

*“You have provided a solid basis for continuing conversations about the brave Jewish women in US history.”*

Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
Justice of the United States Supreme Court

## WE CAME. WE LEARNED. TOGETHER, WE CHANGED.

They arrived as educators. Five days later, they departed as advocates. The 24 participants in the Jewish Women's Archive summer Institute for Educators emerged eager to impart to their colleagues, students, and communities the stories they had heard and the methods they had learned during their four days in Brookline.

*“I now have a responsibility to share this information with people in my professional world and other worlds.”*

**Debbie Kardon Schwartz**, Director of Family Education at Congregation B'nai Torah Sudbury, MA

“As a Jewish educator and as a Jewish woman,” Debbie Kardon Schwartz, Director of Family Education at Congregation B'nai Torah in Sudbury, MA, said, “I acquired a greater awareness of JWA resources and all the great women presented there. We've all become ambassadors for their stories. We now have the responsibility to bring their voices back into the world. Even more important, I now have a responsibility to share this information with people in my professional world and other worlds.”

In a carefully planned series of sessions – equal parts informational and inspirational – the educators garnered



Institute participants Emily Shapiro Katz of San Francisco (left) and Yeshi Gusfield of Oakland, CA, and Alan Rosenberg of Providence, RI (right) listen to a session on teaching with primary sources.

both professional and personal insights and explored innovative ways to use the Archive's resources in their teaching. “We learned techniques to tell stories that have to be told,” explained Alan Rosenberg of Temple Beth-E in Providence, RI.

They had traveled from as far away as California, Nebraska, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. Some were recent college graduates; a few were grandmothers; they ranged from observant to secular Jews. By the end of the first day, everyone knew each other by name; laughter rang out around the dinner table.

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Paula Hyman, Lucy G. Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History at Yale University, presents her research on the kosher meat riots of 1902 (top). Institute participant Ellyn Shriber of Southborough, MA explores teaching resources on the Jewish Women's Archive website (bottom).

[continued from page 1] Something happened that the Institute's planners and presenters could only have hoped for — the educators created a close community of sharing and respect, discovery and delight.

"It was a diverse group in terms of age, region, and professional and personal backgrounds, and they worked together wonderfully," said Judith Rosenbaum, Director of Public History at the Jewish Women's Archive. "They were invested in the process. They stayed focused. They shared enthusiastically and learned from each other. I missed them the minute they were gone. I look forward to staying in touch with them throughout the coming year as they implement their creative ideas in their home communities." }

## VOICES

**Barbara Rosenblit, a teacher at the Weber School of Atlanta and a member of the Jewish Women's Archive Board of Directors, presented two sessions during the Institute. Afterward, she wrote:**

*"The 2008 Institute for Educators was five packed days that renewed both those teaching in front of the room and those out in the participant seats. From my point of view, it was a glorious transmission of the best of what the Jewish Women's Archive can offer to those of us who teach anyone and anywhere. But the best parts for me were the participants themselves, 24 varied and fascinating people, now true believers."*

*I loved their charged and moving comments, both formal and informal. Here is one I won't soon forget: one young and quietly intense participant spoke during the evaluation session. She said that her familiar manner is to sit back, to take everything in, to be a passive participant. Now, for the first time, she stated in full voice, she feels that she is obligated to shout what she has learned, to tell the story she now knows." }*

## BRINGING IT HOME

The Institute included time each day for participants to work on projects of their own design. Drawing on the resources of the Jewish Women's Archive, they developed lesson plans and activities they will use in the coming year to integrate the stories of Jewish women into their teaching. Here are two examples:



**Sheila Silver** developed her project, *Thanks For Letting Me Be Jewish, Mom: Honoring Non-Jewish Women Who Are Raising Jewish Children*, to address the particular needs of her congregation, in which the intermarriage rate is 80%. Combining study of the biblical figure Zipporah – Moses' non-Jewish wife – with interviews of synagogue members, Silver's adult education program offers a creative

way to engage non-Jewish mothers with the Jewish community. "Attending the Institute gave me the tools to gather the necessary stories and materials through the interview process. The work with JWA validated the historical, biblical, and contemporary significance of my study."



In her course on Jewish Civics at the High School of Jewish Studies in San Diego, **Rachel Selk** connects Jewish values and texts to contemporary problems. This year she will include a series of lessons focusing specifically on Jewish women politicians and activists. "It's wonderful to be reminded how much you don't know about the world," she reflected. "The Institute introduced me to the stories

of so many women whom I'd never heard of before." She admitted she was "simultaneously appalled and joyful about that." }

## COMMUNITY AND COMMITMENT

“My time at the Jewish Women’s Archive opened up ideas of where I want to go in my life.”

Emily Pratt, summer intern

Three young women were interns at the Jewish Women’s Archive last summer: Emily Pratt, a Smith College senior from Montgomery, NJ; Hilarie Meyers, a Brown junior from Hudson, NY; and Maya Shwayder, a Harvard junior from Farmington, MI. Like interns before them, they emerged with a stronger commitment to their Jewish identity and a deeper understanding of both the practice and the findings of gender-sensitive history.

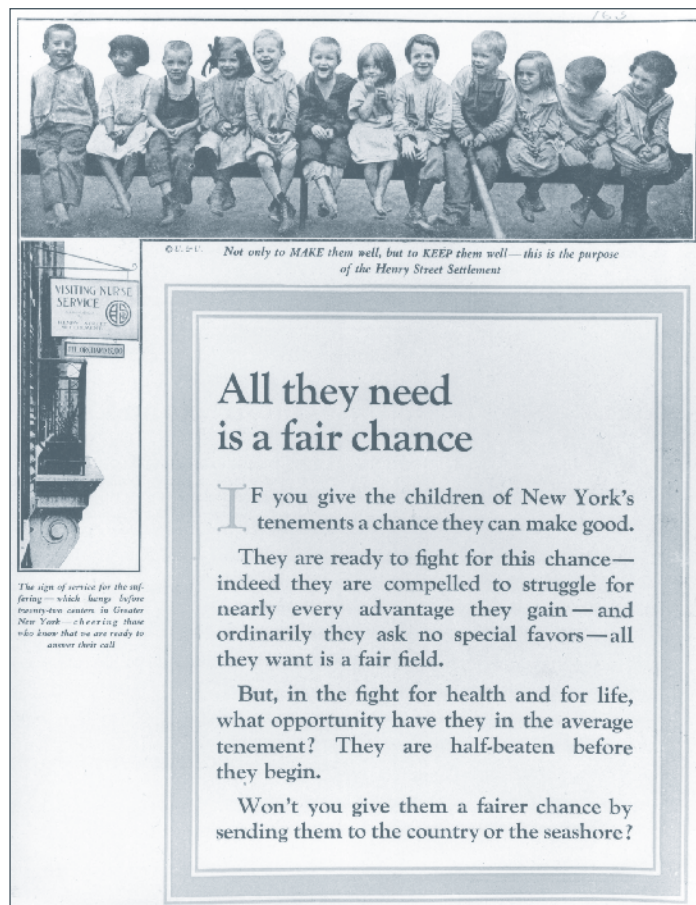
In late July, the interns participated in this year’s Educators Institute. All three appreciated having the chance to witness the Archive’s “influence in the real world” and see concrete evidence of how JWA’s resources benefit teachers and students all over the country. “Most of the time,” Emily said, “we worked on projects with lots of tiny details. But at the Institute, we got to see the bigger picture, to see how creatively the material we’ve been working on is used in the classroom.” }



Left to right: 2008 summer interns Emily Pratt, Maya Shwayder, and Hilarie Meyers.

## (RE)SOURCE

The Jewish Women’s Archive encourages educators to use primary source documents.



Lillian Wald founded Henry Street Settlement House in 1895. One of its programs provided poor children on the Lower East Side with a vacation in the country or at the seashore. This flyer seeking support for the program reflects the contradictions inherent in such Progressive Era projects. Vacation programs removed children from their urban surroundings — and from their families — and sent them to spend time in what reformers considered a healthier environment. The implied criticism of the children’s own homes, however, often had the effect of alienating the intended recipients of the assistance. *Image courtesy of Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library.* }

## DO YOU

**Belong to a book group?** Why not try one of the four reading series the Jewish Women’s Archive has developed? Download a free guide at [jwa.org/readingseries](http://jwa.org/readingseries)

**Have a bat mitzvah-age girl in your life?** She can visit [jwa.org](http://jwa.org) to meet athletes, artists, scientists, entrepreneurs, and other American Jewish women who came before her. [jwa.org/stories](http://jwa.org/stories)

**Want to liven up a dinner or car pool conversation (or Hebrew School lessons)?** Subscribe for free to JWA’s “This Week in History” email. [jwa.org/this\\_week](http://jwa.org/this_week)

**Know what your mother, grandmother, or aunt did during World War II?** Organize a project to interview Jewish women in your community about their experiences in the years 1939-1948. [jwa.org/ww2](http://jwa.org/ww2)

**Or your children or grandchildren know anything about Jewish women in America?** Encourage their teachers to use the educational resources on [jwa.org/teach](http://jwa.org/teach)

**Belong to a Rosh Hodesh group?** Check out the materials for adult learners on topics as varied as gender and ritual garb, immigration and generations, diversity and innovation, and “Lilith Evolved: Writing Midrash.” [jwa.org/golearn](http://jwa.org/golearn)

**In addition to the features listed here, the Jewish Women’s Archive website ([jwa.org](http://jwa.org)) has a variety of resources for you to explore and enjoy.** }

## WE REMEMBER

A permanent online collection of reminiscences about recently deceased Jewish women. If you would like to "nominate" a woman who has died since 2000, use the form at [jwa.org/weremember](http://jwa.org/weremember) or call 617.232.2258 and we'll send you one.



## REMEMBERING FLORENCE MELTON

*Florence Melton was an enormously successful inventor and businesswoman. She patented removable shoulder pads and in 1948 co-founded R.G. Barry Corporation, where she used material developed as a liner for the helmets of World War II tank crewmen to create the world's first foam-soled, washable slipper, marketed around the world under the brand name Dearfoams.*

*Betsy Dolgin Katz remembers:* "At a young vigorous 75, she was about to launch her next career as a Jewish education entrepreneur and philanthropist. I was one of a small group of skeptical educators assigned to implement a program for adults that she had invented to meet her own needs as an adult Jewish learner. It was her conviction that others shared her desire to be a knowledgeable Jew... I felt inspired, invigorated and confident that building the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School was something I could do. I was a little worried about the phrase 'mini' for an experience that had maxi-expectations for adult learners, but Florence convinced me that it was there so as not to intimidate adults who could be frightened away by the two-year, four-course plan...."

"Florence's passionate commitment to Jewish education led to the creation of the most wide-spread, pluralistic, curriculum-based adult Jewish school in the world. Over 28,000 individuals have graduated from the two-year school since 1986. In 2007, it exists in 60 sites in six countries. A partnership between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and communities and educators in North America, England, Australia, South Africa and Israel, it has become an important way for many adults to integrate their Jewish heritage into their lives." }

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

*This Week in History* offers a unique calendar of American Jewish experience — connecting specific dates throughout the year to events related to American Jewish women. To receive TWIH via e mail every week, go to [jwa.org/this\\_week](http://jwa.org/this_week).

## PUBLICATION OF BEL KAUFMAN'S "UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE"

When Bel Kaufman published *Up the Down Staircase* on January 27, 1965, she was already a published writer whose short stories had appeared in magazines like *Esquire* and *The Saturday Review*. The granddaughter of Sholem Aleichem, she emigrated from Russia to the United States at age 12. In the early 1940s, *Esquire* refused to publish fiction by women, so Belle Kaufman submitted her work under the androgynous first name "Bel"; she has published under that name ever since.

*Up the Down Staircase* draws on her 30 years experience as a teacher in the New York City public schools. The novel uses a series of memos, directives, student comments, teachers' notes, and various materials found in school wastepaper baskets to detail the encounters of a new idealistic teacher with the bureaucracy of an inner-city school. The book spent 64 weeks on the best-seller list. It has been translated into 16 languages, and has sold 6.5 million copies. The book was made into a 1967 film starring Sandy Dennis and into a stage play a decade later. }

## VITAL STAT

The Jewish Women's Archive *Go & Learn* curriculum modules have been downloaded more than **20,000** times.

## "MAKING OUR WILDERNESS BLOOM"

Designed by teachers, for teachers, this Jewish Women's Archive curriculum helps create a more inclusive, more accurate understanding of our history. A 200-page Student Resource Guide includes letters, newspaper articles, photographs and other primary sources that open young minds to the contributions of American Jewish women. A comprehensive Teacher's Guide provides lesson plans for use with middle and high school students, in supplemental and day schools and in formal and informal educational settings. As Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Justice of the United States Supreme Court, wrote:

"Though designed to teach a teenage audience, there is much in it that would engage parents and grandparents as well. You have provided a solid basis for continuing conversations about the brave Jewish women in US history. The documents, text, and questions convey the large inspiration those women's lives provide. The curriculum should encourage today's young people to aspire, achieve, and contribute to the well being of others."

*Making our Wilderness Bloom* is available online from Google books or at [jwa.org/curriculum](http://jwa.org/curriculum). }

THE MISSION OF THE JEWISH WOMEN'S ARCHIVE IS TO UNCOVER, CHRONICLE, AND TRANSMIT TO A BROAD PUBLIC THE RICH HISTORY OF AMERICAN JEWISH WOMEN.

Jewish Women's Archive }

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