

## Yiddish yesteryear

I would take my visitor to Jewish New York on a tour of the Yiddish yesterday. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is my first stop. The Vanderbilts used to own the small mansion on the corner of Fifth Avenue and East 86th Street, but it is now a repository  
*Continued, page 13*



*YIDDISH Continued from page 9*

of Jewish history. The first floor usually houses an exhibit on the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe or America. All the floors of YIVO bear witness to a culture that once nurtured eleven million souls.

A five-story building on the corner of East 78th Street and Madison Avenue is my second stop. The *Tsukunft*, America's oldest surviving Yiddish journal, can be found on the fourth floor, adjacent to CYCO, the largest Yiddish bookstore in America. The Jewish Bund—and its illustrious archives—and the Congress for Yiddish Culture also dwell in this building. Each has its own tale to impart.

On East 33rd Street, a few blocks off Fifth Avenue, the presses of the *Jewish Daily Forward* roll in a new environment. The historic building on East Broadway has been converted to a Chinese laundry and the huge *Forward* sign which used to light up the district has been carted away. But the *Forward* carries on, the last of the great Yiddish dailies.

While at the *Forward* one may also drop in at the Workmen's Circle headquarters in the building. The old and new mingle here as the Workmen's Circle labors to pass on the Yiddish cultural heritage to younger, English speaking generations.

The Educational Alliance on East Broadway no longer caters to the Yiddish masses. But it is worth seeing as the once peerless educator of our people.

Uptown on 92nd Street and Fifth Avenue, there is the Jewish Museum. Its name speaks for itself.

And for a taste of what it once was like—the residents of the Bialystoker Home for the Aged at 228 East Broadway are willing to chat in flawless Yiddish about their lives, which often span over a century.

### **Isidore Haiblum**

*Isidore Haiblum, a Yiddishist, is the author of Interworld and The Return, two science-fiction novels published by Dell.*