

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



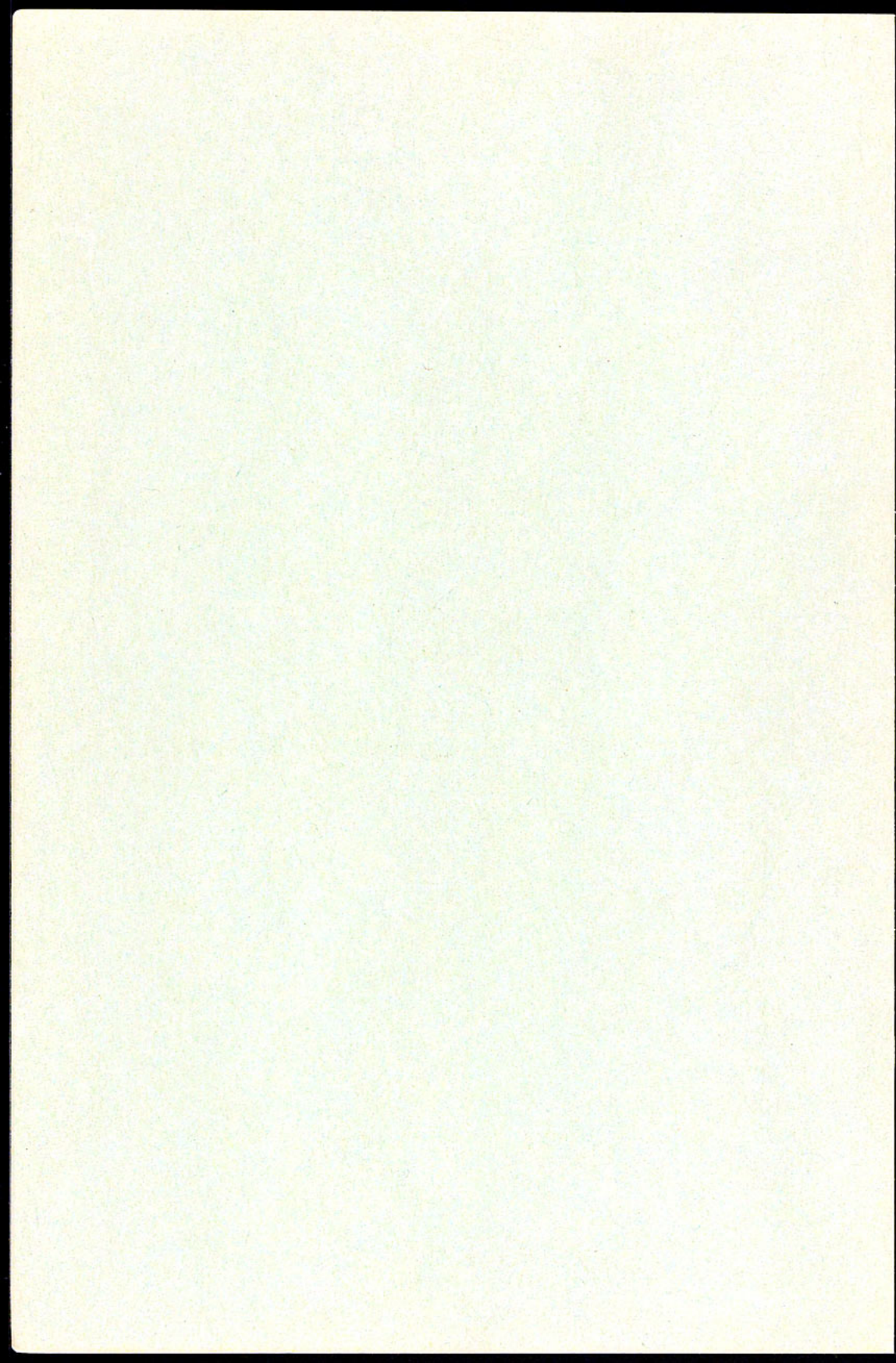
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Volume 19, Number 2

June 1979 - Sivan 5739



This issue of Michigan Jewish History is dedicated  
to the  
20th Anniversary of

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 24, 1979

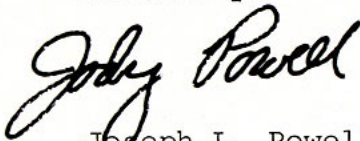
Dear Ms. Easton:

President Carter sends warmest congratulations to the members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of your founding.

This is an important milestone in the history of your organization, and the President appreciates your membership's great pride and satisfaction at this time.

You have the President's best wishes for sustained success in your many worthwhile endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph L. Powell, Jr." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joseph L. Powell, Jr.  
Press Secretary to the  
President

Ms. Doris Passell Easton  
President  
Jewish Historical Society  
of Michigan  
21720 Parklawn Avenue  
Oak Park, MI 48237

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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

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

—Joshua 4:21

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# JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

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Detroit, Michigan 48226

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*\*Deceased*

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, founded in 1959, promotes the study and research of Michigan Jewish history, published periodicals, collects documents and records, maintains a permanent depository for such documents and records at the Jewish archives of the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library, and commemorates sites of Jewish historical significance.

Categories of membership in the Society include Life Member (\$100), Sustaining (\$25), Contributing (\$15), Regular (\$10). Inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to Jeffrey N. Borin, Membership Chairman, 1010 Travelers Tower, Southfield, Michigan 48076; (313) 353-0023.

## ON OUR TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

As the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan celebrates its twentieth anniversary, I would like to recapitulate its accomplishments since its founding in June of 1959 by Allen A. Warsen.

The basic purposes of our Society when founded were the same as they are today, namely, to promote the study and research of Michigan Jewish history, to publish periodicals, to collect documents and records, to maintain a permanent depository for such documents and records, and to commemorate sites of Jewish historical significance.

Since 1960 the Society has been publishing *Michigan Jewish History*, a scholarly journal that documents the history of the Jews in our state. It has come to be highly regarded as a historical tool and is in demand by libraries, schools, and institutions in the United States and abroad.

Preservation of documents and records has always been promoted by the Jewish Historical Society and in June of 1965 a permanent depository for such materials was established at the Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library. The Burton Collection is one of the country's foremost archives, providing the optimum in storage conditions.

The Jewish Historical Society has been diligent in working with the State Historical Commission and the Detroit Historical Commission, and has accomplished the following commemorations:

On May 31, 1964, working with the Michigan Historical Commission, we designated a historic site by erecting a historic roadside marker at Fort Michilimackinac honoring Ezekiel Solomon, Michigan's first known Jewish settler.

On April 20, 1972, working with the Detroit Historical Commission, we honored David Emil Heineman at a ceremony at the Detroit Historical Museum. Mr. Heineman was Michigan's first Jewish historiographer and designer of the City of Detroit flag. A stained glass window from old City Hall with the design of the Detroit flag was reinstalled in the entry of the Museum as a permanent memorial.

In the Spring of 1973, at our initiative and working with the Michigan Historical Commission, a historic roadside marker was erected at Lafayette Street Cemetery in Detroit, marking the site of Michigan's oldest existing and Detroit's first Jewish cemetery. This cemetery was originally dedicated on January 1, 1851, by members of Michigan's first Jewish congregation, Beth El.

On May 25, 1975, a plaque was installed by the Society at the Bonstelle Theatre of Wayne State University, noting that the building, designed by Detroit architect Albert Kahn, housed Temple Beth El from 1903 to 1922.

On October 16, 1977, an official Michigan state historical roadside marker was dedicated at Congregation Beth El in Traverse City commemorating the fact that the structure, built in 1885, is the

oldest building continuously used as a synagogue in the upper part of the Lower Peninsula. Our Society participated in the dedication ceremonies.

On October 30, 1977, another Michigan State historical roadside marker was erected on the south lawn of the Blue Cross-Blue Shield building on E. Congress in Detroit commemorating the site of the first Jewish religious services held in Detroit in 1850 (in the house of Sarah and Isaac Cousens.) The marker was commissioned by us, Temple Beth El and Congregation T'Chiyah.

On November 20, 1977, a bronze wall plaque commemorating Detroit's first known Jewish resident, Chapman Abraham, was installed in the library of the new Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield by the Society.

In addition, the Society has been instrumental in tracing early Jewish settlers of Detroit and of Michigan; in locating, publishing and depositing historical documents in the Burton Historical Collection, The American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

The Society began with a nucleus of eleven people in 1959. Today our membership is over 300, and is growing.

Let us hope that our next twenty years will bring forth continuing historical accomplishments produced by the dedication and hard work of our members.

—Doris P. Easton  
President





OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL

לשכת נשיא המדינה

Jerusalem, 2 April 1979

Mrs. Doris Passell Easton  
President, Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
21720 Parklawn Avenue  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

Dear Mrs. Easton:

For President Navon's Office let me send you congratulations on the twentieth anniversary of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. We had not realized that Jewish historical roots are being so carefully studied in specific states of the Union and we are gratified to know that you are uncovering and illuminating the American past - and we assume the European origins and traditions, as well as the growing connections with Israel - of the Jewish community in Michigan. Here lies assurance of Jewish continuity.

With all best wishes,

Shulamit Nardi  
Assistant to the President

SHN/MB

## THE SURVEY OF THE DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY

By ALLEN A. WARSEN

"The Survey of the Detroit Jewish Community of 1923," conducted under the direction of Harry L. Lurie, presents an analytical portrayal of Detroit Jewry and serves as a source book for historians and scholars.

This article will discuss only certain aspects of the summary as presented by Mr. Lurie.

The author commences his study with a brief review of the early history of the Detroit Jewish settlement. He points out that the *Detroit City Directory* of 1845 contains two Jewish names and that of 1850 six more names. He writes, "However / in 1850 / there was a sufficient number of Jews for the beginnings of group consciousness to make itself evident in the establishment of the Beth El Society." He adds that the first Jewish residents of Detroit were predominantly of German origin. But as a result of the Russian pogroms of the 1880's, "we encounter a steady but gradual growth of the Orthodox Jewish population." At that time a shift of the Jewish neighborhoods from lower to upper Hastings occurred.

Another shift took place during the years 1910-1920. This neighborhood change, however, resulted from an increase of Jews from New York and elsewhere in the United States. They were attracted by the expansion of the automobile industry. Another determining factor, responsible for the change of neighborhoods, was the Black "pressure upon Jewish districts for housing facilities." They, too, were attracted to Detroit by the automobile industry.

The new neighborhoods, Lurie observes, necessitated a thorough reorganization of Jewish communal institutions. New synagogues had to be built, and new educational, recreational, social, and other institutions had to be established.

The "Survey," it is important to note, is replete with charts and statistical data that throw significant light on Detroit Jewish history of the period of the 1920's.

Especially enlightening is the "Survey's" examination of the United Hebrew Schools. The United Hebrew Schools resulted from a merger of the Division and Wilkins Streets Talmud Torahs in 1920.

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ALLEN A. WARSEN is the founder of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He served as the Society's first president, is the honorary president, and is a former editor of *Michigan Jewish History*.

Prior to the merger, the Division Street Talmud Torah was headed by Hyman Buchhalter, a noted Hebrew scholar (of blessed memory), and the Wilkins Street Talmud Torah was superintended by Bernard Isaacs (of blessed memory). Following the merger, Isaacs became the first and longtime superintendent of the United Hebrew Schools.

In 1923, the United Hebrew Schools consisted of four branches with a total population of 2,550 pupils. Eighty percent of its income was derived from tuition, and the balance mostly from membership dues. The majority of the children were "of American birth and from the homes of Orthodox and Conservative families." The United Hebrew Schools has aimed (and still aims) to provide a knowledge of Judaism, Hebrew instruction, Hebrew literature, and Jewish history.

In addition to the United Hebrew Schools, there were congregational schools, Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) schools, a Hebrew National School, and a Yeshiva.

Yiddish was the language of instruction in the Arbeiter Ring schools. They were secular and included in their curriculum the study of Yiddish literature and Jewish history. Hebrew and Hebrew literature were the main subjects of instruction of the Hebrew National School. The Yeshiva, under the direction of Rabbi Judah L. Levin (of reverent memory), stressed the instruction of religious subjects, and was attended by secondary school and junior college pupils.

Of particular interest was the "Survey's" recommendation for the "establishment of a Jewish hospital with an out-patient department. The hospital unit to be of from 125-150 beds — provisions for kosher food for patients desiring it — modern hospital organization — representative board of directors and effective medical organization."

A recommendation for the establishment of a Jewish hospital in Detroit at the beginning of this century was opposed by the now defunct periodical *The Jewish American*. In an editorial of October 25, 1901, it wrote, *inter alia*, "The few Jewish patients can be better cared for and at an infinitely less expense at any one of our splendidly-equipped non-sectarian hospitals, than at a Jewish institution, which in the very nature of things must be poorly equipped and unsatisfactorily conducted. If there is energy to expend, let it be expended where it is needed."

Nevertheless, it took three more decades following the "Survey's" recommendation to establish a Jewish hospital in the Motor City. It became a reality in 1953.

Following is the historically invaluable congregational chart. (The synagogues' seating capacities and author Lurie's comments have been omitted.)

## CONGREGATIONAL CHART

(Spellings are as they appear in the "Survey"; correct spellings appear in parentheses.)

NAME	ADDRESS	YEAR OF FOUNDDING	RABBI
Temple Beth El	Woodard & Gladstone	1850	Franklin & Berkowitz
Shaare Zedek ( <i>Shaarey Zedek</i> )	Brush & Willis	1861	Hirschman
Beth Jacob	Montcalm near Hastings	1884	Levin
Beth Abraham	Winder near Hastings	1892*	Thumin
Beth David	545 Winder	1892*	Aishiskin
Bnai Israel	578 E. Ferry	1871	Levin
Beth Tephila ( <i>Beth Tefilo</i> )	944 Napoleon	1905	Eisenman
Beth Aaron, formerly Tifferes Israel	657 E. Warren	1907	Aishiskin
Beth Hamidrash Hagodol-Anshe Rosso ( <i>Anshe Rovno</i> )	926 Wilkins	1907	Eisenman
Nusach Charee ( <i>Nusach Hari</i> )	922 Alfred	1910	Aishiskin
Miscken Israel ( <i>Mishkan Israel</i> )	Benton near Antoine	1911	(not recorded)
Mogen Abraham	Farnsworth near Antoine	1911	Levin
El Moshe ( <i>Ohel Moshe</i> )	29th & Michigan	1912	Aishiskin
Ben Jacob	938 Illinois	1913	Eisenman
Beth Moses	943 Hendrie	1905	(not recorded)
Beth Jehuda ( <i>Beth Yehuda</i> )	939 Adelaide	1914	Eisenman
Agudas Achim	5434 Hastings	1915	(not recorded)
B'nai Moshe	Garfield & Beaubien	1915	Thumin
Atereth Twzi ( <i>Atereth Tsvi</i> )	W. Warren near 35th	1916	(not recorded)
First Hebrew Congregation of Delray	1824 Burdeno	1916	Thumin
Beth Iszthok ( <i>Beth Itzhok</i> )	3836 Fisher	1916	(not recorded)
Ahavath Achim	Delmar & Westminster	1917	" "
Tifferes Israel	Cameron near Westminster	1918	" "
Atz Chaim ( <i>Etz Chaim</i> )	2495 Wyandotte	1919	" "
I.O.B.A.	682 Warren	1921	" "
Beth Joseph	677 Eliot	1922	Aishiskin
Ahavath Zion	Holbrook & Beaubien	1922	Levin
Temple Emanuel ( <i>Congregation Emanuel</i> )	Wilson & Taylor	1919	(not recorded)
Beth Medrach	622 Watson	(not recorded)	" "

\*approximate

*(Editor's Note: "Beth Medrach" was in fact Beth Medrosh Anshei Bereznitz, the religious congregation formed from the Bereznitzer Aid Society. The congregation was located at 662 Watson from around 1916 until the early 1920's.)*

Ansche Sgard Beresnitz	listed but congregation has moved recently
Beth Isaac	675 Benton - - no information obtained
Brith Sholem	Russell near Hague - - no information obtained

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN  
GOVERNOR

May 30, 1979

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
21720 Parklawn Avenue  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

Greetings:

It gives me great pleasure to extend my official and personal congratulations as you mark the 20th anniversary of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in June, 1979.

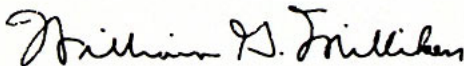
In our past is the guide for our journey into the future. The study of our history and cultural heritage gives us greater insight into the present and future. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., said, "When I want to understand what is happening today or try to decide what will happen tomorrow, I look back."

Michigan and American citizens of Jewish origin have made considerable contributions to this state and nation in the fields of science, technology, art, music and education. By sharing their heritage they have enriched the cultural and civic life of Michigan. It is essential that we preserve the history of these great people for future generations.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable anniversary observance and continuing success in your endeavors.

Kind personal regards.

Sincerely,



Governor

# THE HISTORY OF THE TRAVERSE CITY JEWISH COMMUNITY

## PART I

By DEVRA STEINBERG STOCKER  
BESS ALPER DUTSCH  
NAOMI BUCHHALTER FLOCH

*This is the forest primeval  
The murmuring pines and the hemlocks  
— Hiawatha  
(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)*

Located in the northwestern part of the lower peninsula of the state of Michigan, on the site of a small peninsula that reaches out into Grand Traverse Bay, Traverse City is in an area of great natural beauty. This was Hiawatha's country when the first white settlers came in the early 1840's, and built saw mills and set up lumber camps.<sup>1</sup>

In 1862 the passage of the Homestead Act by the United States Congress brought waves of new immigrants, and agriculture began to flourish. For many years, however, it was not agriculture but lumber that was the main attraction. "Pine was King" over the entire Grand Traverse Region. Grand Traverse Bay provided convenient anchorage for the schooners needed to carry the lumber to Chicago and other ports. From there the lumber was shipped farther south and west to the fast-growing country.

The lumber industry needed workers to fell the trees and chain the logs to the sleighs which carried them to the rivers. In Traverse City the logs floated down the Boardman River to the mill. Other settlers came to service the needs of those engaged in the lumbering industry and to build the community, but logging and sawmills attracted many settlers, not only those seeking fortune and adventure, but also those in search of a future that offered freedom and opportunity.

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DEVRA STEINBERG STOCKER, BESS ALPER DUTSCH AND NAOMI BUCHHALTER FLOCH are all descendants of early Jewish settlers of Traverse City; Mrs. Stocker is a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

The early Jewish settlers of Traverse City came from eastern Europe, largely from Russia and Poland. A general description contains a common theme. They emigrated to escape the injustices to which they were subjected, to escape pogroms, to escape service in the Czar's army. They were young and often had to flee in haste. They were devout and observant Jews, and came to the new land hoping to find freedom and opportunity; and having found it their gratitude was deeply felt.

Research into the early history of the Jewish community in Traverse City was sparked when its synagogue, Congregation Beth El, was designated an historic site by the state of Michigan. The designation was made when it was learned that Beth El's building had been in continuous service longer than any synagogue in Michigan. In October, 1975 the Michigan Historical Commission included Congregation Beth El of Traverse City in the State Register of Historic Sites.<sup>2</sup>

In 1882 Articles of Incorporation were drawn up in accordance with the statutes of the state of Michigan to establish a Hebrew congregation and build a synagogue in Traverse City. The manuscript reads as follows:

Whereas

The undersigning and following named persons, to wit Julius Steinberg, Julius Levinson, Solomon Yalomstein, Benjamin Segal, Jacob Steinberg, A. Greenberg, Charles Levison and Haris Ruskey, persons of full age, being desirous of organizing a Jewish society and building a Synagogue;

And that said Society be organized under chapter 170 of the Statutes of the State of Michigan, as compiled and Annotated by Andrew Howell, A.D. 1882, do establish and adopt the following articles of Incorporation.

Articles of Incorporation of the Hebrew Congregation of Traverse City, Michigan

Article First: This association shall be called The Hebrew Congregation of Traverse City, Michigan.

Article Second: It shall be the object of this Society to take legal and proper care of the property and temporal affairs of the Congregation connected with the said Hebrew Congregation.

Article Third: The membership of the Society shall consist of all persons of full age who are of Jewish descent and believe in the Jewish faith.<sup>4</sup>

A notice to members dated June 7, 1886 reads:

You are hereby notified to attend the special meeting in the synagogue at 8 o'clock P.M. June 10 for the purpose of paying dues and other business. By order of the President. Levinson.

This notice confirms the synagogue building was completed or in sufficient process of completion for use as a meeting place in 1886.

In 1884 Julius Steinberg purchased five acres of land for Congregation Beth El as a cemetery for its members.<sup>5</sup> In 1885 Perry Hannah, a non-Jewish lumber magnate whose contributions figured greatly in the building of Traverse City, donated land, by means of a



contract, for the construction of a synagogue. The contract was signed by Julius Steinberg, Solomon Yalomstein, and Julius Levinson, trustees of the Hebrew Congregation of Traverse City and their successors in office.<sup>6</sup>

A series of mortgages enabled the congregation to pay for the synagogue, and the signatures on the mortgages give us the names of Jews who were there in the 1880's and early 1890's. For most of them we have either scanty information or no information at all; nor did they remain in Traverse City.

In addition to the three signatories to the above-mentioned contract, the following names of trustees of the Hebrew Congregation Beth El appear on the mortgages: Herman Fishel, Benjamin Segal, Aaron Cohn, Charles Levinson, Max Seigel, Goodman Cohn, Moses Segal, Louis Kohn, Jacob Greenburg, Aaron Goldfarb, Robert Shamberger, Isaac Frazer. Of these particular persons we know the following:

Benjamin Segal married Lena Levinson, sister of Julius and Charles Levinson. The Segals moved to Harbor Springs, Michigan, in approximately 1890 and settled there permanently. Their daughter, Mrs. Rose Rosenthal, still heads a business there. Aaron Cohn married Mary Levinson, sister of Lena. They moved to Petoskey in approximately 1890 but remained only until about 1900 when they moved to Detroit. Charles Levinson, brother of Julius, moved to Charlevoix and remained there. Isaac Frazer went first to Empire, Michigan, where he stayed a few years before moving to Cheboygan, Michigan, where he settled permanently. Moses Segal, brother of Benjamin, visited his brother in Harbor Springs in the early 1900's, but where he and his family settled is not known. Robert Shamberger lived in Traverse City for a number of years, and in the early 1900's he moved with his family to Detroit. Herman Fishel is known to have been a tailor in Traverse City from the late 1880's to the mid 1890's, yet we have no further information on him or Samuel Fishel. On Louis Kohn and Max Seigel we have no information. Goodman Cohn and his wife, Sarah Zelda, are buried in the cemetery in Traverse City, which would seem to indicate they had remained in the general area. Jacob Greenburg, Samuel Harris and Aaron Goldfarb remained in the Traverse City area. Aaron Goldfarb settled in Elk Rapids; Samuel Harris and Jacob Greenburg, in Traverse City.

The first Jewish settlers in Traverse City itself, were the three whose names appear on the synagogue land contract. They were the first trustees of Congregation Beth El and its first officers. When ground was broken for the building in 1885 the officers were: Julius Levinson, president; Solomon Yalomstein, vice president; Julius Steinberg, treasurer; Jake Steinberg (Julius' son) secretary; Charles Levinson and Jake Steinberg were elected first and second trustees and Avram Greenberg, sexton. The three men who had signed the original contract were selected as the Building Committee. The cornerstone was laid on November 19, 1885. The newspapers recorded the ceremony:

The record of the Congregation was inscribed in Hebrew, read by Alex Steinberg the youngest Hebrew in the synagogue, and deposited in the cornerstone by Mr. Hannah, Mr. Leach, Mr. Moffet and Rev. Mr. Shorts of the Methodist Episcopal Church, made appropriate speeches. The building will be 22x36 feet in size with brick foundation and will be heated by a furnace. The cost will be about a thousand dollars. Work will begin at once and if the weather permits, will be completed this fall.<sup>7</sup>

Julius and Bertha Levinson were the earliest Jewish settlers in the Traverse City area.<sup>8</sup> They settled in Surdenburg (present day Suttons Bay) and came to Traverse City in about 1880. When their first child was born in Surdenburg, Bertha was nineteen years of age and Julius was twenty-three. They came from Suwalki, Russian Poland. It is believed that Julius and Bertha came to the United States together. What brought them to Surdenburg is not known, but they remained there for a number of years. Five of their children were born in Surdenburg: Benjamin (in 1868), Charles, Henry, Tibbie and Nette (the last in 1879).<sup>9</sup>

Julius Levinson's original family name was Danto. However, when Julius, son of Laib (or Levi) came to this country, he changed his name to Levison (Levi's son). For some time the name was spelled Levison by both Julius and his brother, Charles, who came later.

In the years before moving to Traverse City, Julius was engaged in business with the Indians.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that he was a pack peddler who sold his wares to the Indians, and received payment in furs, which he in turn sold to fur traders. In 1879 Julius established a mercantile business in Traverse City, The J. Levinson Star Clothing



Julius and Bertha Levinson.

House.<sup>11</sup> The merchandise carried was "dry goods, clothing, notions, hats and caps, ladies and gents' furnishing goods." The letterhead on his business stationery stated he was a "dealer in wholesale and retail."

Beyond signing the 1882 synagogue Articles of Incorporation and being the congregation's first president, Julius' religious interest is further confirmed by his donation of a *parokhet* (ark curtain). Embroidered into the cloth in a combination of Yiddish and Hebrew are these words: "Ark curtain donated by Yudel Levinson, son of Laib, 1883." (Preserved are a few synagogue business letters from Levinson, the congregation's first president, to the treasurer, Julius Steinberg, in 1886, on the Levinson Star Clothing House stationery.)

Julius and Bertha had nine children, five of whom survived childhood: Benjamin, Charles, Tibbie, Gertrude and Eva. Gertrude and Eva were born in Traverse City.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1880's Julius brought to this country his brother Charles; his sisters, Lena and Mary; his father, Laib; and his father's brother who retained the name of Danto. He was known to the children as "Grandpa Danto."

The Levinson family moved to Petoskey in 1890 where Julius again established a mercantile business. He retained his store in Traverse City until 1893.<sup>13</sup> In approximately 1900 the family moved to Detroit.

Julius Steinberg came to Traverse City in 1868 from Suwalki, Russian Poland, at the age of 20 years. He was the first Jew to settle in Traverse City. His young wife, Mary, and their infant son, Jacob ("Jake") waited in Europe until he could send for them. Julius had left in haste, as military conscription into the Czar's army threatened his plans to come to the New World. He solved the problem by escaping disguised in woman's clothes. His brother accompanied him to the border and overcame the border police officer, thus making the escape possible. (Under the corrupt government of the Czar, police officers did not report their failures.) Safe on the other side, Julius shed the disguise and went to an inn. His troubles, however, were not over. The innkeeper wanted to see his passport, so Julius produced a *luakh* (Hebrew calendar) instead. The innkeeper, like most people in those days, could not read. When he left to investigate the *luakh* Julius made a quick departure. He made his way to England where he earned passage money to America and had an opportunity to learn English.<sup>14</sup>

What motivated him to come to Traverse City is not known but the following explanation seems plausible: He had "landsmen" (friends from his home village) in Chicago. It is believed he went first to them. Young greenhorn arrivals received advice from earlier immigrants, and he may have been advised that Michigan, with its growing lumber industry offered a future in business.

Agriculture was also getting a start and the farmers needed the wares brought to them by the pack peddlers. Beginning as a peddler



Mary and Julius Steinberg.

carrying his stock on his back, Julius made progress, graduating in time to carrying his merchandise by horse and wagon. Later he was able to set up a dry goods store in a permanent location. (This sequence was the usual pattern of the early Jewish settler.) Meanwhile he sent for his wife and son. They arrived approximately in September, 1871. On October 8, 1871 Julius left them in Chicago with his friends while he returned briefly to Traverse City. From the boat he could see the flames of the now famous Chicago fire. (His friends in Chicago, the Bernsteins, remained always more than casual friends. In 1903 Julius' daughter, Ella, married Meyer, one of the Bernstein sons.)

Together Julius and Mary established their mercantile business and raised their seven children: Jacob ("Jake"), Kate, Alec, Ella, Irene, Birdie and Leon. A newspaper advertisement gives information on the merchandise carried:

The Reliable Dry Goods, Carpets and Clothing House of Julius Steinberg. Ladies and Gents' Furnishing Goods, Hats and Caps, Trunks and Valises.

The store remained in the Steinberg family for more than fifty years. With time it became Julius Steinberg and Sons, later Steinberg Bros, when Jake and Alec took over, and finally the J. H. Steinberg Store, until Jake's death in 1922.

In 1883 Julius brought his brother, Jacob, to this country. The cost of passage in those days was \$34.40. Details on cost are given in a letter dated February 12, 1886 from the firm of S. Jarmulowsky on 54 Canal Street in New York: "Your favor of the 10th instant received: a ticket from Europe to Traverse City direct will cost you as follows by the New German Line \$32.40 Old German \$34.40 Bremen Line \$34.40." The letter went on to state that for a child under one year of age the charge was one dollar and for a child under twelve the charge was one half ticket. Worth noting too, is that the

mail was functioning well in 1886. A letter from Steinberg dated February 10th reached New York in time for a reply to be written on February 12th. It is not known how long Jacob remained in Traverse City but he did not stay permanently. He returned to Europe and after a few years came with his wife and children to the United States. They then settled in Detroit.

In 1891 Julius built Steinberg's Grand Opera House. It was a steam-heated and electrically-lighted brick structure. A local historian had this to say about it: "Steinberg's Grand Opera House occupies the second and third stories of a very fine brick block on Front Street. It is fitted up and finished in the most modern and convenient style. Its seating capacity is between seven and eight hundred."<sup>15</sup> The cost of the structure was estimated at \$60,000. The opera house area included a stage 32 x 45 feet, proscenium 19 x 36 feet, eight dressing rooms, and was illuminated by 400 electric globes.<sup>16</sup> The interior had soft tinted walls of tan, blue and gold, and the ceiling in the same soft tones pictured angels and other valentine effects. The main floor seats were so installed as to be

GRAND OPERA HOUSE, TRAVERSE CITY, MICH.



Steinberg's Grand Opera House in Traverse City as it appeared c. 1905. The Steinberg store was on the ground floor, and the opera house was built above it. Mr. and Mrs. Julius Steinberg lived on the second floor in the building next to the opera house (*on the right*). The building was not used after 1915, and for a time, the Elks (*who occupied the building visible in the left-hand side of the photograph*) used the opera house for storage. The entire structure, however, was destroyed in a recent fire.

easily removed, converting the space into a dance floor. *The Grand Traverse Herald* of December 13, 1894 described the opening night as "one of the greatest successes and most brilliant social events that Traverse City has ever known." The ladies wore evening dress, and the gentlemen their Sunday best and "flowers were at a premium at the Traverse City Floral Company as the fair sex scrambled to secure corsages."<sup>17</sup> The check room was especially noted, as opening night was the first performance in Traverse City where the ladies and their escorts could check their hats and coats. The opera house became one of the important theaters in northern Michigan. Among the many famous names who played there were Walker Whiteside, Mack Sennett, May Robeson, Fred Stone, Eva Tanguay and William S. Hart.

With the coming of the cinema, movies were shown for a short time in the opera house. This was terminated in about 1915 when a law was passed in Michigan forbidding the showing of movies in second floor theaters. In approximately 1916 Julius built a movie theater, *The Lyric*, next to his property. It was an attractive theater building and had a seating capacity of six hundred.<sup>18</sup> *The Lyric* still serves movie goers in Traverse City: in about 1950 it was remodeled and the name changed to *The State Theater*.

Julius and Mary moved to Detroit in 1907 with their two younger daughters, Irene and Birdie, but they never really left Traverse City. They had a summer home on Grand Traverse Bay and the family came there every summer until Julius' death in 1923.



The *Lyric* Theater, built by Julius Steinberg around 1915. The *Lyric*, built next to the opera house, was remodeled and renamed the *State Theater* around 1950, and is still in use. The photograph was taken around 1917, during a parade (possibly Fourth of July).

Solomon Yalomstein came to the United States from Suwalki, Russian Poland, in the late 1860's.<sup>19</sup> After a short stay in New York he settled in Detroit. It is not known whether his wife, Rebecca, came with him or waited in Suwalki with their two small sons, Benjamin and Max, until he could send for them. Their third child, Sarah, was born in Detroit on October 14, 1869. It is not known precisely when Solomon came north to the Traverse City area, but by 1876 he and Solomon Goldman had established a mercantile business in partnership in Elk Rapids.<sup>29</sup>

Solomon Goldman had also come to the United States in the late 1860's. He settled in Detroit with his wife, Gussie, and their daughter, Jennie, who was born in Russian Poland, probably Suwalki. His second child, Lena, was born in Detroit in 1871. The Goldman children — Louis, born in 1873; Mary in 1877; and Benjamin in 1879 — were all born in Detroit. It is believed the family lived in Elk Rapids for a short time only, were dissatisfied, and returned to Detroit.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, the Goldman-Yalomstein partnership continued in operation. The merchandise carried was clothing, boots and shoes. In 1877 they were still in partnership and bought land together in Kalkaska County. On August 3, 1877 they bought forty acres of land for which they paid ninety dollars. On May 15, 1880 they sold the land for \$100.<sup>22</sup> They remained in business until 1883 when they dissolved their partnership and established separate businesses in Elk Rapids. Goldman had a clothing and dry goods Store, Yalomstein a general store. Both stores were still listed in 1885. In 1886 Goldman sold his business to an H. Alpern and returned to Detroit. Alpern also bought a quantity of merchandise wholesale from Julius Steinberg to replenish his stock. H. Alpern was Herman Alpern, who remained in business in Elk Rapids until 1890. Also in business in Elk Rapids in 1883 and 1885 was Max Alpern, harness maker.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile the Yalomstein family was growing. A fourth child, Mose, was born in Detroit in 1872. It is not known whether Simon, the next child, was born in Detroit (1874) or Elk Rapids. Fanny, who followed, was born in Elk Rapids (1876), as were her brothers David and Louis. Though records confirm Solomon retained his store in Elk Rapids until 1887, he moved his family to Traverse City in 1881 and opened a dry goods store on Front Street.<sup>24</sup> The four younger Yalomstein children, Lena (born September 30, 1881), and her sisters, Birdie, Evelyn and Rachel, were born in Traverse City, bringing the number of the Yalomstein children to twelve.

In 1895 Fanny Yalomstein was graduated from the Traverse City High School, and her brother, David, was graduated from a two-year high school commercial course. Soon after this Solomon and Rebecca made plans to return to Detroit. Solomon sold his business, and by 1898 the family was again living in Detroit, where a



Rebecca and Solomon Yalomstein.

larger Jewish community had more to offer their marriageable sons and daughters — a concern of Jewish parents.

Aaron Goldfarb came to Traverse City around 1880.<sup>25</sup> It is not known whether his wife, Tibbie, came with him or waited until he could send for her and their infant daughter, Simma, born in 1878. The family came from Zhitomir, Russia. It is believed they lived in Traverse City before moving to Elk Rapids. The children after Simma were: Minnie, Israel, Abraham, Samuel, Solomon and Gerald, all born in Traverse City. Aaron worked as a lumberjack until he injured his foot; after that he made his living as a pack peddler. It is not known precisely when the family moved to Elk Rapids. Since the youngest child, Gerald, was born in Traverse City in 1892 the move probably was not before then. In Elk Rapids Aaron established a place of business on River Street, selling dry goods, clothing and shoes. In 1894 he was one of the three trustees of Congregation Beth El and his signature appears on a mortgage that was taken out in that year. In 1895 his daughter, Simma, was graduated from the Traverse City High School. In 1898, his second daughter, Minnie, was graduated from the Elk Rapids High School (which gives a general idea of when the move to Elk Rapids became permanent).

Aaron an enthusiastic fisherman and a true baseball fan, and spent much leisure time on Grand Traverse Bay or Elk Lake, relying on his seven children to tend the store. For a time he even had a sign in the window, "*We grow our own clerks.*" As for baseball, Elk Rapids, like most Michigan communities of the time, was a baseball town and there were regular Sunday afternoon games with other towns in the county league. Each player was equipped by a local business and on the back of his uniform was his sponsor's name.





Tibbie and Aaron Goldfarb.

The name of the Goldfarb Store was, of course, on the uniform of one of the players.<sup>26</sup>

Around 1900 it became profitable to buy and sell iron rails, and Aaron engaged in this business also. With time he had a second store in Grand Rapids, which his son Israel managed. The girls married and lived elsewhere. Simma married Albert Grabower and lived in Detroit. Minnie married J. Walter Levie who had a mercantile business in Wolverine, Michigan, and after a number of years they moved to Detroit. Samuel settled permanently in Jackson, Michigan; Solomon in El Paso, Texas. The rest of the Goldfarb family moved to Detroit in approximately 1920. Only two of Aaron and Tibbie's grandchildren remained in Michigan. Samuel's son, Stuart Goldfarb, today lives in Jackson, and Gerald's daughter, Marcia Goldfarb Peven, lives in Detroit.

Many more Jewish families came to Traverse City in the 1880's and 1890's. The Jewish community is said to have numbered forty families in the mid 1890's. The families who came, however, settled for shorter periods and were on the move again to some other Michigan community.

The scattered Jewish families in the upper part of the lower peninsula knew each other and maintained friendly contact. They met at weddings and on holidays and other festive occasions. The young people corresponded with and visited each other. Traveling was by horse and — depending upon the season — buggy or wagon in summer, a cutter or sleigh in winter. For the peddler a horse was



Interior of the Aaron Goldfarb store in Elk Rapids, around 1900.

important to his work. When later he had prospered and had a permanent location for his business he often retained his horse for social travel. Public transportation was scarce but not non-existent. In 1867-68 there were two stage lines which ran in winter between Traverse City and Grand Haven, a distance of 175 miles, which they covered in four days. There were other stage lines, one between Elk Rapids and Traverse City and one between Traverse City and Muskegon. The latter made the trip in three days if the sleighing was good. The first railroad to reach Traverse City was a branch of the Grand Rapids and Indiana. This line ran a distance of twenty-six miles south to Walton Junction. It was completed in 1872. It was not until 1890-91 that further service was offered. There were, however, schooners carrying lumber to Chicago, making trips regularly from an early date.

Among the social activities youth enjoyed were sleigh rides and hay rides, picnics on the beach, swimming, boating, skating, baseball, box socials, square dancing, amateur theatricals, card games and other games. It was possible in the 1880's to learn to play a musical instrument. A piano could be transported to Traverse City beginning in 1845. Some young women took elocution lessons, a vogue which continued into the 1900's. The entertained at gatherings. Many young women enjoyed embroidery, quilt making and other needlework. Some young people were interested in coin collecting and stamp collecting. The Jewish sons and daughters were good students. School work was taken seriously by the People of the Book. Young people were part of a family unit in those days and it was customary to depend on them to take responsibility in the family business as well as in the home. But life was not all serious. Jewish youth en-

tered into the life of the community with their contemporaries. Jewish parents also entered into the life of the community, often taking leadership in community projects. Everyone was an immigrant. They had all come to the new land with hopes to be fulfilled. The largest ethnic group in Traverse City came from Bohemia (present day Czechoslovakia).

Comments on the social life of the time would be incomplete without some examples of pioneer humor. One of the mirthful diversions was riddle jokes. Two examples follow: What is the difference between a schoolteacher and a postage stamp? Answer: The school teacher licks with a stick and the postage stamp sticks with a lick! What is the difference between a rooster and an old maid? Answer: The rooster says cocka-doodle-doo and the old maid says any dude'l-doo!

Jokes also add to our history knowledge. Dated are certain words. "Dude," for example, to describe a man wearing "city clothes." Work clothes brought more respect from the pioneers. "Old maid" is another term that has been out of use for some time as reflecting male arrogance. Another word, "loafer," again expresses the pioneer's attitude toward idlers. On the other hand, nationality jokes were not in disrepute. Everyone was an immigrant. Making fun of each other brought out clever repartee which was remembered and repeated and enjoyed again. It was not until the melting pot began to work that nationality jokes became offensive.

Herschel and Eva Russky came to Traverse City in 1881 after a short stay in New York. Eva had a half-sister in Traverse City, Mary Steinberg (Mrs. Julius). The Russkys probably came with their older son, Joseph, though he, like his younger brother, Hi, may have been born in Traverse City. Hi (Haim) was born in 1884. (Herschel's signature (as Harris) on the 1882 synagogue Articles of Incorporation pinpoints his presence in Traverse City.)

Herschel remained a peddler well into the 1900's. Eva Russky is remembered by this writer as a beloved third "grandma" who offered a warm welcome to the children who came to visit her. Hi and Joe were both graduated from the Traverse City High School in the class of 1900. In the high school year book of 1916 the list of former graduates gives Joe's occupation as salesman and Hi's as business manager of Steinberg's Opera House.

In 1923 Hi and Joe moved to Detroit. Joe married and remained in Detroit. Hi returned to Traverse City and renewed his social activities with his friends, especially in the Elk Lodge. The small-town environment in which he had grown up pleased him more than life in the big city. The Russkys lived in Traverse City from 1881 until Hi's death in 1933.

Among the early settlers who found their way to Traverse City in the 1880's were Avram Greenberg and his three adult sons, Phillip, Benjamin and Jacob.<sup>27</sup> They came from Kishinev, Bessarabia, Russia

and arrived in the United States on a Greek ship with Greek passports. Why they came on a Greek ship with Greek passports is unknown. They lived for a time in Chicago and New York. Avram's signature appears on the document of 1882 synagogue Articles of Incorporation. In 1884 he wrote to Sir Moses Montefiore to extend good wishes on the latter's 100th birthday (July 24, 1884). In the exchange of letters that followed he requested a Torah scroll for the synagogue. Sir Moses responded to the request and Congregation Beth El received its first Torah from him.<sup>28</sup> Later in the 1880's Avram and his sons went to North Dakota to explore the possibilities of staking a homestead claim. Jacob and his father returned to Traverse City. Phillip and Benjamin, however, remained in North Dakota.

In 1889 Jacob Greenberg married his cousin, Minnie Sandelman, daughter of Meir and Hannah Sandelman, who were also new settlers. When the Greenbergs first came to Traverse City, Jacob made his living as a lumberjack. Later he became a pack peddler, and by 1886 he had a horse and wagon — a sign of progress. Jacob and Minnie had seven children: Bessie, Abraham, Sarah, Martha, Samuel, Maurice and Harry, the four older children born in Traverse City. In 1895 the family moved to Petoskey where Jacob opened a "racket store" on Mitchell Street.<sup>29</sup> In 1911 they moved to Detroit. Two daughters, Bessie Greenberg Simons and Sara Greenberg Goldberg, remained in Michigan and presently live in Detroit.

Meir Sandelman came to Traverse City in the 1880's, following the arrival of the Greenbergs, to whom the Sandelmans were related.<sup>30</sup> Meir came with his oldest son, Issac, from Berdichev, Russia; his wife, Hannah, and four younger children, Minnie, Peter, Louis and Isaer, an infant, waited in Europe. As soon as Meir and Issac were able, they brought Minnie, Peter and Louis to this country; and later brought Hannah and Isaer, who by this time was almost four years old. To avoid military service, Meir had had part of his thumb amputated, not an unusual procedure for young men of that time, who would go to such lengths to make themselves ineligible for service in the Czar's army. In Traverse City he made his living by pack peddling, and augmented his income by selling ginseng root. (It is not known whether he collected the ginseng from people who raised it or picked it wild). He sold the ginseng to a firm in Chicago, and from there it was shipped to China, where it was used for medicinal purposes and was believed to prolong life.

In 1895 their daughter, Minnie, who had married Jake Greenberg, moved to Petoskey; Meir and Hannah moved from Traverse City soon after. It is believed they went first to Sault Ste. Marie where their son, Louis, had a racket store. Isaac and Isaer also joined their brother in Sault Ste. Marie. A short time later Louis left to take up residence with his sister Minnie in Petoskey. Peter was the only one of the family who remained in Traverse City. He had a racket store on South Union Street for a number of years.

He married a Chicago girl and they had two children, Charles and Sylvia. The family moved to Chicago around 1907. (Jake and Minnie's daughters, Bessie and Sara, recall the Pere Marquette railroad's Sunday excursions from Petoskey to Traverse City; the cost was one dollar. The children enjoyed coming to Traverse City to visit their Uncle Peter and his family.)

Jacob Meir Sarasohn and his wife, Libbie Shanie, arrived in Traverse City around 1887 with four children, Abraham, Rachel, Samuel and Minnie; (four children had died in Europe.)<sup>31</sup> The Sarasohns came from Sokolka, near Bialystok, Russian Poland. Jacob came to the United States in the early 1880's and went to Chicago where he had three sisters, two of whom were twins. With time he managed to secure quarters that accommodated both living and work. He then sent for his family. But the day after they arrived the building in which Jacob lived was destroyed by fire, and it is believed that soon after that the family came to Traverse City. What motivated them to select Traverse City is not known. Jacob did not establish a business in Traverse City; instead in the late 1890's he opened a general store in Rudyard, Michigan. The rest of the family remained in Traverse City while he explored the possibilities in Rudyard. However, his daughter, Minnie, who was about sixteen or seventeen years of age at this time, went with her father to keep house for him. Jacob was a deeply religious man, and his store was closed on the Sabbath. If a lumberjack wanted something of seeming importance Jacob would give him the key to the store and tell him he could pay for his purchase after the Sabbath. Apparently, things did not go well, and the store venture was not a success.

In 1888 the Sarasohns' daughter, Rachel, married Samuel Burnstein of Windsor, Ontario. (The Burnstein and Sarasohn families knew each other.) Rachel and Samuel settled in Traverse City, where Samuel made his living as a pack peddler. Of their eight children, six were born in Traverse City: Julius Y.; Michael; Alex E. and Moses Monte (twins); Isadore and Cecille.

Of the Sarasohn children only Sarah, the youngest, was born in Traverse City. Sarah was born in 1889, the same year as Rachel's oldest child, Julius.

In 1898 the Sarasohns lived on State Street in Traverse City. Their neighbors next door were Abraham and Mary Rubiner, who came to Traverse City in the late 1890's with their son, Julius, who was born in Detroit in 1895.<sup>32</sup> Their second son, Charles, was born in Traverse City in 1898. Abraham was a cantor, and in Traverse City he was also the *shokhet*, the *mohel*, the Hebrew teacher, and also performed marriages. In 1903 he married Annie Buschell to William Buchhalter. The Rubiner family remained in Traverse City until 1904.

Late one evening a fire broke out in the Rubiner home. Minnie Sarasohn saw the fire, ran next door and smashed a window with her bare fists and wakened the family.<sup>33</sup> Mary Rubiner was so im-

pressed with the courage of her young neighbor that she told her brother, Issac Shetzer, who lived in Detroit, he must meet this girl, which he did. On March 19, 1899, Minnie and Issac were married in Traverse City. The marriage was performed by the Jewish community's acting "rabbi", Abraham Rubiner!

Minnie and Issac settled in Detroit. Soon after Minnie's marriage the Sarasohn family moved to Detroit, and Rachel and Samuel Burnstein moved their family to Windsor, Ontario.

In 1881 Philip Bernstein opened a dry goods store in Fife Lake (31 miles southeast of Traverse City), which he kept for many years.<sup>34</sup> He was born in Russia and his wife, Barbette, was born in Germany. Their six children were born in Fife Lake: Siegfried, in 1884; Hattie, 1888; Martha, 1891; Bertha, 1893; Bernhart, 1896 and Gertrude, 1898.<sup>35</sup> The Bernsteins were one of the families who came to Traverse City for the holidays to attend services at the synagogue. They were still in Fife Lake around 1915. It is not known when they moved from the area or where they went.

Sam Harris came to Traverse City in the Late 1880's.<sup>36</sup> The first reference to him is in 1892, as one of the trustees of Congregation Beth El, his name appearing on a mortgage taken out that year. Whether his wife came with him or joined him later is not known. Their children were: Gertrude, Louis, Earl, Sarah and Celia. It is not known where Gertrude and Louis were born. The three younger children were probably born in Traverse City. Sam had asthma and did not work steadily. A William Harris, who was graduated from the Traverse City High School in 1897, was quite probably the "Uncle Bill" of that family. In any case, we do know that the Harris' "Uncle Bill" opened a dry-goods store in Maback, Texas, and Louis joined him as a partner in the business. Meanwhile the rest of the Harris family moved to Chicago.

When Louis was discharged from the Armed Forces in 1918, he went to Chicago and there met Rae Lazarus, daughter of Abraham and Sarah Lazarus of Traverse City. Louis and Rae were married that year and settled in Maback, Texas.

Escaping the pogroms, Joe and Sarah Shalin left Kiev, Russia, in 1891.<sup>37</sup> They came directly to Traverse City, as Mrs. Shalin had one sister, Mrs. Sam Harris, there and another sister, Mrs. Goldstick, in Petoskey, Michigan. The Shalins had eight children: Nathan, Gertrude, Ben, Morton, Henry, Ephraim, Jack and Earl. Mr. Shalin earned his livelihood selling and repairing shoes. His shop was on Front Street, the main business street in Traverse City. Morton became bar mitzva in Traverse City in 1914, under the tutelage of Rabbi Zuckerman, who moved to Traverse City from Escanaba. The rabbi later moved to Montana to be with his children. The Shalin family left Traverse City in 1919.

Benn and Jennie Wepman came to Traverse City in 1890 from Germany.<sup>38</sup> Of their three children, Israel, Annie and Flora, two were born in Traverse City. Benn's brother, Schulam, and sister-in-law, Fayga, lived in Copemish, about thirty miles southwest of Traverse City. Benn was a hardware merchant and had a store in town. Eventually his brother came from Copemish to join him in the business.

From 1887-1893 Herman Fishel was a tailor in Traverse City.<sup>39</sup> He was also one of the trustees of the synagogue in 1889 and again in 1892, his name appearing on the mortgages taken out in those years. Samuel Fishel was also a trustee of the synagogue in 1892 and his name appears on the mortgage taken out in that year.

Miss Augusta L. Rosenthal was a practicing physician in Traverse City from 1887 to 1901. In 1901 she is listed as Augusta L. Rosenthal-Thompson, presumably having married.

In 1893 Abraham Fryman was a shoemaker in Traverse City and Samuel Cohen had a dry goods store. Fryman moved after a few years and settled permanently in Petoskey.

In 1895 Samuel Cohen still had his dry goods store in Traverse City, Jacob Gordon was a tailor and Mrs. Ida Goldman has a restaurant. Charles Rosenthal had a general store in Traverse city and Nathan and Harry Hirschberg had a general store in Elk Rapids.

In 1897 and again in 1899 Charles Rosenthal was listed in business in Traverse City and the Hirschbergs were still in business in Elk Rapids.<sup>40</sup>

*(To be continued.)*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The first saw mill was built by Horace Boardman in 1847. See *History of the Grand Traverse Bay Region* (Traverse City Chamber of Commerce).

<sup>2</sup>Letter to Mrs. Ellen Fivenson, president of Temple Beth El, from Martha M. Bigelow, secretary of the Michigan Historical Commission, History Division, Michigan Department of State.

<sup>3</sup>Jacob ("Jake") Steinberg was only fourteen years of age in 1882. However, was considered an adult, having become bar mitzva the previous year.

<sup>4</sup>The manuscripts are framed and on view at Temple Beth El in Traverse City.

<sup>5</sup>*Inventory of the Church and Synagogue Archives of Michigan: Jewish Bodies*, (Detroit: Michigan Historical Records Survey Project, 1940), p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup>*Grand Traverse Herald*, November 19, 1885, as quoted in *The Traverse City Record Eagle*, October 18, 1977.

<sup>8</sup>Information regarding the Levinson family came from Mrs. Harriet B. Plavnick of Hollywood, Florida, and from Mrs. Rose Rosenthal of Petoskey, Michigan. Mrs. Plavnick is the granddaughter of Julius Levinson; her mother was Gertrude Levinson Caplan. Mrs. Rosenthal is the niece of Julius Levinson; her mother was Lena Levinson Segal, sister of Julius. Correspondence between these two informants and the authors lasted most of 1977. It was not until the autumn of 1977, however, that a windfall of information came to our attention. A fire in Traverse City a few years previous destroyed some buildings in the downtown district. As the rubble was being cleared away a packet of documents was found. It contained the business records from Julius Steinberg's 1886 file. Among them were the Beth El Articles of Incorporation, membership lists, family miscellanea (wedding invitations, etc.), as well as business correspondence. These papers contributed greatly to information on the Levinson, Yalomstein, Goldman and Steinberg families. The authors are indebted to Mrs. Julius Belfour (Jennie) of Traverse City for notifying us of the existence of these papers and for her kindness in sending them to us. They are now in the possession of Jack Bensley of Traverse City. Another source of information on the synagogue and on the above families was found in *The Traverse City Record Eagle* account (October 1977) of the historical marker dedication ceremonies at Temple Beth El, which took place October 16, 1977 (see also *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 16-17).

<sup>9</sup>United States Census, 1880. A gravestone in a field in Provemont (near Traverse City and presently known as Lake Leelanau) marks the resting place of a four-year-old Nette Levinson (daughter of Julius), who died August 18, 1883. The lettering on the marker is in Hebrew. The grave in its solitary location first came to our attention in the book *Heritage of Provemont* by Vonda Belanger, p. 30. A picture of the tombstone was accompanied by an incorrect description (owing to the author's ignorance of Hebrew). Why this grave is located in Provemont may be explained by the fact that there was as yet no Jewish cemetery in Traverse City. Also, it is possible that the boundaries of Surdenburg at the time may have included this location. The grave is a reminder of the many hardships endured by the early settlers. We are indebted to Mrs. Shirley Plamondon Tanguay, formerly of Suttons Bay, Michigan, for a photograph of the gravestone and for the recollections she recorded from her father. He said that as a child, he and his friends played in the field where the grave was located; some believed that it was an Indian grave because they could not read the lettering, and Indians lived in the area.

<sup>10</sup>Letter from Mrs. Harriet B. Plavnick (granddaughter of Julius Levinson) to the authors, February 28, 1977. In a subsequent letter, dated April 16, 1977, Mrs. Plavnick stated that her grandparents had an Indian girl working for them. Moreover, the 1880 U.S. Census lists together with the Levinson family a servant with the unusual name of Spaneuse Cane.

<sup>11</sup>*Michigan Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Company, 1873-1931), 1879 edition.



- <sup>12</sup> Among the family keepsakes is the receipt Benjamin was given for payment of twenty dollars, the enrollment fee in a Traverse City High School evening commercial course. The receipt is dated November 12, 1887 and is signed by Charles T. Grawn, the first Superintendent of Schools in Traverse City.
- <sup>13</sup> *Michigan Gazetteer*.
- <sup>14</sup> *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (November 1965), pp. 11-13.
- <sup>15</sup> Elvin Sprague, Esq. and Mrs. George N. Smith, *Sprague's History of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties, Michigan* (n.p.: B.F. Bowen, 1903), p.300.
- <sup>16</sup> Al Barnes, *Supper in the Evening* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1967), p. 139.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140
- <sup>18</sup> Seating capacity information from Jack Bensley of Traverse City.
- <sup>19</sup> Information regarding the Yalomstein family was received from Evelyn Yalomstein (daughter of Solomon Yalomstein) of Southfield, Michigan, in three telephone interviews in 1977, and from Shen Smith of Elk Rapids, Michigan, whose husband, Richard Smith, is the great-grandson of Solomon Yalomstein.
- <sup>20</sup> *Michigan Gazetteer*. Also, daughter Fanny was born in Elk Rapids in 1876.
- <sup>21</sup> Information regarding the Goldman family was received from Lydia Grey, whose husband, Archie, is a grandson of Solomon Goldman (his mother was Lena Goldman Goldstick), and from Gertrude Goldman Foster, granddaughter of Solomon (daughter of Solomon's son, Louis). Information on American-born children's birthdates was obtained from the 1880 U.S. Census.
- <sup>22</sup> Patricia A. Holcomb, Register of Deeds, Kalkaska County, Kalkaska, Michigan.
- <sup>23</sup> Sources for business dates for Goldman, Yalomstein and the Alperns: *Michigan Gazetteer*, 1883, 1885, 1887 and 1891 editions.
- <sup>24</sup> *Michigan Gazetteer*, 1881, 1887.
- <sup>25</sup> Information on the Aaron Goldfarb family was received from his granddaughter, Marcia Goldfarb Peven (daughter of Gerald), in two interviews - - January 3 and January 29, 1979.
- <sup>26</sup> "New York Attorney Makes a Case for Elk Rapids" by Richard H. Lewis (grandson of Aaron Goldfarb), *Traverse City Record Eagle*, December 8, 1976, p. 25.

- <sup>27</sup>Information regarding the Greenberg family came from interviews with the following grandchildren of Avram Greenberg: Sara Greenberg Goldfarb (January 8, 1979), Bessie Greenberg Simons (January 16, 1979); from letters of Theresa Greenberg (whose husband, Samuel, was Avram's grandson), January 30, 1979; and Nettie Greenberg Epstein, January 20, 1979 to the authors.
- <sup>28</sup>Letter from Mrs. Nettie Epstein, February 21, 1979 to the authors. Avram's grandchildren in St. Paul, Minnesota (Phillip's children) were once told by their Uncle Benjamin that the Greenbergs and Sir Moses were related. It was suggested that this was the reason Avram extended birthday wishes to Montefiore.
- <sup>29</sup>A racket store carried miscellaneous household items such as dishes, cookware, and other items such as men's work clothes, etc.
- <sup>30</sup>Information regarding the Meir Sandelman family was received from Sara Greenberg Goldberg and Bessie Greenberg Simons, daughters of Minnie Sandelman and Jacob Greenberg (see note 27).
- <sup>31</sup>Samuel had become bar mitza shortly before coming to the United States, which establishes the year of his family's arrival in Traverse City. Information regarding the Sarasohn family was received from interviews with the following Sarasohn grandchildren: Ethel Shetzer Frank, daughter of Minnie Sarasohn (January 19, 1979); Ralph Bernstein, son of Sarah Sarasohn (January 25, 1979); Sidney Sarasohn, son of Samuel Sarasohn (January 28, 1979); Miriam Shetzer Keidan, daughter of Minnie Sarasohn (February 8, 1979); and Cecille Burnstein Levy, daughter of Rachel Sarasohn (February 12, 1979).
- <sup>32</sup>Information regarding the Rubiner family was received from Judge Charles Rubiner, son of Abraham Rubiner. In 1951 while attending the bar mitza ceremony in Traverse City of Robert Adler (whose parents, Ilsa and Henry Adler, Holocaust survivors, had then recently arrived in Traverse City) at Congregation Beth El, he picked up an old prayer book in which he found his father's signature and the date 1903, further confirmation of his family's presence in the city that year.
- <sup>33</sup>Telephone interview with Miriam Shetzer Keidan, February 8, 1979.
- <sup>34</sup>*Michigan Gazetteer*, 1881.
- <sup>35</sup>U.S. Census, 1900.
- <sup>36</sup>Information on the Sam Harris family was received from Eva Lazarus Leach, whose sister, Rae, married Sam's son Lou.
- <sup>37</sup>Interview with Morton Shalin (by Bess Dutsch), Chicago, April, 1976.
- <sup>38</sup>Letter from Benn Wepman of Grand Rapids, Michigan to the authors, August 28, 1976; also, U.S. Census, 1900.

<sup>39</sup>*Michigan Gazetteer*, 1887, 1893.

<sup>40</sup>Information on Rosenthals, Fryman, Cohen, Gordon, Goldman, Hischbergs from *Michigan Gazetteer*, 1887-1901 editions.

The gratitude of the authors is extended to the following persons for their invaluable assistance in the research of this article: Ellen Fivenson of Traverse City (Temple Beth El); Jennie Belfour of Suttons Bay (Steinberg business letters); Sue Fishman of Traverse City (synagogue records); Jack Bensley of Traverse City (loan of Steinberg records); Sibby Cohen Glücksman (location of Aaron Goldfarb descendants); Jean Warshaw (loan of Traverse City history books); Eva Lazaraus Leach; Margaret Ward, Mildred Hilton and Mrs. Noel Van Gordon of the Burton Historical Collection; Mervin and Elaine Jacobson, Bluma Gilbert and Roseman Berlin Danto (location of Julius Levinson descendants). We owe special thanks to Norma Appel for her examination of the *Michigan Gazetteer* editions of 1879-1903, and the 1900 U.S. Census.

DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES: JACOB R. MARCUS, Ph. D.  
*Milton and Hattie Kut; Distinguished Service Professor of American Jewish History,  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion*

## AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

CLIFTON AVENUE • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220

April 5, 1979

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
21720 Parklawn Avenue  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

Dear Friends:

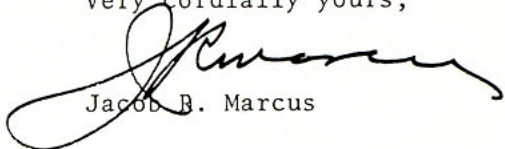
I have been informed that the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its founding this June. I hasten to write and congratulate the men and women who had the vision to create this fine organization.

If American Jewry is to develop, it must always take pride in its past. We are indeed a distinguished people. We have been on this continent since the middle 1600's when a Jewish merchant walked the streets of Boston. This was in a day when John Alden and Miles Standish were still alive.

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is making a magnificent contribution to the story of our adventure on this great continent. All of us who are students and researchers are grateful to the Society and congratulate it heartily on its 20th anniversary.

With all good wishes, I am

Very cordially yours,



Jacob R. Marcus

JRM/rr

## FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF UNITED JEWISH CHARITIES OF DETROIT AND FIRST LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS, 1899-1900

By IRVING I. KATZ

The United Jewish Charities of Detroit was founded by Rabbi Leo M. Franklin of Temple Beth El on November 21, 1899. It consisted of the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, Jewish Relief Society of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society, and Self-Help Circle. The following is the text of the first annual report presented by D.W. Simons, first president of the United Jewish Charities, on October 25, 1900:

### President's Report.

Detroit, October 25, 1900.

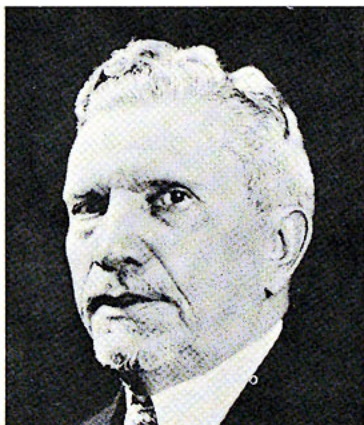
*To the Officers and Contributors of the United Jewish Charities:*

Ladies and Gentlemen—United Charities are a decided success in other communities, and ours will be no exception. The first year's experiment shows favorable results, as will be demonstrated by the able reports of the officers of the several affiliated societies. The personal efforts and self-sacrifices made by our worthy co-workers certainly merit support and encouragement. The tribute of sincere admiration is due to those ladies whose silent but effective work is of the utmost importance and benefit, not only to the poor but also to the officers in the administration of their trust.

In summing up briefly the work done during the first year by the United Jewish Charities, and looking forward to the future, to see how best we can alleviate the sufferings and remedy the unhappy condition of those so near to us, I cannot but feel the difficulties which encompass my undertaking. It is possible and probable that no single thought that I can lay before you will be new to you; but if I can recapitulate and formulate the ideas that have now and then flitted through your minds I shall consider myself well repaid.

---

IRVING I. KATZ, the recently-deceased executive secretary of Temple Beth El, was a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and a former editor of *Michigan Jewish History*.



David W. Simons, first president of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit, 1900-1903.

We need only to recognize that charity "is duty," and that our highest ideal should be the fulfillment of that duty which brings its own reward. It seems to me that we must seek to aid the poor by learning what they actually need instead of simply getting rid of them as cheaply as we can, and then repeating the operation as often as we must. It will, of course, require time and energy to thoroughly analyze the condition and position of the applicant at the start, and in every possible manner to extend such aid and advice as will make him self-supporting; and encourage instead of wrecking his self-reliance and personal pride. It matters not how much or how little effort and expenditure is required on our part, if the aid be effective our duty will be well done.

Those hopeless cases, however, which must be assisted continuously should also have our consideration at the start, and whatever assistance our ability will permit should hereafter be sent to them regularly as long as there is no change in their condition; but the paying out of money and the encouraging of them to assemble at our meeting place, where one may learn the disgrace of the other, should by all means be abandoned except in emergency cases.

We recognize the fact that to do effective work on the broader lines of charity, we must have either greater financial support or rid ourselves of the ancient pensioners, but as the latter method is hopeless the former must be agitated. While we can appreciate the support we have received during the past year from nearly two hundred and fifty sympathizers with our cause, yet there is no good reason why twice as many should not be enrolled upon our books as contributors and even as co-workers.

It is unnecessary to call to your attention that in order to continue our work conveniently, better quarters should be at our command; but as I have no feasible plan to lay before you I can only hope that this will be accomplished in some way. I also believe that in order to systematize our work and properly and promptly attend to the wants of those in whose interest our work is undertaken it is

absolutely necessary to have a competent person employed, as the entire burden of the details placed on men busy in their business vocations is unreasonable, and results are sometimes not satisfactory.

It is true, and no one appreciates it more than I do, that the personal sacrifice made by our superintendent, Mr. Joseph H. Wertheimer, is immeasurable, as is also the considerable work performed by our secretary, Mr. A. Benjamin. Still closer proximity and regular communication should be had with some one who would have no other occupation.

### THE GEMILAS CHASODIM SOCIETY.

This admirable system of charity that preserves character and obviates the stigma of receiving alms, deserves your utmost consideration. One who still possesses pride and yet is in need of immediate assistance and is permitted to return a loan, without interest, in small installments, and thus cancel his obligation, has been aided at no sacrifice of his personal character or financial loss to anyone: providing such a system is carried on in strict confidence. The reports of all similar institutions are remarkable for their operations without loss.

### THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF JEWISH CHARITIES IN AMERICA.

The last conference, held in the city of Chicago, your representatives found to be of much interest to the cause of scientific charity. The immediate benefit resulting from this organization is the interchange by telegraph and mail of friendly and accurate information about traveling applicants, and the agreement that no helpless indigent shall be sent from city to city without first obtaining the consent of the charity organization of the place of destination. Our association has already been benefited by the courtesies exchanged with other affiliated associations.

The financial affairs of this association for the year just closing are as follows:

The total receipts from all sources (245 subscribers)	\$4,283.85
Disbursements by the Ladies' Sewing Society	\$ 567.80
Self Help Circle .....	116.62
General Expenses .....	462.14
Assisted 74 families, of which 30 are pensioners	2,498.72
Transportation to 85 persons .....	312.44
Donations to 58 persons .....	148.90
Expense for the recently arrived Romanians .....	97.43

---

Total..... 4,204.05 \$4,204.05

---

Balance remaining on hand on the 18th, that has been drawn  
 been drawn on since ..... \$ 79.30

In conclusion permit me to express my gratitude to all and my conviction that the United Jewish Charities, now firmly established, will ever be found faithful to its self-imposed task of alleviating human misery in all its various aspects.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID W. SIMONS,  
President.

The following is the first list of contributors to the United Jewish Charities, 1899-1900:

Donations to the United Jewish Charities,  
1899-1900

Aaron, Chas. D . . . . .	\$ 5.00	Enggass, Adolph . . . . .	10.00
Altman, L. E. . . . .	5.00	Ellenstein, Mrs. Libby . .	2.50
Appelbaum, L. . . . .	10.00	Frohlich, S. & Son. . . . .	25.00
Augushewitz, Meyer. . . . .	5.00	Friedberg, Jacob . . . . .	5.00
Amberg, Lee. . . . .	5.00	Franklin, A. J. . . . .	10.00
Appelbaum Isaac. . . . .	20.00	Franklin, Rabbi Leo M. . .	25.00
Appelbaum Mr. . . . .	3.00	Frank, Isadore . . . . .	25.00
Aronheim, Sig. . . . .	15.00	Friedman, Jacob . . . . .	25.00
Binswanger, H. . . . .	25.00	Feldheim, Adolph . . . . .	30.00
Blitz, Louis . . . . .	50.00	Finsterwald, Jos . . . . .	10.00
Barnett, Louis. . . . .	5.00	Fink, M. . . . .	10.00
Butzel, Leo M. . . . .	10.00	Freud, Leopold. . . . .	50.00
Blumenthal, D . . . . .	25.00	Frienderberg, R . . . . .	10.00
Blumrosen, M., Manis- tique, Mich. . . . .	25.00	Fleishman, Mark . . . . .	20.00
Butzel, Magnus . . . . .	50.00	Feibish, Philip. . . . .	5.00
Butzel, Mrs. Magnus. . . . .	10.00	Fechheimer, Dr. K. M. . .	5.00
Butzel, Martin. . . . .	25.00	Friedman, H. . . . .	5.00
Butzel, Henry M . . . . .	25.00	Feldman, I. M. . . . .	5.00
Berger, C. B . . . . .	15.00	Freud, Julius . . . . .	30.00
Blumenthal, H. S. . . . .	50.00	Frank, E . . . . .	15.00
Bielfield, N. . . . .	2.00	Fink, V . . . . .	3.00
Bernstein, Harry . . . . .	5.00	Fechheimer, Henry M. . .	10.00
Berkowitz, J. . . . .	4.00	Freund, Adolph . . . . .	10.00
Barron, A. . . . .	5.00	Golden, Louis. . . . .	25.00
Berman, B . . . . .	3.00	Ginsburg, N. S . . . . .	115.00
Brilling, Harry. . . . .	5.00	Ginsburg, Bernhard . . . .	100.00
Blumrosen, B., Sault Ste. Marie . . . . .	10.00	Goodman, Joseph . . . . .	3.00
Blumenthal & Immerman	5.00	Gottfield, I. . . . .	5.00
Cohen, L. . . . .	3.00	Goldsmith, L . . . . .	5.00
Cohen, S . . . . .	7.00	Goldberg, J . . . . .	3.00
Cohen, B. . . . .	2.00	Goldberg, B . . . . .	1.00
Cohen, Abraham . . . . .	3.00	Gelbloom, C. . . . .	3.00
Caplan, S. . . . .	5.00	Groneman, Sol . . . . .	5.00
Davis, D. W . . . . .	5.00	Goldman, H. L . . . . .	10.00
Davis, Michael. . . . .	5.00	Green, A . . . . .	5.00
Danto, C . . . . .	5.00	Goldberg, J . . . . .	7.50
Danto, A . . . . .	5.00	Goldman, S . . . . .	15.00
Ehrlich, H . . . . .	3.00	Grosslight, Jos . . . . .	3.00
		Grosslight, L. R. . . . .	10.00
		Goldstein, Sam . . . . .	20.00



Granet, Louis . . . . .	5.00	Lambert, Ben . . . . .	15.00
Goldsmith, Chas . . . . .	5.00	Lowman, Oscar . . . . .	15.00
Goldman, A . . . . .	25.00	Landsberg, Albert . . . . .	25.00
Gordon, H . . . . .	4.00	Landsberg, Isabella . . . . .	10.00
Goldberg Bros. . . . .	25.00	Marymont, A . . . . .	20.00
Goldberg, Dr . . . . .	5.00	Marks, Henry . . . . .	10.00
Grabowsky, Max . . . . .	5.00	May, Max . . . . .	15.00
Greenberg, Isaac . . . . .	5.00	Mendellssohn, Aaron . . . . .	5.00
Greenberg, M. & Son . . . . .	10.00	Marx, M. . . . .	10.00
Harris, M . . . . .	5.00	Morwilsky, N . . . . .	5.00
Hart, Sim . . . . .	5.00	Mendellssohn, L . . . . .	10.00
Heavenrich, Simon . . . . .	5.00	Meyer, Louis . . . . .	5.00
Heavenrich, Mrs. Sam'l . . . . .	10.00	Morris, B. G. & Bro . . . . .	25.00
Heavenrich, Walter S. . . . .	10.00	Marx, Herman . . . . .	5.00
Heavenrich, John A . . . . .	10.00	Mitchel, Mrs. . . . . .	5.00
Higer, L . . . . .	5.00	Meyers, H . . . . .	5.00
Heineman, Mrs. Fannie . . . . .	50.00	Marymont, Fred . . . . .	5.00
Heineman, Sol . . . . .	20.00	Mayer, David . . . . .	10.00
Heineman, David . . . . .	10.00	Marx, J.L. . . . .	5.00
Hofman, Sig . . . . .	20.00	Mitschkun, M . . . . .	10.00
Hirschfield, C. B . . . . .	3.00	Marx, Adolph . . . . .	10.00
Hill, Hugo . . . . .	15.00	Neederlander, Jos . . . . .	5.00
Heyn, Emil . . . . .	25.00	Newman, Julius . . . . .	10.00
Heavenrich, Samuel . . . . .	25.00	Oppenheim, B. . . . .	3.00
Jacobson, Meyer . . . . .	5.00	Ollesheimer, Mrs. B . . . . .	15.00
Jacobs, A . . . . .	30.00	Pollasky, M. (Alma) . . . . .	5.00
Jatovsky, J . . . . .	10.00	Peretz, Z . . . . .	5.00
Jacobs, Max . . . . .	5.50	Pollasky, Max . . . . .	5.00
Jacobson, David (Green- ville) . . . . .	10.00	Rothschild, Sigmund . . . . .	100.00
Krolik, Herman . . . . .	50.00	Rothschild, Kaufman . . . . .	50.00
Kuttnauer, Louis . . . . .	30.00	Rosenfield, Fred . . . . .	25.00
Kuttnauer, Isadore . . . . .	10.00	Rosenfield, Monroe . . . . .	25.00
Kuttnauer, Adolph . . . . .	10.00	Rothschild, Louis . . . . .	25.00
Krolik, Henry A . . . . .	50.00	Rothschild, Sidney . . . . .	15.00
Kaufman, A. B . . . . .	8.00	Redelsheimer, Chas . . . . .	10.00
Kaplan, H . . . . .	5.00	Roth, Mrs. Kate . . . . .	5.00
Klein, Mr . . . . .	6.00	Rothschild, Mrs. H . . . . .	10.00
Keidan, A . . . . .	4.00	Rosenthal, S. (Petoskey) . . . . .	25.00
Keidan, Wolf H . . . . .	10.00	Rosenthal, Chas. (Tra- verse City) . . . . .	5.00
Kanter, Henry L . . . . .	25.00	Rosengarten, Wm . . . . .	5.00
Kanter, Chas. . . . .	15.00	Rose, Samuel . . . . .	15.00
Kessler, Mendel . . . . .	2.00	Rosenfield, Jos . . . . .	5.00
Keiter, S . . . . .	2.00	Rothman, E. M . . . . .	15.00
Kimche, F . . . . .	3.00	Redelsheimer, Max . . . . .	15.00
King, M. & Son . . . . .	10.00	Rothschild, Alfred . . . . .	25.00
Kaufman, Nathan . . . . .	10.00	Robinson, Adolph . . . . .	15.00
Krauss, Jas. J . . . . .	10.00	Rosenzweig, Jos . . . . .	50.00
Levin, Jacob . . . . .	5.00	Robinson, David . . . . .	5.00
Levy, J. J . . . . .	10.00	Rosen, H . . . . .	5.00
Lightstone, E . . . . .	5.00	Rosenberg, E. H . . . . .	5.00
Lieberman, Max (Port Huron) . . . . .	5.00	Rosen, A. D . . . . .	10.00
Levy, Wm. K . . . . .	10.00	Rosenthal, J. P . . . . .	10.00
Lewis, S . . . . .	5.00	Rosenberg, A. E . . . . .	10.00
Lichtenstein, Jos . . . . .	5.00	Rosenthal, David . . . . .	4.50
Lang, David . . . . .	5.00	Showitz, M . . . . .	3.00
Levi, H. & A . . . . .	10.00	Sloman, Mark . . . . .	15.00
Lieberman, Israel (Alg- gonac) . . . . .	5.00	Sabel, L. (Lake City) . . . . .	10.00
		Saulson, H . . . . .	10.00
		Simon, A. (Lansing) . . . . .	10.00

Smilansky, M . . . . .	10.00
Selling, Ben B. . . . .	5.00
Selling, J. L . . . . .	10.00
Selling, Zach. . . . .	10.00
Selling, Jerome . . . . .	5.00
Solomon, A . . . . .	5.00
Sommerfield, Samuel . . .	15.00
Schloss, Albert W . . . . .	30.00
Siegel, J. . . . .	25.00
Simon, Sig . . . . .	25.00
Simon, A. & Co. . . . .	50.00
Samter, Albert . . . . .	3.00
Sheyer, David . . . . .	5.00
Steiner, Adolph. . . . .	5.00
Stearns, S. & Bro. . . . .	10.00
Straus, Louis . . . . .	5.00
Sinn, J. B. . . . .	25.00
Sarasohn, S. & Co . . . . .	3.00
Schlessinger, A . . . . .	7.00
Sloman, S. A . . . . .	25.00
Schloss, M. I. . . . .	25.00
Sloman, Eugene H. . . . .	25.00
Siegel, Anton . . . . .	25.00
Simons, D. W . . . . .	100.00
Schloss, Emanuel. . . . .	50.00
Siegel, Ben. . . . .	25.00
Schott, Moses . . . . .	30.00
Sloman, Adolph . . . . .	25.00
Schloss, Seligman . . . . .	100.00
Sempliner, Adolph. . . . .	5.00
Teichner, Wm. . . . .	5.00
Tobiansky, L . . . . .	5.00
Tannenholtz, Alex . . . . .	10.00
Van Baalen, Henry. . . . .	5.00
Victor, Arthur . . . . .	25.00
Van Baalen, Isaac . . . . .	10.00
Vineberg, L . . . . .	5.00
Van Baalen, E. H. . . . .	15.00
Wurzbürger, B. . . . .	25.00
Wineman, Sidney. . . . .	10.00
Weiss, Jos. M . . . . .	5.00
Wolfson, Sol. . . . .	1.00
Wetsman, A . . . . .	4.00
Wolf, N. . . . .	5.00
Wineman, Leopold. . . . .	50.00
Wineman, Mrs. L. . . . .	25.00
Welt, Louis. . . . .	25.00
Weil, M. C . . . . .	25.00
Wertheimer, Jos. H . . . . .	25.00
Wiener, L. . . . .	15.00
Weil, Mr. and Mrs. S.J. . .	5.00
Wodic, Emanuel . . . . .	15.00
Wollenburgh, H. . . . .	5.00
Wilkus, P. S . . . . .	10.00
Wein, M. . . . .	5.00

# American Jewish Historical Society

1900 Hanover Avenue  
Richmond, Va. 23220  
April 30, 1979

Ms. Doris Passell Easton  
President  
Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
21720 Parklawn Avenue  
Oak Park  
Michigan 48237

My dear President Doris:

It is my happy privilege to greet you upon the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

The American Jewish Historical Society is happy to be part of this "simcha" and thereby be able to extend best wishes for continued good fortune and success in your endeavors.

On behalf of the Officers and Executive Council of the American Jewish Historical Society I express the hope that the successful future of your Michigan group will include opportunities of our two organizations working very closely together.

MAZAL TOV!

Sincerely yours,



Saul Viener  
President

## BOOK REVIEW

**Little Jake of Saginaw.** By John Cumming. Mount Pleasant, Michigan: Rivercrest House. Available from John Cumming, 465 Hiawatha Drive, Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48858. x + 142 pp. \$10.00

There has been an unfortunate neglect of the exploration of the careers of those Jewish businessmen whose scope of activity was as important on the local and regional scene as were the national exploits of the Rosenwalds, Gimbels, et al. One of these locally based personages who lent color and a definite sense of entrepreneurial enterprise to nineteenth century Michigan business enterprise was Jacob Seligman of Pontiac and Saginaw, better known to his contemporaries as "Little Jake."

Jacob Seligman was a German Jewish immigrant, a native of Darmstadt, who arrived alone in the United States in 1859 at sixteen years of age. Apprenticed for a year to a tailor in New York City, Seligman, although penniless, accompanied a friend westward to the then bustling semi-frontier community of Pontiac, Michigan — a town then of 4,136 inhabitants.

After three years of diligent work, he had carefully saved one hundred dollars and opened his first clothing store in Pontiac in January of 1863. From the beginning Seligman indicated to the world that his approach to business was to be considerably different from that of the rather staid clothing merchants already on the central Michigan scene. Seligman proved to be a genius at advertising, employing every device fair or foul to entice customers into his stores. Throughout his career, "Little Jake" (as Seligman took to calling himself), engaged in intense and widely advertised price competition with his fellow merchants, accompanying his heavily stressed proclamations of low prices with only slightly veiled allusions to his competition's allegedly inferior and tawdry stock. The local newspapers soon fell under Seligman's thrall, rewarding the merchant's heavy advertising with news notices of virtually every aspect of his activities. Seligman became an extremely well known figure in Oakland County, being instantly identifiable to the motley assortment of immigrants, lumberjacks and people "on the make" who inhabited the rapidly growing area. Little Jake's financial fortunes accordingly waxed and he became affluent, although never to the extent that he proclaimed in the media.

In 1874 Seligman sold out his Pontiac business and moved to Saginaw, where he remained for the rest of his life.

John Cumming, in this labor of love, provides an excellently written and well-researched account of Seligman's life and career. Despite the author's avowed fondness for his subject, however, Cumming does not obscure the less pleasant aspects of Seligman's

life, presenting in the process a complete portrait of the man, "warts and all." Seligman, after all, was not only a successful merchant, but boastful and exceedingly vain as well. He left no device unused, no matter how unethical by present standards, in his effort to turn a dollar. Aggressive "mudslinging" and sometimes outright misrepresentation were not unknown means employed by him to gain his desired ends.

Underneath all of the hoopla and self-promotion that characterized Little Jake's public stance, Cumming reveals a figure of some tragedy. Certainly some of Seligman's overly aggressive public posture might be attributed to his short stature, along with his European ancestry in a foreign land. Seligman's personal life was characterized by sadness and misfortune. His first wife died soon after their marriage, and he divorced his second adulterous mate. His only child died at birth.

Seligman's only political venture was not marked with the success accruing to him as a merchant. Persuaded to run for mayor of East Saginaw in 1877 on the Republican ticket, Little Jake found himself the target of considerable venom and invective directed at him from the Democratic camp. He lost the election, an experience which left him with a permanent distaste for politics, as well as with a more sober view of his real standing in the community.

As far as it is known, Seligman had nothing to do with Jews, Judaism or the organized Jewish community in Michigan. Neither of his wives was Jewish. When he died, funeral services were conducted in a temple of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, of which he was a member. He was buried in the non-demoninational Forest Lawn cemetery in Chicago.

John Cumming's study of Jacob Seligman provides a most absorbing account of a curious personage in the history of Michigan Jewry, as well as of an interesting and to some extent pioneering figure in the annals of Michigan retail business. It is perhaps unfortunate that Cumming's book is printed in a limited edition, since its readability and importance of content is such as to justify a wide audience. The total lack of photographs and other graphics is unfortunate, as they could have so greatly enhanced this fine book. Nevertheless, Cumming as author and publisher is to be commended for his efforts.

Norman Lederer  
*Dean, Vocational and General Studies*  
*Washtenaw Community College*

## NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following persons and institutions who have recently become members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan:

Beth Israel Congregation (Ann Arbor)  
 Birmingham Temple  
 Congregation Beth Shalom  
 Arthur L. Glazer  
 Harry Goldstein  
 U.S. Senator Carl Levin  
 Evelyn Noveck  
 Harold Norris  
 Leona K. Perelman  
 Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Raznik  
 Mrs. Ted N. Sacks  
 Temple Kol Ami

## CORRECTIONS

Note the following corrections for Volume 19, Number 1, January 1979:

Page 3 heading to read: Editor's Foreword.

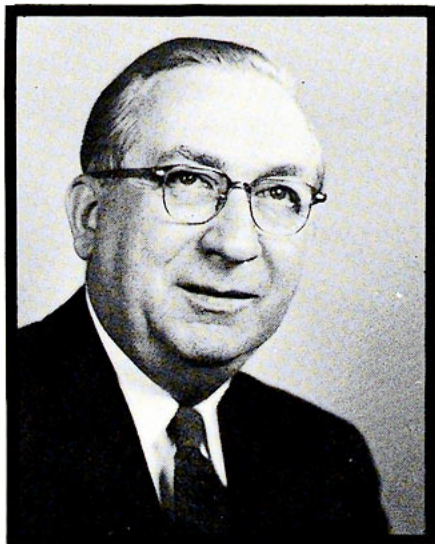
Page 4, paragraph 1, line 3 to read: Indeed, its principal. . .

Page 5, paragraph 2, line 6 to read: Five years after he arrived, in 1896, Louis married Yetta Imerman. . .

Page 9, paragraph 4, line 3 to read: Located on Manistee Lake. . .

Page 12, paragraph 2, line 1 to read: In 1871 Kohler went. . .

## IN MEMORIAM: IRVING I. KATZ



The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan notes with sorrow the death of Irving I. Katz, June 2, 1979, in Southfield, Michigan. Irving was a founding member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan; he served as our second President, from 1961 to 1963, and he was the editor of *Michigan Jewish History* from 1963 to 1965.

Born March 31, 1907 in Dvinsk, Latvia, Irving came to this country around 1936 and in 1939 he was named Executive Secretary of Detroit's Temple Beth El, a position he held until his death.

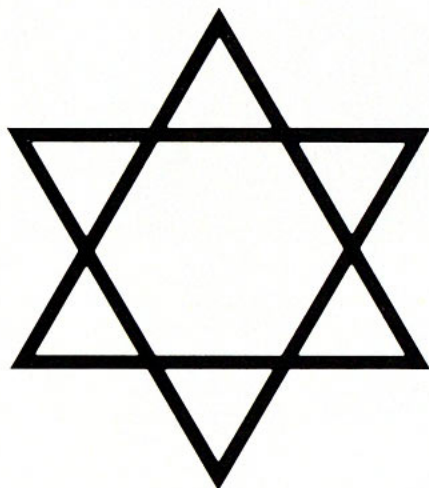
However, it was as a writer of history that Irving was best known. He devoted himself to the research and writing of Michigan Jewry, and his efforts resulted in numerous articles, books and audio-visual materials.

He was the author of two especially well-known books to historians: *The Beth El Story — With a History of the Jews in Michigan Before 1850* and *The Jewish Soldier From Michigan in the Civil War*. Moreover, his articles on Michigan Jewish history appeared in the pages of *The Detroit Jewish News*, *The Detroit News*, *The Detroit Free Press*, the *Detroit Historical Society Bulletin*, the *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, and many other periodicals. He wrote more than 15 pieces for our own *Michigan Jewish History*.

Irving was an active and valuable member of our Historical Society. Sadly missed, he will remain with us in memories of fondness and respect.

## NECROLOGY

BENJAMIN M. LAIKIN, died April 11, 1979. Mr. Laikin was a long-standing member of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. He was born in Russia and came to Detroit in 1929, and was in the wiping cloth business there until 1960. A strong advocate of Yiddish, Mr. Laikin was especially active in the cause of Labor Zionism.





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