JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

Ideas

Irving Berlin's 1926 interfaith marriage sparked a Jewish debate that, 100 years later, hasn't gone away

A century after the famed composer wed Ellin Mackay, a Catholic heiress, their marriage offers a window into how Jewish attitudes toward interfaith unions have evolved — and how much they haven't.

Scott D. Seligman January 2, 2026

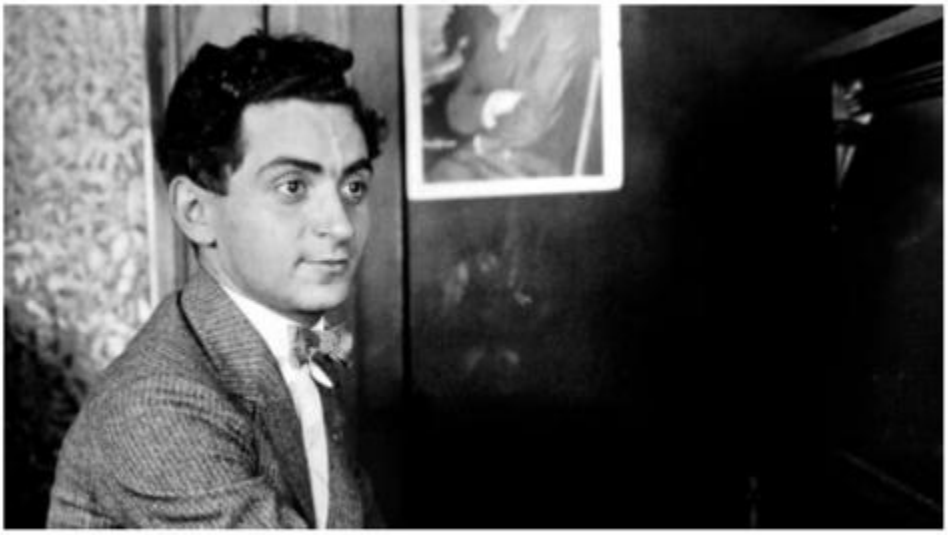
Irving Berlin and his wife Ellin Mackay appear in a photograph in the late 1920s. The 1926 marriage between the wildly popular Jewish songwriter and a Catholic heiress was a media sensation. (Bain News Service via Library of Congress/Wikipedia)

Exactly 100 years ago, on Jan. 4, 1926, legendary American Jewish songwriter Irving Berlin married Ellin Mackay, a Roman Catholic heiress, in a civil ceremony in Manhattan's City Hall. What some considered a misalliance of prominent figures from different worlds was the subject of much comment, as much for their class differences as their religious ones. This is the story of how Irving met Ellin, of the difficulties they faced at the start of what proved a happy, 62-year marriage, and of how Irving's fellow Jews felt about the union.

For more than a century, interfaith marriage has functioned as a kind of Rorschach test within American Jewish life, alternately framed as an existential threat, a sociological inevitability or, more recently, a potential avenue for renewal. Only last month, for example, the Conservative movement formally apologized for decades of discouraging intermarriage and committed itself to a new approach centered on engagement. This is worlds apart from the prevalent attitude in the second half of the 20th century, when intermarriage skyrocketed and communal leaders warned that it was hastening assimilation, eroding a fragile minority culture and causing a crisis.

Such voices were also heard in the 1920s, but in Irving and Ellin's day the attitude of most Jews was a good deal more benign. A robust Yiddish and Jewish press — including the Jewish Telegraphic Agency — closely followed the couple's romance, and pulpit rabbis discussed it in their sermons, but there was no consensus on whether the celebrity intermarriage was a "menace" to the Jews or, indeed, a sign of their growing acceptance.

The couple's courtship began on a May evening in 1925 at the home of Frances Wellman, the socially prominent wife of a New York district attorney. Frances had invited her good friend Ellin to dinner. The 21-year-old Ellin, presented to society four years earlier, had recently begun writing for The New Yorker as a voice of the younger, privileged set.



A publicity photo of Irving Berlin taken by his early music publishing company, 1906. (Life magazine images via Wikipedia)

A theater aficionado, Frances was also close enough to 38-year-old Irving Berlin that she felt comfortable calling him to fill in when a dinner guest

cancelled at the last minute. That was what happened on the Saturday night that Irving was introduced to Ellin in a meeting that was entirely unplanned.

Irving's rags-to-riches story was already well-known. Journalist Alexander Woolcott had just published a biography of him and like most everyone, Ellin had enjoyed his songs. Born Israel Baline in a shtetl in Belarus, he had arrived in America in 1893 at age five. His father, a cantor, worked as a meat cutter and a Hebrew tutor in New York; his mother was a midwife. Young Izzy left school to earn a living when his father died in 1901. He began by selling newspapers, but the musical ability he had inherited opened other doors. He found work as a singing waiter in Chinatown, and later at Jimmy Kelly's Greenwich Village nightclub, the "Montmartre of New York."

By 1907 he was already writing music. He was erroneously identified on the sheet music of his first published song, "Marie from Sunny Italy," as "I. Berlin" and the spelling stuck; he also began going by "Irving" rather than "Izzy." His first megahit, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," which sold over a million copies, came in 1911 and catapulted him to fame. Drafted into the army in 1917, he wrote a patriotic musical, "Yip Yip Yaphank," and produced it with an all-soldier cast. His blockbuster hit, "God Bless America," was composed for that show, but not released until years later. By the 1920s, he was internationally famous and quite wealthy, with assets estimated at a million dollars (about $25 million in today's currency).

Lean and wiry at five feet six, Berlin had briefly been married before. He had wed Dorothy Goetz, a 20-year-old Catholic girl, in a civil ceremony in 1912. During their honeymoon, however, Dorothy had contracted typhoid fever and she died just five months after the wedding. After her tragic death, he composed a plaintive waltz called "When I Lost You" to express his grief. From time to time since then, Irving's name had been linked with those of other women, but in 1925 he was unattached. He liked to quip that if he were engaged to anyone, it was to Sam Harris, his partner at New York's Music Box Theatre.

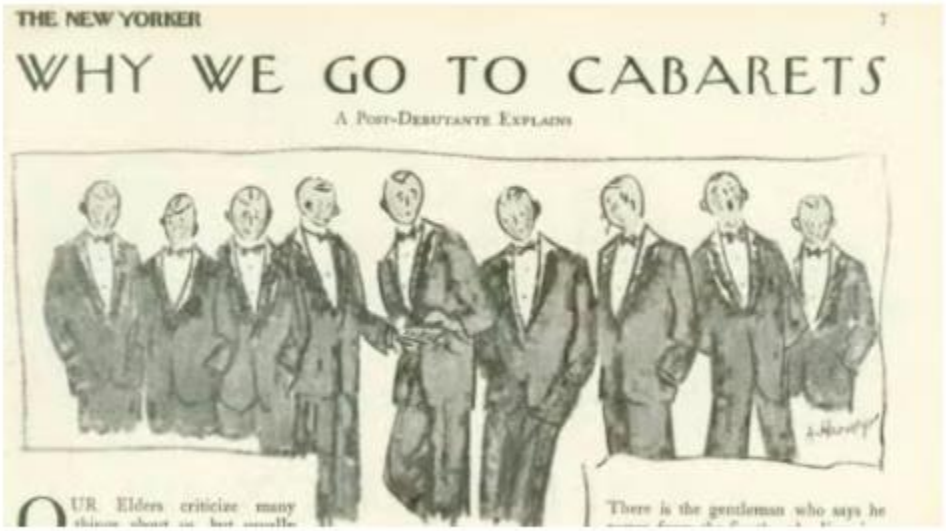
Ellin, for her part, was a bit more attached. She had been seen with Leopold Stokowski, the eminent conductor, and wooed by a Scottish aristocrat, Capt. Ian Campbell, heir to the Dukedom of Argyll. She had even accepted an expensive bauble from the latter, but no engagement had ever been announced.

Nonetheless, the attraction that Saturday night in 1925 was strong and mutual, and the evening did not end with dessert. After dinner, Irving invited Ellin to

hear the band at Jimmy Kelly's. The evening marked the beginning of a passionate romance.

Dancing with the Prince of Wales

To say Ellin Mackay came from money would be a colossal understatement. Her grandfather, John William Mackay, was one of the 20 richest people in the world at his death in 1902. Born into poverty in a Dublin slum, John had arrived in New York in 1840 and answered the call of the California Gold Rush. But it was silver rather than gold that accounted for his vast wealth. He and three other miners had struck it rich in the silver mines of the Comstock Lode.


THE NEW YORKER

WHY WE GO TO CABARETS

A Post-Debutante Explains

OUR Elders criticize many

There is the gentleman who says he

Ellin Mackay's insider chronicle of Manhattan nightlife, published in The New Yorker in 1925, became a sensation. (The New Yorker)

John used some of his fortune to form the Commercial Cable Company, which broke financier Jay Gould's monopoly on transatlantic telegraphy, and the Postal Telegraph Company, which operated networks in the U.S. His wealth rivaled that of Gould and railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt II. But his money could not buy him and his wife Louise social acceptance when they moved back east in 1878. As a nouveau riche Irish Catholic, John was snubbed by New York society.

Upon his death, his son Clarence, known as Clarie, inherited some $45 million ($1.7 billion today) and became president of both enterprises. He would eventually extend the telegraph and cable service to three quarters of the circumference of the earth. In 1898 he wed Katherine "Kitty" Duer, a Protestant and a member of the New York "smart set" whose family was listed

among the “Four Hundred”; in so doing, he bought himself the social standing that had eluded his parents.

For a wedding gift, John gave the couple a 648-acre estate in Roslyn, Long Island known as Harbor Hill, and Clarie spared no expense in building his new wife a dream house there. He engaged world-famous architect Stanford White to design a 52-room, 80,000-square-foot French chateau at a cost of $6 million ($207 million today) that took two years to complete. Erected on the second highest point on Long Island, it commanded impressive views of the ocean and the sound. The manor boasted a grand entrance hall, a ballroom, a library, a music room, a dining room, a billiard room, an indoor swimming pool, squash courts, a private chapel and multiple bedroom suites with bathrooms equipped with indoor plumbing. Kitty’s personal lavatory included a $17,000 ($664,000 today) sunken bathtub imported from Italy, carved from a solid block of marble.

This was conspicuous consumption at its grandest, and it was the fairyland in which Ellin Mackay grew up, together with her elder sister Katherine and a younger brother, John. But her sheltered life was not without its share of heartache. When Ellin was eight, her mother took up with her husband’s physician and departed for Europe with her paramour, causing one of the most sensational scandals of the Gilded Age. In the divorce, Clarie retained Harbor Hill and Kitty received $2 million ($65 million today), but had to forfeit custody of their children.

Because Clarie was viewed as a victim, his social standing did not diminish. In fact, he became one of the most lavish hosts in America. In 1921, for example, he outspent the parents of all the other debs on Ellin’s coming out party. The $20,000 event — the equivalent of about $360,000 today — was held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Among the luminaries in attendance were the Cornelius Vanderbilts, the John D. Rockefeller, Jrs., the Kermit Roosevelts, the August Belmonts, Mrs. J. P. Morgan and the Harry Payne Whitneys.

The most memorable event Clarie ever hosted, however, was his 1924 reception for the future British King Edward VIII, who was on a two-week tour of the United States. One thousand guests were invited for dinner and dancing at Harbor Hill. Ellin would remember that party as the night she danced with the Prince of Wales — seven years before he would meet Wallis Simpson. His Royal Highness found her “one of the most charming girls I ever met.”

Clarence’s social position demanded that he marry his daughters off to prominent, well-to-do young men. He approved of Kenneth O’Brien, son of a

New York State Supreme Court justice and fellow Irish Catholic, as a proper helpmate for Ellin's sister Katherine. The couple were wed in September of 1922 and feted at a 2,000-guest event. Ellin, who served as her sister's maid of honor, had every reason to expect a similar celebration when the time came for her to marry. But such a wedding, it would soon be clear, was not to be.

"A songwriter? And a Jew to boot!"

When the RMS Olympic arrived in New York harbor from Cherbourg on April 15, 1925, Ellin, who had been in Europe for half a year, was mobbed by newspapermen even before she disembarked. Decked out in the latest fashion, Ellin was the picture of poise as she consented to answer a few questions.

"We understand there are well-founded reports that you and Irving Berlin are engaged," one of them asked.

"There is positively not a jot of truth in it," she replied. "I have met Mr. Berlin at a number of parties, but I have met many men at social events, and I don't see that this calls for the creation of something out of nothing." Taking her father's arm, she continued, tongue firmly in cheek, "If I married, I would leave Dad alone, and I cannot bear to think of parting with him. I have not met the young man I would marry and give up my father."

The truth was, she had met him. Whether or not there was an actual engagement, there was something serious going on between her and Berlin. They had kept company for the four months between their first meeting and her departure for Europe. In fact, not only were Ellin and Irving already an item before she left, but Irving was the reason for the trip. Clarie, deeply unhappy about the relationship, voiced many concerns: her youth, the gap in their ages, their religious differences, how any children would be raised, his lack of education and his lifestyle as an entertainer. He actually hired detectives to tail Berlin, hoping to catch him misbehaving, and it was he who had arranged his daughter's extended vacation in Europe. He hoped it would break the couple up.

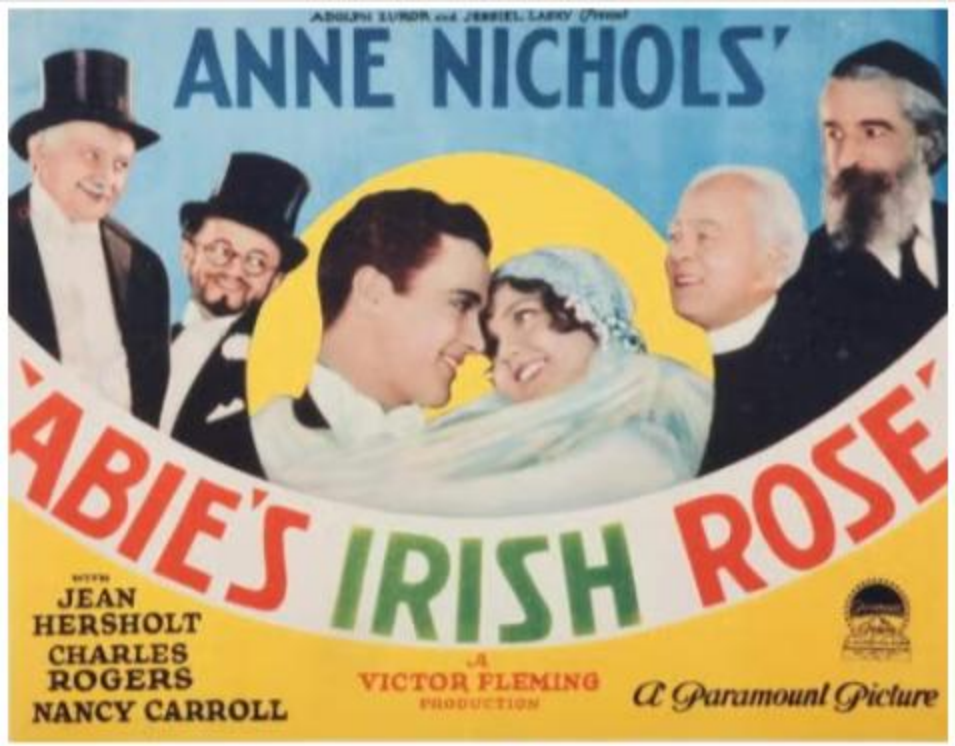
Clarie's attempts to part them proved fruitless, however. By mid-June it was widely reported that the two would soon marry. Ellin, it was said, had secretly traveled to Rome and secured special dispensation from the Pope to marry outside her faith on the condition that any children be raised Catholic. Clarie denied that rumor, certainly untrue. And Irving, accustomed to speculation about his love life, continued to deny that the couple were betrothed.

“The story of our engagement seems to be based on my writing ‘What’ll I Do?’ and ‘All Alone,’” he told Time Magazine. “It has always been assumed after I have written a ballad that I have been through some heartbreaking experience.” The smash hit “What’ll I Do,” the lament of a man apart from his beloved “with just a photograph to tell my troubles to” has indeed often been cited as a wedding tribute composed by Berlin for his new bride while she was away. But the piece was actually published several months before the composer ever met Ellin. “All Alone,” on the other hand, whose lyrics also suggest a man separated from his love, was indeed written in the summer of 1924 when Ellin was in Europe.

The Jewish newspapers used their imagination in reporting about the nuptials. The fact that they were in no position to listen in on private conversations did not stop them from reporting ostensible verbatim transcripts of them. By one account in the Yiddish-language Forverts (Forward), Clarie said to Ellin, “A songwriter? And a Jew to boot! How can an aristocrat tolerate this?” And this, from Di Yidishe Shtimme (The Jewish Voice): “Very well. Marry your ragtime peddler. But the children — Catholic, every one! And the ceremony — no synagogue stench.”

Irving’s Irish Rose

Berlin would not be the first prominent American Jew to intermarry. Harry Houdini (born Erik Weisz) had married out of the faith in 1894, and, more recently, Al Jolson (born Asa Yoelson) had wed twice, both times to gentiles. None of those weddings had made headlines, however. Jolson did get plenty of publicity when his first wife sued him for divorce, but the coverage had focused on accusations of desertion and did not mention ethnic differences.



The lobby card for the 1928 film adaptation of "Abie's Irish Rose," the popular Broadway play about an intermarriage. (LMPC, via Getty Images)

This, however, was different. Jewish intermarriage had caught the public's imagination when a Broadway hit called "Abie's Irish Rose," a three-act comedy by playwright Anne Nichols, opened in 1922. Nichols had weaved a tale of a secret Jewish-gentile marriage and the discord it caused in the bride and groom's families. It was still running when the papers announced the Berlin-Mackay engagement, and the comparison was too obvious to resist.

In the play, Abraham Levy and Rosemary Murphy, Jewish and Catholic, meet and marry in France. When the couple returns to New York, Abie introduces his bride as his fiancée and allows his parents to believe she is Jewish. Similarly, Rosemary's father assumes that her betrothed is an Irishman. But when the parents meet, the ruse is discovered. A priest and a rabbi get involved and there are two more weddings. Reconciliation eventually comes about when Rosemary gives birth to twins, strategically named Rebecca and Patrick.

The production broke Broadway box office records by racking up a record 2,327 performances during its five-year run; even Jewish theatergoers enjoyed it. But it was reviled by most reviewers and was especially unpopular around the Algonquin Round Table, the famous gathering spot for wits. Humorist Robert Benchley called it "something awful"; theater critic Heywood Broun derided it

as “synthetic farce” and journalist Dorothy Parker noted that it had defeated another production “for the distinction of being the season’s worst play.”

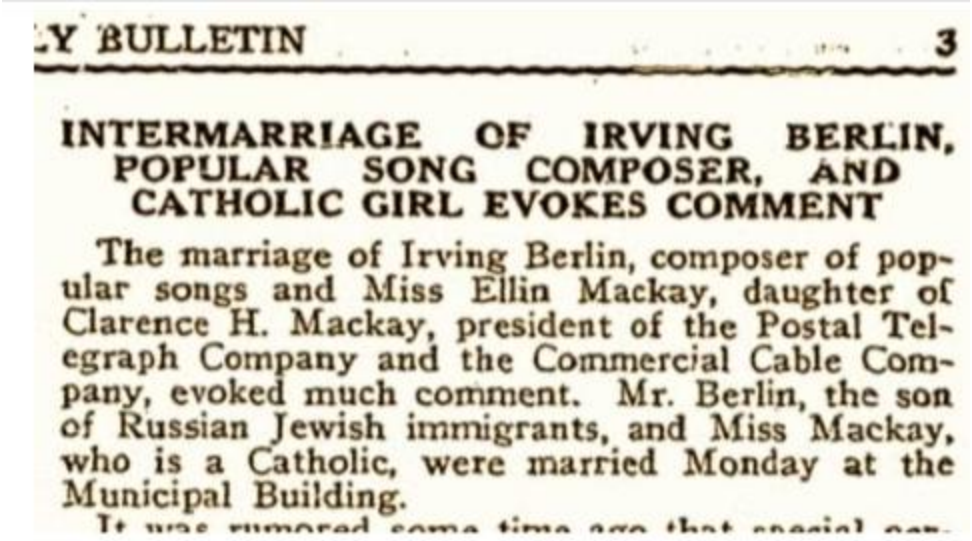
The attitude of the Jewish press toward the play, however, was mostly favorable. The American Israelite found “not the slightest affront to even the most devout adherent in either of the faiths involved.” The Jewish Exponent noted that “on your way out you are still laughing at some of the humor typical of the respective race.” And the Jewish Advocate went even further, commenting on “the deep regard the Jewish people of the metropolis have for this wonderful play of love and tolerance.”

Only the Forverts was unimpressed, condemning it as stupid and noting that “it doesn’t bear the slightest resemblance to Jewish or Irish life.” Missing, even from the Forverts’ rebuke, was any outrage over the stereotypical portrayal of the characters, the mocking of Jewish religious and cultural practices or the sympathetic depiction of interfaith marriage.

Inevitably, Irving and Ellin were widely compared to Abie and Rose. Ann Nichols even reported that attendance at the play rose substantially after the couple’s nuptials were announced. And a Tin Pan Alley duo wrote a song about them that echoed the play, entitled “When a Kid Who Came from the East Side Found a Sweet Society Rose.”

“Mazel tov, Mr. and Mrs. Berlin!”

By September, Ellin was still insisting to reporters that she knew Berlin only “slightly.” But the reporters weren’t buying it, nor should they have. Because just a few months later, on January 4, 1926, Irving Berlin and Ellin Mackay were united in a civil ceremony in New York City. The bride and groom arrived at City Hall by subway — the first subway ride of the aristocratic Ellin’s life, she maintained — and a deputy city clerk performed the ceremony. Only after it was all over did Ellin wire her father with the news.



LY BULLETIN 3

INTERMARRIAGE OF IRVING BERLIN, POPULAR SONG COMPOSER, AND CATHOLIC GIRL EVOKES COMMENT

The marriage of Irving Berlin, composer of popular songs and Miss Ellin Mackay, daughter of Clarence H. Mackay, president of the Postal Telegraph Company and the Commercial Cable Company, evoked much comment. Mr. Berlin, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants, and Miss Mackay, who is a Catholic, were married Monday at the Municipal Building.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Daily Bulletin reports that Irving Berlin and Ellin Mackay were wed on Jan. 6, 1925. The article quoted Clarie Mackay, saying, "The bride's father, when informed of the wedding, declared: 'The marriage comes as a complete surprise to me and was done without my knowledge or approval. Beyond this I have nothing to say." (JTA archive)

The marriage became a front-page story all across the United States. Most of the coverage mentioned the religious difference between the new spouses, but the focus was more on class difference. The reports ran more less along these lines, penned by columnist Eddie Dougherty:

A Catholic girl, finely reared, splendidly educated, a girl who had only to wish for a thing to obtain it, gave herself to a Jew who came out of poverty and hardship into the stars. She gave up for him her religion, her people, her countless society friends, everything she had known and held priceless before Berlin came into her existence.

After receiving his daughter's cable, Clarence Mackay asserted that the wedding "was a complete surprise and was without my knowledge or consent." Ellin's mother, who had initially raised some red flags, was supportive of the marriage. Berlin's parents were deceased by the time of the wedding, but one reporter managed to track down his sister Ruth in New Jersey. She told him she had expected the marriage and wished her brother Izzy and his bride "every happiness."

The couple disappeared to Atlantic City for a couple of days, biding time before their departure for Europe. Irving had originally planned to travel there alone, but now they would go as a couple. He booked the $5,000 presidential suite on the S.S. Leviathan, which was to set sail on Saturday, Jan. 9. Tackled by reporters at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on the Boardwalk, Ellin asserted that "We

are supremely happy, and that is all that counts." She also allowed that the "greatest wedding present" she could receive would be her father's blessing and that she was hopeful of receiving it.

But on the same day, Kenneth O'Brien, Ellin's brother-in-law, told the newspapers that Clarence would neither "forget nor forgive" his daughter. Mackay insisted that his son-in-law's statements had been unauthorized, but he refused to comment on the possibility of a reconciliation. A press account held that he had disinherited Ellin.

By the day of their departure for Europe, the only signal from Ellin's father was a statement that his opposition to the marriage was unchanged. The couple made no attempt to contact him and went ahead with their plans. Late that night, to avoid gawkers, they slipped down the fire escape of Berlin's apartment building and hailed a taxi for Chelsea Piers. At midnight they boarded the S.S. Leviathan and set sail for Southampton, England in luxury.

During the voyage, the couple hosted a dinner to which they invited a small group of passengers with whom they were acquainted. That Ellin was now being snubbed by her "people" became clear when fellow voyagers Alice Claypoole Vanderbilt and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney declined to attend. And soon her name was dropped from the Social Register. There appeared to be some truth in Eddie Dougherty's prediction that in marrying Irving, Ellin would be giving up her society friends.

The Jewish press actually reported the news of the wedding rather proudly. It was almost as if, in an era that demanded that Jews balance tradition with assimilation, they thought it a badge of honor that an immigrant Jewish boy from the slums could be deemed a suitable helpmate for a high-society, patrician girl. It meant that Jews were achieving a measure of acceptance among America's gentiles. The only part of the story that gave the lie to the assimilation dream was the stubborn prejudice of some like Ellin's father.

Irving Berlin with actors Alice Faye, Tyrone and Don Ameche on the set of the 1938 film, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," based on Berlin's first major hit. (Boston Globe/Wikipedia)

"Berlin is of Jewish immigrant parentage," the American Israelite noted. "He attained his present position by strenuous efforts and certainly the good fortune that has come to him is well-deserved. As for the religious question, that is a matter of concern only to the parties themselves."

From the Forverts: "Old Mackay is terribly embittered . . . he hates Irving. Yes, Irving is a talented man. For the aristocrat Mackay that means nothing. Song-writer, actor — for him it is a lowly orphan." And from the editor of the Jewish Criterion: "Mazel tov, Mr. and Mrs. Berlin! That's what I call an ideal marriage. The bride is satisfied, the bridegroom is satisfied . . . The only one who seems unanimously against it is Clarence Mackay."

The Zionist weekly Jewish Transcript took exception to Dougherty's characterization of the match as a misalliance. It pointed out that Ellin, despite her lofty social standing, was in fact the granddaughter of a common laborer who had struck it rich by pure chance.

If any Jewish newspaper might have been expected to be judgmental about the marriage, it was surely the Yidishes Tageblatt (Jewish Daily News), an Orthodox, Yiddish-language daily. And sure enough, in a column published a couple of days after the wedding, Rabbi Isaac Lipa Brill offered this snide comment:

Irving, our very own, once upon a time of Cherry Street, is not much of a Jew. So it does not matter at all, although we expect him some day to be invited to

lay the cornerstone of a synagogue or preside over a Zionist meeting. He may be good for a donation. But we refuse to get excited.

A muted debate around intermarriage

The prohibition against Jews marrying out of the faith has roots in Biblical and later rabbinic sources. There is a proscription against it in Deuteronomy and similar admonitions in Ezra and Nehemiah. Over the ages, the rabbis came to believe that exogamy posed an existential threat to Jewish identity, and Jewish communities often imposed severe social consequences on those who married out. It was not uncommon for the Jewish party in such a union to be mourned as if dead.

The rate of such marriages in Russia and Eastern Europe had thus been exceptionally low, and that did not change significantly among the immigrant generation when they got to America. The only statistical survey of Jewish intermarriage from the early 20th century, a study by a Smith College professor, concluded that the interfaith marriage rate for Jews in America was less than five per 100 marriages and that for New York City it was even less — just over one percent.

That number was surely still quite low in the 1920s, but the match did spawn a robust discussion of interfaith marriage. Rabbis preached against it, social organizations discussed it — even the Junior Hadassah girls in San Francisco debated it — and the Jewish press was full of articles and letters about it.

Nathaniel Zalowitz, a prominent Jewish-American journalist, opposed mixed marriage but didn't discern much of a threat in it. "Intermarriage, I emphatically believe, is decidedly not a growing menace," he wrote in the Forverts, calling it "at most, one of the minor ailments of Jewish life in the United States." Reform Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, on the other hand, could not have disagreed more. "Intermarriage is an assault on the Jewish home," he wrote. It is a breach in the defense of our faith against which we must guard ourselves . . . Our opposition against it is not that of bigots or of narrow-minded people, but is based on our belief that when the bars against intermarriage are removed, the death knell of Judaism will be sounded."

From Conservative Rabbi Israel Goldstein of New York's Congregation B'nai Jeshurun: "Marrying out of the faith is the crucial step leading to the extinction of Israel's separate identity, and is for that reason to be condemned as the ultimate breach of loyalty." And from Brooklyn Reform Rabbi Alexander Lyons, "I say that Catholic, Protestant and Jew who still represent radically

antagonistic traditions and tendencies should marry within their own folds until such time, still — alas! — a long way off, when all denominations are more truly divine in being more nobly human in mutual respect, considerate sympathy and cooperative helpfulness."

"When it comes to love"

While on the couple's extended honeymoon, Ellin became pregnant. They returned by way of Montreal, where their efforts at disguise — they registered as Mr. and Mrs. Johnson — failed miserably. "I traveled from Europe to America via Quebec to avoid publicity," Berlin complained, "and the first three people I met on landing there were newspapermen!"

They came home to New York to speculation that to appease Ellin's father they would marry a second time in a Catholic church. Berlin had gotten kudos in Jewish circles for the civil union; Chicago-based Reform Rabbi Samuel Felix Mendelson, for example, had noted that by choosing civil marriage "he has displayed more self-respect than certain leading Jews of New York who had allowed Christian clergymen to perform the ceremony." The matter of a Catholic wedding met with a firm denial from an annoyed Berlin.

Berlin and Mackay, shown together at the Stork Club, were married for 62 years. (Bettmann vis Getty Images)

Ellin gave birth to Mary Ellin, their first child, on Thanksgiving Day. Her mother immediately went to the hospital to greet the new arrival, but even the appearance of a grandchild failed to move her father toward reconciliation. That would come, but not until the fall of 1928, at the bedside of Ellin's

grandmother Louise, who had expressed a deathbed wish that father and daughter reconcile.

Marya Zaturensky, a well-known Russian-born Jewish-American poet and herself a spouse in a mixed marriage, gave her take in the Forverts on why the Berlin-Mackay match had caused such a furor. "Not because it was an intermarriage, surely," she opined. It was the social and not the religious background that really mattered. "Similarity of taste, of mental and social adjustment are of more importance than the background of religious differences," she insisted, though she did allow that "if you are an intense and Orthodox Jew and a fanatical and devout Catholic, you cannot do it."

Berlin, of course, was not an observant Jew, nor was Ellin a zealous Catholic. Although he embraced his Jewish heritage, he had abandoned the Orthodoxy of his parents. And Ellin had been raised as a Protestant until her parents divorced, at which point, under her father's influence, she became a Catholic. She continued to go to Mass after the marriage, but was otherwise not especially devout.

Irving Berlin shared Zaturensky's opinion that factors other than religion were more important. The composer of "God Bless America" — not to mention "White Christmas" and "Easter Parade" — believed in a broadly inclusive American cultural narrative with room for everyone. He had little use for sectarianism and rejected the notion that religion and culture had to divide people.

Perhaps without intending to, he had the last word on the subject. While the couple was still in Paris, he was cornered at a cabaret by an American reporter. She engaged him in conversation without revealing that she was a journalist, and he was quite candid with her. He didn't know his remarks would wind up on the pages of American Jewish World, but he probably didn't mind it when they did.

"When it comes to love, religion passes to the background. It never struck me that I would be sacrificing a parcel of my Jewishness by marrying Ellin, and I suppose Ellin felt the same way about her religion," he said. "I am proud of my Jewishness, but you will never convince me that intermarriage is anti-anything."

"If the subjects are well-mated, religion, race, or any other collective definition for a group does not hold any serious difficulty. To make a definite problem of intermarriage is narrow-minded. It is a matter of individuals. Age,

material circumstances, temperament and character of the two people may be considered. But for God's sake, leave out religion."

*Scott D. Seligman is the author of several books about the turn-of-the-century American Jewish experience, including "The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902," "The Chief Rabbi's Funeral" and "The Great Christmas Boycott of 1906."