

**THE EARLY MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF JEWS IN PITTSBURGH**

**1754--1894**

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## INTRODUCTION

For over 3000 years, there have constantly been Jews migrating to new homes. The Bible tells us about their leaving Egypt for Canaan. In Roman times, many of them migrated to Italy and later to the Rhineland. In the Middle Ages, they passed on into Poland and Lithuania. In the past 300 years (1654-1957) they have been coming to America.

Wherever they settled, they established innumerable Jewish communities. There are six elementary questions that can be asked about any Jew migrating, no matter when he lived or where he came from. What was his old home? Why did he leave it? What route did he follow? How did he pay his way? Why did he select his new home? Would he remain there?

The answers each individual Jew in Pittsburgh gave varied so widely that a unified writing on their migration and settlement here might appear hopeless. However, although the drum, the piano, the violin, and the saxophone do not resemble each other, their sounds can be put together into a balanced orchestrational piece. Let us try the story of the early Jews who migrated and settled in Pittsburgh.

## CHAPTER I

### WITHOUT A JEWISH COMMUNITY (1754-1841)

Nowadays, it would be unheard of for an important American city to be without a Jewish community. One did not develop in Pittsburgh between 1754 and 1841 although several Jews had activities or lived here.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, there only were approximately 2000 Jews in America. Few--if any--of them settled west of the Allegheny Mountains, where Pittsburgh was located. They mainly resided along the Atlantic seaboard--chiefly New York City; Newport, Rhode Island; Philadelphia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Charlestown, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; and Montreal, Canada.<sup>1</sup>

But Jews from these cities did do business in the interior of America. Joseph Simon of Lancaster was the first Jew known to have activities in Pittsburgh. His firm purchased furs from the nearby Indians possibly as early as 1749 before there was even a settlement on the site of Pittsburgh.<sup>2</sup>

He was a loyal subject of the British colonies of America. In 1754, the French drove the British from Western Pennsylvania and built Fort Duquesne. This was the first settlement on the present site of Pittsburgh.<sup>3</sup> Simon and his fellow Colonial Americans, whether they were Jews or Christians, were not permitted to trade in the unwelcome French domain guarded by the hostile guns of Fort Duquesne.<sup>4</sup>

Another Jew, David Franks of Philadelphia, served as a supply contractor for the British armies in America. In 1758, they captured Fort Duquesne. It was renamed Fort Pitt and used as a key base of military operations during the remainder of the French and Indian War terminating in 1761 and during Pontiac's War (1763-1765). Franks and his non-Jewish partner, Plumsted, made the arrangements whereby Fort Pitt and nearby Fort Ligonier were supplied with salt, meat, flour, cattle, horses, and powder. But he did not live in the Pittsburgh district. He requisitioned the material from the market in the East, and the local military commander such

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1. Marcus, Jacob R., Early American Jewry, Vol. 2, pp. 29, 36, and 422.
  2. American Jewish Historical Society, Publication No. 1, p. 121; Miller, Julia, Jews Connected with the History of Pittsburgh 1749-1865, p. 3.
  3. Buck, Solon, The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania, pp. 74-75.
  4. Marcus, Jewry, Vol. 2, pp. 19-42.

as Colonel Henri Bouquet supervised the distribution at the forts.<sup>5</sup>

With British control restored, American colonists resumed activities west of the Alleghenies. In 1760, Joseph Simon, David Franks, and a non-Jew named William Trent formed a temporary partnership to open up some new western business for themselves. Two more Jews, Isaac Levy of Philadelphia and Levy Andrew Levy of Lancaster, shortly joined them in this venture. Headquarters were established at Fort Pitt.<sup>6</sup>

But untold risk would be involved. Fifty to one hundred miles east of here lurked a large gang of frontiersmen known as the "Black Boys." During the 1760's, they hijacked many of the pack-horse and wagon convoys hauling merchandise over the Allegheny Mountains to Fort Pitt. In addition, hostile Indians inflicted heavy losses upon white traders especially during Pontiac's War.<sup>7</sup> Levy Andrew Levy made a business trip through the West in 1764. As he progressed through the wilderness from Lake Erie to Fort Pitt he was kidnapped by Indians, probably the Wyandottes. They held him for ransom. Fortunately he was released.<sup>8</sup>

Four years later, two Jewish brothers--Michael and Bernard Gratz of Philadelphia--entered the hazardous western trading business. They often would operate in partnership with Joseph Simon, Levy Andrew Levy, and David Franks. These merchants were especially involved in the Indian fur trade, which reached as far west as Illinois. Fort Pitt continued to be used as a base of operations because it was situated at the origin of the Ohio River, the great waterway to the West.

Simon, Levy, Franks, and the Gratz brothers were important names in the opening of commerce to the Pittsburgh district. But they generally stayed in the East and entrusted local non-Jewish residents such as Milligan, John Campbell, William Murray, William Trent, and George Croghan to receive their Indian barter-goods shipments of whiskey, jewelry, blankets, shirts or gunpowder here; to send out their consignments of bearskins or racoon pelts to Lancaster or Philadelphia; and to manage their other affairs here.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, Jews of lesser prominence probably stopped off at Fort Pitt, which was also becoming known as Pittsburgh. Indian trading licenses in Pennsylvania were issued in 1765 to Abraham Moses and Moses Abraham, in 1772 to Abraham Levy, in 1773 to Ephraim Abraham, Jacob

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5. Bouquet, Henri, Papers of Colonel Henri Bouquet, Vol. 3, pp. 86, 96, 110, and 120; Vol. 13, p. 132.

6. Marcus, Jewry, Vol. 2, p. 29; Wolf, E. and Whitman, M., The History of the Jews in Philadelphia, p. 66.

7. Marcus, Jewry, Vol. 2, pp. 19-42.

8. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 228.

9. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 19-42; Wolf and Whitman, Philadelphia, pp. 36-75.

Isaiah Cohan, and Joseph Solomon Cohan, in 1775 to Lyon Nathan.<sup>10</sup> They too would return to their homes in the East.<sup>11</sup>

But several Jewish traders, who had followed the British army into Canada during the French and Indian War, settled down there. During the 1760's, a synagogue was established in Montreal--which had a large French colony with whom the Jew could do business so that he would be assured of a livelihood.<sup>12</sup>

Thinly-populated Pittsburgh, on the other hand, was not a residential center. Merely a trading post, it was composed firstly of nearly 200 inhabitants living in an array of forty log cabins and secondly of some officials and a company of soldiers quartered in a stockade enclosing one brick building and a few houses. The town had no churches and was not attracting even many Christian settlers--not to mention Jews. Many of the men roaming around here were merely transients. Indians often visited Pittsburgh ostensibly to negotiate with the British government or to trade, but they often just got themselves drunk from the local "firewater."<sup>13</sup>

A native of the German province of Silesia, Bernard Gratz had been a leader of the Jewish community of Philadelphia for many years. Around April of 1776, he arrived in Pittsburgh--where he planned to remain for only a few weeks. Since the Revolutionary War had broken out a year earlier the eastern merchant could no longer depend upon British officialdom, whose sovereignty over the thirteen colonies had ceased, to maintain diplomatic relations with the Indians on his behalf. But he wished to retain business with them. Representatives of the Shawnee and Delaware tribes convened with Bernard Gratz in Pittsburgh. But the ensuing negotiations concerning the renewal of the fur trade dragged on. He was still here on July 4, when the Declaration of Independence was signed in his Philadelphia. Deeply religious, he wrote his brother a letter later in the summer requesting a Hebrew prayer book for Rosh Hashonoh (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). He received it by post rider and during these high holidays falling in the early fall, he was able to worship in his room in Pittsburgh. Bernard Gratz can almost be considered as the first local Jewish resident.

For nearly six months, he had lodged here. Having completed his commercial treaty with the Indians and having decided that the western trade was reasonably safe-guarded, he returned to his family in Philadelphia.<sup>14</sup>

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10. Pennsylvania Archives, 5th Series I, pp. 374-379.

11. Wolf and Whitman, Philadelphia, pp. 70, 95, 96, 124, and 141.

12. Marcus, Jewry, Vol. 1, pp. 198-285.

13. Harpster, John W., ed., Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania, p. 119; Ferguson, Russell, Early Western Pennsylvania Politics, p. 13.

14. Wolf and Whitman, Philadelphia, pp. 65-66, 74, and 83.

Never again was Bernard Gratz known to live in Pittsburgh. But he had often loaned money to George Croghan, the famous Indian trader. In 1793, Bernard became the first Jewish heir here. He inherited the estate of his deceased friend, George Croghan. This included property along the Allegheny River, which Bernard transferred to his brother, Michael, the next year.<sup>15</sup>

Long before, Jews had owned land locally. In 1769, the areas around Fort Pitt were first surveyed. No one had ever held title to them under Pennsylvania law; and that year Joseph Simon, Levy Andrew Levy, and David Franks each had obtained original ownership of 250 to 300 acres of land apiece covering much of present-day Wilkinsburg, a suburb of Pittsburgh.<sup>16</sup> Simon later owned several more local properties including a stone house on Water Street.<sup>17</sup>

After the Revolutionary War, the state of Pennsylvania raised revenue by selling uninhabited frontier plots through the land office in Philadelphia.<sup>18</sup> In 1786, Reverend Jacob Raphael Cohen--minister of the only synagogue in that city<sup>19</sup>--bought 301 acres along the banks of the Ohio River. His holdings, apparently covering much of the modern west-side of Pittsburgh, were named Cohensburgh.<sup>20</sup> A prominent member of his congregation, Benjamin Nones, bought an adjacent 207 acres. A Spanish oak tree marked the boundary between their lands. In 1787, Nones obtained another adjoining property.<sup>21</sup>

By 1790, Pittsburgh was still a tiny settlement of 376 people.<sup>22</sup> The Jewish landholders, merchants, and traders had not settled here. Reverend Cohen naturally would not have been able to follow his chosen profession, where there was no synagogue. The other men made adequate livings in Philadelphia and Lancaster, where they continued to live.

The lands around Pittsburgh mainly had been bought as an investment. It was hoped that they would increase in value as commerce and population grew in the frontier region.<sup>23</sup> In August of 1796, a Jew from

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15. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 3, p. 119; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 4, pp. 223 and 251.

16. Warrantee Atlas, p. 10; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 45, p. 419.

17. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 17, pp. 204-205.

18. Sakolski, A. M., The Great American Land Bubble, pp. 31-32.

19. Morais, E., The Jews of Philadelphia, pp. 18-19.

20. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 6, pp. 232-233.

21. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 6, pp. 242-246.

22. Ferguson, Politics, p. 13.

23. Sakolski, Land, pp. 31-32.

Baltimore named Solomon Raphael had bought property in Pittsburgh for \$130.00. A month later, he sold it for \$200.00.<sup>24</sup>

The actual settlers often lacked the money to buy the land. They detested the absentee landholder,<sup>25</sup> who usually was not a Jew, however. But even during the early nineteenth century, Wilksburg--which had been owned by Simon, Levy, and Franks--is said to have been called "Jews-town" and "Jews-land."<sup>26</sup>

Levy and Franks had evidently divested their local interests long before the 1790's,<sup>27</sup> when population finally began growing rapidly through the Pittsburgh district. Land promoters and some settlers made offers for many local properties. Benjamin Nones sold out his holdings here in 1794.<sup>28</sup> Two years later, a non-Jew named John Wilkens bought the lands of Michael Gratz and Reverend Jacob Raphael Cohen.<sup>29</sup>

In 1797, Joseph Simon gave up his last holdings in Pittsburgh.<sup>30</sup> He had become very old, having been in business in America for over fifty-five years.<sup>31</sup> A year earlier, one of his local properties had passed to his grandson, Simon Gratz, who was also a son of Michael Gratz.<sup>32</sup> Simon Gratz retained some property here continuously until 1818.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile some Jewish peddlers from the Eastern seaboard possibly continued passing through Pittsburgh occasionally. It is unknown how they fared or if any of them settled here. An official transcription on government documents was not needed to close a sale for a blanket or piece of jewelry. But we are aware of the land transactions the Jew made because they were recorded in the county deed books or Pennsylvania land office documents.

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24. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 6, pp. 183-185.

25. Ferguson, Politics, pp. 6-18.

26. Cooper, Charles I., "The Story of the Jews in Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.

27. Their names do not appear in the Allegheny County Deed Books. Allegheny County was founded in 1788.

28. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 6, pp. 242-246.

29. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 4, pp. 223 and 251; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 6, p. 232.

30. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 5, p. 562.

31. American Jewish Historical Society, Publication No. 1, p. 121.

32. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 5, p. 538.

33. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 19, p. 361; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 25, p. 362.

Previous histories on the Jews of Pittsburgh have superficially assumed that certain early local residents were Jewish because they had Jewish-sounding names.<sup>34</sup> By 1790, William Abrahams, Jacob Meyers, Thomas Salamon, and a Jacob Hepner had settled here.<sup>35</sup> Possibly each of them was a Jew; possibly one or two of them were; possibly none of them were. Who knows? Proof that any Jew lived in or near Pittsburgh before 1800 has not been located.

The earliest Pittsburgher known to have been publicly accused of being Jewish was John Israel. In 1798, he settled in Washington, Pennsylvania. There he established a newspaper, which staunchly supported Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party, so that he attracted some attention in Pittsburgh--thirty-two miles away.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge, the leader of the local Jeffersonian party, induced John Israel to move here in 1800 and to set up another newspaper, The Tree of Liberty. During that era, the Federalists were America's other political party. They and the only other Pittsburgh newspaper, The Gazette, disliked John Israel. Seemingly, these groups had a hand in circulating a pamphlet with the following nasty pun:

Have you heard ...  
of the new press  
of the Jew press  
By a Hugh<sup>36</sup>  
and by a Jew

Thus John Israel was being labelled as a Jew throughout Pittsburgh, and his opponents were using anti-semitism to villify him.

He himself, however, was not known to admit that he was a Jew. A letter published in his Tree of Liberty stated:

Printer of the Tree of Liberty  
Sir,

A wag of my acquaintance calls you a Jew and your office a synagogue. I presume he takes it from your name Israel. . . . All are not Israel that are of Israel.<sup>37</sup>

Was not John Israel roundaboutly denying his Jewishness by allowing this letter even to be published?

34. Such claims are made in (1) Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918; Miller, Pittsburgh, pp. 20-21.

35. United States Census Bureau, Heads of Families in 1790 in Pennsylvania, pp. 13, 16, and 18.

36. Wilson, Erasmus, A Standard History of Pittsburgh, p. 838; Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.

37. Tree of Liberty, September 13, 1800.

The records regarding his parentage are incomplete. But he probably was the son of Israel Israel of Philadelphia,<sup>38</sup> who also did not profess Judaism and whose wife surely was not a Jewess. Plausibly, John Israel had a remote Jewish ancestor, a logical reason for his surname of Israel. Michael Israel, the father of Israel Israel, was a Jew by birth.<sup>39</sup> But evidence is lacking that John Israel was associated with any Jews.

As pioneers moving west poured through, as commerce arose with the new towns they founded, as factories began sprouting up, Pittsburgh grew to a population of 7200 souls by the year 1820.<sup>40</sup> In the local city directories, census records, deeds on property, and naturalization docket, there appeared new Jewish-sounding names such as: James Abrahams, Joseph Abraham, James Abrams, William Abrams, Aaron Hart, Peter Katz, Jacob Keller, Moses Sterns, Charles Israel, Jacob Steiner, Isaac Leightner, Israel Lewis, Charles Rosenbaum, Joseph Ettelman, Leven Bennet, Elijah Trovillo.<sup>41</sup> Evidence again is lacking that any of the forementioned men were Jewish. It is unknown if they belonged to a synagogue, had Jewish kin, or claimed Jewish ancestry. Unmistakably, few and possibly even none of them were Jews.

Their names should not be considered as final proof of their racial background. Biblical names were common among non-Jews in America then anyway. Rosenbaum, Steiner, Sterns, Keller, Hart and Ettelman were also common among Germans. Joseph Abraham himself was a native of Ireland, where there were but few Jews.<sup>42</sup>

Paradoxically, the earliest Pittsburgher definitely known to have a Jewish parent had a most non-Jewish sounding surname. He was Samuel Pettigrew. He was born in Easton, Pennsylvania, 250 miles east of Pittsburgh. His mother, Judith Hart Pedigrue, was fully Jewish by birth--being the daughter of Myer Hart. In 1793, when Samuel was still a child, his father, James Pedigrue, who may not have been a Jew, died. The

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38. Wilson, Pittsburgh, p. 838; U. S. Census Bureau, 1790 Pennsylvania, p. 225. These census records also reveal a Joseph Israel as living in Philadelphia, but he was the only male listed as living in his household so that he would not as likely be the father of John Israel.
39. Morais, Philadelphia, pp. 33-34; Wolf and Whitman, Philadelphia, pp. 31-32.
40. U. S. Census Bureau, Census for 1820, p. 15.
41. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1800, pp. 4 and 5; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1810, pp. 2, 11, 23, 32, and 99; Allegheny County Common Pleas Court No. 1, Naturalization Docket 1799-1878; Jones, S., Pittsburgh in the Year 1826, p. 105.
42. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Ward 2, Allegheny City, p. 72.

widowed mother removed the family to Philadelphia.<sup>43</sup> As a young man, Samuel Pettigrew settled in Pittsburgh around 1814 and established himself as a druggist.<sup>44</sup> But he was married before a Christian minister here on December 28, 1814; his bride, Miss Barclay, apparently being a non-Jew.<sup>45</sup> Pettigrew became active in local politics and served in city council during the 1820's.<sup>46</sup> In 1834 and 1835, he was the mayor of Pittsburgh, having been elected by popular vote each year.<sup>47</sup>

Others having Jewish ancestry also lived here by then. By 1826, Joseph Israel--a grandson of Israel Israel--was following the occupation of bricklayer here.<sup>48</sup>

Born in Germany in 1795, Solomon Schoyer moved to Pittsburgh from New York between 1824 and 1832. He had sons with the typical Jewish given names of Abraham, Samuel, and Solomon. But his wife, Penelope (Nellie) Schoyer, was a native of New York and probably was not Jewish;<sup>49</sup> and his descendants later joined Protestant churches.<sup>50</sup> Although the proof of his Jewishness is not conclusive, old-time residents of Pittsburgh insist that he was a Jew, and several contemporary Jews of that period carried the name Schoyer including some early residents of Milwaukee.<sup>51</sup>

Through the 1830's, Jews increasingly were emigrating from Germany. More and more, they could be found peddling merchandise in the inland regions of America.<sup>52</sup> Solomon Schoyer soon established a wholesale and retail clothing store. He could speak German, and he probably

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43. U. S. Census Bureau, 1790 Pennsylvania, p. 171; Marcus, Jewry, Vol. 2, p. 99; Stern, Malcolm, Geneological Records of the Jonas Phillips family (unpublished).
44. Pittsburgh Directory 1815, p. 73.
45. Pittsburgh Gazette, January 2, 1815.
46. Jones, 1826, p. 36.
47. Wilson, Pittsburgh, pp. 777 and 779.
48. Jones, 1826, p. 105; Will of Israel Israel, in Pennsylvania Historical Society files.
49. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Ward 1, Allegheny City, p. 38.
50. Miller, Pittsburgh, p. 32; Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.
51. Landman, Isaac, ed., Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. 7, p. 565.
52. Glanz, Rudolph, "Immigration of the German Jews to America," YIVO Annual 1948; Glanz, Rudolph, "Source Material on Jewish Immigration to America," YIVO Annual 1951, p. 128.

sold goods to Jewish peddlers stopping off in Pittsburgh. Most of them evidently passed on to other towns.<sup>53</sup>

However, by 1839, Alexander Heyman was operating a dry goods store on Market Street;<sup>54</sup> and Mitchell Ancker, one of the earliest Pittsburghers known to participate in Judaism, was residing in a dwelling on Penn Avenue between Pitt and Hay Streets.<sup>55</sup> Later he subscribed to the pioneer American-Jewish magazine, The Occident, of Philadelphia.<sup>56</sup> And a wholesale clothing store, Ancker and Mayer, operated on Wood Street, Pittsburgh.<sup>57</sup> Too few Jews, nevertheless, had settled here by 1840 to establish a synagogue.

That year, 15,000 Jews were living in America, whereas in 1818 there had been only 3000.<sup>58</sup> Simultaneous to this fivefold increase in only thirty-two years, four new Jewish communities had arisen west of the Alleghenies. A synagogue was founded in Cincinnati in 1824; in New Orleans in 1830; in Louisville, Kentucky, and in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1836.<sup>59</sup>

But unfavorable business conditions presumably discouraged more Jews from settling in Pittsburgh. In 1841, a magazine article complained:

Every citizen of Pittsburgh at all conversant with our Western business must beware that we are gradually but rapidly losing the transit trade of the great West, and yet we rest satisfied (apparently) with the small and decreasing business left to us. . . . The causes are obvious; the high rate of freight on our state works and the uncertainty in regard to the navigation of the Ohio River from June to November, comprising two-thirds of the business year. . . . Our manufacturers must sustain great loss and inconvenience by being deprived of a home market for their articles. The Western merchants, having no business here, will not visit us merely to buy small stocks of glass, iron nails, cottons, yarns, etc. They will buy in larger Western towns.

Furthermore, the bulk of America's traffic between the Atlantic seaboard and Mid-West passed over the Erie Canal, and not Pittsburgh. Through here, freight rates were far higher. In the year 1841, a New York newspaper reported:

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53. Harris, Isaac, Pittsburgh Directory 1847, p. 15.

54. Ibid., p. 60.

55. Ibid., p. 15.

56. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, July, 1843.

57. Harris, Isaac, Pittsburgh Directory 1847, p. 15.

58. American Jewish Yearbook, 1914-1915, p. 339.

59. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, July, 1843; Landman, Encyclopaedia, Vol. 7, p. 209; Vol. 8, p. 171; Vol. 10, p. 313.

During the first three days of this week, nearly 700 boxes and bales of merchandise from Boston and 300 from Philadelphia have been forwarded . . . to Louisville and other towns in the West by the Erie Canal.<sup>60</sup>

Likewise, Jews going west by-passed Pittsburgh. One young immigrant bound for Cincinnati in 1841 said:

From New York we went up the Hudson River to Albany by steamboat; from Albany to Schenectady we travelled by rail, and we made our way . . . to Buffalo by canal boat . . . across Lake Erie to Cleveland. From Cleveland we journeyed by canal to Portsmouth, Ohio.

Finally he reached Cincinnati.<sup>61</sup> A complete half-circle had been made around Pittsburgh, which was not even touched. And the chances of a Jew settling here were lessened.

The city of 30,000 people<sup>62</sup> was remaining without an organized Jewish community. The early Jewish traders and land-owners had not wished to live here. Later Pittsburghers of Jewish extraction such as the Israels and Pettigrew did not follow the Jewish religion. Unfavorable business and transportation conditions were detracting the Jew away from Pittsburgh as the decade of the 1840's opened.

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60. Wilson, Pittsburgh, pp. 102-103.

61. Marcus, Jacob R., Memoirs of American Jews, p. 312.

62. U. S. Census Bureau, Compendium of the Sixth Census, 1840, p. 26. Population includes Pittsburgh and Allegheny City.

## CHAPTER II

### GERMAN LEAD IN THE NEW COMMUNITY (1841-1865)

Most members of the new Jewish community in Pittsburgh (1841-1865) had been born in Germany. They arrived in steadily increasing waves, doubling and redoubling their numbers constantly. But events opened rather slowly during the 1840's.

Formal Hebrew religious services are known as "minyan" or "minyanim" and require the presence of a quorum of ten adult (over thirteen years of age) men. These were first being held in Pittsburgh in private homes by approximately 1842.<sup>1</sup> Still, however, there evidently were too few persons to organize a synagogue.

Before 1846, Jews preferred to settle elsewhere west of the Alleghenies. Not one of them was known to live in Cleveland, Ohio, before 1836; yet by 1843, two synagogues were functioning there.<sup>2</sup>

Lagging transportation conditions continued to hamper the Pittsburgh economy. Since 1839, there had been much talk of building railroads here. But none operated in any direction of the city for ten more years.<sup>3</sup> A Jewish peddler from Ohio, William Frank, said that he passed through Pittsburgh in 1843. He had to proceed toward the Atlantic seaboard by stage, which naturally took far more time than a steam-driven railroad train would have.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, Jews living here fared poorly or decided that they could make out better in other localities. In 1841, the dry goods store of Alexander Heyman was foreclosed.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, he left Pittsburgh. Levi Drucker was naturalized in the local courts in 1842;<sup>6</sup> but by 1845, he had sold out his holdings and was living in Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> A young rabbi,

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1. Warner, A., History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, p. 410.
  2. Landman, Encyclopaedia, Vol. 3, p. 220.
  3. Wilson, Pittsburgh, p. 191.
  4. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308.
  5. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 62, p. 123.
  6. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, July, 1843; Common Pleas No. 1, Docket 1799.
  7. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 65, p. 400.

Isaac Mayer Wise, immigrated to America in 1846.<sup>8</sup> When he was famous many years later he reminisced about Pittsburgh:

It was here I first sojourned after leaving my place of nativity, Bohemia. . . . You will be surprised to learn that at that time I had nothing in the world but my trunk and very little in it to depend on. I managed however with it and the encouragement given by the ladies of Pittsburgh to proceed on my way rejoicing.<sup>9</sup>

He too settled elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

A better economic scene was emerging locally during the Mexican War (1846-1848). It was then that construction of the railroad was finally pushed ahead, being completed to the city in 1849. A new-type steamboat, brought into use in 1846, greatly advanced local water transportation; by 1848, the river traffic was more than double what it had been five years earlier.<sup>11</sup> Good reports from Pittsburgh would pass into neighboring cities and states. From homes in New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio--Jews moved here to try their luck as peddlers or storekeepers. They mainly sold clothing or dry goods. Although foreign-born, they had mostly been in America for some time.<sup>12</sup> As green immigrants, they rarely would settle in a place like Pittsburgh--where they lacked acquaintances. They usually would first come to established Jewish communities, where they had a relative or friend.

Natives of Bavaria--William Frank, Nathan Gallinger, and David

8. Wise, Isaac M., Reminiscences, p. 13.
9. Pittsburgh Dispatch, July 14, 1887.
10. Wise, Reminiscences, pp. 13-17.
11. Wilson, Pittsburgh, p. 133.
12. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308, regarding Franks and Wormser; McElroy, Philadelphia Directory for 1847, p. 172, regarding Jaroslowskis; Jewish Criterion, October 20, 1903; December 4, 1903; January 15, 1904; May 4, 1906, the obituaries or necrologies in these issues contained many errors but still are verification that the early Jews had lived in other American localities; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 1, p. 21; Ward 5, p. 262; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, Ward 1, p. 44, Strassburger had son, aged 15, born in Ohio; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, see Appendix 4, Joseph Morganstern family and Jacob Morganstern and Nathan Gallinger family. The 1850 census records often conflict with 1860 and 1870 census records. The 1850 records list all Gallinger and Strassburger children as born in Pennsylvania. The years 1860 and 1870 show that some of them were born in Ohio. The 1850 census records, however, were often prepared in slipshod manner.

Strassburger moved here from Ohio around 1846.<sup>13</sup> Ephraim Wormser, who was Frank's brother-in-law,<sup>14</sup> may have already been residing locally a year earlier.<sup>15</sup> These four men were among the "Pilgrim Fathers" of the present Jewish community of Pittsburgh. They lived here the rest of their long lives. Wormser, for example, did not die until 1903.<sup>16</sup> When the community would become well-established during the latter half of the nineteenth century, they would be its earliest members. The Jewish religionists in Pittsburgh before our "Pilgrim Fathers" had usually not become well-rooted in local business or society and generally if not invariably moved away even before 1850.

Naturally, the leadership in the community was assumed by men who planned to remain here permanently. In 1847, a Bes Almon (burial) society was founded. It was the first permanent Jewish organization in Pittsburgh.<sup>17</sup> To available indications, this initiative had been taken by comparatively new residents here. For, on June 12 William Frank, David Strassburger, and Emanuel Reis acted as agents for the Bes Almon Society when it purchased a plot of land located in Reserve Township on the road to Troy Village (present-day Troy Hill) for \$300.00.<sup>18</sup> This oldest local Jewish cemetery was the first property owned by any Jewish religious or social organization in Pittsburgh. But William Frank had as yet lived in the city no more than one year;<sup>19</sup> it is unknown when Emanuel Reis had moved here; however, he and his brother, Solomon, had only purchased their first piece of real estate locally a few months earlier.<sup>20</sup>

The Jewish community finally was beginning to grow rapidly. In 1848, the final year of the Mexican War, the first synagogue in Pittsburgh was founded under the name, Shaare Shamayim (Gate of Heaven). Reverend Bernard Mannheim was hired as minister. He also served as cantor and

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13. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, Pittsburgh Ward 1, p. 44; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, see Appendix 4 regarding Gallinger; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 79, p. 46; Jewish Criterion, January 15, 1904, Sarah Gallinger necrology.
  14. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308.
  15. Jewish Criterion, December 4, 1903, Wormser necrology.
  16. Ibid., December 4, 1903.
  17. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, May, 1852; Israelite, April 25, 1854.
  18. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 79, p. 46.
  19. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 1, p. 21.
  20. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 77, p. 56.

shochet (ritual slaughterer of fowl, cattle, and sheep).<sup>21</sup> Religious services were conducted in a small rented room, probably at the corner of Penn Avenue and Sixth Street.<sup>22</sup> More Jews were settling in the city, and a more expansive hall above the Vigilant Fire Engine House on Third Avenue was consecrated as the new place of worship in 1849.<sup>23</sup>

By 1850, between twenty and thirty Jewish families lived in Pittsburgh.<sup>24</sup> They hailed from several parts of Europe. Alexander Fink and Jacob Silverman, partners in a dry-goods store on Penn Avenue, were natives of the Russian Empire.<sup>25</sup> The German-Polish Jews had resided in the Polish provinces of Prussia such as Posen and included:

Louis Berkowitz -- liquor dealer	Zadok Eisner
Nathan and Simon Samuels -- clothiers	Jacob Kann
Leopold and Louis Jaroslowski -- tailors <sup>26</sup>	

Collectively, the Jews from Russia and German-Poland were called "Polanders."<sup>27</sup> Their native speech being Yiddish, their home provinces had belonged to Poland before it had lost its independence as a nation (1772-1795). One unfortunate peddler listed as a native of Poland lived apart from the Jewish community; Jacob Citeran was serving a term in Western Penitentiary for arson.<sup>28</sup>

Hired in 1849 to replace Mannheim as minister of the Shaare Shaamayim Synagogue, Reverend Moses Sulzbach, late of Philadelphia, had only been in America for a few years. He delivered his sermon in German, not Yiddish. The Polanders were the minority element. Approximately two-thirds of the Jews in Pittsburgh were from southern and western Germany --chiefly Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemberg. Their native speech being German, they also included:

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21. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September, 1852; Israelite, April 25, 1854.
  22. Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918. Sixth Street was then known as St. Clair Street.
  23. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September, 1849; Fahenstock, S., Pittsburgh Directory, 1850, p. 116.
  24. Based on author's count of 1850 census.
  25. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 5, pp. 294 and 310; Fahenstock, Pittsburgh Directory, 1850, p. 30.
  26. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 3, p. 113; Ward 5, p. 312; Allegheny City, Ward 1.
  27. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, August, 1857.
  28. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Allegheny City, Ward 2, p. 185.

Abraham Schoyer -- peddler  
 Eisman Kahn -- peddler  
 Lewis Sterne -- innkeeper  
 Isaac F. Sterne -- clerk  
 Emanuel and Sol Reis -- dry goods dealers  
 William and Henry Greenbauer -- clothiers  
 Louis Simon -- cap dealer  
 Mark Sliderman -- cap dealer  
 Moritz Kraus -- livestock dealer  
 Joseph and Lazarus Meyer<sup>29</sup>

The outnumbered Polanders lacked extensive time-established contacts in America such as the German Jews had. The German Christians had been coming overseas by the thousands for the past 150 years, whereas there had been little immigration from Poland. Before removing to Pittsburgh, Ephraim Wormser, who was born in Wurtemberg, had lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.<sup>30</sup> There, German Jews had been settling before the Revolutionary War, which began in 1775.<sup>31</sup>

The settlers in Pittsburgh soon were attracting relatives and friends from Germany here. Samuel and Emanuel Wertheimer, cousins of Ephraim Wormser,<sup>32</sup> immigrated here directly from Wurtemberg in 1852.<sup>33</sup>

The new Jewish residents, many of whom still moved in from other American localities, witnessed a greatly improving economic scene locally during the 1850's. Favorably-situated Pittsburgh was on the main lines of the chief railroads connecting the Atlantic seaboard to the West. The railroad was rapidly replacing the canal as the great freight handler of America. From 1853 to 1857 alone, railroad freight tonnage through Pittsburgh increased 500 per cent. Correspondingly local commerce and manufacturing began to grow remarkably.<sup>34</sup> In 1857, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise briefly stopped off here again. He could not help but note, "The numerous high chimneys visible in almost every part of the city herald the manufacturing industry of the place."<sup>35</sup>

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29. Ibid., Pittsburgh, Ward 1, pp. 21, 50 and 55; Ward 3, p. 112; Ward 5, p. 313; Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 89, p. 462; Jewish Criterion, March 31, 1905. Morris Kraus necrology lists his occupation; Fahenstock, Pittsburgh Directory 1850, p. 50, the name is spelled Iseman Kahn, 53.

30. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308.

31. Glanz, "German Jews," YIVO Annual, 1958.

32. Wertheimer, Isaac, Isaac Wertheimer Papers, verify relationship between Wertheimers and Wormser.

33. Jewish Criterion, April 17, 1903.

34. Wilson, Pittsburgh, pp. 140-141, 191, 250-251, and 292-299.

35. Israelite, October 30, 1857.

Many more Jews were settling here. In 1852, slightly over thirty Jewish families lived here.<sup>36</sup> By 1857, there were fifty;<sup>37</sup> and by 1858, sixty.<sup>38</sup> Their numbers had nearly doubled in only six years.

The semblance of Jewish neighborhoods was appearing in the city of almost 75,000 people.<sup>39</sup> In 1850, a few Jews were living along Penn Avenue between Tenth and Fourteenth Streets; a few others were around Market and Ferry Streets, especially between Second and Third Avenues; some were in Birmingham and Allegheny City (the North Side of present-day Pittsburgh); and the rest were scattered through the wards of downtown Pittsburgh.<sup>40</sup> Probably not ten Jewish families lived within any neighborhood. Through the 1850's, numerous Jews settled in the First and Second Wards around Market and Ferry Streets. By 1860, over twenty Jewish families lived in this area.<sup>41</sup> But many German Jews were moving across the Allegheny City. Such a sizeable share of the community soon lived there that Reverend Armhold by 1859 had to conduct two Hebrew schools, one in downtown Pittsburgh and one in Allegheny City. He received a salary and would not, if possible, neglect his teaching. One week, a spring flood washed out the bridges over the Allegheny River. But Armhold crossed in a rowboat so that he could conduct classes in Allegheny City.<sup>42</sup>

Jewish social activities increased rapidly during the 1850's too. Certain members of the Shaare Shamayim had been dissatisfied because the Bes Almon Society and not the congregation controlled the cemetery. In 1852, they resigned and organized their own synagogue, the Beth Israel (House of Israel).<sup>43</sup> It purchased its own burying ground in Shaler Township. The next year, however, the two congregations united under the title, Shaare Shamayim.<sup>44</sup> In 1854, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was

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36. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September, 1852.
37. Israelite, October 30, 1857.
38. Ibid., January 15 and 29, 1858.
39. U. S. Census Bureau, Population of the United States in 1860, Vol. 1, pp. 413-414.
40. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 1, pp. 21, 49, 50, 55; Ward 3, pp. 112 and 113; Ward 5, pp. 262, 294, 310, 312, and 313; Allegheny, Ward 1, p. 76; Ward 2, p. 185; Fahenstock, Pittsburgh Directory 1850, pp. 50 and 53.
41. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, see Appendix 5.
42. Israelite, May 13, 1859.
43. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September, 1852.
44. Deed Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 112, p. 310; The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, April, 1853.

organized to assist transient Jews, who often passed through Pittsburgh.<sup>45</sup> By 1856, the Jewish women had organized their own charity group, The Ladies Aid Society.<sup>46</sup>

Another new synagogue was established between 1854 and 1856. Named Rodef Sholom (Pursuer of Peace), it was almost 100 per cent German in membership.<sup>47</sup> The wrangling between various local Jews will not be discussed in this writing. But the community despite the recent growth actually was not large enough to support two congregations.<sup>48</sup> The Shaare Shamayim, which retained several Germans and the Polanders as members, failed to grow and seems to have declined after 1856.<sup>49</sup> New Jews from the Russian Empire, who would have augmented it, were rarely settling in Pittsburgh; the only additional ones known to live here by 1860 being Jacob Burkhart, a liquor dealer, and Henry Hershberg, a clothier.<sup>50</sup> In addition, there were not enough new German-Polish Jews here such as Abram Slassberg to supplement the Shaare Shamayim much more.<sup>51</sup>

The numerous new German Jews usually attended services at the Rodef Sholom Synagogue.<sup>52</sup> It did reach a membership of thirty-five men by 1860. And not only was it employing Reverend Armhold as minister, but it also hired a recent immigrant from England, Josiah Cohen, to conduct its new Hebrew parochial school. Besides Judaism he instructed the children in history, English, spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>53</sup>

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45. Israelite, April 25, 1854.

46. Ibid., May 23, 1856.

47. Ibid., August 25, 1854; May 23, 1856; Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1, pp. 162-165; The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September 27, 1859; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, see Appendix 5; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, see Appendix 4; these census records reveal that charter members were invariably born in Germany.

48. Israelite, October 30, 1857; January 15, 1858; May 13, 1859; The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, August, 1857.

49. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, April, 1858; April, 1860.

50. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, Pittsburgh, Part 2, pp. 42 and 252.

51. Ibid., see Appendix 5; Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, April, 1858 and April, 1860.

52. Israelite, October 15, 1858; March 18, 1859; The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, March 13, 1859.

53. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, April 11, 1860; Israelite, August 10, 1860.

But the Jews of Pittsburgh had always used rented rooms as their synagogue. The membership of the Rodef Sholom had been hoping and planning to build one.<sup>54</sup> A good recourse to insure adequate funds was to reunite with the smaller and less successful Shaare Shamayim Congregation. Compromises were effected so that by March of 1861 the rival congregations merged under the title, Rodef Sholom.<sup>55</sup>

Construction plans were finally pushed ahead. In 1862, Josiah Cohen spoke before the dedication of the new synagogue building on Eighth Street; he could not help but note that the Rodef Sholom, the only Jewish congregation in Pittsburgh, had been increasing in membership of late.<sup>56</sup> Immigration to America had dropped off in 1861 and 1862.<sup>57</sup> But during the Civil War (1861-1865) Pittsburgh was booming with military production, much building construction, great expansion of manufacturing, and high wages.<sup>58</sup> Many Jews were moving here from other localities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Minnesota, New York State, and even Georgia.<sup>59</sup>

Among them was a large body of Dutch Jews. They usually had not immigrated here directly from Holland but had mainly lived in New York or Philadelphia before coming to Pittsburgh. Locally, they often opened up pawn shops. The Dutch Jews included:

Louis and Phillip Sussman	Isaac Gelder
George and William Cohen	Abe Green
Levi, Abe, and Emanuel DeRoy	Julius Van Raalty <sup>60</sup>
Abe Shenkan	

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54. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September 27, 1860; Israelite, August 10, 1860.
55. Israelite, August 10, 1860, January 25, 1867; Cohen, Josiah, Josiah Cohen Scrapbook, pp. 29 and 40.
56. Cohen, Scrapbook, p. 40.
57. United States Statistics Bureau, Commerce and Navigation of the United States 1871, p. 694.
58. Wilson, Pittsburgh, pp. 940-941, 945.
59. Jewish Criterion, November 11, 1904, Lippman article; December 21, 1906, Wiler article; January 8, 1907, Goldstein necrology; August 6, 1909; March 25, 1910; May 31, 1918, Lehman article.
60. Ibid., necrologies January 20, 1902; January 9, 1903; October 14, 1904; February 15, 1907; June 5, 1908; Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, January 15, 1865; United States Western District Court of Pennsylvania, Naturalization Petitions, Louis Sussman and Phillip Sussman; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4; Pittsburgh Directory, 1862.

Two other new Jewish settlers, Abe Lippman (Bavaria) and Louis Aaron (German-Poland), had resided in Georgia.<sup>61</sup> It is unknown if they opposed slavery or feared conscription into the Confederate army. But it was easier to procure and to retail merchandise in Pittsburgh than in the South.

Locally, Jews were also launching successful clothing and liquor stores, dry goods and second-hand establishments;<sup>62</sup> and the Jewish population growing with a new and greater rapidity was to double in only four years. In 1860, approximately seventy-five Jewish families lived here.<sup>63</sup> Slightly over two-thirds of them were members of a synagogue. By December, 1863, the Rodef Sholom had increased to a body of 103 members; and 150 Jewish families lived in and around Pittsburgh.<sup>64</sup>

No statistics have been located showing what proportion of the community was from Holland, England, Russia, or Germany. But it is possible to make a reliable estimate. When Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise visited Pittsburgh in December of 1863, he made four speeches in three days before local Jewish audiences. He proposed that the Rodef Sholom Congregation drop its orthodox ritual, Minhag Ashkenaz, and adopt his Hebrew prayer book, Minhag America. After he left Pittsburgh he wrote, "The majority of the congregation, and especially the ladies, desire reform and it is sure to come."<sup>65</sup> Who were his majority? In America, most Jews from Russia, Holland, and German-Poland had opposed his program.<sup>66</sup> Locally they hoped that the Rodef Sholom would remain orthodox. But in February of 1864, the majority of the Rodef Sholom membership voted to drop the orthodox ritual and adopt Rabbi Wise's Minhag America.<sup>67</sup> The Germans were the majority element. They apparently outnumbered the combined elements from Russia, Holland, and German-Poland.

The orthodox minority resigned from the Rodef Sholom. There were more than enough of them to hold a minyan and to get along without the Germans. These Dutch, German-Polish, and Lithuanian Jews proceeded to organize the Tree of Life Synagogue in June of 1864. Gustavus Graffner, a native of Prussia, was elected president--the German Poles presumably

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61. Jewish Criterion, November 11, 1904; March 25, 1910; Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh, Scrapbook I, Louis I. Aaron article; Pittsburgh Directory, 1863-1864, pp. 1 and 193.

62. Pittsburgh Directory, 1863-1864, pp. 73 and 193, DeRoys and Lippman; ibid., 1865, p. 1, Jacob Abraham; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, see Appendix 4.

63. Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.

64. Israelite, January 1, 1864.

65. Ibid., January 1, 1864.

66. Ibid., January 15, 1858.

67. Ibid., February 5, 1864.

being the largest element within the congregation.<sup>68</sup>

The migration of German Jews to Pittsburgh had reached a climax during the Civil War but began to decline soon afterwards. Many of them still continued to settle here such as Kaufmanns around 1871, who later established the famous department store.<sup>69</sup>

However, since 1860 a larger proportion of the new Jews from Germany were from Prussia or German-Poland.<sup>70</sup> They steadily continued to supplement the Tree of Life Synagogue, which from an original seventeen charter members swelled to a dues-paying body of approximately forty men by 1870.<sup>71</sup>

From Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemberg, the supply of Jewish immigrants had dried up to a certain extent. As much as one-half or three-fourths of the Jews had left some communities.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, the old anti-semitic economic restrictions, marriage laws and social barriers--which had encouraged Jews to emigrate--rapidly were disappearing when Germany was unified (1866-1871). The Jew still there was becoming too successful in business or professional life to be inclined to leave.<sup>73</sup>

Following 1863, the year of the great financial panic, a few German and German-Polish Jews continued to settle in Pittsburgh.<sup>74</sup> But they had infinitely small effect on the general growth of the local Jewish community. Yet when the community was new (1840-1870) the Germans firstly and the German-Polish to a lesser extent composed the prepondering majority of Jews in Pittsburgh.

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68. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, June 26, 1864.

69. Jewish Criterion, November 3, 1905; Kaufmann's Department Store, Kaufmann's Pittsburgh notes on Kaufmann family.

70. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4.

71. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, 1864-1870 inclusive, especially October 2, 1870.

72. Glanz, "German Jews," YIVO Annual 1948.

73. Ibid.; Jewish Times, May 18, 1870, article on Breslau, Germany; "Auf Nach Berlin," Scribner's Magazine, December, 1870.

74. Jewish Criterion, necrologies, April 8, 1904, January 13, 1905; Who's Who in American Jewry, p. 113.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE LITHUANIAN JEWS (1865-1879)

The Lithuanian Jews had lived in Northern Poland, modern Lithuania, Latvia, and White Russia.<sup>1</sup> One of them was Alexander Fink. Born in Vilna in 1819,<sup>2</sup> he married when he was twelve<sup>3</sup> and had a son born three years later. Around 1844, he emigrated to America with his wife and four children.<sup>4</sup> After he settled in Pittsburgh, he shortly became a leader in the Jewish community. In 1852, he was elected president of the Shaare Shama-yim Synagogue although most of the members were natives of Germany.<sup>5</sup>

But it was only after the Civil War terminated in 1865 that the Lithuanians emerged as the largest Jewish element migrating to Pittsburgh. A series of circumstances encouraged more and more of them to settle here annually during the next ten years.

One such circumstance was the Polish Insurrection (1863-1865), which the Russian army stamped out ruthlessly--devastating the farms and villages of Poland and Lithuania.<sup>6</sup> The Jews had wisely remained neutral,<sup>7</sup> but they were finding it hard to make a living in their impoverished homeland. Commerce and industry had declined drastically.<sup>8</sup> In 1864, Polish

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1. Abramovich, Hirsh, "Jews in Rural Occupations in Lithuania," YIVO Annual, 1948.
  2. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, March 23, 1892, Fink's necrology; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 5, p. 310.
  3. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, December 18, 1881, Fink celebrates his fiftieth wedding anniversary on this date.
  4. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1850, Pittsburgh, Ward 5, p. 310.
  5. The Occident and American Jewish Advocate, September, 1852.
  6. London Times, June 16, 1864; Chase, Thomas G., The Story of Lithuania, p. 225.
  7. Dubnow, Simon, The History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. II, p. 182.
  8. Jewish Times, April 1, 1870--Report of the Alliance Israelite Universelle Committee, which visited Poland and Lithuania, given in letter from Cremieux to S. Wolfe.

and Lithuanian Jews began leaving for America in greatly increased number.<sup>9</sup>

After stepping off the boat, their occupational circumstances often might lead them to Pittsburgh. Throughout the United States, most Jewish immigrants from Europe took up peddling. It did not appear too complicated a way of making a living. Previous selling experience and good command of English were not necessary. One merely had to learn to count United States currency, name the prices of the items he sold, and say, "Very good," and "Very cheap."<sup>10</sup>

Had the German or Lithuanian Jewish peddlers remained in one or two localities, however, they might have found conditions too competitive to make a living. As it was in New York or Philadelphia--how often after a weary day of climbing row upon row of steps, knocking on door after door, receiving constant rebuffs, did they earn hardly enough for a day's bread?<sup>11</sup>

But reports circulated that a better living could be made in other American localities--in the South, Mid-West, New England. Alexander Fink, during the Civil War, moved to New York City, where he operated a wholesale store.<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly, he came in contact with recent immigrants from his native Lithuania. Could he have recommended them to Pittsburgh, his former home? Probably other persons also referred them here, giving them the address of a prospective boarding house or the name of a local resident.

Economic circumstances in Pittsburgh were inviting after the Civil War. The industrial boom was continuing. Hundreds of small shops produced a wide variety of items such as wagons, cigars, bottles.<sup>13</sup> Annually, a handful of East European Jews--invariably Lithuanians--moved here. A few of them even entered into manufacturing, probably on a small scale however. Henry Hyams, produced gas meters by approximately 1868;<sup>14</sup> the partners, Abraham Skirboll and Harry H. Livingston, hoop-

9. U. S. Statistics Bureau, Commerce and Navigation of the United States 1870, p. 725. Tables show a large increase in immigration from Russia and Poland in 1864 over previous years. It can be assumed that the immigrants were greatly composed of Jews.
10. Glanz, "Source Materials," YIVO Annual, 1951.
11. Marcus, Jacob R., "From Peddler to Regimental Commander in Two Years; The Civil War Career of Major Louis A. Gratz," American Jewish Historical Society Publication 38, pp. 22-25.
12. Trow, New York City Directory, 1864 to 1870 issues inclusive; Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, March 23, 1892; American Hebrew, April 1, 1892.
13. Wilson, Pittsburgh, pp. 940-949.
14. Pittsburgh Directory, 1869, p. 220; Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, December 13, 1868.

skirts by 1869.<sup>15</sup>

Louis Samuel immigrated to America from his native Russian-Poland in 1862. He was immediately inducted into the Union Army. Some time after he was discharged in February, 1865, he settled in Pittsburgh, where he gained his final naturalization papers in 1868.<sup>16</sup> Other new Jews from the Russian Empire were living here as follows:

by 1865: Simon Citron--clothier  
Max Heiman--peddler  
Harris Snitzer

by 1867: Abraham Adolph--clothier

by 1868: Henry Hyman--clothier  
(He was a son-in-law of Alexander Fink)

by 1869: Isaac Novinski--peddler  
Jacob Schnitzer--liquor dealer  
Emen Goldstein--(He had lived in New York in 1865)  
Jacob Solomon--peddler<sup>17</sup>

Many of the Lithuanian, Dutch, German, and German-Polish Jews had moved around a great deal (1840-1870). They had had children born in three separate states. They had lived in four or five separate American towns before they decided to come to Pittsburgh.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes they remained here permanently, sometimes not.

A Lithuanian Jew, Morris Rosenthal, had arrived in America before the Civil War. He enlisted in the Union Army in New York City in 1861. In 1862, he was wounded in Virginia in a battle against the Confederates. The next year, after he was discharged, he lived in New York City again. But he removed to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in 1864. From 1865 to 1868, he lived in the New Mexico and Colorado territories. He returned East in 1869 and is believed to have been a peddler in Pittsburgh. Here, he settled down permanently in 1871, when he joined the police force.<sup>19</sup>

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15. Pittsburgh Directory, 1869, pp. 265 and 403.

16. U. S. Court, Western Pennsylvania, Naturalization Papers of Louis Samuel, 1868.

17. U. S. Court, Western Pennsylvania, Naturalization Index 1845 to and Including 1882; Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1, p. 421; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4; Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, 1864 to 1870 inclusive, such as of December 13, 1868 revealing that H. Hyman was accepted as a member.

18. Marcus, Memoirs Jews, pp. 303-308; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1860, see Appendix 5; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4.

19. Rosenthal, Morris, Morris Rosenthal Civil War Pension Papers.

The Lithuanian Jews generally took up residence in the First Ward around Market and Ferry Streets, sometimes in the Fifth Ward around Penn Avenue between Tenth and Fourteenth Street, and occasionally in other wards.<sup>20</sup> The German Jews meanwhile were steadily moving out to Allegheny City, a better residential area.<sup>21</sup> They still greatly exceeded the Lithuanians in numbers locally.<sup>22</sup>

But by the spring of 1870, approximately 100 natives of the Russian Empire were already living in Pittsburgh. Around two-thirds of them were Jewish.<sup>23</sup> The Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian Christians had hardly begun to settle here as yet.

The Lithuanian Jews comprised almost twenty families and were to increase in number considerably during the remainder of 1870. In 1868 and 1869, a cholera epidemic succeeded by a violent famine had swept their homeland. Thousands of starving Jews had crossed into Germany. A very few of them probably made their way to relatives or friends in Pittsburgh. But the majority lacked enough money to proceed ahead. They were left in pitifully destitute circumstances, unemployed and wandering hopelessly about the German country-side.<sup>24</sup> In 1870, Alliance Israelite Universelle--the leading Jewish charity society in Europe--shipped 500 of these refugees overseas.<sup>25</sup> The Board of Delegates, the American-Jewish body entrusted with their care, dispersed them among several cities.<sup>26</sup> No more than a few families of them probably were sent to Pittsburgh.

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20. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4.
21. Jewish Times, March 15, 1872.
22. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4.
23. U. S. Census Bureau, Ninth Census, Vol. 1, p. 369; United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, see Appendix 4. In these 1870 Census Papers, Jacob Schnitzer and Leon Hirshberg were erroneously listed as natives of Prussia, and Max Herman as a native of Bavaria. But the Naturalization Records of the U. S. Court verify that they were born in the Russian Empire.
24. Jewish Times, March 12, June 11, October 1 and 22, December 3, 1869; February 18 and April 1, 1870; Israelite, June 24, 1870.
25. Szajkowski, Zosa, "Emigration to America or Reconstruction in Europe," American Jewish Historical Society Publication 42, pp. 168-169.
26. Israelite, May 20 and June 3, 1870; Jewish Times, March 25 and May 27, 1870; May 19, 1871.

By 1870, economic conditions in Lithuania had improved.<sup>27</sup> Would the emigration of the Jews decline? But new circumstances arose. As Bismark once stated:

The richer the country grew, the more its sons would immigrate, for the poor had not the means . . . it was only those whom . . . economic policy had enriched who could afford to pay their passage across the Atlantic.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, land and sea transportation was also rapidly improving. The railroad train from Lithuania would by the early 1870's reach the port of embarkation--Hamburg, Germany--within thirty-three hours.<sup>29</sup> The immigrant of former decades had continued overseas in a sailing vessel. But by 1872, he mainly used the steamship; it would provide better food and accommodations, make a quicker voyage, and have a lower death rate among passengers.<sup>30</sup>

In America, the early 1870's were times of wild speculation, loose credit, great business activity, and ample employment. The magazine, The Jewish Times, cryptically stated in 1871, "The remarkable prosperity of the Hebrews in America will do more than anything else to stimulate further immigration."<sup>31</sup> Arrivals from the Russian Empire especially were soaring--1190 persons in the year 1870, 3927 in 1872, and an astounding 6353 in 1873.<sup>32</sup>

A greater new wave of Lithuanian Jews poured into Pittsburgh (1871-1874). Many and possibly the majority arrived directly from Europe. William Simon, who was born in the town of Nevrinke in Lithuania, is said to have gone to Scotland when he was thirteen. He later removed to Pittsburgh because his cousin, Isaac Novinski, lived here.<sup>33</sup> A native of Suwalk province of Lithuania, Albert Blumberg attended medical school in Germany. He immigrated to Pittsburgh in 1873. He was the earliest known

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27. Jewish Times, October 29, 1869; Landman, Encyclopaedia, Vol. 9, p. 692. Jews of Lithuania organize relief measures for Jews in Persia and France.

28. London Times, January 9, 1885.

29. Richard and Boas, Handbook Hamburg-Amerika Company, 1873, p. 19.

30. New York Times, November 27, 1873.

31. Jewish Times, December 29, 1871.

32. Ibid., May 19, 1871; U. S. Statistics Bureau, Commerce and Navigation of the United States 1875, p. 912.

33. Interview with Mr. Harry Simon and Mrs. Esther Stein, son and daughter of William Simon; Common Pleas Court No. 1, Nat. Docket 1799.

Jewish physician locally.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Blumberg joined the reformed congregation, the Rodef Sholom.<sup>35</sup> But the other Lithuanian newcomers considered themselves orthodox. Until 1870, they had invariably attended the Tree of Life Synagogue,<sup>36</sup> which used Minhag Poland, an official Hebrew prayer.

Joining a congregation did not usually indicate that the Jew had just moved to Pittsburgh, however. How could the newcomer afford to pay the initiation fees? At the Tree of Life, these generally had been \$10.00,<sup>37</sup> but he often arrived here with limited funds. He might earn \$2.00 for a long day of work.<sup>38</sup> This was needed to pay the rent, to buy food and clothing for the family, to obtain added stock from the peddler supply house. Much time, possibly years, would elapse before even a most religious Jew would join any local congregation.

Eight men, who regularly attended services at The Tree of Life, had never been mentioned by name in the congregation Minutes nor officially recognized as members. They had other grievances. They considered themselves "Litvaks" (meaning Lithuanians in the Yiddish). They said that they "had been brought up in the strictest Judaism" and that the Tree of Life was too reformed.<sup>39</sup> This orthodox congregation used Minhag Poland,<sup>40</sup> one of the official Hebrew prayer books in Poland. These eight men comprised:

Isaac Novinski	Abraham Skirboll
David Oppenheim	Jacob Levy
Joseph Altman	Joseph Solomon
Simon Jacobs	Herman Rosenblum

In August of 1870, they organized their own congregation, The B'nai Israel.<sup>41</sup> It would follow Minhag Ashkenaz, the ritual most commonly

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34. Allegheny County Medical Register I, p. 449; Pfeffer, Distinguished Jews, p. 318.

35. Rodef Sholom Congregation Minutes, April 3, 1881.

36. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, August 30, 1880.

37. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, February 5 and October 15, 1865.

38. Nevins, Allen, The Emergence of Modern America 1865-1878, pp. 70 and 71.

39. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, Pittsburgh Times, Pittsburgh Leader, Pittsburgh Post, August 30, 1880.

40. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, June 26, 1864.

41. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, Pittsburgh Times, Pittsburgh Leader, Pittsburgh Post, August 30, 1880.

used in Lithuania.<sup>42</sup>

The Tree of Life proceeded to drop initiation fees as a requisite for joining. And it accepted twenty-three new members on October 2. Many of them had lived in Pittsburgh for several years. Some of the Lithuanians, such as Cass Sunstein and Myer Fink, now officially joined the Tree of Life.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, it was some time before the B'nai Israel could even find two more members named Baker and Browarsky so that it could have a quorum of ten men. It thus had very small beginnings.

The next few years, its rapid growth was one statistical gauge of the mounting migration of Lithuanian Jews to Pittsburgh. The B'nai Israel originally had rented a small room, corner of Third and Liberty Streets, as a place of worship. To accommodate the increasing membership, it had to move to a larger room above a grocery store. This too soon proved inadequate. The membership rose to thirty, then to forty men, and B'nai Israel had to switch to even larger quarters above Fenian Hall on Second Avenue.<sup>44</sup>

Before each presidential election, aliens in Pittsburgh were rounded up and led into court. There they would be hurriedly naturalized as American citizens so that they could vote as the local political machine instructed.<sup>45</sup> In 1872, the year Ulysses S. Grant defeated Horace Greeley for the presidency, the following Jews from Russia--mostly Lithuanians--appear on the naturalization records:

Joseph Altman	Simon Jacobs
Morris Meyers	Jacob Hepner
William Simon	Charles Stein
Jacob Levy	Charles Grossman
Abraham Frank	Herman Rosenblum
Louis Sandusky	Nathan Lieber
Louis Harris	Zachariah Rosenthal <sup>46</sup>

The local Jewish population had always increased during prosperity. But a depression followed the Panic of 1873. Immigration from Europe to America declined drastically.

A new law was enacted in Russia in January of 1874 making all men liable for military service, however.<sup>47</sup> A terrible dread spread over

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42. Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918; Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 4, pp. 433-434.

43. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, October 2, 1870.

44. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, August 30, 1880.

45. Pittsburgh Dispatch, October 5, 1893.

46. Common Pleas Court No. 1, Nat. Docket 1799; Common Pleas Court No. 2, Naturalization Docket 1834 to 1878; Allegheny County Clerk of Courts, Naturalization Docket and Papers.

47. London Times, January 19 and 26, 1874.

Poland and Lithuania. When the initial call was made of men of military age to submit themselves for the draft, half of the eligible Jews failed to appear.<sup>48</sup> How many emigrated, how many eventually settled in Pittsburgh may never be known. Official statistics reveal that 8000 immigrants from Russia arrived in America in 1874, a record total despite the depression.<sup>49</sup>

Conscription in Europe always stimulated the Jewish migration to Pittsburgh (1839-1914). Yearly men and boys not only from Russia but also from Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Roumania settled here after they had fled their homeland to avoid military service.<sup>50</sup>

However, few Lithuanian and Russian Jews appeared in Pittsburgh between the years 1827 and 1855 when they could be forced to serve twenty-five years in the Russian army.<sup>51</sup> Under the milder conscription law of 1874, they were only compelled to serve three to five years.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, in the ensuing forty years until 1914, thousands of East European Jews would settle in Pittsburgh. The conscription dodger like most other immigrants went where he had relatives and friends. Only after a body of East European Jews such as the Lithuanians were established locally, could any conscription law profoundly spur their migration to Pittsburgh.

From 1875 to 1879, the Russian immigration to America dropped drastically from what it had been in 1874.<sup>53</sup> It is true that the initial dread of conscription had worn off so that more Jews in Russia were appearing for the draft.<sup>54</sup> But the number of Lithuanian Jews moving to Pittsburgh probably declined mainly because America was undergoing one of the worst depressions in her history. How could the newcomer be expected to make a living in Pittsburgh then? The iron mills were down; unemployment great. The local Jewish community was

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48. Ibid., November 26, 1874 and January 10, 1875; Glanz, "Source Materials," YIVO Annual, 1951, p. 126.

49. U. S. Statistics Bureau, Navigation 1875, p. 912. Much of this increase was also due to Russian Mennonite immigration.

50. Jewish Times, January 18, 1870; London Times, September 18, 1872; interviews with many Jews in Pittsburgh such as Morris Mayerstein, Roumania; Frank Brunwasser, Hungary.

51. Dubnow, Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, pp. 199-201.

52. London Times, January 10, 1875.

53. U. S. Statistics Bureau, Commerce and Navigation of the United States 1879, p. 789.

54. Dubnow, Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, pp. 199-201.

experiencing "hard times."<sup>55</sup> One impoverished German-Jewish peddler committed suicide.<sup>56</sup>

Anyway, the Jewish population had grown greatly in recent years. Slightly over 1000 Jews lived in Pittsburgh in the year 1870.<sup>57</sup> By the year 1877, there were 2000.<sup>58</sup> The Lithuanian Jews exceeded 100 families. Their migration in no small way was responsible for the community nearly doubling in size in only seven years.

Around 1879, a faction of Lithuanian Jews organized the Beth Jacob Congregation.<sup>59</sup> The B'nai Israel Synagogue from which they had resigned still flourished with a membership of eighty families in 1880.<sup>60</sup> By then the Lithuanians equalled and possibly exceeded the number of German Jews in Pittsburgh.

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55. Israelite, August 14, 1878.
56. Pittsburgh Gazette, November 30, 1876.
57. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, estimate is based on author's count.
58. American Jewish Yearbook 1914-15, p. 374.
59. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, p. 265; Pittsburgh Directory, 1881, p. 61; Savage, N., Pittsburgh Tri-State Pinkas.
60. Pittsburgh Dispatch, August 30, 1880.

## CHAPTER IV

### GROWTH OF THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWS (1880-1890)

Other East European Jews besides the Lithuanians settled in Pittsburgh in significant numbers after 1880. Numerous Hungarian and Russian Jews were here by 1882; and some Roumanian, Galician, and Polish Jews came a few years later.

The only West European nation, where many of the new Jewish residents had lived, was England. Josiah Cohen, the most prominent English Jew locally, claimed that his ancestors had lived there for generations.<sup>1</sup> But he always belonged to the German congregation, the Rodef Sholom. The English never developed as a faction within the Jewish community. For, they were mostly wives or children of the Dutch Germans, or East Europeans. Jews originally from continental Europe had frequently lived in England before immigrating to America. Jacob and Betsy Hyams, natives of Russian-Poland, had had five children born in England as illustrated by the table on the following page.

The word had passed long ago that money could be made easily in America.<sup>2</sup> A larger wave of English East European Jewish immigrants began settling in Pittsburgh in 1880 because the severe depression was finally over. Prosperity was returning.

Joseph Bennet, a native of Simnas, Lithuania, claimed that he arrived in Pittsburgh in 1880 when he was fourteen. He entered public school but quit two weeks later. When he returned home he asked his father to return the seventy-five cents he had left from his journey from Europe. "What do you need so much money?", his father asked. Joseph readily replied, "America is a land of business, and I too want to go to business."

A half hour later with the seventy-five cents, he entered a store and bought matches--which he planned to peddle. The storekeeper instructed him to say, "Matches, ten cents a pack, three for a quarter." It was too much for Joseph to remember. He soon stationed himself on Forbes Street and called out in a broken accent, "Matches, ten cents a box."

Fortunately, he was able to sell everything straight, without any cut in price. At the end of the day instead of seventy-five cents, he had \$1.50. He kept reinvesting his profits in matches, and in eight months he had saved \$250.00.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.
  2. Israelite, August 12, 1870.
  3. Pfeffer, Distinguished Jews, p. 46.

## FAMILIES IN PITTSBURGH WITH MEMBERS BORN IN ENGLAND

Name	Relation	Age	Born In	Occupation
<u>1850 Census*</u>				
Nathan Samuels	Husband	29	Polish-Prussia	Merchant
Charlotte	Wife	26	England	
Lewis	Son	3	"	
Evelyn	Daughter	4 mo.	"	
<u>1870 Census**</u>				
Josiah Cohen	Husband	29	England	Lawyer
Carrie	Wife	21	Bavaria	
Julius Bernstein	Husband	31	Prussia	Clothier
Easter	Wife	23	England	
David	Son	3	Pennsylvania	
Sarah	Daughter	1	"	
Jacob Abraham	Husband	48	Prussia	Clothier
Elizabeth	Wife	48	"	
Henry	Son	24	"	
Max	Son	20	"	
Mary	Daughter	20	"	
George Cohen	Husband	48	Holland	Pawnbroker
Eliza	Wife	38	England	
Morris	Son	14	"	
Esther	Daughter	12	New York	
Miriam	Daughter	10	"	
Gilda	Daughter	7	"	
Jacob Hyams	Husband	56	Poland	
Betsy	Wife	56	"	
Adelande	Daughter	23	England	
Abraham	Son	22	"	Watchmaker
Sarah	Daughter	19	"	
Nahum	Son	13	"	
David	Son	10	"	
Albert Isaacs		27	"	Clerk in Store
Lewis DeHaan	Husband	55	Holland	Retail
Julia	Wife	45	England	Clothing
Jacob	Son	21	Pennsylvania	
Rachel	Daughter	16	"	
Fanny	Daughter	12	"	
Harry	Son	2	"	

\*United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1850, Allegheny City, Ward 1, p. 76.

\*\*United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1870, Pittsburgh, Wards 1 to 5.

Such success stories were heard throughout Europe, but most East European Jews in Pittsburgh had rarely been from other areas of Russia besides Lithuania.

Many Jews, however, lived in the Ukraine. They referred to themselves as "Russian Jews." They had been more prosperous than their brethren in Poland and Lithuania, from whom their historical background and Yiddish dialect differed.<sup>4</sup>

In 1881, shortly after Czar Alexander II was assassinated, a series of riots known as pogroms broke out against the once peaceful Jewish communities in the Ukraine. Russian peasants smashed and looted Jewish homes and stores, assaulted Jewish women and children. Neither the new Czar, Alexander III, nor his police bothered to provide protection.

Panic-stricken, seeking safety, Russian Jews abandoned their homes. They fled over the border into Austria-Hungary. There shortly they were jamming the railway junction of Brody, Galicia, too penniless to go onward.

Donations for these refugees were made throughout Europe. The Alliance Israelite Universelle supervised the relief work and decided to ship the majority of them overseas.<sup>5</sup>

In 1881, American Jewry set up the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) to assist the Russian refugees arriving in the United States. Local branches were set up in all large cities.<sup>6</sup>

The Cremieux Society, the Pittsburgh chapter of Alliance Israelite Universelle, had been organized during the 1870's. It mainly had solicited funds to help the Jews in Africa and the Near East.<sup>7</sup> On November 1, 1881, it was entrusted to direct the relief work in Pittsburgh on behalf of the refugees.<sup>8</sup> The Cremieux Society would send delegates to national meeting of HIAS in New York.<sup>9</sup>

The expected influx of Russian refugees was great, and HIAS decided that they should be dispersed equitably among all large Jewish

4. Levin, Shmarya, Youth in Revolt, p. 212.
5. Dubnow, Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, pp. 242-308; American Hebrew, December 6, 1881.
6. American Hebrew, December 30, 1881; Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States, Reports of the President and Treasurer for 1882, pp. 5 and 6.
7. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, March 31, 1878; American Jewish Yearbook, 1899, p. 35; Jewish Criterion, June 26, 1873.
8. Israelite, November 17, 1882.
9. Jewish Messenger, June 9, 1882.

communities. It was hoped that the tax would not be too extreme anywhere.<sup>10</sup>

Diligent preparations to receive the refugees were made throughout America.<sup>11</sup> Nobody knew exactly how many of them would be settled in Pittsburgh. But virtually every local Jewish organization foresaw the urgency of the situation and tried to help out as well as it could. The Cremieux Society began receiving donations for the refugee fund immediately. The Rodef Sholom Congregation donated \$150.00,<sup>12</sup> the Jericho Lodge of B'nai B'rith \$200.00.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly Jewish families brought over their pushkas (coin boxes), where they customarily deposited small change for charitable purposes. One of the most united efforts in the history of Pittsburgh Jewry had begun.

On March 19, 1882, a great meeting was held at Maltby Hall. Representatives from the Free Sons of Israel Club, the Young Men's Hebrew Association, the six local B'nai B'rith lodges, the B'nai Israel and Tree of Life Synagogues, and the Congregation Emanuel attended. A committee with Alfred Hyams as chairman was formed to arrange a great musical performance at the Pittsburgh Opera House. The profits were for the refugee fund.<sup>14</sup> The next day, an editorial in the Pittsburgh Times commented, "Whatever the Israelites undertake they carry through. . . . Jews are successful in charitable drives."<sup>15</sup>

Non-Jews were also invited to help out. On February 22, a large audience of them had convened at the Third Presbyterian Church. The leading men of Pittsburgh were there--lawyers and politicians, preachers and manufacturers. Josiah Cohen spoke briefly: "The Hebrews had thought it would not be wise for one of them to say much, but they would wait and listen. The meeting was a Christian one."

A procession of non-Jews proceeded to denounce Russia with some fancy oratory. "Such incredible outrages at the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," they declared, "it is an affront to civilization, a turning back of the hands of the great dial of national progress."

The audience unanimously agreed to forward a protest against Russia to the United States State Department. Major Brown, a distinguished lawyer and political leader, then arose on the platform. He stated that he had not come to speak about persecution alone. "Help them with solid aid," he pleaded, "I have not much faith in diplomacy. . . . We should

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10. American Hebrew, December 30, 1881: Hebrew Society, Reports 1882, pp. 5 and 6.

11. Jewish Messenger, February 24 and March 3, 1882.

12. Rodef Sholom Congregation Minutes, November 6, 1881.

13. American Hebrew, December 16, 1881.

14. Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 21, 1882.

15. Pittsburgh Times, March 23, 1882.

put our hands in our pockets and give money. . . . Assist the Jews from Russia to come here."<sup>16</sup>

Two days later, the relief committee, appointed at the rally, met in the Chamber of Commerce rooms at three in the afternoon. But the enthusiasm had cooled off. One delegate suggested that they should think about helping the Mississippi River flood sufferers. The non-Jewish committee in general hesitated about giving any help for the refugees from Russia; it agreed that it did not have much information and did not know what had been done by the Jews locally. But a genuine friend of the Jews was there; Major Brown begged and insisted that the refugees should be helped immediately. Finally the committee agreed to ask William Gormley, who had successfully collected for a relief drive in the past, to solicit. The work was to begin at once. But his collections were to be divided jointly between the Jewish refugee fund and the Mississippi flood sufferers.<sup>17</sup>

William Gormley announced that he would call on the businessmen of Pittsburgh for contributions.<sup>18</sup> It is unknown how successful he was since no final accounting of his work has been located.

A native of the Duchy of Baden, Germany,<sup>19</sup> Rabbi Lippman Mayer of the Rodef Sholom Congregation served as president of the Cremieux Society.<sup>20</sup> He had immigrated to America in 1868, living in New York City for nine months.<sup>21</sup> The next year, he accepted the pulpit at Selma, Alabama, where he stayed only four months;<sup>22</sup> he was evidently dissatisfied with the South of re-construction days (1869). He looked forward to a better position. In 1869 and 1870, the Rodef Sholom Congregation of Pittsburgh advertised for a minister.<sup>23</sup> It believed that its former one, Reverend Naumber, was too ineffectual, and it wished a dynamic

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16. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Post, Pittsburgh Times, February 22, 1882; Jewish Messenger, February 24, 1882.
17. Pittsburgh Post, February 23, 1882; Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, Pittsburgh Dispatch, February 24, 1882.
18. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, February 25, 1882; Pittsburgh Times, February 26, 1882.
19. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1870, see Appendix 4.
20. Israelite, November 17, 1882.
21. Ibid., December 3, 1869.
22. Ibid., April 29, 1870.
23. Ibid., November 26 and December 3, 1869; Jewish Times, January 14 and 22, 1870.

leader.<sup>24</sup> Rabbi Lippman Mayer was chosen.<sup>25</sup> A decade later now, he was working tirelessly for the Russian Jewish refugees. Placed in overall charge of the relief work, he managed the money arriving from all sources --banking and expending it. He tried to find jobs for the forthcoming refugees and arranged that they should be fed, clothed, and housed.<sup>26</sup> A few began arriving early in 1882 in Pittsburgh. And in March, Jackson's Clothing Store hired four of them as tailors.<sup>27</sup> But until April, a very small proportion of the refugees had reached America. A vastly greater influx was expected.<sup>28</sup> As more began arriving in May, Rabbi Mayer seemed to be directing a smooth operation.

Could anything disrupt the relief work? Ominous signs did arise. Unrest was stirring in the Pittsburgh labor scene. On April 10, Negroes were imported to replace striking Irish workers on the Pittsburgh and Western Railway.<sup>29</sup> In May, the local iron manufacturers refused to give their employees a raise in wages.<sup>30</sup>

In June and July, the great stream of refugees poured in. But Rabbi Mayer sent an urgent telegram to New York City late in June:

Last three weeks received seventy refugees mostly direct from England. Through the strike no work; are unable to support them; will be compelled to return them.<sup>31</sup>

During the summer, the manufacturers steadfastly refused to compromise with the ironworkers. The strike had begun on June 1. It did not end until September 20.<sup>32</sup> Business declined. The Jewish peddler and storekeeper depended greatly on the purchasing power of the iron workers.

Rabbi Mayer and the Jewish community had to maintain many of the refugees through the entire sixteen-week strike of Pittsburgh's leading industry. An official report in the magazine, The Israelite, claimed that 700 had to be fed or clothed.<sup>33</sup> These probably included hundreds

24. Israelite, May 20, 1870.

25. Ibid., April 29, 1870.

26. Ibid., November 17, 1882.

27. Pittsburgh Times, March 4, 1882.

28. American Hebrew, March 31, 1882; Hebrew Society, Reports 1882, pp. 5 and 6.

29. Pittsburgh Dispatch, April 11, 1882.

30. Ibid., May 26, 1882.

31. American Hebrew, June 30, 1882.

32. Pittsburgh Dispatch, June 2 and September 21, 1882.

33. Israelite, November 17, 1882.

of refugees stopping off in Pittsburgh but destined for other cities.

Fortunately donations continued to arrive. The Young Men's Hebrew Association sponsored a picnic in July to raise funds.<sup>34</sup> Jewish families donated extensive amounts of their old clothing.

A large house was rented to shelter the refugees. Frequent disturbances took place among them. They were easily managed when treated kindly. But they became indignant when rigorously handled.

Since jobs were not available, Rabbi Mayer provided many refugees with railroad tickets to go elsewhere if they did not wish to remain in Pittsburgh.<sup>35</sup> Some of them were trans-shipped to McKeesport, ten miles away. There he had arranged they be hired in the tube works, which had resumed operations with non-union men. Police protection had to be provided for new employees.<sup>36</sup> Much labor union indignation probably was aroused. But a large colony of Russian Jews had thus been founded in McKeesport.

By August, 1882, refugees no longer were being sent to America. Besieged by world-wide protests, the Czar had the pogroms halted. The Jews stopped fleeing Russia because they were able to live in greater safety.<sup>37</sup> After the strike, no more refugees were sent to Pittsburgh, and those here soon were self-supporting. On November 1, the Cremieux Society terminated its relief work for the refugees. It had spent over \$5,000.00.<sup>38</sup>

"Before the Russian invasion began in 1881, New York contained 50,000 Jews practically all Russian and German," a magazine article stated.<sup>39</sup> For half a century, writers have been groundlessly alleging that because of the pogroms in 1881 and 1882 the Jews of Russia began coming to America. It cannot be denied, however, that the pogroms stimulated the momentum of his emigration.

There were three great families of Jews in Russia--the Polish, the Lithuanians, and the Russians. "By Tranquil, I shall keep my promise." Count Todleben, the governor-general of Lithuania and White Russia, swore that there would be no pogroms in his provinces.<sup>40</sup> And

34. Jewish Messenger, July 7, 1882.

35. Israelite, November 17, 1882.

36. Ibid., November 17, 1882; January 7, 1892; Pittsburgh Dispatch, August 5, 1882.

37. Dubnow, Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, pp. 285-297 and 314-315.

38. Israelite, November 17, 1882.

39. Jewish Criterion, December 28, 1906.

40. Jewish Messenger, June 9, 1882.

there were none. The authorities under him permitted no violence, and peasants wishing to start pogroms could not plunder the Lithuanian Jews.<sup>41</sup>

By 1887, the Russian Jews in Pittsburgh had organized only one synagogue--the Base Avrohom (House of Abraham).<sup>42</sup> They were settling here in infinitely fewer numbers than the pogrom-free Lithuanians, who meanwhile established several new congregations; the Ahoje Adam by 1888,<sup>43</sup> the Shaare Torah (Gate of Learning) by 1890.<sup>44</sup> The older Lithuanian congregations grew with great rapidity. Charles Stein was accused of rounding up new members for the Beth Jacob Synagogue so that he could muster enough votes to be elected as its president.<sup>45</sup> The B'nai Israel had moved into its own edifice in 1880.<sup>46</sup> Many people considered the cost too great for the size of the congregation. But it paid off the \$10,000 mortgage in only three years.<sup>47</sup> The B'nai Israel membership continued increasing so quickly that by 1885 the synagogue, which had a seating capacity of 400 was completely filled for the sabbath services every week. During the next two years, worshipers more and more were compelled to stand as the seating was entirely inadequate. For the Rosh Hashonoh (New Year) services in the year 1887, 1,500 Jews packed into the B'nai Israel although the admission was \$5.00 per person. They sat and stood most uncomfortably.<sup>48</sup>

The majority of the new Lithuanian Jews in Pittsburgh appear to have been relatives or landsman of previous settlers. Sol Rosenblum was born in the town of Suchovolie in the Lithuanian province of Grodno in 1866. Around then his relative, Cass Sunstein, had left for America--settling in Pittsburgh by 1870. Russian law forbade men of military age to emigrate; in 1886 Rosenblum was coming of such age and he emigrated directly to Pittsburgh. His relative had preceded him here by at least sixteen years.<sup>49</sup>

Other factors induced the Lithuanian Jew to emigrate. After the pogroms it was impossible for them to settle in other areas as they had

41. Dubnow, Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, p. 267.

42. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 12, p. 461.

43. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 13, p. 569.

44. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 15, p. 525.

45. Pittsburgh Dispatch, October 23, 1886.

46. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Post, Pittsburgh Times, August 30, 1880.

47. Allegheny County, Mortgage Book 262, p. 51.

48. Pittsburgh Dispatch, August 30 and September 19, 1887.

49. Goodkind, Eminent American Jews, p. 298; Jewish Criterion, December 1, 1925, Rosenblum necrology.

often done in previous decades.<sup>50</sup> In fact, some Lithuanian Jews such as Jacob Glick are known to have immigrated to Pittsburgh from the Ukraine, where they had lived many years.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, they feared they would also suffer pogroms, and they are known to have organized emigration societies in Lithuania.<sup>52</sup>

Due to their great influx into Pittsburgh during the 1880's, the Lithuanians probably totalled easily over half the Jews in the city.

In 1888, the B'nai Israel hired Rabbi Sivitz, who had held a pulpit in Baltimore. Ordained at the Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva in Kovno, Lithuania, he had been in America only two years and was considered too young by many members. An undercurrent of opposition developed against him immediately. Nevertheless, the B'nai Israel hierarchy named him: "Chief Rabbi of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania."<sup>53</sup>

Although he lacked great prestige, the great membership of Lithuanian B'nai Israel Synagogue could uphold his new title; even if the more reformed congregations, the Tree of Life and the Rodef Sholom, never recognized his overlordship.

The Polish were the only family of Jews in the Russian Empire who had not as yet taken a great part in the local community. They had lived in central Poland, between Lithuania and the Austro-Hungarian border, and many of them had emigrated to America for several decades. The census and naturalization records merely listed a Jew as a native of Russia or Poland and did not specify his hometown or province. But rarely if ever did the Polish Jews appear in Pittsburgh before 1880, the so-called "Polanders" here being mostly from Lithuania and German-Poland. Two small and inconspicuous congregations, the Miscan Israel and the Refuge of Strangers, were established in the city during the 1880's.<sup>54</sup> One of them possibly was operated by the small body of Polish Jews, who had been recently migrating here.

The other may have been operated by the pioneer Galician Jews here. They had lived in Austrian-Poland, which was north of the Carpathian Mountains. To the South lived the Hungarian Jews, who seem to have outnumbered both the Galician and Polish Jews in Pittsburgh during the 1880's.

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50. Israelite, January 11, 1867.

51. Hamersly, Lewis R., Who's Who in Pennsylvania, p. 265. Interview with Samuel Glick, born Russia 1876. He was the son of Jacob Glick.

52. American Hebrew, December 6, 1881; New York Times, September 17, 1887.

53. Pittsburgh Dispatch, August 12, 1888; July 28, 1890.

54. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 12, p. 458; Pittsburgh Dispatch, September 19 and 28, 1887.

It is true that the Jews had good reason to hate the Czars of Russia, and historians have emphasized persecution as the basic cause of Jewish immigration. But in 1916, a special memorial service was held at the Hungarian synagogue in Pittsburgh. It was not for any Jew. It was not for anyone locally. It was in honor of a man the Jewish people loved dearly, Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary. He had just died.<sup>55</sup> He was known as a Juden-freund (friend of the Jews). When he had ruled (1848-1916), he always tried to protect his Jewish subjects against what he termed, "Senseless and fanatical enmity."<sup>56</sup>

His Jewish subjects had left a backward and poor industrialized nation. It was especially hard to make a living in Galicia.<sup>57</sup>

A native of Hungary, Bernard Morningstar, lived in Pittsburgh as early as 1860. Probably Jewish, he had children with such typical Jewish names as Fanny and Solomon; but it is unknown if he belonged to a synagogue.<sup>58</sup> By 1870, a large colony of Hungarian Jews lived in Cleveland.<sup>59</sup> A few of them probably drifted into Pittsburgh, but it was not till the 1880's that any considerable number of them lived here. In November of 1881, the local Hungarian Jews met at the home of Victor Keller and organized their own congregation, The Poale Zedeck. It is said to have grown to a membership of forty men by 1886.<sup>60</sup>

The Roumanian Jews, on the other hand, were seemingly the most persecuted in Europe. They suffered from continual outbreaks similar to the pogroms.<sup>61</sup> One of the earliest Roumanian Jews in Pittsburgh, Samuel Sheffler, who was later a tobacco manufacturer, settled here around 1884. He had left his homeland due to poverty and harsh conditions and stated, "In Roumania--our people are so hedged in by laws and restrictions that we cannot make a decent living."<sup>62</sup> The Hawkers Laws of 1884 especially stimulated emigration by forbidding Jews in Roumania to peddle in the villages.<sup>63</sup> In 1889, Samuel Sheffler was among the twenty charter

55. Brunwasser, Mollie, Brunwasser Scrapbook.

56. London Times, September 16, 1885.

57. Mahler, Raphael, "Economic Background of Jewish Emigration from Galicia to the United States," YIVO Annual, 1949, pp. 255-267.

58. United States Census Papers for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 1860, Pittsburgh, Ward 2.

59. Jewish Times, August 12, 1870.

60. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 8, p. 274; Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.

61. Kissman, Joseph, "The Immigration of Roumanian Jews up to 1914," YIVO Annual, 1948.

62. Jewish Criterion, October 10, 1902.

63. Kissman, "Roumania," YIVO Annual, 1948.

members of the Ahave Sholom Congregation of Pittsburgh. It was mainly composed of the Roumanian Jews who had begun to settle here extensively in the past few years.<sup>64</sup>

Although the German Jews mainly segregated to themselves in Allegheny City, the different elements of East European Jews resided together in the same neighborhoods. Some of them still lived around Market and Ferry Streets and along Penn Avenue between Tenth and Fourteenth Streets. But during the 1870's, many Lithuanian Jews began settling along Chatham, Tunnel, and Townsend Streets between Fifth and Wylie Avenues. As the majority of new East European Jews continued settling in this neighborhood known as the Lower Hill District, it kept spreading out. Thus by 1889, Jews were also congregated along Fernando, Washington, Clark, Logan, and Franklin Streets and along Centre Avenue.<sup>65</sup>

The greater area was needed. Since 1877, the local Jewish population had approximately doubled. By 1889, there were 5,000 in Allegheny County<sup>66</sup>--the majority, possibly 80 per cent, in Pittsburgh. But the new element of Jews--the Russians, the Polish, the Galicians, the Roumanians, and the Hungarians--were numerically far fewer than the Lithuanians.

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64. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 14, p. 54.

65. Pittler, Alexander, The Hill District: A Study in Succession.

66. Warner, Allegheny County, p. 410.

## CHAPTER V

### RISE OF THE SATELLITE COMMUNITIES

Over 200 small towns in Western Pennsylvania were situated within a fifty-mile radius of Pittsburgh. By their very closeness, the Pittsburgh Jew was bound to have dealings in them. And he often resettled in one of them because they offered him a more promising livelihood. Thus numerous satellite Jewish communities arose around Pittsburgh.

Since the day of Mitchell Ancker and Solomon Schoyer, Jews had set out from Pittsburgh by foot, by horse and wagon, or by railroad train to peddle in an outlying area. There they might be stoned and jeered at by the country children. Elsewhere, after a bad day, they had to sleep outdoors with their arm around their pack because they could not afford to pay twenty-five cents for lodging. But soon they had tried and retried every village and every district of Western Pennsylvania. The Jewish peddlers appeared in the mining towns, in the oil-well settlements, on the farms, at the river stops. Some of them daily returned to their homes or boarding houses in Pittsburgh, remaining a few days and purchasing merchandise.<sup>1</sup> By 1882, the Jewish peddler supply and wholesale dealers on Fifth and Wylie Avenues had a clientele of 250 to 300 pack peddlers and small country merchants doing business in the outlying areas.<sup>2</sup>

Previously a street peddler in Pittsburgh, Joseph Bennet, proceeded to peddle in Washington County for seven years. When he had saved enough money he bought a blind horse to carry his stock of silks and second-hand stoves. Later he bought one that could see. As he continued prospering, he bought two horses and a wagon.<sup>3</sup>

The peddlers were also opening up the Jewish migration to the towns outlying Pittsburgh. They had gotten to know their customer well. Assured of patronage, they often moved into the town and opened a store.<sup>4</sup> Many German Jews were living in the outlying areas of Western Pennsylvania

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1. Volksfreund, June 28, 1889; Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Times, June 27 and July 3, 1882. Weinberger-Gutfreund case; Fleming, History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. VI, p. 194; Goodkind, S., Eminent Jews in America, p. 323.
  2. Pittsburgh Dispatch, April 8, 1882.
  3. Pfeffer, Distinguished Jews, p. 46.
  4. American Publishing and Engraving Company, Industries and Wealth of Pittsburgh, p. 194; Jewish Criterion, October 25, 1907.

before 1870--a few even as early as the 1840's.<sup>5</sup> But the East European Jews mainly started to settle there only after 1870. That year, the census revealed that only five natives of Poland (meaning Lithuania also) resided in Westmoreland County; one in Beaver, Lawrence, Butler, Fayette, and Greene Counties, respectively; and none in Washington County.<sup>6</sup> The numerous Lithuanian Jewish peddlers still considered Pittsburgh as their home.

A second stage in the migration would develop. The peddler or merchant soon would be attracting his relatives and friends from Pittsburgh, elsewhere in America, or from Europe to the town. Sometimes seven or eight Jewish families soon lived there; sometimes only one or two.

They depended on Pittsburgh for their Jewish communal and religious life generally. They attended synagogue services and social functions here. In its Rosh Hashonoh (Jewish New Year) article for 1887, the newspaper, The Pittsburgh Dispatch, reported:

Peddlers who have not seen the city for a year have returned, dropping their pack . . . to render needful praise to the God of Israel, for the beneficence showered upon them and their children during the past year.<sup>7</sup>

In many localities, where the Jew might even have opened a store, no organized Jewish community ever would develop. Hardly any new Jewish families would settle there.

But a third stage in the migration did develop. This would make it possible for an organized Jewish community to arise in many towns. Jews were attracted to the growing industrial towns, where there was need for new businesses to serve the increasing population. After 1880, Jewish stores mushroomed in Beaver Falls, Butler, Braddock, Evans City, Homestead, Connellsville, McKeesport, New Castle, Uniontown, Washington. Peddler supply houses opened up everywhere such as M. Solomon's in Beaver Falls.

Instead of handling clothing, furniture, notions, or dry goods, some Jewish peddlers in Pittsburgh and the outlying areas collected and sold junk.<sup>8</sup> This included waste rags, rubber, empty bottles, paper and

5. Jewish Criterion, April 18, 1902; December 1, 1905; American Jewish Historical Society, Publication No. 29, p. 185.
6. U. S. Census Bureau, Ninth Census, Vol. 1, pp. 390-391.
7. Pittsburgh Dispatch, September 19, 1887.
8. Goodkind, Eminent Jews, pp. 57 and 166; Parsons, A. E., History and Commerce of Pittsburgh and Environs, pp. 256 and 257; Beaver Falls and New Brighton Directory 1885, pp. 162, 256 and 257, Solomons and Wilkoffskys.

especially metal.<sup>9</sup> As the steel industry through Western Pennsylvania expanded, the demand for scrap iron rose; and Jewish owned junk yards appeared in the larger towns during the 1880's--Wolf Daniels in Greensburg, Charles Landay's in Washington, J. Solomon's in Beaver Falls.<sup>10</sup> By 1890, Jewish communities composed mainly of East Europeans existed in the larger industrial towns of Western Pennsylvania around Pittsburgh.

In 1888, the Montefiore Society was established in Braddock for purposes of Hebrew worship.<sup>11</sup> By 1894, a synagogue was functioning in Homestead.<sup>12</sup> By then, many Jews lived in Uniontown, undoubtedly enough to have a congregation; but the town's orthodox and reformed elements could not get together so that no synagogue was organized there till 1903.<sup>13</sup> In general, a policy of non-cooperation existed between the East European and German Jews in most of the towns. The formation of a religious society often only indicated enough East Europeans had settled there to have one, and not that a community had just arisen. The German Jews in outlying towns were rarely numerous enough to have their own congregation, and they would attend the Rodef Sholom Temple in Pittsburgh and often not associate with their local orthodox synagogue.<sup>14</sup>

McKeesport emerged with the largest Jewish community in the outlying areas. In Pittsburgh, the immigrant--who was a tailor, carpenter, blacksmith, or harness-maker--would successfully resume his old-country trade.<sup>15</sup> But if he were an unskilled laborer, industrial jobs were not too available for him locally.<sup>16</sup> During the 1880's and 1890's, a few Jews did work in the Pittsburgh steel mills--chiefly Carnegie's, Shoenberger Speer and Company, and the Continental and Pennsylvania Tube Works.<sup>17</sup> But old-time local residents claimed that many non-Jewish and even several Jewish firms refused to hire the Jewish immigrant; it was said that, "A Jew could not work."<sup>18</sup>

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9. Pittsburgh Post, February 24, 1882.
  10. Goodkind, Eminent Jews, pp. 57 and 166; Beaver Falls, 1885, p. 162.
  11. Jewish Criterion, December 14, 1906.
  12. Ibid., September 11, 1942.
  13. Ibid., May 8, 1903.
  14. Ibid., May 8, 1903; Interviews with old time residents of outlying communities.
  15. American Hebrew, August 21, 1891.
  16. Pine, Kurt, The Jewish Immigrant in the Hill District 1910-1930, pp. 45 and 46.
  17. American Hebrew, August 21, 1891.
  18. Pine, Hill, pp. 45 and 46.

But during the 1880's, Hungarian Christians found employment in McKeesport. The Hungarian Jews could speak the same language, and they too were hired when they applied for work in the iron mills there.<sup>19</sup> In 1890, a correspondent to the magazine, American Hebrew, claimed that 1,000 Jews worked in the factories of McKeesport.<sup>20</sup> This was quite an exaggeration. But by then, the town had three synagogues and a population of several hundred Jews.<sup>21</sup> The Hungarians were the largest element, and the Russians second in number.<sup>22</sup>

Jews sometimes were disappointed with the employment they did find in Pittsburgh. One local newcomer wrote back to Europe in Yiddish in 1890:

The work is very hard because I do not know English. . . . I work like a slave. . . . At first I earned \$20.00 per month. Take away \$12.00 for lunch, breakfast, dinner, and I have nothing left. In Europe I could save and have comforts. So what is the use of coming to America. You don't gain anything. . . . I won't complain to God about my faith. God will help. What I have told you I have said for those who want to come to America. They have false dreams. They must work hard.<sup>23</sup>

But many Jews preferred to remain in Pittsburgh even if they might earn less money. The new communities in the outlying areas often had no shochet or kosher butcher, no Hebrew school or rabbi.<sup>24</sup> With such an atmosphere, Jews feared that their sons and daughters would marry gentiles and drop Judaism.<sup>25</sup> In Pittsburgh, there were infinitely more Jews and more of a Jewish social life. There were shochets and kosher butchers here. The children could grow up in Jewish neighborhoods, play with Jewish boys and girls, and attend Hebrew School in any of the many synagogues.

Something besides peddling was needed in Pittsburgh to insure a livelihood for the growing number of newcomers during the 1880's. Around

19. Interview with Frank Brunwasser--author published this in Jewish Criterion, March 21, 1953, entitled "Reminiscences of old Pittsburgh."
20. American Hebrew, August 21, 1891.
21. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 11, p. 346; Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 15, p. 498; Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 16, p. 105.
22. Jewish Criterion, January 11, 1907.
23. Hazefirah, Vol. 17, 1890, p. 258; Vol. 18, 1891, p. 2.
24. Interviews with old time residents of Pittsburgh and outlying communities.
25. Jewish Times, January 14, 1870. Article gave reasons why Jews in Europe feared coming to America.

1886, non-union cigars began to flood the local market.<sup>26</sup> In 1887, The Official Journal of the Cigar Maker's Union advised its members throughout America:

Pittsburgh December . . . dull--not even a mold toby job. Travellers should keep away from Allegheny and Pittsburgh unless they have plenty of money.<sup>27</sup>

The next year, the rival Cigar Maker's Union affiliated with the Knights of Labor pleaded with the local grocers to stop selling the non-union cigars, which were also known as stogies or tobies.<sup>28</sup> But in ensuing years, these continued to be manufactured more and more by the Jewish newcomer in small shops or even his home.<sup>29</sup> He also would engage in this occupation in the outlying towns but not to such an extent as in Pittsburgh. Here by 1890, possibly 200 Jewish men and women were employed as non-union tobacco workers.<sup>30</sup>

Another occupation, the most important one in America, cannot be overlooked. It should be remembered that the farms in the areas outlying Pittsburgh produced the great share of the foodstuffs for the local populace. Numerous Jews have been farmers in Western Pennsylvania. But during the nineteenth century, the newcomer followed other pursuits. A common myth has arisen that the Jews in Europe had been banned from agriculture and forced to live in ghettos. The truth is that they had been skilled agriculturalists, even in Germany.<sup>31</sup> In Lithuania, they raised poultry, did truck and dairy farming, tended the orchards, and cut timber.<sup>32</sup> When the Jewish immigrant settled in the Pittsburgh district, however, he was far too poor to buy a farm. But he had to make a living. He was inexperienced in America and naturally did what other Jews did, peddling or toby-making. Record has not been located of a large Jewish agricultural settlement around Pittsburgh. Only a very few Jews lived in the country and in the villages of the outlying areas.<sup>33</sup>

McKeesport may have siphoned off much Russian and Hungarian migration from Pittsburgh, but the outlying towns as a whole contributed to the

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26. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, August 13, 1888.
  27. Cigar Maker's Union Official Journal, December, 1887.
  28. Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, August 13, 1888.
  29. Jewish Criterion, March 6, 1896; February 7, 1902; Pittsburgh Dispatch, February 22, 1891; September 27, 1893.
  30. Based on author's estimate.
  31. Kober, Adolph, "Jewish Emigration from Wurtemberg 1848-1855," American Jewish Historical Society Publication 41.
  32. Abramovich, "Lithuania," YIVO Annual, 1948.
  33. Pittsburgh Dispatch, April 8, 1882.

growth of the local community. Many Jews, who originally immigrated to Butler or McKeesport or Washington, would later resettle here.<sup>34</sup> The importance of Pittsburgh was enhanced as it had developed as the center of a string of satellite communities.

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34. Jewish Criterion, April 18, 1902; March 11, 1904; December 1, 1905.

## CHAPTER VI

### PAYING THE WAY

Migrating to Pittsburgh cost money. It might have been fairly cheap to come here from another American community by railroad or by horse and wagon. But from Europe, it naturally was far more expensive. The immigrant would have to buy food over several weeks of journey. He would have to procure lodging at many stops and pay for transportation. Also since the Jew generally left Russia illegally and without sanction of the government, he needed additional money to bribe the border police or hire a guide to smuggle him across the frontier.<sup>1</sup>

Before he left his homeland the Jew tried to make sure that he had enough funds to reach Pittsburgh. He had carefully saved his wages and earnings. He had tried to collect the debts anyone owed him. He sold out his possessions--the shoes and clothing he could not wear in America, his real estate, furniture, chickens, cattle, the crops on his field, his tools and utensils. If he were still short he might ask his relatives or friends for a loan.<sup>2</sup>

However, 60 per cent of the immigrant ocean passages were paid for by someone in America.<sup>3</sup> Often the husband had originally left alone, his family remaining behind in Europe. Later, when he had saved enough American dollars, he would provide for his wife and children to emigrate to Pittsburgh. Often also, the Jew assisted his brothers and sisters, his parents or in-laws, his cousins or landsman to come here.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that runners and scalpers roamed the local streets peddling ocean passages they had purchased at reduced rates from the steamship lines.<sup>5</sup> But the Pittsburgher generally arranged through the

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1. Weber, J. and Kempster, J., Causes of Immigration, Vol. 1, p. 84; Vol. 2, p. 51; London Times, January 5, 1874.
  2. American Hebrew, February 10, March 31, 1882; New York Times, November 15, 1880; YIVO Autobiographical Series No. 45, pp. 144 and 145; Fleming, Pittsburgh, Vol. 6, p. 194.
  3. New York Tribune, June 12, 1882; Pittsburgh Post, New York Times, February 8, 1892.
  4. Goodkind, Eminent Jews, p. 298; Jewish Criterion, September 22, 1905, Jacobs necrology; Jewish Times, April 15, 1870; Pittsburgh Times, July 3, 1882; Pittsburgh Dispatch, September 7, 1886, new rabbi article; Fleming, Pittsburgh, Vol. 6, p. 194; Brunwasser, Scrapbook, p. 78.
  5. Pittsburgh Times, May 7, 1881.

foreign exchange agency that his relative or friend emigrate from Europe.

James Blakely operated one on Wood Street during the 1840's and 1850's.<sup>6</sup> John McCormick and William Bingham were leaders in the field after the Civil War.<sup>7</sup> In 1866, a twenty-six year old native of Hesse-Nassau, Germany, settled in Pittsburgh. The next year, Max Schamberg entered the foreign exchange business. He openly confessed that he was a Jew only by accident of his birth, not in a spiritual sense.<sup>8</sup> But he desired the patronage of his co-religionists; and he was the only local agent known to advertise in the American-Jewish press before the 1880's. In 1869 and 1870, his ads appeared in The Israelite of Cincinnati and The Jewish Times of New York City.<sup>9</sup> In 1882, he served on the Pittsburgh welcoming committee for the Jewish refugees from the Russian pogroms.<sup>10</sup>

Schamberg was very accommodating, and he garnered the patronage of all European peoples--not only the Jew. They soon knew him as their friend. Even when they were not buying ocean passages, he performed many kindly favors for them.<sup>11</sup> Once he advertised as follows in the Pittsburgh Times:

Wanted-----labor

Contractors, railroad builders, managers of mills and factories and others seeking laborers will kindly inform me, as I have daily applications of persons in want to work, and can readily supply all wants in that direction. . . . I charge no fees whatsoever considering it a duty to assist in search of labor.<sup>12</sup>

When the customers wishing to bring over a party from Europe entered his office, Schamberg tried to put them at ease. He and his staff could speak their native tongues--whether it was German, Slavic, Hungarian, Dutch, or French.<sup>13</sup> His nephew, Dr. Alexander Silverman,

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6. Pittsburgh Directory 1852, p. 46.
  7. Pittsburgh Leaders, April 15, 1865; Pittsburgh Directory, 1865 to 1885 inclusive.
  8. Pittsburgh Dispatch, February 17 and 18, 1875; October 12, 1901; Parsons, Pittsburgh, p. 120.
  9. Israelite, November 26; December 3, 10, 17, and 24, 1869; Jewish Times, May 14, 1869 to May 6, 1870.
  10. Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.
  11. Pittsburgh Times, March 2, 1882, Joseph Sylinski story; Pittsburgh Dispatch, November 18, 1891.
  12. Pittsburgh Times, March 1, 1883.
  13. Ibid., March 1, 1883.



The ocean passage covered the European and American railroad fares three-fourths of the time.<sup>17</sup> But it was not legal in Russia. Therefore, railroad coverage for the Lithuanian Jew, for example, usually began at the German railroad junction of Eyditkhunen, just over the border from his homeland.<sup>18</sup>

But an international money order known as a draft, which the foreign exchange agent issued for any amount over \$1.00, could take care of expenses not included in the ocean passage. Often sent merely as a gift and not for immigration, the draft could be cashed in at banks and railroad stations throughout Europe, including Russia.<sup>19</sup>

The Jewish immigrant would then progress on his way. If he landed in Baltimore, he continued to Pittsburgh via the B&O Railroad.<sup>20</sup> If he landed in New York, agents from the Erie, New York Central, and Pennsylvania keenly competed in trying to induce him toward their line. The railroad he rode upon would draw an allotment from his ocean passage.<sup>21</sup>

An intense rivalry between the steamship lines spurred the Jewish migration to Pittsburgh (1883-1887). In the spring of 1883, the Carr-Hamburg Steamship Company in Germany cut her rates to America by only \$1.00. The rival Hamburg-America Line proceeded to cut her rates.<sup>22</sup> By 1884, America was beset with a mild depression, but immigration was not declining. The other steamship companies dropped their fares in retaliation--to \$20.00, then to \$18.00. At the end of the year, an ocean passage from Germany to New York City cost only \$9.00.<sup>23</sup>

Circulars had been sent out to American agents to cut their rates also. The following advertisement appeared daily during the Fall of 1884 in the Pittsburgh Times:

CHEAPER THAN EVER BEFORE

Steamship fares to and from Europe by the best lines have been greatly reduced. Apply to MAX SCHAMBERG, General Agent for

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17. New York Tribune, January 18, 1890; Rhodes, S., Norddeutscher Lloyd Handbook 1857-1888, p. 40.
  18. Levin, Youth, p. 221.
  19. Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 31, 1875; Pittsburgh Leader, April 18, 1875; Pittsburgh Times, September 18, 1882; Richard and Boas, Hamburg-Amerika, 1874, pp. 31-32.
  20. Rhodes, 1888, p. 18.
  21. New York Tribune, December 17, 1880; January 18, 1890.
  22. New York Times, December 22, 1883.
  23. New York Tribune, April 19, 1884.

foreign tours, 131 Smithfield Street, near City Hall and Post Office.<sup>24</sup>

The foreign exchange agent was not losing money. He still received his usual \$4.00 commission on every steamship ticket he sold.<sup>25</sup>

Jewish immigration to Pittsburgh and to America was soaring to new heights. Ocean passages could usually be used for twelve months after they were purchased.<sup>26</sup> In 1885, a record-high of East European Jews arrived in the United States: 3,938 from Austria-Hungary; 10,618 from Russia, which exceeded that of the year 1882 when the pogrom refugees arrived; 803 from Roumania, from which only sixty-five Jews had arrived in 1882. Jewish immigration figures were even higher for the next year, 1886.<sup>27</sup> The depression was too mild to repel the weight of bargain steamship fares.

When prosperity had returned to America in 1887 the shipping companies made peace, and rates were restored to the usual \$25.00, between Bremen, Germany, and New York.<sup>28</sup> However, Jewish immigration continued to increase to new record-highs.<sup>29</sup> In prosperous times, the Pittsburgher could earn more money so that he could better afford to send for his relatives and friends; and the newcomer could also be better assured of a livelihood locally.

New agents began to try their luck at the profitable foreign exchange business. Joseph Roth established a successful one in McKeesport to serve the Jews and other European people.<sup>30</sup> In 1876, Max Schamberg had been appointed as the Austro-Hungarian consul in Pittsburgh.<sup>31</sup> Since he wished to devote himself entirely to these duties he sold his business in 1887 to two men. One of them, a Swede named Baron Lagerfeld, was exposed as a swindler. The partner, Isaac Hirsch, a Jew, therefore assumed sole proprietorship in 1890. He had mainly been active in the German-Jewish community in Allegheny City, however, and he devoted the firm still known as Schamberg Agency to all nationalities from Europe.<sup>32</sup> But in 1889 Peter Lazarevity and A. Mozersky began advertising their foreign exchange agencies in the Volksfreund, the new Yiddish weekly printed in Pittsburgh.

24. Pittsburgh Times, October 12, 1884.

25. New York Tribune, January 17, 1885.

26. New York Times, April 7, 9, and 23, 1885.

27. Joseph, Samuel, Jewish Immigration to America 1881-1910, p. 93.

28. New York Tribune, April 17, 1887.

29. Joseph, Immigration, p. 93.

30. Jewish Criterion, January 11, 1907.

31. Pittsburgh Leader, July 1, 1876.

32. Hirsch, Scrapbook.

They lived among the East European Jews locally, whom they primarily solicited for business.<sup>33</sup>

Mozersky operated a small agency, never even listed in the city directory. The Jews began to deal mainly with Peter Lazarevitz, who soon shortened his name to Lazear.<sup>34</sup> Very ambitious and accommodating, this Lithuanian Jew from the province of Minsk<sup>35</sup> established his office on Fifth Avenue. For any client, he would write a letter to Europe free of charge. If they were short of money, he would sell them the ocean passage on credit, and he could be repaid in installments. His office was closed on Sunday, but he would transact business at his home.<sup>36</sup> He soon decided to expand his agency, and he took in a Mr. Shaeffer as his partner and opened a second office to deal with the Polish people of Pittsburgh.

The East European Jews had put great trust in Lazear.

But then the Panic of 1893 struck America. In September of that year, his agency suddenly went into bankruptcy. Rumors spread throughout Pittsburgh that he had swindled his clients out of thousands of dollars. He and Schaeffer disappeared.

On Saturday, the day after his offices closed, a suit was brought against him before an alderman. But Lazear found the plaintiffs before the constable found him. And the case was privately settled. On Monday, however, new suits were coming in thick--the plaintiffs being Jewish peddlers and tobacco workers.

Charges against Lazear were difficult to press to a successful conclusion. The witnesses were still in Europe.<sup>37</sup> Immigrants who had arrived in Pittsburgh in previous years could not claim that he had been dishonest toward them. Generally, he and the other agents had been very reliable.

With this prestige temporarily destroyed, Lazear never returned to the foreign exchange business. By 1899, he was selling insurance.<sup>38</sup>

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33. Volksfreund, May 17, 1889.

34. Pittsburgh Dispatch, September 27, 1893.

35. Interview with Max Lazear, brother of Peter Lazear.

36. Volksfreund, May 17, 1889.

37. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, September 27, 1893.

38. Pittsburgh Directory, 1899, p. 450; Jewish Criterion, January 13, 1907.

Jewish immigration was, as a whole, a well-organized affair. This was made possible by the foreign exchange agents in cooperation with the railroad and steamship lines and also by the Jewish immigrant-aid societies as we shall learn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### GUIDING THE WAY

Many of us have been lost in our own United States although we might be only a few miles from home. How could the Jewish immigrant be expected to be a more self-reliant traveller? To reach Pittsburgh, he had to pass through many unfamiliar lands. The languages were foreign to him and the roads unknown.

Often the immigrant became stranded on the way. Sometimes he was merely lost or confused. Sometimes he had misplaced his baggage, money, or tickets. Sometimes he ran short of funds.

Wily swindlers hanging around the railroad stations, inns, and docks tried to fleece the immigrant. They would take his baggage for safekeeping and never return it. In exchange for roubles or marks, they would give him worthless drafts on American banks and fake United States currency.<sup>1</sup> The magazine, American Hebrew in 1890, commented:

People frequently land here absolutely penniless without any wearing apparel and other personal property, when honest treatment in Europe would have protected them.<sup>2</sup>

At times, the American immigration officials did telegraph ahead to the stranded newcomer's relative or friend, who might send him the money to reach his destination.<sup>3</sup> But these officials also permitted the worst sort of abuses to greet him when he landed. John B. Weber, the United States Commissioner of Immigration (1890-1892), described his first visit to Castle Garden, the point-of-entry at New York City harbor, as follows:

After being passed, the immigrants were turned into an enclosure. Then a gate was opened admitting a horde of boarding house runners; first they walked--then trotted and finally ran toward the bewildered immigrants. Calling out their respective boarding houses, pulling and hauling the dazed creature toward them this way and that. Frequently quarreling among themselves over some confused victim.<sup>4</sup>

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1. American Hebrew, December 19, 1890; New York Times, December 1, 1880.
  2. American Hebrew, December 19, 1890.
  3. New York Tribune, January 18, 1877.
  4. Weber, John B., Autobiography of John Weber, p. 87.

The immigrant invariably had chosen his destination in America long before he left his homeland.<sup>5</sup> After 1880, 80 per cent of the Jews settling in Pittsburgh came here directly from their native country.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, they usually were guided safely along by the Jewish immigrant-aid societies at the important stops on the way--in Germany, in England, at the American ports-of-entry of which New York City was the leading one, and Baltimore and Philadelphia the principal secondary ones.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning in 1874, United Hebrew Charities was entrusted with the Jewish immigrant-aid work in New York City.<sup>8</sup> It hired an agent to seek out the Jews disembarking at Castle Garden. He acted as interpreter between them and the immigration officials. He secured prompt delivery of their baggage. He tried to protect them against runners and swindlers. He directed them to the proper railroad connections and suitable lodgings. He helped them get in touch with relatives and friends. One year alone for Jewish immigrants, he sent 4,170 telegrams and wrote eighty-three letters, and he recovered lost baggage for seventy-eight persons and gave 344 food.<sup>9</sup>

The immigrants generally were not destitute. In 1884, the United Hebrew Charities of New York City estimated that less than 10 per cent needed financial assistance.<sup>10</sup>

But if an immigrant in distress did ask to be sent to Pittsburgh, the society would furnish him with food and temporary lodging, provide a hospital or doctor if he were sick, and buy the necessary railway tickets. The United Hebrew Charities, however, often refused to forward immigrants who it believed would be permanent charity cases. The sick and aged, without visible means of support, were often returned to Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Private individuals were known to give the immigrant useful advice or a loan of money.<sup>12</sup> But most aid was provided by the established Jewish organization such as United Hebrew Charities.

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5. New York Tribune, November 15, 1880.
  6. Taylor, Maurice, The Jewish Community of Pittsburgh, p. 53.
  7. Jewish Times, December 14, 1875--Baltimore; Weber and Kempster, Immigration, Vol. 1, p. 22; London Times, July 3, 1885--England.
  8. United Hebrew Charities of New York City, Report of the Board of Relief 1875, pp. 1-6.
  9. Ibid., Report 1885, p. 15; Report 1888, p. 14.
  10. Ibid., Report 1885, pp. 9 and 16.
  11. Ibid., Report 1876, p. 9.
  12. Society for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants, Minutes of the Board of Officers Directors, October 22, 1884.

In Philadelphia, The Society for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants hired Moses Klein as its special agent. On October 14, 1884, he reported:

The steamship Pennsylvania . . . arrived . . . on Monday . . . with 402 steerage passengers among whom the following Jewish were included. (1) Phillip Van der Haag from Holland, age 28, profession butcher. He was booked through to Vicksburg, Mississippi. . . . (3) Joseph Samuel, age 21, from Hungary, profession general clerk. . . . He was booked through to Pittsburgh. . . . (4) Mrs. Deborah Finkelstein, age 33, native of Russia Poland . . . resided some years in London. . . . I had great difficulties discovering her trunk which had been mislaid. . . . I consulted the officers of the steamer, who ordered at once to open the deck, so I followed them searching all through, till we found it.<sup>13</sup>

The Pennsylvania Railroad granted Moses Klein a free pass, which he could use to ride to "points west of Harrisburg."<sup>14</sup> In a special emergency, he might escort a helpless child or invalid oldster even to Pittsburgh.

But the railroad companies hired interpreters to direct the immigrants at the important railroad stations. J. O. Nathanson acted as interpreter at the Pennsylvania depot in Harrisburg, during the 1880's.<sup>15</sup>

From there, the train scurried over the Allegheny Mountains. As it stopped off in Pittsburgh anxious relatives and friends were standing by at the station. Some immigrants evidently had no one to meet them; maybe they were making a surprise arrival and advance word of their coming had not been received; maybe they had no close contacts locally.

The immigrants disembarked. Their possessions were often done up in bundles and packs on their back. The women wore shawls; and the men heavy boots, long overcoats with heavy fur collars, and small caps set firmly on their head. An interpreter roved around ready to direct them. Many immigrants merely were taking a brief stretch; walking about the station and viewing Pittsburgh. They were waiting a few hours for the train to take them to more distant localities such as Chicago or St. Louis.<sup>16</sup>

Locally before 1890, the Hebrew Benevolent Society evidently would have assisted the desitute immigrant. But record of its immigrant-aid work has not been located.

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13. Ibid., October 16, 1884.

14. Ibid., April 15, 1886.

15. Ibid., May 6, 1886.

16. Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 22, 1882; April 3, 1885.

Unfortunately, the Jewish society of other cities was also forwarding another class of migrant Jews, who generally were not coming from Europe. Known as shnorers in Yiddish, they went from town to town in America. By 1869, numerous lazy opportunists were flooding this age-old occupation of seeking alms. They would complain that they could neither support themselves nor their family, and they refused to work or peddle. They would present a well-conned hard-luck story to a group such as the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Pittsburgh; and they would receive charity often for months even if they were not truly in need. They merely had to be persistent. Alms were given out from the heart and not with adequate investigation. When the community was tired of supporting the beggars it would present them with a railroad ticket. It was immaterial where they would be sent and how much nuisance the next town would suffer.<sup>17</sup>

The average immigrant hoped to be self-supporting and would rarely demand charity.<sup>18</sup> But Pittsburgh Jewry learned an expensive lesson to be on guard against the shnorers who stepped off the train. In 1870, the Hebrew Benevolent Society was flourishing with a \$500 surplus in its treasury.<sup>19</sup> Its president, Jacob Affelder, proposed that the money should be spent solely on the local poor. The majority of the members disagreed. They wished the money be spent on other purposes, probably including the shnorers. Affelder was forced to resign.<sup>20</sup> Later in the year, a panic nearly ensued. The Hebrew Benevolent Society had gotten so badly into debt that it had to borrow \$200 from a bank.<sup>21</sup> In 1882, the Society--wiser from experience--refused to assist any beggars and complained that they "helped cripple the finances."<sup>22</sup>

As a whole, the Jewish immigrant-aid and charity societies did creditable work. They usually guided self-reliant people to Pittsburgh although unworthy beggars sometimes were slipped in.

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17. Jewish Times, April 23, 1869; October 15 and November 29, 1875.
  18. New York Tribune, May 31, 1891; Charities of New York City, Report 1885, pp. 9 and 16.
  19. Israelite, May 16, 1870; Cooper, "Pittsburgh," Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918.
  20. Israelite, May 16, 1870.
  21. Jewish Criterion, January 8, 1904. The minutes of The Hebrew Benevolent Society could not be located. But Charles Joseph, the writer of the Jewish Criterion article, advised author that he based his writing on the actual minutes of the Society.
  22. Israelite, November 17, 1882.

## CHAPTER VIII

### VICTIMS OF OPPRESSION (1890-1894)

Most of the early Lithuanian Jews in Pittsburgh were from four provinces of Russia--Kovno, Suwalk, Vilna, and Grodno.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish tobacco worker in the city of Grodno earned only \$3.00 per month.<sup>2</sup> At the same job in Pittsburgh, he earned \$3.50 to \$5.00 per week.<sup>3</sup> For generations, Jews had written back about the superior conditions they found in America so that their relatives and friends in Europe often desired to emigrate.<sup>4</sup>

But more Jews than at any previous period during the nineteenth century settled in Pittsburgh between 1890 and 1892 not only because they considered wages and opportunities unbelievably great. They had an even more important reason. In the year 1891, a Jew in Vilna stated:

I am going to America because in that direction lies hope. Here I have only fears to confront me. The hope may prove delusive, but here the fears are a certainty.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the Jews wished to avoid the further persecution and the greater poverty facing them if they remained in Russia.

Lately, many of them had been victimized by the Russian police. Louis Cohen, who recently had settled in Pittsburgh and resided on Fifth Avenue, was interviewed by the newspaper, the Pittsburgh Dispatch. He explained that he was from Bagne in Russia. There he had been a blacksmith, and he had built himself a house at the cost of 150 roubles. One day, the Russian police ordered him to vacate his home and move to another city. He had committed no crimes. No one else particularly needed

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1. We have only a sampling of the towns of birth of the early Jews in Pittsburgh. Regarding the Lithuanians, see Chapter III, concerning Alexander Fink, William Simon, and Dr. Albert Blumberg and Chapter IV regarding Cass Sunstein and Rabbi Sivitz. Also places of birth for others are given in the following sources: Jewish Criterion, May 8, 1903, Ralph B. Raphael necrology; September 22, 1905, Sarah Jacobs necrology; February 14, 1908, Meyer Rosenblum necrology; Goodkind, Eminent Jews, pp. 87 and 166.
  2. Weber and Kempster, Immigration, Vol. 1, p. 73.
  3. Hazefirah, Vol. 17, 1890, p. 258; 1891, p. 2, the writer from Pittsburgh gave his occupation as a Rokeach, which probably meant tobacco worker. This word has several meanings but means to smoke in Lithuanian.
  4. Weber and Kempster, Immigration, Vol. 1, pp. 15 and 85.
  5. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 77.

his home. He had a wife and four children. But he was Jewish. The police threatened that if he did not comply they would burn down his home. And at a heavy sacrifice, he sold it for merely 50 roubles. And he started off for America.<sup>6</sup>

The Jewish Pale was a designated group of West Russian provinces where Jews were permitted to reside. It included Lithuania, White Russia and the Ukraine.

The May Laws, enacted by the Russian government in 1882, forbade the Jew of the Pale to live in a village unless he and his family had lived there for over twenty years. Weakly enforced until approximately 1889, these laws were used as a pretext to evict thousands of Jews such as Louis Cohen from their homes even if they had lived there for generations.<sup>7</sup>

Many expelled villagers flocked into the neighboring cities and towns. There, competition for the few available jobs was very keen. Even Jews with employment soon had only part-time work and received reduced hourly rates. Unemployment spread. A dreadful economic depression throughout the Jewish Pale was provoked. Retail sales dropped off, and merchants earned barely enough to stay in business. Many Jews soon were on the verge of starvation; one young girl stated that she lived on, "Two meals a day of black bread watered with tears"; sometimes she also had cabbage soup but rarely any meat.<sup>8</sup>

In 1890, a correspondent from Europe wrote to the Volksfreund in Pittsburgh in Yiddish in apt terms, "The immigration from Russia to the outland grows from day to day. They run anywhere the eyes carry them, impoverished, suffering."<sup>9</sup>

In former years, the Jewish immigrant-aid societies on the way had rarely been over-burdened. But now, cries were made in many places that their work was becoming "overwhelming."<sup>10</sup> Charlottenberg, Germany, probably faced the worst problem. When the train from Russia stopped off at this great railway junction near Berlin, many of the Jewish immigrants were destitute. Appeals for help were made by the local society, and a central European Jewish committee was formed to relieve the situation at Charlottenberg. Funds were solicited throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup>

The Committee decided to set up special relief headquarters at Konigsberg and at Buuthen to help the refugees in Germany closer to the

6. Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 2, 1891.
7. Weber and Kempster, Immigration, Vol. 1, p. 38.
8. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 27.
9. Volksfreund, February 7, 1890.
10. Menorah, August, 1890.
11. Weber and Kempster, Immigration, Vol. 2, p. 27.

Russian frontier.<sup>12</sup> During the next few years, over 100 Jews on their way to Pittsburgh apparently were assisted. Between July 1 and September 17, 1891--a short eleven-week period--the Konigsberg branch gave twelve persons passenger tickets to Pittsburgh and provided five others coming here with partial assistance.<sup>13</sup> However, the great peak of immigration was not reached until 1892, when 64,253 Jews from Russia arrived in America.<sup>14</sup>

Since the latest refugee problem had started in 1889, pleas for help had been received in Pittsburgh:

I beg you, in the name of numerous Russian Jews, that you should be good enough to print this epigram and answer it from beginning to end. I hope that you will not refuse me for two reasons. Firstly you were my teacher and I was your pupil. Secondly I knew you as a real friend of the Jews and surely you will not be stingy with your time if it can result in some benefit for our people.

"They know not where to go," the writer from Europe added in his letter to the editor of the Volksfreund. What chance was there for some of the Jewish refugees to be settled in Pittsburgh, he continued.<sup>15</sup>

A mass colonization program, where hundreds of thousands of Jews arrived here at once, was never carried out locally. The Jews generally sifted into Pittsburgh individually or in small groups of approximately two to ten persons.

Many of the new settlers needed assistance from the local Jewish community during the early 1890's. Peter Lazear then still had a good reputation and was emerging as a leader among his people. On November 6, 1890, he led a score of Yiddish-speaking men into the Clerk of Courts Office. They had formed the United Hebrew Relief Society of Allegheny County. Now a charter was being prepared stating:

Object shall be to render aid . . . to the Hebrew emigrants and their families that may come to Pittsburgh and its vicinity, to furnish them with relief if destitute and to perform other acts of benevolence as circumstances may require.

Each member was to contribute fifty cents per month, and income was also to be obtained from charitable contributions. Peter Lazear first signed his name on the charter, followed by Jacob Glick of the Volksfreund, Gutman Caplan who was later president of the Beth Jacob Synagogue, and many others.<sup>16</sup>

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12. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 27.

13. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 107-109.

14. Joseph, Immigration, p. 93.

15. Volksfreund, February 7, 1890.

16. Charter Book of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 15, p. 546.

This society of 150 members evidently gave the most help for needy Jewish newcomers.<sup>17</sup> But overlapping organizations authorized to perform the same functions existed. The old Hebrew Benevolent Society had merged with the Ladies Aid Society under the name, United Hebrew Relief Association. Not to be confused with Lazear's society, this group was controlled by the Jews belonging to the Rodef Sholom and Tree of Life Synagogues. Alexander Fink served as its president from 1876 to 1892.<sup>18</sup>

In 1890, Rabbi Lippman Mayer had founded still another organization, his so-called "Russian School." It was not designed for immigrant-relief work, however. It was to help Americanize the new Jew locally, evidently teaching him to read and write English. Funds were provided by the members of the Rodef Sholom Congregation. Three students attending the Pittsburgh medical college were hired as instructors. Classes were first held in the basement of the Rodef Sholom Temple on Eighth Street. By November, 1891, when 110 pupils attended, the "Russian School" was moved to No. 400 Fifth Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

Even the East European Jews of the Hill District were not fully united despite the gravity of the refugee problem.

In February, 1891, William Hoffman and P. Sandomere of Pittsburgh attended a convention in Philadelphia organizing the Jewish Alliance of America, a nation-wide immigrant-aid society.<sup>20</sup> A Pittsburgh branch of nearly fifty members proceeded to be established.<sup>21</sup>

On March 22, 1891, a great meeting was held at Miller's Hall, corner of Logan and Franklin Streets in the Hill District, to discuss merging the Jewish Alliance Branch with Lazear's United Hebrew Relief Society. P. Sandomere, William Hoffman, and Peter Lazear, who served as secretary, each gave enthusiastic speeches. Nevertheless, no merger was accomplished.<sup>22</sup>

Information revealing how this disconcerted relief program detracted the local Jewish community and the newcomer is lacking.

A city-wide immigrant-aid society was finally formed in January of 1892. Its representatives agreed that the newcomers should be helped

17. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Post, March 2, 1891.

18. Pittsburgh Times, January 5, 1885; Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, January 3, 1887; Jewish Criterion, January 8, 1904; Israelite, January 7, 1892.

19. Rodef Sholom Congregation Minutes, February 1, 1891; Israelite, November 19, 1891 and January 7 and April 7, 1892; American Hebrew April 22, 1892.

20. Jewish Alliance of America, Constitution and Abstracts of Proceedings, pp. 9 and 15.

21. Pittsburgh Dispatch, Pittsburgh Post, March 2, 1891.

22. Pittsburgh Post, March 23, 1891.

go to the West, where it was believed opportunity was greater than in Pittsburgh.<sup>23</sup> However, the Jew apparently migrated and stayed here as he pleased.

The new society initiated projects to raise funds for the destitute immigrants. Regarding its benefit concert and lecture held on February 15 in Allegheny City where the German Jews lived, the local correspondent to the magazine, American Israelite, of Cincinnati, reported:

. . . was a decided success from an artistic point of view, but was very poorly attended. Could the community have gotten a peep at the excellent program beforehand; or could they have formed an idea of the captivating powers of Dr. Berkowitz this announcement of small numbers would doubtless have not been made. However, the worthy cause should of itself attract; the knowledge of having aided others being a sort of entertainment.<sup>24</sup>

With the funds it did raise, the society probably tried to find factory jobs for the newcomer, provided him with cigar-maker tools, and helped him with food or lodging.<sup>25</sup>

By the spring and summer of 1892, the gravity of the refugee problem seems to have diminished. Mention of it died down almost entirely in the American-Jewish press. Although immigration was at its peak, apparently less destitute and distressed Jews were arriving. The Jewish immigrant-aid societies in Europe and America had expanded their services and were better equipped to handle any refugees.

By 1894, the great wave of immigration had already been brought to a sudden halt. That year, only one-third as many Jews arrived in America as had in 1892.<sup>26</sup> The disastrous "Panic of 1893" had struck the nation. A partial shutdown of the steel mills in the Pittsburgh District had occurred. Men were laid off work, and businesses failed by the dozens including Peter Lazear's agency. Pittsburgh was a scene of great destitution with thirty to thirty-five thousand men unemployed. Slavs and Hungarians besieged the offices of Consul Max Schamberg asking him to give them money to return to Austria-Hungary. He could not help them. Many recently-immigrated parties were forced to sleep outdoors because they could not earn even enough to pay rent.<sup>27</sup> Pittsburgh and America as a whole could no longer absorb a great wave of newcomers economically.

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23. Tree of Life Congregation Minutes, January 3, 1892; American Hebrew, January 29, 1892.

24. Israelite, February 24, 1892.

25. American Hebrew, January 15 and February 19, 1892. This refers to activities in other cities.

26. Joseph, Immigration, p. 93.

27. Pittsburgh Dispatch, October 5, 1893.

The many Jews who had fled Russian oppression and impoverishment were finding some way to support themselves. By 1897, there were approximately 10,000 Jews in the city--probably over twice as many as there were here in 1889.<sup>28</sup>

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28. Savage, Nathan, Pittsburgh Tri State Pinkas. Mr. Savage stated that he forgot where he obtained this figure, but it appears reasonable.

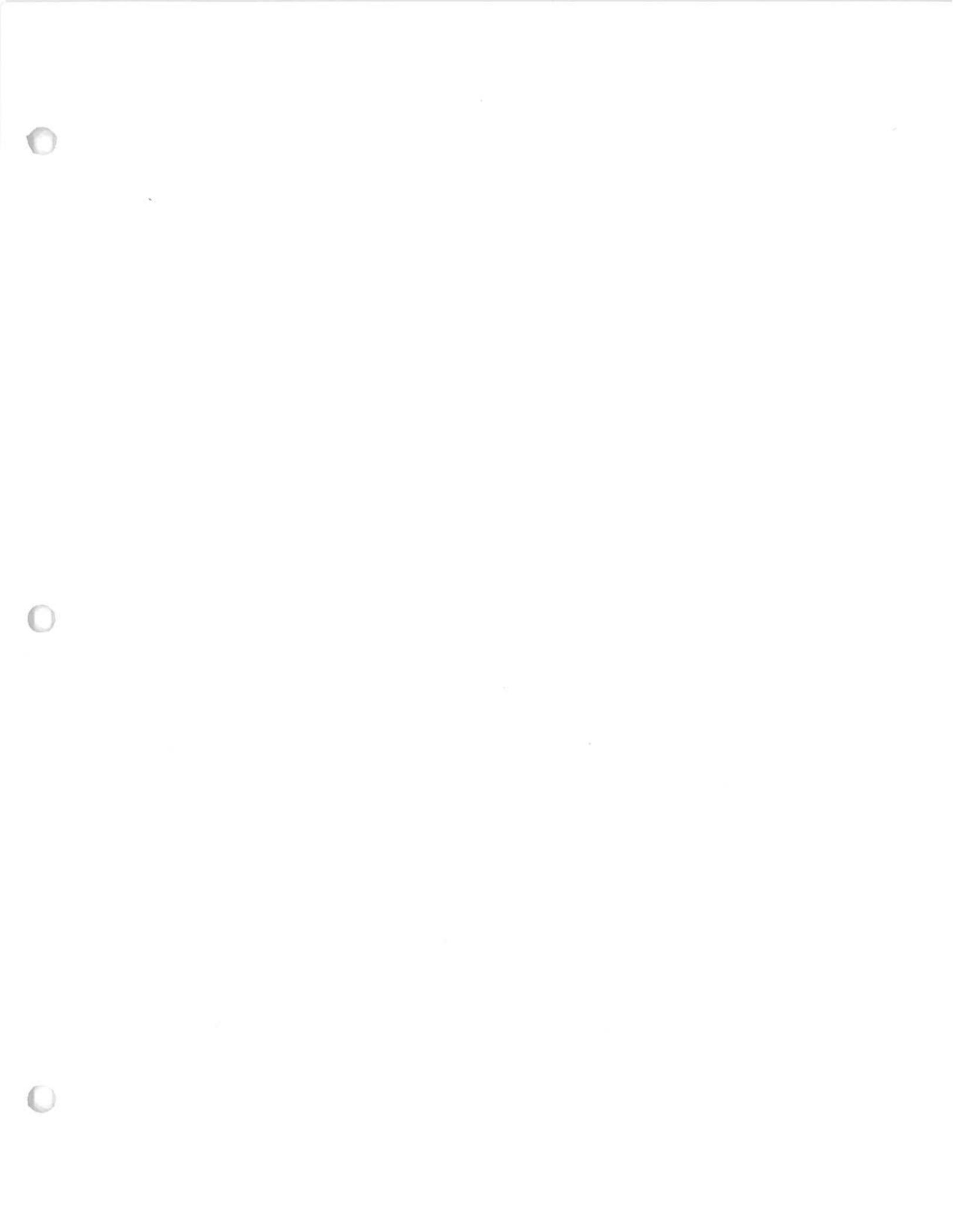
## CONCLUSION

The year 1894 marks a convenient breaking point in our story. The Panic of 1893 had slowed the Jewish migration to Pittsburgh down greatly. Czar Alexander III died, and the oppression of Jews in Russia was toned down.

It is true that far more Jews would settle in Pittsburgh (1895-1914) than during the long period our story covers. But the roots had been set. A Jewish social and religious life, an employment pattern for Jews, satellite communities, a foreign exchange system had become established.

Not a year had passed since the founding of Fort Pitt in 1753 that Jews had not had interests in Pittsburgh. Just as water or sun or soil alone do not cause a garden to grow, not one single factor induced the Jew to settle or not to settle here. Many circumstances were involved--his successes and failures in other American localities; persecution, poverty, and military service in Europe; relatives and friends; Jewish societies, employment and business conditions in Pittsburgh.

Most of the Jews were self-reliant and law-abiding and since the days of Joseph Simon and David Franks had made positive contributions to the Pittsburgh district.



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## APPENDIX I

## CHRONOLOGY OF SYNAGOGUES AND CONGREGATIONS

## A. Synagogues in Pittsburgh

1. SHAARE SHAMAYIM (Gate of Heaven).

It was organized in 1848, and was orthodox, using Minhag Ashkenaz.

2. BETH ISRAEL (House of Israel).

It was formed by a group breaking off from the Shaare Shamayim in 1851 or 1852 and was orthodox using Minhag Poland.

3. SHAARE SHAMAYIM.

In 1853, the Beth Israel merged with the Shaare Shamayim. Orthodox (Minhag Ashkenaz) adopted.

4. RODEF SHOLOM (Pursuer of Peace).

It was founded between 1854 and 1856, probably 1855. It was orthodox using the German variation of Minhag Ashkenaz. Its membership had resigned from the Shaare Shamayim most likely as William Frank stated in his memoirs because the Rodef Sholom group wished to retain Reverend Armhold as minister of the Jewish community of Pittsburgh. The Shaare Shamayim meanwhile remained orthodox but adopted Minhag Poland.

5. RODEF SHOLOM.

In 1860 or early in 1861 the Shaare Shamayim and the former Rodef Sholom merged. The name Rodef Sholom was adopted presumably because the former Rodef Sholom group had obtained a charter whereas the Shaare Shamayim never had. Rather than reapply for a charter under a new name, it was more convenient to retain the name already on a charter. The modern Rodef Sholom, however, dates back to 1848 when the Shaare Shamayim originally was organized.

In 1864 the Rodef Sholom adopted the mild reform prayer book, Minhag America; and the German Jews came in almost complete control of the congregation.

In 1870, it adopted Rabbi Einhorn's radical reformed prayer book and dropped Minhag America.

6. TREE OF LIFE (Etz Chaim).

Organized in 1864 by the Dutch, Lithuanian, and German-Polish Jews in Pittsburgh. They had broken off from the Rodef Sholom and adopted Minhag Poland as their ritual.

7. B'NAI ISRAEL (Sons of Israel).

Organized in 1870 by Lithuanian Jews who had attended services at the Tree of Life. The B'nai Israel was orthodox and adopted Minhag Ashkenaz in the Lithuanian variation.

In 1892 its name was changed to Beth Hamedrish Hagodol.

8. EMANUEL.

Organized mostly by German Jews in 1874 living in Allegheny City (the Lower North Side of modern Pittsburgh).

They considered the Rodef Sholom too reformed, and provided that their congregation follow the mild reform ritual, Minhag America.

9. BETH JACOB.

It was founded before 1881 when it was first listed in the city directory. The Pittsburgh Tri-State Pinkas, Nathan Savage, editor, states it was founded in 1879. Its members were orthodox Lithuanian Jews, who had belonged to the B'nai Israel and had often lived in and near the town of Kalvrie.

10. POALE ZEDECK.

It was organized in 1881 according to Charles I. Cooper in the Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918. It was orthodox and was organized because the Hungarian Jews wished to have their own congregation.

11. KNESSETH ISRAEL (Gathering of Israel).

Mention of it appears in Pittsburgh Dispatch articles in 1886. It was orthodox but probably was shortlived.

12. BASE AVROHOM OR BETH ABRAHAM (House of Abraham).

The Mozerski family were among its early members. The Pittsburgh Dispatch in 1886 mentioned a congregation which it called Mazurski's Community. The membership was composed of Russian Jews and was named their congregation Base Avrohom in their charter in 1887.

13. REFUGE OF STRANGERS.

Only known mention of it appears in the Pittsburgh newspapers in 1887. The members were some type of East European Jews and were orthodox.

14. MISCAN ISRAEL (Refuge of Israel).

It received a charter in 1887. It was possibly the same group as the Refuge of Strangers.

15. AHOVE SHOLOM.

Its membership was Roumanian and it received a charter in 1889. It would follow the orthodox ritual.

16. AHOYE ADAM.

It received a charter in 1889 and was composed of orthodox Lithuanian Jews. It probably was shortlived.

17. SHAARE TORAH (Gate of Learning).

It was founded in 1890 by orthodox Lithuanian Jews who had probably attended the B'nai Israel.

18. AGUDAS ACHIM.

It received a charter in 1892 and was composed of orthodox Russian Jews, some of whom may previously have been associated with the House of Abraham Congregation previously.

19. ANSHE SANEE.

It was organized by orthodox Lithuanian Jews who had lived in and near the town of Sieny in the province of Suwalk. They received a charter in 1892 but later changed the name to Tiffereth Israel.

## B. Early Jewish Congregations in McKeesport

1. GERNULAS CHESED (Austro-Hungarian).

Received charter in March, 1887. Hungarian organized, earlier than 1887.

2. B'NAI ISRAEL.

Received charter in December, 1890. Organized earlier. Lithuanian and Russian.

3. AHAVAS ACHEM.

Received charter in December, 1890. Hungarian.

## APPENDIX II

## CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY JEWISH SOCIETIES IN PITTSBURGH

1. BES ALMON - 1847.

Cemetery and Burial Society. Date of founding given in Israelite of August 25, 1854 by Leopold Jaroslowski.

2. HEBREW BENEVOLENT - 1854.

Founded as appendage of Shaare Shamayim Congregation. It was reorganized in 1862 as an independent society. Purpose was to assist local sick and poor and the transient pauper.

3. LADIES AID - 1856.

Probably organized earlier, but first known official mention appears in Israelite, March 23, 1856. Women's society to assist local sick and poor. Regina Bierman was its first known president.

4. JERICH LODGE NO. 44 OF B'NAI B'RITH - 1862.

Social group.

5. IBN GABIRAL LODGE NO. 114 OF B'NAI B'RITH - 1872.

Social Group.

6. SAAR SHOLOM LODGE NO. 154 OF B'NAI B'RITH - 1872.

Social group. Organized by Jews who were living in Allegheny (North Side of the present day).

7. YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION - 1878.

Social group. First mentioned in Israelite, April 17, 1878. Controlled by Young Jews of Allegheny. Later disbanded.

8. CREMIEUX BRANCH, ALLIANCE ISRAELITE UNIVERSELLE - 1874.

Organized possibly earlier by members of Rodef Sholom, but its first record known to author appears in Tree of Life Minutes, March 31, 1878. Its purpose was to obtain contributions in Pittsburgh for the AIU to help the Jews of North Africa and the Near East.

9. MT. SINAI LODGE 480 OF KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS - 1881.

Originally organized as a Young Men's Hebrew Association by the Yiddish (East European) Jews. Its first record appears in Pittsburgh Times, April 11, 1882. Social group.

10. KING DAVID LODGE FREE SONS OF ISRAEL - 1882.

Organized earlier but first known record appears in Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 21, 1882.

11. IRON CITY LODGE NO. 324 OF B'NAI B'RITH.

1882.

## APPENDIX III

## POPULATION ESTIMATES OF JEWISH COMMUNITY OF PITTSBURGH

1. Occident, September, 1852 -- over 30 families.
2. Israelite, October 30, 1857 -- 50 families.
3. Israelite, January 15 and 29, 1858 -- 60 families.
4. Jewish Criterion, May 31, 1918 -- "old-time Jewish residents believed that there were 50 families and 25 unattached single men in Pittsburgh in 1860."
5. Israelite, January 1, 1864, reprint of letter from Rabbi Isaac M. Wise from Pittsburgh, December 28, 1863 -- 150 Jewish families in Pittsburgh and vicinity.
6. William Hackenberg, 1877 -- 2,000 Jews in Pittsburgh.
7. A. Warner, History of Allegheny County, Pa., 1889 -- 5,000 Jews in Allegheny County.
- \*8. Nathan Savage, Pittsburgh Tri-State Pinkas, 1943 -- 10,000 Jews in Pittsburgh by 1897.

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\*Author spoke with Mr. Savage and he did not know where the figure 10,000 was obtained.

A good way to obtain a population estimate is to count Jews appearing on the early census. The 1850, 1860, and 1870 census are available. I counted over 400 Jews in the first eleven wards in Pittsburgh in the 1870 census. Allegheny then was a separate city and had over 300 Jews. Considering the parties who were not known to be Jewish to this author, and Jews scattered sparsely through other districts of Pittsburgh, and Jews whom the census takers missed--Pittsburgh had over 1,000 Jews by 1870.

Hyman Grinstein in his Rise of the Jewish Community of New York bases his estimates on New York on synagogue membership lists. For Pittsburgh, this method is useless. Newcomers here as religious as they might be could not afford to join synagogues; and it is doubtful that they did either in New York.

## APPENDIX IV

## 1870 CENSUS\*

## A. Dutch Jews in Pittsburgh

Ward 1:

Solomon Green	30	Holland	Second hand dealer
Johana	27	Prussia	
Nathan	4	Penna.	
Bessie	2	Penna.	
Meyer	2 mo.	Penna.	

Wards 4 and 5:

Israel DeRoy	23	Holland	Pawnbroker (just married)
Kate	17	Penna.	Housewife
Joseph	20	Holland	Pawnbroker
Henry Samuels	35	Holland	Pawnbroker
Mary	29	Holland	
Maurice	11	New York	
Rebecca	8	New York	
Bella	4	Ohio	
Jane	2	Ohio	
Berne	6 mo.	Ohio	
Philip Susman	48	Hannover	Retail clothing
Adelaide	50	Holland	Housewife
Edward	18	Holland	Peddler
William Cohen	42	Holland	Tobacco dealer
Rachel	32	Baden	
Jacob	4	Penna.	
2 younger children		Penna.	
Moses Cohen	29	Holland	Tobacco Manufacture
Carolina	28	Holland	
Celia	5	W. G.	
Sophia	3	Penna.	
Eliza	1	Penna.	
Jacob Scriber	50	Holland	Cigar maker
Betsy	17	Holland	
Lena	15	Holland	
Isaac	12	Holland	
Sol	9	Holland	

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\*Excludes those mentioned in conjunction with English Jews in Chapter IV.

Louis Susman	48	Holland	Clothier
Bette	47	Holland	
Jacob	24	Holland	Salesman
Isaac Gelder	34	Holland	Clothing
Regina	32	Baden	
Henrietta	11	Penna.	
Carolina		Penna.	
George		Penna.	
Hannah		Penna.	
Kate	10 mo.	Penna.	
Henry	24	Holland	Peddler

Ward 6:

Emanuel DeRoy	28	Holland	Pawnbroker
Johana	26	Holland	
Sarah	5	Penna.	
Bernard Aaron	20	Mass.	Pawnbroker
Sarah	18	Holland	
Abraham Shenkan	32	Holland	Pawnbroker
Fanny	30	Holland	
Susan	2	Penna.	
Saul	1	Penna.	
Abe Green	32	Holland	Peddler
Jeanete	30	Prussia	
Nathan	6	Penna.	
Fred	5	Penna.	

Ward 7:

Kan Witkowski	33	Poland	Clerk in store
Rachel	23	Holland	

B. German and German-Polish Jews in Pittsburgh\*  
(Allegheny excluded)

Ward 1:

Isaac Bearman	49	Bavaria	Clothier
Regina	46	Bavaria	
Joseph Hettman	28	Prussia	Peddler
Leah	25	Prussia	
David	4	Penna.	
Hannah	6 mo.	Penna.	

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\*Prussia usually but not always signified German-Polish Jew.

Levi Zelanski	40	Prussia	Peddler (cannot write English)
Etta	38	Prussia	
Emper	8	Prussia	
Fannie	5	Penna.	
Anne	3	Penna.	
Abraham Goldsmith	31	Hesse	Cigar-maker
Bertha	31	Bohemia	
Frederick	3	Penna.	
Isaac	1	Penna.	
Ammon	2 mo.	Penna.	
L. Naumberg	56	Bavaria	Teacher (minister of Rodef Sholom)
Caroline	41	Bavaria	
Henrietta	19	Maryland	
Flora	16	Penna.	
Bertha	11	Penna.	
Aaron	7	Penna.	
Benjamin	27	France	Clerk
Moses Bonn	21	Prussia	Peddler
Samuel Floersheim	34	Prussia	Tobacconist
Pauline	25	Adregan, Germany	
Bertha	4		
Bella	2		
Henrietta	26		
Samuel Bearman	33	Bavaria	Clothier
Ann	28	Bavaria	
Louis Affelder	25	Bavaria	Agent for liquor establishment
William Brietzenfeld			Liquor dealer
Sigmond Reidelheim	26		
Morris Brilles	26	Prussia	Clothier
Caroline	24	Prussia	
Bertha	3	Penna.	
Fanny	1	Penna.	
Benjamin Oppenheimer*	35	Bavaria	
Harvi	33	Penna.	Housewife
4 children			
Charles Zeugsmidt	37	Baden	Glass company agent
Mary	33	Baden	
Louis	11	Penna.	
Julius	9	Penna.	
Sophie	7	Penna.	
3 younger children			
William Steinacher	43	Bavaria	U.S. storekeeper
Matilda	32	Baden	
Leonora	4		
Harry	1		

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\*The spelling giving his occupation is not legible.

Saul Aronson	38	Prussia	Tailor
Sophie	44	Bavaria	
Fredricka	11	Penna.	
Henry Holstein	33	Prussia	Peddler
Benj. Cohn	45	Prussia	Clothier
Hannah	40	Prussia	Boarding House
Henry	15	Ohio	
William	13	Ohio	
Mary	12	Ohio	
Bertha	11	Ohio	
Fannie	8	Ohio	
Louis Myer*		Baden	Minister
A. Solamon	21	Prussia	Clerk
Henry Potolski		Prussia	Clerk
Samuel Jaffe	28	Prussia	Dry goods merchant
Amelia	26	Prussia	Housewife
Sarah	18	Prussia	
Baruch	3	Penna.	
Joseph	6 mo.	Penna.	
Solomon Bergmann	37	Prussia	Minister (Tree of Life)
Ane		Prussia	
Benjamin	5	Penna.	
Lillie	3	Penna.	
Rebecca	1	Ohio	
Irene Solomon	52	Prussia	Domestic

Ward 3:

Lewis Fleishman	51	Bavaria	Retired
Louisa	45	Bavaria	
Solomon	23	Virginia	Clerk in store
Pauline	17	Penna.	Home
Jacob	14	Calif.	
Adeline	10	Virginia	
Grabich Weis	64	Prussia	Peddler
Fannie	53	Prussia	
Hellie	15	New York	
Louis Buka	25	Hesse	
Charles Pizer	26	Prussia	Bartender
Rosa Frowenfeld	41	Bavaria	Boarding

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\*The census taker undoubtedly was referring to Rabbi Lippman Mayer, who apparently boarded at Benjamin Cohen's when he first came to Pittsburgh.

Joseph Morganstern	53	Bavaria	Retired
Yetta	49	Bavaria	
Nathan	22	Maryland	Trimming dealer
Samuel	20	Penna.	Clerk
August	18	Penna.	Clerk
Emma	17	Penna.	Home
Laura	15	Penna.	
Julia	14	Penna.	
Mathilda	12	Penna.	
Lewis Morganstern	50	Bavaria	
Madeline	29	Bavaria	
Edmund	16	Penna.	
Albert		Penna.	
Charles	11	Penna.	
Jacob Morganstern	26	Maryland	
Yetta	21	Bavaria	
Alfred	1	Penna.	
Bernard Hepner	43	Prussia	
Johana	24	Wurtemberg	
4 children		Penna.	
Charles Bucky	29	Prussia	Hat and cap dealer
Johana	29	Prussia	
Rebecca	3	Penna.	
Bertha	7 mo.	Penna.	
Alfred Harris	32	Prussia	Clothier
Yette	22	Prussia	
M. Hannauer	46	Bavaria	Clothier
Fanny	15	Penna.	
Younger child		Penna.	

Ward 4:

A. Klinordlingen	39	Bavaria	Liquor
Helena	43	Prussia	
Pauline	18	Penna.	
4 younger children			
Lew Aaron*	26	Moschin, Prussia	Dry goods retail
Minna	26	Wurtemberg	
Marcus	5 mo.		
Abraham Lippert	28	Baden	Salesman
Theodore Tobias	32	Prussia	Retail clothing
Amelia	52		

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\*There were many mistakes on 1870 census. The census taker listed Lew Aaron as born in Wurtemberg but his correct birthplace is given.

Jos. Assion (Ascheim?)	36	Prussia	Peddler
Barbare	24	Prussia	
Kate	1	Penna.	
Jno.	11 mo.	Penna.	
Isadore Baer	22	Prussia	Peddler
Michael Streng	47	Bavaria	Cigar dealer
Sarah	47	Bavaria	
Henrietta	17	Penna.	
Julia	15		
Julius	13		
Rachel	12		
Sol Trauerman*	30	Bavaria	
Lena	25	Bavaria	
Benj.	1	Penna.	
Isaac Lehman	33	Baden	Retail clothing
Amanda	26	Maryland	
3 children		Penna.	
Mose Greenbaum	25	Maryland	Salesman
A. M. Openheimer	18	Holland	Salesman
Harry Lehman	24	Holland (?)	Home
Jacob Baer	47	Prussia	Tailor
Julia	44	Prussia	
Lena	15	Prussia	
Hanah	2	Penna.	
Bertie	1	Penna.	
Sigmund Goldstein	34	Prussia	Wholesale liquor
Carolina	24	Bavaria	
Carrie	2	Ohio	
Albert	1	Penna.	
Isaac Rosenbaum	50	Bavaria	Salesman

Ward 6:

Sol Hobenstein	32	Prussia	Cigar maker
Amelia	31	Baden	
Clara	8	D. C.	
Isaac	5	D. C.	
Charles Bierman	51	Prussia	Warehouseman
Johana	50	Hanover	

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\*There were many mistakes on 1870 census. Trauerman was probably 40 and in the cattle business.

Louis Berkowitz	52	Prussia	Liquor Merchant
Hettie	49	Prussia	
Sarah	22	Penna.	
Albert	16	Penna.	
4 younger children			
Leopold Kahn	40	Bavaria	Retail clothing
Hanah	39	Baden	
Mary	13	Penna.	
4 younger children		Penna.	
Lotta Kahn	35	Bavaria	
Abe Talman	27	Prussia	Salesman
<u>Ward 7:</u>			
Henry Silverman	48	Bavaria	Retail merchant
Barbara	43	Bavaria	
Philip	17	Penna.	Clerk
Hyman	15	Penna.	
Simon	13	Penna.	
Isaac	8	Penna.	
Kate	18	Penna.	
Ella	19	Penna.	
<u>Ward 8:</u>			
Isaac Goldstein	48	Germany	Plasterer
Sophie	40	Germany	
Rachel	14	Penna.	
4 other children			
Joseph Hart	42	Baden	Clothier
Hannah	48	Bavaria	
<u>Ward 9:</u>			
Jacob Rosenswick	50	Bavaria	Second hand dealer
Rachel	39	?	
Aaron	9	Penna.	
Henrietta		Penna.	
Sarah	3		
Nathan Gallinger	58	Bavaria	Pawnbroker
Sarah	46	Sax, Wiman	
Samuel	25	Ohio	Glass dealer
Joseph	23	Ohio	Agent for glass house
Carriel	19	Penna.	
Abraham	13	Penna.	
4 younger children			

Ward 10:

Max Harris	40	Prussia	Laborer
Paulna	33	Prussia	
Sarah	7	New York	
Hannah	5	New York	
Yetta	3	Penna.	
Fanny	1	Penna.	
Wilhelmina Wiler	34	Prussia	Peddler in ladies'
Simon	15	Penna.	garments
Emanuel	12	Ohio	
Rebecca	11	Ohio	
Solomon	5	Ohio	

NOTE: Most of the older men were natives of Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemberg. They had grown children born in America. The younger ones generally were natives of Prussia. The earlier Jewish migration to Pittsburgh was mainly composed of South Germans. The more recent of Lithuanian, Prussian and Dutch Jews.

Note also that several of the Prussian Jews were peddlers, while the South Germans were established in business--another indication that the Jews from Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemberg were the earlier settlers and had become well established, whereas the Prussian Jews had mainly been arriving since 1860. Peddling generally was the occupation of newcomers.

## C. Jews from the Russian Empire\*

Ward 1:

Alexander C. Silverman	35	Russia	Clothier
Morris	25	Russia	Clothier
Harry	21	Penna.	Clothier
Leah	16	Penna.	
Rachel	18	Penna.	
Jacob Lincoln	19	Russia	Clerk in store
Morris Levi	17	Bavaria	Clerk in store
Jacob Fink	36	Russia	Clothier (born in Vilna)
Myer	31	Russia	Clothier
Lazarus	22	Penna.	Clothier
Joseph	17	Penna.	Clothier

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\*Poland generally but not always signified natives of the 10 provinces of Russian-Poland, which retained the title of Kingdom of Poland until 1868.

William Uppenheimer	37	Prussia	Merchant tailor
Fannie	27	Russia	
Carrie	9	Penna.	
Harry	7	Penna.	
Jacob	3	Penna.	
Abraham Adolph	30	Russia	Clothier
Keinas	28	Russia	
Leah	6	Penna.	
Abraham H.	5	Penna.	
Sallie	4	Penna.	
Dina	3	Penna.	
Lazarus	1	Penna.	
Henry Hershberg	52	Russia	Clothier
Mollie	48	Russia	
Henrietta	19	Russia	Home
Sallie	7	Penna.	
Harry Livingston	28	Russia	Agent for liquor
Pauline	28	Russia	store (1869 Direc-
Amelia	7	Russia	tory)
Jacob Solamon	29	Russia	Peddler (cannot write
Leah	31	Russia	English, 1869 Direc-
Annie	10	Russia	tory)
Fanny	5	Russia	
Sarah	1 mo.	Penna.	
John Coan	18	Russia	Peddler (cannot write)
Abraham Catkiskie	30	Russia	Peddler (cannot write)
Henry Hyman	30	Russia	Clothier (son-in-law
Angeline	26	Russia	of Alex. Fink,
Elias	4 mo.	Penna.	joined Tree of Life,
			1868)
<u>Ward 2:</u>			
Himan Meyer	34	Russia	Peddler
Elizabeth	29	Russia	
Anne	4	Virginia	
Sadie	2	Kansas	
Rachel	1	Penna.	
Jacob Rosenberg	40	Russia	Peddler
<u>Ward 3:</u>			
David Oppenheim	24	Poland	Peddler (native of
Hester	24	Poland	Kalvrie County, Su-
Gertrude	5	Poland	walk Province,
Rebecca	1	Penna.	Lithuania)
Harris	16	Poland	Peddler
Jacob Levy	28	Poland	Peddler

Ward 4:

Leon Hershberg	30	Russia	Wholesale liquor
Pauline	28	Russia	
Aaron	11	Russia	
Harry	8	Russia	
Louisa	4	Russia	
Sarah	2	Russia	
Herman Wolf	18	Russia	Painter
Jacob Schnitzer	30	Russia	Liquor dealer
Ann	23	Russia or Prussia	(?)
Louis	3 mo.	Penna.	
Max Hyman	35	Russia	Peddler (naturalized
Catherine	30	Bavaria	in Pittsburgh, 1865)
2 children	7 and 5	Penna.	

Ward 5:

Joseph Levi	22	Russia	Peddler
Adolph Burkhardt	35	Poland	Towning stove
Rosiland	31	Prussia	
Sillie	2	Penna.	
Hester	6 mo.		
Cass Sunstein	28	Poland	Travel agent
Tilli	28	Poland	Grodno, Poland
Abraham	11	Poland	
Meyer	8	Poland	
Solomon	5	Poland	
Marks Browarski	29	Poland	Hoop skirt mfg.
Rachel	21	Poland	
Jacob Burkhardt	31	Poland	Coppersmith
Yetta	29	Poland	
Dora	9	Poland	
Lillie	4	Poland	

Ward 8:

Lewis Simonds	23	Poland	Clerk
Termie	19	New York	
Flora	8 mo.	Penna.	

Ward 10:

Jacob Grouski (Gusky)	22	Poland	Working in tailor store
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## APPENDIX V

RESIDENTS OF THE EARLY JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD IN PITTSBURGH  
AROUND MARKET AND FERRY STREETS\*Ward 1:

Jacob Brunn	32	Prussia	Salesman (killed during Civil War)
Lydia	22	Penna.	
Henry	2	Missouri	
David Strassburger	57	Bavaria	Dry goods merchant
Eliza	40	Bavaria	
Samuel	15	Ohio	
Ellen	10	Penna.	
Abram	5	Penna.	
Nathan	3	Penna.	
Theresa	9 mo.	Penna.	
Abram Slassberg	33	Prussia	Salesman
Sarah	27	Prussia	
Solomon	2	Ohio	
Leopold Heldbrommer	36	Germany	Notion merchant
Sophia	35	Germany	
4 children		Penna.	
Ephraim Wormser	42	Wurtemberg	Glass manufacturer
Birda	31	Germany	
4 children		Penna.	
Jacob Rosenthal	25	Bavaria	
Ida	25	Bavaria	
3 children		Penna.	
Zadok L. Eisner	40	Prussia	Clothing merchant
Sarah	25	Penna.	
3 children		Penna.	
William Frank	41	Bavaria	Dry goods merchant
Pauline	40	Wurtemberg	
Hiram	14	Ohio	
Samuel	12	Penna.	
3 other children		Penna.	
Leopold Einstine	30	Wurtemberg	Dry goods merchant
Matilda	30	Wurtemberg	
2 babies		Penna.	
M. Hannauer and Family	36	(see page 85)	

\*Based on 1860 census.

Sophia Arnold	60	Wurtemberg
D. H.	29	Wurtemberg
Joseph	25	Wurtemberg
Henrietta	16	Penna.

Ward 2:

Louis Hirschfeld	60	Prussia	Tailor
Hetty	58	Prussia	
Jacob	24	Prussia	Tailor
C. V. Arnstall	47	Hamburg, Germany	Tobacconist
Grace	37	New York	
7 children		New York	
Betsy Wertheimer	65	Wurtemberg	
Samuel	27	Wurtemberg	Liquor dealer
Emanuel	25	Wurtemberg	Liquor dealer
Isaac	20	Wurtemberg	Clerk
Pauline	18	Wurtemberg	
Abraham Katz	40	Germany	Peddler
Julia	45	Germany	
3 children		Penna.	
W. Fleishman	38	Germany	Grocer
Minia	30	Germany	
Catherine	12	Virginia	
Amelia	10	Ohio	
Solomon	8	Penna.	
2 other children		Penna.	
Lewis Morganstern		(see page 85)	
Fanny Bierman	16	Bavaria	
Louis Jonas	30	Germany	