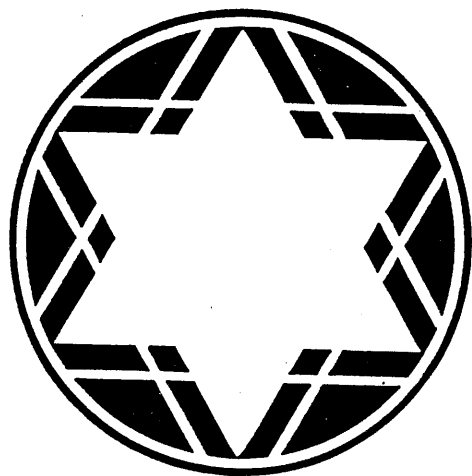


*Tiphereth Israel
Synagogue*



*Warren, Pennsylvania
1918-1994*

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PREFACE

Several efforts to present a history of our Warren Jewish Community and Synagogue were made piecemeal in recent years. The late and esteemed Aaron Shulman presented a partial history on several occasions. Robert Freedman, a former reference librarian at the Warren Library, initiated some research and attempted to write a record for the Warren Historical Society which was not completed. This most recent effort undertaken during the past three years combined these sources together with a collection of data from Synagogue and Sisterhood minutes and records, news articles and more personal accounts from members to finalize and complete this project.

In 1993 a committee of most of the remaining members including Barbara Shapiro, Miriam Benson, Helen Punskey, Frances Stein, Ida Stutz and Harry Segel undertook the responsibility of compiling information and the names and addresses of former residents. A questionnaire was mailed out to those whose addresses were available and a good response followed.

We regret that we did not come up with all of the details and names, especially of the early families. For these and any oversights, omissions or errors, we apologize. This record was undertaken with feelings of loss for what was but with great appreciation and pride for the accomplishments and dedication of so many former members of our Synagogue and Jewish community. Our special thanks to Idie Johnston and Leatrice Segel and their computers for editing and printing out the collection of materials that were brought together.

HARRY SEGEL

A HISTORY OF THE WARREN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Tradition...it is what binds us together. No matter where Jews go, the customs of their people, the rituals of their heritage, the sense of responsibility toward their community will always be with them. While the small community of Warren, Pennsylvania never had more than thirty Jewish families, they built a congregation, established a religious home for their spiritual as well as their social needs, and bound themselves together to form a culture and a way of life that extended four generations in the Warren community. It was a shared responsibility with members giving generously of their time and talent, labor and learning. The bonds which held them together were faith, charity, loyalty and dedication. The members of the Warren Hebrew Congregation collectively demonstrated a strong desire to learn, to achieve, and to contribute to their community.

The beginning of Jewish settlement in the Warren area began in the 1850's. The George Ball family may have been the first although there was evidence of itinerant peddlers before and following the oil field discoveries in the '60's. When George Ball's son Michael V. Ball finished his medical studies in Philadelphia and resettled in Warren, he wrote the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) that there were industries in woodworking, lumber, leather and metalworking in this area needing employees. HIAS then sent a dozen or more families into this area at the beginning of this (the twentieth) century and in 1906 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania chartered the first Warren Hebrew Congregation of Tiphereth Israel Synagogue.

In 1906, Rabbi Aaron Shulman came to Warren where he was hired as it's first rabbi and served as teacher and schochet, ritual slaughterer, and mohel as well. There were fourteen Jewish families in the congregation and almost this many more in the surrounding towns. A Mikvah for ritual cleansing was built in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sontag on South Carver street. Rabbi Shulman wrote to the Jewish Publication Society of New York requesting a Torah and promising payment within a year, "With G-d's help". The Torah was sent cost-ing \$82.00 and was paid for in the promised time. Prayer services were held in member's homes and on the Jewish New Year holidays a local social hall was rented to accommodate the congregants.

The need for a synagogue of their own was painfully felt at the time of the High Holydays in the year 1917. A group of people celebrating a wedding on the afternoon before Yom Kippur Eve remained long after the time in the same rented hall which was to be used by the congregation for their Yom Kippur

services. This caused great anxiety and dismay and a firm resolve that for the next year the congregation would have it's own synagogue.

In the following year it was learned that the United Brethren Church on Conewango Avenue was for sale. The members excitedly met raising part of the required down payment themselves and then traveled by train to other established Jewish communities who contributed the balance towards their holy undertaking. The members came with horse and wagons bringing materials for the conversion of the church to a synagogue and digging out a basement for the study, social, kitchen and bathroom facilities. As expressed by Louis Segel, one of the younger members, "The builders of Solomon's Temple didn't have more enthusiasm for their undertaking than did this small group of Jewish immigrants". Following a series of building improvements through the next two decades, the mortgage was finally paid off in the late 1930's. In 1965 the synagogue was modernized with a new Ark, Marble Ten Commandments, Bemah, Amud and lighting, as designed by architect, Sol N. Gellman of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

At its early inception in 1918, the congregational dues were 50 cents per month with \$3.00 charged each family for the High Holiday seats. At that time each member was obligated for a two week period to clean the "shul" building and assist in arranging services. There was a great spirit of participation, occasionally resulting in heated arguments on procedure, but throughout the years most families and members took turns in assuming responsibilities and offices.

A Ladies Auxiliary, later known as the Sisterhood, played a very important role. The women helped provide the initial furnishings and continued all through the years to raise funds to support Shul operations, provide dinners and programs for the celebration of the various holidays and special occasions. It created and operated a Sunday School for the children of members providing teachers and materials. In addition it held regular meetings at which discussions related to the various plans for synagogue and social activities were held. Programs included speakers, book reviews and subjects of interest that served to create a close social bond between the women.

Throughout the 1930's and later the Sisterhood provided meals and arrangements for lodging for itinerant unemployed Jews passing through Warren. With the coming of the Nazi terror in Europe, the community undertook to sponsor several individual Jews and families who were fortunate enough to escape from there before the war. After World War II, the Jewish sponsored five refugee families at one time. Apartments were acquired and furnished, our women scrubbed the floors and stocked the cupboards and jobs were provided. While only one family remained for a few years, the others moved on to larger opportunities in the cities.

From the 1950's through the 1970's participation in synagogue activities was enthusiastic. B'nai Brith, ZOA, Hadassah, and youth organizations were actively supported with strong emphasis placed on the education of the children. Over a period of fifteen years five rabbis were hired full time to prepare some thirty-five youngsters for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah experience and to continue Hebrew and Jewish history and ethics studies. After this Aaron Shulman taught our young people, preparing them for Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Some of them later participated in conducting our synagogue services.

Special anniversary celebrations for the 40th, 50th and 55th anniversaries of the Warren Hebrew Congregation were held in the synagogue. Rabbi Bernard Poupko of Pittsburgh, a leading rabbi in the area, was the guest speaker for the 50th anniversary event. He is nationally noted for his efforts toward the release of Jews to emigrate from the former Soviet Union.

Through the years new families came to Warren, some for a period of two to fifteen years, becoming members of the Jewish community. Many of them were touched and influenced by the services, activities and association. In the words of Nahum Levinson, "Many Jews were converted to Judaism here". By the end of the 1980's, the number of Jewish families decreased. Some families moved, other members died and most of the grown children did not choose to remain, seeking greater opportunities elsewhere. By 1992 only a few families and several single members remained.....certainly not enough to hold regular services or to continue operation of the synagogue.

It had been stipulated early in this century by the founding members that at such time there might be too few Jewish families to maintain the synagogue that the properties and proceeds be given for Jewish education. A decision was made in 1993 by the remaining members to give up the synagogue. It was intended to find a Jewish school or institution that would accept as a unit the principle religious items to include the Torahs, Ark, Amud, Eternal Light, Marble Ten Commandments and Memorial Tablet, so as to perpetuate the spirit and accomplishments of four generations of the Warren Hebrew Congregation. A year earlier one Torah was given to the Chabad chapter serving Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois.

After almost two years of searching and visitations it was unanimously agreed to give these religious items to the Bet Sefer Mizrahi School in University Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.....a progressive Orthodox Hebrew Day School. This school had recently purchased the Northridge grade school building that it had been leasing. Following a successful fund drive, it is now completing an expansion adding eight classrooms and a new Bet Tefillah (shul and study center) in which the religious fixtures of the Warren synagogue will be housed. Rabbi Levine, the Director and it's Board acknowledged and accepted our conditions to maintain these religious properties together within an active day

school synagogue. Kaddish prayers will be recited for our departed Warren members whose names appear on plaques on the Yahrzeit Memorial Tablet.

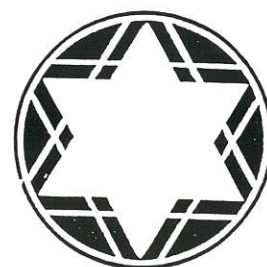
On September 8, 1993, Rabbi Samuel J. Levine, director of this school, together with Rabbi Auerbach, director of Camp Stone, and several others came to receive the Torahs. The next morning, on Thursday, 250 children aged 4 to 16, faculty members and parents gathered outside Bet Sefer Mizrachi School. As described in a letter to Nahum Levinson and Harry Segel, Gerald Englehart, a Bet Sefer parent, said "Rabbi Levine gave a detailed explanation on where the Sifrai Torahs came from, the difficult decision the remaining members of the Warren community had to make in placing them, and the obligation of Bet Sefer Mizrachi school to continue the legacy of the Warren, Pennsylvania community. From there the Torahs were danced into the school and to the shul where they were used for the Thursday morning Torah reading". The remaining religious items for Bet Sefer Mizrachi were shipped later.

Other properties including Talism (prayer shawls), prayer and study books and related materials were given to Camp Stone, a Young Israel sponsored summer camp, headquartered in Cleveland and located outside of Sugar Grove, Warren County, Pennsylvania. The Synagogue sign, records and supporting papers together with the Charter Member Plaque, awards and other memorabilia were sent to the Western Pennsylvania Archives of Jewish Communities located in Pittsburgh, where they are on record for the public.

Efforts to sell the Synagogue property over a three year period mainly by Nahum Levinson and through real estate agencies did not meet with success until March of 1996 to an area church. At a meeting held June 6, 1996, at the home of Leah and Nahum Levinson, it was decided to divide the proceeds of the sale between Yeshiva University and the Jewish Educational Institute of Pittsburgh. Further this History of the First Tiphereth Israel Synagogue and the Warren Jewish Community of over four generations was to be distributed to all of the former members and their families who had resided in Warren. The Warren County Historical Society and Warren County Library Association will also receive copies of this document.



**Warren Hebrew Congregation
Tiphereth Israel, 1918-1994
Charter Members and Families**



CHARTER MEMBERS AND FAMILIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Harris and Mary Rothchild First President	Scrap Metal	Mina, Dora, Hyman, Bessie, Ben, Harry Stein
Wolfe and Clara Gordon Vice-President	Cantor, Peddler	Abe, Phillip, Goldie, David
Aaron and Sonya Shulman Secretary	First Rabbi, 1906 Farmer, Merchant, Teacher & Cantor	Patricia, Max, Morris, Ben, Ned (Israel)
George and Mary Waxman Treasurer	Furniture Store	Boris, Esther, Mary, Leah
J. A. Brown and Family Trustee	Dry Goods Store	Unknown
Harry and Jennie Sontag Trustee -- Had a Mikva in home	Fish Peddler	Ben, Charles
Dr. Michael and Grace Ball Trustee	Doctor of Medicine Son of George Ball, 1st. Merchant, who settled in 1855.	John, William, Jean, Mary
Ben Blesser and Family Trustee	Sold and repaired umbrellas	Harry Anna, Unknown daughter.
Samuel Berson and Family Trustee	Men's Tailor	Unknown
Benjamin Ferdman Trustee	Repaired and sold umbrellas	Rachel, Pearl
Elias and Rachel Glassman	Yeshiva teacher, Clothing Merchant	Rebecca*, Judith, William, Abe

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Morris Greenberg and Family	Furniture factory worker	Sarah
David and Miriam Kanovsky	Grocery Store, Scrap Business, Kane, Pa.	Ruth, Judy, Hershel
Samuel Kornreich and Family	Scrap Business	Fannie, Meyer, Asher
Louis Lebowitz and Family	Peddler, lived in Sheffield, Pa.	Harry, others unknown
Aaron A. Printz	Men's Clothing Stores	Two sons & a daughter
Charles and Dora Punsky (second wife, Etta)	Scrap Dealer	Anna, Jean, Harry, Abraham
Sam and Belle Schraybman	Scrap Business, Grocery Store	None
Louis and Rose Segel	Scrap Dealer	Mazie, Pearl, Harry
Ben Skolnik	Scrap Business	Fannie, rest unknown
Max and Dora Slutz	Peddler	Frank, Edna, Bertha, Ida, Colman
Ernest L. and Belle Stein	Ladies' Clothing Store	Edith, Raymond
Louis and Nettie Waxman	Peddler	Solomon, Zelda

EARLY MEMBERS, 1920'S

Israel and Hannah Barris	Grocers -- First super Market in Warren	Jake, Jane
Levi Epstein and Family	Peddler- oil fields, Working Men's Stores, Sheffield, Warren.	Cyril, Harold, Joe, Sam, Phyllis, Mor-dicai, Beatrice

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Eli and Rachel Gorden	Scrap Dealer	Vera, Miriam
Robert and Rebecca Punskey	Scrap Dealer	Mildred, Burton, Clarence, Julia

EARLY MEMBERS, 1930'S

Meyer and Ida Berenfield	Barrel and Steel Drum Manufacturer	Linda, Harriet Ann
William and Hope Glassman	Attorney at Law	Nema, Olga, David
David and Leah Gordon (2nd. wife, Eva Kanovsky G.)	Shammus, care- taker of shul, schochet, and peddler	Julian, Paul, Gerald
Fred and Mazie Greenwald	Scrap metal and auto parts dealer	Barbara, Barry
Charles and Esther* Sontag	Dst. Mgr. PA. State Liquor Store	Norma, Donald
Jack and Hannah Greenwald	Warren News Agency, Newspapers & Maga- zine Dealer.	Melvin, Richard
Dr. Arnold and Dorothy Kippen	Psychiatrist, Warren State Hospital	Dena, rest unknown
Isadore Leaf and Family	Dry Cleaning	Sylvia, Dorothy
Dr. Leonard & Dora Rosen- zweig	Asst. Dir. Warren State Hospita	Hershel, Monica
Morris & Bessie Shulman	Rug and Floor Covering Store	Jacob, Hershel, Renee
Mary Stein (Sister of Ernest L. Stein)	Homemaker	None

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Dr. Joseph & Jean Sugarman	Pathologist, Warren General Hospital	Roslyn, Heidi
Boris and Sarah Waxman	Waxman's Furniture Store	Jerome

MEMBERS, 1940'S

Paul and Miriam Benson	Gorden's Metals and Salvage	Bonnie, Gail, Amy Jonathan, Clay
Abe and Blanche Feldman	Grocer, New York Life Insurance Salesman	Marshall, Judy, Robert
Ida Feldman	Homemaker	Abe
Albert and Rose Gross	Ace Auto/Sports Store	Eileen, Leonard, Irene, Julia, Norman, Elizabeth, Helen
Hyman & Isabel Levinson	Women's Clothing, The Betty Lee Store	Leo, Harlan
Hershel & Rose Kanovsky	Mgr., G.G.G. Metal, Scrap Dealer, Kanovsky Scrap, Kane, Pa.	Helen, Martin
Joseph & Ruth Miller	Clothing store, Sheffield	Alan, Judy
Martin & Jean Nidetch	Mgr. "The Federal Store"	David, rest unknown
Harry (Shy) & Helen Punsky	Scrap Dealer	Debra, Bruce
Abe & Vera Schwartz	Children's clothing store, "Tiny Town"	Gary, Steven, Nancy
Harry & Leatrice Segel	Scrap Dealer, Steel Supply Segel & Son, Inc.	Marc, David Elliot, Brian, Leonard, Joel

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Herman & Hilda Shapiro	Furniture, Plant Mgr. Sheffield	Names unknown
Sam & Ruth Sherman	Refinery products	Name unknown
Ned & Ann Shulman	Teacher	Amy
Raymond & Frances Stein	Stein's Women Clothing Store. Dir.: of R.S.V.P.	Beverly, Leslie
Isadore & Eileen Trager	Ace Auto Store Deluxe Metal Mfg.	David, William
Jerome & Rhea Waxman	Waxman's Furniture Store	Bradley, Phyllis, Neil

MEMBERS, 1950'S

David & Helen Demel	Warren News Agency	Arlene, Alan
Louis & Pearl Gernstat	Lou's Workingmen's Store, Kane, Pa., Segel & Son, Inc.	None
Bernard & Mollie Gofberg	Gen. Manager, Deluxe Metal, Mfg.	Sheldon, Alan
Norman & Leona Gross	Ace Auto/Sports Store	Barbara, Judy
Meyer & Edna Kornreich	Attorney at Law	Barry, Stuart
Bert & Ruth Levinson	Betty Lee Ladies Store, Levinson's Dept. Store	Mara, Wendy
Jacob & Miriam Levinson	Betty Lee Ladies Store Levinson's Dept. Store	Harry, LeeAnn, Daniel, Sarah Beth
Nahum & Leah Levinson	Betty Lee Ladies Store Levinson's Dept. Store	Laura, Madalyn

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Joshua & Yetta Lyjek	Resettled Holocaust Survivors, Tailor	Henna, Harvey
Burton & Geneva Punskey	Scrap Business	Susan, Norman
Clarence & Eleanor Punskey	Scrap Business	Stewart
Michael & Pearl Siegel	Biochemist, Stuart Meyers Industries	None

MEMBERS, 1960'S

Phillip & Rachel Cockel	Lighting Engineer Executive	Shira, Jonathan
Leonard & Barbara Berenfield	Mgr. Berenfield's Steel Drum Manufacturing	Greg, Joy
Brahm Feldman & Family	Engineer	Names unknown
Murray & Mimi Katz	Engineer, Struthers Wells	Tom
Meyer & Judy Levine	Kanovsky Scrap, Kane, PA.	Kenneth, Sandra
Jerry & Mary Morgenstern	Family & Children Social Services Agency	Names unknown
Harvey & Barbara Shapiro	Public School Teachers, Youngsville, PA.	Susan, Barry
Ben & Sarah Shulman	Unknown	Names unknown
Norman & Lillian Silver	Engineer	Names unknown
Harold & Pamela Weinstein	Owner, Russell Roller Rink	Names unknown

MEMBERS, 1970'S

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Children</u>
Howard & Arlene Brody	Ladies' Clothing Store Ridgeway, PA.	Ira, Dana, Ellen
Lillian Brody	Ladies' Clothing Store	Howard
Arthur & Diane Goldberg	Warren County Family Service, Director	Names unknown
Karen Hulings & Family	Warren Times Observer	Names unknown
Dr. Romould & Maria Orlowski	Psychiatrist & Drama Professor	Daniel, David
Louis & Mimi Schauers	Warren State Hospital Social Worker	None
Jerry & Paula Schindler	Engineer	Names unknown
Steven & Joey Simms	Mgr., Curry's Stationery	Joshua, Jackie, Blake
Harvey & Manuela Stone	Pres. Northwest Engin- eering Company	Margarita, Debra, Daniel, Jimmy, Marco

MEMBERS, 1980'S

David & Nancy Segel	Mgr. Segel & Son, Inc.	Louis, Sara, Rose Benjamin
Ida Stutz	Photographer	None
Idie Johnston & Family	Computer Operator	Gregg, Jennifer, Mara, Sharai
Violet Emple	Clerk	Bill
Lawrence & Debra* Rand	Optician Teacher & Attorney	Benjamin, Jeremy
Dov & Karen Arbel	Warren State Hospital	Mica

The following women whose names are followed by a star have the distinction of having been married in the sanctuary of the Tiphereth Israel Synagogue:

Rebecca Glassman to Meyer Goldblum.....First
Esther Waxman to Charles Sontag.....Second
Debra Punsky to Lawrence Rand.....Last



RELIGIOUS LIFE IN OUR CONGREGATION

Our first generation or two of immigrant members, being brought up Orthodox, did conduct regular Sabbath and all holiday services themselves. Before 1918 services were held in individual homes and halls were hired to accomodate members on the High Holy Day services. Later on the community engaged cantors for the high holidays mostly from New York yeshivahs. A notable cantor for two years during the 1930s was Rabbi Harris from South Africa. His addresses were most interestingly delivered in the "King's English". A few cantors were engaged through member referrals. One young rabbi, brought for the high holidays in the 1960's was Meyer Kahane -- at that time a very mild, reserved Yeshiva Law student -- before his later leadership in the Jewish Defense League and assassination.

In time it became more convenient to bring cantors from Pittsburgh. These included Dov and Michael Bloom and Rabbi Leib Heber, who after retirement as a congregational rabbi became a Jewish Chaplain for Western Pennsylvania State mental hospitals and prisons. These he and his wife, Pearl, served with great dedication. Rabbi Heber encouraged communities to involve themselves, not to abandon the patients, young and older, whom he called his "exceptional children" -- even preparing them for Bar and Bat Mitzvah in emotionally moving services.

Special appreciation is given to Zvi Shuldiner of Pittsburgh who served as our esteemed cantor for the last nine high holiday services held in our community. Each year when called, Zvi responded with, "I will never refuse you as long as you need me". He came to us even though it meant being away from his own family. Zvi served ably conducting our services and reading from the Torah. He gave spirited sermons with special insight as to the events in Israel where he had lived and continued to maintain close ties with friends and family. Zvi made himself a friend to each member of the congregation.

Aaron Shulman came to Warren in 1906 and served as our first rabbi, teacher, ritual slaughterer and mohel. The Shulman family left for a time to reside in Connecticut returning after several years. Other than Rabbi Ulenofsky in the 1920s, there is no record of other rabbis hired until the period of the 1950s through the 1960s. The families were blessed with some thirty-five children and youth to be educated and so for a period of 10 years, four young rabbis made their start with us, followed by Rabbi Michael Eisenberger and his family, who were with us for five years during the 1960s. Bar and Bat Mitzvahs were congregation events and together with the Sunday School, conducted by the Sisterhood, these were the years of marked progress in learning. As the number of children and families diminished, full-time rabbis were no longer hired. Aaron Shulman then very ably taught most of the remaining young people for Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

RABBIS WHO SERVED OUR CONGREGATION

1906.....Rabbi Aaron Shulman
1920's.....Rabbi Ulenofsky
1950-53.....Rabbi Irwin Halperin
1954-55.....Rabbi Herbert Berger
1956-57.....Rabbi Fred Ackerman
1958-59.....Rabbi Morris Kosman
1960-65.....Rabbi Michael Eisenberger

CANTORS WHO SERVED AT THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

Rev. Phillip Shulman
Wolfe (Velvel) Gordon
Rabbi Harris
Rev. Polonsky
Rev. Abraham Singer

Rabbi Meyer Kahane
Rabbi Leib Heber
Dov and Michael Bloom
Zvi Shuldiner
Aaron Shulman



LADIES AUXILIARY "THE SISTERHOOD"

The Ladies' Auxiliary, later called "The Sisterhood", provided many services and activities for the Warren Hebrew Congregation throughout the years of its life. Its members raised monies for charities, and for furnishings for our shul. Holiday dinners, rummage sales, card parties and a cookbook publication were methods for fund raising.

In the early years, the Ladies' Auxiliary helped newly arrived residents to settle in the Warren area. During the Depression years, the Ladies' Aid Committee frequently provided meals and lodgings to itinerant Jews traveling through Warren. Another ongoing project of the Sisterhood was the delivery of monthly food packages prepared by two members and then brought to the Jewish patients in the Warren State Mental Hospital. In addition, every member put together matzos, and special Passover cakes, cookies and candies for the same residents of the hospital.

Of course, it was the ladies of the Sisterhood who "came through" and successfully prepared dinners for holidays and such special occasions as the 40th, 50th and 55th anniversaries of our congregation.

Our Sunday School educational program was the responsibility of the Sisterhood over the years. Volunteer teacher, books and study materials were supplied and holiday programs were presented. Hannah Greenwald first organized classes in the early 1930's and later Hope and William Glassman advanced the curriculum to extend through the high school years.

The Sisterhood met monthly, except during the summer months, presenting varied cultural and entertaining programs which were well attended. A congregational picnic was looked forward to by everyone, including guests from the surrounding communities.

The active participation of these women was in great measure the reason for our synagogue being the center for our small, but vibrant, Jewish community.





B'NAI BRITH



B'nai Brith Chapter # 1252 was established in 1937. An early meeting with its ADL representatives bore out the dangers in Nazi Germany and the growing Anti-Semitism in this country. The Warren Chapter was one of eight in the Northwest Council of Western Pennsylvania. In the 1970's it received recognition as the outstanding chapter with David Demel as its able president. It was involved in community activities and fund raisers and for a short period put out a bulletin called THE STAR. It sponsored the BBYO which became active in meeting together with other youth groups from Erie to Sharon-Farrell all with excellent parent support.

An outstanding program introduced during the late 1940's was the invitation of a local church group to the Synagogue each "Brotherhood Week" falling in February. On these occasions a presentation was made on Judaism. What is a Jew? What does a Jew believe? How do Jews conduct their services? This was followed by tea and cookies with an informal question and answer period. The response was so successful that various church groups kept returning with their youth and other adult groups averaging five to ten groups a year. Programs were presented by our rabbis when present but through most of the years by several of our women and men. As many as 150 Middle School students crowded our 100 seat synagogue on one occasion. Other groups normally averaged from 15 to 50 so that through the years several thousand church members, young and old, attended. It may well have been an important factor that the city of Warren did not experience any major anti-semitism.

Our B'nai Brith Chapter was represented on a committee for the establishment of an INTERFAITH CENTER at the Warren State Mental Hospital. We played an active role in its realization together with lay members and ministers from other churches and the WSH Chaplains. Over a seven year period of planning, fund raising, choosing an architect and design and lobbying the committee persisted in its efforts. The result was the first interfaith center of its kind at a state mental institution and a place of beauty. It consists of a hexagon shaped main non-denominational sanctuary, a narthex, offices for the chaplains, a kitchen for serving, and three individual chapels, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, making this center one of the finest in the country and a model for others to follow. Charles Sontag, David Demel, Abe Schwartz, Phillip Cockel and Harry Segel served on this committee.

A B'nai Brith Living Room Study Program was taught from five prepared texts using work books designed to guide the study and discussions during the 1970's. Over a dozen members took part alternately preparing and conducting

these classes at meetings in the living rooms of their homes. In addition to the social benefit derived from these sessions, participants gained a knowledge of the past, present and current Jewish thinkers, writers and their literature, a heritage to be treasured.

The chapter also had bowling teams that took part in a Warren Service Club Bowling League and our chapter put on several community fund raising projects for greater visibility and local service activities.

A more recent special program sponsored by B'nai Brith International in 1988 was the observance of the 50th Anniversary of Krystal Nacht which occurred in Germany. This was in remembrance of the widespread destruction of Jewish property together with over 1200 synagogues by the Nazis. Churches in our community responded to our request to leave their lights on all night and several ministers participated in a memorable commemorative service at our synagogue which was open to the public.

The activity of our Warren chapter was at its height throughout the 1960's and 1970's and then diminished with the loss of Jewish families. Ray Stein and Hersh Kanovsky served as presidents of the Northwest Pennsylvania Council and Meyer Berenfield was the last president of our local #1252 chapter.

COMMITTMENT TO TZEDAKA

The Warren Jewish community's fund raising efforts in support of American and World Jewry through the Jewish Agency and the United Jewish Appeal heightened in the 1930's. The Warren County Federation of Jewish Charities was established. Each Yom Kippur men and women were present at a fund raising appeal to give annual pledges. Attorney William Glassman, who served as chairman, also conducted a fund drive which raised \$6000.00 from non-Jews and \$9000.00 from our Jewish members, a new high at that time. Funds were allocated, 90% to U.J.A. with the balance sent to a number of Jewish educational and religious institutions. Annual totals of over \$35,000.00 a year were reached. Bert Levinson and Harry Segel served as co-chairmen together with Harry Punsky as treasurer for over twenty years.

During the late 1930's, several refugees from Germany and Austria were sponsored and settled in our town for a year or two. After World War II, the community brought in five families from the Displaced Persons Camps in Europe at one time. Apartments were acquired, cleaned and furnished, cupboards were stocked and jobs were secured. Jacob Levinson led this project together with the Sisterhood and other Shul members.

Jacob Levinson also served capably as President of our ZOA chapter while it existed and Chairman of the Israel Bond Sales in the congregation over a number of years. The Warren Jewish community rated among the highest in terms of the percentage of people purchasing bonds in the Tri-State Area of Northwest Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

A later highlight for giving was the establishment of a perpetual foundation through the estate of Samuel Epstein in 1989. Sixty percent of the income realized annually was bequeathed to ten major Jewish educational institutions and charities dividing a sum of approximately \$80,000.00 a year. The other 40% of income provided scholarships annually to the most deserving of Sheffield High School graduates.

The State of Israel sent a special plaque in appreciation to the Warren Jewish Community on its twenty-fifth anniversary for its support. It is signed by Golda Meir, David Ben Gurion, Zalman Shazar, who were former prime ministers of Israel and also by Lewis Pincas, President of the Jewish Agency.

The Valley Voice and Echo

40¢

Vol. IX No. 19 Warren County's Only Weekly Newspaper Friday, August 7, 1987

"Sam's" Gift To The Future



Samuel Epstein

The last will and testament of Samuel Epstein was probated last Friday at the Warren County Court House. Townsfolk had speculated for years about the final distribution of the Epstein property, but the will of the last member of this well-known Sheffield family provided a surprise that the curious had never envisioned.

According to the terms of Samuel Epstein's will, his entire estate, after a few specific grants to civic groups, family members and friends, will be held in trust by Pennbank as the Samuel Epstein Foundation.

Sixty percent of the net income from this trust will be distributed annually to ten

charities outside of the community, all Hebrew centers of learning, research or benevolence.

Forty percent of the income will be paid to Sheffield Area High School to be used for three annual scholarships for graduates of the Sheffield school. A graduate of Sheffield High in 1916, Mr. Epstein was interested in seeing qualified young people have the advantage of a college or university education.

Mr. Epstein further directed that a committee of three, chaired by his good friend, William R. Rice, and including the principal of the high school and one other, should have the responsibility of choosing the recipients. It was his intention that selection be based on merit, not need. The will states that the committee is to make the award to students "who in their judgment will likely succeed as college or university students and make the best citizens in the future." Each grant will be for one school year.

Mr. Samuel Bonavita, Mr. Epstein's attorney, said on Tuesday that the last of Levi Epstein's and Anna Herschfield Epstein's seven children had been discussing his will for the last four years. The document probated last Friday was signed on March 4, 1986. One of the two codicils added at a later date gave gifts of \$1000 to the Sheffield Civic Association, the Sheffield Library and the Sheffield Volunteer Fire Department.

Although there is only one surviving member of the once-large Epstein family, niece Annette Miller of New York City, and no one to carry on the name that has for more than a century been synonymous in Sheffield with business acumen, honesty and thrift, the Samuel Epstein Foundation will preserve the memory of this civic-minded man and his remarkable siblings. Sheffield has long admired the Epstein family and many have had reason to be grateful to them for unpublicized kindnesses. Now the entire community is justified in giving thanks for these quiet, industrious men and women who understood well the meaning of "good citizenship."

AARON SHULMAN AND DAVID GORDON SPECIAL RECOGNITION

While many members, both men and women, gave of themselves to the service of the Warren Hebrew Congregation, special mention must be made of the dedicated commitment given by the late Aaron Shulman and David Gordon.

Aaron Shulman came from Russia to America and in the year 1906 he became the first rabbi, shochet, mohel and teacher for the small group of Jews who resided in the rural community of Warren, Pennsylvania. He maintained a regular routine of early morning study through his many years and was the Talmud and Bible authority for both young and old. He was well read and articulate on many subjects. He and his wife Soshia, raised a family of four sons and one daughter. Because of the health of his wife, they left Warren to take up farming in Connecticut. After several years they returned to Warren where Shulman owned and operated a family clothing store on Pennsylvania Avenue East.

Throughout his years in Warren he taught Hebrew and Judaic heritage subjects to member Jews and their families and also to interested Non-Jews. Many of our young boys and girls were taught and prepared for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah occasions and often times he wrote their speeches too. He also had a talent for composing original poetry in Hebrew and English, giving these "acrostic" gems to individuals for their special events. Notable was his contribution as our spiritual Chazan for congregational prayer services without any compensation and if we persisted, he would give such compensation to Jewish charities. He, together with David Gordon, kept our religious services going, for regular Shabbos Minyans as well as holiday services. On the very last Yom Taven (New Year) cycle in October of 1976, he expended all of his energies, asking only that G-d enable him to complete the final Succoth services of the cycle. With great heartfelt effort he did and shortly after in that month he died. There could be no replacement and the loss of his personal knowledge, teaching and leadership are still missed by us. A year later, on September 3, 1977, an Aaron Shulman Memorial lecture was given by Rabbi Lewis Littman of Erie, sponsored by his family members, at the Synagogue. It was very well attended and formal tribute was again given in his memory.

David Gordon, a son of Wolfe (Velvel) and Clara (Chaitze) Gordon, came from Russia, along with his mother and several brothers to Warren in 1922 at the age of 17, the youngest of their four children. He joined their father and sister Goldie at their home on Prospect street. He had no formal english education or other training and made his living peddling and collecting junk and papers. However, he gave much of his time to the duties of Shammus, (caretaker) of our congregation and synagogue building. He arranged for and participated in conducting our religious, prayer services, cleaned the "Shul", and in

time also was trained to be our Shochet, preparing the Kosher slaughtering of poultry used by the families of the congregation. The holiday of Succoth prompted him to bring the ceremonial Lulav and Esrog to each of our homes so that the family members could say the special morning prayers associated with the holiday observance.....with a smile and his usual happy greetings. Dave seemed happiest when he was serving the religious needs of his Jewish friends and family, uncomplaining as to his lack of great means and the personal tragedies he experienced when his first wife Leah died leaving him with two young boys and in later years when his second, devoted wife Eva passed away after a lengthy illness. They gave him three fine sons who became high achievers in their own right.

Dave was perhaps the best giver to our local United Jewish Appeal fund raising drives. He collected used newspapers which he laboriously bundled and each year he resolved that with the proceeds from this accumulation he would buy a new suit for the New Year High Holidays. Instead, each year he would give this money to the UJA fund drive, because "others needed it more". In the year 1970, he finally purchased that special, new suit planning to wear it to a family member's son high school graduation, but, he never got the chance! In a freak auto accident in June of 1970, he was thrown out of his pickup truck causing his ultimate death. He was truly mourned by everyone of us. The members of our congregation contributed to a memorial fund that was used to establish a grove of 1000 trees planted in Israel's J.N.F. John F. Kennedy forest to honor and commemorate our wonderful friend, David Gordon.

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WARREN COMMUNITY

During the span of the several generations of Jews that lived in the Warren area, many business, professional and cultural contributions were made to the community at large. There was evidence that Jewish peddlers were in Warren during the early days. George Ball was the first Jewish business owner in our town. He settled in Warren in the year 1855 and employed up to twenty tailors and later opened another shop in Buffalo, New York. The Siegel Brothers Haberdashery was a leading area store. Levi Epstein and family had early stores in Warren and Sheffield. Sam Schraybman established the first grocery "super market" on Pennsylvania Avenue, East. E.L. Stein and Raymond Stein's fine, women's store was the first retail store to have air conditioning in downtown Warren. J.A. Brown, Elias Glassman, Aaron and Morris Shulman, George Waxman, Boris and Jerome Waxman, Albert and Norman Gross, and Abe Schwartz also owned and operated a variety of retail stores. More recently the Levinson Brothers Department Store and the Betty Lee Women's Store were the prominent anchor stores in downtown Warren until closing in the 1980's.

Other families established businesses, some starting from peddling junk and paper and progressing to scrap metal dealers. These families included Harris Rothchild, Samuel Kornreich, Charles and Harry Punsky, Robert and Burt Punsky, Eli Gordon and Louis, Harry and David Segel. Segel and Son, Inc. introduced the first comprehensive steel warehouse supply in the area. Myer Berenfield and Leonard Berenfield owned and operated the Berenfield Barrel and Steel Drum manufacturing company in Clarendon.

One of the earlier outstanding members was Dr. Michael V. Ball. Born in 1868, he received his principle schooling in Buffalo and Warren. He entered Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia at the age of eighteen and graduated three years later. Post graduate study took him to Germany where he studied under Dr. Robert Koch. Upon returning to the United States, Dr. Ball worked in several hospitals and taught Histology at Niagara University and New York Medical College for Women. His practise in Warren was in the speciality of Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat diseases. He served as Coroner and was considered the leading medical authority of Warren during his early years. Dr Ball was instrumental in contacting the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and requesting that they relocate newly, arrived Jewish immigrants to the Warren-Sheffield area. As a result more than a dozen families came into this area.

JEWISH LEADERS IN THE WARREN COMMUNITY

DR. MICHAEL V. BALL	Founder of Warren Academy of Sciences, Pres. Warren Medical Society, Dir. County Medical Services, Coroner
IDA BERENFIELD	Pres. Warren County Girl Scouts
MYER BERENFIELD	Founder, Berenfield Steel Drum Manufacturing
WILLIAM GLASSMAN	Pres. Warren Cty. Bar Association, State Attorney General's Office
HOPE & WM. GLASSMAN	Co-founders Warren Civic Orchestra
BERNARD GOFBERG	Co-Chairman, Kinzua Dam Committee Genl. Mgr., Deluxe Metal Manufacturing
ARTHUR GOLDBERG	Dir. Warren Cty. Family Service Agency
HERSHEL KANOVSKY	Pres. B'nai Brith, Northwest Council
MEYER KORNREICH	Warren County District Attorney
BERT LEVINSON	Pres. Pine Grove Twshp. Lions Club
JACOB LEVINSON	Pres. Warren Genl. Hospital Board Pres. Warren Retailors Assn. Chairman, Warren Borough Parking Authority
LEAH LEVINSON	Pres. Pleasant Twshp. PTA, Girl Scout Leader 5 years
RUTH LEVINSON	Well known area professional artist
MIRIAM LEVINSON	Well known musician & piano teacher, Dir. Philomel Club
JEAN NIDETCH	Founder of "Weight Watchers"
HELEN PUNSKY	Girl Scout Leader, 5 years.

DR. LEONARD ROSENZWEIG	Asst. Dir. Warren State Hospital Pres. Warren Kiwanis Club
ABE SCHWARTZ	Pres. Warren Art League
HARRY SEGEL	Pres. Warren Cty. Family Service Agency Pres. Interfaith Ctr. Warren State Hospital Pres. Gracchian Society
DAVID SEGEL	Scoutmaster, Troop 8 BSA -- 7 years Pres. Warren Electric Cooperative
LEATRICE G. SEGEL	Pres. League of Women Voters of Warren Member LWV of PA. State Board Vice-Chair. Warren Borough Home Rule Charter Commission. Member and Vice-Pres. Warren Borough Council. Secy. Warren Cty Leased Housing Corp.
MORRIS SHULMAN	Master Farrah Grotto U.C.T. United Commercial Travelers
MICHAEL SIEGEL	Winner of Natl. Photo Essay Contest
BARBARA SHAPIRO	Member, Youngsville Borough Council
CHARLES SONTAG	Commander, American Legion Post
RAYMOND STEIN	Pres. Warren Chamber of Commerce Recipient, Community Service Award Pres. B'nai Brith Northwest PA. Chapter Pres. Family Service Agency Dir. R.S.V.P. Pres. Conewango Country Club
MANUELA STONE	Pres. Warren Art League
HARVEY STONE	Pres. Northwest Engineering Company Pres. Warren Chapter, Professional Engineering Society Supervisor, Glade Township
JEROME WAXMAN	Pres. Lions Club, Warren

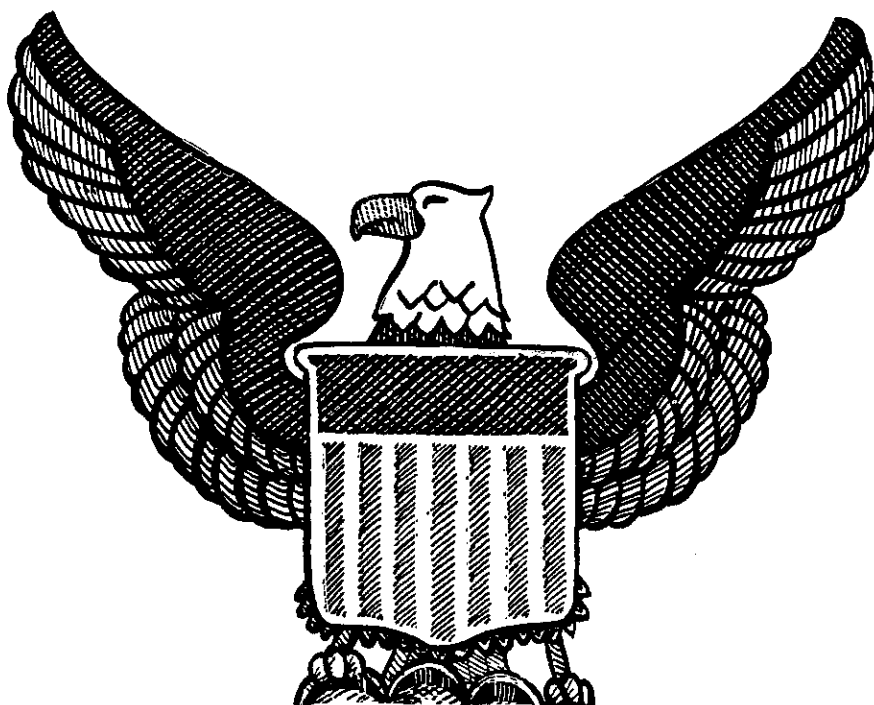
MEMBERS IN THE ARMED SERVICES

In both World Wars I and II our Jewish community was well represented in the armed forces. WW II, especially was a time of realization that Jewish survival was dependent on its outcome. Most of our eligible young men served.

Harold Epstein
Hershel Kanovsky
Hyman Levinson
Jacob Levinson
Harry Punskey
Abe Schwartz

Ned Shulman
Harry Segel
Charles Sontag
Harry Stein
Raymond Stein
Jerome Waxman

A few worked in defense industries and on home service projects.



SYNAGOGUE FOUNDERS - 1918

Harry Rothchild, Pres.
 Wolf Gordon, Vice Pres.
 Aaron Shulman, Secy.
 George Waxman, Treas.
 J. A. Brown, Trustee
 Harry Sontag, Trustee

Dr. M. V. Ball
 Ben Blesser
 Samuel Berson
 Ben Ferdman
 E. I. Glassman
 M. Greenberg
 David Kanovsky
 Samuel Kornreich
 Louis Lebowitz

A. A. Printz
 Charles Punskey
 Sam Schraybman
 Louis Segel
 Ben Skolnik
 Max Slutz
 E. L. Stein
 Louis Waxman

ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM COMMITTEES

PROGRAM

Jacob Levin son
 Harry Punskey
 Hershel Kanovsky
 Nahum Levinson
 Harry Segel

DINNER

Bessie Shulman
 Geneva Punskey
 Rose Kanovsky
 Miriam Levinson
 Leatrice Segel

RESERVATIONS-PUBLICITY

Harry & Helen Punskey
 Louis & Pearl Gernstat
 Abe Schwartz

DECORATIONS

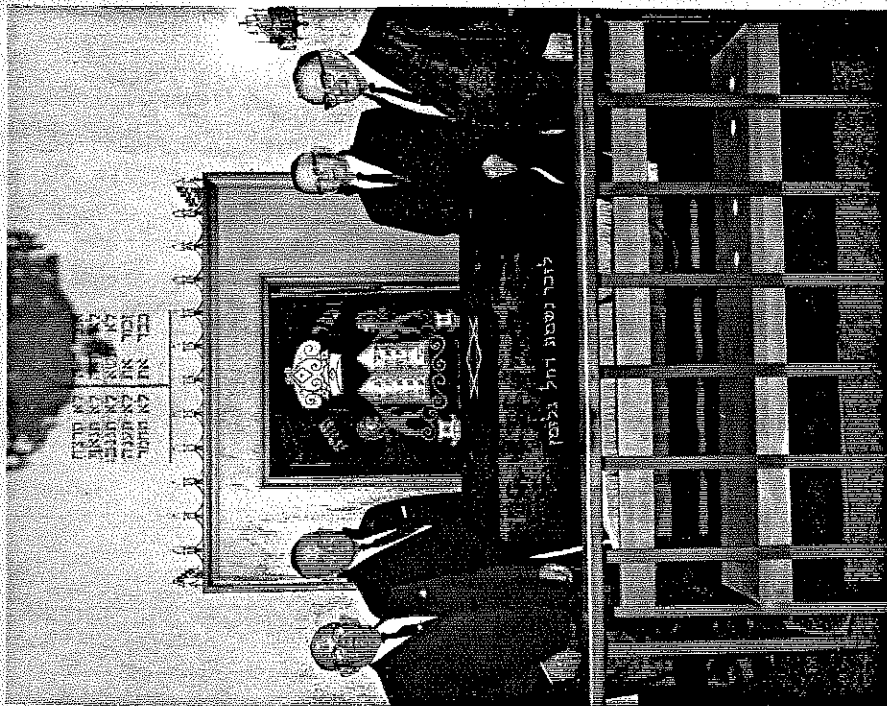
Ruth Levinson
 Bert Levinson
 Sarah Waxman

Tiphereth Israel Synagogue

50th Anniversary

1918 - 1968

September 8, 1968
 Warren, Pennsylvania



CHARTER MEMBERS

Aaron Shulman
Charles Punsky

Louis Segel
David Kanovsky

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Congregation President

Mr. Nahum Levinson

Sisterhood President

Mrs. Jacob Levinson

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Harry Segel

Invocation

Rabbi Michael Eisenberger

DINNER

GRACE AFTER MEALS

Congregation History

Mr. Aaron Shulman

Sisterhood History

Mrs. Jacob Levinson

Address

Rabbi Bernard A. Poupko

Charter Member Presentation

Mr. Jacob Levinson

Toast

Mr. Harry J. Punsky

Warren Hebrew Congregation

112 CONEWANGO AVENUE, P. O. BOX 365

WARREN, PENNA. 16365

September 3, 1993

Bet Sefer Mizrachi School
University Heights, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Levine and Officers of Bet Sefer Mizrachi School:

This is to acknowledge gifting of religious fixtures and Torahs of Tiphereth Israel Synagogue, this city, to include the following:

Two Torahs with crown and breast plate
Ark with Paroches
Amud with coverings
Marble Ten Commandments
New Tamid
Memorial (Yorcheit) tablet, bronze
Two large custom Synagogue chairs
Bench for Torahs

Also available are Siddurim, bookcases, books and other items remaining for your selection.

Bet Sefer Mizrachi does acknowledge donations of religious items subject to following conditions:

1. Said Torahs and gifts will be transported to University Heights by Bet Sefer Mizrachi and are to be removed by October 31, 1993.

2. These religious properties and fixtures to be maintained together as a unit in a Bais Medresh for religious services as a perpetual memorial of Warren Hebrew Congregation of Tiphereth Israel Synagogue with appropriate plaque of acknowledgment.

3. Bet Sefer Mizrachi will observe Kaddish memorial services for those departed members regularly. Families of departed members will be notified of Yorcheit anniversary dates if requested.

It is with heartfelt considerations for Bet Sefer Mizrachi School, its students and teachers, that we place these dear memorial objects with you and with best wishes for this and each New Year.

Yours truly,

Nahum Levinson,
President



BET SEFER MIZRACHI

Rabbi Samuel J. Levine
Educational Director

Rabbi Melvin Granatstein
Chairman, Vaad Hachinuch

Myer Senders, Chairman of the Board

Samuel Friedlander, President

September 22, 1993

Mr. Nahum Levinson
112 Conewango Avenue
Warren, Pa. 16365

Dear Mr. Levinson,

This is to acknowledge the Warren Hebrew Congregation's gift of two Sefrei Torah, crown breast plate, rimonim, parochet, amud coverings, shulchan covering, shofarot, and besamim box. We also will make arrangements to pick up the ark, marble ten commandments, ner tamid, memorial tablets, two large custom Synagogue chairs and a bench for the Sefrei Torah. We understand that the gift was made subject to the following conditions:

1. Said Torahs and gifts will be transported to University Heights by Bet Sefer Mizrachi and are to be removed by October 31, 1993.
2. These religious properties and fixtures to be maintained together as a unit in a Bet Midrash for religious services as a perpetual memorial of Warren Hebrew Congregation of Tephareth Israel Synagogue with appropriate plaque of acknowledgement.
3. Bet Sefer Mizrachi will observe Kaddish memorial services for those departed members regularly. Families of departed members will be notified of Yortzeit anniversary dates if requested.

We sincerely appreciate this gift and feel honored to help perpetuate the memory of the Warren Jewish Community. Please accept our best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Samuel J. Levine
Educational Director



September 10, 1993

Mr. Nam Levinson
Warren Hebrew Congregation
112 Conewango Ave
P.O. Box 265
Warren, Pa, 16365

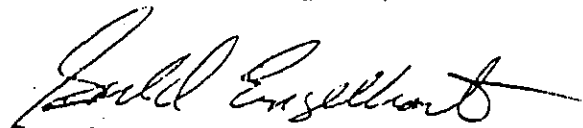
Dear Mr. Levinson,

After meeting you Wednesday when we picked up the Sefrai Torah's, I felt compelled to write you to express my appreciation and gratitude for your decision to transplant the Torah's and the N'shama of your Congregation to our School.

The ride home was bittersweet. We talked about how difficult it must be to take apart a shul, something that is so near and dear to your hearts and which had been the center of your lives for so many years. Likewise we talked about how Bet Sefer would undertake perpetuating the community, its former members, and the Torah ideals for which it stood.

We arrived in Cleveland too late for us to have the student body welcome the Torah's Wednesday, but Thursday Morning about two hundred children, aged 4 to 16, 25 faculty, and several parents gathered in the parking lot to welcome the new additions to our school. Rabbi Levine gave a detailed explanation on where the Sifrai Torahs came from, the difficult decision the community had to make in relocating them, and the obligation of our community to continue the legacy of the Warren Pa. Jewish Community. From there the Torahs were danced into the school, and to the shul, where they were used for the Thursday morning Torah reading. It was really an exciting moment, and as soon as I have the film developed, I will forward to you copies of the photographs I took.

Again, thank you for allowing us the privilege to make a new home for your community, and with best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year,


Gerald Engelhart
A Bet Sefer parent



A flood of emotions was unleashed when Nahum Levinson (second from left), last president of Warren Hebrew Congregation, turned over two Torah scrolls to Dov Pickholtz (left), Rabbi Samuel J. Levine and Elana Hoenig of Bet Sefer Mizrahi.

A tale of gain and loss

Our hearts sang with the song of Simchat Torah; his with the sorrow of Tisha B'Av.

RABBI SAMUEL J. LEVINE Special to the CJN

From Rosh Hashana to Simchat Torah, we are touched by feelings of awe, fear, humility, transcendence, love and joy. I experienced the entire roller coaster of these emotions in one day, when I, along with Rabbi Yisrael Auerbach, Jerry Engelhart, Elana Hoenig and Dov Pickholtz, traveled to Warren, Pennsylvania, to pick up two *Sifrei Torah* (Torah scrolls) that the Warren Hebrew Congregation was donating to Bet Sefer Mizrahi.

It was with great excitement and enthusiasm that we set out on our journey. Acquiring two *Sifrei Torah* would be another milestone in the development of our school as an institution of Torah learning, and anticipation ran high as we drove through the picturesque Pennsylvania countryside.

We discussed what it meant to our school to be the recipient of so wonderful a gift, and we even touched on the difficulty our benefactors would have in parting with these sacred objects.

However, we were totally unprepared for the flood of emotions, the anguish and sorrow, demonstrated by Nahum Levinson, the last president of the Warren Hebrew Congregation, as he turned over the *Sifrei Torah*, along with their accouterments, to our delegation. As recipients, our hearts sang with the song of Simchat Torah; as donor, Nahum Levinson's heart was tinged with the sorrow of Tisha B'Av.

Levinson turned over more than two *Sifrei Torah* on that day; he turned over the history, tradition and legacy of his community as well.

The Warren Jewish community had its beginnings in the early 1850s, with the George Ball family. When Ball's son, Michael, finished his medical studies and settled in Warren, he wrote to HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) indicating there were jobs available in Warren and requested that HIAS send a number of families to join him there. A dozen families were sent and, in 1905, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania chartered the Congregation of Tipheret Israel Synagogue.

In 1906, a rabbi arrived to serve the community and a mikveh was built. In 1918, a building was purchased and this site became the hub of a vibrant community that prospered through the 1970s.

"Many Jews were converted to Judaism here," is the way Nahum Levinson put it as he stood, eyes brimming over with tears, in the silent, empty sanctuary. Their tears of joy and sorrow, prayers of supplication and praise were a palpable presence as we took the *Sifrei Torah* from the ark.

The awesome import of that moment dawned on all of us; we were participating in a life-and-death operation, a spiritual organ transplant. We were the vehicle through which life would be transferred from one body to another.



Joyfully escorting the Torah scrolls into the Bet Sefer Mizrahi building are, from left, Naftali Balanson (carrying scroll), Rabbi Yoram Nalshoni and Jessie Pole.

The next morning, 250 students and teachers welcomed the *Sifrei Torah* to school. Fortuitously, it was Thursday and we were able to read from one of the scrolls immediately. Genuine delight radiated from the

We were the vehicle through which life would be transferred from one body to another.

faces of the children as they heard their Torah being read, but my mind wandered back to that sanctuary that now stood alone.

I did not weep for the Jews of Warren. They are a part of our remarkable history and they have contributed to Jewish continuity on many levels. Their sons and daughters are productive members of *k'lal Yisrael* (the people of Israel). Their community's future has now been melded with that of a Jewish day school, and they have the merit of being remembered and memorialized by Jewish children studying Torah.

As Yisrael, Jerry, Elana, Dov and I celebrate Simchat Torah this year, it will be with an enhanced sense of the centrality of Torah in our lives.

Rabbi Samuel J. Levine is the education director at Bet Sefer Mizrahi day school.

Silence whispers synagogue memories

By VICTORIA BARONE
Staff Writer

When you step inside, you can almost hear the silence whisper with the many prayers offered up within its walls for over 75 years.

The splendor of the religious objects it holds within its simple wooden structure speaks of the beauty of its Hebrew rituals. Because the Jewish community is a minority in this area, the sights are exotic to most. But the Tiphereth Israel Synagogue is a familiar and comforting presence to those who have worshipped there throughout the years.

"This was the center of all of our lives," Nahum Levinson of Warren commented. "With such a small group like ours, they all were an extension of your family. You experienced each other's joys and sorrows."

With the Jewish community dwindling in number in recent years, the synagogue held its last service about three years ago. It has recently been listed for sale and its many religious objects divided up for distribution. The official closing brings an important chapter in local history to a close.

The synagogue served its Jewish community since early in the century, but that community was born many years prior to that. Between 1850 and 1880 the first Jewish families settled in Warren



WITH THE SACRED TORAH — Nahum Levinson, left, and Harry Segel, members of the congregation of Tiphereth Israel Synagogue, are shown here with one of the synagogue's three Torahs. (Photo by Rob Andersen)

County, sent to the area by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. The George Ball family was the first Jewish family to settle here in the 1850s. Dr. Michael V. Ball, born in Warren in 1868, became a physician, a college professor, and a clinical pathologist. He practiced medicine in Warren until his death in 1945.

The area's first rabbi, Aaron Shulman, came to America from Russia as a young man around 1905. Shulman, together with

David Gordon, who also emigrated from Russia, were responsible for religious services for many years.

Some other early Jewish settlers were the Siegels, who established a men's clothing store, Siegel Brothers habadashery; the Levi Epstein family, with stores in Sheffield and Warren; and Sam Schraybman, who established Warren's first grocery store. The Steins, Browns, Glassmans, Shulmans, and Waxmans

were also early retailers in the area. More recently the Levinson Brothers department store and Betty Lee's women's clothing store became prominent anchor stores in downtown Warren until their closing at the end of the 1980s. Others who operated businesses included Louis Segel, who introduced the first comprehensive steel warehouse supply, Harris Rothchild, Samuel Kornreich, Charles Punsky,

See SYNAGOGUE, page A-8

Synagogue

Robert Punsky and Eli Gordon.

Early Jewish settlers held religious meetings in private homes or a public meeting place until 1917 when they decided to establish a permanent house of worship. They found that property in the United Brethren Church at the corner of Conewango Ave. and Conewango Pl. that had just been put up for sale. Donations of money and materials were obtained through both the Jewish and Christian community, a down payment was made, and the project was underway. Over the years, members of the congregation donated numerous religious items and parts of the synagogue.

Louis Segel, a young man during the synagogue's earliest days, once described the work performed as, "The builders of Solomon's Temple did not have more enjoyment than we in our undertaking."

An average of 18 to 20 families worshipped in the synagogue at any one time over the years. In the 1950s, the synagogue was modernized with, among other items, a new Ark to hold the Sefer Torah, which contains the Five Books of Moses, marble Ten Commandments, and lighting designed by architect Sol N. Gellman of Milwaukee, Wis.

A Ladies Auxiliary, called The Sisterhood, played an important role in the synagogue over the years. The auxiliary helped to provide initial furnishings, dinners and programs for holidays and special occasions, and created a Sunday School for children. Throughout the Great Depression and later years, The Sisterhood provided meals and arrangements for lodging for itinerant unemployed Jews passing through Warren.

With the rise of the Nazi party in Germany in the 1930s, the Jewish community sponsored several Jewish families from Europe, bringing them to the area before the Holocaust began. After World War II, they brought five Jewish refugee families to the community. The Ladies' Auxiliary worked to prepare apartments for the new arrivals, scrubbing floors and stocking cupboards. All but one of the refugee families moved on to larger cities and Jewish communities within a year or two.

During the 1950s through 1970s, education was one of the synagogue's primary missions. Sunday School classes were supplemented by preparations for the ceremonies of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, and for Hebrew education.

By the 1980s, only five or six families who attended the synagogue remained in the area.

Harvey Stone moved to Warren in 1968, and attended synagogue in Warren with

his family from that time until services stopped several years ago.

"You hate to see something like this end in your community. All my children grew up in the synagogue. I taught Sunday School there from 1968 to 1984. After Rabbi Shulman died, I was the one who prepared the children for their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. I probably prepared about nine or ten for that," Stone said.

Once the decision was made to sell the synagogue, members decided to make a gift of such things as their three Torahs, the Ark, prayer books, Ten Commandment Tablets, Memorial Tablets, a plaque signed by Golda Meir and David Ben-Gurion celebrating Israel's 25th anniversary, and the eternal light above the altar to a growing congregation or institution. This, Levinson said, will in some measure perpetuate the Warren Hebrew congregation.

Most of these will be donated to University Heights Hebrew School in Cleveland, Ohio, but some will be donated to Warren County Historical Society, a congregation in Evanston, Ill., and as a gift to Camp Stone, a Jewish summer camp in Lottsville. Some will remain with the descendants of the families who originally donated them.

All are of religious significance and carefully tended. The three Torahs are some of the most impressive. Handwritten on lambskin parchment, and wrapped in velvet, they have been opened during each service by reverent hands. The Rabbi read a part of the Torah each Sunday, completing the roll after a year had passed. With the new year, the readings would start again at the beginning.

The loss of the synagogue, while accepted as a necessity, has been difficult for members of its congregation.

"It's very sad. It's like my home is being taken away," Frances Stein of Warren commented.

Stein recalled that over the years, even after her children had grown, they attended synagogue with her, and with her late husband Raymond, whenever they visited the area. She takes comfort in the fact that religious items will be donated to other places of worship. Even the sale of the building will be a relief, she said.

"Because it won't be sitting there empty anymore," Stein explained.

For the congregation of Tiphereth Israel Synagogue, the building at the corner of Conewango Ave. and Conewango Pl. will never be truly empty. It will vibrate subtly with the hushed tones of more than 70 years of its congregation's experiences.



Historical Society
of Western Pennsylvania

4338 Bigelow Boulevard
Pittsburgh
Pennsylvania 15213

Telephone 412/681-5533
Facsimile 412/681-3029

Sites

Pittsburgh Regional
History Center

The Kins House
Museum of the
American Immigrant

Meadowcroft
Museum of Rural Life

August 3, 1994

Nahum Levinson
135 Callender Street
Warren, PA 16365

Dear Mr. Levinson,

Thank you for your recent donation of the records of the Warren Hebrew Congregation/Tiphereth Israel to the Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. These records will be a valuable addition to our rapidly growing collection of archival material documenting the history of the Jewish experience in Western Pennsylvania.

As we move toward the opening of the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center in 1996, we are grateful for donations such as this to further enhance our ability to document and interpret the history of this region.

In order to formalize the donation, please sign the enclosed Memorandum of Agreement and return the original to me in the enclosed envelope. The copy is for your records..

Should you have any questions about this donation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Judith B. Ross
Archivist for the Jewish Collection

encls.



Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

4338 Bigelow Boulevard
Pittsburgh
Pennsylvania 15213

Telephone 412/681-5533
Facsimile 412/681-3029

Sites

Pittsburgh Regional
History Center

The Kins House
Museum of the
American Immigrant

Meadowcroft
Museum of Rural Life

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania has accepted with sincere gratitude and appreciation your gift of:

Records of the Warren Hebrew Congregation/Tiphereth Israel:

General correspondence, 1950's - 1990's
Source documents, including: Constitution and By-laws,
deed, charter, histories.
Minutes, 1918-1940, 1941-1957, 1957-1985
Financial Ledgers 1967/68
Sisterhood materials: 1944-1957, 1950's - 1980's, including
minutes, constitution & By-laws, programs, annual reports
Certificates & citations including one which has the original
signatures of Golda Meir and David Ben-Gurion.

Sign (wood and glass) with name of synagogue and date building
erected (will be given to the Museum)

Received by: Judith B. Ross Title: Archivist of the Jewish
for the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Collection

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DATE: _____ DONOR'S SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: Nahum Levinson

ADDRESS: 135 Callender St.

Warren PA 16365

PHONE: 814-723-1353

35.

May we list your name in our Annual Report as a donor? Yes No

If yes, please print your name as you would like it to appear: _____



Director

Lisa M. Newmark

August 8, 1994
1 Ellul 5754

Mr. Harry Segel
Mr. Nahum Levinson
c/o Segel & Son
P.O. Box 276
Warren, PA 16365

Dear Mr. Segel and Mr. Levinson,

I have just finished reading the informative and enlightening history of the Warren Jewish Community. Having a greater knowledge of your community enhances the appreciation felt by myself and Camp Stone for the shul's generosity. The various items acquired from the Warren Hebrew Congregation will be utilized as educational tools as well as a means to inform our campers of the existence of a Jewish community in Warren and continue its legacy.

Due to the success of this summer, we are looking forward to growth and expansion for next summer, including an enlargement of our already existing Bet Midrash (house of study). The books we received from the Warren Hebrew Congregation will be a nice addition to our library collection.

I know that I speak on behalf of all members of the Camp Stone family when I say that we are delighted to have been given the opportunity to keep the Warren Jewish community alive. As you both already know, you are always welcome to visit us at Camp Stone.

Sincerely,

Lisa Newmark
Director

Business Address

14141 Cedar Road
South Euclid, OH 44121
(216) 382-8062
Fax: (216) 382-8722

36.

Camp Address

R.D. #2
Sugar Grove, PA 16350
(814) 489-7841

Early Life of the Warren Jewish Community

As Accounted for by Aaron Shulman

It was natural that the American Jewish population of Warren would eventually have its own House of Worship and, in as much as we are now celebrating the Fortieth, (actually the forty-first), Anniversary of our synagogue, we have assembled in chronological order some of the events leading up to the acquisition of our present Synagogue and a little of the story that followed.

Although we do not have any early record, we do know that, from the latter part of the Century, there was a small Jewish Community in Warren composed mostly of immigrants from Russia, Romania, Poland and Austria-Hungary.

It is worthy of note and, we may take pride in the fact that, all these immigrants applied for their Citizenship in the quickest possible legal time.

Regarding the Religious life of these American Jews who now lived in a land of Religious freedom, we know that services were held in homes and, on special occasions such as the High Holy Days, in rented halls. At times, when there was no Rabbi, members conducted the services and when possible Chazonim were brought in for the Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur days. Phillip Shulman served as the first Chazin. Some years later, Wolf Gordon was engaged to serve either as Chazin or as Assistant Chazin when Warren boasted a Rabbi. His son, Dave, followed in his fathers' footsteps and at one time or another served in one or the other of these capacities being assistant Chazin at the present time. To avoid getting ahead of the story, we shall go back to the period, after 1901 when for several years a room was rented in one of the members' homes for safekeeping of the Torahs' and for services.

In 1906, the First Warren Hebrew Congregation Tiphereth Israel was incorporated. Then, finally on May 19, 1918, a special meeting of the Congregation was called by President Sameul Kornreich for the purpose of discussing the advisability of purchasing the U. B., (United Brethren), Church and remodeling it for use as a Synagogue. George Waxman was appointed Chairman of the committee to raise funds for the initial payment. At this same meeting, the following officers were elected:

H. Rothschild - President

W. Gordon - Vice President

G. Waxman - Treasurer

A. Shulman - Secretary

J. Brown, S. Kornreich, & H. Sontag - Trustees

After some furious activity in raising funds, sometime between May and June 1918, the Church was purchased for use as a Synagogue and Communal Center.

The Charter Members were:

H. Rothschild, H. Sontag, M. Greenburg, S. Kornreich, W. Gordon, A. Printz, S. Berson, J. Brown, D. Kanovsky, E. Glassman, B. Ferdman, G. Waxman, E. Stein, M. Slutz, L. Waxman, L. Labovitz, S. Schraybman, C. Punskey, B. Blesser, A. Shulman, L. Segel, & B. Scolnick.

The spiritual leader was Rabbi Philip Shulman and his salary was approximately \$50 per month.

In 1923, there was a change made in the Charter but no further details are available on this matter.

In the years that followed, changes and improvements were made in the Synagogue and new members were initiated. Although the dues were originally \$6.00 per term, assessments were made as required, there were charges for teaching the children in accordance with the size of the family and charges for Schchita. Special donations were also made. A new Constitution and by-laws were drawn up and passed and a childrens educational fund was set up. The Ladies Auxiliary, later the Sisterhood, played an important role by continually making generous contributions of funds, equipment, accessories and time.

At the end of World War II, the Congregation sponsored a number of Jewish refugees who were oriented, provided with housing, jobs, and otherwise assisted; later leaving for larger cities. To the best of our knowledge, they are all getting along.

Though we come now to a joyous occasion, namely the burning of the mortgage, there is a distinct note of sadness occasioned by the loss of many of our dear ones. Members who had worked so unceasingly to provide us with a House of Worship. How pleased they would have been to have seen the burning of the mortgage which took place on the night of October 6, 1947. The records are not clear on the next event but close to this time, there was a Founders Day dinner following a Chanukah observance at which time honor was paid to Charter Members A. Shulman, E. Stein, L. Segel, S. Schraybman, C. Punskey, E. Glassman, & S. Kornreich.

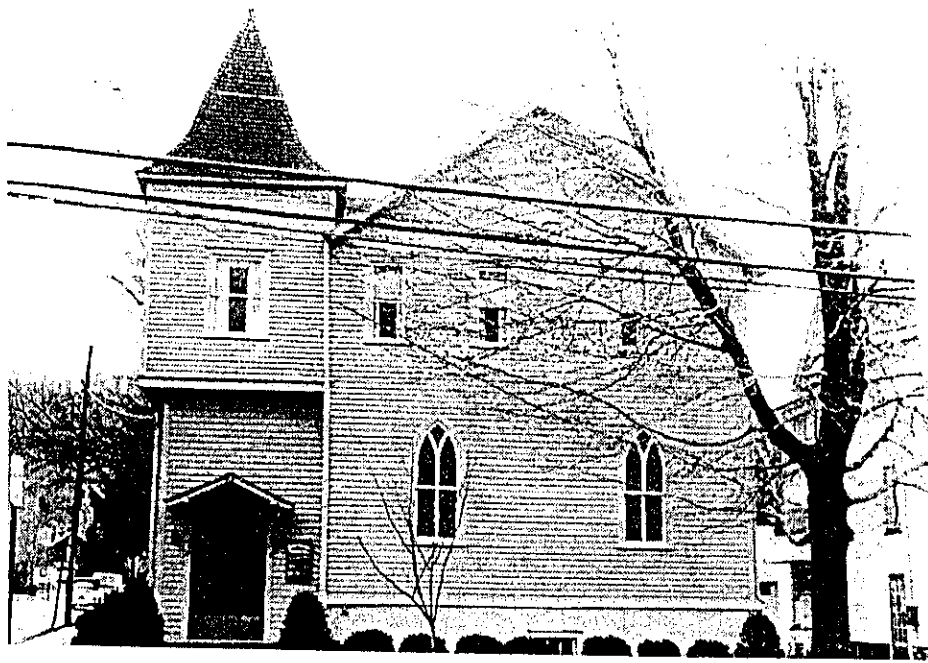
There is little more to add with which the members are unfamiliar. The usual changes took place over the years with membership varying from time to time, presently about 30 families. A number of Rabbis' have been engaged. Some part-time others full-time. At present, Rabbi Morris Kosman is our spiritual leader and Bert Levinson is our Congregation President.

In 1918, we had twenty-two Charter Members. At present we honor six Charter Members:

D. Kanovsky	A. Shulman
E. L. Stein	L. Segel
C. Punskey	B. Scolnick

We regret that due to the lack of records, we were unable to shed more light on the early Religious life but we do know that it existed, & has been continually maintained & will continue to be an important part of the life and future History of Warren Jewry.

Tiphereth Israel Synagogue



Tiphereth Israel Synagogue

112 Conewango Avenue, Warren, Pa.

Man's determination to find a place to worship in freedom and after his own convictions is forcibly shown in the history of the synagogue that stands at the corner of Conewango Avenue and Conewango Place.

The first Jewish families to live in Warren County came between 1850 and 1880. From 12 to 15 families settled in Sheffield and almost as many were found in Warren. These families had been sent into this area by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. The work of this organization was to bring immigrants from the ghettos of eastern Europe to America and to direct them into the interior of the United States and away from the large cities. The tanneries, the lumbering industry, and the opportunities for small stores were good in Warren County and accounted for many Jewish families coming here.

These people wanted their children to worship and follow the teachings of their ancestors, just as parents have since time began. Most of them were young and without funds to build their own synagogue; so their meetings were held in private homes, or when possible, in a public hall for major holiday services. These practices continued until 1917, when a religious service was delayed because another group refused to vacate a hall at a given time. Because the delay in starting this service seemed almost sacrilege to many, they began to think about establishing a permanent house of worship.

It must have seemed like a favorable omen to these men that the United Brethren Church on the corner of Conewango Avenue and Conewango Place should just then have been offered for sale. The congregation of that church was moving into a new and larger quarters. Mr. Louis Segel, one of the younger members, worked hard to arouse interest and enthusiasm for purchasing the building. The group formed a committee for fund raising. As was the custom of the Jewish people, the committee went outside Warren to other cities to raise funds among the Jewish people there. This was considered as a holy undertaking. One thousand dollars was raised. They also called on their Christian neighbors, all of whom responded. Particularly notable

was the donation of an Ark for the Sefer Torah (the scroll on which are inscribed the Five Books of Moses) by Mr. Creal of Warren Furniture Company, and a donation of flooring for the whole structure by Mr. Wetmore. A down payment was made and the project was underway. And now began a joyous, though strenuous time of labor. With horses and wagons and hand tools these dedicated men set about improving the first synagogue of Warren. They dug a basement and made other alterations which made the building functional for their services. When the work was finished, an opening was held. Invitation to membership was extended to all Jewish families in the area. Dues were fifty cents and the members maintained the building themselves. At the end of thirty years, they were able to pay the last of their debt and the building was finally their own.

In this synagogue, Jews observed days sacred to them, taught their children the creed of their faith, and carried on their way of worship. When it was possible they had a Rabbi to conduct and carry out their rituals. At other times the older men took on the duties of instructing the young. In 1955 the little synagogue was completely modernized, and in 1958 the 50th anniversary was celebrated with four of the charter members present. Present, too, was Rabbi Bernard A. Poupko, a leader of Orthodox Jews in this country.

Today about 25 families worship in the synagogue, many of whom are descendants of those early Jewish families. The congregation maintains traditional Orthodox services with some modernization. Sunday School is conducted on Sunday morning and Jewish Youth Activities are well established.

When next you pass the modest structure, remember that it stands for more than a synagogue. It is a testament to a few determined men who built for their children and their grandchildren a place to learn a fine, dignified way of life. Think of it, too, as a place erected with joy, as reflected in the words of Mr. Louis Segel, who, when speaking about the renovation said, "The builders of Solomon's Temple did not have more enjoyment than we in our undertaking."



Through the years 1918 to 1955 the interior of our Synagogue remained quite plain. It was arranged in a traditional, Orthodox manner with a Bema, a separated, raised platform in the center. On the Bema was a table for the reading of the Torahs and a bench. On the east wall three steps led to a small, raised platform on which the Ark housing the Torahs stood. The original Eternal Light given by Wolfe Gordon hung above the Ark. Standing on the floor on each side of the Ark, was a large, carved, wooden throne chair for the President and Cantor's use.

On 1965 Louis and Rose Segel donated funds for the remodeling of the interior of our Shul. Sol Gellman, an architect from Milwaukee, donated his services and designed a modern sanctuary. A large platform held the new Ark, a special, turn-table reader's desk from which the Torahs were read, two chairs, the American and Israel flags and a bench to sit or rest the Torahs. Two, handsome marble tablets, representing the Ten Commandments, were placed above the Ark.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Punsky and the Levinson families donated beautiful, crystal, chandeliers. The silver Menorah, previously given by the Punsky family, stood on a corner book shelf. One hundred plush, burgundy seats were purchased from a Jamestown, New York, theater. They were removed and reset in our Shul by our own members greatly adding to the richness of the interior. The new setting gave one a feeling of warmth and spiritual community.