

Rededication of the Chestnut Street Cemetery

CINCINNATI, OHIO | SEPTEMBER 26, 2021



Jewish Cemeteries
of Greater Cincinnati



**JEWISH CINCINNATI
BICENTENNIAL**
jewishcincy200.org

Hillenbrand

Honoring the Pioneering Spirit of Our Ancestors

Dear Friends,

Today is an historic day in Cincinnati, a day to honor the important role that the Cincinnati Jewish community plays in American history. It all started here 200 years ago when pioneering Jews consecrated this land as a cemetery. By setting aside this sacred land, they formed the first Jewish community west of the Allegheny Mountains. We take great pride in their achievements and the achievements of the generations that followed.

The men, women and children buried here in the Chestnut Street Cemetery — once known as The Old Jewish Cemetery — were pioneers of the American Frontier when they began to arrive in 1817.

By 1821, there were six Jewish families when Benjamin Lape (Leib) divulged his heritage to those Jewish settlers and tasked them with establishing a Jewish burial ground for his imminent death. In Jewish tradition, establishing a Jewish community begins by ensuring that we can fulfill the commandment to Honor the Dead.

By 1824, Kehal Kodesh Bene Israel — the Holy Community of the Children of Israel — became the first Jewish congregation west of the Allegheny Mountains and is now known as Rockdale Temple. Other congregations, cemeteries and burial societies followed.

Nearly 15 years ago, those congregations and burial societies recognized that caring for the souls of our ancestors is the obligation of the whole Jewish community. That's when 25 cemeteries were brought under unified ownership and management, creating Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati — the first association of its kind in the country and a nationally respected model.

Today, as we honor our past, we look boldly to the future — to build upon what our ancestors created with their adventurous spirit.

Thank you for joining us to commemorate this historic milestone. We hope you will enjoy the many exciting and meaningful programs planned for our 200th year.



Larry A. Neuman, President



David Harris, Executive Director



David Harris, left, and Larry Neuman



Chestnut Street Cemetery

Speakers

Today, we celebrate the restoration and rededication of the Chestnut Street Cemetery in Cincinnati's West End. Two centuries ago, Jewish life formally began in Cincinnati with the founding of this cemetery. We gather here today for the first of many events, exhibits and programs celebrating our Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial.

Rabbi Elena Stein, Board Member, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati

Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives; Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Fannie Shaw, Beautification Committee Chair, and **Noah O'Brien**, Vice President, West End Community Council

Larry Neuman, President, and **Edward G. Marks**, Emeritus Trustee, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati

Rabbi Meredith Kahan, Rockdale Temple

Greg Landsman, Cincinnati City Council Member; Descendant of David I. Johnson, who is buried in Chestnut Street Cemetery

Danielle V. Minson, President & Interim CEO, Jewish Federation of Cincinnati

Tamara Harkavy and Kim Heiman, Co-Chairs, Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial

Procession to ish Festival: We welcome those in attendance to follow our two bands to Washington Park for the *ish* Festival, a celebration of Jewish art and culture

We also welcome people to place stones, a Jewish tradition when visiting a cemetery.

Birthplace of Cincinnati's Jewish Community

Chestnut Street Cemetery played a central role in establishing Cincinnati as the first Jewish community west of the Allegheny Mountains.

In 1821, Benjamin Leib, who had not been living as a Jew, lay on his deathbed. About six Jews lived in Cincinnati at the time. Leib reached out to several of them, asking them to make arrangements for him to be buried as a Jew.

Joseph Jonas, believed to be Cincinnati's first Jewish settler, and five others bought the cemetery's original plot of land for \$75 from Nicholas Longworth, Cincinnati's largest landowner. Leib became the first person buried there.

The cemetery is at Chestnut Street and Central Avenue in what is now known as the Betts-Longworth Historic District in the city's West End. The area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cincinnati's Jewish community marks 1821 as the year it was founded because the cemetery was the first formal step taken to create the Jewish community. The cemetery became the seed from which the rest of the Jewish community sprouted and flourished.

Also known as the Old Jewish Cemetery, Chestnut Street Cemetery contains about 100 graves, making it the smallest cemetery overseen by Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati.

The cemetery remained in operation until about 1849 when the cholera epidemic caused gravesite space to fill up, closing the cemetery to new burials.



Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati renovated the entrance to the Chestnut Street Cemetery in summer 2021 with a beautiful new plaza. After the above photo was taken, Jewish Cemeteries installed an exhibit that educates visitors about the first Jewish settlers, the community they created and the cemetery. Photo at bottom right shows the entrance before the construction. The Ohio History Connection supplied the Ohio Historical Marker shown on the page at left.





Relatives of David Israel Johnson, including Greg Landsman and his mother, Lee Hamill, shown above, have been living in Cincinnati continuously since about 1818. They speak with pride about their family history. “The more you learn about it,” Landsman said, “the more you are inspired to contribute, because you are part of this rich past of people who gave a lot to this community.”

Family of An Early Settler Still Lives in Cincinnati

Cincinnati City Council Member Greg Landsman and his mother, Lee Hamill, are descendants of one of the first Jews to settle in Cincinnati. They are related to David Israel Johnson, who is buried in the Chestnut Street Cemetery.

Johnson and his wife, Eliza, arrived in the Cincinnati area from Portsmouth, England in 1818 at the urging of their friend, Joseph Jonas. Jonas is considered to be Cincinnati’s first Jewish settler. “You had to have a lot of adventure in you to come over when they did,” Hamill said.

Johnson, Jonas and several others bought the land for the cemetery. In 1824, they also helped to create what is now called Rockdale Temple in Amberley Village. In doing so, they created the first Jewish cemetery and the first Jewish congregation west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Johnson was a merchant and auctioneer. He also served as Rockdale’s third president. He died in 1842 at age 47.

Hamill only discovered her family’s link to Johnson during a decade of genealogical research following her retirement. Her research resulted in her book, “In the Mix: Stories of My Family.”

Preserving History

To prepare for the Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati held a series of clean-up days at the Chestnut Street Cemetery. Volunteers from the Ohio History Service Corps and Jewish Cemeteries carefully cleaned the headstones to make the inscriptions more visible and to prevent further deterioration.



A Celebration That Will Be Worth the 200-Year Wait

The Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial will feature more than 30 events, exhibits and programs. They are open to the entire community. This is just a sampling of events below. Many more can be found at jewishcincy200.org/events

Events listings will be updated throughout the Bicentennial.

Upstander Museum Tour, Tom Schaumberg's Story of Survival

Exhibits about upstanders who spoke out against injustice and a talk by Tom Schaumberg, whose family survived the Holocaust.

- Oct. 17, 2021 at 11 am and 1 pm
- Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center,
- 1301 Western Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45203
513-487-3055
holocaustandhumanity.org

Tree of Life Cantata Debut

The world premiere of Jacob Lindy's Tree of Life Cantata, a collection of movements composed in memory of those who lost their lives during the 2018 Tree of Life Synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh.

- Oct. 24, 2021
- Location and contact information to be announced

A Portrait of Jewish Cincinnati

Portraits and sculptures of Cincinnati's movers and shakers since the early 19th century.

- Nov. 4, 2021 to Jan. 30, 2022
- Skirball Museum, Mayerson Hall, HUC-JIR
3101 Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-487-3231
csm.huc.edu/



These portraits will be included in the Portrait of Jewish Cincinnati exhibit at the Skirball Museum. They depict Fannie and Abraham Aub, who donated the land for Cincinnati's Jewish Hospital and made significant gifts to the building campaign for Plum Street Temple. (Artist unknown, oil on canvas, ca. 1860, collection of Professors A.E. Ted Aub and Phillia C. Yi)



Price Hill Cemeteries

JEWISH CEMETERIES OF GREATER CINCINNATI:

Bicentennial Programs

Jewish Cemeteries is organizing a year-long series of events and programs to celebrate the Bicentennial:

Genealogy

Two-part series:

- Finding Your Roots: Getting Started on Researching Your Family History - Sunday, January 30, 2022 at 2 pm - The Mercantile Library
- Preserving Your Family History Through Storytelling - February-March 2022 - Date and location to be announced

Jewish Cemetery Tours

Tours of Cincinnati's Historic Jewish Cemeteries:

- UJC-Clifton and UJC-Walnut Hills Cemeteries - May 22, 2022
- Price Hill and Covedale Cemeteries - June 12, 2022

Customs and Traditions of Mourning

Two-part series:

- Traditions that Comfort: Jewish Customs of Mourning - March 20, 2022 - Location to be announced
- Shared Grief, Different Customs: An Interfaith Look at Funeral and Mourning Customs - May 15, 2022 - Location to be announced

Photography & Art Contest for Students

Share your artistic impressions of our Jewish cemeteries and environs:

- Students can prepare their photography or art from October 2021 through May 2022.
- Award finalists will have their work formally exhibited in the summer 2022.



Sign up to receive more information and RSVP for upcoming programs.

A Model for Other Communities

About two decades ago, local Jewish leaders realized they had a mutual problem overseeing the more than two dozen Jewish cemeteries in Greater Cincinnati. The cemeteries faced common challenges, including insufficient funding for repairs, a predicament made even more daunting because many of the original owners — including congregations and cemetery associations — no longer existed.

That's when a small group of community leaders, led by Dr. Ed Herzig, Michael Oestreicher, and Ed Marks, began discussing how to address the challenges. After 11 years of planning and working collaboratively with rabbinic and lay leadership, most of the cemeteries decided it was in their mutual interest to merge under the management of one organization. In 2008, the new nonprofit, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, Inc., assumed responsibility for the cemeteries.

Initial funding came from the endowments of the cemeteries, a grant from the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati and an ongoing fundraising campaign guided by the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati.

Since the formation of Jewish Cemeteries, several other Jewish cemeteries in Greater Cincinnati have joined the organization. Additionally, in 2017, Jewish Cemeteries developed and dedicated its newest cemetery and the first community cemetery, the Loveland Cemetery, which has Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform sections.

Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati became one of the first organizations of its kind in the country to own nearly all of the Jewish cemeteries in one community. Its Board of Trustees includes broad representation from across the Jewish community, including unaffiliated community members. Ritual matters are governed by a committee of congregational rabbis. Today, Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati is a nationally respected model for other Jewish communities seeking to preserve their cemeteries and plan for their future needs.

“Caring for the souls of our ancestors is the obligation of the entire Jewish community. That's why we know we did the right thing when we created Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati.”

— LARRY NEUMAN, PRESIDENT,
JEWISH CEMETERIES

MISSION STATEMENT:

JCGC serves the burial needs of the Greater Cincinnati Jewish community with care and dignity and honors the resting places of our people.

VISION STATEMENT:

JCGC will serve and engage our entire Jewish community and preserve the history and memory of our people, while maintaining financial stability.

CORE VALUES:

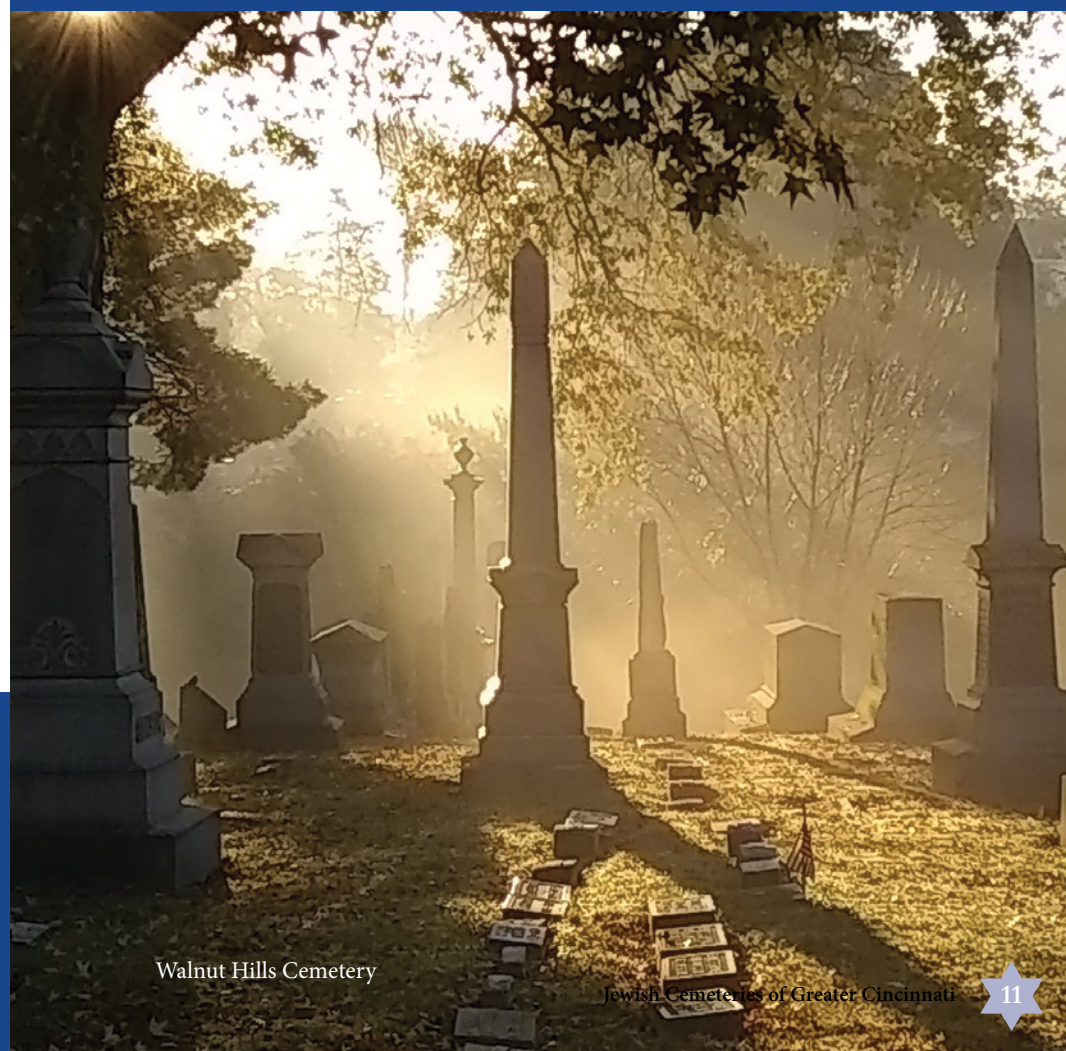
Service — JCGC provides quality service with dignity and compassion in the fulfillment of its sacred duty.

Sustainability — JCGC stewards all resources in a way that sustains our cemeteries.

Diversity — JCGC respects the diverse traditions of the Jewish community it serves and is committed to collaborative decision making.

Heritage — JCGC preserves and shares the Jewish community's history enshrined in our cemeteries.

Integrity — JCGC acts ethically and respectfully toward its staff, volunteers and the public.



Walnut Hills Cemetery

Leadership

Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati

Board of Trustees

Larry Neuman, President
Raphael Warren, Vice President
Michael Bergman, Secretary
Josh Juran, Treasurer
Alan Brown, Immediate Past President
David Harris, Executive Director

Richard Barasch
Susan Brenner
Margie Burgin
Ariella Cohen
Henry Fenichel
Julia Fowler
Micah Holzer
Rabbi Mendy Kalmanson
Sandy Kaltman
Dena Morton
Marlene Ostrow
Sarah Schneider
Eric Schwartzberg
Amy Shaiman
Izar Spivak
Rabbi Elena Stein
Robb Stokar
David Weil
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200th Committee

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Rachel Loftspring
Cynthia Rosen
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Sari Goldhoff Small
Elena Stein
Felicia Zakem

Chestnut Street Cemetery Committee

CO-CHAIRS

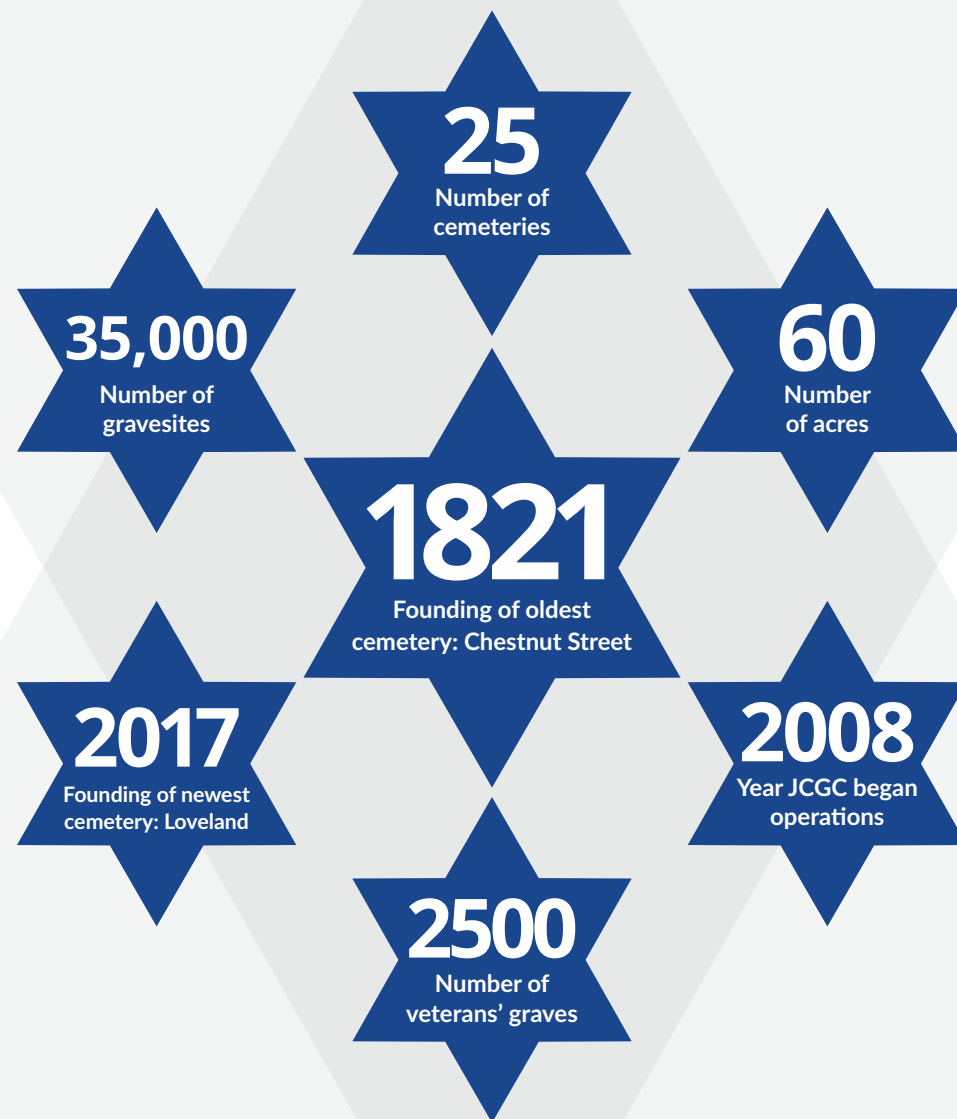
Marlene Ostrow
David Schwartz

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Richard Barasch
Mimi Daria
Shelly Gerson
Dana Herman
Miriam Hodesh
Ed Marks
Noah O'Brien
Abby Schwartz
Sarah Strouse

JEWISH CEMETERIES OF GREATER CINCINNATI

By the Numbers



Friends Honor Roll

Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati is grateful for the support of our Friends, whose Founding Gifts helped establish our visionary association to care for all of our community's dearly departed.

Adath Israel Congregation	Joyce* and Paul Heiman	Mitchell and Jackie Meyers
Pam and Bernie Barbash	Andy A. and Debbie Heldman	Diane Oestreicher
Harvey* and Thelma Bergman	Anne Heldman	Michael Oestreicher
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Robert and Maryann* Betagole	Paul and Deborah Heldman	Gerald Robinson
Andrew and Cindy Berman	Roger and Julie Heldman	Millard E. Samuels
Stanley Berman*	Daniel J. Hoffheimer	Andrew G. Schwartz
Herbert Bloch*	Karen and David Hoguet	Ben Schwartz
Peter and Randy Bloch	Richard and Lois* Jolson	Marvin and Betsy Schwartz
June Burgin*	Stanley Kaplan*	Stephen A. Schwartz
Larry A. Byer*	Louis H. Katz	Theodore Schwartz*
James and Eileen Chalfie	Barry and Patsy Kohn	Phyllis Sewell*
Dr. Louis and Kathy Claybon	Alvin Levine*	Gwendolyn Shapiro*
Barry Cobb and Jan Armstrong Cobb	Alvin Lipson*	Andrew and Sally Shott
Lois and Philip S.* Cohen	Dorothy Lockspeiser	Eleanor Shott
Wilbur* and Miriam Cohen	Barry and Alice Lucas	Jacob* and Polly Stein
Kari and David Ellis III	Virginia Stix Lurie*	Charles Stix*
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Allison and Edward Frankel	Millard and Helene Mack	Meriel Vigran
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Bill* and Sue Friedlander	Andy and Peggy Markiewitz	Alex and Lynn Warm
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Shelly Gerson	Manuel D. and Rhoda Mayerson Foundation	Robert A. Weil
Gary and Linda Greenberg	Alvin "Bunny" and Faye Meisel	Richard Weiland
Harold and Cynthia Guttman	Jerry Mellman	Alice F. and Harris K. Weston*
Ian and Aimee Guttman	Joe Mendelsohn III*	David and Nancy Wolf
Louis and Beth Guttman	Gene Mesh	Thomas and Marilyn Zemboch
Murray Guttman*		Elinor and Bill Ziv
Kim and Gary Heiman		

This Honor Roll was created on August 1, 2021. If your name has been omitted or needs correction, please accept our apology and please notify JCGC, so we can correct any errors or omissions.

*Deceased

The Guardians Honor Roll

Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati thanks "The Guardians," whose Legacy Commitments will help ensure that we can fulfill our mission to care for our community's dearly departed in perpetuity.

Mallory and Jeffrey Adler	Evelyn Margolin
Marjorie and Steven Adler	Andy and Peggy Markiewitz
Barry and Jan Armstrong Cobb	Anita and Edward G. Marks
Pam Barnett	Alvin "Bunny" Meisel
Richard and Sara Behrman	Susan Brenner and Steven Mombach
BreeAnna and Michael Bergman	Dena Morton
Alan and Christie Brown	Joy S. and Thomas Nadler
Wilbur* and Miriam Cohen	Carol and Larry Neuman
The Mark R. Cohen Family Trust	Diane Oestreicher
Malcolm and Adell Coleman*	Michael Oestreicher
Craig and Frances Coleman	Marlene Ostrow
Stephen Dann	Sue and Jay* Price
Deborah Eckert-Rubinstein	Rachel and Steven Schild
Mack and Judi Evans	Stephen A. Schwartz
Allison and Edward Frankel	Eric and Cricket Schwartzberg
Rebbie and Norman Frankel	Samantha Segerman
Gail* and Dick Friedman	Susan and Steven Segerman
Carrie and Ken Goldhoff	Joshua Shapiro
David C. Harris	Andrew and Sally Shott
Andy A. and Debbie Heldman	Izar and Stacey Spivak
James G. Heldman and Wendy Saunders	Josephine G. Stillpass
Lauren and Aaron Herzig	Bob and Marcia Sugerman
Andrea and Edward Herzig	Suzanne Voos
Daniel J. Hoffheimer	Jake and Briana Warm
Karen and David Hoguet	Raphael and Nancy Warren
John Isidor and Sandy Kaltman	Chie and David Weil
Josh and Tracy Juran	Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Weil
Karen and Brad Kaplan	Edward Wertheimer
Mona and Dick Kerstine	Matt and Ann Yosafat
Barry S. and Stephanie H. Kogan	Karen and Stuart Zanger
Bernard Lenchitz	Elinor and Bill Ziv
Leah Levine	Anonymous (13)
Ina and Edward Loftspring	

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*Deceased

JEWISH
SINCE
1821



JewishCincy200.org

More than 30 interactive programs and events from Sept 2021 - Oct 2022!

September 26

KICKOFF CEREMONY

10 a.m.
Chestnut Street Cemetery

September 26

ISH FESTIVAL

11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Washington Park

October 1 & 3

CSO PERFORMANCES

Friday | 7:30 p.m. Music Hall
Sunday | 7:30 p.m.
Plum Street Temple

October 17

UPSTANDER TOUR

The Nancy & David Wolf
Holocaust & Humanity Center

November 4

A PORTRAIT OF JEWISH CINCINNATI

Skirball Museum

THE FIRST

The Cincinnati Jewish community has a right to be proud of its accomplishments. Here is a sampling of what happened here first:



Cincinnati is the birthplace of the first Jewish community west of the Allegheny Mountains as well as the first synagogue and Jewish cemetery.



Jewish medical researcher Albert Sabin led the development of the first oral polio vaccine here.



The first Jewish hospital in the U.S. was founded here.



Rabbi Sally Preisand became America's first female rabbi after being ordained in Cincinnati at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the nation's first Jewish seminary.



Rabbi Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati established the first office of Agudath Israel of America, an organization that represents Haredi Orthodox Jews.



Manischewitz first produced its innovative matzo here.

PRESENTING SPONSORS



In partnership with
Cincinnati's many Jewish
and civic organizations

A Community Effort

Thank you to the Jewish Federation and The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati for their continued support of Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati. And thank you to all the Sponsors and Founding Partners of Jewish Cincinnati Bicentennial!

PRESENTING SPONSORS



SPONSORS



Dick Weiland



FOUNDING PARTNERS



THANK YOU to the organizations below for their contributions and support for today's rededication!



And thank you to all these talented companies for their partnership and artisanship.



Ashire Communications developed this booklet in partnership with Jewish Cemeteries: www.ashire.net



How You Can Help

For two centuries, the Jewish community has cared for our dearly departed in Greater Cincinnati's Jewish cemeteries. To ensure that we can continue to fulfill our mission for years to come, we encourage you to make a gift by going to our website to commemorate a loved one's birthday, *yahrzeit* or other special occasion. All donations go toward a fund to keep our cemeteries well maintained.

We also welcome you to volunteer your time and talents for our committees and projects.

To learn more about Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati, we ask that you follow us at [Facebook.com/JewishCemeteriesCincy](https://www.facebook.com/JewishCemeteriesCincy) or sign up for our newsletter by going to [jcemcin.org](https://www.jcemcin.org).

To use our genealogy search tool, go to [jcemcin.org/genealogy-2/](https://www.jcemcin.org/genealogy-2/)



Jewish Cemeteries
of Greater Cincinnati

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