



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS & THE MID-SOUTH

NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER 1989

Jewish, American, and Southern: Women of the Pinch in Memphis, Tennessee

by Emily Angel Baer*



The Pinch was a thriving, important ethnic community in downtown Memphis, Tennessee. It covered only twelve blocks, with boundaries on the south at Poplar, on the east at Fourth St., on the north at Auction, and on the west

at the Mississippi River. Recently, the Pinch has become the "hot spot" of Memphis as the site of the much-touted Pyramid. The local media has enjoyed "discovering" the Pinch, as the area experiences yet another of a long string of rebirths since the community first began in the 1820's. But from 1900 to 1945, it was home to East European Jewish immigrants and their children, the foundation of Orthodox Judaism in Memphis. The Jews who came to this small, downtown neighborhood in the early twentieth century faced a two-fold challenge to break the patterns of life to which they, their ancestors, and their families had become accustomed to in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, and to create new patterns which would both retain their beloved Orthodox Judaism and promote the Americanization they sought, if not for themselves, then for their children.

The paper from which this article is excerpted, which examines the ways in which the Jewish women in Memphis approached this challenge, was originally presented as part of "Refocusing the Past: Women in Arkansas and Neighboring States," at the University of Arkansas; and it is based on approximately 65 oral histories. The experience separated the Pinch women from their northern sisters, for these Orthodox Jewish women created a pattern that involved one more unique dimension: they became Southerners. To them, the modern bumper sticker slogan, "Shalom Ya'll," would have had a more literal

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*Please note the grateful appreciation of the author to Ms. Judy Peiser of the Center for Southern Folklore for her assistance on this project.

Conference on Jewish Immigration Scheduled For October 29

A conference, entitled Jewish Immigration: Memphis, A Mirror of the South, will take place on October 29 at Memphis State University in the Student Center from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Co-sponsors are the History Department of Memphis State University, Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South, Center for Southern Folklore, and Memphis Jewish Federation.

The conference is funded in part by the Tennessee Humanities Council.

The theme of the conference is the successive waves of Jewish immigration which have formed the Memphis Jewish community. The character, social customs, languages, histories in relation to particular areas of the world, forms of religious observance as well as the impact of the culture of the South on these immigrants are all matters to be considered. Their study will provide a way of looking at the experiences of other immigrant groups who have contributed to the rich diversity of this city.

The conference schedule is as follows:

- 1:00 Registration
- 1:30-2:30 Greetings and Keynote Address
- 2:30-3:30 Workshops
- 3:30-4:00 Break, refreshments, and viewing of exhibits
- 4:00-5:00 Repeat workshops
- 5:00-5:30 Summary and closing remarks by keynote speaker
- 5:30 Distribution of evaluation forms.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Alan Kraut, Professor of History at The American University, Washington, D.C. He is the author of *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* and *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*. His academic interests include the influence of race, religion, and ethnicity upon American society and culture in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The five workshops will address separate waves of Jewish immigration which together form the Memphis Jewish community.

The workshops are designed to provide a background for each successive wave of immigration, a discussion of what occurred in the lives of the immigrants after they arrived in Memphis, and audience participation and sharing of family experiences. They will be led by:

I. German Immigration, 1830-1880 Dr. Pierre Secher, Dept. of Political Science, Memphis State University, and Dr. James Wax, Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Israel.

II. Eastern European Immigration, 1880-1920 Dr. Steve Benin, Bornblum Judaic Studies, History Department, M.S.U. and Ms. Emily Baer, M.A., History Dept., M.S.U.

III. Immigration from Country to City, 1930-1970 Dr. Margaret Caffrey, History Dept., M.S.U., and Ms. Judy Peiser, M.S., Director of Center for Southern Folklore.

IV. Immigration Before, During, and After World War II, 1930-1948 Dr. Donald Ellis, History Dept., M.S.U., and Ms. Nina Katz, Public Relations Director for Memphis Literacy Council.

V. New Russian and South African Immigration, 1970-Present Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Terk and Rabbi Mark Levin, Rabbi of Anshei Sphard Synagogue.

The workshops will run concurrently, but will be held twice, allowing participants to choose two. The conference is free, and open to the public. Parking instructions are: Please inquire at the MSU Information Center at Patterson Street and Central Avenue, for available space. The conference is at the Faulkner Lounge of the Student Center.

Conference planners are: Dr. Abraham Kriegel, Chairman, History Dept., M.S.U., Project Director and Dr. Selma Lewis, Alternate Project Director; Ms. Jeanne Dreifus, Director of Human Services Co-Op, M.S.U.; Dr. Charles Crawford, History Department, M.S.U.; Dr. James Johnson, Director of History Department of Memphis Public Library and Information Service; Ms. Judy Peiser, Director, Center for Southern Folklore; Ms. Diane Sachs, Sociology Department, Rhodes College; Ms. Emily Baer, History Department, M.S.U.; Dr. Morris Klass, Division of Social Work, M.S.U.; Dr. Pierre Secher, Political Science Department, M.S.U.; Ms. Jeanne Danziger; and Ms. Harriet Stern.

This conference will allow us to examine our origins, to consider why we or our ancestors came to this city, and to talk about our lives as citizens of this southern region of the United States. While its topic is Jewish Immigration specifically, it has implications for the many other immigrant groups who, with their various homelands, languages, religions, and cultures have created the city we call home.

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH - FOUNDED IN 1986
163 BEALE STREET, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103

Jews In Oregon 1850-1950

A Book Review by Mark Hayden

This history of the Jews in Oregon by Steven Lowenstein is a well-written, comprehensive study of the settlement of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews of that state. The Sephardic Jews settled in Oregon initially but the Jewish population grew five-fold with the arrival of the immigrants from Germany and the rest of Eastern Europe. By 1880 the German-Jewish community of Oregon numbered a quarter of a million people but the Sephardic Jews dominated that region for at least a century.

The Jews of the state of Oregon had their share of characters: store owners such as Bernard Goldsmith, Aaron and Jeanette Meier, Julius Durkheimer and Jacob Meyer, but a good portion of the book deals with Jews of South Portland.

The community was very close and pretty well self-contained so their daily needs were a short distance away. The synagogues, the library, community center and the grocery store were within earshot of each other. Jews enjoyed new freedoms such as good educational schools in the neighborhood houses and the failing schools. Here their tremendous work ethic which they learned in Europe was put to good use. Education was very important, the educated man was held in the highest esteem. Most of the students followed the hard days' work with five-day a week sessions at the local Hebrew School. It was thought that attendance there was vital, especially in the strong secular environment of America. Libraries continued this educational service for the youngsters. You could also spot the adult men catching up on the recent news in the Yiddish Daily Forward.

On the whole, the immigrants who came to Portland were rather poor. Louis Albert, from Kiev, Russia, was one of the many thousands of Jews who rose from humble beginnings to make a name for himself. Arriving with only \$6.75 in his pocket, he worked hard and was able to earn \$5,000 when he sold his laundry service only six years after arriving in his new home.

The positive and negative aspects of the labor unions are discussed in detail by Lowenstein as are the changing roles of the women in the New World. Actually, while still in Europe, the woman of the family had gained a measure of equality in the homestead. Bad times were common in the Old World; women had to help make money for the family to survive and the further decline of the patriarchy took hold as marriages were no longer arranged and most women married later. Neighborhood houses served the public with social, athletic and medical programs.

During the mid-twentieth century, anti-Semitism's ugly head rose in American society and members of the Portland Jewish community led the national Anti-Defamation League fight. A later coalition between Jews, Catholics and other minority groups staved off a KKK boycott of a Jewish department store by the hate group.

But the worst was yet to come. The Depression Years of the 1930s saw many Jews of the city lose their businesses but compassion among some

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of the town's elite such as Meier and Ben Selling made those years more tolerable.

One of the greatest accomplishments among Oregon Jewry was reserved for its politics. Meier served as governor of the state for one term on the independent ticket, Bernard Goldsmith became the first Jewish mayor in Portland from 1869-1871 and Neil Goldschmidt was elected mayor of Portland from 1869-1871 and Neil Goldschmidt was elected mayor of Portland and later governor of the state. Over the years, many other Jewish politicians have also been active in city and state-wide politics.

Steven Lowenstein, a native of New York City and a graduate of Oberlin College and Yale Law School, was instrumental in establishing a law school in Africa and administering a legal program for the Ford Foundation in South America in the 1960s. He moved to Oregon 20 years ago, is a member of the Oregon State Bar and served as director of the Oregon Legal Services for eight years. Lowenstein has written two legal texts and is the executive assistant to the commissioner of public affairs for the city of Portland.

Sternberger Family Reunion

HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS - JULY 7-9, 1989

by William G. Sternberger

It all began on a Sunday afternoon in May, 1988 when I visited with my cousin Louise (Mrs. Henry) Levy in Brownsville, Tennessee. She told me that she and another cousin, Betty (Mrs. Herbert) Feist of Ripley, had discussed the possibility of having a Sternberger Family Reunion, and she wanted to know what I thought of the idea. I told her that I thought it was a great idea, and that I would be glad to help in any way I could.

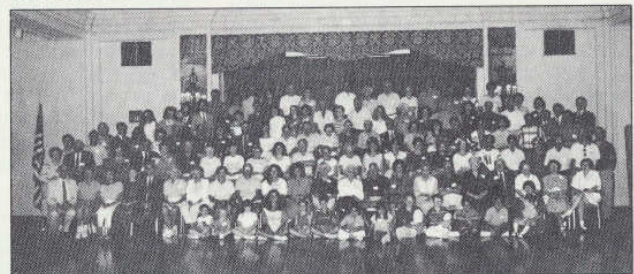
One day in June, Louise called me and suggested that we have a meeting of a working committee at her home on Wednesday evening, June 29. The following people made up that committee and met for dinner and opening discussions: Lena and Dick Block, Betty and Herbert Feist, Ruth and Jay Kahn, Mildred and Abe Lapides, Louise and Henry Levy, Harriet and Harry B. Solmson, Jan and Alex Sternberger, Joe Sternberger and Frieda Greenfield, Peggy and Billy Sternberger. We met several other times during the following year for making plans and preparations.

We decided to try to contact all the living descendants of our great-grandparents, Meyer and Bessie Freiberg Sternberger and Solomon and Henrietta Gimbel Sternberger, the two men being brothers. Our information is that these people lived in Boerstadt, Bavaria, Germany. Names of relatives were supplied by various members of the committee and by many of those whom we contacted. Letters were sent out to some 225 descendants. Some replied that they were coming to the reunion, others replied that they could not attend, and yet others made no reply at all.

The reunion was held at the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs, Arkansas

beginning Friday afternoon, July 7, and ended on Sunday, July 9, 1989. In all, 130 people attended plus about three infants. Attending from the Memphis area, besides those of the committee were: Rose Merry Brown and son, Jay; Don and Margaret Goldstein, Joan Goldstein, David and Carol Hoxie and sons, Jesse and James; Nancy and David Rosenberg and daughter Rachel; Judy Sternberger, Milton and Peggy Sternberger, Pege and Virgil Vaughan and children, Lauren, Kennon and Emily; and Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg. The relative from farthest away was Gale Boyd from Jerusalem, Israel. States represented at the reunion besides Tennessee were: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

For some time, Ruth Kahn has been researching and putting together the Sternberger Family Tree. Some additional information was supplied by some of the relatives in attendance. This is an on-going project, which she hopes to have completed by the end of the year.



The Sternberger Family

Jewish, American and Southern: Women of the Pinch

continued from page 1

significance. It was the Jewish immigrant woman and/or her daughter who learned to balance the laws of Kashruth and gefilte fish with a society full of grits and greens. For many years, the Pinch was the emotional and spiritual center of Orthodox Jewish life in Memphis, created and sustained in no small part by the women who broke the Old World patterns to create a new culture that was uniquely Jewish, American, and Southern.

Many Jews came to America via a southern connection through Cuba, New Orleans, Galveston. From there they dispersed toward other southern cities, including Memphis. Why? The answer is simple: "mishpocheh." The East European immigrants in 1900 had relatives, friends, "landsleit," in the South, and especially in Memphis, which had had a fair-sized Jewish population since the Civil War. The women who came to the Pinch and those who were brought up there came to feel that they belonged there; being Southern quickly became an important part of their Americanization. Fanny Scheinberg is one whose family came first to New York and then to Memphis:

"When I first came here, I wanted to go back [to New York], but after I was married and had my children here, my friends from New York came to visit. They said, 'Oh Fanny, I'll bet if you had the chance you'd like to come back.' And I said 'You couldn't give me New York on a silver platter'."

Anne Firor Scott, in her ground-breaking book on Southern women, notes that neither geographic, demographic, historical nor ethnic differences prevented the "formation of a common culture of home and family" that lies at the core of the life of the Southern woman. Just as family was at the center of life for the Southern woman, so too did the Jewish immigrant woman's life revolve around family. The maintenance of the sanctity of the family was balanced with the socialization and adaptability of the Jewish mother. She wanted to adhere to the familial traditions of Orthodox Judaism, but she also wanted to embrace America, her new home. Herein is a second trait, which anthropologist Sarah Brabant finds basic to the Southern woman: survival. The women of the Pinch, in order to survive as Jewish women in America, had to adapt to the circumstances around them. Their ability to do this further emphasizes their successful transition from East European ghetto life to American "southernness."

Historian Caroline N. Dillman cites several scholars who have identified southernness as an ethnicity in itself. She notes several characteristics as designations for Southern womanhood in addition to devotion to family, including religiosity, respect for elders, gentility, and, most important, a self-image of being Southern. Many of these traits developed among the women of the Pinch as a natural extension of their own traditional background.

The family home of the Jewish woman in the Pinch was usually upstairs, above the family business, and more often than not, the "family" was an extended family. Miriam Weis's description of where she grew up is typical:

"We had three bedrooms, and my sister and I slept on the couch in the living room. Because Grandpa had the little bedroom up front, and my Aunt Gussie slept in the bed-

room next to the living room with a chamber pot under the bed . . . And then the next bedroom was Mama's and Papa's and then a dining room and a butler's pantry, for God's sake. And the kitchen where we ate our breakfast, and a bathroom. Back porch, no front porch." Many Pinch families did have the front porch, and even if they didn't, they put porch furniture out front to sit and socialize, especially during hot, un-airconditioned summers.

Even though their living conditions were crowded, these women shared a characteristic of the South that was also a carryover from the Old Country. In the Old Country, travelling religious men would always be welcome in the home, especially on Shabbat. In America, the Old Country tradition of welcoming visitors into the home became an expression of Southern hospitality. Fagie Schaeffer says, **"... we always had 'meshoulach,' travelling people, stay with us."**

The hospitable Southern attitude added to the sense of community in the Pinch and a sense of responsibility as new arrivals came. Said Tillie Alperin, **"... you must remember these were all immigrants. They had to depend on one another. If one stayed here like 6 months or a year, they knew a little bit, so they would with open arms welcome the newcomers and they took care of them so to speak. There was a closeness there."**

While it was very important to the Jewish women of the Pinch to preserve their Orthodox traditions, they also wanted to create an atmosphere in which their children would become Americans. This was not always easy and sometimes it could be humiliating. As Fagie Schaeffer remembered, **"When a family came over from Europe, we would call them greeners, 'cause they were new. Some needed help. They had to become acclimated to the conditions. They would come to school, and unfortunately if they were a little older, they were put in grades with the younger kids, . . . All of our parents were greeners at one time. They all had to come learn the language and earn a livelihood."**

The Jewish girls in the Pinch did lots of things that the non-Jewish girls did. One remembers fondly that **"we even went to the Peabody and had flank steak and strawberry shortcake for birthdays."** The girls would often go in groups to the movies: **"our father would give us two nickels and we would get an ice cream and go to the movies,"** not exactly an Old World tradition. In addition to these spontaneous pleasures, they participated (but only as spectators) in one of the city's most Southern traditions: Cotton Carnival. Fannie Goldstein remembers **"the very first Cotton Carnival because my cousin was from Clarksdale, Mississippi and she represented the state of Mississippi."** However, while there were Pinch families that went into the cotton business, none of the Pinch girls became members of the Cotton Carnival organizations.

The daughters of the East European Pinchites grew into young southern ladyhood enjoying many pleasures their mothers had never known. Among them was "the joy of shopping." As one later remembered, **"... my family just walked downtown, 4 or 5 blocks up the street was Bry's Department store and Gerbers . . . Goldsmith's was a little further down, in**

South Memphis . . . Gerbers was at Court and Main, Lowensteins was at Monroe and Main, and Goldsmith's was at Gayoso and Main.

Sometimes the shopping was quite serious. Martha Oser Alperin grew up and was married in the Pinch: **"Q: Did you wear a wedding dress? A. Yes, I had on a beautiful white chiffon with . . . a beautiful silk crepe trim . . . and it was beautiful. It was bought at one of the finest shops in Memphis at that time, Rosenfield's . . . on Main Street. I wore it all through my first pregnancy. I had it died dark brown . . ."** Martha was a very practical southern shopper.

In addition to shopping, courting became a significant American experience. While many young girls still went to the mikveh, as in the Old Country, they did not practice the type of courting their mothers had known. Courting became a strange combination of religious and social custom. On the High Holy Days, Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, the most religious days of the Jewish calendar, the young women of the Pinch were hardly burdened with serious religious thought: **"I know on the holidays . . . everybody had to have new outfits . . . And we would march around, especially on Yom Kippur. We . . . would meet people, and the girls would try to get a date for the Yom Kippur night dance if they didn't have one . . . And there'd sometimes be people in from Mississippi or Arkansas . . . and they would meet each other there, get to know each other, and it was a close kind of thing."** Their intention was to stay with their own: **"Q: Did you ever date boys who weren't Jewish? A: There must have been one or two from school. I'm sure I would have been disowned if my parents had known they weren't Jewish. It was unthinkable. I knew it wasn't allowed, even with the boys that we played with and grew up with."**

The method was pure Southern belle. Tillie Alperin's fondest memories, "the highlight" of her year, was the annual Elks Ball: **"You would walk up some very beautiful stairs and on the second floor would be a band playing, a music hall, children danced, everybody dressed up beautifully. Then you would go down to the basement and they would have balloons, they would have favors, . . . ice cream, . . . candy, . . . cake and I looked forward each year to getting a ticket from my cousin to go to that Elks Ball."** The dances were an important and popular aspect of the socialization of young Pinch women, complete with beautiful dresses, albeit often homemade, and dance cards. According to this description by Rosalee Abraham, it would seem that the young ladies had everything under control: **"The Young People's League would have dances every Sunday night. Jewish dances. All these boys would be in the middle, and they had a stag line, and if you danced with your date more than two minutes, you were very unpopular. The boys would just be waiting in line to tap the next boy, and you would dance with everybody, and you didn't dance much with your date - that would be terrible if you were seen dancing with your date too long."**

To be continued in next issue

The Two That Became One – Among the Oldest and the Newest:

The Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation – Memphis Tennessee

by Rabbi A. Mark Levin, Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation

The Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation is the newest Congregation in Memphis, and, paradoxically, at one and the same time, almost the oldest!

September 13, 1970, witnessed the formal rebirth of the newest "baby" of the Memphis Jewish Community, the Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation, which, on that day, formally dedicated its new, modern facilities. Located in beautiful, suburban East Memphis, the strikingly modern edifice reflected its roots and commitment to the tenets of Orthodox Judaism, while, at the same time, making the important statement through its architecture, design and decor, that it was a forward-looking Orthodox Congregation, integrating the world of modernity of the late twentieth century with the timeless world of eternal Torah values. The architecturally award-winning building reflects the Congregation's commitment to being a "full-service" Synagogue and Congregation with multiple facilities. These include the strikingly magnificent Main Sanctuary, the Sacharin-Posner Sanctuary; the Melvin Silberstein Daily Beth Medrash Chapel, an intimate setting for daily worship; the Sylvia Buring Social Hall with its two completely separate and fully equipped dairy and meat kitchens; the Ann Slutsky Conference Room for Board and Committee meetings; the Lit Nursery Room; the Rachel C. Platkin Youth Lounge; the Abe Harkavy Library; the Miriam Friedman Rabbinical Library; the Harry and Meriam Cooper Administrative Complex; the Fogelman Sukkah; the Messinger/Finkelstein Gift Shop, and the newest addition, the Platkin/Loskove Children's Playground, to name some of the major facilities.

But, we are getting ahead of ourselves, for this "new arrival" on the scene of the Memphis Jewish Community has roots in the community that takes it back more than one hundred years, for, the Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation represents the merger of two smaller, separate Congregations, the Anshei Sphard and the Beth El Emeth Congregations, each of which has a proud history and record of service, not only to its members and worshippers, but also to the entire Memphis Jewish Community, the surrounding mid-South area, and to the many travelers and visitors who passed through Memphis.

On March 2, 1854, the State of Tennessee granted the first charter to a Jewish House of Worship in Tennessee to the B'nai Israel (Children of Israel) Congregation in Memphis. And, herein lie the roots of the Beth El Emeth Congregation.

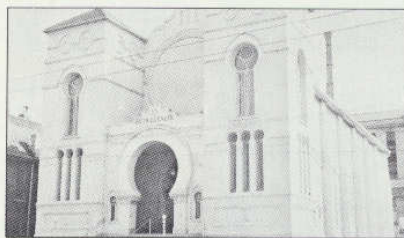
The great struggle between Orthodox and Reform Judaism which characterized the second half of the nineteenth century, was represented in microcosm in this new B'nai Israel Congregation. In 1858, it elected Jacob J. Peres, an Orthodox Rabbi, as its first Rabbi, but, as the result of ideological conflicts between one faction of the Congregation espousing Orthodox Jewish ideology, and a second faction espousing Reform Jewish ideology, Rabbi Peres resigned. Soon thereafter, in January, 1861, Rabbi Peres, togeth-

er with a group of disgruntled members of the B'nai Israel Congregation who were unhappy with the Reform Jewish direction the Congregation was taking, established a new Congregation, the Beth El Emeth Congregation, which received its charter in 1862 and, as reported in *The Daily Appeal*, "The new Synagogue, Beth El Emeth, on Jefferson near Front, recently dedicated by Rabbi E. Maruson, is proving to be one of the most popular in the city." Rabbi Peres went on to serve the Congregation in various capacities as a volunteer, but it was as a successful and prosperous businessman, a lawyer, a refined, cultured and widely-read person who lectured widely on literature and languages that he made his mark in Memphis. He earned the respect and esteem of the citizens of Memphis as a civic leader, first being elected as a member of the Memphis City Board of Education, and subsequently chosen as its President. "In the score of years that he lived in Memphis, no man was a greater factor than he for the mental and moral progress of the city."

The new Congregation's first "official" Rabbi was Rabbi Joel Alexander. But it was in 1872 that the Congregation achieved some fame when it engaged as its Rabbi, Ferdinand Leopold Sarner, who had been the first Rabbi to become a chaplain in the United States Army. He had served as chaplain of the 54th New York Volunteer Infantry, and had been seriously wounded at Gettysburg. A year after Rabbi Sarner's death in 1878, after some six years of service, Rabbi Jacob J. Peres, who was the preeminent lay-leader of the Congregation and one of its most powerful guiding forces, passed away, leaving the fledgling Congregation without strong professional and lay-leadership.

Memphis had been struck by a number of yellow fever epidemics, culminating in the great epidemic which decimated the entire City of Memphis, leaving the Jewish Community amongst them weak and poor.

At this juncture, the destinies of the Children of Israel and Beth El Emeth Congregations crossed paths again, when Hardwig Peres, son of the late Jacob J. Peres, successfully advocated a merger of the two Congregations, which, using the funds and property of the Beth El Emeth Congregation, purchased a lot at 165 Poplar, and in 1884, erected its Synagogue/Temple there. However, the merger was not successful, reflected in the fact that at the time of their union, the membership of the Children of Israel/Beth El Emeth Congregation remained constant at about 125 members. This



Beth El Emeth – 165 Poplar Avenue
1916-1958

reflected some significant dissatisfaction with the merger by members of the Beth El Emeth Congregation who, apparently, did not embrace Reform Judaism, preferring to remain loyal to Orthodoxy. These disaffected Beth El Emeth members joined forces with a group of Orthodox Jews which had been worshipping in rented halls since 1862, at the time when the first split in the Children of Israel Congregation occurred. By 1916, the Children of Israel (Reform) Congregation had outgrown its facilities at 165 Poplar, and when the Children of Israel Congregation moved to its new building at Poplar and Montgomery, the Orthodox group which worshipped in Cochrane Hall, amongst whom were apparently members of the original Beth El Emeth Congregation, led by Joseph Hanover and H. B. Jacobs, purchased the 165 Poplar site.

Thus, the original Children of Israel Congregation building which it had outgrown, was now mobilized into service of the Orthodox Beth El Emeth Congregation, becoming known as the "Poplar Street Shul."

The Beth El Emeth Congregation remained in the "Poplar Street Shul" facility for forty-one years, until 1957. During the late 1930s, a group of teenagers established the Beth El Emeth Junior Congregation, and during its second year in existence, the group's numbers swelled to over 200 Jewish teenagers from all over the city and from all the Synagogues and the Temple. In addition to sponsoring late Friday evening services, it fulfilled an important social function by organizing activities such as dances, ping-pong tournaments, picnics and minstrel shows. For a few years, it was an important activity associated with the Beth El Emeth Congregation, before the center of teenage interest and activity shifted elsewhere.

Among the prominent Jewish Memphians who served as President and lay-leaders of the Congregation were A. T. Morris (1935-45); Joe Lazarov (1945-48); Nathan Loskovitz (1948-54); Morris Franklin (1954-55); Sol Friedman (1955-60); Lester Zalowitz (1962-63); Ben Gruber (1960-61, 1964-65); and Jordon Messinger (1965-66). Others who served as Presidents were A. H. Cohen and Dave Lazarov.

During these forty-one years, the Congregation enjoyed the Rabbinic leadership of four Rabbis, E. T. Siegel, Alfred Fruchter, Phillip Goldman and Arthur Levin.

During the 1930's, Abe Kipper served as Cantor, and, as reflected in *The Hebrew Watchman* of those years, his talent and artistry were an established feature of the local Memphis Jewish Community scene. He succeeded in establishing a fine choir, amongst the choristers being Simon Gordon, Meyer Kipper, Bernard Messinger, Sidney Lazarov and Dave Richman.

In 1919, Mrs. H. B. Jacobs and Mrs. Ferd Loewenberg established the Beth El Emeth Sisterhood which, throughout the history of the Congregation, played an outstanding role in the growth and survival of the Synagogue, both religiously and financially. The annual Chanukah Dinner, prepared and hosted by the Sisterhood,

Contribution to the History of Jewish Immigration

The First Holocaust Survivor Family Settling in Memphis 43 Years Ago

by Leonid Saharovi

Memphis, rich in history as a city, has attracted a large number of Jewish immigrants. They came to the bluff city as to many places in the "Goldene Medina" as a result of anti-Semitic persecutions and the destruction of glorious Jewish European communities. They came in pursuit of freedom, liberty, justice and the opportunity to rebuild a Jewish life. They settled here, raised families, and left a substantial contribution to the progress of this great community of the South. They and their children have repaid their debts with their talents and achievements.

History has recorded several "waves" of Jewish immigration to the U.S.A. Conclusive evidence for this assertion are the studies of Jewish history in America, the documents aged and yellowed, the inscriptions corroded and worn out by time, the dates inscribed on monuments in Jewish cemeteries. Tombstones have offered not only documentation to historians but inspiration to poets. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his moving poem "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport," written in 1852, has left some remarkable thoughts on this subject.

"How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,

What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea - that desert desolate -
These Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire . . .

Pride and humiliation hand in hand
Walked with them through the world where'er
they went;

Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent . . ."

Any subject related to Jewish immigration can be explored from a multitude of dimensions. My interest and research has dealt primarily with a small group of Jewish immigrants - the Holocaust survivors. In this article, I want to bring to light a few aspects concerning the difficulties caused by restrictive immigration laws for those who could escape Nazi persecution. And to present the history of the first Holocaust survivors who came to Memphis 43 years ago. Over one hundred Holocaust survivors settled in Memphis after the Second World War. Each has a fascinating story that could form the object of an interesting study.

In the history of civilization, the U.S.A. was and still is a symbol of liberty, the refuge and haven for persecuted people. But shortly before and during World War II, America's tradition of generosity and home for the oppressed was stained by the failure to respond in a humanitarian way to the tragedy that befell European Jewry. The U.S. government tightened its restrictive immigration laws which in effect closed the doors to those who could have escaped Nazi brutality. As a result, the immigration quotas permitted by law were left unfilled. The gates to America were closed.

In May, 1939, the Nazis permitted the Hamburg-American ship ST. LOUIS to leave Germany with 930 Jewish refugees, which included 200 children. Cuba could have been a temporary

sanctuary before reaching their future home, the U.S.A. They had filed the U.S. Immigration requirement forms and were supposed to arrive from Cuba to the U.S.A. at different times according to quotas. However, the Cuban authorities refused admission and on instruction from Washington, the U.S. Coast Guard forced the ship to return to Europe. Many of these refugees died in extermination camps. On June 9, 1939, the New York Times wrote in its editorial, "The crime of the St. Louis cries to high heaven of man's inhumanity to man." The history of immigration has recorded shameful obstructions of many well planned schemes and sabotage of rescue efforts. America's failure to respond in a humanitarian way to the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis is a painful chapter in the history of the Roosevelt administration. David S. Wyman, the renowned gifted thinker and historian, in his books "Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-41" and "The Abandonment of the Jews - America and the Holocaust 1941-45" has presented a deep and complex analysis and has offered findings showing why America failed to undertake the rescue of the Jews.

In the years after the Second World War a sign of hope was the change in the U.S.A.'s policies of immigration. Holocaust survivors, living in displaced persons camps and in other places around the world, were included in U.S. immigration quotas.

The first family of Jewish Holocaust survivors to arrive in Memphis was Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Gontownik. They came to New York on May 20, 1946 from Feldafing displaced persons camp in Germany where both were reunited after the war. Before the Second World War, Zina and Abraham Gontownik lived in Vilna, "the Jerusalem of Lithuania," a center of Jewish learning, Yiddish culture, and Zionism. Zina was raised in Lajbishok, a small Jewish community close to Vilna (30 KM). It had its own Yiddish folk school, a Jewish library, a rabbi, synagogues, and a Jewish cemetery. Abraham was raised in Stajacisok, also near Vilna. They were married in Vilna in 1937.

The Nazis occupied Vilna in 1941 and with the help of Lithuanian Nazi sympathizers, they exterminated the bulk of the Jewish population. Ponary, the forest on the outskirts of Vilna, will remain among the places of infamy used by the Nazis as mass graves for Jews. The Gontownik family witnessed both the glory of this great Jewish community and its extinction. Abraham's father, a pious Jew in his nineties, was killed on Kol-Nidrey evening when the Nazis set fire to the synagogue where Jews gathered for prayers. The Gontownik's only daughter, age four, was taken from her mother's arms by the Nazis and perished together with 1,500,000 other Jewish children who were exterminated during the Holocaust.

Zina was liberated from Dachau concentration camp by the American army and was reunited with her husband in a displaced persons camp. From there, in 1946, they came to the United States. Their journey to freedom was both a dramatic and traumatic experience. Strongly orient-

ed toward family values, they decided to come to the only remaining sister, Mrs. Betty Bensky, who immigrated to the U.S.A. before the war. They arrived in New York on the ship Marine Flasher, being among the first group of Holocaust survivors to land in the United States after the war. From New York, the Gontownik family came to Memphis where Zina was reunited with her sister. From her suffering in the camps, Zina became very ill and had to be hospitalized for thirteen months in a sanatorium in Oakville. She impressed the doctors with her determination to survive again. Abraham worked for Goldsmith's and later opened a self-service laundry and dry cleaners which he successfully operated for 38 years until he retired in 1986. (In 1961, they became naturalized U.S. citizens.)

Looking back on their forty-three years in Memphis, they have had a full family life with wonderful children and grandchildren. Their two sons graduated from the Memphis Hebrew Academy and Yeshiva of the South. Jerry, the oldest, graduated from New York University law school and is a successful attorney in New York where he is active in many Jewish organizations. Their youngest son, Sidney, is a jeweler in Memphis.

Their life and achievements are not isolated examples of the unique success stories shared by many Holocaust survivors in the United States. They, along with many others, overcame traumatic experiences and demonstrated tremendous vitality and creativity. They started new lives, developed new skills, learned new languages and integrated themselves into a completely different economic, social and cultural environment. The Holocaust survivors' life experiences are tales of truth, perseverance, tenacity and, of course, lots and lots of hard work. Their achievements will be a great part of Jewish history and a great source of inspiration for the future.

Jewish partisans from Vilna who fought in the Rudniki forests return to Vilna after the city's liberation (July 14, 1944)



Abraham Gontownik (third from right, standing)



Zina and Abraham Gontownik and their sons Sidney and Jerry.

General Grant and Memphis Jews

by Dr. Berkley Kalin

In the 1860s Jews made up a larger percentage of the Memphis population than today. Out of 22,000 people (blacks included), there were about 1000 Jews in Memphis. They were engaged in all areas of business activity. Memphis business flourished during the Civil War; some \$11 million worth of business was done weekly. Most of it was perfectly legal but some of it wasn't. Memphis suffered because it was a prison town, filled with bitterness, friction, and sickness; both Federal and Confederate prisoners were here, creating a crosscurrent of tension. Business attracted many newcomers, some of them Jews. Since the North needed cotton and the South was starved for capital, it was hard to keep them apart. Ulysses S. Grant was rightly concerned about the black market in cotton undermining the Union cause, as well as leaks of information planted by carpetbaggers. He declared he had not found one honest man following the army as a trader, and, "be he Jew or Christian, he hated a thief." He added that men of this "class are doing more to corrupt the army than all other kinds of rascality put together."

Ulysses Grant's father, Jesse, was ashamed of his son's lack of success in business and otherwise. During the war, Jesse Grant, who was somewhat of an opportunist, formed many business relationships. Among these was a partnership with three Jewish merchants of Cincinnati — Henry, Harmon, and Simon Mack, who traded as Mack and Brothers. Grant, who was in charge of the military department of Tennessee (which included Kentucky and Mississippi), was concerned about contraband trade in cotton and other goods. He was convinced that this trade, along with the exchange of prisoners, prolonged the war. The Macks came down to northern Mississippi to see Grant in order to gain permits to buy and ship cotton. But they returned to Cincinnati lacking permits. Grant was angry and embarrassed by his father's attempt to use personal influence. On December 17, 1862, Grant put his anger into an order, published for the guidance of the whole military department, which read as follows:

"The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade, established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.

"Post commanders will see that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and anyone returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners, unless furnished with permit from headquarters.

"No passes will be given these people to visit headquarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits."

The same day the order was issued, Grant justified his action in a letter to C. P. Wolcott: "I have long since believed that in spite of all the vigilance that can be infused into post commanders, the specie regulations of the Treasury Department have been violated, and that most by Jews and other unprincipled traders. So well satisfied have I been of this that I instructed the commanding officers at Columbus to refuse all

permits to Jews to come south, and I have frequently had them expelled from the department, but they come in with their carpet-bags in spite of all that can be done to prevent it. The Jews seem to be a privileged class that can travel anywhere. They will land at any wood-yard on the river and make their way through the country. If not permitted to buy cotton themselves, they will act as agents for someone else, who will be a military post with a Treasury agent to receive cotton and pay for it in Treasury notes which the Jew will buy up at an agreed rate, paying gold. There is but one way that I know to reach this case; that is, for Government to buy all the cotton at a fixed rate and send it to Cairo, St. Louis or some other point to be sold. Then all traders (they are a curse to the army) might be expelled."

Apparently, to Grant cotton merchants and Jews were synonymous. Historian Bruce Catton illustrates that Grant's contemporaries used such phrases as "Jews and Yankees" and "unprincipled sharpers, Yankees, bloodhounds of commerce, and Jews." After the war Grant told a friend of his, who happened to be a rabbi: "You know, during the war, these nice distinctions were disregarded. We had no time to handle things with kid gloves. But it was no ill-feeling or want of good-feeling towards the Jews. If such complaints would have been lodged against a dozen men each of whom wore a white cravat, a black broadcloth suit, beaver, or gold spectacles, I should probably have issued a similar order against men so dressed."

As Catton notes: "Yankee" was a "catch-all epithet which epitomized everything that was mean, grasping and without conscience." "Jew" may have served a similar purpose for contemporaries of Grant.

The order was followed by other anti-Semitic statements. Grant ordered General Hurlbut to allow no civilians south of Jackson, adding, "The Israelites especially should be kept out." He then told General Webster, "Give orders to all the conductors on the roads that no Jews are to be permitted to travel on the railroad south from any point. They may go north and be encouraged in it; but they are such an intolerable nuisance that the department must be purged of them."

Within two weeks Grant received instructions from Washington to revoke the infamous order, which he promptly did. General Henry Halleck sent an explanation: "The President has no objection to your expelling traitors and Jew peddlers, which, I suppose, was the object of your order; but, as it proscribed an entire religious class, some of whom are fighting in our ranks, the President deemed it necessary to revoke it." Washington may have also taken political considerations into account.

There were contemporary rumors that the order was "issued on instructions from Washington," prepared and issued by one of Grant's subordinates, or issued without his knowledge. The order certainly suggests that anti-Semitism was taken for granted at that time.

Following the issuance of the infamous Order No. 11, many Jews left Memphis for Nashville, St. Louis, and other cities, who gained some of their best Jewish families in this way. Other Memphis Jews lost money and had merchandise

confiscated. Many long-time residents in Mississippi were likewise evicted from their homes.

A. E. Frankland gives a detailed description of these days in his *Kronikals* of 1862. "Men were arrested and thrown in dungeons upon the most trivial charge, many times because the general in command wished to obtain possession of the man's wife. Having him in prison on some pretext, the wife would be sure to sue to the general for his release. Her honor was made the passport to his prison."

In the election of 1868, in which U. S. Grant was the candidate for the Republican Party, mass meetings of Jews were held throughout the nation, protesting his candidacy. Memphis' rally received more national publicity than any other. Speeches here urged that the only position Grant deserved was the one occupied by Haman in the last moments of his career. Of course, the Republican press attacked the meeting. One Cincinnati Republican newspaper commented on Memphis' protest:

"We have a big meeting of Jews here, to denounce General Grant for the order issued in his absence by his Adjutant excluding Jew traders from the army lines. Nearly every Jew that figured in this meeting was, it is notorious here, a contraband dealer, who grew rich during the war by trading to both sides. The order was wrong because it was aimed at a whole sect, but a more unmitigated set of scoundrels than the Jew traders who were engaged in running goods through the army lines, it would be hard to find anywhere. The idea of such men, meeting to denounce General Grant because his subordinate issued an order which reflected on all Jews, and which General Grant immediately annulled, is absurd."

It is only fair to mention that Ulysses Grant, once President, proved a friend of the Jewish people, appointing many to high offices. Benjamin Peixotto, a Jew, was named ambassador to Rumania by President Grant, at a time when anti-Semitism was rampant in America. Likewise Edward S. Saloman and David Eckstein were named to diplomatic posts abroad; Joseph Seligman was offered the post of Secretary of the Treasury. (Grant was the first President to offer a cabinet position to a Jew.) Grant had a close friendship with Simon Wolf and as well as several other Jews. Furthermore, in various controversies, such as one over the alleged cruelty practiced by Jews in slaughtering of animals, Grant, with the advice of Wolf and other Jewish friends, rejected the allegations. Grant refused to discuss Order No. 11 on many occasions and did not mention it in his excellent *Memoirs*.

Sociologist Ellis Rivkin in *Essays in American Jewish History* sees great significance in the Order No. 11: "What Grant did was to identify a common practice with a particular group, and his prestige gave the discriminatory order a national audience. . . . Grant's order was the first utilization on a national scale of what was to become a basic anti-Semitic device: the attribution to the Jews of that which is negative in capitalism, so that negative features of capitalism are viewed as Jewish aberrations rather than as integral, if disturbing, aspects of an intricate and complex system of production."

was an annual highlight of the Memphis Community's calendar, with years in which more than 400 people attended.

Under the Presidency of Sam Blaiss (1927-1935), land on Horn Lake Road, across the Tennessee border, in Mississippi, was purchased and dedicated as a cemetery.

Under the leadership of President Nathan Loskovitz (1948-54), Rev. Hirsch Gornicki was elected to serve as Cantor, mohel and shochet. A person who played an important role for many years in the life of the Beth El Emeth Congregation, although never serving as President, was Bernard Messinger. He served as the second President of the Junior Congregation, and in his adult years, served as Toastmaster of the Sisterhood's Annual Chanukah Dinner for thirteen consecutive years. He served as Chairman of the Committee which selected the renowned Cantor Gornicki as the Congregation's Cantor, and later co-chaired the Joint Search Committee that emerged from the merger negotiations and which identified and located the site on which the present merged Synagogue stands.

The roots of this new/old Congregation are deeply imbedded and intertwined with the roots of the Memphis Jewish Community in general. The origins of each of the two components of this new/old Congregation, the Anshei Sphard and Beth El Emeth Congregations, are rooted in the first area of concentrated settlement of Jews in Memphis. According to the Center for Southern Folklore, one of the city's very first neighborhoods – a roughly twelve-block area north of downtown – became the social, religious and cultural center of Memphis' Jewish Community, one that lasted through the 1940s. Affectionately known as the "Pinch," the most popular version of how it got its name is "that it derived from the pinch-gutted countenances of the Irish refugees from the Great Potato Famine," the original citizens of the Pinch.

Defined by the Center for Southern Folklore as the area bounded by Main, Overton, Third and Washington, the Pinch began its rise as the Jewish center with the arrival of Eastern European immigrants between the years 1880 and 1910. This neighborhood became Memphis' version of New York City's Lower East Side, home to a thriving, bustling, vital and intense Jewish Community, albeit a small one. It is in, or near, the Pinch that both the Anshei Sphard and Beth El Emeth Congregations had been established, together with four other Congregations, the Baron Hirsch (Orthodox), Congregation Children of Israel (Reform), Anshe Galicia and the Anshe Mischne, both Orthodox.

Beginning in the late 1930s, briefly interrupted by the advent of the Second World War, and continuing in the 1940s, accelerating after the Second World War, the Jewish Community of the

Pinch began to move away eastward. World War II shattered the invisible boundaries of the Jewish "ghetto" which was the Pinch, Memphis' version of New York City's Lower East Side.

By the early 1950s, it was evident that if the Beth El Emeth Congregation chose to remain in its downtown location, its days were numbered. The leadership of the congregation, just before, and during the term of office of President Sol Friedman (1955-60), initiated a bold move, purchasing land on Poplar, eight miles east of its downtown location. Believing that the Jewish Community was moving in that easterly direction, and located in the area of Memphis State University, the Beth El Emeth Congregation undertook a two-phase Building Program, the first stage of which was the erection of an Educational Center, which also served as a temporary place of worship. The Congregation, expanding the range of services offered to its membership, established its Sunday School, hoping that this would serve as an important recruitment tool to expand its membership. The second phase of the Building Program was to result in the erection of its permanent Sanctuary. In 1961, during the terms of office of Presidents Lester Zalowitz and Ben Gruber, Rabbi Arthur Levin was elected Rabbi of the Congregation. However, the membership of the Congregation did not grow, and the leadership began to realize and appreciate that they had erred in the site of their new facility, since the Jewish Community was not clustering in that part of East Memphis. The gamble had failed.

Faced with a declining membership, the leadership of the Congregation realized that something drastic had to be done, and initiated discussions with the Jewish Theological Seminary representing the Conservative Jewish Movement with a view to the Beth El Emeth Congregation affiliating with the Conservative Movement, thereby hoping to revitalize its waning fortunes. However, at the critical membership meeting called to debate the issue, a number of prominent Orthodox Memphis Jews who had supported the Congregation by paying membership dues, while not availing themselves of its services, appeared and made impassioned pleas for this venerable Congregation not to abandon Orthodoxy and affiliate with the Conservative Movement. These appeals were successful, and the membership voted not to affiliate with the Conservative Movement.

Membership in the Beth El Emeth Congregation continued to dwindle, and an alarmed leadership began to cast about for ways through which to still salvage this venerable Congregation about to celebrate its centennial – 100 years of service to its members and the Memphis Jewish Community.

By then, the leadership of the Congregation had abandoned plans to proceed with the second stage of its Building Program – the erection of a permanent Sanctuary – and cast about for alternative plans to sustain the Beth El Emeth Congregation.

It is at this juncture that we need to pause and temporarily suspend the history of the Beth El Emeth Congregation, and focus on that of the Anshei Sphard Congregation, because it is at this juncture in time, in the early 1960s, that the destiny of these two Congregations crosses paths.

In 1893, the Anshei Sphard Congregation was

organized by Polish Jews with a membership of 20. Israel Peres, a descendant of the venerable Jacob J. Peres, who had played such a pivotal role in two other Congregations (the Congregation B'nai Israel/Children of Israel, and the establishment of the Beth El Emeth Congregation) was instrumental in drawing up the Charter and Constitution for this small group of Orthodox Polish immigrants. On January 2, 1904, the Anshei Sphard Congregation was incorporated. Between 1898 and 1904, the Congregation had rented a brick store building at Main and Beale, where it worshipped with meetings being held in the residence of Samuel Baruchman. In 1904, the Anshei Sphard Congregation purchased a residence on Maiden Lane, later called Market Street, and by 1906 had remodeled it for use as a Synagogue, worshipping there for twenty-one years. In 1907, a mere three years after its incorporation, the Anshei Sphard Synagogue purchased land on Airways Boulevard, directly opposite of what is today the Defense Depot, for use as a cemetery.

In 1925, under the leadership of Nathan Kapell (who served as President in the years 1924-25), the Congregation demolished the old wooden structure and built a brick Synagogue, the main Sanctuary seating 250, and the balcony for women, 75.

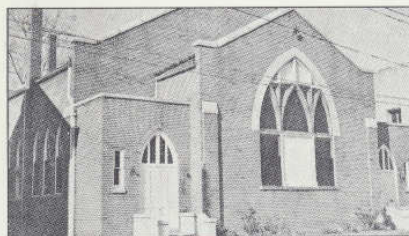
A few years after the building of their new, permanent Synagogue in 1925, under the leadership of Mrs. Joe Felt, the Anshei Sphard Ladies' Auxiliary was established. In 1942, H. I. Schaffer, a deeply pious and religious Jew, passed away. He had served the Congregation as President for two terms of office, from 1910-24, and again from 1925-42, a record of more than thirty years of service.

As the deterioration of the Pinch as a Jewish neighborhood and center of Jewish living accelerated after the Second World War, the membership of the Congregation, which by now had outgrown its facility on Market Street, realized that the time had come to follow the easterly march of its membership.

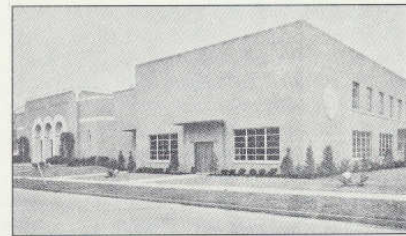
The election of Nathan Tenenbaum (1943-44) to the Presidency during the war years signaled a transition in the leadership of the Congregation from the "old guard founding fathers" to a new generation of leaders heralded by the placement of numbers of younger men to serve on the Board of the Congregation.

One of the great accomplishments of President Meyer Felt's administration in the immediate post-War years, was to involve the young men returning from service in the war in the leadership echelons of the Congregation. This visionary move injected much young blood into the Congregation, accelerating its growth, and, during President Felt's term of office, Rabbi Elijah Stampfer was engaged as Rabbi, and Rabbi Nathan Greenblatt as Cantor.

To be continued in next issue



*Anshei Sphard – November 6th Street
1925-1948*



*Anshei Sphard – 1188 North Parkway
1948-1970*

The Cane

From The Archives of Temple Israel

Exploring history is like restoring a beautiful antique; by removing or peeling away a few layers of time there is revealed a splendid moment in the past.

It began with the discovery at Temple Israel of a black walking cane with a gold handle. Inscribed on the handle was "To Lew Wexler presented by Congregation Children of Israel (the name was changed to Temple Israel in 1944).

The cane meant very little because we had no idea who Lew Wexler was or why he had been presented this gift.

Just by chance in searching through the Memphis Daily Appeal microfilm we found that in the winter of 1869 in a city yet overcoming the dreadful effects of civil conflict the Jews of Congregation Children of Israel produced a fair and bazaar in the downtown district. It was

very successful and enjoyed the support of the entire community among other reasons because "our Hebrew citizens . . . are among the most liberal givers for all purposes that we have in our community."

It was, one can sense, from the accounts in the paper, a glorious achievement and on Saturday, December 25, 1869 - Christmas Day mind you - the Congregation expressed its esteem and mark of appreciation to Mr. Lew Wexler for his services as Chairman of the fair by the presentation of a gold handled cane.

This has been like a puzzle. First the cane, then why it was presented. There is one piece still missing. Does Lew Wexler have descendants? Where are they? In Memphis?

Shirley Feibelman
Ruth Kahn

Museum Dedication Set For October 15th

The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, once a dream and now a reality, will be dedicated on Sunday, October 15, at 1:30 P.M. in Utica, Mississippi, on the grounds of the Jacobs Camp. Into this museum will go treasured ritual objects and items of historical interest from former synagogues throughout the region. Many Jewish communities in small towns throughout the South have vanished, leaving behind synagogues and their artifacts. Now a repository will exist to keep their history alive.

The Memphis Jewish community is invited to attend the ceremony of dedication. The trip from Memphis requires about four hours. Those who would prefer to travel down and stay overnight can find accommodations in Jackson.

*Your President, Officers and Directors
of the*



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