

The Hebrew Benevolent Society



THE JEWISH CRITERION



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Pittsburg, Pa., January Eighth, 1904

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Mr. A. LIPPMAN,

Re-elected President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society (twelfth consecutive term).

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THE HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

By Chas. H. Joseph.

(We desire to acknowledge with thanks valuable assistance courteously rendered us by Mr. Louis I. Aaron in preparing the following report.—C. H. J.)

We are not particularly boastful, but truth demands the statement that for a community of its size Pittsburg Jewry occupies the most enviable position in the United States with reference to its various institutions, religious and charitable. When one mentions a Pittsburg institution one never thinks of an empty treasury or of possible bankruptcy. Once established local pride looks to it that the cause is maintained. That is a Pittsburg characteristic.

Every institution must undergo a struggle, which is fit and proper. To have everything needed at the outset deprives the movement of workers. Too much money at the beginning is enervating. The necessity of hustling develops the aggressiveness latent in every one interested in public affairs. But don't forget this fact—a watchful eye is kept on every institution located in our midst and the moment the youngster begins to show signs of fatigue there are a number of willing hands ready to offer assistance. Once on its feet no fear need ever be entertained as to its future.

Our community has been doing good for a long time back. In 1859 fortune smiled much more benignly on some than on others and the fortunate ones got together in those days in rather an informal fashion and handed money out to the deserving. The income didn't exceed a few hundred dollars, but that amount answered all purposes.

Hebrew Benevolent Society Organizes..

Matters ran along in a sort of haphazard fashion until May 1, 1864, when, in a becoming manner, accompanied by a set of by-laws, the Hebrew Benevolent Society made its bow to the public.

It may start a train of reminiscent thought in the minds of the older generation when we mention that Mr. A. Roedelheim was the first president of the society and Mr. Louis Jonas, Secretary. During the first year the receipts were \$1,375 and the expenditures \$1,450. This alarming condition of affairs caused the society to take drastic measures to keep the society in respectable circumstances.

In 1865 Mr. Jacob Affelder was elected secretary. In that year a Charity ball was held, which was the social event in those days, and records show that \$509.25 was real-

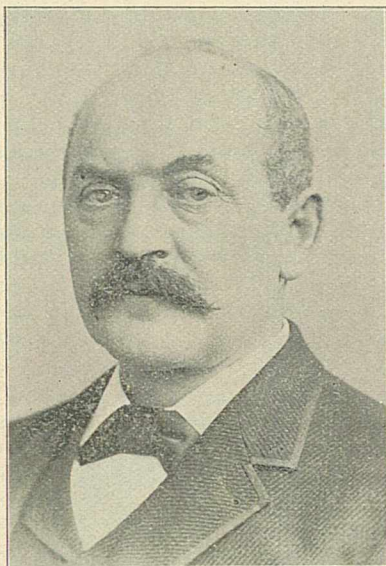
ized, which proves that dancing was enjoyed even at that date.

In 1866 Mr. Samuel Floersheim was elected secretary, Mr. Roedelheim still retaining the presidency. The year following Mr. Daniel Stein was elected president and Mr. E. Bernstein, secretary. In the year 1868 a charter was obtained and then the organization really began to assume pretentious proportions. During all of this period the records indicate that the income of the society proper was nearly as great as it is to-day, that is, the dues fluctuated between \$1,200 and \$1,800.

The Ladies' Aid Society was not such a potent factor as it is to-day.

A Serious Deficit.

In 1869 Mr. Jacob Affelder, who had become schooled by experience for the position, was elected president and Mr. Benjamin Cohen took



MR. HERMAN HIRSCH,
Vice-President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society.

up the secretary's pen. Affairs progressed fairly well until the year 1870, when the society was confronted with a serious deficit. Such a condition of affairs even at that stage was such an unheard-of thing that a panic nearly ensued, and the Board very solemnly authorized the negotiating of a loan of \$200 to enable them to continue business. We believe that not much difficulty was experienced in securing this sum.

In that year Mr. Affelder resigned his position as president, and Mr. Benjamin Cohen succeeded to the position, and Mr. Isaac N. Heidelberg assumed the duties of Secretary.

For some unaccountable reason the officers did not stick to their positions in those days as they do to-day, which, to our minds, proves that constant changing of officers of an organization works to its detriment. Once put the reins of government in competent hands

they should remain there. Experience counts for much in the direction of the affairs of a charitable institution. In 1871 another change came and Mr. J. Benswanger was elected secretary. We would respectfully call the attention of the organization to these frequent changes in the position of secretary so that they will fully appreciate the present incumbent, who has held to the office for twenty-five years.

In 1872 Mr. S. Stein became president and Mr. I. Bierman, secretary. In this year the Rev. Dr. Lippman Mayer arrived in the city and began to take an active interest in the affairs of the association. Dr. Louis Naumburg had always been a faithful worker and continued to be during his residence in the city. The Hon. Josiah Cohen was also one of the earliest workers and from youth to manhood he always did his share in behalf of the organization.

Mr. Bierman resigned as secretary and Mr. Morris Morganstern was elected. In 1873 Mr. N. Gallinger took the reins of office and held them until the following year. In 1874 Mr. Henry Rosenberg made a record; he was elected secretary and actually held the position for three years. In 1875 Mr. Charles Zugsmith, Jr., became presiding head, but in 1876 he turned it over to Mr. A. Fink, who held to it until 1892. Mr. S. Gallinger held the position of secretary from 1877 until the latter part of 1879, when Mr. Louis I. Aaron was elected to fill the unexpired term and has been in office ever since.

Consolidation.

In 1880 it was decided to consolidate the Ladies' Aid Society and the Hebrew Benevolent Society under the title of the United Hebrew Society, which has obtained ever since. In 1885 Mr. M. Himmelrich was elected treasurer and held the position for four years, being succeeded by Mr. Charles Zugsmith, Jr., who held it until 1892, when Mr. Himmelrich again took up the work.

This is the merest outline of the history of the society until the time when the present officers took hold. Good work was done in those days, though it seems that in many cases charity was dispensed in a very loose manner and that heart completely ran away with head.

Mr. Lippman, President.

When Mr. Abram Lippman assumed the duties of president in 1892 matters began to assume a different aspect. The society had been victimized in a systematic manner, and when Mr. Lippman took hold many of the evils were rooted out. He carried on the work in a most systematic manner and he used both head and heart, which should be the case in a model officer. And

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it might be of interest to know that the society has flourished steadily until the present day and that the Hebrew Benevolent Society is without doubt in a stronger position than any other charitable association in the Jewish communities of the United States. There is no deficit to be made up which necessitates "extra calls." The society spends within its means, and the sinking fund is being added to steadily. Everything is conducted on a conservative, well-arranged basis, and as the best proof of the conduct of an organization is in results the Hebrew Benevolent Society stands head and shoulders above any like institution in the country. The members have the utmost confidence in the policy of Mr. Lippman and the flattering manner in which he was re-elected was the most satisfactory evidence of their respect for his judgment as to the manner in which the society should be conducted. He has shown during his term of office the most intimate knowledge of the needs of the community and the best manner of ministering to those needs. It is well known that Mr. Lippman has for some time been desirous of giving up the office, feeling that the duties were growing onerous, and he had fully determined to refuse the office at the meeting held last Sunday.

Mr. Lippman's Re-Election.

When Mr. Lippman's intention became known some weeks ago the following petition was drawn up and circulated and received hundreds of signatures:

A. Lippman, President of the United Hebrew Relief Association of Allegheny County.

Dear Sir: We, the undersigned, constituting all of the members of the Board of the United Hebrew Relief Association, as well as the members of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Allegheny county, respectfully petition that you retain your office as president of the United Hebrew Relief Association of Allegheny county, which you have occupied during the past years with honor to yourself and with great benefit to the entire community.

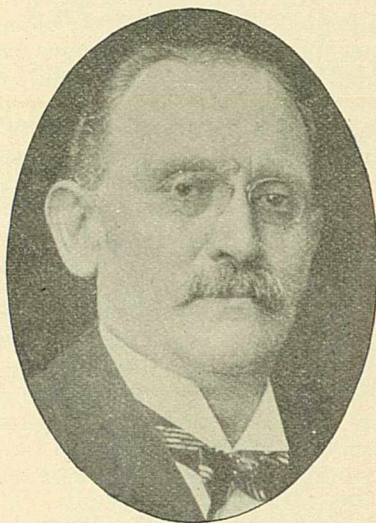
It has come to our knowledge that you desire to relinquish that position and to enjoy the ease and comfort of private life. We recognize that you are entitled to such, but we cannot spare you yet. You have served us faithfully and watched the interests of the poor so carefully as to earn the praise and admiration of both in the administration of the duties of your office.

Peculiarly fitted by your experience to preside at the head of such an institution, blessed by Providence with good health and with a heart that leans to the poor and afflicted, and relieved as you are from the burden of mercantile pursuits, you are the man above all others to whom we look for that beneficent administration of your charities which has characterized your record in the past.

We, therefore, urge and petition you not to surrender the office, but to continue in it for the sake of the

good of our community, and in behalf of the oppressed poor, who are always so near and dear to your heart.

On Tuesday of last week the members of the Board of Directors of the United Hebrew Relief Society called at the home of Mr. Lippman and presented the petition urging him to remain. And as a further token of the esteem in



MR. L. I. AARON,
Secretary of the Hebrew Benevolent Society.

which he is held they presented him with a beautiful vase containing orchids. Dr. Levy presented the gift and asked him to reconsider his determination, as the poor of the two cities would be the sufferers if he retired. Then Mrs. Josiah Cohen, who assumed charge of the gathering, called on every member present to add a few words showing the great necessity for retaining the present head of the organization. Mr. Lippman finally told the committee that he would be in a position to reply at the annual meeting which would be held Sunday.

The Meeting.

At the meeting he was nominated and the nomination was seconded and quickly closed. Before putting the nomination to vote Mr. Lippman secured the floor and stated that he had fully determined to give up the office, but in view of the great pressure that had been brought to bear, and as it seemed to be the earnest wish of many of his nearest and dearest friends, he would yield. Then, on motion, Mr. Lippman was re-elected by acclamation and by rising. Thus was a worthy servant fittingly honored.

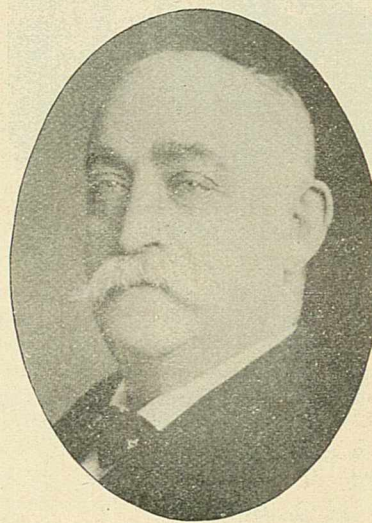
Mr. Herman Hirsh, one of the most faithful workers the society has ever known, has filled the office of vice president since Dr. Mayer's retirement some few years ago. His work has been of the most excellent character and Mr. Hirsh was enthusiastically re-elected. Mr. M. Himmelrich, who has been treasurer of the society for some 16 years, was also anxious to be relieved of the growing duties of the position, but the members would listen to no such proposition, as Mr. Himmelrich has fulfilled his duties in such a manner as to make the selection of a successor a difficult task, indeed. His duties have been of the most exacting character, and too much

praise cannot be accorded this faithful servant of the society. He was also elected unanimously and by a rising vote.

Mr. Louis I. Aaron, who has been secretary of the organization for nearly a quarter of a century, and who modestly declares that his position isn't worth making a fuss about, has shown himself to be one of the most constant and consistent workers for the welfare of the society. That his office is one that requires time, attention and conscientious effort is proven by the number of secretaries the Benevolent laid claim to in the early part of its history. A new secretary was elected nearly every year, as men refused to be bothered with the details of the office. But Mr. Aaron got into the harness and from all indications he will die in that condition. Nothing but praise can be meted out to him for his faithful performance of duty and his re-election was tendered him in the same complimentary manner as that of his fellow officers.

The thanks of the society were unanimously tendered these four good and true men who have been the backbone of the organization, and on motion of Dr. Levy a vote of thanks was tendered Messrs. Herman Hirsh and A. L. Rauh for their excellent work in connection with the auditing of the books. They were also unanimously re-elected for another term.

The members of the board were re-elected without a dissenting voice. The following is the personnel of the board: Messrs. Philip Hamburger, A. Klinordlinger, Isaac Kaufmann, S. L. Fleishman, Max Rothschild, C. Sunstein, Oscar H. Rosenbaum, Rabbi J. Leonard Levy and Hon. Josiah Cohen, honorary members.



MR. M. HIMMELRICH,
Treasurer of the Hebrew Benevolent Society.

A motion was passed authorizing a letter of sympathy to be sent to Mayor Harrison of Chicago and extending an inquiry if any funds are needed in view of the recent calamity.

The meeting was well attended and harmonious and proved one of the most successful held in the history of the society.

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