

EAST LIVERPOOL

A Thriving Jewish Community in this Thriving City in the Heart of the Ohio Valley

About thirty years ago, two Jews by the name of Adolph and Henry Joseph, attracted by the possibilities of the town of East Liverpool, settled there and entered business. Records are rather vague, so it is exceedingly difficult to trace in exact order the development of the community. However, it is certain that among the pioneer Jews were William Erlanger, Sr., founder of the business bearing the name of William Erlanger & Co.; Mendell Wasbutzky and his late brother, Charles, were known to be the very earliest residents of the Jewish community; Gus Bendheim and Leon Rich, deceased; all these were the group that formed the nucleus of the Jewish settlement in that region of the Ohio Valley. In the near proximity are Chester and Newell, W. Va., and Wellsville, O., and in a measure these communities center in East Liverpool, speaking from the standpoint of Jewish life; East Liverpool is the center, so to speak.

In East Liverpool proper there are today, roughly speaking, about 75 families, or a total Jewish population of 325; not a large number in any way; but if measured by the value of service rendered to the community, and by the interest this small group takes in all Jewish affairs, not merely local but national, then the East Liverpool community is quite large indeed. In considering the growth and activity of the neighboring community of Steubenville, we were much impressed by the remarkable record achieved by these co-religionists, and rightly so. Because, if one will turn the pages to that community and consider what they have done, every one will agree that they are entitled to great credit. At the same time when we have before us in rough outline a sketch of what the East Liverpool group has done, we feel too that they should be given their just measure of credit.

It is a small town, but let us whisper it softly, we know cities of over fifty thousand inhabitants, that have far more Jews than East Liverpool who cannot boast of Reform Jewish congregation. Seems unbelievable in times such as these, when Jews are seeking an expression of their religion. But East Liverpool can point to two congregations; one the B'nai Jacob, which is Orthodox and was organized some fifteen or more years ago. It has a congregation of some fifty families from the city proper and then about fifteen fami-

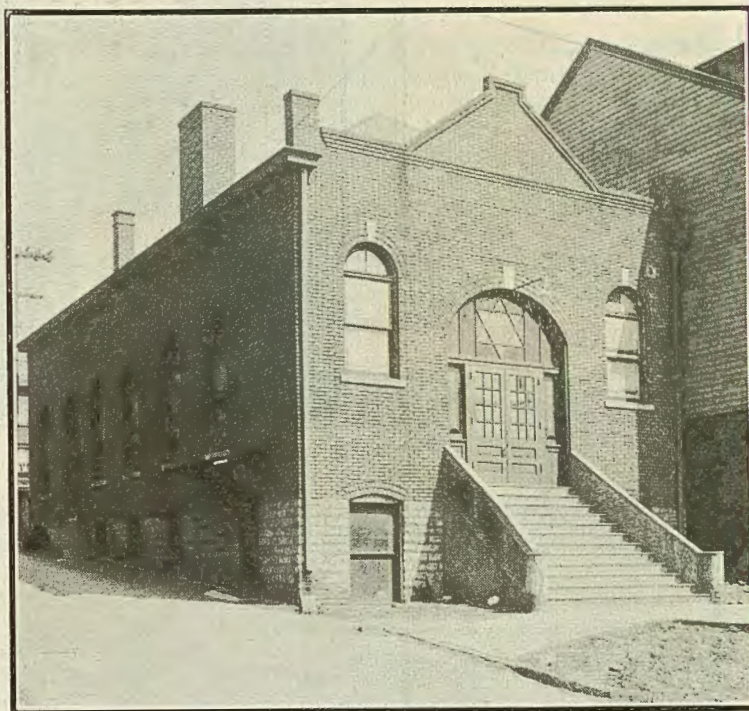
lies from the outside join with them. For eleven years this congregation held its services in the Citizens Bank Building, again following closely the similar development of every other religious organization. It was chartered in October, 1908. Later in 1915, with commendable enterprise, this small group of devout Jews, at the cost of five thousand dollars, erected a synagogue and

min Wolk; Vice-President, Joseph Erbstein; Secretary, William Mikler; Treasurer, Abraham Fisher. The present rabbi is Hyman Fine, who has been in East Liverpool for a year, but whose ability and leadership has become already recognized, and who, under his agreement with the congregation, will remain at least three years. A large number of the members of this con-

a charitable body within the congregation, to which the families contribute small weekly sums to assist the stranger who may be in need of relief. This is one of the oldest forms of Jewish charity and is still kept up in even the largest communities, where it seems that every possible form of philanthropy has been looked after. But there are, especially in the large communities, groups who are better able to contribute small sums, and choose to do that rather than belong to some Federated Charity where the strictly personal element is lacking. We find the record of definite contribution of \$550 given to the Jewish War sufferers by the members of this congregation, and this amount is independent of the sums given to the War Chest, which, of course, was considerably more.

The progress of the Orthodox group has been such that there is no doubt that with the continual growth of that big manufacturing district, which is sure to attract our people in larger numbers, the congregation B'nai Jacob is sure to grow. And who knows that as the years pass and the younger generation takes hold that a more modified form of religious worship will be introduced. It seems wherever we go to be the tendency to move in that direction; a conservative Judaism that will adjust itself in the matter of worship more to conditions which surround the Jews in this country.

The Reform Congregation numbers 22 families, yet it is progressive enough and wide awake enough to have a Rabbi, and a well known Rabbi to guide them. We refer to Rabbi I. E. Philo, one of the ablest leaders in the American Reform Jewish pulpit. Congregation B'nai Jacob has every reason to be gratified at the opportunity to have such a leader in American Israel be their spiritual guide. This congregation naturally has to meet in a hall, but it is in a way a temple, the Odd Fellows' Temple, and they meet there once a month, but, believing that the interests of the children must be safeguarded, that is, the religious interests, there is a Sunday school which meets every week. This Sunday school is well organized and has a Superintendent, Mr. Gus Bendheim, and the following teachers: Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Gus Rickersberg and the Misses Lena, Ethel and Rachel Wasbutzky; that is what we call a family record—three sisters to give their service to religious instruction—and the Misses Mollie Sarbin and Moyer.



B'nai Jacob Synagogue (Orthodox)

the first service in the new edifice was fittingly held on Rosh Hoshana. This is a splendid spirit and we think it is quite unusual for so small a number of our co-religionists to have a synagogue. If there are any other communities in the country who can equal such a record we would be glad to hear from them. The first President of the Congregation was Samuel Caplan, since died, and Meyer Reich, Secretary. Unlike most congregations, B'nai Jacob apparently believes that with fewer officers greater efficiency in the conduct of congregational affairs can be achieved. It is a well known fact that even the smallest Jewish society gets overloaded with officers. This is the time when more can be accomplished by less cumbersome bodies; we are learning this too from the Peace Conference, where the original number of those taking part numbered some seventy, and now it has been reduced to the Big Four; and it has been suggested that if there was one dominant personality the Peace Conference would move to a successful end much sooner.

The present officers of the congregation are: President, Benja-

min Wolk; Vice-President, Joseph Erbstein; Secretary, William Mikler; Treasurer, Abraham Fisher. There is also



Rabbi Hyman Fine
Leader of Orthodox Congregation

dent is Julius Sand; Vice-President, Lemuel Berman; Secretary, William Mikler; Treasurer, Abraham Fisher. There is also

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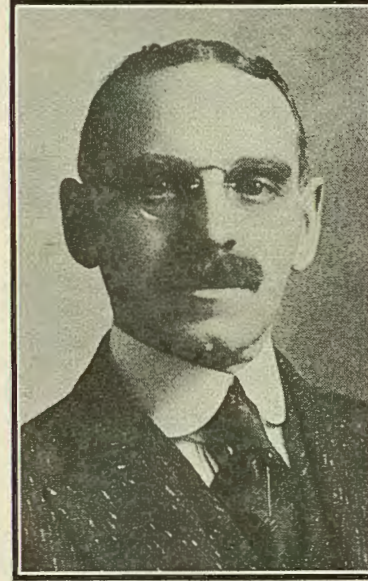


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The President of the Congregation is William Erlanger, Jr.; the Vice-President is Gus Bendheim, and the Secretary and Treasurer is Gus Rickersberg. And we are delighted to learn that the Congregation has a Sisterhood that is a branch of the Temple Sisterhoods of the country. There is nothing that will do more to stimulate Jewish life in a community or to promote the interest of a congregation



William Erlanger, Jr.
Pres. Reform Congregation

than the women. This Sisterhood was originally a Ladies' Aid Society and then it was re-organized by Mrs. Harry Sternberger of Cincinnati, into a Sisterhood body. Mrs. Henry Newman is President and Mrs. Gus Rickersberg is Secretary; and like most organizations of Jewish women this group aids needy Jews. While this congregation, which was organized about fifteen years ago, numbers only 22 families at present, the time cannot be far distant when by reason



Maurice Newman
Interested in B'nai Brith and other Jewish Activities

of rapidly changing conditions in American Jewish life, its numbers will be greatly augmented and that they should have a small place of their own wherein

to worship. In such a community as East Liverpool we are sure that as soon as conditions warrant it, that our Reform brethren will not waste any time in securing such a building, whether by purchase or if necessary to erect it.

In every well organized community there is a B'nai B'rith lodge, and East Liverpool with 37 members, shows an unusual number. The officers are: Leon Rubin, President; William Erlanger, Jr., Vice-President; Gus Bendheim, Monitor. It is interesting to note that the 37 members had eleven sons in the army and navy, which is quite an unusual percentage. The B'nai B'rith has done its share of war work, and has taken an active interest in all those problems affecting the welfare of our people. While the opportunity for broad and constructive work is not nearly so great in such a community as East Liverpool, yet, considering their opportunity, they have shown a commendable interest and an appreciation of the principles of the Order translated into practical action.

During the war the East Liverpool community showed a realization of their responsibility and duty in the premises and the record made was highly creditable. The work which apparently appealed with great force to our co-religionists was the Jewish Welfare Board, and in the year 1917 over \$6,000 was con-



Leon Rubin
Pres. Independent Order B'nai Brith

tributed to this service. When it is recalled that in the city of Pittsburgh in the first year for which funds were asked for Jewish Welfare Work that only about \$14,000 was raised, we get an idea of the generosity of our East Liverpool friends. Besides this sum, there was, of course, contributions by each and every member of the community to all other war activities. It goes without saying that they purchased their quota of Liberty Bonds, War Saving Stamps, that they contributed their proper

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proportion to the Red Cross and to the Y. M. C. A., K. of C. In 1919 the community will again be asked to contribute \$6,000 to the War Chest, and it goes without saying that they will do it. Leon Rubin was a member of the War Chest Committee; Mrs. Gus Rickersberg was the first

wives and daughters were not personally interested. Mr. William Erlanger, Jr., is a member of the Board of Trustees of the East Liverpool Hospital Association.

The development along business lines by East Liverpool Jews has been extremely

While it is impossible, of course, to cover in minute detail every phase of the Jewish life of this community, yet those who have followed the brief sketch of the high spots, so to speak, of the community life, must be impressed as we have been with the remarkable varied

Jewish chain that are fashioned from these smaller communities can American Jewry hope to increase its standing and prestige and to prove itself worthy of the highest and noblest traditions of the faith. If we can keep alive the flame of Judaism in the small town then we have



Panoramic View of East Liverpool

chairman of the East Liverpool Red Cross chapter; Miss Dorothy Weinsweig was Secretary of the Civilian Relief Committee (Home Service Section) of the Red Cross in East Liverpool. There was not a single war activity of importance in which some of our brethren and their

marked. They have kept pace in that respect with the growth of the whole city. And these men take an active interest in the Chamber of Commerce, the most important trade body of the city, and help in every way to promote the interest of the entire section.

and active communal work our people are engaged in for so small a community. By reason of these various local agencies they are in close touch with the activities of all our national Jewish groups; and as we have so often stated that it is only by strengthening the links in the

faith in the future of our people and our religion. All over this country are countless thousands of Jewish groups similar in size to those of East Liverpool, and all of them we regret to say are not so active nor are they so interested in the development of Jewish life as our East Liver-

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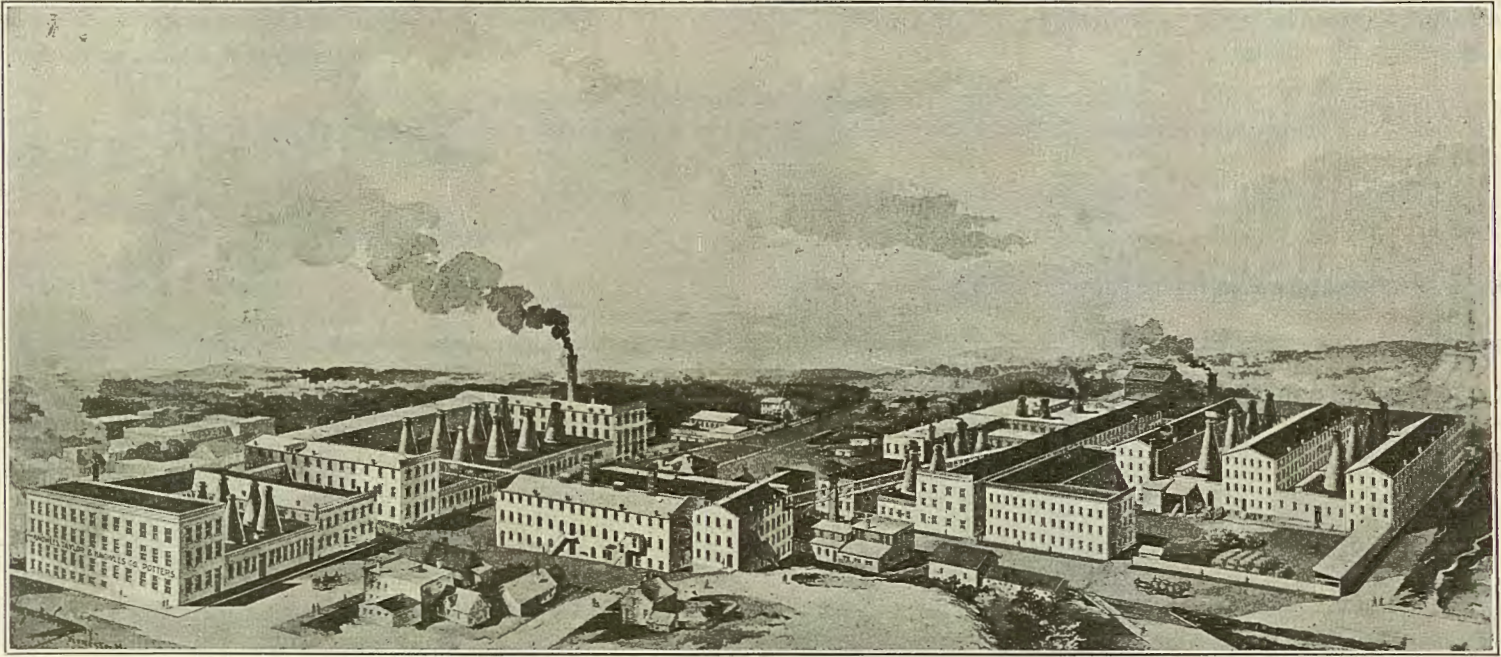
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pool brethren. For this reason we are always gratified when we find a small community where the tenets of our faith are so strictly adhered to.

With the spirit that pervades the community, with the aspirations with which they are possessed, with the progressiveness and aggressiveness they have thus far displayed, with their close contact with all the representative Jewish bodies throughout the country, with their real interest in things Jewish, we feel morally certain that East Liverpool will one day take its place among the larger and most representative Jewish groups in the country.

The fullest encouragement should be given our neighboring communities in the opportunity for utmost development; and the larger city with its many well organized agencies for promotion

should be called upon from time to time by these smaller sister communities for co-operation at any time. The JEWISH CRITERION pledges itself to co-operate in any way it can with any of these nearby communities. If speakers are wanted to help along some cause; if plans of work are required; if there is occasion for a conference with any group in this city, we shall be ready at all times to assist in promoting such co-operative spirit.

We trust that by the time the year 1919 has run its course and when we come again to East Liverpool that it will have justified the highest expectations of those friends who have watched the sure growth of this little giant among the Jewish communities of the state—East Liverpool.

EAST LIVERPOOL

The Pottery Center of the World

East Liverpool was settled in 1789, so it has quite a respectable historical background. It is located in the heart of the Ohio Valley, which is known as the "Workshop of the World." The population today is 25,000 and it was incorporated as a city in 1889. East Liverpool is admirably situated for the development of its industrial resources and for the possibilities of becoming a much more potent factor in the industrial life of the nation. There is plenty of fuel, bituminous coal of the famous Pittsburgh quality and natural gas from the West Virginia fields, and electric power in almost any quantity for manufacturing purposes, make it an eminently desirable location for any industry. While of course potteries constitute the chief industry, yet the fact that there is a rubber plant, steel mill, flint works and other smaller factories indicate that the advantages of this thriving town have become well known and are being taken advantage of.

One of the biggest business assets of the city is the Chamber of Commerce, and though it has been in existence only four years it has made itself felt as a constructive factor in the commercial and civic life of the community. The President is Joseph Betz; First Vice-President, J. T. Croxall; Second Vice-President, D. M. Ogilvie; Third Vice-President, J. M. Manor; Treasurer, T. E. Lewis, and Secretary, W. Irving Lewis.

An interesting feature of this body is the fact that the members were far-visionsed enough to have a Women's Auxiliary. This Auxiliary does a great amount of work for the city along civic and educational lines; and during the war it proved of invaluable assistance to city, state and national authorities. This idea of a women's auxiliary seems to us good enough to be copied by some of the Chambers in the larger cities. After all the women in these days have shown themselves equal to every emergency and the old idea of incompatibility of woman with work-

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a-day affairs has become entirely eliminated from the minds of thinking people.

It is interesting to note that East Liverpool has a \$100,000 Y. M. C. A., which is a big asset to any community; a Carnegie Library, excellent schools, including a new high school, a business college, churches, two city parks, up to date theatres, modern city hospital, motorized fire department and city water works, including a modern filtration plant, costing half a million dollars. So it will be seen at a glance that East Liverpool has covered every phase of public service in a well organized and well conducted large city.

It is scarcely necessary to add that such a body of men in such a city are alive to every new idea that will in any way promote the interests of their organization and of East Liverpool. They have the entire Chamber so organized and divided that each group has its work cut out. For instance just to show that they are on the job, the Retail Merchants' Division inaugurate special sales and special displays and special out of town days so as to bring to the city the greatest number of customers for all the stores. It is the community spirit that is sure to show excellent results. We like the statement found in the Chamber of Commerce booklet to the effect that "initiative and well directed organization are the community forces that East Liverpool must have if we are to take important steps during this reconstructive period." Then there is a strong appeal made for every member to get together, to pull together, to work together, to SERVE for the city. That's the underlying thought all the way through—**WORK FOR EAST LIVERPOOL.** Reminds us somewhat of Ft. Wayne with its slogan: **WORK WITH MIGHT AND MAIN FOR FT. WAYNE,** or words to that effect.

East Liverpool is in a strong position to take advantage of the peace situation and with the energy and the foresight of an active, earnest, single-minded body like the Chamber, there need be no fear but that this busy town is going to get its share of the big things that are coming to all industrial centers during this period of Reconstruction. You know that Reconstruction as yet is only in the newspapers and in the dictionary; it yet hasn't had a chance to try itself in real life. We have heard a great deal about this much used and abused term, but everybody, from the Administration down, has been fighting shy of it. There is a sort of "laissez faire" (let alone) attitude. Oh, things will work all right; you know everything has worked out all right, and it will work out all right this time, etc. etc. You

have all heard the same talk. But in the meanwhile there is need for the most earnest effort of all trade bodies, whether they be in East Liverpool or anywhere else, that will enable this country to get back SAFELY to a peace basis. We are just standing on one leg now and no one knows when we will have a place on which to place our other leg. And in the meantime we are afraid some fellow will come along and push us over before we get our balance. We approve of the East Liverpool idea; don't wait until things come around all right; get out and get busy; take the initiative; go after business; make an effort to **MAKE THINGS COME RIGHT.**

With such ideas there can be no doubt that East Liverpool will miss anything worth while from a business viewpoint.

GROWTH OF MIZRACHI IN ENGLAND.

A Conference of Mizrachi delegates to the Inter-Allied and Neutral Zionist Conference took place on February 23rd in London. Reports were delivered on the growth and activities of the Mizrachi Organization in Poland, Switzerland and America, and plans were outlined for work in Palestine. Efforts are also to be made to reunite the Mizrachi Associations in the different countries.

Advantage was taken of the presence of the delegates from abroad to carry on intensive propaganda in this country.

A great meeting, over which the Chief Rabbi presided, was held in the Philpot Street Synagogue, at which Rabbi Meyer Berlin, Rabbi Leventhal, Rabbi Silver, Rabbi Ashinsky of America and Rabbi Dr. V. Schonfield spoke. Large mass meetings also took place in the provinces, which were addressed by the visiting Mizrachi representatives. As a result of these meetings, the Mizrachi of this country has gained a large number of new members.

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