

MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan
congratulates Rabbi Leon Fram on his 75th
birthday and wish him many more years of
health and happiness.

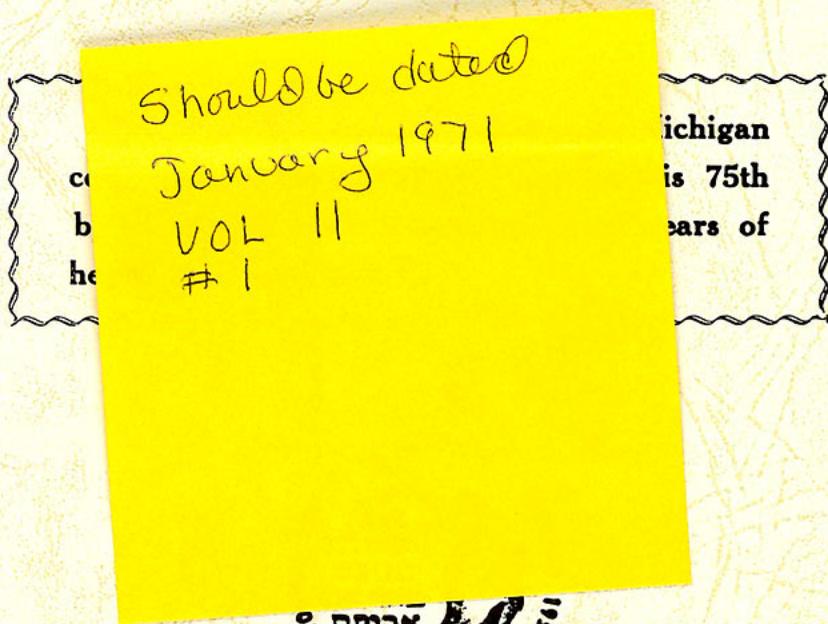


NOVEMBER, 1970

HESHVAN, 5731

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

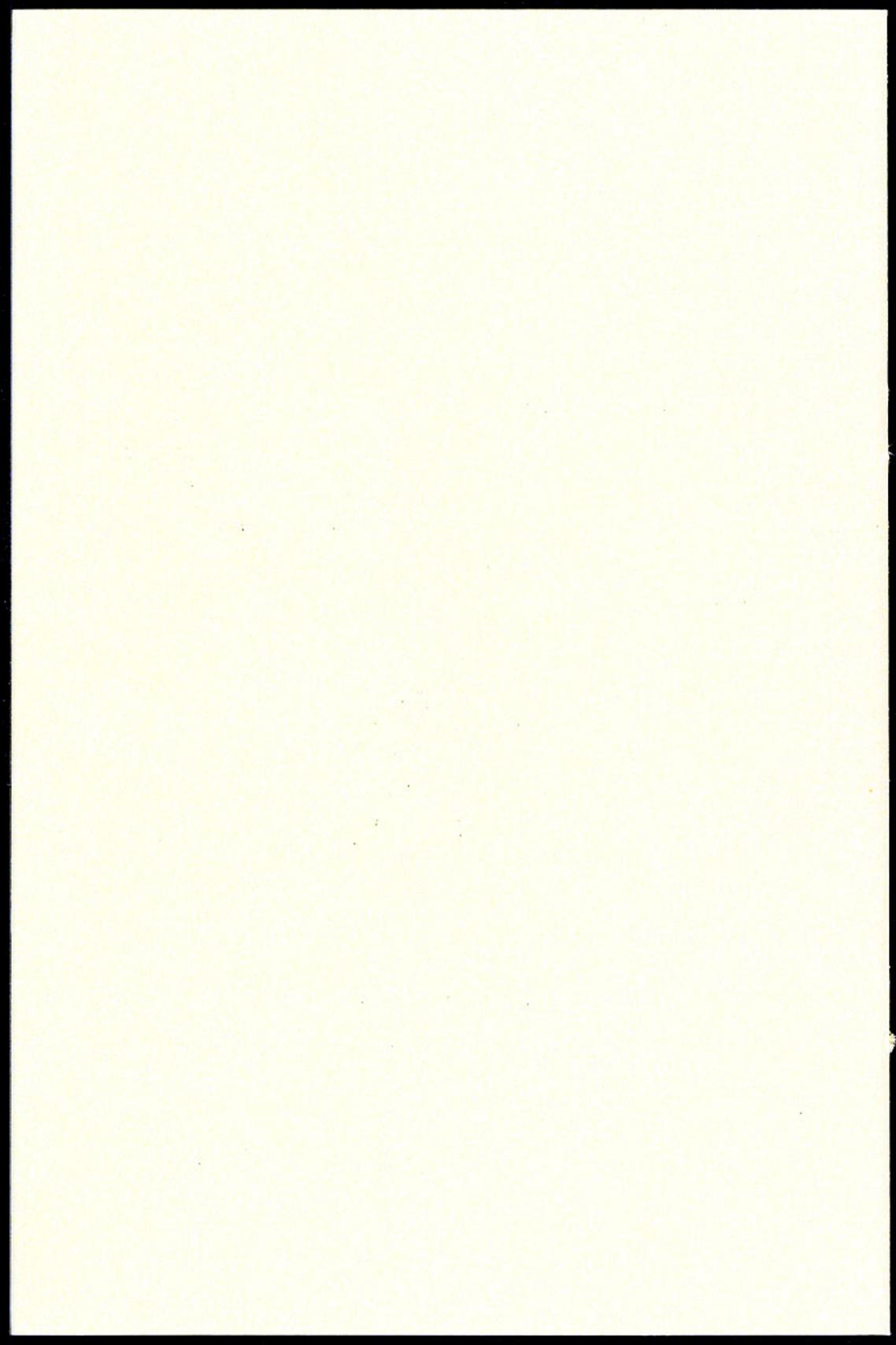
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... אשר ישאלון בניכם מהר את אבותם... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."
— Joshua 4:21

Volume 11 November, 1970 — Heshvan, 5731 No. 2

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Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was organized on June 1, 1959, for the following main purposes:

1. To promote the study and research of Michigan Jewish history by encouraging all efforts to create a wider interest on the part of Michigan Jews in the growth and development of their many respective communities.

2. To foster the collection, preservation and publication of materials on the history of the Jews of Michigan, to which purposes the society publishes *Michigan Jewish History*, a semi-annual journal, and has established the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library as a permanent archive-depository for Michigan Jewish historical source material.

3. To encourage all projects, celebrations and other activities which tend to spread authentic information concerning Michigan Jewish history, such as the erection by the Society in conjunction with the Michigan Historical Commission, of the historical marker commemorating Michigan's first Jewish settler, at the restored Fort Michilimackinac.

4. To cooperate with national Jewish historical societies as well as with other state and regional Jewish historical groups.

Membership is open to all who have an interest in Michigan Jewish history and in supporting the goals of the organization. Income of the Society is derived from the annual dues and contributions which are deductible for income tax purposes, and are used for publishing the journal and related projects.

Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

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*The Early Sites and Beginnings of Temple Beth El**

II

The First Synagogue of Congregation Beth El: The Room
Above the Store of Silberman and Hirsch. 1852-1859.

As already mentioned, the first religious services in Detroit were held in the Cozens' home on the north side of E. Congress Street, in the vicinity of the corner of St. Antoine Street, between the years 1850 and 1852; and an attempt was made to locate this site as precisely as possible in present day Detroit. However, this first place of worship cannot be considered a synagogue in the true meaning of the term. The first real synagogue came into existence in the latter half of 1852. We know this first from a letter dated June 10, 1852, already referred to as having appeared in Rabbi Leaser's *The Occident* of August 18, 1852 (vol. 10, pp. 265-6). This letter¹ represents the first evidence of the renting of "a room for two years and (the) fixing it up for a place of worship at an expense of about \$300 rent included." This letter does not state where this room was located.

In a *Jewish Calendar For Fifty Years* published in 1854,² Temple Beth El is listed in Detroit as follows:

K.K. Beth El
Originated 5610 — 1850
Temporary Synagogue in Jefferson Avenue.
Burial place three-quarters of a mile from the city — —

In this item the site of this first "Temporary Synagogue" is merely mentioned as "Jefferson Avenue."

Silas Farmer' in *History of Detroit and Wayne County*, places it "over the store of Silberman and Hirsch on Jefferson."³

None of the sources mentioned thus far state where this first synagogue (room) was located though Silas Farmer does mention it as being "on Jefferson." Nor does the *A History of Congregation Beth El, 1850-1900*⁴ cast any further light on the matter for it locates it as follows: (p. 18).

* This is the second of a series of articles on this subject. The first appeared in *Michigan Jewish History*, June 1970, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 17-23. I am indebted to Irving I. Katz for much of the material in these articles.

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During the administration of Rev. Marcus, several forward steps were taken by the young congregation. In the first place more adequate quarters were secured in a room above the store of Silberman and Hirsch, on Jefferson Ave. The place was by no means elaborate, but the worship offered within its walls was none the less ardent and sincere.

The Rabbi Samuel Marcus who was the first spiritual leader of the congregation and officiated both at the Cozens' home, (1850-52) and at the first real synagogue in a room above the store of Silberman and Hirsch,

fulfilled all the functions that then devolved upon the orthodox Rabbi, from killing the fowls to conducting the services, and all at no princely salary . . . Rev. Marcus was a conscientious pains-taking gentleman, and he officiated to the complete satisfaction of his congregation. Unfortunately however, after residing here but a few years he was stricken down by the cholera which at that period swept a mighty scourge across the country. Reverently he was laid to rest in the Champlain Street Cemetery . . . There, a modest tombstone, fittingly inscribed, marks his grave, which even now, is carefully kept up by Congregation Beth El.⁵

This Rabbi Marcus is listed in *Shove's Business Advertiser and Detroit Directory*, 1852-53 (p. 174.) as,

Marcus, B., Jewish Rabbi h., W.S. (home, west side) St. Antoine St.

Both Jacob Silberman and Adam Hirsch who did business together are listed in the U.S. 1850 census⁶ and in the various directories of Detroit in those early years.

But to continue our search further, we find another reference to this location of the store in question farther on in this same *History of Congregation Beth El*, (p. 25). It states that,

The room above Silberman and Hirsch's store having become inadequate for the purposes of the congregation, a hall was leased on Michigan Grand Ave. which later became Cadillac Square (more recently Kennedy Square) between Bates and Randolph Streets.

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This latter site which was the second synagogue of Congregation Beth El, we shall take up later. Where then was this store of Silberman and Hirsch?

Irving I. Katz in his *The Beth El Story* places this first synagogue above Silberman and Hirsch's store as being at 172 E. Jefferson Avenue for he definitely states (p. 69) in his chronology of the congregation for April 1852 as follows:

Rental of a room above the store of Silberman and Hirsch at 172 Jefferson Avenue to be used as a place of worship.

Katz apparently bases his opinion of this exact address of the store on the appearance of an item in the *Daily Advertiser Directory* of Detroit of 1850 (see the *Beth El Story* p. 55.) in which it states,

Silberman & Hirsch, Dealers in all kinds of cigars, Tobacco, Snuff, Respectfully announce to their friends and the public in general that they have always a large quantity of these articles on hand, of every variety and quality.

They have removed, from their old stand to the store adjoining Geo. Doty, Jeweller, No. 172 Jefferson Avenue.

Katz must have assumed that the address given above remained the address where Silberman and Hirsch continued business and that hence the first synagogue above their store was at this address. Research indicates that this is not so. Let us therefore delve into this matter further.

First of all, let it be noted that this item about the removal of their store "from their old stand" which did appear in the *Detroit Advertiser Directory* (p. 15) appeared in the year 1850. At that time the religious services of the congregation were still held at the Cozens' home and continued to be held there till the later half of 1852 and that the Silberman and Hirsch store could have moved from the "172 E. Jefferson" address to another address.

What actually happened was this: originally, the Silberman and Hirsch store was on the north side of Jefferson Ave. A fire however at this early site destroyed their store and other's adjacent to it. This accounts for the precipitous moving of the store across the street to the south side of Jefferson Avenue and the appearance of the special advertisement announcing this.

The *Detroit Daily Advertiser* of Dec. 8, 1849 carried the following news item⁷ regarding this:

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A fire broke out in a block of wooden buildings nearly opposite the Daily Advertiser' block and destroyed six or seven buildings. Nothing but fire proof roofing saved the Advertiser office, the Markham Book Store and Doty's Jewelry store from burning . . .

The losses are as follows:

Silberman and Hirsch, Tobacconists, loss \$1400, building owned by Davenport estate, loss not ascertained.

A few days later a news item appeared in the same paper stating:

Silberman and Hirsch, Cigars and Tobacco are opposite their old stand, next door to Geo. Doty's Jewelry Store.

Except for the item in the *Daily Advertiser* of 1850 mentioned before, the Detroit Directory does not show the address of Silberman and Hirsch in the regular pages. However the 1852-53 Detroit Directory does show the address as being at 220 Jefferson Avenue and the several subsequent directories for these early years continue to show the address as 220 Jefferson Avenue. Furthermore, Doty's Jewelry Store which was mentioned in the aforesaid advertisement as "adjoining" the Silberman and Hirsch store is listed at 218 Jefferson Avenue which of course confirms the above address of the store in question.

We must therefore accept this evidence that the Silberman and Hirsch (Hersh) store was definitely at 220 Jefferson Avenue and that therefore the first synagogue in Michigan was above this store at this address and not at 172 Jefferson as listed in the advertisement of 1850 and accepted by Irving I. Katz in his *The Beth El Story* as the address of this first synagogue.

It is also possible, of course, that the 172 Jefferson address was only of a temporary nature where the burned out Silberman and Hirsch store immediately was able to move to and occupy, perhaps for only a short time. Be that as it may, all subsequent evidence places the store at 220 Jefferson Avenue.

Thus the 1850 *Daily Advertiser and Directory* (p. 231.) shows Silberman and Hersh as being on the "S.S. (southside) of Jefferson between Randolph and Bates" with no specific number mentioned. Johnston's *Detroit Directory* 1853-54 (p. 124) shows Adam Hersh (Hirsch) at this time as "residing over store S.S. Jefferson between Bates and Randolph Streets." Shove's *Business Advertiser and Detroit Directory* (vol. I., published by the Free Press Book Job Office

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Printer, 1852, p. 207.) shows "Silberman and Hersh, tobacconists" at 220 Jefferson Avenue.

So then we reiterate we can narrow down this first site as definitely being at "220 Jefferson Avenue, between Bates and Randolph Sts." which was on the south side of the street.

The historiographical problem then is to locate this specific site of Michigan's first synagogue to its location in the Detroit of 1970. In order to do this however, certain historical factors in the development of Detroit between 1852 and 1970 must be taken into consideration.

Firstly, we must assume that this store of Silberman and Hirsch had at least three stories and probably four, since not only was the synagogue in a room above the store but there is also evidence that Adam Hersh also lived in a room above the store at this time, with his wife Hannah and at least one child. Martin⁸ Hersh, for the 1850 U.S. census lists all these three and the Detroit City directories of the time definitely lists Adam Hersh as living above the store during the period when the synagogue had its location there.⁹ Photographs¹⁰ of this specific area of Jefferson between Randolph and Bates Streets including 220 Jefferson Ave., taken some years later show that the building did have three stories above its store, assuming of course, that it was the original building of the 1850's.

Furthermore, a study of this Shove's Directory (1852-53) and of the two or three later directories reveals that the southside of Jefferson Avenue, between Randolph and Bates Streets had some of the following occupants: 1. The southwest corner of Randolph and Jefferson was occupied by Fireman's Hall, 232 Jefferson. 2. Next to it going westward was 228 Jefferson occupied by a Markham and Elwood (p. 66.). 3. There was a "John Pickering, New Books and Publications" at 222 Jefferson. 4. Silberman and Hirsch was next to this at 220 Jefferson and, 5. Doty's Jewelry Store was at 218 Jefferson "adjoining" the Silberman and Hirsch store. Since the stores at the time had about 25 feet frontage each, with the probable exception of Fireman's Hall which had about 50—100 feet frontage, we can state with some certainty that 220 E. Jefferson where the first synagogue in Michigan was located, was on the southside of East Jefferson Avenue, between Randolph and Bates Streets, about 150 feet west of Randolph Street. This can also be confirmed by a perusal of the Real Estate Atlases of Detroit through the years.¹¹

In the second place, we must be aware of the historical fact that in

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1921 Detroit instituted a major change in its whole address numbering system. (See *Old and New House Numbers*, Effective Jan. 1, 1921, published by The Department of Public Works, City of Detroit, 1921). As a result, 220 E. Jefferson became 150 E. Jefferson (p. 85) and thru the years since 1921 we can follow the various occupants of this original location of the first synagogue of Beth El by looking at the subsequent yearly directories of Detroit.

Thirdly, we must take into consideration at this time the fact that the building of the new Civic Center with the erection of the high-rise City-County Building and other buildings in the area has resulted in the disappearance of a southside of East Jefferson altogether, at this site, and that in its place there is a grassy midway directly facing the City-County Building. It is on this grassy midway about 150 feet westward from Randolph Street that we must place the one time 220 East Jefferson Avenue, the subsequent changing of the address to 150 E. Jefferson, and the final development of the grassy midway facing the City-County Building. It is on this grassy midway about 150 feet from Randolph Street that we now can definitely place the first synagogue in the State of Michigan in the City of Detroit during the years 1852-1859 following which, they moved on to 39 Michigan Grand Avenue to a hall above the drug store of John C. Sherer.

Eventually a certified historical marker will be erected commemorating the organization of this first synagogue in Michigan. (The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has already petitioned the appropriate agencies for such a marker). It is obvious that it would be unwise and inappropriate to place this marker on the grassy midway mentioned since it would be inaccessible to the public. It is suggested, therefore, that such an historical marker be placed on what is now the south side of East Jefferson Avenue about 50 feet south of where the original true site of this first synagogue happened to have been. This would place the marker on the lawn fronting the main entrance to the Old Mariners Church, close to the sidewalk, about 100-150 feet west of Randolph Street, and about 75 feet west of the statue of George Washington which is also on the lawn of the Old Mariners Church.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A photostatic copy of this letter appearing in **The Occident**, vol. 10 pp. 265-6, Aug. 18, 1852 is in the hands of the author.

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2. **A Jewish Calendar For Fifty Years** by Jacques L. Lyons, Minister, K.K. "Shearith Israel" New York and Abraham DeSola, Minister, K.K. "Shearith Israel," Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the University McGill College, Montreal, 5614-1854. See **The Beth El Story** by Irving I. Katz, *op. cit.*, p. 70 for a photostatic copy of the item.
3. Farmer, Silas, **A History of Detroit and Wayne County. op. cit.** (1884, vol. I, p. 628).
4. **A History of Congregation Beth El, 1850-1900**, Detroit Mich. compiled and edited under the auspices of The Historical Committee, 1900. Winn & Hammond. The Historical Committee consisted of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, Chairman, Adolph Freund, Adolph Sloman.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. A picture of this tombstone appears in Katz **Beth El Story**, p. 67.
6. Warsen, Allen, "An Important Discovery" **Michigan Jewish History**, vol. 10, No. 1, January 1970, pp. 4-6.
7. **Detroit Daily Advertiser Digest**, 1849 edition, vol. XIV, 103, whol No. 5053 (at the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library).
8. See note (6).
8. **Shove's Business Advertiser and Detroit Directory**, 1852-53 lists: "Hersh, A. of Silberman and Hersh, h. (home) over 220 Jefferson Ave.
10. These photographs are in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library. Copies are in the possession of the author.
11. See **Best's Real Estate Atlas** vol. 1, compiled July 1921 by C. W. Chadwick, Chadwick, Block, Ann Arbor, Mich., publisher of the annual revision of this Plat Book. The atlases of the previous years all show the area in question.

The Saga of Rabbi Leon Fram, Dean of the Michigan Rabbinate

An Interview with Rabbi Leon Fram on His 75th Birthday

FOREWORD

The entire Jewish community of Detroit has joined with Temple Israel in celebrating the 75th birthday of Rabbi Leon Fram. The year 1970 also marks the 50th anniversary of his ordination as Rabbi, the 45th anniversary of his arrival in Detroit, and the 30th anniversary of his founding of Temple Israel.

Rabbi Fram is President of the Michigan Association of Reform Rabbis, and Chairman of the Rabbinical Commission consisting of all the Rabbis in Metropolitan Detroit — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. He is popularly known as the Dean of the Detroit and Michigan Rabbinate.

In 1954 his Alma Mater, the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Rabbi Fram was born, December 12, 1895, in Lithuania, in the town of Raseinas. His family arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1905. He was educated in the public school of Baltimore and in the Baltimore Talmud Torah. He entered John Hopkins University in 1914 on a chemistry scholarship, but left in 1915 to study for the Reform Rabbinate at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He was ordained in 1920 by Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, at the same time earning his A.B. and his M.A. in philosophy



Rabbi Leon Fram

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at the University of Cincinnati. He served as Rabbi of Temple Judea, Chicago, till 1925, and was then called to Temple Beth El of Detroit to serve as Director of Religious Education, in association with Rabbi Leo M. Franklin.

In 1941 he founded Temple Israel, and has been its Rabbi since then. It is a congregation of 1,600 member families. Throughout his career in Detroit, he has been a leader in community and civic life. In the Jewish community, he contributed leadership to the Zionist movement, to the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish Community Council and the Jewish Welfare Federation. In the civic community, he distinguished himself in the service of the Detroit Public Library Commission, of which he was twice president, and in the service of public education. He is now, by appointment of Governor William G. Milliken, Chairman of the Michigan Fair Campaign Practices Commission. He served in many posts of civic leadership, in cooperation with Mayor and Governor Frank Murphy, Mayor Eugene Van Antwerp, and Governor G. Mennen Williams.

In view of his long experience in, and his profound knowledge of, the life of our city and state and of our Jewish community, the editors are pleased to publish the following interview in the direct form of question and answer.

T H E E A R Y Y E A R S

YOU ARRIVED in Detroit in 1925—45 years ago. Did you have any vivid recollection of the city of that time, and of the Jewish community?

Yes, Detroit was a different city then, and for the Jewish community it was an era altogether different from now. To get an idea how different, just recall the events that have taken place in the world and in America since 1925, then consider how these events have operated also to determine the character of the Jewish community.

There was the Great Depression of 1929, which brought on the horrible Hitler nightmare of 1932, and which in turn precipitated the Second World War, one of whose by-products was the establishment of the Sovereign independent State of Israel. Can you imagine a Jewish community as yet unaffected by the Nazi Holocaust? A Jewish community unchallenged by the existence of a Jewish State? Try to imagine a world that is not living under the threat of the atomic bomb. And try to imagine an America without Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, that is, without social security? A Detroit automobile industry without the UAW?

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Detroit in 1925 was a society of prosperity, automobile prosperity. There were no clouds on the horizon, so the prevailing attitude among the population at large, as well as within the Jewish community, was that of complacency.

However, those who were trained to look beneath the surface of things — progressive economists and sociologists, and some liberal ministers and Rabbis — could sense everywhere in America the social inequities and the injustices that would bring on the Depression and the wars and the race conflicts. The Establishment of those days resented bitterly the slightest insinuation that anything was wrong. So any young Rabbi who would be so indiscreet as to advocate from the pulpit the idea of Unemployment Insurance would subject himself to the criticism that he ought to “stick to the Bible.” I committed that indiscretion and encountered that criticism.

Any Rabbi who would openly advocate the organization of the automobile workers, would be warned to cease and desist. I was one of the principal speakers at a mass meeting for the unionization of auto workers, and I promptly received the warning. Any Reform Rabbi who in those days of general complacency would disturb the serenity of the upper class Jewish mind by a vigorous championing of the movement for a Jewish State, the Zionist movement, was virtually inviting personal disaster, the loss of his position. I took that risk, and the result was — the establishment of Temple Israel.

WHAT LED you, who were in 1925 a very young Rabbi serving at Temple Beth El, the oldest Jewish Congregation in Detroit, to take such strong public positions on so many controversial issues?

It was my concept of the function of the the Rabbi in the modern world, a concept that was embodied in the career of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. Since Reform Rabbis were Rabbis who were no longer pre-occupied with questions of Kashrut and other ritual details, they were free to concern themselves with the prophetic aspect of Judaism and the application of Jewish social ideals to modern life. I saw the America of 1925 heading toward social disaster, and I was confident that the new ideals of Judaism had a healing message for a moribund society.

WHAT WAS the situation of the Reform Synagogue in Detroit in 1925?

When I remind you that in 1925 there was only one Reform congregation in Detroit, you get the essence of the situation. Detroit had

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then a growing Jewish community of 40,000 souls (survey of Detroit Jewish community, 1923). I sensed from the beginning that it was a reflection on the validity of Reform Judaism that it could organize only one congregation in the entire Detroit area. Even though that one congregation was large and affluent, it meant that Reform Judaism was isolated from the Jewish people as a whole. I decided to "seek my brethren," to find ways of bringing Reform Judaism into the mainstream of Jewish life.

I set out to intensify the educational program of the congregation by requiring more time for the elementary Religious School, by emphasizing the study of Hebrew, by reintroducing traditional elements of beauty, such as in the Friday night worship, by developing a system of education that began with pre-kindergarten and continued on to High School Graduation, and by promoting Adult Jewish Education. In the late twenties the congregation decided to establish a branch Temple in the area of Fenkell and Dexter. This was then a new area of Jewish settlement in a neighborhood of modest new homes. I threw myself heart and soul into that effort.

It meant the realization of one of my pet projects, the extension of Reform Judaism to "the masses." It met with considerable success. However, with the onset of the "hard times" of the Thirties, the congregation abandoned the project as a needless expense. I protested in vain. I was heartbroken, but as it turned out, I learned a valuable lesson that I would utilize to the full later on. I learned that there was room and need in Detroit for more than one Reform congregation.

How would you characterize the Jewish community of Detroit as you found it in 1925?

Complacency is again the word which most accurately describes the attitude of the American Jew in 1925. The Jews of Detroit felt themselves living on a plateau of infinite prosperity with its concomitants of security and general good-will. There was an emotional attachment to the status quo in everything. This is why my advocacy of social security, and the unionization of the automobile workers met with so much resistance. This was why my preaching of Zionism was deplored. This was also why my advocacy of practical defensive measures against Nazism in Europe and anti-semitism in America was so powerfully resisted.

Detroit Jews refused to believe there could be such a thing as anti-semitism in America. They knew, of course, that they were

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excluded from membership in the leading city and country clubs, that many residential neighborhoods and vacation resorts were closed to Jews by contract or "gentlemen's agreement." In the city of the machine, there was no opportunity for Jews in the engineering profession. They were aware of the fact that the first question every employment agency asked of an applicant was "What is your religion?" All these disturbing facts were simply swept under the carpet. They were the fault of the "pushy" Jews who provoked hostility. So when I helped organize the first mass protest meeting against Nazism, a meeting which received lavish notice in the Detroit press, I was told I was aggravating the situation rather than helping.

When I engaged in a telephone campaign to alert the Jewish community of Detroit to listen to Father Coughlin's broadcasts when they had begun to take on an anti-semitic character, I was asked why I was creating a needless panic in the community. When I started advocating a boycott of Nazi goods and services, even the brilliant and progressive editor of the Detroit Jewish News warned me that the boycott was a "two-edged sword" that could hurt the Jews as much as the Nazis. Finally, of course, the menace of Nazism and the reality of anti-semitism in America became too obvious to be any longer ignored.

Then it was that the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit invited me to serve as the head of a new agency, the League for Human Rights. Immediately I secured the leading Protestant clergyman of the city, Rev. Edgar deWitt Jones, and the most popular Catholic priest of Detroit, Father Edward Hickey, to serve with me as co-chairmen. We opened an office, engaged a staff and proceeded to conduct a vigorous and successful boycott of Nazi goods. We literally cleared the shelves of all German products in the stores of Detroit. We also replied effectively to all anti-semitic broadcasts, and published refutations to anti-semitic propaganda wherever it appeared.

The need for defense against the rising tide of anti-semitism was the primary motivation for the establishment of the Jewish Community Council, another new agency of the Jewish Welfare Federation. I was called upon to serve as Chairman of its Committee on Community Relations, a position from which I could carry on the struggle for the preservation and the expansion of civil rights not only of Jews but of all minorities. The American Jewish Congress and its Michigan Council, called on me to lead its battle for the Separation of Church and State. This time my work had the full sup-

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port of the entire Jewish community. It was in the exercise of these functions that I became associated with Frank Murphy and G. Mennen Williams. Out of this new militant spirit of the Jewish community there came such legislative victories in Detroit and in Michigan as the Fair Employment Practices Commission, the Civil Rights Commission, and the Absentee Voters Act, a law permitting a Jewish citizen to vote by absentee ballot when an election occurs on a Jewish Holiday.

RABBI LEON FRAM AND ZIONISM

ZIONISM AND the State of Israel seem to have played a crucial role in your life. Did your enthusiasm for Zion place you in the position of a "Maverick" in the Reform Group?

I did indeed stake my career, my reputation, I might say my very life, on the cause of the Jewish State, but already in 1925 it was no longer true that Reform Judaism was monolithically opposed to Zionism. My Reform congregation in Chicago, Temple Judea, had been committed to Zionism and had encouraged my leadership in the movement there. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Rabbi James G. Heller had in their student days led many of the students of the Hebrew Union College into the Zionist ranks and were now occupying two of the foremost pulpits of Reform Judaism, where they were outspoken in behalf of the Jewish State. There was the towering figure of the great Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who was the veritable founder of American Zionism. Many members of Reform congregations were by this time friendly to the movement.

It is true that the ideology of Reform Judaism was at that time still under the formulation of the "Pittsburg Platform" which rejected Jewish nationalism in behalf of a universal ideal. So any Reform Rabbi or congregational leader who was so minded could quote Reform authority to support an anti-Zionist stand. However, already in 1925 the facts of life were eroding those foundations of the Reform ideology. The prosperity of the twenties never reached the hapless Jews of Eastern Europe who continued to live under the threat of pogroms. If they wanted to escape, where could they go? There was a time, before the First World War, when a Jew who suffered oppression anywhere in the world, could head for America where the Statue of Liberty would welcome him into the land of freedom and opportunity with open arms. By 1925, America had begun to close its gates.

The year I arrived in Detroit, I came upon a numismatic or coin-



SIGNING OF THE ABSENTEE VOTERS ACT, MAY 25, 1950

A bill permitting a Jewish citizen to vote on Jewish Holidays by absentee ballot. The bill was introduced by State Senator Charles Blondy. Shown, left to right: Harry Weinberg, W.J.L.B. Radio; Rabbi Leon Fram, Rabbi Morris Adler, Larry Weinberg, Senator Charles S. Blondy, Julius Goldberg. Seated: Gov. G. Mennen Williams.



THE DETROIT LIBRARY COMMISSION, 1969

Shown, left to right: Charles Morhardt, Rabbi Leon Fram, Dr. Harry Merker, Thomas Long, William Patrick and Mrs. Millie Jeffry.

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collectors' convention at the Statler Hotel. On display was a pre-war penny that was priced at a hundred dollars. The penny bore the inscription "America, the refuge of the oppressed of the world." It carried such a high price because the sentiment of the inscription no longer corresponded to the Immigration Quota Law's reality. The penny marked the end of an era in American idealism. It had therefore become rare and costly. So it began to dawn on the minds of many American Jews that if their persecuted fellow-Jews were to find a refuge anywhere, it would have to be one of the Jews' own making. It was this emerging fact of history that led quite a few Reform Jews to realize that it was for a change in their ideology.

At the same time, it was by no means true that, in contrast to Reform Jews, all Conservative and Orthodox Jews were ardent workers and givers for the idea of a Jewish State. There was apathy, if not downright opposition, among all American Jews. So the individual to whom Zionism had become a conviction knew it was his duty to stir his people to an awareness of the Jewish need of Zion. I felt that need "in my bones," for Zion's sake, I was prepared to make any sacrifice. However, I did not anticipate any conflict. I was confident that American Jewry in general, and Reform Jews in particular, could be alerted to the merging crisis in Jewish life by a process of education.

I made my contribution to this project of reorientation when I wrote my Essay on "Reform Judaism and Zionism." This Essay was a chapter in a volume published by the Alumni Association of the Hebrew Union College under the title "Reform Judaism." I am proud of that essay. I have on the whole been too busy organizing on various fronts to have the leisure for creative writing. This essay is my outstanding literary contribution. It gives a definitive account of the historical events which propelled the Reform Rabbis of today into the leadership of the Zionist movement. Wherever I meet my younger colleagues these days, they inform me that this Essay of mine was both an important record and an important influence in this remarkable change of direction taken in recent years by both Reform Rabbis and Reform laymen.

Now I recall that great verse in Psalm 126 "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy and harvest." When I gaze upon the current glorious spectacle of all Detroit Jewry, together with all American Jewry, united in devotion to the State of Israel, I have a profound sense of the fulfillment of my career, the reward of all my labors and sacrifices.

YOU WERE associated with Rabbi Leo M. Franklin for sixteen years. Would you give us your personal impressions of him?

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Regardless of the personal traumatic experiences I had in relation to Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, I must say that he emerges as the outstanding figure in the history of Detroit Jewry. It was he who united the various and competing Jewish charitable organizations of the city. He was for a long time the most articulate spokesman for Detroit Jewry vis-a-vis the general citizenry. He was the most conscientious pastor and family counsellor I know of. When I consider the large size of his congregation and the spread-out character of the city, I marvel at the fact that he never missed a call upon any Temple family, whether rich or poor, in which there was illness, bereavement or some human problem. At the hospitals, he frequently called on all Jewish patients regardless of affiliation. His zeal "beyond the call of duty" sometimes provoked a good humored resentment on the part of other Rabbis who found to their amused chagrin that when they called on their members in the hospital, Rabbi Franklin had already preceded them.

He and I were in agreement on most congregational issues. He cooperated with me, for instances, in my revolutionary project of raising the Confirmation age above the traditional 13. The one issue we could not resolve, and which led to our separation, was that of Zionism. He had been brought up in the early Reform tradition that the essential universalism of the Jewish religion precluded any return to Jewish nationhood.

In his later years he did cooperate actively in campaigns which included funds for the Jewish settlement of Palestine. Subconsciously, however, if I may presume to analyze, he could not bear the thought of being succeeded by an outright Zionist. He was sanyhow, of course, succeeded by Rabbis who were friendly to Zionism and to Israel as ever I was, namely Rabbi B. Benedict Glazer and the present admirable incumbent of Beth El's pulpit, Rabbi Richard C. Hertz. Zionism happily, has ceased to be an issue in Jewish life. In view of our common concern for Israel, we all are Zionists.

RABBI FRAM AND TEMPLE ISRAEL

TELL US of your adventure in organizing a new Reform congregation in a city which for a century had known only one Reform Temple. Was it difficult? Did you undergo many personal hardships?

It is incredible how easy it was. The decisive factor was my will to undertake it. I could have accepted any one of the many invitations I received from congregations in other cities. There was then, as there is now, a shortage of Rabbis. Once I had determined to undertake the

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project, and summoned up the courage to go through with it, I was joined by a wonderful company of friends who were fascinated by the idea and volunteered to work with me. A group of about fifty people met to organize a congregation, and to invite me to serve as its Rabbi. From that point on, and literally within months, a large congregation of a thousand members emerged. It all happened so smoothly. There was no rift in the community. Our new members were not taken from the roster of the old congregations.

The secret of our success lay in the sub-surface situation, whose existence I had long suspected, namely that thousands of Detroit Jews had been waiting to be invited to join a congregation, and hundreds of them were hungry for a Reform congregation. All that was required was the impetus and the leadership I gave to realize the potential. Several new Conservative congregations were organized at the same time as Temple Israel. What is more, hundreds of new Reform congregations sprang up all over America soon after Temple Israel was established.

It was the year 1941, the year of Pearl Harbor. The free world's struggle to halt Nazism was essentially a religious struggle to vindicate, in the face of Nazi brutality, the grand Judeo-Christian tradition of the dignity of man and the infinite preciousness of the human soul. A religious revival was everywhere in progress creating a ferment in the Christian Church, as well as in the Synagogue.

Wherever we turned we found friendship and helpfulness. We needed an auditorium for High Holy Day Services. The Detroit Institute of Arts welcomed us. We needed a school building for our Religious School. The Detroit Board of Education gave us one of its newest and most beautiful school buildings, Hampton School. By 1942 we were already one of the largest congregations in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. We had the most cordial relations with Temple Beth El which also entered upon a new era of growth.

Let me not, however, give the impression that the growth of Temple Israel was automatic. We took some decisive steps to adapt Reform Judaism to meet the spiritual needs of the current generation of American Jews. They wanted a liberal faith and a liberal way of worship, but they also wanted color in their religion. They wanted a Judaism that was modern, yet also rooted in the sentiments and symbols of the Jewish past.

The first thing we did to meet these needs was to engage a Chazan or Cantor. Although it was true that Cantors had for a long time

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been serving in the Reform congregations of the East Coast and the West Coast, here in the Middle West the announcement that the new Temple Israel would have a Cantor had the impact of a shock. Old line Reformers were aghast. The younger generation was thrilled.

When Cantor Robert S. Tulman, son of a Tel Aviv Chazan, and a refugee from the Nazified German opera, raised his magnificent tenor voice to a high C as he chanted the Kiddush of Rosh Hashana in the auditorium of the Detroit Institute of Arts, the word spread that genuinely Jewish music had at last returned to the Reform Temple. Both Rabbi and Cantor wore the Tallit, the traditionally Jewish prayer shawl. The congregation began to sing along with the Cantor, thus breaking the hundred year old practice that in the Reform Temple the congregation sat in frozen silence.

We restored the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and observed it on Friday nights, as well as Saturday mornings. By these restorations of emotionally loaded Jewish traditions, we pioneered in the development of the "New Reform Judaism," a Judaism that not only fostered universal ideals, but a Judaism that was close to the heart of the Jewish people, that sang with its rhythms, and nurtured its aspirations for peoplehood and Zion, a Judaism that appealed to the senses, as well as to the intellect, a Judaism that was full of color, melody, flavor and savor and fragrance.

Temple Israel now has a large staff — Rabbi M. Robert Syme and I, Cantor Harold Orbach and the educational director, Cantor Arthur Asher. We all work harmoniously toward this common goal of a revitalized Reform Judaism nourishing the spirit of a rededicated American Jewry.

It is difficult, I know, to establish claims of historical priority which would be generally acknowledged. Temple Israel cherishes the belief that it was the founding of our congregation in 1941, and the completion of our Sanctuary in 1951, which sparked the historic post-war wave of the emergence of new congregations, and the building of new Temples among the Jews of America — Reform, Conservative and Orthodox. Temple Israel was the first large new Reform congregation to be organized in a major American city in the twentieth century. To a youthful American Jewry which was waiting for the signal, we provided the needed demonstration of religious vitality.

This replenishment of American Judaism is well exemplified right here in Detroit. In 1925, there was only one Reform congregation here. In 1970, we have so many Reform congregations in the area

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that it has been necessary to organize a Federation of Reform Synagogues. In 1925, there was only one Conservative congregation — Shaarey Zedek. Now, so many more. Orthodoxy, too, has taken on new strength, as witness the growth of the Young Israel movement. I hope I may say that my presence in Detroit during these forty-five years has contributed to this growth. I know I contributed to the unity of our people here, for the Rabbis of Detroit — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform — have honored me by electing me Chairman of their Rabbinical Commission.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS OF RABBI FRAM

BESIDES THE founding of Temple Israel, of which you are justly proud, what are some of the other achievements of your career in Detroit?

I realize that in answering most of your questions about my career I have omitted mention of the names of so many men and women without whose friendship and co-working, none of these accomplishments would have been possible. As a result, I may seem to be taking credit for achievements which others could claim along with me. I hope I can be forgiven for these omissions. This is a brief biographical account for which you have asked in relation to my 75th Anniversary, so I must satisfy what is actually your request, to write not an all-inclusive record of the period, but to specify my personal contribution to it.

Among the civic achievements I cherish most is the completion of the new Additional Wings of the Detroit Public Library. When I was first appointed a Detroit Public Library Commissioner, the Mayor of the city was Albert E. Cobo. He was a great business executive, but had not time to give to the cultural aspect of the city life which the Library represented. I learned that the Library Commission had been trying for years to get consideration for a bond issue to enlarge the Main Library which had outgrown its facilities. There was simply no room for the great new flow of books being produced under the impetus of the technological revolution, the rapid advance of all the sciences, and the flowering of American literature. Mr. Cobo's remarkable suggestion to the Library Commission was "If you have no room for all these new books in the Library building, put them in a warehouse." So the Commission spent meeting after meeting dreaming of splendid new additions, with new stacks and new departments and services. We also did more than dream. We worked out specifications and drew blueprints. Yet it all seemed an exercise in futility. The additions would cost no less than ten million dollars, and Mayor Cobo had other uses for that kind of money.

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Then Louis Miriani was elected Mayor. I, at the same time, became President of the Library Commission. The name of Louis Miriani is now under a cloud, but there is no gainsaying the fact that he was a highly competent mayor. We were friends from the days when he was the energetic leader of the Legal Aid Bureau. I immediately availed myself of our friendship to isolate him at a cocktail party and to tell him that he could not hope to surpass Cobo as a business mayor, but that he had the opportunity to make a name for himself as the mayor who advanced the culture of Detroit. By securing the approval of a ten million dollar bond issue for the Library Additions, he would assure his civic fame. To my delight, he consented on the spot. At its next meeting an astonished Commission learned that its futile fantasy had suddenly become a reality. The bond issue was approved, and the work began.

At the ground-breaking ceremonies soon after, a remarkable scene was enacted. Mayor Miriani, the principal speaker said, "All my business judgment counselled me against this large expenditure for Library Additions, but Rabbi Fram caught me in a weak moment and inveigled me into it." Whereupon as President of the Commission, I responded, "Let me, a Rabbi, quote to my Catholic friend, Mayor Miriani, the words of St. Paul, "The Lord hath appointed the weak to confound the mighty." Great institutions have been known to rise from such slender beginnings as "a word in season."

Now whenever I enter that magnificent structure on Cass Avenue, which is the wonderful architectural blending of the modern new Additions with the charming old Building, and I see my name on the plaque at the entrance, I recall that highly effective cocktail, and that dramatic dialogue at the Ground-breaking which is now recorded in the historical archives of the Library. I can then be forgiven if I am suffused with a warm feeling of spiritual proprietorship as I gaze upon the glorious new Detroit Public Library.

Another civic achievement of permanent value was my intervention in behalf of the Rivera Frescos in the Detroit Institute of Arts. Diego Rivera had come out of Mexico at the invitation of Edsel Ford to paint the story of Detroit on the walls of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Rivera was famous throughout the world as the genius who had revived the art of fresco painting and restored it to the glory it enjoyed at the hands of Michelangelo. Edsel Ford may not have known, or if he knew it, may have discounted the fact that Rivera was a devout Communist and that the content of his frescos in Mexico was far removed from the themes of the Sistine Chapel. Did Edsel know

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that one of Rivera's paintings on the walls of the Ministry of Education in Mexico City showed Edsel's father, Henry, sitting at a dinner table with J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, all in caricature, their plates filled with gold pieces, and that the inscription below the painting read, "Fools, you cannot eat gold?"

When the Detroit frescos were unveiled, all lovers of art saw the gorgeous colors, the exciting portrayal of the machine as a thing of beauty, the scholarly evolution of the automobile from the minerals inside the earth to the finished product on the assembly line. Our immediate conclusion was that Detroit had come into possession of a treasure to which seekers after beauty from all over the world would make pilgrimage.

However, the Catholic community was unhappy, principally over the fact that an atheist Communist had been given an exalted monument in the cultural center of Detroit. Rivera had not fixed any obvious Communist stamp on these frescos. Later on, when the Rockefellers of New York followed Edsel's example and invited Rivera to paint his frescos on the walls of the new Rockefeller Center Building, it was discovered that the artist had smuggled a glorified face of Lenin into the frescos. The Rockefellers had the Rivera work erased. There was nothing like this in Rivera's Detroit work. Nevertheless, a Committee was formed to urge Ford and the Art Institute to erase the frescos from the walls of the Garden Court. Catholics were joined by other conservatives in a determined effort to influence public opinion and the authorities.

The art circles of Detroit looked for a prestigious leader to defend the frescos and to protect their inviolability as works of art. Such a leader was hard to find. It was hazardous in those days to "buck" the anti-communist crusade. Aware of all the risks, I nevertheless jumped into the breach and became the leader of a popular movement to save the frescos. We succeeded. To the credit of my opponents, Catholics and industrial conservatives, be it said that they harbored no grudge against me for frustrating their plan. The fight has been forgotten. The splendor of the frescos abides, and this remarkable historical fact will continue to intrigue the historians of art that it took a young Rabbi of Detroit to lead the battle for civic beauty and culture.

YOU CAME to Detroit as a Jewish educator. What do you claim as your accomplishment in this field?

In 1925, I made the discovery that Jewish people, young and old, were hungry for the knowledge of Judaism, Jewish history and Jew-

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ish culture. When I announced that we were organizing a school of adult Jewish education at Temple Beth El, the response was astounding. Hundreds of eager students enrolled for courses in Bible study, Jewish philosophy, the ancient, modern and current periods of Jewish history, and the study of the Hebrew language. My own class in current Jewish history grew so large, it had to be taken out of the classroom and held in the large auditorium. Nor was this a matter of the attraction of a novelty. The large attendance was sustained over the years.

The story of this phenomenal growth soon spread beyond Detroit. I was invited to present papers on this new development in adult Jewish education, both before the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Beth El College of Jewish Studies gave impetus to a veritable national movement for adult Jewish education which was taken up also by Conservative and Orthodox congregations. There is now a Department of Adult Jewish Education at the offices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Students at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion are now trained to teach adult classes, as well as preach sermons.

In Detroit now, the new Federation of Reform Synagogues has made adult Jewish education its principal project. The central school it has established for all the Reform congregations is still known by the title "College of Jewish Studies." I had discovered a hunger for Jewish knowledge in the heart of the modern Jew. It is now being satisfied by many effective methods.

Before I left Temple Beth El I had given definitive form to the institution of the Temple High School. In most Reform congregations religious education ended with Confirmation. This meant that there was no Jewish education at the High School level. I asked myself the question, why were we so successful in keeping our children regular and interested till Confirmation, and why could we not persuade the same children to attend after Confirmation? The answer lay in the fact that Confirmation was a recognized congregational institution. The Ceremony took place at the Feast of Shavuot at a regular service in the presence of the entire congregation. Every child therefore looked forward to the prestigious ceremony. Thus the ceremony served as an instrument of control and discipline. It kept the children in school.

I realized then that we must establish a similar instrument of control for High School Youth. So I proceeded to convince the

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congregation that the Temple High School Graduation must also be held at the principal service of the Temple in the presence of the entire congregation. The Graduation Ceremony would then become an established and communally recognized institution. High School Youth would then look forward to Graduation, as in their younger years they desired Confirmation. This piece of motivational engineering was my special contribution. I succeeded in making the prospect of the Temple High School Graduation Ceremony a potent instrument of control and discipline. For the sake of the Ceremony, the young people were willing to meet requirements and attend regularly.

Of course, it was necessary also to present interesting courses geared to adolescent interests. It was important also to bind the students together by means of social events, and extra-curricular activities and projects. We even introduced athletic events. We organized choirs, debating teams and drama groups. However, what gave the Temple High School its attribute of permanence was the primary significance we attached to the Graduation Ceremony.

In a definitive article in the magazine "The Jewish Teacher," I described this successful experiment in Youth Education. I began hearing from Rabbis and educators all over the country that they were following this suggestion of rendering the Graduation Ceremony as desirable as the Confirmation Ceremony. Most Reform Temples now have such complete High School programs. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has a highly developed Youth Department. Camping has been added as another opportunity for the Jewish education of our Youth. At the Commission on Jewish Education, sponsored jointly by the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregation, where I sit as Chairman of the Editing Committee, youth education carries a high priority in our deliberations.

In Reform congregations throughout America now, the High School Youth program is the liveliest sector of the congregational life. I am happy to have contributed to this rejuvenization of American Judaism.

Life As We Knew It, 1900 - 1920; *A Personal Memoir*

by DEVERA STEINBERG STOCKER

My parents resided in St. Ignace, Michigan, at the time of my birth, but they did not wish to risk the medical services in this outpost of the lumbering business. As a consequence, I was born in Detroit, August 9, 1898, in the home of my maternal grandparents, Isaac and Rebecca Lipsitz. As soon as my mother and I were able to travel, she returned to St. Ignace, taking me with her. In 1900 my brother, Morton, was born in St. Ignace. Evidently by this time my parents had more confidence in the medical services there.

My father, Jake Steinberg, had been in the dry goods business in St. Ignace since 1887.* In 1903 my parents moved to Traverse City where my father and his brother, Alec, took over my grandfather's dry goods business.

I grew up in Traverse City. It was the home of my childhood and youth as it had been for my father and his brothers and sisters. Among my earliest recollections are the house we lived in, the big bellied stove in the sitting room and the gas lights that were lit with a gas lighter at the end of a long stick. We lived on Eighth Street across from Central High School. One large building housed the grade school and the high school, the only high school in Traverse City. Lovely trees beautified the spacious school grounds. The only exception to the natural setting was the horse trough at one end. My father and my aunts and uncles attended Central High School. My brother and I were also graduated from there.

In 1907 we moved to a new home, a lovely nine room house with central heating and electric lights! My sister, Getelle (Gitl), was born here in 1910. Sixth Street was tree lined and pleasant. There were no automobiles until after 1908, and probably only a few for some years after that. Telephones were put in operation by turning the handle at the right of the box. Phonographs were not unusual. We had an Edison, the records were thick and unbreakable. Our only excitement in connection with transportation was an occasional run-away horse with the wagon or sleigh harnessed to him. We were forbidden to be tempted to fasten our sleds to a passing sleigh.

Children played jacks and hopscotch and croquet and various card

* *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 24-25.

** *Ibid*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 11-13.

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games. An ongoing project for me was my dolls and the doll clothes I designed and sewed. When not in use they were kept in my old doll trunk, a miniature in all details of the trunks of that period. We played with paper dolls, too. We put on shows using someone's barn for a theatre. We made snowmen and snow forts. We roller-skated in summer and ice skated in winter. We climbed trees. We made pipes out of acorns with a toothpick, and dolls out of hollyhock blossoms. The Sunday newspaper cartoon section, which we called "the funny paper" featured among others *The Katzenjammer Kids*, who never failed to outwit the adults, and *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, who had wonderful dreams. Backyards

were big. In our backyard we had a chicken coop attached to the barn and inside was a divided area for a cowshed. Approximately after 1914, the barn housed a car, a Willys Knight. Summer evenings we played run-sheep-run and other active games. When it became too dark to play, we sat down breathlessly on the steps of someone's porch to tell a story, which we made up ourselves. The story was begun by one of the children, continued by the child next to him, and concluded when the last child had his turn. Meanwhile, parents sat on porches. A carriage ride was a pleasant way for a family to spend Sunday afternoon in summer. The area around Traverse City abounded in beautiful wood trails. The hired horse and carriage included a driver. Sometimes on these trips we gathered ferns, lillies of the valley, and trilliums to transplant. In the spring we gathered trailing arbutus, a fragrant flower that grows in Michigan, north of Cadillac.

My paternal grandparents lived on Front Street. The family store, Steinberg's Grand Opera House, above it, and my grandparents' home



Standing on the right is the author of this article Devera Steinberg (now Stocker) and brother, Morton, seated.

On the left are cousins, Rachel Rosenthal, standing and Freda Rosenthal, seated. (1907)

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were connected buildings. Together they were known as the Steinberg Block. This building is a story in itself and holds some of my most cherished memories. My grandparents moved to Detroit approximately in 1907 but they never lost contact with Traverse City. They had a summer home on Grand Traverse Bay and returned to it every summer.

I remember our visits to the home of my maternal grandparents in Detroit. They lived on Winder Street across from the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue. When I was very young the family included Bubie Gitl (my grandmother's mother) and Uncle Yankel (my grandmother's older brother). Bubie Gitl took me for walks and bought me rock candy. She had a cure-all, or perhaps a preventative: a cube of sugar with a little kummel spilled on it. I remember on one of our visits I became ill and Dr. Beisman was called.* In the days before tongue depressors, the handle of a spoon was used by the doctor to look at the patient's throat. I was sent to get a spoon. On the way to the dining room, I called back to inquire if I should bring a "fleischige" or a "milchege" spoon. The response was laughter. I could not figure out what clever thing I had said, but I appreciated the approval. It was in the home of my maternal grandparents I first heard the word Zionist. I did not understand what it meant but I knew it was a nice word.

Jewish families in small towns had to reach to maintain Jewish observances. My mother was deeply religious and the dietary laws were observed strictly. When my parents lived in St. Ignace, kosher meat was shipped in from Chicago. Sometimes it was spoiled by the time it arrived. For my pioneering grandparents in Traverse City it must have been even more difficult. By the time I came along, the Jewish families in Traverse City had a "schoichet." He doubled as a teacher to prepare the boys for "bar mitzvah," a job for which he was often poorly qualified. Our "shul," Congregation Beth El, still serves as the house of worship for the Jewish families in the Grand Traverse area. Since it was not usual to be able to get a "minyan" for Sabbath services, the synagogue was used almost entirely for holidays** Jewish families came from Kalkaska, Fife Lake, and other communities for the High Holy Days. During my childhood, my maternal grand-

* See Dr. Joseph Beisman, *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 8-12, by Dr. Irving I. Edgar.

** I was told that the Jewish families in Traverse City were first able to have a minyan when my father was bar mitzvah. This would have been in 1880.

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father, Isaac Lipsitz, who with my grandmother spent the summers with us, conducted the holiday services at the synagogue.

Life was at a local level before the First World War. Travel was not usual. Our news came from the local newspaper *The Traverse City Record Eagle* and the Grand Rapids and Detroit newspapers which came once a week. Sometimes we were "bottled up" by heavy drifts in winter and the Pere Marquette Railroad, which brought the papers, could not get through. When the train finally got through we went to the station to welcome it. Some of the business men shoveled the last few feet of snow as the train came in to make an occasion of it. Though the news was already old we were glad to get the big city newspapers.

It was the philosophy of the times that girls should not know too much. The nineteenth century viewpoint lingered into the twentieth century. My mother's scoldings revealed the prevailing attitude toward women. She would say that she could not understand me. (There was a generation gap in those days, too.) She did not know who in the family I "took after." (Much behavior was explained by who one took after.) She said I did not show any inclination for being "a society girl" or for acquiring housewifely virtues. Apparently these were the two avenues open to women. My mother herself suffered very much from the limitations imposed on women. She was an interesting woman, had a fine education in music, she read a great deal, and was open to new ideas. She tried to accept the limitations because anything else would have seemed in bad taste to her, but it took its toll. Most of her energies were channeled into dominating the details of her children's lives. I think this describes many intelligent women of that time.

I read a good deal, but unfortunately my reading in my childhood was not of much value. The wonderful educational books for children did not appear until a generation later. We read the *Elsie Dinsmore* series by Martha Finley, the George Henty books, the Horatio Alger books, and of course, the *Little Women* series by Louisa Alcott. A favorite with children was *The Adventures of a Brownie* by Dinah Mulock. *Teddy A and Teddy B* was a popular children's book during the Theodore Roosevelt period. Sometimes I read *The Ladies Home Journal*, and I am indebted to it for the only sex education I received. The article I read was designed to instruct parents. The prevailing attitude toward sex in those days was largely responsible for the shyness parents felt concerning sex education for their children. Both the attitude toward sex and the absence of sex education is illustrated, I think, in the explanation offered by my mother when we talked

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about it many years later. She said parents did not give sex education to their children because "they wanted to keep them innocent."

Our first moving picture theatre was *The Dreamland*. During intermissions, coming attractions were announced. The announcement always ended as follows: "The price of admission will remain the same, five and ten cents." Later, my grandfather built a movie theatre, *The Lyric*. He had been showing movies in the opera house above the store. In 1915, however, it became illegal to show movies in second floor theatres because of the fire hazards. We thrilled to the *Perils of Pauline* with Pearl White and loved every movie that starred Mary Pickford, our favorite. As teenagers, our favorite place to congregate was Pete's Ice Cream Parlor. Pete Batsakis had relatives in other towns in Michigan, for example, Petoskey and Manistee, and they were, also, proprietors of ice cream parlors. Teenagers met at inter-town football games and debating contests, and the place to congregate after the event was the ice cream parlor. Consequently when there was a Greek wedding or other festive occasion this was news of interest to teenagers over quite an area. Jewish teenagers were more likely to meet on the debating teams than on the football fields.

Among my memories of Detroit are the early electric cars. In appearance, they were a glassed-in carriage-type automobile and they were driven by electrical current. On one of my visits, my cousin, Nathan Steinberg, took me and my cousin, Freda Rosenthal, for a ride in his mother's electric car. We were all about thirteen years of age at the time. A driver's license and age qualification were not yet legal requirements in Michigan. Another memory is St. John's Arbor, an eating place on Woodward Avenue popular with young people. What I enjoyed most on my visits was the Temple Theatre vaudeville shows. Here we saw Gallagher and Shean, Fannie Brice and the many great performers of the heyday of vaudeville. I remember, also, one could walk down Woodward Avenue any evening, as late as midnight, and see little boys, eight and nine years old, selling newspapers, their hands blue from the cold. These were the days before child labor laws. It was not until 1924 that Congress passed a resolution proposing a child labor amendment to the Constitution.

The United States entered the First World War in the spring of 1917. The boys in our senior class were presented with their diplomas early to permit them to be graduated before leaving for the army training camp in Battle Creek.

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It took my parents a year and a half to make up their minds to send me to college. There was never any question my brother would go to college. For girls it was still new. In the spring of 1919 I entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where there were sixty Jewish girls and 400 Jewish boys!* The war had come to an end the previous November. ROTC on campus had been terminated. The boys were returning from service and hopefully "the world had been made safe for democracy."**

* Unofficial statistics.

** Slogan of the First World War.

Report of Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan

JUNE 18, 1970

The eleventh Annual Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan was held on June 18, 1970, in the auditorium of the Detroit Jewish Welfare Federation Building. It was a luncheon meeting and was well attended.

In his report, the president of the Society, Dr. Irving I. Edgar, reviewed the highlights of its activities and programs during the period of June 1969 through June 1970. Among the items noted were the following:

- 1—This meeting was especially significant because it marked the Tenth Anniversary Issue of our magazine, *Michigan Jewish History*, representing the longest period of continuous publication among the active, local Jewish Historical Societies in the United States; and there were many congratulatory messages on this account. A special index for all the issues thus far published, was prepared by Jonathan Hyams and included in that issue. It was pointed out that our magazine is mailed to cultural institutions the world over and that it has received many commendations. Our editor, Allen A. Warsen, was given special recognition.
- 2—That shortly, in cooperation with the Detroit Historical Commission and the City Plan Commission, the Society will erect an appropriate historical marker, memorializing the site of the first Jewish Synagogue in Michigan, Temple Beth El.
- 3—That work is continuing on our Michigan Jewish Historical Research Archives Section of the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library.
- 4—That in furtherance of our Society's program, president Edgar has continued to speak before various groups on various Michigan Jewish Historical subjects. More especially, that he did appear on the National Radio program "Eternal Light" and gave a short discourse on Chapman Abraham, the first known Jewish settler of the City of Detroit.
- 5.—He announced that Mr. and Mrs. Morris Friedman have

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provided funds for scholarships at the Jewish "Teachers' Seminary of New York. Mrs. Friedman has been an active member of our Board of Directors.

Allen Warsen introduced a resolution respectfully recommending that the Detroit Jewish Welfare Federation give consideration and approval to issuance of a grant of funds for the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, to aid in the furtherance of its educational activities. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Dr. Henry Green gave a report of the nominating committee for the new officers and Board of Directors for the year 1970-1971. All were unanimously elected and are listed in this issue.

The guest speaker at the meeting was Mrs. Bernice C. Sprenger, head of the Burton Historical Collection. The subject was "The Burton Historical Collection and the Development of the Society's Michigan Jewish Historical Research Center."

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

DORIS P. EASTON,
Recording Secretary

We wish the Members of the Jewish Historical
Society of Michigan a year of Health and Happiness
and all of Jewry a Year of Peace and Tranquility.



Officers and Board of Directors

