

# Yiddish Folk School flourished once

By JACOB M. ROTHBART

At the beginning of the 1920's the number of Jews speaking Yiddish in America was large, but there was very little formal education in the language for the children.

Schools teaching Hebrew after public school hours flourished, but outside of New York City few attempts at organizing a Yiddish school were successful.

Finally, a few of us independent people got together and in 1925 organized the Yehoash Folk School, named after the great Yiddish poet Yehoash.

Our first school was established in the Irene Kaufmann Settlement on Center Avenue in the Hill District. Our teacher was Morris Goldstein.

He was at the same time a doctoral candidate student at the University of Pittsburgh. Several excellent students came out of that school, such as Esther Fagan, Miriam Rudick, Meyer Kapaport and others.

My own children also went to that school and wrote articles for the Yehoash Folk School Yiddish newspaper.

This newspaper was a way for the community to test the success of the school's teaching  
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YEHOASH Folk Shulle, March, 1929.

# Yiddish Folk School

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of the Yiddish language. It also helped us to raise funds for the school by getting businesses to buy advertising space.

Fundraising for the school was a hard job, but in time we were successful enough to open a branch school in Squirrel Hill. We rented a room in the Gold Building on Murray Avenue and again were successful in drawing students to attend.

In Squirrel Hill we also started having social get-togethers with the parents on Friday evenings, with singing and readings of Jewish literature. These get-togethers were an outstanding factor in making the Yehoash Folk School a success.

Little by little the school got into problems that were harder and harder to solve. The Depression made fundraising very hard. The Poale-Zion decided to sponsor their own Yiddish school in competition.

To all our sorrow, we realized that the school must close after several successful years. I remember at our last meeting one member, Nathan Smith, crying like a baby because we had to give up the school.

The Poale Zion school did not last long after that either.

The Yehoash Folk School lasted altogether 12 years.