

## *Baron Hirsch Synagogue*

The Baron Hirsch Synagogue came into being in 1891, and was named in honor of Baron de Hirsch, the French capitalist and philanthropist. The original membership included Jake Croner as president, Ferd Loewenberg, as secretary, H. Glickman as vice-president. Other members were David Goldberger, Leopold Goldberger, J. Croner, A. Weiss, A. Lippman, Sam Rosenheim, S. L. Benowitz, F. Franklin, Max Brode, Dave Hammer, and A. Isaacs.

The original aim of the Baron Hirsch Synagogue was to provide an Orthodox House of Worship in the city of Memphis. Prior to the formation of the Baron Hirsch group, there had been an Orthodox Congregation in Memphis, but it had been wiped out by the Yellow Fever epidemic. There were only two surviving members of the congregation, the Franklin brothers, who were left without any place of worship. However, they did have a cemetery, and in exchange for two pews in the Congregation, Children of Israel Temple, they turned the cemetery over to the other group.

However, with the formation of the Baron Hirsch Synagogue, they desired to have the cemetery returned, and made such a demand upon the Congregation, Children of Israel. After two years of litigation, the cemetery was returned to the Baron Hirsch Synagogue in exchange for one thousand dollars.

The site of the Baron Hirsch was formerly a colored church. The original purchase price was five thousand dollars which was raised by the issuing of fifty dollar bonds which were purchased by Jews and Non-Jews until the entire amount was realized.

Jake Croner served as the first president. Among the early presidents we find the names of A. Isaac, S. Kaplan, Fishel Franklin, Leopold Goldberger, S. L. Benowitz, and I. Menke.

There was no Talmud Torah in Memphis until 1892. At this time a special group composed of S. L. Benowitz, M. Lewis, David Goldberger, Leopold Goldberger, and Hyman Kovinsky, formed the first Talmud Torah Society which continued in operation until 1897 at the outbreak of the Yellow Fever.

The first rabbi of Baron Hirsch Congregation was I. Myerowitz who was succeeded by Rabbi Bressler. Rabbi Leiber Cohen then served the Memphis Community. Rabbi Henry R. Gold served next, and then Rabbi Bacharat.

What follows from that time is the more modern history of the synagogue of which more definite information is available.