

The PITTSBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY BOOK

Comprising the Names and Addresses of Members and the History of Jewish Organizations; also a History of the Jewish Community of Pittsburgh.

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DEDICATED to the
men and women
composing the various
organizations that helped
to build up an ideal
Jewish Community in
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



The Preface

With the conclusion of the disastrous World War marked a new epoch in social life everywhere. Thousands of war-weary soldiers, eager to forget scenes of bloodshed and carnage, donned civilian clothes and entered into the community life with a vim and vigor unprecedented.

It is an unmistakable characteristic of the American Jew to contribute his time, service and support toward any worthy endeavor, perhaps more so than any other people. He believes in social activity. He finds comfort in assisting the needy. He bends every effort toward giving the children all the necessary education. He loves his religion. He has faith in his brethren. The spirit of brotherly love, all in all, is evident in every form and phase of endeavor.

Increasing outbursts of anti-Semitism the world over; desire to unify and fortify the Jewish people against the insidious propaganda of Jew-baiters; the approach of the realization of the Zionists' age-old dream; immediate need of help by their starving, persecuted co-religionists in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and ideals of ancient Hebraism—these, in substance, are some of the potent reasons why the Jewish people have banded together into every imaginable form, striving and toiling daily to carry out the things they hold dear.

Then it is these three factors—the War, inherited tendencies and present-day conditions whose combined strength have created the unity of things, the many organizations that keep the Pittsburgh Jewish Community in a dizzy whirl of doing, thinking and appealing.

With this knowledge in mind came the need of a Jewish Community Book for Pittsburgh. At least half of the fifty-five thousand Jews in Pittsburgh are actively interested in one or more organizations. The necessity and convenience of such a directory finally reached the point where it was beyond question.

Social, educational, religious and charitable endeavor is at its greatest heights today. The work of community uplift and the advancement of the Faith has the whole-hearted attention of thousands. Several new rabbis have come into the Pittsburgh field. Others have joined in the work. The building of synagogues is more than a dream. Their foundations are already being laid. This, in itself, is worthy of special mention.

Anyone may at a glance ascertain by reading this volume the full importance of the welfare work in Pittsburgh. It is intended to show not merely the object of each organization, but its officers, trustees and membership as well.

What are the various synagogues in Pittsburgh? Who are the rabbis and leaders? What nationalities do they represent, and when were they organized?

How about the clubs and different charities, the fraternal and other organizations? All these interesting facts are contained in this book.

Such a directory, it is self-evident, can be utilized in many ways. We have tried to insure its authenticity in every respect. Names and addresses were taken from the books of the various organizations. Therefore, confident of its value and trusting that it will be of service in the advancement of the Cause, we offer this volume—the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Book—to Pittsburgh Jewry.

History of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community

There are no reliable records of the beginning of the Jewish Community of Pittsburgh; but it has been ascertained that between 1838 and 1844 a small number of Jews, mostly from Baden, Bavaria and Wurttenburg, Germany, settled in and around the city. These were joined by others in 1847, and by still others in 1852, who included in their numbers the real founders of the Jewish communal life in Pittsburgh. The first Jewish service was held in the autumn of 1844, while the first attempt at organization was made in 1847, when a mere handful of men combined with the hope of forming a congregation. The inception, then, of public divine service among the israelites of Pittsburgh and vicinity commenced in the year 1847. Prior to that time there were not sufficient members to organize a service.

In the year 1847, the following well-known persons held the first religious services. Eph Wormser David Strassburger, William Frank, Nathan Gallinger, Jacob Klein, Emil Klain, Moritz Kraus, Eiseman Kahn, Reis Bros. Stein Bros., Louis Morganstern, Henry Silverman, Alex Fink, etc. They engaged the Rev. Manheimer as chasan, (Cantor) and their first meeting place was in a room on Penn street, near what is now Thirteenth street. The Israelites in those days were few in this part of the country and coming here strangers without any means, it required time and perseverance to establish a permanent place of worship and those who did come and locate here at that time came to promulgate their religion for themselves and their posterity, because most of them had been living in small villages isolated and no opportunity of worshipping their God, according to their own dictates. This was the principal reason for their gathering in a large city.

About 1847 they removed their place of worship to Liberty street, where the Jenkinson cigar factory now stands and changed their chasan by electing the Rev. Sulzbacher, who officiated until 1853. There were a few members added during the time: Isaac and Charles Bierman, Joseph Meyers, C. D. Arnsthal, L. Hirschfield, Louis Fleishman, Jacob Silverman, Joseph Morganstern, Michael Streng, Mr. Sheyer, Mr. Alexander, Ben Oppenheimer and a few others whose names are not accessible. After the year 1853 the place of wor-

ship was transferred to the hall over old Vigilant Engine House on Third avenue. The Rev. Mr. Marcuson was engaged in place of the Rev. Mr. Sulzbacher. He officiated two years Up to this time the congregation underwent many changes as doctrines of dogma and reform created more or less strife and other congregations were formed.

The organization was not known then as "Rodeph Shalom." It came later. It was organized about the year 1854, a majority of the members of the first organization constituting the mainstay of this later body including Fraunfeld Bros., A. Gluckheimer, Samuel, Emanuel and Isaac Wertheimer, Louis Myer, Alex Greenwald, M. Hanauer, Simon Zugsmith, M. Rosenthal, Klee Bros., Jes. Jacob and Simon Kaufman, I. Kann. H. Rosenbaum, Henry and Moses Oppenheimer, G. Kann, J. Rothschild, Simon Marks, S. Trauerman, S. Prager, Moses Good, L. Berkowitz, Jaroslawski Bros., Z. Eisner, G. Grafer, Jacob Rosenthal, Max Arnold. Chas. Zeugschmidt, H. Rosenbach and some others became members of the new congregation. Max Arnold was elected the first President and assisted the Chasan during the holiday services. The Rev. Wm. Armhold was chosen Chasan and German Teacher, and the place of worship was again removed to a hall on Third Avenue, opposite the old Vigilant Engine house where they worshipped about two years; from there they went to (St. Clair) now Federal street, in the hall of the Irish building. In 1866 Josiah Cohen was elected English teacher by the congregation, he remaining with them in this capacity until his admission to the bar.

In 1860 efforts were first started to build the Temple on (Hancock) now Eighth Street. After hard struggles the small band of reformers striving for improved and modern ritual succeeded, and have been worshipping in their own Temple since 1865. Rev. L. Naumberg was elected after Rev. Wm. Armhold resigned, and he officiated in the Temple until Rabbi, Rev Dr. L. Mayer was called in 1871.

In 1879 Congregation Rodeph Shalom purchased the West View Cemetery. In 1884 the synagogue was enlarged, but it was subsequently torn down, and the building, under erection during 1900 and 1901, was dedicated on September 6 and 7 of the latter year. Among the early

readers and teachers of Rodeph Shalom were Sulzbacher and Marcuson. In 1854 William Armhold took charge of the congregation, remaining until 1865, when he went to Philadelphia. During his administration the congregation erected the Temple on Eighth Street; and in conjunction with Josiah Cohen, he conducted a school which was maintained from 1860 to 1868. From 1865 to 1870 L. Naumberg was teacher and reader, and in his day the Reform movement was considerably advanced. The first rabbi of the congregation was Lippman Mayer, who came from Selma, Ala., in the spring of 1870. He successfully guided the congregation along advanced Reform lines until his retirement as rabbi emeritus in 1901. By that time he had seen his congregation grow from a membership of 65 to 150. He was succeeded (April 1, 1901) by J. Leonard Levy, who was called from Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia. In the later years Rodeph Shalom has grown considerably, and it is worthy of record that, on the day after the dedication of the new temple (September 8, 1901), the congregation contributed a sum of money which not only liquidated a debt of nearly \$100,000, but left a suhplus of over \$30,000.

Rodeph Shalom, which during the past sixteen years had been presided over by Abraham Lippman since 1901, issued for the use of its members and others: "A Book of Prayer" for the Sunday services; "A Textbook of Religion and Ethics for Jewish Children;" "A Home Service for the Passover;" "A Home Service for Hanukkah;" "The Children's Service;" "Sabbath Readings" for each Sabbath of the year; and three volumes of Sunday lectures. The congregation distributes these Sunday lectures weekly in pamphlet form to all who attend the services and also furnishes gratuitously a special edition to non-Jewish residents of Allegheny county.

The Ez Hajim congregation worshipped for a time in a hall in the Dennis block on Second Avenue and Ross Street. It has prospered, and is an active force in Jewish congregational and communal life. Among its ministers may be mentioned: A. Crone (1874-81); A. Bernstein (1881-91); F. Salinger (1891-97); Michael Fried (Since 1898), the present (1905) incumbent, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Ez Hajim belongs to the school of progressive conservatism, and now has family pews and confers the rite of confirmation. It has inaugurated Friday evening services and has a Ladies Auxiliary Society, a flourishing religious school and a growing alumni association.

Pittsburgh is notable in American Jewish history on account of the conference here in 1885, and is also well known as a general support of all national Jewish movements, notably the Hebrew Union College and the Denver hospital. Pittsburgh's local Jewish philanthropies are many, and a brief history of each is contained herein. There the more than twenty-five Orthodox congregations in Pittsburgh proper. At least twelve have up-to-date synagogues. Three are planning to build. It is thought more than one million and a half dollars will be spent by Pittsburgh Jews for synagogues by next year.

The Y. M. H. A. and the Y. W. H. A. Campaign for \$500,000 was a success, and building plans are nearing completion.

The Concordia Club fosters Jewish social life in Pittsburgh. The Council of Jewish Women is the largest women's organization in Pittsburgh. The consolidation of the three lodges of the B'nai Brith indicates a greater stimulation of activity on the part of that famous order. There are two weekly papers, one in English, "The Jewish Criterion" of which David Alter is proprietor, and Charles H. Joseph, editor, and one in Judaco-German, "The Volksfreund," published by J. S. Glick.

Since 1882 there has been a steady increase in the number of Jews in Pittsburgh, due to the coming of thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe, Russian, Roumanian and Hungarian Jews have come in large numbers, and are displaying an appreciable interest in public affairs. There are scores of organizations in addition to the synagogues. Leading rabbis are Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky, who came here in 1901; Rabbi M. S. Sivitz, Rabbi W. A. Kochian, Rabbi B. A. Lichten, Rabbi Sol B. Friedman, Rabbi A. H. Kahn. Rabbi Samuel Zahler left for Palestine in 1920, after a successful career here.

Pittsburgh Jews strongly sympathize with the Zionist Movement, having a large number of Zionist Societies.

Plans are assuming definite form for a new hospital to replace the present Montefiore Hospital. It is thought \$1,000,000 will be spent for this new project.

Dr. Ludwig B. Bernstein has been called to assume the executive directorship of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.