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The “Typical Home Kid Overachievers”: Instilling a Success Ethic in the Jewish Children’s Home of New Orleans

by

Wendy Besmann

In June 1935, six-year-old Jimmy Whitehead and his siblings entered the Jewish Children’s Home of New Orleans (called the Home since it first opened as the Jewish Orphan’s Home in 1855.) Their mother had died and their merchant seaman father was unable to care for them. When their father died soon after, young Whitehead and his two half-sisters and two half-brothers, Lucille, Marguerite, Cecil, and Charles, were among the few true orphans in the institution. Most wards had at least one living parent, and many of these children entered or left the Home as their family situations changed. For Whitehead, the Home was the only source of shelter and emotional support for most of his childhood. Yet during that time, he thought of his surroundings as a “fancy boarding school” that offered him far more privileges than an average child experienced while growing up during the Depression. Between 1935 and the closure of the Home in 1946, Whitehead was housed in a leafy, elegant neighborhood, educated at one of the city’s best college-preparatory schools, mentored in the evenings and at summer camp by medical students from nearby universities, provided with excellent health care at the famous Touro Infirmary, and given religious training at a temple attended by some of the city’s most affluent Jewish families. He excelled socially and academically, becoming president of the school’s Jewish fraternity. Later he became associate professor and head law librarian at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. “I’m not atypical,” he says, “I’m just one of the ordinary

kids from the Home, given the best education and support from the Jewish community.”¹

The way a society treats dependent children is a good measure of its social values. If a rigid class structure confines those children to a lower economic status, they may be firmly channeled toward habits of good citizenship, hard work, and obedience to authority. If the system is more fluid, the children may be taught the very same qualities as a means of promoting upward mobility. From the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, the American Jewish community placed great value on individual attainments and reserved high honors for the businessmen, industrial giants, and professionals who also maintained a commitment to their fellow Jews.

In pursuit of these and other cultural goals, the southern Jewish community's ongoing investment in the Home yielded significant returns. The wards of the Home, instilled with a Jewish success ethic that was backed by strong emotional and financial support, became remarkable high achievers who repaid their benefactors with a willingness to support Jewish community institutions. This article will use examples of discipline, educational opportunities, leisure activities, and mentorship at various points in the institution's history to illustrate the development of the Home as an incubator for successful Jewish adults.

The history of the Home can be divided into three eras that reflect the evolution in American and Jewish American ideas about child welfare, as well as the ongoing leadership provided by patrons in southern Jewish communities. From its establishment in 1855 through approximately 1880, the primary goal of the institution was to feed, clothe, and shelter young children from the devastating effects of disease and poverty. During these years, the Home attained a sound financial footing through the support of the New Orleans Jewish community and gradually became an institution staffed by trained professionals. With the influx of eastern European Jews in the 1880s, the Home followed a national trend toward Americanizing children by separating them from their immigrant families. Behind the locked gates, a strict regime of discipline was used to inculcate middle-class values. Yet during

this period the lay leadership of the Home helped its wards develop even higher aspirations by establishing a top-quality private school that enrolled children from the city's most affluent families. Also during this time, the involvement of B'nai B'rith District Seven ensured that Jewish communities from throughout the southern region had a stake in the institution's survival. During the years after World War I through the institution's closure in 1946, the Home followed the nationwide Progressive Movement in child welfare by changing its rules and physical plant to create a more homelike environment. However, in some instances the institution rejected changes that did not seem to improve upon its already positive results. The evidence shows that the Home's combination of response to national trends and adaptation to unique local circumstances played an integral part in helping wards to become well-rounded, successful adults in different ways in each of the three periods.

The First Era: Saving Their Own

By 1844, New Orleans Jews had already chartered a Hebrew Benevolent Society to provide for a cemetery and make provision for the sick and indigent.² As elsewhere, this relief primarily included the informal collection and dispersal of funds. The existence of a Ladies Auxiliary (established in New Orleans in 1847) often signaled that affluent, civic-minded society women were creating a more organized effort to help the needy.³ In New Orleans, the effort was spurred by major epidemics that afflicted the city until the rise of modern hygienic practices. The New Orleans yellow fever epidemics of 1853 and 1855 were especially disastrous. According to the Home's historian, Joseph Magner, "On November 25, 1854, the Hebrew Benevolent Society held a mass meeting of the Jews of New Orleans. Its purpose was the creation of a separate organization for the support of the widow and orphan."⁴ Out of that meeting came the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans. Although other Jewish-sponsored societies for the relief of widows and orphans were established earlier (most notably in Charleston, South Carolina) the New Orleans endeavor was the first residential facility

for such use and thus the first Jewish orphan's home in North America.⁵

The traditions of *tzedekah* and community self-help are so deeply rooted in Jewish culture that even the most secular New Orleans businessmen would have been likely to respond.⁶ Early efforts at Jewish communal life in America occurred during the colonial era and congregations often provided *bikhor kholim*. This typically took the form of financial help that covered the traditional Jewish communal responsibilities of providing religious education for male children and dowries for orphaned girls of marriageable age.⁷

On March 14, 1855, a charter was granted to the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans, an organization overseen by seventeen incorporators who were among New Orleans' most prominent Jewish merchants. The project was brought to fruition with a speed that modern Jewish professional organizations might envy. By June 20, the contract was in place for a building at the corner of Jackson Avenue and Chippewa Street, costing the princely sum of \$10,700. The Home's cornerstone was laid in August, its new building was dedicated the following January, and on February 1, 1856, a widow and her five children were admitted together with seven other children.

Support from outside the Jewish community was generous. On April 6, 1856, the Louisiana legislature appropriated six thousand dollars to relieve the Home of its remaining indebtedness. Other donations came from gentile merchants who conducted business with the Jewish community.⁸

Before the Home was established, Jewish widows, orphans, and disabled or aged seamen were housed together in the Touro Infirmary of New Orleans. When the infirmary could not handle the influx of cases and the Home was established, more widows and orphans began to arrive. The ravages of the Civil War and repeated yellow fever epidemics helped to swell the population to more than one hundred, putting strain on the aging structure at Jackson and Chippewa. The postwar Jewish merchants of New Orleans seemed astonishingly able and willing to underwrite this expansion. In 1865, association president George Jonas reported to

The Widows and Orphans Home.

Opened in 1856, it stood at corner of Jackson Avenue at Chippewa Street.

*From the History of the Jews of Louisiana, published in 1905
by the Jewish Historical Publishing Company of Louisiana.)*

(Courtesy of Catherine C. Kahn, New Orleans.)

the board that finances were in excellent shape and that "This is a very satisfactory and remarkable result, at a time when so many of our brethren have had to seek new homes from the utter prostration of business."⁹

At this point, another shift occurred that was characteristic of Jewish charitable institutions during the late nineteenth century. Previously, the internal affairs of an orphanage were customarily left to the wives and daughters of prominent Jewish men, or to female employees, often known as matrons. The rise of social work as a profession prompted many Jewish institutions to hire male supervisors to oversee the work of matrons.¹⁰ Notes historian Timothy Hacsí, "Jewish orphan asylums were strikingly male dominated in their management. The Hebrew Orphan Asylum Society of Brooklyn was typical . . . women did not play the same

crucial role that they so often played in Protestant and Catholic institutions. . . . The one woman who did carry some power was the matron, who had been hired along with her husband, the superintendent."¹¹ The Home followed this trend in 1868, when Michael Heymann was elected superintendent, Hebrew teacher, and assistant secretary to the board, and his wife Marion came along as matron.¹²

In 1887 the Home moved to 5342 St. Charles Avenue, where it remained until its closure almost six decades later. It also was determined that discipline at the Home was incompatible with the presence of elderly widows. At the 1890 annual meeting the association decided to enter into a cooperative agreement with Touro to construct a building to house the women. From that point on, the Home was exclusively for children. The building, an imposing structure that dominated that part of the street, was constructed in a square that enclosed a large courtyard for sports and other outdoor activities. At the same meeting an auxiliary association of former residents was formed. This was the first sign that positive feelings on the part of Home children were strong enough to give them an ongoing interest in the institution. The Alumni Association remained a backbone of the Home for many decades, and its members often contributed short pieces to the school newspaper or were cited in its alumni column as examples of successful graduates. Today alumni of the Home and their relatives contribute financially or serve on the board of directors of the Home's direct descendent, the Jewish Children's Regional Service.¹³

The institution was located in a lovely and affluent part of the city where many Jews resided. This location would prove fortuitous for its wards because it placed the Home in plain view of those in the Jewish community who were in a position to help or spread the word to co-religionists in other southern states. These same families were also more likely to want these children to be all-American boys and girls who shed honor on the local Jewish community in the eyes of the Christian majority. As historian Scott Langston notes, the New Orleans Jewish community actually solidified its own ethnic identity through genteel interaction

The second Jewish Children's Home.

Opened in 1887 at 5342 St. Charles Avenue, the orphanage remained there until the Home was closed for good in 1946.

(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)

between rabbis and ministers who sought mutual respect between separate but equal circles of worship. Isaac Leucht, a New Orleans rabbi who was central in the early organization of the Home, proclaimed that his co-religionists must "prove to the world we are definitely willing to solve the Jewish question."¹⁴

Isidore Newman School: Education for Upward Mobility

During the nineteenth century, wards of the Home attended an in-house school. Although its educational quality is uncertain, the school did boast two boys from the Home who were awarded scholarships to the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and graduated from that postsecondary institution with

highest honors. One of the boys, Harry Rich, was hired by then Secretary of Agriculture Woodrow Wilson.¹⁵ Mississippi native Edgar Goldberg, who lived in the Home between 1884 and 1890, created what is today the oldest Jewish newspaper in Texas, the *Jewish Herald*.¹⁶

Many orphan asylums in New Orleans had their own schools because there was insufficient space in city classrooms. When the system expanded in 1890, many asylums saved money by sending children to public schools.¹⁷ By contrast, the Home's board of directors began discussing the creation of a private, off-site school for its wards in 1889 and hired a consultant to prepare plans for the school two years hence. The project got under way in 1902 when Isidore Newman, a wealthy merchant who had immigrated to America in 1853, donated funds for construction of the school and purchase of equipment. The 1902 resolution creating the school mandated that it was to be located in a separate building and open to children of all creeds who lived outside the Home. The Isidore Newman Manual Training School, located a few blocks from the Home, opened on October 3, 1904, with an enrollment of 102 wards of the Home. Jewish and gentile children from the outside community soon outnumbered the Home children. At the 1907 annual meeting, President Gabe Kahn announced the surprising growth of the school population, adding that an annex had been built to accommodate three hundred more pupils and extra space would soon be needed. Home students numbered less than one third of the total. Also in 1907, the practice of Home children wearing uniforms in school was abolished in order to allow them to blend more easily with others.¹⁸

The original name, Isidore Newman Manual Training School, reflected a cutting-edge notion that all children should be taught practical, hands-on skills as well as academic knowledge. Classes such as home economics and woodworking were included in the curriculum as well as literature, mathematics, and languages. Ruldolph Reeder, superintendent of cottage homes and school for the Orphan Asylum Society of the City of New York during this era, explained the philosophy: "Our problem, then, is how to develop industrial and economic power in each child. The girl who

Rabbi Isaac L. Leucht.

*Rabbi Leucht, of Touro Synagogue, New Orleans, was an advocate
for children and a leader in the early organization of the Home.*

He also served on the Louisiana State Board of Education.

(Courtesy of Touro Infirmary Archives, New Orleans.)

can describe in oral or written form a beautiful dress she has seen has some ability, that which the school imparts; but the girl who made the dress has the power which carries with it independence and self-reliance."¹⁹ Newman School was proudly dubbed "Manual" and its football jerseys were emblazoned with the letter "M."

For several decades, Manual Training remained a prestigious moniker, although the school itself changed to stress more academic subjects for its brightest pupils in order to better compete with the top preparatory academies. The tide finally turned in 1931, just after Manual's school newspaper won first place in a national contest sponsored by Columbia University, and the school became the first Louisiana academy to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The school was renamed Isidore Newman School and today continues to provide one of the city's most competitive college preparatory programs.

B'nai B'rith District Seven: Backbone of Regional Commitment

Beginning in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, B'nai B'rith District Seven's role in building the stature of the Home cannot be overstated. As the primary Jewish men's lodge in North America, the International Order of B'nai B'rith wielded enormous financial muscle and maintained broad contacts in every state.²⁰ District Seven was the regional body for the lodges in seven southern states (excluding a few urban areas). Yet up to this time it had been channeling the resources of its members into the much larger Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum (CJOA.)

The wooing of District Seven was prompted by the gradual expansion of the Home beyond its metropolitan New Orleans population base. According to Magner, the "number of inmates in the Home from the country districts showed such a vast preponderance over those from the city, [that it was] necessary to secure wider cooperation, and it was felt that the IOBB was the best possible agency to secure that result."²¹ The Home's Diamond Jubilee souvenir booklet records that the Home became a B'nai B'rith institution in 1876, but the fraternal district still channeled some of its funds to CJOA.²²

The patronage of B'nai B'rith encouraged Jews beyond New Orleans to contribute. The 1901 *Annual Report* meticulously notes four columns of donations, from a box of eggs sent by B. Shoas of Fayette, Mississippi, to dolls from Miss Fannie Riegler of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and fourteen pairs of undergarments from the Social and Sewing Club of Houston, Texas.²³

It was not until 1908 that District Seven formally withdrew its financial support from CJOA and committed those resources to the Home. B'nai B'rith gained the authority to place thirteen members on the Home's board. Eventually, the Home policy changed so that all children accepted into the institution except those from New Orleans had to pass the scrutiny of B'nai B'rith District Seven board members.²⁴ In 1913, the Home also joined the Jewish Charitable and Educational Federation of New Orleans, successor to the old Hebrew Benevolent Association, thus extending its interaction with the growing social services network of the local community.²⁵

District Seven not only provided financial resources and exercised veto power over some admissions, but also began identifying candidates from smaller towns in the region. Correspondence between personnel at the Home and businessmen associated with B'nai B'rith illustrates the close personal involvement of various members. In one case, a series of letters on business letterhead relates the story of Robert C., who was badly abused by his stepmother. Robert's stepmother beat him and threw him out of the house for days without food or shelter. The father was so complicit in this abuse that he had already been summoned before the parish judge for a reprimand. The case came to the notice of a B'nai B'rith Lodge in Vicksburg. At issue in the correspondence was Robert C.'s mental state, since the Home could not undertake care of an emotionally unstable child. The businessmen involved took it upon themselves to investigate the matter thoroughly, report to the Home, and ensure his eventual acceptance.²⁶ Also, Robert was twelve years old, above the maximum age at which children were usually admitted. The proprietor of Louis Leach & Sons ("The Store of Styles") intervened on his behalf, while the Jewish Children's Educational Fund (JCEF)

cooperated in expediting this case.²⁷ Robert was admitted and remained in the Home until reaching adulthood. Robert C.'s case was followed by the Home when he applied for a scholarship at Louisiana State University and later when he attended vocational school and settled into a career.²⁸

Another aspect of cooperation between lodge and Home involved the policy of only accepting Jewish wards. Both organizations took some pains to establish the matrilineal descent (the traditional definition of a Jew) of all the children it served. In the case of Louis and James C., a widowed father sought admittance of his two young sons. Correspondence between Home personnel and the JCEF relates in detail the interviews done with the father, the two children, older children, a neighbor, and even the rabbi who allegedly circumcised the boys. Eventually, the two candidates were not accepted since evidence of matrilineal descent proved inconclusive, and the rabbi had no record or memory of their circumcisions.²⁹ However in a later case of a farmer whose children were found to be not Jewish, B'nai B'rith District Seven compassionately loaned the man twenty-eight dollars until his crop came in.³⁰

The Second Era: Producing Middle-Class Jews

Beginning in the 1880s, the Home began to accept more children from rural areas and small towns because of the settlement patterns of the eastern European Jews who became its primary clients. In order to reduce population on the Atlantic seaboard, migration of these Jews to southern rural areas was encouraged by formal efforts, such as the Galveston Plan that was executed through the combined efforts of the Industrial Removal Office in the United States and the Jewish Territorial Organization in Great Britain. This program attempted the systematic diversion of Jews from New York to the port of Galveston to encourage settlement in smaller communities away from the northeast. Wholesalers such as the Baltimore Bargain House also encouraged peddlers to reach southern towns in which many later established stores.³¹

Although immigrants spread throughout the southern states, New Orleans soon boasted the largest Jewish population in the

Home Boys (top) and Girls Calisthenics, c. 1890.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)

*Typing class (top) and Boy's Carpentry Shop, Newman School, c. 1905.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)*

*Home Hebrew Class (top) and Dining Room, c. 1890.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)*

region.³² In fact, *The Jewish South*, a newspaper published for a few years during this period, moved its operations from Atlanta to New Orleans because closer proximity to its largest readership cut production costs.³³

Jewish orphanages of this era tried to Americanize children by cutting them off from what some regarded as the polluting influences of Old World ideas. According to the view of child welfare administrators, hard work and strict discipline would provide a sound moral foundation and inculcate the values needed to succeed. As historian Gary Pollster observes of this perspective, "For the good of the nation, for the good of the native Jews, and for their own good they needed to be changed. . . . [They] had to adopt middle-class attitudes and behavior. They had to relinquish their Yiddish cultural beliefs, their Yiddish language, and their religious Orthodoxy and adopt Reform Judaism and American culture."³⁴

At the Home as in most Jewish institutions, this led to a rigid, military-like environment intended to inculcate discipline, self reliance, and respect for one's superiors. Judge Louis Yarrut, who lived at the Home from 1906 to 1909, recalled, "In military fashion we marched to meals and sat at long tables. We marched to every undertaking. We slept in long dormitories with the cots lined up in endless array."³⁵

That the vast majority of Jewish immigration consisted of family groupings may have propelled the Home's rapid growth. Females composed an estimated 45 percent of Jewish immigrants of this era. Presumably most of these women were married or soon would be. The high rates of death from disease and work accidents among large numbers of poor immigrants produced many poor widows unable to care for their children.³⁶ As previously noted, the vast majority of "orphans" had at least one living parent. The parent or guardian placed the child in the institution because of poverty, illness, or other hardships. This was true in Jewish and gentile orphanages throughout the country. Such children were generally known as half-orphans until the term fell out of use and was replaced by inmates or, later, wards.

A Boy's Life: Sam Pulitzer's Story

For Jewish families that fell behind in the struggle for prosperity, orphanages often became a primary line of defense. Parents were forced to give up their children until they could afford to keep them. Sam Pulitzer, who later owned the self-proclaimed "world's largest neckwear company," was committed to the Home in a way common to the period from the 1880s until the massive flow of immigration stopped in the 1920s. After his father's business in a tiny Louisiana farming community failed, Pulitzer's dad brought his thirteen-member family to New Orleans in search of work. No jobs could be found, and the father disappeared and was assumed dead. Pulitzer's impoverished mother surrendered her three young sons to the Home, while keeping a daughter who was too young to be separated from her mother, two sons who held low-paying jobs, and an older daughter who worked alongside her mother to help support the family. (The father eventually turned up, having faked his own death to avoid creditors.)

The experience of Sam Pulitzer, chronicled in his autobiography *Dreams Can Come True*, provides a vivid picture of life in the Home between 1912 and 1918. The Home reached its peak population of 171 children during Pulitzer's residency.³⁷ He described his first experience of the Home in this way:

"Good morning, Mrs. Pulitzer," said the old lady who opened the door. "We can take the children from here." We watched as Mama and Mena boarded the streetcar. It pulled on down the street and Mama was gone. . . . For two days we saw no one but stout, austere ladies in white uniforms. We were in the orphanage infirmary for observation; they had to make sure we were healthy enough to mingle with the other kids.

Once out of isolation and installed in the big dormitory for boys, Pulitzer found himself in a small city of children run as tightly as a military camp.

In the dorm and throughout the orphanage we all had our assigned jobs to do, and we started from the moment the matron rang her brass bell at 5:30 every morning. Some swept the sidewalks, some raked the yard, some worked in the garden, and

some mopped the floors. We were each responsible for making our own bed, tidying up around our lockers, and everything had to be done by 6:30 a.m. in time for inspection.

With us lined up at the foot of our beds, the superintendent with his starched white shirt and shiny black shoes would pass in review. We would all stand tall and straight, trying not to move, trying not to attract attention, for if his eyes rested on you for more than a second, you knew something was wrong. The more he looked at you, the more you slumped and wished you could crawl right through the cracks in the wooden floor. I will never forget his name—Mr. Volmer—or his face. He would get real close and just scuff the tops of your shoes with his, an indication that they were not clean enough. If your hair needed cutting, he announced it to everyone, telling them that you had bangs and curls like a girl, and better report to the barber before the day was out. Actually, he was a very kind man, but a firm disciplinarian, and every boy knew that he had better toe the line.

Use of older children as monitors to enforce rules was a common practice and sometimes produced abuses.³⁸ The Home's version included a roving band called "The Seven Soap Scrubbers."

Those boys were the menace and fear of our early years. Appointed by the superintendent to discipline the younger boys who broke minor rules, they came for you at any time of the day or night. You never knew when you were going to be singled out and dragged to the showers. They would rough you up some, then take a bar of soap, rub it all over your teeth, and shove it in your mouth. We Pulitzer boys rarely broke the rules!³⁹

Pulitzer's residence in the Home occurred as the second phase of its history waned and its leadership began to consider, if not implement, the new progressive ideas. In 1909, Superintendent Chester Teller instituted the Golden City plan, which board president Joseph Kohn described as a "self-government plan with its rewards and punishments depending upon conduct, decreed by the members themselves, thus encouraging correct standards and at the same time illustrating the actual workings of a municipality, so that children get a real understanding of the community

Home Boys in Class, probably at Newman School, c. 1905 (top).
A "Golden City Family," c. 1910.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Golden City, c. 1910 (top).
"Our Big Brothers," c. 1910.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)

Boy Scouts, Home Troop, c. 1915 (top).
Newman School Boy's Band, c. 1905.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)

life they are ultimately to enter."⁴⁰ Home children still marched to school in formation, although they now wore street clothes rather than asylum uniforms. All children received music lessons, and the piccolo-playing Pulitzer marched with the school band in the city's annual Mardi Gras parade. In 1918, his final year of residence, courses such as business English, and commercial arithmetic were added so that students might have access to entry-level office jobs.⁴¹ Pulitzer reports his excitement at taking carpentry shop and learning to work in a garden, all skills that children might have learned in any asylum, although not necessarily in the company of an overwhelming population of affluent children.

By establishing the Newman Manual Training School instead of sending children out to public schools, the Home's directors and management seemed to have put extraordinary emphasis on preparing the children to blend into a successful environment. Pulitzer recalls that he became a close school friend of his classmates Dede and Red Newman, who were grandsons of the wealthy founder and were driven to school each day in a chauffeured limousine.

In 1918 the Home was still a closed environment. Pulitzer attended the institutional synagogue and joined clubs inside the asylum, a practice that had become popular in the late nineteenth century as social welfare commentators emphasized the role of play in children's lives.⁴² He rarely left the grounds of the asylum except to attend school, and the weekly allowance each child received had to be spent in the institutional store. This was probably meant to be a lesson in middle-class money management, and, indeed, Pulitzer hoarded his candy purchases in order to make them last a whole week. Another use for the money was practical if unsanctioned. He and several others would pool their spare change and boost the tallest, strongest boy over the brick fence. This boy's job was to run two blocks to Spaul's Sandwich Shop, buy a huge sandwich for ten cents and climb back over the wall to share it with the others.

Food at the Home was scarce, even before America's entry into World War I brought rationing to the outer world. The

superintendent's birthday was a rare chance for a big outdoor picnic with huge watermelons. In general, beans grown in orphanage gardens were the staple food. Meals were as regimented as other aspects of asylum life. Each child was assigned a seat at a long rectangular table where a Big Brother or Big Sister, age twelve or thirteen, would spoon out the portions. Showing up late meant missing a meal.⁴³

The unvarying routine of work and school was punctuated by organized sports such as baseball and basketball. "Sports were the lifeblood of our daily activity, and we developed muscles early," Pulitzer comments. The owner of the Pelican baseball team occasionally took the boys to play in Pelican Park, a thrilling experience for Pulitzer. Unfortunately, he left the Home just prior to the 1919 establishment of Bay St. Louis, a summer camp created by JCEF. The camp offered two weeks of rugged camping, play, and sports for the boys, followed by two weeks for the girls. For almost three decades, Bay St. Louis camp served as the Home children's most eagerly anticipated experience.

In Pulitzer's day, group activities were mandatory, and "there was no going off alone to brood or feel sorry for yourself," Pulitzer says. The Big Brothers or Big Sisters were expected to look after younger children, and, in fact, Pulitzer became so attached to his Big Brother, Max Tobias, that he stayed in contact with him for sixty years. However, when a child became truly overwhelmed by homesickness or other sadness, a teacher always seemed to notice but did not indulge. Recalled Pulitzer, "They talked to us like adults, reasoning through our problems, giving us alternatives, and pointing out the bright side of the situation. I learned to be very self-sufficient."⁴⁴

Although many institutions tried to reinforce middle-class values during this period, there is some evidence that Jewish orphanages as a group were more dedicated to promoting the careers of their most talented charges. Child welfare expert Ludwig Bernstein commented in 1906 that "Jewish institutions have a higher conception of their educational aims for their wards than some non-Jewish institutions."⁴⁵ The Home's expectations were probably at the highest end of the spectrum.⁴⁶ For the most part,

Jewish children were not being trained to be house servants or factory workers, but rather given the means to become genteel entrepreneurs, independent crafts workers, clerks, and other respectable members of the bourgeoisie. In his 1918 *President's Annual Report*, Joseph Kohn stated, "Modern sanitary and refining living conditions, healthful development, exercises in self-government and club practices; moral religious training; practical insight into family life by the Big Brother and Big Sister method; above all a liberal education in a good school—have lifted the orphan child into a loftier sphere and have awakened in him new aspirations, created new hopes for a higher and better life."⁴⁷

The Third Era: The Home as Family

The sealed-off institution described by Pulitzer was coming under increasing fire within the child welfare community. During the late Victorian era the emergence of psychology and social work, which identified a child's developmental needs, gradually led to the consensus that institutional life often made children less fit to enter society. As early as 1899, the National Conference of Charities and Corrections declared subsidized and foster care to be the preferred methods of caring for dependent children. In January 1909 the seminal White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children recommended that homes not be broken up for reasons of poverty but only because of immorality or lack of sufficient care.⁴⁸ During the next three decades, the social welfare movement gradually encouraged the closure of orphanages and the substitution of a new system.

At the beginning of this debate, a number of prominent Jewish institutions argued for the superiority of their own homelike surroundings as opposed to the harsh conditions experienced by some children in foster care. As late as 1909, Superintendent Fleischman of the Jewish Foster Home of Philadelphia observed, "We, too, believe that poverty alone should not disrupt the family circle, but unfortunately poverty and vice are close neighbors and a mother's devotion is no invulnerable shield against a bad environment."⁴⁹ As Hacsí notes, a number of Jewish institutions also resisted the growth of the popular "cottage system" in which

children were placed in a cluster of small detached houses, each overseen by a houseparent, on land usually located in open or rural areas. In a joint statement at the National Conference of Jewish Charities in 1909, the committee for dependent children used a generous dash of circular reasoning when it stated that the cottage plan was no doubt best, but since no Jewish asylums had attempted such a plan, it stands to reason that "Jewish institutions have never been institutions, but homes, and most worthily have Jewish ideals been fostered and prepared by them."⁵⁰ In 1910, of 117 cottage-based institutions that operated, none were Jewish. The Jewish Foster Home of Philadelphia, the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York, and CJOA all endorsed the cottage plan within a decade of the 1909 conference but only CJOA ever built such a facility.⁵¹

As new ideas about non-institutional care became rooted in child welfare philosophy, most Jewish agencies joined the stampede. Atlanta's Grand District Lodge of B'nai B'rith established the Hebrew Orphans' Home of Atlanta in 1889 but, as early as 1910, began to house children in private homes or to subsidize fatherless youngsters so their mothers could delay returning to work.⁵² By contrast, the board of the Home adhered to a firm position on the superiority of institutional care and stayed with that position until after World War II. In the period 1929 to 1940, institutionalized populations governed by twenty-two other Jewish childcare agencies dropped every year. The Home population of sixty-five children remained steady between 1930 and 1942, when outplacement cut the population to thirty-one at the time of the Home's closure. However, this method was rejected heartily in the 1920s and 1930s, when the communal embrace of New Orleans Jews in the town's best neighborhood was considered to be the most efficacious environment for those unable to live with natural parents. Taking the Home's children away from their lovely surroundings and the advantages of Newman School did not seem advantageous to their futures.

By the time Leon Volmer, the kind but firm disciplinarian so vividly recalled by Sam Pulitzer, retired in 1925, the Home and its forward-looking board were well on the way to incorporating

other progressive practices. In 1922, the Home attracted as its field director the renowned Edward Lashman, former superintendent of CJOA, who claimed a solid gold reputation for moving Jewish institutions into the Progressive Era and finding the money to make it happen.⁵³ The recruitment of Lashman and his elevation to superintendent in 1926 is a good example of the way in which the Home moved in tandem with nationwide trends but also kept to its own road.⁵⁴ Lashman's first priority was to raise the Home's profile among southern Jews in order to increase the base of fundraising for projects such as a new nursery wing. (One letter written in 1928 tells the appealing story of "Little Sadie" who lived in the Home since age two and had just graduated from nursing school. The letter ends with a gentle reminder to send an annual pledge of seventeen dollars.)⁵⁵

By the following year, the Home's thirty thousand dollar deficit had been erased and another twenty-five thousand dollars had been raised to improve the infirmary. Ongoing efforts to raise money from regional supporters and successful alumni allowed management to upgrade the physical environment in ways that reflected current theories of child development without sacrificing the institution itself. It certainly helped that the Home had already put in new facilities and eliminated its deficit on the cusp of the Depression when its supporters had far less cash to contribute.

In essence, Lashman and the board aimed to produce the best possible cottage and foster care systems under the roof of one cavernous forty-year-old structure. The atmosphere was made as much like a family home as possible. Long rows of dining tables were replaced with scattered round tables at which children sat in family-style groupings. Siblings of different sexes could eat together daily. In 1924, reflecting new sensitivities as well as the fact that most of its wards had at least one living parent, the institutional name was changed from Jewish Orphans Home to Jewish Children's Home.⁵⁶

Children were given a level of freedom roughly approximating a good foster home. The custom of numbering each child was discontinued, along with the institutional store and scout troops. Children purchased items in neighborhood shops and were

encouraged to join outside scout troops or other clubs. The large dormitories were subdivided into small, private rooms.⁵⁷ The Home's synagogue was closed, and the children were sent to up-scale congregations nearby.

Tedious annual reports were replaced with the monthly *Golden City Messenger*, a combination student newspaper and fundraising organ. In its pages, a former Home child marveled at the changes. "Gone are the pitiful little uniforms, the close-cropped hair, the marching like culprits to and from school with their little tin lunch buckets. Gone is the experience of an orphan."⁵⁸ After another fundraising campaign, a nursery wing was added. Rose Meadows, who came to the Home at eighteen months old, says her first memory is of waking up and being taken out of her white crib by one of the nannies. "We had so much loving from them."⁵⁹

After Lashman's sudden death in 1929, Assistant Superintendent Harry L. Ginsburg assumed that position and held it until the Home closed in 1946. Under the management of Uncle Harry, as he was called, the community supplied so many of the children's needs that the Depression affected them far less than it did the average child. Downtown merchants supplied free clothing, while food from local groceries was plentiful. A staff dietician planned the meals and local doctors and dentists provided excellent health care.⁶⁰ As the Home moved toward the end of its history, a smaller group of children received the mixture of responsibilities, education, and activities that alumni of that time directly credit with their own success.

Pulitzer's view of work and discipline at the Home contrasts sharply with the description given by alumni of the 1930s and 1940s. Before the Progressive Era and the invention of many labor-saving devices, a large population of children was useful in the day-to-day maintenance of the facility. Administrators also saw this work and the harsh disciplinary rules as a means of keeping the children out of trouble. However, during the last decades of the Home, the population was smaller and the tasks were aimed at sharing communal responsibilities as in any family. The value of labor was taught, but only as an addendum to hard work

*Superintendent Edward Lashman (left) and his successor, Harry L. Ginsburg.
(Courtesy of the Jewish Children's Regional Service, New Orleans.)*

during the school day. "At 12 and above the children were given chores to do," says Rose Meadows. "For cooking duty, you came home from school, changed clothes, and the cook would tell you what she needed — preparing vegetables, shelling black-eyed peas, peeling shrimp, etc. . . . At an older age, we learned to hand wash and iron clothes. The next year we had new dresses and the school clothes became yard clothes."⁶¹

Jennie Schneider adds, "All the while, [there was] a carefully structured day; older children often helped the younger ones. Every resident had rotating communal tasks such as office duty, serving as kitchen and dining room helpers, etc. Simple and basic pleasures. Simple and basic responsibilities."⁶²

The rules were strict, but they contrasted sharply with the lock-down era described by Pulitzer. Whitehead recalls, "Teenagers will talk over the telephone! However, no telephone was made available to the Home kids; I used to lift the screen and crawl through a window to use one of the phones in an administrator's office after hours. He figured it out, I believe, for he always left the window unlocked."⁶³ Tacitly, the administrator seemed to accept that socializing with friends at school did more to inculcate middle-class values than the rigid adherence to discipline used twenty years before.

Some of the Home kids still felt different from the wealthy children at Newman school. "These children had unlimited clothes allowed to them," says Albert Fox, "while I was limited to three sets—yard, school and Sunday school, and had to keep them all in a small locker."⁶⁴ Yet many students at Newman saw those differences from another angle. "I sort of envied them," says Elise Silverman Blumenfeld, who attended Newman in the mid-1940s. "They had all these children their own age to play with."⁶⁵ Newman graduate Catherine C. Kahn, daughter of a prominent lawyer, adds simply, "We didn't pity them. We looked up to them"⁶⁶ During her years at Newman, she dated Whitehead, who was president of the Jewish fraternity Tau Beta Phi. His friend Morris Skalka, another Home resident, was president of the school honor society and captain of the football team.⁶⁷ "Socially, we Home kids were completely accepted in the community," says Whitehead. "The Newman experience was one of the finest educations available to anyone in the whole world; second to none."⁶⁸

Music was an integral part of life at Newman and the Home, as it had been for decades. Every child received musical training at school, while the most gifted were tutored privately at the Home. A ward's performance was a family affair. "When somebody had a recital everybody went," says Rose Meadows.⁶⁹ Area organizations provided access to free athletic and cultural events by hiring Home children as ushers. Pat Samuels, who lived at the Home from 1928 to 1942, remembers vividly the day that the New York Philharmonic visited the Newman School.⁷⁰

Outdoor spaces at the Home were filled with places to play and socialize. "The building was organized as a square formed by a two story boys dormitory on one side, a two story girls dorm on the opposite side, a one story dining hall in the back where families ate breakfast, lunch and supper; and a two story front which held an infirmary, and office space for administrators," recalls Whitehead. "A large, rectangle inner courtyard [was] filled with gardens, a fish pond made by the Home kids, volleyball court, badminton court, swings, climbing bars for younger kids, parallel bars for older ones; plus a large backyard with baseball diamond, and swimming pool."

The indoor spaces were simple but comfortable. Two or three wards shared a bedroom that included lockers for their personal possessions. Each area had tables for doing homework or playing board games. There were radios for listening to shows such as "The Lone Ranger" and "Your Hit Parade."⁷¹ Jennie Ogden Schneider remembers "roller skating with our peers around-and-around the cement sidewalk under the porches . . . creative play-time in the pavilion where we wrote and acted out skits. [There were] bats in the attic which further jostled our creativity for who-can-top-this ghost stories."⁷²

Contact with siblings, friendships with peers, and bonding with the group were actively encouraged. Siblings could sit together at family-style tables. Friendships were forged that lasted through lifetimes. "We lived in dormitories together, walked to school together, played together," says Carol Hart, "I'm still in touch with some of those friends in places such as Houston and Oklahoma City."⁷³

Alumni of the Home have especially warm memories of going to summer camp. Children from the Home attended Bay St. Louis after it opened in 1919, but in the 1930s a coed group spent six weeks at the camp along with Jewish children from around the area. A summer at camp emphasized sports, rugged outdoor activities, and social gatherings that built teamwork. As befits a camp that served New Orleans children, food was nothing but the best. "We'd go crabbing all day long with big buckets and then have crab boils at night," says Whitehead's half-sister Lucille

Gilberstadt. "There was hot cocoa around the fire and milk that came off the train frozen and loaves of wonderful French bread brought in from the city."⁷⁴ Pictures show Home children posing in fashionable 1930s bathing suits.⁷⁵ "Summer camp was wonderful," says Gilberstadt. "The boys were in tents, and there was a big Victorian house with a wraparound screened porch where all the girls slept." She adds, "The last thing my brother [Charlie] said before he died was 'Bay St. Louis.'"⁷⁶

As the Home population declined, Ginsburg and the board showed willingness to be flexible about the special needs of parents. At first, the divorced working mother of Jennie Ogden Schneider and her twin sister Sarah Ogden Sweet paid a small weekly fee to have her children picked up from school, fed dinner, and brought home to sleep. During the war, the two Ogden girls became residents of the Home while their mother worked as an army nurse.⁷⁷ A man named Max E. contracted in 1920 to pay the Home the then considerable sum of twenty-five dollars per month for the maintenance of his children.⁷⁸ In another case, Ralph C. was given temporary shelter in the Home because his divorced mother (a former ward herself) was having an operation. The father was not willing to undertake care of the child, but contributed twenty-five dollars per month to his upkeep.⁷⁹ One woman whose children were to enter the Home left a bequest of three thousand dollars.⁸⁰ Apparently this was her way of protecting her children's future and compensating the Home.

Most parents who paid money to place their children in the Home did so because they could not be physically present for the children or could not create a home-like environment by means of hired care. In this sense, the Home assumed some of the aspects of a highly subsidized Jewish boarding school to which parents entrusted their children because they would be more likely to thrive at the Home than elsewhere.

Another picture during this period comes from a 1942 survey of the Home by the Child Welfare League for the Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds. The report contains an exhaustive description of the physical plant as well as a statistical comparison with other Jewish children's homes

nationwide. One finding was that nearly three-quarters of referrals to the Home came from B'nai B'rith lodges in outlying cities.

The report employed intelligence testing as one measure of the Home quality. "The present population shows some shifting away from the average toward both the borderline and the superior groups. Proportionally, the Home now has more children of borderline intelligence and both superior and very superior intelligence than in 1933." Home kids were actually getting smarter according to these measures.⁸¹ The reason for this is unknown, but it could be that the children of 1942, many of whom had entered the Home as small children and had their entire education at Newman, had a verbal and cultural background that allowed them to do well on this type of test. In any case, the scores were a bellwether of the success these children so often achieved in later life.

During the 1920s, creation of a Big Brother and Big Sister program (which assumed the name of the very different peer-mentoring program used in the pre-Progressive Era) was yet another effort to put Home children together with affluent New Orleans Jews. With luck the children could absorb that aura of success and perhaps gain valuable contacts. The results varied according to the child and the family. Morris Skalka, who lived in the Home from 1936 to 1944, remembers that his involvement with the program was limited to the occasional dinner in the family home.⁸² Jimmy Whitehead formed a closer relationship with Solis Seifert and his wife Helen, whom he remembers with gratitude. "He stood up with me at my wedding and paid for the pre-wedding reception. I would never ask for such a thing—he just did it."⁸³

Jewish and non-Jewish staff provided role models. Medical students from nearby Tulane often exchanged room and board for supervising after-school activities and sleeping in the building. Teachers-in-training and social work students were often present. "I'm still in touch with Janice Rubin, who helped me with homework and encouraged me," says Carol Hart. Rubin was the daughter of a prominent lawyer and a student at Newcomb

College. Hart observes, "The Home helped these students by giving them room and board during the Depression. They put us to bed and helped us with homework."⁸⁴

The mostly African American household staff, almost always addressed by their first names in the common practice of that time, was also on hand to nurture and support. The late Ralph Beerman, who lived in the Home from 1924 to 1942, recalled a cook named Lottie who slipped him extra cookies and broke down in tears when he and his brother stopped in for a visit during World War II. "I still see a picture of that response," he said. "She was like a surrogate mother to us."⁸⁵

Helen Gold Haymon, who was a toddler when she entered the Home, remembers a nanny named Henrietta whom everyone called Mamie. "Even on her days off she would take me on the streetcar with her home to her people," Haymon recalled at a Newman School class reunion in 2004. "She was the only mother I've ever known."⁸⁶ Jimmy Whitehead and Morris Skalka still have fond memories of going fishing at summer camp with the Home's beloved groundskeeper.⁸⁷

Partly because staff included an increasing number of non-Jews, religious observance at the Home could vary. In one example, Morris Skalka explains that Home children usually went back for lunch as other students did, but on rainy days lunches were sent over so the Home children wouldn't have to get wet. "It was Passover, so they gave us ham on matzo," he chuckles.⁸⁸

The true mettle of the Home as a vehicle for upward mobility was shown in its guidance and financial backing for wards who wanted to pursue higher education. By the 1920s, children at the Home were increasingly urged to pursue higher education degrees in part because Newman School had become a college preparatory institution that attracted both academically gifted students and New Orleans' social elite. Some were helped by jobs or direct aid provided by the Home. Helen Gold Haymon lived in the Home until she left for college at Louisiana State University in 1935. Four years later, she returned to the Home as a resident counselor while studying for her master's degree at nearby Tulane University.⁸⁹

When Lucille Gilberstadt entered Louisiana State University, five other Home kids, a substantial portion of those graduating from its population of sixty-five, attended the same college. "The Home had a loan program for education. Later, you would repay in some form dollar for dollar or with a contribution." She borrowed \$200 from the program. Together with a \$30 per month stipend from an uncle in New Orleans, she could afford college expenses and even sorority membership. "I was on my own, but I went back to people at the Home for a feeling of caring, comfort, being secure."⁹⁰ When Gilberstadt needed lodging during her graduate studies in social work at Tulane, the Home gave her both a regular job as nighttime counselor and a summer job as a camp counselor at Bay St. Louis. "They were concerned about you. They wanted to know what was going on." She adds, "Uncle Harry had a feeling you would find your way. . . . When I was getting married, I went to Uncle Harry. He said, 'Are you asking me for advice or telling me?' I said I was telling him, and he said, 'Well, then—congratulations.'"⁹¹ Gilberstadt married a clinical psychologist and worked for twenty-four years as a social worker.

Home children were encouraged to be aware of what was going on in the world they would enter as independent adults. Carol Hart remembers that Uncle Harry invited him to his home on Wednesdays to hear the radio program, "Town Meeting of the Air." Hart says, "That's where I got a feeling for current events." Hart later worked his way through college and law school as a sportswriter and eventually became assistant district attorney for New Orleans.⁹²

In 1940, Ginsburg hired Inge Friedlander, a German refugee who first ran the girls' side of the Home and ultimately took over more of its overall management as the health of the superintendent declined. The population of the Home had shrunk to thirty-one wards. At one point, a fundraising brochure made the group look much larger because some of the children's faces were cut and pasted on the cover photo more than once. When Ginsburg died in 1946, plans were already in place to close the Home and replace it with the Jewish Children's Regional Service, a social agency that provides financial and practical support to families

all over the South. Most of the remaining children were sent to relatives or other foster homes; a few went to CJOA. Whitehead spent his last years of high school living with his grown sister Marguerite.⁹³

While the new JCRS operated with little staff and no building, the facility was sold to the Jewish Federation of New Orleans for use as a community center. It served this purpose for more than a decade before it was torn down and replaced by a modern structure. When most of the Jewish community had moved away from the city, JCRS moved to an office in suburban Metairie, Louisiana.

Over a period of ninety-one years, the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans evolved from a nineteenth-century asylum for the victims of poverty and disease into the disciplinary force that Americanized wards before World War I and finally into a progressive environment that sought to be an institutional version of the best possible family. In each era, the Home's leadership clearly sought to give its children the goal of career success and the tools to reach it.

Surviving wards interviewed by this and other authors praise the institution for teaching them teamwork, persistence, and high aspirations. In high school, according to Catherine C. Kahn, students such as Whitehead were known as "Typical Home Kid Overachievers."⁹⁴ Later they went on to be lawyers, social workers, psychologists, teachers, and other professionals.

Agrees Pat Samuels, "All of us were successful. We knew the value of saving. We knew the value of helping others. It was the best thing that ever happened to us."⁹⁵ Jennie Ogden Schneider adds that the Home was "an institution at the vanguard of social welfare with clear direction, positive expectations and concrete objectives in the interest of its young charges. . . . There is a Jewish saying that our successes are directly related to standing on the shoulders of those who preceded us. My own personal successes have come from standing on some very broad shoulders, including those of my mentors at JCH. I am indebted to them"⁹⁶

 NOTES

¹ James Whitehead, written interview, July 24, 2004, in possession of author.

² Souvenir booklet for the Home's Diamond Jubilee (n.p., 1930), 29 (hereafter cited as Diamond Jubilee Booklet).

³ Diamond Jubilee Booklet, 29. Such was also the case in the Jewish community of Knoxville, Tennessee, in part because the individual society ladies had tired of having those individuals and their representatives applying to them for direct aid. It was simply too much to have a parade of indigents on their doorsteps. Emily Strasburger, *Beth El Temple 80th Anniversary Pageant* (Knoxville, TN, February 15, 1947.)

⁴ Joseph Magner, *The Story of the Jewish Orphans Home of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1914), 1.

⁵ The Jewish Foster Home of Philadelphia was founded during the same year.

⁶ Exodus 22:21–23: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise—for if they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry—My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." The Holy Scriptures: According to the Masoretic Text (Philadelphia, 1948.)

⁷ Reena Sigman Friedman, *These Are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States* (Hanover, NH, 1994), 6.

⁸ Magner, *Jewish Orphans Home*, 1–2. The state legislature gave this appropriation before the passage of laws mandating state support of destitute children, which began to appear in other parts of the country in the latter part of the century. See also Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 4.

⁹ Magner, *Jewish Orphans Home*, 5.

¹⁰ In the early 1890s, the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society of New York, previously led by a Board of Lady Managers, turned over administrative power to Samuel Levy, a young lawyer who soon relegated the ladies to "honorary directresses." Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 13.

¹¹ Timothy Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphans and Poor Children in America* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 86.

¹² Magner, *Jewish Orphans Home*, 10. Mark Bauman notes with regard to another contemporaneous southern orphanage, the Hebrew Orphans' Home of Atlanta: "The movement toward professionalism was part of the larger thrust toward 'scientific charity.'" See Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta, 1928–1948," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 53 (2001): 104, n. 3.

¹³ Magner, *Jewish Orphans Home*, 10.

¹⁴ Scott Langston, "Interaction and Identity: Jews and Christians in Nineteenth Century New Orleans," *Southern Jewish History* 3 (2000): 111.

¹⁵ Jewish Children's Regional Service, *The JCRS Story: 150 Years of Service to Children* (film script) (Metairie, LA, 2005) part 6.75 (hereafter cited as *150 Years of Service*.)

¹⁶ Bryan Edward Stone, "Edward Goldberg and the *Texas Jewish Herald*: Changing Coverage and Blended Identity," *Southern Jewish History* 7 (2004): 76, 78.

¹⁷ Hacsí, *Second Home*, 191.

¹⁸ Diamond Jubilee Booklet, 24.

¹⁹ Rudolph R. Reeder, *How Two Hundred Children Live and Learn* (1909), 77.

²⁰ On the political status of this international men's organization see Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany, NY, 1981).

²¹ Magner, *Jewish Orphans Home*, 6.

²² Diamond Jubilee Booklet, 29

²³ *Annual Report of the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans*, (New Orleans, 1901) Jewish Children's Regional Service Archive, Metairie, LA (hereafter cited as JCRS Archive.)

²⁴ Diamond Jubilee Booklet, 29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁶ Letters from B'nai B'rith admissions committee to social worker for JCEF, Tulane Special Collections, Collection 80, Box 11 (hereafter cited as TSC).

²⁷ Correspondence from Louis Leach & Sons to JCEF, 1927, TSC 80:11.

²⁸ Correspondence between Jewish Children's Home [JCH] director and B'nai B'rith District Seven president, TSC 80:11.

²⁹ The case was considered between May and July 1931. Correspondence from executive director Harry Ginsburg in 1931 originally questioned the boy's ethnic origin, so a letter was sent to Rabbi David Goldberg of New Orleans for a certified copy of a *brit milah*. He had no record and could not remember the event. The case eventually went to the Committee on Admissions and Discharges of B'nai B'rith District Seven, which refused admission. TSC, 80:16. It seems unlikely that this process was marred by ethnic elitism, as B'nai B'rith and the Home shared a clearly-defined mission to aid the Jewish population.

³⁰ JCEF correspondence, 1931, TSC 80:11.

³¹ Rachel A. Wise, "Guide to the Records of the Jewish Immigrant Information Bureau (Galveston, Texas)." Galveston immigration plan records, 1901-1920, American Jewish Historical Society (1999).

³² Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845-1915* (Philadelphia, 1978), appendix.

³³ Suzanne R. White, "Much Good in Small Places: A Study of *The Jewish South, 1878-1881*" (undergraduate honors thesis, University of Tennessee, 1982); Janice Rothschild Blumberg, "Rabbi Alphabet Browne: The Atlanta Years," *Southern Jewish History* 5 (2002): 1-42.

³⁴ Gary Pollster, *Inside Looking Out: The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum* (Detroit, 1990), 74.

³⁵ *A Century of Progress*, a booklet commemorating the Home's 100th anniversary, as quoted in Anne Rochell Konigsmark, *Isidore Newman School: 100 Years* (New Orleans, 2004), 32.

³⁶ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, 1991), 223.

³⁷ According to JCRS Archive, this peak number was reached in 1917. See also *150 Years of Service*, part 8.

³⁸ Hacsí, *Second Home*, 158.

³⁹ Sam Pulitzer with Larry Stuart, *Dreams Can Come True: The Inspiring Story of Samuel C. Pulitzer* (New Orleans, 1989).

⁴⁰ Joseph Kohn, *President's Annual Report, 1918* (hereafter cited as Kohn's Report), JCRS Archive.

⁴¹ Konigsmark, *Newman School*, 32.

⁴² One Jewish superintendent in New York reported proudly that more than 90 percent of the asylum's children belonged to asylum clubs. Hacsí, *Second Home*, 197.

⁴³ Pulitzer with Stuart, *Dreams Can Come True*, 8, 9

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-13.

⁴⁵ Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 52.

⁴⁶ For comparisons with other Jewish orphanages of this era, see Michael Aaronsohn, *Broken Lights* (Cincinnati, 1946), a memoir of growing up in the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of Baltimore; Nurith Zmora, "A Rediscovery of the Asylum: The Hebrew Orphan Asylum [Baltimore] through the lives of its first fifty orphans," *American Jewish History* 77 (1988): 452-475; Brad Trevathan, "The Hebrew Orphan Home of Atlanta" (honors thesis, Emory University, 1982).

⁴⁷ Kohn's Report, 1918

⁴⁸ Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 56-57.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵⁰ Hacsí, *Second Home*, 170.

⁵¹ Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 70.

⁵² Bauman, "Emergence of Jewish Social Service Agencies," 489.

⁵³ Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 118.

⁵⁴ Diamond Jubilee booklet, 20.

⁵⁵ Lashman claimed that the Home had a population of 153 children. Superintendent E. Lashman to Mr. and Mrs. L. Lipsitz, TSC, 80, 11. Numbers vary in other sources although it is clear that the Home's population was well over one hundred at a time when other institutions were being reduced or eliminated.

⁵⁶ Diamond Jubilee booklet.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁸ *Golden City Messenger*, (1929) 42, JCRS Archive.

⁵⁹ Rose Meadows, oral interview conducted by Alan Stein, March 19, 2004, Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, Utica, MS (hereafter cited as ISJL.)

⁶⁰ *150 Years of Service*.

⁶¹ Meadows interview.

⁶² Jennie Ogden Schneider speech before Jewish Children's Regional Service panel, March 19, 1995, 3, in possession of Jennie Ogden Schneider.

⁶³ Whitehead interview.

⁶⁴ Albert Fox, oral interview conducted by Alan Stein, March 19, 2004, ISJL.

⁶⁵ Konigsmark, *Newman School*, 34.

⁶⁶ Catherine C. Kahn, oral interview conducted by author, July 1–2, 2004, in author's possession.

⁶⁷ Whitehead interview.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Meadows interview.

⁷⁰ Pat Samuels, oral interview conducted by Alan Stein, March 19, 2004, ISJL.

⁷¹ Whitehead interview.

⁷² Schneider speech, 2.

⁷³ Carol Hart, oral interview conducted by author, December 6, 2004, in author's possession.

⁷⁴ Lucille Gilberstadt, oral interview conducted by author, August 10, 2004, in author's possession.

⁷⁵ Jewish Children's Regional Service, Annual Regional Board Meeting booklet, January 13, 2002. JCRS Archive.

⁷⁶ Gilberstadt interview.

⁷⁷ TSC, 80:11, 16.

⁷⁸ Letter from JCEF social worker to Harry Ginsburg, TSC, 80:11.

⁷⁹ Letter from JCEF lawyer to Harry Ginsburg, TSC, 80:11.

⁸⁰ Letter from JCEF lawyer to Harry Ginsburg, TSC, 80:11.

⁸¹ *Report of the Survey of the Jewish Children's Home of New Orleans, Louisiana, made under arrangements with Child Welfare League and Council of Jewish Federations* (New York, 1942).

⁸² Morris Skalka, oral interview conducted by author, August 2, 2004, in author's possession.

⁸³ Whitehead interview.

⁸⁴ Hart interview.

⁸⁵ "Former orphanage residents reunite," [New Orleans] *Times Picayune*, March 19, 2004.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Skalka interview. See also Whitehead interview.

⁸⁸ Skalka interview.

⁸⁹ *150 Years of Service*, part 7.

⁹⁰ Gilberstadt interview.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Hart interview.

⁹³ Whitehead interview.

⁹⁴ Kahn interview.

⁹⁵ Samuels interview.

⁹⁶ Schneider speech, 5.