

Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan: Jewish Nursing Pioneers

by

Susan Mayer

Early in the 20th century, *trained* nursing was not considered a suitable profession for a young, wealthy woman who had made her bow to society at a debutante ball. Yet, the young daughter of German-Jewish immigrants, who had settled in the South, listened “with wide eyes and bated breath” to the stories told by her ex-Confederate soldier father about the work performed by the nurses who had served the Confederacy during the Civil War.¹ At the conclusion of each story she would always say, “When I grow up I am going to be a trained nurse”.² Ultimately, the opportunity to train young Jewish women as nurses a continent away, thereby enabling them to become self-supporting, “became the greatest ambition of [her] life to accomplish.”³

“Woman of valor,” a phrase found in Proverbs 31:10–31, is a hymn to the perfect wife. Yet, those were the words chosen by Betty Kaplan Uzick to describe her adoptive mother, Regina Kaplan, who was for thirty-five years the superintendent and administrator of the Leo N. Levi Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Kaplan had wanted to become a doctor. However, the expenses and difficulties a woman faced who sought to enter medicine led Regina Kaplan to enter Mercy Hospital Training School for Nursing in Denver, Colorado.

This paper examines the lives and motivations of Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan in historical context. What would motivate members of an ethnic group to enter a profession that, at least on the surface, seemed to embrace an incongruous belief sys-

tem? Although healing and nursing care are not antithetical to Judaic tradition, the history of nursing, with few exceptions, evolved in the Christian tradition.

Jews were and are an ethnic minority group. Few people are aware of the double discrimination that Jews faced in entering the nursing profession. First, they confronted quotas in being admitted to nursing schools, and second, they had to deal with outright discrimination in being hired by non-Jewish hospitals.⁴

Between 1881 and 1920, quotas for Jews in schools and for employment positions were usual.⁵ Ethnicity could be rapidly established with the requirement of a letter of recommendation from a clergyman. Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan were leaders atypical of the norm. However, being atypical was the quality that permitted their successes in nursing.

Amelia Greenwald was born in Gainesville, Alabama, on March 1, 1881, the youngest of eight children of Joseph and Elisha (Elise Haas) Greenwald. The Greenwalds had been married in Memphis. Her siblings grew to adulthood, married and as typical of a Jewish commercial family of the era, spread out in surrounding towns and cities.

Greenwald's father emigrated from Rheinbelln, Prussia and settled in Gainesville, Alabama, where he became a grain and feed dealer. Joseph Greenwald was elected mayor of Gainesville and his family enjoyed the social status of his position. Amelia made her debut to society at the home of her aunt, Mrs. Sigmund Haas, in Mobile.

Because Amelia Greenwald had both education and family money, there was no expectation that she would seek employment. Over the objections of her family, Amelia Greenwald applied to become a member of the class of 1908 of the Touro Infirmary's Training School for Nurses (TISON) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Among her papers is a letter in which Amelia wrote that at the mention of seeking a nursing education, her father and brothers immediately indicated that women did not work.

*Amelia Greenwald
(Touro Infirmary
Archives)*

Lacking her family's approval, Amelia Greenwald broke with both ethnic and societal factors of blind obedience to her father and ran away from home to enter TISON. A brother was sent after Amelia to convince her to return home but she refused, stating that she was happy with her work.

The years between graduation in October 1908 and the outbreak of World War I were very busy for Amelia Greenwald. She helped organize the Pensacola Sanitarium in Pensacola, Florida, which had been organized by a group of nine physicians in 1909. The president of the corporation was Dr. Charles E. Hutchinson, a graduate of, and paid physician at Touro Infirmary. Dr. Hutchinson chose Miss DeWitt Dillard (TISON, class of 1907) as superintendent, along with six additional nurses from Touro who were to provide nursing services. As Dillard had not yet arrived, Amelia Greenwald filled her place "most efficiently. . .at least in the general work of arranging. . ."⁶

After a short period of work in a hospital in North Carolina, Greenwald did post-graduate work in psychiatric nursing at the

Phipps Clinic of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, in 1913–1914. While studying in Baltimore, Greenwald met Henrietta Szold who introduced her to Zionism and her Zionist friends, and talked to Greenwald about going to Palestine as a public health nurse.⁷ Instead, she moved to New York and attended Teachers College, Columbia University, taking classes in public health nursing.

According to some sources, Greenwald worked for Lillian Wald at the Henry Street Settlement.⁸ There was a severe polio epidemic in New York City that was taxing the limited staff of the Henry Street Visiting Nurse Service. A call went out for volunteers. It is entirely possible that Greenwald did work for Henry Street in some capacity.

In 1916 she became the director of the New Jersey Public Health Association at Long Branch, New Jersey. The slogan of the association was “no sick babies this summer.” The first efforts were directed at improvements in the milk and ice supply. With Greenwald’s efforts, a new milk ordinance was enacted and the association hired the first health officer in Long Branch.⁹

During World War I, Greenwald served with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) as chief nurse in several evacuation hospitals in France. Her American Red Cross pin number was 5532 when she enrolled in New York City on January 28, 1915. Initially, she enlisted in the First Psychiatric Unit, although according to Army Nurse Corps historian Constance J. Moore, there is no listing for such a separate organization. In her own words, she recalled the group being called the “shell shock unit.”¹⁰ Greenwald became acting chief nurse of the hospital on the front lines at Verdun, France. The site of one of the most famous battles of World War I, it was under constant artillery barrage while she served there. From Verdun, she was sent to Savoy to serve as Night Superintendent of the AEF hospital at that location. With the armistice signed, and before returning to New York, Greenwald accompanied the First Army of Occupation to Germany to establish its first hospital at Coblenz. Among her duties was aid to war brides prior to their coming to the United States.

In October 1919 the National Council of Jewish Women asked Greenwald to direct its program for farm women.¹¹ This program was organized in cooperation with the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society (JAIAS) of New York City.¹² The purpose of JAIAS was to encourage immigrants to settle away from urban areas.¹³

Greenwald began her work in the small village of Woodridge, New York. As she reported to the National Council for Jewish Women Convention (Denver) in 1920, she gave English lessons twice weekly, did public health nursing, and developed hygiene programs for the elementary public schools. She also assisted in the development of a library containing Yiddish, Russian and English books. Although her parents were German, Greenwald spoke no Yiddish. Consequently, she required a translator to assist her.¹⁴

Woodridge was not a successful project. The farm owners began to realize that providing summer accommodations for vacationers was more lucrative. Instead of relocating to another site, Greenwald requested a release from her obligations to the National Council of Jewish Women in 1923 to begin work in Poland.

Greenwald went to Warsaw, Poland at the insistence of Bernard Flexner, chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish-American international relief organization. Dr. Lee K. Frankel, social analyst and manager of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Welfare Division, and Herbert Hoover, head of the American Relief Administration, organized the distribution of food, clothing and medical supplies to refugees in eastern Europe. Hoover understood the urgent need to improve health conditions as a defense against economic and disease disasters devastating eastern Europe.

In 1921 the Warsaw School of Nursing directed by the American, Helen Bridge (Pohlman), a 1914 Teachers College graduate,¹⁵ had been established at the Polish Red Cross Society. It received assistance from the American Red Cross, the Polish Ministry of Health, the Magistrate of the City of Warsaw and Warsaw University. The Warsaw School of Nursing was cited as the "first school of nursing in Poland of the American type which had in

view to prepare the professional, trained nurse.” This new school prohibited Jewish students from attending.¹⁶ Therefore it was necessary to create a similar institution where Jewish girls could be trained. Dr. Jacob Schweitzer, chief physician of the Jewish Hospital in Warsaw, successfully negotiated with the government of Poland, the city of Warsaw and the Joint Distribution Committee to obtain necessary permission and funding for a school of nursing. The school would train young Jewish women for future service among their people. “Miss Amelia Greenwald, an American citizen, a woman of outstanding abilities and unusual energy”¹⁷ was recruited as the organizer.

Arriving in Warsaw in March 1923, Greenwald surveyed her domain: A little cluster of bare rooms on the top floor of an old administration building. She immediately remodeled the area, including breaking through the attic door with an ax. To continue in Greenwald’s own words:

On the subject of a nurses’ training school those doctors were simply naive. They didn’t expect to expand. Twenty nurses to help them in the hospital was as far as they had thought—and I was thinking of a service for public health training for all of Poland!¹⁸

Greenwald found one hundred applications already on hand from women in all parts of Poland. She was so impressed with those letters that she sent for fifty girls. They were serious-minded, intelligent and eager for training. Greenwald found that the medical staff expected her to begin educating students almost immediately. She had frequent discussions with the physicians over the control of the school and whether nursing was a “trade” or a profession.

The Jewish Nurses’ Training School in Warsaw was dedicated July 8, 1923, only four months after Greenwald’s arrival, and admitted twenty-two students. A new class was admitted every six months. Training lasted twenty-eight months. The school was affiliated with the twelve hundred bed Jewish Hospital in Warsaw.¹⁹ The students were generally nineteen to twenty years old. Many women either found work by that age or

emigrated. Greenwald designed the school pin, the pink gingham uniforms, and used her own TISON cap as model for the school cap.

The school followed American nursing education guidelines. The New York State University nursing curriculum was translated into Polish. Once again Greenwald had to use interpreters so that she could teach in English to Polish students who thought in Russian. The students had great difficulty in mastering Polish as they had studied in the Russian language while attending Gymnasium (high school). Classes had been conducted in Russian prior to the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I and which granted Poland independence. Nursing textbooks were non-existent. Students waded through Russian, German and French medical books to write permanent notes.

In exchange for their education, graduates of the Jewish Nurses Training School were required to continue to work for the Jewish Hospital for a period of five years. In November 1925 the first class of fifteen students graduated. Future teaching faculty were chosen from this first class and sent for post-graduate courses in Germany and England. On their return, they received additional training under the tutelage of Greenwald. According to her initial agreement, the task of maintaining the school was turned over to these capable women. Greenwald left Poland at the end of four years, the first woman licensed to drive in Poland. She also introduced iced tea to the Poles.

The school which Greenwald organized received accolades throughout Europe, including a Golden Medal at the International Exhibition of Hygiene and Sanitation in Warsaw. Participation at the International Convention of Nurses in Geneva earned the school a citation in *The British Journal of Nursing*. The Jewish School of Nursing was recognized for its high standards by the League of Nations Division of Public Health.

Amelia Greenwald was the first woman to be honored by Poland when President Ignatius Moscicki awarded the Polish Golden Cross of Merit, the nation's highest order, for her unique service to the welfare of Poland and its people. Greenwald's creative leadership had made a difference in the lives of many people.

Despite a personal invitation from President Moscicki to remain in Poland, she returned to the United States. The students and graduates of the School of Nursing of the Jewish Hospital in Warsaw exhibited ethnic pride and were credited with developing a new form of social service heretofore unknown in Poland. The school continued functioning, operating within the Warsaw ghetto, until 1943.²⁰

After Amelia Greenwald returned to the United States, she spent several months in Miami, Florida, "to look after some business interests".²¹ She returned to New York and was again active in public health work in that state until the early 1930s.

Greenwald's missions abroad, however, were not yet complete. She declined an invitation to return to Poland offered her by the Joint Distribution Committee because the United States was in the depths of the Great Depression. She did accept an invitation from Dr. Chaim Yassky, medical director of the Hadassah Medical Organization, to spend a year in Palestine.

Once again, Greenwald required the services of a translator as she was named the director of the Nurse's Training School of the Rothschild Hospital (Hadassah). She was in Palestine about eighteen months. She wrote lengthy reports to Dr. Yassky citing the lack of proper telephone service and the work that her nurses were required to do, as there was insufficient orderly help available. Dr. Yassky terminated her services in a letter dated November 9, 1933.²² It is only possible to speculate what occurred at Hadassah Hospital during that year. However, Greenwald never again was active in nursing.

Although Greenwald occasionally visited her family in the South, her brothers finally persuaded her to make her home there. She divided her time between her sister Carrie in Meridian, Mississippi, and her brothers Isaac and Julian in Winnsboro, Louisiana. Her oldest brother Isaac, according to Greenwald, advised her to open a ladies' ready-to-wear dress shop. She chose Eunice, Louisiana, because when they had passed through the town her brother had said that Eunice was "a fine town in which to live."²³ In 1936, she opened La Vogue Dress Shop.

Amelia Greenwald never married; however, in 1939 at age

58, she took on the challenges of motherhood. A distant cousin in Germany had been writing to Amelia's brothers, pleading for assistance in removing his children from the threat of Nazism. Understandably, Greenwald resisted motherhood. The question was debated within the family for several years until a deathbed wish by her brother Isaac convinced her to concede. In 1939 Amelia brought a 15-year old distant cousin, Liselotte Levy and her younger brother, Leo, to the United States. Leo was sent to live with Julian Greenwald and his wife. Liselotte Levy Weil²⁴ remembers that it was very difficult for both of them. One of Liselotte Levy's earliest memories is of cousin Amelia relating how she first was taught to prepare custard in nursing school.

Amelia Greenwald and Liselotte Levy Weil developed a close personal friendship and deep love. As Liselotte grew older, she ran the dress shop. Amelia preferred her antiques. Mrs. Weil and her husband remained in Eunice to care for Greenwald when she became ill with cancer. Weil informed this author that Greenwald had said to her that she, Mrs. Weil, "was her greatest blessing."

Amelia Greenwald died January 1, 1966 at the age of 85. She lies interred alongside other members of her family in the Beth Israel Cemetery in Meridian, Mississippi. Her gravestone bears the simple inscription: "Amelia Greenwald, Nurse, Army Nurse Corp, World War I."

Amelia Greenwald was an extraordinary nursing leader. She served as an example of an international public health nurse and globe trotting executive in the period between the two world wars.

Regina Kaplan, on the other hand, never left the United States. Kaplan was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on May 12, 1887. She was the third of five children born to Gershon and Adella (Hannah) Traube Kaplan, German-born immigrants. Her father had taught school in Germany prior to emigrating. Her oldest sister was Sally. Next came Belle. Her younger siblings were Louis G. and Dora.

Adella Kaplan had health problems, probably tuberculosis,²⁵ which led the family to move to Denver, a city whose Jewish

Regina Kaplan
(*Leo Levi Hospital*)

population numbered some four thousand.²⁶ The family moved before the last sibling, Dora, was born. There is a question as to whether the entire family moved to Denver. LeMaster²⁷ writes that Kaplan's father died when she was in grade school. Only subsequently did the remainder of the family relocate to Denver. In a conversation with Kaplan's daughter, Betty Uzick, she clearly stated that the entire family moved to Denver. Since she was adopted after Regina Kaplan was forty years old, she may not know for certain. The oldest daughter, Sally, raised the family after their mother's death.

As the cost of a medical education was not available to her, Regina Kaplan entered Mercy Hospital Training School for Nursing and became a member of the class of 1908. Kaplan was not necessarily a typical new student. She was only about seventeen although the most desirable age for candidates was from twenty to thirty years old. While physical exertion was often required, she was under five feet tall and weighed barely ninety pounds. Nonetheless she graduated at the head of her class of twelve: five

religious and seven lay nurses.²⁸ The Sisters of Mercy had additional training schools in Pittsburgh and Chicago which were considered reputable and effective in the training of nurses.²⁹

After graduation, Kaplan began work as a private duty nurse. This was typical employment for graduate nurses.

She had hoped to join the military and enrolled with the American Red Cross on January 14, 1915 in Denver, Colorado, as it appeared that the United States was going to enter the European conflict. Her badge number was 5482. However, she was not accepted because of her short stature. She was always sensitive about her height. Her son-in-law remembered³⁰ that after a few glasses of wine, he called her "Shorty." She walked into her kitchen, motioned her son-in-law to follow and said, "Son, I'm going to tell you something. I've always been short. But if you ever call me that again in front of my guests, I'll show you how big I really am!" Little else is known about her early years. Louis Uzick described his mother-in-law as "a very private person".³¹

She continued her private duty practice until relatives told her of the need for a superintendent at the Leo N. Levi Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas, approximately eight hundred miles away. Regina Kaplan's connection with the B'nai B'rith hospital was to last for thirty five years.

The Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital Association was incorporated in Hot Springs in September 1910. The first patient was admitted on November 1, 1914. The local newspaper, *The Sentinel Record*, reported on the opening of the hospital for "the reception of such charity patients as might be qualified to enter." The hospital was formally dedicated on May 3, 1916. In the days before antibiotics, steroids, and salicylates, water therapies were among the few options available to treat persons afflicted with arthritis. Patient stays ranging from one month up to six months were not uncommon.

The first superintendent, Esther O'Quinn, served from November 1, 1914 until January 15, 1916, when she was replaced by Regina Kaplan. O'Quinn did not welcome Kaplan. In fact, she tried her best to discourage her. She herself had become disgruntled with the hospital board and encouraged Kaplan "to

quit, before it is too late.”³² In “My Story,” written on the occasion of her retirement from Levi, January 16, 1951, Regina Kaplan wrote,

I was an eager, starry-eyed girl with a dream in my heart when I boarded that Denver train on a crisp January day in 1916, bound for Hot Springs, Arkansas, and the post of Administrator of Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital. On my lips was a prayer for guidance. When the wheels began to turn and settle down into a steady hum, they seemed to me to echo that chant whirling in my mind:

Levi Hospital, B’nai B’rith!

Levi serve hu-man-i-ty

. . . If G-D were willing, I would not fail the trust placed in me. With His help I would dedicate my life wholly to Levi and the service I hoped to build there.³³

This was the attitude that Regina Kaplan brought to Hot Springs. She was issued license number 515 by reciprocity by the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners, October 24–25, 1916.³⁴

It appears that by 1917, Kaplan had already opened or was about to open, a Training School for Nurses. However, in a 1914 document entitled *First Survey of Schools of Nursing in Arkansas*, Myra Breckinridge Thompson states that the Leo N. Levi Hospital already had a training school with an enrollment of twenty-five pupil nurses and had applied to the State Board of Education for a charter. The superintendent of the hospital was a trained nurse named Emma N. Olinsey. As for Kaplan’s plans, the Medical Director, Dr. Maurice F. Lautman, disagreed with her. However Kaplan and her medical board prevailed, as there seems to have been a shortage of registered nurses in Arkansas at the time. (State registration in Arkansas was required by 1913.) The Leo Levi Hospital School of Nursing was also the first training school in the South to admit men into the program.³⁵ Kaplan designed the nursing school pin, as well as a linen cap. Students received a blue star on admission. Later, they received the bib, apron, the red star and the black star. On graduation, they received the traditional black band on their cap.

Also in 1917 the Medical Staff suggested the opening of a dispensary for outpatients, with Kaplan serving as organizer and director.³⁶ All gifts and equipment donated were recorded and acknowledged. This forerunner of the modern emergency room was a success from the beginning and served all residents.

Regina Kaplan's public service included the organization of a local Red Cross chapter. She taught the nurse aide classes as well as home nursing and first aid classes for adults and high school students.

All the while the Training School for Nurses was growing in the number of students and in academic excellence. Kaplan appears to have taught many of the classes.³⁷ In a conversation with four of her students,³⁸ they indicated that Kaplan reserved teaching the ethics class for herself. Not remembering exactly what was covered in the ethics class, her students do remember that Kaplan "wanted us to know nursing. . .and to know the history of nursing. She always wanted you to be proud you were a nurse and proud you were a Levi Hospital graduate." She also always said, "Nurses were sisters under the skin." According to the *Circular of Information*³⁹ in addition to ethics, Kaplan also taught history and nursing procedures.

Her students all remembered that they sat upright in class without slouching. One student related that during one of these classes, the light fixture from the ceiling fell and hit her on top of her head, knocking her out of her seat. Although Kaplan became quite excited, the student was not dismissed from class. However at the end of class, Kaplan came over to her and said, "Well Miss Mary, you can be an hour late going on duty."

Her son-in-law, Louis Uzick stated, "She was interested in the work that she did. That was her life. She'd rather have a few good nurses than. . .have a big class of ones that didn't know what they were doing." There is no doubt that Regina Kaplan "looked so firm" and "was the authority."

Regina Kaplan recognized and convinced the Hot Springs community of the importance of school nursing supervision. Shortly after her arrival in Hot Springs, a measles epidemic raged in the schools. No provision had been made for the examination of

school children or the follow through on absences. Kaplan urged the president of the Rotary Club to help raise sufficient funds to employ a visiting nurse. With the sale of Red Cross seals, the necessary \$1,800 for the visiting nurse's salary was secured. The first nurse, a Miss Joyce, was employed in 1919 for one year. In the interim Kaplan trained a Levi graduate to take over the responsibilities. It was common practice for Red Cross nurses to be employed for short durations.⁴⁰

By the end of World War I, Regina Kaplan was encouraging the establishment of a free public health nursing program for the city of Hot Springs. This started with a cleanup of local dairies and led to the first organized meat and food inspections. The public health nursing program worked collaboratively with the Levi School of Nursing. Many home-bound elderly were the beneficiaries of this project.

Dr. Oliver Clarence Wenger, the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officer and the organizational genius behind the USPHS "model federal venereal disease clinic,"⁴¹ befriended Regina Kaplan when he came to Hot Springs in 1919 to wage a national venereal disease fight.⁴² Wenger appears to be credited with giving Regina Kaplan her nickname, "Kappy."⁴³

During the 1920s, the patient load continued to grow, along with the need to expand out-patient services. Concurrently, it was necessary to make arrangements for housing staff nurses as well as nursing students. Colonel Fordyce was authorized to draw sketches for the proposed nurses' residence.

Regina Kaplan was invited to address the National Council of Jewish Women at their Southern Division Conference in Little Rock in 1921.⁴⁴ At the conclusion of this conference, Mrs. Yetta Schoenfeldt, representing the Southern Division, announced that the Nashville women pledged the \$40,000 necessary to build the nurses' residence. With this expansion of facilities, Kaplan chose new candidates for the School of Nursing, selecting, when possible, those with some college credits.⁴⁵ On two occasions, Kaplan also chose candidates with children because she believed these women needed to have a profession to provide for their children and themselves. Kaplan was tolerant of religious observance, al-

lowing Catholic students additional time to attend the services which were not as near as Protestant services.

In 1923, the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners conducted a survey of the Training School for Nurses⁴⁶ and issued an unflattering report. Kaplan was cited for not being familiar with the Standard Curriculum and poor record keeping. Other problem areas included no bath facilities in the student nurses' living quarters and no library. The examiner found that "the pupils wore very short skirts, a good deal of rouge, and all sorts of shoes and stockings and that the discipline is lax." Specific mention was made that the hospital is non-sectarian and that the school "has no Jewish pupils." Although it was indicated that of the fourteen pupils, one came from Montreal, one from Kansas, and two from Oklahoma, their specific religions were not noted. One can only wonder why the examiner felt compelled to comment on the absence of Jewish students. It is possible to surmise that this survey was conducted in response to the landmark study, *Nursing and Nursing Education in the United States* published in the same year by Josephine Goldmark.⁴⁷ There is no record of Regina Kaplan responding to this report.

In the Wagoner history of the Leo Levi Hospital, the author writes that the minutes duly report the "comings and departures of key staff members" for their vacations. The minutes for June 19, 1921 record that Regina Kaplan was scheduled to be on vacation for the month of August. In her absence, a temporary *housekeeper*, Mrs. D. Hogaboom has been engaged. Why, Wagoner questions, "of all the hats this versatile lady wore, was a housekeeper hired for the month of her absence?"⁴⁸ Perhaps the answer can be found in the previously mentioned 1923 Survey Report wherein it states,

The Superintendent does the housekeeping and buying, makes rounds with the doctors, administers the pauper oath to each patient treated in the clinic, so that it seems reasonably sure that she can not do all the teaching she thinks she does.

Expansion of the Leo Levi Hospital was contingent on the granting of government lands. At the time the Public Health Cen-

ter was built, the government also granted land to the Levi Hospital.⁴⁹ On January 28, 1924, after rounding up registered nurses as well as nursing students, Regina Kaplan turned the first shovel of dirt for the three-story expansion plan for the nurses' home. She credited her dedicated board for turning her dream into reality. Further she used the opportunity to announce several other future projects.

Regina Kaplan ran her hospital with a firm hand and great love for her patients. Initially having signed a contract as superintendent, she was also made the administrator. She tried to decorate the facility and make it as pleasant and home-like as she could.⁵⁰ The hospital acquired the reputation of being "the hospital with a heart." Kaplan was angry when the hospital board insisted that she discharge her patients early and felt this meant discharging patients one-tenth to one-half cured.⁵¹

Kappy always said that she learned acts of *chesed* from her parents. Somehow she had also found time to become a licensed midwife. In 1927 she attended the birth of a baby girl, who was to be adopted. Although marriage, motherhood and being a homemaker illustrated the American dream of young women during this period, Regina Kaplan accomplished a most unusual feat for the time. She convinced Judge Sam Gerritt to grant her, a single woman, forty years old, adoption of the baby, whom she named Betty Jean. She also arranged that the natural mother not contact the child as long as Regina was alive.

Regina could cook holiday specialty foods. Her son-in-law remembers the gefilte fish she prepared for Rosh Hashanah. When they arrived at her home, Regina was found holding her nose and saying, "Only for you would I mess around with this kind of stuff." After Betty, too, became a parent, and Regina started "fussing" at her, Betty kissed Regina, put her arms around her and said, "You don't have to pretend [to be stern] anymore." Today Betty Jean Uzick remembers Regina as a wonderful mother, "a true saint of the Jewish people," although she used to be scared of her too!

Betty grew up around the hospital and was the darling of all the students in the nurses' house. She remembers popping into

students' rooms at odd hours. Betty remembered,⁵² that one day her bicycle was missing. She spent some time looking for it. When she walked into the pool area, there was her bicycle, in the middle of the pool, put there by Regina Kaplan to help crippled patients do their exercises.

The next years were busy for Regina Kaplan, raising and educating her daughter, as well as finding sufficient monies for the hospital. At one point, Kaplan lent the hospital one thousand dollars from her personal funds.⁵³ "Tag Days" were one fund-raising activity. This is probably an activity she learned from her alumnae association which makes mention of such an event. Tag Day netted four thousand dollars in 1910.⁵⁴

Kaplan did not want Betty Jean to marry; rather she wanted her to go to college to become a doctor or a nurse. Contrary to her mother's wish, Betty and Louis Uzick eloped in 1944, had a son, Marty, and today have several grandchildren.

Kaplan was an early advocate of nutritious food and saw that her patients received good diets. The kitchen always remained kosher, although only thirty per cent of the patients were Jewish. In order to contain costs, meatless meals were served two days per week.

As the patient load increased and more space was necessary for wards and administrative support areas, Kaplan and her daughter moved into a private home at 421 Dell Street. Prior to this, they occupied an apartment in the hospital.

At Regina Kaplan's urging, a formal program of arthritis studies was initiated by the hospital in 1936. Regina attended a special institute for hospital administrators at Purdue University in 1940.⁵⁵ In the spring of 1944, Regina Kaplan was honored by Eleanor Roosevelt with a special brunch at the White House.⁵⁶

Regina continued to maintain her association with the Garland County Red Cross, serving as executive secretary. She also belonged to the American Hospital Association, an important influence in her effort to get Levi Hospital to participate in the new hospitalization insurance plan, Blue Cross.

During World War II, Hot Springs was declared a defense area.⁵⁷ In addition to more hospital beds, Kaplan was able to get

her much sought-after pool. The therapy pool was built through contact made with the Civic Works Administration (CWA) in Little Rock. The CWA was one of the early programs generated by the Roosevelt administration to help alleviate the social and economic difficulties of the Depression era. The hospital qualified for federal assistance under the Defense Public Works Program. With the help of Lanham Act funds, a thirty four foot by eighteen foot pool was built in 1943. The Hon. W.F. Norrell of Arkansas read a thank you from Regina Kaplan into the Congressional Record⁵⁸. The School of Nursing also participated in the U.S. Cadet Nursing Corps Program.

Because of war-time shortages, Kaplan did her part to conserve supplies. As one of her students said, whenever supplies were needed, Kaplan would say, "Don't you know there's a war on?" During this time the students had to be in bed by nine o'clock. One evening four of them were taking a bath together, "just having a ball," when they were found by the house mother, Miss Tilsey. The house mother reported that the girls were indecent. The next morning they had to report to Kaplan who asked if they had anything to say. One of the students said, "Well, we were conserving water. Don't you know there's a war on?" Kaplan, according to the students, "came unglued. She jumped up off that floor two feet high and said, 'Well, that is just the worst thing I have ever heard of in my life.'"

Kaplan never mentioned a love interest. She was also very concerned that her girls always behave properly. Until World War II, it was also not permissible to date soldiers. During the war it became popular to entertain the military, and Kaplan, according to the Uzicks, entertained them royally.

Regina Kaplan was vice-president of the American Hospital Association from 1945 to 1946. In 1945 she also attended a special hospital administrator's institute at Colorado University. Kaplan felt so positively about Blue Cross that she became a member of the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Blue Cross, Blue Shield. She served as president of the Arkansas Hospital Association from 1947 to 1948 and was a member of the Mid-West Hospital Association from 1948 to 1949. From 1949 to 1953, Kaplan was a

member of the advisory consultant board, hospitals for Arkansas, State Board of Health.⁵⁹

The professional activities of Regina Kaplan are staggering. In addition to those already mentioned, she served as executive secretary of the Red Cross chapter, Garland County, Arkansas, from 1917 to 1945. She was a member of the American Nurses Association from 1918 onward. In 1928, Kaplan was named chairperson of the National Rehabilitation Association of the State Hospitals.⁶⁰ She founded the Lakewood Convalescent Home for "old age indigents" of Garland County and served as its president from 1946 to 1953. Additionally, she was a member of the Arkansas Nurses Association, the Colorado State Nurses Association, and the American College of Hospital Administrators.⁶¹

Regina Kaplan indicated that she was a contributor to professional journals and that she read papers before sectional meetings of the American College of Surgeons. However, these papers have not been located.

Regina Kaplan's leisure time activities were equally staggering. She apparently had a lovely soprano voice and served as director as well as sang in the Temple Beth Israel choir, and served as chairman of its choir committee.⁶² She served on its board of directors as well. Kaplan's wide-ranging interests included service on the board of directors of the Community Concert Association, the presidency of the Federation of Church Women from 1943 to 1945, and the secretaryship of the Hot Springs Community Council. She was a member of Eastern Star, Hadassah, and B'nai B'rith. Her club associations were Dale Carnegie, Business and Professional Women, and Explorers⁶³.

In October 1950 Jay Robinson of San Pedro, California, became president of the Leo Levi Hospital Board. According to Louis Uzick,⁶⁴ Kaplan and Robinson had differing views as to the future of the hospital. Fund raising was difficult at this time because Jewish philanthropy was directed towards the new state of Israel. Exactly thirty-five years to the day after she had arrived, January 16, 1951, Regina Kaplan chose to retire. She remained as a consultant to the hospital after her retirement.⁶⁵

The week that she retired was declared "Regina Kaplan Week" by proclamation of Hot Springs mayor Floyd A. Housley. It was Housley who called her the "Sister Kenny" of Arkansas and the "Florence Nightingale" of Hot Springs.⁶⁶ The spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel, Rabbi Martin M. Weitz, was chosen as chairman of retirement activities. Congratulatory letters came from Senators Fulbright and McClellan, among others. It is a tribute to Regina Kaplan that Congregation Beth Israel even today sets aside a Saturday in May to celebrate "Florence Nightingale Sabbath."

Regina Kaplan picked her successor, a 1926 graduate of the School of Nursing, Mrs. Fannie Benedikt McLaughlin. The school, which closed in September 1952, had graduated 250 registered nurses during its existence.⁶⁷ The last students were transferred elsewhere to finish their program. Geraldine Harp⁶⁸ and her friends stated that the reputation of the graduates was so high that doctors would say, "Get me a Levi nurse." A Levi graduate, Wilma Fae Rowe Booker, helped deliver President Bill Clinton.

Regina Kaplan had boundless energy. She began her day at five each morning, even after leaving her position at Levi Hospital. Her daily plans usually kept her occupied until five in the afternoon. When she became ill, the Uzicks attempted to run her errands for her. After two weeks, they both said it proved impossible for them to maintain that schedule. Regina had engaged in charitable works unknown to her family. Betty and Louis learned of this after Regina Kaplan's death.

Regina Kaplan's retirement from the Leo Levi Hospital was a busy one. She remained in nursing by becoming the Director of Central Supply at St. Joseph's Hospital, Hot Springs, in 1953. She held that position until 1957.⁶⁹ While working at St. Joseph's, Regina organized and was a charter member of the St. Joseph's Hospital Guild. One of her graduates recalled how she was accepted by Kaplan as a fellow employee while they both worked at St. Joseph's. This former student was still frightened to see Kaplan in Central Supply when it was necessary to obtain something from that area. In retrospect, the graduates inter-

viewed, as well as her daughter, think that Kaplan's bark was worse than her bite.

Regina Kaplan, dying from cancer, left Hot Springs to return to Denver on September 25, 1957. Two students still cried when they talked to this author in 1995 about helping Kaplan close her office at St. Joseph's Hospital and pack her belongings. Kaplan knew they were "her girls", and she was glad that "her girls" were there to help her. Regina H. Kaplan entered the Jewish Hospital in Denver where she died on October 8, 1957, her daughter at her side. One of "her girls," Bonnie Valerie Turner, took care of her although she still made her own bed when she had the strength. Kaplan is buried within sight of the mountains she loved as a child.

Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan became active in their career when nursing was achieving professional status. Both of these women came from middle-class German-Jewish families. They were not raised in the crowded tenements of inner cities or in squalid conditions. Rather they were reared and educated in pleasant surroundings.

These two leaders were atypical of the norm. However being atypical was the quality that directed their successes. Their lives stand as testimony to the accomplishments of professional women, and especially Jewish women, in the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the United States there was segregation and discrimination for African Americans in education and employment in all sections of the country. Black codes were legally promulgated by states in the South and maintained in northern states by custom.⁷⁰ Discrimination extended beyond the African American community to the Jewish community, distinguishable not by skin tone, but by accent, food, dress, and lack of American schooling. The same institutions that developed sanctioned programs of nursing education were the same institutions that developed criteria to deny admission to both African Americans and Jews.

Entry into the professions was the dream of Jewish sons and daughters. Discrimination against Jews denied them that privilege. This early discrimination in nursing dates back to the

New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston, Massachusetts, which stated in its charter that one Negro and one Jew could be admitted to each class.⁷¹

Examination of the historical literature indicates that nursing, during this time, was regarded as an occupation and not a profession. Although it permitted economic independence, the apprentice relationship to organized medicine led to employment with relatively poor compensation, working conditions, and usually low status.⁷² Although the emphasis for women was a shift into white-collar work, there were individual women that made particular choices.⁷³

Although nursing was organizing, it had little control over its own practice. Therefore conditions for students during training, which is what nursing education was called at that time, varied widely. In reality nursing students were generally considered a cheap source of labor for facilities that called themselves hospitals. Working for others was shunned by upper class Jewish women. Entering a long period of training was not acceptable to Jewish women. Amelia Greenwald was driven by a dream from childhood. Regina Kaplan was probably motivated by her inability to go to medical school, though still desiring a career in health care.

In early 20th century American society, tradition offered women two choices: to proclaim themselves as women and therefore be less of an achieving individual or become achieving individuals, thus being less of a woman. Nursing permitted women to have it both ways.⁷⁴ The character and spirit of independence of these two women permitted them to stay within the confines of the authoritarian system and yet carve out a maternal role in the world outside the home.

The male-dominated American society offered few options for single women. They were supposed to live at home until married. Unless working in the family business, working was a temporary affair lasting only until marriage. In America, children were supposed to go on to colleges and universities where young women prepared to become teachers and social workers. They did not prepare as nurses because nursing was still an occupation, a calling: training which was embarked upon for altruistic reasons.

Repeatedly Jewish women were discouraged from applying to nursing schools, northern and southern. Regina Kaplan may have faced discrimination in applying to the Colorado Training School or St. Lukes Training School, the other nursing schools in the Denver area. A character reference from a clergyman was usually required. A character reference from a rabbi immediately indicated the religion of the bearer.

There were still carefully preserved quotas during the era of the United States Cadet Nursing Corps, established in 1942. In Lowell, Massachusetts, girls were always told that the quota for Jews was filled at the Lowell General Hospital School of Nursing.⁷⁵ Myra Levine had the same experience in trying to gain admission to the Michael Reese Hospital School of Nursing in Chicago in 1940.⁷⁶

Graduation speeches frequently noted the fine *Christian* profession of nursing that graduates were about to enter. Anti-Semitism was in the press, in housing opportunities, in employment advertising and in private colleges and universities. It permeated the nursing school as well. Superintendents of nursing, even those associated with Jewish hospitals, were not Jewish. They were employed for their abilities as educators and administrators. They brought with them the prejudice of society.

This researcher does not believe that Amelia Greenwald or Regina Kaplan thought that they were breaking barriers for Jewish women when they entered professional nursing programs. They have been described as very private persons. Both women were intensely proud of their career choice.

Both of these leaders were risk takers in their own way. Amelia Greenwald held several different administrative positions around the world. Regina Kaplan left the city in which she was educated, after doing the usual private duty nursing. She took a position as superintendent of nursing in a distant city, without career moves within the hospital setting. Their career choice permitted regulated adventure, travel and an income, and therefore self-support. Their friendships included presidents and many notable names from early 20th century nursing leaders to charitable people who could help fund their dreams of helping others.

The Jewish experience in American nursing included anti-Semitism, a system of quotas, and little regard for Orthodox Jewish practice. Amelia Greenwald and Regina Kaplan were driven to achieve and to accomplish much in their lifetimes. These women followed the Nightingale dictum of being trained to train. The lasting legacy of these women is the nurses they helped to educate and the people they unselfishly served.

NOTES

¹ M. C. McCarroll, "Father's Stories of Civil War Nurses Determined Amelia Greenwald's Career," *New York Evening Post*, May 28, 1930, 1.

² Ibid.

³ Amelia Greenwald, "Nursing Education in Poland," (Unpublished manuscript, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1925, microfiche 396, Nutting Collection), 73.

⁴ Carl Rheins, to Dr. Jacqueline Rose Hott, January 3, 1990.

⁵ John Appel and Selma Appel, "Anti-Semitism in American Caricature," *Society* 24 (January 1986): 78-83; S. Klitz, *The Jews: Their Origin in America, in Connecticut* (Storrs, CT, 1980).

⁶ *Pensacola Journal*, January 15, 1909.

⁷ Leon Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald (1881-1966), Pioneer American Jewish Nurse," *Korot* 10 (1993-1994): 92-101.

⁸ Leo Turitz, "Amelia Greenwald (1881-1966)," *American Jewish Archives*, 37:2 (November 1985): 291-292; Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald."

⁹ Susan Magyar, Executive Director, Greater Monmouth Visiting Nurse Association, to author.

¹⁰ D. Stewart, "Local Resident was Member of First American Legion," *Eunice News*, March 21, 1961

¹¹ Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald," 94.

¹² Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, 1993).

¹³ Ibid.; Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald," 94; Sanford J. Rikoon, ed., *Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader on the Northern Plains*, (Bloomington, 1995).

¹⁴ Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald," 94; Amelia Greenwald, to Sam Greenwald, June 24, 1914.

¹⁵ A. Knapik, "Nursing Education in Poland, 1918-1928: A Cooperative Venture of Polish and American Nurses," *Journal of Nursing History* 1 (November 1985), 38-55.

¹⁶ *Prospectus*, (1923-1928), School of Nursing at the Jewish Hospital in Warsaw, Poland, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸ D. Brown, "How the Jewish Training School in Warsaw was Established," *News*, 1927, 2-3.

¹⁹ "Communique from Jews of New Poland to America," *The American Hebrew*, June 25, 1926, 198.

²⁰ For additional information on The Jewish Nurses' Training School, Warsaw, Poland, see Susan Mayer, "Amelia Greenwald: Pioneer in International Public Health," *Nursing and Health Care* 15 (February 1994): 74-78; iden., "The Jewish Experience in Nursing in America: 1881 to 1955," (Ed.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1996), 64ff.

²¹ Amelia Greenwald, Unpublished letter addressed "Dear Miss Binham," to Florida State Board of Nursing requesting registration in Florida, Jacksonville, December 6, 1927.

²² Sokoloff, "Amelia Greenwald," 97.

²³ After returning from Europe at the conclusion of World War I, Greenwald joined the American Legion. She always maintained her membership and joined the Turner-Mornhinveg Post when she first settled in Eunice.

²⁴ Interview with Liselotte Levy Weil, conducted by Susan Mayer, several occasions since June 1973.

²⁵ Leon Sokoloff, "A History of Jewish Attitudes Towards Nursing," *New York State Journal of Medicine* 92 (December 1992): 529-536.

²⁶ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 4th ed., IV, s.v. "Colorado," 179.

²⁷ Carolyn LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan: Arkansas's 'Lady With the Lamp,'" (Unpublished Manuscript, Susie Pryor Award in Arkansas Women's History, February 1987), 2.

²⁸ Untitled Documents, 1909-1913, 231ff. Courtesy of Sister Rita Connell, Archivist, Institute of Religious Sisters of Mercy Archives, Omaha Regional Community, Omaha.

²⁹ Mary Tarbox, "The Origins of Nursing by the Sisters of Mercy in the United States: 1843-1910," (Ed.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1986).

³⁰ Interview with Louie Uzick, conducted by Susan Mayer, September 28, 1995.

³¹ Ibid.

³² LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 3.

³³ Regina Kaplan, "My Story," Speech delivered by Kaplan on the occasion of her retirement from Leo Levi Hospital. [Contained in a document given to author by Betty and Louis Uzick.]

³⁴ Minutes of the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners. October 24-25, 1916. "Nurses Passed by the Board" [No further information]. Submitted to author by Elissa Miller, Arkansas State University, School of Nursing, Beebe, AR.

³⁵ Dale Wagoner, *Levi Arthritis Hospital More Lasting Than Marble or Stone* (Hot Springs, 1984), 47.

³⁶ H. Schneiderman and I. Carmin, eds., *Who's Who in World Jewry*, (New York, 1955).

³⁷ Regina Kaplan, "My Story," January 16, 1951. Speech delivered by Miss Kaplan on the occasion of her retirement from the Leo Levi Hospital.

³⁸ Interview with Lovenia Burch, conducted by Susan Mayer, September, 28, 1995; Interview with Corriene Guerin, conducted by Susan Mayer, September, 28, 1995; Interview with Gardine Harp, conducted by Susan Mayer, September 28, 1995; Interview with Christine Rowe, conducted by Susan Mayer, September, 28, 1995.

³⁹ *Circular of Information*, 1930, School of Nursing, Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital, Hot Springs.

⁴⁰ Interview with Elissa Miller, conducted by Susan Mayer, December 1995.

⁴¹ Edwina Walls, "Hot Springs Waters and the Treatment of Venereal Diseases: The U.S. Public Health Service Clinic and Camp Garraday," *The Journal of the Arkansas Medical Society* XCI (February 1995): 430-437.

⁴² Paul De Kruif, *Life Among the Doctors* (New York, 1949), 253.

-
43. *Ibid.*, 274.
 44. Wagoner, *Levi Arthritis Hospital*, 14.
 45. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 11.
 46. *Survey*, (1923), Hot Springs, The Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital. Conducted by Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners. Archives, ASBNE.
 47. Josephine Goldmark, *Nursing and Nursing Education in the United States*, Report of the Committee for the Study of Nursing Education (New York, 1923).
 48. Wagoner, *Levi Arthritis Hospital*, 15.
 49. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 11.
 50. *Ibid.*, 7.
 51. *Ibid.*, 12.
 52. Interview with Betty Jean Kaplan Uzick, conducted by Susan Mayer, September 28, 1995.
 53. Wagoner, *Levi Arthritis Hospital*, 19.
 54. *Ibid.*; Untitled Documents, Courtesy Sr. Rita Connell, 233.
 55. *Who's Who in World Jewry*.
 56. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 16.
 57. *Ibid.*, 12.
 58. *Congressional Record*, 89, no. 130, A3892.
 59. *Who's Who in World Jewry*.
 60. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 15.
 61. *Who's Who in World Jewry*.
 62. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 16.
 63. *Who's Who in World Jewry*.
 64. Interview with Louis Uzick, conducted by Susan Mayer, September 28, 1995.
 65. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 20.
 66. *Ibid.*, 17–18.
 67. Wagoner, *Levi Arthritis Hospital*, 46–47; Harp Interview.
 68. Harp Interview.
 69. LeMaster, "Regina Kaplan," 20; *Who's Who in World Jewry*.
 70. Elizabeth Carnegie, *The Path We Tread: Blacks in Nursing 1854–1990*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1991), 22–23.
 71. *Ibid.*, 19.
 72. Olga Church and S. Poirier, "From Patient to Consumer; From Apprentice to Professional Practitioner," *Nursing Clinics of North America* 21 (March 1986): 99–109.
 73. A. Makler, "Imagining History: A Good Story and a Well Formed Argument," C. Witherell and Nell Noddings, eds., *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*, (New York, 1991).
 74. Church and Poirier, "From Patient to Consumer," 100.
 75. Interview with Pearl Styman, conducted by Susan Mayer, January 2, 1995.
 76. Myra Levine in Thelma Schorr and Anne Zimmerman, eds., *Making Choices, Taking Chances: Nurse Leaders Tell Their Stories*, (St. Louis, 1988), 215–228.