

# Der Bay

## The International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter

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### IAYC 9th Conference in Minneapolis:

#### They Came to the Goldene Medine: The Immigrant Experience

The demographics of Minneapolis/St. Paul have changed greatly. The predominant population had been Scandinavian. Now we have one of the largest Hmong populations in the U.S., and a very large Somali population. We are aware of the problems that immigrants have had to deal with.

Thinking about this resulted in thinking about our own parents and grandparents' experience coming to America. We wanted to explore the immigrant experience of those survivors who came to our community from the Shoah and from the former Soviet Union.

We chose our theme for the IAYC Convention (June 2-5, 2005) in Minneapolis ... "They Came to the Goldene Medine: The Immigrant Experience". All groups faced difficult times upon arrival in the U.S. ... language skills, employment problems, and, of course, limited or no income.

#### My Parents

They came to Minneapolis because my father's aunts were here. He was a graduate from a gymnasium in Odessa, worked as a janitor in the Nabisco cookie factory. He later had clerical jobs, and opened a clothing store. Times were hard, but my folks were involved with the Labor Zionists, and attended endless meetings. There were social and cultural activities, music, literary readings, and picnics.

To help one another, they formed a Genelas Chesed. Education of the children was a high priority. Even through the bitter depression, sons and daughters attended the University of Minnesota. The shoemaker's three sons all became doctors; prominent lawyers, professors and doctors also came from this group.

#### The Migration

To disperse the immigrants from the East Coast they were urged to accept land in North Dakota offered by Baron de Hirsch. Families settled in Devils Lake, ND. (This will be covered in a talk entitled *And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher*.) Some came to Minneapolis, but then moved on to Aberdeen, South Dakota, hoping it would be better there. Thirty families supported a rabbi. Kosher meat came to them by Greyhound bus from Iowa during the winter only.

#### The New Immigration

Many came from the Shoah—professionals: dentists, physicians, engineers, etc. Some re-trained to meet local standards. Others had vocational training. We were enriched by the quality of these people—their perseverance and intelligence were truly admirable. And, so it was with those who came from the former USSR. The Minnesota orchestra quickly hired talented musicians. Scientists joined the faculty at the University. Others have been very enterprising.

These are just a few examples of migrant experiences. We shall have sessions that tell the fascinating stories, of the Upper Midwest, and other parts of the country ... how, from these tribulations came achievements, and nakhes fun di kinder in *The Goldene Medine!*

This Ninth IAYC Conference will be in Minneapolis on Thurs., June 2nd to Sun., June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005. If you have any questions, please call **Chair Roz Baker at: 612-377-5456, or Publicity chair, Annalee Odessky at: annalee26@aol.com or 952-544-5423. Website: <http://www.IAYC-minnesota.org>**

**Editor's note: You'll find information about the *Tribute Book* in the back of this issue. Honor your immigrant parents or grandparents. Fishl, Sally & Debbie already have registered. See you there!**