

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

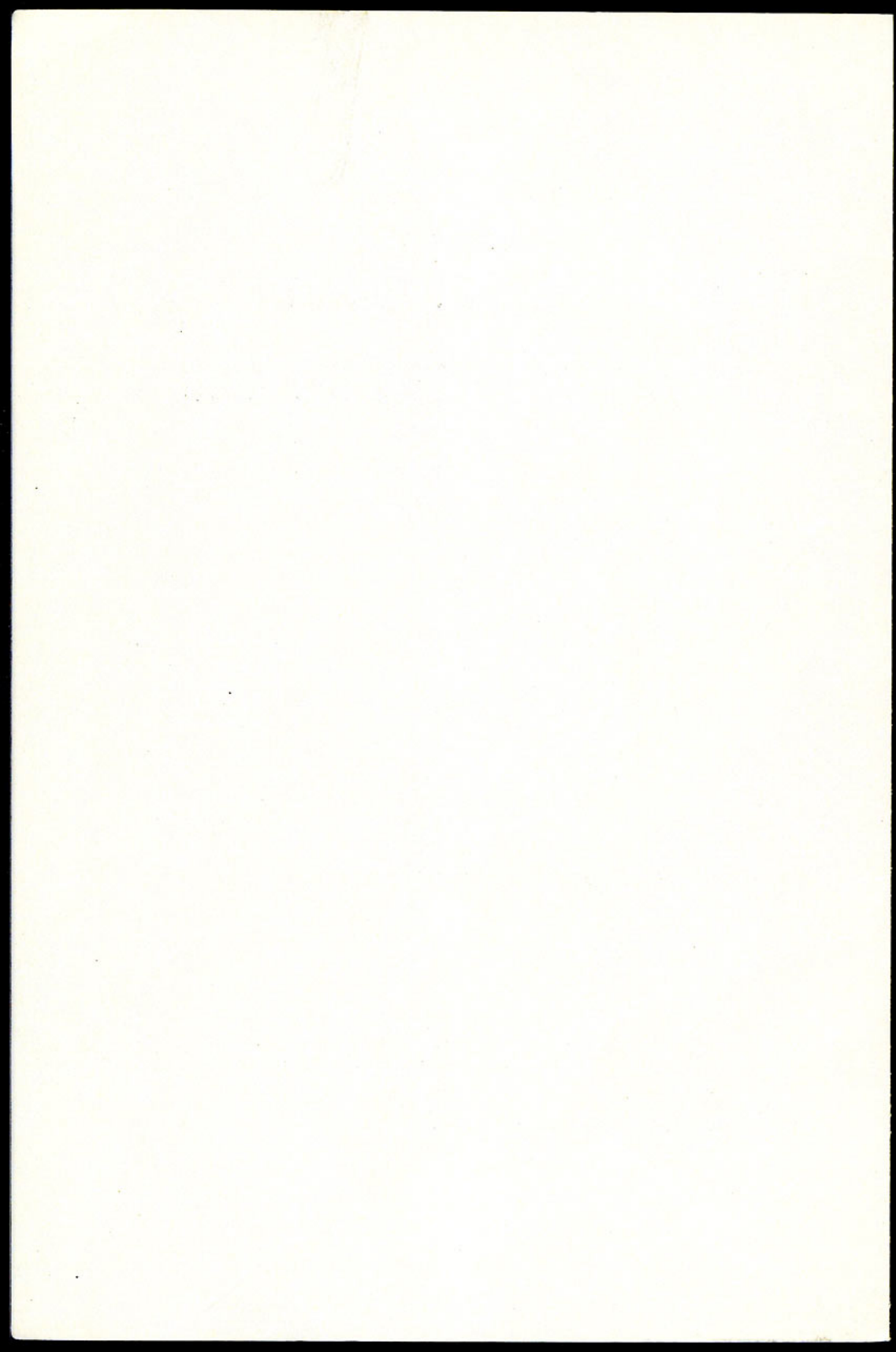


Volume III

Sivan, 5723 — June, 1963

Number 3





... אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם ... (יהושע ד:בא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."  
— Joshua 4:21

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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Volume III                      Sivan, 5723 — June, 1963                      Number 3

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## *Folklore Among Detroit Jews*

*by*

LEONARD W. MOSS and EMANUEL APPLEBAUM

In man's quest for knowledge the commonplace and every-day occurrences are often overlooked. Often we allow the glamour of the unusual, the different, or rare phenomenon to capture our fancy, thus obscuring the ordinary facts of the work-a-day world. This paper is concerned with the commonplace, for it is concerned with folk-beliefs and folk practices among young Jews in a major metropolitan area. We have deliberately avoided an attempt to classify these practices as "religious," "non-religious," or "superstitious." Folk practices and beliefs often do treat with supernaturalism. We take no stand on the rationality or irrationality of these patterns.

The subjects of our inquiry are all American born Jews living in the Detroit metropolitan area. Most of our respondents have had some college education. All are below forty years of age. In one sense, they are representative of the community to the degree that approximately 75 per cent of Detroit Jews are American born.

We should append a parenthetical observation at this juncture to describe the urban setting in which this study was completed (in 1959). The Detroit Metropolitan Area then contained some 3,700,000 people (in 1959). It is estimated that there are 90,000 Jews in the metropolitan area. Nearly as many persons live in the suburban fringe surrounding the central city as in Detroit proper. The same is true of the Jewish population to a slightly lesser degree. Population movements occur rapidly in a major metropolitan area, and the Jewish population has become dispersed over a relatively wide geographic space. However, there remain regions which are typically and distinctively Jewish. The fringe community of Oak Park is one such area, in that its population is approximately 38 per cent Jewish (about 10,000 souls in 1959). Within a land area of five square miles we find some eight synagogues, seven Hebrew and/or Yiddish schools, six kosher meat markets, two kosher fish markets, and four Jewish bakeries. Super-markets catering to the general population, located in Jewish neighborhoods, carry many Jewish specialty foods and kosher items. There are many Jewish organizations and clubs in Oak Park, as there are in Detroit generally. In many ways, Oak Park is simply a relocation of pre-existing Jewish neighborhoods of the older areas in the central city.

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We have not attempted to evaluate the *Yiddishkeit* of our neighborhood; for, indeed, what criteria would one use? Statistical evidence is difficult to amass on such a point. Synagogue membership and attendance, is today, greater than prior to World War II. Yet this, in itself, is an inconclusive factor; for in the United States generally there has been a superficial adherence to religion by all groups during these troubled times. The use of *Yiddish* in public places is not uncommon, though it becomes increasingly less frequent and less popular among the younger elements of the population. The circulation of the two remaining *Yiddish*-language newspapers is diminishing; although, both the *Forward* (*Der Forvets*) and the *Day-Journal* (*Tog-Zhurnal*) are available daily in the Jewish specialty grocery stores. The population of Oak Park supports but one bookstore and this establishment depends, to a great extent, upon the sale of toys, phonograph records, and stationery supplies, as well as some books of Judaica and fewer still of Hebraica. It should be noted, of course, that Oak Park is not a self-contained community and resident shopping patterns are often carried on in Detroit rather than in the immediate neighborhood. In Detroit one finds numerous Jewish specialty shops and three stores which specialize in Jewish books and religious articles.

Our subjects of this investigation, thus, have been drawn from a population which is, in many ways, typical of American Jewry outside the New York City area.

Anthropologists and folklorists have noted that in the processes of transmission and diffusion of culture the form and structure of an element are more easily transmissible than the content and/or belief. We have sought, in our investigation, to identify the retention of certain folk practices. Here we find that it is relatively simple to identify retention of form. The degree to which our subjects believe in the patterns to which they adhere is open to further question. In all fairness, we should note that our respondents often remarked: "I don't really believe in that *nahrishkeit!* (nonsense), or, equally often, "These are nothing but *baba meinselach!*" (old wife's tales). We should not, however, that information was often advanced with a nervous laugh at the same time the respondent indicated disbelief, yet often: "*Vehr waist??*" (Who knows?). Simple observation reveals the common use of many folk expressions to a greater extent than does the questioning of respondents.

As we noted earlier, we have not sought to catalogue our findings as "superstitions," although Jewish doctrine is eminently clear

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on this point. Moses Maimonides stated: "All these are false and fraudulent notions which idolators of ancient days used to mislead the ignorant masses in order to lead and exploit them. It is unfit for Jews, who are a wise and intelligent people, to succumb to such superstitions or to conceive of any value in such notions . . ." (*Yad Hachazakah, Hilchoth Alam* 11.16). Be that as it may, we should like to present some of our gleanings.

Throughout the day-to-day life several behaviors reveal vestigial retentions. This is not to suggest that the life-ways of young American Jews are dominated by folkloristic behaviors but only that in little ways these themes are indicated. For example, some persons will not begin a trip on Wednesday for that would bring ill fortune; Tuesday, however, is a lucky day. Opening an umbrella in the house will also bring bad luck, as will walking barefoot in the house. Whistling in the house will not bring bad fortune, it means that you are a *Goy!* (non-Jew). The breaking of a dish or glass should be accompanied by the cry: "*Mazeltov!*" (Congratulations) (Better a dish than a human sacrifice); or related to the wedding custom of shattering a glass. Dropping a knife means that male company is coming; a fork, female company.

Among non-literates, anthropologists have found considerable beliefs associated with clothing, particularly beliefs associated with sorcery and sympathetic magic. Among native Detroiters, however, we found little that could be interpreted in this manner. Some few reported that certain pieces of apparel are associated with good luck but here we deal with idiosyncratic patterns. More commonly, and not limited to Jews, is the practice of placing a coin in the pocket of a new suit or purse to insure good fortune. Less often, perhaps, is the donning of new apparel accompanied by a *bracha* (blessing). One often hears: "*Trug es gesindterhait, zereiss es gesindterhait.* (Wear it in health, tear it in health). A coin comes into play when one receives a knife as a gift, the coin is exchanged for the knife lest a friendship be severed. A person's clothing should never be mended while it is being worn; if it becomes necessary to mend the clothing, the wearer must hold a piece of thread in his mouth or chew a crust of bread. One respondent suggested a "reason" for this behavior, i.e., one's brains could be sewn up (lead to bad memory). An English belief on the same theme indicates one will come to want if the clothing is worn while being sewn.

Some few animals come into play in folk-beliefs. There is, of course, the widespread fear of snakes replete with generalized folk

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"knowledge" regarding these "slimy" creatures. A bird flying into one's home is an omen of good luck to come. There is a childhood belief that stepping on an ant (formica) or a spider (aracneida) will cause rain, but this is rarely heard today. However, one locust-associated belief still obtains: a lady-bird beetle (*Coccinella bipunctat*) alighting on a person is an omen of good fortune to come. How the lady-bird became associated with Judaic folk belief, is an intriguing problem. This beetle is identified, in English folk belief, with the Virgin Mary; hence, the name "lady". A dating of the introduction of belief associated with this beetle is, of course, highly conjectural. However, the specie *Cochineal* (*Coccinidia*) was not unknown in early Hebrew times for this beetle provided the raw substance for the manufacture of crimson and lake dyestuffs. Alternatively, we might suggest another avenue of fruitful exploration. The Egyptian scarab beetle (*Scarabaediae*) has long been identified as a symbol of creation, creative power, and good luck. The traditional *Yiddish* term *Moishes kayilah* (Moses' calf) has been attached to the scarab. Perhaps, the Cochineal beetles, common to Europe and America, have inherited this identification.

We noted earlier some beliefs associated with one's home. There are many folk expressions related to this topic. A Jew should move often, it brings good luck. If someone dies in your home, move out. If you live in an apartment building and move within the same building, always move up, never down; one's fortunes will go down with the downward move. Before moving into a new house, there are many preparations to be made. The night before one moves in, a live chicken should be placed in the house for the bird will "absorb" whatever ill fortune there might be in the building. The chicken is removed on the day you move in, and the live bird is given to a poor person. (As if the poor man didn't have enough ill fortune already!) On moving into the house, it is common to bring in first such items as: salt, bread, wine (or whiskey), honey (or sugar), a prayer book, and a *mezzuzah*. Although Jewish laws allow ample time for a *mezzuzah* to be affixed to the doorpost, there are many persons who will not move into a house until a *mezzuzah* is attached. The symbolism of those items need not be recounted at this point.

The use of amulets among Jews is a well documented phenomenon in folkloristic literature. Commonly, among Jewish university students and teenagers, one will find the *mezzuzah*, *Mogen David*, or *Ten Commandments*, worn on a chain around the neck. These gold charms were identified by several respondents as "good luck pieces". One co-ed revealed another function of her gold *Mogen David*, it served

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to identify her as a Jew for purposes of dating behavior. During World War II, many an American "G.I.," wore a *mezzuzah* not as a sign upon his puptent or foxhole but as an amulet to ward off enemy bullets. The prayerbook, issued by the Jewish Welfare Board, was carried in the soldier's tunic, in the left breast pocket directly over the heart. This, not so much for inspirational readings as to fend off bullets. At least one commercial firm provided prayerbooks, for soldiers of all religions, with brass or steel covers. This is American pragmatism in action!

Americans, generally, pride themselves on the advanced technology of the United States; American Jews are not an exception to this value position. However, in this day of antibiotics, vitamins, and modern surgical procedure one still finds a core of folk beliefs relating to bodily care and medicine that, perhaps, pre-date Maimonides. Some practices, such as washing one's hands after touching one's shoes, are on the level of elemental sanitation, or a desire to be a "Holy people". Other beliefs, as the discarding of nail parings, hark to an earlier belief in the wandering of the spirit after death, or, perhaps, to an even earlier belief in sympathetic magic. It is doubtful if anyone still believes in the escape of the soul during a sneeze but the practice of saying: "*Gesunderheit*" or "*tsu gesundt*" is very common. Less Common, however, is the belief that three sneezes should be followed by a pull on the left ear. If one sneezes when the name of a deceased person is mentioned, pull the right ear. And, of course, one sneezes on the truth ("*emmes, genosen dar auf*").

Long before the day of "do-it-yourself" technology, each man could become his own physician. To expell a foreign body from the eye, pull down on the eyelid and spit. If this technique doesn't work, pull down on the eyelid and hop on the left leg. If you slip while hopping and suffer a contusion, don't fear, a cold knife blade, held flat, should be pressed against the point of the swelling. If the excitement induces a nosebleed, simply apply the flat blade of the same knife above the bridge of the nose. By this time, you will probably have a headache. No aspirins handy, try a raw sliced potato applied to the forehead and tied in place with a handkerchief.

There are many beliefs associated with the pre-natal period. Beginning with a girl's first menstruation, there is a body of beliefs commonly expressed by our respondents. At the time of a daughter's first menstruation, some mothers gently slap or pinch at her daughter's cheek and then kiss the child. The most common



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explanation holds that the mother slaps the girl to "keep color in her cheeks". Alternately, we might suggest that the girl has now become a threat to the role of the mother; hence, the slap to indicate a continued subservient position.

The health of the mother-to-be must be protected so that she might suckle her child. Eating squab will promote general good health. She must take care never to look at a deformed person or even at strange animals. Hence, she should avoid going to a zoo, to horror movies, and she should refrain from watching such shows on television. Far better, the pregnant woman ought to go to concerts, art museums, and ballet performances so that her child will be artistic and music loving.

Seemingly, it has always been a struggle to wait the full nine months of pregnancy to discover whether the off-spring would be male or female. Many simple prognostic devices have been developed. If the facial features of the pregnant woman remain unchanged, the child will be male; if her features are "full", female. If the woman carries "high", male; "low", female. If the mother-to-be uses her right hand to arise from a chair, the child will be male; left hand female. When the woman is asked to show her hand, if the hand is presented palm up, female; palm down, male. Statistical tests of "goodness of fit" have been applied by the authors and we have discovered significant differences at the *probability level* of  $P=.5!$

The modern Jewish mother, following the heritage of her honored role, will move heaven and earth for the safety of her children. Besides the well-stocked library on child care; a wall-phone line to the pediatrician's office; the modern Jewish mother may also have a storehouse of folk belief to aid her in raising her little *Kaddish* to manhood. She knows that walnuts will give the child a sore throat; cucumber seeds will stick in the throat; watermelon seeds are deeper penetrating and will cause appendicitis, and, ice on a hot day will induce an upset stomach. During a lightning storm she may place a glass of water on the window sill of the child's bedroom to ward off the lightning.

There are many retentions of beliefs associated with children; a reflection, of course, of the emphasis of Judaic culture on the importance of children. The child's first ride in the baby carriage is an event marked by the deposit of sweets (candy, honey, or sugar) in the buggy, so that the child's life may be sweet. The child must be safeguarded against a variety of ills. Never walk over a child who is

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stretched out on the floor, for this would stunt the child's growth. If you have stepped over the child, retrace your steps. Never cut the child's hair before the child is one year old. If the boy is a *Cohen* and his hair is red, beware of his violent temper. Should the child suffer bad dreams, take a lock of his hair and burn it in his presence, thus dispelling the unpleasant dreams. However, the mother must take care and remove the matches, for if a child plays with matches he will wet his bed.

There are many Jewish parents who adhere to the traditional rite of *Kaporeth* (substitute sacrifice) on the evening before *Yom Kippur*. More often than not, money replaces the white hen or rooster that used to be waved over the head of the child. The chicken plays a part in other food beliefs associated with children. The unlain eggs found in the oviduct of the hen should be fed after cooking to the male child; the chicken heart, to the female. Only rarely now, at the *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony, do we find almonds, candy, and dates thrown at the boy. More often, these fertility symbols decorate the sweet table at the *Kiddush* following the ceremony.

Perhaps as old as fertility symbolism are beliefs concerned with supernaturalistic powers to cause evil. Most anthropologists would agree that belief in the evil eye is one of the oldest and commonest retentions among people everywhere. This field, however, is fraught with differential interpretation by rabbis and sages. We might cite a Biblical injunction: "For there is no *enchantment* with Jacob, neither is there any divination with Israel . . ." (Numbers 23:23). Be that as it may, evidence exists that formal ritual against *ayn hora* is still practiced by young American Jews. The use of the *royte baendel* (red ribbon) as counter-magic to protect an infant is still found among "modern" mothers. Most often, the ribbon is attached to the undergarments of the child, as a hair-ribbon, to the carriage, or to the bassinette. When a child is complimented or when excessive praise is given, it is common for the complimenter to utter: "*Kin ayn nahora (sic) zol em nit schatten*" (An evil eye should not befall him). If the complimenter does not provide the counter-magic, the mother may say: "*Unbeschrien*" (Without invoking any ill-luck). If the complimenter remains suspect, the mother may invoke further phophylaxis by knocking wood or by spitting three times, this latter is most often done surreptitiously.

One should never invoke ill-fortune by talking about possible trouble or tragedy, for then it come to pass ("Don't paint the Devil on the wall, for then he will appear." "Don't open your mouth for

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Satan.") At the time of *Yizkor* (Memorial Services), in many traditional synagogues, those with both parents living leave the worship services. Some few respondents identified this with evil eye, i. e., jealousy of those who have lost their parents; other respondents indicated that one should leave so as not to distract those who are praying from concentration on their prayers. This latter explanation raises the further question: "Why and how is the mourner distracted by the presence of non-mourners?"

There remains a large body of folk-belief associated with death and mourning. Black is the *contemporary* color of mourning; hence a child should never be totally dressed in black. Two people should never dress a child at the same time, for it takes two to dress the dead. One should never count the cars in a funeral procession, for it will bring bad luck. The sight of a black hearse will bring bad luck all day; but, a white hearse is a sign of good luck.

After the death of a member of the household, all the mirrors in the house are turned to the wall or covered. Various explanations are offered: one should not see himself during mourning and thus be shocked at the appearance of grief; one should not distract from the solemnity of the occasion by gazing vainly at one's appearance; and, perhaps most cogently, the spirit of the deceased might be mirrored. On the return from the cemetery, one's hands should be washed of contamination before entering the house. The immediate mourners rend their clothing but this is, more often, done symbolically by a member of the *Chevre Kadisha* or the *shamus*, cutting a slit in the necktie or jacket or vest of the males and the collar of the female's dress. Increasingly more frequent is the reformed practice of affixing a black ribbon to the clothing of the mourner and then rending the ribbon rather than the clothing.

The immediate relatives of the deceased sit on a couch or chair from which the cushions have been removed. Rarely do the mourners still sit on stools, boxes, benches, or the floor. It is a common belief that one should not sit on the floor in your house, for that is a sign that you will soon be seated in mourning. The shoes of the deceased should be destroyed but, more commonly, the clothing of the deceased are given to a charitable organization. After the period of mourning, when visiting the grave, it is common practice to pick up some grass or stones and place it on the headstone. Rarely, the grass is thrown above and beyond the headstone (to dispel evil spirits). This, despite the injunction: "Turn ye not unto the ghosts, nor unto familiar spirits; seek them not out be defiled by them . . ." (Leviticus 19:31).

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### CONCLUSIONS

We have attempted to document the retention of some folk-beliefs among some young Detroit Jews. By its very nature, such a study must be incomplete and fragmentary. We have found great hesitancy on the part of respondents to admit to adherence or even knowledge of folk-beliefs. Yet, we have found considerable retention of specific practices with the greatest degree evidenced in those areas which can be considered *life crises*. Birth, marriage, death and other important events reveal a high incidence of folk-belief evidenced in terms of folk sayings, practices, and other patterned behaviors.

For the most part, it can be said, that mankind is not easily detached from customs and beliefs that have fastened themselves securely upon human beings. This is particularly true when these beliefs are learned at the mother's knee.

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The authors should like to thank Drs. Bernice Kaplan and Arthur Pilling for their critical evaluations of the manuscript. The authors, however, assume full responsibility for this article.

## *The Fort of Ezekiel Solomon*

*by*

*EUGENE T. PETERSEN*

Unfortunately, too little is known of Ezekiel Solomon, the first Jewish trader to appear in Michigan after the British took over the territory from the French in 1761. However, as the result of historical and archaeological research begun in 1959, we are gradually learning some interesting things about the place where Solomon lived and conducted his business — Fort Michilimackinac.

This northern Michigan Fort was a key military bastion and fur trading center for three-quarters of a century. Built by the French in 1715, it guarded the Straits until it was abandoned in 1781 during the American Revolution. The English took over in 1761, and for the next twenty years Michilimackinac witnessed the golden age of Indian fur trading.

Ezekiel Solomon was one of the English fur traders who accompanied the British Army to the Fort. Here he established a fur trading business and a residence that was to last until his death sometime



A mural depicting trading at the Fort and showing a number of objects such as have been found by archaeologists digging at the Fort Mackinac Island State Park.

## THE FORT OF EZEKIEL SOLOMON

after 1805. His name appears frequently in documents relating to the Fort, most notably in 1763, when he was captured during the massacre and later ransomed in Montreal, and in 1784, when the first board of trade in Michigan was established.

Although references to Michilimackinac are frequent in 18th century letters and official reports, until recently we knew little about its life and buildings. Traders' accounts are sketchy and often raise more questions than they solve. Military documents have been helpful, especially when they contain maps, but these, too, are frustratingly incomplete.

During the past three years, in connection with the restoration of the old Fort, intensive research has been done. Libraries have produced long ignored or forgotten diaries, such as Dr. Daniel Morison's journal of events at the Fort from 1768 to 1772 and the 1778 inventory of the possessions of John Askin, a prominent trader and friend of Solomon. But, above all, this research has led to the systematic archaeological examination of the site itself. Buried beneath two feet of drifting sand lies the civilization of two hundred years ago.

When Ezekiel Solomon came to Michilimackinac in 1761, the Fort was already forty-six years old. Archaeologists have located still existing rotted timbers, stone foundations, and storage base-



Fort Michilimackinac. A view of the southeast bastion and land gate with two typical French trader's houses of the Fort in the background. The guide in the foreground, wears the uniform of Roberts' Rangers.

## THE FORT OF EZEKIEL SOLOMON

ments of the first buildings. The French-made structures had vertical posts placed side by side in a ditch and filled with a mud and straw chinking. The British frequently complained that these huts were hard to clean, placed too close together, and dry as tinder. Frequently appearing charred logs testify to the last.

British military buildings and traders' houses were constructed much more substantially. A contract signed in 1769 between the commanding officer and carpenters sent from New York called for a soldiers' barracks measuring eighty by twenty. It is likely that some of the traders may have contracted, also, with these carpenters to put up their own houses. Archaeologists have found complete stone foundations and evidence of large storage basements, massive back-to-back fireplaces, and triangular leaded glass windows. Cedar shingle roofs replaced thatched ones after 1763, and, contrary to popular conception, there was no shortage of nails at this frontier post as literally thousands have been recovered in the course of the excavation.

Through study of thousands of lost or discarded items, we are learning much about the culture of these hardy fur traders who risked so much to make their fortunes. Did they wear buckskin clothing, eat from wooden or pewter plates, and live out of their packs at this outpost in 1772? Some might have, but around one unidentified trader's house archaeologists have found fragments of nicely decorated delft china cups, beautiful and fragile porcelain plates made in the Far East, delicate green glass wine bottles, ornate hinges that once graced impressive chests, and rhinestone shoe buckles. We know that this particular trader entertained the soldiers because regimental buttons from every British unit stationed at the Fort were found in his house. We know, too, that he used an impressive engraved hand seal on his letters.

But the business of the trader was trade. Found by the archaeologists, after having been buried for two hundred years, are glass beads of many colors, some so small they pass through a door screen and others as large as a marble. There are small balls of vermilion, more orange than red, so prized by the Indians for decorating their faces. Very interesting are the small lead disks about the size of a penny that were used to seal packets of merchandise shipped from Europe via Montreal and consigned to some Fort Michilimackinac trader. One such seal, clearly marked "*La Grave, Manufacture des Couvertures de Toulouse,*" testifies to the important trade in blankets.

Interpretation of the culture reflected in the 100,000 catalogued

## THE FORT OF EZEKIEL SOLOMON

artifacts found at the Fort is still incomplete. We do know that in architecture the early French thatched mud and clay huts gave way to impressive squared timber, carefully dovetailed British structures. By the 1770's, at least, the cultural level of some of the traders seems comparable with that of eastern American communities. The brass door knocker found among the ruins of one trader's house is not so surprising when we learn that by 1778 John Askin could report his net worth at Michilimackinac as 20,000 English pounds.

Research is continuing. The Askin inventory, which turned up unexpectedly at the Provincial Archives in Toronto, is being studied and compared with artifacts from the site. It is hoped that more documents of this type will be located to give us a clearer picture of this heretofore dark age of Michigan history. Some day we may even be able to identify with reasonable certainty the homes of John Askin and Ezekiel Solomon.



# *The Historical Development of the Detroit Jewish Community Center<sup>1</sup>*

by MILTON TAMBOR

The development of the Detroit Jewish Community Center and local Jewish social services has been closely related historically. Initially, the Jewish Community Center, was established in 1925 as an outgrowth of the United Jewish Charities. This organization provided clubs at recreational centers and schools in different sections of the city. Shortly afterwards, the Jewish Center Association joined as a charter member of the newly organized Jewish Welfare Federation. Other member agencies included the Fresh Air Society, Jewish Social Service Bureau, North End Clinic, United Hebrew Schools, Hebrew Free Loan Association, United Jewish Campaign and Detroit Service Group.<sup>2</sup>

With the merger of the Jewish Center Association and the Young Women's Hebrew Association in 1933, the Jewish Community Center was born. The immediate objective of the organization was to provide a more comprehensive educational and recreational program. At that time, the building at Woodward and Holbrook was formally dedicated.<sup>3</sup> Some of the early program and activities of the Jewish Community Center as reported in the Center's 1934 annual statistics included thirty-five classes, seventy clubs and forty-nine basketball teams with a total attendance exceeding twenty thousand.<sup>4</sup> Such classes as stenography, bookkeeping, typing, public speaking, play production, charm school, Yiddish, art, club leadership, creative writing and sewing and millinery were offered.



First Jewish Community Center building, on Woodward and Holbrook



Aaron DeRoy Memorial Building — dedicated 1939 on Woodward at Holbrook.

## DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

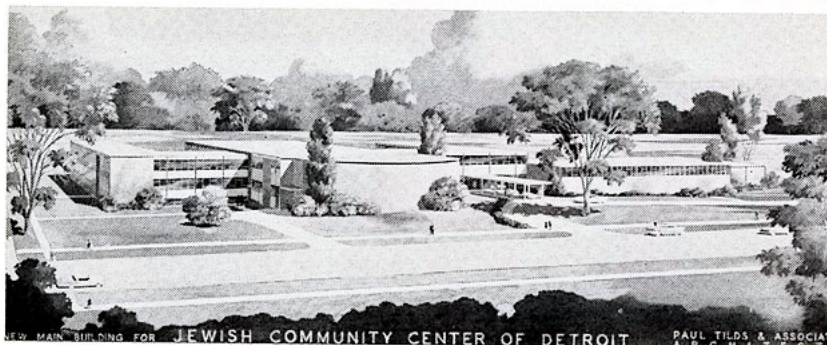
The building at Woodward was subsequently enlarged in 1939 through the addition of a swimming pool, gymnasium and health education unit. With the dedication of the Aaron DeRoy Memorial Building, an expanded adult education program of lectures, concerts and classes in literature, history, Jewish fiction, economics, architecture, interior decoration and child behavior were offered.<sup>5</sup>

A few years later the program at the Jewish center was significantly affected by the start of the Second World War. The Center's facilities were made available for the United Service Organization serving soldiers throughout Michigan, and classes in fire prevention, first aid, consumer problems and nutrition were introduced.<sup>6</sup>

In 1944 the Twelfth Street Council Center at Twelfth Street and Blaine and a special branch office on Dexter Boulevard were opened. The Jewish Parents Institute (an experimental program in Jewish education) a planned recreational program for senior citizens consisting of regularly scheduled friendship clubs for men and women over sixty-five, and a summer program of day camps at the various branches were implemented.<sup>7</sup>

By 1950 the Davison Branch at Holmur was opened. Clubs and adults. In 1952 the D. W. Simons Branch began operation to meet the growing demand for services at the Davison Branch. At this building older adults comprised more than fifty percent of the nine hundred members.<sup>8</sup>

In 1954 and 1955 the Esther Berman Branch of the United Hebrew Schools and offices located on Broadstreet were utilized, while the Twelfth Street Center was closed and the DeRoy Building



NEW MAIN BUILDING FOR JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF DETROIT  
PAUL TILDS & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS  
New Main Building of the Jewish Community Center of Detroit

## DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

leased to the Department of Parks and Recreation. In 1956, with the shift of the Jewish population, the Ten Mile Center serving the Northwest and suburban areas was dedicated with extensive activities for juniors and youth.<sup>9</sup>

In March, 1959, the Main Building at Meyers and Curtis was completed. Facilities for the approximate ten thousand members included a swimming pool, theater, two gymnasiums, library, cafeteria and snack bar, handball and squash courts, and men's and women's health clubs. During this time services at D. W. Simons and Davison Branches were discontinued.

Presently activities for juniors, youth, adults and older adults are being offered at the Center at the Main Building and Ten Mile Branch, under the supervision of professionally trained social group workers and physical education instructors. Friendship clubs, special interest groups and classes, lounge activities, physical education courses, are planned at all age levels.

In general, the program and facilities of the Jewish Community Center have steadily developed and expanded, while the same objectives continue to be held: (a) "to provide for the spiritual, physical and social welfare of its members, (b) to help in every way possible the community of Detroit, (c) to help maintain in the Jewish community a spirit of harmony and union and to foster and develop the highest ideals of American citizenship."<sup>10</sup>

### FOOTNOTES

1 — Information has been excerpted from Chapter II of author's Master's Essay entitled "Historical Survey of Two Policies Within the Detroit Jewish Community Center: Sabbath Programming and Non-Jewish Membership", Wayne State University.

2 — Michigan Jewish Yearbook, 1925.

3 — Center News, Jewish Community Center, March 15, 1947.

4 — Jewish Community Center Annual Statistics, January 1934.

5 — Education Committee Report to Board of Directors of Jewish Community Center, 1939.

6 — Board Minutes, January 1942.

7 — Board Minutes, November 1943.

8 — Summary Report of Davison Branch Activities, April 1950.

9 — Ten Mile Branch Report to Board of Directors, October 1957.

10 — By-laws in Section 2 approved in February 1944.

## **Louis LaMed - Jewish Culture His Hobby**

by JAY ROSENSHINE

Louis LaMed, a resident of Detroit for over forty years and a prominent member of the Detroit Jewish Community, enjoys the unique distinction that his name and benefactions are known to many people far beyond the confines of the city of Detroit. In Chicago and in Tel Aviv, in Buenos-Aires and in Paris, in Melbourne, Australia and in Johannesburg, South Africa — wherever Jews live, one will find people who are familiar with the name of Louis LaMed and who know of his activities.



It would not be proper to characterize Louis LaMed as a philanthropist or as a Maecenes, meaning a patron of literature and art. His benevolent acts on behalf of Jewish culture, which brought him recognition and fame, do not stem only from the motive to perform a charitable deed, or from the urge to give relief to someone in distress. There is nothing casual and extraneous about his social and cultural activities. Rather it is an authentic expression of his personality and a true reflection of his philosophy of life as man and Jew. This philosophy can be formulated "while standing on one foot". It is the primacy of spiritual values, the recognition of the oneness of the Jewish people, the attachment and the loyalty to the whole rather than to its constituent parts and his desire for Jewish creative continuity. With this ideological compass Louis LaMed arrived as a young man to the United States from Russia and this determined the direction of his life's journey.

He received his Jewish and general education first in his native town of Novo-Ushitzka and later in the Odessa Yeshiva, which was a crossbreed of a traditional Yeshiva and a modern college. When Louis LaMed arrived in Detroit in 1921, he could have well been labeled a "Hebraist", which, at that time, meant one who scornfully regarded as sheer arrogance the attempts of the "handmaid" Yiddish to obtain a place of recognition and honor on par with the "mistress" Hebrew. But he soon began to see the realities of American Jewish life and to appreciate the value of Yiddish as an instrument for Jewish literary expression and as a barrier in the struggle against assimilation.

The "combat of languages" in the Jewish literary world between Hebrew and Yiddish which began in the first decade of this century had already subsided by then. Both "armies"—the Hebraists and the

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Yiddishists retreated to their respective camps. They were not on speaking terms with one another and had even ceased quarreling. By the end of the third decade the estrangement has become so pronounced that we find Yiddish writers who had no knowledge of Hebrew and its literature and Hebrew writers who showed no concern for the Yiddish literature. This cleavage was even more conspicuous among the readers of both literatures. But in both camps there were people — few in number — who could not tolerate the cultural “isolationism”, who disapproved of the fragmentation, who yearned to repair the breach in Jewish cultural life and who began to think in terms of a common heritage and a common purpose — and Louis LaMed was one of them.

When circumstances afforded him the opportunity to make some of his financial resources available for altruistic purposes, it was natural for him to direct his attention to the needs in the field of Jewish cultural activities. He talked the matter over with some friends and came up with concrete suggestions which led eventually to the establishment of the Louis LaMed Foundation for the Advancement of Hebrew and Yiddish Literature.

It was the spring of 1940. The Nazi hordes overran some European countries and threatened to conquer the others. The air was tense and the spirits were low. Only a Jew with a deep faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness, with an innate sense of “Bitochon” could think then of spiritual values and constructive cultural projects.

When the eminent writer Sh. Nizer received a letter from Louis LaMed informing him of his intent and purpose, he replied immediately as follows:

“Your letter which I received today delighted me greatly. The news reaching us from all over the world has been gloomy and distressing, and suddenly a ray out of the future appears. The least flare in the darkness drives the gloom away. Particularly when that which you propose to do is no trivial matter. It will enhance our efforts and uplift our spirits. Moreover, it is important right now. We feel so dejected, that we have lost faith even in relief. So we must come out and declare: the world is not coming to an end. In spite of Hitler and the peril of Hitler, we will begin to build for tomorrow”.



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The first book published by the Louis LaMed Foundation, printed in Detroit in 1941, was: "Bilingualism in Our Jewish Literature" by Sh. Niger. It was the occasion of a public celebration in the Detroit Art Institute on April 1st of that year addressed by the author and by Rabbi Morris Adler.

In September, 1941 the first awards were announced. The recipients were: Jacob Glatstein for his Yiddish novel "Wen Yash is Gekumen", Efraim Auerbach for a book of Yiddish poems, Abraham Regelson and Israel Efros for their volumes of Hebrew poems. Glatstein's prize-winning novel has recently been published in English under the title "Homecoming at Twilight".

A month later the winners of the awards were formally honored at an impressive celebration in the city of New York. 700 people filled the auditorium of Hotel Pennsylvania and hundreds were turned away for lack of seats. The estranged brothers of the Hebrew and Yiddish literary fraternities, together with their friends and admirers, met in reunion to pay honor to deserving authors, and to demonstrate that we are one people with one literature, though we may use more than one language. This celebration set the pattern and for close to twenty years in succession the LaMed Awards Assemblies were the annual literary rendezvous of the Jewish intelligentsia of New York. They were sponsored jointly by the Central Yiddish Culture Organization (CYCO) and the Hebrew Federation (Histadrut-Ivrit).

For several years (1946-48) the Louis LaMed Foundation issued awards for works in English having a bearing to Yiddish or Hebrew. An attempt was also made by the Foundation to establish at the Israeli publishing house "Dvir" a department, "From the Best of Yiddish Literature," for the purpose of publishing Hebrew translations of meritorious works in Yiddish.

Two books — I. Bashvis Singer's THE SATAN OF GORAY and J. Glatstein's VEN YASH IS GEKUMEN were translated and published jointly by Dvir and the LaMed Foundation.

A great deal of effort and money were invested in a project to prepare and to publish an extensive History of Hebrew Literature in Yiddish. However, this project did not reach the final stage of realization for reasons beyond the control of the Louis LaMed Foundation.

In 1945 the Foundation published a voluminous book in Hebrew, *Achisefer*. It contains diverse essays about our bilingual literature, original stories in Hebrew and some translations from Yiddish. But the largest part of the volume is devoted to poetry. Thirty-

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two Yiddish poets are represented there in Hebrew translations.

A few years later another important book (1120 pages) was published by the Foundation under the title *Kiddush Hashem*. It contains a collection of reports, letters, chronicles, legends, poems and short stories depicting Jewish martyrdom. The future historian will find in that book a treasure of valuable information.

The total proceeds of these books went to the Central Yiddish Culture Organization (C.Y.C.O.) and the Hebrew Federation (Histadrut Ivrit), who were the distributors of the publications.

Daniel Charney, for many years the secretary to the annual panel of judges, was assigned to catalogue all important current events relating to Hebrew and Yiddish literature. This material was published regularly in the monthly *Zukunft*, and in the *Hadoar*. In addition to the literary material, the two publications received annually a substantial subsidy from the Louis LaMed Foundation.

From 1941 to 1960 the Foundation distributed 90 awards to authors, and its total expenditures for that period reached the sum of \$150,000.

For many years — no doubt — the Talmudic dictum "The needy of your own town come first" kept reminding Louis LaMed of the importance to apply his benevolence to his own community, the city of Detroit. True to himself he answered that inner call in a manner befitting his personality, and again chose the field of culture and education.

At the Tercentenary Celebration held by the Detroit Jewish Community on October 17, 1954, at the Statler Hotel. William E. Stinton, vice-president of Wayne University, announced that a professorship in Jewish Studies was established at Wayne with funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Louis LaMed. The first activity under the new professorship was an eight-week course on "History of the Jews in America" by Dr. Bernard Weisberger. Supplementing this course, two guest lecturers were invited. The well-known novelist Charles Angoff spoke on "The Jewish American Literary Scene", and the distinguished scholar Prof. Horace M. Kallen delivered a lecture on "The Jewish Community and the American Idea".

During the spring semester of that year a course titled "The development of Jewish Cultural Patterns in American Society" was offered at Wayne University under the directorship of Dr. Norman Drachler. He was assisted by the visiting lecturers Dr. Abraham Duker, Charles Angoff and the late Hillel Bavli, Hebrew poet and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary.



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In 1955 the LaMed professorship at Wayne University finally took root by the appointment of Dr. Isaac Rabinowitz as associate professor in charge of courses in the History of the Jews and Jewish Philosophy. This placed the new venture on a basis of equality with other subjects taught at Wayne.

In 1957 Dr. Rabinowitz accepted the newly established professorship in Biblical and Hebrew Studies at Cornell University and Dr. Abram Spiro assumed the leadership of the Semitics program at Wayne University.

In 1958 the University took over the program and established the Department for Near Eastern Languages and Literature which has since been under the direction of Dr. Abram Spiro.

In recent years Louis LaMed began to realize that the changing conditions in Jewish life call for a revision of the objectives and the methods of his Foundation and after some careful deliberation he wrote in a letter to Dr. Judah J. Shapiro, of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, saying: "My original purpose as well as my current interest in Jewish cultural activities will be served best by turning over to the National Foundation for Jewish Culture funds for several grants and prizes. I am confident that the plans and scope of your Foundation will give this program the standing that it merits in the field of Jewish scholarship and Jewish letters, and I hope that through this grant I can make a contribution to encourage work in these fields".

Subsequent to this communication, it was announced in the fall of 1960 that awards will be given for outstanding Masters' theses on a Jewish subject accepted by any accredited University in the United States and Canada. In 1961 and 1962 essays were submitted by students of the following universities: Wayne State, Maryland, Ohio, Columbia, New School for Social Research, Yeshiva, Pennsylvania, Brandeis, California, Washington, Boston, Purdue and Hunter College. Eight students received awards. Prizes were also given to two university students for essays in Hebrew and Yiddish. Some of these LaMed award winners were referred to Jewish publications and Jewish organizations as contributors and speakers. In a recent issue of the *Reconstructionist* an article has been published on "The Jew in the American Drama" by Leonard Fleisher. This is a shortened version of a dissertation for which the author received the M.A. degree and the LaMed award in 1961.

A LaMed citation was presented in 1962 to Leo Mindlin, executive editor of the Jewish Floridian, for his expert reporting and

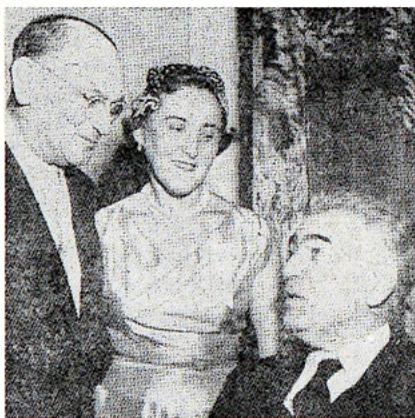
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analytical interpretation of Jewish Culture in the American Jewish Press.

Recently the National Foundation for Jewish Culture was instrumental in organizing the American Jewish Philosophical Society, which has attracted many outstanding Jewish faculty members. Annual meetings of the Society are scheduled for 1963, 1964, and 1965. The expenses to be paid for by an annual grant from the LaMed Fund.

The Detroit Jewish Community, under the leadership of the Jewish Welfare Federation, has been successful in organizing — through the United Hebrew Schools and its affiliates — an effective communal school system. Louis LaMed, among others, has contributed substantially to the development of this unique Detroit Jewish school system which has received national recognition and has served as a model for other communities to follow.

In the Detroit Jewish Community Louis LaMed has for many years voluntarily occupied the distinguished post of "ambassador" of national and local cultural and educational agencies to the Executive Committee of the Jewish Welfare Federation where he has untiringly pleaded the cause of Jewish culture. He is the Chairman of the Midrasha Board of Directors, Chairman of the Educational Division of the J.W.F., a member of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Council, and Vice-President of the Jewish Community Center.



Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, guest speaker of the Tercentenary Celebration congratulates Mr. and Mrs. Louis LaMed.

## *Indian Points to Ponder*

by CHARLES J. MEYERS

The origin of the American Indian has posed a problem for Europeans from the time of the first contacts between Columbus and the Carib Indians. Even the name Indian was incorrect — an incorrect guess as to who these people were. One of the older ideas of the origin of the American Indian was the belief that they were the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. The Mormon Church still holds to the idea that the lost tribes of Israel crossed from North-west Africa to the Amazon River area in South America and then spread across the continent and northward to North America.

Some of the factual evidence used by many scholars to prove their conjecture on the origin of the American Indians and the link between them and the Lost Tribes of Israel is quite interesting. In 1772 an Englishman, James Adair, published a book on his experiences gleaned during a stay of forty-years among the Indians. Adair predicted his belief that this was true on several different points. In 1829 Barbara A. Simon wrote a book on this same subject, "The Hope of Israel" with presumptive evidence that the Aborigines of the Western Hemisphere are descended from the Ten Missing Tribes of Israel. From these two books I have abstracted items that have been cited as evidence that the American Indian is descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. I have tried to select items that can and



Julius Meyer (1851-1909) of Omaha Nebraska, an Indian trader in the 1870's with some of his Indian friends.

## INDIAN POINTS TO PONDER

are attributed to the Indian *prior* to contact or pre-contact with Europeans.

Some of the points that you may well ponder over and that will leave you wondering if you know your Bible are:

Suppose you find some of the tribes making an altar of twelve stones, on which no iron tool may pass, upon which they offer sacrifices?

Suppose that amongst these people you find a desire to return to return to their own land, where the sun rises and from where their ancient ancestors came. This is cherished with a fond faith, together with the repossession of the great good Book, which once belonged to their people.

Time is reckoned by the moon, and observing the first night of the new moon with rejoicing. Celebrating anniversary feasts of a religious nature, one in gratitude for the green corn, and another for the gathering of the ripe corn. Evening feasts in which the bone of the animal may not be broken, if there is more than enough for the family to eat they invite the neighbors, and before dawn the next day burying what was left over.

Suppose these people are of an Asiatic genius and manner, a Hebrew physiognomy?

Suppose they have the custom of washing, anointing and making loud lamentations for their dead?

When in deep distress or affliction, "putting their hand on their mouth, and their mouth in the dust".

An Indian Mother purifies herself after childbirth, thirty days for a male child, forty days for a female child.

Unmarried brother of a deceased husband, marries his brother's widow, six months after the brother's death.

Look at the original twelve tribes, each with a symbol for the tribe. The American Indians and their totem symbols for their tribes (and clans). Both used animals — Snake, Deer, etc.

Eating bitter herbs to cleanse themselves from sin.

Have place of refuge, where a murderer may flee and the avenger may not intrude.

Suppose you find them observing certain appointed festivals

## INDIAN POINTS TO PONDER

and religious dances in which the words HALLELUJAH and YE-HOWA are constantly repeated?

Suppose they designated God as the "Great Spirit", (who is the head of all the tribes) he is called YEHOWA, is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient Creator and sustainer, on whom they are dependent from day to day for life and all things. Who shall punish the unjust, and reward the just after death.

Predicted the "baptism" of the earth by fire.

Suppose they have a tradition, this tradition stating there were prophets who could perform miracles, and foretell the future?

They are familiar with the longevity of the ancients who "lived until their feet were worn out from walking, and their throats worn out from swallowing".

All males must appear at some predetermined place at least once a year.

They are familiar with the deluge, the building of a Tower of Babel.

Suppose they have an ark, an imitation of the Ark of the Covenant, this ark can not be permitted to touch the ground, no one may even presume to touch it, or even look into it, upon pain of death, except for the officiating priest.

So put yourself in the place of the Europeans first making contact with these people on a new-found continent some four hundred years ago. If you had been tendered the opportunity to observe these people in the "pre-contact period", allowed to follow them through their daily routines, been able to go from tribe to tribe, and had observed some of the above "evidence" what then would your reactions have been but to link the Indians with the Lost Tribes of Israel? Who knows.

## Aaron David Markson \*

1885 — 1933

by ALLEN A. WARSEN

Aaron David Markson, who translated Mark Twain's *THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER* into Hebrew, taught in the United Hebrew Schools for almost two decades under the superintendency of Mr. Bernard Isaacs, Hebrew educator and author.

Markson came to the United States from the small Lithuanian town Pilwiski. His father Isaac, a very devout person, was once a well-to-do merchant, but at the time of his son's birth was a mail carrier.



Markson's elementary Hebrew and religious education was begun in the "chadorim" (religious schools) of his native town where he distinguished himself by his keen mind.

At "Bar-Mitzvah", Markson's parents sent him to a "yeshivah" (higher school of Hebrew learning) in Wirblin, a nearby town. There, at first, he devoted most of his time to the study of the "Talmud". Soon, he joined a group of enlightened young people whose guide and mentor was the well known Hebrew poet Samuel Loeb Gordon, also remembered for his Hebrew commentary of the Bible and translations into Hebrew of works by Israel Zangwill, Jean de La Fontaine and William Shakespeare. Gordon, who knew that Markson's knowledge of Hebrew, especially its grammar, was thorough, asked him to put the "nikudoth" (vowel marks) in his Hebrew manuscript of "KING LEAR".

From Wirblin, Markson went to Wilki. (Do not attempt to find these localities on a map of Europe.) There he lived with his nephew, Benjamin Silkiner, who years later left for the United States where he became known as an outstanding Hebrew poet. Silkiner was also the first Hebrew poet who introduced American Indian themes into Hebrew poetry.

Thirsting for more knowledge, Markson decided to continue his studies in Vilna, known as "Jerusalem of Lithuania". There he met Max Gordon with whom he was associated years later in the United Hebrew Schools of Detroit.

During his stay in Vilna, Markson studied both Hebrew and

\* Dedicated to his thirtieth yahrzeit (memorial).

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secular subjects, among others world literature. There, too, he would regularly attend the Sabbath services at the Great Synagogue where Gerson Sirota, who later became world famous, was the cantor. Markson was so impressed with Sirota's chanting of the liturgy that within a short time he became familiar with it and would chant it at every given opportunity. Incidentally, Markson loved music.

Having been away from his parents and friends for so many years, Markson decided to return to his native town Pilwiski where he became the leader of the Zionist youth groups. There he continued his studies of the Russian language and literature as well as Hebrew and world literatures.

In the year 1904, Markson left his native country for the United States. In the new country, he settled first in New York where he taught Hebrew in various schools. The educational standards of the "chadorim" in those days were very low, and to a person of Markson's intellectual caliber discouraging and frustrating.

Consequently, in the year 1912, Markson decided to make a change in residence, and accepted a teaching position in Indianapolis, Indiana where the learned Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Neustadt was the community's spiritual leader. As long as Rabbi Neustadt was alive Markson seemed to be happy in Indiana's capital for he and the Rabbi were close friends, and were both concerned with furthering the cause of Jewish education.

After Rabbi Neustadt's death, Markson decided to move to Chicago where in the year 1914 he married Miss Chana Esther Katz, a native of Pilwiski. In Chicago too, his daughter Hemda was born.

Markson was not happy professionally in Chicago, and since his dear friend Silkiner resided in New York, he decided to move there too.

The educational level of the Hebrew schools in New York had not changed greatly during the time he had been away from that city. His desire for a better Hebrew educational system, however, had not decreased; he wished and hoped for schools with high educational standards. Since such schools were being formed in Detroit, he made up his mind to go to Detroit where he remained the rest of his life.

As a teacher, Markson imbued his students with the inspira-

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tion to not only study diligently, but also to love their studies. Similarly, he was highly esteemed, and enjoyed a great reputation both as a teacher and a scholar by the Jewish community.

Indeed, Aaron Markson is remembered with fondness by his students, colleagues and friends.

In 1933, Markson, after a sudden and brief illness, died at the age of forty-eight.

In 1938, the "Kvutza Ivrit" (Hebrew Speaking Organization) of Detroit published a memorial volume in Hebrew in honor of Markson. The volume edited by Mr. Bernard Isaacs and Daniel Perski consists of three parts. Part one includes introductory remarks by the editors and a biographical sketch of Markson by Mr. Isaacs. This study is based on this unusually well written biography. Part two contains most of Markson's published works and excerpts from the Hebrew version of the PRINCE AND THE PAUPER. Part three contains an evaluation and brief memoirs by friends and students of Markson.

This commemorative volume is a real tribute to A. D. Markson who devoted his life so unselfishly to the promotion of Jewish education.

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### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was organized for the purpose of fostering the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the History of the Jews in Michigan; to encourage all projects, celebrations, and other activities which tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish History; to foster all effort to create a wider interest on the part of Michigan Jews in the growth and development of their respective Jewish communities; and to cooperate with National Jewish Historical Societies. Membership dues in the Society are \$5.00 per year. Michigan Jewish History is sent to each member.



## *Early Jewish Physicians of Michigan\**

by

IRVING I. EDGAR, M.A., M.D., F.A.C.P.

DR. THOEDORE F. HEAVENRICH

Dr. Theodore F. Heavenrich was born on May 31, 1874 in the old Heavenrich family residence, 43 Winder Street, Detroit, Michigan. He was a graduate of the Washington Grade School and of the old Central High School, then located at Griswold and State Streets. He was a confirmant of Temple Beth El Religious School, Class of 1887.



He entered the Detroit College of Medicine in 1897. The Detroit City Directories of that time list him as a medical student living at 43 Winder Street, with an Edgar E. Heavenrich, a Sidney F. Heavenrich and a Simon Heavenrich, the father.

This Simon Heavenrich, the father of our Dr. Theodore F. Heavenrich, had emigrated from Frensdorf, Bavaria with his brother Samuel in 1855. The Heavenrich family soon became important members of the Jewish community in Detroit and of the general metropolitan area. They entered the clothing manufacturing business and are generally considered to be the first operators to introduce power machinery for cutting many thicknesses of cloth at one time.

This same Simon Heavenrich was one of the charter members of Detroit Pisgah Lodge, B'nai B'rith, formed November 24, 1857. He was president of the Lodge in 1863 and again in 1875. He was president of Temple Beth El from 1868-1874.

Our Dr. Theodore F. Heavenrich obtained his M.D. degree from the Detroit College of Medicine on May 10, 1900. During his medical school days, he spent much time assisting Dr. H. O. Walker, a then prominent surgeon and professor of the Detroit College of Medicine, administering to the needs of callers at his offices especially dur-

\* This is the 4th in a series. Dr. Theodore F. Heavenrich and Dr. Louis Barth belong to the Germanic Group. See Edgar, Irving I., "A History of Some Early Jewish Physicians of Michigan"; Michigan Jewish History, I:1, 13-24; II:2, 18-19; III:2, 6-11.

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ing his absences. Dr. Heavenrich was a house physician at Harper Hospital in 1900 and 1901.

In the latter part of 1901, he moved to Port Huron where he remained in practice the rest of his life, over 44 years.

Dr. Theodore Heavenrich married Katherine Ballentine of the prominent and respected Ballentine family of Michigan, one of the founding families of the city of Port Huron.

During his 44 active years as physician and surgeon, Dr. Theodore Heavenrich was very active in county and state medical circles. He was president of the St. Clair County Medical Society until 1911. He was a member of the Northeastern District Medical Society. He was chief of staff of Port Huron Hospital from 1903-1917; 1920-1927; and 1932-1933. He also served as president of the Hospital Board of Trustees for the period 1918-1919. He did much to promote the growth and prominence of this Port Huron Hospital. He died within its walls.

Dr. Heavenrich, furthermore, was very active in the Michigan State Medical Society. He was a member of the Council of this Society in 1928. He was also its vice-president and a member of its Executive Board for 10 years.

He was also medical counsellor for the Seventh Congressional District for 10 years, and Port Huron chairman of the National Rehabilitation Administration (NRA) Compliance Board in 1932. He was the first examining physician appointed for local Draft Board No. 1 of World War II. Polk's Medical Directories of 1912 and 1917 list him as surgeon to the following corporations: Detroit United Railway, Pere Marquette Railroad, Port Huron Gas Company, Michigan Sulphite Fiber Company, Port Huron Paper Company, Port Huron and Duluth Steamship Company, and of the City Electric Railway of Port Huron. He was also medical examiner for the following insurance companies: Mutual Insurance Company of New York, Provident Life and Trust Company, Postal Insurance Company of North America, Insurance Company of Toronto, Pennsylvania Mutual State Insurance Company, Life Insurance Company of Indiana, Hartford Life Insurance Company, Banker's Life Insurance Company of Iowa, Federal Life Insurance Company, and others.

At the time of his death, he was physician and surgeon to the Detroit Edison Company and to the Port Huron Sulphite and Paper Company. He apparently had been ill for several years. On the day

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of his death, he had suffered a heart attack, while driving to the home of a patient. Rushed to the Port Huron Hospital, he died 10 minutes later at the age of 70.

The St. Clair Medical Society drew up a special official formal resolution of regret, condolence and lament. The Port Huron Elks organization, in which he was very active, engraved a plaque to his memory.

He died May 5, 1944.

### LOUIS BARTH, M.D.

Dr. Louis Barth was a physician and surgeon of considerable prominence during his many years of practice in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was born in Krotochin, Prussia, on November 21, 1859. At age 10, the records indicate, he was able to enter the "gymnasium" (similar to our High School) of his native town. Although but 19 years old, he passed the "maturity examination" in 1878 and in the same year, entered the Medical School of the University of Breslau, where he remained two semesters, a full year. He then spent six months at the Medical School in Vienna, following which he passed a theoretical examination at Berlin under Professor Rudolph Virchow on November 7, 1880. He next obtained much hospital experience studying with Liebrach, Langenbeck, French, and Schroeder in Berlin for about a year. After further study at Wurzburg, Bavaria, he was granted the degree of Doctor of Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics on December 21, 1881 by the Konigliche Julius Maximilian Universitat (University of Wurzburg).



In January, 1882, he left for London, England, where he continued his studies for awhile. In September, 1882, he arrived in the United States and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he remained the rest of his life.

In Grand Rapids, Dr. Barth's medical and surgical skill soon attracted attention and before long he reached the front ranks of the much-longer established medical men of the city. In the words of the author of *The City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, 1900)\*\* , "He devotes

\*\* *The City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, A. W. Bowen and Company, Chicago 1900 — pp, 289-290.

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more hours to practice than any other physician within the boundaries of Grand Rapids and it is not an exaggeration to say that his patronage is enormous, as a visit to his office will show . . . At the time his opinion is sought for in *consultation from all parts of the State.*" This same writer goes on to state: "In connection with his consultation room, Dr. Barth has a dispensary in which his prescriptions are prepared under his personal supervision, and he also personally selects all drugs before they are assigned a place in the dispensary, which is under the charge of a competent pharmacist. His private office is supplied with all modern appliances for the diagnosis of diseases, including the first x-ray machine in the city, and his library is replete with medical and scientific volumes numbering over 3000. The doctor is a generous-hearted man and often devotes his attention to the cases of the poor patients for the sake of science as well as of humanity. At the meridian of life, he has realized a competency, and this despite the fact that he has been obliged to acquaint himself with the customs and language of a new world within the space of 18 years, and in despite, also, of all rivalry and traduction, has secured for himself a professional and social standing in the city of Grand Rapids second to that of no man".

Dr. Barth married Miss Hona Barth, an adopted daughter of his brother, and a native of Budapest, Hungary, in 1892, in Grand Rapids. It was an "exceedingly" happy marriage.

Dr. Barth was a charter member of the National Association of Railway Surgeons. He was the onyl physician of an infirmary then known as the "House of the Aged Poor", conducted under the auspices of the "Little Sisters of the Poor". He was also consulting physician at the Orphans' Asylum, and for the Sisters of the parochial schools, as well as for the Masonic Home.

He was eminent as a Mason, having attained the thirty-second degree. He was also a charter member of Daisy Lodge, No. 48, B.P.O.E. Elks). He was a member of Temple Emanu-El of Grand Rapids, then located at the southeast corner of Fountain and Temple Streets.

It is interesting to note that the officers of Temple Emanu-El at the time were: President, Julius Houseman, and Treasurer, Jacob Barth, brother of our Dr. Louis Barth, and a manufacturer of shirts.

Dr. Barth was a Fellow of the American Medical Association. He died June 7, 1933, at the age of 74, at Blodgett Memorial Hospital, Grand Rapids.

## EARLY JEWISH PHYSICIANS OF MICHIGAN

He was written up as a prominent citizen of Grand Rapids in the *History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries* by Dwight Goss, and published by C. T. Cooper and Company, Chicago, 1906. He also appeared in the various editions of *The City of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan*, by Ernest Fisher, published by A. W. Bowen & Company, as well as in the *History of the City of Grand Rapids* by Baxter\*

In addition, a biography of him appears in the *Jewish Advocate* of the period in which he is listed as a Surgeon-Major in the U.S. Army in 1912.

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\* See History of The City of Grand Rapids by Baxter, p. 300.

## *A Jewish Michigan State Senator, Charles S. Blondy*

by EMANUEL APPLEBAUM

The Honorable Charles S. Blondy of Detroit, is State Senator from the Fourth District. He was born on January 29, 1905, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

His parents Hyman and Goldie Blondy had five children, Samuel — now a dentist in Detroit, Allen H. — an attorney in Detroit, Florence — married to Sam Gaylord, Lee — married to Ben Jacoby, and Charles S. — State Senator.

Charles was about nine years of age when the family arrived in Detroit from Philadelphia, Pa. in 1941.



The family lived on Division Street near Hastings Street is now the area of the Walter P. Chrysler Expressway. He attended the Bishop Public School. Afternoons he played at the Hannah Schloss Memorial Building on High Street which was the center of Jewish activities of the Jewish Community.

The family later moved to Theodore Street near Beaubien Street and he then attended a Cheder (Hebrew School), which met in the basement of the Farnsworth Synagogue which was directly behind his home. Later they moved once again to live above their father's tailor shop on Michigan Avenue near 29th Street in Detroit. At the El Moshe Synagogue at 29th and Michigan Avenue, he joined the Young Judeans. Mr. Philip Slomovitz was the group's Young Judean leader and the supervisor of the entire area. Philip Slomovitz had first organized Young Judea in Detroit which then had 1500 children as members. As a youngster Charles S. Blondy sold newspapers in the downtown area. In latter years he was a member of the original Old Detroit Newsboys Association which met at Wheelman's Hall on Adams Avenue in back of the Y.M.C.A. Building.

In 1936 Charles S. Blondy married his wife Frances, the daughter of Julius and Bertha Goldberg of Detroit. Julius Goldberg is now Vice-President of Beth Tefilo-Emanuel Synagogue. This Rabbi of this Congregation is the scholarly dean of Michigan's Orthodox Rabbinate, Rabbi Eliezer Levin. An interesting point of pride with Senator Blondy is the geneological fact that his uncle — now deceased, Rabbi Berel Grodsky was appointed by the City

## A JEWISH MICHIGAN STATE SENATOR

of St. Louis, Mo. as the official City Chaplain — Rabbi.

Senator Blondy was elected to the State Senate in 1940 and to each succeeding session of the Michigan Legislature. He served as the Senate Democratic Floor Leader in 1953 and 1954. He fought for and won increased old age assistance benefits and increases in workmen's and unemployment compensation benefits.

Michigan's population in the 1960 census numbered 7,823,194 persons. In a State with a population of this size and with the tremendous industrial capacity and the manufacturing of so much heavy industry, with great highways, airfields and ports, he serves on the committees of Appropriations, Highways, and Taxation.

There is only one other known Jewish State Senator in Michigan; he is Senator Harry Litowich, a Republican. Senator Litowich is from Benton Harbor, Michigan, where he has lived for 50 years. He was born in Chicago Illinois. Harry Litowich is married and has two daughters, Marjorie and Joan. He is President of Association of Michigan Nurseries, a member of Temple Beth El of Benton Harbor, and he belongs to B'nai B'rith. Senator Litowich has served in the Michigan State Senate from 1958 to the present.

Senator Blondy has an outstanding and consistent record of public service. Some of his recent accomplishments are:

Author of Michigan's Law giving compensation to dependents of officers killed in active duty. Sponsored a bill to relieve persons receiving old age assistance from paying Sales Taxes. Fought for legislation to provide education for children of migrant workers. Co-sponsored legislation to permit Employment Security Benefits to continue while worker attends school for vocational retraining. Author of a bill to provide Compensation to persons injured by uninsured drivers.

Senator Blondy is a member of the Interstate Cooperation, Highways, and State Office Building Committees. In 1953 Governor G. Mennen Williams appointed Senator Blondy to serve on the Michigan Committee to bring the United States Air Force Academy to Michigan. In 1956, he was awarded the Certificate for Meritorious Service by the Fraternal Order of Police. In 1957, Senator Blondy was appointed by the Governor to attend the Golden Anniversary of the National Tax Conference in Columbus Ohio. In 1958, he received the Michigan Agricultural Award in recognition of distinguished services.

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In 1959, Senator Blondy was appointed by the State Senate to deliver a Resolution welcoming the new State of Hawaii. Senator Blondy addressed the Hawaiian Legislature and presented Governor Quinn of Hawaii with a Proclamation of Welcome from the Honorable G. Mennen Williams, then the Governor of Michigan.

On April 1, 1962 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that: A resolution calling on the United States Department of State to "firmly" oppose Arab interference with the rights of American citizens and firms to travel to, reside in or trade with areas controlled by Arab League states was introduced in the Michigan State Senate at Lansing this weekend by State Senator Charles S. Blondy.

The resolution also called on the State Department to "redress these circumstances and conditions, and to prevent them in the future". In the preambular clauses of the resolution, Senator Blondy specifically objected to the anti-Israel boycott as applied to American citizens and shipping, and to the banning of Jews from the United States operated Dharhan airbase in Saudi Arabia.

Senator Blond is an Administrative Board Member of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Detroit.

He was instrumental in the introduction of certain bills and resolutions that have specific Jewish reference, such as:

The Jewish Tercentenary Resolution, acclaiming the 300th anniversary of the settlement of Jews in the United States.

The humane slaughter amendments, protecting the right of Jews to retain ritual slaughtering of meat. This bill offered as an amendment to bill No. 1015 in the Michigan State Senate providing for humane slaughter.

Senator Blondy's two amendments were passed after debate on the Senate floor March 14, 1961. One provides that previous specific references to "the Jewish faith" in the original bill be deleted. The second amendment reads: "Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit, abridge or in any way hinder the religious freedom of any person or group. Notwithstanding any other provision of this act, ritual slaughter and the handling or other preparation of livestock for ritual slaughter are exempted from the terms of this act."

He introduced a bill to permit absentee voting by Jews when the balloting occurs on Jewish Holidays.



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He introduced a bill declaring that the authorities in Michigan institutions are to notify the Hebrew Benevolent Society when a deceased person is determined to be of the Jewish Faith.

Senator Blondy was again elected Minority Leader in 1963.

He is a member of Detroit Louis D. Brandeis Lodge No. 1583 and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hebrew Benevolent Society.

There are only two Jews whose names are on a plaque at the State owned Stevens T. Mason Building in Lansing, which was dedicated on November 10, 1953, they are Benjamin Levinson, a public spirited citizen and Senator Charles S. Blondy.

An interesting fact is that in 1953 and 1954 the two brothers, Allen H. Blondy and Charles S. Blondy were elected and served together in the Michigan State Senate. Two brothers in the Senate was a "First" in Michigan History.

## Biographical Notes on Contributors

CHARLES J. MEYERS, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. — Member of the Civil War Centennial Commission, Teacher Sunday School at Temple Israel, Detroit; Chairman of the Committee on the Michigan Indians in the Civil War.

JAY ROSENSHINE — A member of the Education Division of the Jewish Welfare Federation, the Board of Directors of the United Hebrew Schools and the Board of Directors of the Midrasha—College of Jewish Studies of Detroit.

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EUGENE T. PETERSEN — Director of Historic Projects for the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, has been in charge of the restoration of Forts Mackinac and Michilimackinac since the outset of the program in 1958.

ALLEN A. WARSEN, B.A., M.S.W. — Teacher at Cody High School and is Educational Director of the Adas Shalom Religious School. He is the author of Jewish Communal Institutions of Detroit.

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DR. IRVING I. EDGAR, B.A., M.D., F.A.C.P. — Practicing psychiatrist in Detroit. His hobby is the history of Jewish medicine. He has done extensive research on the earliest Jewish physicians in Michigan.

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