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View of Prague's Jewish Quarter shows the Altneuschul (center foreground). Dating from 1270, it is the oldest active synagogue in Europe.

## 'Legacy' leaves strong imprint

By Benita Bornstein  
special writer

"We must never forget," a heart-rending phrase associated with the Holocaust, finds new meaning and relevance in the emotionally touching exhibition, "The Precious Legacy: Jewish Treasures From The Czechoslovak State Collections" at The Detroit Institute of Arts.

The exhibition, at once a paradoxical record of the twisted mentality of the Nazis and celebration of the beauty of the Czech Jewish culture, will, without doubt, leave its imprint in memory.

In this 40th anniversary of the liberation of Terezin and other Nazi death camps, "The Precious Legacy" is indeed a timely and fitting tribute to the vitality, creativity and endurance of a people.

Following 15 years of negotiations with the Czech Socialist Republic and foreign and cultural bureaus, this unusual exhibition was organized by the Smithsonian Institution Exhibition Service (SITES) in cooperation with Project Judeica, Mark E. Tallman, chairman and the State Jewish Museum in Prague.

Philip Morris Incorporated is the national sponsor. The DIA's presentation is made possible by the Founders Society with assistance from the Jewish Welfare Federation.

TO VIEW the exhibition is to be educated in Czech Jewish history. Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, served as the country's political, economic, cultural and religious center. The city was also known for its Jewish quarter.

The State Jewish Museum in Prague, established in 1906, was a great source of pride to Czech Jews as its treasures modestly increased. But from 1942-45 a bizarre and demonic turn of events changed the fine museum into a grotesque instrument of Nazi pathology, a "Museum of an Extinct Race."

Upon orders from the Third Reich, more than 95,000 objects were confiscated and shipped to Prague. Jewish curators, unable to save lives, in a spiritual resistance, recorded history as they cataloged precious items. When their job was completed, they were deported and executed.

The collection filled eight Jewish sites and more than 50 warehouses throughout the city. And Prague was spared wartime destruction. Thus, the confiscated artifacts, all beautiful examples of Jewish life, ironically give

testimony to a heritage that extends back to the Middle Ages.

ON VIEW from this collection are more than 300 objects chosen to illustrate primary aspects of the Jewish ethic — worship, learning, benevolence.

Although there are no tombstones for those who perished under the Nazis, the objects give a personal reality to the communities and individuals to whom these things belonged.

The Torah (sacred scrolls of the first five books of the Jewish Bible), the silk embroidered brocade Torah curtains and mantles, the finely wrought silver shields, crowns, and finials that adorn the Torah, pointers because the hand must not touch the holy scriptures, all attest to the ritual of Jewish worship.

A typical study room complete with table and chairs, books and illustrated manuscripts, depicts the value of learning.

Household goods, kitchen utensils and furnishings reflect the cycle of the seasons, the sabbath, holidays, and festivals. A cradle and circumcision bench inscribed with the translated phrase, "May this child be great," and a 15-painting narrative of death relate the cycle of life and acts of benevolence.

ENLARGED PHOTOGRAPHS of the thousands of objects stored and labeled according to the Nazi's demand for strict order also give a chilling record of the people who were eventually deported.

A most touching memorial is a photograph of a small portion of the wall at Prague's Plaskas Synagogue, described in every Czech Jew (17,297) whose fate was extermination — but before death there was life.

At the end of the exhibition, there is a wall, dimly lit with one small picture. It is the joyful drawing of butterflies, apples, and a bird by an 11-year-old girl who was deported to Terezin. She, along with 150,000 other children, was executed in 1944.

Finally, "The Precious Legacy" is a legacy to Jew and non-Jew alike — a poignant lesson in the duality of the human capability for destruction and the overwhelming struggle for survival.

The exhibition extends through Sunday May 5. Daytime hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday and until 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Entry is every half-hour only. Tickets are \$2.75. For further information call 832-2730.

## Children's books Drawings are first, words follow

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

There's no need to ask David Small, children's book author/illustrator, how he taps into the mental set for his work.

The refreshing enthusiasm for life and wide-eyed interest in the world about him, typical of children, radiates through his conversation.

Small and his wife, Sherry Stewart, also a writer, were at the Birmingham Bookstore last week for an autograph party for his new book, "Imogene's Antlers," Crown, 1985.

This is the second book for children which he has written and illustrated. The first, "Eulalie and the Hopping Head," Macmillan, 1982, won many honors including the 1983 Children's Book of the Year award from the Library of Congress and Best Book for Spring Award from the School Library Journal.

Small has also illustrated five highly acclaimed books, among them "The Dragon Who Lived Downstairs" by Burr Tillstrom, William Morrow & Co, 1984, "Anna and the Seven Swans" by Maida Silverman, William Morrow & Co, 1984, Best Book 1984 award, School Library Journal and Booklist, and one coming out this year, "The Christmas Box," by Eve Merriam, William Morrow & Co.

THE OTHERS he illustrated are "Mean Chickens and Wild Cucumbers," by Nathan Zimmelman, Macmillan, 1983 and "Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift, William Morrow & Co, 1983.

Small, who has taught drawing at Kalamazoo College, will be a visiting lecturer at the University of Michigan this summer for the second year. He grew up in Detroit. He has a bachelor's degree in fine art from Wayne State and a master of fine art from Yale.

From the time he was two, drawing has been a primary force in his life.

"He can't stop it. When he writes and draws something different is happening. It goes on all the time. When he gets up for breakfast before I do, he'll be drawing at the breakfast table when I come down," Stewart said watching her husband's reaction as she spoke.

"It's difficult for me to understand any other way of doing it," Small said. "The stories come to me through the pictures. If I don't know what's going to happen, I'll draw it out. I'm mainly a visual person. The world comes to me through my eyes."

"As a kid I can remember being overwhelmed by color. I could taste them (colors). They had different textures."

He added, "I respect literature, but I'm not in love with words the way some people are."

But, he expresses himself well and said he loves to teach.

"I write them for the adults as much as for the kids, so the person who has to read them night after night doesn't get bored," he said.



Before he sold his prize-winning book, "Eulalie and the Hopping Head," to Macmillan, David Small said many editors told him the book was "too strange, too weird, too adult, too odd." Here he autographs his latest, "Imogene's Antlers" at Birmingham Bookstore.

Saying that he admires the form of children's books, he continued, "When writing for children, you can't beat around the bush, they'll get up and walk away. It's so good to say 'getting dressed was difficult,' where you can cut through all the rococo stuff."

Small brought examples of his paintings for illustrations to the bookstore, so visitors could see the progressions and changes he makes as he perfects each one.

Most children's books will require a minimum of 34 illustrations, one for each of the 32 pages, plus cover and title page.

THESE are first done as pencil sketches and once approved by the publisher are completed in watercolor.

But, it isn't as simple as it sounds. Small is a perfectionist. He may do each illustration up 10 times before he is satisfied — adding or subtracting details — bringing more attention to the cat snuggled under the dresser in "Imogene's Antlers" or making the dragon emerging from the trapdoor in "The Dragon Who Lived Downstairs" more prominent.

"I think 'Eulalie' is my best book — I had the longest time to work on it."

Small said that he doesn't like to be rushed with tight deadlines.

He said that while he teaches illustration at University of Michigan, it's something really learned by doing.

David Small, the artist, is having a one-man show of his drawings, pastels, paintings and prints at Gallery 617 of Kalamazoo starting April 25.



This illustration by David Small was done for "Anna and the Seven Swans" by Maida Silverman.

Staff photos by Gary Caskey

## 'Gales of November' comes out in paperback

By Chuck Moss  
special writer

"Gales of November, The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald," by Robert J. Hemming, Contemporary Books Inc., 235 pages, \$9.95 (paper). The legend lives on the big ship called "Edmund Fitzgerald." Superior hasn't given up her dead, but the wreck still haunts the lakes, endlessly plunging through seas November-savage.

Not the first victim, and by no means the last, the big "Fitz" has captured an eerie immortality, a public mystique as THE Great Lakes shipwreck.

"The song has a lot to do with it," explained Bob Hemming, former Southfield Eclectic editor and the author of "Gales of November," originally published in 1981. The book tells the story of the "Fitzgerald" sinking, both analyzing the causes and reconstructing the scenes of that disaster.

"The mystique comes from the dramatic nature of the wreck: going down suddenly with no — absolutely no — warning, no survivors. It was a ready-made mystery," said Hemming.

NOW RELEASED in paperback, Hemming's chillingly fascinating book unravels that mystery celebrated in Gordon Lightfoot's hit 1976 recording, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

The story reads like a thriller. Launched in 1958, the "Fitzgerald" was a queen. This largest ship on the lakes was lavishly outfitted with luxury appointments and fine J. L. Hudson's china.

But on that wild November night in 1975 it was the "Fitz" alone that perished, almost in a twinkling and right under the very eye of her partner vessel.

One minute it was there on the radar screen, the next minute gone. How could such a vast and mighty vessel simply vanish?

"The ship was slightly off-course," said Hemming. "Her radar was blown off in the storm and she'd asked another vessel for directional assistance. And she didn't have any depth-finding equipment."

Thus semibled, the "Fitz" wandered over Six Fathom Shoals off Michilicoten and smashed her bottom.

"Obviously, the ship shoaled. With a hole in the hull she took on water, so when the big waves reported would have hit, she couldn't have righted herself, just kept on plunging downward like a submarine," Hemming added.

But the first reports blamed the First Mate.

"THE COAST Guard conclusion was blatantly false and has since been repudiated," Hemming said.

So late the cover-up? "My supposition — it was apparent that they were sensitive to avoiding litigation directed to the ship's owners."

**'The ship was slightly off-course. Her radar was blown off in the storm and she'd asked another vessel for directional assistance. And she didn't have any depth-finding equipment.'**

— Robert J. Hemming  
author, 'Gales of November'

In piecing the story together, Hemming actually puts the reader aboard the doomed ship, reconstructing the actions and thoughts of the sailors.

"That was the most difficult part of the book. I wanted it realistic, but not grisly or macabre. I found out which mates would be standing watch, who would be having coffee, where various people would be. The interviews were endlessly fascinating. The families were remarkably open to a strange voice on the end of the telephone," he said.

But why the legend? "The song. Of course, we weren't able to get the rights

to use the song, at least not all the words. Lightfoot's sister is his manager and she's a businesswoman first and last.

"She just wanted more money. But it is a great song, there's a quality to it that's eerie. The families of the crew hate it, you know. They dread the 10th of November not only for the memory, but because they know they're going to hear that damn song," Hemming said.

And the moral? "Sooner or later there will be another wreck. You can count on it. It all depends on the whim of the lakes."