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Diamond Jubilee, 1888-1963: Congregation Beth Israel

Congregation Beth Israel

Henry H. Segal

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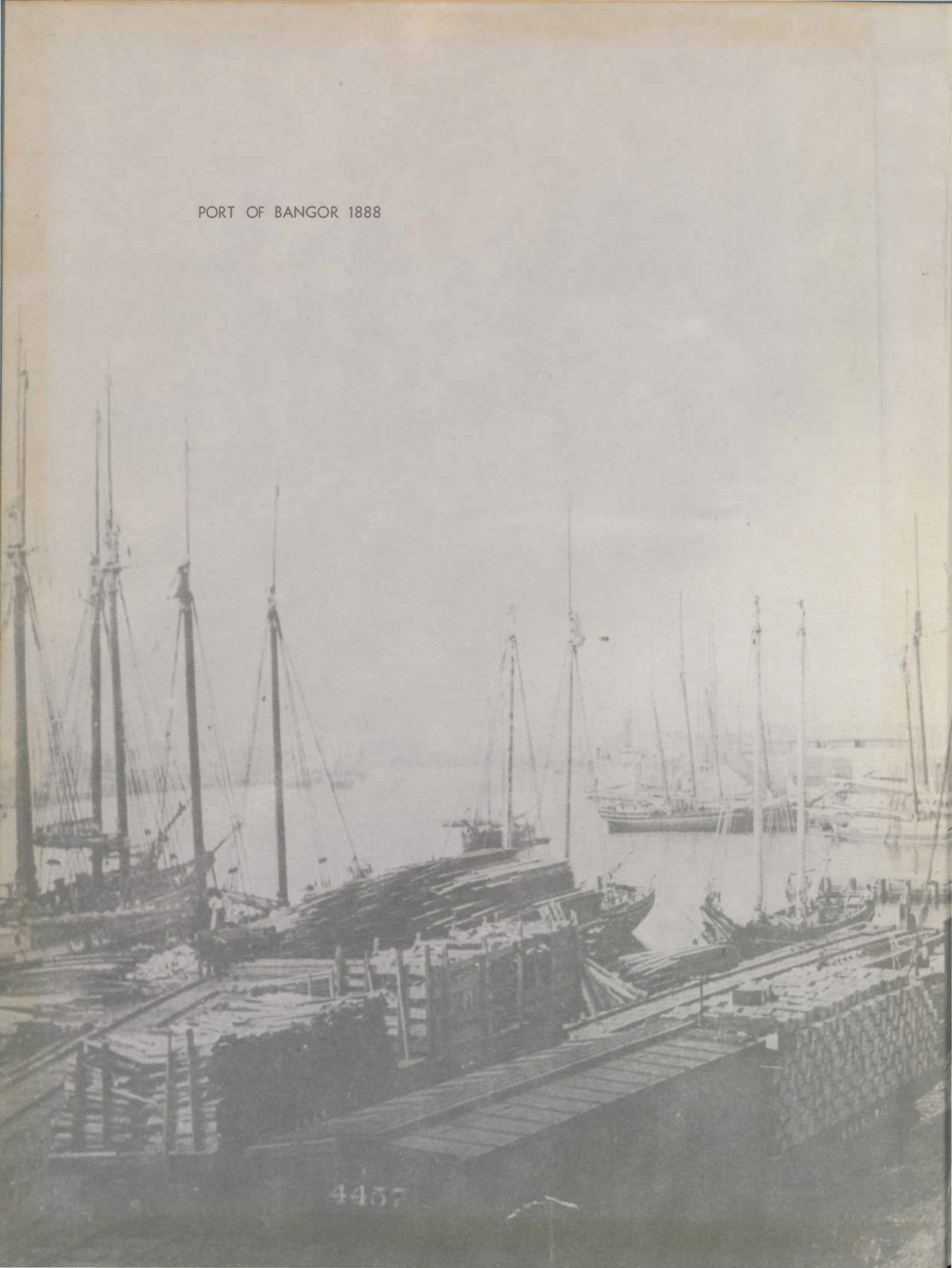
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL 1888-1963

PORT OF BANGOR 1888



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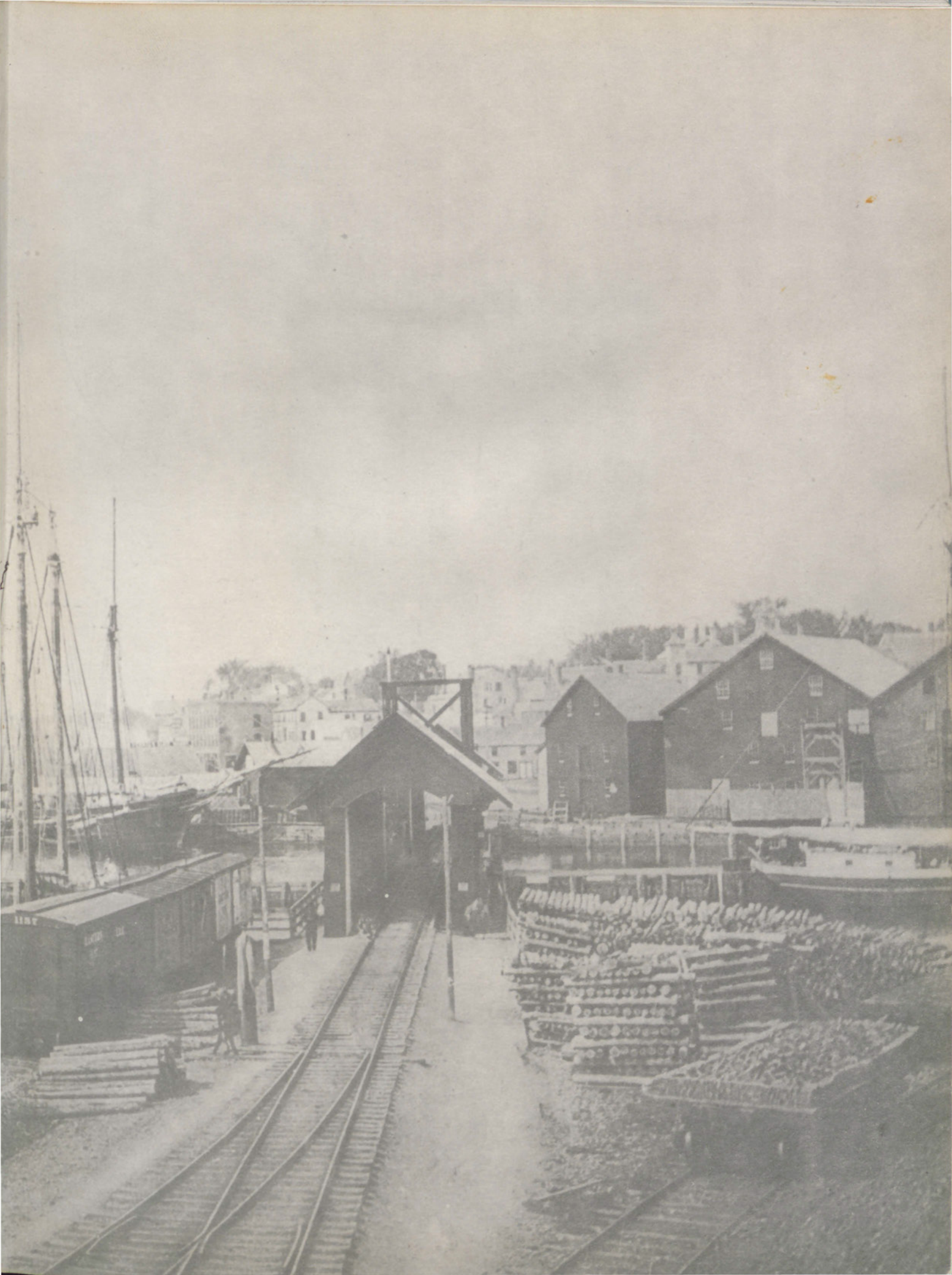

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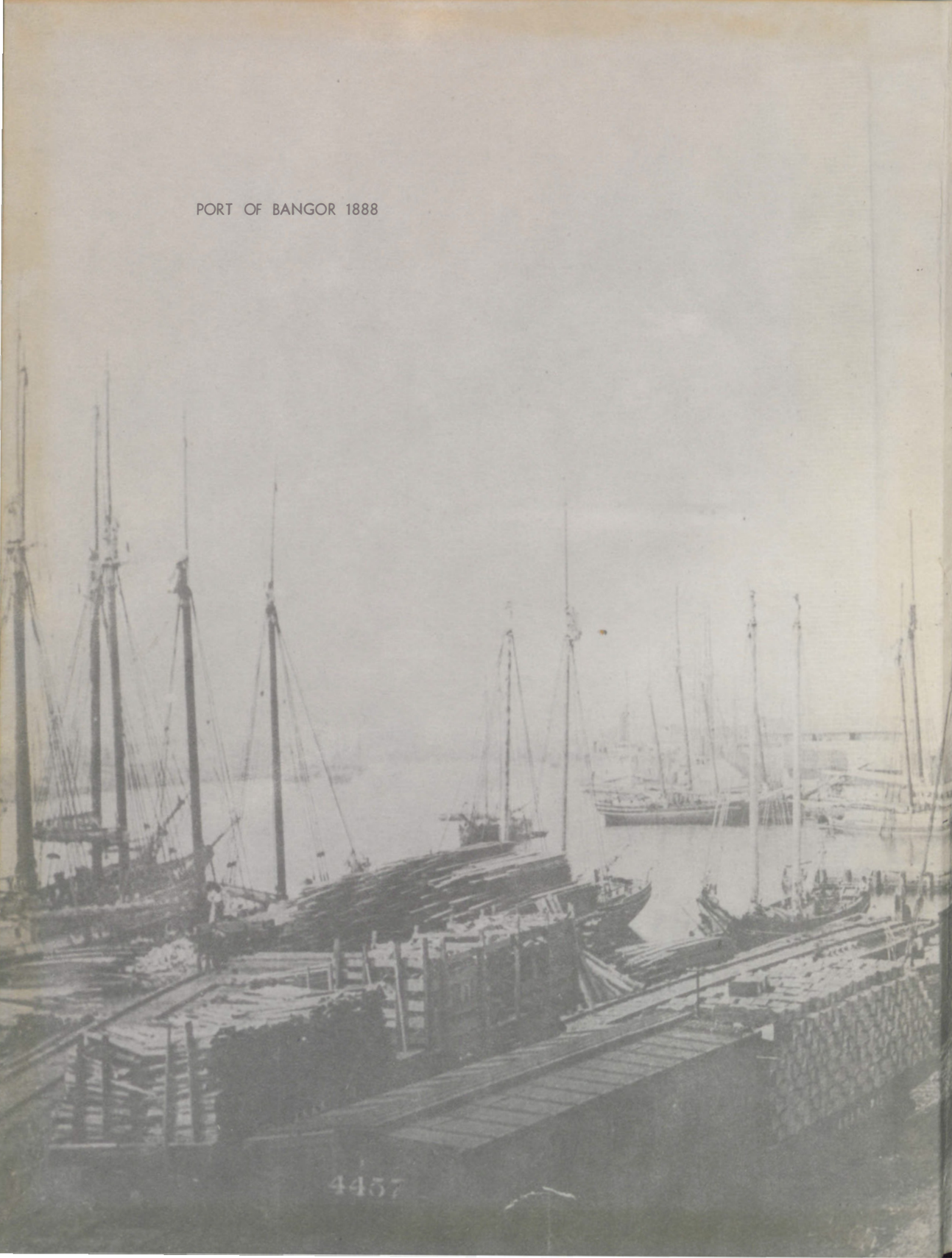

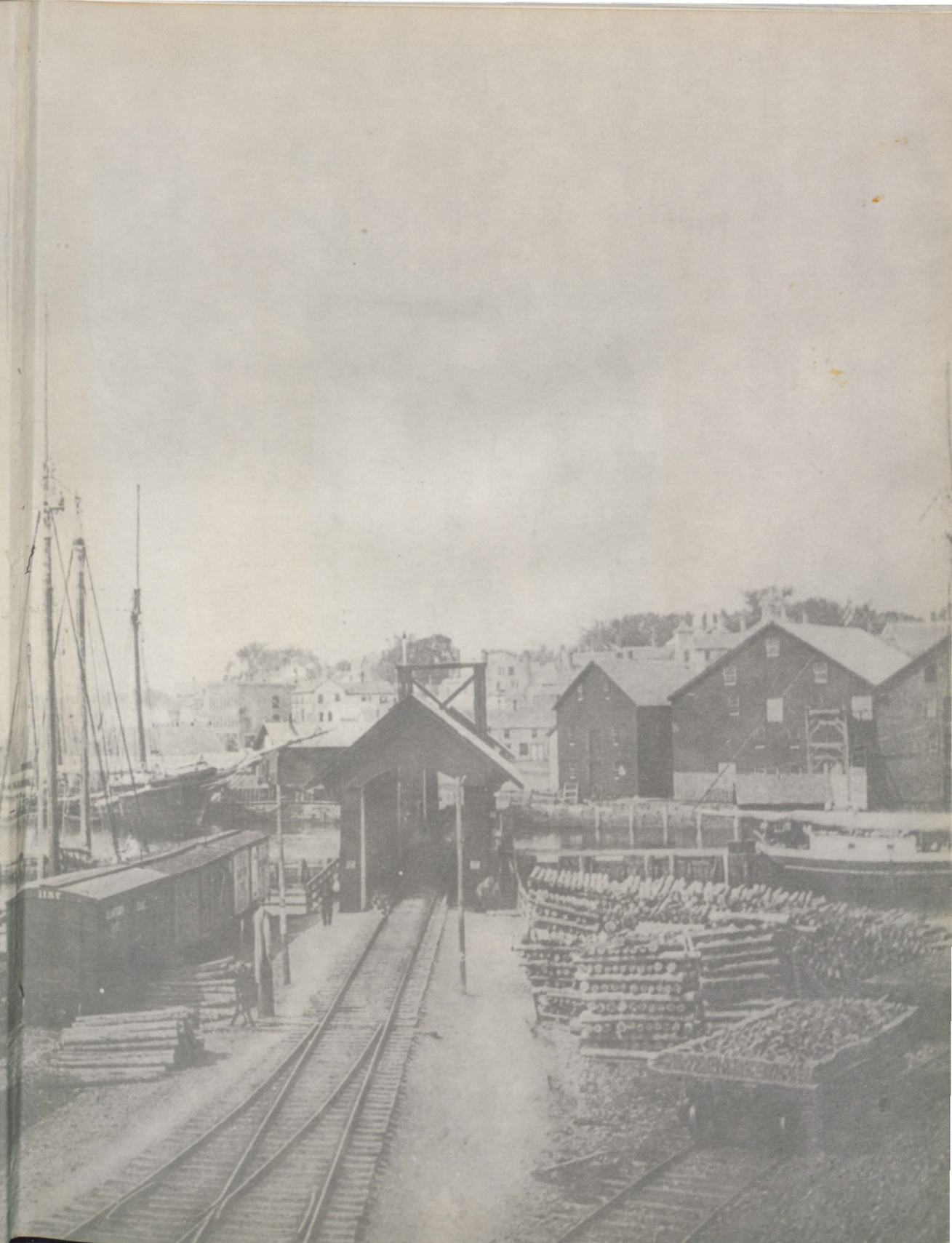

Congregation Beth Israel

BANGOR, MAINE

DIAMOND

1888-1963

JUBILEE

PRINTED FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

BY

FURBUSH-ROBERTS PRINTING CO., INC., BANGOR, MAINE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We believe we have explored every available source in compiling this short history of our Congregation. It has been our privilege to assemble from diverse corners all the Minute Books since Beth Israel was named excepting those of the 1930's, a complete set of records of the Chevra Kadisha, the Ladies' Auxiliary, and the Talmud Torah when it was solely sponsored by Congregation Beth Israel. The proceedings of the Congregation and the Chevra Kadisha were written in a fine Yiddish hand by Solomon Harris and Morris N. Golden.

Even so modest an effort as this is not possible without the aid of many willing friends. I wish first of all to express my gratitude for the information assembled by Mrs. Ann Brown, Mrs. Diane Cutler, Mrs. Rene Minsky, Mrs. Judy Rudman, Mrs. Delores Schiro, and Mrs. Marilyn Segal; for the technical advice of Mr. Morris Ollove.

Miss Olive Smythe and Mrs. Robert Wetzler of the Bangor Public Library were good enough to provide us with old pictures of Bangor and other pertinent information. For some of the photographs and information concerning old residents we are indebted to Lawrence Berson. We are grateful to Mrs. Ada Cohen Gleszer for the biography of her father, Max Cohen.

It is a happy circumstance that several of the direct descendents of the pioneers of the Congregation are still in our midst. We secured extremely valuable information from Mrs. Minnie Allen, daughter of Lemke Allen; Mr. Abraham Golden, the son of Morris N. Golden; Moses Byer, the son of Joseph Byer. Mr. A. B. Friedman and Mr. Abraham J. Berson also contributed information heretofore unrecorded. The Congregation remains in their debt.

While recognizing their assistance, I do not in any way shoulder them with responsibility for any statements or judgments in this document. That responsibility is solely mine.

Henry H. Segal
Editor

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. . . to build a house for the name of the Lord,
. . . I KINGS, VIII:17

WE COMMEMORATE the spiritual life and endeavors of a small group of faithful and devoted Jews. They brought to this region of northern New England not only their meager worldly goods and their high hopes for material success, but also their spiritual heritage which they in turn were ready and eager to foster, to cherish and to hand down to their posterity. We, their descendents, physical and spiritual, have the high privilege and sacred honor to testify to the growth and development of the institution which they founded seventy-five years ago. We do this both from a sense of pride that a fine Sanctuary is now the monument to their humble beginnings and also from a sense of humility that even this monument does not suffice to testify to the debt of gratitude and love which we owe to their memory.

וְהָלְכוּ גוֹיִם לְאוֹרֵךְ

And the nations shall walk in Thy light

ISAIAH 60:3

FOREWORD

Congregation Beth Israel, the oldest synagogue in the State of Maine, this year celebrates its 75th anniversary.

This is the story of Beth Israel—of the men and women who shaped its character—of the influences which patterned its destiny—of the spirit which has brought it through crises in the past and which must be trusted to preserve it in the future.

In the aggregate, this chronicle is a review of the Congregation's struggles, hopes and accomplishments. It is not meant to be a distinguished historical contribution nor a detailed chronological summary of the seventy-five years it covers. Instead, by selecting the more significant and human episodes in our growth, we hope to present a colorful pageant of the modest epic which is our history.

The personalities that have been interwoven are those of the men and women who, by general agreement, have been most responsible for the development of synagogal life and whose deeds have become a part of the tradition that is Beth Israel. There are others too, and though their names are not mentioned, the satisfaction of having participated in our growth must be its own reward.

Thus we do honor to the memory of those who made this congregation possible and sustained it through the rough and the smoother years. We would also make this modest contribution to the future history of the Jews in Bangor—a rounded pebble for some future historian to use in the compilation of an authoritative chronicle. We are all the more moved to do this when we realize that the centennial year will be celebrated twenty-five years hence. The more recent history of Beth Israel will not be so extensively dealt with since it is adequately recorded in the columns of the "Beth Israel Bulletin" and in other available records. Furthermore, the developments of recent years require the mellowing of time to give them the aging indispensible to durable historic data.

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AUGUSTA

JOHN H. REED
GOVERNOR

Congregation Beth Israel
Bangor
Maine

Greetings:

It gives me great pleasure to extend official greetings as well as my own personal best wishes to Congregation Beth Israel on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee Anniversary on June 2, 1963.

For 75 years Congregation Beth Israel has fulfilled a vital role in the spiritual life of the City of Bangor. Through the influence of Congregation Beth Israel religious and moral values have been strengthened, the words of the Creator brought into the lives of more citizens.

On this historic occasion in Jewish community, I wish Congregation Beth Israel many more successful years. May its members be strengthened in their faith and may the Congregation continue to grow and prosper.

Sincerely,

John H. Reed

John H. Reed
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
SUPERIOR COURT
BANGOR

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

GREETINGS:

It is with great pleasure that I join with my fellow members in celebrating this important anniversary in the history of our Congregation. We do not always realize how great a part the Synagogue plays in our lives; how closely connected with all the milestones that mark off the span of human existence.

It is to the Synagogue we turn for spiritual inspirations, and to bring our joys and sorrows. It is from the Talmud that we learn the cardinal virtues of faith, courage, understanding, love, justice, charity and hope.

The books of Moses taught and read in the Synagogue, in which we take pride, are the source of all law governing human behavior in the free world.

Cordially,

Abraham M. Tudman

July 8, 1963

Message of Hon. Edward I. Gross

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BANGOR

It is a splendid endeavor to undertake the recording of the "Beth Israel Story." History is so fleeting that it is difficult to capture its full meaning, to translate it in terms of the present, or to use it as a guide for future goals unless scribes of the pertinent periods made adequate historical accounts.

Religion has played an important role in the development, and in the cultural and spiritual growth of the City of Bangor. The many houses of worship of all religions attest to the importance the citizens of this area attach to the belief in the Almighty.

The "Beth Israel Story" is but one segment of the Jewish history of the City of Bangor. Without doubt, it parallels the account of Jewish history in many other cities throughout this wonderful country of ours. The difference is, of course, it is ours. Some of us can fondly recall the historical events related herein, and feel touched with a special warmth, or pause for a moment of quiet reflection.

Bangor has emerged from its tumultuous, robust, log-driving days, and now throbs with new vitality and growth. The Jewry of Bangor has done its share in the development of the Queen City, and I know they will continue to contribute to its growth. A static life is not that of any Jewish person, nor has it ever been. The restlessness and impatience of achievement, not the acceptance and contentment of mere accomplishment, have been the distinguishing features of our predecessors. The importance of education, and continued adult education, was well understood by our parents and is a heritage which also is part of our history.

The "Beth Israel Story", because of the many details and collectors' items, will be a treasure house of information and interest to all. It will undoubtedly be a source of information and inspiration to our children. I feel we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have undertaken this historical endeavor.

BANGOR SEMINARY
THEOLOGICAL
BANGOR, MAINE

July 3, 1963

Rabbi Avraham H. Freedman
Congregation Beth Israel
Bangor, Maine

My dear Rabbi Freedman:

On behalf of the whole family of Bangor Theological Seminary--trustees, faculty, and students--permit me the honor and pleasure of extending to all the members of the Congregation Beth Israel hearty congratulations and warm good wishes as you celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of your religious community.

The Synagogue and the Seminary are living symbols among us of the Jewish-Christian tradition which has shaped our destiny in city, state, nation, and world. The Seminary is happy to salute the Synagogue on this historic occasion, to praise the Congregation for its witness in faith and works, and to acknowledge with gratitude the Seminary's debt to the heritage of Judaism.

May the God of our Fathers continue to bless and to keep you!

Most sincerely yours,

Frederick W. Whittaker

Frederick W. Whittaker, President

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
AMSTERDAM AVENUE & 186TH STREET
NEW YORK 33, N. Y.

June 19, 1963

Mr. Henry H. Segal
Jubilee Publication Committee Chairman
34 Hammond Street
Bangor, Maine

Dear Mr. Segal:

I am happy to extend my warmest congratulations on your celebration of a joyful milestone--the 75th anniversary of Congregation Beth Israel. The significance of this occasion transcends the immediate boundaries of your locality, for vibrant traditional congregations are essential to the further strengthening of Judaism.

The entire Jewish concept of the community finds its origin, as well as its vitality in the synagogue. Whenever a Jew joins his fellow Jews in synagogue worship, he affirms the brotherhood of Israel and demonstrates the unity of belief and observance that transforms us into an integrated community.

May the Almighty grant you the strength and vigor to carry on with increased inspiration and dedication.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Belkin
President

SB:ml

Greetings From The Jewish Community Council

Sidney Epstein

JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

28 SOMERSET STREET - BANGOR, MAINE

MILTON LINCOLN, ACSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SIDNEY EPSTEIN
PRESIDENT

I am happy to extend my greetings and best wishes to Congregation Beth Israel as it celebrates the Diamond Jubilee of the Congregation.

Our parents and grandparents built wisely when they established, as one of their first acts, a House of Worship. The role of the Synagogue, as the heart beat of Judaism, is central to the survival of our Jewish people.

Our community shares with you the joys of this happy milestone in the history of Bangor Jewry.

Sidney Epstein
President
Jewish Community Council

JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

28 SOMERSET STREET - BANGOR, MAINE

SIDNEY EPSTEIN
PRESIDENT

MILTON LINCOLN, ACSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Diamond Jubilee, now being celebrated by Congregation Beth Israel, is a momentous event in the history of our Jewish Community. The men and women, who in the 1880's, settled in Bangor, brought with them a zeal and love for Judaism which has been transmitted down to our present generation.

I have personally enjoyed the warm relationship which exists between Congregation Beth Israel and the Jewish Community Council. The mutual understanding and appreciation of our respective roles in Jewish life and the willingness to work together for the welfare of Bangor Jewry have forged strong links in the chain of Jewish survival.

I extend my best wishes and heartiest congratulation to Congregation Beth Israel and sincerest hopes that the years ahead will be blessed with peace and happiness.

Milton Lincoln
Executive Director
Jewish Community Council

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA
NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

CABLE ADDRESS: "SEMINARY" NEW YORK

April 2,1963

Dear Mr.Epstein:

Please extend my warm congratulations to all members of your congregation on the occasion marking the 75th Anniversary of Congregation Beth Israel.

The long history of this religious institution is evidence of its success in serving the spiritual needs of your people. I know,moreover,that the influence of this synagogue has reached far beyond the boundaries of your community, and it is my hope that this beneficial influence will continue to exert itself for many more years.

Cordially yours,

Harold R.Epstein
Congregation Beth Israel
Bangor,Maine

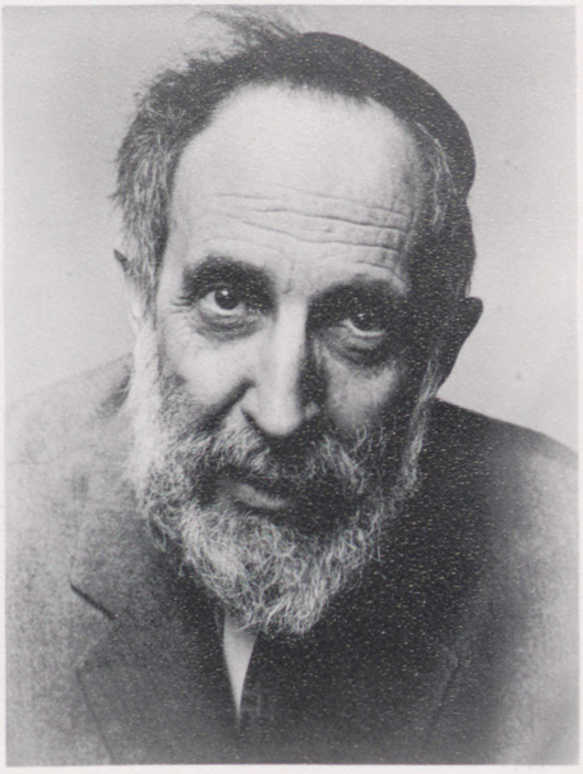
Judaism As A Contribution To A Better World

In speaking of a better world, we must always remember that such a world can only be brought into being by better people—or by people aspiring to be better. We Jews are fortunate indeed to have inherited a tradition which is one of the greatest systems for character education which the world has ever known. We have but to cleave to our tradition to give expression to the nobler side of human nature, that divine spark which is part of all of us.

Judaism is inherently an ethical system. All its minutia are part of a system directed to the improvement of character. Hillel clearly considered such commandments as not to speak falsehood, not to injure one's neighbor, not to insult him, or pain him, or degrade him, or malign him no less integral to Torah than any ritual. And, in the Hillelite tradition, Judaism, when it has to make a choice is even more concerned with the problem of character than it is with that of ritual devotion. Devotion to ritual may come to a person disciplined to right behavior to his fellows. Right behavior to one's fellow—harder to achieve than observance of any of the ritual commandments—has to be stressed day in and day out.

In our time, it is a *kiddush ha-shem* to stress the ethical content and character of Judaism, and a *hillul ha-shem* to overlook them. For if Judaism is recognized for what Hillel says it is, our youth will understand its relevance. If our youth comes to believe that Judaism is, like primitive religions, nothing more than a system of rituals, they will flee from it.

It is to the genius of Professor Solomon Schechter, Professor Louis Ginzberg, Professor Alexander Marx and Professor Israel Friedlander—to mention only those who have passed to their eternal reward—that we, in America, owe the re-discovery of the totality of Judaism.



Dr. Louis Finkelstein

In this interpretation of our heritage it is implicit that we share an obligation to explore the wisdom of our faith, so that its insights can be made available for the guidance of modern man.

How can this obligation "to explore the wisdom of our faith" be fulfilled better than within the structure of the synagogue. For two millenia, the synagogue has proven to be a bulwark of our faith, indispensable as house of worship, as house of assembly, and as house of study. As your congregation attains this important milestone in its history, I am sure that each of you will think through how your synagogue can be strengthened so that it will always continue to afford increasing opportunities to its leaders and congregants to fulfill the obligations imposed upon us by our heritage.

From The President

HAROLD R. EPSTEIN

During my term of office, I have had a better opportunity to observe, and to consider the Synagogue's place and worth in our lives and in the community. I have come to have greater understanding and admiration for the men and women who in the early days planned, built and administered the edifice in which we worship. With this office, there has come a deep sense of responsibility—the responsibility of measuring up to the exacting duties, to the high standards of service of my predecessors, of continuing the traditions and maintaining the high position Congregation Beth Israel has attained in this city.

I have become more aware of how we of the work-a-day world need the Synagogue—aware of what it means or should mean to us individually and collectively—aware that here we may satisfy our spiritual hunger, conscious that "man cannot live by bread alone"—that the more he gives of himself to such a cause, the more he receives in return.

Here in silence we may meditate—here we can seek sympathy and consolation—here we can continue to live in the ritual of a fuller life—here we may enjoy the satisfaction of a finer, less selfish one—here we may carry on and teach our children the traditions of our great religion, our heritage.

May I not ask your fullest assistance and cooperation in the discharge of the duties and responsibilities we each owe to our Synagogue and our Religion?

RABBI THEODORE L. ADAMS, PH.D

Diamond Jubilee Speaker

Born in Bangor, Maine, February 23, 1915
B.A. Yeshivah University 1936, M. S. Yeshiva University
Ordained Rabbi 1937; Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary
Presently Rabbi of Congregation Ohab Zedek, New York City
President of Rabbinical Council of N.J. 1939-1952
President of Rabbinical Council of America, 1952-1954
Member of the Executive of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Invited Delegate by the President of the United States to Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth, December 1950
Member of the United States Mission to the United Nations
Member of President Eisenhower's "People to People Committee" in January 1957-1960

The Beth Israel Heritage
Its 75th Year

By HENRY H. SEGAL, *Editor*

The synagogue is one of the oldest and most significant institutions created by our people. It has been a house of refuge in storm and travail and a house of joy on festive occasions. Above all, the synagogue has been the power station in which was generated the ethical dynamism that fashioned Jewish life for the past two thousand years. In our own day, we are witnessing a tremendous increase in the number of synagogues and in the number of families affiliated with them. Beautiful structures are being erected in every city in the country and in many small towns. In our community of Bangor we have expended great effort as well as large sums of money to renovate and beautify our house of worship.

It would be nice to think that all this activity is evidence of a deepened understanding of the goals of Jewish life and of the place of the synagogue within that life. Regrettably, this is not as yet discernible. On the contrary, there is real danger that we may be developing a synagogue "cult," in which the synagogue structure, its aesthetic appointments and the order of its service have become the essential concerns. We need to hear again the prophetic words that will remind us that the synagogue and its worship service in themselves are not the heart and essence of Judaism. Serious study is required of the complex world-society in which we live so that we may acquire an understanding of our responsibilities and opportunities. It demands of us also that we study our vast religious literature and tradition for insights and guidance as to how we may apply the moral imperatives of our faith to the problems of our time.

On this joyous Anniversary, Congregation Beth Israel retraces the steps and stages of its growth, becomes more keenly aware of the fundamental traditions which make it a unique and distinctive entity among the Jewish institutions on this Continent, and defines and deepens them for sure guidance toward the future.

A study of Beth Israel's documented and dramatic past—its relation to society, the response of its pulpit to the challenge of events, above all the lives of its people—reveals that our congregation had a "special" approach, a "different" pattern, a color all its own, from birth. It had a personality.

A Jubilee truly observed will renew our loyalty to the qualities that make Beth Israel the outstanding bastion of Judaism in northern New England.

May this Anniversary celebration gladden our hearts, deepen our fellowship with one another, enrich our minds with the proud recollection of our spiritual ancestry, and strengthen our resolve to preserve the Beth Israel heritage and pass it on undiminished to our children, across the threshhold of yet another Jubilee.

Greetings From Max Kagan

Past and present are but a prelude to the future. The seventy-five years of our congregation's striving and achievement ripen into meaning for us only as we erect upon the firm foundation of the past the even more glorious structure of the future.

It has been a privilege for me to have shared in the shaping of the most recent chapter of Congregation Beth Israel's noble history. I look forward to the future with prayerful eagerness. May it bring the blessings of peace, tranquility and Godly love to the household of Israel, to our beloved country and to all humanity.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RENOVATION COMMITTEE

THE 75 years which Congregation Beth Israel spans, and whose completion it now celebrates, has been perhaps the most revolutionary in the annals of man. To visualize our world in 1888, and now in 1963, requires an adjustment in the perspective of the mind's eye; they appear like two separate realms, with no more relationship to each other than exists between the horse-and-buggy and the jet plane.

Yet we know that atomic power, electronics, space travel and other triumphs of science are direct descendents, in unbroken continuity, from the "primitive" tools that mankind used 75 years ago. Each advance in technology grew on the soil furrowed and fertilized by its predecessor. Without the humble wheel, the giant turbine would have been impossible.

Surely the line of development from the past is even more clear in the spiritual life. We are products of the generations; our fundamental character was shaped by the experience of the men and women who went before us and by what they did with that experience. To an extent greater than we realize, the form of our thinking and feeling, the vessel into which personal energies are poured, is an inheritance.

—Moses Byer

Message of the Jubilee Fund-Raising Chairman

RESOLVE TO SACRIFICE

Seventy-five years have passed since our "Founding Fathers" established our Congregation. We sincerely believe that they were motivated by an abiding faith in God. From generation to generation, since that historic day, the Beth Israel family has kept burning the torch of Judaism. From humble beginnings, Beth Israel has grown to maturity and stature among the congregations in Israel. Our history records how our dedicated leaders and devoted membership met the challenges. The inspired efforts of men and women working together, with unity of purpose, towards the brighter day is truly the story of Beth Israel in action through the decades.

As we face the bright future let us resolve that no further effort be too great, no sacrifice beyond us, to make the coming years fruitful ones for Beth Israel. A spirit of self-immolation and a conscientious regard for our Synagogue obligations will assure our success. Let each member, each family, pledge themselves to make our Diamond Jubilee Anniversary c e l e b r a t i o n worthy of the momentous event in our history. Through fine leadership and through harmonious effort we have reached this 75th year. Now as it slowly passes into history we look forward to our cenntennial with confidence because of our wonderful membership. You are our strength and through your efforts will we continue to grow. We offer you our greetings on this great milestone in our Congregational life. May the realization of each of your golden dreams bring to you a deep sense of achievement.

ALBERT SCHIRO
Chairman

SIDNEY SCHIRO
Co-Chairman

On the following pages is the graphic record of the handiwork of those, both of another day and now, who believed—and, in believing, built—

INTRODUCTION

THE BETH ISRAEL STORY records the faithful adherence to their religion of a handful of Jews who settled in Bangor over eighty years ago in the days when this "Queen City" was a booming lumber port. It is a typical story of the growth of early Jewish settlements in America. The story begins when our forefathers banded together to establish a House of Worship—known as the Beth Israel Society—which has been faithfully maintained with increasing zeal unto the fourth and fifth generations. Here is recorded the story of the religious life in these four decades of those of the Jewish faith, of their leadership in the social, commercial, and economic and political growth of the third city in Maine. It is an inspirational recording of the courage, vision and firm religious convictions of the early settlers, and it is to memorialize their faith and spirit and the seventy-five years of progress that this story is told. The Beth Israel Story has been written to provide the future generations of Congregation Beth Israel with a tradition, with the incentive to build in this community from strength unto strength; to keep the fires of Judaism ever burning in this great region.

We are incredibly fortunate in having the minutes of the congregation beginning with that historic meeting in 1888. These minutes with their unconscious humor and pathos, the meticulous attention to detail and the measured phraseology of that era, provide us with a vivid picture of our beginnings. No weighty historical tome could convey more strikingly (nor more delightfully) the struggles and aspirations of our founding fathers. Somerset Maugham, in a plea for reading the obscure authors of the past, very aptly has written: "It is a relief sometimes to look away from the bright sun of perfect achievement, and the writers who appealed to their age and not to posterity have by contrast a subtle charm."

The history of Congregation Beth Israel is in many respects the story of Bangor Jewry. Venerable and honored, the Congregation has weathered and grown through all the vicissitudes of American life. Like the community itself, the Synagogue has had its hard times. The flame of faith flickered more than once under the driving winds of circumstance, but the Congregation and the city rallied to keep it burning with the fuel of dedication and hope.

The members of Beth Israel have never stood apart from the community. They have provided leadership in many phases of both Jewish and general community life. The rabbis of Beth Israel have been no cloistered divines but have spoken forth frequently and brilliantly on the issues of their day, applying to these contemporary issues the truths of all times. Such men as Plotkin, Zucker, and Avraham Freedman have provided the kind of vigorous energy needed for the spiritual guidance of one of the state's finest Jewries.

From the beginning Beth Israel stood as the chief cornerstone of Bangor Jewry. From its family circle went forth offshoots to found other congregations and to promote those charitable and educational endeavors which with worship complete the cycle of Jewish communal life.

The older settlers, mostly Lithuanian Jews, and the newcomers from the more remote areas of the Russian Empire gradually learned to dissolve the superficial differences which tended to keep them apart. With the emergence of a unified Jewish community, new and creative Jewish energies were unleashed. The tide of Jewish regeneration swept new strength into Congregation Beth Israel. The Congregation grew in numbers and activity.

It stands today after three quarters of a century as a vital center of Jewish faith and thought radiating its beneficent influence through its synagogal family into the total community.

Many hands have worked under the roof of the Synagogue. Many hearts were moved to respond generously to the appeals which were made from its pulpit for the relief of the handicapped in life, for aid to war sufferers and homeless refugees. Many happy voices echoed within its walls, and many anguished hearts found solace and comfort in its sanctuary. Many souls were kindled with renewed faith in God and man as they listened to the solemn ritual of its services and to the words spoken in the pulpit.

This, then, is the BETH ISRAEL STORY —a story that has attained a singular depth when viewed through the perspective years. It is a story of that time, a simple, moving account of Jews putting down the roots of their faith in strange but friendly soil.

. . . the story

of

Beth Israel

CHAPTER 1

FORCES INFLUENCING

Seventy five years have elapsed since the official inception of Congregation Beth Israel. Fifty years have passed since the completion of the present synagogue edifice. Judaism has been profoundly disturbed and cruelly tried in the seething cauldron of history from time immemorial to the present era. Jewry has known exalted dreams and bitter frustrations. In some measures our founders and loved ones have also suffered the ordeals that have been Israel's lot through the ages. They have also tasted of the grapes of success and gratification in their efforts to establish a tabernacle to the service of God, both for themselves and for the generations to follow.

The story of our Congregation is part of the epic of the westward flight of Jews in search of freedom. These Jews brought to this continent along with their scars and memories of persecution their priceless baggage of ideals and practices. These have had their decided impact upon the ever-evolving American heritage, but their own way of life and culture were also profoundly influenced by what they found here.

The first permanent settlers in what is now these United States were twenty-three hardy souls who came in September, 1654 to New Amsterdam, now New York City. They were permitted to make their homes in the new land on the condition that they would never permit their poor to become a burden to the general community. This order became an unfailing ideal for American Jewry throughout its three hundred years of history.

However, facts about early Bangor Jews are scarce. The research efforts of Professor William Otis Sawtelle of Haverford, Pennsylvania, indicate that Jews from Spain and Portugal settled in the area prior to the Revolution and the name of Lowe or Levi is mentioned by historians. The American Historical Society has brought to our attention that "Susman Abrams (b. Hamburg, Germany) is known to have settled in the area during the period of the Revolutionary War. First he lived in Waldborough and Thomaston, but later he moved to Union, where he conducted a tannery for many years."

Though there were a few scattered Jewish individuals of Sephardic descent in the Bangor area, there was no "community" of Jews until the early 1840's. As late as 1849, the Jewish population of Bangor was estimated to consist of 12 families.

When the first meeting of the group of Bangor Jews who formed the Beth Israel Society was held in October 1884, Jews had been living in Bangor for at least 40 years. And, Bangor itself had existed as a settlement for more than a hundred years.

One reason why the Jewish community of Bangor is relatively younger than that of many other cities of the eastern seaboard is that the Portuguese Jews, who formed the earliest Jewish settlements in most American cities, did not venture further north than Rhode Island. Even the Sephardic congregation which existed in Boston in the early 1800's contained only a few Portuguese Jews, and was composed principally of families of German and English descent. These families, upon settling in America, had affiliated themselves with Portuguese congregations because they were accustomed to the Sephardic ritual, rather than the Ashkenazic, as practiced in the congregations established by the German Jews.

OUR HISTORY

Reaction had set in in Germany. The period of enlightenment and tolerance was, alas, brief. The brotherhood of man, so eloquently proclaimed by Goethe and Lessing and fervidly echoed by the Jews of the ghetto, was confined to a few choice spirits. Germans were seeking a scapegoat for their frustrations and for the ignominous defeats lately heaped upon them by Napoleon. The Jews were at hand as usual. Obsolete discriminatory laws were revived. Baptism was demanded as the price of admission to the army or to any profession. Only the eldest son in each Jewish family was permitted to marry. Jews were allowed to deal only in second-hand merchandise. Again, with a streak of clarity that flashes through the most warped brain, the Germans recognized the Jewish spirit as alien to provincialism, militarism and bigotry. The masses as well as the leaders became anxious to exercise the leaven of Jewish conscience and reasonableness from their midst.

So, from the Germanic States, Jews came to America, bringing little of worldly goods, but much of courage and hope. Most of them remained on the Atlantic coast where the mass production industries, especially the clothing trade, greedily absorbed all newcomers. More intrepid spirits and those who preferred the smaller village communities to which they had been accustomed in Germany, pushed further north.

Bangor, an important river port in this period became host to a group of these "Deitchuks" in the early 1840's. This period marks the beginning of a Jewish community in Bangor. Jews came at a time of economic expansion. New England merchants were sending their merchandise to the new Western cities of Chicago and Cleveland, St. Louis, Savannah, and Memphis, to be distributed through the local territory. To these new trade centers also went the Yankee lad, who previously was initiated in business through peddling. This left a vacuum in New England, which Jewish peddlers filled. Arriving in New York from Germany, Austria, and Poland, young Jews started in American life through itinerant trade. With the passing of the Yankee peddler, they came North, to settle in New England and the Bangor area.

Congregation Ahawas Achim, founded in 1849, was the first Jewish organization established in Bangor. This group rented a hall for religious services and purchased a tract of land for a cemetery. Their language and the language they taught to their children was German. It was not the destiny of these Jews to build a lasting house of worship, and by 1856 most had either moved away or became assimilated with their gentile neighbors.

ORIGINS OF THE BETH ISRAEL FOUNDERS

The transfer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the Russian Empire involved its Jews, not only in a change of government but, what was much more serious, in a change of treatment. It inaugurated a period during which the Jews were seldom left in peace by the Government. Thereafter they were subjected to oppression, until, after more than a century of tyranny and misrule, tsarist Russia itself was brought to an end by the first World War.

The tsars were, in the main, fanatical foes both of Judaism and the Jewish people, resolved to stamp out the one and either to annihilate the other or else by various so-called reforms to bring about their gradual amalgamation with the general population.

Soon after the signing of the Peace of Tilsit (1807), however, a peremptory order was issued to the local authorities to carry out the decree of expulsion—one-third of all those affected to be driven out of the villages in each of the next three years, and the total evacuation by the end of 1810.

Napoleonic invasion immediately affected the Jews in Lithuania. The Jews displayed a remarkable loyalty to the Russian cause and rendered whatever practical services they could to the Russian troops. All these endeavors of patriotism were brought to the cognizance of Alexander I, who acknowledged them with satisfaction and promised that, after the return of peace, he would take steps to ameliorate the position of the Jews. After his spectacular victories over Napoleon, he abandoned whatever liberal outlook he had hitherto cherished. His successors did little more to ease the lot of their Jewish subjects and it was from an atmoshpere such as this did the Jews seek to escape and seek the freedom of spirit as well as economic betterment.

The exodus of the Jews to the lands of liberty in the West, especially to America, had begun in the previous reign; but from the pogroms of 1881 it assumed ever growing dimensions and poured forth in different directions. These progroms were designed to implement the formula which called for the emigration of a third of the Russian Jews, they were to all appearances accomplishing their purpose. Shortly after the first outbreaks, Jews in large numbers began streaming towards the borders. The government of Spain, we are told, anxious to atone for the expulsion of 1492, offered to receive the fugitives, but despite their distress, the offer failed to attract them. The great majority looked west towards the fabulous land across the ocean where, as they knew, many of their people had already found refuge and new life.

In May 1882, when the violence had run its course, the Czar's government replaced it with a "cold pogrom," which had the merit of lasting longer and producing fewer repercussions in the world outside. It took the form of the infamous "May Laws," which barred Jews from the villages in the Pale of Settlement and forced Jewish traders in the towns to keep their shops closed on Sundays and Christian holidays. The congestion and destitution in the towns increased and Jewish tradesmen who competed with non-Jews received a staggering blow.

Although there were some Polish Jews among the earlier immigrants, it was not until the 1880's that mass immigration from Eastern Europe started. The brutal persecutions of Russian and Polish Jews, the bloody pogroms, and the Russian "May Laws" of 1882 which imposed new and grimmer civil and economic disabilities upon the Jews, drove whole communities en masse to America. Within twenty years this wave of Eastern European immigration made the German Jews a minority in New England, as elsewhere throughout the United States. In only two or three generations, Bangor has been able to develop an integrated Jewish community, and has been able largely to overcome religious, economic and social rivalries which originally existed between the immigrants from the Baltic states and those from Poland.

It is with this setting that the curtain rises on the first act of the Beth Israel Story.

The beginning of the influx of Jews in the early 1880's from Lithuania and Poland found a few German-Jews already established in Bangor. However, it soon developed that the two groups of Jews had many differences—so many, that it seemed for a time that there were many points of issue than there were ideas and ideals in common. The language barrier was another handicap to mutual understanding. These Litvaks regarded Yiddish as their national language; they referred to it as "Jewish", and believed that it was spoken by Jews everywhere. Imagine their consternation on arriving in Bangor to find that their fellow-Jews, for the most part, spoke no Yiddish—only German and English. True, the more learned of both groups were familiar with the Hebrew of the Scriptures and rabbinic books, but as a medium of every day communication, Hebrew had about as much practical value as speaking classical Latin to a shopkeeper in Naples.

During that period, the established Jewish charitable agencies established by these German-Jews became inadequate for the problem of the new group, and as successive waves of terror-stricken and penniless Jews arrived, the Lithuanian Jews formed their own relief organizations. Mr. and Mrs. Israel Frank rendered inestimable services in sympathetic understanding as well as financial aid. It was the Franks who took the initiative in organizing the first benevolent aid society in the community.

Furthermore, there was an entirely different background of feeling about the place of Jewishness in daily life. To the German-Jews, civil, business, and religious activities fell into entirely separated spheres; to the Lithuanian Jews, coming from self-contained Jewish communities, Judaism was much more than a religion—it was a complete way of life that governed the individual's secular, as well as his religious, actions. Probably, the greatest source of discord was the sheer weight of numbers of the new group. In 1897, the Jewish community of Bangor numbered about 50 families of which less than 5 families were of the German-Jewish community. The older community felt itself engulfed. Intermarriage and self isolation finally wiped out the last vestige of the German entity.

FIVE GENERATIONS — Still Going Strong!

"LEMKE" ALLEN . . . FOUNDER

LEMKE ALLEN AND WIFE JULIA
HENRY ALLEN ARTHUR ALLEN

Arthur Allen was the first of the offspring of the Beth Israel founders to be born in Bangor. He followed in the footsteps of his father and was made a director when he turned twenty-one. He also served on the Building Committee in 1912.

Grandson Edward, son of Lemke's daughter Minnie, many years later was to carry on the tradition. He was a member of the Board of Directors and several committees. Ed is also prominent in civic and fraternal affairs.

Great grandson Merrill, son of Edward and the eldest of three, also attends Beth Israel, and is the father of a daughter, Ruth—the fifth generation of the progenitor Lemke Allen.

"LEMKE" ALLEN	1st Generation
MINNIE (ALLEN) ALLEN	2nd Generation
EDWARD L. ALLEN	3rd Generation
MERRILL ALLEN	4th Generation
RUTH ALLEN	5th Generation

CHAPTER 2

The Beth Israel Founders

Maine in the early 1880's was quite different from the rest of the United States. Almost entirely concerned with the lumber trade and farming with barely a hint of industrialization our state was a generation behind the other sections of the country in its mode of life. It was a quiet, unhurried life, undisturbed by the noise of factory motors, unaffected by booms and depressions, isolated from America by an economy and a harsh winter climate that made for the retention of old Yankee customs and habits which other places were even then beginning to discard.

Into such a setting there had come a group of Jews from the small villages of the provinces of Kovno, Grodno, and Vilna. They were the ordinary humble Jews, poor, and some of them not very learned in things Jewish, but all of them animated by a strong passion for preserving that Jewish life and those Jewish values they had cherished in the Old World. In the early years the few Jewish families in the city were like one family—there existed a neighborliness, an intimacy, a passion for mutual aid that were extraordinary.

The first of Beth Israel's founding fathers to arrive in Bangor was Ezriel Lemke Allen, in 1882. A "Grodner landsman," Ike Wolper, was peddling in the Old Town area and induced Allen to leave Boston and seek his fortune in the more sparsely settled regions of Maine. These pioneers were followed by Jacob Altman, Harry Cohen, and Israel Goldman. Joe Byer, who was to become a vigorous leader in the Jewish community found his way to the Allen abode and here the nucleus of Orthodoxy and Zionism was established. A short time was to transpire with the arrival of Joe Bernstein, Marks Goldman, Philip Hillson, and Simon Kominsky. These men constituted the first congregational group that numbered the traditional "minyan" of ten.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bernstein and Family

They were lonely, uprooted, displaced persons of their day. Coming together, they sought to find among themselves something of the familiar and spiritually secure life they had once enjoyed. The beloved Jewish ritual and ceremony, the body of tradition and practice which they had known in Eastern Europe, were precious to them. Hence they kept their records in Yiddish and adopted the ritual of the Jewish communities from whence they had sprung.

With increasing numbers, Jewish life began to take on a communal aspect, with Lemke Allen and Joe Bernstein playing leading roles as the observant Jews banded together for worship. Tradition holds that they held religious services in their respective homes until the group became numerous enough to require larger quarters. They had no Hazan, nor even a shohet, at the outset. With the arrival of Morris Golden

ritual practices became formalized, for he was a highly qualified mohel and shohet.

It should be stressed that although this group of Jews joined together for worship, and were probably augmented on special occasions and high holidays by their co-religionists, travelers and solitary Jews from nearby towns, they did not establish a congregation in any formal sense. Beth Israel grew out of this loose association, but its regular life as a congregation did not begin until 1888. The early Bangor "minyan" had no name, no rules or constitution, and no officers or clerical leader.

Gradually, however, a degree of formality did enter into the religious life of the Bangor community, even though they had no house of worship of their own. For the High Holy days in 1884, Lemke Allen, Ike Wolper, and Joe Bernstein, in a formal note, acknowledged that they had "borrowed and received a Scroll of the Law" from Ohabei Shalom of Boston. They borrowed it "in order to fulfill the Biblical injunction 'The Book of the Law' shall not depart from thy mouth," and they promised "to return it without any excuse whatsoever." It may be assumed that with a Sefer Torah on indefinite loan in Bangor, religious services became more regular.

The last fifteen years of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth century were a period of immigration, growth, adjustment to the economic environment and to the process of Americanization. Jewish fraternal lodges arose to fill the need for social integration and cultural adjustment to the new environment. The Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin granted the local group a charter in 1884. This fraternal lodge helped the new-comer to adjust himself. The meetings brought the warmth of friendship so necessary to strangers. Assurance of a Jewish burial had been a primary concern of Jews for thousands of years. It was to provide for this—financially and religiously—that the lodge purchased a tract of land from the City of Bangor for 45 dollars "for use of a Jewish Cemetery." It was not until 1907 that Beth Israel purchased this tract from the Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin for the sum of $335.00.

"TEKIAH!" . . . when this first sound of the Shofar was heard at the beginning of the High Holy Days in Bangor 75 years ago, it was more than the traditional call to prayer. The Tekiah heralded another beginning for the scant dozen Jewish families newly arrived in this great land—the formal organization of Beth Israel, oldest active Jewish congregation in the State of Maine.

The services on Rosh Hashonah during the fall of 1888 were, of necessity, makeshift. There was no rabbi. There was no synagogue. Still these pioneers gathered together to usher in the New Year with a ceremony conducted by Joe Bernstein, a cultured and scholarly man.

It was in October of the year 1888, that a group of young men formally created the Beth Israel Society. At the organizational meeting held at the home of Lemke Allen on

Jacob Altman and Family

May Street, there were present: Joe Bernstein, Harry Cohen, Nathan Cohen, Jacob Altman, Israel Frank, Yechiel Cooperstach, Ike Wolper, Simon Kominsky, David Sny-

The Granite Block, Corner Park and State Streets, Home of Beth Israel in the 1880's.

der, Ezra Sarhazky, Philip Hillson, Nathan Hillson, Marks Goldman, Israel Goldman, Joe Byer, and Solomon Harris.

Marks Goldman acted as temporary presiding officer, and a committee of Joe Bernstein, Israel Goldman, and Lemke Allen was named to rent a location in which services could be conducted. Services for the first year were to be alternately in the homes of Joe Bernstein and Lemke Allen, while plans for a permanent synagogue were being made. Solomon Harris was the choice for the Baal Kora. The society then proceeded to elect Marks Goldman as its Gabbai.

As the membership increased and the treasury became more affluent a hall was rented on Exchange Street. When this location was no longer available Simon Kominsky offered the use of a large room at 13 Essex street.

At the next meeting, held in November, the committee had not yet found a suitable location and were instructed to look further.

It was decided that each member should pay a $3 entrance fee until 25 members had been admitted, and that the dues should be $3 per year payable in quarterly installments of 75 cents. By November 16, the committee reported that they had rented a small hall on the second floor of the Granite Block on Park Street for $10 per month. At this meeting Harry Cohen was named Treasurer and Morris Golden was elected Secretary. The name Congregation Beth Israel was officially adopted by the membership at one of the early meetings, but the minutes fail to mention by whom the name was suggested.

First, the congregation had to secure a Sefer Torah of its own. A New York congregation, to whom they first applied, seemed indisposed to comply with the request, so a committee of Joe Byer and Morris Golden was appointed to order a Holy Scroll so that the Torah on loan from Ohabei Shalom could be returned. The treasurer was ordered to reimburse Mr. Golden for his trip to Boston for the inspection and purchase of the Sefer Torah. The functions of Mr. Golden in the Congregation were somewhat complex. He was appointed to alternate in reading the Torah; perform marriages, and serve as shohet and Mohel.

Mr. Golden continued in this capacity for several years although the Minutes relate he was often unable to collect his fee. Mr. Golden later resigned as Baal Kora and Solomon Harris officiated as Reader until shortly before his demise in 1943.

THE JEWISH PEDDLER

Our founding fathers were a venturesome group and young in years—all in their twenties or early thirties. Unable to speak English and with little prospect of gainful occupation, these young Jews had no choice but to peddle small wares from a pack. They attracted attention and became the butt for much of wit, humor and satire in the 80's. Viewed with suspicion, for their shrewd trading made of them a figure to be watched, but the negative aspect of their career hardly prevented these young Jews from considering peddling as a respectable means of earning a living.

For the newly arrived immigrants it was a quick and natural step into the American economy. Peddling required little or no investment, and the fertile field was open for the price of a peddler's license. The rural areas were in need of goods of every description and the Jewish peddler continued to furrow the field now partly deserted by the Yankee. Gradually he went from basket to pack, from peddling on foot to a horse and wagon. The towns in eastern and central Maine had their meeting points from which peddling forays into the back country were begun. In many areas many of these future shopkeepers were made welcome as they trudged wearily, with packs on their backs, yearning for a day of rest. The cycle of Yankee peddler was being completed and the heroic age of the Jewish peddler about to begin. Our founders operated with considerable success and as the profits increased their stocks were enlarged. They learned English slowly and became familiar with the customs of rural Maine. Lemke Allen was such a peddler and as his increased stock could no longer be carried on one back he stepped up the first rung on the ladder to success, symbolized by the purchase of a horse and cart. Another young immigrant, whose destiny was to be linked with that of Allen, was Ike Wolper. Wolper arrived in America a year before his friend. A fellow "Grodner", he helped Allen invest all of his limited capital in the small wares that bulged in a peddler's pack.

At the end of a year the original investment had grown to an unencumbered capital of $100.00. Heartened by this splendid return Allen headed for new routes, peddling overland and stopping at farm houses by night, where for the standard charge of 25 cents he could obtain supper, lodging and breakfast. The rate was indeed low for Lemke Allen subsisted wholly on fruits and vegetables. Allen peddled the countryside within a radius of 75 miles from the source of supply of goods. This enterprise was lucrative enough to enable him to eventually open a small clothing store on Exchange Street. This new firm became a center for peddlers supplies and good free advice.

The business pursuits of Allen were typical of any of the early peddlers. Peddling was a difficult occupation under the rigorous climate of Maine. Local inhabitants have a saying that our area has three seasons—July, August and Winter. The peddler filled the necessary economic need because the farms were scattered and the villages were far between. He brought the city to the hard-working farmer whose daily chores tied him to the soil.

Inadvertantly, the peddlers created a strange concept of the Jew. Though the numbers of Jewish peddlers decreased as better means of transportation developed and as more general stores were opened, they left an indelible impression upon several generations of farmers and country people. As late as the first World War many a country person still thought that a Jew, who had a beard, was a "rabbi", even though he was a peddler. The reason for such identification lies in the fact that these Jewish peddlers were observant of the laws of kashrut, the Sabbath and the recitation of their daily prayers. They did not hesitate to practice these rituals when they stayed overnight or spent the Sabbath in the farmhouse. Such religious people exemplified a "Jewish rabbi" to the average farmer.

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES OF THE FOUNDERS

When Carlyle wrote "Happy are the people whose annals are blank in the history books," he emphasized the fact that the events that make history dramatic and interesting also bring sorrow and tragedy to the people concerned.

From this standpoint, the annuals of Beth Israel are indeed blank, but to offset the dearth of historic drama, the Congregation can boast of a wealth of interesting characters, and the congregational history is enlivened by the account of the personalities and accomplishments of the members.

The Minyan of 10 who organized the Congregation 75 years ago—our congregation and, in many cases, our personal ancestors —were men of robust and colorful character. They were not only determined to prosper in a new country, and to combat the anti-Jewish prejudice that existed, but they were also willing to set themselves up against practically all the other Jews in their adopted community.

Israel Goldman

The fact that they created successful and lucrative businesses from very humble beginnings is evidence that they were men of indomitable enterprise and bold imagination. Though they ruled their families and business with patriarchal discipline—characteristically a "Litvak" trait—they were neither ascetics nor "stuffed shirts", and they enjoyed the good things of life with lusty appetite.

It would be of great interest to sketch the "profile" of each of the "First Ten". Unfortunately, the facts are not available. Some of the founders no longer have any descendents among the present Congregation; of others, all that we know are dates of their birth and death from the cemetery records. And of still others, we do not even know that; probably they left Bangor to seek their fortunes in other fields.

Of some, however, we do have accurate information and from the brief character sketches which follow, a pattern emerges which enables us to see the founders of the Congregation as living human beings, rather than faded names on a dusty record.

Morris Stern

Marks Goldman, the first Gabbai, was born in Lithuania in 1862. He came to this country together with Ezra Sarhazy and Yechiel Cooperstach and the three became friends and companions.

He was known as a strict disciplinarian, but had his moments of relaxation, particularly at weddings, at which the trio of Goldman, Cooperstach and Sarhazy con-

sumed record amounts of liquid refreshment.

Grandchildren of Cooperstach relate that their grandfather ran a "private distilling business" and kept his boon companions well supplied with his product — which must have been one of merit, for Goldman lived to 89 and Sarhazy to 87!

Goldman served as Gabbai from 1888 until 1897 and then moved to the mid-west. He was married twice and had 8 children; three daughters by his first wife and three sons and two daughters by his second.

Ezriel Lemel Allen, affectionately known as "Lemke" was born in 1858 in a small town on the outskirts of Grodno. He arrived in the United States in 1882 and soon made his way to Bangor. Steamship records indicate that Mr. Allen booked passage to Bangor on the steamer "Penobscot" along with "a suitable stock of wares of all descriptions." All the pioneers had much in common. Most of them were all young men, under thirty. All but three were unmarried and all began their careers by peddling from town to town in a radius of 100 miles. In less than three years Lemke Allen was able to open a clothing store on Exchange Street. He had brought his wife, Julia to the new land and here his first son Arthur was born. He was to be the first of the offspring born in this country to one of the founding pioneers of Beth Israel. Other children born to Lemuel and Julia Allen are Minnie Allen (Mrs. Max Allen), Sarah and Henry now deceased, and Harry. Both Minnie Allen and Harry Allen continue to reside in our community. Harry is a member of the Chevra Kadisha and generally active in synagogue affairs. The Allen family takes pride in the fact that five generations of Allens continue to be associated with Beth Israel. Lemke Allen died in 1900 in his 42nd year.

Israel Goldman was still in his teens when he came to America and helped organize the Congregation. He was born in Grodno and was orphaned at a very early age. He engaged in a profitable peddling venture and later became associated with Hyman Lait in the "Yankee Clipper" door to door enterprise. He was a successful retail clothier and was known for his sharp wit. The story is told that when he bought a place of business in Washington County from a local financier, the former owner complained that he was selling only to get away from Jews who had begun to infiltrate into the area, and he didn't know where to move to be sure there wouldn't be any Jews around him. "That's easy," Goldman was supposed to have replied, "move to prison,—you won't find any Jews there!"

CHAPTER 3

Building Of The First Synagogue

Hazan Goldenkopf, when he arrived in Bangor in 1895, brought with him an additional Sefer Torah on loan from Temple Ohabei Shalom in Boston. He noted that the rented synagogue quarters in the Granite Block on Park Street were quite small, but it was the energetic laymen who actually stimulated the reorganization of the Beth Israel Society and the construction of the first synagogue on the lot at 114 Center Street. Indirectly, too, the arrival in New York of a compatriot, the renowned preacher and Talmudic scholar Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Vilna, spurred religious life by inspiring the communal leaders to organize themselves in a more definite manner. The outcome, a new synagogue and a congregation with formal rules and regulations, was of a national character rather than a purely local accomplishment. In 1897 the necessity for a new building became apparent. The oldest extant minutes of the congregation record a memorandum signed by Max Cohen, Joseph Byer, Israel Goldman, Lemke Allen, Joe Bernstein, Harry Cohen, David Snyder, and Simon Kominsky, as the board of directors, stating that they thereby formed themselves into a "Congregation to be known and distinguished by the name of Congregation Beth Israel in the City of Bangor." Marks Goldman who had served as Gabbai of the informal group known as the Beth Israel Society is no longer mentioned in the minutes. We must assume that he moved away as several itinerant peddlers had already done. Max Cohen, Harry Cohen, and Simon Kominsky were immediately authorized to negotiate the purchase of the lot "not to exceed $200.00"

These founders, drawing upon their experience with synagogal matters, recognized that at this juncture a formal organization had to be created. With Harry Cohen as acting presiding officer, a meeting was held at the home of Lemke Allen, to receive the report of the committee appointed to secure the site. Before that pressing business was presented, Cohen observed that, although it had been decided to buy a peice of ground, the congregation had no legal powers and their determinations were not binding on the members. To correct this situation he offered a resolution that those present should agree "That in order to promote our Holy Religion, and Establish a Proper Congregation in this City," they form themselves into a legally constituted congregation, and bind themselves "one to the other that we will assist if required, to form a Constiution, and rules for the good conduct of the Congregation, and strictly abide by

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Koritzky and Family Circa 1895

same." The president was instructed to consult with "lawyer Cook." Harry Cohen thereupon suggested that new officers be properly elected, and he forthwith divested himself of his own office. The other members of the committee followed suit. The meeting proceeded to elect Max Cohen as its

first president; Joe Byer as Vice President; Morris N. Golden, secretary; and Harry Cohen as treasurer. At the same time two gabbayim were added to the officers: Simon Kominsky and Joe Bernstein, first and second gabbayim in the order named.

However, all did not proceed smoothly after the brave beginning. The Jews then in Bangor were far from affluent. The funds did not pour in over-abundantly, although the membership subscribed nearly $1500.00. This sum reflected their ability and a genuine spiritual interest in the project, and which as a start seemed to promise success. Almost as soon as the project had gotten under way, notice came from the owners of Park Street building where the congregation was occupying a rented second-floor room, giving them notice to vacate immediately. The short notice compelled Max Cohen to apply for an extension, which in view of the positive building program, was granted.

The congregation was called together and informed that further funds were required before the Veazie National Bank would grant a mortgage loan. Max Cohen spurred the efforts to raise $1,000 within a very few days. It was decided that, in order to secure the funds, the four cornerstones and the two doorposts would be sold to the highest bidder in return for synagogal honors, following the old Jewish custom. Simon Kominsky bought the first cornerstone for $150, Harry Cohen the second for $100, Max Cohen the third for $85, and Morris Rosen the fourth for $75. Israel Goldman bought the right-hand door-post for $50, and Joe Byer the left-hand doorpost for $50. A total of $510 was thus subscribed and the balance was raised by the general membership as part payment on seats.

At last the work on the building could proceed. On the west side of Center Street, about midway in the block from Cumberlandland Street to Garland Street, adjacent to the lot now occupied by the United Jewish Chapel, the first synagogue building in Maine began to rise. With fitting ceremony on the 24th day of AB—August 22, 1897—the cornerstones were laid, with blessings asked for the generous men in whose names they were dedicated.

Front row: Mr. and Mrs. David Snyder
Back row: Simon Goldberg

From The Cornerstone Of 1897*

"Perhaps that this paper will ever have the opportunity to be read again by our Posterity. And, it may be then, that we all who are inserted here will be passed away in the world of truth. Our desire is that our succeeding Brethren shall try their best to fortify and strengthen our faith. Not to be misled and deluded by those who pay much stress to the 'vanities of this world'. You shall follow our religion according to the regulations and dictations by our Rabbis of old, — After the 'Shulchan Orach' You shall adhere to our faith with the best of your knowledge and ability, in a way that you may not go astray from the traditions which we have received from our wise men, —

"Do all you can to extoll and magnify our 'Holy Torah', until our righteous Redeemer will come, Amen.

"We the Congregation Beth Israel of Bangor, Maine, lay this cornerstone with great gladness and delight. We thank and praise our Creator that he enabled us to build this modest sanctuary."

*In order to preserve the original flavor the above is a literal translation from the Yiddish as recorded in the minutes. The membeship list was not included.

DAILY WHIG AND COURIER
Monday, August 23, 1897

CORNER STONE LAID
At the Jewish Synagogue on Center Street

The ceremony of laying the corner stone of the Jewish synagogue on Center Street occurred on Sunday afternoon beginning at 2:30 o'clock, with quite a large number in attendance. A platform was erected upon the foundation and the exercises were held there in a successful manner.

Mr. Louis Goldberg presided and made some remarks appropriate to the occasion and the presentation of the other participants in the exercises. Prayer in the *Hindoo language was then offered by Rabbi Goldenkop, of Bangor, after which Rabbi Shasher, of Boston, delivered an address, which was heard with much interest by all in attendance.

Appropriate remarks were made by Hon. Joseph F. Snow and Mr. F. H. Parkhurst. At the conclusion of the speaking the corner stone was placed in position, Hon. J. F. Snow guiding it into place. The corner stone has a sealed receptacle containing some synagogue records, names of the worshippers and other documents of interest.

The synagogue is being built by the Beth Israel Society and will be the first in Maine. It will be 60x40 feet, of attractive design and will have a large auditorium with galleries. It is intended to have it ready for occupancy by the first of next January.

*The word Hindoo was printed in error by the Daily Whig and Courier.

Mr. and Mrs. Moishe Goldberg

Louis Goldberg

Louis Goldberg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Moishe Goldberg, was born in Poland on December 15, 1865. He came to America at the age of 14. He lived in New York, then moved to Philadelphia, where he married Minnie Myers. The couple made their home in Boston. The Goldbergs moved to Bangor in 1890, so that Mrs. Goldberg could be near her only sister, Sarah, the wife of Morris Golden.

Mr. Goldberg opened a tailor shop on the top floor of the old Wheelright & Clark building corner of Main and Hammond Streets. He later brought the remainder of the family to this country. The surviving members of his family are two sisters, Mrs. Lena Braveman of Bangor and Mrs. Eva Goldsmith of Old Town. Louis Goldberg's eldest daughter, Alta, was born in Boston. A son and two more daughters were born in Bangor. His children are Samuel Goldberg of Watertown, Massachusetts; Mrs. Alta Cutler of Old Town; Mrs. Ruth Burke of Portland; and Mrs. Lillian Morris of Old Town.

When Beth Israel built the Center Street synagogue in 1897, Louis Goldberg was one of the co-signers of the first mortgage. Father Hennessey, a curate of St. Mary's Parish, and personal friend of Louis Goldberg, had such admiration for the spirit of the handful of Jewish families, that he personally canvassed the Catholic business establishments on Exchange Street. The priest raised a considerable sum of money to aid in the construction of the synagogue.

—Mrs. Lillian Morris

RABBI RAPHAEL LASKER

Rabbi Lasker accepted a call from Temple Ohabei Shalom in 1876, and served as Rabbi from 1876 to 1895, and as Rabbi Emeritus until his death. He was twice elected by the citizens of Boston to the School Committee.

Rabbi Lasker delivered the dedication address at the ceremonies consecrating Beth Israel Synagogue, Center St. in 1897.

By modern standards it was a tiny edifice, being described by the building committee, which consisted of Max Cohen, Simon Kominsky, and Harry Cohen, as "forty feet from South to North and sixty feet from East to West." Philip Hillson pointed out that space should be left in the rear for the future addition of a ritual bath or a residence for a hazan. Solomon Harris, who seemed most concerned with the details, insisted upon a rabbinic opinion on the necessity of having the door toward the west in order that the Ark be placed in an eastward position. Religious custom, however, did not prevail over architectural preference, and those who passed along the street saw a solid, almost square, typical small synagogue of that period—a wooden building, no doubt with white painted trim. The contract with the builders, Cutter and Cutter, copied into the minutes, gives the details of the construction.

Knowing that the funds already raised would be insufficient to take care of all the building costs, the congregation looked to other Jewish communities for help. A letter of appeal went to the wealthy philanthropist, Jacob Schiff. This kind of solicitation of congregations was one of the accepted means for a new congregation to get financial help. It is recorded that a "substantial sum was received." Schiff later acquired an estate in Bar Harbor and made it a point to observe his yahrzeit in the newly built synagogue.

The financial difficulties of the congregation remained critical enough to plague the Bangor Jews for some years to come and to create friction among them. Israel Goldman, Hyman Lait, David Snyder, and Harry Cohen had endorsed a note which long remained unsettled.

Meanwhile, as the work on the synagogue building progressed, it was necessary to equip it with ritual objects. One Sefer Torah was already in possession of the congregation, and now the board of directors applied to Ohabei Shalom to borrow still another scroll and ornamental crowns for use on the day of dedication. Lemke Allen presented a silver habdalah cup. The women busied themselves conducting a subscription which netted funds for curtains for the Ark, a silk cloth for the reader's desk, and covers for the scrolls. The only items which had to be purchased out of congregational funds were additional crowns for the scrolls.

Morris N. Golden was appointed to prepare plans for the consecration, which was to take place in August, so that the dedication would be conducted before the inauguration of the High Holy Days. An invitation went off to "his Honor the Mayor" and many other dignitaries. The joyful event took place on the 24th day of the Hebrew month of Ab — the 22nd day of August, 1897. Mr. Golden in his entry notes "the officers followed by members of the congregation solemnly but happily met at the shul to recite the Mincha prayers." After the amidah, the president of the congregation,

Max Cohen, announced the mitzvoth, or honors for the ceremony: the opening of the synagogue door, the opening of the ark, and the carrying of the Scroll of the Law. After appropriate blessings, the line of congregants made the hakafoth, or circuits around the Bimah, with the honored members bearing the Sefer Torahs. They all chanted the Baruch Haba, following it with the customary Psalms. At the close of the ceremonies, misheberach, or the blessings, were asked for those who had contributed so generously to the subscription fund which had made the bulding possible. At last the Jews of Bangor had their own place of worship. Beth Israel had succeeded where the previous attempts to form a permanent synagogue had failed.

In the Jewish world the Dreyfuss Affair in 1894 shocked Jews profoundly. This new anti-semitism spurred Theodore Herzl to organize the movement for a Jewish state. In 1897, the very same year the first Beth Israel Synagogue was dedicated, Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress in Basle.

Silver and War now filled the headlines, but man also hailed the X-ray, the wireless, an aeroplane that flew, the theory of relativity, and the radio tube. War came with Spain as the Maine blew up. Myer Kominsky, son of Simon Kominsky obtained his father's permission and became the first of the Beth Israel family to serve in the armed forces of the United States.

MYER KOMINSKY

Morris L. Rosen and Bessie Kominsky were the first couple to be married in the Center Street Synagogue Jan. 2, 1898. Morris N. Golden officiated.

DEDICATION OF BETH ISRAEL

Bangor Has the First Jewish Synagogue Erected in Maine.

SERMON BY RABBI LASKER

Impressive Ceremony in the New Church Sunday Afternoon

Sunday was a happy day for the Hebrews of Bangor. After years of constant work, economy and self denial the little handful of the sons of Abraham who eight years ago met for the first time to worship in their faith in Bangor in the house of one of their number, were able to consecreate to the God of their fathers a fine new house of public worship, spacious and well appointed; a place where they can come to renew their faith; where heart can be united to heart as hand to hand; where the widow can receive support, the orphan protection and the penitent come for supplication and prayer.

The dedication ceremonies of the substantial new structure which occupies a prominent site on Center Street, took place at 4 p.m.

The church was brilliant with the numerous and nicely arranged incandescent lights even to the altar lights and the ever-burning blue light in front of the ark. Everything in the interior is bright and shining in oil finish relieved by the handiwork of florist Beers in festoons of laurel, evergreen and holly with bouquets of lilies, chrysanthemums and cut flowers in profusion.

The congregation, now numbering nearly one hundred persons and a good attendance of the Gentiles including many prominent people of the city filled nearly every seat in the house. Pullen's full orchestra was stationed in the gallery and played an opening selection and also during and after the services. The usual opening service of the church followed the processional being led by Rabbi Goldinkoff and escorting Rabbi Raphael Lasker of the church of Ohabei Sholom of Boston, one of the most distinguished rabbis of the church in New England.

After an invocation Rabbi Lasker announced the subject of his afternoon's discourse from the text: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth tidings, good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation," Isa. 52-7. In the brief sermon that followed Rabbi Lasker held the closest attention of every hearer, Jew and Gentile as well. He is a man of grand personality, of magnificent physique and imposing dignity. A richly modulated voice and expression carries feeling with every sentence. His diction was elegant in its pure English, amazing in its simplicity yet conveying the fullest meaning even intensified when he repeated in the Hebrew tongue the words which meant so much to him, words of peace, happiness, salvation. In his opening he extended hearty congratulations, praise and thanks to the people of congregation Beth Israel for the almost wonderful fruition of their earnest efforts. He brought from his church in Boston, Ohabei Shelom, greetings of love and sympathy. In his sermon proper he followed the words of the prophet and continued the passage as three messages: First, a message of peace; second, a message of happiness; third, a message of salvation. Each he analyzed carefully and thoroughly and besought his people to live in peace with all men; that happiness came not of wealth, not of position, not of knowledge but by the salvation of faith in the living God. He charged the people that as the chosen messengers of God, the bearers of the law forever, that they should bear in mind the education of their children in the principles of the faith, the ten commandments and the Pentateuch.

The sermon was orthodox and not out of place from any pulpit in the land and its soundness of its teachings.

The actual consecration was a simple but beautiful declaration delivered by the rabbi with uplifted hand consecrating the house to the only and living God.

After the sermon ended there was a selection by the orchestra and the benediction in the usual form of Christian churches in English and Hebrew.

The orchestra gave several numbers after the service.

From a Gentile's standpoint the services were differed but little from the ordinary Christian worship. The ceremony was impressive and decorous. The custom of the congregation as well as all connected with the service wearing their headgear seemed rather odd at first but was soon frgotten. The new church is practically completed lacking but a few of its furnishings including an elaborately carved ark of the covenant now being constructed.

The church is still in need of aid and it seems not a great remove from true charity to help a sect who in all sincerity are striving for a suitable place in which to worship in the faith of their fathers.

ALLGEMAINE ZEITUNG des JUDENTUMS
JAN. 2, 1898

— In Bangor, Maine, wurde am 19. Dezember eine Synagoge eingeweiht. In Maine, wie in Neu-England überhaupt, haben sich erst seit dem russischen Exodus Gemeinden gebildet. —

AMERICAN ISRAELITE
1897

FIRST SYNAGOG IN MAINE.

Bangor, Maine, Dec. 20.—The first Jewish house of worship in this state was dedicated here yesterday with the customary solemn services. The English portion of the ceremonies, including the dedication sermon, were delivered by Rabbi Raphael Lasker of Boston and the Hebrew portion by Rabbi Goldinkopf. The congregation numbers about 100 souls who were all present at the dedication as were many Christian visitors. The local press speaks very highly of Dr. Lasker's sermon.

THE JEWISH MESSENGER
SEPT. 3, 1897

BANGOR.

The corner stone of the synagogue being erected by the Beth Israel Society was laid Aug. 22d with appropriate ceremonies. Mr. Louis Goldberg, of Bangor, presided. Prayer was offered by Rabbi Goldenkop, and remarks were made by Hon. J. F. Snow and Mr. F. H. Parkhurst, of Bangor.

CHAPTER 4

The Formative Years

Whether or not Rabbi Lasker directly aided in the formation of Beth Israel, there is no question about the fact that he was often called upon as a "friend in need" in the early days. It was he who dedicated the first Synagogue on Center Street. It was he to whom the Congregation turned for advice and it was he who assisted the leaders of the Congregation in their search for a rabbi.

In the continuing search for a rabbi, the Congregation published notices in the leading Jewish journals of both America and Europe. Beth Israel was not alone in seeking a rabbi. Not only in America, but in Europe as well, congregations were looking for spiritual leaders who had been well indoctrinated. In explaining to Rabbi Seltzer that the Bangor post at $1,000 a year was preferable to a New York pulpit at $1200 a year because of lower living costs and "greater opportunities", Rabbi Lasker wrote:

"In my eyes, the congregation is honorable and generous, and you will have a good chance to live quite a satisfied life, especially since a sphere of activity is open before you which cannot be found in New York as far as extent and fruitfulness is concerned. Our Jews in America suffer, it is true, from a lack of general education, but indifference finds no name here, and basically they are able to be educated. "They do count amongst their membership a few baale battim with Yeashivah backgrounds."

An invitation was extended and accepted, and Rabbi Seltzer was elected rabbi of Beth Israel in April, 1903 at a salary of $1,000 per year. The choice was a most fortunate one. Seltzer was a vigorous, dynamic young man of 35 when he came to Bangor, and proved to be one of those great personalities who shaped the destinies of Beth Israel.

Seltzer was a man of great erudition, combined with simple candor, that verged on the humble. He loathed pomp and pretense of any kind. He considered his gifts of intellect as a public trust. It was his duty to translate his knowledge into terms that the average housewife could readily understand. This remarkable ability to make the profoundest thoughts simple as the alphabet is evidenced in his "Shabbos Droshes" still remembered by our senior members.

When he accepted Beth Israel's invitation, although he was only 35 years old, he was a seasoned master of traditional Hebrew literature, an eager student of Philosophy and the secular classics. The vigorous content of the sermons as well as their weekly regularity attracted good sized audiences. We dare assume that then as now Jews attended the synagogue to drink in the wisdom of the rabbi more than they did to pray.

The building of the synagogue had been financed with notes, and when these came due, the Congregation was strained to the utmost to meet them. Rabbi Seltzer volunteered to have his salary reduced from $20 to $17 per week, with the understanding that it would be restored when times got better. Many of the members were in arrears on their dues and efforts to collect them met only rebuffs and insults that only a diplomat like Solomon Harris could counter.

Hazan Goldenkopf, having served the congregation for nearly four years, expressed the desire to return to New York in the not too distant future. Although it was not openly discussed at the meetings of the congregation, the committee began to look around for a successor to him. The congregation was steadily growing and it was decided to call an ordained rabbi as its spiritual leader.

It is an interesting comentary upon the religious life of the young community to note that Goldenkopf, who had already served a New York congregation with distinction and who was an acknowledged leader, was not a rabbi in the European or modern sense. He was a highly qualified shohet and mohel as well as an excellent reader and cantor. He was respected by his congregants for his spirituality and eloquence. Reluctantly, Beth Israel accepted Goldenkopf's resignation and speedily reengaged Morris Golden who had served Beth Israel in these capacities before the arrival of Goldenkopf. Mr. Golden had no desire to serve in an official capacity and urged the membership to seek the services of a full-time shohet so that he might return to his private affairs.

The need for funds to keep the synagogue going was always a dire problem. Having exhausted the charity of the local Jews and the out of town sources as well, the congregation turned to what had proved in other religious institutions to be the most practical way of raising money—a lottery. It is not recorded whether or not official permission for such a venture was ever granted. The committee in charge was appealing to the gambling instincts of the public. Later that year Simon Kominsky, Louis Goldberg, and E. H. Rosen were able to report that a "gold watch had been offered as a prize and the winner (no name is mentioned) turned the watch back to the synagogue." Mr. Kominsky suggested that the watch be presented to Rabbi Seltzer and it was so voted. The turn of the lottery wheel marked the end of a temporary crisis.

A knotty problem arose and required immediate solution. An itinerant peddler died in a nearby town. He was not a member of the congregation, although a year before, fearing that he was about to die, he called in several Jews and recited the viddui, or confession of faith; and he had been married to a non-Jewess by a Christian minister. The question was: should he, or could he, be buried according to Jewish custom? One group in the congregation at first insisted upon a legal interpretation from a Boston rabbi as the congregation at that time did not have a rabbi of its own. But another group, somewhat more realiztically, felt that an immediate decision would have to be made. After all, the corpse could not be kept unburied until an answer would be forthcoming. Consequently, the decision was left to a panel of experts, consisting of Rudman, Harris, and Philip Hillson. It was their judgment that this wayward Jew be buried in a corner of the cemetery, without ritual washing, without a shroud and without a ceremony.

Traditionally, Jews always took care of their co-religionists in trouble or need; the Jews of Bangor, even though their congregation was in financial difficulties, were determined to do what they could. In those days, a Jew in a strange city went straight to the synagogue for help. Hence, it was logical that the new society should have been organized by and in Congregation Beth Israel. There always had been a tsedaka, or synagogal charity fund, which used free-will offerings for the relief of the needy; but in 1898 the need was felt for a specialized branch of the fund. As a result the Ezrath Orechim, or Society for Destitute strangers—the first Bangor Jewish charit-

able organization, and the earliest one in the state of Maine whose records have survived —was created, with Israel Frank as its president and Philip Hillson its secretary, and Samuel E. Dennis its treasurer.

The financial problems of Beth Israel continued to be a source of worry to the leaders of the congregation, and the cause of serious friction between some of them. Those who had signed notes at the bank for the loan to build the shul were pressed by the creditors for payment. They appealed for help. One of the signatories even hired a lawyer to represent him against the congregation should the bank take legal action. The complicated arrangements that had to be made to meet payments falling due, the collection of subscription promises, the claims of men who had advanced money on the congregation's behalf—all the struggles of a young, and far from affluent, religious group—fill the minutes of Beth Israel. Yet, the difficulties did not discourage the Jews of Bangor. Squabble and scrape they might, but they were determined to care for their religious needs, and expand they would if that proved necessary.

The handful of men who formed the congregation in 1888 were confronted, as Jews, by three basic needs fundamental to their religion; circumcision for their sons; hallowed ground in which to bury their dead; and kosher meat, which equalled the other two needs in importance as far as these devout and strictly Orthodox Jews were concerned. And so the story of this congregation during its early years is replete with the constant struggle to obtain these services. A Reverend Kemer had been servicing the community but it was decided to send him to Boston "to be examined with regard to his capabilities to act as shohet." Mr. Kemer, perhaps motivated by prudence, refused to go, and the congregation was faced with the problem of finding a replacement.

And now began a long succession of reverend gentlemen, hired with high hopes, disappointing the membership after a few months or a year, to be followed by another and another. Time and time again the official minutes in faded handwriting tells of advertisements being placed in the Yiddish periodicals of the day, for "Hazan, Shohet, Mohel, a teacher being preferred." Either the congregation was fantastically unlucky in its selections, or the skills required were not to be found in one man. This search for a master-of-all religious functions continued to dog the congregation up to the 1920's.

Yet one cannot help but feel a secret sympathy for the reverend gentlemen in their difficult position. Take the case of the Rev. P . . . . . who had been tendered a special vote of thanks for his "noble exertions" and assured that his own feelings "as a sincere Jew in advancing the cause of the Kehila will be sufficient stimulus for continuing the same." Six months later disillusionment set in and complaints were made by members of the "incapability of Mohelshaft." A committee of three was set up to visit the alleged injured children and the committee formally reported, in full anatomical detail, the results of their inspection. The complaints were found to be justified, and the gentleman received his marching papers forthwith.

Other Shohetim had other troubles. A Mr. Rubenovitz had a charge of slander preferred against him by a member, and in return, one year later, he formally complained in writing that "Mr. Wolper had grossly insulted him in the public market." Then there was the case of a temporary shohet who was discharged "owing to him being no Mohel, also of his incapability of teaching on account of a defect in hearing." Perhaps the congregation was too hasty, for the following month a desperate telegram was sent to the Chief Rabbi Margolis of Boston:

"Situation is open. Have no meat. Send shohet at once." Signed: S. E. Rudman, Simon Kominsky.

There were social problems in those days, too. Take the case of the shohet, who was brought to Bangor from New York, at a cost of $20. It seems that the reverend gentleman liked to relax his spirit with spirits. He was accused of conduct unbecoming to a shohet and placed on probation. He was requested to take an oath in the presence of a quorum of the board of directors, that while engaged by the congregation he would "never imbibe any alcoholic beverages except when prescribed by a physician for medical relief." But alas for human frailty! Six weeks later a complaint was made by Max Ginsberg that the shohet had violated his oath.

After its first decade, Beth Israel endured and survived many changes. Achieving stability and a degree of affluence, the congregation had been joined by a fresh group of newcomers drifting in from the Chassidic strongholds of Russia and Poland. The Ashkenazic or German ritual was firmly entrenched at Beth Israel. It was the ritual of the progenitors of the founding fathers. This change from the Sephardic ritual for these "Russishe" Jews concealed a tension among the members of the congregation, for those favoring the Spanish ritual could find no ground for mutual compromise. As is often the case, debate centered not so much around the profundities of faith as around its incidentals. A familiar gesture, a well-loved phrase, a simple melody—these were the divisive forces that brought discord to Beth Israel in 1902.

At the outset the Sephardim proposed not a separate synagogue, but only a separate service, retaining membership in Beth Israel. They seem, primarily, to have been asking a method of maintaining unity which would have allowed them a measure of autonomy and self-expression. Had Beth Israel accepted this plan, the Jewish community might have continued united, even when, at some time later, separate houses of worship were erected. Financial control and the administration of all necessary activities in the community would have remained centralized. We learn, however, from the minutes of Beth Israel that this compromise was not effected. The Sephardic group headed by Pinchos Striar sent its petition for a separate service to the board of directors. The request was rejected. The

PINCHOS STRIAR

opposition was led by Joseph Byer and Morris Rosen. Simon Kominsky and Nathan Ginsberg were the advocates of compromise. In addition, a petition signed by the majority of the Beth Israel membership, upheld the action of the board of directors in refusing to permit a separate service. The petitioners expressed their full and entire approbation of the conduct of the board, and asked them to continue to oppose any measure or proposition having a tendency to destroy the well-known and established rules and customs of the founding fathers.

The synagogue seems to have been permeated with the fear that if these newcomers were permitted a voice in determining the conduct of the congregation, they

would, sooner or later, abolish the established ritual and transform the synagogue into a Sephardic place of worship. To the older members, the very existence of the Askenazic ritual seemed to be at stake.

Immediate and decisive action had to be taken. Beth Israel, in desperation, decided on a plan which destroyed all possibility of reconciliation between the two groups and which made secession and the consequent disruption of the Jewish community inevitable. This decision of the board of directors had as its purpose the restriction of control to the dominant Ashkenazic membership, the majority group which favored the retention of the Ashkenazic ritual. Joe Byer argued that if the admission of newcomers was restricted, or, perhaps, if they were barred from membership unless they accepted the prevailing customs, there would be little opportunity for complications to arise in conncetion with any future attempt to change the mode of worship.

Following this decision of the board, a group of persons waiting for the usual automatic admission to membership were informed that they must apply to the board of directors for admission and that their applications would be placed before the investigating committee in regularly assembled meeting. At the meeting of the committee in July of 1902, only two out of the group of nine who had applied for admission were accepted.

Compromise was no longer possible and the "Russishe" group headed by Pinchos Striar seceded, taking with them enough families to constitute a minyan of their own. Thus was Congregation Beth Abraham Anshe Sfard, the mother synagogue's first daughter, born. The reasons which were officially advanced for this decision were: A.) a desire to permit the Sephardim to worship according to their own customs; B.) the increase of the Jewish population, which necessitated the formation of another synagogue; and C.) the distance at which many lived from the Center Street location. In a polite letter, they informed the Board of Directors of their intentions; they added that they would contribute a fair sum for the services of the Beth Israel shohet-mohel.

The Board did not manifest any great enthusiasm over the rift. A heated meeting indicates that the president, Harry Cohen, was instructed to advise the seceders that the services of a shohet-mohel would be provided for a fee to be determined at a meeting of representatives of both factions. The use of a Sepher Torah was offered until such time that the new synagogue could provide one of its own. Underlying these amenities was the feeling that the secession could have and should have been avoided.

Two years later, due to internal strife, Striar with a bare following was to return to Beth Israel disgruntled but far from disillusioned.

In time, however, the hatchet was buried; relations between the mother synagogue and her offspring began to improve. It is difficult, indeed, to determine where to place the blame. The Beth Abraham people had suggested the separate service as a solution for the problem of mixed groups. The Beth Israel leadership had opposed the plan on the ground that it placed the united Jewish community in danger of being rent in twain. The motives of both sides may have been noble; by their actions, nevertheless, they destroyed the very institution both sought to save—the united Jewish community of Bangor. Seven years later the recriminations of shohetim of both Beth Israel and Beth Abraham sparked a controversy that continued unabated for a decade.

Beth Israel, however, continued to be sovereign among the Jews of Bangor. The rise of the new congregation did not weaken its position and the community as a whole looked up to Beth Israel as the leading congregation in the region.

CHAPTER 5

Congregational Life

The specifically Jewish life of the Bangor community of those days was, if anything, even more saturated with poetry than was the non-Jewish. There was a simple, yet deep, faith in the God of their ancestors and the traditional ways of their people, there was that feeling for the unsolved mystery of life that always sets the imagination to work, the feeling that the pre-Industrial ages possessed in abundance. And so the maggidim who would often come to town and warm up a cold Sabbath by their pictures of the horrors of hell, delivered in a sing-song fashion, or the awe that permeated the community on the eve of Yom Kippur when the womens gallery in shul would be bathed in tears, or the weeks-long preparations for the great holiday of Pesach, or the respect shown to the Rov upon whose entry into the synagogue everyone would rise, or even the quarrels and the women's petty gossip—all stemmed from an honest religiosity which couldn't help but strongly affect the life of imaginative youth during the important years of spiritual growth. The second generation of Bangor Jews were brought up simultaneously in two worlds—the East-European world of religious Jewish belief and folkways and the world of American culture.

Life in America, as has been noted, was not easy for a religiously orthodox Jew. Burial, circumcision, marriage, kosher food, services and ceremonies—all were important parts of a Jewish life that had to be planned for and worked out for each individual and each new community. There were other more recondite matters of religion too, which for want of numbers and organization were overlooked or disregarded in the early days, but which in the atmoshpere of a formally constituted religious body began to assume great importance.

In Boston, Ohabei Shalom had had nearly a half century's experience, and while no organizational relationship existed between the Boston and Bangor congregations, the personal relationships of the spiritual leaders of the two groups was so close that many of the regulations which had been satisfactorily introduced by the older congregation were taken over by the younger one. The Jews of the United States did not live in a religious enclave within the larger community; they were an integral part of the total citizenry.

The observance of the Sabbath, which had been a personal matter theretofore, then became part of the synagogue discipline. Infractions of the Sabbath laws were reported to the rabbi, who in turn passed on the news to the First Gabbai. Formal charges were in several instances and fines imposed.

The community was not only to provide a place of worship for the Jews who wanted a synagogue, but also, in the European sense, to bring all the Jews of the city under its religious jurisdiction. But, from the outset, it was realized that willingness to accept this jurisdiction was purely voluntary, and that punitive coercion was limited to a withdrawal of religious rights and privileges. On Rosh Hashanah, 1905, a lengthy resolution was read to make all the Jews who attended that Holy Day service fully aware of the decisions of the congregation. The most important problem facing the congregation was lack of financial support, so it was declared that those persons who professed Judaism and received the benefits of the synagogue, such as kosher meat, the services of a mohel, and birth, marriage and burial rites under its auspices, and did not contribute to its support by failing to pay their dues and assessments:

> "shall be deemed as not belonging to our chevra either in public or private nor shall they be noticed in any concerns peculiar to the Rites and Ceremonies thereof on any occasion."

This was the greatest punishment that could be meted out to a believer, for it was tied to eternity. Lack of support was, however, only part of the problem. Infrequent synagogue attendance, Sabbath-breaking, plagued the community even more. All were direct expressions of the seductively free American environment, although they were not new to Judaism.

The matter of ritual was taken very seriously in this period. It is interesting to note that there was a case of Halitzah—the

release of the obligation to marry a brother's widow. On that occasion, the widow removed the ceremonial shoe from the foot of her brother-in-law, an early member of Beth Israel. The writer was somewhat intrigued by this ritual and pursued further sources to learn that it was the alternative for the levir to avoid marrying his brother's widow. Where the husband died without leaving issue it is the duty of an unmarried brother "to raise up seed for the deceased brother." The record books are barren of further information but this unusual incident is still remembered by some of Bangor's senior Jewish citizens. Rabbi Seltzer conducted the "court" assisted by laymen.

Dissenters and nonconformists are bound to appear in any religious community and Beth Israel was no exception. In the early days the founding fathers were without doubt scrupulous in religious observance. But as the community became larger religious laxity continued to crop up. It is difficult to discover the extent of dissent in the formative years for the sources are meager, but we do have reference to religious laxity and the appeal by Rabbi Seltzer to the board of directors to institute a series of fines and penalties for these offenses. The threat of non-burial, excommunication, and loss of membership were no longer effective measures in democratic America of the twentieth century. Perhaps among the non-observing Jews were some who were kith and kin of members of the board of directors; one sometimes hesitates to pass sanctions against near relations.

This new-found tolerance pertained only to members of the congregation, not to its officials. There is a case on record in which a suspicion of religious laxity on the part of a teacher in the Talmud Torah of the synagogue was sufficient to call forth an investigation. The teacher was called to account for having alledgedly eaten in a home where the food was considered to be in question with regard to strict kashruth enforcement. During the investigation it could not be proved that the teacher had actually partaken of questionable food; he was, therefore, acquitted and shortly after he resigned his position.

Matters as kashruth, the general lack of Jewish education and the growing need to counteract the influence of the new world both divided the Jewish community and brought it together. From both congregations arose adjunct organizations, like mutual-aid societies. Intra-communal philanthropic groups were formed which were the pioneers of present-day institutions. Although Jewish religious life under the constant pressure of integration retrogressed somewhat, the first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed the progress of Jewish organizational growth which enabled succeeding generations to build and further expand.

Another aspect of ritual law with regard to which synagogue control weakened in this period relates to the preparation and sale of kosher meat. In the earliest times, this was in the hands of synagogue authorities. Although the synagogue paid the salary of the shohet, no charge was made, at first, to the butchers for the service. In the early 1900's, the butchers began to pay a fee to the congregation. The shohet was still an employee of the congregation, however, and still under the supervision of the synagogue authorities, even though the fees of the butcher paid his salary.

The fiscal affairs of the congregation, as conveyed in the Minutes of the early years, breathe an air of order, moderation, and prudence. Many months were to elapse between the recommendation urging the purchase of new curtains and appropriation of the requisite sum of fifty dollars. The donation of shulchen covers and chupah dress covers by the Kominsky and Wolpert families respectively added appreciably to Beth Israel's reserves of sacred linen. "Green trees" decorated the synagogue on Shavuot but the committee did not indulge this enthusiasm beyond the expenditure of one dollar.

The single-entry bookkeeping of the early years (the funds in the treasury sank to a slim $82.40 in 1899) of necessity cast the chazan-shochet office in a pallid light. Versatility rather than incandescent eloquence or erdudite learning was the prime requisite for filling the roles of reader, teacher, and shochet. The annual compensation to Chazan Rubinstein for the multiple role rose from a scant five hundred dollars in 1899 to seven hundred dollars in 1901. The more imposing credentials of Rabbi Seltzer merited a more respectable salary of a thousand dollars in 1903.

BETH ISRAEL AND EDUCATION

The perpetuation of the basic values and ideals of a community through education is essential for its existence and survival. From its beginning, the Jewish people has been known as the People of the Book, because it has lavished more attention on education and study, particularly of the Sacred Scriptures, than most other nations in history. Twice daily the Orthodox Jew recites the command of teaching one's children in the most important of all prayers.

The Talmud Torah, originally established in 1897, and the forerunner of our present community school, was founded by a group of spirited "Baale Battim". These individuals wanted more than the usual smattering of "Amerikaner" Jewish education. Classes were held in the basement of the shul until 1903 when a house was acquired corner Carr and York Streets for the exclusive use of a Hebrew School and the residence of the teacher.

The Hebrew Free School, as its name would indicate, reveals that there were poor people in the Jewish community, and free religious education was offered to all who could not afford to pay. We are also informed that the school had the traditional, Orthodox curriculum and that the highest subject of study was the translation of the Pentateuch and the Prophets. The children who came from "prosperous" homes and who could afford to pay also attended the Hebrew Free School.

Communal Jewish education was instiuted when the Free Hebrew School was chartered in 1903. The necessary legal corporate papers were written in long-hand by Attorney Albert Blanchard. The minutes make special reference to the fact that "only a small fee was charged the congregation because Mr. Blanchard was a great believer in all kinds of religious education."

Increased enrollment necessitated the purchase of a building on Carr Street. The down stairs was devoted to class rooms while the upper story provided housing for the "Rebbe." The school was under the direct supervision of Rabbi Seltzer.

By a very happy accident, we are in possession of a most important document. It is a buckram bound ledger containing the constitution, by-laws and minutes of the Board of Education of Congregation Beth Israel. The secretary of the Board, Morris N. Golden, portrays the fascinating record of the school in his splendid caligraphie.

Dov Reb Yehudah Wasserman

Dov Reb Yehudah Wasserman (Bernard S. Waterman) was chosen as Principal-teacher and Solomon Harris volunteered to assist. Some of the names appearing on the class rolls are familiar figures in the community. Others have gone to their rest. Louis Byer, Moe Byer, Max Kominsky, the Hillson boys, Sam Lipsky, Joe Glazier, the Koritzkys, Snyder, and Harry Allen. In keeping with the practice of European Jews, only boys received a Jewish education in the early days; the religious training of girls was very much neglected. The first mention of girls at the Talmud Torah was in 1913 at the completion of the present synagogue building. The present kitchen area once served as a classroom.

The management of the school and the setting of its policies attracted the care of the leading citizens of the congregation. Mr. Joseph Byer was the chairman of the Board. Philip Hillson served as treasurer; Morris Golden, secretary and Robert Cooper was a director for the entire existence of the school — his annual re-election becoming more and more in the nature of routine business.

The roll call of those who attended its monthly meetings include such names as these: Simon Kominsky, Jonah Wallace, Snyder, Koritzky, Nathan Ginsberg, Richardson, Israel Goldman, Ratchkovsky, Morris Rosen.

In 1907 Beth Israel made a gift of the Talmud Torah building to the Jewish community as it became apparent that the community was growing and that Jewish education would be best served on a community basis. The same office holders served until 1912.

The generation of "rebbes", who were learned men, although with pedagogic shortcomings, should be recorded for a blessing for they did bring the Torah to men who later become prominent in the community.

Robert Cooper

Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Harris
Rose Harris Louis Harris

BETH ISRAEL'S ROLE IN ZIONISM

A primary force in modern Jewish life has been the Zionist movement. There is no doubt that political Zionism, as envisaged by Dr. Theodore Herzl, had a tremendous effect on Jewish life. That Bangor Jews were Zionistically oriented, religiously speaking, goes without saying, but organizing a Zionist society in the early 1900's was a more difficult and practical task. The membership of Beth Israel took the initiative in 1903 to organize the "Chovevei Zion." Rabbi Seltzer, Joe Raichlin, Morris Rosen, Sam Leavitt, Jonah Wallace, Philip Hillson, and Joe Byer constituted the nucleus of the forerunner of the present Bangor Zionist District. By 1905 there was a B'nai Zion. During that year a mass meeting was held at Beth Israel Synagogue, Center Street, to support the proposed purchase of Palestine from the Turkish government. The optimistic leaders were reported as believing that "on account of the present financial conditions, the purchase will be easily effected." The audience was urged to purchase stamps for use on letters by Rabbi Seltzer. In 1912, Myer Minsky was instrumental in initiating a "Young Judaea" club. During World War I, leaders like the Reverend ZVi Hirsch Masliansky, Zionist orator, spoke in Bangor. Jewish National Fund activities were carried on continually.

JOSEPH RAICHLIN

The future Zionist story and the work by the sons of Beth Israel in the trying days after 1948, the great efforts on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal, the Israel Bond Drives, can be confidently left to the future historian. Suffice it to say that the founders of Beth Israel started life in 1888 with the dream of Zion in their prayer books and sixty years later we, their heirs, rejoiced at the announcement that Israel was reborn.

JONAH WALLACE

Commercial Nov. 17, 1919

BANGOR JEWS REGISTER IN THE ZION MOVEMENT

The Jews of Bangor held a big mass meeting Sunday evening in the Synagogue of the congregation Beth Israel on York Street. Myer Minsky acted as chairman and the speakers were, Dr. M. M. Eichlez and M. Alpert of Boston who told of the Zionists movement and the promise of Balfour and British statesmen that Palestine should be restored to the Jews. There were 125 Jews registered as Zionists and every Jew in Bangor will be registered within the next week. The meeting opened by the singing of America and closed with the singing of the Jewish battle hymn, Hatickvo.

THE RUSSIAN POGROMS

Rabbi Seltzer became ill in October, 1905, and had to spend some weeks away from his pulpit. But the troubles of the congregation were forgotten in November of that year when it, together with all members of Bangor's Jewish community, were plunged into deep sorrow by the Russian pogroms of 1905, a large scale repetition of the Kishineff pogroms of 1903. Jews all over America shared in the great mass demonstrations as reported in the local press of December 5 under the headline, "Jews Bow in Grief."

It was recorded in the minutes that the Rabbi "addressed the congregation in anger." The Rabbi's anger stemmed from the events that were taking place in Russia. The pogroms of Russia were of deep concern to the entire Bangor Jewish community. Jacob Schiff, the American Jewish leader, had wired Max Cohen to collect funds for the Russian Jews. The rarely united Jewish community joined together and appointed Rabbi Seltzer chairman of the newly created "Central Committee for the Russian Jews." As chairman he spoke for the community at every possible occasion. At one mass meeting at the Synagogue the interior was dramatically "draped in black, with American flags draped conspicuously among the folds." (It was noted by Solomon Harris, Secretary, that the expenditure for drapes was $1.50 and the president was able to receive the loan of the flags from the City Hall.)

Many Christians sprinkled the audience, with the sympathetic press reporting that "A Jewish rabbi speaking from the pulpit and almost sobbing forth the soul cry of his down-trodden race in Russia, was the spectacle which presented itself to a large audience." At the end of his address he was recalled to the pulpit for a few more words, after which "Almost sobbing, he sat down, while the audience remained fixed and immobile."

Bangor News
Tuesday Morning, December 5, 1905
JEWS BOW IN GRIEF

Outraged Hebrews Mourn
for Tyrant's Victims

Hundreds of Synagogues Echo the
Voice of Lamentation

Exercises are Marked by Series of
Most Affecting Pathos

Discord In The House Of Israel

Personality clashes and rivalries likewise frequently disrupted the incipient religious organizations of the settlers in the new communities. Reflecting this condition, the early history of the religious organizations in Bangor, as in other cities, abounds in clashes, secessions, reconciliations, law suits and counter law suits. The early settlers disagreed most violently on matters of ritual, on the selection of a hazan—a cantor—or a rabbi, and on lesser administrative matters. Thus the Congregation Beth Israel, which was organized in 1888, saw itself split wide open in 1909.

ISRAEL EPSTEIN

LEWIS RUDMAN

Although Beth Israel became the leading spiritual center in the community, it was, for a long time, far from being a united congregation. It was made up of diverse, independent groups, often at odds with one another. More and more frequent were the quarrels that raged within the congregation. A second and more far-reaching struggle struck a new chip off "old" Beth Israel in 1909 as some of its early and vigorous leadership seceded to form still another congregation. The causes of this intra-congregational conflict were diverse in character. The serious rift which led to the formation of a new Ashkenazic synagogue was motivated by the refusal of the secessionists to conform to the rules concerning the purchase of kosher meat from the officially designated butcher.

In 1909, the election of a shohet was the occasion for conflict between the board of directors and certain members of the congregation. The board was dissatisfied with the incumbent and wished to supplant him with a new candidate.

It was agreed by both factions that the man elected would not be engaged if a hard and fast contract could not be made with him, and that the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes would be considered as elected. The board took advanage of a technicality to declare that Shohet Rubinstein was elected though he did not receive the highest number of votes.

The synagogue members, who were already divided over other issues, now separated into two groups, one purchasing meat slaughtered by the temporary shohet, the other patronizing Rubinstein. The trustees thereupon requested a decision from a rabbinical authority in Boston. Nathan Ginberg, Israel Epstein, and Lewis Rudman were not to be outdone. They, too, directed an inquiry to the same authority, and pre-

NATHAN GINSBERG

vailed upon him to annul the synagogue ordinance on the ground that a schism had taken place at Beth Israel over this question, and that it was a matter of "conscience" to choose meats slaughtered by one man or the other. The board was now placed in an extremely uncomfortable position. They admitted that a Jew had the right to purchase meat from the shehita of any man he saw fit; they contended, however, that no man had a right to seal the meat in the manner used by Beth Israel unless he was permitted to do so by the congregation. They denied that an actual schism had occurred, but they admitted that differences of opinion existed. Attempts at reconciliation failed and barely more than a minyan organized themselves into a new congregation which they named Tifereth Israel (Glory of Israel). Thus, the first major breakdown in Jewish community life had come to pass.

The Jews of 1909 were unwittingly sowing the seeds of disunion and of the breakdown of synagogal control. For quite a while after Tifereth Israel seceded from Beth Israel, the old arrangements were still in force. The shohetim were still employed and controlled by their respective synagogues. With multiple shohetim, however, the Jewish community lost control over the vital religious practice of shehita. To this day shehita and the sale of kosher meat continue to plague rabbinical authority.

It was clearly a quarrel precipitated by the refusal of a defeated minority to submit to the will of the majority. The immediate effect of these two secessions in the first decade of the 1900's is difficult to ascertain. The breach, however, was healed in 1933 when a handful of the recalcitrant members and their offspring rejoined Beth Israel. Until the rift of 1900 occurred there was a more or less united Jewish community in Bangor. One synagogue and one set of officials meant one mode of accepted behavior. The secession of Tifereth Israel, however, and a revolt of Toldoth Yitzchak from Beth Abraham in 1920, nearly brought about a state of anarchy in the Jewish community. Men performed marriage ceremonies, handed down decisions on ritual law and set themselves up as supreme authorities without the sanction of the existing synagogues. The resulting disruption of the community is, in essence, an outgrowth of carrying to an extreme American freedom of religion, thought, and action.

The disintegration of the community was hastened by the decay of its most potent disciplinary agent. In the old Jewish communities in Europe, the Jews had a tremendously powerful weapon against dissenters which, when applied, brought erring sheep swiftly back into the fold. This was the herem, or excommunication. Its preliminary involved admonition and the loss of the privilege of attending services; its final stages entailed complete social ostracism and the forfeit of burial rights. No Jew, living as he did within the confines of the ghetto and having social and cultural relations only with Jews, could afford to ignore this communal ban.

In America, excommunication could not be applied. Each synagogue wished to guide its own affairs without dictation from above. Each religious group jealously guarded its rights and privileges in true American fashion and to this day the community remains divided on the issue of ritual enforcement.

At times the three synagogues of Bangor worked together harmoniously; at other times they clashed with one another. Beth Israel and Tifereth Israel were unfriendly towards each other after the 1909 rift; with the years, the immediate resentment over the secession faded and for some time the two congregations were able to collaborate. Their amity was again disturbed by a controversy over cemetery boundaries in the early 1920's; a second estrangement followed.

The casual visitor to Bangor would have thought that the community was united and that harmony was its watchword. Only on the surface, however, were matters so pleasant and unruffled. In matters of real importance each synagogue was a law unto itself, and each jealously guarded its rights from encroachments of any other group. Attempts to persuade the synagogues to collaborate on communal projects almost invariably failed. This was so because each synagogue considered itself a completely independent entity, whose interests came before those of any other synagogue or of other Jews in the community at large.

CHAPTER 6

"Bangor Fire" Destroys Synagogue

For many years the congregation was composed almost wholly of shopkeepers, pant and sweater manufacturers, and dealers in used wares of all kinds. At first the proportion of peddlers was high. But very soon, itinerent trade led to more lucrative and respectable highways of commerce. The building of the synagogue in 1897 already gave evidence of more extensive mercantile pursuits. Largely retailers of apparel, shoes, dry goods, jewelry, there were also some tailors, grocers, and wholesalers among them. By the late 1890's many had become solidly rooted in the Yankee business community.

Max Cohen was the first to enter politics and prior to World War I was elected to the Board of Aldermen.

Congregation Beth Israel now found the wooden structure on Center Street unworthy of the aspirations of its members.

As in every religious community which had increased in size and in which more and more members had attained higher social and economic positions, a house of worship befitting the size and the status of its congregation became a matter of both pride and necessity. The little synagogue on Center Street had been big enough for the original founders. The Jews of Beth Israel now wanted an edifice which would match the respect in which they were held by their fellow-citizens. The concentration of the Jewish population in the first ward also demanded a change of locale.

In 1909, Max Cohen was called back to the presidency for a second time, and his leadership and enthusiasm inspired the Congregation to commit itself officially to a new synagogue building. A committee was appointed to secure an appropriate site for the new shul. "Kol Nidre" night marked the beginning of an effort to cope with the requirements of a rapidly growing Jewish community. In his Yom Kippur appeal Mr. Cohen proclaimed, "We can feel confident that this effort will be pursued with vigor and enthusiasm till our hopes are realized and our needs met in the creation of a dignified spacious Synagogue that will be a credit to the entire community."

To insure the success of the campaign for funds for the new synagogue, letters were addressed to other congregations as well as to a few individual Jews of world-famed wealth. Even before all these generous gifts were received, the building committee had been instructed to sell the original building and commence building a new one in the "Jewish Settlement." The cost of such an undertaking "should not be more than $25,000."

In the early spring of 1911, the Building Committee reported, "the results achieved thus far have been most encouraging and we all feel confident that a new edifice shall be built this summer."

The deteriorating synagogue continued to need repairs. The board of directors appointed a committee of three, consisting of Hyman Epstein, Jonah Wallace, and Arthur Allen, to determine how much it would cost to put the building in condition. Before the committee could complete their study and make its recommendations to the board, the synagogue was destroyed in the "great Bangor Fire of April 30, 1911."

HYMAN EPSTEIN

ARTHUR ALLEN

Bangor Daily News, May 24, 1911

SCIENTIST CHURCH IS AIDING THE CHURCHES THAT PLAN TO REBUILD

JEWISH CONGREGATION GETS $22.42

Treasurer Max Cohen of the Beth Israel Congregation, which lost its synagogue in the fire, received on Tuesday from G. C. Eames, treasurer of the First Church of Christ Scientist, a check for $22.42. That being the apportionment of the contribution made by the executive board of the latter church for the rebuilding or refinishing of those churches or organizations destroyed.

The letter accompanying the check follows:

Bangor, Maine
May 22, 1911

Mr. Max Cohen, Treas.
Bangor, Maine

Dear Sir:

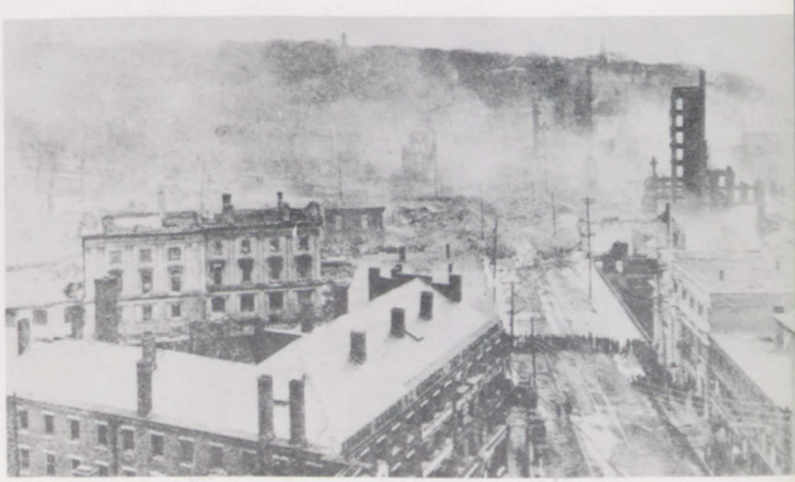
By vote of our Executive Board, our contribution of Sunday, May 21st, is to be given to the building funds of the several churches and organizations, who are to rebuild or to refinish church homes.

I am, therefore, enclosing check for one eighth of the amount collected.

Sincerely yours,
Signed: G. C. Eames
Treasurer, First Church of Christ
Scientist

As the letter explains, the church is distributing this aid to all churches destroyed.

G. C. Eames



STORY OF THE CATASTROPHE

Shortly after 4 o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, April 30, fire broke out in the hay shed of J. Frank Green on lower Broad Street. Cinders were carried across Kenduskeag stream, igniting the Stetson building, occupied by the New England Telephone Company on Exchange Street at the foot of York. From there the flames spread with irresistible force, sweeping through the city, straight toward the outskirts along Harlow, Center and French Streets and Broadway.

It was the most destructive fire ever visited upon a Maine city, save for the Portland conflagration of 1866. Two were killed and many received injuries. The property loss was estimated at between $2,500,00. and $3,-000,000. There was approximately $1,500,-000 insurance on the burned buildings. The fire burned over an area of 55 acres and it was not until 5 o'clock Monday morning that it was under control. Business blocks, some of them the finest in the city, were burned to the number of 100. Some 285 dwellings were laid in ashes and between 50 and 75 families, made up of nearly 300 persons, many of them women and children, lost everything.

Soon after the fire started aid was hurriedly summoned from Brewer and Old Town. Mayor Mullen then telegraphed to Waterville, Augusta, Lewiston and Portland and fire fighters from those cities were rushed here on special Maine Central trains. They arrived during the evening, when the fire was at its height, and their services proved indispensable. The special train bringing the Portland firemen between that city and Bangor in a little over three hours.

Entirely wiped out were the business blocks on Exchange Street from York Street to East Market Square, and on State Street from the Merrill Trust Company building to Broadway; Park Street, its entire length and a large section of Central and Franklin Streets.

The residential portion of the city also suffered a most terrible loss. Many of the beautiful residences on the east side of Broadway between State Street and South Park, went up in flames. Between the same limits on French Street nearly every residence was burned, while starting from Harlow Street the flames cut an almost clean swath clear to the east side of Broadway between State and South Park, burning ing hundreds of dwellings on Harlow, Spring, Penobscot, Prospect, Cumberland, Center, Somerset, Garland and Park Streets. Partial or total losses were sustained by Beth Israel members, L. Rudman, Wolf Lipsky, Israel Frank, and Lena Rosen.

In addition six of the churches of the city were totally destroyed by the raging flames. Those destroyed were the First Congregational on Broadway, the Central Congregational and St. John's Episcopal on French Street, the Universalist, First Baptist, the Christian Advent on Center Street and our own Beth Israel Synagogue on Center Street.

Tom Gibbons, a lineman, had just gone into the synagogue to dynamite it as a barricade to the advancing flames when a huge beam fell across the door, holding it shut. The building was already on fire. For two or three minutes onlookers watched helplessly. Then Gibbons, slow and deliberate, hauled himself through a cellar window with half a dozen sticks of dynamite in one hand and the fuses draped over his arm. In a matter of seconds there was a muffled explosion inside and the building collapsed like a house of cards. This episode was graphically described to your editor by Adolph B. Friedman who had entered the synagogue to assist in the salvage of the Sefer Torahs and other holy books. These men barely escaped with their lives.

ADOLPH B. FRIEDMAN

Norumbega Hall where Edwin Booth once played Hamlet was razed to the ground. Among the first structures to go was the Central Fire Station. The Bangor Daily News carried on through the fire. In the path of the flames, its staff worked by candlelight through the night, setting type by hand and operating hand presses, so that the Monday morning edition reached the streets at the usual time, small in size but informative in content. The fire was stopped short of the News' plant.

It is safe to say that no man, woman or child in the city of 25,000 slept during that grim night as the National Guard patrolled the streets and weary fire-fighters struggled to keep the flames from spreading, using dynamite to destroy buildings in its path. The water supply was exhausted early. When dawn came that Monday morning of May 1, 1911, a once beautiful city lay under a pall of smoke and embers.

Bangor News, Dec. 1, 1911

MORE MONEY FOR SYNAGOGUE FUND

Concert and Ball Given by Ladies of Congregation Beth Israel Last Night

Success shone brightly upon the concert and dance given Thanksgiving night in City Hall by the Ladies' Auxiliary of Congregation Beth Israel for the benefit of the Synagogue Building Fund, and not only was a very gratifying sum of money realized but the social aspect of the vicinity went far towards promising many people of Bangor and its vicinity a pleasant memory of the 1911 Thanksgiving season.

Selections by Pullen's orchestra opened the program of concert numbers, and immediately afterwards Miss J. Bessie Bernstein rendered artistically the beautiful O Dry Those Tears, by Teresa Del Riezn, and I L Bacio Lereve by L. Arditi. Miss Bernstein's soprano was a surprise to those who had never heard her. She sang more than well. Miss Lena Golden followed Miss Bernstein's solos with an interpretation of Crosez's Prisoner and the Swallow on the piano. Her work was also much enjoyed. Violin solos by Ellery F. Tuck and vocal solos by Bertha K. Bogrett pleased the audience, as the work of their well known local artists always does. Master Tuck gave the Meditation from Thais, and the Adevation, by Borowski. Here Bogret sang the sweet Briggi song, Because of You, and held her hearers enrapt with her rendition of The Beautiful Lady, from the Pink Lady.

After the concert the orchestra played for dancing until a late hour. Myer Epstein was floor manager, and he managed well. His aids were L. L. Byer, S. N. Cohen, M. L. Friedman, H. J. Golden, and S. Marcus.

Bangor High School Destroyed by the Fire

CHAPTER 7

Building Of The Second Synagogue

Up to the period of the fire only $700.00 had been paid on the original synagogue mortgage of $2,500. After the fire, a meeting was held at the Talmud Torah building at 29 Carr Street, and President Joseph Byer appointed a committee consisting of himself and Messrs. Morris Rosen and Harry Cohen to settle with the insurance company. The settlement was made for $4,000 and the balance of the mortgage on the original structure was liquidated. Soon afterwards, the Center Street lot was sold and the present site on York Street was purchased for $5,000, the latter street having been decided on as the most centrally located place for the Jewish people. The deal was consummated on May 11, 1911, by a special committee consisting of Israel Goldman, A. B. Friedman, and Jonah Wallace.

Jacob M. Ross

Another committee was then appointed to communicate with architects on the matter of the type of building to be erected on the newly purchased lot. Mr. Morris Rosen was chairman of this committee and it was decided to construct a cement steel-reinforced building. The contract awarded to the Exports Company of New York City was signed on October 13, 1911. The work of erecting the new synagogue commenced at once.

The insurance money on the Center Street Synagogue, which amounted to about $4,000, was used as a basis for a building fund, and money was also solicited by private subscription. A sum of $4,000 was raised in a very short period of time. Many out-of-town Hebrews contributed to this fund, the largest single contribution, $1,000, having been made by Jacob H. Schiff. Many local business-concerns also contributed to the fund as well as a number of prominent citizens including the late Governor Frederick H. Parkhurst.

The officers of the congregation during the period of construction were as follows:

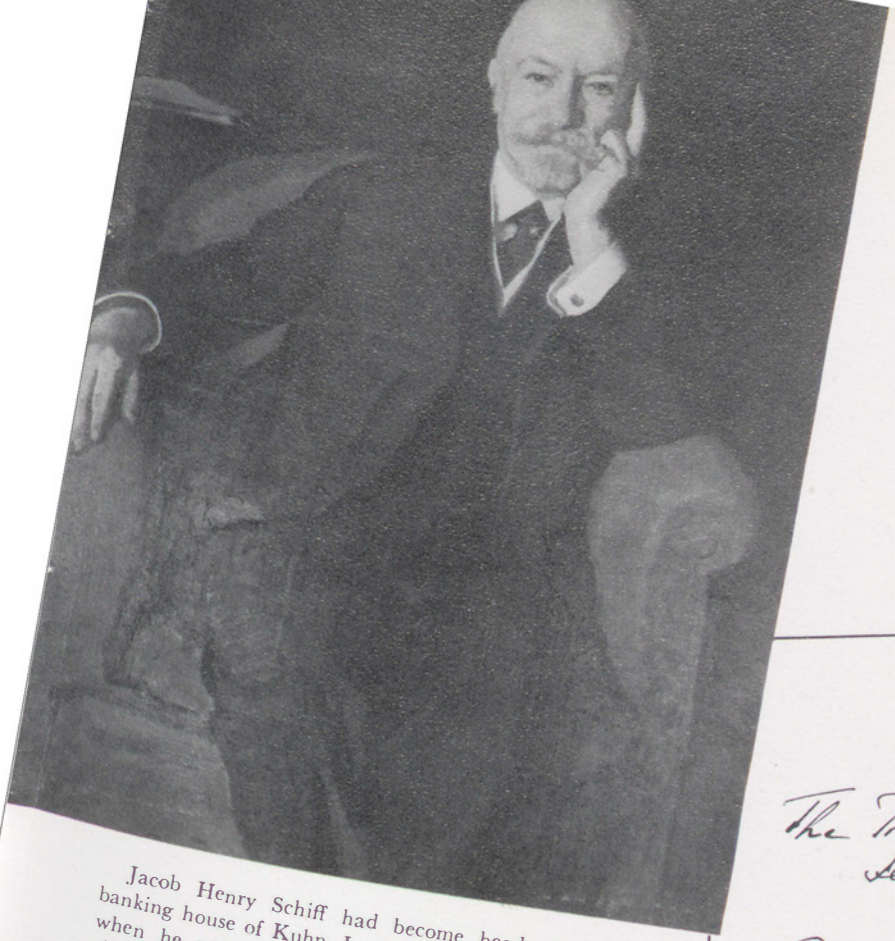
Abraham J. Berson, Pres.
Max Allen, Vice-Pres.
A. B. Friedman, Treas.
Solomon Harris, Sec.
B. Kamenkovitz, First Gabbai
J. Friedman, Second Gabbai

Meanwhile, services were being conducted at 29 Carr Street, and for the next Holy Days, a hall on Exchange Street was engaged. Services were conducted there through 1912. On April 28, 1912, the congregation voted that all future business of the congregation would be conducted by the Board of Directors. A committee, consisting of M. L. Rosen, J. Wallace, Simon Kominsky, A. B. Friedman, and Jacob M. Ross, Chairman was apointed to draw up a new constitution and by-laws. On August 12, 1912, the new constitution was adopted, and on September 29, 1912, in accordance with the new by-laws, a board of directors consisting of twenty members was elected to transact the business of the congregation. The following were known as "the twenty":

A. J. Berson	M. L. Rosen
Moishe Brown	Johnny Richardson
Harry Cohen	David Snyder
A. B. Friedman	Hyman Epstein
Max Ginsberg	M. A. Stern
Solomon Harris	B. Kamenkovitz
Simon Kominsky	Jonah Wallace
Wolf Lipsky	Samuel E. Rudman
Jacob Ross	Nathan Koritsky
S. Broide	James Sawyer

Jacob Henry Schiff

Benefactor of
Congregation Beth Israel



Jacob Henry Schiff had become head of the banking house of Kuhn, Loeb & Company in 1885 when he was only thirty-eight, and by the beginning of the new century had achieved a position as one of the country's leading financiers, philanthropists and patrons of learning.

When tidings of the Russian pogroms, climaxed by the orgy that swept the whole of Russia from October 1905, reached the world there were mass demonstrations throughout the United States. A committee, with Jacob Schiff as treasurer, raised over a million dollars for relief.

"Far View"
Eden Street
Bar Harbor, Maine

Aug. 6/12

The President
Jewish Congregation
Bangor

Dear Sir,

I shall be obliged if you will advise me at what hour divine service is held at your synagogue on the evening of Aug. 13th and the morning of the 14th, and also whether your synagogue is still located, where it used to be some years ago, notwithstanding the fire which I believe you have had.

Very truly yrs.

Jacob H. Schiff

BAR HARBOR
AUG 6
8-30P
1912

To the President
of the Jewish Congregation
Bangor
Me.

Lack of finances still continued to be a major problem, and the congregation was forced to borrow $500 for running expenses. Jake Ross and Wolf Lipsky extended a loan of $200 each, while Harry Sterns contributed $100.

BANGOR DAILY COMMERCIAL
Aug. 14, 1912

SCHIFF MEMORIAL IN BETH ISRAEL

New York Banker and Philanthropist Here for Services on Anniversary of his Father's Death

Jacob H. Schiff, the noted New York financier, is in Bangor to attend memorial services for his father at the Congregational Beth Israel synagogue on York Street. He was present at services in the synagogue Tuesday night and after attending services this morning will leave for his summer home in Bar Harbor. Mr. Schiff arrived here from Bar Harbor on Tuesday afternoon and was met by M. L. Rosen, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Congregation Beth Israel, who accompanied Mr. Schiff in Samuel Cummings automobile, the latter driving, to the Bangor House where the visitor stays during his visit in Bangor. A. B. Friedman and James Sawyer, members of the board of directors, were also at the station.

For the first time the new synagogue was used on Tuesday night. While not yet completed, temporary arrangements were made in the edifice out of courtesy to the distinguished communicant and evening prayer was held there at 7 o'clock. Tuesday was the anniversary of the death of Mr. Schiff's father and following his usual custom, Mr. Schiff went to the nearest synagogue to offer up prayers. This time, Mr. Schiff was staying at his summer home in Bar Harbor and consequently came to Bangor. The last time he attended memorial services in Bangor was in 1909.

After services Tuesday night, Mr. Schiff was taken in the auto back to the Bangor House by Mr. Rosen and Mr. Cummings and this morning at 7 o'clock will be present at a larger service in the synagogue. Mr. Schiff in his auto ride through the city commented upon the big fire of April, 1911 and was interested in the progress that had been made in rebuilding.

BANGOR DAILY COMMERCIAL
June 26, 1911

FOR THE NEW TEMPLE

Plans are Accepted by Congregation Beth Israel

Plans for the new temple of Beth Israel Congregation were accepted Mon. afternoon and the contract for the erection of the building signed by three members of the building committee, Morris L. Rosen, Harry Cohen, and J. A. Byer. The new edifice is to be thoroughly fireproof, of re-inforced concrete, under the Lewen system and the architecture of the art naveau style. Henry L. Lewen consulting engineer of the Lewen Company, drew the plan. The height of the building from the ground to the top of the dome will be 52 feet, the height from the ground to the ceiling being 35 feet and from the ceiling to the top of the dome 17 feet. The dome is somewhat of the minaret style with twisting columns, and according to the architect is something absolutely new in this country. The entire building is to be re-inforced concrete, including the dome, floor, stairs and balconies, so that it will be thoroughly fireproof.

The new synagogue is to be ready for occupancy by September, 1912, and it is hoped to complete the outside work before cold weather sets in this year. It is expected that the total cost will be in the neighborhood of $25,000.00.

The front of the building will consist of a large door of the arched type and at both sides will be two Greek Corinthian columns. There will be ornamental features to be added, including artistic windows.

In the basement of the new temple a school room is to be fitted up with accommodations for from 275 to 300 pupils, where the children will learn Hebrew and the religious traditions of their fathers. In the basement there will also be toilets of the latest and most approved pattern, for both sexes.

A commodious ladies' balcony for use in worship is to be fitted out on both sides of the new synagogue and this will be reached by two stairways going up the front walls, just after one enters the main room, and on both sides.

The ground floor, which will be one large chamber, is to be 50 by 70 feet, so that there will be ample room for the members of the congregation. In the rear of the temple is to be a raised platform, elevated 18 inches from the floor proper on which will rest the ark.

The building, as already announced in the Commercial, is to be erected on York Street, between Essex and Adams Street, on the site formerly occupied by Mrs. Mary A. Hayes' residence.

DIRECTORS IN 1913

First row: Moishe Brown, Harry Cohen, Morris Rosen, A. J. Berson, Simon Kominsky.
Second row: David Snyder, James Sawyer, Hyman Epstein, Wolf Lipsky, M. Braidy, Max Ginsberg
Third row: B. Kamenkovitz, Solomon Harris, N. Koritzky, A. B. Friedman, Jonah Wallace, John Richardson.

COMMERCIAL
March 10, 1913

Jewish Synagogue Dedicated Sunday Afternoon With Civil and Religious Rites

Dr. E. Caplan, The Speaker

Congregation Beth Israel at last occupies its splendid new building on York St.

The handsome new synagogue of Congregation Beth Israel, built in the heart of the Hebrew colony on York Street and vicinity, to replace the one on the congregation's former property on Center Street, destroyed in the big fire, was dedicated Sunday afternoon with impressive ceremonies, civil and religious, marking a distinct forward step in the life of the Jewish residents of Bangor.

There was a big crowd, which completely filled the new edifice on this auspicious occasion and many expressions of admiration for the attractive interior of the building and its magnificent electric illumination, were heard as the people filed in and out of the building.

The exercises began at 2 o'clock when the mayor and the directors of the synagogue, led by its officers, took their positions in the building, being followed in through the big doors by the people who had gathered to witness the ceremonies. Pres. M. L. Rosen handed the key of the building to the mayor, who unlocked the door and the congregation took their seats.

The exercises opened with the singing of a hymn by the cantor, an orchestral selection following.

Morris L. Rosen, president of the board of directors of Congregation Beth Israel gave a most interesting historical address of the career of the congregation during its 25 years of existance, speaking graphically of the obstacles which had seemed almost insurmountable in the raising of the necessary money for building the synagogue, but now in spite of these it had at last been secured and the edifice erected and furnished, its completion only being made possible by the loyalty of its members and their generosity, aided by the generosity of many outside their circle.

The mayor was introduced and spoke briefly, then turned to President Rosen and tendered him the key of the building. Following this ceremony the orchestra played another selection and an interesting address was delivered by Dr. L. M. Pastor.

One of the touching and interesting features of the civil service here occured when Master Arthur Lipsky stepped forward and, in behalf of the boys and girls of the congregation, presented a $10 gold piece as their special contribution toward the building. These little folks have been accumulating this sum, penny by penny until the copper coins have become gold in their thrifty little hands. Master Lipsky's speech of presentation which showed careful preparation was as follows:

Mr. Chairman and Worthy Audience: My predecessor, the worthy Vice President of our society, has already made clear to you the goal of our strivings. I, on my part, wish to tell you of the evident accomplishments of our society.

We had noticed how our parents had, with the utmost self-denial, and to the best of their ability, contributed to the erection of this holy edifice. Wishing to follow the example thus set for us, we have saved the pennies given us to spend for candy, and watched with joy their accumulation. With impatience did we await the opportunity to show our attachments to Jewish interests.

The memorable day has at last arrived.

Mr. Chairman, the pennies have changed into a ten dollar gold piece! We beg of you to accept this trival sum, not for its intrusic worth, but because it carries with it the heartiest wishes for the welfare of the "Tiphereth Israel" of many true Jewish followers.

I Thank You

Following Master Lipsky came yet another representative of the young life of the congregation in the person of Miss Rosie Berson who in behalf of the young Maccabeans delivered the following address of loyalty and assurance of support:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will undoubtedly wonder at my audacity to appear before you this afternoon but perhaps the fact that I stand before you as a representative of an organization will answer the wonder that has arisen in your mind. I see that when I mentioned the word organization. But nevertheless a society does exist which dares to call itself "The Young Maccabeans." The aims of this society are of vital interest to you as well as to us. Its members try to enthuse themselves that noble Hebrew spirit which animated the Maccabeans. We look upon the synagogue as our fortress and the pillar of Judaism. Our purpose is to help once more uplift the Hebrew flag without wishing in any way to detract from the greatness of, or letting it in any way affect our allegiance to, the Stars and Stripes. We hope to make ourselves deservant of the greatness of our ancestors and worthy of taking our place as standard bearers for our nation. Accept, Mr. Chairman, our heartiest wishes at this dedication, which to us means so much, and rest assured that this new synagogue will find in us true supporters when we shall be called upon, in years to come to do our share.

I Thank You

The religious ceremony came next, being invested with all the solemnity of the Jewish church. It was an eloquent demonstration of the faith of people and was participated in by the members with an earnestness that attested their loyalty. Morris Goldman and Arthur Dennis, two boys, read the ten commandments, one in Hebrew, the other in English, performing their roles most creditably.

The speaker of the day, Dr. Elias Caplan of Portland made a deep impression upon his hear-

ers. Seldom has a more eloquent sermon been heard here. His remarks added greatly to the impressiveness of the event and the significance of the occasion was vividly set forth. The service ended with the singing of America.

The decorations of the synagogue were unusually elaborate. A handsome chandelier was noticeable, and stretched about the balcony and ceiling were electric lights, the illumination shedding radiance upon the various colored curtains, etc., below. Everything was arranged in the decorative element so that the entire scheme was particularly pleasing to the eye. It was a worthy setting for the time.

Among the contributions to the furnishings of the edifice were a table cloth just received from N. Y., the gift of Mrs. Max Ginsburg and others and a curtain the present of the little girls of the Junior League.

On Sunday night, the day of dedication was ended with a celebration, participated in by only the members of the congregation. A banquet was served and the event was equally in keeping with the afternoon's event.

Among the prominent people in attendance were: Former Mayor John F. Woodman, Col. I. K. Stetson and Col. F. H. Parkhurst.

The erection of the synagogue was commenced in Nov., 1912 and has a capacity of 620, the balcony seating 220. The total capacity of 620 being sufficient to meet the demands of the congregation.

The officers of Congregation Beth Israel are:

M. L. Rosen, President; Wolf Lipsky, Vice President; Harry Cohen, Treasurer; A. J. Berson, Recording Secretary, these forming the officers of the board of directors.

Arthur Lipsky

Rosie Berson

York Street Synagogue

The congregation selected for its sanctuary the Byzantine - Romanesque style, warm and Mediterranean in motif. The design was meant to reflect "the cradle of the Jewish people, Asia Minor." The dome for example resembled in shape the domes of early synagogues in the Near East. Also, in moving from its Center Street location to York Street, the congregation reflected a general population trend in the Jewish community.

It was not until the spring of 1913 that the new building stood proudly as a completed work. The total cost of the synagogue was approximately $38,000. After the insurance money and funds raised by subscription had been exhausted, a loan of $10,000 was secured from the Merrill Trust Company and the balance raised by the sale of pews to the members of the congregation.

Meanwhile the congregation lost a lawsuit instituted by Hazan Goodman. The Hazan was awarded damages in the amount of $345.25 for a breach of contract. Morris Rosen and the Board of Directors had been writing frantically to every possible source which might turn up a permanent hazan-shohet for the congregation. When Hazan Liss responded to the call of the new synagogue, the members of Beth Israel proceeded with plans for an elaborate but dignified consecration of their new building.

Invitations were sent to Ohabei Shalom and to other congregations in New York to attend the dedication ceremonies. The mayor of the City of Bangor and other dignitaries of state and church were asked to join their fellow - citizens on the happy solemn occasion. The date was set for March 9, 1913.

Everything was there to make the dedication day an auspicious one. At this period in American life, few events were looked upon more favorably than the sanctification of a house of worship, and one to be consecrated by "those ancient people of the Lord" had added attraction. The people of Bangor, looking forward to a day of interest and excitement, had pride in the fact that such an event was part of their community life. Admission to the synagogue was by invitation only, and by the time the congregation finished the afternoon prayers, every one of the seats downstairs and in the gallery was filled. As part of the impressive dedication ceremony, the key to the synagogue was presented to Mayor Charles Mullen, the city's chief executive at that time.

Speech by Morris Rosen, Chairman of Building Committee at the dedication in 1913:

I feel that I have been greatly honored by having been given the responsibility of the chairmanship of the committee that was assigned the duty of building our new synagogue. It has been a great task, and how all the members of my committee and I have discharged our duties only the congregation can judge.

Morris L. Rosen

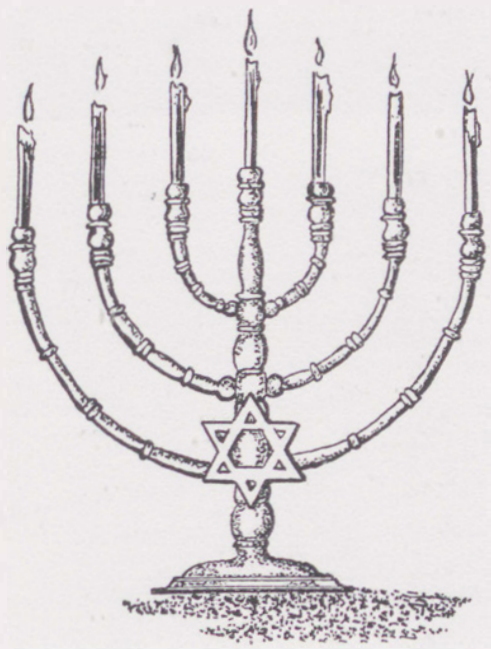
I am very grateful to the members of my committee who unselfishly gave of their time and advice in connection with this project. Many, many hours were unstintingly devoted by them, often at great personal sacrifice, in order that we might secure the best results obtainable. Not only did they give of their time and personal effort, but also each contributed to the fund making the project possible. They are all truly leaders of our congregation, and I am sure that their leadership and their accomplishments will be most inspirational to future generations.

I am also most grateful to Mr. Lewen, the fine architect who designed our synagogue and whose mastery is expressed throughout the building. He is an outstanding leader in his chosen field of architecture, and I can well understand the heights of acclaim accorded him both in the United States and Europe.

I am most grateful to the congregation for the support it has given me and my committee in this great undertaking. Were it not for its continued support and encouragement, the successful conclusion of this portion of the project would not have been possible. I say "this portion of the project" most advisedly since I have never ceased to have in mind the remainder of the project comprising the Talmud Torah. The same congregational spirit and devotion which brought us to this point will, I am sure, make the completion possible in the very near future.

Few congregations have been blessed with the opportunity of building a new synagogue. I know of no congregation of our size that has executed that opportunity with as much credit to itself as has the Congregation Beth Israel. It has been a rich experience and we have all gained from it in many ways. For not only have we built a beautiful place of worship, but what is more important, we have at the same time built up a spiritual force that will be felt in our daily lives for many years to come. This force will be felt not only within our own congregation but will radiate to all with whom we come into contact.

In this day of the dedication of our new synagogue let us not rest with the complacency of a task accomplished, but rather let us dedicate ourselves in this beautiful new edifice to an even higher peak of religious concept and attainment under the unity of God.



Will Dedicate New Synagogue

BANGOR DAILY COMMERCIAL
March 8, 1913

WILL DEDICATE NEW SYNAGOGUE

The dedication of the new synagogue of the Beth Israel congregation will take place Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Dr. Elias Caplan of Portland will be the main speaker on the occasion, and there will be several of the local prominent members of the congregation as speakers. There will also be singing by the cantor of Portland, and Dr. Caplan, who will arrive in this city on the noon train Sunday, has an elaborate program of ceremonies, of which he will take full charge. This will be the first opportunity the public has been given to inspect this new and handsome edifice, and large numbers of invitations have been distributed to the business, professional and other prominent residents of the city, and a special invitation has been extended to the members of the city government to be present. Following the impressive service of the dedication, committees will show those attending about the new church, which was completed this week, and all will be warmly received.

In the evening the members of the congregation will privately observe the occasion of the dedication of the synagogue with a grand celebration. This observance will be open to no one but the members and will be an event of the highest Hebrew celebration. A feast will be served and there will be elaborate ceremonies. The evening religious meeting will be called at 6 o'clock and will continue until a late hour.

The synagogue, which is now complete, is all that could be desired, and is one of the many attractive places of worship in the city. Every detail has been given the proper consideration and the members of the Beth Israel congregation have an edifice of which they can well boast. The interior decoration of the main auditorium is after the style of all Hebrew synagogues, the interior architectural styles having undergone but very few changes from the early days. The auditorium is finished in white, with mahogany pews and furnishings. A marble floor has been laid and the general appearance is one of lustre and splendor.

The center of the floor is occupied by an elevated platform, surrounded by a rail and surmounted with candelabras. On this platform, called the Almemar, is located the desk from which the scripture is read. Directly facing the entrance is the Ark, in which the scrolls of the law or Pentateuch are kept, and before which a heavily and gorgeously embroidered curtain is hung. The perpetual light hangs over the Ark. The pulpit is also at this end of the auditorium. A spacious gallery surrounds three walls of the auditorium, to be reserved for the women and children, the pews on the floor being occupied by the men only.

The vestry of the church is fitted up for the purpose of the daily prayer services and smaller services. In the basement is also two large and well lighted school rooms for the use of the Free Hebrew school students. The whole church is well illuminated with electricity, and every convenience has been arranged for.

It is hoped by the members of the congregation that all those to whom invitations have been given will accept the same, as it is desirous that there be a large attendance on this occasion.

A. J. Berson, recording secretary of the board elected on Oct. 6, 1912, in a delightful conversation with the editor, has left the only description of the service as seen through Jewish eyes:

I have never witnessed a more impressive or solemn ceremony or one more calculated to elevate the mind to religious exercises. Rabbi Shohet was assisted in the service by Hazan Liss, Rabbi Shohet, a venerable, learned and pious man gave great effect to the solemnity. The doors were opened by Morris Rosen and the blessing pronounced at the entrance—the procession entered with the Rabbi and Hazan followed by the gabbaim carrying the Holy Scrolls—they advanced to the Biemah where the Hazan chanted the appointed psalms. The board of directors in slow and solemn manner preceded the Sefer Torahs in their circuit around the area of the building between the Biemah and the Ark.

Mr. Berson, in a voice tremulous from deep feeling, though a half century had passed, assured me with these simple words —"I have no hope of conveying by description any idea of this ceremony—you should have seen the whole spectacle—the beautiful Oren Kodesh thrown wide open to receive the Holy Scrolls, with their rich crimson mantles fringed with gold—the Ner Tamid suspended in front with its little constant light like a watchman at his post—and with the humble yet dignified figure of the venerable rabbi as he conducted the procession in its seven circuits and then deposited the Torahs—after which the Hazan recited with an effect amounting almost to eloquence the impressive prayers—the whole audience was most profoundly attentive and although a few were happy as to understand the language, even those who did not were enraptured by the proceedings."

If Mr. Berson was so deeply moved by what he saw that he could not hope to express his feelings, he was not alone in his sense of inadequacy. Three different accounts, all struggling to express the solemnity of the event, were featured in the newspapers. Both newspapers considered the consecration of such importance that it devoted one article to a description of the ceremony, and another to the architectural design of the synagogue. It was observed—

> The chanting was of a very devotional cast, and interested us much at the time; but this interest has since been greatly increased by hearing that much of it is so very ancient that the date of its origin cannot be ascertained, while its antiquity is fully verified by the fact that it is used in almost all the synagogues throughout the world.

The chief attraction of the dedication was the Lewan-designed building. One commentator regretted that the synagogue did not stand in a better location. But the Jews preferred to have their synagogues in the immediate vicinity of their homes for the convenience of daily and Sabbath worship. However, if the reporter was sorry that the building was huddled against others in a solidly built-up section of the city, he was very impressed with the beauty of the interior, in which, he remarked, "the architect, Mr. Lewan, had free scope for his taste and his judgment, and the cooperation of the congregation has enabled him to display both to the best advantage." The rich, crimson velvet curtains of the ark and covering of the reader's desk, as well as the battle ship linoleum which lay on the floor, were favorably commented on. "Everything is made to correspond," was the summary, "and the entire harmonious array is very pleasing."

If aesthetically the new synagogue and its dedication service were note-worthy, equally so were the civic implications of the event. Another newspaper called it a more than gratifying spectacle and editorialized:

> For those who duly estimate the happy equality of our religious rights, and the prevailing harmony among our religious sects, the scene was productive of higher emotions. Among the audience and in conspicuous stations on the floor of the building, we observed several members of the Christian clergy and many other distinguished citizens, all manifesting by their presence and demeanor, that, however we may differ upon certain points, the great truth is recognized and acted upon, that we are all children of a common and Eternal Father.

The news items about the dedication ceremony were picked up by other newspapers and periodicals throughout the country, and the account of Bangor's synagogue consecration was printed in almost every large paper up and down the Atlantic seaboard.

This tangible accomplishment of Beth Israel played a consequential role in strengthening the Bangor Jewish Community. Even the shamash, Moishe Rosen, affectionately called "Feter Moishe", felt that a new era had come and requested a raise in salary because of the additional duties assigned to him. This raise, in this time of expansive optimism, was granted together

"Feter" Moishe Rosen

with the free use of a seat in the ark area. And finally, new rules were drawn up and publically proclaimed to govern decorum during worship; a number of these rules dealt with the behavior of the growing community of children. One such read:

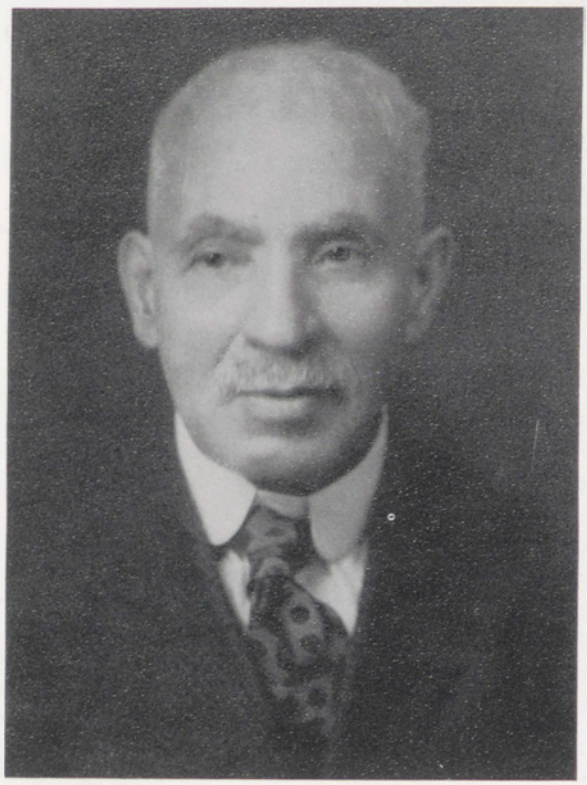
> Parents are requested not to bring children to the synagogue unless they are of sufficient discretion to be under their control and remain quiet in their seats; their running in and out will not on any account be suffered; and the shamash is strictly enjoined to prevent their interruption of the services.

With a new synagogue, an energetic rabbi, a growing membership, and a feeling of accomplishment, Beth Israel looked forward to constructive years ahead. Just prior to the High Holy Days in the fall of 1912 the Congregation elected Rabbi Moishe Shohet to replace Rabbi Klatchko who accepted the pulpit of a large Boston congregation. With the coming of Rabbi Shohet, a new era opened for the Jews of Bangor. He emerged as one of the leading members of the Maine rabbinate. He was the effective and tireless defender of traditional Judaism against the incursions of the new spirit of change that was taking place in some of the large cities. He was a champion of Jewish rights at home and abroad. In brief, a formless, drifting, haphazardly growing Bangor Jewish community was given leadership and direction and substance by Rabbi Shohet.

The musar sermons of Rabbi Shohet with respect to kashruth and Sabbath observance still ring in our ears. After, 1920, the minutes of the congregation fail to mention matters of this sort. It is not surprising, considering the extent of violation of the Sabbath, to find that attendance at services suffered as well. Both Sabbath and weekday attendances began to decline as early as 1925, and the minutes are replete with committees and panaceas to avert the crisis. Besides the Sabbath violation and non-attendance at the services in the synagogue on Sabbath and at other times, other types of nonconformity were found among the membership. Failure to observe the dietary laws, as we have seen, was another such transgression; it was said that some Jews kept kosher homes but ate non-kosher food outside the home. But none of these practices raised a clamor in the official family as did the valid report that a few members had departed from traditional religious practice by dropping the rite of circumcision by a mohel. Those who offended in this respect were threatened with loss of all privileges in the synagogue. Once more the records fail to provide evidence that such sanctions were instituted.

Rabbi Shohet tried to bring some order into the growing disorganization of shehita and called a meeting of the representatives of Beth Abraham, Tifereth Israel and Beth Israel and learned, to his dismay, that meat was allowed to remain for seven or eight days without washing or the removal of the kosher seals. This situation was contrary to the general agreement promulgated at a previous session. With the help of all three synagogues, Shohet attempted to persuade all of the butchers and the shohetim to accept a set of rules which he drew up. The Rabbi threatened that those who refused to abide by the rules or to enter into agreements with the so-called Kashruth Board would be declared passul by public announcement in each of the three synagogues. He also threatened that those who purchased meat from disqualified butchers would be openly cited as non-Kosher householders. Whether he met with any degree of success does not appear in the information we have. A half century later the very same conditions would vex the local rabbinate.

If the construction of the synagogue on York Street was important in the external history of the Congregation, the calling of Rabbi Shohet to the spiritual leadership of the congregation was far more significant in the internal history of the congregation's religious and intellectual development. It was during Rabbi Shohet's tenure that there was a revival of the Chevra Mishnayoth and a general pursuit of learning by the laity.



MAX GINSBERG
Chairman, Vaadha-Kashruth Committee

CHAPTER 8

In War And Peace

The first quarter of a century of Beth Israel's history was enacted against a background of world-shaking events. The Twentieth Century, which started so serenely and auspiciously, suffered a rude shock when the First World War ushered in an era of chaos and upheaval. Unprecedented material progress and scientific advance had held forth the promise of a better life; at the same time, spiritual anarchy and social revolution kept the world poised at the brink of disaster.

HYMAN HILLSON
Killed in Action
July 18, 1918

SAM MARCUS
Died in the Service of His Country

HENRY LAIT
Killed in Action
Sept. 12, 1918

With America's entrance into the conflict, several of Beth Israel's young men rushed to enlist. The congregation honored its fighting men at a special service on March 29, 1918, and service flags bearing their names were dedicated. Men, women, and young people of all age groups were involved in one form of patriotic work or another. Tragedy struck the community with the announcement of the deaths of Hyman Hillson and Henry Lait. Both were killed in action. Citations for bravery were awarded these men only weeks before.

The war and its aftermath saw many critical changes for the Jewish people. On November 2, 1917, Lord Balfour, with President Wilson's endorsement, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to a homeland. A Jewish Legion helped General Allenby to win Palestine from the Turks—it was this same military unit that received a tumultous welcome from the Bangor Zionists as it passed through Bangor from Canada on its way to a point of embarkation.

World War I made an indelible impression upon the Jewish community of Bangor. The problem of war relief became a communal responsibility but the organizational and administrative problems were assumed by Beth Israel. A committee composd of Abe Segal, Morris Rosen, Joseph Byer, and

ABE SEGAL, CHAIRMAN

COMMERCIAL
November 26, 1917

Bangor Hebrews' Aid Fund For Brethren

Wedding Ring and Other Jewelry Given at Mass Meeting in Synagogue Sunday Night, About $3,000 Raised

New York Attorney Makes Stirring Appeal for Jewish War Sufferers In Stricken Europe

Bangor Hebrews contributed approximately $3,000 at the Congregation Beth Israel on York Street Sunday night in aid of their war-stricken brethren in Europe. This will be added to the $1,030 already pledged here and sent to swell the relief fund which is being raised all over the United States. Members of the local committee will continue to solicit subscriptions and it is expected that the sum given in this city will reach a considerably higher aggregate.

Practically every Jewish family in the city was represented at the mass meeting which was called to order at 7 o'clock by Simon Cohen, the chairman. Charles Zunser, a well-known Jewish lawyer of New York City, made a stirring appeal in behalf of the stricken old world Jews who, he said, lacked even the barest necessities of life. He said it was impossible for the Jewish War Relief committee to even furnish the barley water which alone has kept the breath of life in many of them. It was proposed, he said, to raise $10,000,000 in this country to help them and a leading Hebrew had promised to add a $1,000,000 to that sum. Bangor's share is $10,000. Non-Hebrews will not be asked to contribute, although gifts from them will be thankfully received.

Mr. Zunser, in his address, quoted an account given by a rabbi who described the sufferings of his people when they were driven from their homes. Aged and infirm, and mothers with newly born babies were forced upon the road and many of them soon succumbed to the hardships. As soon as he had finished, subscriptions to the relief fund were solicited and the rapidity with which they were offered affording a striking object lesson of the patriotism of the Jewish race. Bangor Hebrews have already contributed liberally to the two Liberty loan drives, the Red Cross campaign, the fund for the Y.M.C.A. work and other war objects. But they still had funds to aid their fellows.

An incident was related of an impovished rabbi in New York who, although he had no money, gave a gold watch to be auctioned off for the relief fund. It brought $4,000. Mr. Kirstein asked those present to give their treasures in the same spirit of sacrifice. The scene which followed was an unusual one.

One woman offered her wedding ring and it quickly brought $100. Rings, watches and various articles of jewelry were offered by the wholesale and the bidding for them became spirited. The articles were all sold at good prices, the bidding continuing uninterruptedly for several hours. When the receipts were checked up, it was found that approximately $3,000 had been added to the fund.

The campaign is to continue here in Bangor for the next fortnight and it is hoped that all citizens will aid in the cause to the extent of their ability.

HARRY ALLEN
Son of Founder "Lemke" Allen

Simon Kominsky assumed the task of canvassing the city for the initial drive. Throughout the hostilities funds were collected and distributed to the Central Relief Committee. When the task assumed proportions too weighty for a single congregation a city-wide committee was appointed with Louis Kirstein as Director.

There was hardly a person who was not related to some war-stricken family in war-torn Europe, for the vast majority of Jews here were the immigrants of the period of 1880-1914 and their children. The cry of the starving, the homeless and the refugees touched the hearts of every Jew who wanted to help. The incomplete records tell a greater story of philanthropy and human kindness than do these inadequate accounts.

Armistice Day was wildly celebrated in Bangor on November 11, 1918. In Philadelphia Jews met in the first American Jewish Congress with a sprinkling of Maine Jewry represented. At Versailles in 1919, Jewish delegates secured acknowledgment of Jewish claims to a homeland in Palestine and of equal rights in Eastern Europe. In Detroit Henry Ford's anti-semitic Dearbon Independent began publishing in 1920 the forged protocols of the Elders of Zion. Palestine Arab riots could not halt the efforts to colonize the land which was to come under the British mandate. The League of Nations was founded without the United States. America went dry for thirteen years, but speak-easies thrived. Women finally got the vote. The Munich Beer Hall Putsch led by Hitler was put down in November, 1923. The cruel immigration laws were signed by President Coolidge, excluding many who might later have been saved from Hitler.

The year 1923 was notable for the removal of a great burden from the financial structure of the congregation. The York Street Synagogue had served the congregation well, but it had encumbered the treasury of the congregation with a $10,000 mortgage. Under the dynamic co-chairmanship of Morris Rosen and Adoph B. Friedman a campaign was undertaken to liquidate the mortgage. That campaign was brought to a successful culmination at a memorable dinner held on December 9, 1923. On that stirring occasion the co-chairmen, who led a group of devoted workers to victory, presented the cancelled mortgage to Adolph B. Friedman, president of the congregation. He then proceeded to burn the mortgage in an impressive ceremony. The Beth Israel Synagogue at last belonged to the people of Beth Israel.

BANGOR NEWS
November 29, 1918

Jews Held Five Peace Services

SYNAGOGUE BETH ISRAEL CROWDED THURSDAY AFTERNOON AT THANKSGIVING MEETING

A peace jubilee and Thanksgiving service, in which all the Jews of Bangor participated, was held in the synagogue at the Congregation Beth Israel on York Street, on Thursday afternoon at 5 o'clock. The two Jewish churches, various Jewish societies and organizations all were represented and the services were very impressive. Owing to the large number of young Jews in the various branches of the United States service as well as in the Jewish Legion in Palestine, the news of the Armistice and the consequent end of the war, was a theme upon which this most unusual observance of Thanksgiving Day was based.

At 5 o'clock when the meeting was called to order by Simon Cohen, the chairman, the synagogue was filled with eager faces and the spirit of Thanksgiving that filled the hearts and souls of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and sweethearts shone out of wide open eyes and echoed out in the joyous song of praise and Thanksgiving.

Interesting addresses were made by a number of local speakers, who gave their reasons why this Thanksgiving day was unique among the anniversaries of the day. The war and the armistice with the consequent end of the war was the theme around which the speakers wove a large amount of interesting and informative descriptive matter. The speakers in their order on the program were: A. B. Friedman, Abram Segal, Maurice L. Rosen, Rev. H. Harris, and Rev. M. Scochet.

After the addresses prayer was offered for the government, and then the President's and Governor's proclamations were read. This was followed by a Thanksgiving prayer for the armistice; a memorial prayer for those fallen in battle and Kaddish.

It was an inspiring service and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Beth Israel Lifts Debt On Synagogue Will Celebrate Burning of Mortgage

Members of the Beth Israel Congregation of Bangor's Hebrew Section are rejoicing over an important step in the history of the congregation, that of clearing the Beth Israel synagogue on York Street of a mortgage of $10,000 which was placed on the building when it was erected in 1912. A celebration to commemorate this important event will be held at the synagogue Sunday, December 9, 1923, when the mortgage will be burned and an elaborate program staged including a banquet with several speakers and an entertainment. Maurice L. Rosen is Chairman of the Committee in charge of the arrangements for this celebration and it is planned to make the affair one which will long be remembered in the annals of the Hebrew history of this city.

The clearing up of the mortgage on the Beth Israel synagogue is the result of the efficient handling of the congregation's business affairs by a method which was first introduced by M. L. Rosen after the erection of the present synagogue on York Street in 1912. Previous to that time the business affairs of the congregation had been handled by the open meeting method and this procedure had proven very unsatisfactory, the congregation being unable to pay even the interest on a $1,800 mortgage on the synagogue on Center Street which was destroyed in the big fire of 1911. At the time the York Street synagogue was formally opened Mr. Rosen who had always been a very active member of the congregation introduced a constitution and bylaws which called for a governing board of 20 directors, four directors being elected for one year, 4 for 2 years, 4 for 3 years, 4 for 4 years and 4 for 5 years, with 4 new directors being elected each year to fill the vacancies caused by the expiration of terms of the other directors. This new plan was unanimously accepted by the congregation and Mr. Rosen was elected president of the board of directors and held that position until 1915 when he resigned.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That We, M. L. Rosen, J. Wallace, A. B. Friedman, W. Lipsky, M. Kominsky, James Sawyer, David Snyder, Harry Cohen, M. Brown, B. Kamenkowitz, G. Raichlen, N. Koritzky, Hyman Epstein, S. Harris, M. A. Stern and A. J. Berson, are jointly and severally holden and stand firmly bound and obliged unto the Merrill Trust Company, a corporation duly existing under the laws of the State of Maine, and with its place of business at Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine, in the sum of Five Thousand Dollars ($5000) to be paid to the said Merrill Trust Company, its successors or assigns, and the which payment well and truly to be made, we jointly and severally bind ourselves and our heirs, executors and administrators, firmly by these presents.

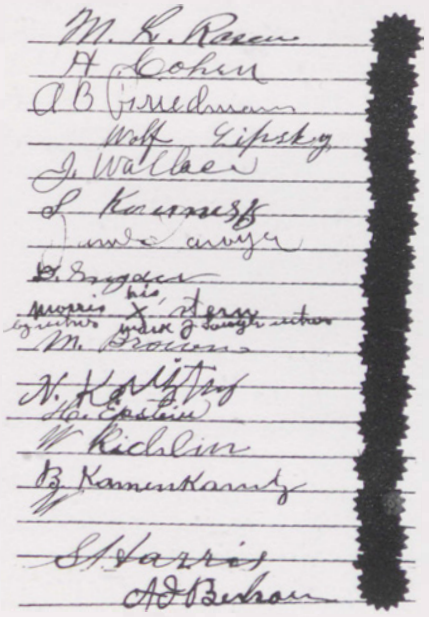
Sealed with our seals. Dated the fifteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twelve.

THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE OBLIGATION IS SUCH, THAT WHEREAS the said Merrill Trust Company has loaned the Congregation Beth Israel certain sums of money and is about to make further advances to this society, said loan already made and future loans being secured by mortgage on the real estate of said society, situated in Bangor, and WHEREAS, owing to certain difficulties in construction, and other possible difficulties, there is a possibility that liens for work, labor and material may be placed upon said building by various contractors or other parties,

NOW THEREFORE, if the above bounden parties or either of them or his or their heirs, executors or prior mortgage on said property, then this obligation shall be void, otherwise it shall remain in full force.

Witness our hands and seals the day and year above written.

Witness:



At the congregational meeting on November 24, 1924, Abram Brown was named president.

With the arrival of Rabbi Levine in 1925, representatives of the two synagogues met to discuss matters of common interest and made a startling attempt at unity by engaging the rabbi to serve both institutions. Each synagogue, however, still conducted its own affairs independently and each was still considered a separate unit. The community was a federation rather than an organic union; for example Levine's salary was not paid out of a common treasury, but each of the affiliated congregations assumed one-half of the obligation. Levine's installation was held in the grand manner befitting an occasion in which two congregations collaborated.

Rabbi Levine's duties were fixed; he was to preach at each of the synagogues in turn, to supervise the Talmud Torah, to deliver religious opinions, and to perform marriages. The records reveal the inner workings of the rabbinate and the many problems of various types which were faced. The minutes show the federated character of the community clearly, for they indicate that the joint board was ultimately obliged to turn to the members of the individual synagogues for sanction on any important matter, such as kashruth problems. Charges and counter charges were the order of the day and it was not long before Rabbi Levine was forced to relinquish his post and return to New York.

The years ahead looked promising for peace with the adoption of the Dawes Plan and the Locarno agreement. Throughout the United States Americans were both dismayed and amused by the debate between Bryan and Darrow on whether man had come from a monkey. Jews were coming into Palestine where the Hebrew University was dedicated in 1925. World Court membership was approved by the United States but with reservations unacceptable to the Court. In 1927 Lindbergh made his solo flight across the Atlantic. Non-Zionists and Zionists began discussions for joint participation in the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and in 1929 it became a fact largely through the efforts of Louis Marshall. In 1928 the first talking movie presented Al Jolson in the "Jazz Singer." The Kellog Pact to outlaw war was signed. These had been the roaring twenties—the years of flaming youth.

The crash came in October, 1929. "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime," would soon be not just a name of a song but the cry of hungry millions. The same year saw Arab riots in Palestine and Britain further restricting immigration. Japan seized Mukden in 1931 and the fires of World War II were being kindled in the Far East. In Washington, bonus marchers were driven off. Bonuses like "two chickens in the pot" were not the order of the day.

In 1933, Morris L. Rosen succeeded Louis Rapaport as president. Mr. Rosen strove earnestly to meet the oppressive financial burden and continued the program of his predecessor.

The long lines of unemployed were stretching. More drastic remedies were necessary. Franklin Delano Roosevelt would provide them. 1933 was the year of the Blue Eagle and the end of prohibition. "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." President Roosevelt p r o c l a i m e d. Louis Brann, a democrat, became Governor of Maine.

With the coming of the depression, bad times seriously affected the congregation. A. B. Friedman, who had been elected president in 1927 in succession to Simon Kominsky, sought to meet the problems that the crisis had wrought. Mr. Friedman felt that the problems of the depression as they began to affect the security of the congregation could only be met by collective action on the part of all three synagogues with respect to maintaining a shohet-mohel. The president urged a union of all congregations toward that end. It was reported at the annual meeting on November 27, 1933 that Beth Israel's financial condition was the worst in twenty-five years. The membership had fallen, no payment on principal or

BANGOR DAILY NEWS,
MONDAY, OCTOBER, 1938

TORAH PRESENTED TO BETH ISRAEL

Impressive Ceremony Sunday as Sacred Volume is Received

A Torah, which is the written law of Judaism, was formally accepted and inscribed by Congregation Beth Israel yesterday in a ceremony at once impressive and unusual.

The Torah was presented by Mrs. Max B. Epstein in memory of her late husband. Members of the Epstein family, their relatives and friends, were present in large numbers from many communities; and there was a great outpouring of Bangor Jewry. Presentation of a Torah occurs very seldom in any congregation, and the occasion always is memorable.

Members of Congregation Beth Israel, with others of the faith, first marched from the residence of Rev. Charles N. Goldberg to the synagogue on York Street. This was in the traditional manner, the sacred book being borne beneath a canopy while various members of the congregation took turns in carrying it—a high honor. There was singing as the procession moved through the streets. At a point opposite the synagogue, older members of the congregation came forward with copies of the Torah already in existence there—this also being in accordance with ancient rite.

Then the procession entered the synagogue, where there were addresses by Rabbi Adams of New York, Goodman Gaffin and Edward Stern, president of the congregation. Following this, the Rev. Goldberg officiated at the inscribing of the Torah—an impressive ceremony in itself.

Each copy of the Torah is written on parchment with a quill pen, this taking from two to three years. The work is by experts—those who spend their lives doing nothing else.

interest could be met on the indebtedness of the congregation. It was only due to the rigid austerity program of Mr. Rapaport that Beth Israel weathered the storm.

Then Came Hitler

Hitler was now Chancellor. Jewish books were burned in Germany; Jewish shops boycotted. Henrietta Szold started Youth Aliyah to save Jewish children. Jews protested against Hitlerism, but not all Jews. "Power would tame Hitler," they said. Before 1933 ended the United States and Russia had resumed diplomatic relations on the latter's promise not to propagate Communism here. In 1934 Roosevelt was using the whole alphabet to save the nation, and people began to show their optimism by singing "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

1935 saw Mussolini priming for war and Hitler declassing German Jews. In 1936 a World Jewish Congress met in Switzerland to seek ways to save world Jewry. But some still doubted Hitler's intent to annihilate all Jews. The fire was lit in Ethiopia by the Italians and in China by the Japanese. The United States proclaimed neutrality. The AFL and the CIO were at war, but labor profited from the passage of the Wagner and the Social Security Acts. In 1937, Spain was a battleground for another dictator. The Kremlin purged itself of so-called traitors. Ghetto benches were ordered for Jewish students in Poland. In Palestine Arab violence broke out again under Nazi influence. And the Haganah trained by Charles Orde Wingate saved the Jewish settlements.

At its meeting on June 30, 1937, the Board received the recommendation to call Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon of New York. The Board unanimously adopted the recommendation and proclaimed its determination to go forward under his ministery. The president, Morris L. Rosen, then called upon the members of the Board to subscribe to a special fund to help guarantee the functioning of the congregation for two years. Although the clamor for an English speaking rabbi was beginning to break down the resistance of the "old guard", the young graduate of Isaac Elhanen Yeshivah, did not appease the younger element. The change from a Yiddish sermon to the English did not fulfill the growing need for change that the tide of time could not stem. Realizing that the innovations demanded would compromise his philosophy of Judaism, Rabbi Berzon tendered his resignation after a tenure of two years.

Nazi oppression of Jews increased. Our members signed affidavits to help many come here. Jews were harrassed in Poland, Roumania and Hungary. Mussolini declassed Italian Jews. In November, 1938 the synagogues in Germany were burned; and as if in defiance Beth Israel marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the present edifice with the dedication of a Sefer Torah donated by Mrs. Max Epstein in memory of her late husband. The local press observed that the traditional ceremony highlighted the solemn occasion.

Mr. and Mrs. Max B. Epstein

The strong man of the Beth Israel old guard, Morris Rosen, bowed to the demands of the younger members and did not stand for re-election. Goodman Gaffin a newcomer in the ranks of shul politics took the reins of leadership.

A new era in Jewish community life was inaugurated with the opening of the Community Center. By now, Beth Israel had

ceased to be the single center of Jewish community life in Bangor. Other congregations had grown up. Organized philanthropic work was now carried on by the Federation. Social activities flourished in various lodges, while cultural life was varied and fruitful. So the Beth Israel Synagogue which had once provided the sole institutional stability for Bangor Jewry was joined, though not superseded, by other organizations. As the Jewish community grew in numbers and as its formal structure left primitive stages, many co-workers joined Beth Israel in cultivating the fields of Jewish endeavor.

Within this period Beth Israel, still a dominant force within the community, also underwent a fundamental change. The first indication was the election of Edward Stern, at the age of thirty, as the first American-born president. With a Jewish education which was completely native, they managed to acquire a working knowledge of the fundamental elements of religious forms, services and rituals, without any real training in Jewish lore or law. Considering how limited their Jewish learning was by the European standards of their fathers and grandfathers, their devotion to Jewish life was all the more remarkable. The older generation with a European background was slowly giving way to the demands of the "young Turks." The congregation was to be led by the first generation of Jews ever to have been born in a democracy.

Our World In Turmoil

The British White Paper of 1939 dimmed the hopes of Europe's Jews for refuge in Palestine. There was no refuge in most places of our world. Many American Jews were at the Zionist Congress at Geneva when Russia and Germany made their pact. War came on September 1, 1939, before they reached home. Upon their return, they warned of war's threat to America itself, American Jewish leadership urged the rescuing of Jews. Six million would be lost before the war was over. Poland fell quickly, but Jews withstood the terror in the Warsaw Ghetto four more years. In June 1940, the Germans entered Paris unresisted. Here, we arose at every gathering to sing "The Star Spangled Banner." "God Bless America" was not only a song but a prayer. By the time bombs fell on London in 1941 and our ships were menaced on the seas, we had become the arsenal of democracy. It was suggested by President Roosevelt the "War for Survival" should be the name of the conflict America was fighting against Nazi Germany and Imperialist Japan.

CHAPTER 9

Dedication To The Nation's Cause

The congregational meeting in 1941 was transformed into an occasion for dedication to the tasks called for by the National Emergency. The program had been planned to enlist the efforts of the membership to engage a rabbi for the congregation. It became instead an occasion to urge the purchase of government bonds and participation in those activities that would strengthen the nation at home and the democratic forces abroad. The election of officers was held and Harold R. Epstein was elected to succeed Edward Stern as president.

The year 1941 was significant in the annals of the congregation, and drew from its past the inspiration to minister to a community, which for the second time in a single generation had blundered into the horror of world war. As had always been the case when the safety of the country was at stake, the families of Beth Israel gave generously of their sons and substance to the nation's defense. Nearly 100 men of Beth Israel served in the armed forces of the United States.

Despite the efforts of the advancers, the Synagogue fell back in some fields. It was warned by Henry Segal, Chairman of the Religious Committee; "Beth Israel will have to look to its laurels if it would continue to maintain its long prestige of being the leading congregation in Bangor. Names on the membership rolls is not enough. We earnestly hope that it will not lose its title as the leader in Northern New England Judaism. It will have to wake up and lead, or it will someday find itself shorn of its glory by the younger congregations. At times there is a bare minyan."

On February 1, 1943, death came to Solomon Harris. The community mourned his loss. At the funeral service it was said of him; "Faith characterized his life, faith in God, faith in man, faith in his co-religionists . . . Nothing Jewish was alien to his soul."

Through the years Congregation Beth Israel has had the unique distinction of being the training ground for a number of distinguished Rabbis who have gone on to fill pulpits in large cities and serve on the faculties of great centers of Jewish learning.

The War had a religious consciousness that manifested itself in a movement for spiritual leadership. Consequently Rabbi Moishe Zucker, a refugee newly arrived in America and rabbi of the Jewish Center in Brooklyn, New York, accepted an invitation issued by the late James Striar to serve both Beth Abraham and Beth Israel Congregations. The Rabbi's oratory both in Yiddish and English won for him a warm place in the hearts of his congregants. The first installation ceremony in the history of the synagogue paid tribute to the scholastic fame achieved by this young rabbi. The stringent limits of a pastoral life led the noted rabbi to seek a position in the field of education. Two years later he was named to the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The ministry of Rabbi Zucker extended over a period which included dark days and trying years for the congregation, the Jewish people, the nation, and the world. But it also included many noble victories as well. It was a goodly heritage which he transmitted to his successor, Rabbi Avraham Freedman, who assumed the leadership of the congregation in 1949.

Franklin D. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, having brought the United States within sight of victory in Europe. It was only a month later when that victory was realized and the end of the war in the Pacific followed in a few months. Beth Israel desired to honor this great war President. At first, it was thought that a memorial plaque should be dedicated but it was finally decided to hold a memorial service. The Synagogue was filled; Rabbi Zucker delivered the memorial address.

In the United States the years following the War were marked by wrangling of Re-

publicans with Democrats. But far worse were the quarrels between Russia and the Western powers, shaking the foundations of the U. N. The non-fiction best seller was Joshua Liebman's "Peace of Mind" — but there was no peace. Jews were being freed from th concentration camps and thousands were coming into Palestine despite the White Paper and the British fleet which drove refugees into the sea or dumped them on the island of Cyprus.

In November the United Nations voted to partition Palestine, making possible an independent Jewish homeland. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were instituted to save Europe from Communism. At home eggs were $1.00 a dozen, butter $1.00 a pound, and income taxes at their peak. The world had its old look but the women adopted the New Look. In 1948 Czeschoslovakia fell into Russia's lap. The United States began to re-arm and renewed its draft. Truman was elected to everyone's surprise but his own. The Kinsey report told us more than we would admit.

Talmudical tradition has it that a triviality led to the ultimate destruction of the Second Commonwealth; similiarly, it was a minor issue which led to the resignation of Rabbi Zucker and the disruption of the entire edifice so well planned and dreamed of by its architect, Gimpel (James) Striar. The proposal to unite the 3 congregations originated with Striar, and he interested Harold Epstein, president of Beth Israel, as well as the leaders of the two sephardic congregations. The argument in favor of fusion maintained that there was neither point nor need for three separate congregations in the Jewish community of Bangor. The protagonists envisaged a large place of worship with one spiritual leader.

Had such a fusion taken place, the rabbi engaged would undoubtedly have been Rabbi Zucker. No mention is made in the records of the intentions of the leaders with respect to the position of rabbi. Needless to say, the negotiations were instituted and carried on behind the scenes; whatever the lay leaders had in mind, Rabbi Zucker was probably completely ignorant of it. Striar, Epstein, and other leaders of the movement called together the trustees of Beth Abraham, Toldos Yitzchak, and Beth Israel and placed the proposition before them. Beth Abraham and Toldos Yitzchak showed little interest in the plan and soon withdrew from all discussion. The first difficulty, the refusal of Beth Abraham to give up its synagogue building even for a limited period, sounded the death knell for further negotiation.

In 1948 Rabbi Zucker asked the congregation to permit him to retire from his rabbinical duties in order to accept a teaching post at the Jewish Theological Seminary. We at Beth Israel floundered in our attempts to find a spiritual guide with the wisdom to weld the factions already appearing on the horizon. Jews in Palestine moved forward to fulfill the fond dream of a Jewish State. It was not to be realized until much Jewish blood had been shed. Here at home Jews gave, as they never had given before, to make that State possible and to build it as a secure home for the thousands who were coming into Israel. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed and Jews rejoiced everywhere—but with no greater enthusiasm and spirit than displayed by the function held by Beth Israel. In a measure it was almost a personal triumph for our Zionist pioneer Myer Minsky.

Years of Fulfillment

The years between 1912 and 1949 have been years of creative adjustment to the tumultous changes — many of them tragic, many of them hopeful — which have been wrought in the life of the world and of the Jewish people. Beth Israel like every sensitive instrument of the spirit in modern times, has been marked by the consequences of the wars which have shaken the world, by the tragedy which overwhelmed the Jewish people in Europe and by the various cynical philosophies which encouraged indifference and even hostility to organized religion.

These ups and downs of world history, these peaks of hopes and nadirs of despair, are reflected on microscopic scale in the ups and downs of the Congregation's history— the prosperous first decade of the 20th Century and the raising of the mortgage on the Synagogue; the trials and turmoil of the First World War; the renewed prosperity of the Twenties; and the plunge into the depths of the Great Depression; the Recov-

ery and the new hopes shattered by the second World War; the period of post-war progress against an ominous background of an Uneasy Peace and a Cold War . . . thus history traveled a rugged and uneven course.

But Beth Israel has also been uplifted by and has played its part in the great creative enterprises through which the Jewish spirit made its response to the challenge of our time. There has been no major venture in Jewish life which has failed to evoke warm response from the faithful membership of the congregation, and much of the dynamic personal leadership which these movements required was recruited from among the Beth Israel membership. The great charitable ventures following each of the World Wars, the Zionist dream, now in the first stages of fulfillment in the State of Israel, the great galaxie of service agencies linked together in the Jewish Community Council, the movement to establish genuine good will and mutual brotherliness between the various denominational groups of the community—all of these and a host of other redemptive activities found that Congregation Beth Israel had prepared the hearts and minds of its members to be generous, imaginative and enthusiastic in their response.

Rubinoff The Violinist
is married in Beth Israel
1942

CHAPTER 10

The Modern Period —Impact Of Americanization

The war had ended. The Period of the "leaders" had ended. The men who had held the reins of synagogue leadership for decades were passing to their reward one by one, and there were few to replace them. But a new impasse loomed. The post war years 1945 to 1950, were years of drastic change at Beth Israel. The new generation had gradually begun to separate itself from the strict ritualism of the past. Perhaps the most serious problem confronting Beth Israel was to crystallize religious policy with respect to the various ideologies in Jewish thought and practice.

"Shevorim!" . . . Congregation Beth Israel again was called to action by the sound of the Shofar in the fall of 1948. The quick and impatient melody of the Shevorim was heard, and it pierced, like knife thrusts, to the core of the spirit.

The Shevorim, symbolic of the growing-up years, pointed to a period marked by idealogical conflicts. There were some in the congregation who favored Orthodoxy, and others who favored moderate Conservatism. Heretofore, the congregation was passive in the extreme. It was prayed at, preached at, sung at, invoked, blessed and dismissed.

The pattern of Jewish living was changing and the native-born Jewish generation was restive, dissatisfied with the uncompromising Othodoxy of their parents. This new generation of American born Jews preferred to battle the turbulent currents of religious controversy rather than to drift with the tide of tradition. They felt kneely the desirability of harmonizing Jewish tradition with the demands of modern life. The "old shul" never made any changes down through the years in its activities—certainly not in the religious service. Even the physical structure of the synagogue remained the same except for a few minor alterations.

A native movement among a small group of Beth Israel members advocated adoption of the Conservative platform as early as the 1920's; it soon lost its momentum and was revived only when Myer Segal came upon the scene in 1927. This movement from the outset was, of an external nature. There was not attempt to foist the philosophy of Conservatism upon the existing synagogue. This new religious congregation was named Beth El and elected Myer Segal as its first president. Services were conducted at the old Talmud Torah building on State Street, and in 1935, Rabbi Harry Zwelling, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York was called to occupy the pulpit. Services were conducted in Hebrew with English readings. Men and women were permitted to sit together and the services were enhanced by a mixed choir.

This "rebellion" was later to become the focus of attraction to many of our religious minded Jews who could accept neither the rigid orthodoxy transplanted from Europe, nor the radical theories of American Reform Judaism. Beth El was founded on the conviction that traditional Judaism can function as a vital spiritual force in this country in complete harmony with the best in our American culture. Twenty years would elapse before Beth Israel would institute these innovations and its membership reunited in a common purpose.

The situation reached the boiling point in 1948. Naturally in a congregation consisting of the old and the young, there arose a dissatisfaction with the status quo and a clamor arose for a change in the ritual.

Specifically, should women be permitted to sit with men? Should there be a use of the vernacular in the traditional service? These questions became topics of heated debate. The traditionalists, and there were many of the elders who had nostalgic feelings for the time-honored services, fought against the "reformers." And the answers that came from the senior members nearly split the congregation into islands of othodoxy and conservatism, and stirred the kind of bitter and passionate espousal of one side or the other that only religious controversy can create. To the modern Jews, the religious philosophy of Judaism was a living, vital issue—something that requires vig-

orous action, not merely nicely-turned phrases. This new element was dissatisfied with rigid orthodoxy, but was unwilling to go as far as Reform. This was the beginning of a bitter feud between the advocates of change and James Gimpel Striar. His father had fought as unrelentlessly sixty years ago. Striar was an exponent of the traditional orthodox service and warned against the changes which would impair the essence and purity of the Jewish religion. He struck out against these new proposals when he admonished the membership with the charge: "Reformers create schisms and promote divisions besides impairing the unity of our faith." He and his family left the congregation and worshipped elsewhere rather than see the shibboleths of their faith changed. They did, however, retain their membership in the congregation. And so the battle raged on through the months, every move along the road to Conservatism being contested inch by inch.

The Orthodox group hinted at court action in order to obtain redress, but the victory was apparently too complete. The pioneers, so to speak, had become the patriarchs; it was time for the next generation to carry on the work. The synagogue was no longer static but bent to the beauties and requirements of American Jewish life. That we chose in some respects to depart from the strict ritual of our founders does not mean to imply criticism of them. It rather suggests we intend to compliment them by assuming that, even as they adjusted tradition to their day, so we mean, in the same spirit, to adjust to the changed circumstances of our own.

Having known Rabbi Zucker, it was impossible for the congregation to think of a successor who would not be worthy of the scholarly tradition set by the rabbinate of Beth Israel. The rabbi who would fill the pulpit must, furthermore, be steeped in traditionalism and at the same time be a liberal theologian. Early in 1949, the congregation began its search for a successor to Rabbi Zucker. President Harold R. Epstein, Myer Segal, David Rosen, Joseph Emple, and Henry H. Segal were designated as a committee to screen candidates who would meet the requirements of the new order. The choice fell upon Rabbi Avraham Freedman and his election was ratified by the congregation. It was arranged that Rabbi Freedman should assume his new duties in September of that year.

The installation of Rabbi Freedman as the religious leader of the congregation in the fall of 1949 was in many respects the mark of the beginning of a new era. Coming to the pulpit of Beth Israel following years of distinguished service as spiritual leader of Durban, South Africa, Rabbi Freedman was symbolic of the post-war age—an age full of promise and achievement.

He was scholarly and gentlemanly, a man whose tolerance and learning well fitted him for the difficult years of transition lying ahead. Born in Russia, Avraham Freedman came to America as a young child and was educated at Yeshivah University. He received his ordination from three of the most distinguished Rabbis in the country—Rabbi M. Soloveichik, RaMaz Margolis, and Dr. Bernard Revel. He occupied the pulpit of the Rideout Street Synagogue in Ottawa, Canada, and later served as the Rabbi of the united synagogues in Ottawa. Rabbi Freedman organized the first Vaad Ha-Ir in Canada and was elected Rabbi of the entire Jewish community of the city of Ottawa. In 1937, he was called to South Africa where he served the Durban community with distinction for 12 years. During World War II, Rabbi Freedman served as chaplain to His Majesty's forces.

JAMES GIMPEL STRIAR

He was elected to the South African Board of Deputies.

Rabbi Freedman believed that the Synagogue must be restored to its primacy in Jewish life, that it must be the dynamic center of all phases of Jewish communal life. He knew that while he must convince the elders of this necessity, his main work would be with the younger element. To restore our meaningful folkways and give color and drama to our teachings, he inaugurated the Friday Evening Service and the Sunday Morning Minyan Breakfasts—that proved to be a "breakfast institute" of Jewish studies.

The sermons of Rabbi Freedman explored the gamut of intellectualism. Soon he was in demand as a lecturer; he gained renown for his inter-cultural activities. Through the years he has sustained the congregation and helped it regain its perspective toward Judaism, and has brought new hope to the spiritually disinherited. It was due to his influence and zeal that the Sisterhood and Brotherhood were organized. The women's work of the synagogue was originally charitable; it now became apparent that their role would be almost exclusively in the realm of service to the congregation. Rummage sales, fund-raising projects, and a wealth of similar activities followed over the years.

The change from the oligarchy which had directed the congregation during the earlier years led to a more general participation by the members in synagogue affairs. Keeping the rest of the congregation intact and pacifying both the traditionalists and innovators required a great deal of tact and ministerial engineering. While traditional as his predecessors in fundamentals, Rabbi Freedman felt that the new policy adopted before his arrival would tend to enhance the service and have further meaning for modern Jews. The foundation was laid for the establishment of a congregation along Conservative lines with a minimum of innovations, aiming to attract the young American Jews to the synagogue in order to guide them by precept and example toward the Jewish way of life. Religion at Beth Israel, if it were to mean anything, had to be the expression of a free and educated people. Yet it had, like all Judaism, to be characterized by the love of basic ethical traditions.

Rabbi Freedman's pastorate marked a turning point for the congregation. Beth Israel embarked upon a re-appraisal of values. Progress and tradition moved side by side in the synagogue's calendar. 1950 saw the successful inauguration of the congregational SEDAR on the Passover. How much closer was Rabbi Freedman to the emotional and religious needs of his congregation than was his predecessors. The Rabbi's leadership in the support of Israel and suppressed Jews the world over symbolized the deep sense of urgency—the need to re-educate for Judaism. His activity in the communal Hebrew School reflects credit upon himself and his congregation. He has played the role of shadchan between school and home, enlightening each as to the responsibilities of the other.

Nor was the temporal part of the Congregation neglected. The original constitution and by-laws were replaced by new ones in 1954. The legality of these new measures as presented by Henry H. Segal were scrutinized by Shirley Berger and Abraham Stern and finally enacted at the general meeting.

During the incumbency of Rabbi Freedman who holds the record of longest service to the Congregation, the modernization of the Synagogue building was started. The interior of the building was completely overhauled, the vestry room floor was tiled and an attractive and utilitarian kitchen was installed. The main sanctuary was tastefully redecorated. New electric light fixtures were installed, and an air refreshing unit completed the work on the balcony.

GROWTH OF BETH ISRAEL

"Teruah" . . . a call to battle, and to build!

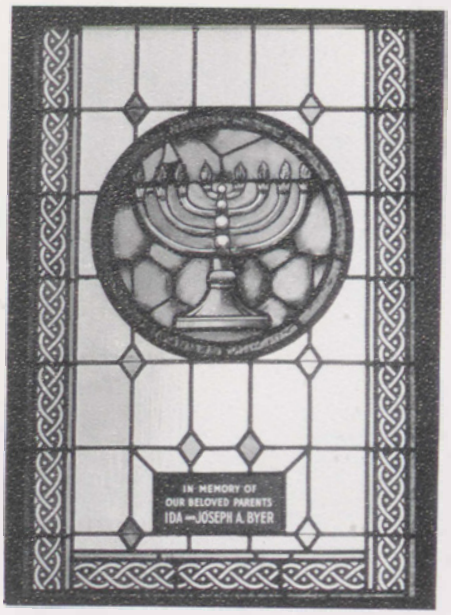
The remarkable expansion of Beth Israel in the past decade has encompassed a broad range of interests and sentiments and a diversity of traditions. With the coming of Rabbi Freedman men and women were attracted to the synagogue in growing numbers. They, along with the workings of time, were to modify its features.

Growth has always been one of the basic impulses of the Jewish spirit, and it was not long before the congregation felt the pinch of limitation. Passing years and the rise in religious interest made Beth Israel inadequate in facilities. When the present building was erected, the congregation was convinced that it had been built for the future. The past decade made it apparent that the facilities of the Synagogue, which was nearly a half century old, were insufficient to cope with the increasing needs of the members. More useful space was vital for synagogue activities. The office of the Rabbi had to be surrendered for other uses because of the space shortage. There were inadequate facilities for recreational and social activities. In 1960 the first changes were brought about by remodeling the downstairs vestry. A specially designed movable wall made the vestry available for secular functions under the auspices of the Synagogue and for community when such is compatible the aims and purposes of the Synagogue. The seating capacity for banquet purposes can now accommodate 160 comfortably. A modern heating system was installed and the walls covered with a rich mahogany paneling. This welcome change added a touch of warmth to the heretofore bleak atmosphere. In 1961 the main sanctuary was carpeted and the walls were treated to a wainscot paneling that completely altered the inner appearance of the synagogue. Subsequently the Ark area was enlarged and the Ark itself refinished in deep tones and adorned with pillars of a golden glint. The "biemah" was removed from the center of the sanctuary and additional benches installed to meet the problem of increased membership as well as allowing greater visibility of the Rabbi's podium and the Ark. The completely new lighting effect along with the colorful stained glass windows lent both an inner comfort and a deep sense of awe.

The year 1963 is of vast significance to Congregation Beth Israel, for it marks not only the 75th year of its founding, but also the Golden Jubilee of our present edifice.

Our lovely stained glass windows remind us to strive for justice, to hasten the day when each man shall live under the vine with none to make him afraid.

OUR MEMORIAL STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

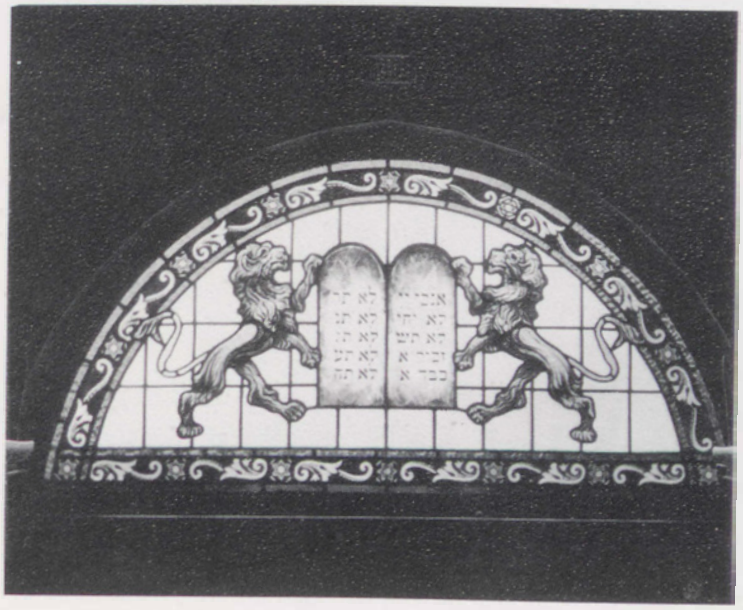


Possibly the only achievement which will be remembered longer and will furnish more beauty and inspiration, not alone for ourselves, but for future generations as well, was the changing of the old colored glass windows which, so far as is known, had served the Synagogue since its erection and their replacement with the Memorial stained glass windows of exquisite color and design that can only give to those who attend services, an added feeling of dignity and reverence.

When renovating the main Sanctuary, provision was made for a series of stained glass windows, in harmony with the Romanesque style of architecture. It was the intent of the planner that, in executing these windows, there should be dignity as well as artistic beauty and feeling, in keeping with the sanctity of its surroundings.

Rabbi Freedman as a committee of one, decided that there should be an overall scheme of design for all windows, so that a sense of unity and balance would be accomplished.

The motifs of all windows consists of a continuous chronological presentation of the religious and historic development of Israel. The large windows on the Mizrach Wall depicting the Scroll of the Law and the Menorah symbolizes the essence of Truth and the Enlightenment of man. The Stone Tablet portrays the moral code for all of mankind.



"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them . . ." Exodus 25:8

"Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness"

The above cited passage, taken from our daily morning prayers, guided us in beautifying the Holy Ark of classic design, which, with its Ner Tamid, forms the focal point in our Sanctuary. Built fifty years ago, at considerable cost, and remodeled in 1962, its components of solid oak, is a work of religious art in its simplicity enabling us to furnish the keynote to what has resulted in a most graceful "Mizrach Wall."

PLANS MADE FOR DIAMOND JUBILEE

For Beth Israel and the world at large 1963 is an auspicious year. As the Congregation was about to enter its seventy-fifth year, plans were made for the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee anniversary. At the October, 1962 meeting of the Board of Directors, Rabbi Avraham Freedman was appointed General Chairman of the Anniversary Committee, Harold R. Epstein as Co-chairman, and Albert and Sidney Schiro, as Co-chairmen of the Fund Raising Committee. Henry H. Segal was named as Editor and Historian of the Jubilee publication. A large and active committee was later named to assist Rabbi Freedman in the shaping up of the plans for an appropriate celebration. One of the goals of the 75th Anniversary program was to free the congregation of all indebtedness incurred in the renovation of the synagogue building. More than $20,000.00 in gifts were contributed toward the Jubilee Fund. The President, Harold R. Epstein was able to announce that all indebtedness had been lifted from the congregation through the use of part of the gifts. The congregation of a "minyan" in 1888 has now grown to 250 families.

Rev. Raphael Adams
Has served Beth Israel for many years
as Baal Kore and Baal Tekiah

1963 and our seventy-fifth anniversary year witness more billions poured into defense and foreign aid. In addition to giving millions to the United Jewish Appeal, Jews are continuing to buy Israel bonds. The nuclear bomb and mutual distrust fills the world with fear even though a partial test ban treaty has been signed. Man stands tremblingly seeking through the darkness that surrounds him to discern the signs of a brighter future. Gigantic programs have been launched by the world powers to conquer space. For centuries thinkers have deliberated on the mystery of our world's beginning; today they direct their attention to its possible end. The most pressing problem facing mankind today is not whether there is human life on the moon, but whether there will be any human life left on earth.

Of this we are convinced, that we need desperately the faith of our fathers in these times. We need the faith of the founders of this congregation who believed that by walking in God's ways and fulfilling His commandments we might help to build His kingdom on earth. As we pay tribute to those who built our house of God, we rededicate ourselves to Him.

"Tekiah Godolah" . . . the sound of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, 1963, is as symbolic to Bangor Jewry today as it was three quarters of a century ago. The broken notes are heard. So are the notes that rise and fall. But, most important, the long call is heard—the call to ever lift our voices to God in the moving prayer:

> "Look with compassion upon Thy children and grant us strength of love and purity of purpose, that we may live together in peace and concord, so that the well-being of all may be promoted and Thy name, O God, be glorified in all the earth."

The Sanctuary of Beth Israel

Conclusion

And so, in 1963 WE FIND OUR CONGREGATION 75 YEARS—THREE QUARTERS of a century old. It now numbers a membership of nearly 300 families. A mighty tree has sprung from the "First Minyan." The Congregation is now old in years and experience, but not in ideals—for these will never age.

This is the conclusion of a story of a congregation, but in reality, it is only the beginning. Unlike a novel, a history does not have a "happy ending." In fact, the history of a living organization has no ending at all; only the story of an extinct culture comes to a definite close. The first 75 years of the history of Beth Israel will merge imperceptibly with the years to come; the bequest of the first 75 years is not an assurance, but a challenge. The light of the Synagogue will continue to cast its rays with ever-increasing brilliance.

Passing years and changing times bring new anniversaries, new leaders, new ideas. As the spiritual and cultural leadership of the Synagogue continues toward its Centennial, we can be strong in the faith that the "building of a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel" will never halt.

THIS, THEREFORE, IS NOT THE END.

אנכי ה'
לא יהיה
לא תשא
זכור את
כבד את
לא תרצח
לא תנאף
לא תגנב
לא תענה
לא תחמד

Beth Israel's Tomorrow

To turn from the past to the future is at once to attempt the most difficult and the most intriguing part of this evaluation. Difficult, because not even with the most instructive insights of our history would any honest man pretend to accurate clairvoyance. Intriguing, because though we have been largely determined beyond our will by the past, we have it within our present power, in part at least, to act in determination of the future. Indeed, this is in a sense the reason for undertaking such a study as this on the occasion of Beth Israel's Diamond Jubilee; that we may learn enough about the past, and apply it with sufficient intelligence in the present to influence our congregation's character in the future.

Not by number, but by spirit, do we measure our advances of the past and present. For our material growth is affected by the growth of Bangor Jewry's population; but our spiritual growth is affected by our own will to live as Jews and our own devotion to the congregation which has been a treasured possession and hallowed force in our lives.

Let it be recorded that our Synagogue today stands on a foundation of the founders' dreams, the hopes and determination of the generations that preceded us, and—most of all—the eternal ideals of Judaism. All, that has gone before us is only a prelude to the fulfillments that lie ahead of us.

It is for us to carry forward the Ark of the Covenant, to create new and even more glamorous traditions, to enlarge our horizons, to become builders, to make ourselves living witnesses to the goodness and the glory of God, as worthy sons and daughters in whom abides the spirit of Beth Israel.

The events of history do not arrange themselves in such an orderly and convenient manner that one epoch closes and another begins precisely on some particular anniversary. In the case of Beth Israel, the 75th Anniversary finds the Congregation in the middle of a period of change and transition.

Verily, the first 75 years have been fruitful and good. Congregation Beth Israel's yesterday and today chronicle years of consecrated loyalty to faith and people—years of worship and service—years of striving and searching. In order to pay proper respect to these years of our inheritance, we must prepare to attain an even greater future in the 75 years of tomorrow.

As we look into the future, we see the years unfolding with a promise of tremendous vitality for this Synagogue.

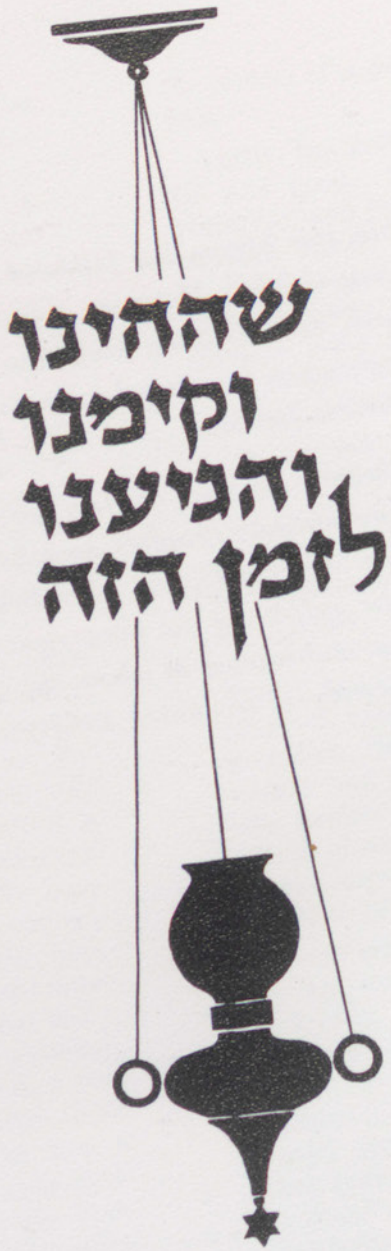
Our country has fought through two world shattering wars during the lifetime of Beth Israel. The world has grown smaller in these 75 years. Human values are constantly being sacrified to world conquest—religious values are being cast aside. Congregation Beth Israel will seek to lend its weight and its voice against these destructive tendencies—against the bitterness and hatred of nations; against the evil ambitions of the powerful; against the sordid materialism of unspirited men.

These critical times challenge Jews to follow but one ism—Judaism. It holds a key to human salvation. Its emphasis on democracy, on social justice, on love and on world brotherhood can be the panacea for human ills. Just as the founders of Beth Israel proudly and heroically determined that Judaism shall not perish in this isolated frontier of our country, so we, their descendents, must resolve that Judaism will remain the primary urge of our life. We shall not succumb to hysteria or jitters. Faith in God and not fear of man will be the keystone of our existence.

When the tyrants rage and reign, we shall heed the injunction of the jubilee and "proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all inhabitants thereof."

AS far as possible, this history has followed the main stream of the story of the Congregation. However, just as a river broadens and meanders in its course, even dividing itself into branches, so have the activities of the Congregation broadened to include new functions, and to branch out into diverse fields.

Some of these "branch streams" of Beth Israel deserve recognition of their own; therefore separate chapters have been accorded to "The Chevra Kadisha", "The Sisterhood", and "The Brotherhood." Each of these contributed to the welfare of the Congregation; they enlisted the services of devoted men and women to whom the Congregation is eternally grateful. Their story is recounted briefly on the pages which follow.



. . . that has sustained us and brought us to this day

In The Midst Of Our Festivites
Let Us Pause To Remember.....

We Have Mourned The Six Million

We have mourned the six million . . .

We have celebrated Israel's rebirth . . .

During the 75 years of our existence, the world has been shrunk by technology and shattered by war.

We have been witnesses to homelessness and enslavement and death. As witnesses, we have been spared much, but we have been seared by the ordeals of our age. We saw our brothers and sisters in Europe become the victims of one of history's most savage tyrannies. As our synagogues remained secure, their synagogues were violated and demolished. As our congregation flourished, theirs were decimated and destroyed.

We lived those years with the awareness that all of Israel was one fellowship. The goal of our labor, we knew, was to create the conditions for the one fellowship of mankind, to remove the dominion of tyranny, to rescue Jews, to help them reach Israel and America.

We Have Celebrated Israel's Rebirth

On Friday evening, May 14, 1948, with a jubilation and a thanksgiving unknown to any previous generation of Jewry, we conducted our Sabbath services in the knowledge that a few hours before, in the museum in Tel Aviv, David Ben Gurion had read the declaration of independence proclamation of the third Jewish Commonwealth. The miracle of rebirth had happened in our time.

What was our special merit, that unto us this miracle was shown? Our eyes had seen it, the fulfilling of the words of the prophets; the opening of graves, a doomed people arising to life, to light; the blossoming of a desolated land; the victory of the few against the many; the gathering in of the exiles, their being borne aloft as on eagle's wings. We shall remember this tragedy and this miracle all our days and they shall be remembered as long as Jewish history unfolds. These two events of the past 75 years will be remembered throughout all the days of Jewish history.

The death of the six million.

The rebirth of the State of Israel.

May they continue to teach us their lesson: Out of death can come life.

These Are The Rabbis Of Beth Israel

By a man of understanding and knowledge
established order shall long continue.—Provebs 28:2

JUDAISM as a faith is a democratic theocracy that recognizes the ability of every human being to commune with God. Man and his maker require no special intermediary. Our ancient faith, therefore, has never made any distinction between Rabbi and layman with regard to ecclesiastical attributes or religious obligations. Both he and the layman are equally responsible for the fulfillment of the duties placed upon all Jews by the sacred law.

The Rabbinate, however, without being a special group of theologians, has, nevertheless, exercised the profoundest influence upon the direction of Jewish life over the centuries. The positive continuity of this way of life may well depend upon the influence exerted by the men in the Rabbinate.

The real significance and place of the Synagogue can be understood all the better, if we can appreciate the character and place of the Rabbi in Israel. As the custodian of the ideals for which the Synagogue stands, the Rabbi symbolizes the House of Assembly. He is the leader of the Jewish community and of all that pertains to community welfare. He is the social architect and is motivated by a spiritual purpose which makes it in the deepest sense religious.

The Rabbi symbolizes the House of Prayer in the piety of his own personal life. Above all, the Rabbi symbolizes the House of Study, for the resevoir from which he draws his inspiration is the Torah and the hundreds of tomes that serve as commentaries that are contained in the rich repositories of Jewish learning. We can take deep pride that the Rabbis of Beth Israel have been men of great learning and well qualified in expounding the higher moral and spiritual purpose of Judaism. The Synagogue and the Rabbi are the unifying and creative forces in Jewish life.

RABBI LOUIS SELTZER

Rabbi Louis Seltzer, Beth Israel's first spiritual leader, had been well chosen for the post which he assumed. Born in Poland, in 1869, he received his education at the Yeshivahs of Vilna and Cracow. He was both scholar and author. He emigrated to the United States in 1903, stopping for a brief period in London.

Rabbi Louis Seltzer gave leadership to the Jews of Bangor in the early years of the 20th century. He was a great scholar, an effective leader, and a valiant interpreter of the old in an effort to make it applicable to conditions that were new. Learning, courage and above all, good sense enabled him to make Jewish Law the instrument with which he helped to create unity and establish a pattern of Jewish life in this new land. Rabbi Seltzer thus made his contribution to the survival of our Jewish people and deserves the niche which he has occupied in the gallery of Jewish worthies in our community.

The growth of Jewish life in Bangor during this period is a tribute to the Jew's unique talent to maintain a minority culture and his power to readjust his religious, social and cultural ways of living amid changing scenes and circumstances.

His great love for all Jews was demonstrated in the leadership he gave throughout the state to the Committee for the Relief of Russian Jews after the Russian massacres of 1905.

Rabbi Seltzer left Bangor to accept the pulpit in Paterson, New Jersey. In 1911 he left for Palestine and remained there until 1913. While there he wrote and published a scholarly work entitled Maasa Yehouda. He then returned to the United States and became rabbi of Shaarai Zedeck of Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1921 he answered the call of the community of Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he served until 1924. His election as Executive Director of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada brought him to New York. Rabbi Seltzer held this position until 1954. In 1935 he was elected as honorary president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. In 1954 he emigrated to Israel to make his permanent home. In 1957 he published his second book, Vezot Leyehouda. He died October 18, 1959, at the age of 90.

Rabbi Louis Seltzer
1903 - 1906

RABBI LOUIS PLOTKIN

Rabbi Louis Plotkin was spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel from 1906 to 1909. He succeeded his friend and colleague Rabbi Louis Seltzer. In addition to his rabbinical duties, he took charge of the Hebrew School and taught the classes. He was also a spokesman for the Jewish community and wrote frequently for the Bangor Daily News. His articles for this newspaper, on Judaism, Jewish Theology, Biblical and Talmudic law, problems of the Jewish people and public affairs, were collected in his book "Some Talmudic Gems." These revealed great Biblical and Talmudic learning, as well as a deep insight into the contemporary world and a passionate concern for the fate of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Plotkin, who died in 1942 at the age of 79, was born in Slutsk, White Russia, famed center of Jewish learning. He studied there and in Bobroisk, and became known as the Bobroisker Masmid—the diligent student of Bobroisk. He received ordination from a number of distinguished rabbis, including Reb Yankel David of Slutsk, known the world over as "Ridvaz", whose commentary on the Talmud is well known to scholars. He was a member of the Agudas Ha-Rabanim, America's oldest and most distinguished organization of Orthodox rabbis.

An erudite Talmudist, Rabbi Plotkin was also a brilliant, inspired Biblical scholar and Hebrew grammarian. In addition, he was devoted to modern Hebrew and especially to the cause of Zion, and was one of the earliest Zionists in America, where he arrived with his wife, Sarah Shimka, a brilliant and learned woman in her own right, in 1891. He was a Zionist before Herzl and the creation of the World Zionist Organization.

Rabbi Plotkin was a gifted writer and wielded a facile pen in Hebrew, Yiddish and English.

For many years after his return to New York City, Rabbi Plotkin was rabbi of Congregation Adath Jeshuran of Brooklyn. His oldest son, Rabbi Benjamin Plotkin, is spiritual leader of Congregation Emanu-El, Jersey City, which he founded in 1930. He was formerly chairman of the committee on peace and international relations of the Rabbinical Assembly of America and president of the New Jersey branch of the United Synagogue of America. Another son, David is a well-known writer. There are five other sons and daughters.

RABBI LOUIS PLOTKIN
1906 - 1909

The articles of Rabbi Plotkin which appeared in the Bangor Daily News and were collected in his book "Some Talmudic Gems" dealt with all the Jewish holy days and fast days; modern and ancient anti-semitism; the idea of Hell in Judaism (in retort to Pastor Russell) modern Zionism; healing by religious rites (which he said Judaism opposes); the drink habit (Maine's prohibition law); womans lot; the Mosaic Law; Capital and Labor. Some of the headings given by the editor were: "Rabbi Plotkin Describes Great Hebrew Observance for the News", referring to Yom Kippur; "The Feast of Passover." Rabbi Plotkin Gives Interesting Description of the Great Hebrew Festival"; "Rabbi Plotkin on Modern Zionism." "Bangor Hebrew discusses the Cruelty of Nations and Suffering of the Jews"; "Rabbi Plotkin on the Mosaic Law"; "Observations by Rabbi Plotkin," touches on Capital and Labor and explains Talmudic Law.

RABBI MORDECAI KLATCHKO

Rabbi Mordecai Klatchko was born in the city of Vilna, Russia in 1860 of wealthy parents. They wanted him to follow in their footsteps and become a merchant. His love for learning, however, and his love of the Torah induced him to go to the city of Volozin, the center of learning and the seat of the famous Yeshivah.

There he studied under the Great Rabbi Naphtali Zwi Yehudah Berlin. Rabbi Klatchko was a prodigy at the age of 15. At the age of 22 he received his S'micha. He also attended the Yeshivah of Byalistock and received S'micha from the famous Rabbi Samuel Molivar.

He arrived in the United States in 1905. His first position was that of Rabbi of Altoona, Pennsylvania. A few years later he accepted the Rabbinate in the city of Bangor, Maine. It was while in Bangor that Rabbi Klatchko conceived the idea of writing a Sefer.

Subsequently, the Congregation of Volozin in the City of New York invited him to become their Rabbi.

Later, as his fame increased, he was called to Boston. There a special congregation was organized by the name of Chevra Shas and a beautiful synagogue was erected and dedicated as a monument to Rabbi Klatchko.

RABBI MORDECAI KLATCHKO
1909 - 1912

He served as the leader of this large Congregation until his death. He also was known and respected as one of the leaders of the entire community.

He was the author of a two volume Sefer known as "Tachlas Mordecai." Rabbi Klatchko died in 1933 at the age of 73. A special tribute was given by the entire Boston Jewish community on the occasion of the loss of this great scholar and humanitarian.

RABBI MOISHE SHOHET
1912 - 1920

The scion of a rabbinical family, Moishe Shohet was born in Shamantzer, Lithuania in 1877. As a young man he attended the famous Lithuanian yeshivahs and obtained his ordination from the Yeshivah of Novogorod, a school of learning founded by a pupil of the Gaon of Vilna. A younger brother followed him in the rabbinate while still another studied medicine and is still practicing in Boston, Massachussetts.

His father and grandfather were Jewish leaders in their community, distinguished by fine minds and deep faith. This legacy was inherited by Moishe Shohet. While still in Europe he was a devoted adherent to the Mussar movement founded by Israel Salanter. Upon coming to America he served the communities of Quincy, Mass., and Portland, Maine before coming to Bangor. Rabbi Shohet was a most able preacher and lost no opportunity to engage in the moral rebuke of his congregants.

In 1923 he left America and made his home in B'Nai Brak, a town famous for scholarly pursuit. He devoted his remaining years to writing commentaries and glosses to the works of the erudite scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Some of our older folk remember the seminars he conducted in the synagogue for the Chevra Mishnayoth. Rabbi Shohet never allowed the pressure of other communal duties to interfere with these lectures. During World War I and the critical period that followed he gave his leadership to the entire Maine community in raising funds for war relief.

RABBI ELIEZER LEVINE
1925 - 1930

Rabbi Eliezer Levine, son of Rabbi Shalom Levine, was born in Luzk, Poland, in 1882. He was a descendent of thirty-six generations of rabbis. He studied with Rabbi Mehel, Chief Rabbi of Luzk, and was ordained by Rabbi Kliger, Chief Rabbi of Brod, Poland.

Rabbi Levine served as spiritual leader of Rodnoyo, Pinsk, from 1903 to 1915. In that year he became Dean of the Yeshivah of Rovno, Poland. He held this post until 1925 when he emigrated to the United States. He served both Beth Israel and Beth Abraham and nearly succeeded in uniting these congregations.

In 1910 a major controversy regarding Kashruth took place in Poland. Rabbi Levine served on the Board of Rabbis to decide the issue. It was his decision that was finally accepted as the correct and authoritative interpretation of the Law. Rabbi Levine's opinion was recorded by Rabbi Malkiel of Lomzo, and may be found in his writings, "Divre Malkiel."

Rabbi Eliezer Levine passed away on the 19th day of Tishri, 1950.

GREETINGS FROM

DR. BERNARD L. BERZON

RABBI

CONGREGATION AHAVATH ISRAEL

My Dear Friends:

It is with boundless joy that I greet my former congregation on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee. For 75 years the members have sustained the congregation with their support and strengthened it with their religious faith.

I salute the men and women of the past. Their dreams have made your accomplishments possible.

I salute the men and women of today. You too, have poured your labor, your funds, your hearts into your congregational life. You too, have had to pioneer down paths untrod. You too, have searched for new ways to glorify our heritage and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among men.

To Jews who labor for a synagogue the purpose is clear. We wish to survive first of all, because we have a noble heritage to preserve and to transmit; second, because our religious teachings give meaning to our existence; third, because throughout history the Jew has been the barometer of civilization and the conscience of mankind; and fourth, because Judaism, unlike other world religions, is an optimistic religion. It says that poverty, disease and injustice can and must be eradicated, and that an era of brotherhood and peace can be ushered in.

In this spirit we observe this Jubilee Celebration

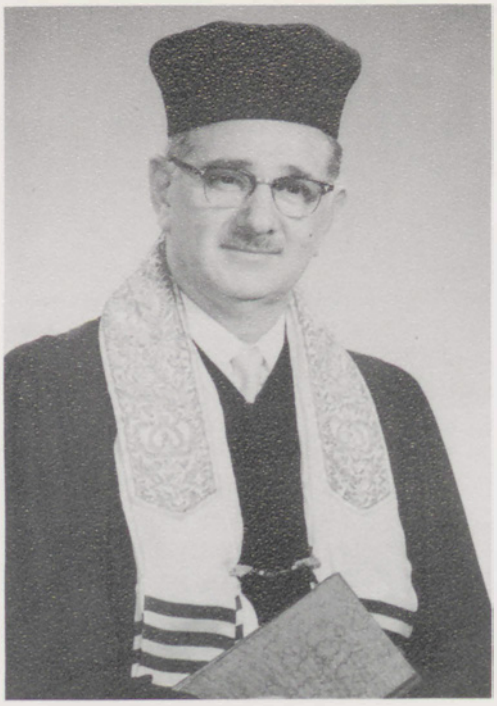
RABBI MOISHE ZUCKER

Rabbi Zucker was more the scholar and teacher than the advocate. He preferred not to engage in controversy. He preferred, rather, to show both sides of every debatable issue and let the individual choose his own course of action. He impressed upon the lay leadership of the congregation to respect his scholarship and to free him from the burden of many administrative duties. He believed that synagogues had the same obligation to Jewish culture that universities had to general culture. Even those who were not too ardent about Jewish culture recognized what Rabbi Zucker meant to the community. His Bible classes, his discourses on the Talmud, and his sermons were equally attractive to eye and ear. His fine record as a scholar won for him an appointment on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

At present Rabbi Zucker is serving as an Associate Professor of Talmud in the Rabbinical School and Chairman of the Talmudic Department in the Teachers Institute and Seminary College. He has published during his stay at the Seminary two volumes on Saadia Gaon (10th century), and one smaller volume on Hefetz Ben Yatzliah (late 10th century). Dr. Zucker has also published a number of articles in scholarly journals here and in Israel, all concerning literary works of the Gaonic period (9th-11th centuries).

RABBI MOISHE ZUCKER
1945 - 1947

In 1952 Dr. Zucker made his first research trip to England and Israel due to a generous grant of the late James Gimpel Striar. In 1956 he received a grant from the Philosophical Society of America which enabled him to do research work in the libraries of England, Holland, and Paris. In 1962 he was appointed a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation and revisited the great European libraries. At present Dr. Zucker is preparing a scientific edition of a great collection of Geniza fragments, Rabbinate and Karite, to be published in 4-5 volumes.



RABBI
AVRAHAM FREEDMAN

Fourteen Significant Years

Rabbi Avraham Freedman has led the Congregation through its period of most rapid growth, an expansion that is still going on.

NO review of Beth Israel's 75 years of history can be brought into proper focus without considering the significance of Rabbi Freedman's 14 years in the pulpit and the notable contribution he has made, and is making, to the spiritual and physical development of the congregation.

It has been said that every successful institution is but the lengthened shadow of a great individual. During this past decade, Rabbi Freedman has been that individual—not only the spiritual leader of the congregation, but one of the outstanding personalities of the civic life of Bangor and of the Maine Jewish community.

The remarkable growth of Congregation Beth Israel is shown by the fact that since 1949—the year Rabbi Freedman came to Bangor—the membership has increased considerably until today nearly 300 families are connected with synagogue life. Rabbi Freedman soon made his presence felt, and he began the long, slow march towards a form of worship that today finds expression in a unique and inspiring combination of traditionalism and modernism.

Rabbi Freedman set himself the task of conveying to his congregants that the synagogue should be a living fountain of inspiration and that it could give rich personal satisfaction while gently persuading its devotees to put their religion to work in all the avenues of daily life.

Although the multitude of activities engaged in by the Rabbi takes a great deal of time, they do not infringe upon the services Rabbi Freedman gives his congregation; in every sense of the word, he is its spiritual leader and, also, its administrative mainspring. He holds a deep conviction that once a Rabbi is elected to serve, he must become the guide, and the members of the congregation, his followers. Though he often came into minor disagreement with men of influence in his congregation because of his espousal of tradition — when the question was one of principle, he refused to compromise.

His conception of his office was that of "The Rabbi in Action" and he was always ready to enlist in any humanitarian effort. Under Rabbi Freedman's leadership, the Synagogue has grown in influence. In and out of the pulpit, on radio and television, Rabbi Freedman has demonstrated the qualities of heart and mind that have brought him recognition as the distinguished spokesman for Jewry in this region. Of him it may be said that he is a fearless and articulate crusader for human rights. To the cause of unity and human brotherhood he has given leadership and utmost loyalty by his role in interfaith activities and by sermons and talks in churches and before service clubs.

Rabbi Freedman has conceived it his duty to march beyond the walls of one building and to minister to the community. He has become identified with the religious, cultural and moral life of our community. He has pleaded the cause of negroes as well as of whites. In all this he has been moved by the love of God and man.

Rabbi Freedman has been especially effective as an interpreter of Judaism to Christian ministers and teachers. His profound, philosophic knowledge, his deep rabbinic scholarship, and his eloquent oratory have made him a favored spokesman.

Through the media of the written and spoken word, Rabbi Freedman has contributed uniquely and with distinction to the development of a liberal, progressive approach to social, communal and cultural issues. His presentation of the "Jewish Point of View" to the faculties and students of the University of Maine and the Bangor Theological Seminary, was highly commended for its clarity, courage, dignity and self-restraint.

In local, civic and cultural and communal matters, Rabbi Freedman has been active in support of the Community Chest, the United Jewish Appeal, and many other significant endeavors. He is the supervisor of the Bangor Hebrew School.

On his tenth anniversary, Rabbi Freedman was lauded in the press by his and other congregations for his signal contribution to his Synagogue and to the larger community. His record of achievement was duly noted when the Board of Directors at a meeting held July 18, 1963, voted the Rabbi a Life Tenure.

The challenge before Rabbi Freedman is clear—to maintain a balance between modernism and an ancient faith.

The Centrality of the Synagogue in Jewish Life

By Rabbi A. H. Freedman

Someone once wrote that the life of a person, no matter how long it might be, adds up to only a few special moments. What the writer meant was that most of our lives is spent in dreaming, working and waiting for an event on which we have set our hearts.

A congregation too, lives in moments. A congregation too, has its highlights. The jubilee year of the Beth Israel Synagogue, which is also the diamond anniversary of the establishment of the Beth Israel Congregation is surely such a high moment.

The most profound feelings of man, his most cherished hopes are expressed in symbols. What indeed are music and art and architecture but symbols that indicate man's inner longings and deep-rooted needs?

This is also true of the Synagogue. The Synagogue as a unique creation of the Jewish people is the symbol of the collective hopes and aspirations of the Jew. This is also true of every house of worship in every town and every village where Jews live and seek to communicate with the G-D of their fathers.

There are those who would have us believe that the sun of the Synagogue has set. They say, this is the age of the organization man, and in the modern Jewish community we have a surfeit of institutions—fraternal, philanthropic and cultural—to meet the need of the twentieth century Jew. They suggest that Jewish survival today rests with these organizations—that the Synagogue has been supplanted in this age of sophistication by the practical and the realistic. We challenge this view. We deny it. We believe that today as much as ever, the Synagogue still forms the core and true center of every Jewish community.

Other organizations divide, other organizations specialize and particularize, other organizations represent parochial and limited ideals. The Synagogue, however, is the great unifier. It is eternal. It champions not merely the aims and objectives of individuals and groups but the eternal purpose of the Jewish people. The Synagogue alone, friendless, forlorn, forsaken. He awakens from his dream transformed, elated, exalted. He cries out, "How full of awe is this place. This is none other than the House of G-D." (Gen. 28:17) Jacob discovers G-D. It was the most momentous experience of his life. He was infused with a today still is and will continue to be the center and the symbol of the spiritual life of every Jewish community. Historically, it is a fact that without a Synagogue, no Jewish community survived.

One may well wonder whether the small group of men and women who organized the Beth Israel Congregation and eventually built the Beth Israel Synagogue dreamed even in their most sanguine moments that the foundations they laid would ever assume the proportions and character of Beth Israel as we know it in 1963. The founders brought to the life of this congregation something that was worth a great deal more than money and membership. They brought to their task a vast measure of devotion and

vision to a high and noble cause. We shall never be able to adequately discharge our debt of gratitude to these pioneering men and women. It is from "the well they digged" that we draw today our "waters of salvation." A partial record of their deeds will be found elsewhere in this journal; however, here we are primarily concerned with the growth and development of the Beth Israel congregation in the last decade.

I was privileged as a student to study under Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, a leading Jewish historian. I well remember a statement he made in a lecture on American Jewish History in which he said that vital Jewish history on this continent begins with the second half of the 19th century. True, Jews have been living in America for some three centuries but until almost the turn of the century all we had here was the story of individual Jews. Jews came here, they struggled here, they played their part in fighting for liberty here, they shed their blood, but apart from a few exceptions, the only contribution of a collective Jewish nature was the consecration of cemeteries. It takes more than a collection or concentration of Jews to create a Jewish community. It takes more than a structure of brick and mortar to build up a "kehillah k'doshah," a holy congregation.

The Beth Israel Synagogue of Bangor that our pioneers built with such love and devotion 50 years ago still stands. It has had its face lifted, it has been renovated and been made more attractive and more comfortable. However, the question that should be asked by the present membership is this: "Has the Synagogue structure led to the formation of an 'aidah'—of a congregation? Has it resulted in a holy community? Have we captured and retained the reverence our fathers and forefathers had for the G-D of Israel whom they worshipped here?"

Is this not the central purpose of the Synagogue—to infuse its worshippers with a sense of awe, with a reverence for G-D and man? HAS THE BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE RESULTED IN A BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION? This is the challenging question as we look back over these 50 years. For let it be clearly understood that a Synagogue and a Congregation are not necessarily synonymous terms. A Synagogue is a building. A Congregation is a living organic institution. It can live and it can die.

A living congregation has at least three constituent elements, together they form a "Chut Ha-Meshulash"—a triple chord of G-D, Torah and Israel. When these three elements are present, the Congregation together with the Synagogue, becomes welded into a living unity that is indivisible and indestructable.

This though was underscored by our sages in their comment on the first sanctuary built by our fathers. The ancient Hebrews are urged to build "a tabernacle unto the Lord. Let them make unto me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst." (Ex. 25:8)

The sages of the Talmud call our attention to the curious wording in this passage. "Note," they say, "the verse ends with the words 'that I may dwell in their midst' and not 'in it' (meaning the sanctuary)."

The answer we are given is that G-D will dwell in the hearts of the builders of His house. To utilize a psychological term, a transference must take place from the Synagogue to the Congregation. The sanctity of the "Mokom Kadosh,"—of the holy place, must find its way into the hearts of the men and women who build and labor, thus making them a Holy Congregation.

When I was invited by the Beth Israel Congregation in 1949 to serve as Rabbi, I set myself this task above all else—to create with G-D's help a "Kehillah Kadoshah,"—a Holy congregation, a Beth Israel congregation that would worship G-D in the Beth Israel Synagogue. Fourteen years have now elapsed since we attended our first service together.

How much of the goal that we set for ourselves has been realized? I often wonder.

How does one measure success in matters of the spirit? How does one gauge progress in the area of faith. In the business world, there is a balance sheet—you gauge success by the color of the ink used to record your fiscal figures. But how do you measure the progress of a congregation? In the *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, 1949*, Rabbi Hyman Rabinowitz, in speaking of the problems facing the smaller Jewish communities, wrote "In re-

gard to the Friday evening services, if the weather is mild, you get an attendance, but if it snows or rains it makes no difference how good the sermon is, you get no attendance. When you name a baby girl or invite the Bar Mitzvah to the service the family will attend and you have a good attendance. A third gimmick is to invite a guest speaker. Now I don't know what you call a good attendance or bad attendance, but after you get them to the Synagogue, how do you get them to pray? They sit like statues, few consult the prayer books, even those who can read the Hebrew. And even the English readings are mechanical and dull. They lack warmth and there is no emotional response. It is really more of a show than a service. This is the problem. How do you get them to pray?" (P. 202)

There is a cry of anguish here that comes from the heart of every Rabbi.

In the book of Genesis, there is the beautiful and dramatic story of Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching into the heavens. He is sense of awe, of reverence. This is the experience every Jew must undergo. Call it "kadushah,"—holiness; call it "taharah,"—purification; call it awe. It is the spirit of Kol Nidrei; it is the mood that floods our beings—that moves us to cry out "Lord I love the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

We should like to believe that over the years, something of this spirit has descended over our Synagogue. More and more of our people are involving themselves in our congregational activities. In diverse and different ways, they have become identified with Beth Israel. Perhaps the greatest tribute that could be paid to them would be to say that they have become "seekers of knowledge". They ask questions and they want answers, and as a result, the services too, have become more meaningful.

In the December, 1962, issue of the B'Nai Brith magazine the educational director of B'Nai Brith writes "When it comes to adult education people stay away in droves." We here, at the Beth Israel, have been more fortunate. True, we still don't turn them away at the doors, but the people do come and they listen and they learn. Much ground has been covered, and much instruction has been given. Like Jacob of old, many have made the great discovery—they have regained their kinship with G-D, the link in the chain has been forged, it is strong and it will endure. There is a sober appreciation today of the place of the Synagogue in the life of the Jews of Bangor.

We have indeed reached a high moment in the life of Beth Israel. We are deeply indebted to all who have worked in the "vineyards of the Lord." We have reached a station but not a destination. What is our destination? To become a "Kehillah Kadoshah"—a Holy Congregation. Not a group of men and women, not a collection of people, not an organization like all other organizations but a Holy Congregation, informed, dedicated, committed, Torah-loving. A Holy Congregation of men and women banded together in the service of G-D.

Beth Israel Had Its Scholars

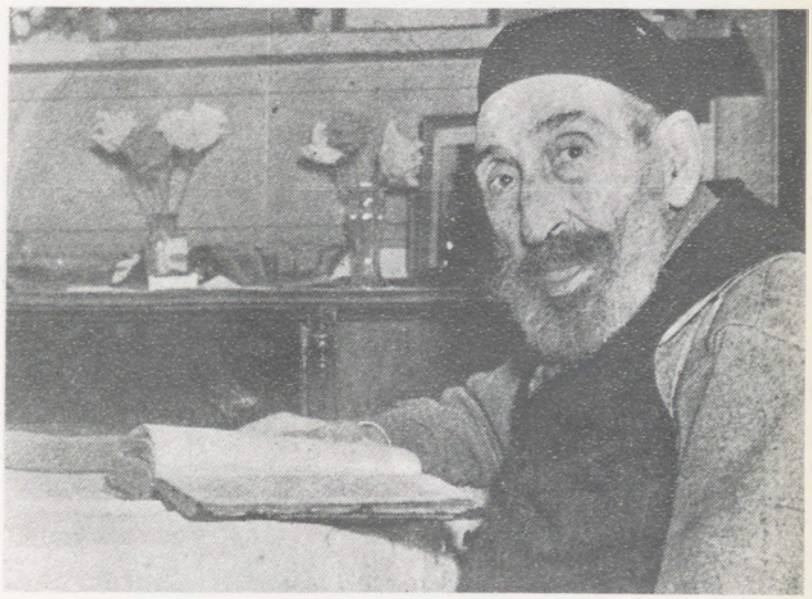
None is poor but the poor in knowledge—
Talmud Ned. 41a

In the various changes of the Jewish intellectual and cultural development throughout the ages, a benign Providence furnished outstanding personalities who gave direction and guidance to the course of events that fashioned every new phenomenon. Often this was accomplished by a group of persons whose foresight and broad outlook helped to establish the new domicile for the Jewish spirit on a firm footing, but in all such cases there was always those who gave tone and character to the changed arena of intellectual and spiritual endeavor.

The coming of such men to our shores in the formative years of Beth Israel are regarded as events that consolidated Jewish cultural strivings and made them harmonious with the life and tendencies of the environment. The various waves of immigration brought such men as Solomon Harris, Shabbtai Rudman, Morris Golden, and Jacob David Leavitt and they were able to continue their studies with merit and distinction. Their efforts on behalf of the community continues to elicit the gratitude and veneration of future generations even as we venerate the memory of all the other scholars who stood at the cradles of their respective communities and helped in the design of fashioning them in accordance with Jewish tradition.

As great paintings can be appreciated only from a distance, so can the stature of great men be understood only in the perspective of time. We may estimate the power of their personalities during their lifetime, but only years after their death can we measure the effects of their life's work upon their own generation as well as that of their talmidim. Indeed the labors of great men are to the end that their children's children may reap the fruits of their toil. Like our Father Abraham, they walked not only with God but "before God," for they prepared the road of the future.

There is no record of great Jewish learning in Bangor in spite of loyalty to Judaism. But there was not much Jewish scholarship anywhere in the United States until larger and much richer communities began to bring scholars from abroad. In the formative years our community was indeed fortunate to boast of such "lamdanim" as Solomon Harris, Morris Golden, Shabbtai Rudman and Jacob David Leavitt. Of these, Solomon Harris and Jacob David Leavitt left an indelible mark upon the young who were their students. Of Morris Golden and Shabbtai Rudman their reputations as scholars have become legend. Unfortunately none remain who can evaluate these men with objectivity and candor.



Solomon Harris

Solomon Harris

Solomon Harris was an outstanding pioneer in this community in the field of Jewish education, combining great knowledge with ineffable charm and wit. He served as one of the teachers in the first Talmud Torah sponsored by Beth Israel in 1903. In later years he conducted his own private academy more commonly called a Hedar. He fascinated his students by his masterly art of shedding new light on Biblical exegesis—even when discussing a subject of secular literature, he knew how to demonstrate the eternal truth of Judaism and its immutable validity for every generation. He served faithfully for many years as secretary and beadle of the synagogue.

His lectures to his colleagues on Talmud and Bible, still remembered, kept his audience spellbound from beginning to end. Of him it can be said that he brought the spirit of his dynamic personality into the Jewish community. He was truly a part of the founding movement and sustaining effort that nourished Beth Israel to its present status. He was a master of the enormous spiritual and religious heritage of Judaism. Because of Solomon Harris' work and his great qualities, the people of Bangor, both Jews and non-Jews held him in profound regard.

After a short illness, the hand of death brought to a close the distinguished and fruitful career of Solomon Harris on Feb. 1, 1943.

He was active until a short time before his demise. Even the affliction which clouded the last few months of his life could not diminish his zeal for service nor his concern for his congregation and its affairs. For Solomon Harris was of that calibre of God's ministers who throughout his years gave himself wholly to his congregation, his community and his fellowmen. An entire city bowed in grief at his passing, their sorrow shared by men in all walks of life throughout the community who had felt the warm influence of his personality, his profound wisdom that commanded the respect and esteem of all who knew him, the deep and abiding humanity of the man that brought glory upon Klal Yisrael and increasing modesty unto himself. Bangor was a small city when he came to it in 1888 and with its growth the congregation grew in stature, dominated by the great and good qualities of this man that taught our children.

But of all the honors and respect that bestowed upon him during his lifetime, none pleased Solomon Harris more than the affection and esteem of his pupils. He is still remembered for his paternal affection and solicitude, guiding and instructing, directing. There was a gentleness and sterness combined. Such was the nature of the man —modest, loyal, sympathetic. No one could escape his endearing qualities. It was only natural that the congregation of whom he was its most honored member, revered him without reservation.

Jacob David Leavitt

To own books has ever been the ambition of all cultivated gentlemen, but when setting out to settle in a new country, it is not to be expected that even the most devoted book-lover would find much cargo space at his disposal for such impractical baggage. Bibles and Talmudic tomes comprised in large part all that many Jewish immigrants counted as necessities.

Jacob David Leavitt
1868 - 1948

Jacob David Leavitt was indeed in this category. The writer recalls that his small study was virtually crammed with Hebrew literature of every description. It is impossible within the natural limits of this publication to do even the scantiest justice to one who was a gigantic spirit of Judaism in our community; nor is it easy for myself admitted to his gracious friendship in my early years, to speak of him in measured terms. He was a true friend and mentor.

"Rebbe" Leavitt was so richly endowed with all the gifts of mind and soul. A bit of a mystic and philosopher, he was a veritable religious genius. He would have been a noble soul even if he had not read a single book, for his fine spirit came not from his books, but from the inner welling forth of a richly endowed soul. His personality had something ethereal about it. His large tender eyes, inscrutable and dreamy, gazing,

as it were, into eternity, lent mystery to his aspect. Under the spell of his discourses one often felt that peace was returning to the tortured soul.

We recognized him as a scholar, endowed with extraordinary mental gifts. His learning, coupled with an unusually wide acquaintanceship, tempered by long experience with human kind and mellowed by the passage of years, all contributed to make him a man of exceptionally broad vision, of tolerant understanding and of warm sympathies.

We knew him as a friend—and teacher—genial, kind and cordial always. Everyone was at home in his presence. In conversation with those who had known him but briefly, as well as with others whose contacts were of long duration, one sensed immediately a kinship and a knowing, ready response. In the very best sense of the word, he had the human touch.

But above all else, we knew him as a man of God, a man of deep religious convictions which made themselves felt in every phase of his life. There would have been little need for "Rebbe" Leavitt by word of mouth to urge men to the love of God and of our neighbor. He did not have to preach it, he lived it. No one could escape the inspiring influence of his manly virtue. He walked among us with a simple dignity that won not only our hearts, but our deep and sincere respect. His example, I know, has contributed much to your well-being as it has to mine.

Morris N. Golden

After the departure of Hazan Goldenkopf, the Congregation continued without a hazan-shohet for nearly five years. In the interim Morris N. Golden officiated at weddings and was recognized as a highly qualified model. He was not an ordained rabbi, but was a man of great learning, well versed in Torah and Talmud, and he consented to act as rabbi until a professional leader could be obtained. Mr. Golden also served as secretary of the Chevra Kadisha and his beautiful handwriting has been compared to some of the finest Jewish manuscripts. His Judeo-German is succinct and expressive—the Yiddish literary style of an era long gone.

Mr. Golden conducted a meatery that was known for its strict supervision, and his name became a trade-mark known all over central and northern Maine. Many families in the rural areas were able to obtain kosher meat through his efforts. Moreover, there was no denying that the standards of Mr. Golden were an improvement in terms of the religious values to which the observing Jews adhered.

—THE EDITOR

MORRIS N. GOLDEN
1859 - 1916

Chevra Mishnayoth

The Chevra Mishnayoth of Beth Israel was a testimony to the pursuit of Jewish learning. Jews are, indeed, "The People of the Book," in accordance with the epithet Mohammed bestowed upon them as adherents of a faith based on revealed Scripture. Notwithstanding occasional lapses, they have remained "The People of the Book," faithfully guarding and interpreting its every letter throughout the centuries and the millenia. Inevitably, however, they are also a people of scholars and students, for the very constitution of Judaism, as revealed in the Pentateuch and interpreted and elaborated by the doctors of the Talmud, makes it obligatory for every Jew to devote himself to the study of the Torah, representing the sum total of Jewish law and lore amassed by a hundred generations of scholars, thinkers, philosophers and poets.

The founding fathers of Beth Israel engaged in this intellectual pursuit, tinged with pious motives. It was their glory and their delight, their refuge and their staff in suffering—the sanctuary of the spirit where invariably they found solace for the tribulations of their tragedy-frought pariah existence.

Excellence in scholarship is the kind of success traditional Jews worship and crave more fervently than all else, with the result that study and learning are idealized as the very meaning and purpose of the good life; the badge of nobility and honor. There is no greater bliss and satisfaction for a traditional Jew than to excel in Jewish scholarship.

MEMBERSHIP

Lemke Allen
Joseph Bernstein
Abraham Berson
Yudel Cutler
Samuel E. Dennis
Israel Frank
Nathan Ginsberg
Morris N. Golden
Akibah Goldberg
Solomon Harris
Philip Hillson
Simon Kominsky
B. Kamenkovitz
Jacob David Leavitt
Moishe Rosen
M. L. Rosen
Shabbtai Rudman
Shmuel Rudman
Joseph Raichlen
Elias Rosen
Ezer Ratchkovsky
I. Stone
Abraham Segal
H. Stern
Chaim Shmuel Striar
David Snyder
Jonah Wallace
Zwi Wolper

In the early 1920's the membership dwindled to the point where the Chevra disbanded.

Religious Worship Enriched by Lyric Beauty

CANTOR HAZAN LISS

Jewish Liturgical Music has always played an important part in the life of the Jewish people. Ever since the time when Moses led the children of Israel in song when they were delivered from the Egyptians, we see that Music and Song accompanied all the activities of the Jewish people. The entire tribe of Levi was singled out to sing and play musical instruments during the service in the Temple.

It is told in the Holy Scriptures that among the various groups of people who went up to Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile with Ezra and Nehemia, were also the "Singers."

There is a Hassidic saying that "Shirah B'gimatriah T'fillah," the numerical value of the Hebrew letters of Shirah-Song, is the same as T'fillah-Prayer. Music elates the spirit and stirs the heart, so we may say that song is the perfect vehicle for Prayer to carry it to its highest degree of Faith, Hope, and Gratitude, the three components of Prayer.

And when the fiftieth year came around the Torah tell us 'Then shalt thou make proclamation with the sound of the horn . . . And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year.'

The beauty of Beth Israel services is enriched by the traditional chant of the cantor. Over the years we have had cantors with voices of haunting beauty. Cantor Krakow brings to his work a feeling and depth associated with a mature and sensitive musicianship.

In recent years it has become customary to invite Cantors only for the High Holydays. Accordingly, there were so many during the past 40 years, that it is virtually impossible to enumerate them all. Hazan Goldenkopf served the congregation prior to the building of the shul on Center Street and continued in this capacity until 1899. Upon the completion of the new synagogue on York Street, Hazan Liss of New York was appointed as the first permanent Cantor who devoted his time exclusively to cantoral duties. It is recalled "His wonderful voice and beautiful rendition of the prayers had added much to the inspiration of our services." Throughout the years of his association with Beth Israel he performed a most worthy task with exceptional ability.

In September 1930, Cantor Zelig David was chosen for the office. Prior to his coming to Bangor he was associated with eminent congregations in his native Rumania and Pennsylvania. He organized a choir that lent both dignity and beauty to the services that is still a topic of discussion when cantors are considered for appointment.

Other names to be remembered are Ezekiel

Baruch and Judah Sugarman. Baruch, a lyric tenor, was associated with the Strauss Jewish Center. He has since become a concert artist of some note, and has made many recordings, and in 1952 an album of Jewish liturgical records. His ambition to achieve greater fame did not permit him to continue in Bangor.

In September, 1961, Cantor Milton Krakow was auditioned by Rabbi Freedman and has continued to serve B. I. for the High Holydays. At an early age he studied liturgical composition with the renowned cantor and conductor Joshua Weisser. Krakow attended New York College of Music and Voice. At present he is a third year matriculate at the Cantorial Training Institute of Yeshivah University. He will be a candidate for the Cantorial degree next year. Before coming to Bangor, Cantor Krakow officiated at Temple Israel, Great Neck, Long Island; Temple Emanuel, Philadelphia; Northwest Jewish Center, Detroit.

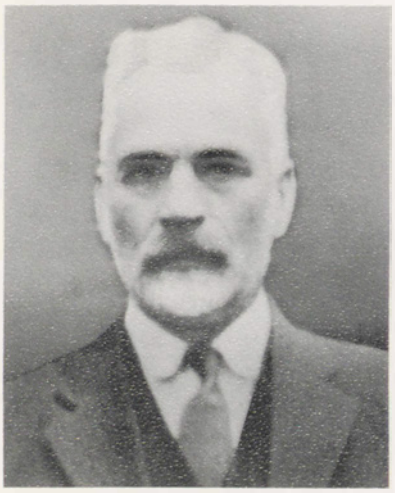
CANTOR MILTON KRAKOW

BETH ISRAEL CHOIR ABOUT 1930

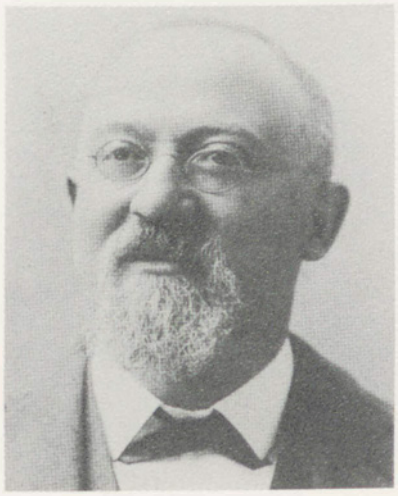
First row, left to right: Irving Emple, Bernard Weisberg, Harold Chason, Edward Weisberg.
Second row: Sidney Chason, David Rapaport, Murray Raben, Teddy Goldberg.
Third row: Cantor Zelig David.

These are the men who have led us

PRESIDENTS 1888-1963



HARRY COHEN
1899 - 1905



MARKS GOLDMAN
First Gabbai 1888-1897

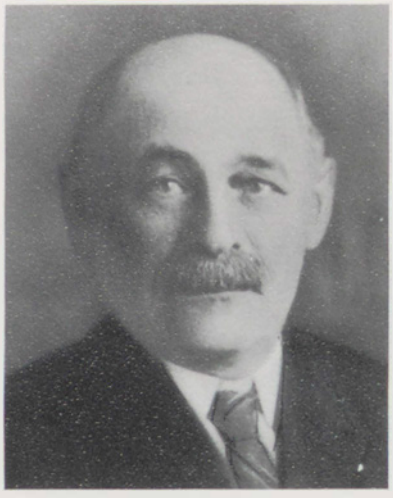
LOUIS BERGER
1905 - 1906

MAX COHEN
1897 - 1899
1909 - 1910

MORRIS L. ROSEN
1906 - 1907
1913 - 1915
1933 - 1938

Elias H. Rosen
1907 - 1909

Wolf Lipsky
1915 - 1917



Joseph Byer
1910 - 1912

Simon Kominsky
1917 - 1921
1926 - 1927

Abraham J. Berson
1912 - 1913

Adolph B. Friedman
1921 - 1924
1927 - 1930

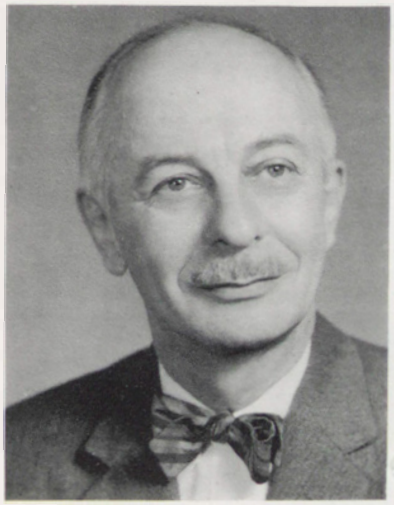
ABRAM BROWN
1924 - 1926

EDWARD STERN
1939 - 1941

LOUIS RAPAPORT
1930 - 1933

HAROLD R. EPSTEIN
1941 - 1947
1948 -

GOODMAN GAFFEN
1938 - 1939



SAMUEL GOODMAN
1947 - 1948

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First Gabbai

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President

Abraham Stern
Secretary

Abraham O. Emple
Honorary Gabbai

Congregation Beth Israel
Officers and Board of Directors

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men . . .
So shall they make it easier . . . and bear the burden with thee.

—Exodus 18:21

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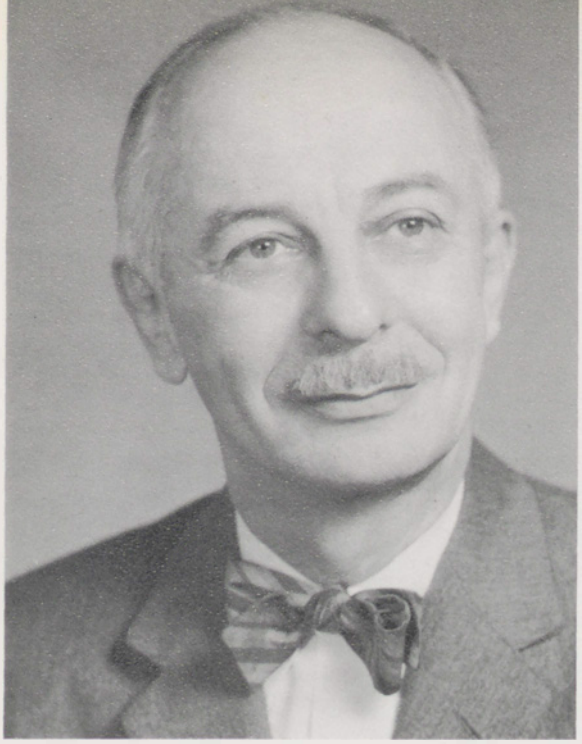
Editor

MORRIS OLLOVE
Technical Adviser

Left to right: Marilyn Segal, Rene Minsky, Diane Cutler, Deedy Schiro, Ann Brown, Judy Rudman.

BETH ISRAEL ACTIVITIES



SAMUEL GOODMAN
Gabbai Chevra Kadisha

The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. — Psalms 112:6

FIRST THINGS FIRST

A Jewish cemetery, in the traditional parlance of Jewry, is a Beth Olam, a "House of Eternity," a term that may be said to combine a love for euphemisms with a belief in immortality.

Life without the rituals of his religion was bearable for a Jew, if circumstances prevented his practice of them, but burial in unsanctified soil was not to be thought of. Hence it was that in this community as in many other communities, before a synagogue—before any other community project —a Jewish cemetery was the first step towards religious identity. Our founders, faced with choice of burying their dead in a non-Jewish cemetery, decided in a positive Jewish spirit to seek ground which could be called Jewish to cover the remains of their dear ones.

In the earliest years of its existence the cemetery was owned and supervised by the Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin, a fraternal order organized in 1885 for the sole purpose of maintaining a burial ground for the Orthodox Jewish community of Bangor. The sense of community gave this band of fellow Israelites the impetus to organize the Chevra Kadisha. Even as the patriarch Abraham purchased for 400 shekels of silver, from the children of Heth, a plot for a grave for his beloved Sarah, so did the Independent Order of the Sons of Benjamin, the forerunner of the Beth Israel Society, purchase from the city of Bangor a plot of ground for 45 dollars. This was not the first time a burial society was to precede a synagogue. In many parts of Europe, the only collective property the Jews were allowed to own was the cemetery. The synagogues were often privately owned chapels. The organization of this burial society was not only an act of reverence for the dead, it

New Section Opened in 1953

Liss Memorial Gate
Entrance To Old Cemetery

The "Old Section" of Cemetery

was an act of loyal committal to our future in these United States. The soil where our dead lie buried is hallowed soil because memory transmutes common clays into sanctuaries.

It was not until 1906 that Congregation Beth Israel formally purchased this tract for the sum of $335.00. Throughout this long period of possession, more land has been added until the so called "new section" now comprises five sections in an area that measures over 1200 feet in length and is 236 feet in width. The Congregation has a genuine sense of pride in its possession of what the poet Henry W. Longfellow has so fittingly called "God's Acre." In this "House of Eternity" we have the symbol not of the dark and gloomy shadow of the fear of death, but rather the tangible possession of a beautiful and rich garden of memories. While it is the resting place of our physical destiny, it is also the hallowed ground in which we mix our tears with the sacred ashes of our departed. Thus the physical earth becomes the spiritual symbol of life and death and immortality.

The cemetery was for a long time the most important adjunct of the congregation. Their full youthful energies devoted to the acquisition of a firm economic hold in the new land, our early immigrants inevitably neglected the amenities of social intercourse and the joys of religious fellowship. But death was a more insistent creditor. In 1907, within a year after the purchase of the cemetery from the Sons of Benjamin, the congregation which had dwindled to 63 members, swelled to over 90. The first to be interred in the burial ground was Sarah Goldman, wife of Israel Goldman. Congregational records reveal that, in a less medically advanced age, a high mortality incidence prevailed among children.

The development of the newly acquired acreage to its present state of perfection is a tribute to the dedicated efforts of Harold Epstein and Dr. Joe Ornstein. These dedicated men have been looking after the last inevitable needs of our members, as well as supervising the improvements, landscaping and care of the grounds. This hallowed ground is truly a place of peace and beauty.

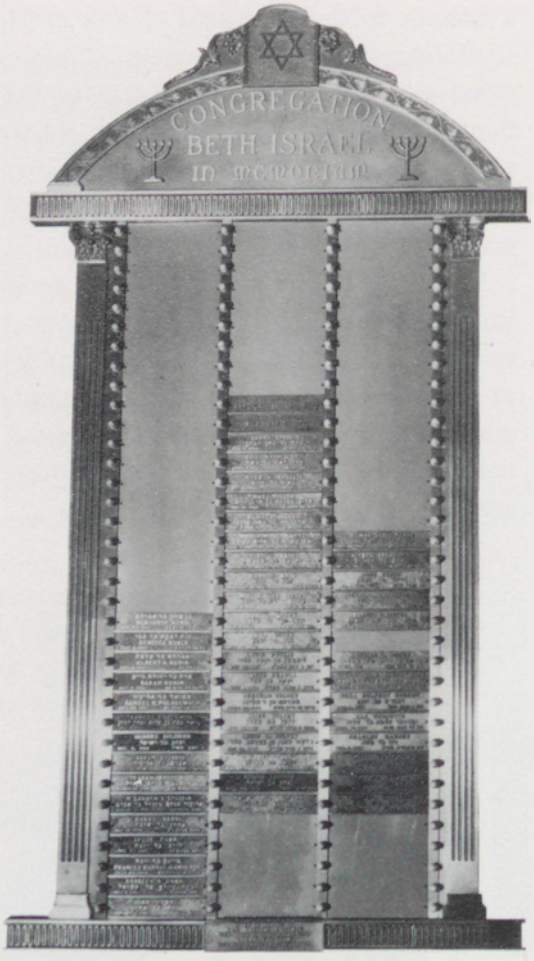
The perpetual care fund of the congregation enables lot and grave owners to maintain the permanent care of the resting place of their beloved departed. A contribution made during life or a bequest directed in a last will and testament, provides the necessary funds in each instance.

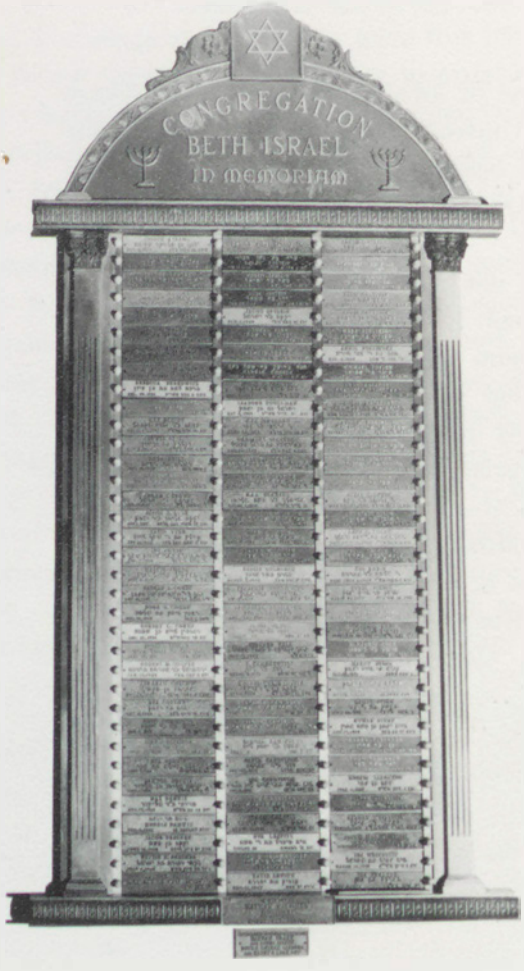
Dr. Joseph Ornstein
Chairman Cemetery Committee

A Memorial In The House Of The Lord

While the Jew does not subscribe to "Ancestor Worship" as practiced by some faiths, he, nevertheless, expresses reverence for his dear departed by special prayers prescribed for funerals, daily and subsequent annual Kaddish, Yiskor prayers on the three Festivals and Yom Kippur.

A very fitting, dignified and popular way of perpetuating the names of your loved ones, is to have them inscribed on the impressive MEMORIAL TABLETS mounted on the sides of the ARK in the Main Sanctuary. These tablets are cast in imperishable bronze, completely wired for electric lights, which are turned on, individually on their respective Yahrzeit dates, and fully illuminated on Yiskor days.





GOD'S ACRE

I like that Saxon phrase, which calls
The burial-ground God's Acre! It is just;

It consecrates each grave within its walls,
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

God's Acre! Yes, that blessed name imparts
Comfort to those, who in the grave have sown

The seed that they had garnered in their hearts,
Their bread of life, alas! no more their own.

Into its furrows shall we all be cast,
In the sure faith, that we shall rise again

At the great harvest, when the archangel's blast
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom,
In the fair gardens of that second birth;

And each bright blossom mingle its perfume
With that of flowers, which never bloomed on earth.

With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow;

This is the field and Acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

SHIRLEY BERGER

We of Beth Israel are justly proud of the part Shirley Berger has played in Jewish community affairs. As President of the Community Center, Treasurer of the Hebrew School, and Treasurer of the United Jewish Chapel, Shirley has worked with an eagle eye and an understanding mind in carrying out his duties.

It would be invidious to leave even the slightest suggestion that men and women of other congregations were not active in creating the Chapel. However, Beth Israel points with pride to the fact that Shirley Berger not only took an active role in bringing the chapel idea to reality but continued as a one man committee to administer the financial affairs of the institution until all its obligatons were liquidated.

Chevra Kadisha Of Beth Israel

The function of a Chevra Kadisha is the preparation of a body for burial according to the prescribed Orthodox rules. This first mutual-aid society gave assurance of a Jewish burial with Jewish rites. It had been a primary concern of Jews for thousands of years. It was to provide for this—financially and religiously — that the Chevra Kadisha, or burial society, had been formed in the Jewish communities of Europe, and as an institution it was several centuries old. In America it grew up within the synagogue. The functions of such a society—praying by the side of the corpse, preparations for burial, the funeral itself, and the minyan of mourners after it—remained in the hands of the congregation's adjunta, who also acted as overseers of the cemetery.

Until quite recently the Chevra Kadisha of Congregation Beth Israel was a semi-autonomous society. It had its own board of management, constitution and sources of income. This Chevra was the first religious organization to be created by our founders and preceded the establishment of the synagogue itself.

Simon Kominsky

It was considered a matter of religious merit to belong to the Chevra Kadisha, and its membership included the leading personalities of the community. Every new member had to pay an entrance fee and have his name registered in the minute-book. During the first year he had to take part in the burial-rites, and it was not until some time later that he was entitled to vote in the election of officers or himself be a candidate for office. The executive board consisted of the Gabbaim and their immediate assistants, who were elected annually on the second of the intermediate days of Passover. In order to stimulate the enthusiasm of the members a Seudah was arranged for them every year on the 15th day of Kislev. The first Seudah of which we have record took place in December, 1894. It was voted to spend $6.00 for this gala affair and the following were appointed to make the arrangements: Israel and Hannah Frank, Joseph and Malcha Bernstein, Simon Kominsky, Morris Golden and Sam Dennis.

In the early days of the Congregation the Chevra Kadisha undoubtedly used a horse and wagon to carry the dead to the cemetery. By 1915, the Congregation purchased a hearse and hired a horse from a local livery when the occasion arose. This was the first hearse to be owned and operated by a local synagogue. It is recorded that the Chevra Kadisha rented the hearse to the other two synagogues for a "small fee." This innovation of a hearse is attributed to the efforts of Simon Kominsky and Labele Rolnick.

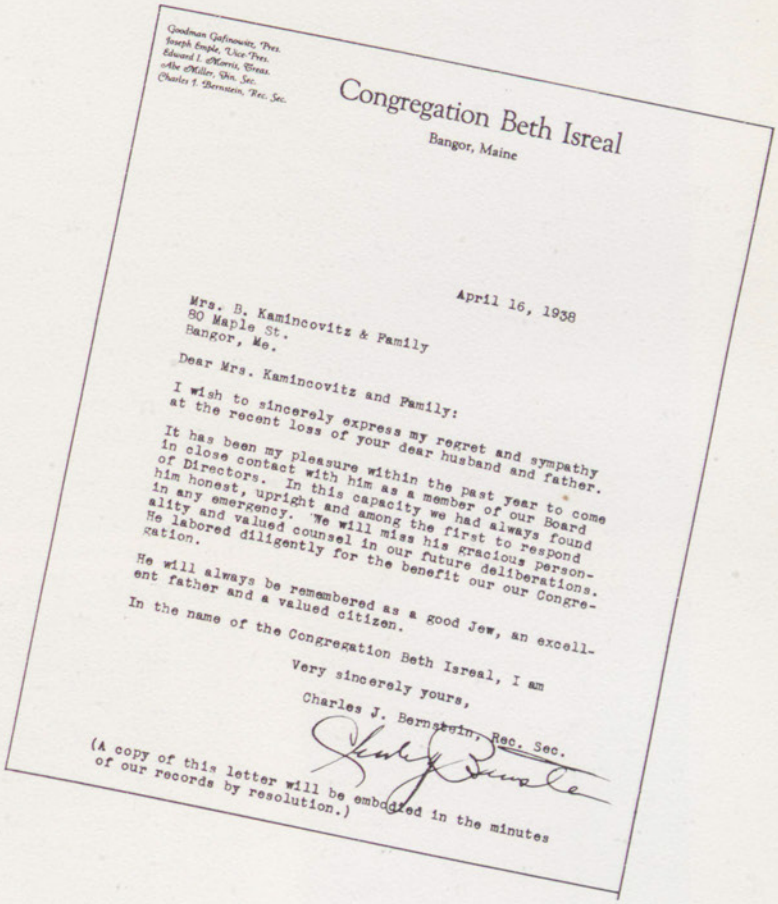
Burial in the old cemetery was in regular rows, without distinction as to sex. Beth Israel long adhered to its custom of not reserving any grave or plot. The Chevra Kadisha maintained that it was a matter of democratic procedure to have all people buried one next to the other in the order in which they departed from this earth. It was due to the influence of members of the

Chevra such as "Berke" Kamenkovitz, Moses Rudman and Max Kominsky that Beth Israel departed from this practice and began to sell private plots to families. Two sections now developed on the cemetery, one for general burial in rows, the other for private burial plots and for the reservation of graves made long in advance. The new arrangement meant a greater income for the synagogue. Burial in rows was free to members, but reserved graves and family plots had to be paid for. Indeed, the Congregation had now found a means of raising extra revenue.

The Chevra Kadisha carried on general customary rules and regulations that were in use for centuries. No one who had left the faith, who had intermarried, or had allowed his membership to lapse, was "permitted to buried therein." In keeping with Jewish traditional law, suicides "were to be buried near the fence." The general attitude towards those who had intermarried was summed up in recent years by Rabbi Avraham Freedman, when he maintained that a Jew was still to be regarded as a Jew and to receive Jewish burial even though he had intermarried.

Beginning with the 1920's the Chevra Kadisha had to grant permission for a tombstone to be erected. An observer remarked that this procedure was essential because some of the inscriptions were "in bad English and worse Hebrew."

Barnett (Dov) Kamenkovitz



Goodman Gafinowitz, Pres.
Joseph Emple, Vice-Pres.
Edward I. Morris, Treas.
Abe Miller, Fin. Sec.
Charles J. Bernstein, Rec. Sec.

Congregation Beth Isreal
Bangor, Maine

April 16, 1938

Mrs. B. Kamincovitz & Family
80 Maple St.
Bangor, Me.

Dear Mrs. Kamincovitz and Family:

I wish to sincerely express my regret and sympathy at the recent loss of your dear husband and father.

It has been my pleasure within the past year to come in close contact with him as a member of our Board of Directors. In this capacity we had always found him honest, upright and among the first to respond in any emergency. We will miss his gracious personality and valued counsel in our future deliberations. He labored diligently for the benefit our our Congregation.

He will always be remembered as a good Jew, an excellent father and a valued citizen.

In the name of the Congregation Beth Isreal, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Charles J. Bernstein, Rec. Sec.

(A copy of this letter will be embodied in the minutes of our records by resolution.)

Beth Israel Chevra Kadisha

First row: Samuel Goodman, Gabbai; Myer Minsky, Harold Epstein, Louis Saltzman.
Second row: George Ginsberg, Neil Glazier, Joseph Ornstein, Abe Braveman.
Not present: Harry Allen, Harry Bass, Seymour Chamoff, A. B. Friedman, Aaron Gotlib, Max Kominsky, Morris Singer, Abraham Stern.

Past Members Of The Chevra Kadisha

Moishe N. Golden
Mordecai Allen
Moishe Aaron Stern
Mordecai Ginsberg
Menachem M. Cohen
Moishe L. Rosen
Nathan Cohen
Ezriel L. Allen
Ezer Ratchkovsky
Shabbtai Rudman
Simon E. Kominsky
Shlomo E. Dennis
Moishe Goldberg
Aryeh L. Stern
Eliezer Rosen
Elihu N. Koritzky
Avraham Brown
Aryeh L. Rolnick
Avraham I. Abramson
Dov Kamenkovitz
Chaim Epstein
Chaim Zalman Harris
Yosef Bernstein
Yosef E. Friedman
Israel L. Frank
Yehudah H. Raichlin
Shmuel Rudman
Yerachmiel Cooper
Moishe Rudman
Peasach Baron
David Goldberg
Akiba Yehudah Goldberg
Yisrael Zwi Wolper
Yitzchak Wolper
Ezer N. Sarhaskey
Yosef Yehudah Richelson
Yechiel Yehudah Kuperstach
David Snyder
Gabriel Richlen
Basye F. Richardson
Breindel Rolnick
Dvorah Brill
Chia S. Kominsky
Judith Allen
Liebe L. Koritzky
Leah Kominsky
Michle Rosen
Nachme B. Stern
Rachel Cohen
Rachel Friedman
Rivkah B. Dennis
Sarah Golden
Shaine R. Stern
Hannah Goldberg
Sima Kaprow
Malcha Kamenkovitz

A woman of valour who can find?
For her price is far above rubies. — Proverbs 31:10

Beth Israel Pays Tribute To These Women Who Haved Served So Zealously On The Chevra Kadisha

Bobbie Silver

Annie Berger

Rivkah Dennis

Malcha Kamenkovitz

Bessie Segal

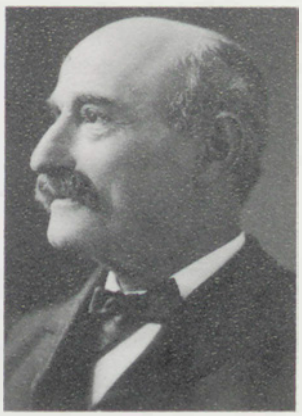
Zelda Siegel

Sarah Striar

Philanthropy and Social Service

Well is it with the man that dealeth graciously and lendeth,
that ordereth his affairs rightfully.—Psalms 112:5

HANNAH FRANK
1843 — 1937



ISRAEL FRANK
1842 — 1915

It was a beautiful chapter written at the turn of the century by a few dedicated families. The flow of early immigration brought with it economic stress for the newcomers to adjust themselves in a new land. It took virtually a full generation for most of the new arrivals to fit into the economy of the late nineties and early 20th century. It was a question of bread and the barest necessities of life and also of sending succor and assistance to the members of the families who were still abroad.

Under these circumstances the usual high standards of spiritual values and religious observance of these immigrants were often crowded out in the strife and stress. In spite of all this, a goodly number of immigrant families laid greater emphasis on the eternal values of Judaism than on their daily problem of subsistence.

Israel Frank, inspired by the devoted cooperation and encouragement of his noble wife Hannah, stand out as a tower of light for all spiritual values of their day. The aged, the orphan, the immigrant, the underprivileged—all these found a warm response in the generosity of Israel and Hannah Frank who with dedicated hearts gave generously to establish the Gemileth Chesed Fund in memory of their son, Julius.

Many homes of that era had known tranquillity as a result of the inauguration of this fund.

The Franks also donated the Ner Tamid to Beth Israel in 1897.

"THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY"

It is quite natural in a work such as this to devote a word to the beneficent activities of Beth Israel from its very inception to the present day. If there was any quality which the Jew was able to enhance even during the age of persecution, it was the spirit of charity.

The degree of destitution among the Jews of Europe often reached enormous proportions. In the eighteenth century it is computed that one in three of the Jewish population was dependent upon his coreligionists for relief. Yet the cry for assistance was never made in vain, and relief was given in such a manner as to facilitate the maximum self-reliance and to avoid pauperization. It was realized from the beginning that the poor have rights, and the rich have duties. This principle, explicitly laid down in the Mosaic code, was extended and crystallized in talmudic practice. It was from such a tradition that the founders of Beth Israel instituted societies such as the Hachnoses Orchim (Fund for Wayfarers) Mo'os Chittim, (Matzoh Fund) Gemileth Chesed (Loan Society).

A natural stage was provided for the Bangor Jews upon which they were to enact their ancient drama of tsedakah (righteousness), the traditional concept of charity that couples love of fellow man with responsibility for fellow man.

Eliminating, or alleviating, human misery in any form is a fundamental in tsdokoh.

The natural tendency of immigrants in a new land is to look for help from others who had come from the same country is as old as human nature. Amid strange surroundings one seeks the comfort of the familiar. The newcomers to these shores not only had deep emotional ties which bound them to the ways of their people, but they needed guidance in establishing themselves, and then the assurance that understanding friends would help them in the times of emergency. It was to their own people that they turned.

The early congregations of the country, from the time that the Jews of New Amsterdam were permitted to remain, provided that their poor should never become public charges, had taken care of their poor and indigent transients from the tsedaka fund. In Bangor, a special synagogal charity, the Hachnosos Orchim, had been created to help immigrants and transients. That pattern of help was not new. This method of assistance had been the pattern in Europe for centuries.

When the Chevra Shel Bikur Holim Ugemilut Hasadim, or Society for the Visitation of the Sick and Mutual Assistance, was organized in 1890, it was the first Jewish organization of its type to appear on the Bangor scene. It grew out of Beth Israel; its first members were all members of the congregation; and it did request the sanction of the synagogue and permission to raise funds at services, which were unhesitatingly given. But it functioned separately with its own officers and its own treasury. To join, one had to belong to Beth Israel. This provision was changed after Tifereth Israel seceded from the mother synagogue in accordance with the rapidly changing make-up of the Jewish community to permit non-members of Beth Israel to join. Two dollars was the regular entrance fee, and the monthly dues was twenty-five cents. The guiding spirit and first president of the society was Israel Frank. The other officers were Philip Hillson, Simon Kominsky, Samuel E. Dennis, and E. Ratchkovsky.

The society continued on for many years, but as the original members attained financial success the character of the organization changed. The funds not needed any more by the members themselves were used for non-members who did need help and for general philanthropic purposes. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kirstein observed their golden wedding anniversary in 1922 by making charitable donations to many Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropic agencies. The Hachnosos Orchim was the recipient of a $500 interest bearing bond. The Jewish Community Council fell heir to the bond when the Hachnosos Orchim ceased to function as a community agency. The time had come when our Jews were prepared to ex-

tend their philanthropic energies into a wider sphere. The participation of our women in the work of the Hachnosos Orchim was particularly impressive. The homes of many of our old members were thrown open to the wayfarer in the spirit of tsedakah. For the late Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hillson, it was their first communal undertaking, one to which they devoted the driving energy that characterized their entire mode of living.

However, the Society went beyond the dole. Dr. Pastor, a Jewish physician, volunteered his assistance and at a later date Shmuel Rudman was to announce that his son, Dr. Israel Rudman would also render his professional services. And the age-old Jewish ethical concern for the dignity of the recipients was evidenced by the provision that a select committee should administer relief secretly to those who had seen better days.

It was a well known fact that Philip Hillson sheltered and fed these travelers out of his own personal funds and never presented a bill to the society for reimbursement. A committee of two went from home to home once a month to collect funds for these wayfarers.

On Oct. 27, 1907 a check for $500.00 was received from Jacob Schiff to replenish the treasury of the Hachnosos Orchim.

From the old Hachnosos Orchim by direct descent, as a result of mergers and changes of name, has evolved today's Jewish Community Welfare Fund. Charity was necessary on an individual and usually temporary basis. Yet, the importance of this early agency to the Jewish community can be judged by the stature of its leaders. Names like Philip Hillson, Shmuel Rudman, Sam Dennis, Simon Kominsky, have become synonymous with the administration of charity and benevolence.

SHMUEL E. RUDMAN

PHILIP HILLSON

SAMUEL E. DENNIS

SIMON COHEN

Running through the entire history of the congregation there are found many, many names of men and women who gave unselfishly of their time, effort and substance to advance the purposes of the Congregation. The ancient rabbinical maxim: "The world rests on three things: the study of the Law, divine service, and acts of benevolence."—has always excited the interest of the Jew, and many members of Beth Israel have achieved renown for their acts of philanthropy. James Gimpel Striar was undoubtedly the greatest contributor to Jewish causes in the history of Maine Jewry. Few men equalled his capacity for making money—but even fewer equalled his lavishness in giving money away. He had the quality of leadership as well as generosity. He is often referred to as "the man who taught Bangor Jews how to give." There was only one James Striar, but we of Beth Israel are fortunate in having on our rolls such men as Max Kagan, Joseph Emple, and Moses Byer. Their names are synonymous with charitable and educational endeavors and are unhampered by the bounds of creed or race. Samuel Goodman, a former president of Beth Israel, is directly responsible for bringing to these shores many victims of Hitlerism. Over the years "Sammy" Goodman has been associated with many philanthropic endeavors but he is perhaps best known for his boundless zeal in nurturing and developing the Home for the Aged in Portland, into one of the finest institutions of its kind along the eastern seaboard.

Born within the portals of the synagogue, mutual aid and charity gradually left the parent abode and were provided for by independent societies and organizations. The year 1938 is a convenient point to mark the division for it was at that time that the Jewish Community Center came into being and the major charitable funds were conducted on a communal basis. Ultimately, mutual aid and charity serve the same ends; they differ in their methods of approach to the problem of helping those who, for the moment, are unable to help themselves. They may be considered as parts of one effort—that of making the Jewish community independent of public help in all needs. Today, of course, there is a much wider participation in the work of the charities and the many State of Israel projects, and a far different distribution of wealth than was the case twenty-five or thirty years ago. But the tradition of giving is still strong in the Congregation.

Bangor News Jan. 16, 1922

JEWS HELD BIG MASS MEETING IN SYNAGOGUE SUNDAY NIGHT — NOTED SPEAKERS FROM AWAY

An extensive campaign to raise $14,000,000 for the Jewish War Relief Fund in progress all over the country by the Hebrews of America received its local inception on Sunday night at a mass meeting held in the Synagogue of the Congregation Beth Israel. This meeting was largely attended and a very good start was made upon the local quota of $3,000.

Simon Cohen, chairman of the general committee presided over the meeting. Interesting addresses were made by Dr. Louis L. Goldberg of Boston, director of New England Bureau of Jewish War Relief; Philip Potash, a brilliant speaker in the Hebrew language; Reuben Licker a Portland attorney and secretary of the state organization of which J. H. Berman is chairman, and Simon Levi of Bangor.

The object of the campaign is to raise a fund for the relief of European war suffers and the fund is non-racial and non-sectarian. The committee in charge co-operates with the Hoover Relief work and the campaign aims of the committee in charge has received the co-operation of President Harding, Secretary Hoover and Gov. Baxter.

Dr. Goldberg will remain and aid in the beginning of the canvassing of this section. The work will be in charge of a competent committee composed of Simon Cohen, chairman; M. L. Rosen, vice chairman; A. B. Friedman, treasurer; Simon Levi, secretary and Abraham Rudman, assistant secretary.

JOSEPH EMPLE

OUR WOMEN IN SOCIAL WORK

The first recorded Jewish women's society in the city of Bangor dates back to 1894. It was an organization of women for the purpose of performing the last rites for deceased females. This ladies' group started out as an adjunct of the Chevra Kadisha. The beginning of organized Jewish social work can be traced to 1903, when a number of Hebrew ladies gathered at the Center Street shul at the invitation of Rabbi and Mrs. Seltzer. The Rabbi addressed the ladies "on th object of the society." It was at this meeting that the "Ladies Aid Society" was formed to aid the sick and the poor of the Jewish community. The functions of the group were manifold. An old record book indicates that its membership consisted of nearly all the women in the Jewish community. Among its aims was "to help in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the synagogue."

MRS. MIASHE GINSBERG

They decided that officers were to be elected every year; to meet in the vestry of the synagogue every first Monday of the month; to have a sick committee, which acted as an investigating committee, with power to give immediate help. The minutes disclose that during the first two years they gave one family as much as thirty dollars; that they bought shoes for poor children; paid a week's lodging for a poor man; gave one man his fare to return to Boston rather than give him five dollars every month; ten dollars aid to Russian sufferers; a ton of coal to the Hebrew Free School; a twenty dollar loan to a needy family and paid the janitor 25 cents per meeting. The names of the recipients were rarely recorded in the minutes. The members paid dues, gave donations, engaged in raffles and annual entertainment and balls. The first president was Miashe Ginsberg, the wife of Max Ginsberg, a director of Beth Israel. Mrs. Ginsberg served until 1912.

At first the group was called upon to arrange a holiday celebration, or to assist at a wedding reception. Gradually as modern times refined and specialized these needs, the rudimentary interest group evolved. The story of the Ladies' Aid Society in its formative years is an endless record of personal zeal and achievement. From its very inception the organization has constantly assumed the responsibility of meeting some urgent need of the synagogue as well as catering to the needy. It is of interest to note that the charitable work was not confined to those of the Jewish faith. The early minutes brings to the attention of the membership the fact that "two children in the neighborhood were provided with winter boots and warm underwear."

As the society grew in scope its membership was to include women from the Beth Abraham and Tifereth Israel Synagogues. In 1914 the society became an independent group and confined its activities to "care for the sick and needy." The Ladies' Aid Benefit dances became an institution in the community and these annual events received financial support to a large extent from the non-Jewish community.

The "Ladies' Auxiliary" that was founded in 1903, had, in truth, shown the way with their benevolent work, their Purim parties, and fund-raising projects. With a new and modern application of an old idea in 1949, Mrs. Bess Minsky, then president of the Sisterhood, through her deep understanding of the problem and with the aid of her associates, developed a plan which was to set

the pattern for the future. By presenting interest groups on the synagogue premises it was hoped to make the Synagogue a center; one to which the women of Beth Israel would come with eagerness and pleasure. They were soon to learn that to participate in and to identify themselves with its program was to serve the principles of active Judaism.

During World War I Beth Israel took the initiative in organizing relief and assistance to the victims of war torn Europe. This ideal has been preserved to our own day.

The participation of our Jewish women in philanthropic work throughout the years has been impressive. We would be indeed remiss in our duty if we did not mention the name of Mrs. Golda Hillson, the wife of Philip Hillson. Mrs. Hillson is still remembered by many in our community for her work in the "Ladies Aid Society." It was her first communal undertaking, one to which she devoted the driving energy that characterized her entire career in local Jewish welfare work.

THE EARLY GEMILETH CHESED

(LOAN SOCIETY)

Men's Division

Ezriel L. Allen
Joseph Bernstein
Jechiel Cooperstach
Israel Frank
Samuel E. Dennis
Morris N. Golden
Moishe Goldberg
Nathan Hillson
Philip Hillson
Akiba Goldberg
Simon Kominsky
Nathan Ginsberg
Israel Goldman
N. Koritzky
Joseph Raichlen
Shabbtai Rudman
Joshua Wallace
Moishe Rosen
Cyrus Schiro
M. Schiro
David Snyder
Ezer Ratchkovsky
Ezra Sarhasky
Israel Wolper
Isaac Wolper

Women's Division

Julia Allen
Malcha Bernstein
Annie Berger
Rachel Cohen
Hannah L. Frank
Rachel Friedman
Hannah Goldberg
Shaineh Zirel Rosen
Bashye Faiga Richardson
Rivke Dennis
Faiga Rudman
Hannah Snyder
Becky Levine
Fraida Ratchkovsky
Chia Sarah Kominsky
Miriam Goldman
Shainah Rivke Stern

A Biographical Sketch of Max Cohen

By Mrs. Ada Cohen Gleszer

Max Cohen was the first President of Congregation Beth Israel, the first synagogue in Bangor; the year being 1897.

It seems fitting that Max Cohen should have been the first president, as he was instrumental in bringing about this important step in the religious life of Bangor's Jewish Community. Max Cohen had a rare charm and inherent understanding of people, which inspired confidence and which was most valuable in establishing a good relationship between the first Jewish settlers in Bangor and the natives. His home and place of business, a jewelry store on Exchange Street, were always open to those who needed shelter, or had problems to settle.

He came to Bangor as a young man with his parents, Rose and Nathan Cohen, who were among the first Jewish families to settle in Bangor. He married Rose Migowski of New York, whom he met when she came to Bangor to visit her mother and stepfather who also were among the first Jewish settlers here. They were married in Bangor at the home of Mrs. Julia Allen, a cousin of the bride, whose home served as the religious center for the few Jewish families in Bangor at that time.

When the number of Jewish families began to increase, Mr. Cohen started a movement to establish a synagogue. It was through his tireless efforts that the Beth Israel Synagogue came into being in this community. Max Cohen took an active part in the growth and development of this synagogue, and served it for many years.

One incident during his service as President especially stands out to show that this Synagogue served not only Bangor, but the surrounding communities where the Jewish

people had no place of worship of their own.

Mr. Jacob Schiff of the banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company of New York, was a summer resident of Bar Harbor where he maintained a lavish estate. Memorial services for his father fell during the summer months he spent there. As the nearest synagogue was at Bangor he contacted Max Cohen who made all arrangements for the service.

He came year after year and he and Mr. Cohen became fast friends. It was a sight which attracted much local attention when Mr. Schiff would drive up to Max Cohen's store and together would arrive at the Synagogue in a style seldom seen in Bangor at that time. Mr. Schiff's banking firm in those years was comparable to the House of Rothschild in Europe and his presence in Bangor created wide interest from citizens and from newspapers. Every year he left a generous contribution to Beth Israel Synagogue.

In later years Max Cohen became interested in politics and could have gone far in public office. However, he preferred the role of advisor to men who through his advice and judgment were elected to the officers of Governors of the State, U. S. Senators, Congressmen and many lesser offices in the city, county, and state.

Among his close personal friends were Governor Bert Fernald, Governor Percival P. Baxter, Governor Owen Brewster, and Governor Lewis O. Barrows. The back office of his jewelry store on Exchange Street was a meeting place where many policies for the State of Maine were formulated. For himself he was satisfied to serve when called upon in local offices, such as Chairman of the City Committee, a member of the County Committee, the City Council.

He belonged to many fraternal orders among which were the St. Andrews Lodge of Masons, the Eastern Star, Anah Temple, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and the Elks. He also was a member of the Lions Service Club.

On his death tributes paid him were outstanding for a man in private life. The newspapers carried many from high State and National officials. He died in 1930. His wife Rose died in 1911. He was survived by three daughters and two grandsons and two granddaughters.

Miniature Bible Presented to Max Cohen
As a Token of Esteem
By Gov. Percival P. Baxter

Myer Segal: Religious Rebel

MYER SEGAL

Myer Segal was born in a small town in the shadows of Minsk, Russia, October 12, 1889. As the eldest son of an Orthodox Rabbi he was obliged to follow the course of traditional learning. Accordingly he studied the Talmud with his learned parent and at a young age he enrolled at the yeshivah. When Myer reached the age of seven, the Rabbi emigrated with his family to Canada where he served the St. Johns, New Brunswick Jewish Community for eight years. The family later moved to Lewiston, Maine. Myer Segal did not want to follow in his father's footsteps. He objected to the rigidity of Orthodoxy, could not accept the Bible literally, and wanted a career outside the synagogue. While attending Bates College he gave private instruction in Hebrew and cognate studies. He was graduated from Bates College, Phi Beta Kappa, class of 1909, and received his Master's degree from Columbia University in 1911. He studied in Germany from 1913 to 1914, and later taught at the New York Military Academy and the University of Maine.

Mr. Segal entered business in Bangor in 1922. He was president of Cortell-Segal Company and president of Chernowsky's of Augusta. He was also a member of the Rotary Club. He was an active participant in the religious and cultural life of the community. His leadership in the realm of the spirit was soon apparent. He became the guiding influence of Conservative Judaism in Bangor. Mixing easily with his non-Jewish friends and associates, Myer Segal was a bridge between the Jews and their gentile neighbors. When Bangor wanted a representative Jewish opinion, it went to Myer Segal.

"An up-to-date Judaism," Myer Segal asserted, "would have the vitality and strength to survive." His was the evolutionary thesis that each age fashions religious beliefs for its own needs. He believed in a Judaism of the future, not merely a Judaism with a tag or label. He strived for that kind of Judaism dedicated to that most excellent combination of freedom of spirit and warmth of ceremonial. He taught us never to be indifferent to the accumulated treasures of our traditions and heritage.

Present day members of Beth Israel who remember Myer Segal revere his memory. He was endowed with a high intelligence, but more than that, with a deep spirituality.

Message from our Sisterhood President

Mrs. Hannah Freedman

This happy celebration of the Synagogue coincides with a most successful year in the life of the sisterhood. Success, however, did not come easily. It was brought about by the willingness of many dedicated workers who carried out their tasks on a high plane of efficiency and devotion. If the work has been arduous, the satisfaction that comes from achievement has been a compensating factor.

The past year has been notable for several reasons. Membership has reached an all time high of 207. The kitchen has been completely renovated, fully equipped and paid for. Life membership introduced only a few months ago has already met with a most heartwarming and enthusiastic response. If large attendances at meetings reflect the growing consciousness of Jewish women then it is, indeed, a most hopeful omen for the future.

It has been a privilege to serve as president for the second time since the sisterhood has been founded. While much has been accomplished, our work is only begun. I do not refer specifically to fund raising, important though it is. The sisterhood surely has a more sacred task. The sisterhood must not rest and, I hope, will not rest until the Synagogue becomes the spiritual home of its members.

This is Our Sisterhood

By Mrs. Hannah Friedman

Fund raising, and raising the standards of our congregation—these are the Sisterhood's constant concern.

"A Rabbi in a large metropolitan city was asked whether he could use an assistant. 'No', was the reply, 'I have the sisterhood.' In the sisterhood, a Synagogue has a treasure that is priceless." This statement was made by Rabbi A. H. Freedman shortly after his arrival in Bangor in the Fall of 1949 to a group of women gathered in a private home and invited for the purpose of organizing a sisterhood.

As a result of this meeting, the Beth Israel Sisterhood, as we know it today, came into being with Bess Minsky as its first president, Dorothy Broder as secretary, and Esther Dresner as treasurer.

From its very inception, the sisterhood set for itself a three fold program:—to beautify the Synagogue, provide spiritual and cultural stimuli for its members and meet the social needs of the congregation. Throughout the fourteen years of its existence, this ideal has remained constant.

Many of the readers will recall what the Synagogue looked like in 1949. While it served its primary purpose, it was an unattractive, uninspiring structure with the minimum requirements necessary for a house of worship. The seats, the floors, the windows, the walls, the vestry, the kitchen —all cried out for change.

It is no exaggeration to say that the sisterhood played an important role in bringing about this change, in helping to transform the Synagogue into the beautiful sanctuary it is today where upon entering one wishes to repeat the Psalmist's word of love and admiration, "Lord, I love the habitation of Thy House and the Place where Thy glory dwelleth."

It wasn't long before this newly found

organization shed its swaddling clothes and began in earnest the beautification of the Synagogue. The sisterhood undertook as its first project the carpeting of the upstairs. This immediately brought a measure of color and warmth into the Synagogue and served as an impetus for still further and even greater efforts.

Spurred and encouraged by the Rabbi, and under the leadership of the standing house committee consisting as it has for many years of Pauline Rapaport, Bess Minsky and Ida Rolsky, women who serve with zeal and steadfastness, the sisterhood found itself undertaking a new task each year. Among its major projects, it provided cushion seats for the pews, installed a ventilation system, replaced the seats in the balcony and presented one of the beautiful stained glass windows which now grace the Synagogue.

Turning its attention to the downstairs, the women of the sisterhood enlarged and panelled the vestry, disposed of the outmoded equipment in the kitchen and purchased new ovens, an upright deep freeze, a large stainless steel refrigerator, and replaced the assorted array of dishes, cutlery and utensils with complete meat and dairy plants as well as adequate facilities for the annual communal Passover sedar.

This past year saw one of the sisterhood's long cherished dreams come true with the installation of a new stream lined kitchen with its modern glazed countertops, its roomy, attractive birch cupboard, gleaming stainless steel sinks and many of the conveniences found in the best set up kitchens. The new facilities and improvements have already inspired the finest efforts of the women who bake and cook in it.

Through membership and special fund raising activities, approximately thirty thousand dollars have been raised and joyously spent in enriching and beautifying the Synagogue. At times, when it was felt necessary to undertake a large project with little in the treasury, but with much confidence in the women of the sisterhood and in the future, bank loans were arranged. In each instance, the loan was repaid sooner than anticipated.

The warmth, the love, the service given to us by the women of the sisterhood have enabled us to exist as a synagogue.

Numerous women have played a part in raising the necessary funds. Regardless of whether they have contributed in greater or lesser measure each one deserves to have her particular effort recorded. Each one deserves to be thanked through the pages of this journal. It would indeed be satisfying to mention each individual by name but that is impossible. The work lives on and is full testimony to the part they played. However, no history of the sisterhood would be complete without paying tribute to the presidents who have not only filled this high office with distinction but who have, over the years, either in this capacity or as members of the board, convened some of the most successful fund raising functions:—

Bess Minsky	(1949-1951; Hon. Pres. since 1951)
Ruth Gelbert	(1951-1952)
Hannah Freedman	(1952-1953; 1962-1963)
Helen Stone	(1953-1954; 1959-1960)
Ruth Epstein	(1954-1955)
Bertha Robinson	(1955-1958)
Barbara Ollove	(1958-1959)
Florence Wittner	(1959-1961)

Although preoccupied with the physical aspects of the Synagogue, the sisterhood never lost sight of the services it felt it should render to its members. At the regular bi-monthly meetings, held from October through May, programs of high standard both stimulating and informative were carried through. Professors from the University of Maine as well as lay and professional men and women from all walks of life were invited. Talks on knowing how to answer teen age problems, mental and physical health, nutrition, education, law, as well as lectures on religion, holiday observances and on the State of Israel were especially well received. Play readings and demonstrations were, from time to time, presented to the delight and appreciation of the audiences. From the first program chairman, Molly Emple, to the present incumbent, Selma Berger, the women in charge of programming have all contributed much in transforming these afternoons from occurrences to occasions.

With Rabbi Freedman as instructor, the sisterhood sponsored two classes in elementary Hebrew. The attendance at each of the sessions was most gratifying and at the termination of the coarse, most of the wom-

SISTERHOOD PAST PRESIDENTS—From left to right, front row: Mrs. Myer Minsky, Mrs. Abraham Freedman, Mrs. Albert Schiro. Back row: Mrs. Harold Epstein, Mrs. Charles Robinson, Mrs. Julius Stone, Mrs. David Wittner.
Not present—Mrs. Allan Ollove, Mrs. Bernard Gelbert.

en were able to read the Prayer Book in Hebrew correctly, if slowly.

To help preserve Jewish traditions and contribute a share in its perpetuation, the sisterhood holds annual Passover sedorim, Chanukah functions as well as Purim and Simchos Torah parties for the children. The communal sedar held on either the first or second night of Passover is run on a non profit basis as a community service and is designed to enhance the rich traditional ceremonies of the meaningful festival. Jewish personnel from Dow Air Base and their families as well as students from the University of Maine are invited as guests of the community. Approximately 125 men, women and children avail themselves of this beautiful service and traditional meal. The Sisterhood acknowledges its gratitude to the Rabbi and to the women who have made these communal observances possible. The handful of hard working, dedicated women who have carried the major portion of the responsibility for the sedorim have been:—

Ruth Epstin, Bess Minsky, Betty Leiberman, Ida Rolsky, Florence Wittner and Rae Gross.

Hoping to encourage the growth of Jewish consciousness among its members, the sisterhood, in 1958, set up a gift shop in the vestry making available Bibles, a large selection of books with Jewish content for adults and children as well as many symbolic items for the Sabbath and Holidays. Although this service filled an important need in the community, it had to be abandoned in 1960 because of the difficulty in obtaining the services of women during hours which were inconvenient to most homemakers. The place and the function of the Jewish book in Jewish life cannot be overestimated and we are happy to note that the Community Center is now undertaking the task not only of rousing members of the community to the need of bringing such books into their homes but also of making them easily available. We wish the Center every success.

The sisterhood has also played a major role in our Friday night services. For 14 years it has been providing the Oneg Shabbat program which follows the services thus creating a "shtimmung" of fellowship and warmth which is an integral part of the Sabbath spirit. However, the indirect influence of the sisterhood is even more significant. Over the years, the activities it initiated and the services it rendered have quickened the religious awareness of the congregation so that for a considerable number of men and women, attending Friday night services has become "a way of life." Oneg Shabbat in the Beth Israel Synagogue is synonymous with the name of Jennie Rubin who has so ably and loyally been in charge for the past ten years and to which she has indeed brought the "joy of the Sabbath."

It was with a great deal of pleasure that the sisterhood, in 1956 undertook to cater the testimonial dinner tendered to Mr. Harold Epstein in recognition of his many years of selfless and devoted services as president of the Synagogue. In 1959, the sisterhood again happily placed itself in charge of the delightful surprise party given to Rabbi and Mrs. A. H. Freedman on the occasion of their tenth anniversary in Bangor.

One of the sisterhood's proudest achievements this year was the introduction of life membership which came about through the joint efforts of Bess Minsky and Hannah Freedman and a new chapter in the story of the organization was begun when Mrs. Sarah Schiro became its first member in August 1962. Left in the able hands of its chairman, Ida Schiro, her enthusiasm and initiative resulted in twenty members joining within the first six months of its inception. A plaque given by Sylvia Rolsky is being placed in the vestry and will honor in a permanent and fitting manner the life

members who, as of February 1963 are: Sarah Schiro, Ida Schiro, Edna Rapaport, Lillian Braidy, Helen Schiro, Molly Emple, Irene Rudman, Ruth Epstein, Lena Friedman, Hilda Goodman, Ruth Tabenken, Frances Pilot, Ethel Kagan, Helen Stone, Sylvia Rolsky, Rose Rudman, Pauline Rapaport, Eleanor Israel, Sylvia Berson and Ida Shur.

The Memorial and Happy Day Fund started in 1951 with Harriet Kern as its first chairman is still very much in business. This fund has not only been a source of revenue to the sisterhood, but gives members an opportunity of extending, in a most appropriate manner, thoughtful remembrances to dear ones and near ones in times of gladness and sadness. Lillian Stern who is so efficiently heading this project at present recently stated in a message to the members, "Do not forget the wonderful way to show thankfulness for a simcha; to wish the sick a speedy recovery; to honor the memory of a departed friend by contributing to our Simcha Fund and Memorial Fund. By so doing, you are not only helping in sisterhood work but also showing thoughtfulness to others."

Looking over membership lists, one wishes it were possible to say, "There is not missing one of us." That, unfortunately, we cannot do. We pause in our report to pay tribute to those who have been called from us and amongst whom we had sincere and devoted workers.

Those privileged to serve on the sisterhood today are:—

Officers:

Hon. President	Bess Minsky (House Committee)
President	Hannah Freedman
1st. Vice President	Ida Schiro (Life Membership Chairman)
2nd. Vice President	Marian Laeger
Secretary	Roberta Mogul
Treasurer	Bess Tabenken
Financial Secretary	Ruth Tabenken

Board Members:—

Rose Alpert (Board Tel. Committee)
Selma Berger (Program Ch.)
Charlotte Broder
Ruth Epstein
Ida Friedman
Belle Grodinsky (Fund Raising Committee)
Rae Gross (Membership Ch.)
Anna Kominsky
Freda Miller
Edna Rapaport (Ch. Membership Tel. Committee)
Pauline Rapaport (House Committee)
Bertha Robinson
Henrietta Rolnick (Fund Raising Committee)
Ida Rolsky (House Com.; Fund Raising Com.)
Sylvia Rolsky
Jennie Rubin (Ch. Oneg Shabbat)
Sarah Schiro (Ex-Officio)
Rosalie Shapiro
Lillian Stern (Ch. Happy Day and Memorial Fund)
Helen Stone (Ch. Memorial Tablets)
Florence Wittner

After 14 years, the sisterhood can look back with deserved satisfaction upon its achievements and with justification say, "Our efforts have borne fruit." This has been made possible because of the devotion, services and vision given not only by the founders and officers but by the rank and file of its membership.

Jewish women have always played a significant role in upholding and maintaining the sacred traditions of our people and in enriching the spiritual life of the community. It is through the sisterhood that the Jewish woman has the G-d given opportunity of continuing this noble work. Much has been done and much remains to be done. The sisterhood looks confidently forward to the future for continued fruitful services.

Message of Incoming Sisterhood President

Mrs. Albert Schiro

The Sisterhood continues as always to be an inspiration and mainstay to the Congregation, due mainly to the active participation of so many of its members. It is my wish, as your president, that the coming years deepen and further that relationship through rededication on the part of our membership in being a religious group and as an active auxiliary to the Synagogue functions. In the unsettled world in which we live, it is the challenge for us to help the relationship of the brotherhood of men along by an increment in our own devotion to duty, to God, country, and ourselves. This increased devotion to the Sisterhood and Synagogue is my challenge to you as Sisterhood members and loyal Jews to make possible our contribution toward a better world for us all.

Message from the President of the Brotherhood

MORRIS ALPERT

The Beth Israel Brotherhood wholeheartedly and enthusiastically joins with all the other constituent organizations which make up our Synagogue family in supporting the Beth Israel Diamond Jubilee Committee in planning and celebrating our Synagogue's 75th Anniversary.

In recognition of the realization that Judaism is not merely a theology but a "Way of Life," the Brotherhood has encouraged and made possible the active participation of our Brotherhood members in social, cultural fellowship and religious activities. Under the inspired leadership of Rabbi Freedman, the Sunday Morning Breakfasts and the discussions that follow have made a real contribution to the knowledge and understanding of our religious heritage.

As President of the Beth Israel Brotherhood, I and my family—and I am certain every member of our Brotherhood—consider it a rare privilege indeed to have the opportunity of taking part in the 75th Anniversary of Beth Israel Synagogue.

This is our Brotherhood

PAST PRESIDENTS

Herb Freedman, Abe Stern, Cy Chamoff

The Beth Israel Brotherhood

The brotherhood of man is a way of life that gets mostly lip service in today's troubled world. If there is not much of it on an international or national scale, one has only to drop one's sights to the community level to find that a brotherhood has real and significant meaning. This is true at Beth Israel where the Synagogue Brotherhood for many years has been a powerful medium for cultural and social development in an atmosphere of genuine friendliness.

The many contributions of the Sisterhood to the social and material benefit of the Congregation inspired the thought that a men's auxiliary organization would be equally useful in extending the horizons of the Congregation's communal life and in broadening the opportunity for participation in congregational activities.

Brotherhoods are usually established in a synagogue in order to attract the younger men of the community, and to involve them culturally and religiously in the fellowship of the congregation. Our Brotherhood has broadened these functions over the years. It has been entrusted with fund-raising responsibilities. In addition to its Minyan Breakfast the Brotherhood has served as a proving ground for many of those who later became members of the Board of Directors and officers of the Congregation.

We of Beth Israel view the breakfast talks by Rabbi Freedman as an institute for adult Jewish studies. We have had fine discourses as well as discussions on Jewish history and civilization, Jewish ethics, great Jewish books, and eminent personalities. Adult Jewish living requires adult Jewish learning.

Louis Shapiro
Faithful Sexton and "Chief Steward" of the Saturday "Third Meal" and the Sunday Morning Breakfasts.

The following is a list of officers of the Brotherhood over the years

PRESIDENT

1950 - 1953	Bernard Gelbert
1953 - 1955	David Israel
1955 - 1956	Abraham Stern
1956 - 1958	Herbert Freedman
1958 - 1962	Sy Chamoff
1962 -	Maurice Alpert

VICE PRESIDENT

1950 - 1952	David Rosen
1952 - 1953	David Israel
1953 - 1955	Abraham J. Stern
1955 - 1956	David Israel
1956 - 1958	Sy Chamoff
1958 -	Isadore Alpert

TREASURER

1950 - 1956	Donald Day
1956 -	David Z. Rapaport

SECRETARY

1950 - 1951	Samuel Rolsky
1951 - 1952	David Israel
1952 - 1953	Hyman Segal
1953 - 1954	Isadore Alpert
1954 -	David Z. Rapaport

Rabbi Avraham Freedman

A Tribute

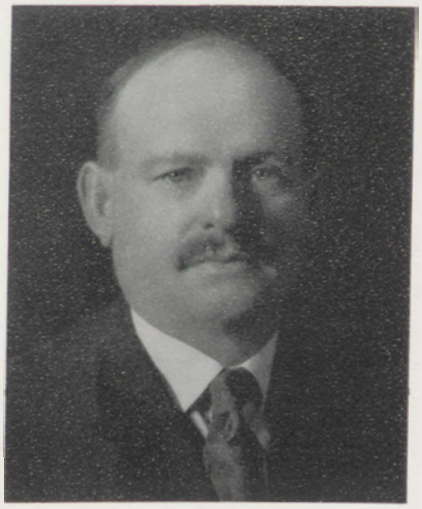
THIS CONGREGATION IN ITS DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR justifiably rejoices in its good fortune in having Rabbi Avraham Freedman as its minister and leader. This year marks not only the 75th Anniversary of the founding of Congregation Beth Israel but also the fifteenth year of Rabbi Freedman's service and ministration to this congregation. As we ponder the fact that his spiritual inspiration and untiring energy have guided us through a critical period of our congregational history, it becomes apparent that much of what this Congregation is today as well as much of that for which it stands, takes its color from Avraham Freedman, as man and teacher.

The SISTERHOOD extends to Rabbi Freedman hearty congratulations and deep appreciation on this Diamond Jubilee Year.

MRS. IDA SCHIRO,

President
Beth Israel
Sisterhood

A TRIBUTE



ABRAHAM J. BERSON

After serving the Congregation as its president during the construction of our present Synagogue building, Abraham J. Berson is now "President Emeritus," and is known and honored by our membership at large for his long years of devotion and service to the Congregation. It was during his presidency, and due to his leadership and persistent efforts that the Congregation was able to secure the services of Rabbi Shohet, renowned scholar and preacher. Indeed, he stood loyally and devotedly in the vanguard for every move and effort to promote the welfare, growth and development of the Congregation.

May you continue to enjoy the fruits of your labors.

An Appreciation

"But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates."

—Poverbs 31:30, 31

MRS. PEARL CHESNER

Permeated with a deep and enduring love Judaism, Israel, and her People, Pearl Chesner has devoted her life and deep concern to constructive and dedicated service on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

Blessed daughter, noble wife, inspired mother—continues to contribute the veritable love of her heart and the work of her hands to every worthy and significant cause in Jewish life. The Chevra Kadisha of Congregation Beth Israel, of which she is a member, has indeed been the beneficiary of her deeply thoughtful and generous spirit.

May she be granted many, many years in which to pursue her exemplary deeds within the excellent framework patterned by her forebears.

A TRIBUTE

ADOLPH B. FRIEDMAN

For your many years of public service and private benevolence, we, your fellow members of Congregation Beth Israel unite to express our esteem, admiration and our love. You have been an ardent leader, benefactor, and friend to our Congregation for over half a century. The wider community beyond, likewise knows the sum of your social-mindedness and generosity.

May you be blessed with many vigorous years.

A Woman of Valor

A Gracious Woman Obtaineth Honour.
—Proverbs 11:16

Mrs. Myer Minsky

. . . Whose guiding influence
has helped to foster the
highest ideals of
womanhood in our
Congregation

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, THE SISTERHOOD of Beth Israel has been engaged in a vigorous program of service to the Congregation.

Active, interested, and devoted, blessed with responsible leadership and willing followership — many many w o m e n down through the years, have developed the Sisterhood into a model congregational organization. The warmth, the love, the service given to us by the women of our Sisterhood have enabled us to exist as a synagogue.

This congregation has been most fortunate in being able to retain the constant interest and concern of its elder statesmen. This is no less true of our women. Behind the scenes in Sisterhood is a woman of valor whose intelligence, experience and judgment are constantly called upon.

Bess Minsky gives graciously of her unusual qualities of insight and vision. She has done a great deal to develop leadership, to intensify and broaden the scope and interest of Sisterhood's growing program. Bess' continued warm interest and guidance is a source of gratification and inspiration to all.

A Man In His Community

The story of Max Kominsky, son of one of our Founders, Simon Kominsky, is the story of a man's good works on behalf of his community and his faith. There is scarcely a facet of Jewish life in Bangor that does not bear the imprint of the Kominsky hand. There are monuments of brick and stone that form evidence of his deep communal spirit, but more important than these are feelings of respect and admiration he has engendered in the hearts of those with whom he has worked.

The writing of a check for a substantial sum has never been Max Kominsky's idea of rendering communal service. He has always given generously of his means, but his service has never ended there. Throughout the years he has given without stint the energy and ability, and time needed to advance the cause of cherished projects.

MAX KOMINSKY

Max Kominsky has continued to serve Congregation Beth Israel as a member of the Board of Directors, Chevra Kadisha, and and its fund-raising and building campaigns. To this task he has brought the same judgment and capacity that always characterized his public service. Max Kominsky was one of the three men who founded the United Jewish Welfare Fund. He took a leading role in establishing the Community Center in 1938, and more recently was instrumental in carrying to fruition the new Hebrew School building.

Max is prominent in the fraternal affairs of B'nai Brith, Kiwanis, and many other civic groups. He is a member of the Urban Renewal Authority and a director of the Bangor-Brewer United Fund.

In everything he has undertaken Max has always surrounded himself with capable workers, giving them a reasonably free hand to do what has to be done. He was, and is, impatient with inefficiency. Sometimes he expresses his views with considerable vigor.

To his communal responsibilities Max Kominsky has always brought those qualities of heart and mind vital to the successful carrying out of tasks involving large numbers of people and substantial sums of money. In reviewing his achievements of the past 30 years, one is struck by the fact that in his mind the Jewish community as a whole, was always more important than its parts. In other words, he never permitted his judgment and objectivity to become distorted by undue absorbtion in any single cause.

Truly, "A chip off the old block"

Jewel Scroll

Lo, children are a heritage
of the Lord; the fruit of the
womb is a reward. — Ps. 127:3

Ruth Esta Allen
David Arthur Allen

Joel Alpert
Stephen Alpert
Bruce Alpert

Bernard Sanford Alpert
Francine Ruth Alpert
Michael Howard Alpert
Cynthia Helen Alpert

Robyn Jill Berger
Andrew Berger

Phyllis Berger
Laurence Berger

Marcia S. Berson
Deborah Lynn Berson

Robert Scott Blocher
Steven Mark Blocher

Susan Braveman
Bunny Braveman
Norman Braveman

Sheri P. Broder
Cindy Broder
Janet Lee Broder

Denise Ann Brody
Stephen Arden Brody
Lewis Arthur Brody

Arlon Brown
Jalon Brown

Judythe M. Chamoff
Jon R. Chamoff
Zelda Chamoff
Denise Chamoff
James Chamoff

Marlene Chason
Stuart Chason
Lori Chason

Jay Irwin Chason
David Perry Chason

Daniel Stuart Cohen
Richard Scott Cohen

Melanie Cohen
Stuart Cohen

Joshua Paul Cohen

Marcia Cohen
Barry Cohen
Lee Cohen
Mark Cohen

Cynthia Jill Cohen
Scott Jason Cohen

Debora Dee Cutler
Edwin Stephen Cutler

Nicholas Day

Michele Dennis
Ronald Dennis
Mark Dennis
Hayden Dennis

Brenda Syliva Elfman
Amy Lou Elfman
Cathy Helene Elfman

Sally Ann Emple
Robert Mark Emple

Lisa Faith Emple
Janet Hope Emple

Elaine Epstein
Bruce Epstein
Carol Epstein

Patty Finn
Susan Finn
Hester Finn

Allan Freedman
Anne Susan Freedman

Mark Randall Friedman
Mitchell Alan Friedman

Michelle Lois Garson
Gregg Scott Garson

Marvin Howard Glazier
Lynn Ann Glazier
Rachel Enid Glazier

Jerome B. Goldsmith
Diana L. Goldsmith
David J Goldsmith
Dana L. Goldsmith
Jody A. Goldsmith
Bette Ann Goldsmith

Henry A. Goodstein
Lawrence N. Goodstein
Kenneth B. Goodstein

Louis Jeffrey Gotlib
Marcia Jean Gotlib

Roger Green
Kenneth Green
Nancy Green

Debbie Greenberg

Barbara R. Grodinsky
Aura K. Grodinsky

Carol F. Gross

Richard Alan Grossman
Mark David Grossman
Beth Lynn Grossman

David Honig
Jeffrey Honig

Heidi Jill Israel

Candace Beth Kagan
Leslie Jane Kagan
Nikki Lee Kagan
Daniel Gelb Kagan

Michael Kahn
Jonathan Kahn

Peter Kaminski
George Kaminski

Anne M. Kaplin
Jill M. Kaplin
Peter Maury Kaplin

Barbara Helen Kominsky
Norman Scott Kominsky

Susan L. Laeger
Jane N. Laeger
Allison L. Laeger

Rachel Linda Lait

Diane Wendy Lieberman

Lauren Beth Levine
Scott Edward Levine

Alan Jay Lincoln

Stephen Miller
Sybil Miller
Mickey Miller

Howard Marc Miller
Randi Ilene Miller
Lori Ann Miller
Stephen Richard Miller

Emily Beth Miller
Mark Warren Miller

Robyn Miller
Scot Miller
Alisa Miller
Kimberly Miller

Marilyn Beth Minsky

Steven Jay Mogul
Carolyn Beth Mogul
Debbie Ann Oliver
Stephanie Lynne Oliver

Maxine Beth Ollove
Michael Lewis Ollove
Peter Stuart Ollove

Marilyn Ina Ornstein
Louis Andrew Ornstein

Stephen C. Paul

Gail Ellen Plesset
Robert Jordan Plesset

Elaine Susan Povich
Lou Fredric Povich

Bruce L. Rapaport

Esa Jane Rapaport

Scott Rapaport
Jane Rapaport
Susan Rapaport

Bonnie Lisa Rappaport
Randy Michael Rappaport
Louis Ira Rappaport

Edward Rice
Gary Rice

Lauren Rich
Karen Rich

Lawrence Alan Rolnick
Rena Bess Rolnick
Eleanor Lee Rolnick

Anne C. Rolsky

Robert Rolsky

Vicki Anne Rolsky

Michael Rosen
Richard Rosen
Phillip Rosen

Richard Lewis Rosenthal
Susan Jane Rosenthal
Leslie Ann Rosenthal

Ruth Rothseid
Andrew Rothseid

Jeffrey Bruce Rudman
John Steven Rudman

Margo Ellen Rudman
Lisa Lee Rudman

Robert Kolker Rudman
Samuel Kolker Rudman
Lewis James Rudman

Jeffrey Zade Rudom

Hope Ellen Schiro

Susan Lynn Schiro
Jeffrey Craig Schiro

Mark Andrew Segal
Stephen Erik Segal

Jane Alice Segal
Hope Amy Segal
Elizabeth Ann Segal
Richard Myer Segal
Robert Bacon Segal

Susan Gale Serota
Michael Silver Serota

Paul A. Shapero
Sue J. Shapero

Jeffrey Alan Silver
Scott Eric Silver
Stephen Paul Silver

Stephanie Slon
Dennis Slon

Barry Alan Sokol
Amy Jo Sokol

James Steinberg
Margot Steinberg

Brenda P. Stone
Richard I. Stone

Wendy Ellen Striar

Sherry L. Swankin
Robin Swankin

Matthew Richard Tabenken
Lee Marcus Tabenken

Karen Beverly Trembowler

Deborah Ann Viner
Richard Peter Viner

Jonathan Viner
Robert Viner
Diane Viner

Bonnie Wittner
Ilene S. Wittner

Beth Israel Members In Public Service

The scions of the Jews who were described in 1888 as "sober, industrious, and law-abiding," have become less self-conscious and more expressive both in their Judaism and in their Americanism. Beth Israel has

NORMAN MINSKY

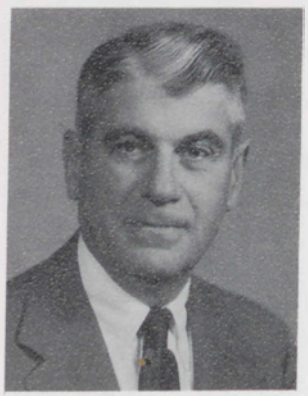
been a congregation of splendid men and women, many of whom have been fired by the vision of Israel's teachers to do justly and to love mercy. They have known that their religion demands service to their fellowman, and they have served human beings without distinction of color or creed. They have endeavored to apply the ideal of the Levitical commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Leaders in many philanthropic, civil and cultural enterprises have marched from their ranks. They have been good American citizens, ready to serve their country, their state and city. Here

BRIG. GENERAL
BERNARD S. WATERMAN

in Bangor, they have developed industrial and commercial institutions, nationally known, for integrity and fair dealing. The record of these men is a source of pride and a precious legacy. It is an inspiration to the members of Beth Israel, not merely to carry on a noble tradition, but to add to its significance.

Before the half way mark of the present century was reached, the Jews of Beth Israel, with all their involvement in the fortunes of their fellow-Jews the world over, had become associated with all phases of civic life. More and more of them rose to importance and distinction. The preponderant majority of them were now native to the soil. This modest chronicle, at the risk of dissent, must restrict itself to naming only a few whose contributions have enriched our community life. The members of Beth Israel include eminent judges, physicians, attorneys and prominent merchants and industrialists. Many are active in public affairs. Public service and personal achievement are a measure of the journey from the small frame building on Center Street, to the concrete and steel structure on York Street. The achievement of Congregation Beth Israel has been the achievement of America. So its future is the American future.

If at this point a few may be named who rose to a high level in the state's industrial enterprise, the list



LAWRENCE M. CUTLER, M.D.

would have to include James Gimpel Striar, who came to America in his teens, and became a leading figure in the textile industry. He was even more famous as a philanthropist, especially in the promotion of Jewish learning and all phases of the United Jewish Appeal. Nor could the list omit Max Kagan and Joseph Emple, nationally known figures in their respective fields. Kagan, a pioneer in the shoe industry in this area, and Emple, operator of one of the largest knitting mills in the East, are both distinguished for their philanthropy and active aid to the State of Israel. Samuel Goodman is remembered for the numerous refugee families he brought to these shores and his zeal in nurturing and developing the Home for the Aged in Portland.

On the local, state and national levels, Jews of Beth

Israel were elected or appointed to office, and figured prominently in the less-defined areas of civic affairs and public service. Michael Pilot was appointed Assistant United States Attorney in 1935 and served with credit both to himself and his office for four years. Edward I. Gross was named Judge of the Bangor Municipal Court in 1953, and nine years later acceded to the Mayoralty of the City of Bangor. He, too, has been prominently identified with many Jewish endeavors.

The judiciary appears to have enlisted many prominent American Jews throughout the land. It has been said of them that because of their Jewish backgrounds "they viewed the law not as a hardened system of logic and precedent, but as a living organism designed to serve the needs of an evolving society." Abraham Moses Rudman was designated a Justice of the Superior Court of Maine in 1954. Justice Rudman has brought honor to Maine Jewry and added lustre to an already distinguished reputation. He served as the first president of B'nai Brith Lodge and this same honor was accorded him in 1938 with the establishment of the Jewish Community Center.

Several Bangor Jews are making important contributions to the progress of medicine in this region. Jews came to America with a tradition of reverence for the art of healing that went back to the Middle Ages. Many of our great medieval scholars, philosophers and poets had been practitioners of the art. In the New World the tradition retained its vigor and in the dreams of several Beth Israel members the first choice of a calling for their sons was that of physician. Names such as Dr. Lawrence M. Cutler and Dr. Eugene E. Brown have figured prominently in Maine medical circles. Dr. Cutler is also active in the field of education. He served as chairman of the Bangor School Board and presently

JULES MOGUL

is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine.

The American Jewish community is proud of the splendid record of our men and women who have taken part in two world wars. We of Beth Israel have voiced our debt of gratitude elsewhere in this publication. We are especially proud of a former resident, Brigadier General Bernard S. Waterman, named after his grandfather, Reb Yehudah Wasserman (Waterman). General Waterman is the son of Samuel Waterman now residing in Lewiston. Reb Yehudah Wasserman will be remembered by some of our members as the Principal of the Free Hebrew School established by Beth Israel in 1903. General Waterman commanded an artillery battalion at Saipan, Tinian and Leyte and led the 419th Field Artillery Group through the Okinawa campaign. After serving with the Logistics Division of The General Staff of the U. S. Army, Europe, and as commander of the 30th Field Artillery Group of the 7th Army. Since February 1962 he has been artillery commander of the 5th Infantry Division.

MILFORD COHEN

Myer Epstein, Chairman Bangor City Council 1917-1919

Milford Cohen, Bangor School Committee

Sidney Epstein, Trustee Bangor Water District

Max Kominsky, Commissioner Urban Renewal Authority

Norman Minsky, Member Maine Legislature; City Planning Board

Edward Stern, Recorder Bangor Muncipal Court; Acting Judge

Diane Cutler, Recreation Advisory Committee

Albert Schiro, Trustee Recreation Center

Samuel J. Rosen, D.M.D., Dental Health Advisory Committee

Howard L. Kominsky, D.M.D., Dental Health Advisory Committee

William C. Viner, Industrial Development Advisory Committee

Gerald E. Rudman, Civil Service Commission

Jules Mogul, Complaint Justice District Court

Abraham J. Stern, City Solicitor Bangor

Edward I. Gross, Judge Bangor Municipal Court; Mayor of Bangor

Lawrence M. Cutler, M.D., Chairman, Board of Trustees University of Maine; Bangor School Board

Abraham M. Rudman, LL.D., Justice Superior Court; Bangor School Board

Military Service

"The Lord is With Thee Valiant Warrior"
Judges 6:12

"The American people need no reminder of the service which those of Jewish faith have rendered our nation. It has been a service with honor and distinction. History reveals that your people have played a great and commendable part in the defense of Americanism during the World War and prior wars, and have contributed much in time of peace toward the development and preservation of the glory and romance of our country and our democratic form of government."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Spanish-American War 1898

Myer Kominsky
Morris Hall

World War I

Sgt. Harry Allen
Pvt. Louis L. Byer
Pvt. Moses Byer
Pvt. Robert Cohen
S 2/c Harry Epstein
Pvt. Louis A. Frankel
S 1/c George S. Ginsberg
Sgt. Abe Goldsmith
Pfc. Bernard K. Hillson
*Cpl. Hyman Hillson
Sgt. Philip Koritzky
S 1/c George Levenson
*Pfc. Henry Lait
Pfc. Louis Lieberman
Pvt. Samuel Lipsky
S 2/c Sam Marcus
QM Maurice Miller
Pfc. Myer Minsky
Pvt. Harry Morris
Pvt. Samuel Richardson
Sgt. William Rosen
Pvt. Samuel Rosen
S 1/c Abraham Rudman

*Killed in action

WORLD WAR II

Many young men of Beth Israel were called into active service in the Armed Forces and their congregational dues were waived for the duration. Soldiers from neighboring camps were cordially received at Synagogue functions and entertained in many of the Jewish homes. The men and women of the congregation distinguished themselves in war service work.

Cpl. Lawrence Baron
Lt. Arthur Bayer
Capt. Hayden Bayer
T/Sgt. Albert Bernstein
S 2/C Robert Bernstein
R3 Selden Bernstein
Theodore Braveman
1st Lieut. Irving Broder
Lt. Eugene E. Brown
Sgt. Irvin Byer
Sgt. Myer Byer
Lt. JG. Walter Cahners
Capt. Martin Cantor
S/Sgt. Seymour Chamoff
Pfc. Harold Chason
S/Sgt. George Cohen
Pfc. Milford Cohen
Col. Lawrence Cutler
Capt. Donald Day
S/Sgt. Kenneth Elfman
Pfc. Herbert Emple
Pfc. Irving Emple
Pfc. Lawrence Emple
Sgt. Maurice Emple
1st Lt. Sidney Epstein
PhM 3/C Herbert Freedman
Maj. Albert Friedman
S/C Neil Glazier
S/Sgt. Joan Golden
S. F. 3/c Edgar Goldsmith
Sgt. Joseph Goldsmith
T/4 Milton Goldsmith
Pvt. Marvin Goldstein
1 C PO Benjamin Goodstein
Cpl. Max Gotlieb
Sgt. Harold Grodinsky
Capt. Edward Gross
1st Lt. Jerome Grossman
HAlc Harvey Hillson
Cpl. Archie Kamen
Cpl. Nathan Kamen
Pfc. Donald Kominsky
Maj. Howard Kominsky
S 2/C Morris Koritzky
F 1/C Millard Koritzky
1st Lt. Leo Kupsenal
Pvt. Lawrence Lait
FCS Samuel Levine
BM 2/c Harold Maisel
S/Sgt. David Miller
S.Sgt. Henry Miller
S 2/C Sanford Miller
1st Lt. Morris Ollove
1st Lt. Murry Oppenheim
1st Lt. Dorothy Kamen Ornstein
Maj. Joseph G. Ornstein
Sgt. Irving Paul
Cpl. Sidney Paul
Sgt. Lewis Plessett
S 1/C Abraham Podolsky
SK 2/C Shirley Povich
SK 3/C David Rapaport
S/Sgt. Isadore Rolnick
Pvt. Louis Rolnick
Pfc. Simon Rolsky
2nd Lt. Daniel Rosen
Capt. Lawrence Rosen
Sgt. Morris Rubin
Maj. David Rudman
Cpl. Elmer Saltzman
Cpl. William Saltzman
Ensign Martin Schneider
S/Sgt. Benjamin Segal
2nd Lt. Louis Segal
S/Sgt. Vernon Segal
Capt. Jacob Serota
T 4 Sumner Shafmaster
Maj. Benjamin Shapero
Capt. Lawrence Slon
Cpl. Shelson Sokol
Sgt. Isadore Solomon
Pvt. Abraham Stern
Cpl. Arthur Stern
T/4 Max Striar
T/Sgt. Nathan Sucher
Ensign Gerald Tabenken
Lt. Comdr. Ben Viner
Sgt. Leo Viner
S/Sgt. Harry Weinstein
Cpl. Nathan Weinstein

In Memoriam

"The Soul is Eternal as the Light of the Lord"

We dedicate the pages that follow in tribute to the sacred memory of our dear departed Members, Friends, and Supporters whose affiliation with our congregation was a constant source of inspiration to us.

Beth Israel Synagogue constitutes an enduring memorial to their ardent and profound devotion to the cause of their faith.

It reflects furthermore the true and precise realization of the ancient prayer which has always served as the dynamic force uniting the countless generations of the past with the living impulse of contemporary houses of worship: "May their souls be bound up with the bonds of the living."

In Fond Memory of

Samuel and Mary Emple

Bernard and Dora Cohen

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Emple

In Memoriam

Isaac and Rachel Kagan

Mr. and Mrs. Max Kagan

In Memory of

James Gimpel Striar

The Striar Family

In Memory of

Hyman and Katherine Adelman

and

Gertrude Adelman

Yale and Milton Adelman

Elizabeth Mazer

In Memoriam

Abram I. Brown

March 17, 1880 — October 16, 1939

Fannie R. Brown
Dorothy S. Polakewich
Irene C. Cooper
Eugene E. Brown

In Memory of

My Beloved Parents

Samuel H. and Dora B. Cohen

Mrs. Jack Rapaport

In Memoriam

Samuel E. and Eva B. Dennis

The Dennis Family

In Memory of

Max and Mary Ginsberg

Simon Leonard Ginsberg

In Memory of

Israel and Rebecca Goldman

Charles M. Goldman

In Memoriam

Our Parents and Sister

Morris Epstein

Rose Epstein

Sally Epstein Low

Max, Nathan and Kay Epstein

In Memory of

Max and Sarah Epstein

Alexander and S. Bella Goldman

Mr. and Mrs. Harold R. Epstein

In Memoriam

Solomon and Sarah Harris

Louis Harris

Louis and Rose Rapaport

Abe and Lee Harris

Belle Harris

Molly Sheer

Joe Harris

In Memoriam

Lewis and Ida Rudman

In Loving Memory

Cyrus Schiro

Isadore Keim

Hannah Keim

Samuel Cohen

Mrs. Sarah Schiro

and the

Schiro Families

In Memoriam

Isaac and Fannie Stone

Mrs. Rose Gladstone
Julius
Maurice
Paul

In Memoriam

William Emple

Moses Rudman

Dora Rudman

Mrs. William Emple

In Memory of Our

Beloved Parents

Hyman and Mamie Stern

The Stern Family

In Memoriam

Zalman and Gittel Saltzman

Jacob and Edith Cohen

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Saltzman

In Memoriam

James Cahners

The Cahners Family

In Memory of

Nettie Glazier Koritzky

Jack Koritzky

In Loving Memory of

Mrs. Anne Rapaport

Mrs. Ida Glazier

Medford, Mass.

Mrs. Ann Podolsky

Old Town, Maine

Mr. Jack Rapaport

Bangor, Maine

In Memoriam

Joseph B. Glazier

In Memory of

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Richardson

Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Goldstein

Mrs. Leah Kaminsky

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Richardson

Mr. and Mrs. Haskell Cohen

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Byer

Mr. and Mrs. John Swartz

Mrs. Bessie Segal

Mr. Samuel Richardson

Mr. Louis Brenin

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Goldstein

In Memoriam

Philip Baron

The Baron Family

In Memoriam

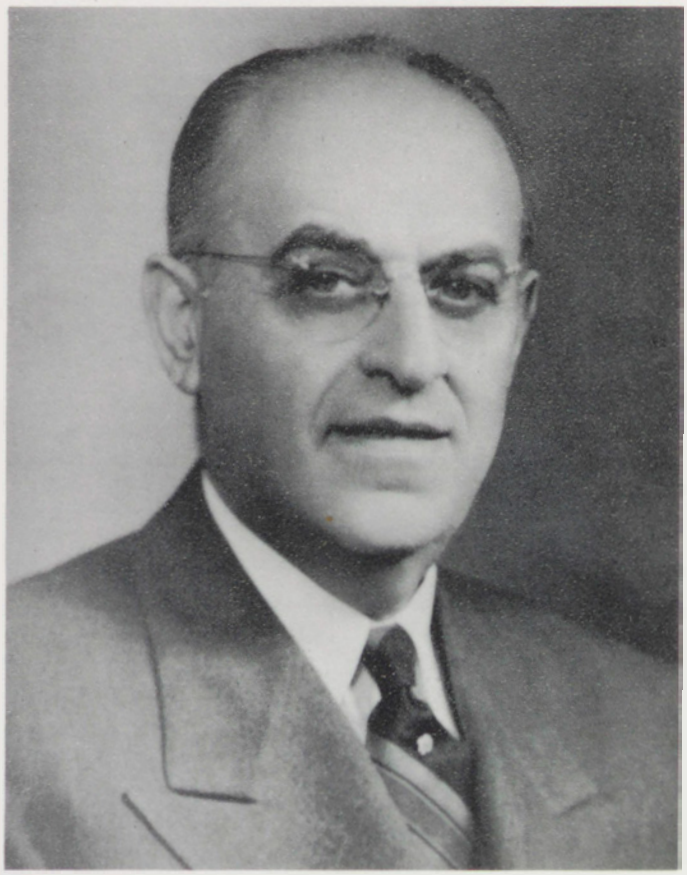
of All The Departed of Our

Families

Mr. and Mrs. Adolph B. Friedman

Mr. and Mrs. Albert H. Friedman

In Memoriam



Myer W. Epstein

1890 – 1960

Mrs. Isabelle H. Epstein

Mrs. Dorothy Epstein Kaplan

Mrs. Shirley Epstein Berger

In Loving Memory

Harry Broder

The Broder Family

In Memory of

Mr. and Mrs. Simon Kominsky

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Ginsberg

Mr. and Mrs. Max Kominsky

In Memoriam

Joseph Cooper

Mrs. Sarah Cooper

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Cooper

In Memoriam

Abraham Rolsky

Alice Rolsky

Lillian Rolsky Handler

Louis Rolsky

Henry Rolsky

The Samuel Rolsky Family

In Memoriam

Jacob and Nettie Dresner

Mr. and Mrs. Isadore Dresner

In Memory of

Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Epstein

Mrs. Harry M. Feinberg

Mrs. James A. Cahners

In Memoriam

Joseph and Annie Raichlen

Henry and Florence Raichlen

Goldie Raichlen

Samuel Ames

Berel and Malcha Ames

William and Bessie Rubin

Abraham and Libbe Ames

Joseph and Annie Wallace

Leah Marcus

Molly Ames Mavitz

Annie Ames Steinberg

Gertrude Zatiner

Nettie Galpert

Hattie Pullman

Fannie Raichlen Ames
Weirs Beach, New Hampshire

In Memory of
Beloved Husband and Father

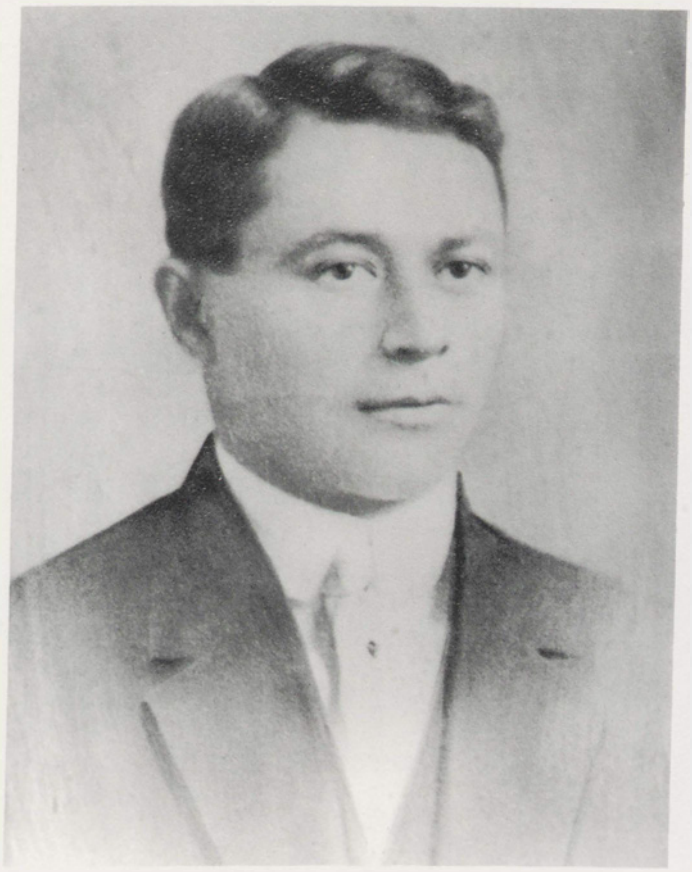
Dan Rosen

Mrs. Esther Rosen

Mrs. Janice Rosen Brody

Robert Rosen

In Memoriam



Edwin Epstein

May 15, 1873 — April 24, 1926

Hyman Epstein

February 29, 1911 November 3, 1913

In Memoriam

Samuel E. Rudman

Ida V. Rudman

Ellis I. Rudman

Samuel Rudman

Rebecca Balis

Lillian Unobskey

In Loving Memory

Wife and Mother

Katie Richardson Emple

Abraham O. Emple

Anne Emple Levine

Hyman W. Emple

Maurice L. Emple

Dorothy Simonds

Jeanette G. Chamoff

Irving B. Emple

Herbert C. Emple

Lawrence M. Emple

In Loving Memory
of Our Parents

Abraham M. Shiro

Lena Altman Shiro

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Altman

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kirshenbaum

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wolfe

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Katz

Mr. and Mrs. Harold I. Shiro

In Memoriam

Philip Hillson

Mary Hillson

The Hillson Family

In Memoriam

Dora Hillson Segal

Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Segal
and Family

In Memoriam

Mrs. Rose Gotlib

Mrs. Elizabeth Grodinsky

Mrs. Leah Sclair

Mrs. Sarah Zitaner

Their Bequests to Congregation Beth Israel
Are Gratefully Acknowledged

In Memory of

Daniel Rosen

The Lipmans

Augusta, Maine

In Memoriam

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Segal

Nathan Segal

Jack Segal

Mrs. Edna Segal Brenin

Clarks Green, Pa.

In Memory of Our

Beloved Parents

Jacob David and Mary Leavitt

The Leavitt Family

In Memoriam

Edward L. and Gertrude Hirsch

Moishe and Malka Bass

Mr. and Mrs. Harry E. Bass

In Memoriam

Robert Rosen

Sarah Rosen and Family

In Memory of

Louis A. Rolsky

Robert and Ida Rolsky

In Memory of Our Grandparents

Morris and Ida Rosen

Lazarus and Jennie Rosen

Ida Rolsky, David and Lawrence Rosen

Archie Epstein

May 15, 1887 — Sept. 20, 1931

In Loving Memory

of Our Dear Husband and Father

By his wife Sara and children

Marjorie, Bobby and Eddie

In Memoriam

Louis and Annie Berger

The Berger Family

In Memoriam

A. B. Epstein

Mrs. A. B. Epstein

Judy and Harold

In Memory of

Max and Rose Cohen

Pearl Cohen Wigon

Joseph Wigon

Bertha Migowski

Mrs. Harry A. Levenson

In Memoriam

David and Bessie Goldberg

The Goldberg Family

In Loving Memory of

Dora E. Goldsmith

Stella D. Goldsmith

David A. Goldsmith

Harry and Joe Goldsmith

In Memoriam

Myer Segal

Mrs. Myer Segal and Family

In Memory of

Harry H.

and

Ida Goldsmith Epstein

Mrs. Lawrence Cutler

In Memoriam

Jacob and Katie Byer

The Byer Family

In Loving Memory

Barnet and Molly Kamenkovitz

Louis and Sadie Ornstein

Dr. and Mrs. Joseph G. Ornstein

In Memory of Our Loving Parents

James and Fannie Sawyer

Joseph and David Sawyer

In Memoriam

Elias Haskell Rosen

Lena Rachel Rosen

Bill Sam Ed Ben Abe Esther

In Memoriam

Harry and Leah Day

Nathan and Rose Sanders

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Day

In Memoriam

Isaac Goldsmith

Bessie Goldsmith

Arthur Abe Harry Ann Keith

In Memoriam

Isaac Davidson

Rachel E. Davidson

Joseph Bernstein

Molly Harris Bernstein

Isabelle Davidson

Hilda C. Rosen

In Memoriam

Israel Epstein

Julia Epstein

Jack Epstein

The Epstein Family

In Memoriam

Nathan and Hannah

Ginsberg

In Memory of

Lewis Glick

Lena Glick

Glick Bros.

Portland, Me.

In Memoriam

Our Beloved Parents

and Grandparents

Charles J. Bernstein

Sarah Allen Bernstein

Joseph W. and Mollie H. Bernstein

Lemuel and Julia Allen

Joseph W. Bernstein
Helen S. Gans

In Loving Memory

Max and Rebecca Miller

William Woodrow Miller

Hyman Share

Alfred Abrahams

Mr. and Mrs. Abe Miller

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Miller

In Memoriam

Sam Schneider

The Schneider Family

In Memory of

George Finn

Mrs. Samuel Finn
Mrs. A. David Rapaport
Mitchell Finn

In Memory of

Wolf Lipsky

Anna Lipsky

Samuel F. Lipsky

Betty Lipsky

George Lipsky

In Loving Memory of Our Parents

Emil and Frieda Schuermann

And

Robert and Selma Wertheimer

Dr. and Mrs. Hans Shurman

In Loving Memory

Rose Cummings

Samuel and Eugene Cummings

In Memoriam

Samuel B. Weinstein

Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Provisor
Newark, N. J.

In Memory of

Eva Kobritz

The Kobritz Family

In Memoriam

Max Dennis

The Dennis Family
of Ellsworth, Me.

In Memoriam

Morris Breidy

Mrs. Morris Breidy

In Loving Memory

Mrs. Minnie Leavitt

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Leavitt

Isadore Leavitt

Mrs. Rose Gross

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Grodinsky

Robert Grodinsky

Morris M. Leavitt

Isadore Solomon

Edward I. Gross
Irving Grodin
Harold Grodinsky

In Loving Memory

of

Judge Edward I. Gleszer

Mrs. Edward I. Gleszer

Col. Roland M. Gleszer

In Memory of

Samuel H. Golden

Beloved Husband and Father

Helen Golden Evelyn Black

Mimi Stern Albert Golden Balfour Golden

A Wonderful Friend and Co-Worker —

We Dedicate This Memorial to

Philip Byer

American Girl Shoe Co.

Boston, Mass.

In Memory of

Jacob Chason

The Chason Family

In Memoriam

Jacob and Esther Gotlib

Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Gotlib

In Memoriam

Morris and Rachel Glazier

The Glazier Family

In Memoriam

Sophie Berson

A. J. Berson and Family

OUR FRIENDS

No cause, however lofty, can survive without the confidence of all the people among whom it functions. Shrines of religion, endeavoring as they do to enlighten the mind and sustain the spirit, rise above the limits of race, nationality and sometimes even creed. Thus Beth Israel has many friends beyond its portals who wish it well and have expressed themselves most generously. In deep appreciation of this fine gesture of brotherliness, we of Beth Israel render our grateful thanks.

It is our happy privilege to extend our warm congratulations to Congregation Beth Israel on the 75th Anniversary since its founding in Bangor, and the 50th year since the building of its present home.

Since 1888 the years have witnessed the splendid growth of your congregation and felt its fine influence in our community. Many, many happy returns!

Eastern Trust and Banking Company

Two State Street, Bangor, Maine

Branch Offices

Old Town Machias

Compliments of

Pilots Grill

BANGOR'S FINEST RESTAURANT

Compliments of

Irving Tanning Co.

Boston, Mass.

Hartland Tanning Co.

Hartland, Maine

Pinetree Tanning Co.

Howland, Maine

Best Wishes to

Congregation Beth Israel

Bangor Hydro Electric Co.

Congratulations

To

CONGREGATION

BETH ISRAEL

On Its

75th Anniversary

Remember .. You're always welcome at

MERCHANTS NATIONAL BANK

MERCHANTS
National Bank
of BANGOR

BROAD ST., BANGOR

UNION AT 14TH, BANGOR

NORTH MAIN ST., BREWER

DOW AIR FORCE BASE

Member, Federal Reserve System and
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Compliments Of

Maplewood Poultry Co.

Dealers And Raisers Of

Live Poultry

Belfast, Maine

Drink

GRANT'S

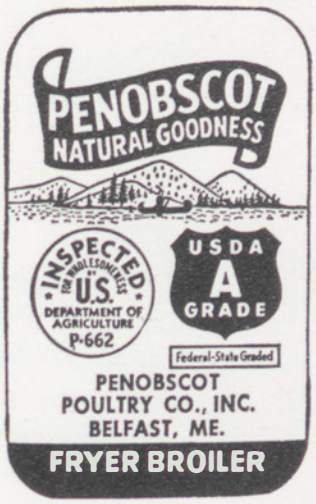
Milk

We Appreciate Your Patronage

Compliments of

SERVE THE WORLD'S BEST POULTRY

for more Eating Pleasure...



There are no substitutes for "PENOBSCOT or CACKLEBIRDS" because they are unmatched for quality, flavor, wholesomeness and goodness. Quality markets feature Penobscot fresh iced and Cacklebird fresh frozen birds. Quality minded Homemakers serve them.

PENOBSCOT POULTRY CO., INC.

BELFAST

Compliments of

Bangor Drug Co.

Bangor, Maine

A salute to...

75 *years of* PROGRESS

We extend our congratulations to you on reaching this major milestone. In the three quarters of a century your synagogue has been in the city — fifty of these years in the same building — you have made a major contribution to the social development of the greater Bangor area.

Over the years, The Merrill Trust Company also has been serving the people and community. It has been our pleasure to help many thousands of individuals and businesses make financial progress through use of our complete banking services.

THE MERRILL TRUST COMPANY

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation · Member Federal Reserve System

Fifteen Offices Serving Eastern Maine

Compliments of

New England Pipe & Supply Co.

Bangor, Maine

HEARTIEST

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your

DIAMOND JUBILEE

From

An Institution That Has

Also Created A Record Of

Stability And Service

Over The Century

BANGOR SAVINGS BANK

Serving Maine Families Since 1852

Main Office
3 State Street, Bangor

Shopping Center Office
623 Broadway, Bangor

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

Congratulations . . .

During this year of WABI-Radio's 41st Anniversary and WABI-TV's 10th Anniversary we warmly congratulate Beth Israel on the 75th Anniversary of the Congregation and the 50th Anniversary of its Synagogue.

As a public service, WABI-Radio presents each Sunday at 12:35 P.M. "Message Of Israel." WABI-Radio also presents on the Jewish Festivals of Purim, Passover and Shovuos dramatic programs produced by the Jewish Chautauqua Society. We invite you to hear these inspiring programs.

"Understanding Through Communications"

WABI AM-FM-TV

A SERVICE OF

THE HILDRETH NETWORK

Compliments of

Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kupsenal

Compliments of

The Viner Family

Compliments of

W. S. Emerson Co.

Bangor, Maine

In Honor of

Abraham J. Berson

It was during his administration
that the present Synagogue building
was completed

PRESIDENT
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL
1912 - 1913

The Berson Family

Compliments of

A FRIEND

Compliments of

BEACON FINANCE CO.

John J. Flaherty, Pres.

61 Main St.

Bangor

Compliments of

Louis Kirstein & Sons

Bangor, Maine

Compliments of

BNS International Sales Corp.

52 Broadway

New York, N. Y.

Compliments of

Bangor Shoe Mfg. Co.

Compliments of

THE OLLOVE FAMILY

Congratulations and Best Wishes

To

BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

on its

75th ANNIVERSARY

OF SERVICE

The SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION of Bangor

201 Main St. Bangor, Maine

Member of

Federal Home Loan Bank System and Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp.

A Tribute

to

A. J. Berson

Past President

Congregation Beth Israel

George Lewis

Cumberland Cold Storage Co.

Portland

Compliments of

Ben Rubin

Compliments of

Sidney Kahn

Compliments of

CITY OIL CO.

Brewer, Maine

Compliments of

AMERICAN BILTRITE RUBBER CO.

CHELSEA, MASS.

Compliments of

BEACON MOTOR CO.

34 Summer St.

Bangor, Maine

Compliments of

UNIVERSAL C. I. T.

Compliments of

Bangor Drive-In Theatre

Sidney Epstein

Newell B. Kurson

Kenneth M. Kurson

Robert R. Kurson

Bank

With The

PROGRESS-MINDED

People

At The

PENOBSCOT
SAVINGS BANK

THE SAVINGS BANKS OF MAINE
MUTUAL SAVINGS BANKS

BANGOR ELLSWORTH

MEMBER: FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

Compliments of

BURDELL'S

and the

Rothschild Family

Our Best Wishes

Samuel and Rose Rudman

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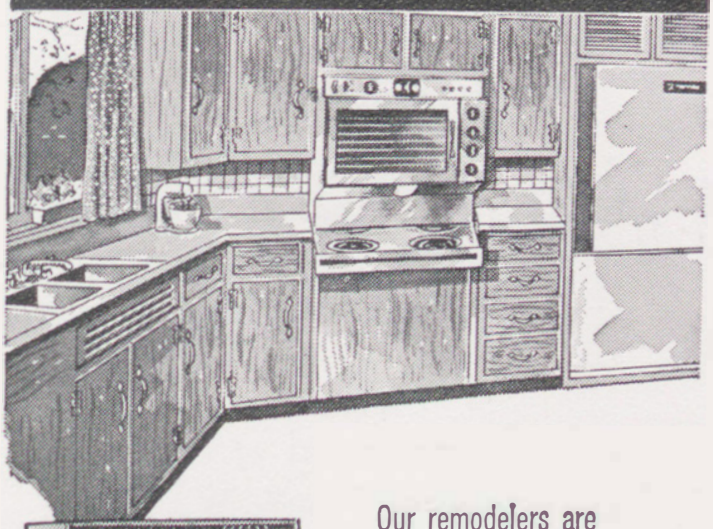

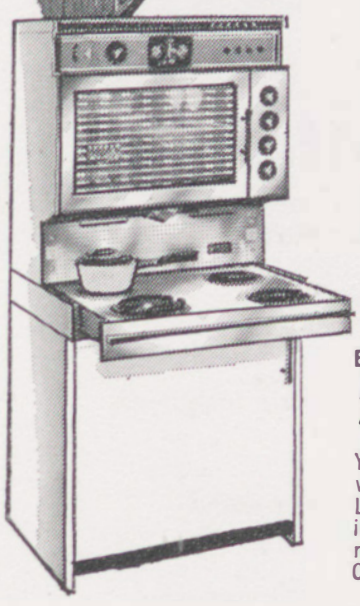

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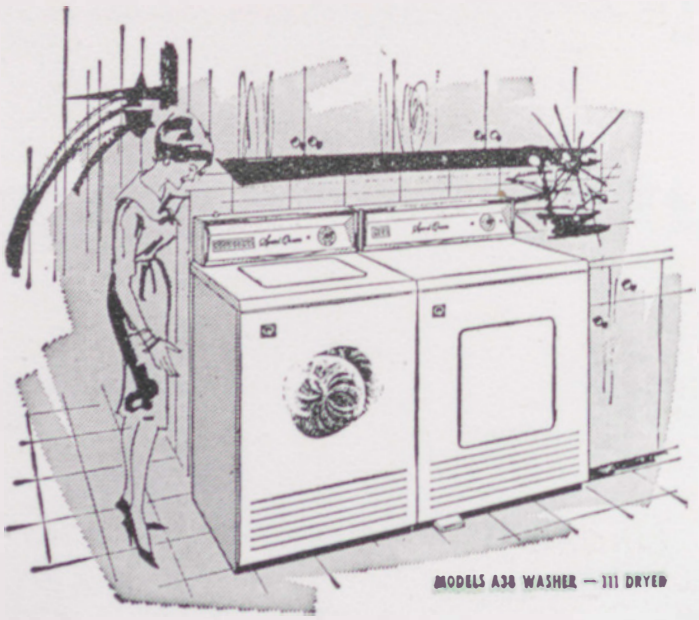

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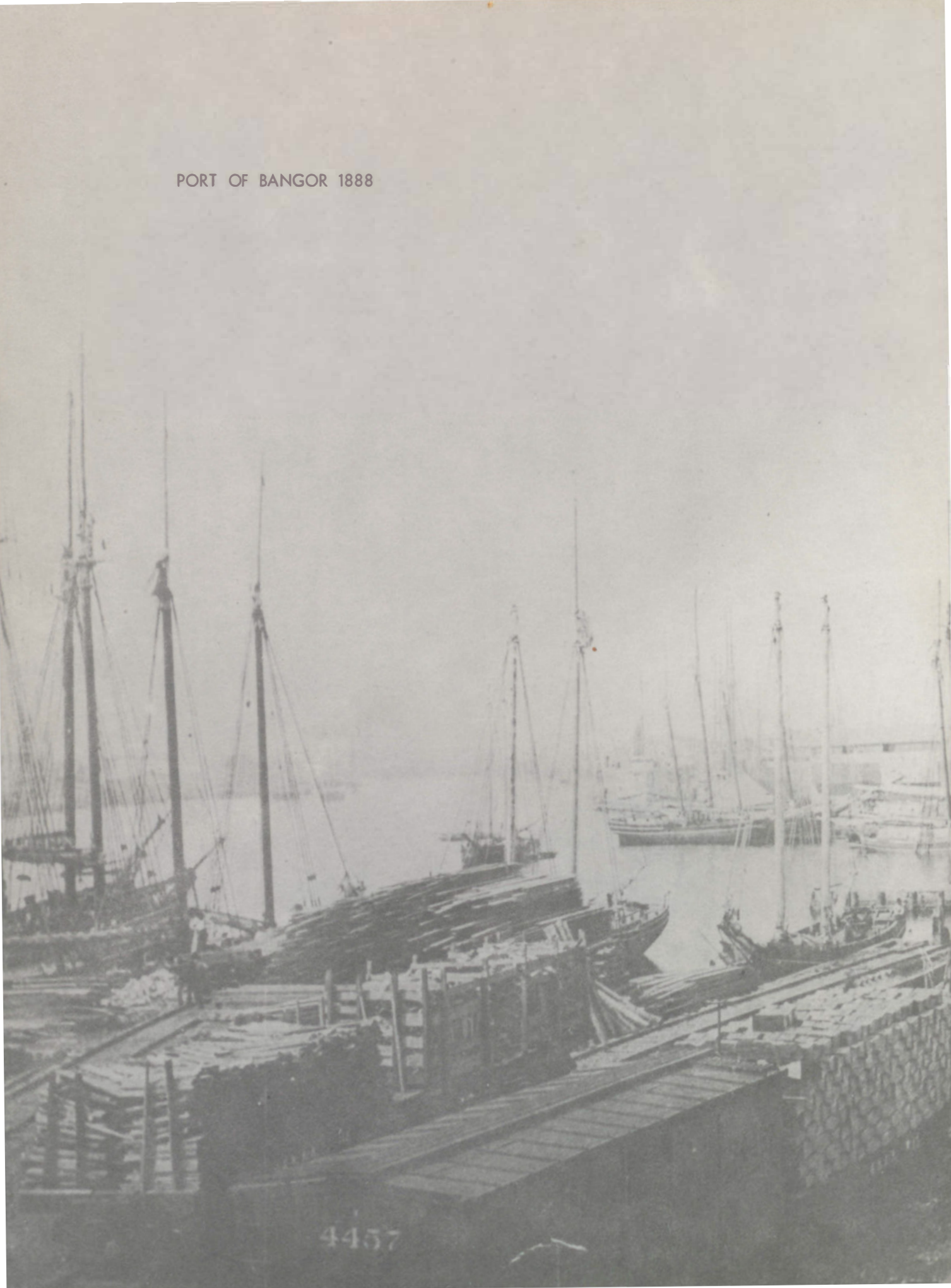

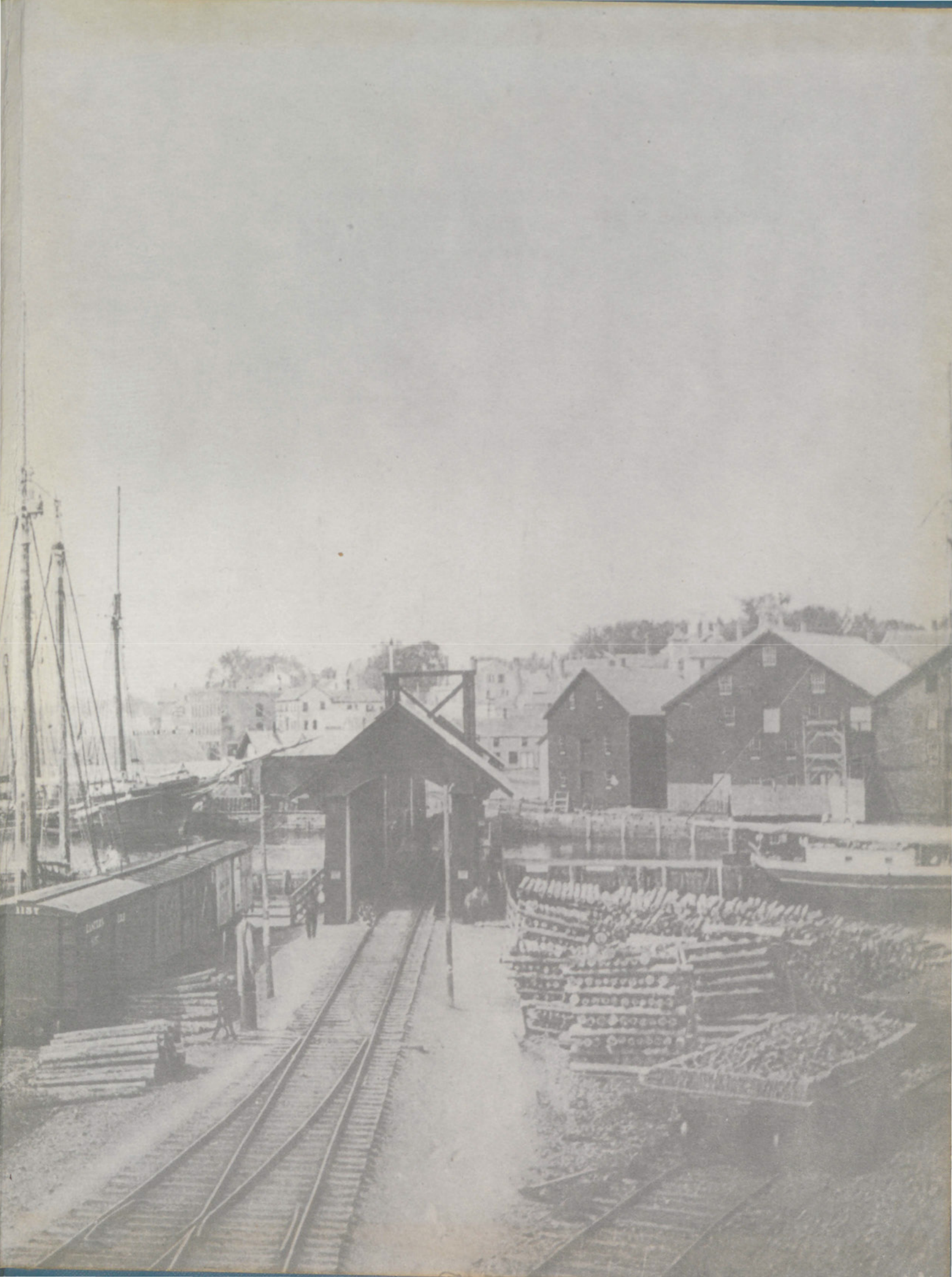
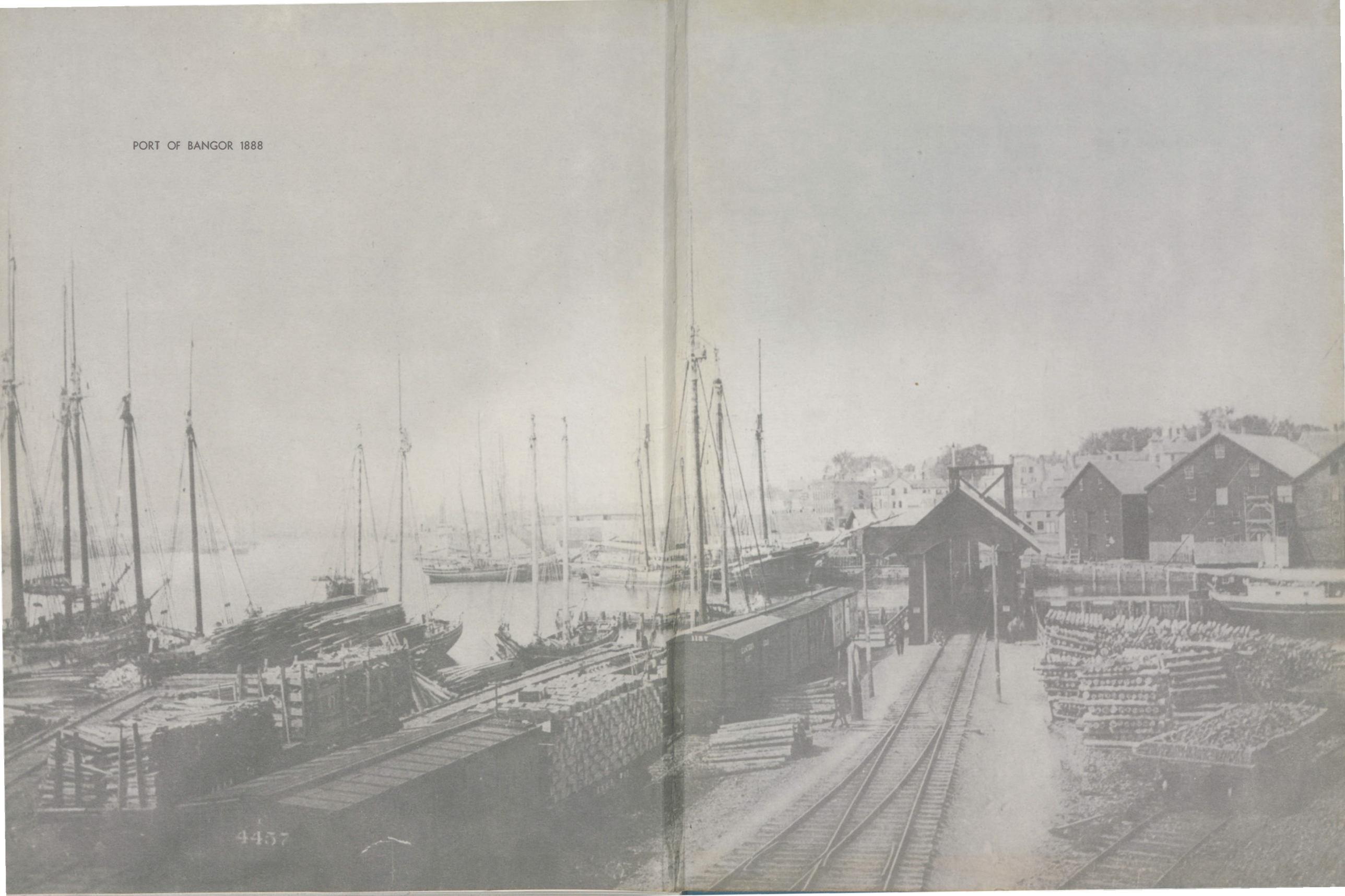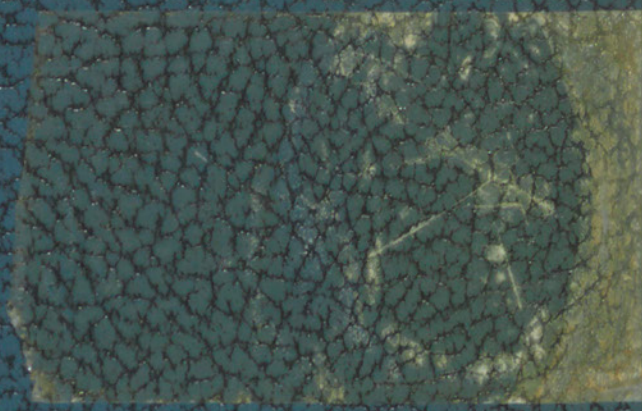
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