

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF LONDON



BY JOHN STOW  
1597

# History of the Jewish Community

DuBois, PENNA.

Compiled by Rabbi Nandor Marton

On Sunday, February 21, 1943, the members of Congregation Sons of Israel will add a colorful page to the history of Jewish life in DuBois. This will mark a great event. DuBois Jewery will rejoice over the Burning of the Mortgage, covering the two buildings, the Synogogue and the Jewish Community Center.

It is indeed a great accomplishment for a small Jewish Community to have its Synogogue and Community Center paid for. To the members of the Congregation it means, that it will be easier to keep up the good work; and it will enable them to remodel the Synogogue; towards which the proceeds of this Souvenir Program will be used.

On this great occasion, we review the history of the Jewish Community of DuBois, and note with pride a half a century of growth and progress. It is interesting to know how the Jewish life in DuBois began and developed. Particularly in these days when our people are living through difficult times; when entire Jewish Communities are completely destroyed; it is encouraging and gratifying to note how Jews, uprooted from their native soil of various European countries came to America, took root, and flourished as a Jewish Community. The Jewish Community of DuBois is proof that the Jew is like a hardy perennial plant which can easily be transplanted in any type of soil, take root, and continue to flourish. The history of local Jewery shows that the Jew readily adapts himself to environment and circumstances.

The Jew, destined to wander, has learned to acclimate himself to whatever surroundings he may find himself. Spiritually however, this is a great task, for wherever he may find himself and be content physically and materially, spiritually it is a different matter. As soon as he becomes established, he instinctively begins to feel that something vital to his welfare is lacking. He misses the Home to which he is accustomed from the cradle to the grave; he misses the Synogogue which is the nucleus of his spiritual well-being. He misses the Synogogue because it is the point of contact between the

individual Jew and his People; and above all, it is the focal point between himself, his religion, and his Creator.

Jewish communal life in DuBois developed over a period of about sixty years. It came about through the foresight of Jews who were small tradesmen traveling around the country-side in an effort to earn a livelihood. Now and then, a Jewish soul would settle in DuBois. Then they encouraged and attracted others to settle here, also. As soon as there were a handful of Jews in DuBois, and they began to earn a meager livelihood they realized, that: "ON BREAD ALONE MAN CANNOT LIVE," but "THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD."

The old-timers, who were steeped in Judaism, came to DuBois religiously minded, and found it a real hardship to be without a House of Worship. No doubt they were troubled by the words of our sages, that: "ONE SHOULD NOT RESIDE IN A TOWN WHERE THERE IS NO HOUSE OF GOD." They gave serious thought to the command: "LET THEM MAKE ME A SANCTUARY THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM." Thus the handful of Jews united in a common effort, developed the Jewish Community of DuBois.

Turning the pages of the history of Jewish life in DuBois, we find that on November 16, 1894 three of the handful of members who organized under the traditional name: "SONS OF ISRAEL," appeared before Notary Public of Clearfield County W. C. Pentz, and applied for a charter which they received without any difficulties. They were: Levi Locks, Joseph Breman and Louis G. Deitz. The trustees for the first year as listed in the charter were: Louis Holman, Israel Wayne, and Abram Zisser. Also listed as a subscriber was Abram Bers. On November 19, 1894, the Charter and Certificate of Incorporation were granted by the President Judge of Clearfield County, Cyrus Gorden. It was entered and recorded on November 26, 1894 by Bine Koozer.

As soon as they received the Charter and were recognized as a religious group, organized for the purpose of serving God, they realized that they needed a Synagogue. However, the group being small and the income slight, they had to satisfy themselves by holding Services in private homes. Then Mr. Loeb gave them a place on Long Avenue, rent free, but these quarters were small, so after a time the Congregation moved over to Weber's Store. From there

they moved to the Odd Fellows Building where they did not stay long either. Finally Mr. Hyman Shakespeare prevailed upon Mr. Joe Whithead to rent the Congregation the Whithead Hall, but soon they had to move again. This time, Mr. Abram Zisser gave them quarters in his home. From Mr. Zisser's the Congregation moved to the home of Mr. Joe Lovitz.

Finally the Congregation felt that the time was ripe to establish a permanent place of worship. A meeting was called, and it was decided to make a drive in order to raise sufficient funds to make a payment on a building on Morrison Street, which had formerly been occupied by the Church of United Brethren. The Deed was recorded on November 28, 1911.

According to Synagogue records, the trustees at that time were: Henry Klewans, Abram Zisser, and Solomon Feinberg. Records show that the building committee consisted of: M. Cohen, F. Tamler, Henry Klewans, A. Miller, H. Shakespeare, and J. Brinn. The committee lost no time. They met, and a motion was made by Mr. Klewans and seconded by Mr. Tamler, that money should be borrowed to remodel the Synagogue. After great efforts, they were successful in procuring money to remodel the Synagogue, and to move the building to the corner of Morrison and Weber Avenue, where it is now located. On November 1912, the Synagogue was dedicated. The late Rabbi Levy of Pittsburgh was the guest speaker.

Now that DuBois Jewery had realized its dream of procuring a Synagogue Building, they turned their attention to another vital institution. The Congregation was aware of the necessity for acquiring consecrated ground, so they purchased land for a cemetery. The Deed shows that on July 9, 1919, the Sons of Israel Congregation purchased land for a cemetery from the DuBois Land Company. This tract was named the Hillside Cemetery. Officers elected were: Hyman Shakespeare, President; J. Brinn, Vice President; Lewis Kaufman, Secretary; and Fred Tamler, Treasurer. Cemetery committee was composed of: H. Klewans, E. A. Fischel, and A. Miller. The Sons of Israel members may indeed be proud of the cemetery, the manner in which it is kept up; and its fine appearance. And it has been further improved by the beautiful gates set up by Mr. Morris Shakespeare in memory of his Mother, Mrs. Ida Shakespeare.

After acquiring the cemetery, the Congregation continued to work in behalf of the Jewish Community, and in 1922, the Synagogue Building was paid in full. Then the members decided to build a Jewish Community Center, on the Synagogue lot. A committee was appointed for this purpose composed of: H. Klewans, A. Miller, H. Shakespeare, Lewis Kaufman, and Fred Tamler. On September 17, 1926 money was borrowed to complete the Jewish Center Building. The trustees at that time were F. Tamler, S. Berger, and Ben Klewans. Official opening of the Community Rooms took place on January 27, 1927. Hyman Witten was president of the Congregation. A Board of Governors was appointed for the new building consisting of: Albert Miller, Simon Berger, Fred Tamler, A. Hoffman, Morris Shakespeare, and Aaron Blankfeld.

On February 6, 1927, H. Shakespeare made a motion, amended by L. L. Steinberg, and seconded by Ben F. Klewans that the building committee be empowered to borrow money to remodel the Synagogue to the full extent. Money was secured and the necessary improvements were made.

Since then, the Congregation has been eager to keep both buildings in good condition. The Congregation has had a goal before it, namely, to pay off the mortgage. This has been made possible through the generosity of two principal donors: Mr. Morris Shakespeare, and Mr. Harry Katzen, and the generous support of the entire membership.

Officers of the Congregation Sons of Israel at present are: Hyman Shakespeare, Honorary President; Hyman Witten, President; Fred Tamler, Chairman of Board of Trustees; Isadore Myers, Secretary; and Harry Rivkees, Treasurer. The trustees are: George Greenberg, Morris Shakespeare and David N. Racusin.

The late Mr. Nathan Dym, may he rest in peace, was Vice President for many years and died while in office, on November 29, 1942.

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# Hebrew Aid Society

In recording the history of DuBois Jewery, I necessarily had to refer to records and do considerable research. In examining existing records, I was convinced that if secretaries of organizations and institutions would be aware of the interest posterity would feel concerning past events, secretaries would devote much more space and record seemingly unimportant details; for only by means of records can the present become acquainted with the past; and it is important to safeguard existing records.

Among the many records which I read in compiling this history, I got a thrill from reading the records of an organization no longer functioning. It is the HEBREW AID SOCIETY whose work to a certain extent is now being carried on by the Ladies Auxiliary and the Hachnosos Orchim. According to records of the Hebrew Aid Society which are the most complete of any local Jewish group, the Society was formed for the sole purpose of philanthropy; for helping the poor and needy.

It is interesting to note how this group was formed and how long it functioned. At the dawn of the Twentieth Century when the DuBois Jewish Community had already become firmly established, a pressing problem arose which had to be solved, namely, how to help members of our faith who might become stranded here for want of funds. The small group of Jews residing in DuBois at that time, were faithful to the pledge which the first Jews who landed on the soil of North America had made to Peter Stuyvesant before they were allowed to settle in New Amsterdam, namely, that: "they would provide for their own poor."

If we recall that the greatest influx of Jewish immigration occurred at the turn of the Century and resulted in many Jews crossing the country on a shoe-string in an effort to make a living, we can readily understand how vital and necessary was the formation of a Hebrew Aid Society. Sons of Israel Congregation not being organized for this purpose, the burden first fell upon kind-hearted individuals until the Aid Society was formed on June 21, 1908, at the home of Abe Zisser. Reverend J. Disenberg and Harry Samuels explained the need for this group. This group was composed of both men and



women who had dedicated themselves to the welfare of the needy. Officers elected were: President, Abe Zisser; Vice President, Harry Samuels; Secretary, Harry Koblenz; Treasurer, J. Brinn. The original members of this group who still reside in DuBois are: L. Kaufman, Mrs. H. Klewans, J. Spear, Mrs. Helen Levinson, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Tamler, Mrs. E. A. Fischel, Mrs. Nathan Bloom and Hyman Shakespeare.

The newly formed Hebrew Aid Society held a dance to raise funds. It took place on October 2, 1908. The net proceeds were \$49. Lewis Kaufman and H. Greenblatt were in charge of the dance.

It is interesting to see the scope of this organization's work, and the manner in which they treated the transient. Each wayfarer received meals, lodging, a ticket to the next community, and pocket money. The charitable work of this group was not confined to this locality, for records show that annual contributions were made to National Hospital for Consumptives, Denver, Colo.; to charitable institutions in the Holy Land; to the Hias and other worthy causes.

Page 119 of the Hebrew Aid Society records, is an unusually interesting one because it deals with the problem of aiding War Victims of World War I, and we today face a similar problem because of World War II. On January 18, 1916 a Special Meeting was called to arrange for a Tag Day proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson, for the purpose of raising funds to aid Jewish War Sufferers. Chairman Abe Zisser appointed a committee composed of: Mrs. Henry Klewans, Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. A. Zisser and Mrs. F. Tamler. Mr. L. L. Steinberg and Mr. H. Samuels were appointed to address the public in an effort to arouse public sentiment in favor of this undertaking. 5000 tags were printed bearing the inscription: "FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WAR SUFFERERS . . . BY ORDER OF PRES. WILSON, JAN. 27, 1916."

On February 6, 1916 Mrs. Henry Klewans had a most favorable report to submit, namely that she had sent to New York a check for \$564.84 to Mr. Harry Fischel, treasurer of CENTRAL RELIEF FUND FOR JEWISH WAR SUFFERERS.

The Hebrew Aid Society rendered valuable service and functioned until May 21, 1924 at which time its work was taken over by a newly formed group: DUBOIS CHAPTER OF JEWISH WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF AMERICA.

# DuBois Chapter of Jewish Women's Council of America

The DuBois Chapter of Jewish Women's Council of America was organized in May 1924 with thirty-five paid members. The elected were: President Mrs. H. Klewans; 1st Vice President Mrs. Helen Levinson; 2nd Vice President Mrs. A. Hoffman; 3rd Vice President Mrs. A. G. Simmons; Corresponding Secretary Miss Rhoda Snyder; Recording Secretary Mrs. L. Kringer; Treasurer, Mrs. Fred Tamler. The committee in charge of philanthropy consisted of: Mrs. Jacob Brinn and Mrs. Samuel Levinson.

Records show that this organization also functioned very successfully. For the benefit of the opening of the Jewish Community Rooms, they conducted a Rummage Sale on November 1926 and it netted \$221.03. Also recorded by Mrs. Esther Blankfeld, Secretary, was a Card Party held at the Elks which netted \$82.35. A Studio Tea was given, proceeds of which were: \$54.24. The proceeds of these affairs were used to furnish the Community Rooms.

Records of this group are available until February 1931 and do not show when the organization was dissolved. Existing records show that this organization also added a fine page to the history of the Jewish Community of DuBois. Its functions were assumed by the LADIES AUXILIARY OF CONGREGATION SONS OF ISRAEL.

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## Ladies Auxiliary of Sons of Israel

It is interesting to record the history of the Jewish Community, because the events and activities of the past reveal to us that the growth of a community is comparable to the life of an individual. Before attaining full maturity both undergo various stages of development. We have already noted phases of this development, and now we turn our attention to an existing organization whose records and present activities stamp it as a very important one. I shall here-with outline the scope of the work of the Ladies Auxiliary, which is testimony to a functioning organization whose fine work is to be complimented. In my three years as Rabbi of Congregation Sons of Israel, I have become acquainted with its excellent work.

The first officers of the organization were elected November 1935: President Mrs. Robert Kranitz; Vice President Mrs. Louis L. Steinberg; Secretary Mrs. David N. Racusin; Treasurer Mrs. William L. Singer.

The Ladies Auxiliary has assumed responsibility of keeping both the Synagogue and the Community Building clean and heated. Whenever necessary, the Ladies see to it that the Synagogue should be painted. The Ladies Auxiliary has sought earnestly to help the Congregation achieve its goal of paying off the mortgage, and has contributed from \$150 to \$200 for this purpose, annually.

The group also makes an annual contribution to the United Jewish Appeal ranging from \$75 to \$100.

The Ladies Auxiliary maintains a Room in the Maple Avenue Hospital, which was originally sponsored by the Hebrew Sewing Circle, no longer functioning. The Ladies Auxiliary donated a new bed for this room in 1942, by giving a Benefit Card Party for this purpose. Mrs. E. A. Fischel and Mrs. Jack Gusky were co-chair-ladies of the affair.

The Organization is active in furthering welfare work in the Community. They support the Red Cross with annual contributions, and aid materially whenever called upon to do so. In 1942 the group donated a bolt of diaper cloth to the local Red Cross, and a sewing machine. Money for the sewing machine was raised through a benefit party given by Mrs. Harry Rivkees, Mrs. Morris Shakespeare, Mrs. Geo. Greenberg, and Mrs. Charles Sommer. Enough money was raised at that time to also purchase a stove for the Kitchen of the Com-

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munity Center. Recently, the Ladies Auxiliary donated \$10 to Red Cross for bags for marines going over-seas. In addition to financial aid, various members of the Ladies Auxiliary contribute their time and energy directly at the Red Cross Rooms where they are actively sewing, packing bundles and making surgical dressings. The majority of the Ladies took the Red Cross First Aid Course, and some are now taking Home Nursing.

The Ladies Auxiliary is also doing its part in Civilian Defense: some serve at the Listening Post, Air Raid Station, on Bond Drives and on U. S. O.

A very vital and important function of the Ladies Auxiliary is the maintenance of the Sunday School. The Organization provides text books, periodicals, and necessary supplies. The Ladies sponsor the Children's Seder, outings and parties, all of which stimulate the interest of the children in religion. Past Presidents: Mrs. Robert Kranitz, Mrs. George Greenberg, Mrs. Leona K. Selman, Mrs. Sam Levinson, and Mrs. Louis L. Steinberg.

The present officers of the Ladies Auxiliary are: President Mrs. Harry Rivkees; 1st Vice President Mrs. E. A. Fischel; 2nd Vice President Mrs. Robert Kranitz; Secretary Mrs. Leona Selman; Treasurer Mrs. George Greenberg.

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## DuBois B'Nai B'Rith Lodge 1225

B'nai B'rith, the oldest and largest Jewish fraternal organization in the Country which is now celebrating a century of service, tried for some time to organize a lodge in DuBois and finally succeeded. On March 22, 1936 a meeting was held at the L. L. Steinberg Studio and DuBois Jewery decided to affiliate with B'nai B'rith by organizing a local chapter. Officers elected were: L. L. Steinberg, President; Morris Gordon, Vice President; Norman Tamler, Secretary; Marvin Bloom, Recording Secretary; Aaron Blankfeld, Treasurer; Ben F. Klewans, Monitor; William L. Singer, Inside Guard; George Greenberg, Warden.

The initiation of twenty-five charter members took place on April 26, 1936. Leon L. Tolochko, President of District Grand Lodge No. 3 installed Chapter 1225 into the Order. The Pittsburgh Degree Team initiated the members, and a banquet was held at the Community Center.

Since then DuBois Lodge 1225 has grown and practiced the fine ideals of B'nai B'rith. On February 23, 1941 DuBois Lodge was host to the Northwestern Pennsylvania Council. President of the Lodge at that time was David N. Racusin. Guest Speaker at the Banquet was the Hon. Lawrence M. Brile, President of B'nai B'rith District Three of U. S. At the same time the Lodge also sponsored Brotherhood Week, and various Civic Groups and Churches were represented at the Banquet.

DuBois B'nai B'rith Lodge was the first fraternal organization in the city to hold Bond Rallys. George Greenberg was President when the first Bond Rally was held in 1941. President Marvin L. Bloom has continued this practice and a very successful Bond Rally was held recently at the Community Center, at which time B'nai B'rith sold \$11,100 to its members. It recently presented a Service Flag to the Jewish Community in honor of the local boys in the armed forces. It remembers these boys with packages, and presents each boy with a Mezuzah upon entering the Service. DuBois Lodge presented a very important book for fostering better relations between Jews and Christians to the local library, the Y. M. C. A. and other organizations, its title is: **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING THE JEW.**

Past Presidents of the Lodge are: Louis L. Steinberg, Chas. Sommer, Norman Tamler, David N. Racusin, George Greenberg, and Ben F. Klewans, Hon. President.

Officers for the current term are: President Marvin L. Bloom; Vice President Tullie Scheck; Secretary Isadore Myers; Treasurer Norman Tamler; Warden, William L. Singer; Guardian Gustave Wein; Monitor, George Greenberg; Assistant Monitor, Milton Witten. The trustees are: Harry Katzen, Morris Gordon and Fred Tamler.

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## Free Loan Society

In 1918 while World War One was still raging several members of the Congregation met on May 1918 and decided to organize a Free Loan Society. At the initial meeting \$890 was subscribed by the sixteen members who were present. The group received a charter from the State of Pennsylvania. Mr. Albert Miller was chairman and Mr. Louis L. Steinberg, secretary-treasurer. The Free Loan Society functioned only three years but it is worth while to note the efforts of DuBois Jewery to be self-sustaining through war and epidemic.

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# Religious Education

The history of any Jewish Community would not be complete without mentioning the mediums for religious training; for without religious training and background, we cannot hope that the coming generation will carry on the good work.

The Sons of Israel HEBREW SCHOOL is under the guidance of Rabbi Nandor Marton. Classes are held daily from 4:00 to 6:00 p. m. Curriculum includes: Hebrew and Yiddish; and how to conduct Services.

The Sons of Israel SUNDAY SCHOOL includes all the children of the Community. It is also under the supervision of Rabbi Marton, and consists of four classes. The teachers are:

RABBI NANDOR MARTON..... *Seniors*  
 MRS. MARVIN BLOOM..... *Juniors*  
 MISS SHIRLEY LEVINSON..... *Kindergarten*  
 MRS. NANDOR MARTON..... *Teachers Training*

For the first time in the history of DuBois Jewery, a Confirmation was held on May 24, 1942, the following boys and girls were Confirmed:

Miriam G. Blankfeld	Shirley Ann Levinson
I. Harold Greenberg	Marion Ruth Rivkees
Rose Pauline Klewans	Norman J. Rivkees
Jacob Haddon Kaufman	Estelle Simon
Bessie Kranitz	Sydell Thelma Sommer

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**RABBI & MRS. NANDOR MARTON**  
**AND MALKA**

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<i>Compliments of</i> <b>MR. &amp; MRS.</b> <b>OSCAR SHAKESPEARE</b> <b>AND FAMILY</b> <b>FRANKLIN, PA.</b>	<i>Compliments of</i> <b>MR. &amp; MRS.</b> <b>JACOB SPEAR</b> <b>AND FAMILY</b>	

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MR. & MRS. J. KRANITZ & FAMILY	MR. & MRS. TULLIE SHECK & SON PAUL
BEN SHAKESPEARE	NUPP PRINTING CO. Sykesville Post-Dispatch
DR. JOHN J. FUSCO Dentist SYKESVILLE, PA. Phone 2521	MR. & MRS. L. L. STEINBERG & FAMILY

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*In Memory of*  
NATHAN DYM

*In Memory of*  
JEFFERSON G.  
SELMAN

*In Memory of*  
HENRY KLEWANS

*In Memory of*  
JACOB C.  
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MRS. IDA SHAKESPEARE

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MR. & MRS. M. KATZEN

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AARON KRANITZ

*In Memory of*  
NATHAN BLOOM

*In Memory of*  
T. KAUFMAN

*In Memory of our Dear Parents*  
LOUIS & PAULINE WOOLF  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

*In Memory of our Dear Brothers*  
NATHAN & WILLIAM WOOLF  
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## Hachnosos Orchim

This department of the Synagogue has assumed one of the functions of the Hebrew Aid Society namely, to aid the transient by providing lodgings, meals and pocket-money. Mr. Louis L. Steinberg is in charge of the funds for this necessary work.

## United Jewish Appeal

DuBois Jewelry does its part in raising funds for the United Jewish Appeal. Officers for the current campaign are:

HARRY KATZEN ..... *Chairman*  
GEORGE GREENBERG ..... *Co-Chairman*  
MORRIS SHAKESPEARE ..... *Secretary-Treasurer*

They have done a fine job and most of the pledges have already been collected.

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