

A HALF CENTURY OF FAITH

By Ruth Arnfeld

"Though some of you be rich and some of you poor; some intelligent, others ignorant; some pious, other irreligious; some generous, others niggardly; though you speak different tongues and have different habits, yet have ye a common ancestry, a common peril and a common destiny; for ye are all Jews."

Leo N. Nevi, President of B'nai B'rith, 1900-1904

A common ancestry, a common peril and a common destiny, the words have a somber ring. Our common ancestry is in peril of the destiny of extinction. Let us pause to survey the roots we have put down.

The Pittsburgh Jewish community actually may be said to have started with the very first traders at Fort Pitt. And gradually, through the ensuing century, it grew. It undertook various forms of commerce and acquired various degrees of security. And with this increase in numbers and increase in affluence, the time came when its members could pause and consider a testament of their faith. The time had come to erect a Jewish House of Worship.

As early as 1842 group services were known to be held in private homes for those who wished to worship on Sabbaths and High Holidays in the district of Lawrenceville where most of the Jews lived at that time. And in 1846 an organization was formed that marked the beginning of a congregation. This was the **Bes Almon Society** which worshipped first in a room on "Penn Street near Walnut," which today is Penn Avenue near Thirteenth Street. Reverend Mannheimer was Cantor. Somewhat later the group met on the second floor of the Vigilant Fire Engine Company on Third Street. The Troy Hill cemetery was purchased by this society through the efforts of William Frank, Emanuel Reis and David Strassburger, and this burial ground constitutes the only records left of this earliest of Jewish congregations.

The Bes Almon Congregation represented a mixture of orthodox Polish and reformed German Jewry and such a mixture in that day and age was bound to bear friction. It represented two diametric viewpoints. For the German Jew the reformation of modern thought affected all branches of his mental life. To the Polish Jew, nothing secular should be permitted in any way to alter the orthodoxy of his religious customs. However, in this Congregation a concession to the latter group is the recorded fact that the wives did sit apart from their husbands in strictly orthodox fashion.

There were two outstanding provisions in the constitution of the new Congregation. The first was that worship was to be according to the German forms, the ritual of Minhag Ashkenaze. The other was the establishment of a Jewish parochial school, the first and only school of this type in Pittsburgh. The school was to teach the educational curriculum of the times in addition to the principles of the Hebrew religion. Mr. Cohen was appointed its principal. The tuition was set at forty dollars a year, but that fee was waived in special cases where families could not afford to meet the cost. Mr. Cohen, through his diligence and close touch with the public school system of this

county, a few years later became one of the earliest presidents of the Allegheny County Teachers Association.

Rabbi Naumburg Becomes Leader

Rev. Armhold, who had gone along with the Rodef Shalom Group when it severed connections with the Bes

years later, Rabbi Naumburg took full charge. He was a profound Hebrew scholar and a Cantor of great ability and he continued as rabbi of the Congregation until 1870, the year Rabbi Lippman Mayer was called to the pulpit.

"The advent of Dr. Mayer in the spring of 1870 was marked by the introduction of Dr. Einhorn's prayer book, an English translation. A few months later, the second day celebration of the holy festivals was abolished. The removal of the hats was a reform that soon followed and the young rabbi, a co-worker

invitation of Congregation Rodef Shalom of the Rabbinical conference of 1885 met in this city, a conference famous for its unequivocal declaration of principles known as the Pittsburgh Platform . . . The radical reform measures recommended at that time are now recognized by all reform congregations throughout the United States." (Quoted from the Jewish Criterion's Dedicatory Number of the Congregation Rodef Shalom, September 6 and 7, 1901.)

The Congregation continued to worship in the Hancock Street (now Eighth Street) Temple until 1900, when members felt that a larger, more fitting synagogue was required. Accordingly the old building was razed and a new one constructed on its site. It was this building that was dedicated in September of 1901.

The elaborate construction of the new building on Hancock Street left a sizeable indebtedness, which the members feared having to carry for many years. However, a fitting climax to the dedication services was the sale of pews in the new Temple which realized \$117,300, a sum more than sufficient to clear all obligations.

Dr. Levy Fills Pulpit

It was just prior to the dedication of the new edifice that Rabbi Mayer retired and Rev. Dr. J. Leonard Levy was called to fill the pulpit of the new synagogue. Dr. Levy instituted major changes in the congregation, among which were the opening of Sunday morning services and the construction of the present Temple at the corner of Morewood and Fifth Avenues. The Fifth Avenue Rodef Shalom was undertaken because of the foresight of a few leaders of the group, Marcus Aaron among them, who saw an impending exodus of reformed Jews from Allegheny to Oakland, Baum Grove and the East End. With this change of residential neighborhoods the Hancock Street Temple in the heart of the downtown business district came to be considered unrepresentative of the Jewish population.

The new Temple was completed in 1907. In 1912 the Falk Memorial Addition was built in the rear of the Temple by Leon Falk in memory of his wife, Fanny Edel Falk. Included in the annex were a gymnasium, a swimming pool and a library. Classes in physical education were offered. The building filled a long felt community need until the erection of the Y. M. & W. H. A. and of public park pools took away the necessity of this facility. Today the swimming pool has been covered over and the room has become a social hall.

The erection of the new Temple left a mortgaged indebtedness. Dr. Levy's philosophy was such that he said the Temple should not be dedicated until the mortgage was cleared and Rodef Shalom stood freed of all debt. That time did not come until ten years after its doors were opened. The occasion was one of deep sorrow, for the catafalque of the man under whose aegis the Congregation had risen to this high pinnacle became the altar at which Rodef Shalom Temple was finally dedicated. Dr. Levy died on the night the banquet was held at which

FORM OF SERVICE

AT THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

SYNAGOGUE

RODEF SHULOM,

HANCOCK STREET, PITTSBURGH, PA.

On Thursday, Adar Shane the 17th, 5622,

Corresponding with March 20th, 1862.

ADDRESS IN ENGLISH, BY THE REV. DR. RAPHAEL,

OF NEW YORK.

ADDRESS IN GERMAN, BY THE REV. W. ARMHOLD,

Minister of the Congregation.

ADDRESS IN ENGLISH, BY MR. JOSIAH COHEN, TEACHER OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOL.

Leader of the Music, Prof. J. DINGELDEIN.

W. G. JOHNSON & CO., STEAM PRINTERS AND STATIONERS, 51 WOOD STREET.

Consecration of the Synagogue Rodef Shulom, Hancock Street,
Pittsburgh, Pa., on Thursday, March 20, 1862

Almon Society, continued as its Reader until 1865 when Rabbi Naumburg became the leader of the Congregation. Rev. Naumburg assisted Mr. Cohen in the Hebrew School until the latter was admitted to the bar in 1866. From then until the school was dissolved two

with Adler, Einhorn, Hirsch and Wise in the epoch-making Philadelphia Rabbinical Conference of 1869, of which he was one of the secretaries, had the satisfaction of knowing that his congregation was taking its position in the front line of reform Judaism . . . It was at the

subscriptions were raised to write off the final amount of the mortgage. And it was while Dr. Levy's body lay before the pulpit in the Temple that the dedication was made.

In 1854, when Rev. William Armhold was Reader for the group, dissension broke out because the Polish members wanted a Reader from Baltimore who had recently come from Poland, one whose wife and children were still in that country.



William Armhold
First Reader of Rodef Shalom

The other members, of course, wanted to retain Rev. Armhold. The ruckus ended with Mr. Frank leading his faction out of the Bes Almon Society to form a new congregation, aptly named **Rodef Shalom**, which means, "Seek Peace."

On July 2, 1859 the Rodef Shalom group presented its articles of association to the Allegheny Court of Common Pleas. In 1860 steps were taken to start construction of the Temple on Hancock Street, now Eighth Street. The cornerstone was laid in the autumn of that year with Josiah Cohen as principal speaker. The consecration of this first Jewish House of Worship took place on March 20, 1862.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, of the Free Synagogue of New York, spoke the "words which were to take the place of the formal eulogy and which were at once eulogy, dedication of the Temple, prayer for the departed and benediction of the people. Dr. Wise said: 'In accordance with the expressed wish of Dr. Levy, no word of eulogy is to be spoken, although our hearts yearn to hold converse with one another touching the precious gift of his life, and our sorrow in his passing . . . This Temple, which was his shrine of shrines, before which and on which, as on an altar, he laid down his life, has rested since its erection under a burden of indebtedness. Dr. Levy willed that no formal dedication should be held until it had been freed from debt. That hour is at hand. It came while yet Dr. Levy was of the living. Almost the last earthly tiding to gladden the heart of your rabbi was the report of the generosity of the Congregation at its annual meeting on Monday night in canceling the last item of the Temple's indebtedness and thus setting this House of God free.'" (Quoted from the Jewish Criterion of May 4, 1917.)

Dr. Goldenson Takes Over

After a year with an interregnum rabbi, Dr. Samuel Goldenson was elected to lead the Congregation which had become so large as to require the services of an assistant rabbi. During this period the Temple underwent still more changes in the character of its reforms. Under Dr. Goldenson the unassigned pew

system was introduced whereby seats were assigned by lot rather than by the amount of money contributed for them. Rodef Shalom thus became one of the pioneers among world Jewish congregations in this respect. The system increased the membership to such an extent that from the time of its introduction in 1922 until the present day it has been necessary to rent Carnegie Music Hall on High Holidays to take care of the overflow.

In January of 1934 Dr. Goldenson was called to Temple Emanuel in New York City. For the following seven months Assistant Rabbi Benedict Glazer became officiating rabbi until, in August, Dr. Solomon B. Freehof was appointed chief rabbi of the Congregation. Following this appointment Rabbi Glazer left to join his chief, Dr. Goldenson, at his New York post.

Under Dr. Freehof, Rodef Shalom has taken another spurt in growth. Soon after assuming his new duties, Dr. Freehof started planning a new school building to be added to the present structure. In October of 1937 a dinner was held at which two hundred and fifty members subscribed one-half the estimated cost of the new addition. By the end of the following year it had been completed and included two testaments to men outstanding in the history of the Temple. The first was in honor of the man whose strength and vision had built the synagogue, an assembly room known as the J. Leonard Levy Hall. The second was the Josiah Cohen Chapel, a tribute to the first principal of the first Jewish parochial school who had rounded out that association by becoming president of the congregation forty-five years later to serve it again for the last twenty years of his life, 1910-1930.

Today, the membership of Rodef Shalom runs upwards of one thousand, making it the largest as well as the oldest congregation in Pittsburgh. And the Temple stands a bulwark of influence representing Jewish life as an important unit of metropolitan Pittsburgh.

The second oldest synagogue in the city, **Ez Hayyim or Tree of Life**, dates back to June 26, 1864, or about five years after Rodef Shalom

sought its charter, when a group of members of that Congregation objected to reforms that had recently been introduced. Led by Gustavus Grafner, the group, whose aim was the preservation of the traditional orthodox form of worship, met at his home at 80 Second Avenue on that day in June seventy-eight years ago. At that meeting Gustavus Grafner was made chairman of this new Congregation of sixteen members. On Friday evening and Saturday morning, July 8th and 9th, the first services were held in Mr. Grafner's home, according to the ritual of "Minhag Poland."

By August of the same summer Mr. Grafner had been made first president of the Congregation, a burial ground had been acquired, and Isaac Wolf had been employed as Chazan and Sexton at a salary of four hundred dollars per annum. Services for the first holidays of the new Synagogue were held in Lafayette Hall at the corner of Fourth and Wood Streets, where the Columbia Bank later was located. In this same Lafayette Hall the National Republican Party had been organized in February of 1856, eight years earlier. Membership dues in the Congregation started at twenty dollars a year, but by 1866 the fee was raised to three dollars a month.

That year President Grafner, with the consent of his Congregation, authorized a committee to rent a hall at the corner of Market Street and Second Avenue for services and a Hebrew school. That year also the Congregation held its first Purim Ball. It was growing and could now afford a Shamos at one hundred dollars per year. In addition each family was charged ten dollars a year for one child in Hebrew School and five dollars for each additional one. Those whose parents could not afford to pay and those who were orphans were admitted free.

Mr. Grafner was president till 1867, when Benjamin Cohen was elected and it was his son, William H. Cohen, whose bar mitzvah in the Synagogue of that year is the earliest one on record. During the seven years after its inception Ez Hayyim changed its Chasan several times. From offering a salary of four hundred dollars the first year 1871

found the Congregation willing to pay a compensation for Chazan and Teacher "not to exceed twelve hundred dollars a year" and the incumbent was to be able to lead a choir. They finally found a Rev. G. Weil to fill the post.

In 1876 when the Congregation decided to erect three rooms at the cemetery the secretary's report of that meeting "showed twenty-eight members, eleven seat holders and thirty-eight children enrolled." The group was slowly growing. Another



Gustavus Grafner
First President of the Tree of Life Congregation

five years passed and the Congregation was left without a place of worship. Remember, it had used only rented buildings. So, in 1881, a committee of three was appointed to purchase a place for a synagogue.

Pittsburgh's floods intervened to change the first consideration, on Seventh Street between Duquesne Way and Penn Avenue. Another spot at the corner of Fourth and Wood housed a tavern whose proprietor could not be induced to move in a hurry so that the coming holidays could be celebrated in correct style in the prospective location. So once more the Tree of Life observed its holy days in Lafayette Hall.

After a few more sites were considered, the final selection and purchase was made at the corner of Fourth and Ross, the exact site of the present New County Building. Prior to this, property had been purchased at Fourth and Ferry Streets, but the Ross Street site was afterwards felt to be more desirable. Alexander Fink, president of the Congregation from 1872 until 1892, obliged by purchasing the unwanted property and thereby relieving the Congregation of the double responsibility. There followed remodeling and redecorating and on March 25, 1883, the Tree of Life Congregation was formally dedicated. Rev. A. Crone was minister of the Congregation at that time and until the following year, when he handed in his resignation. Rev. A. Bernstein was chosen to follow him.

In October 1890 there was a motion to call a special meeting of the Congregation "to consider the change of the present mode of seats." Apparently the group had become more conservative and now wanted family pews instead of segregating the men from the women. The first meeting for this failed to secure the necessary two-thirds affirmation and it was not until 1893 that a vote of 27 to 3 finally brought the women out of the gallery into family pews with their husbands.

Congregation Grows Rapidly

By 1898 the Tree of Life was a large congregation whose needs required the services of a full-fledged



Rodef Shalom Temple, Eighth Street near Penn Avenue
Built 1862—Rebuilt 1901

graduate rabbi. Michael Fried was about to graduate from the Jewish Theological Seminary. After an interview here he was immediately chosen as Ez Hayyim's first rabbi and served the Congregation for the next eight years. Under his influence late Friday evening services were introduced and the Religious School was placed on a sound basis. This expansion soon made a larger synagogue imperative. The Ross Street property was disposed of after a committee recommended the purchase of a lot on Craft Avenue on December 31, 1905. Henry Jackson was chairman of the building committee assigned to the task of erecting a new synagogue to cost not more than seventy-five thousand dollars.

The cornerstone of the new edifice was laid in June 1906, but without special ceremony since Rabbi Fried was gravely ill. His illness necessitated his resignation and his friend and colleague, Rabbi Rudolph I. Coffee, became his successor in the pulpit of the Congregation.

When the new building was finally completed, the Scrolls of the Law were transferred to it from the old building by three charter members, Isaac Gelder, Meyer Fink and Samuel Levin. Marks Browarsky carried the fourth Scroll which he had donated some years before. During the next seven years in the new building the membership increased from fifty to one hundred fifty-three.

During that time, too, A. Goldstein who had become sexton of the Congregation in 1884 was elected to that position for life. On Passover in April of 1912, Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt was guest speaker in the Congregation.

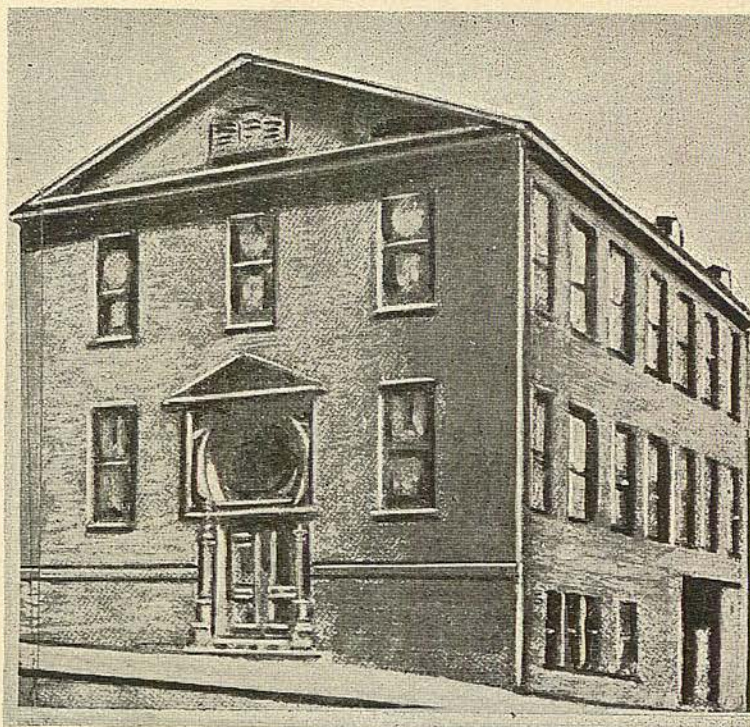
In 1915 Dr. Coffee left the Tree of Life for the West Coast and was succeeded by Rabbi Morris M. Mazure who remained leader of the Congregation until 1921. Rabbi Herman Hailperin was called to the pulpit in 1922 and has been with it until the present day. For the first time in the history of the Congregation, its rabbi was appointed to the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Hailperin has been an instructor in the departments of History and Philosophy.

Today, in another vein, it is the first time in the history of the Congregation that almost every important officer is either a son or a grandson of either an officer or a member of the Board. President Charles Rosenbloom's father was at one time also president of the Congregation. Secretary Samuel M. Fischer's father is still an active board member. And organist Cyrus Hailperin is the son of the present rabbi.

Another noteworthy distinction, one which the Tree of Life shares with Rodef Shalom, is the fact that neither of these synagogues is a "neighborhood congregation." Instead each has drawn and continues to draw its members from throughout the city. Ez Hayyim's Friday evening service has the largest attendance of any in the city and its membership ranks third with two hundred and fifty families. However, the coming winter with its diminishing means of conveyance offers a challenge to this record. Will the heretofore loyal members of the Tree of Life bestir themselves on foot to maintain it?

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With the founding of the Rodef Shalom and the Tree of Life Congregations, the Jewish community of Pittsburgh established for itself a two-branched tree whose trunk has grown thick and strong and hoary with age. Other smaller branches have grown out on the tree some of which have since stopped and atrophied. Others, quick recent growths, have burgeoned forth in a veritable fury of clinking silver and



*The Old Tree of Life Synagogue, Fourth Avenue and Ross Street
(Where the New County Building now stands)*

polished brass. The locality of houses of worship has changed with the changing residence of their adherents. The thickest growth of synagogues occurred within the section of Herron Hill bounded by Logan and Green Streets.

Charter Is Sought

On Washington Place, sandwiched in today between a very narrow alley-way and a large Catholic church is one of the oldest and most dignified of Jewish congregations. **Beth Hamedresh Hagodol**, otherwise known as the Washington Street Schul, was begun in a private home on Liberty Avenue in 1869, five years after Ez Hayyim and ten years after Rodef Shalom. The first year the minyan numbered only fourteen members, but by the next year there were forty. Its first name as a congregation was B'nai Israel and it rented the Guskys auditorium at Third and Market Streets for its services. In 1873 the Congregation petitioned a charter of incorporation. A copy of this petition, in the longhand of the time, is in the synagogue's safe today and the signature at the end is that of the young attorney, Josiah Cohen, as "solicitor for the petitioners." In the year 1876 the membership had reached eighty and the Congregation began to think of larger, permanent quarters.

Subsequently a building on Grant Street was purchased, which continued to house the synagogue until 1892. In that year the structure on Washington Place was erected and the new name, Beth Hamedresh Hagodol, was taken. In the new edifice the membership rose and in 1907 was one hundred and thirty families. Today, like so many other synagogues in the district, the curve is sloping downward again. In 1921 the Congregation made a ceremony of burning a twenty-five year old mortgage for forty-five thousand dollars which it had been able to liquidate. Today, Rabbi Ashinsky is honorary rabbi associated with Rabbi Joseph Kaplan who has served the Congregation since 1904. Joel D. Cohen is president.

All in all twelve synagogues in addition to Rodef Shalom Temple were founded in Pittsburgh before the century turned. A decade after the Washington Place Schul the **Beth Jacob**, now at the corner of Epiphany and Townsend Streets, came into existence. Started by a group of twenty-three members with Philip Cohen as its first president,

the minyan met in the usual rented buildings until it was able to erect its own. In 1883 it was granted a charter and in 1884 a lot and building was purchased at 512 Wylie Avenue. By 1891 the Congregation had outgrown its quarters so larger space was procured at 73 Logan Street. At that time there were fifty-five members. Then, in 1901, the Congregation bought the old Sixth Presbyterian Church at the corner of Epiphany and Townsend Streets and there the Congregation has remained ever since. Today Joseph Schwartz is president.

Fifth on the time-table in place of seniority is the **Poale Zedeck Congregation**. It dates from a day in 1881 when a group of fifteen men, all of Hungarian descent, decided to organize an orthodox congregation for their fellow-countrymen newly settled in this city. This was during the High Holidays of that year. Although the men were all of limited means they managed to raise among themselves sufficient money to apply for a charter under the name of the Austro-Hungarian Congregation Poale Zedeck. Mr. Philip Fried was elected the first president of the Congregation. At that time nearly all the Jewish families resided in the present downtown area so the group rented a hall on the corner of Grant Street and Second Avenue where the Pittsburgh Post Gazette Building is now located.

Three years later the Congregation acquired a cemetery in the Borough of Sheridan, a modest acre around which they built a fence. Services were held in a small frame chapel. Several years passed and the growing Congregation sought new quarters in a house which they purchased on Fernando Street which at that time was Federal Street. Finally, in 1900, they acquired a synagogue on Crawford Street in addition to two buildings which were remodelled to accommodate 100 children. The membership now numbered over four hundred families.

Then the residential district changed for the Jewish community. Squirrel Hill became the brighter patch of earth. The Poale Zedeck Synagogue was far-sighted enough to keep step with the times and instead of resigning itself to a slow death in the rapidly depleting neighborhood, it set about following its members to the newer locale.

Poale Zedeck Dedicates Synagogue

In 1927 the Congregation purchased a lot at the corner of Shady

and Phillips Avenues. The first service was held during the High Holidays in 1928, although the dedication did not take place until September of 1929. Last year the Congregation celebrated its sixtieth anniversary.

Today, Dr. Joseph Shapiro is its spiritual leader and Maurice Chaitkin is its president. Max Friedman is the last charter member still living. The Congregation has a Hebrew School and a Sunday School. Affiliated with it are a Sisterhood, a Junior Sisterhood, a Men's Club and a Junior Men's Club. There is also a Chevrah Mishnah.

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Rabbi Sivitz, the first orthodox Jewish rabbi to come to Pittsburgh—prior to him the leaders of congregations were chazans—arrived here in 1885. Four years later he organized the **Sharay Torah Congregation** whose first home was on Tunnel Street where it remained for the next two years. After another brief stop at the corner of Marion Street and Fifth Avenue the Congregation took up new quarters at 35 Townsend Street and remained there for eighteen years.

In 1909 the Congregation voted to tear down the old building and erect a new one on the same site. During the construction the members met in temporary quarters at the corner of Colwell and Stevenson Streets. And, when finally the new synagogue was completed, the dedication was an impressive occurrence.

With the oldest and most revered members of this Lithuanian Congregation carrying the Scrolls of the Law, a procession walked from the temporary quarters to the new edifice. When they arrived at the entrance the golden key of the door was auctioned off. It went to Mrs.



Rabbi Sivitz who first organized the Sharay Torah Congregation

Lillie Heck for the sum of one hundred and ten dollars. Mrs. Heck was a widow of the Congregation who made her living by peddling. When she had first heard that the old building was to be razed she determined to be the first one to enter the new. Through scrimping and saving on her meagre, hard-earned income she was able to realize this ambition. She was the first to enter Sharay Torah or the Gates of Wisdom. Today, the Congregation still meets in the Synagogue at 35 Townsend Street and B. Neaman is president.

Homestead Organizes

The years passed on. Rodef Shalom Congregation had been founded in 1854 by a faction which split away from the orthodox group. Forty years later another Rodef Shalom Congregation came into being founded by the Jews who had branched out and settled in Homestead. It came about because Sam Markovitz wanted to recite kaddish in memory of his father. He had difficulty in getting a minyan to do this and Isadore S. Grossman, another member of the community, remarked that it was a disgrace that a Jewish community the size

of the one in Homestead should have no organized congregation. His remarks took root and a few months later the **Homestead Rodef Shalom Congregation** was formed.

There were eighteen charter members with Raphael Segelman as first president. The dedication took place on the twenty-fifth of March and the ceremony was the first Jewish celebration in Homestead. I. S. Grossman's father in New York City bought the Torah for sixty-three dollars and seventy-three cents and sent it on to the new Congregation. And the first meeting took place in Sam Markovitz's home on Heisel Street. President Segelman held that office for only a short while for he passed away just a few weeks later.

Two years went by and the Congregation was able to purchase a plot of ground for a cemetery in Homeville in Mifflin Township. And then, five years later, in 1901, it purchased a lot on Ammon Street for its own synagogue. The dedication of this building took place on March 30, 1902, with Rabbis Michael Fried and A. M. Ashinsky officiating. Rev. Sam Federman was the Congregation's own leader at that time.

Until 1904 the synagogue was devoted exclusively to religious, spiritual interests but in that year affairs of communal interest gained importance. A chapter of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith was organized on December 11, and was followed shortly thereafter by a Ladies Aid Society. The Congregation remained on Ammon Street until a fire in 1911 damaged the building so badly that new quarters were necessary. The partly destroyed property was disposed of and another purchase made for which the cornerstone was laid on September 28, 1913. A year later the new synagogue at 331-5 East Tenth Avenue in Homestead was dedicated. Dr. J. Leonard Levy officiated for this ceremony with Josiah Cohen and Rabbi Ashinsky. And in this building the Congregation has met ever since.

Today, there are four living charter members: B. Hepps, Morris Frankel, Joseph Freed and Morris Fogel. Rabbi A. M. Pinkas has served the group since 1932. The secretary of the Congregation has held that office for the past thirty-one years; Isaac Grossman, brother of the first secretary of the Congregation, has kept an almost Boswellian account of the growth of the synagogue. A diary in the form of speeches written in vivid style that makes humorous, interesting reading even today, it is the sort of record one wishes could be found in the archives of every synagogue.

So much for the tentacle of Jews that stretched out toward Homestead. However, the original locality had not yet reached the end of its growth. In 1895 another Hill schul came into existence called **Shaare Zedeck** or the Gates of Justice. It first started at 7 Scott Street with fifteen or twenty members and Meyer Ross as president. Ten years later it purchased property at 14 Townsend Street where it built its own Synagogue. The newspaper clippings of the times tell that on September 1, 1907, this building was formally opened to the public amid fan-fare and parading. A special detachment of police and a brass band playing religious music led a parade of four hundred marchers and twenty-five carriages through the Hill district to the new synagogue.

At that time the roster included about two hundred Polish Jews, but today the membership has shrunk to about one hundred. Rabbi Ashinsky was the first leader of the congregation and today Rabbi A. B. Zilberberg occupies that position.

Affiliated with the Synagogue are a Religious School and a Ladies Auxiliary.

The ninth synagogue to be formed before the beginning of the twentieth century was the **Machsikei Hadas**, which was organized in 1897 by twelve members with Samuel Houseman as president. These men met in a home on Fulton Street, now Fullerton, for about five or six years until they were able to buy a small house on Crawford Street. There Rabbi Sivitz became their leader. In 1909, when the Congregation numbered about forty members, they moved to their present site at the corner of Wylie and Granville Streets.

Rabbi Wolf Leiter has served the Congregation from 1921 until today. Harry Katz is president of the eighty-five members. There is a Free Loan Association, a Chevrah Thilum, a Chevrah Mishnah and a Ladies Auxiliary run in connection with the Synagogue.

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The **Shaaray Tefillah Congregation** and the **Columbian Council**, forerunner of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, have a lot in common. Both of them started at 32 Townsend Street. In 1899 the Synagogue of the Gates of Prayer, which at that time called itself Beth Israel, met in its first minyan at that address. The place was not very large and for the big Holidays it was necessary for the members to meet at Turners Hall on Forbes Street. That is, until 1901 when they moved to a hall on Crawford Street where they remained for a few years.

1905 found a split in the Congregation. The Beth Israel group bought a lot on Ross Street where the Center Lumber Company is today. The splitting faction, under the name Beth David, bought a lot at 23-25 Miller Street and started



32 Townsend Street where both the **Columbian Council** and the **Shaaray Tefillah Congregation** started

construction on a synagogue. At the same time the Beth Israelites, planning their own synagogue, were about to sign the contract for its construction when Rabbi Sivitz strode into the room actually at the second when the president was poised pen in hand.

It seems the Beth Davidians found themselves financially unable to continue the construction they had undertaken and the good rabbi had come to tell their erstwhile brethren that, "for the honor of Judaism," the Beth Israelites must come to the rescue and complete the Miller Street edifice. After all, they were all Jews, so to the Miller Street job the Beth Israelites came. And having finished the synagogue, the Beth Israelites and the Beth Davidians

merged under the name, **Shaaray Tefillah** in 1906. They moved harmoniously into the new synagogue the Saturday before Purim in March of that year.

Peace lasted for about two years. Then another group, feeling slighted at not being elected to hold office, got out again in 1908 and again took the name, Beth David, a slingshot being the order of fighting men. They took the small synagogue right next door, at 21 Miller Street. That Congregation ambled along for a few years, its numbers constantly being depleted by death and other factors. Then the Pennsylvania Trust Company which held the mortgage failed and the Colonial Trust Company took it over. That happened in 1933 and the synagogue took the new name of **Beth Mogan David**. Today, Joseph Stern is president of a handful of members.

However, the **Shaaray Tefillah** still casts a rather large, protective shadow over it as its own membership continues to hold up. S. Malitofsky is the president. The building at 23-25 Miller Street is also the headquarters of the **Beth Abraham Cemetery Congregation**, whose membership of four hundred and sixty is entirely separate from that of the synagogue. It is a very old group, having been formed in 1888 when the first land was purchased in Carrick. In 1893 the plot was increased and the group finally gained enough affluence to construct a chapel for twenty-seven thousand dollars. This is strictly for use in burial services only. Dr. S. J. Marcus is president.

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Beth Israel Appears

After the Jewish community began to stretch out through the rest of the city it early found its way to the North Side. As early as 1890 a minyan of thirteen men had met to form the beginning of a congregation in that section. However, it was not until the year 1907 that the **Beth Israel Congregation** as such came into existence. Prior to that the group met on Third Street and in Mendal Hall on Ohio Street, among other places. But the year 1907 found them purchasing what had once been a Methodist Church at 801 East Street and converting its interior to a fitting Jewish House of Worship. Herman Jacob became first president of the Congregation and his son, Siegfried Jacob, as well as Leopold Horn, the son of another charter member, were the first two bar mitzvahs of the Congregation. Milton Patz, the son of another charter member, still has the key he was given when, at the age of seven, he opened the synagogue doors for the first time. Rev. Henry Tolochko was the first rabbi and he remained with the group for twenty years.

Having bought only the building and not the lot on which it stood, it was not until years later that the Congregation was able also to purchase the ground. It started a campaign for new members and by 1921 had about fifty. Some years later, a Mr. Shiller donated to the Congregation all the silver needed for the Torah and on his death four or five years ago he willed it five hundred dollars to help pay off its mortgage. Rev. Adolph Levin, who has served Beth Israel for the past ten years, donated with his wife on their fifth anniversary a smaller Torah from Palestine. By raffling it off further funds were raised. The winners, Mr. and Mrs. Bennie Neiman, returned the Torah to the Congregation in honor of their parents and today it is used for bar mitzvahs, etc. Today, Siegfried Jacob, one of the first to be bar mitzvah in the synagogue and the son of its first president, is himself president of Beth Israel.

Mass Exodus and the "New Light"

Probably the most interesting congregation of the ones that came to life after the turn of the century is the **Oher Chodesh** or **New Light Synagogue** at 79-81 Roberts Street. It is made up entirely of Roumanian Jews who came to this country in a mass exodus in 1902.

The Roumanian pogroms were such that about twenty-five thousand Jews pooled their resources and set out to walk to the nearest sea-



Herman Jacob
First President of Beth Israel
Synagogue

port. They bought wagons and covered them and in them thus sheltered rode the women and children while the men walked along side. As they passed through each town along the way the local synagogue would hold some sort of fete to raise funds to help the pilgrims on their long journey.

These Jews, wandering Jews in the truest sense, awlled through Hungary, through Austria, through all of Germany, till they reached the port of Bremen. There they boarded ships and crossed the Atlantic to America. They landed in Quebec and were brought to New York by HIAS. That organization distributed these twenty-five thousand Roumanian Jews to different cities to avoid concentration and one hundred and fifty families were settled in Pittsburgh.

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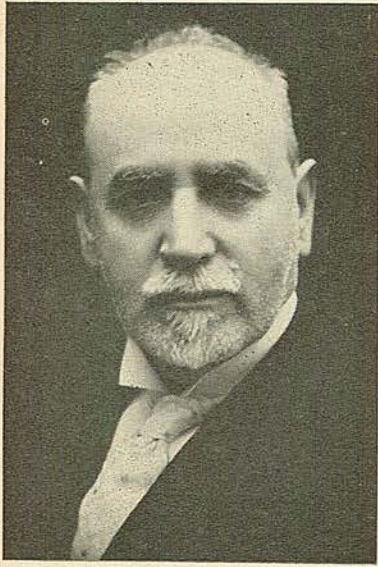
The group of Jewish tradespeople who made their home in the Homewood district were, for the most part, only temporary settlers there. They were small shopkeepers, shoe repairers, tailors, grocers and other merchants and most of them did not stay long. They were not sufficient in number to form their own congregation so for the most part from 1903 on they followed the B'nai Israel group in its wanderings through the East Liberty district.

About 1907, with the Wilkinsburg Jews, there were enough families to form a minyan for the High Holidays and services were held in Carat at the corner of Homewood and Hamilton Avenues. A little later, as the **B'nai Zion Congregation**, they rented the upper floors of the old Homewood Bank Building on Homewood Avenue. At one time in their peregrinations Commissioner John S. Herron, then Councilman Herron serving on the board of Carnegie Library, was instrumental in procuring for many years use of the auditorium of the Homewood branch of Carnegie for the Holy Days at a nominal fee.

In 1921 or possibly earlier a religious school was organized for thirty children from Homewood, Brushton and Wilkinsburg. At first the Hebrew language was the prin-

principal subject of instruction, but after the school was put under the Southwestern District Religious Schools Committee the other subjects of a Jewish Sunday School were also taught.

It was this group that formed the Lebanon Society which shortly became the Oher Chodesh Congregation in 1902. Rabbi M. S. Sivitz was appointed by HIAS to be the rabbi and B. Chaimovitz to oversee the welfare of the new group. David



David Segall
First President of New Light
Synagogue

Segall, who at that time had a pop factory on Roberts Street, helped in the formation of the synagogue and became its first president. Today the president is Morris Kohen who emigrated to this country from Roumania a year before the mass emigration.

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From the very beginning, through all these years, the guiding hand and guardian angel of the group has been Harry I. Neaman. The group never had formal elections of officers; it was taken for granted that Mr. Neaman would "take care of things." Little by little a few more families have become permanent residents of Homewood and now a full-fledged congregation exists. Last year a permanent home for a synagogue was purchased at the corner of Hamilton and Lang Avenues. The Congregation has a Free Loan Society, a Sisterhood and a Men's Club.

The Hill is Still Active

Although the movement had begun which was to carry the Jewish population away from the Hill to other sections of the city, nevertheless the first twenty years of the new century still found a few synagogues being formed in that locality. In 1905 ten men, with Philip Rosenthal as president, formed the Kneseth Israel Congregation, later to become Caneses Israel of 72 Miller Street. They started worshipping in one room at 1415 Clark Street where they remained till 1909. For the next year they occupied two rooms on Fullerton Street, at the end of which time they bought the Congregation's building at 72-74 Miller Street and there they have met ever since.

In 1918 the group bought a half acre of cemetery ground in Millvale which has since been added to. In 1940 a new chapel was built there and the ground fenced off. Today the synagogue has a Ladies Auxiliary and a Free Loan Association and engages in charitable work throughout the city. There are fifty-five members of whom Isadore Siegal is president.

On a certain day in 1907 a group of fifteen orthodox Jewish emigrants from the Russian province of Volinia who had settled in Pittsburgh gathered together to organize a Chevrah. Solomon Liner who, today, is president of the Adath Israel Congregation, offered his home to the group as a place of prayer. By 1910 there were fifty members instead of fifteen in the Congregation Anshe Volinia and it was necessary for them to move into a hired hall.

In 1914 they decided to accept as members those who had immigrated not only from Volinia but from all parts of the world. For this reason the name was changed to **Congregation Keser Torah**, under which name the group applied for and was granted a charter.

1916 found the group assessing each member fifty dollars for the purchase of cemetery grounds at Hoffman Road, Millvale, Pa. The next year the Congregation reached its highest peak and decided to build a new synagogue at the corner of Webster Avenue and Erin Street. The building was completed and dedicated as a place of worship and learning three years later.

In July of 1922 at a general meeting of all members, Rabbi A. M. Ashinsky was unanimously elected as Rabbi for the Congregation and was offered a lifetime contract. The Congregation today has a Ladies Auxiliary, a Free Loan, a Young Men's Hebrew Club and a Ladies Cheder Aid Society. The president is B. Linder, brother of the man in whose home the first minyans took place.

"The Little Rabbi From Lebovitz"

There is a small town in Russia called Lebovitz and in that town there is a schul. Its leader at one time was one Rabbi Shneersohn, whose spiritual guidance was such that he came to be known as, "The Little Rabbi from Lebovitz." His fame extended to groups of Jewish orthodox beyond his own country and Yeshivas bearing the name of Lebovitz have sprung up in many lands. Today Rabbi Shneersohn is in New York City.

The Pittsburgh Anshe Lebovitz was formed in 1907 by ten or twelve members. H. Friedman was its first president. About 1909 this group was meeting in a home at 68 Arthur Street. 1918 found it expanding a little and seeking new quarters in another home, this time on Wylie Avenue. That same year plans were made to build a synagogue at 108 Erin Street where the Congregation of thirty-eight members still meets. Today B. Weiner is the president.

In 1908 a Hazelwood congregation came to life. Beginning with a small group of eight members with Jacob Weinberger as president, the Ahavath Zedeck Congregation started in Barkers Hall in Hazelwood. Four years later it rented a Mansion Street store room for its growing membership. In 1916 it was meeting in rooms above the Hazelwood Bank. Several more places were rented until, in 1926, the Congregation was able to start work on its own building. The new synagogue, on Glen Caladh Street, was finished in 1927 and is still the religious home of its twenty-eight members. Nathan Newman, who served as the group's first treasurer, is today its president.

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B'nai Israel Fills A Need

Born of a need that found Jewish children growing up in a neighborhood that offered religious worship for every faith but their own, the B'nai Israel Congregation came into being in 1909. The original Jewish community in the Hill district had begun to break down and families were sifting into other districts of

the city. Several had moved to the East End and the heads of a few of these families held their first minyan in 1909 at the home of M. Trachtenberg on Frankstown Avenue.

The group grew until larger quarters were necessary and the second floor of the Cameraphone Building was rented. From 1915 until about 1920 the East End Jewish population more than doubled in numbers and the Masonic Building on Collins Avenue became its House of Worship with a seating capacity of about two hundred.

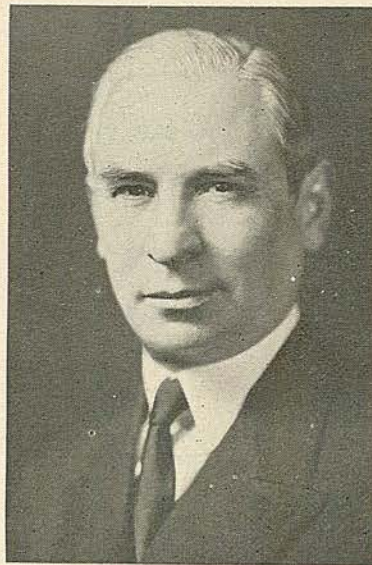
Somewhat later the Congregation purchased the beautiful old Martin home at 401 North Highland Avenue and thus acquired ample space for a Jewish center. There were class rooms, meeting rooms, a library and a chapel where daily services were held. Sabbath and holiday services were conducted in the Collins Avenue building, while for the High Holidays the ballroom of the Rittenhouse and the Pershing Theatre were rented.

Almost until the end of World War I, it was the only synagogue in East Liberty. In 1920 Rabbi Benjamin A. Lichter was called to lead the Congregation and it was under his guidance that the late Friday evening services were instituted which permitted more members to attend than were able to be at the Sundown Services.

The year 1923 found the Congregation taking title to its present property on North Negley Avenue. In May of that year the cornerstone was laid with Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson of Rodef Shalom and Rev. Hersh Maslianski of New York as guest speakers. The new building, Byzantine in design, offered a seating capacity of more than one thousand. In September of 1924 the building was dedicated and opened to worshippers.

Since that time, of the many workers who toiled to bring the Synagogue to its high position today four individuals stand out prominently: Saul Schein and Charles Friedberg, now honorary presidents; Max Azen, now honorary vice-president, and Mrs. Barnett Davis, honorary president of the Sisterhood, but more accurately Mother of B'nai Israel Congregation.

B'nai Israel is a force in the East End community. It commands the respect of its Christian neighbors



Harry I. Neaman
First President of B'nai Zion
Congregation

with whom it has on many occasions joined in communal endeavors. Its membership is growing and its program of activity is ever expanding. Affiliated with it are Religious Schools, a Sisterhood, a Men's

Club and a Parent-Teachers Association. The leadership of the Congregation is still in the hands of Rabbi Benjamin A. Lichter with Benjamin Chait as president.

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The North Side fathered another synagogue in the early nineteen hundreds. About 1913 a group of men with George Mendelbaum as their first president started a minyan which they named Agudath



George Mendelbaum
First President of Beth Jehuda
Synagogue

Achim, which met first on Beaver Avenue. There were twenty-five members in this first group whose first leader was Rabbi Tolochko.

In 1915 Rudolph Solomon bought the honor of having the Congregation named after his father, Jehuda Solomon, and it forthwith became the Beth Jehuda Synagogue. The group moved into a building at the corner of Nixon and Atmore Streets where it remained until 1925 when the building at the corner of Chateau and Adams Street was purchased. In 1926 the new House of Worship was dedicated and there the Congregation has remained ever since.

George Mendelbaum remained president until 1930. Today William Siegman holds that office, while Simon Z. Rubenstein is the rabbi. There are thirty-five members, a Hebrew School, a Sunday School and a Sisterhood.

Out at 5157 Butler Street there is a small congregation that today is more of a prayer house than a synagogue. It is known as the Butler Street Congregation and came into existence thirty-five or forty years ago. The first president was B. Rogalsky but the group was never incorporated as a congregation. It used to do a great deal of charitable work but there are few members left. Nathan Shall today is president and a rabbi is engaged only on High Holidays for the twenty Jewish families of the immediate neighborhood who attend.

Under its first president, S. Goldvarg, the Talmud Torah or South Side Congregation was formed with twenty-two members in 1913. The Jewish community of the South Side met for worship in a private home at 1916 Carson Street until, in 1916, it was able to buy a small synagogue. Still later the Congregation erected a new building at 1908 Ferry Street which it opened for sixty-five members in 1929. Today, the Congregation still meets in this building. A Ladies Auxiliary and a Sunday School are affiliated with the Congregation and Sam Blitz is president.

A few years later, in 1916, a faction split off from the Congregation B'nai Israel in the East End district to form the **Adath Jeshurun Congregation**. In December of 1917 this small group filed a petition of incorporation under that name and the charter was approved the following year.

For several years after that the growing Congregation met in various small meeting rooms and homes in the neighborhood. On the Holy Days it rented the auditorium of Carnegie Library on Larimer Avenue or the Cameraphone Building. Still later its members worshipped in a house on the site where the synagogue now stands at the corner of Margaretta and North St. Clair Streets. But in 1923 the Congregation voted to erect a new edifice at that corner.

The house was razed and ground for the new synagogue was broken on June 10, 1923, for a building of Moorish design. The building was completed and the doors formally



David Hirsh
First President of the Chofetz
Chaim Congregation

opened on September 15, 1924. In 1927 the Congregation purchased a large plot of ground in Wildwood to be used as a cemetery in conjunction with the synagogue.

Last year a banquet marked the Silver Anniversary of the Congregation. Rabbi M. A. Levin has been its spiritual leader for the past seventeen years. Samuel Maryn is president.

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Beth Shalom Comes in

Starting twenty-five years ago with a group of thirty-five men who felt the time had come to build a synagogue in the new residential district of Squirrel Hill, the **Beth Shalom Synagogue** at the corner of Beacon Street and Shady Avenue today ranks second in the city in the number of its members. Those early business men met in various rented buildings in the district, the first movie house located where Isaly's now is on Forbes Street, in the Manor Theatre a little later. Their first rabbi was Rabbi A. H. Kahn and their first president was Meyer Osoff.

Then, in 1923, the group erected its own building on Beacon Street, the structure that today houses the school rooms and the offices. The Congregation outgrew that building eight years later.

The Talmud enjoins a congregation to build its house of worship on a high place because the synagogue should tower above all other buildings. The new Beth Shalom Synagogue, started in 1931 directly above the older building, stands on top of one of Pittsburgh's highest hills and carries out in its architecture many other aspects of Hebrew tradition.

The bronze doors of its entrance depict the three virtues stressed in Judaism: a crown for truth, a lion for justice and a Palestinian tree for peace. The floor plan of the building itself follows the plan of the Tabernacle built to house the Ark of the Covenant of many thousands of years ago. The original Tabernacle was divided into three parts. The first was an open court in which the worshippers gathered before entering the Tabernacle proper which was itself divided into two sections: the Hekal, containing the incense altar, the table for shew-bread and the seven-branched lamp; and the Holy of Holies, a perfect square, where the Ark of the Covenant and the Tablets of the Law were kept.

The new Beth Shalom, in following this plan, made the auditorium the open court. The Hekal became the large raised platform from which the Torah is read. And the Ark, containing the Scroll and corresponding to the Holy of Holies, is placed against the wall nearest Jerusalem. Thus is the formal design of ancient times revived today for modern religious worship.

The greatest development of the Congregation was brought about under the presidency of the late M. L. Avner who served the Synagogue in that capacity from 1923 until 1939. Abe Caplan has been secretary for the past twenty-five years, while its spiritual leader for the past eighteen has been Rabbi Goodman A. Rose. The president today is Joseph J. Schmidt. The Congregation now numbers six hundred members and has recently added to its space with the purchase of the adjacent property at 5911 Beacon Street which will be used for future expansion.

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Beechview Gets A Synagogue

Two years after Beth Shalom began the group of Jewish residents in Beechview chartered its first synagogue. That was the year 1919 and it was called the **Beth El Congregation**. J. Rosenson was its first president and the membership numbered twenty-five. The group met in private homes until 1926 when it erected its own synagogue at 1910 Broadway in Beechview.

When the key for the new synagogue was auctioned off it was purchased by Senator James J. Davis who had many friends in the Congregation. At that time he was Secretary of Commerce under President Hoover and he flew in from Washington for the occasion. The key for which he paid three hundred and fifty dollars he still possesses and that should make him vice-president on the Lord's right in Heaven some day. Hitler take heed! Even today, if there is a special affair given by the Congregation, Senator Davis still comes to town for it.

The Congregation is a very active one serving the Jewish communities of Dormont, Mt. Lebanon and Brookline in addition to its own locality. The membership now numbers seventy-five families, has a junior and a senior Sisterhood, a Men's Club and an organization for young children called the Busy Bees. It was the first congregation to sponsor farewell parties for selectees in the South Hills and now other churches of other denominations have followed its example. Today Philip Goldstein is president.

Three congregations came into existence in 1921, Agudath Achim, Adath Israel and Ohave Zedeck. **Agudath Achim** started in the nickelodeon at 615 Herron Avenue because Harry Mosenson, the first chairman, believed that the Jewish children of the neighborhood needed a Hebrew School. There were forty members in the beginning and almost one hundred children in the Hebrew School. They were predominantly Ukrainian Russians and the synagogue was strictly orthodox. In 1922 the Congregation moved into its own building at 2919 Wylie Avenue where it has been ever since.

Today, like so many other synagogues on the Hill, the membership has dropped and there are no children for whom to conduct a Hebrew School. However, through contributions and the leadership of its president, Max Basser, the schul is reviving and taking a new lease on life.

The **Adath Israel Congregation** of 3257 Ward Street is an active group numbering forty or fifty members in addition to non-members who attend services. It is a mixed group of no one particular language extraction whose president is Solomon Linder. There is a Ladies Auxiliary, a Sunday School and a Chevrah Mishnah.

The **Ohave Zedeck Synagogue** is located at 356 Craft Avenue, at the end of that street. Its first minyan numbered only nine members, but today it can boast of seventy. Its first president was Morris Rosenblum. In 1937 the building was remodelled and now has a Sunday School and a Ladies Auxiliary. The rabbi is S. Mallinger and the president is Joseph H. Neustein.

The **Chofetz Chaim Congregation** was organized in 1925 and met for the first four years on a second floor at the corner of Murray and Phillips Avenues. Its first president was David Hirsh. In 1929 it purchased and remodelled the property at 5807 Beacon Street where it has met ever since. Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky was its first leader and still occupies the pulpit.

Louis Yale Borkon is now in his third term as president of the Congregation which today numbers about one hundred members. The Synagogue is known for the support it gives to Torah and educational in-

stitutions throughout the world and stands first in the city of Pittsburgh in the support of Yeshivath. It is also known for the classes in Talmud and the discourses of Rabbi Ashinsky which draw listeners from outside the Congregation. It has a magnificent library of rare volumes. The Congregation has become a permanent influence in the Squirrel Hill Jewish community.

The original minyan of the **B'nai Emunoh Congregation** numbered only ten or fifteen men who met for the first time in 1927. Their first president was Morris Pavlov and they gathered together in a private home until the group expanded sufficiently for them to seek other quarters in a rented store room at 4325 Murray Avenue.

Today the group has its own synagogue at 4323 Murray Avenue with about one hundred members and about one hundred children in the Hebrew School. Simon M. Rosenthal is the president.



Rabbi A. M. Ashinsky

Another congregation founded that same year of 1927 is the **Torath Chaim Synagogue** at 728 North Negley Avenue. The first president was Morris Shechter and there were about thirty members. Rabbi Horovitz was the first spiritual leader. Today the membership is sixty-five, there are fifty to sixty children in the Hebrew School and the Congregation has affiliates in a Free Loan Association, a Ladies Auxiliary, a Chevrah Thilim and a Chevrah Mishnah. Rev. Kaplan is the Congregation's leader and H. Rosenberg is its president.

There is a small synagogue on Anaheim Street on Herron Hill that was founded in 1930 and is kept up for the benefit of the Jews who still live in that section. Jacob Gold was the first president of the **Kihilath Jeshurun Congregation** of twenty-five members. Louis Begler has been the Cantor ever since its beginning. Today, Joseph Wise is president of this small Congregation which has a Ladies Auxiliary and a Sunday School.

For the sake of completion mention must be made of two final congregations data concerning which was not made available to the writer. What epoch of Pittsburgh Jewish history these two synagogues fit into is, therefore, unknown. They are the **Sharay Zion Congregation** at Wylie Avenue and Green Street and the **Tfereth Israel Congregation** at 137 Fullerton Street.

The roots of the Jewish community are still alive, still putting out new shoots. Strongly knit into the pattern of the city as a whole, the Jews of Pittsburgh with their thirty-six synagogues founded during the past one hundred years clearly show the strides they have taken in becoming an integral part of the city of their adoption.



Signing The First Contract By the Officers of Congregation Beth Shalom, Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh, Pa., for the Erection of Their New Synagogue, February 19, 1922. (Left to Right) H. Arensen, Vice President; Joseph Lasday, President; Abe Caplan, Secretary.