



# SOUTHERN JEWISH HERITAGE

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## IMAGES IN PRINT . . . . . by Harriet Stern

### The Goldberger Family and the Tri-State Press, Inc.



Harriet Stern

Early printing was both an art and a craft. Literacy was rare and printers a select few. Tri-State Press, Inc., like its forebear, Goldberger Printing Company, identified itself with this cultural tradition. Its owners, Sam and Gene Goldberger, jacks of all parts of the trade, were at once executives, editors, typesetters and pressmen, as happily garbed in grimy, ink-stained t-shirts as in formal business suits. Bringing from Jewish tradition a respect for learning, they followed in the footsteps of Gutenberg and Franklin.

On August 5, 1985, a torrential rain brought down without warning a section of roof at the Tri-State Press building at 277 Jefferson. With the entire shop awash, Sam and Gene sloshed about, determined to finish the week's edition of The Hebrew Watchman and an issue of the high school newspaper for Immaculate Conception. Grateful and relieved that none of their workers—mostly family and long-time employees—had been injured, they anticipated only a brief delay before repairs would enable them to resume full operation.

But it was not to be. Within days, the building was condemned and Tri-State never reopened. "Printers don't get rich," admitted Gene Goldberger, now retired. The dollars just weren't there to replace the damaged equipment and to relocate, as The Hebrew Watchman was able to do.

With reason, large companies gain the headlines, but the economic heart of a city lies equally in its small businesses. Many Memphis Jewish-owned businesses have been small and often family-owned, as was Tri-State Press. But Tri-State made a special place for itself in the general community as well.

For its two years more than a Biblical lifespan, from 1913-1985, it was printer to the educational, religious and business community of the Memphis area. In its career from hand-set type to linotype to electronic typesetting, and much of Memphis history, as well. High school and college newspapers, trade journals, union publications, small town weeklies and innumerable flyers and posters, as well as the Jewish weekly, The Hebrew Watchman, came off their presses. Throughout, a reputation for good literary quality and good workmanship remained their stock in trade. Tri-State's distinguished story is now history.

Emanuel Goldberger was a junior at Central High School when his cousin, Sidney Friedman, Sr., acquired a foot-powered press (on the order of an old treadle-type sewing machine) and set it in the back of the tailoring shop owned by David Goldberger, Emanuel's Father. In short order the youth put his hands and feet to the wheel and launched himself into business with the printing of Rosh Ha-Shona cards, which at that time resembled today's business cards. His immediate success was such that, to the dismay of his parents who hoped he would go to college, Emmanuel never even finished high school. By 1918, when he joined the Marines to fight in World War I, he had formed E. Goldberger & Co. and

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*As we went to press, we were saddened by the death of Eugene S. Goldberger, former President of Tri State Press, Inc. We were privileged to have known him and dedicate this article to his memory.*

## PERES - - by Dr. Selma Lewis

### Good Things Come in Threes

This triple biography is the story of three Peres men, a father and two sons, all of whom embodied the qualities of intellect, spirituality, and philanthropy that inspired others to stand in admiration.

They were all three community leaders, demonstrating that the highest ideals of Judaism also embody the highest ideals of citizenship.

The first page of the pamphlet of the Temple Israel Cemetery describes the Peres family plot where the body of Rabbi Jacob, the first rabbi of Congregation B'Nai Israel, rests beneath a large sculpture of a family tree, with a strong trunk, and many branches. His grave is surrounded by those of his descendants, whose graves are marked by sculptures of branches which appear to have been sawed off the main trunk. What an appropriate memorial this is to a man whose family stemmed directly from the source, in spirit as well as in form.

Jacob J. Peres was the patriarch not only of his own family, but of Jewish life in Memphis. Few families have been more closely involved in the public life of the city, establishing high standards for scholarship and public service. Peres had been a child prodigy who, when he graduated from high school at his home in The Netherlands at the age of fourteen, was given a stipend by the King of that country to attend the Netherlands Israelitish Seminary. (Shankman, Peres p.2.) Before he reached the age of

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Dr. Selma Lewis



## Presidents Message . . . . . Gloria Felsenthal



Gloria Felsenthal

It is a new year—a time for each of us as individuals to look ahead and to look back and reflect on the past. As a society we begin a new year in the same way. As we plan for our future, we realize that we learn by examining our past.

Our Jewish Historical Society needs the help of our members and the Jewish community of Memphis and the Mid-South in preserving and perpetuating our past.

As you browse through scrapbooks, clean out drawers, rummage through attics, please think of sharing treasured records of the past. We will make copies and return originals. We also welcome written reports on families and citizens who have contributed to the Jewish community and the community-at-large of Memphis and the Mid-South.

Your society has taken a stand in support of the continued operation of the River Museum on Mud Island in its present full capacity. This action is in keeping with our belief in the value of preserving the past. I urge you to continue monitoring the situation and to write Mayor Hackett to indicate your feelings.

I wish a Happy and Healthy New Year to all our members and your loved ones.

WE NEED INTERESTING HISTORICAL  
INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR  
FAMILY AND/OR BUSINESS. . .  
WE WILL WRITE THE ARTICLE.

Call David Schneider - 767-8603

## Images

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had taken his younger brother, Leo, and Sidney Friedman, Sr. into the business. He left 15-year-old Leo in charge when, early and always a patriot, he followed two older brothers into a war he was too late to fight. By the time he sailed, the war was three days over. He spent 11 months in Santo Domingo, says his widow Regina, "guarding the sugarcane."

In Emanuel's absence, Leo and an older brother Sam relocated to 226-68 Vance to share space with another typesetting operation, Plexico, which Emanuel later bought out. They renamed their business Goldberger Printing Company. In 1919, they added their first automatic press, thereby setting a pattern which the business was to follow to the end: that of expanding by the purchase of other business and through continued modernization of its equipment.

Emanuel returned to the business, to which Leo, inspired through Young Judaea, had added a Jewish newspaper, The Hebrew Watchman in 1925. Sam left to practice law for a number of years, but when a third brother, Milton, returned from college with a journalism degree, he assumed a role in the printing business and well as the editorship of The Hebrew Watchman.

In 1933, the family enterprises moved to 409 South

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Second Street, in the building of the Western Newspaper Union, and later purchased the Sessions Typesetting Company, and created Goldberger Composition Service. They became typesetters for Western, which syndicated a weekly of four identical pages of "ready print" national news and advertising copy—otherwise known as "boiler plate"—to which various localities added another four pages of local news and ads for distribution throughout the country towns. In 1942, Emanuel took Goldberger Composition Service and separated amicably from the rest of the Goldberger Printing Company. Sam, Regina and later, son Eugene joined him.

In 1946, the Western Newspaper Union gave up their printing operations, leaving their printing customers to go elsewhere. Emmanuel, Gene and Sam seized this opportunity, bought a newspaper press, and renamed their business Tri-State Press. Western had ceased printing the "ready-print" country newspapers, but Tri-State assumed the work for the local publications previously served by Western, including The Hebrew Watchman, The Cotton Trade Journal and others.

Forced to look for another location since Western Newspaper Company needed to expand into that portion of their building which the Goldbergers had occupied, they moved the new company to 188 Jefferson. Here, on a first floor below the Germania Hall, they found themselves entertained as they worked nights by the sounds of music and dancing overhead.

In 1950, they made a final move to 277 Jefferson, where they celebrated the purchase of the first rotary newspaper press in town (other than one at The Commercial Appeal), and later added commercial printing equipment. With room to spare, two other family businesses moved in. The Hebrew Watchman relocated there (Goldberger Printing Company had

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## At the Foot of the Smokies — — — A Small Southern Jewish Community Survives



by Sylvia Katz Gaylor, Ph.D

*Sylvia Katz Gaylor was born in Brooklyn, New York. She received her B.A. from Brooklyn College, M.A., from University of Illinois, and her Ph.D. from New York University. She attended classes at Columbia University and the New School for Social Research.*

*For 17 years, she taught in the New York City Schools. From Sept., 1970 to August, 1987, she was assistant and associate professor of history and member of the graduate faculty, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN.*

*Mrs. Gaylor retired in 1987, to devote more time to several research projects. She is presently working on a history of the Jews of the Tri-Cities which she plans to expand into a history of the Jews of East Tennessee.*

In 1904, when Bristol, Tenn.-Va. had a population of about 13,000, six Jewish families came together and organized B'nai Sholom Congregation. The first synagogue in the area was built here in 1927. From 1927-1960 the place of worship was in Bristol. Bristol is located on the Northeast tip of Tenn. and the Southwest corner of Va. and is half in Va. and half in Tenn. The boundary line runs down the middle of the main street.

The population today, close to 43,000, includes 13 Jewish families who are affiliated with the Congregation.<sup>1</sup> The present temple six miles from Bristol in Blountville, Tenn. is a handsome two

story colonial mansion and was the headquarters of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Of the 2,554 inhabitants in Blountville there are no identifiable Jews.<sup>2</sup> The Congregation, however, which has survived for over 85 years has 65 member-families. B'nai Sholom is the only Congregation between Roanoke, Virginia and Knoxville, Tenn., a distance of 250 miles. It is in the center of a triangle between the cities of Bristol, Johnson City and Kingsport, Tenn. Jews also attend from the small surrounding communities.

Bristol had remained meadowland until the mid 19th century. In 1852, a Blountville merchant began selling lots. One of the purchasers was Henry Rosenheim a merchant, believed to be the first Jew to live in Bristol when it was incorporated in 1856.<sup>3</sup> With the coming of the first railroad in Oct. 1856, Bristol enjoyed a period of economic growth and prosperity.

The Bristol news of July 13, 1860, carried an advertisement from Stern, Rosenheim & Co. of Bristol, Tenn. The March 9, 1866, edition of the State Line Gazette carried one from H. Guggenheimer and Co. on Main Street.<sup>4</sup> Both sold general merchandise. Guggenheimer is also believed to have been Jewish. When Tenn. voted to secede from the Union in 1861, East Tenn. voted against secession. Bristol, however, was solidly behind the Confederate cause, though most of the people here were without slaves. Sigmund Rosenheim and Henry Guggenheimer served with the Confederate Army.<sup>5</sup> Bristol began to expand industrially and commercially in the late eighties and nineties. By 1906, Bristol was connected by railroad to every town in the vicinity and to several large cities. The population had nearly doubled in 10 years to 9,850.<sup>6</sup> Valuable high grade coal in Southwest Virginia attracted domestic and foreign investors. Their offices were in Bristol. Farmers brought their produce to Bristol and did their shopping here. Manufacturing firms, retail shops, and a variety of wholesale businesses were established. Over 25 peddlers carried goods by wagon to rural areas. Bristol

became the largest city between the Knoxville and Roanoke areas.

Jewish merchants in business in 1896 were Abraham S. Gump, and Simon A. Gump, men's clothing, Isaac Perry, and Joseph Simon of Simon and Perry, men's clothing and Henry J. Simon of Simon Auction Co., house furnishing.<sup>7</sup> Isaac started out as a peddler and saved enough to open up a clothing store with Joseph Simon.<sup>8</sup> Simon A. Gump born in Germany in 1827, arrived from Philadelphia around 1876 with his wife and grown children. He opened a clothing store with his son Abraham. Gump's daughter Minnie had married Nathan Stern, a Knoxville merchant. When Nathan died in 1892, Minnie Stern came to Bristol with her three children.<sup>9</sup> In 1894, Herman Hecht, a 25 year old baker from Frankfurt, Germany, arrived in Bristol and opened a bakery on 6th Street. Herman's great grandson recently returned to Bristol, but is no longer a practicing Jew. There are no other descendants of these early families living in Bristol today.

At the turn of the century, 3 or 4 Jewish families lived in Johnson City and Kingsport.<sup>10</sup> In 1904, B'nai Sholom was started and met for traditional services at the home of Simon Gump.<sup>11</sup> Reform services were conducted at the Hecht home. In September of 1905, B'nai Sholom Congregation incorporated in order to buy land for burial purposes. As the city prospered more Jews were attracted by the flourishing economy. The 1905 and 1910, City Directories list a number of new Jewish owned establishments. Seven out of 10 clothing stores on State Street were owned by Jews.<sup>12</sup> B'nai Sholom appeared in the City Directory under places of worship and a spiritual leader Rev. Joseph Lesser was listed under Clergymen.<sup>13</sup> By March, 1916, the congregation had 16 dues paying members, mostly the shopkeepers and clerks from State Street. Services were held in rented rooms. From 1916 to 1927 over 50 names appeared as dues paying members.<sup>14</sup> Some stayed from one to two years while others became permanent residents and were the mainstay of the Congregation. Membership fluctuated. Jews were attracted by expanding economic opportunities during periods of prosperity. In the lean years especially in the '30's, as businesses closed, many left. A nu-

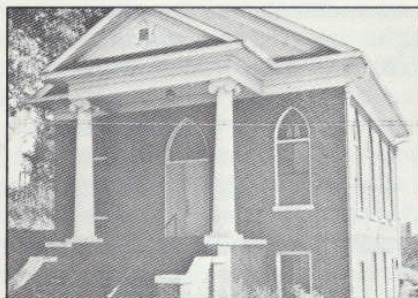
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cleus would remain, and maintain a continuity. Names such as Radunsky, Levine, Perry, Simon, Strauss, and Ross appear in 1916 and were also active in 1927.<sup>15</sup> The prosperity of the twenties brought new people into the area and they were still active in the forties and fifties. Ralph Gourse, Tom Green, Morris Palkes, Emanuel Cohen, Isaac Levi-son, and Uel Ross were to contribute much to the Congregation's survival during the depression. They bore the brunt of maintaining the synagogue and paying the bills. They kept the shule from collapsing or the bank from foreclosing. They did the work and scraped together the money.

Newcomers were important because the children of the congregants rarely stayed. Today only Morris Ross and Milton Green live in Bristol, the last local remaining descendants of these early leaders. A major contribution to the growth of the Congregation was the automobile. It enable Jews from neighboring towns to attend services. Many nonmembers names appeared on the donors lists for the High Holidays.<sup>16</sup> In 1916, a B'nai Zion chapter of the Federation of American Zionists was organized.

The majority of Jews who arrived in the early twentieth century were of East European origin. Brought up in traditional households quite a few could conduct services. They were more concerned with obtaining Kosher meat than hiring a spiritual leader. Schochets hired in 1919 and in 1921 also conducted holiday services. In 1925, Rev. Frankel was hired to conduct Yom Tov services and act as schochet. He was the first permanent Rabbi and remained for five years.



King Street Synagogue dedicated 1927

For over twenty years the Jews of Bristol dreamed of possessing their own house of worship. In 1926, with about 30 member families, they decided to build a temple. The members carried out a massive fund raising drive. The dedication ceremony for the first Jewish House of Worship was held on Sunday, Sept, 25, 1927, a day before erev Rosh Hashannah.<sup>17</sup> The Temple became not only a place of worship but a center for meetings, social gatherings and for educational purposes. Rabbi Frankel conducted Hebrew and Sunday School classes. There was even a mikvah which was only used once. The Jews attended services at the Temple in Bristol for 33 years. Until 1928, there were only two or three merchants in Kingsport and they joined B'nai Sholom. Johnson City had more Jews. Religious services continued to be held there sporadically in a rented room.

During the war years as new industrial plants were built in the trities and others expanded, there was an influx of young people with children. Industrial growth continued after the war and into the 1950's and 60's. Jewish college educated, salaried professionals came to work at Eastman Kodak, Kingsport Press and Mead Paper in Kingsport and Raytheon, Sperry Rand and Monroe Calculator in Bristol. By 1942 there were 39 dues paying members and Jews from Johnson City began attending. In 1959 membership peaked at 77 families.<sup>18</sup> The largest number still came from Bristol.

In 1945, with an increase in membership the congregation voted to hire a permanent Rabbi.<sup>19</sup> A minority argued that the congregation could not afford a Rabbi. Differences over hiring a Rabbi, expenditures, dues, conservative versus reform practices, English versus Hebrew in the services, shorter versus longer services had created discord. An occasional member stormed out in anger never to return. However, the minority adapted to the will of the majority because unlike larger communities there was no place else to go.

In 1946, they hired a Reform Rabbi who had served in a conservative Congregation. There was a visible im-



B'nai Sholom Sanctuary

provement in congregational affairs. Membership increased, religious education improved, a Sisterhood was started and a monthly bulletin was distributed. A congregational seder, an oneg shabat following Friday night services and newly organized B'nai Brith lodge all helped bring members closer together. When in 1952, there was an influx of traditional Jews, the majority voted to find a more conservative Rabbi. Until 1970, the Rabbis were to be of a more conservative inclination.

By 1956, the Congregation had outgrown the Temple. An estate 6 miles from Bristol was purchased and remodeled to serve as Sunday School, meeting place and recreation hall. The old synagogue continued to serve as a place of worship until 1960. The Center was dedicated on May 18, 1958, amidst much fanfare. It had become the focal point for all religious, social, recreational and educational programs. More social functions were held, a community seder, a sisterhood luncheon, U.J.A. meetings, adult study groups and even dance classes were just some of the activities. The Congregation joined the United Synagogue of America and remained a member until 1970.

Since 1962, the Congregation has encountered difficulties replacing its Rabbi. In the absence of a Rabbi there has always been a member who could conduct services and deliver short sermons. Rabbi Amos Eliash of Israel came as Chasan and Rabbi for the High Holy Days and returned for the next few years. The United Synagogue was unable to provide a Rabbi or a Student Rabbi in 1970. The reform members persuaded the Congregation to try a student form Hebrew Union College who would conduct traditional services. In 1971

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## Peres

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eighteen he had edited a book of proverbs in five languages, and a Hebrew grammar.

At the age of twenty-seven Jacob Peres came to America in search of better economic opportunities than his native country provided. He arrived in Memphis in 1859 to assume the position of the first rabbi of the fledgling congregation. Although his tenure there was brief, his ideals of service became the foundation of the life of the Memphis Jewish community.

In addition to his rabbinical training Peres was a scholar in the fields of languages, literature, and mathematics. He wrote *The Child's Arithmetical Exercise* book, which was used in public schools of Memphis, Chicago, and cities in Arkansas. He wrote and lectured on the philosophy of language, and translated Dutch literature into English. He also studied law, and organized the legal firm of Peres and Micou. (Shankman, p. 8.) In 1865 he was elected President of the Memphis School Board, on which he was then serving. In this position he made positive changes: three modern schools were built, physical education was instituted, and the curriculum was generally improved. (Ibid.)

Although Jacob Peres died in the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1879 at the age of forty-nine, followed shortly by his wife, the ideals he espoused lived on in his sons who survived him. Two of his sons, Hardwig and Israel, also served as President of the Memphis School Board, and each was prominently involved in fraternal, civic, charitable, and religious organizations.

When Hardwig, the eldest surviving son, was quite young his father reluctantly removed him from school to help him attend to his expanding business and his semi-invalid wife. Hardwig's formal education was then provided by his father at home, and later continued informally by himself for the rest of his life. Hardwig became the head of a family which consisted of an invalid brother, Bernard, sister Sarah, who later married Dr. Harry Posert, and twelve-year old brother, Israel. This was to be Hardwig's only family, since he never married.

Hardwig arranged for Israel to have a fine education, sending him to Yale University, where he received a B.A., an M.A. in Social Science under the tutelage of William Graham Sumner, his mentor and friend, and a degree in law, with honors. When he returned to Memphis, Israel joined the law firm of Taylor, Carroll, and Peres.

At the age of thirty Israel was elected Vice-President of the Department of School Administration of the National Education Association. In 1901 he was married to Rebecca Behm, who tragically died in childbirth, along with the infant. Five years later,

Israel re-entered public life. Among other activities, he was a member of all the synagogues; a Thirty-third Degree Mason; President of the Lion's Club; member of the Board of Directors of Congregation Children of Israel; Trustee of Children's Home Society; Chairman of Art and Education Committee of the University Club of Memphis; an officer in the Yale Club; active in Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association; officer of Zionist Organization of Memphis; President of the Young Men's Hebrew Association. In World War I he was a special agent of the employment service, and advisor to the Draft Board of West Tennessee, a member of the local Draft Board, a Four Minute Man, a member of the Red Cross and the Liberty Loan Campaign Committee.

In 1917 Israel was appointed to fill an unexpired term as Judge in the Tenth Chancery Division, Part II, to which office he was re-elected in 1918 by a large majority. Only ten of his decisions were reversed, a record on the bench. He died in 1925, mourned by the city as well as by his family. In his memory the Israel H. Peres Memorial Scholarship was established with an endowment of \$20,000 to provide two or more four-year scholarships at Southwestern (now Rhodes) College. (Shankman, p. 20.) The scholarship still functions. Abe Fortas, who became a member of the United States Supreme Court, received his education at that college as a recipient of a Peres award. (McIlwaine, p. 21.)

While Jacob's and Israel's accomplishments had to be crowded into a relatively short span of years, Hardwig's which were at least as distinguished, graced the life of the city for many years. Like those of his father and brother, they ranged over a large realm of human endeavors.

Hardwig was an ardent participant in Jewish affairs. He was one of the organizers and the first treasurer of *The Jewish Spectator*, a Memphis-based weekly newspaper that played an important part in the cultural development of the Jews of the South. Unlike most of the well-established earlier immigrants who were disdainful of their co-religionists who constituted a later wave of refugees, when the Eastern Europeans arrived in Memphis, they were befriended by Hardwig Peres. His interest in all Jewish refugees from persecution continued throughout his life. In World War I he joined Louis Brandeis, later Justice of the United States Supreme Court, in an effort to save the Jewish colonies in Palestine. The Zionists of Memphis considered him their leader. In 1938 he was elected Honorary Vice-Chairman of the United Palestine Appeal, the American fund-raising group of Jewish Agencies for Palestine. In 1939 he received a letter from Herbert H. Lehman, Governor of

New York, asking him to meet regarding the desperate plight of the Jews in Germany. (Mississippi Valley Collection, MSS #232.) Although he was a member of every synagogue in the city, he was elected Honorary President for Life of Congregation Children of Israel, which he attended regularly. (Shankman, p. 59.)

Hardwig belonged to many fraternal organizations, including the Young Men's Hebrew Association, of which he was its first president. He worked for the political improvement of the city, helping to create reform measures in the charter. In 1928, Governor Horton appointed him to help draft a new amendment to the Tennessee state constitution. As President of the Memphis School Board, he was an innovator, advocating year-round schools, divided into four equal terms. During World War I he was appointed by Herbert Hoover as food inspector for the entire southern region.

Noted for countless acts of charity and kindness, in 1926 when the American Savings Bank and Trust Company failed, and thousands of people lost their money in Christmas Savings accounts, although he was not connected with that bank, Hardwig, together with Lloyd Binford and Abe Plough advanced the money to pay all those accounts in time for Christmas shopping. He was a trustee of John Gaston Memorial Hospital, which was built to serve the poor. (Shankman, p. 59.) In 1927 readers of the *Memphis Press Scimitar* voted him Memphis' most valued citizen.

It would be difficult to overstate the contributions of the Peres family to their community. Their influence extended far, not least in the friendship that existed between Hardwig Peres and Abe Plough. Although they were about twenty-five years apart in age, they spent many hours together, visiting almost every day. The ideals and goals of the older man, which were undoubtedly already present in the younger, have been sustained and carried forward in the contributions of Abe Plough to the city. (Interview with Kay Myar.)

### You Can Help !

Our Archives Committee would like to know about any material you have relating to early Jewish History in Memphis. Pictures, books, synagogue and temple publications, family histories and early documents.

PLEASE CALL - LAURA SPIEGLER

767-5924



## Images

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gone-out of business) as well as Reporter Publishing Company, a complete mailing service owned by Milton. Eventually, Emanuel, prompted by a heart condition, sold Tri-State to his sons, Sam and Gene, but continued to work until his retirement in the late 1960's, when he turned his energies to politics and civic organizations.

Regina Goldberger, who married Emanuel in 1920 after a brief courtship ("Boy, did the bug bite him!"), emphasizes that hard work, integrity and ethics characterized her husband as a businessman. Once he destroyed an expensive job (\$100 then) and redid it because something quite minor wasn't right. They survived the Depression in part because their credit was good (and also because they bartered and received everything from train tickets to shovels, buckets, food and clothing for their work). Emanuel was no manager and no entrepreneur. He was not aggressive and never tried to do anyone out of a job. Yet, they never employed or even needed a salesman. Emanuel was well-known and well-liked and the trade "walked in the door" because of his good work and his good reputation. Such a reputation continued to characterize the business after Emanuel's departure, for Gene Goldberger says the same of the later years of the business.

The printing company was always a union shop from the moment the printer's union came into existence. It was one of the first three shops to become unionized and, when it closed, it was one of the only three union shops left in the city. "My daddy was always a union man," Gene states proudly. In this respect as in others, both Gene and Sam followed in their father's footsteps.

Union work may have cost another member of the Goldberger family his life. Emanuel's brother Herman was deeply involved with the Tenant Farmers' Union in Arkansas. He suffered a great deal of animosity for this. Just before he was to drive to Nashville to deliver a speech on behalf of the Farmers' Union, two people called the house warning him not to go. He died on the trip, when his car went, probably by foul play, into a ditch.

From the beginning of Tri-State Press until it went out of business, The Cotton Trade Journal, 10-16 pages a week, was the major client. It made Friday afternoon a time to remember. Editor Seton Ross would rush in with the week's closings and write his analysis in the printshop while to typesetters snatched each page as he finished. A team of mailers waited to take it from the press and rush to get it into the mail.

Gene and wife Wilma tell how their wedding some 45 years ago was timed to sync with this operation. After one hectic Friday,

Gene hopped a train to New York, knowing he needed to wed and return with his bride before the following Friday. After their children started school, Wilma, like her mother-in-law before her, came into the business. As Secretary-treasurer, she saw to it that the Goldbergers made no moves they couldn't afford, and everyone credits her with keeping them on the straight and narrow path. Gene, in the course of things, took a law degree, but never practiced a day in his life. Regina thinks perhaps printer's ink got in his blood. Others in the family suspect that he put law aside to go into the family business in order to be able to marry Wilma and, once there, found printing to be, after his wife, his second love.

Gene himself puts it this way: "Words had been my hobby from almost the day I was born." His mother taught him to read at age four and couldn't get him to quit. His verbal skills and his perfectionism proved to be a major asset to the business. Nine-tenths of the customers, Gene estimates, came to Tri-State because they knew their material would be handled and corrected by highly literate printers.

Gloria Felsenthal, President of our organization and once an editor of her White Station High School newspaper, recalls that taking copy down to Tri-State Press was one of the highlights of those years. "They didn't just print it for us," she explains, telling that Gene Goldberger went over everything carefully, helping and teaching them.

As printers, Gene and Sam not only loved the printed word, they loved the artistry of print. Gene once told a newspaper reporter, "I believe in verbal communication. And my brother has the same orientation. We have a commitment to printing things that are grammatically correct and verbally attractive."

And they loved the physical details of the printing trade. They marvelled at the newer machines even while preferring linotypes to electronics. They felt at home in the clang and clatter. They used hot type and cold type. As wierd as it sounds for Jewish boys, they "cooked the pig" (created molten lead for type). They played the linotype deftly like an organ but with a drive to set speed records.

At one time the business made a living for 20 people. It had five linotype machines, an offset press, an electronic typesetter and always the out-of-date machines kept sentimentally even if not in use. They had 50 kinds of type and made sure to keep certain old varieties, just in case someone should ask for them.

Tri-State Press published The Cotton Trade Journal until it ceased publication because of government regulation of the free trading in the futures market. The press also printed employee newspapers for International Har-

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Harriett Stern or Gloria Felsenthal

vester, Federal Express and the Post Office. It printed the Memphis State Tiger Rag, later The Helmsman, the Southwestern and School of Optometry student newspapers, and the alumnae publications of Southwestern and the University of Tennessee. High school newspapers in the surrounding area came off their presses, as well as those of Central High, East High, White Station High, St. Mary's, St. Agnes' and Immaculate Conception. They printed the Collierville Herald and, for its brief duration, Prelude Magazine on the arts. Each week they printed the East Memphis Shoppers News and the Memphis Union News for the Memphis Trades and Labor Council. Tri-State printed other trade publications--Livestock Weekly and National Hardwood, to say nothing of numerous flyers, posters and grocery circulars.

In 1983, Gene told Clayton Braddock of Mid-South Business, "We feel that most of the people who trade with us do so because of our reputation for serving the customer and for being accurate." That, in an understated nutshell, describes well the philosophy of the Goldberger family typesetting and printing business from start to finish.

## Foothills

continued from page 6

4 for a Reform, Minutes of Meeting, October 21, 1945. B.S.F. 83, Box 1,6.

20. E. Arnold Siegel, History of B'Nai Sholom Congregation. B.A. dss. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, 1972. Siegel's dissertation was helpful. However, it contained a number of errors from sources he did not bother to check.

21. B'Nai Sholom Congregation 75th Anniversary Journal, B'Nai Sholom Congregation, 1979, personal copy.

22. Membership Meeting February, 1984. These minutes are still in the Minute Book held by the Recording Secretary to the present and eventually will be given to the Archives.

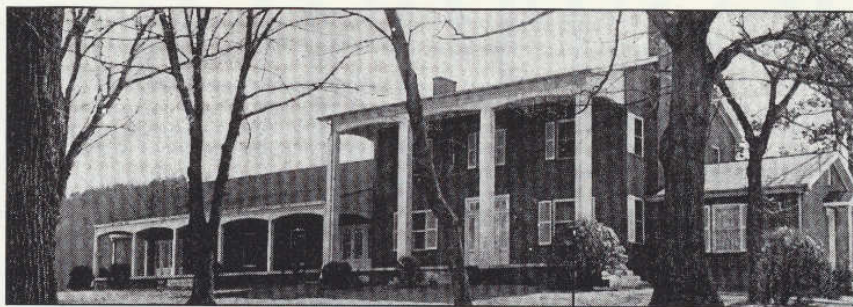
23. Interview with Dr. Jeff Gold, "Jewish Community Finds Acceptance in Bible Belt", Kingsport Times News, March 29, 1984, p.1.



**Foothills** *continued from page 4*  
with only 43 dues paying members they agreed to continue with the Student Rabbi. In 1972, the congregation decided to affiliate with Union of Hebrew American Congregations.<sup>20</sup>

Since 1970, B'nai Sholom has had Student Rabbis from Hebrew Union college. Some have been very good and others have been disappointing. After each unpleasant experience, an attempt has been made to convince the Congregation to hire a permanent Rabbi. With a decrease in membership in the 70's and the shortage of good rabbis, the motion has always been defeated. In the mid 70's the older members were gravely concerned about the survival of the Congregations. Membership had declined. There appeared to be a growing indifference toward religion. Attendance at Friday night services, at congregation meetings and at Sunday School had fallen off drastically. No new members were coming into the community. A tornado hit the Center in Oct. 1977, causing a good deal of damage. The in the late 70's, there was a discernable change. East Tenn. State University in Johnson City acquired Medical School. The University and the Veterans Administration Hospital had expanded. New Jewish faculty and Doctors came into the community. Texas Instrument brought in more professionals. The Jewish population grew and shifted to Johnson City. In May 1979, the members of B'nai Sholom Congregation celebrated its 75th Anniversary and held a rededication ceremony followed by a gala 75th Anniversary Ball.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1980's, the congregation adopted some of the far reaching reforms that were sweeping through other Conservative Congregations. Women were now counted for a minyon.<sup>22</sup> The first woman President was elected in 1984. More women were participating in services, and were involved in running the Synagogue. These and other changes antagonized some of the more conservative Jews. However, it was this flexibility that also allowed the congregation to attract a variety of Jews and permitted B'nai Sholom to



Armand Hecht Jewish Community Center

survive and grow.

The Congregation is entering the nineties on a more positive note. More young people are arriving with children and are settling in Johnson City. Johnson City's Jewish population has increased while Bristol and Kingsport have suffered a loss. The Jewish community will survive. It is not dependent on one city or town but on the Jews in the small towns and cities throughout the area. Members are younger, better educated and are for the most part in the professions. Religious School is doing well. Parents are enthusiastic and are actively involved in the School.<sup>23</sup> A number of dedicated, and concerned long standing members provide continuity and experience. Of the nine Board members who served in Oct. 1950, 5 are still actively involved in the Congregation forty years later. Louis Millen who is 81, is still our Gabbi. Last, but not least is the special quality of the people. Their generosity, dedication, warmth and helpfulness made many diverse people reluctant to depart from this Jewish community.

#### Footnotes

1. The figures given by the Bristol Chamber of Commerce for 1986, were, Bristol, TN 23,984, Bristol, VA 18,400. There are at least another 12 known unaffiliated Jews and perhaps a dozen closet Jews. This is about .11% of the population.
2. The World Book Encyclopedia 19 (Chicago:1988), p. 143 the figures are for 1980.
3. Mr. Victor Nicholas Phillips is a local historian who is writing a history of Bristol and has been doing local history for the past 37 years. Wilma Smith a local historian and genealogist whose family dates back to the Revolution, has written a number of articles on local history. Roberts S. Loving, *Double Destiny: The Story of Bristol Tennessee-Virginia* (Bristol:1955), pp. 25, 93, and Nancy Hamblen Acuff et.al. *Foundations of Faith In Sullivan County* (Knoxville:1976), p. 188. The last two sources refer to the first Jewish settlers

who arrived here as among the pioneers of the 1850's. Rosenheim is listed among the original purchasers of land in Goodson, Virginia and Bristol, Tenn. He is the only name that appears to be Jewish. Goodson changed its name to Bristol, Va. in 1896.

4. The Bristol News, 13 July 1860, *State Line Gazette*, 9 March 1866.
5. James L. Douthat, *Transcribed Civil War Records Washington County, Va. 1861-1865* (Signal Mt:1985), pp. 1,3.
6. G.R. Groseclose and Martha C. Marshall, eds., *Entering A New Century, Sullivan County, 1895-1905* (Knoxville:1986), pp. 13,21.
7. J. Leonard & Harry W. Johnson, *City Directory of Bristol Tenn-Va. 1896-1897, (Roanoke:1896)*, pp. 34,64,76,82.
8. Interview with Alfred Perry grandson of Isaac September 1989. He is now living in Washington, D.C. and is unmarried. His brother has converted to Christianity.
9. Interview with Melinda Stern MacKenzie, great granddaughter of Simon A. Gump. She is now living in Princeton, N.J., Nov.22, 1989. She is the only daughter of Leon Stern and was brought up as a Presbyterian. She married two non Jews and has four children. One son converted to Judaism when he was married. Interview with Lucy Gump, Nov. 14, 1989, whose husband is the great great nephew of Simon Gump. Simon persuaded his 2 nephews to come to Johnson City. Louis Gump is still living there but it appears that none of the descendants of the two nephews continued to practice the religion of their great grandfathers.
10. Kingsport did not become an incorporated city until 1917. Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Kingsport Tennessee: A planned American City* (Lexington:1987). This is the first history to be written about Kingsport.
11. There appears to be some disagreement as to the exact date. Several sources claim it was 1903 while Congregation records refer to 1904.
12. Bristol Va-Tenn. Directory 1905-1906 (Richmond:1905), pp. 5-212.
13. Bristol Va.-Tenn. Directory 1910. p.5.
14. Historical Minute Book of B'Nai Sholom Congregation 1916-1927, File 83, Box 1, Folder 5, pp.1-108. The records of B'Nai Sholom Congregation are at the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn. The File number is 83, Boxes 1-10. Hereafter it will be referred to as B.S.F. 83, Box 1,5.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., pp.29,33,47.
17. B.S.F. 83 Box 2, 1.
18. B.S.F. 83, Box 1,6, Box 4, 3-8, contains membership pledges which lists members annually.
19. The vote was 17 for a Conservative Rabbi and

*continued on page 6*



## Centennial Weekend At Heska Amuna Synagogue

by David Schneider

Labor Day weekend in Knoxville, Tennessee was a gala centennial celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Heska Amuna Congregation. Former members came from all parts of the United States and made this truly a Homecoming weekend. The program began Friday night as guests such as Congressman and Mrs. John Duncan and Knoxville Mayor and Mrs. Victor Ashe were greeted along with the many Homecoming guests. After candlelighting, Kiddush and Hamotzi, a Shabbos dinner was enjoyed by all. Services were then held in the Sanctuary of the Six Million where Rabbi Noah Golinkin, former spiritual leader of the congregation, was guest speaker. After services were, there was an Oneg Shabbat in the social hall.

On Saturday morning, services were again in the Sanctuary of the Six Million with special recognition of past officers, presentation of plaques and recognition of Mr. Jacob Corkland, the congregation's oldest living member, at the young age of 92. After serv-

ices, all enjoyed lunch and visiting with friends in the social hall.

Festivities continued Sunday with a pool party at the Jewish Community Center and a dinner dance Sunday night at the Radisson Hotel. Like most synagogues in America, Heska Amuna was founded by immigrants who in 1890 founded a Conservative Jewish congregation naming it Heska Amuna, the Yiddish for "strongholders of faith". Knoxville, being at the foothills of the Smokey Mountains, was the central religious point for the Jewish families living in the rural areas of East Tennessee. Heska Amuna's first resident Rabbi, Issac Winick used to travel to many rural communities in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee to perform weddings, ritual circumcisions and funerals. He gave a sense of belonging to these communities, often isolated from their religion. On major holidays many of these members would travel into town and become a part of Heska Amuna congregation.

As a youngster, growing up at the old Heska Amuna Synagogue on Fifth Ave., I still remember

many friends whom I saw only two or three times a year when they came into town for the holidays. We looked forward to seeing each other and spending as much time together as possible. In later years as automobiles became more plentiful and roadways in and around the mountains more accessible we had more opportunities to get together.

Heska Amuna's first synagogue was in a small frame house on Temperance Street. Some years later, my parents purchased a small grocery store within a couple of blocks of the early synagogue location.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this great weekend, but know that everyone who was there will always remember the celebration and the many memories that were re-kindled among those who did return for the festivities.

Certainly, this is a great tribute to the wonderful Heska Amuna congregation and the always strong, vibrant Jewish community of Knoxville.

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of the*



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