

Men of the Tree of Life Who Wrote Community History

An important chapter in the history of the Jewish community of Pittsburgh is the role which the Tree of Life Congregation has played through its rabbis and leading laymen.

Long before the local Jewish charities had the semblance of present-day organization, this congregation was functioning as a Jewish social agency. As early as 1871, the synagogue archives tell of the liberal contribution made by the congregation to the various hospitals of the city, upon request of Jericho Lodge I. O. B. B.

It was Alexander Fink, president of the congregation, who for years served as president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. Long before Federation days, he went out among his brethren, collected monies from among those more comfortably situated and then distributed gifts among the poor in our midst. In the eighties the great wave of immigration from Russia brought to Pittsburgh a large number of destitute Jews. With these suffering brethren, Fink as a communal leader, concerned himself. Alexander Fink, in his day, was the instrument whereby the scattered Jewish community could be, in some degree, welded together. He was the "go-between" of the older settlers and more recent immigrants. He it was who extended the helping hand to the Jews who needed help; and it was this same Alexander Fink who showed them the way to give charity when they had already enjoyed some material blessings of their own.

It is not generally known that one of the worthiest Jewish institutions in the city, owes its origin to a former rabbi in the Tree of Life pulpit. Rabbi Michael Fried was called to Pittsburgh from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1898. Some years later it became Rabbi Fried's sad duty to deliver a sermon at the tragic funeral of a poor, aged couple, who had been burned to death. This old man and his beloved wife had been worshipers in the Tree of Life. And now after this fire they were to be buried in the Tree of Life Cemetery. In his eulogy, Rabbi Fried dwelt at length on the importance of having a Home for the Aged. He pointed out how the fire would have been impossible if this old couple had been cared for in a Moshav Zekenim. His was the first public utterance in Pittsburgh for a Home for the Aged. On Yom Kippur following, before Neilah he preached a whole sermon on the need of founding such an institution. Before he was able to bring to a successful fruition and practical realization this idea and hope, Rabbi Fried had to leave Pittsburgh, to seek other climes for his health.

Every Sabbath afternoon, Rabbi Fried regularly went to Gusky Orphanage, to teach the boys and girls the Word of God and to conduct services.

During the ministry of Dr. Rudolph I. Coffee, the Tree of Life Congregation was brought to the attention of the non-Jewish world through the rabbi's many civic interests. It was through Rabbi Coffee's influence that ex-President Theodore Roosevelt delivered an address in the Tree of Life Synagogue, on the last day of Passover, 1912.

The early days of the Y. M. H. A. are bound up intimately with the Tree of Life and Rabbi Coffee. The "Y" dedication program of May, 1926, contains these statements:

"The early meetings were held in the Vestry Rooms of the Tree of Life Synagogue and the end of the first month showed a membership of 100."

"The Bible class met in one of the Sunday School rooms with Dr. Rudolph I. Coffee, who was then rabbi of the Tree of Life Synagogue. Dr. Coffee was particularly interested in the 'Y' movement from the very start and was consulted by the original group of sixteen."

Several laymen of the Tree of Life, throughout its history, have represented their congregation in the community through their benefactions and leadership.

Marks Browarsky, who joined in the membership in 1870, was one of them. The Federation of Jewish Philanthropies is today the recipient from his estate of about \$100,000.00, the income of which is applied to free loans. The Browarsky annex to the Home for the Aged was an outright gift, presented by the late Marks Browarsky while in the land of the living.

The name of Henry Jackson will forever stand out in the history of important Jewish personalities of Pittsburgh. President of the Montefiore Hospital for

Among Them Alexander Fink, Rabbi Fried, Rabbi Coffee, Marks Browarsky, Henry Jackson, Sol Rosenbloom, Dr. K. I. Sanes and Isaac Seder

many years, president of the Home for the Aged for twenty years—in fact, the only president of the Home until, with his death, J. H. Frank was elected—Henry Jackson reflected credit upon the

synagogue he loved so much. He was chairman of the Tree of Life School Board for almost thirty years.

Henry Jackson was one of the first Zionists in the United States. In those

days, when it wasn't fashionable to show interest in the Palestine movement, he made a trip to Palestine and also to several Zionist Congress meetings. He was the treasurer of the Federation of American Zionists for a period of years.

The deeds of Sol Rosenbloom and Isaac Seder are of our own times. The former was a trustee of the congregation, and, for a time, its president; the latter served as a member of the Board of Trustees.

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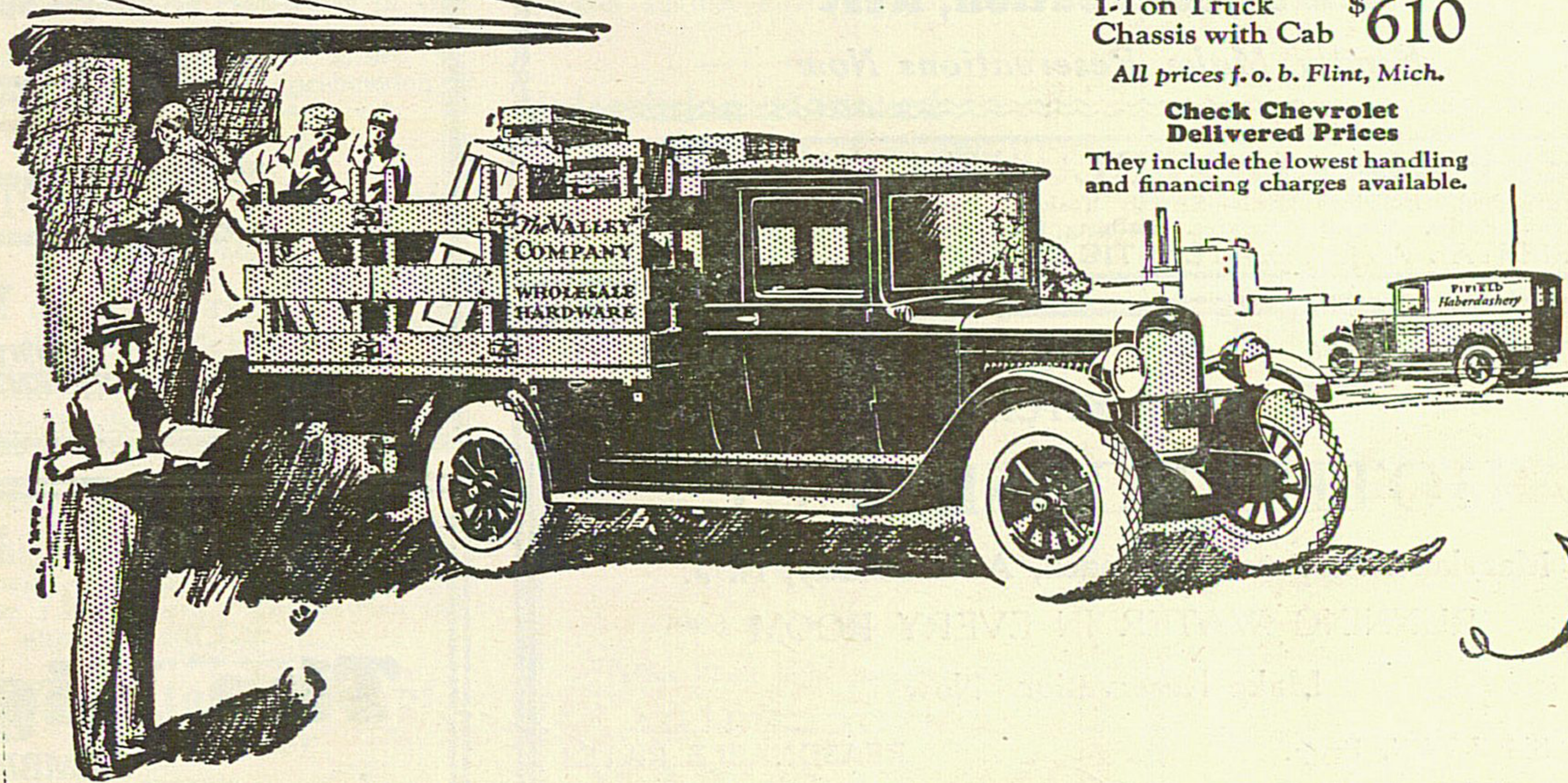
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QUALITY AT LOW COST

Sol Rosenbloom became an international Jewish figure. Through the Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh, his name stood for progressive Jewish education throughout America. His love for Torah expressed itself in his benefactions and services to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Palestine and the Jewish Renaissance benefited from his liberal endowments and gifts.

The role played by Isaac Seder was, unfortunately for the community, terminated too soon by his untimely death. The new Montefiore Hospital will forever be connected with his name. Within the walls of the Tree of Life Synagogue, his exchange of ideas of holidays with his business associates interested in the project, planted the seeds which later sprouted forth into the united endeavor of the whole Jewish community. The Isaac Seder Educational Center of the Y. M. & W. H. A. is an evidence of the blessings made possible by Isaac Seder's immortality. His last will and testament will remain forever a model of true Jewishness and since humanness—for no one was overlooked in his will.

And who will ever cease to revere the memory of K. I. Sanes, renowned surgeon.

The bodies, in which dwell the spirits of these men, now lie asleep forever in the Tree of Life Cemetery, at Sharpsburg. They have hallowed the ground and rendered it "holy unto the Lord".

Steps Taken to Safeguard Interests of American Zion Commonwealth Purchasers and to Assure Its Credit in This Country

Louis Lipsky, President Zionist Organization of America, Announces New Personnel Is in Charge in America and Palestine; Nathan D. Kaplan, of Chicago, Heads Palestine Office; Gives Service Gratis

COMMONWEALTH'S ASSETS EXCEED LIABILITIES BY OVER \$600,000

New York.—Men of acknowledged business ability, commanding Zionist confidence, have been placed in charge of affairs of the American Zionist Commonwealth both in this country and in Palestine and are taking steps to protect the interest of American purchasers and to assure the Commonwealth's credit in America.

This is the statement made by Louis Lipsky, president of the Zionist Organization of America, before leaving for the fifteenth World Zionist Congress at Basle, giving assurance that "the new administration is slowly extricating the American Zion Commonwealth out of its credit difficulties."

A composite financial statement of the books of the American Zion Commonwealth in this country as well as in Palestine, duly signed by certified public accountants, shows that the assets of the company exceed the liabilities by over \$600,000. The surplus earned by the company is not the property of any individual but is to be used for public purposes and for the furtherance of the Jewish National Home ideal in Palestine.

Mr. Lipsky's statement briefly outlines the accomplishments of the Commonwealth during the nine years of its active operation in Palestine. "During that time," he declares, "it has contributed a great deal to the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home. It has established the colonies of Balfouria, Herzlia and Afule. It redeemed 150,000 dunams of land from the possession of non-Jews and took part in the acquisition of the most promising stretch of territory known as the Haifa Bay complex, which consists of 60,000 dunams of land and which is destined to become a flourishing industrial and agricultural section.

"The American Zion Commonwealth was caught, however, in the conditions that developed in Palestine during the past few years," Mr. Lipsky's statement continues, in explanation of the difficulties of the fund. "Its difficulties are attributable to the fact that it had insufficient capital with which to operate; to the fact that its managers purchased more land than they were in position to sell or develop; to the fact that the market for the sale of land in Palestine broke as a result of the discontinuance of immigration; to the fact that the American Zion Commonwealth managers in Palestine failed to take proper precautions to protect the American land purchasers."

Mr. Lipsky states that "the Zionist Or-

ganization of America intervened and placed in charge of the American Zion Commonwealth a new personnel to take the place of the old administration. At the head of the affairs of the Commonwealth," he states, "were placed men of acknowledge business ability in whom we have the utmost confidence, and who will command the confidence of all Zionists. At the head of the Palestine office of the American Zion Commonwealth we have been most fortunate in securing the able services of Nathan D. Kaplan gratis. Mr. Kaplan, an attorney, is prominent in Chicago Zionist affairs."

The statement further declares that "the Zionist Organization of America stands squarely behind the American Zion as does Dr. Weizmann, president of the World Organization. It further declares that "the failure of the American Zion Commonwealth would bring about a serious financial condition in other Zionist institutions in Palestine, which makes it all the more imperative for Zionists in co-operation to do their utmost to place the Commonwealth upon a safe financial basis."

Mr. Lipsky's statement, which is supplemented by the financial statement of the Commonwealth, concludes with an appeal to all American land purchasers to give their support to the "effort that is being made by the present board of directors of the American Zion Commonwealth to meet all the obligations of the corporation and to place it once more in a position in which it can be of service to the Zionist movement." The statement points out that there are now outstanding \$682,288.58 due to the American Zion Commonwealth from American land purchasers, and declares that the payment of this amount would enable the Commonwealth fully to redeem important stretches of land which are being held under mortgage.

The Newspaper Reporter Interviews the Opera Singer

"What is your favorite smoke?" "Murad," says the singer. "Why?" asks the reporter. "While I don't pretend to be a connoisseur of tobacco, I do know that Murad has no equal for fragrance. That's one reason I'm so partial to Murads. Their exquisite aroma won me years ago."

Jewish Cemetery in Essen Desecrated

Berlin (J. T. A.)—Another desecration of a Jewish cemetery occurred in Essen recently. This is the forty-second case of desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Germany.

The Jewish community of Essen has offered a reward for the apprehension of perpetrators of the vandalistic act.

407,119 Jews Live in White Russia

Minsk (J. T. A.)—The Jewish population in the Republic of White Russia amounts to 8.17 per cent. of the general population, according to the results of a census made known by the statistical department of the White Russian Government.

The census shows the total population of White Russia numbers 4,983,168. The White Russians number 86.6 per cent., the Jewish population 8.17 per cent., Russians 7.7 per cent. The Jewish population numbers 407,119.

Confesses to Murder of Kurt Eisner

Madrid (J. T. A.)—Baron George Wilhelm von Arco, of Bavaria, when arrested her, confessed to the police that in 1919 he murdered Kurt Eisner, the first president of the Bavarian Republic.

Dutch Jewish Scholar Called to Minnesota University

The Hague (J. T. A.)—Dr. J. N. Colthof, head of the pharmaceutical laboratory of the University of Utrecht, has been called to the University of Minnesota, it has been learned here.

Dr. Colthof will occupy the chair of

analytic chemistry at the University of Minnesota. He had refused a call to one of the universities in Germany because of the prevailing anti-Semitism.

Kennywood Park

The special free attraction that is brought to Kennywood Park for the week commencing Monday, August 22nd, is the appearance twice daily of the Atenos mid-air marvels and whirling wizards.

On Sunday afternoon and evening, T. J. Vastine and his Westinghouse Band will render concerts of both popular and classical numbers. The repeated engagements of this famous band of musicians prove that their renditions have met with unqualified success. Commencing Monday, August 22nd, and throughout the entire week, Tom Tyson and his Morning Glory Orchestra will play their second week's engagement at Kennywood's dancing pavilion.

Palestine to Have New Police Chief

Jerusalem (J. T. A.)—Colonel A. S. Mavrogordato, the Inspector General of the Palestine Department of Police and Prisons, is to be transferred to another post, states the "Doar Hayom". He will be succeeded as chief of the Palestine police by Colonel A. J. Macneil, former commandant of the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie (Black and Tans), which was disbanded about a year ago.

Nathan Straus to Erect Children's Sanatorium in Palestine

Tel Aviv (J. T. A.)—The amount of \$25,000 toward the erection of a children's sanatorium here was forwarded by Nathan Straus, American philanthropist. Mr. Straus has undertaken to build the sanatorium at a cost of \$75,000.

Warsaw Refuses to Name Street for Zamenhof

Warsaw (J. T. A.)—The City Council has refused to honor the memory of Dr. Leo Zamenhof, father of Esperanto, by renaming the street where he lived.

The suggestion was made by the delegates to the Esperantists' Congress that Dzikia Street, in the heart of the Jewish quarter in Warsaw, be renamed Zamenhof Street. The city government rejected this proposal on the basis of a previous decision against changing the names of streets.

Palestinian Honored by French Government

Paris (J. T. A.)—Dr. Jacob Segal, Palestinian who is residing in Paris, has been honored by the French Government, which has conferred upon him the Legion of Honor.

Dr. Segal is a member of the Central Committee of the League of Zionist Revisionists.

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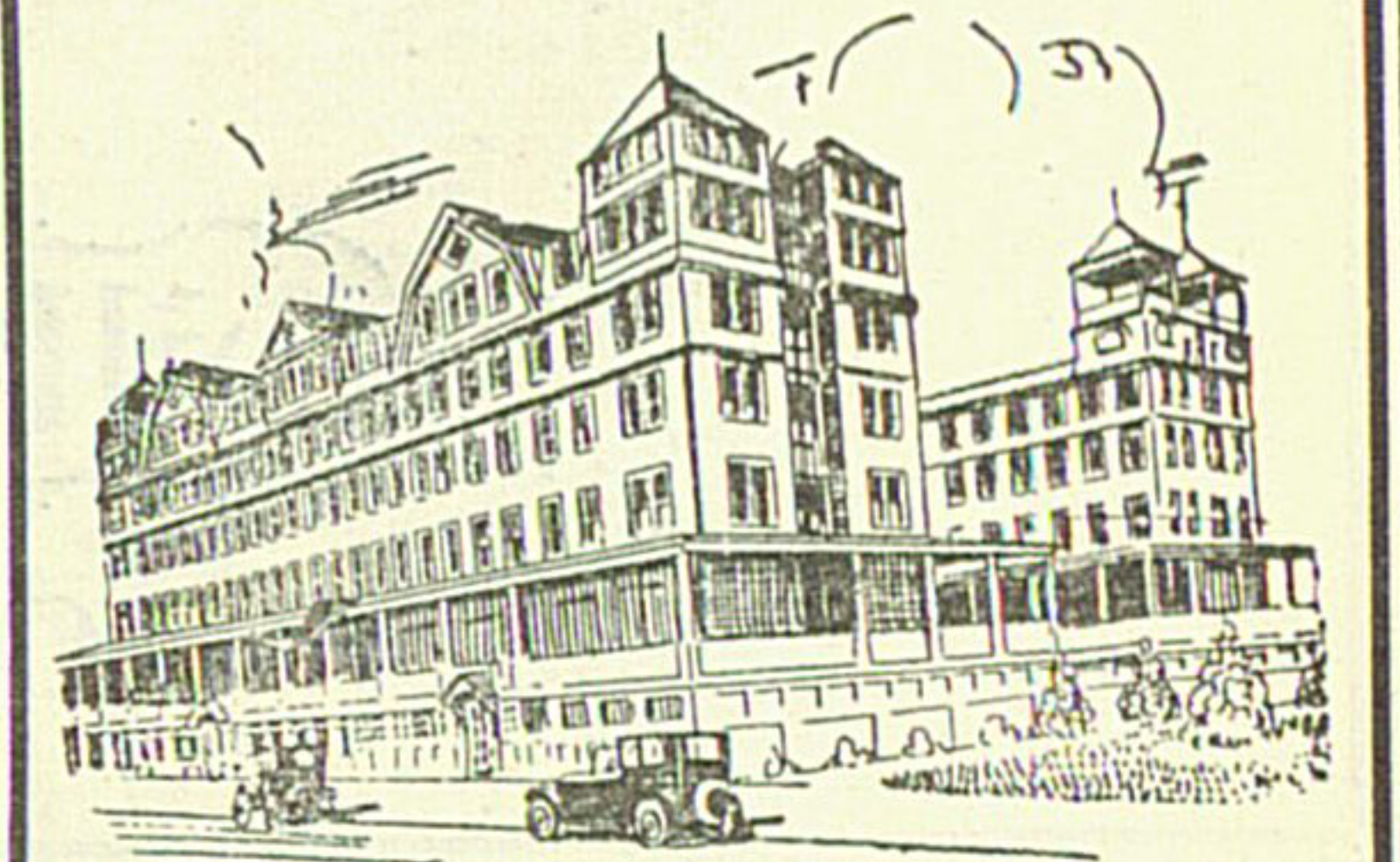
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