

Preface

Since the appearance of the renewed *American Jewish Year Book* in 2012, we have had the opportunity to speak at public panels and to the press about the importance of this publication for North American Jewry. On one occasion, we suggested that 100 years from the present, when historians seek to understand the Jewish communities of North America in the early twenty-first century, they will turn to an examination of the *American Jewish Year Book* and the topics covered in its various chapters. It is a safe bet that no reader of this volume in 2014 will be around to disprove our assumption in 2114! We are strengthened in our conviction, however, from the analysis provided by Sarna and Golden (2000) in their article “The twentieth century through American Jewish eyes: A history of the *American Jewish Year Book*, 1899–1999.” As one of us, who was quoted in a local press account, stated, “When we went to renew the *Year Book*, people said, ‘With the internet, do we need this?’” The answer: “In 100 years, Jewish Federations may be listed online, but a list of past Federations won’t be. For historians wanting to track what happened over time, they will use the *Year Book*” (Mindell 2014).

One of the events that seized many in the US Jewish community in the past year was not an action of the American government—nor the Israeli government—but a social scientific survey conducted by a reputable organization, the Pew Research Center: *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*. The response to the survey, released in October 2013, generated a groundswell of interest among concerned American Jews. So compelling was its release that both of us were asked to speak about it at local lectures, and consequently, we have structured this volume to include, in Part I, Chap. 2, the Executive Summary of the survey followed by brief commentaries authored by a group of respected social scientists with a response by two of the original authors of the report, Alan Cooperman and Gregory A. Smith. Part II, Chap. 14 presents a detailed review of the ongoing shifts in regard to gender in American Jewish life by Sylvia Barack Fishman. Four additional chapters continue the model established in the previous volumes of articles on national affairs, Jewish communal affairs, and the US and world Jewish populations by Ethan Felson, Laurence Grossman, Ira Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, and Sergio DellaPergola.

In the current volume, in an effort to be faithful to our subtitle, “The Annual Record of the North American Jewish Communities,” we have added another article on the Canadian Jewish population by Morton Weinfeld and Randal F. Schnoor.

In Part III, we continue with the long-standing tradition of earlier editions of the *Year Book* to publish a variety of Jewish lists. For this year, we have organized the lists into four chapters, including Jewish Institutions, Jewish Press, and Academic Resources. We reason that this is a more conceptually integrated approach to inventorying the “infrastructure” of North American Jewry. In addition, we conclude with a chapter on transitions, major events, honorees, and obituaries.

In this third volume under our direction, we have also introduced several new features. First, the “Jewish Population in the United States, 2014” chapter now includes an “Atlas of American Jewish Communities.” We believe that this is the first attempt to map American Jews not by state or by county but by the “communities” into which the American Jewish community has organized itself. Second, Chap. 20 has a much expanded list of Jewish Family Service agencies and added lists of Jewish Free Loans and Jewish Vocational Services. Third, Chap. 20 includes a much expanded and reorganized list of national Jewish organizations. Fourth, Chap. 22 now includes a list of Israel Studies Programs. Note as well that for each volume of the *Year Book*, we click on every Internet link to make certain that it is still active and to double-check and update the information as necessary.

As Sarna and Golden (2000, p. 102) observed about the first century of the *Year Book*,

For a century, the *American Jewish Year Book* has been attentive to just such messages as it chronicled events and trends in American and world Jewish life. From its modest, imperfect beginnings, it helped to inform and educate American Jews as they assumed the burden of Jewish leadership, and annually it documented American Jewry’s burgeoning and multifaceted role at home and abroad. Its listings, directories, population figures, quantitative studies, annual reviews, and special articles supplied the basic information that Jewish leaders required for their work, and helped to clarify the central issues affecting Jews everywhere.

We trust that this observation will hold true in this second century of the *American Jewish Year Book*.

Storrs, CT, USA
Coral Gables, FL, USA

The Editors

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