

## Young Men's Hebrew Charity Association

### History

The Young Men's Hebrew Charity Association was formed in Chicago in 1882, and was one of many Jewish charities active in the city. The Young Men's Hebrew Charity Association (YMHCA) from the beginning was closely tied to the United Hebrew Relief Association (UHRA), an organization formed in the early 1870s with a dual mission of operating a relief office for immigrant and needy Jews and managing the Michael Reese Hospital.<sup>1</sup> The YMHCA complemented the management work of the UHRA by raising monies to keep various Jewish institutions funded. The UHRA managed and financially supported Michael Reese Hospital, however it distributed money raised by the YMHCA to other institutions besides the hospital.

As its main activity, the YMHCA held annual charity balls, the first of which took place on March 15, 1882. The \$25,000 proceeds of this first charity ball were given to the UHRA for donation to Michael Reese Hospital. The annual balls made the YMHCA famous and continued to be important social functions in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>2</sup>

Early prominent members of the YMHCA included Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, Maurice Rosenfeld, Louis Kuppenheimer, Max Wolff, Henry Frank, Eli B. Felsenthal, James Rosenthal, Simon Rosenfels, Charles Guthman, N. M. Schmaltz, and Henry Gerstley.<sup>3</sup> Some members served as delegates to the United Hebrew Relief Association, which functioned as an umbrella group for many of the Jewish charities. Names of YMHCA delegates are contained in some annual reports of the United Hebrew Relief Association, which later became the United Hebrew Charities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bregstone, Philip. Chicago and its Jews. Chicago: (privately published), 1933, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Meites, Hyman. History of the Jews of Chicago. Chicago: Jewish Historical Society of Illinois, 1924, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> See Chicago and Illinois Charitable Institutions Collection, Accession #75-31 for annual reports, and the Chicago Woman's Aid Collection for related information about Jewish charities.

The YMCA gave impetus to the formation of several Jewish social clubs such as the Ideal (north side), the Lakeside (south side), and the West Chicago Social Club.<sup>5</sup> The organization also directly supported educational and social institutions. For instance, the Jewish Training School, dedicated in 1890, was made possible in part by \$9,500 in funds raised by the YMCA at its annual ball.<sup>6</sup> The YMCA also gave financial support to the Maxwell Street Settlement.<sup>7</sup> In the late 1890s many Jewish educational and welfare organizations encountered financial difficulties. The YMCA held a large charity bazaar in December 1898 that netted \$84,000, which was distributed to many of these troubled organizations.<sup>8</sup>

#### Scope and Contents

The Young Men's Hebrew Charity Association Collection is composed of two photograph albums that show the Hebrew Charity Bazaar held at the Auditorium Theater from November 29 to December 5, 1898. This is probably the fair mentioned above that netted \$84,000 for various Jewish organizations. The albums (accessions #73-68 and 78-63) are identical except for the inclusion in the first (#73-68) of photographs of Italian landscapes and city scenes, primarily around Naples and Genoa, ca. 1900. The photographs remain mounted in original albums. The pages were numbered in pencil by the cataloger, and correspond to the numbers in the following brief descriptions.

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5 Meites, p. 149.

6 Ibid., p. 161.

7 Ibid., p. 751.

8 Ibid., p. 192.

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Note: The page numbers in the following album listings refer to numbers in pencil on the lower outside corner of each page. Negatives are available for some photographs. Consult the negative slip in the box with the albums.

Album 1 (accession #73-68):

Pages      Description

The photographs on pages 1-30 are of scenes from the Hebrew Charity Bazaar held at the Auditorium Theater in Chicago, from November 29 to December 5, 1898.

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|-----|--|
| 1   | Men and woman in parlor, reading the "Roaster"<br>(a newspaper, possibly put out by the YMHCA) |
| 2   | Group of young men in military uniform   |
| 3   | Young women in postal office booth   |
| 4-5 | Young women in postal office uniforms  |
| 6   | Phrenologist and astrologist booths  |
| 7   | Young women dressed as gypsies   |
| 8   | "Bric-a-Brac" booth, with dried flowers and wreaths  |
| 9   | Young women in white dresses with corsages   |
| 10  | Young women seated in decorated gazebo   |
| 11  | Young women in white ball gowns with flowers   |
| 12  | Cigar booth and customers  |
| 13  | Young women and man staging mock interview for "Roaster"                                       |
| 14  | Jewelry booth  |
| 15  | "Bric-a-Brac" booth  |
| 16  | Books for sale   |
| 17  | Young women in Grecian costumes--dramatic presentation   |
| 18  | Doll booth   |
| 19  | Men drinking in parlor   |

- 20 Handicrafts booth
- 21 Glassware booth
- 22 Raffle booth
- 23 Young women in various European costumes
- 24 Apothecary booth ("staffed by students from the first graduating class of Michael Reese Training School for Nurses, 1892 graduates"--note in album)
- 25-26 These pages are missing in Album 1
- 27 Young women on balcony and in boat (set for dramatic production?)
- 28 Young women on wooden ship
- 29 Perfume or glassware booth
- 30 Two couples in formal dress

The following pages in this album contain photographs of Italy, some identified as being in Genoa or Naples, ca. 1900.

- 31 Miscellaneous Italian scenes, possibly Genoa
- 32 Miscellaneous Italian scenes, possibly Genoa
- 33 Naples (Italy)--People by harbor, and view overlooking city
- 34 Genoa (Italy)--Railroad depot and buildings
- 35 Naples (Italy)--street views, and view from harbor
- 36 Garden with fountain, possibly Genoa
- 37 Genoa (Italy)--Church of the Annunciation
- 38 Genoa (Italy)--"Valle del Bisagno e Camposanto"
- 39 Genoa (Italy)--Monument to the "Duca di Galliera Monteverde Sc"
- 40 Naples (Italy)--Men making macaroni
- 41 Naples (Italy)--"Dalla Certosa S. Martino"
- 42 Naples (Italy)--the port

Album 2 (accession #78-63):

<u>Pages</u>	<u>Description</u>
1-24	(Same as #73-68 above)
25	Toy shop at Charity Bazaar
26	Wine shop at Charity Bazaar
27-29	(Same as #73-68 above)
30	Two men in parlor in formal dress
31	Doll booth at Charity Bazaar

Subjects

Charities--Illinois--Chicago  
Jews--Illinois--Chicago  
Jews--Charities  
Bazaars--Charitable  
Photographs--Albums  
Italy, Southern  
Genoa (Italy)  
Naples (Italy)

Processed by: *Jean Mc Manus*

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