



Reflections

A Series of Observations and Recollections

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We are indebted to Marvin L. Bloom, former General Manager of The Courier-Express, for the following account of the history of the Jewish community in DuBois.)

**The Jewish Community
by Marvin L. Bloom**

Many of DuBois' Jewish residents arrived here shortly before the turn of the century.

Research shows that the Sons of Israel organization was founded on November 16, 1894, with three residents of a small membership making application for a charter—issued under the name which today continues actively in both Synagogue and related religious affiliated activities.

The trio appearing before Clearfield County Notary Public W.C. Pentz in quest of the charter were Levi Locks, Joseph Breman and Louis D. Deitz.

Charter members for the initial year of the congregation were Louis Holman, Israel Wayne, Abram Bers and Abram Zisser.

The charter was granted on November 19, 1894, with Certificate of Incorporation, by Clearfield County President Judge Cyrus Gorden. It was duly entered and recorded on November 26, 1894 by Bine Koozer.

Upon receiving the charter members promptly organized for the purpose of ultimately obtaining a Synagogue, recognizing the necessity of such a House of Worship for full time religious purposes.

The charter group, small in numbers, held regular religious services in private homes.

The group obtained a temporary hall for weekly services in a Lonz

Street. A finance committee comprised of the following succeeded in reaching its goal for both building and interior requirements: Henry Klewans, Albert Miller, Hyman Shakespeare, Lewis Kaufman, Fred Tamler, Nathan Dym.

The Center officially opened January 27, 1927 with a Board of Governors as Administrators, as follows: Albert Miller, Abe Hoffman, Aaron Blankfeld, Morris Shakespeare, Sam Berger.

On February 6, 1927, a committee was organized to raise monies with which to undertake a modernization program of the Synagogue. Ben Klewans, L.L. Steinberg, Norman Tamler, were committee members.

Necessary improvements were undertaken upon conclusion of the successful campaign.

In the period of the twenties, thirties and forties many new families, with kin of the early members sharing actively in progressive programs, were welcomed into membership.

Included were the following: H. Witten, George Greenberg, Frank and Ben Shakespeare, Edgar Levine, Jacob H. Kaufman, Harry Rivkees, Charles Sommer, Harry Katzen, Joseph Isenberg, Isadore Myers, Dr. O. Racusin, Dave Racusin, Marv Bloom, William Singer, Jack Gusky, Jeff Selman, Ben, Albert Kaufman, brothers of Louis, early settlers.

Since 1950 several additional families accepted Synagogue assignments. Namely, Nathan Miller, Henry Frishoff, Paul Begler, Dr. Ray Evins, Richard Silk, Harold Zinn, Mark Gelfand.

Avenue building, later moving to an assembly room located on the third floor of the present DuBois Appliance Company building, North Brady Street.

From this location members transferred all activities to larger quarters, in the then Whitehead building, West Washington Avenue below Brady Street.

Between negotiations for new quarters, committees convened at various homes.

A finance committee launched a financial campaign enabling Sons of Israel to purchase the former Church of the United Brethren building, West Weber at Morrison Street, location of the present Synagogue. The deed for purchase was recorded November 28, 1911.

In years from early 1900's to 1911 several families were welcomed into the congregation. Henry Klewans, Fred Tamler, Albert Miller, Sol Feinberg, Hyman Shakespeare, joined Abe Zisser and other charter members developing plans for the future.

Shortly after 1911 came Jacob Brinn, J. Jones, J. Golub, H. Kaplans, J. Spear, L. and E.A. Fischel, the Kaufman families, Nathan Bloom, Abe Cohen, Nathan Dym, Louis Levy, B. Trattner, E. Dym, Jake, Sam, and Jay Levinson, J. and R. Kranitz.

One of the early projects was procurement of an area from the DuBois Land Company, for use as the Jewish Cemetery.

Located opposite the St. Catherine's Cemetery, above South Avenue, a deed was granted on July 9, 1919.

Original name had been the Hillside Cemetery. First administrators were Hyman Shakespeare, president; Jacob Brinn, vice president; Lewis Kaufman, secretary; Fred Tamler, treasurer; Trustees H. Klewans, E.A. Fischel, Albert Miller.

Following organization of the Cemetery project, Sons of Israel moved to construct a Jewish Community Center, adjacent the Synagogue, fronting on Morrison

Dr. Stephen Schmidt.

Two memorable dates in the archives of the Jewish community are recalled as February 21, 1943 and April 26, 1936.

The February date marked the burning of mortgages for the Sons of Israel buildings; the April date, the day the DuBois B'nai Brith Lodge received its charter from National Headquarters.

B'nai Brith was the first fraternal organization in the city to hold Bond Rallies during the World War II era.

The Lodge honored 16 of its members who served in the armed forces, remembered service men of all faiths by contributing packages and presents to countless overseas men, contributed to all civic charities, the Public Library, YMCA and others.

The Ladies Auxiliary maintained a room in the Maple Avenue Hospital, which was originally sponsored by the Hebrew Sewing Circle, no longer active.

The Ladies assumed responsibility for maintenance of both the Center and Synagogue over many years. Like B'nai Brith, it contributes to all needy charities, with many members active in various civic programs.

B'nai Brith and the present Sisterhood, an outgrowth of the former Ladies Auxiliary, successor to the Chapter of Jewish Women's Council of America, are prominently identified with Synagogue activities.