Final Report  
Mary McCune, Assistant Professor, Department of History  
Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant, Spring 2007  

Project Title:  
Homeland(s): The Development of Ethnic Identity among Polish Catholics and Jews in the United States, 1914-1939  

Archival Work Conducted:  
As proposed, I used the Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant in order to take research trips to the two cities that I am studying in this project, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. In late May-early June I spent a week in Cleveland doing research at the Western Reserve Historical Society. In both cities I decided to focus my attention on Jewish community groups with which I have greater familiarity at this point than with Polish Catholic organizations. At the Western Reserve I utilized resources to do general background reading on the history of Jewish and Polish Catholic migration to the city and the changing residential patterns of those communities over time, specifically the movement of Jews. I also spoke at length with the Jewish archivist who also has expertise in the fields of Polish and Polish American history.

The specific collections I examined included:

- National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section, Executive Board minutes, 1914-1940
- National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section, Bulletin, 1920s-1940s
- The records of Masada, the Young Men’s Zion Organization, 1928-1930s
- The unpublished manuscript of a novel regarding immigrant life in Cleveland in the 1920s by Shin Miller

The ability to take the time to go through these collections closely was quite useful, providing me a sense of the shape of the Jewish community, intra-community tensions and issues of importance, and interactions with non-Jewish groups. I found, for example, quite a bit of information on the activities that the NCJW spearheaded during the Great Depression to organize relief and assistance to the city’s Jewish unemployed. I also found an early and growing concern with Hitler’s Germany and a variety of communal responses, including a boycott of German goods and the close monitoring of stores that had pledged not to sell German goods, but were continuing to do so.

I had intended to return to the Archive of Industrial Society for my Pittsburgh trip but decided, after talking to the Western Reserve archivist, to visit the Heinz History Center which has an extensive collection of material relating to Jews in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. I spent four days in that archive in late June. I took the same approach in Pittsburgh as I had in Cleveland, focusing on the Jewish community and using my trip to gain greater familiarity with community organizations. I spent quite a bit of time, at the suggestion of the Heinz Center’s Jewish archivist, exploring the records of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh, an organization which grew out of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement in the city’s Hill District.

The specific collections examined here included:
Examing these documents, especially the JCC records, revealed much intriguing material on race relations, most notably, but not exclusively, between Jews and Blacks in Pittsburgh. This material, as well as interesting material on Jewish activism during the 1940s, has led me to extend the time frame of my project into the 1950s. The site of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, the Hill District, was largely African American by the 1950s leading the Jewish community to engage in a self-study to determine whether the Settlement should remain at its Hill location, serving the neighborhood in continuance of its historic mission, or if the community should divest of its Hill holdings and build a "Jewish Community Center" in the post-war centers of Jewish life, Squirrel Hill and the East End.

**Next Steps:** I'm working on putting together a panel for the Midwest Jewish Studies Conference with the Western Reserve's Jewish archivist on preserving, researching and teaching local Jewish history. I have also scheduled to give a College Hour talk in November 2007 entitled, "What is 'Our Community'? Blacks, Jews and the Irene Kaufmann Settlement in Pittsburgh's Hill District, 1920-1955." I would like to further develop that paper into a presentation at a scholarly conference. I intend to return to the archives next year and am beginning to search for funds that will enable me to do so. My shorter-term goal is to focus on the themes of Jewish activism in the Great Depression and against Hitler and on the interactions of blacks, Jews and other white ethnics in the changing neighborhoods that arose in the Great Migrations of the war years in hopes of producing an article or two for submission to scholarly journals. I would also like to begin to delve into the sources relating to Polish Catholic life in both cities in the coming year.