

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

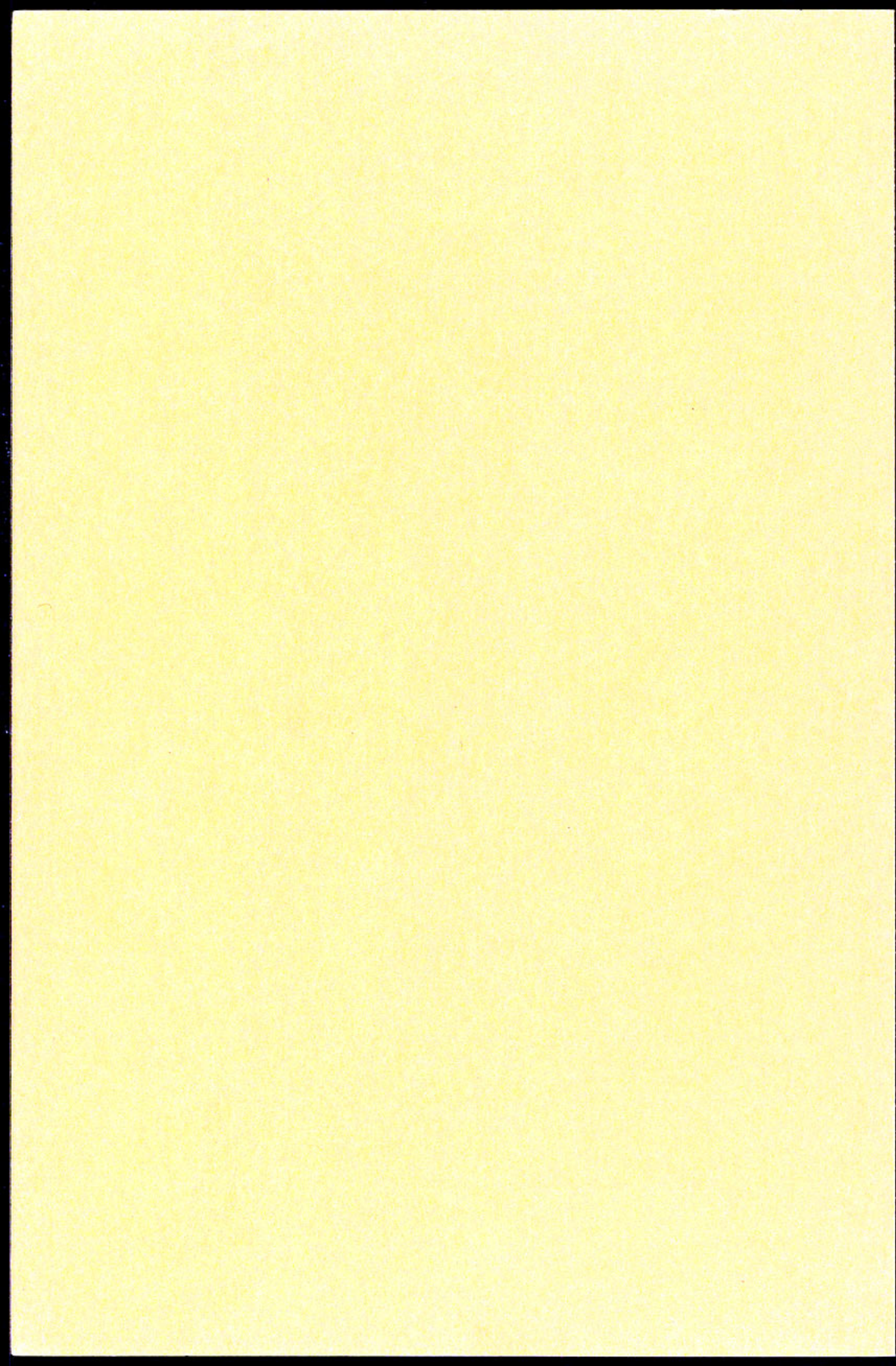


JANUARY, 1973

TEVES-SHEVAT, 5733

*Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*





# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."

—Joshua 4:21

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## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Members of the Michigan Historical Society are respectfully requested to send to the editor their changes of address including the full zip code in order to facilitate the prompt delivery of the publication.



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

# In Memoriam



JACK MALAMUD  
1903 — 1972

Jack Malamud, who died on July 29, 1972 at the age of 69, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

He took active part in many Jewish organizations and institutions, serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit, and of the Board of Directors of the Midrasha College of Jewish Studies.

As a lifelong follower and supporter of the Labor Zionist Movement, Jack Malamud actively participated in the Histadruth Campaign and other Zionist undertakings. His wholehearted devotion to the State of Israel and to the Welfare of the Jewish people was a deep personal involvement. For many years he was actually commuting between the United States and Israel, and, knowing Hebrew well, he felt as an Israeli when in Israel just as he felt as an American Jew in Detroit.

But more than for what he did, Jack Malamud was admired and will be remembered by all who knew him for his integrity, his humility and his love of his fellow men and fellow Jews. He was a depository of the centuries-old high Jewish values which found expression in his humble everyday life. His genuine interest in the welfare of others and his everready desire to help people in their hours of need, led him to devote time and energies to an institution like the Hebrew Free Loan Association, serving as a member of its Board of Directors.

We mourn the loss of a good man and a good Jew.

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### RESOLUTION

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan wholeheartedly endorses the Bi-Centennial Resolution of the Michigan Historical Commission of December 19, 1971.

In addition, the Jewish Historical Society resolves that a portion of the proposed History Building and Museum be reserved and dedicated to the preservation of the historic documents and artifacts of the State's ethnic groups.

The Resolution was passed at the Jewish Historical Society's annual membership meeting held on June 28, 1972.



### BI-CENTENNIAL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Bi-Centennial of our Nation's birth will be celebrated in 1976, and

WHEREAS, The State of Michigan has for some time been planning for the construction of a State History Building which would more adequately provide proper facilities for the preservation, use, display and publication of the records and artifacts illustrative of the rich historical heritage of the State, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the Michigan Historical Commission that the Governor, the Legislature, and the people of the State of Michigan be encouraged to celebrate the Bi-Centennial of the United States by building a State Museum and History Building, thus leaving an appropriate and lasting memorial of this significant event in the history of our State and Nation.

Passed unanimously by the Michigan Historical  
Commission, December 10, 1971



## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

# THE BURTON HISTORICAL COLLECTION AND ITS JEWISH ARCHIVES

By Bernice C. Sprenger

Chief of the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library

Mr. Clarence Monroe Burton, founder of the Burton Abstract and Title Company was a student at the University of Michigan, and his interest in collecting historical material grew out of a lecture he heard in which the speaker advised each man to develop a hobby. He exhibited a leaf of a 1780 account book as an example of valuable material which might be collected. Mr. Burton began to collect historical material shortly after his graduation from the University in 1874, trying to buy at least a book a week at first and then a book a day. His association with a local law firm where he was assigned to the searching of titles of land developed new interests. He soon decided to limit his collecting to the history of the United States with emphasis on the old Northwest territory, nearby Canada, the Great Lakes, and Detroit.

Mr. Burton collected not only books, pamphlets, maps, pictures, newspapers, church records, documents, personal papers and business records, but also ephemeral literature such as broadsides, playbills, campaign cards and the like. In the field of manuscripts he devoted particular attention to the acquisition of personal papers of early citizens of Detroit, in the French, English and American periods, and early official records. Where the material was not available for purchase, he had transcripts made of items in the archives in Paris, in notarial records in Montreal and in the parish registers of St. Anne's Church in Detroit. At the end of 40 years his library had grown to about 30,000 volumes, 40,000 pamphlets, and thousands of pieces of manuscripts. It was a well known private library.

In January, 1914 Mr. Burton offered his library to the city, and on March 16, 1914 the formal deed of conveyance was signed. In accepting it, the city agreed to provide suitable fire proof rooms, take proper care of it, make the necessary indexes and to add regularly and systematically to the library. When the new Main Library was opened to the public in 1921, the library was moved from its quarters in the old Burton home on Brainerd Street to the 3rd floor. Later the Brainerd Street residence and property were returned to Mr. Burton who created an endowment fund of \$50,000. Part of the interest was to be used for acquiring additional material and part was to be used to increase the principle of the endowment. By this time the endowment is \$150,000 and all of this interest is available for purchasing books, manuscripts, pictures, etc.

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Among others, the Burton Collection is concerned with ethnic and religious groups — their background, leaders, achievements, and, of course, any records that are extant. We have received some of the First Protestant Society records, the Fort Presbyterian Church records; St. Paul's Episcopal Church files, and Catholic church records.

All of this leads up to some of the catalogued items we have about the Jews in Michigan. In common with the other religious denominations, there is an account of the 15th anniversary of Adas Shalom Synagogue, 1945-60; a 2 volume history of Congregation Beth El, 1850-1910; and two other works by Irving I. Katz about this same group. Mr. Katz also wrote about "Chapman Abraham: An Early Jewish Settler in Detroit"; "Ezekiel Solomon — The First Jew in Michigan"; and *The Jewish Soldier from Michigan in the Civil War*. We have a typescript of his, "Jewish Congregations in Detroit," and have also Allen Warsen's *Jewish Communal Institutions in Detroit and Autobiographical Episodes*. Both gentlemen have also given us manuscript material as have also Mr. Benjamin Laikin and Mr. Fritz Flesch. Awhile back David E. Heineman told about "The startling experience of a Jewish trader during Pontiac's siege of Detroit in 1763, and wrote about "Jewish Beginnings in Michigan before 1850. *The Michigan Historical Magazine* carried an article by Rabbi Leo M. Franklin on "Jews in Michigan." A Wayne University student learned Yiddish and read the Yiddish newspaper *Forward* which is on film in our collection. He wrote a thesis, *The Detroit Yiddish Theatre, 1920-37*.

To bring us to the near past, Leonard Milstone wrote an 8 page article, "Jewish Merchants in Detroit's Prime Riot Affected Areas" in the 1967 disturbances. *The Center News*, organ of the Detroit Journalism Club of the Jewish Community Center is represented by a few volumes covering the years 1940-48.

In a file which we call E & M (Exerpts & Miscellanea) there is some general material about the Jews in Michigan; the Jewish Community Council, Synagog-Shaarey Zedek and the Labor Zionist Organization Council.

The Detroit chapter of Hadassah's publication, *Headlines*, forms a small group in our department. The *Jewish News* is on microfilm and the *Forward* is bound. We have only one annual report of the Detroit Jewish Institute, formerly known as United Jewish Charities for the years 1910-11.

There are some records and papers on file for the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan from its inception in 1959 to 1963, including a Proclamation in June, 1967 by Gov. Milliken for Jewish History Month. The Jewish Religious Schools of Metropolitan Detroit Director's Council



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have deposited a wallet of papers which cover the period 1954-63. The Michigan Branch of the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America has one folder on file. Congregation Beth-El Archives are quite voluminous and include Annual reports 1874-1966, account books, cash books, voucher book, ledgers, executive board minutes, scrapbook, Sisterhood — minutes 1901-1956 (and constitution, yearbooks, certificates); some printed material such as *Temple Bulletin*, *Bethel Annual* and others.

The Jewish Welfare Federation records are stored in 105 boxes. They include:

1. Office files and correspondence for 1932-59 in 87 boxes.
2. Michigan Labor Committee for Human Rights, 1947-52, 3 boxes
3. Michigan Commission on Civil Rights 1949-55, 7 boxes.

A volunteer, Mrs. Ned Chalot, has been working on this material and has done a splendid job, but the going is slow because she is also a tour guide for the Friends of the Detroit Public Library.

Many of the records have been already processed. By that we mean that records are transferred to new acid free folders, which are labeled, paper clips and pins removed; chronological and subject arrangements of originals maintained, storage boxes labeled, filled and put on shelves. When one particular group of manuscripts is finished a finding list is made which is another way of saying that the contents are listed, years covered and subjects noted, and number of boxes containing the whole lot is indicated.

In addition to this there are 18 reels of microfilm of the Jewish Welfare Federation which contain:

- 1) Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Federation, 1928-61.
- 2) Records of the United Jewish Charities, 1899-1963.
- 3) Detroit Service Group, Board of Directors Minutes, 1930-59.
- 4) Minutes of the Board of Governors of the United Jewish Community, 1931-65.
- 5) There are summaries giving a History of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit, 1899-1949; Story of Jewish Welfare Federation, 1926-49; General Summary of the Survey of Detroit Jewish Community, 1923.

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MORRIS GARVETT — A GREAT  
COMMUNITY LEADER

1893 — 1971

Edited by Allen A. Warsen

"Men rise to community leadership from a variety of directions. Some begin with Social Service, others with fraternal organizations, still others with civic or political activities.

"Morris Garvett began his career of communal leadership as an humble servant of the Synagogue. To the vindication of the Synagogue as the central institution in Jewish life, he devoted his orderly mind, his talent for organization and his gift of leadership . . .

"Morris Garvett was born November 22, 1893, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of Elihu and Dora Mazer Garvett. He came to Detroit at the age of thirteen. He attended Central High School, then studied Law at the Detroit College of Law following which he was admitted to the bar. Adolph Sloman, of blessed memory, one of Detroit's most eminent lawyers, and his son Edmund M. Sloman, invited the brilliant young attorney to enter their office. After his apprenticeship with that renowned firm, he entered the office of William Friedman, then a Judge of the Wayne County Circuit Court. There followed a period of private practice and then he became a member of the firm famed for its communal leadership as well as its distinguished law practice, — Levin, Levin, Garvett & Dill.

"In 1919 he married Gladys Warren and this marriage was blessed with one son, Charles M. Garvett. He was then President of Pigsaw Lodge, B'nai B'rith . . . Mr. Adolph Finsterwald, of blessed memory, was the Vice-President and Rabbi Samuel Mayerberg, then of Temple Beth El and now Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jehuda of Kansas City, Missouri, was among the officers.

"His preparation for congregational leadership began with his activities at Temple Beth El, at that time the only Reform Congregation in Detroit. He manifested keen interest in all the educational, social and recreational functions of the modern synagogue. An unusually gifted amateur in dramatic art, he was chosen to be President of the



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Temple Arts Society, an organization which functioned like a little theatre, producing programs of one-act plays at regular intervals. He took pleasure in acting as well as directing the business of the organization.

"Virtually every office in the Congregation sought Morris Garvett as its man. He was elected President of the Men's Club. He served as Chairman of the Cemetery Board. He was appointed chairman of the Religious School Board. After serving as Vice-President for five years, in 1936 he was elected President of Congregation Beth El. His presidency was one of the most fruitful in the history of that congregation.

"It was under his leadership that the new Memorial Park of Congregation Beth El was purchased, the finances of the Congregation reorganized and the position of Executive Secretary established. Recognizing the essential role of Jewish education in the future of American Jewry, he gave the best of his talents to the improvement and enhancement of the Religious School.

"He was especially interested in the program of Adult Education in Judaism which the writer had established upon his coming to Detroit. Because of his sympathy with this project of adult education, Beth El College of Jewish Studies expanded under Mr. Garvett's presidency until it became the largest and the most famous institution of its kind in the United States and in Canada. Under the impetus of the success of the program of Adult Education in Detroit, similar programs were established in the Temples of many cities throughout the land."\*

Mr. Garvett, too, was instrumental in founding Temple Israel, and was its first President.

Mr. Garvett, according to the JEWISH NEWS, "practiced law uninterruptedly . . . for 56 years". The article continues:

"An authority on corporate and constitutional law, he was a life member of the Sixth Judicial Conference United States Courts. He was a member of the American, Michigan and Detroit Bar Associations, Lawyer's Club of the University of Michigan, American Judicature Society, Detroit Bar Association Committee on Estate and Trust Law

\*Excerpted from a "Personality Sketch" by Rabbi Leon Fram.

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and Michigan State Bar Committee on Probation and Parole . . .

"He took a deep interest in the Jewish Historical Society.\*\*

"He was a member of the committee on community organization of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and in 1958 he received the CJWF Edward Rosenberg Award 'for outstanding leadership in communal service'.

"He loved music and the arts and he was an accomplished pianist.

"An avid reader, Mr. Garvett especially loved biographical writing. He was thoroughly versed in American history and was an authority on the lives of U. S. Presidents and Supreme Court Justices. He was especially authoritative on the Civil War period.\*\*

\*\*See Michigan Jewish History of January, 1971.

Mr. Philip Slomovitz, publisher and editor of the JEWISH NEWS, in an annotation for MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY wrote:

"If I were to seek confirmation for my claim that the great Detroit Jewish personality was *a man of faith*, I'd offer the text of an article he wrote, I believe for the Temple Beth El Bulletin, some 35 years ago. Under the title WHAT MY JUDAISM MEANS TO ME, he then wrote:

"The way of life called "Judaism" is rich beyond measure and is variously interpreted by its adherents. While all Jews recognize the existence of certain basic principles which they share in common, yet their individuality is such that everyone is at liberty to make his own interpretations, so that the question, "What does my Judaism mean to me?" is not inappropriate.

"To me the great merit of Judaism is the self-disciplined freedom it makes possible to its followers. Freedom of thought coupled with freedom of action may readily lead to mere license. Self-discipline, however, and divinely inspired precepts provide the brake which stops us short of irresponsibility and leads to a life enriched by spiritual satisfactions.

'No organized hierarchy imposes its mandates upon the Jew



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but his literature spreads before him the teachings of a veritable galaxy of prophets and God-inspired spirits. These teachings I accept, not only intellectually but emotionally. How do they affect the daily round of my living?

'When the hazards and apprehensions of my existence must be met, I remember the injunction of the prophet to cast out fear; when the whirl of life tosses me into adversary relationships with other people, I become conscious of the admonitions to do justice, to love mercy and to stretch out our hands and hearts to the unfortunate. Man is a turbulent creature, but I am reminded that he who rules his own spirit is greater than he who captures a city. Now and again a worthy task seems to be beyond my power to complete, but the precept confronts me that I am, nevertheless, not free to desist from it altogether.

'There are times when I am oppressed by discouragement, doubt and uncertainties. It is then that I take refuge in the knowledge that my help comes from God, Who made heaven and earth; that obedience to His laws is the beginning of wisdom; that His forgiveness may be mine, if I but truly repent of my mis-doings; and that if I raise my eyes unto the hills my acting spirit will be healed.

'The universality of Judaism, embracing the brotherhood of man, touches me deeply. The mandate "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is not narrowly constructed to exclude our non-Jewish neighbors — I am taught that the righteous, even among the heathen, shall share in the world to come. Judaism places no boundaries on the range of my thinking. It fears nothing from the discoveries of science. Centuries before Evolution became a controversial concept, we offered our prayers to the Ruler of the universe Who daily renews the work of creation.

'Such a guide for living, and freedom restrained by responsibility for a man to live his own life, subject only to those principles of justice and right-doing which have been hammered out on the anvil of Time; and faith in the goodness and wisdom of God — "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" — this, briefly, is what Judaism means to me.' "

This  
**Award of Merit**

is presented to

**Allen A. Warsen**

by the

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN**

for service to the society as

**FOUNDER OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN  
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## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

# THE EARLY SITES AND BEGINNINGS OF CONGREGATION BETH EL\*

By Irving I. Edgar, M.D.

### III

#### THE MICHIGAN GRAND AVENUE SYNAGOGUE, 1859-1861

For seven years, Congregation Beth El held its services at 220 Jefferson Avenue above the Store of Silberman and Hirsch, tobacco-nists. During this period, the Jewish population of Detroit increased from sixty Jews in 1850 to one hundred thirteen in 1853-54; and to proportionately greater numbers in the few following years. With this increase in the general Jewish population, there followed an increase in the membership of the Congregation from twelve in 1850 to forty in 1860. But almost from the beginning, there was dissatisfaction with this first synagogue. Some considered it too high up, for, as mentioned previously, it may have been on either the second or third floors above the store, with large windows facing Jefferson Avenue. It is interesting to note that Rabbi Leeser of Philadelphia comments on this factor following a visit to this Synagogue. He writes the following: (*The Occident*, September, 1857. vol. 15, p. 306.)

As our readers know, Detroit is one of the towns which evidently must attract to it a large commerce from its very favorable position. The Israelites already are numerous there, and appear to be doing well. We could only spend one day, the 14th of July, among them owing to the fact that our engagements at home compelled us to be absent only about four weeks on a very long journey. We were kindly received by Rev. Lipman Adler, who officiates as Hazan, Schochet, Teacher and Mohel, having thus ample engagements to fill up all his time. We visited the Synagogue with him; it is situated on a favorable position, *only a little too high for comfort, though when you are once in it, you will find everything well and properly arranged.* They speak of making an effort soon to erect a suitable Synagogue and we believe that many donations from Christian residents would be obtained for that purpose. . . . . We also learned that some reforms have

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\*This is the third of a series of articles on the subject. The first, "The Cozens' Home", appeared in *Michigan Jewish History*, June 1970, vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 17-23. The second, "The First Synagogue of Congregation Beth El: The Room Above the Store of Silberman and Hirsch", 1852-1859, appeared in the same magazine, November 1970, pp. 5-11. Much of the materials in this paper were made available to me through the courtesy of Irving I. Katz, Executive Director of Congregation Beth El.

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been introduced into the worship, such as reading the Haphtorah in a German translation, and having some prayers in the same language in place of the *Yekim Purkan*, but we also perceived that the whole people were not satisfied with what had been done, and nearly all would resist any radical and further change. We trust that for the sake of the public peace no more alterations will be attempted.

. . . We promised to be present when the new Synagogue is dedicated; and we shall, with pleasure, keep our word whenever we are called on which we trust will be before many years."

Rabbi Issac Wise several years later in his "An Account of the dedication of the Washington Ave. Boulevard Temple." (*The Israelite*, vol. 14, p. 6, September 6, 1867), writes of the first Synagogue as "in the upper *loft* of Mr. Silberman's Store" and of the second Synagogue as "opposite the market-house two stories high" (from the *Beth El Story*, Appendix XI) which refers to the then 39 Michigan Grand Avenue in the hall above Scherer's Drug Store which we are to consider here as the actual second Synagogue of Congregation Beth El.

It is also evident, especially from the remarks of Rabbi Leeser, that there was much controversy about the reforms that were being instituted in the Services along the lines of Reform Judaism then gaining a foothold in America. There must have been much wrangling and dissatisfaction over this issue among the members worshipping in this "upper loft" above the Silberman and Hirsch Store; and Rabbi Leeser warned "that the people were not satisfied with what had been done and (that) nearly all would resent any radical and farther change." He expressed the hope "that for the sake of the public peace no more alterations will be attempted." (See *The Occident* of September 1857, vol. 15, p. 306). As events turned out, further reforms were instituted in the new place of worship on Michigan Grand Avenue and it was here that the split took place in the membership; so that when the Rivard Street Synagogue came into being in 1861 at least seventeen<sup>1</sup> of the members formed a new congregation and remained at the Michigan Grand Avenue site. This was the first site of Shaarey Zedek Synagogue of Detroit.

Rabbi Leo Franklin (see *Congregation Beth El 1850-1900*, p. 27.) writing of some of these reforms states:



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But this new feature (a mixed choir) in the Service had even more far-reaching results than were anticipated. Of these, the most significant was the withdrawal from the congregation of a large number of members who deemed the innovation a "Chukath Ha Goy" (a non-Jewish custom), and who, moreover, could not reconcile themselves to a service in which individuals could not pray alone and at random. These banded together and with some others found the Shaarey Zedek Congregation, which today is the leading orthodox congregation of the city.

Ten years later (in *Congregation Beth El 1900-1910*, p. 13.) Rabbi Franklin sums it up in this manner:

The congregation worshipped in a hall on what was then known as Michigan Grand Avenue, but in 1861 it had so far progressed as to be able to purchase a building on Rivard Street. This Synagogue of which the congregation was very proud was dedicated on August 30th, 1861 by the late Dr. Isaac M. Wise of Cincinnati. That year was a most significant one in the history of the congregation. It marked the coming to the pulpit of the Rev. A. Lazer, under whose guidance the choir and family pews were introduced. This was in fact the first great forward step toward real reform that had yet been taken, but was accompanied by many a heart-break on the part of many, and led to the factional split in the membership, out of which grew our now prosperous orthodox sister congregation known as Shaarey Zedek.

But during these seven years, also, at this first synagogue there was agitation and a desire for a synagogue building of their own. As a matter of fact, a desire for a synagogue building of their own began from the very first. Thus in the letter of Joseph Friedman<sup>2</sup> to Rabbi Isaac Leeser dated November 13, 1851, part of which was printed in *The Occident* (vol. 10, p. 58, April 1852) it is stated that

"The prospects for erection of a Synagogue are rather remote yet being so few in number it will have to be deferred to a later and more auspicious period."

Actually, the first synagogue they really owned was the Rivard Street Synagogue which was bought as a church and transformed into a synagogue in 1861. This does not mean that efforts were not put forward to attain this end during these earlier years. Indeed, according to *The Israelite* of October 12, 1855 it is reported that,

"At the General Meeting of this congregation. . . Measures were adopted to build a Synagogue in this city which has become very necessary."

The December 14, 1855 issue of *The Israelite* was able to report the following:

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DETROIT, MICH.—Our friend L.A. writes from this place, that "the plan of building the first synagogue in this city and in this state is no longer a flimsy theory. The energetic and incessant endeavors of our Parnass are a sufficient guarantee for its final realization. \$1000 have been subscribed to this purpose by our members, for which a suitable lot has been bought. The members have promised more material aid when building will be commenced. But the congregation being too small and its members not being rich enough, it is most likely, that they will call on their friends to aid them in the realization of this laudable scheme. Inform meanwhile your wholesale merchants of Cincinnati, that their Detroit friends will call on them next spring to tax their generosity."

These efforts did not immediately bear fruit and the congregation continued to worship in the "upper loft" above Silberman and Hirsch's Store.

It is for this reason — this lack of a synagogue building — among other reasons, that made Rabbi L. Adler submit his resignation in January 1859. The congregation held a meeting and organized a Synagogue Building Association and petitioned Rabbi Adler to withdraw his resignation, which he did. Following is a report regarding all this, which appeared in *The Israelite* of May 6, 1859:

DETROIT.—Ed. Is.—The matter of our building a Synagogue is still greatly agitated. The interest in this question is a general one, as well as is the consciousness of the necessity of such a building; good will and readiness to make sacrifices for the attainment of this end are also everywhere present.

In view of this spirit a Synagogue Building Association was formed a short time ago, having for its object "to influence all the Israelites of this city, but more especially the energy of the young to take part in the good work."

There is a sinking fund to be raised by small, weekly contributions, but the more especial object of the association is to cooperate with energy and aid the one great object by all direct or indirect means.

The Rev. Mr. L. Adler opened the first meeting of the Society on Sunday, the 24th of April last, by a most eloquent sermon, which had the general reference of the Passover Feast for its object, and then entered into the tendency of the meeting, impressing upon the minds of his hearers that great object, which they were about to set for their aim.

He showed most successfully in appropriate illustrations how the Almighty had but once created something out of nothing, and never again; in nature everything else is development; in the moral world it is said, "God blesses and only blesses



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action, but not the lazy ease, not the unexecuted project. When man makes a commencement God will help along."

Today we had another meeting of the association for the purpose of electing Officers; the meeting was a good one and the prospects of our institution look progressive; general good feeling and harmony prevail.

The Officers elected are the following gentlemen:

EDWARD KANTER, President  
Marcus Cohen, Vice President;  
Louis Breslar, Treasurer;  
Sam Musliner, Secretary.

Now we have a beginning; May God's blessings speed us in our undertaking

The Rev. Mr. Adler having resigned his office in this congregation some time in January last, the following document was addressed to him, to which no answer has yet been received.

To the Rev. Mr. L. Adler—Whereas, We learned to our deep regret that, for certain reasons specified, at the last regular meeting of the Congregation Beth El, the Rev. Mr. L. Adler declined to officiate any longer than the time agreed upon as minister for our Congregation; and

Whereas, We think it wounding to the Rev. gentleman to sever from our Congregation as minister, on account of those certain reasons, after a number of years of faithful service, and after having won of all the members that unbounded confidence and high esteem which so seldom exist between a congregation and its minister, be it therefore.

Resolved, That we, the undersigned members of said congregation, do hereby petition the Rev. Mr. L. Adler to withdraw, at the next regular meeting of the Congregation, his resignation, and at the same time we request the Rev. gentleman to state on what terms and conditions he will grant he said petition.

(Signed by many members of the Congregation.) S.M.

It was at this time also that they moved to the larger quarters — the hall above J. C. Scherer's (Scherer's) Drug Store at 39 Michigan Grand Avenue between Bates and Randolph Streets, the actual site of the second Beth El Synagogue, and, as mentioned previously, the site of the first Shaarey Zedek Synagogue.

The lease<sup>3</sup> for this site reads as

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

"From:

John C. Scherer of Hall on Michigan Grand Avenue, to Congregation Beth El.

From May 1st, 1859.

and is signed by M. Hirschman the then president of Beth El."

The lease provides the payment of \$35.00 every three months in advance" . . . "the first installment . . . on the first Day of May, 1859." "And it (was) further agreed that the parties of the second part shall not be allowed to occupy any part of the above mentioned Hall for any purpose deemed extra hazardous, or and or let any part thereof for any purpose deemed a nuisance."

*The Israelite* of August 26, 1859 mentions this new synagogue site (vol. 6. pp. 62-63) in a report of a visit by Isaac M. Wise to Detroit and Congregation Beth El in the later part of July in which he states that,

We preached there Sabbath before last in a large auditory and with the help of God we hope to have cast a blessed seed on a fertile soil. We return our thanks to our brethren of Detroit for the kind treatment we experienced in their midst, and especially to our friendly host, Mr. and Mrs. Trounstine.

In Rabbi Leo M. Franklin's *A History of Congregation Beth El, 1850-1900*<sup>4</sup> this second synagogue of the congregation is mentioned as follows:

"The room above Silberman & Hirsch's Store having become inadequate for the purposes of the congregation a hall was leased on Michigan Grand Avenue (now Cadillac Square) between Bates and Randolph Streets at an annual rental of one hundred and forty dollars. The terms of the lease which is dated May 1st, 1859, and signed for the congregation by M. Hirschman, President, expressly stipulates that "this hall is to be used as a meeting house and school room."

Ten years later Volumn II of this *A History of Congregation Beth El 1900-1910* again mentions this actual second synagogue as follows, (p. 12.)

The congregation worshipped in a hall on what was then known as Michigan Grand Avenue but in 1861 it had so far progressed as to be able to purchase a building on Rivard Street. . . . That year was a most significant one in the history of the congregation. It marked the coming to the pulpit of the Rev. A. Lozer under whose guidance the choir and family pews were introduced. This was in fact the



## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

first great forward step toward real reform that had yet been taken, but it was accompanied by many a heartbreak on the part of many and led to the factional split in the membership, out of which grew our now prosperous orthodox sister congregation known as Shaarey Zedek.

Silas Farmer in his *History of Detroit and Michigan* (1884, p. 628), writes of Congregation Beth El as follows:

The rabbi at this time was Rev. S. Marcus. He was succeeded after his death in 1854 by Rev. L. Adler who remained seven years. During most of his term the Society met in a room over Scherer's drug store at No. 39 Michigan Grand Avenue.

Actually the congregation remained at the Silberman & Hirsch location (above the store — 220 Jefferson) from 1852-1859, fully seven years and only two years (1859-1861) at the Michigan Grand Avenue location (Cadillac Square, now Kennedy Square).

Furthermore the various directories of the City of Detroit during this period all have entries of J. C. Scherer's Drug Store as being at 39 Michigan Grand Avenue<sup>5</sup>.

We may then summarize: that the second Synagogue of Temple Beth El was in the hall above J. C. Scherer's drug store at 39 Michigan Grand Avenue, at that time (1859) "opposite the markethouse two stories high." (*The Israelite*, Vol. 14, p. 6, September 6, 1867).

As already mentioned in a previous article the City of Detroit made a major change in its house numbering system in 1921, so that 39 Michigan Grand Avenue (Cadillac Square) became 101 Cadillac Square which is presently the site of a high rise-Hotel apartment building called "101 Cadillac Square" at the northeast corner of Cadillac Square and Bates Streets (between Bates and Randolph Streets). It is at this location that Congregation Beth El continued its growth for two years when they acquired their third Synagogue site, that became the Rivard Street Synagogue (1861). As already mentioned the members that split away from the Beth El Congregation at this time organized Congregation Shaarey Zedek and remained at the 39 Michigan Grand Avenue site for some time, this site being the first Synagogue of this congregation.

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This occurred September 27, 1861.  
See *The Beth El Story*, p. 75.  
"Seventeen members withdrew and organized the Shaarey Zedek Society, now Congregation Shaarey Zedek."
2. A photostatic copy of this letter in the original German is in the hands of the author.
3. A photostatic copy of this lease is in the hands of the author due to the courtesy of Irving I. Katz, Executive Director of Congregation Beth El.
4. Published by The Historical Committee Winn & Hammond, Detroit, Michigan, 1900, p. 25.
5. *Johnston's Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetteer of Michigan*, published annually by James Johnston and printed by Fisher Fleming & Co., No. 52 Shelby St., Detroit, 1857, p. 237 lists it as follows: Scherer, J. C., Apothecary, 39 Michigan Ave. Clark's Detroit City Directories also list this item in the various years as, Scherer, J. C., Dr., druggist, 39 Michigan Grand Ave.



## THE U. S. CENSUS OF 1850\*

The U. S. Census of 1850 also includes the names of the members of this family:  
Jacob Lang, age 34, blacksmith, born in Germany  
Eliza Lang, age 30, born in Germany  
Joseph Lang, age 1, born in Michigan

Recorded by the Census enumerator on August 6, 1850. Jacob Lang's signature appears on the Articles of Incorporation of Congregation Bethel (original spelling) as recorded on December 21, 1852, and signed on April 21, 1851. According to this Census Lang lived in Detroit prior to 1850.

\*Add this to "Analysis of a Discovery" in MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY of June, 1970.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The next convention of the  
American Jewish Historical Society  
will be held in Detroit, Michigan  
May 18 to May 20, 1973  
at the  
Detroit Hilton Hotel



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

*IMPORTANT HISTORIC DOCUMENTS*

Regarding a State Marker for the Lafayette Street Beth El Cemetery

August 16, 1971

Dr. Leonard N. Simons  
11th Floor Lafayette Building  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Leonard:

Years ago, it was proposed to the Michigan State Historical Commission that it approve an historic marker for the Beth El cemetery on Lafayette Street as being the first Jewish cemetery or the first Jewish congregational cemetery in Michigan. The request was rejected, since there had been an older Jewish cemetery in Ann Arbor.

I believe that another request should be made to the State Historical Commission asking that it recognize the Beth El cemetery as the *OLDEST HISTORIC EXTANT* Jewish cemetery in Michigan.

I would also suggest that a request be made to the Detroit Historical Commission that it recognize the Beth El cemetery as the *FIRST* Jewish cemetery in Detroit. Thus the Beth El cemetery would be recognized as both the State's oldest and the City's first Jewish cemetery.

I am writing this letter to you because I am convinced that *ONLY YOU* can bring this project to a successful completion.

With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

*Allen A. Warsen*

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

August 18, 1971

Mr. Allen A. Warsen  
21721 Parklawn  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

Dear Allen:

I will get busy immediately and see what I can do with the Michigan Historical Commission regarding an historical marker for the Beth El cemetery on Lafayette Street. I will keep you informed as to what progress I make, if any.

Regarding the Detroit Historical Commission, we don't get involved in markers and I don't think it is necessary that the original Beth El cemetery have recognition from the Detroit Historical Commission.

The fact that the Detroit Jewish community recognizes the old Beth El cemetery as the first Jewish cemetery in Detroit is all the recognition along these lines that this cemetery needs. As far as I am concerned no further proof is necessary. If Beth El says that their old cemetery is first in Detroit, then that is what it is.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote today to the Director of the Michigan Historical Commission.

Cordially,

*Leonard N. Simons*



## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

August 18, 1971

Mr. Harry Kelsey, Director  
Michigan Historical Commission  
Department of State  
3504 N. Logan  
Lansing, Michigan 48918

Dear Harry Kelsey:

It seems that some of my friends are anxious to have an historical marker on the Temple Beth El cemetery on Lafayette Street in Detroit designating it as being either the first Jewish cemetery in Michigan or the first Jewish congregational cemetery in Michigan or at least the oldest historical extant Jewish cemetery in Michigan. They have asked me to make a request because of my great interest in local and Jewish history.

I am a former president of Temple Beth El and I am also on the board of the Michigan Jewish Historical Society. My knowledge of local area Jewish history has convinced me of the accuracy of the description of the cemetery that I have described above.

The first Jewish families that came to this area settled in Ann Arbor. A family by the name of Weil bought a plot of land that they owned personally and privately to be used as a burial for members of their own families and their friends. Years later, this plot of land was condemned by the city. The bodies were transferred elsewhere to another cemetery where a portion of the cemetery was turned over to the Jewish people of Ann Arbor for a so-called Jewish section of the cemetery.

Now bear in mind that the Weil cemetery was a privately owned and "operated" plot of land.

The Temple Beth El cemetery on old Champlain Street now called Lafayette Street was the first official or recognized Jewish cemetery in the state and the first Jewish cemetery owned and operated by a Jewish congregation. Temple Beth El of Detroit is the oldest Jewish congregation in Michigan.

So, that is the historical background and we are wondering if the State Historical Commission would be willing to place a marker on the Beth El's old cemetery which is still being maintained by Temple Beth El of Detroit. I will appreciate hearing from the Commission at your earliest opportunity. In the meantime, if you need any more details, drop me a line or call me and reverse the charges.

Best personal regards,

*Leonard N. Simons*

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE

September 1, 1971

Leonard N. Simons  
Simons-Michelson Co.  
Lafayette Bldg.  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Mr. Simons:

We have received your request that the Temple Beth El cemetery be registered as a historic site and that an appropriate text for a historical marker be prepared. Ordinarily our Commissioners do not grant historic site status to cemeteries but in this case I feel they may make an exception. We will place this on the agenda for the next Commission meeting in early October and I'll notify you immediately after the meeting of the decision. The history of the cemetery seems well enough established that it will be an easy matter to prepare a mutually suitable text. If registered I suspect one of our local historical markers would be appropriate. These currently cost \$180.

Sincerely,

*William Lowery*

Research Historian  
Michigan History Division



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

*Congregation Beth El  
Woodward at Gladstone  
Detroit, Michigan 48202*

Founded 1850

December 2, 1971

Mr. William Lowery  
Michigan Department of State  
Michigan History Division  
Lansing, Michigan 48918

Dear Mr. Lowery:

It gives me great pleasure to advise you that our Board of Trustees at its meeting on November 29, 1971 authorized the erection of an historical marker on the grounds of our Lafayette street cemetery.

On behalf of the Officers and the Board of Trustees I want to express our deep gratitude to the Michigan Historical Commission for designating our Lafayette street cemetery, the oldest congregationally-owned Jewish cemetery in Michigan, as a Michigan historic site. As the oldest Jewish congregation in the state of Michigan, founded in 1850, we are, of course, exceedingly pleased with the honor conferred upon us by the Michigan Historical Commission.

The text for the marker will be sent to you shortly. I will also be in touch with you regarding the ceremony of dedicating the marker.

Best regards,

*Irving I. Katz, F.I.A.*

Executive Secretary

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

## TEXT OF CEMETERY MARKER

### BETH EL CEMETERY

Beth El, first Jewish congregation in Michigan, was organized in Detroit on September 22, 1850. This cemetery, described by an early member as "a very handsome burying ground, well-fenced and ditched," was purchased three months later. The first interment was in the fall of 1851, and in 1854 Samuel Marcus, first rabbi of Beth El, was buried here. The cemetery, containing many graves of Jewish war veterans, was in active use until the 1950's.

Michigan Historical Commission Registered State Site No. 241

Property of the State of Michigan

1972

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Editor's Note: The text is by Mr. William Lowery.



## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

### BOOK REVIEW

#### Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry.

By Irving I. Edgar, A.M., M.D. Philosophical Library, New York. 1969.

Price \$9.95

This is essentially a study in psychiatric history, although a considerable amount of medical material is added. The volume is scholarly, rich in detail, and interesting in content; the reader who cultivates it will learn much about the development of psychiatric thought since the late 1500's. He will also find it an excellent reference to original sources on Elizabethan psychiatry.

This is not a book for the impatient, however, or for those who seek immediate utility or "relevance"—such readers will find it slow; they will be troubled by the detail; they will probably be repelled by the scholarship, and may even see it as mere scholasticism.

The avowed aim of the volume is to prove once and for all that Shakespeare had no special professional knowledge of medicine or psychiatry, notwithstanding the statements of experts of the past who have given him credit for being far ahead of his time in these matters. Such claims are described as the outcome of some 200 years of "idolatry" of Shakespeare which built up the Bard not only as a great scientist, but as a classic scholar, a linguist, and a genius with a lawyer's knowledge of law. In other fields the critical scholarship of recent times has returned Shakespeare from the level of a Superman to that of a creative literary genius, but this is not so in medicine and psychiatry—perhaps because the exercise requires a critic doubly qualified in literature and in the medical fields, which explains why Edgar became involved.

So states Chapter I, but a more personal note can be found somewhat hidden in the Preface. The book originated as a Master's thesis in 1933, and we may assume that this was merely the start of the author's affair with the humanities which deepened into a lifelong liaison despite his career in psychiatry. Be that as it may, this book which is presented as an undertaking in literary criticism appears also to be the condensation of a lifetime of scholarship in medical and psychiatric history. Virtually every page is enriched with a profusion of interesting, illuminating and little-known details, many of which were new to this reviewer in spite of many years of interest in this period of history. For example, the author states that the plot of Shakespeare's *King Lear* was too cruel for 18th-century audiences, and so it was long played in altered form with a "more just and happy ending."

The book's aim is not to demote Shakespeare to a mere author, but to humanize him and make him believable even to a critical 20th-century audience. To achieve his purpose Edgar develops several lines of argument which converge to his basic conclusion.\*

\*Reprinted with the permission of THE PSYCHIATRIC QUARTERLY, Vol. 45, pp. 151-153, 1971.

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

One line of evidence is drawn from a broad review of the technical literature of the Elizabethan period—its science, medicine and psychiatry—and shows how advanced it really was; another line comes from a review of the plays of the period and shows how much the available medicine and psychiatry was used by other writers, proving that the plays of Shakespeare were no more sophisticated than were those of his contemporaries. Some readers may see this as an elaboration of the obvious and may feel that the case is overproved, but to consider only this aspect of the book is, I think, to miss its real spirit, which is one of leisurely, meticulous, and detailed scholarship which Edgar appears to have imbibed from the Elizabethan writers. On a lesser scale, the book is reminiscent of Burton's *Antomy of Melancholy*; it is a sort of pleasant intellectual journey in a style of that earlier time when the purpose of travel was to enjoy the experience for itself, rather than merely to get to the end as fast as possible. At that time even the digressions of a book were savored, and only later did it become the rule that books must be written so that even he who runs may read.

The book's third main division is a review of the comments of medical critics of the last 300 years which gradually built up the picture of a Shakespeare who through sheer genius and intuition knew about the circulation of the blood before Harvey did, and about the moral treatment of psychoses before Pinel, a Shakespeare who was an expert in physiology, anatomy, psychiatry, and internal medicine. Among these "idolatrous" critics we encounter such well known figures from the history of psychiatry as Amariah Brigham, who declared that the moral therapy of *King Lear* was quite up to the 19th-century standards, and Isaac Ray who called the *King Lear* scene on the heath "a new chapter in the history of mental disease of the most solemn and startling import." We also hear of a less well-known psychiatrist, Buckmill, who said that Lear's tranquility when among the insane was evidence of Shakespeare's remarkable knowledge of pathological psychology since "few things tranquilize the insane more than the companionship of the insane."

Finally, we come to the last phase of the volume, Dr. Edgar's constructive criticism. Having demolished the false structure created by what he calls "the bardolatry of the past," he builds up a new concept of the psychiatric meaning of these plays, and psychiatry is the main focus of the book in spite of the considerable attention given to other medical aspects. Edgar maintains that the previous interpretations could not succeed because they did not go deep enough, and only through psychoanalysis can one get to a proper understanding of the Bard and his psychiatry. The author freely acknowledges that this interpretation is subject to revision by future historians and admits that his views presupposes the validity of the psychoanalytic approach, but he puts his full support behind the Oedipus complex as the underlying mechanism in both *Lear* and *Hamlet*. In this context he examines the effect of Shakespeare's unconscious on the plays and even builds interpretations on the operation of Hamlet's unconscious.

At this point the reader may echo Edgar's own question: What will be the judgment of future psychiatrist-critics on these matters? They will undoubtedly find



## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

that Shakespeare is still up-to-date, that is up to their date, but what will that mean with respect to their interpretations of the plays, and what will they think of our current evaluations? One can imagine, perhaps, that our successors will see Shakespeare's deeper meaning in his remarkable recognition of the social aspects of Elizabethan psychiatry and medicine, with its insights into the mechanisms of social change, the effect of these changes on the individual, and the human repercussions of the transfer of power as when Lear divided his kingdom. Will there also be a fuller appreciation of Shakespeare's cases of personality disorder, the picaresque characters, the delinquents and near-delinquents? Here we can think of Mercutio the braggart, and the aging Falstaff who lived on the sunny side of the generation gap and joined the youth to play highwayman against the establishment, for all of his years and "fat guts." Will Falstaff's final delirium be interpreted as a complication of a personality disorder?—or just old fashioned D.T.'s a little toned down? These thoughts and others will be stirred up in a sympathetic reader who enjoys reliving the psychiatry of the past 300 years with a man who has invested so much time in bringing it back to life. With him the reader can visit the streets of brawling Elizabethan London and can listen to the psychiatric interpretations of the intellectuals of their day. Then the reader can interview successive generations of medical critics—each of whom has examined the psychiatry in these plays in the light of his own times. The case material such as that of Lear and Hamlet and many others remains fixed and unchanging—only the viewpoint of the discussants changes and from these changes emerges an interesting picture of the past growth of psychiatric knowledge and opinion, and perhaps some insights about what may develop in the future long after we and our notions have joined those of Amariah Brigham and the others. After all it was one of Shakespeare's characters who said that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in Horatio's philosophy, and he has certainly been vindicated so far in the history of psychiatry. As we think about going deeper for more truth we may recall Mark Twain's homely scientific model. He said of such pursuits that they are "like peeling an onion—no matter how often you peel it there always seems to be another layer underneath."

Henry Brill, M.D.

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Dr. Edgar's newest book *ESSAYS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND HISTORY* has just been published. A review of the book will be forthcoming in a future issue of *MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY*.—Editor.



MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

*DATA ON DUTCH JEWRY IN AMERICA*

Continued from the previous two issues.

Municipality	Name	Occupation	Age
Amsterdam	Danzig, Betje	None	22
Amsterdam	Danzig, Job	Baker	18
Amsterdam	Danzig, Joseph	None	16
Amsterdam	Lyon, Calman	None	37
Amsterdam	Lyon, Job Isaac	Barber	38
Amsterdam	Mayer, Herman	None	19
Amsterdam	Bloemendaal, Hansse	None	19
Amsterdam	Wolters, Lipman	Cigar Manufacturer	28
Amsterdam	Boas, Rachel	None	32
Amsterdam	Schilt, Valentyn Isaac	Merchant	45
Amsterdam	Kalong, Saartje	Seamstress	42
Amsterdam	Snoek, Abraham	Diamond Cutter	48
Amsterdam	Visch, Wolf	None	32
Amsterdam	Pourant, Levi Meyer	Diamond Cutter	29
Amsterdam	Suikerman, Gezina Wolf	None	28
Amsterdam	Suikerman, Hartog	Diamond Cutter	19
Amsterdam	Suikerman, Levi	Diamond Cutter	17
Amsterdam	Bouteille, Levi Simon	Cigar Manufacturer	21
Amsterdam	Alegro, Boas Abram	Bed Manufacturer	34
Amsterdam	Mullem, Isaac Herman	None	17
Amsterdam	Witteboom, Hartog	None	17
Amsterdam	Jong, Abram Hartog	Diamond Cutter	19
Amsterdam	Schoolmeister, Sientje	None	25
Amsterdam	Friedman, Sientje	None	25
Amsterdam	De Dooy, Lech Abram	Merchant	16
Amsterdam	Samson, Sara	None	20
Amsterdam	Sarphati, David	Storekeeper	38
Amsterdam	Goldbach, Koppel	Cigar Manufacturer	38
Amsterdam	Snoek, Simon Israel	Diamond Cutter	54

## MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

### Family Components

Wife	Children	Reasons for Emigrating	Destination	Year
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	1	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	1	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	4	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	1	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	3	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	2	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852
0	0	Better Livelihood	New York	1852

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

*FROM OUR HISTORY ALBUM*

A group of Poalei-Zion members of Detroit

with their leader from Palestine

Jacob Zerubavel (1886-1967)

He visited Detroit in 1918



*Standing:* From Left to Right: M. Ginsburg\*, Sadie Robinson, Dr. Raphael Bendove\*, Rivka Haggai, Joseph London\*.

*Second Row:* L. to R.: Dr. Meyer Glick\*, Chana Weintrobe (Michlin), Jacob Zerubavel\*.

*Bottom:* L. to R.: Joseph Haggai\*, David Zunenshein\*, Fannie Lifshitz (Levin).

\*Deceased

Jacob Zerubavel, leader of Poalei-Zion, author and journalist, settled in Palestine in 1910. He worked together with David Ben Gurion and with Ben-Zvi. In the U. S. he was for a time organizer and lecturer of the Poalei Zion. He died in Israel.



