



*William Miller helps lay the cornerstone for the Irene Kaufmann Settlement addition in 1928.*

# BUILDING PITTSBURGH

While some people in Pittsburgh can claim that their families are among the “builders” of the Jewish community, Marcie Alter can state it literally — and figuratively.

Her great-grandfather (through her paternal grandmother), Herschel Miller, was one of the city’s best-known and busiest contractors, beginning in the late 1880s. His firm, H. Miller & Sons Co., was responsible for the construction of many important institutions and homes in the East End. Working with various architects, including Henry Hornbostel, they erected the B’nai Israel Congregation, Taylor Allderdice High School, Montefiore Hospital and more.

Herschel, who was born in Russia about 1859, came to Pittsburgh in the early 1880s, establishing his construc-

tion company in 1888. The firm grew to include offices on Fifth Avenue, a staff of construction engineers, and a mill.

Herschel was married first to Bessie Lazier, and when she died, married her sister, Liba, in 1890. With the two wives, he had a total of 12 children—five boys and seven girls, many who became involved in the business. Herschel’s oldest son William who was born in Pittsburgh on July 5, 1888, joined his father in the construction business at age 16. Another son was an architect with the firm, one was a lawyer, and several of the daughters kept the books. All went to college.

Through old marriage records, Marcie was able to determine that the Miller family lived on such well-known streets as Scott Street and Dinwiddie Street in

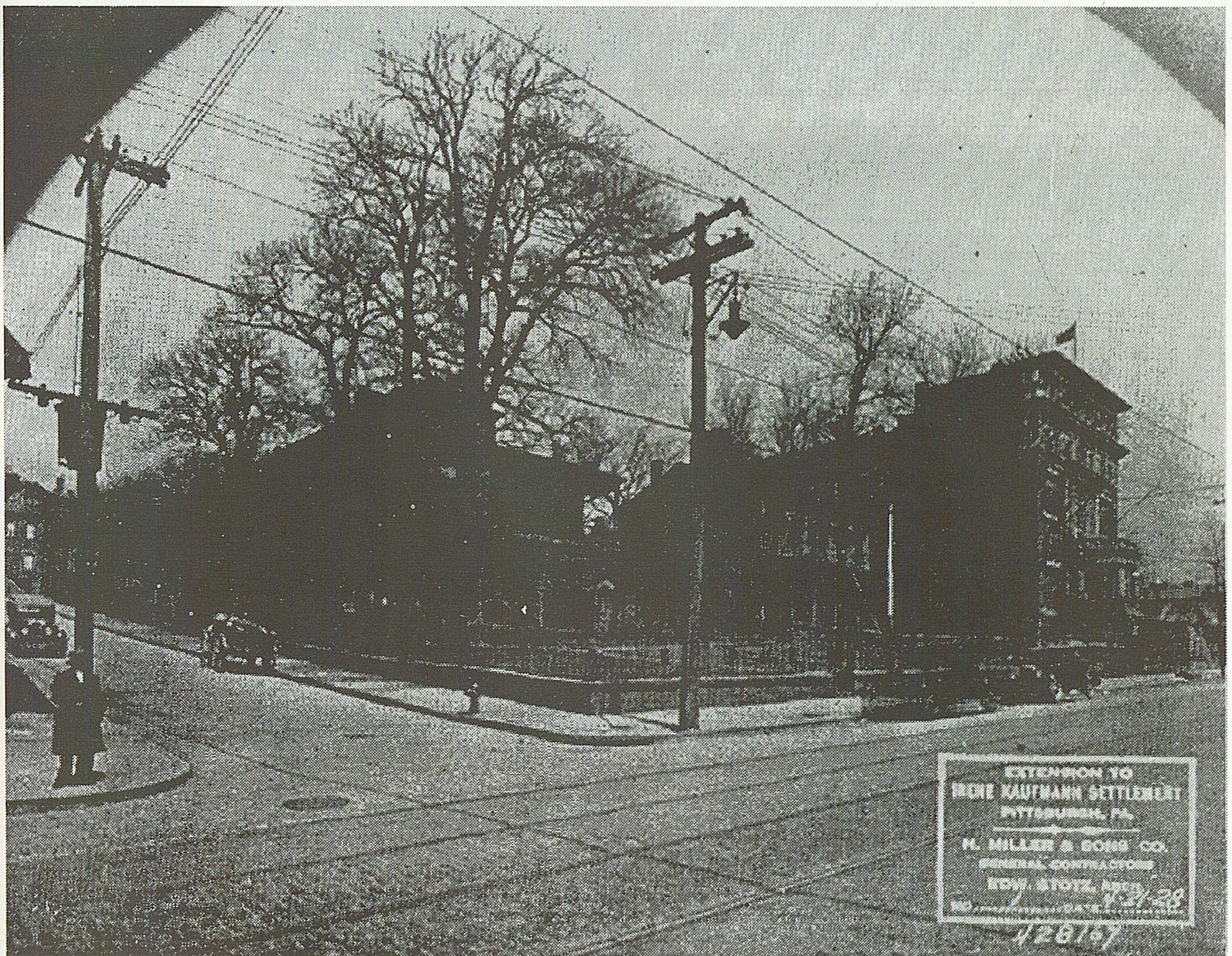
the Hill District before moving to a home built by Herschel on Roup Street.

An article in the journal “Pittsburgh Today” lists some of the buildings constructed by the firm, including the 1927 incarnation of Montefiore Hospital, Concordia Clubhouse, the Hebrew Institute, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement, the Terrace Court Apartments, the 10-story Select Furniture Company, and the G.C. Murphy Building.

According to family tradition, many other buildings are attributed to H. Miller & Sons, albeit through word of mouth.

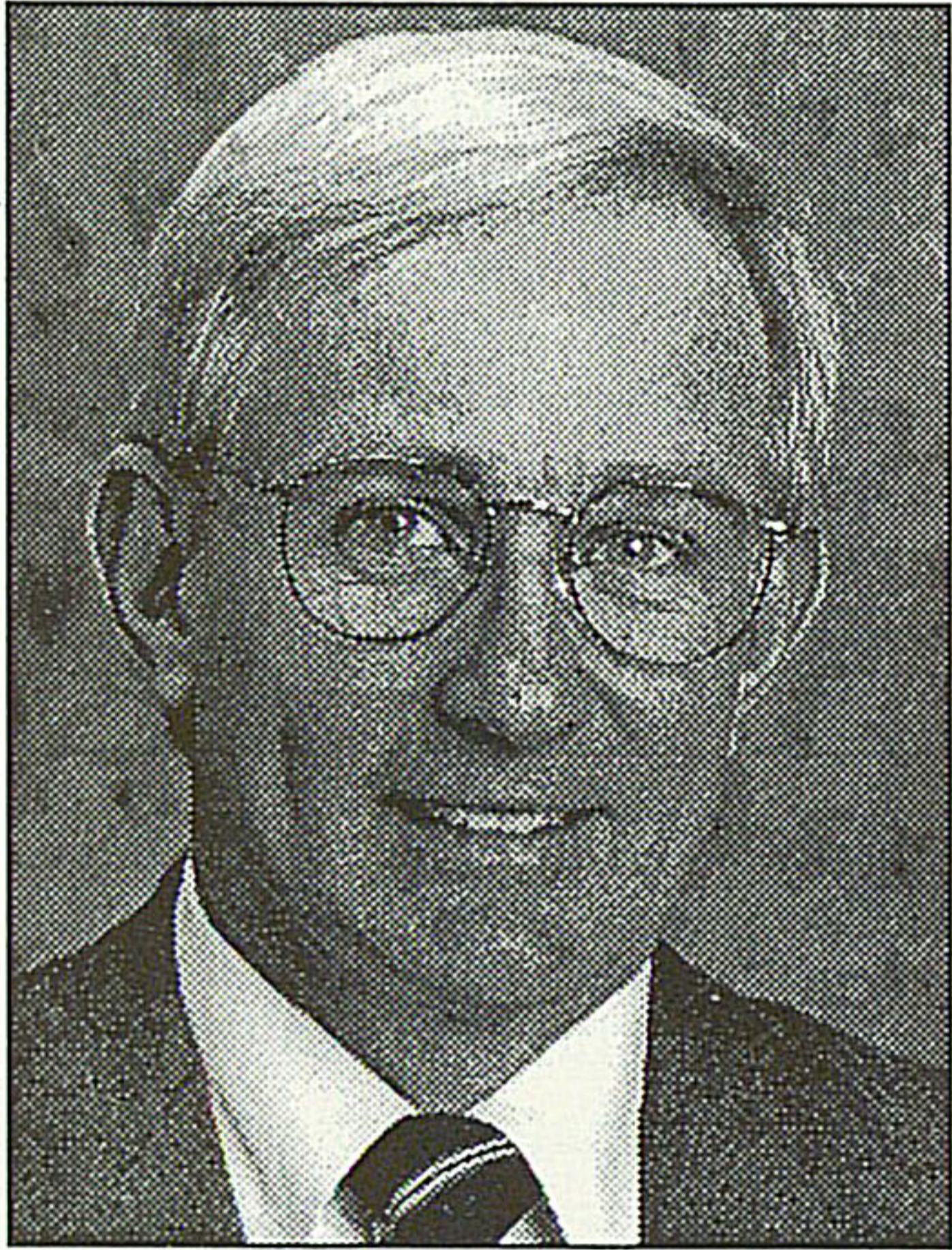
“I was told by my father that they also built the old Pittsburgh Hospital on Washington Blvd. and the Beth Shalom Congregation,” Marcie states. “But there

*As Jewish Pittsburgh grew, so did the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. This addition was built by H. Miller & Sons.*



EXTENSION TO  
IRENE KAUFMANN SETTLEMENT  
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H. MILLER & SONS CO.  
GENERAL CONTRACTORS  
1207 STATE ST.  
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1/28/19

*Warmest regards to  
Pittsburgh's Jewish Community  
In recognition of  
their many contributions  
that make our city great*



**Tom Murphy**  
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

*Paid for by the Tom Murphy for Mayor Committee*

## **BUILDING PITTSBURGH**

are no records from Beth Shalom. I also discovered, through William's daughter, Betty Strem, who lives in California, that they were responsible for building the first 10 houses on Phillips Avenue, from the corner of Shady." William resided with his family at 5933 Phillips Ave.

Under the direction of William Miller, in the 1930's or 40's, a housing development company, the Steelwood Corporation was founded. They developed an area of Stanton Heights that had formerly been a part of the Schenley Estate. In this area known as Millermont, they developed streets of modest two-story brick homes.

William was a leader and founder of various builders' organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce Builder's Council, and part of a group that instituted a building and construction department at the then-Carnegie Institute of Technology as well as Sponsors Organization to help needy students there.

He was involved in the Jewish community as a member of the Westmoreland Country Club, the Young Men's Hebrew Association, and the Rodef Shalom Temple.

"I am very proud of my family's accomplishments. My mother's side of the family was also very successful. Her father, Max Kleber, and his two brothers, Lou and Sam, had a luggage business downtown. The Kleber Building stood across from the train station, where the DoubleTree Hotel is now.

"I enjoy pointing these places out to my son, Ben, and I hope that he gets a sense of pride as well," Marcie says.

Shared by Marcie Alter

## **US DREAMING IN POLISH**

My mother, of blessed memory, came to America from a village in Poland called "Stolchin" in 1885 to carry out her dream of leaving Poland to come to America. She married a widower with four children. Shortly after, they left Poland to enjoy a new life in America. Seven children were born of that marriage -- five girls and two boys. I am the youngest and only one left of this family.

Shared by Eve Finegold Martin

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