

Stories for 100 years of Hollywood Temple Beth El Part 2

This is the link for the recorded version:

<https://youtu.be/s3hquHkG9ms>

This is the link for the interview with Roger Rosen, grandfather of founder, Morris Rosen, and memories of earlier times at HTBE

<https://youtu.be/cM5w5Cubmrk>



The Main Sanctuary with nursery wing



The Main Sanctuary



The Chapel



The newer wing, built 1972.

By 1952, the members of Hollywood Temple Beth El built the magnificent edifice at the corner of N Crescent Heights and Fountain, in the heart of what would become the City of West Hollywood.

It was designed by noted architect, Harry Hiller, and it has since been on the tour route of the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles for its unique design. It seems to have been influenced by artist depictions of the ancient Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem

The structure also houses three sets of stained glass windows depicting the twelve tribes. The large windows in the Main Sanctuary were crafted by Francis J. Dunham in 1967. The most recent set, on the doors to the sanctuary lobby, were designed by Joe Young, architect of the Holocaust Memorial in Pan-Pacific Park.

Over the course of the years there were many unusual and interesting individuals who were involved in the congregation. I am not going into the Rabbinic leadership at this point, but the lay leadership. Of the Rabbis, since the earliest years as noted Part 1, were such as Rabbi Julian White, Jacob Ott, Joseph Wagner, Gilbert Kollin, for example. Rabbi Wagner was perhaps the fondest remembered of the Rabbis here, and a bas relief image of him was placed in the sanctuary lobby in his memory.

Here is just a skimming of some people whom I got to know during my main tenure here as full time Rabbi (1990-1996) and then again, on a part-time basis, 2014 to present,

For example, in our last years, we had a wonderful nursery school which was run at the time by Harriet Levins (and years before by Barbara Drotow). I had a chance to meet with one of the parents who was just beginning to make her way to popularity, the self-help guru, Marianne Williamson, who ran, if you recall, in the last presidential primaries as a Democratic candidate.

One of my last acts at HTBE, before I went in to the education field, was to convince noted star of both Broadway(Barnum), Israeli cinema(Kuni Lemel), and the Yiddish

Theater(The Megillah of Itzik Menger), Mike Burstyn, to serve as our High Holy Days cantor, even though I was no longer officiating.

John Ritter- from 3's Company- would come here- not to pray-but to play- Bingo.

Shelley Winters- would come by for a garage sale

Roy Doliner-was a young actor who was involved while I was here in working with us on activities for other young people in the entertainment community—as far as I know, he went back to New York-he didn't enjoy LA- and since ended up in Rome, where he has become known as an expert on secret stories hidden in the Sistine Chapel.

Our last official Cohen and great reader for our High Holy Day services, Aubrey Morris.

This from his obituary in the Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/jul/16/aubrey-morris>

Aubrey Morris obituary

Stalwart character actor who appeared as Mr Deltoid in A Clockwork Orange and as one of the gruesome locals in The Wicker Man



📷 Aubrey Morris as Leslie Milton in ITV's Catweazle. Photograph: ITV/Rex Features

In 1957, the character actor Aubrey Morris, who has died aged 89, was praised by Kenneth Tynan for his “mimetic cunning ... wreathed in cringing smiles”. Adept at the vaguely camp and suggestively sinister, Morris always left an unconventional stamp on even the smallest, and seemingly conventional, roles. Small and rotund, with gleaming eyes, and occasionally

He was from a family of actors and several would attend services here with him. He was so much nicer and sweeter than the characters he portrayed.

When you're a rabbi you get to do some interesting funeral stories also , and we never want to tell tales out of class. I did get an OK to mention this one from the son to tell this one.

I was called on to do a funeral for Esther Melnick Teitelbaum and her nephew told me about her being a very successful attorney who in her day was the first woman to plead a case in front of the United states Supreme Court .

After the funeral he asked me to go over to a crypt of her child who had died in infancy. He asked me to make an El Moleh prayer for the child.

He then pointed out to me right next to her was the crypt of Bugsy Siegel of Las Vegas fame and the mob .well interesting story. He didn't want to mention before the funeral,

because I said it would have been awkward , but she was the attorney for Al Capone, Bugsy Siegel, Meyer Lansky and quite a lot of others. As I said, we come across some very famous people with some interesting backgrounds.! The full account is available at Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Hiding-Plain-Sight-True-Crime/dp/0999351931> by Robert and Carol Teitelbaum

Some very significant personages:

Anatole Ponve (actually before my time, but a tale that must be told) -here is a name that is not well known, but really should be!

This was in the footnote to a very unusual book called The Fugu Plan which was written by Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, who had served as the United States naval chaplain based in Japan in the '70s. During World War Two, the Japanese very much believed the Nazi propaganda about Jews controlling everything; they had heard about the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and went about sending spies to the United states to find the Rabbis in charge. They call this the fugu plan based on the famous Japanese delicacy, the fugu fish, which is highly poisonous but, if treated correctly, is one of the greatest delicacies on earth .The Japanese were sure that Jews were like the fugu fish; if you treated the Jew correctly you could enjoy the benefits of the Jew without getting poisoned. One of the interesting figures that came up in Rabbi Tokayer's research was Anatole Ponve. This is the footnote:

ANATOLE PONVE was in the United States when the war with Japan broke out. (His wife was trapped in the Philippines where she was interned as an enemy national until the war ended.) Ponve returned to Japan after the war. He was instrumental in organizing the Jewish Community Center in Tokyo and in helping the refugees emigrate from Shanghai in the late 1940s. Ponve later returned to California where he became president of the **Hollywood Temple Beth El**. He died in Los Angeles in 1969.

How did he get from Japan to HTBE?

Here is a backgrounder from a Jewish Telegraph Agency release:

<https://www.jta.org/archive/around-the-jewish-world-tolerance-respect-for-tradition-hallmarks-of-jews-living-in-japan>

The Jewish Community of Japan, in Tokyo, was established March 21, 1953, founded by merchant Jews primarily from the Chinese cities of Harbin and Shanghai.

“The criteria to be a member was to be able to speak Russian, play poker and drink vodka,” remembers former community president Ernie Salomon, a Tokyo resident since 1950.

One of their distinguished guests at one time was our member, The actor Edward G. Robinson once called the center saying, “I need a minyan,” recalls Bernard Valier, who spent 17 years in Japan starting in 1953.

The founder of Tokyo’s organized Jewish community was a Russian textile businessman, Anatole Ponve, who established the Kobe synagogue in 1937.

During the early 1940s, Ponve was among those who mobilized a massive effort to take care of Jewish refugees from Europe.

As I mentioned in Part 1, Edward G Robinson, loyal supporter of HTBE, made sure to find a minyan to say Kaddish for a Yahrzeit wherever he went.

Note the reference to Jew settling in Harbin, China, 1st. It was as far from Mother Russia that one could go, and that is where the Tsar sent Jews, with the promise of freedom from oppression if they would develop this border region with China. One of those was Anatole Ponve, whose father had been drafted into the Tsar's army and had already settled in the far east]

Here is his amazing story- in a nutshell, from the USHMM

Anatole Ponve (born Anatole Ponevejsky) was born on January 7, 1900 in the Siberian city of Irkutsk. In the 1920s, he and his brothers David and Leo moved to Harbin, Manchuria, where they began a business of importing woolens from Japan.



In 1935, Ponevejsky went to Japan to run the exports side of the business... moved to Kobe He organized the Ashkenazi Jewish community of 25 families, renting a building on Yamamoto-Dori Street that housed a synagogue and community center.

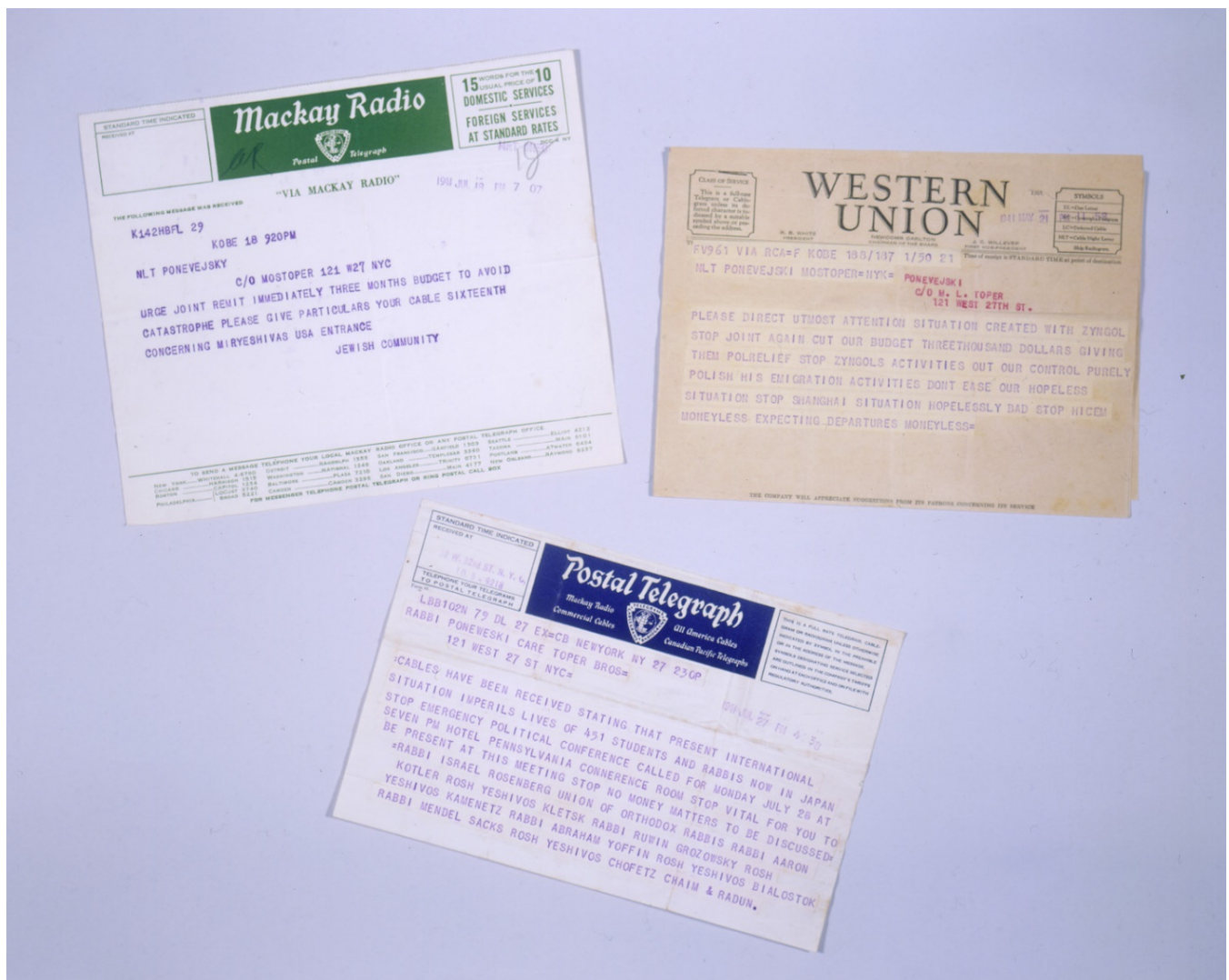
In 1940 and 1941, over two thousand Polish Jewish refugees arrived in Kobe. The entire Kobe Jewish community, spearheaded by Ponevejsky, his brother-in-law, Moise Moiseeff and Leo Hanin, coordinated a massive refugee relief effort and successfully persuaded Japanese authorities to issue permits to extend the stay of refugees in Kobe. The communal organization, now known by its telegraphic acronym JEWCOM, also sent money for ship fares for refugees who were stranded in Vladivostok. When their funds ran low, they appealed to the JDC in New York for added money so that they could continue their relief efforts unabated.



(Poneve is seated, third from left of photo)

Ponevejsky left Kobe for the United States in April 1941 to attend to medical problems.

Gita and the two girls planned to follow Anatole shortly thereafter. While living with his cousin Gregory Toper in New York, Ponevejsky continued trying to find visas for the Polish refugees still in Japan, and worked with the JDC to continue funding for the relief efforts. In the meantime, Gita and her two daughters ..., became stranded in Manila following the American entry into World War II. Unable to leave the Philippines, they remained there for the duration of the war and only came to the United States in June 1945.



After the war, Ponevejsky commuted between the United States and Japan where he operated a store in Tokyo where Chiune Sugihara briefly worked. became president of the Tokyo Jewish Communal Association and established the Tokyo Jewish Community Center. [Sugihara was the Japanese diplomat responsible for saving Jewish lives during the Holocaust]

Eventually, Anatole Ponevejsky settled in Los Angeles, abridged his name to Ponve, and continued his activities as a Jew, involved at Hollywood Temple Beth El. Here, this was no Hollywood film, but a real flesh and blood hero at HTBE!

Here is the news account of his coming on to this position:

ANATOLE PONVE SUCCEEDS FACTOR AT BETH EL

The ruby anniversary, marking 40 years of spiritual service to the Jewish community of Los Angeles will be celebrated by the temple family of Hollywood Temple Beth El at its 40th anniversary donor dinner, Sunday, Feb. 11, in the grand ballroom of the Beverly Hilton.

Record attendance for this milestone event is anticipated, according to temple president-elect, Anatole Ponve, successor to John Factor.

AN OUTSTANDING array of talent will perform for this gala ceremony of officers and board members recently elected to office.

Heading the list of electees will be Mr. Ponve, a comparative newcomer to the Los Angeles community who, in a few short years, has linked himself to a chain of Jewish philanthropy in all areas of the community.

ANATOLE PONVE migrated from Russia to Manchuria in 1919 after studying law and foreign languages in the college at Irkutsk, Siberia. During his stay in Manchuria, Mr. Ponve became active in creating a Jewish community and became secretary and vice president of the board of the temple in that city. In 1930, Mr. Ponve and his family arrived in Kobe, Japan, where he was once again instrumental in organizing a Jewish community center. In addition to this, he served as head of the Joint Distribution Committee in Kobe and saw to the needs of the refugees fleeing from the onslaught of the Nazi horde in Eastern Europe.

MR. PONVE then went to Tokyo in 1947 where he organized and was instrumental in building, together with a group of personal friends, the Jewish Community Center of Tokyo, where he served as its first president and today holds the unique distinction of holding an honorary life presidency of that congregation.

Because of his personal and untiring efforts on behalf of the Jewish community of all the Japanese mainland, Mr. Ponve has been recognized and honored by the imperial family. Mr. Ponve today numbers among his personal friends Prince Mikasa, brother of



ANATOLE PONVE
—New Beth El President

Emperor Hirohito, currently serving as the titular head of the Japanese people.

ACTIVE TODAY in the Los Angeles Jewish community, Mr. Ponve recently made an endowment to the University of Judaism. In addition, he is a principal personality in the Jewish Heritage Foundation and is a major contributor to the temple and community center in Israel on behalf of Far Eastern Jewry.

For the past eight years, Mr. and Mrs. Ponve have been residents of Beverly Hills where Mrs. Ponve has been a charming hostess to many major organizational functions which had their initial impetus in the Ponve home.

THE PONVES have been active at Hollywood Temple Beth El since their arrival here, and Mr. Ponve has served on many committees and as chairman of several others, in addition to serving the congregation as vice president for the past several years.

He is noted as successor to John Factor-The newer wing of our building, the "upstairs", now named the Neman Hall, was originally called the Factor Hall.

Print Date: 3 February 2022. Source: Page 22, B'nai B'rith Messenger, 4 March 1960 *** "Historical Jewish Press", The National Library of Israel and Tel Aviv U

JOHN FACTOR IS NEW TEMPLE BETH EL PRESIDENT

John Factor, noted philanthropist, who has served as vice president of Hollywood Temple Beth El for the past four years was unanimously elected president of the Temple for the coming year.

Re-elected another term as vice



JOHN FACTOR

presidents were Robert Goldberg, Anatole Ponve and Gabriel Kahn. Also elected to serve as vice presidents was Bertram A. Knight. Reuben R. Katz was re-elected as treasurer, Mrs. Richard Behr was re-elected recording secretary, E. J. Peiser, honorary financial secretary and Harry Bikson, financial secretary. Mrs. Paul Angress was elected corresponding secretary.

In impressive ceremonies conducted at the annual donor dinner

dance of the Temple held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel when Rabbi Chaim J. Weinstein, spiritual leader of the congregation, formally installed Factor and his fellow officers as well as newly elected members of the board before a splendid gathering of over 700 members and friends.

In his brief acceptance remarks to the congregation Factor said, "I plan to devote myself to building our new school for our children because without educating our children in the Jewish way of life, our people cannot survive. Therefore, I feel honored that you have chosen me as president. I think it a great opportunity to serve and I accept the opportunity as a great challenge in helping build for the future of our Temple a new educational and youth center to serve our community."

John Factor was born Iakov Faktorowicz

He was brother of famous Max Factor, of cosmetics industry, who's son, Max Factor , Jr(actually Frank) was a member until his passing in the 1990's. Nicknamed "Jake the Barber" because he too started out in the hair styling business.

John Factor had , we could say, a colorful life as a younger man, made his money in some very questionable activities at one time, with his wife owning the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas.

In his later years, he became a known philanthropist, and was JFK's largest donor and subsequently was pardoned by JFK!

Joe Youngerman



**Joseph Youngerman Building -
8436 West 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048**

Named in his honor by the Director's Guild of America.



Or

The Director's Guild Building just up on Sunset and around the corner from HTBE

This was from his obituary:

Los Angeles, Nov. 22 - Longtime Guild official Joseph C. Youngerman died in Los Angeles Wednesday from complications following a stroke. He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years Molly, son Arthur, daughter Barbara, 12 grandchildren and 18 grandchildren.

One of the central figures in the history of the DGA, Mr. Youngerman served 27 years as the organization's National Executive Secretary following a distinguished 25 year production career that began in silent films as a prop man at Paramount. He went on to work as an assistant director for many legendary directors, including William Wellman, Cecil B. DeMille, Ernst Lubitsch and Rouben Mamoulian.

Among his achievements as Guild Executive Secretary were the historic mergers of the Screen Directors Guild with the Radio and Television Directors Guild and Screen Directors International to form the Directors Guild of America in 1960; construction of the DGA's national headquarters building at 7950 Sunset Boulevard during the 1950's; and expansion of the Guild's offices in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago.

His proudest accomplishment, however, was the creation of the Directors Guild-Producer Pension Plan based upon an ingenious proposal he mapped out one night when he couldn't sleep. Operating from his credo that "a strike is an effective weapon until you use it," Mr. Youngerman's pension plan proposal resulted in a major producer contribution to the pension funding exchange for surrendering the Guild's lein on post-1948 films.

Joe was our Honorary Life Vice President and Molly was a member of our Board of Trustees.

On behalf of the Board, I made this statement at his funeral:

"We recall with love his great tzedakah to the general maintenance of the Temple, as well as to the nursery school and religious school.

His spiritual support and deep concern for the welfare of our Temple during its difficult times as well as its good times was invaluable, and his wisdom and experience will be sorely missed. "

He was one of the personages who helped keep an even keel on our board during hard times.

Harry and Leo Popkin

I was surprised to discover that the pair of brothers who have done so very much to keep the congregation going in its last years were actually important in an unusual aspect of the film industry. I'm going to wrap up with them because I think that story is so very important

Leo C. Popkin (1914–2011) was a film director and producer in the United States. His brother **Harry M. Popkin** was the executive producer of Million Dollar Productions, a partnership that included Ralph Cooper.

Harry was the long-time Chairman of the Board and I believe, as long as he was alive, he kept that board from going overboard. At the end of each year, when there would be a budget shortfall, he would pull out the check book and close the gap.

His brother Leo used to call me up for years after I had left to chat with me about all sorts of things. He also left a generous donation for HTBE in his will.

This was from my eulogy notes for Harry Popkin:

.

He owned his first theater in 1929, and then built up one of the largest movie theater chains in the state. He involved himself in a variety of entertainment and sports ventures .

Harry Popkin made a brave stride into the world of independent movie production in the age of the all-powerful studios.

His first pictures were perhaps a first in and of themselves-for they featured an all -black cast for a public too much ignored then, and today. [I will say more of it later]

One of his films was nominated for 5 Academy awards (The Well). and he cast such actors as Kirk Douglas, Brian Donleavy. Ronald Coleman, & Robert Young

.. with his success, despite his success, he was a boon to his fellow human beings.

Just a few examples. The family still owns the door to a Japanese command car--signed with movie stars names-it had been the auction prize for bidding for US Bonds- during the Second World War. Harry Popkin versus Al Jolson- each one ready to buy an astronomical sum of bonds, till Jolson gave the prize over to Harry.

Harry Popkin had always been a strong supporter of Israel.

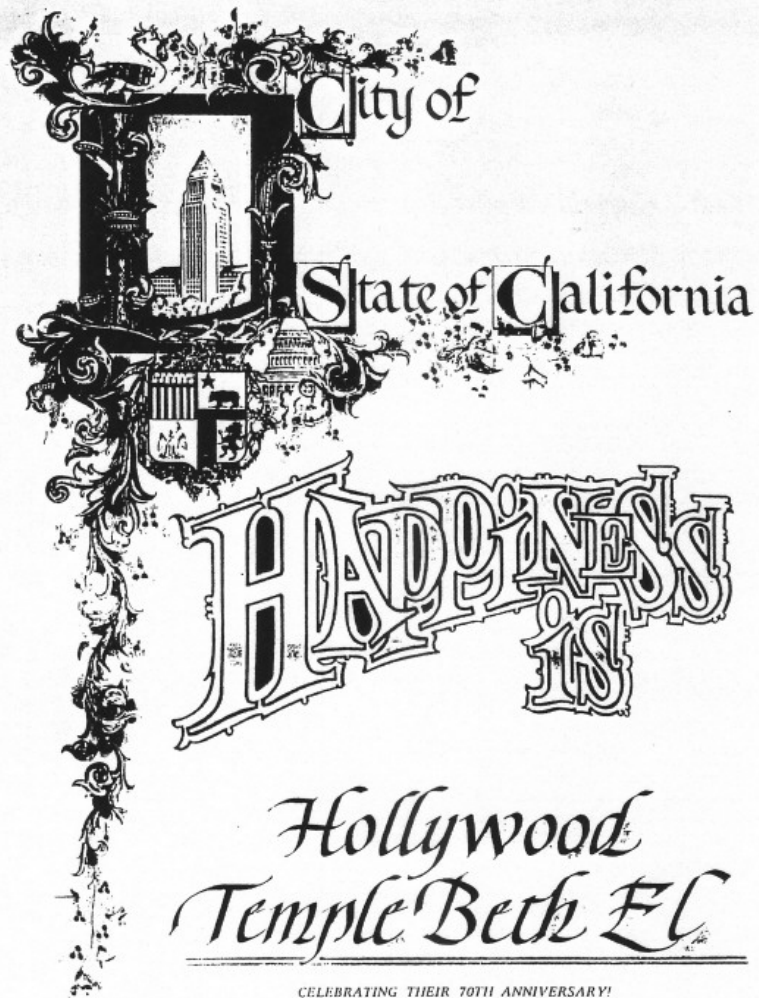
He was particularly close to the Histadrut, Israel's Labor Federation.

Our paths had crossed, indirectly. I had worked at Bet Berl for the Histadrut[I ran a program of Jewish Studies for the union membership]. He was proud to tell me that he had been a close friend of the director of the federation's bank, Bank Hapoalim. "Did I see the convention center now built in honor of his friend, Levinson?", he asked me. He had given them a good donation. Had I seen it? I told him," I put the mezuzah personally on every door in that building!"

Harry sat on the board of the Fund for Higher Education, together with Abba Eban and Mayor Teddy Kollek. Through the Harry and Frances Popkin Endowment fund, they could target individual projects, such as providing scholarships to the Hebrew University for promising students.

As a curiosity- if you saw the movie, Bugsy, with Warren Beatty, Bugsy walks into a Beverly Hills house and buys it cash on the spot. The movie used Harry and Francis Popkin's house in Beverly Hills. Harry had actually bought that very same house in that same period and paid cash on the spot for it the very same way, I believe it was \$ 45,000!.

He had a strong social conscience. He told me that he had a night club and made appoint of higher a young off-duty cop for security. Years later, that same off-duty cop came to HTBE to present a plaque from the City of Los Angeles in honor of our 70th year.



APRIL 5, 1992



Tom Bradley
MAYOR

That off-duty cop, none other than hizzoner the Mayor, Tom Bradley.

This was undoubtedly the most important contribution to social justice that was possible: This from an article about a document buried in the time capsule at Val Verde Pool House in Santa Clarita(Val Verde was known, in the earlier years of the 20th Century as “The Black Palm Springs”)

<https://scvhistory.com/scvhistory/cp3908.htm#:~:text=In%201937%2C%20the%20white%20Los,to%20form%20Million%20Dollar%20Productions>

(The website draws on material from: *"Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939"* by Tina Balio. Volume 5 of *"History of the American Cinema,"* University of California Press, 1993. Pp. 344-347.)

In 1937, the white Los Angeles theater owner Harry M. Popkin and his movie-producer brother Leo C. Popkin ("D.O.A.," 1950) teamed up with the black actor Ralph Cooper ("Dark Manhattan," 1937) to form Million Dollar Productions. Picking up where the pioneering black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux (1884-1951) left off, Million Dollar "moved black filmmaking away from a marginalized form toward the mainstream, advancing considerably its reputation and ability to attract audiences" ([Balio 1993](#):345).

Cooper, who had founded amateur night at the Apollo Theater in Harlem in 1935, had been brought out West by Fox "but was immediately dropped when he didn't fit the desired stereotype" (ibid.:346). Now, Million Dollar would use the crime/gangster genre as a vehicle to make Cooper a star of black cinema.

Harry Popkin (1906-1991) was already featuring many African American performers on stage and in film at his Million Dollar Theater at 307 S. Broadway in Los Angeles. Built by Sid Grauman — Grauman's first theater, opening in February 1918 with William S. Hart's "The Silent Man" — Popkin bought the place in 1935. In the 1940s, stage acts ran the integrated gamut from Billie Holliday and Lionel Hampton to Artie Shaw.

Popkin leased the premises in 1945 to Metropolitan Theatres, which added it to the Orpheum vaudeville circuit and booked such acts as the Nat King Cole Trio. Around 1949 it was subleased to Frank Fouce, who turned it into a major, long-running Spanish-language film house and Mexican vaudeville theatre. Dolores del Río, José Feliciano, Juan Gabriel and many other luminaries weren't strangers to its stage. Fouce and partners would acquire many media companies in the coming decades, eventually selling them in 1986 for \$301 million to Hallmark Cards, which rebranded them as Univision.

Million Dollar Productions didn't last all that long — its filmmaking days were over by 1942 — but it created a lasting legacy in 1938 when it paired Cooper with a hitherto-unknown actress in "The Duke is Tops." Nine or 10 months later, when Harry Popkin penned the history that's featured here (photo above, text below), he obviously didn't know what he had. He mentions the long-forgotten film — and its male lead — by name, but he doesn't mention its costar. Her name was Lena Horne.

This is the letter that Harry Popkin wrote and placed for the time capsule:

.

NEW YORK OFFICE
723 Seventh Avenue
Suite 301
New York City

ATLANTA OFFICE
148 Welton, N. W.
Atlanta, Georgia

MILLION DOLLAR PRODUCTIONS, INC.

4516 Sunset Boulevard
HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.
OLympia 2131

HISTORY OF MILLION DOLLAR PRODUCTIONS, INC.

To be sealed in this corner stone of Val Verde Club-house and Pool on
Sunday, April sixteenth, Nineteen Hundred
and Thirty-nine

Million Dollar Productions was organized May, 1937 for the purpose of
producing all-colored cast, modern, Class -A- talking pictures with
themes taken from modern Negro life.

The corporation was headed by Harry M. Popkin, who served as Executive
Producer. The personnel of the original company was:

PRODUCTION DEPT: Ralph Cooper, Halley Harding, Walter Jones

DISTRIBUTION DEPT: Leo C. Popkin, Distributor; Alyce Pettus, secretary;
John Jenkins; Al Westen; Henry Sonenshine and
Adolph Klaz

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT: Harry Levette, Director.

Stars and featured players under contract were: Ralph Cooper, Louise
Beavers, Edward Thompson, Lawrence Criner, Reginald Fenderson and Monty
Hawley.

The first picture produced was "Bargain With Bullets" starring Ralph
Cooper, with Frances Turnham, Clarence Brooks, Sam McDaniels, Edward
Thompson, and Lawrence Criner, in the supporting cast. It was finished
on August 1st, 1937, and released Friday, September 17th, 1937. This
picture was received as the harbinger of a new era for the Negro in the
portrayal of intelligent roles in Hollywood pictures.

Following it came "Life Goes On," starring Louise Beavers, released
New Year's Eve, 1937. "The Duke Is Tops," starring Ralph Cooper,
released June 10th, 1938; "Gang Smashers" starring Nina Mae McKinney,
released December 27th, 1938; and "Reform School" starring Louise Beavers,
in April, 1939.

At this writing the company is completing plans to produce for the first
time in the history of motion pictures, films depicting the part the
Negro has played in the upbuilding, culture development and art of
America, also his patriotic nature.

(signed)

Harry M. Popkin
Executive Producer.

"A MILLION DOLLAR PICTURE IS THE TALK OF THE TOWN"

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>



Harry Popkin



Leo Popkin

Here is link to one of the movies, featuring Ralph Cooper- and Lena Horn. The film is called The Duke is Tops-but after the public sees it, it is rereleased as “ The Bronze Venus” and Lena Horn is now tops! This launches her career.

Lena Horn sings -and that’s show biz at HTBE!

This is also a reminder how significant was the contribution of the Jews of Hollywood, and in particular, of Hollywood Temple Beth El, in breaking the stereotype image of the black in America and opening new avenues for African Americans in the film industry.

Post Script- The Later Years- the 1990’s

The People

The Temple still attracts people in the film and television industry. It is also home to a varied and polyglot community, reflecting the composition of Los Angeles Jewry--American born-and -bred, East European Holocaust survivors who arrived here 40 years ago, and more recent arrivals from Israel, Iran, and the former Soviet Union. All share together their common Jewish heritage and tradition under one roof.

The Programs

Because of its efforts in outreach in the community, the Temple won special grants from the Council on Jewish Life of the Jewish Federation Council and from the Bureau of Jewish Education. It has also been honored with plaques from the cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood for its activities in serving the community.

In addition to religious worship and Jewish learning, the Temple conducted the following activities in previous years:

A nursery school, an afternoon religious studies program, Bar/ Bat Mitzvah studies, Kadima and USY children and youth activities, outreach to unaffiliated Jews, social programs, Sisterhood, Kosher meals for seniors.

Hollywood Temple Beth El has served as host to a variety of other organizations and activities: Herzl School, a private Jewish junior and senior high school, the Creative Arts Temple, the Musical Dramatics Club, Senior Elites, and the American Congress of Holocaust Survivors.

With its spacious sanctuary, and two social halls, and double kosher-kitchens, it is a popular location for weddings, anniversaries, Bar Mitzvah celebrations, concerts and banquets .

Rabbi Alstead was the first to grace the congregation's pulpit. In the 1960's and 1970's, Rabbi Joseph Wagner served, followed by Rabbi Gilbert Kollin. Rabbi Norbert Weinberg served as the last full time Rabbi in the 1990's and has since returned to help the congregation from 2014 till today.

Into the 21 st Century

In 1998, the Hollywood Temple Beth El building was acquired by the Iranian American Jewish Federation and original congregation continues its operations under their auspices. The building now hosts West Hollywood Preparatory School and Touro College.

During the recent COVID pandemic, the congregation developed an on-line format, which it still uses now when the members have come back for in person services. This allows for a reach far beyond the immediate neighborhood, and there have been joint programs with Jewish communities in Jamaica and Warsaw, and guest speakers from Canada and Israel, for example. This year, as life returns to normal, the plans are for a film series on best Jewish and Israeli films and programs highlighting events in the Temple's history.