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# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



May, 1964  
Sivan, 5724

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN



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# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

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

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

— Joshua 4:21

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# *Two Of A Family*

From "Diary of a Superintendent"

by BERNARD ISAACS

Translated by Naomi (Buchalter) Floch

"*One of a city, and two of a family*" (Jeremiah 3, verse 14)

## CHAPTER I — THE POWER OF A PLAY

The system *Ivrit B'Ivrit*, introduced into the schools of Detroit at the end of the second decade of the present century, was not merely a system to improve and accelerate the study of Hebrew. It planted its roots in the nationalist movement and in its threefold renaissance: the rejuvenation of the people, the land, and the language. It was carried along by the waves of the nationalistic movement, which arose among Jews of Europe and in the land of Israel, and included an important part of the world of the Jew, which was also transported into America.

The leaders in Detroit who laid the foundation for the first school in which the *Ivrit B'Ivrit* system was employed, and the group of teachers who were invited to put into practice their ideas, knew and fully appreciated the extent of their responsibility. They knew that their task was not only to put into effect a new approach to a systematic and natural teaching of the language, but also to strengthen the links in the chain of rising nationalism that was about to encompass, intensify, and tie together all the scattered ones of Israel, wherever they were.

Moreover, the introduction of this new principle into the field of Hebrew education was a direct result of the great desire on the part of the educators to give their devotion to the work of the Renaissance in its fuller and broader meaning. Had it not been for this, they could have made use of much more lucrative opportunities available to them in America.

But their path was not strewn with roses. This new system disturbed the peace of mind of many parents. It was, first of all, opposed by those who wanted no more than a little *Ivri*, the saying of the *Kaddish*, and preparation for *Bar Mitzvah*, with all the accompanying ceremonies. It was also rejected by the proponents of the study of a "sentence from the *Chumosh*" and a commentary such as *Rashi*. Among the latter, one could discern those who obtained their education in the *Chedorim* in the small European villages or in the Ye-

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*shivoth*. They dismissed the new method contemptuously as being merely a game or child's play.

Among the scoffers there were those who exclaimed with derision that studying "*Ivrit B'Ivrit*" was equivalent to eating "bread with bread." They contended that the translation of a word from the *Tanach* by means of another Hebrew word was an activity only fit for acrobats, a waste of time, and squandering of money. They further charged that the end result of study of this sort would be that the child might know neither the word in the Book nor the new word. It would be far better, they insisted, to teach the children the traditional way of past generations, consisting of explanation in *Yiddish* or English, this being the only worthwhile approach.

In numerous meetings with the Committee and the group of teachers, the following question came up — How can we convince the skeptics that this language, lying dormant for two thousand years in the pages of the Book, has now come to life in the land of our fathers and will similarly be resurrected into a living language in our midst and among our children? What is more, the new teaching approach will be instrumental in increasing and enriching the vocabulary of the child to a degree that he will be able to grasp an understanding of the Holy Writ with much greater ease than heretofore.

Many practical suggestions were made at these meetings, such as holding public examinations, publishing explanatory articles in the local newspapers and distributing circulars calling attention to the importance of this system. Though they were faithfully carried out, they made little impression on the public.

At this point, it is essential to state that these obstacles did not prevent the development of the schools, nor any increase in enrollment, nor the establishment of new branches. Even those who opposed the new approach did not remove the children from the school. For example: An Orthodox Jew, a learned man, complained: "Here in America, is the land where everything is done hurriedly, there is no time and no place for play; and if you really want to teach my son *Torah*, teach it to him simply, as I learned it, and as so many other Jews of past generations did." "*Breshit—tzum ershten,*" and so on. If you continue to teach him according to your method, I shall withdraw him from your school. One way or another, I don't expect him to be a *Rov* in Israel. At least teach him a verse properly in *Chumosh*." (It is interesting to note that his son, an unusually talented child, continued to study until he completed both the elementary and high school courses. He was later accepted in one of the

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leading Rabbinical schools, and is at the present time one of the most active Rabbis in the field of education.)

Two years after the opening of the first school, we find many students who have already gained a fair knowledge of the language.

At this point, the Superintendent and his teachers decided to present a Hebrew play to publicize the reality of the language as it appears in the mouths of the children.

The time being around Purim, the Superintendent wrote a play based on the story of *Megilat Esther*. This dramatic *megillah* has always been excellent material for a presentation. He found the writing easy, and to give it color, he introduced many songs and dances. The singing of the lyrics and the dances required a rapid tempo, in conformity with what had been the mode at ancient royal palaces. At the same time, a sad note too, had to be introduced to suggest the unhappy mood of the Jews of Shushan, headed by Mordchai.

The play was presented in the school auditorium, which had a seating capacity of about two hundred. The effect exceeded all expectations. The audience was electrified. In the play, the easy flowing style of the *Megillah* was adhered to and the audience, a good part of which possessed a knowledge of the Scriptures, found little difficulty in grasping the content and as a consequence enjoyed themselves a great deal. Particularly happy were the board members who had a knowledge of Hebrew.

The Superintendent, therupon, was requested to present the play a second time. One of the leaders remarkd, "Let the audience come; let them see; let them hear; and let them be convinced! Let the disgruntled ones come and hear the living Hebrew tongue!!" However, the disgruntled ones had no chance to see the second presentation, as the board members and their friends, who had immensely enjoyed the first presentation, completely filled the hall, leaving no more room for latecomers.

The great success of the lay induced the board members to resolve to present all future plays in a well-known hall — such as Orchestra Hall in which Ossip Gabrilowitch, the renowned conductor, led the Detroit Symphony.

The Superintendent explained that a presentation in a hall of 2500 seats would entail great expense. "A presentation of this type," he said, "could not be carried out by the teachers alone; it would

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require a special director, orchestra, a chorus, special teachers for singing and dancing, etc. And who knows but what this enterprise might not be a losing one!"

Then arose a few members of the board, whose heart the first play had won, and announced that they would be responsible for the expenditures and if there would be a deficit, they would cover it.

Thereupon, the Superintendent proceeded to write a Biblical play, "Saul and David," in the language of the Prophets, which was then understood by many, and also, this time, he enriched the play with songs and dances.

Someone closely connected with the local *Yiddish* Theater, which had existed for some time in Detroit, was invited. A choir of more than 100 boys and girls was chosen and Cantor Abraham Minkowsky, brother of the well known Pinchas Minkowsky, was asked to train this choir. For many of the songs Cantor Minkowsky wrote original symphony melodies. Also invited were a number of musicians from the local symphony orchestra and so were specialists in opera, costuming, lighting and scenery. Soon the rehearsals began.

### CHAPTER II — JOE AND DORA

Everything was arranged and properly synchronized. There was no lack of players. Those were the pre-radio, pre-television days.



JOSEPH EHRLICH



DORA EHRLICH

The students, chosen for the various parts in the play and in the choir, found, in the rehearsals, opportunity for fun and relaxation.

The only problem was the selling of the tickets. The expenses were high and on this account the prices of the tickets had to be

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set high enough to take care of the cost of hall and of the production of the play, which entailed much effort and energy. How were two thousand tickets to be sold?

The Superintendent laid this question before the members of the board. They, in turn, directed him to see Joe. "He is your man. Go and see him and Dora."

"There was no one like Joe to spread ideas and there is no one like Dora for connections and influence. Everyone knows her, respects her, and loves her."

Joe is a worker and also a dreamer. This is strange. Is it not? Two opposites. But he differed from ordinary dreamers in that he put into action his dreams and he engaged not in one activity alone. His financial contribution plus his talents have been incorporated into many community projects — the synagogue, the Zionist Organization, Gemiluth Chassodim, education, and many charitable organizations.

To cite an example of his make up—When a *Meshulach* or any collector entered his place of business (he had a jewelry store) he gave his contribution generously (and remember he was only modestly wealthy). Not only that—he would say "Come again" and he meant it. No one ever went out of his store empty-handed, and the surprising thing is that — at the time he was giving, he was also trying to figure out a way to dissuade these people from visiting homes. He contended that they degrade themselves and the institutions they represent.

"A strange man. Is it not so? His right hand draws you near and his left hand pushes you away."

The members of the board frequently expressed their enthusiasm about Joe's doings and from time to time they related incidents about Dora Ehrlich's manifold activities. Like her husband, she busied herself with many community projects, especially Hadassah. Both of them shied away from honors and recognition.

The Superintendent who had lived in Detroit for barely two years had already come to know and appreciate this couple. Still it took the enthusiasm of the members of the board to prompt him to solicit the Ehrlichs' assistance.

Joseph Ehrlich received him graciously and immediately ex-

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pressed his willingness to help with the publicity as well as the sale of tickets. He explained that one must approach this phase of the problem with the same serious effort and energy devoted to the presentation itself. Then he added, "The practical end deserves the same consideration as the artistic part. In the final analysis it determines the success of the whole production."

"The auditorium must be filled or else we shall suffer a loss, despite the excellence of the performance. One other thing, the prices of the tickets should be high because high prices add prestige to a presentation. Even regular theater goers have been known to evaluate the worth of a production by the cost of their tickets. Thus it is well to create a special instrument for that purpose."

So he spoke and immediately started work. With his aid and that of his wife, Dora, a committee was organized to publicize and distribute tickets.

Finally, the time for the presentation arrived. The hall, containing 2500 seats, was filled as soon as the doors opened, and about 200 people had to stand to see the play. The success was beyond all expectations. Everything turned out superbly — the play itself, the scenery, the chorus, and the orchestra. But the most important thing was — the living Hebrew language flowing from the lips of the children. People who had never heard Hebrew spoken heard it for the first time. They wondered; they were astonished; and some even shed tears of joy.

In the choir, a young lady, by the name of Emma Lazaroff (now Emma Shaver, the well known soprano) particularly excelled. Her solos enchanted the audience. (This was her first appearance on the stage.)

At a subsequent board meeting, it was decided to present plays of this sort, from time to time, in view of the success of the large scale presentation.

In a year's time "Samson and Delilah" was presented. A few years later "The Daughter of Jephthah" followed. The music of the earlier plays was conducted by Cantor Abraham Minkowsky. The later plays and choirs were trained by Cantor Elijah Zaludkowski. (Cantor Minkowsky died in 1924.)

Only the great economic crisis which occurred at the end of the twenties, and which involved the whole country, especially Detroit, whose prosperity depended upon one industry, terminated these plays.

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In the mentioned three plays, Joseph Ehrlich's great business acumen was clearly visible — no less than it was apparent in all work, whether it was for the schools or other institutions.

Dora Ehrlich had her special causes and is still just as zealous today as she ever has been. Neither of them sought glory or honor. Only once did Dora accept the presidency of Hadassah. (At the present time, she serves as a member of the National Board.)

They gave of their time, energy, and their money to many activities. When the new Israeli songs began to be heard at the Zionist meetings, and at the youth gatherings, Joe Ehrlich came to the conclusion that it was not right that these songs should be limited to these gatherings. They should be heard in every home, every day, every Sabbath, every holiday, and all social and family gatherings. To carry out this idea, he founded the Songfest. Every Saturday evening, he invited people to gather and sing national as well as sacred songs, being directed most of time by Cantor Sonenklar of Congregation Shaarey Zedek. Each ended with a discussion of some cultural subject. At first these gatherings took place in the Ehrlich home. Later on, when the numbers became very large, they used to meet in a downtown hall, at the expense of the Ehrlichs.

The Superintendent respected and honored Joseph Ehrlich and his wife, Dora, not only because of their intense devotion to the many institutions but also because of their sense of responsibility to the Jewish community. One incident will suffice to illustrate this:

Chaim Weizmann came to Detroit in the interest of the *Keren Hayesod* and delivered a talk at a large banquet tendered him by the local Zionist Organization. He spoke in carefully measured and weighed words. Everyone sensed that a fine statesman stood before them.

At the close of Weizmann's talk, the President of the Zionist Organization arose and asked for contributions. Large sums rolled in — \$5000, \$4000, \$2000, but when they reached \$1000, the audience stopped giving. It appeared that the people were waiting for the "smaller sum." "It is not good. It is not good." These were the words the Superintendent heard Joe say to Dora. "You are right," Dora agreed, "If the contributions go down to \$500 or less, Weizmann's mission will be a failure. There are still many in this hall who can give \$1000 or more."

It appears that the President knew this secret of giving, too,

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and instead of continuing with contributions, he began to speak and try to enthuse the audience.

Ehrlich turned to Dora again, "If I could only give \$1000 in place of the \$500 we decided to give, we would immediately remove the barrier. But that is impossible. It is utterly impossible."

It seems as though the Superintendent was guilty of eavesdropping. He heard Dora whispering to Joe, "Give \$1000 and remove that barrier."

"What are you talking about? How can we?"

"Yes, Joe, give \$1000. I will get along with last year's clothes."

Joe squeezed Dora's hand and announced his contribution of \$1000.

## *Detroit's Jewish Community in 1867*

By IRVING I. KATZ

In 1867 Detroit had a population of about 60,000 including about 400 Jews. Temple Beth El, organized in 1850 as an orthodox congregation, was reform for some years, meeting in the Rivard Street Synagogue, its first house of worship. Congregation Shaarey Zedek, founded in 1861 as a split from Beth El when the latter introduced a mixed choir and mixed seating, was located in a modest structure on Congress and St. Antoine Streets.

In addition to the two congregations, the small Jewish community of Detroit had the following organizations: Pishah Lodge No. 34 of the Independent Order B'nai B'rith (organized in 1857), Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans in the State of Michigan (organized in 1863 and popularly known as the "Frauen Verein"), Montefiore Lodge No. 12 of the Order Free Sons of Israel (organized in 1864), Michigan Lodge No. 1 of the Order Keshet Shel Barzel (organized in 1867), Chevrah Kadishah and Bikur Cholim (Burial of the Dead and Sick Visiting Society (organized in 1867), Detroit Social Club (a dramatic and social club organized in 1867), and Polonia Club (a club devoted to literature and chess playing, organized in 1866 or 1867 by Rabbi Elias Epstein).



ISAAC LEESER

The Leeser Collection, at Dropsie College, in Philadelphia, contains an interesting letter written in 1867 by Isaac Hart of Detroit to Rev. Isaac Leeser, the well known rabbi of Philadelphia, wherein Hart makes mention of the two congregations then existing in Detroit.

Isaac Hart was born July 30, 1815, in Portsmouth, England. His parents were Alexander Hart and Elizabeth Moses. At an early age Isaac Hart came to Cincinnati, Ohio, when that city had a handful of Jews, all from England. He then moved to New Orleans, La., where he married, in 1838, Julia Cohen, daughter of Benjamin Cohen and Rachel Shennon, natives of London, England. Hart became active in Congregation Shangarai Chesed, the first Jewish Congregation of New Orleans, organized in 1828, and a friendship developed between him and Rabbi James G. Gutheim who came

## DETROIT'S JEWISH COMMUNITY IN 1867

from Cincinnati in 1849 to assume the ministry of Shagarai Chesed, a post he held for four years. Hart was active in the first B'nai B'rith Lodge of New Orleans, Hebrew Benevolent Society, Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, Hebrew Foreign Missions Society and the Jewish Widows and Orphans Home. When Edward Kanter, founder of Detroit's German-American Bank, landed in New Orleans penniless in the 1840's he was helped by the Hebrew Benevolent Society of which Isaac Hart was an active member. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1853, Hart did heroic work in alleviating the suffering of the afflicted. Major Alexander Hart (later a prominent resident of Norfolk, Va.), Sidney A. Hart (later a prominent resident of Grand Rapids and Detroit), sons of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Hart, and David J. Workum, their son-in-law, who was later a prominent resident of Detroit and served as President of Beth El from 1866 to 1868, served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

In 1865, Isaac Hart moved to Detroit where he became a prominent member of the Jewish community and joined Temple Beth El in 1874. He died here on January 13, 1890, and his wife on March 15, 1906. Both were interred in Section North F of Woodmere Cemetery. Mrs. Sidney Silberman of Detroit is a granddaughter of the Harts. Miss Blanche J. Hart, for many years the efficient superintendent of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit, the predecessor of the Jewish Welfare Federation, was also a granddaughter of the Harts.

The text of Isaac Hart's letter is as follows:

February 14, 1867

Rev. Isaac Leeser,  
Philadelphia

My dear friend —

I rejoice to learn of your safe return and I trust with renewed vigor and strength. I have just read this month's Occident — disappointed. I fully anticipated to read your full account of places visited, their Synagogues Progress, numbers, and C. It would prove interesting to your readers. None regretted the sudden loss of that pious good woman Mrs. Osterman (Peace to her Soul) than myself and none more rejoice at her not forgetting the worthy in her Will. I cannot but congratulate you and I doubt not you will find it useful for I presume your income is not so great as to enable you to keep a large bank account of your credit.

I have now resided here nearly two years without joining either Congregation. The Polish Minhag I do so much object to as the mixing with its worshippers. You may blame me but were you here in my situation you would act the same. My immediate and kindest and best friends (friends

## DETROIT'S JEWISH COMMUNITY IN 1867

not only in words but noble actions) are those connected with the Reform Synagogue. My hosts of visitors are the same while the others I know not and from what I see of them care not to know. I have at times visited their Synagogue and the Service is not what I admire. Give me the Portuguese Service above all others for solemnity. The Minister of the Rivard Street Synagogue, Mr. Epstine, is a very talented man. He preaches every Shabbat alternately English, German. His Synagogue is well attended. He has that happy oratory of making his hearers feel his words and frequently the whole audience are in tears at the strength of his inspiring words. The Polish Synagogue is fairly attended. They have a Hazan but no Preacher. Mrs. Hart and family unite with myself in kind regards.

With your friend

Isaac Hart

We have formed a Social Club of about 45 members — cards, dramatic performances, lectures, concert balls and C. Two performances in English and one in German by the members, their wives and sisters was played equal to any stage.

# *The Palestine Colony - An Agricultural Endeavor*

By EMANUEL APPLEBAUM

The Lower Peninsula of Michigan is shaped somewhat like a mitten. In the thumb of this area, approximately 125 miles north of Detroit, a village bearing the name Bad Axe, in Huron County, is the area of the earliest Jewish agricultural settlement in Michigan. This district was timber country until a forest fire burned out vast stretches of forest in the fall of 1884.

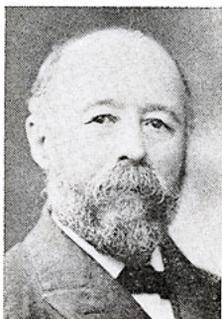
In 1891, when the groth in the area returned and contained brush and poplar trees, an experimental agricultural colony was established by Jews. This was but one of the attempts during the nineteen century, by Jews in the western area of the United States, to establish such colonies. These Jewish "farmers" in Bad Axe were completely inexperienced and untrained. With one exception who had come from Germany, they all had arrived from Russia in 1888 and had lived in Bay City, Michigan. The United States was in the midst of a depression when the Palestine Colony, as it was called, was begun. All of the twelve settlers had been peddlers or itinerants wandering from farm to farm and from town to town. The originator of the idea of an agricultural settlement was Hyman Lewenberg, who had arrived in the United States in 1880, and had read of other such experiments and attempts by Jews elsewhere to return to farming. In European countries Jews were not allowed to own land. In the freedom of the United States, these Jews felt that they could, even as their ancestors in ancient Israel, return to a pastoral society, to live a more "Normal" existence as farmers working the soil and not to be confined to the ghetto of a city.

From the financial banks in the area of Bad Axe, which held title to huge tracts, twelve adjoining parcels of land were then purchased by Wolfe Berman, Joseph Beckman, Sam Eckstein, Abraham Goldman, Aaron Kahn, Hyman Lewenberg, Jacob Lipowsky, Joe Malinoff, Louis Malinoff, Mose Rosenberg, Uriah Steinborn and Sam Steinborn. They hoped to establish a "new Zion" in America and so they named the colony "Palestine". However, being inexperienced they were failing miserably in their undertaking.

A passing Jewish peddler brought the story of their failure and extreme hardship to Martin Butzel, a prominent Detroit merchant who was then president of the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society. He became quite involved in a number of attempts to aid the

## THE PALESTINE COLONY—AN AGRICULTURAL ENDEAVOR

struggling farmers of Bad Axe. By 1892, sixteen farms were in the process of being slowly developed, with a total Jewish population of 57 persons. There were 16 men, 7 women, 26 boys and 8 girls. Regrettably, only an acre or two had been cleared of brush and poplar trees on each farm. No great surprise, because, after all, the settlers had a total of 2 cows and only 7 horses.



MARTIN BUTZEL



EMANUEL WODIC

Emanuel Wodic, a retired, experienced farmer of 25 years of farming in the area of Utica, Michigan, was a member of Temple Beth El. Martin Butzel asked him to visit Bad Axe and report back on his observations. Upon his return and his report to Martin Butzel, a meeting was called of the Beth El Relief Society. A fund of \$1200 was raised to help the farmers. A supply of clothing, groceries and Passover Matzohs was sent to Bad Axe with the \$1200 for their relief and aid. Wodic returned in the spring of 1892 and provided each farmer with a cow and also with other needed supplies. He also bought a yoke of oxen, three plows, other farming tools and seed. He taught the men to farm. He received no compensation. As a result of Martin Butzel's correspondence with the Baron de Hirsch Fund that had just been established, the Fund voted \$3,000 to meet the immediate needs of the Jewish farmers, and Butzel served as trustee of the Fund. In September, 1892, Butzel travelled to Bad Axe and paid out \$2,300 to cover back payments on the mortgage on the farms. Other pressing debts were then also taken care of.

In an effort to interest Detroit Jewry in the increasingly difficult position of these farmers, Martin Butzel also arranged an exhibit of their produce at Temple Beth El during the season of Succoth, 1892. This display may well have been the first "Fair" for

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Jewish farmers in the United States. In 1892, over 50 acres of potatoes had been planted, but the farmers were still desperately poor and in need of cash. That year, Martin Butzel sent them a supply of Kosher meat, and the Baron de Hirsch Fund lent the Palestine settlers another \$1,000. However, things were so rough that some of the families left, even though others joined them in the farming of the land.

Almost from the beginning of the Colony, Sabbath morning synagogue Services were conducted and Saturday was observed by all as a sacred day of rest. During the summer and fall of 1892, Charles Goodwin came from Bay City to serve as their spiritual leader, Cantor and Hebrew teacher, without salary. A modest building for their Hebrew School was built.

The mortgage company was constantly pressing these Jewish farmers who, by 1895, never really succeeded to earn enough to afford decent clothing, food or even fair housing. They had cleared only 165 acres by then. Trouble followed them and dogged their footsteps. The crops of 1897 failed, as had occurred a few times before, and utter defeat soon stared the pioneers in the face. In 1899 three farm families finally gave up their farms and one year later, in 1900, only eight families remained and soon all but three parcels reverted to the creditors. Soon even these also failed and were given up. With deep regret, failure was conceded by all the farmers of the Palestine Colony, by Martin Butzel and by the Baron de Hirsch Fund.

However, Jews still continued farming individually in various parts of the State. Encouraged by Rabbi A. R. Levy of Chicago, Illinois, many Jews began to establish or purchase farms all over Michigan, aided by the Jewish Agriculturists' Aid Society of America. The largest number were, however, in the area of Southwestern Michigan — South Haven and Benton Harbor. Farms and experimental settlements were also established in the eastern part of Michigan, near large cities such as Detroit, and near Saginaw (The Sunrise Co-operative Community). During the depression of the 1930's many of the Jewish farmers lost their farms. However, there still are Jews today farming the land in Michigan.

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## Book Review

HARPER OF DETROIT — THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF A METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL by Frank B. Woodford and Philip P. Mason, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1964.

by IRVING I. EDGAR

Harper Hospital is presently the nucleus of a vast developing medical center in the City of Detroit. In 1963 this great institution of healing and research commemorated the 100th year of its existence. *Harper of Detroit* is the history of these first 100 years, from the time of its inception in 1863 and its opening in 1864 as a military hospital reserved for Michigan casualties of Civil War battlefields, down to the present day. It deals with the personalities who conceived it and developed it through the years. It tells of the lay leadership and the medical leadership, its difficulties and its triumphs. It takes us through the development and growth of a nurses' training school (the Farrand Training School), and it takes us through the beginnings of the present Wayne State University College of Medicine, where roots and present affiliations are deeply interwoven in the history of Harper Hospital.

Actually, *Harper of Detroit* gives us a fine window glimpse of the history of the great City of Detroit.

From an historiographical viewpoint, it is a fine piece of historical writing, well documented, scholarly, yet highly interesting to most any reader. It could very well become a prototype for other historical accounts of similar institutions, not only in Detroit but in other metropolian centers of the United States.

### THE JEWISH INFLUENCE ON *HARPER OF DETROIT*

Of special significance, however, to those interested in Michigan Jewish history, are the numerous references to the various Jewish influences on Harper Hospital of Detroit and on the city in general as they are found in this book.

Thus, in discussing the status of Detroit at the time of the Civil War, the authors mention<sup>1</sup> some of the "well-to-do" families . . . (who) . . . began to build fine new homes on East Jefferson or out Woodward (so that) by 1863, Woodward Avenue, as far north as Adelaide, was lined with palatial houses, the show place homes of such business and professional leaders as the Duffields, E. S. Heineman, L. R. Medbury, the Whitneys . . . and many others equally well known." Among the above mentioned names, the family of Emil S. Heineman has played a considerable role in Detroit Jewish history. Heineman was a member of Temple Beth El in its earliest years. He appears in the earliest extant Book of Accounts of Temple Beth El (1867)<sup>2</sup>. Mrs. Emil S. Heineman was active in

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organizing the *Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans in the State of Michigan*, in July, 1863. She was its first president<sup>3</sup>. She was also president in 1900<sup>4</sup>. Other members of this family played important parts in the Jewish community through the years<sup>5</sup>.

There is a description of the development of the Detroit Soldiers' Aid Society and of the Soldiers' Home<sup>6</sup> in which Jews of Detroit played a part. At the organizational meeting of this Soldiers' Aid Society, the first such organization in the United States organized during the Civil War — on November 7, 1861 — the delegates from Temple Beth El were the Mesdames Isador Frankel, Simon Freedman and Isaac Altman<sup>7</sup>. Isidor Frankel was the third president of Temple Beth El (1857-1858)<sup>8</sup> while Simon Freedman was its sixth president (1860-1865)<sup>9</sup>. These families were true Jewish pioneer families, among the first to settle in Detroit.

In describing the development of the Farrand Training School for Nurses,<sup>10</sup> *Harper of Detroit* tells of the fund-raising campaign. "Altogether there were 133 subscribers. They included the best names in Detroit . . . such well known people as James McMillan, David Whitney, Jr., Mrs. Zach Chandler . . . Dr. Herman Kiefer . . . Magnus Butzel . . ."<sup>11</sup>

As is well known, Magnus Butzel and the entire Butzel family are as intimately woven into the growth of the Detroit Jewish Community as into that of greater Detroit. Magnus Butzel settled in Detroit in 1862 and soon became a leader. He was very active at Temple Beth El. He was a delegate from Beth El to the founding meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held in Cincinnati on July 8, 1873. He was especially active on Beth El's School Board, serving as its secretary in 1871<sup>12</sup>. He was one of the founders of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Detroit Public Library Commission for many years. He served on the Detroit Board of Education. There is a *Magnus Butzel Branch* of the Detroit Public Library on East Grand Boulevard to commemorate his name.<sup>13</sup>

Martin Butzel, a brother of Magnus Butzel, was president of Temple Beth El from 1874 to 1878.<sup>14</sup>

Other Butzel family members mentioned in *Harper of Detroit* include Fred M. Butzel, Henry M. Butzel and Leo M. Butzel in connection with another fund-raising campaign for the new Brush Street addition to the Hospital in 1927. "The subscription list . . . included such well-known Detroiters as Clarence N. Booth, Walter C. Briggs, Fred M., Henry M., and Leo Butzel . . . Mrs. Edsel Ford, Ossip Gabrilowitch . . . Alvin Macauley . . . Horace H. Rackham,

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Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Siegel . . . Sidney D. Waldon, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wineman".<sup>15</sup> "Albert Kahn made one of the most welcome contributions of all in November, 1927, when he (as the commissioned architect) informed the trustees that he had been able to scale down his original cost estimates from \$2,300,000 to \$2,217,000. To the fund raisers, that was like finding \$83,000."<sup>16</sup>

All the Jewish names mentioned above have been household names in the advance of Detroit and its Jewish community. To mention their accomplishments and philanthropies even in brief would be beyond the scope of this book review.

Other matters of Jewish historical interest are worthy of mention: First, a breakdown of the 1290 cases that were treated in Harper Hospital in 1890 indicates that "There was no segregation or discrimination against race or religion at Harper . . . The Protestants numbered 971; Catholics, 278; and Hebrews, 19"<sup>17</sup> Second, early in the development of Harper Hospital, both for charitable purposes and to raise money for the hospital, a Free Bed Fund was established and later "more beds and rooms were endowed" by various organization.<sup>18</sup> "Harper Hospital provided hospitalization, when required, at the rate of \$4.00 per week per patient, through an arrangement with the City Poor Commission by the Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans".<sup>19</sup> Temple Beth El, before Sinai Hospital was built, had "for years sustained two beds" at Harper Hospital.<sup>20</sup>

Undoubtedly the greatest influence on Harper Hospital of Detroit of special Jewish historical interest is represented by the many Jewish medical men who worked on its staff through the years of its development, down to this very day. Among these there stands out that great triumverate of physicians; Dr. Louis Hirschman, Dr. Max Ballin and Dr. Hugo Freund. These three medical figures not only contributed mightily to Harper Hospital, but they raised the status of the healing art in the general community. They became national, even international figures, contributing to medical literature and to the general advancement of medicine. They were chiefs of their departments at Harper; they were chiefs of staff. These names weave all through the book, *Harper of Detroit*. It would take an article in itself for each of these three men to do justice to their many contributions in the various fields of their activities.

They played an especially important role in the early development of Jewish medical services to the needy.<sup>21</sup>

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- 3—IBID, pp. 75, 76.
- 4—Saltzstein, Harry C., M.D., SINAI HOSPITAL AND THE NORTH END CLINIC, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1963, p. 4.
- 5—David E. Heineman, son of the Heinemans was among the first individuals to write on Michigan Jewish History. See Heineman, David E., "Jewish Beginnings in Michigan Before 1850", in PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY, N. Y., 1905, Vol. 13, and IBID, Vol. 23, "The Startling Experience of a Jewish Trader During Pontiac's Siege of Detroit in 1763".
- 6—Chapter 9, pp. 101-113. See also Millbrook, Minnie D. and McTeer, Frances "For Loved Ones Far Away", MICHIGAN WOMEN IN THE CIVIL WAR, Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission, Lansing, 1963, pp. 113-131; Millbrook, Minnie D., "Detroit Women on the Civil War Home Front" in DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN, Vol. XX, No. 7, April, 1964, pp. 6-12.
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- 17—Chapter 11, p. 133.
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- 20—IBID, p. 5.
- 21—SINAI HOSPITAL AND THE NORTH END CLINIC, Op. Cit,

*Burton Historical Collection Official  
Repository of Michigan Jewish  
Archives*

We are pleased to publish the following letter received from James W. Babcock, Chief of the world famous Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library:

Rabbi Emanuel Applebaum, President  
Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
8801 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan, 48202

Dear Rabbi Applebaum:

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is cordially invited to designate the Burton Historical Collection as the official repository for its archives. The records of your organized deliberations and activities as well as of individuals of the Jewish faith in Michigan will be a significant addition to our considerable holdings of materials reflecting all aspects of Michigan's past. Certainly the particular heritage with which your society is concerned is important to us. We would receive such records and papers as a permanent part of the collection, to be properly arranged and housed. They would be made available for proper research use by qualified scholars and for the administration needs of your society.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to a rewarding association in the cause of Michigan History.

Yours truly,

JAMES M. BABCOCK, Chief  
BURTON HISTORICAL COLLECTION

## *Dedication of Solomon Marker*

The formal dedication of the historic state marker to Ezekiel Solomon, Michigan's first Jewish resident, will take place on Sunday afternoon, May 31, at the restored Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City. *This will be the first state marker for a Jew in the history of the Jewish community of Michigan.*

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan will be represented at the dedication by our founding president, Allen A. Warsen; vice-president, Dr. Irving I. Edgar, and our Board member, Mrs. Edgar; treasurer, Jonathan D. Hyams; Executive Secretary of the Mackinac Bridge Authority and a member of our Society, Lawrence A. Rubin. Details of the dedication will appear in the next issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

## *Contributors*

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IRVING I. KATZ, Executive Secretary of Detroit's Temple Beth El, is a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, a nationally known administrator and historian, and the author of books on synagogue administration and Michigan Jewish history.

EMANUEL APPLEBAUM, Headmaster of Detroit's Hillel Day School, is president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and an ordained rabbi.

IRVING I. EDGAR, a practicing psychiatrist in Detroit, is vice-president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and an authority on the earliest Jewish physicians in Michigan.

## *Jewish Historical Society of Michigan*

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was organized for the following purposes :

1. To foster the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the history of the Jews in Michigan.
2. To encourage all projects, celebrations, and other activities which tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish History.
3. To foster all effort to create a wider interest on the part of Michigan Jews in the growth and development of their respective Jewish communities.
4. To cooperate with national Jewish historical societies.

Annual membership dues to individuals, libraries, and institutions are \$5.00 per year. Dues and contributions to the Society are deductible for income tax purposes.

*Michigan Jewish History*, a semi-annual journal, is sent to each member. Contributions are invited. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor, 8801 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, 48202.

