last, but certainly not least, it will be very difficult for you not to become totally involved with this remarkable family—to feel joy at their many accomplishments and immense sadness at their losses.

Indeed, *The Family* is a story of courage in the face of adversity and innovation in times of necessity. In it, Laskin reveals how knowledge about the past can help us understand and appreciate the present.

Please do consider picking up a copy of *The Family* from the Spertus Shop, where it is available in hardcover and paperback. (It makes a great Hanukkah gift, especially with the author's signature!) And while of course we want you to read our book selection, we also want those of you in the greater Chicago area to come to related programs. Join us to discuss the book, learn about Jewish history, and meet the author. The **One Book** schedule of events is printed right here in our Readers' Guide starting on page 11.

The Readers' Guide includes original information about the author and the book, historical resources, and suggestions for further reading. It is designed to be flexible. Print it out in full or select a few favorite pages for your book group, reference the timelines as you read the book, or forward the link to friends who are researching their own family history.

Have a wonderful fall season. I look forward to meeting you at one or more of our **One Book** events.

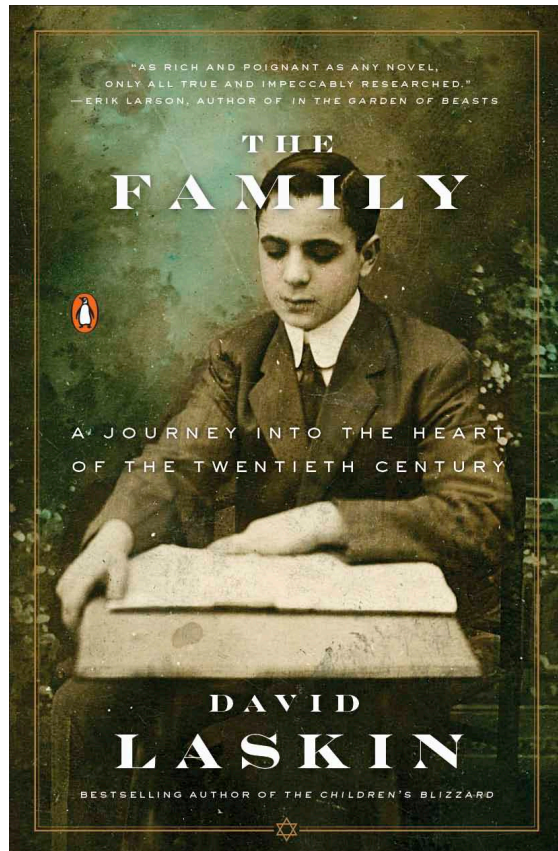
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Schenker".

Beth Schenker

Assistant Dean for Jewish Studies

Chance, fate, and ambition
had divided the family of
the scribe. War reunited them.

— *The Family*, Chapter 20,
Yom Kippur 1941



Published by Penguin Books, *The Family* is available in hardcover, softcover, and e-book versions. The hardcover and softcover versions are available from the Spertus Shop—onsite at Spertus Institute and online at shop.spertus.edu—and they will be for sale at all **One Book | One Community** programs.

About *The Family*

David Laskin's *The Family* is a fascinating memoir that follows the author's amazing ancestors across the tumultuous sweep of the twentieth century.

In addition to being selected as the Spertus Institute's 2014 One Book, *The Family* was named a best book of the year by the *Seattle Times*, *Kirkus Review*, and the New York Public Library and was awarded the 2014 Washington State Book Award for Memoir/Biography.

“a vivid, utterly compelling exploration of the forces that shaped modern history”

—Bestselling author Stephen Greenblatt

“[a] family chronicle with all of the depth and detail of a great novel”

—*Jewish Journal*

An Amazon Book of the Month

The Family tells of a Torah scribe and his wife who raised six children in a town on the fringe of the Russian empire. Devout and caring parents, they assumed their sons and daughters would carry on their traditions, but changing times led them on other paths: to America, the Holy Land, and into the nightmare of the Holocaust. David Laskin tells a deeply emotional story with characters you will remember for a long time. Among them is his great aunt Itel Rosenthal, who came to New York with \$12 and went on to found the Maidenform Company. Tracing her story, Laskin gives us the quintessence of the American Dream.

It was in Israel that I felt the presence most intensely of those who came before. I felt them bearing down on me, these generations of pious, bearded Kohanim scribes as I stood by the Western Wall in Jerusalem with the slip of a prayer I folded and stashed in a crack already wadded with prayers. To pray by the Wall would have crowned their lives. Why me and not them?

—*The Family, Epilogue*



David with Kate and Patrick.

David Laskin on David Laskin

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Great Neck, New York, I grew up hearing stories that my immigrant Jewish grandparents told about the “old country” (Russia) that they left at the turn of the last century. How I wish I had recorded and video-taped every one of their memories.

An avid reader for as long as I remember, I graduated from Harvard College in 1975 with a degree in history and literature and went on to New College, Oxford, where I received an MA in English in 1977. After a brief stint in book publishing, I launched my career as a freelance writer. In recent years, I have been writing suspense-driven narrative non-fiction about the lives of people caught up in events beyond their control, be it catastrophic weather, war, or genocide. My 2004 book *The Children's Blizzard*, a national bestseller, won the Washington State Book Award and the Midwest Booksellers Choice Award, and was nominated for a Quill Award.

I write frequently for the *New York Times Travel Section*, and I have also published in the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Seattle Times* and *Seattle Metropolitan*.

When I'm not writing or traveling for research, I am usually outdoors trying to tame our large unruly garden north of Seattle, romping with our unruly Labrador retriever pup Patrick, skiing in Washington State's Cascade Mountains, or hiking in the Wallowa Mountains of northeast Oregon. My wife, Kate O'Neill, and I have raised three wonderful daughters—all grown now and embarked on fascinating lives of their own.

An Interview with Author David Laskin

David Laskin talks about embracing the present by exploring the past in a conversation with Brian Zimmerman for Spertus Institute.

In June of this year, David Laskin's *The Family* was chosen for Spertus Institute's **One Book | One Community** initiative, in which a Jewish book is selected as the focus of a series of programs for Greater Chicago's Jewish community. In this interview, the author describes the many surprises he encountered while doing research for this book, his techniques for bringing his family's history to life, and the importance of reconnecting with the past.

I am going to give you a blessing.
May you have light your entire life,
light throughout your journey.

— *The Family, Chapter 2,
The Move to Rakov*

Spertus Institute: How did this book come to fruition? Did you start by researching your family's history and then decide to write a book, or did you know you wanted to write about your family's history from the outset?



The author's Great Aunt Ite Rosenthal was by the early 1940s presiding over the largest family business in the world.

David Laskin: Both. I had just finished a book about World War I and was looking for another topic to write about. I knew that my Aunt Ite was founder of the Maidenform Bra Company and I thought she would make for an interesting story. I started to pull at this one strand, and the more I pulled the more I wanted to know. That was the first time I thought "You know, it would be really

interesting to write about my family." I started doing some research, just talking to family members, and things caught fire. I discovered this amazing family history, with three divergent branches—some [family members] that came to America, some that went to Israel, and some that stayed in Europe—and I knew it would make a great book.

SI: Of your family's three divergent paths, which one were you most excited to write about?

DL: Writing about Israel was eye-opening for me.

SI: How so?

DL: Well, prior to writing this book, I'd never been to Israel. It just wasn't on my list. I knew I had relatives there, but I was really not that curious about what it was like to live there. But as I started to dig into my family's history, I discovered that Israel—and Zionism—played a huge role. After all, some of my relatives were there at the height of the agriculturalist movement in Israel during the Second Aliyah [an important period in Zionist history, when nearly 20,000 Jews from Eastern Europe immigrated to what was then Ottoman Palestine]. They were real players in the country's push for independence. When I went there shortly after I signed my book deal, I was surprised to discover how much family I had over there—more than 100 relatives. Once I met one, I just had to meet the others.

SI: Was there anything else that took you by complete surprise when compiling research for this book?

DL: One whole area that took me by surprise was doing research on the Holocaust. I think one of the big misapprehensions many of us, myself included, have about the Holocaust is that the majority of Jews were killed in death camps like Auschwitz. But in fact, more people were killed in mass shootings, burned in synagogues, or killed by their neighbors. That, to me, was shocking.

The letters were probably the second biggest discovery and revelation. My cousin Benny in Israel, to whom this book is dedicated, had in his possession 281 family letters written in Yiddish. Most of them were written by our relatives who were killed in the Holocaust. The biggest discovery that came from the letters concerned the beginning of WWII, when the Soviets and the Germans divided Poland between them. My family lived in the Soviet sector of Poland, and their lives were not so bad. They were doing well enough that one decided to have a baby. They were in touch with their family in Palestine and the US. They didn't ask for money. It's strange for me to think about my family living in relative security while right across the border Jews were being sent to their deaths.

But the biggest surprise in my research was finding out about my cousin, Shimon. [Shimon survived the Klooga labor camp in Estonia, but was shot by Nazi soldiers right before the camp was liberated by the Russian Army.] Nobody even knew he had ended up in a labor camp. I tracked that down, and I couldn't find a lot about him, but just the fact that his name appeared on the list of prisoners was kind of shocking to me. I found him on a couple of German documents with work details—that was a real surprise, a real revelation.

SI: What do you think it is about the story of your family that people attach to?

DL: A lot of people have said to me—and this is something I thought myself—“Wow, these people are so brave, they were teenagers in the early 1920s who just picked up and left their country of origin.” I think that is what

people find moving. Another big thing people have said to me is that they were kind of exhausted by reading about the Holocaust. Exhausted in the sense that they felt there was nothing left to learn. They've told me that they've seen all the movies, read all the books. But reading *The Family* was a revelation. My guess is that they became emotionally involved because the book brings the Holocaust to the level of the individual. It's one thing to read that 20,000 Jews were killed in July 1943, but it's another to read about one Jew who died on one particular day, and to feel that you've gotten to know this person, to admire him and feel that he could be part of your family. It brings history alive through narrative. I think that's what readers respond to.

SI: That narrative element is undoubtedly one of the book's strongest assets. How did you manage to turn the historical, data-driven research into scenic action?

DL: Well, let's take as an example the Klooga slave labor camp that my cousin Shimon ended up in. What I said to the reader was I knew he was there, and I have a couple of documents that indicate his work with a couple details he was assigned to. And that was pretty much it. So my



Laskin's cousins, brothers Shimonkeh (left) and Velveleh, playing chess in the Lithuanian countryside. Supervising is their father Shepseleh.

dilemma became, “How do I create scenes? How do I make this novelistic?” To do that, I immersed myself in everything I could find about Klooga. One thing I found was a diary by Herman Kruk, who was a very well-known journalist and librarian. He lived in the Vilna ghetto when it was liquidated and he was taken to Klooga, but his diary was miraculously saved.

This gave me very vivid accounts of what happened—what the prisoners ate, how they felt, what the last day was like when the surviving prisoners were killed. So even though I didn’t have any letters or photographs from Shimon himself, I knew what was happening around him. I gave myself that liberty because I felt it was important to dramatize this moment and make it vivid.

By the time we get to the war, I didn’t really need a lot of details about how Shimon was on a train, what his number was, what was happening to him at camp, because at that point the readers were emotionally invested in him. They care about him because they know he celebrated his bar mitzvah just a few years earlier, that he loved to play chess with his dad, that he was good at singing, and that he had scarlet fever as a kid and went partially deaf. This creates a picture of a real human being, and you’re like “Oh, he reminds me of my cousin or a kid I went to school with.” I wanted to make people feel history rather than just read about it.

SI: What other forms of research did you use while writing this book?

DL: One hugely helpful internet research site was JewishGen [jewishgen.org]. I would recommend it for anyone who is doing Jewish historical research. It’s an incredible website, with great information about the shtetls my family lived in, and excellent resources for looking up lists of Holocaust survivors. The other extremely helpful thing about JewishGen was the listserve where you can post questions about family history. While writing the book, I was posting almost daily. Little



Sonia, who left her family in Rakov in August 1932 to move to the Promised Land.

picky things like “How did immigrants get from the port at Ellis Island to their first apartments? Did they walk? Did they take a horse-drawn carriage?” For these little details, the internet was supremely helpful.

But really, the root of my research was travel. I travelled to all the places where members of my family

had lived and died. I was in Vilna, Lithuania; I was in Belarus; I saw their shtetl in Rakov, in present day Belarus; I interviewed my Israeli relatives. Obviously, a huge amount of reading was involved, too. At first it was intimidating. I’d have piles and piles of books and would be thinking to myself “How am I going to do all this research?” But I had to remind myself that I wasn’t writing a book about the entire Holocaust, just the Vilna ghetto and Klooga—those places my family experienced. I did some archival research at Yad Vashem and at the Ghetto Fighters Kibbutz in Israel. But the best information came from talking to everyone in my family. People often think, “I’ve heard all my family’s stories before. There’s nothing left to learn.” But that’s just not the case. Once I really sat down with them and got them talking—and once I really, truly listened—all this new information would come out.

SI: I think it’s safe to say that some readers, if they’re not already interested in genealogy, will be after they finish the book. Do you think it’s important for people to reconnect with their pasts as you did? And do you think that notion of reconnection is more important for Jews?

DL: When I was young, I really wasn’t interested in my family. I wanted to be unique, to distance myself from them in some kind of teenage rebellion. Besides, I just didn’t think my family was that interesting. But I think as you get older you realize how much you have inherited

both literally and figuratively from your family. You begin to see how much like them you are, how much you have in common, and how much you learn from them. And if we can come back to Judaism, I think the survival of the Jewish people, the culture and the religion, its lore—is miraculous. The more we can discover about our little piece of that huge tapestry of Jewish history—why wouldn't you want to do that? Really, what is more important?

So to me, the past is the most important part of my Jewish identity. It's amazing when you realize how long and deep our history is, and how vivid it can become when expressed through the story of an individual. It's a little bit like *The Family* itself. You know, reading history about the Jewish people is very moving and illuminating, but it can be a little abstract. But when that history is of your own family, your own genealogy, you enter into it in a very gripping, emotional way.

SI: Did writing this book change the way you think about your religion?

DL: Absolutely. As I said earlier the continuity of the Jewish generations brought me closer to my Jewish past, my family, my heritage. But I also think going to Israel, particularly to Jerusalem, was an uplifting, spiritual experience. There's something about standing by the Western Wall that is unlike anything else I have experienced. You feel this sense of ancient sacredness, ancient reverence. I remember putting my hand against the wall and feeling like I was touching my heritage, my people, our dreams, our faith. You know, I mention at the end of the book that I am descended from a long line of Torah scribes. And I truly feel that I'm continuing that tradition.



Abraham and Sarah's fiftieth wedding celebration, December 31, 1931, at Burnside Manor in the Bronx.

All the improvised magic and hope and sexiness of the Zionist endeavor were present that night – and so were the fear and constraint that shadowed every Jewish celebration in the Land.

— *The Family*, Chapter 12, *In Love in The Land*

Programs & Events

Special Ticketed Programs

One Book | One Community Kick-Off

Old Land, New Land, Holy Land

Sunday, November 9 at 2 pm
at Spertus Institute

This year our **One Book** programming kicks off with music and food from three continents, along with related readings from *The Family* by WFMT's **Steve Robinson**. Music will be performed by **Stuart Rosenberg** with **A Bissele Shmaltz**.

Steve Robinson is the general manager of WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network. In his 46-year career, he has produced hundreds of classical, jazz, and spoken word radio programs heard throughout the US and the world.

Stuart Rosenberg has performed with artists as diverse as Sir Georg Solti, Theodore Bikel, and The Moody Blues. A founding member of the Chicago Klezmer Ensemble, he has long been involved with the preservation of Jewish music.

\$25 | \$18 for Spertus members. Buy tickets online at spertus.edu or call 312.322.1773.

Lecture | Book Discussion

Spertus
in the
Suburbs!

Thursday, November 20 at 6:30 pm
at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center
9603 Woods Drive in Skokie

Dr. Phyllis Lassner, a professor in the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies at Northwestern University, is an expert on historical memoirs and literature about the Holocaust. Join her for an exploration of *The Family*'s characters and themes, as well as the ways David Laskin brings his ancestors' intertwining stories to life.

\$10 | Buy tickets online at
spertus.edu or call 312.322.1773.

\$15 includes IHMEC admission before the program

Programs & Events

Free Programs

Made possible with generous support from our donors and partners.

Introduction to Jewish Genealogy



Sunday, November 16 at 2 pm
at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El
1175 Sheridan Road in Highland Park

In his research for *The Family*, author David Laskin both confirmed family lore *and* encountered astonishing surprises. For those inspired to begin this quest—as well as those already involved in genealogical research—Spertus invites you to join Jewish genealogy expert **Mike Karsen** for an exploration of what information is most beneficial to seek and the factors that make Jewish genealogy unique. Mr. Karsen is a genealogy mentor and the past president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois.

This program is free.

Reservations requested at spertus.edu/TheFamily



Book Discussion

Tuesday, December 2 at 7 pm
at Spertus Institute

With expert book group facilitator **Rachel Kamin**, director of the Gray Cultural & Learning Center at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, this informal discussion is perfect for those who have read the book, plan to read the book, or just want to learn more.

This program is free.

Reservations requested at spertus.edu/TheFamily

Meet prize-winning author David Laskin at one of two locations!

These events are free.

Booksigning follows each presentation.

Reservations requested at spertus.edu/TheFamily

■ Author Event #1

Sunday, December 7 at 10 am
at Spertus Institute

■ Author Event #2

Sunday, December 7 at 2 pm
at Congregation Etz Chaim
1710 S. Highland Avenue in Lombard



Discussion Questions

...he was a lost soul sojourning in a strange land. —*The Family, Chapter 20, Yom Kippur, 1941*

1. How much did the family members living in the US and Palestine understand the events occurring under the Nazi Regime?
2. Do you think the family members living in America could have done more for the family members living in Eastern Europe during the 1930s and 1940s?
3. Some family members stayed in Europe, some moved to Palestine, and others to the United States. What do you think it was about each person's character that impacted this important decision?
4. What do you think of David Laskin's writing and storytelling style? How did his combination of family lore, letters, and history work as a way to tell his family's story?
5. Early in the book Shalom Tvi is given a blessing promising him light throughout his journey. After reading the book, how do you interpret this blessing in relation to how his life unfolded?



Har-Kinneret 1920–1930

6. In chapter 12, Laskin writes, “The tragedy of modern Palestine was that one oppressed, thwarted people had come to settle among, and inevitably to displace, another oppressed, thwarted people.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why?
7. In chapter 12, Laskin talks about the erasure of Yiddish from the vocabularies of the family members who left Europe. Among the American family members, their Yiddish accents were sources of embarrassment. For those who went to the Middle East, leaving Yiddish behind and embracing the language of the Jewish homeland was a source of pride. How do you understand and interpret these two reactions to abandoning the use of Yiddish?
8. Compare the generational differences of assimilation of Jewish immigrants.
9. Laskin relies on historical research along with a certain amount of educated guesswork to determine the fate of the family members living in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust. Are you comfortable with his conclusions?
10. In chapter 23, Laskin writes, “Doba was not a saint. Her heart was large but fragile and selfish. It must have driven her mad to share half a room with two miserable boys for two years, to listen to them cough and bicker, to see their childhood wither...Maybe she broke down and turned on her family. Maybe she grabbed food for herself and let them starve. Maybe she came to hate the sons she had once loved more than life. There is no way of knowing what was in her heart. But the facts speak for themselves. She was a widow without a work permit imprisoned in a ghetto, and yet she kept two boys alive.” What do you think was in Doba's heart?
11. Itel evolves from a socialist revolutionary in Russia to a capitalist tycoon in America. Yet in many ways she stays true to her character: gutsy, driven, and stubborn. What do you make of her transformation? By the end of the book how do you understand her character?
12. Laskin writes about a variety of family members, each of whom reconciles with their Jewishness in his or her own way. Did this book make you evaluate your own Jewish identity? If so, how?
13. How does David Laskin's family story compare to your own?
14. The lives of Laskin's family members take place against a tableau of issues that defined the nature of the twentieth century. Many of these are still relevant today. Which issues most resonate with you in terms of their importance? Which do you believe will remain relevant through our current century?



Recipes by Spertus Executive Chef Laura Frankel

Chef Laura Frankel is Executive Chef for Spertus Kosher Catering and the author of the *Chosen Bites* column in the *Jerusalem Post*. She is a passionate teacher who has made it her mission to reimagine and revitalize the diverse and delicious traditions of Jewish cooking. Her two cookbooks, *Jewish Cooking for All Seasons* and *Jewish Slow Cooker Recipes*, are both available at the Spertus Shop in the Spertus Institute lobby and online at shop.spertus.edu.

David Laskin's *The Family* chronicles the divergent paths taken by his European Jewish family during the tumultuous sweep of the 20th century.

Some family members stayed in Europe, others became part of the massive wave of immigration to the United States, and a pair of cousins ventured to Palestine, where they helped found the State of Israel. Inspired by *The Family*, Spertus Executive Chef Laura Frankel has prepared a trio of recipes based on the same dish, in a sense variations on one core theme. These recipes celebrate the similarities and differences of Jewish life in three very different parts of the world.

First, there's **Classic Russian Beef Borscht Soup**, an homage to Laskin's family's European roots. Next is a **Modern Borscht-Gazpacho**, paying tribute to the cultural diversity and fresh opportunities Laskin's immigrant ancestors found in America. Finally, there's **Israeli Beet Soup with Beef Dumplings**, a nod to the courageous Israeli pioneers who helped secure the independence of the Jewish homeland.

A Note from the Chef

Some Background About Beets

Beets are part of the traditional Ashkenazi Jewish food basket. They are a *cucina povera*—a poverty kitchen food—that found its way into our European ancestors' cooking because it was plentiful, healthy, hearty, and cheap.

An often overlooked attribute of beets and other root vegetables is their versatility. This has led to a resurgence of interest as people seek authentic, less fancy foods. Beets are currently *en vogue* and can be found on menus around the globe.

On a personal note, I find that beets are polarizing. You either you love them or hate them. Often, the hate group has memories of old-fashioned pickled beets or beets that were stewed in a way that masked their fresh, peppery flavor.

I love beets—and maybe it is because I was traumatized as a child by well-meaning grandparents and pickled beets. I didn't taste another beet until I was an adult with a more sophisticated palate. Now, I am mad about them, and crave recipes that highlight their flavor and beautiful colors.

Beets are part of our heritage and I offer these recipes and renditions of beets from around the globe.

Enjoy!

A blue ink signature of Chef Laura Frankel, written in a cursive style. Below the signature, the text 'Chef Laura Frankel' is printed in a simple, sans-serif font.



Classic Russian Beef Borscht

The classic soup is rich and comforting. I love the earthy flavors of beets and vegetables in rich beef broth. This is a cold weather soup that will stick to your ribs.

Beef Stock Ingredients

3 pounds beef shanks or 2 ½ pounds beef chuck
on the bone, well rinsed
8 cups (2 quarts) cold water
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1 large carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 celery rib, coarsely chopped
1 *bouquet garni* of bay leaf, parsley stems, thyme stems,
and several whole cloves tied in a cheesecloth pouch

Additional Soup Ingredients

1 pound fresh beets, trimmed and peeled
3 large carrots, trimmed and peeled
¼ large cabbage, shredded
2 large potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
2 large onions, diced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon sugar
Salt and pepper

Garnishes

Fresh dill
Lemon wedges

To make the beef stock, combine the beef and water in a stockpot over medium heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer gently. Skim top surface until impurities no longer appear, about 30 minutes.

1. Add onion, carrot, and celery. Tie *bouquet garni* to pot handle and drop into the pot. Simmer, uncovered, for 3 hours or until meat falls off the bone.
2. Remove *bouquet garni* and discard. Transfer beef to a bowl and pull the meat off the bones, chop into bite-sized pieces, and set aside. Strain stock into a clean, heatproof container, pressing on vegetables to obtain maximum flavor. Discard vegetables.
3. To make the soup, cook the beets and carrots in the beef stock, covered, until tender, approximately 45 minutes. Remove from broth, let cool, and then coarsely shred. Set aside.
4. While beets and carrots are cooling, add cabbage, onion, and potatoes to the broth. Bring back to a boil and simmer 20 minutes, covered, or until tender. Add beets and carrots, tomato paste, and salt and pepper to taste.



Modern Borscht-Gazpacho

This modern soup takes advantage of summer produce. It is light and refreshing.

Because the American melting pot influences the food I cook, I look at vegetables differently than a Russian immigrant might. To me, it seems natural to evolve borscht into a gazpacho with a sweet-and-sour flavor profile.

This soup is brilliant garnet in color. I like to serve it in glass mugs to show the bright red color.

The more garnishes, the better.

Gazpacho Ingredients

3 medium fresh red beets
2 pounds heirloom tomatoes, diced
1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced
2 medium shallots, diced
2 cloves garlic, diced
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
¼ cup best quality extra virgin olive oil
3 cups of tomato juice (preferably from fresh tomatoes)
Kosher salt and pepper

Garnish Ideas

Diced heirloom tomatoes (ideally with lots of colors)
Beet slices, thinly sliced on a mandolin*
Fresh herbs
Cucumber slices
Micro diced green and yellow beans**
Extra virgin olive oil
Edible flowers
Diced figs
Diced watermelon
Pomegranate arils (seeds)
Toasted caraway seeds
Shredded cabbage



1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Drizzle olive oil on the beets and wrap them individually in foil and roast for about 1 hour, until tender or until a paring knife can easily pierce them. When cool enough to handle, peel the beets. (The beets can be roasted up to 3 days ahead of serving.)
3. Puree the ingredients for the soup, in batches in a blender or food processor, until smooth with no lumps. Chill the soup. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. To serve the soup, portion the soup into shallow bowls or gorgeous glasses. Garnish with as many fresh items as you can find. Finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

* When preparing beet slices for garnish, select colorful beets. (I like golden and candy-striped beets.) Position the blade on your mandolin to the thinnest setting. Holding the beets with a towel to prevent cuts, slice a cross section as thin as possible to produce a beet chip. Store the beet chips in ice-cold water in the refrigerator. The beet chips can be cut one day ahead of serving. Store each color separately.

**To micro-dice the beans, gather the beans together in a tight bundle (about 6 beans works best) and cut tiny cross sections. The beans can be gently blanched and shocked in color water, or if they are really sweet and delicious, they can be used raw!

Israeli Beet Soup with Beef Dumplings

The Israeli melting pot is showcased in this soup, with Middle Eastern spices as a featured flavor. The dumplings, called *Kubbeh*, have an Iraqi-influence. They have a pasta-like dough and are hand-formed and stuffed with spiced meat. In Israel, *Marak Kubbeh Adom* (literally “red soup with dumplings” and pronounced Muh-rock Koo-beh Ah-dome), is traditionally eaten on Shabbat.

The soup is simple and delicious, and can easily be made vegetarian. Like most Israeli and Middle Eastern dishes, it has a relatively short cooking time versus the Russian version that cooks long and slow.

Beet Soup Ingredients

Olive oil
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
6 fresh beets, peeled and roughly chopped
4 tablespoons tomato puree
2 tablespoons sweet paprika
Salt and freshly ground pepper
8 cups chicken stock
2 tablespoons sugar
Juice of 1 lemon

Additional Marak Kubbeh Adom Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon *ras al hanout**
1 onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound lean ground beef
Freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
4 cups coarse wheat semolina
2 cups water

For the Beet Soup

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat and sauté the onions and garlic until onions are translucent. Add the beets and cook for a few minutes. Stir in the tomato paste. Add the paprika and season with salt and pepper, then add the chicken stock. (Of course it's best to use homemade here, but if not, use the best quality you can.) Allow to simmer over medium-low heat, uncovered, until the beets are soft and cooked through, about 30 minutes.
2. Just before adding the *kubbeh* (instructions below), stir in the sugar and lemon juice. Using an immersion blender, pulse to partially blend the soup (or carefully transfer about 1/3 to a blender). This step is optional and will depend on what texture you like your soup.

For the Marak Kubbeh Adom

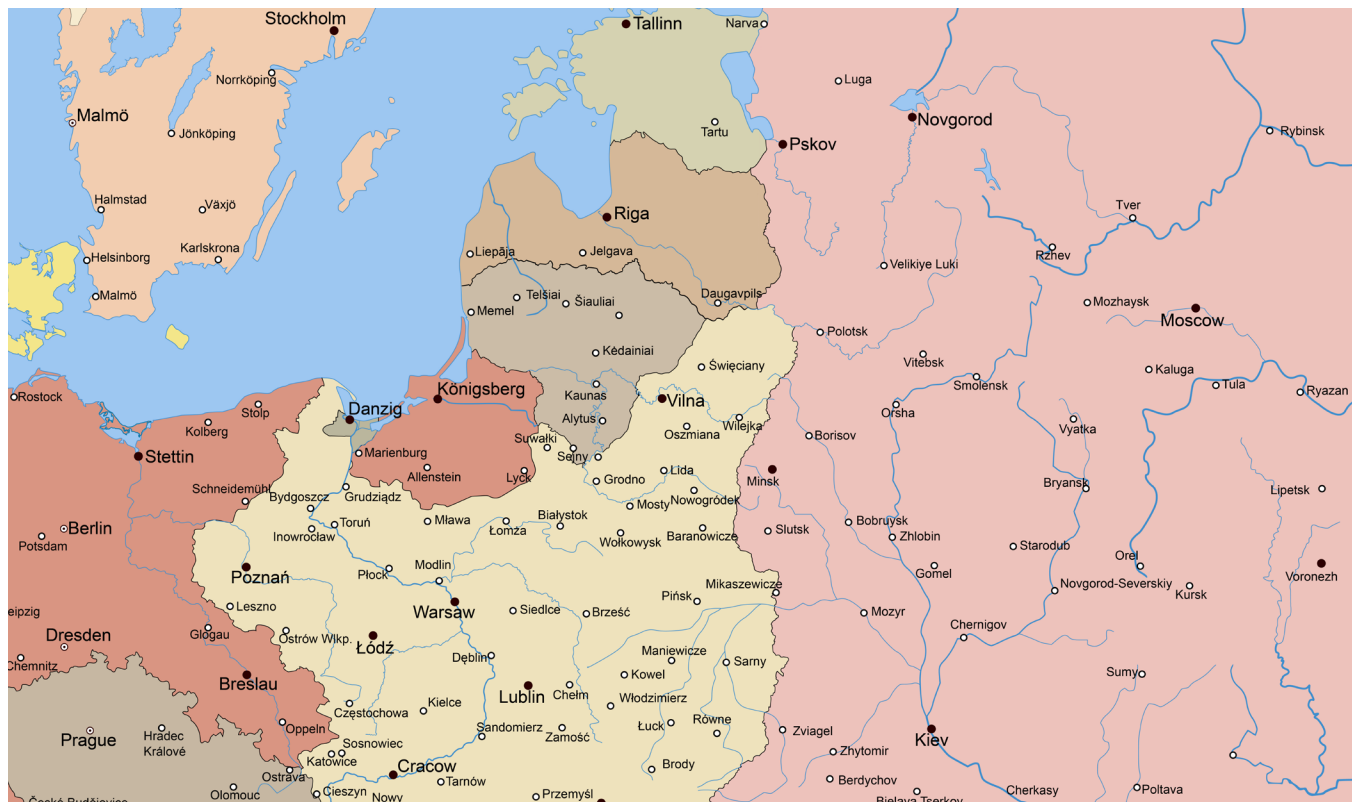
1. Heat the olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add the *ras al hanout** and toast, stirring, 1 minute. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the ground beef and cook, stirring and breaking up with a spoon, until meat is cooked through. Remove from the heat and season with black pepper. If there is a lot of grease and fat in the pan, then drain. Allow to cool, stir in cilantro, and set aside.
2. Put the semolina and water in a large bowl and allow to sit for a few minutes until the water is fully absorbed. It should be soft, but not liquidy or sticky. Try to avoid adding additional water or semolina as this contributes to stickiness. If this does happen, discard and start over. Using clean, dry hands, take a small amount of the semolina mixture and form a ball about the size of a ping pong ball, rolling it between your palms. Using your thumb, make a hole in the ball and work your way around the inside to hollow it out slightly. For those of you who have ever taken a ceramics class, it's similar to making a pinch pot.
3. Holding the hollowed out ball/cup in the palm of your hand, stuff a small amount of the meat filling into the cavity. (You can use a spoon but I just use my hands.) Pinch the opening together and smooth over to seal. Roll in the palm of your hands once more and transfer to a parchment-lined or Silpat-lined baking sheet. Continue until the filling or dough is used up.
4. Add the *kubbe* and simmer the soup until the *kubbe* are cooked through and floating, about 12-15 minutes. Serve immediately.

*A spice blend traditionally from North Africa, it can be bought in Middle Eastern markets or grocery stores with an ethnic section or wide array of spices. There is no definitive combination of spices that makes up *ras al hanout*. Each shop, company, or person may have their own blend. The mixture may consist of over a dozen spices. Commonly used ingredients include cardamom, clove, cinnamon, ground chili peppers, coriander, cumin, peppercorns, paprika, fenugreek, and turmeric.

Three Timelines

These timelines represent the time period from WWI to the founding of the State of Israel. They include events large and small that touched the lives of Jews living in Europe (begins below), the United States (begins on page 21), and Palestine (begins on page 24).

Europe



Map of Central and Eastern Europe after the Treaty of Riga, 1921

Shimonkeh was old enough to bristle at the sight of the leather-jacketed Jewish police that the Nazis appointed to cow and club and rob their own kind. He was old enough to feel the agony of abandonment; old enough to mourn the death of a beloved teacher, to see the poetry in snow drifting against ruined walls, to breathe the melancholy of autumn nights when workers hurried through the streets with their shoulders hunched.

—*The Family*, Chapter 23, *Despairing People*

June 28, 1914	In Sarajevo, Bosnia, a Serbian Nationalist assassinates Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, igniting WWI.
February 1917	The Pale of Settlement is dissolved and Jews gain equal rights in Russia.
March 15, 1917	Czar Nicolas II abdicates the Russian throne. Provisional government installed.
August 1917	The Jewish Legion, a regiment within the British army, is created to fight against the Ottoman Empire.
November 7, 1917	Vladimir Lenin leads the October Revolution and overthrows the provisional government.
December 15, 1917	Representing the new Russian government, Leon Trotsky signs an armistice with Germany.
March 3, 1918	Germany and Russia sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, ending Russia's involvement in WWI.
March 12, 1918	Moscow replaces St. Petersburg as the Russian capital.
July 17, 1918	Czar Nicolas II and his family are executed.
November 9, 1918	Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates the German throne.
November 11, 1918	Germany and the Allies sign an armistice effectively ending WWI.
February 1919–March 1921	Polish-Soviet War.
February 1919	During the Khmelnytsky Pogrom in the Kiev region of The Pale, over 1,200 Jews killed.
March 1919	Vladimir Lenin delivers a speech condemning anti-Semitism, "On Anti-Jewish Pogroms."
June 28, 1919	The Treaty of Versailles is signed.
November 15, 1920	The League of Nations holds the first General Assembly at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
March 18, 1921	Poland and the Soviet Union sign the Treaty of Riga. In accordance with the treaty, many Jews choose to live in Poland rather than the Soviet Union.
October 31, 1922	King Victor Emmanuel of Italy appoints Benito Mussolini Italian Premier.
December 31, 1922	Vladimir Lenin becomes the leader of the newly established Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
November 9, 1923	Adolf Hitler and General Ludendorff lead the unsuccessful Beer Hall Putsch.
January 21, 1924	Vladimir Lenin dies. He is eventually succeeded by Joseph Stalin.
1925	The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is founded in Vilna, then in Poland, today in Lithuania.
1926	Rabbi Shlomo Chanoch Hakohen Rabinowicz establishes eight <i>yeshivot</i> (plural of yeshiva) in Poland. These would become part of the <i>Keser Torah Radomsk</i> , a network of 36 yeshivot opened prior to WWII.
April 25, 1930	The Gulag system of forced labor camps is formally recognized by the Soviet government.
July 25, 1932	Poland and the Soviet Union sign a non-aggression pact.
January 30, 1933	President Hindenburg names Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany.
February 27, 1933	The Reichstag building in Berlin is set on fire.
March 20, 1933	Heinrich Himmler announces the opening of the the first concentration camp for political prisoners, in Dachau, Germany.
April 1, 1933	A nation-wide boycott of Jewish stores is organized by the Nazi government.
January 26, 1934	Germany and Poland sign a non-aggression pact.

August 2, 1934	Hitler becomes president of Germany.
August 19, 1934	Hitler abolishes the presidency and declares himself the Führer, a dictator unconstrained by laws or constitutional acts.
September 15, 1935	The Nazi government passes the Nuremberg Laws, which classify citizens in order to prohibit intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans.
March 7, 1936	In violation of the Treaty of Versailles, German forces remilitarize the Rhineland.
August 1–16, 1936	Summer Olympics in Berlin.
October 25, 1936	Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler sign the Berlin-Rome Axis Agreement, an alliance between fascist Italy and Germany.
November 25, 1936	Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comintern Pact, an alliance between the two countries designed to stop the spread of communism.
September 29–30, 1938	At the Munich Conference, Great Britain, France, and Italy agree to allow Germany to annex parts of Czechoslovakia, following a policy of appeasement.
March 12, 1938	Germany annexes Austria.
November 9–10, 1938	Kristallnacht attacks occur throughout Nazi Germany and Austria.
August 23, 1939	Germany and the Soviet Union sign a non-aggression pact, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.
March 15, 1939	Germany occupies Czechoslovakia, violating the Munich Conference.
September 1, 1939	Germany invades Poland.
September 3, 1939	Great Britain and France declare war on Germany, honoring their agreement with Poland to protect the Polish borders. WWII begins.
September 17, 1939	The Soviet Union invades Poland.
September 21, 1939	Reinhard Heydrich authorizes the formation of Jewish ghettos in Poland.
September 27, 1939	Poland surrenders to Germany.
November 23, 1939	Jews in Poland are forced to wear a Star of David.
September 27, 1940	Italy, Germany, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact, uniting them as the Axis Powers.
June 22, 1941	Germany invades the Soviet Union in violation of their non-aggression pact.
October 1941–November 1943	Implementation of Operation Reinhard, the Nazi plan to exterminate Polish Jews residing in an occupied area called the General Government that includes Warsaw, Kraków, and Lvov. Sobibor, Belzec, and Treblinka death camps are constructed in conjunction with this plan. 1.7 million Jews murdered.
January 20, 1942	In Germany, the Wannsee Conference finalizes Nazi plans to deport all Jews to camps in Poland.
June 21, 1943	Heinrich Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union.
September 25, 1944	Soviet Troops liberate Klooga concentration camp.
February 4–11, 1945	At the Yalta Conference, the big three (Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin) meet to discuss the fate of Europe after the war.
May 8–9, 1945	Germany surrenders to the Soviet Union.
November 29, 1947	The United Nations agrees to a Jewish State and an Arab State in the British Mandate of Palestine.

The United States

Two thousand people turned out that day to pay their respects. It was the end of an era not only for the family but also for Jewish New York. The old guard was passing on and there was no one to take its place. The patriarch had died; there would be no patriarch after him. —*The Family, Chapter 15, Second World War*



April 21, 1914	President Woodrow Wilson orders the US navy to occupy Veracruz, Mexico.
August 15, 1914	Official Opening of Panama Canal.
September 26, 1914	Establishment of the Federal Trade Commission.
November 27, 1914	The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is founded in New York.
February 8, 1915	The silent film <i>Birth of a Nation</i> , about a relationship between two families on opposite sides of the Civil War, is released to great controversy due to its portrayal of African Americans and the Ku Klux Klan.
May 7, 1915	A German U-boat torpedoes and sinks the British ocean liner, RMS Lusitania, killing 1,198 passengers, including 114 Americans.
July 2, 1915	Erich Muentert, a German nationalist living in the United States, detonates a bomb in the US Senate Reception Room and shoots J.P. Morgan Jr. (There were no casualties.)
August 17, 1915	Leo Frank, a Jewish American factory superintendent convicted of raping and murdering Mary Phagan, is lynched in Marietta, Georgia. (Frank was pardoned posthumously in 1986).
June 1, 1916	Louis D. Brandeis becomes the first Jewish US Supreme Court Justice.
September 13, 1916	The Adamson Act is passed, mandating an eight-hour workday for interstate railroad workers.
February 6, 1917	The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, an international news agency and wire service, is founded in The Hague.
March 1, 1917	The Associated Press publishes the “Zimmermann Telegram,” a proposal from Germany inviting Mexico to join it in an alliance against the US.
April 2, 1917	President Woodrow Wilson proclaims “the world must be made safe for democracy” in his speech asking Congress to declare war on Germany.
April 6, 1917	The United States declares war on the Central Powers (Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria).
April 9, 1917	Leaders from Jewish community centers and Hebrew associations form The National Jewish Welfare Board to provide social services and support to Jewish men serving in the US Armed Forces.
April 13, 1917	Woodrow Wilson helps found the Committee on Public Information to boost public support of World War I through advertising media.
May 18, 1917	Formation of Selective Service System. All US men aged 21–30 required to register for the military draft.
June 15, 1917	Congress passes the Espionage Act.
July 28, 1917	Establishment of the War Industries Board.

January 8, 1918	President Woodrow Wilson introduces his Fourteen Points Plan.
November 11, 1918	An armistice ends fighting between Germany and the Allied Powers.
December 1918	The first American Jewish Congress convenes in Philadelphia.
June 28, 1919	Germany and the Allied Powers sign the Treaty of Versailles, ending WWI.
January 16, 1919	Ratification of the 18th Amendment establishing prohibition.
September 21, 1919–January 8, 1920	350,000 steelworkers and 400,000 miners on strike.
November 19, 1919	The Treaty of Versailles fails to pass in the US Senate.
March 19, 1920	The vote to join the League of Nations fails in the US Senate.
August 18, 1920	Passage of the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote.
March 4, 1921	Warren G. Harding is inaugurated President.
May 19, 1921	Congress establishes a quota system to limit immigration.
November 12, 1921	Washington Naval Conference called by President Warren Harding is held in Washington, DC, to promote disarmament.
August 2, 1923	President Warren Harding dies while in San Francisco.
August 3, 1923	Calvin Coolidge is sworn in as the 30th President of the United States.
1923	The first Hillel is founded at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
1924	The College of Jewish Studies opens in Chicago. Later becomes Spertus Institute.
May 26, 1924	President Calvin Coolidge signs The Immigration Act of 1924.
March 4, 1925	Calvin Coolidge's Presidential Inauguration.
March 1928	Yeshiva College, which grows to become Yeshiva University, opens with 31 students in New York City.
August 27, 1928	Fifteen nations, including France, Germany, and the United States, sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, pledging not to use war to resolve international conflicts.
March 4, 1929	Herbert Hoover's Presidential Inauguration.
October 29, 1929	Black Tuesday, stock market crash, start of the Great Depression.
March 3, 1931	<i>The Star-Spangled Banner</i> officially becomes the national anthem by congressional act.
December 1930–October 1931	2,123 banks across the US close due to mass withdrawals brought on by the Great Depression.
March 4, 1933	Franklin D. Roosevelt's Presidential Inauguration.
December 5, 1933	The 21st amendment is ratified, repealing prohibition.
July 5, 1935	The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (The Wagner Act) is signed into law.
August 14, 1935	President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Social Security Act.
December 12, 1937	A Japanese naval aircraft sinks the US gun boat USS Panay, while it is anchored in Chinese waters. Claiming the attack to be unintentional, the Japanese government issued an apology and paid an indemnity.
May 26, 1938	The House Committee on Un-American Activities is established.



The facade of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair; copper relief sculpture *The Scholar, The Laborer, and The Toiler of the Soil* by Maurice Ascalon (now in the Spertus Institute collection).

- April 30, 1939–October 27, 1940 New York World's Fair runs for two seasons April-October during both 1939 and 1940.
- June 7, 1939 After being denied entry into Cuba and the United States, the 908 passengers on board the SS St. Louis begin the return journey to Europe.
- March 11, 1941 President Franklin Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act into law, enabling the US to supply Allied nations with war materials while not breaking any previous peace treaties.
- 1940 The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is relocated from Vilna to New York City.
- December 7, 1941 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.
- December 8, 1941 The United States declares war on Japan.
- December 11, 1941 The United States declares war on Germany following Germany's declaration of war on the United States.
- February 19, 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt issues Executive Order 9066, leading to the internment of over 110,000 Japanese Americans.
- April 9, 1942 The Bataan Death March—a forcible transfer of American and Filipino prisoners of war by the Japanese military in the Philippines— begins.
- June 4–7, 1942 The Battle of Midway in the Pacific Ocean, a naval battle between the US and Japan, serves as a turning point for the Allied Powers.
- July 25, 1942 In Operation Torch, Allied Powers invade North Africa.
- July 10, 1943 In Operation Husky, Allied Powers land in Sicily.
- June 6, 1944 D-Day. Allied Forces land on the beaches of Normandy.
- October 22–27, 1944 The Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Pacific, the largest naval battle in history.
- April 12, 1945 Harry S. Truman sworn into office upon death of President Roosevelt.
- May 8, 1945 V-E Day (for Victory in Europe). Germany surrenders.
- June 26, 1945 In San Francisco, representatives from 50 nations sign the United Nations charter.
- August 6, 1945 The United States drops an atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima.
- August 9, 1945 The United States drop a second atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Nagasaki.
- August 14, 1945 V-J Day. Japan surrenders.
- 1947 The American Jewish Archives is founded on the Hebrew Union College campus in Cincinnati.
- April 3, 1948 President Harry Truman signs the act that becomes known as the Marshall Plan (the European Recovery Program).

Palestine

Idealism alters when it has to wear a sidearm. The tragedy of twentieth-century Palestine was that farmers like Chaim had to learn to beat their plowshares into swords. —*The Family, Chapter 9, Pioneers*

November 2, 1917	Balfour Declaration issued by Britain, promising to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
December 11, 1917	British troops capture Jerusalem from the Turks.
June 1920	Formation of Haganah, a Zionist paramilitary organization.
1921	Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (Ashkenazi) and Rabbi Ya'akov Meir (Sephardic) are appointed the first two Chief Rabbis of the British Mandate of Palestine.
July 24, 1922	The League of Nations formally approves the British Mandate of Palestine.
August 15, 1929	Outbreak of fighting at the Western Wall between Arabs and Jews.
August 23–29, 1929	An outbreak of violence between Arabs and Jews at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem sparks six days of bloodshed.

No one used the word pogrom for what started in the summer of 1929. This time it was more like the opening battle in a civil war. —*The Family, Chapter 9, Pioneers*

August 24, 1929	A brutal attack by Arabs on the Jewish quarter in Hebron left over 60 Jewish men, women, and children dead, and nearly 60 wounded or mutilated.
August 29, 1929	A repeat of the Hebron violence, known as the Safed Massacre, occurred in Safed, killing Jews and destroying homes and shops throughout the Jewish quarter.



Jewish evacuees in Safed following the 1929 riots

- October 20, 1930 Passfield White Paper restricting Jewish immigration into Palestine issued in response to the findings of the Shaw Commission, which investigated the 1929 violence.
- April 1931 The Irgun, Zionist paramilitary organization formed in 1929, breaks with the Haganah.
- February 25, 1933 The Arab population of Palestine institutes a non-cooperation policy against the British. Arabs boycott British goods and refuse to pay government taxes.
- April 25, 1936 Establishment of the Arab Higher Committee, which operates as the central governing voice for the Arab population in Palestine.
- April–November 1936 The 1936 Arab Riots. The Arab High Command calls for Arab workers to go on a general strike and Jewish goods to be boycotted.
- July 7, 1937 The Peel Commission recommends the partition of the British Mandate of Palestine. The Arab Higher Committee denounces the findings, leading to violent outbreaks directed mainly against the British.
- November 9, 1938 The Woodhead Commission, formed to investigate the logistics of partitioning the British Mandate of Palestine, announces findings that such a partition is unworkable.
- May 23, 1939 After failed talks about partitioning Palestine, the British government releases *The White Paper of 1939*— a resolution to form a Jewish-Arab governing body while limiting Jewish immigration and land acquisition.
- March 22, 1945 The Arab League, representing Arab states in the northern and horn regions of Africa, forms and offers official support to Arabs in Palestine.
- July 22, 1946 The King David Hotel in Jerusalem, headquarters for the British Mandate of Palestine authorities, is blown up by the Zionist paramilitary group Irgun.
- May 14, 1948 David Ben-Gurion declares the establishment of the State of Israel.



David Ben-Gurion declares Israeli independence under a portrait of Theodor Herzl, founder of modern Zionism.

Jews and World War I

The legacy of WWI is often overshadowed by the history of WWII, with the horrors of the Holocaust eclipsing the impact of the WWI on world Jewry. Jews fought on behalf of countries aligned with the Allies and the Central Powers. In every case they were fighting for their home and their place in society. Jews fought in large numbers on behalf of all belligerent nations during the Great War.

Germany

In Germany, where Jews were the most assimilated, 100,000 Jews joined the army. On the surface, they fared better than their Russian counterparts. Jews readily enlisted, seizing the opportunity to showcase their loyalty to Germany. Unlike their Russian counterparts, enlisted Jews were afforded the opportunity to move up within the ranks of the military. Despite this potential and their enthusiastic response to the war effort, German Jews were accused of skirting enlistment and war profiteering. In 1916, anti-Semitic forces commissioned a military census to prove a lack of Jewish participation on the fronts. However the opposite proved to be true. The survey showed that 80% of Jewish soldiers were engaged in active duty. The census was never published.

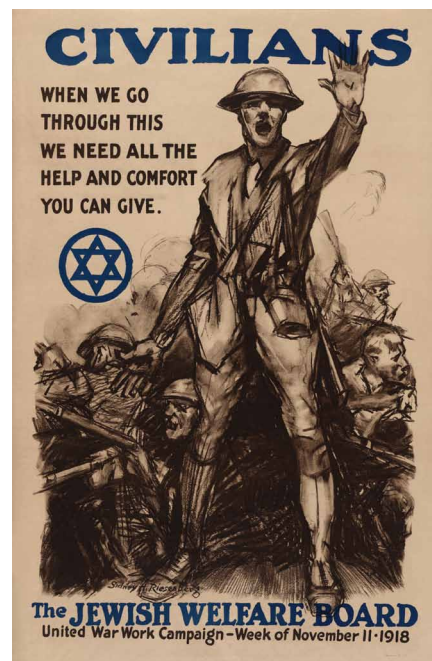
Russia

Despite vivid memories of pogroms and forced conscription during previous wars, Russian Jews initially rallied in support of their country at the outbreak of war. About 500,000 Jews fought in the Russian army. However the honeymoon period of loyalty and nationalism quickly subsided as the Russian government implemented an anti-Semitic campaign against the Jews living in the Pale of Settlement. This area became the central battleground of the Eastern Front. Until their surrender in 1917, the Russians deported 350,000 Jews living in this area, accusing them of being enemy conspirators.



The United States

When war broke out in 1914, recently immigrated Jews remembered the violent and murderous pogroms of Russia and were sometimes reluctant to support the Allied powers of which Russia was a part. But when America entered the war in 1917, 200,000 Jews joined the fight. Just as in Germany and Russia, American Jews excitedly joined the war effort, regarding it as an opportunity to prove their Americanism. Even so, enlisted Jews were not free from bigotry or anti-Semitism. Newly enlisted Jews did not escape stereotypes of cowardice and weakness. However, the bonds of brotherhood forged in the trenches overpowered initial prejudice. WWI proved not only to be an opportunity for Jewish Americans to assimilate, but also to assert their Jewishness. The army had to accommodate the needs of its Jewish soldiers including acknowledging dietary restrictions and honoring Jewish holidays. For the first time, Jewish chaplains were included in the military hierarchy.



Philanthropy

WWI saw the establishment of worldwide Jewish philanthropic organizations. Most notable was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee [the Joint]. The Joint was founded in 1914 after the outbreak of war to provide aid to the large population of Jews suffering in Europe and Palestine. 2014 marks 100 years that the Joint has been operating to assist Jews worldwide.

Zionism

The Zionist movement began building momentum in the United States on the eve of WWI, when it garnered the support of prominent Jewish lawyer, and future Supreme Court Justice, Louis Brandeis. Brandeis was also the chairman of the American Zionist organization, The American Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, which by 1917 had 200,000 members.

Meanwhile, support for Zionism was building in Britain and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 provided tangible evidence to Zionist supporters that a Jewish homeland was a growing reality. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of WWI enabled the newly created League of Nations to assert its influence in Palestine and endorse the British Mandate of Palestine and the promises of the Balfour Declaration.

Zionists in the post WWI world encouraged greater emigration to Palestine. The violence and Civil War plaguing Russia during the 1920s further encouraged Jewish migration to the future homeland.

Legacy

WWI left a complicated legacy of assimilation and divisiveness. In the aftermath of the Great War, American Jews were reminded of the families they had left behind in Europe. For a time there was greater unity among Jews across the diaspora. German and Russian Jews were once again scapegoats for broken economies, political disharmony, and military humiliation. While American Jews grew into their new role as philanthropists and more completely melded into the fold of their new world, Zionist fervor increased. Jews fought harder than ever to secure a Jewish homeland in Palestine.



Louis Brandeis in 1916

Reading Lists

The book unites us with the future, the book unites us with the world. —*The Family, Despairing People*

Uncovering Family History

Articles

Once Removed: Discovering an Israeli Cousin

by David Laskin, *Jewish Currents*, October 10, 2013

A personal essay by the author of *The Family*, in which he writes about his visit to Israel to meet family he never knew he had.

Web

Jewish Genealogy Subject Guide, Spertus Institute

spertus.edu/subject-guides/jewish-genealogy

Resources from the Asher Library at Spertus Institute, as well as links to a rich array of online resources.

Jewish Genealogy Society of Illinois

JGSI.org

Organization dedicated to helping members collect, preserve, and learn from the records and history of their ancestors. Memberships start at \$25.

JewishGen

jewishgen.org

Free genealogy website that features thousands of databases, research tools, and other resources to help those with Jewish ancestry research and find family members.

Books

The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance

by Edmund de Waal

When he inherits a collection of tiny Japanese sculptures, renowned ceramicist Edmund de Waal seeks to find out where they came from and how they survived. In doing so, he uncovers the rise and fall of a nineteenth-century Jewish banking dynasty.

Everything is Illuminated

by Jonathan Safran Foer

In this novel based on real life, a young man sets out on a quixotic journey to find the woman who may have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. A film adapted from the novel starred Elijah Wood.

They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland before the Holocaust

by Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

A remarkable record—in both words and images—of Jewish life in a pre-WWII Polish town, as seen through the eyes of one inquisitive boy.

The Red Leather Diary

by Lily Kopel

A discarded diary rescued from a Manhattan dumpster compels a young writer working at The New York Times to find its owner and tell her story.

My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Family's Past

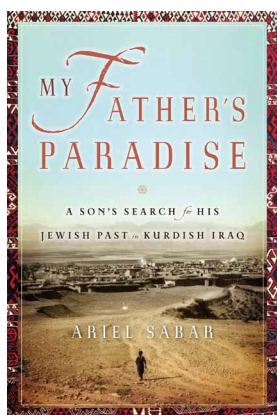
by Ariel Sabar

The author and his father travel to find what's left of his father's birthplace, a tiny Jewish enclave that existed for 3,000 years in what is now the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography.

Little Failure: A Memoir

by Gary Shteyngart

The acclaimed Russian-born novelist writes with humor about his own American immigrant experience.



Jewish Immigration

Books

Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America

by Hasia Diner

To learn why the Lower East Side has become an icon of popular Jewish-American culture, Diner examines children's stories, novels, movies, museum exhibits, television shows, summer-camp reenactments, walking tours, consumer catalogues, and photos hung on deli walls far from Manhattan.

At the Edge of a Dream: The Story of Jewish Immigrants on New York's Lower East Side, 1880-1920

by Lawrence J. Epstein

Life in the crowded streets and tenements of the Lower East Side recreated through "poignant and humorous archival photos and excerpts from memoirs, novels, scholarly texts, letters, musical scores, and the *Jewish Daily Forward*."

The Ice Cream Queen of Orchard Street

by Susan Jane Gilman

A dark comedy novel about the daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants, raised by Italians on New York's Lower East Side.

A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1800-1960

by Gabriel M. Goldstein and Elizabeth E. Greenberg

Drawn from an award-winning exhibition of the same title at the Yeshiva University Museum, this illustrated volume features scholars from varied backgrounds considering the role of American Jews in creating, developing, and furthering the national garment industry.

The Time That was Then: The Lower East Side, 1900-1914: An Intimate Chronicle

by Harry Roskolenko

In this memoir, Roskolenko's colorful storytelling brings to life the Lower East Side world of teeming streets, crowded tenement apartments, sweatshops, and socialism over a glass of tea, Yiddish theater down the block, the cheder, and the *Forward*, losing none of the flavor and leaving out none of the grit.

Call It Sleep

by Henry Roth

Considered by many to be the best work of fiction about immigrant life.

Entree to Judaism: A Culinary Exploration of the Jewish Diaspora

by Tina Wasserman

A culinary journey through Jewish communities around the world.

Getting Comfortable in New York: The American-Jewish Home, 1880-1950

by Jenna Weissman Joselit and Susan L. Braunstein

Exhibit catalog from New York's Jewish Museum. Takes the experience of Jews with East European roots as a paradigm for the process of becoming American during a period of enormous social change.

Film

The Road to New York from Eastern Europe

Directed/written by Charles Fine and Phyllis Greenspan, 1996

This documentary short film traces the path of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Photographs and detailed narration tell the story of life in the shtetl, arrival at Ellis Island, the harsh realities of New York's Lower East Side, and the pursuit of the American dream.

Web

Lower East Side History Project: the blog **evhp.blogspot.com**

Ongoing research and documentation of the history of New York City's Lower East Side.

Tenement Museum

tenement.org/research.html

An inside look at tenement life on the Lower East Side of New York, with links to additional reading materials and resources.

World War I

Articles

When Hitler Honored Jewish Soldiers: Nazi Regime Cited 10,000 Jewish World War I Troops

by Ofer Aderet, *The Forward*, July 7, 2014

How World War I Shaped Jewish Politics and Identity: The War America Forgot

by Paul Berger, *The Forward*, June 25, 2014

The Great War and Jewish Memory

by David Laskin, *Hadassah Magazine*, June/July 2014

World War I Shaped My Life, But I'll Never Know How

by Hody Nemes, *The Forward*, June 29, 2014

100 Years of Change in Europe

by Marylou Tousignant and Gene Thorp, *Washington Post*, August 1, 2014

Books

The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I

By S. Ansky; translated by Joachim Neugroschel

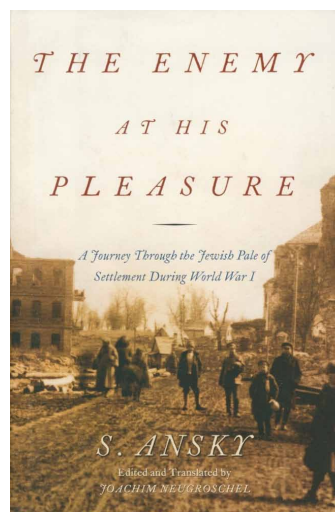
In late 1914, S. Ansky, the Jewish-Russian journalist and playwright set out on a mission to organize desperately needed relief for Jews on the borderlands, caught between the warring armies of Russia, Germany, and the Austrian Empire. This book is Ansky's vivid account of the unspeakable violence and suffering to which he was a witness.

Film

Image Before My Eyes: A History of Jewish Life in Poland Before the Holocaust

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. NY: New Video Group, 2006

Film draws on the artifacts of a vanished world: photographs, home movies, songs, and evocative interviews to recreate Jewish life in Poland from the beginning of the 20th century until the Holocaust.



World War II

Books

Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History Of Jewish Life In Poland Before The Holocaust
by Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland
by Christopher R. Browning
Browning reconstructs how a battalion of average middle-aged Germans killed tens of thousands of Jews during WWII.

The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million
by Daniel Mendelsohn
Mendelsohn, an award-winning author and critic, searches for the truth behind his own family's tragic past.

Bashert: A Granddaughter's Holocaust Quest
by Andrea Simon
The author's search for her lost family leads to the village of Volchin in today's Belarus. She then follows the trail of the death march taken by the village Jews to the Brona Gora forest, where 50,000 Jews were shot by Nazis and local collaborators.

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin
by Timothy Snyder
Snyder presents the mass murders perpetrated in Eastern Europe in the 1930s and 1940s by the Nazi and Stalinist regimes as two aspects of a single history. In *The Family*, David Laskin refers to Timothy Snyder's work.

Spiritual Resistance in the Vilna Ghetto
by Rachel Kostanian-Danzig
The author draws on diaries, the posters, interviews with survivors, and other primary sources to illustrate how programs and activities were developed in the Vilna Ghetto to raise spirits and give Jews a sense of dignity, hope, and self-worth, hoping to make it easier to resist and survive Nazi torment.

The Complete Maus
by Art Spiegelman
A series of graphic novels that won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize. Art Spiegelman depicts interviews with his father, in which his father tells about his experiences as a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust.

Web

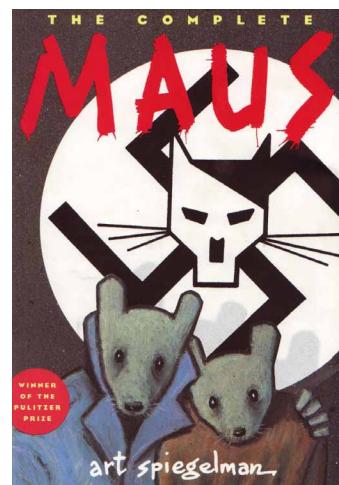
Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
ushmm.org/learn/holocaust-encyclopedia
Provides an extremely comprehensive exploration of WWII history, with articles, timelines, maps, photos, film footage, and personal histories—from the rise of the Third Reich to the post-WWII war crimes trials.

Holocaust Subject Guide, Spertus Institute
spertus.edu/subject-guides/holocaust
Resources available from the Asher Library at Spertus Institute, as well as links to a rich array of online resources.

Rakow Community Memorial Book
jewishgen.org/yizkor/rakow/rakow.html
Edited by Haim Abramson; translated by Ruth Wilnai
Histories and personal remembrances by former residents of Rakow, Belarus, where part of Laskin's family once lived.

The National Museum of American Jewish Military History
nmajmh.org/americanjewish
The NMAJMH, under the auspices of the US Jewish War Veterans, documents and preserves the contributions of Jewish Americans to the peace and freedom of the United States.

WWII History: An Open Harvard Course
extension.harvard.edu/open-learning-initiative/world-war-history
A series of free, downloadable lectures by Charles S. Maier, PhD, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, Harvard University.



The Birth of the State of Israel

Books

Pioneers and Homemakers:

Jewish Women in Pre-state Israel

Edited by Deborah S. Bernstein

Explores the experience and action of Jewish women in the new Jewish settlement during the period of Zionist immigration to Palestine. Though based on scholarly research, this book brings forth women's voices through their private and public writing.

Israel: A History

by Anita Shapira

Renowned Israeli historian Anita Shapira examines Israel's economic, social, and cultural past.

The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History

Edited by Eran Kaplan and Dereck J. Penslar

Chronicles the making of modern Israel before statehood, using original sources and documents.

My Russian Grandmother and Her American Vacuum Cleaner: A Family Memoir

by Meir Shalev

From one of Israel's most celebrated novelists, a charming memoir about his pioneer grandmother.

A Tale of Love and Darkness

by Amos Oz

A family memoir that takes place against the backdrop of the birth of Israel, written by one of Israel's most important writers. A National Jewish Book Award winner. Soon to be released as a movie starring Natalie Portman.

Resurrecting Hebrew (Jewish Encounters)

by Ilan Stavans

The stirring story of how Hebrew was rescued from the fate of a dead language to become the living tongue of a modern nation. You can hear a recording of Ilan Stavans' talk at Spertus Institute. Find a link to it in the Israel Subject Guide at spertus.edu/subject-guides/state-israel in the Digital Resources section.

Exodus

by Leon Uris

Leon Uris's 1958 page-turner was an international bestseller. The novel chronicles the attempt of early Jewish settlers to establish the modern State of Israel. A feature film made from the book starred Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint.

Articles

When History Speaks

by David Laskin, *New York Times* Sept 29, 2010

Account of Laskin's trip to Israel when he visited the places where his relatives Chaim and Sonia worked the land and he learned more of his family's story from Chaim and Sonia's children.

Film

Dreamers and Builders

Directed by Ya'akov Gross

Waltham, MA: National Center for Jewish Film, 2006, DVD

Jerusalem, Israel: Film Archive-Jerusalem

Cinematheque, 2006, DVD

Rare archival film footage of Palestine in the 1920s forms the heart of this documentary. The footage, considered lost for more than 70 years, was taken by Ya'akov Ben Dov, the father of Hebrew cinema. It depicts settlements and activities in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Rishon le Zion and Old Jaffa; visits by Albert Einstein and Winston Churchill; the funeral of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda; and early Zionists who pioneered the Third and Fourth Aliyahs.

UN Partition Plan for Palestine

Juf.org

Search for "UN Partition"

News clips from the time of *The White Paper*.

Web

Streets of Israel

streetsofisrael.wordpress.com

Spotlights the personalities behind Israel's street signs, many of which are named for people involved in the birth of the nation. Search the site for Joseph Vitkin to learn about the namesake of Kfar Vitkin.

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