

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA: A Case Study and  
Network Analysis

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Greenville is a small town of 9,000 people located in the rural/ industrial county of Mercer, in western Pennsylvania, half-way between Erie and Pittsburgh. The closest major urban center is 45 miles away in the area around Youngstown-Warren, Ohio. The Shenango Valley, fifteen miles away and within the county, is now a growing center with major shopping malls, heavy and light industry, center-city decay and mushrooming tract housing. Greenville is a predominantly Protestant, working class town with most employment linked to railroads. Greenville industry is a major source of jobs in the county so there is a net inflow of workers daily. Newer light industry is located on the site of an abandoned World War II army camp has added to the prosperity of the area.

Greenville has much in common with Springdale, the community studied in Small Town and Mass Society (Vidich and Bensman, 1968). Since the end of the Second World War (the period on which this paper focuses), the insular rural center has been homogenized and incorporated into the amalgamation of similar American communities. Now just twenty miles away from the intersection of two major interstate highways and boasting national fast food chains, cable TV, and suburban shopping plazas, Greenville ambivalently feels the mass society reaching in with cultural and corporate tenacles. The town is the home of a hundred year old Lutheran liberal arts college,

boasts a symphony orchestra and is a stronghold of Republicanism. Its appearance and ideology remain that of a small, rather self-sufficient, rural community. Yet personal and institutional self-determination are being rapidly undermined. From local school policy now being dictated more and more by the state, to television being a pervasive cultural leveler, Greenville's residents are being integrated into the mass society.

The focus of this paper will be on a "community" within Greenville, that of its Jewish residents. My interest comes from growing up as a participating member of both communities. Virtually all Jewish community studies are urban based (e.g. Baron, (1942); Cooper, (1953); Reznikoff and Engelman, (1950)). Given that as high as 98% of all Jews reside in urban centers, social scientists have naturally focused on the urban character of the Jew. Yet there is clearly a richness and different quality to Jewish life in rural America which has received little attention. (Kaplan, (1957); Levenger, (1952); Rose, (1977)). The few authors who have examined the nature of the life of Jews in small towns agree that unless major unforeseen social changes take place, such communities are headed for extinction. This case study is intended to capture the salient features of Jewish life in a single community whose Jewish population is now shrinking and to be the first step in a process of developing policy alternatives for similar communities.

"Network Theory", while more of an approach rather than a rigorously defined analytic procedure, provides a valuable means by which to analyze the bonds of Greenville's Jewish people and the dynamics and viability of this community within a community.

When viewed in the context of their structural and categorical orders, network theory can serve to explain the details of the social behavior of individuals and their community.

While sociology has long used the image of "network of social relations" to represent the complexity of social system inter-relationships, its use from early periods was strictly metaphorical. Today, "network" is still commonly used by sociologists as metaphor, rather than as an analytic tool. Reader notes that network as metaphor obscures several different and important aspects of social relationships (1964:22). Yet he points out that the common use of the term should not prevent the metaphor's expansion into an analogy, thus allowing its use in more specific and defined ways. Mitchell elaborates that the transformation of the network metaphor into analogy can begin by the identification of the characteristics "on which its heuristic usefulness rests and then to define these characteristics in terms of general theory." (1969:2).

This paper will not attempt to review the diverse contexts in which network theory has been applied (cf. Harary, 1959; Bott, 1971; A.C. Mayer, 1966; etc.) or define with precision the multiplicity of meaning ascribed to the words meant to clarify concepts. This is mentioned to acknowledge that the specific dimensions of networks, their dynamics, and the terms of definition evoke little consensus among sociologists applying and critiquing this approach. This paper will thus use network theory in its presently diffuse and general form to focus on the specific linkages among Greenville's Jews, using the characteristics of these linkages as a whole to interpret their social behavior.

While a significant literature of network theory, based on categorically defined networks (as opposed to ego defined networks), supports this approach (cf. Barnes, 1954; Mills, 1956; Lipset et al., 1962), it does suffer from a methodological problem. Taking a category, in this case Greenville's Jewish people, and extracting them from their multiplexity of social requires abstraction. Any attempt to link this one group or its sub-parts beyond that of individuals with another in terms of network analysis implies a relationship. Thus a network approach, anchored on categories or groups requires that the links of connection all represent the same level of abstraction (cf. Harries-Jones in Mitchell, 1969, pp. 335-336). Care will be taken to be cognizant of this potential weakness.

Greenville's Jews, because of both socialization from birth in Jewish homes and ascription by the Gentile world, saw themselves as Jews and a community for as long as anyone can remember. While the community had no physical Jewish institutions, both the tradition of the Jewish calendar and Jewish life-cycle events reinforced this feeling. While this paper will concentrate on the period 1948 - 1978, an historical background sketch will give some perspective.

Oscar Handlin and others (Handlin, 1956) delineate three stages of immigration to America which parallel the arrival of Jews to Greenville: The Period of Early Settlement (1654 - 1860) - The pre-World War I Jews, many of them from German families of the haskalah who were prosperous merchants, most of whom had died or moved from Greenville by the end of the Second world War; The Immigrant Period (1860 - 1914) - Immigrant or children of immigrants from eastern European countries who began settling in Greenville around the period

of the First World War and throughout the Depression; and the Refugee Period (1920 - End of WWII) - While no European refugees of Nazism came to Greenville, neighboring communities did absorb them. Finally, Greenville experienced an influx of Jews in the late 1960's - early 1970's whose arrival was not connected to immigration. For the most part these were people who had become, previous to arrival, so assimilated that they chose not to identify themselves as Jewish.

Listed in the Appendix (see A) are all the Jewish families of Greenville, including children. All kinship links among the community are also drawn (see Appendix B). Since the degree of formal organization has never been very high in this community, I've also mapped linkages (primary and secondary) that various households had to larger Jewish social/religious communities (see Map 1). The strongest bond is with Sharon, Pa., 15 miles away, which has a Reform Temple and a religious school. Twenty years ago, Sharon had 200 Jewish families and adjacent Farrell had 80 families. Today they have combined into one congregation and have 200 families. Greenville's bond is both because of proximity and the fact that two of the community's strongest organizers had family ties there. In fact, all linkages to other communities are based on family ties with the exception of the ties to Sharon which were established for the sake of their children's education.

The history of the Jewish people is one of two opposing social forces: a sacred community, which survives in the face of tremendous opposition; and an ever-changing collectivity, subject to the pressures of external social, cultural and religious forces. Since the Diaspora, Jews as a group have held marginal positions in almost every place

they have settled.

The economic and social position of Greenville's Jews reflect the ways in which they earn their livelihood coupled with Gentile small town society's view of the Jew. In many ways the Greenville Jew is the classic "stranger":

The stranger is by nature no "owner of soil" - soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point in the social environment. Although in more intimate relations, he (sic) may develop all kinds of charm and significance, as long as he is considered a stranger in the eyes of the other, he is not an "owner of soil." Restriction to intermediary trade...gives him the specific character of mobility. If mobility takes place within a closed group, it embodies that synthesis of nearness and distance which constitutes the formal position of the stranger. (Simmel, 1950; pp. 403-404)

Some authors have characterized the Jewish "stranger" as a disturbed, marginal man, condemned to be an eternal stranger, who by the very omnipresence of contradiction in values and lifeways must be a cultural schizophrenic (Stonequist, 1937; Park, 1950). While the Jews of Greenville can be seen as marginal, involving simultaneous participation in two different, but not necessarily conflicting ways of life, the ascribed schizophrenia seems to be absent.

This is best explained by the people themselves who are nearly unanimous in their view of participating in the "best of both worlds". This general view is supported by their perceptions of earning a good living, seeing their children achieve and succeed, negligible anti-semitism, a bucolic environment and having a comfortable social niche within a Gentile community. The suggested split personality is in reality a pluralist self-image made up in this case two positive and compatible sets of values. In what could be

called bi-culturalism, Greenville's Jews do not feel the postulated omnipresence of contradiction in values and lifeways.

Virtually all of Greenville's Jews have been merchants, mostly located on Main Street. Here they continue to fill their historic role as intermediary. As Greenville's locally-based economy has declined with the growth of corporate capitalism, so has the presence of the Jew on Main St (see Map 2 and Appendix 3). While numerically Jews have been a very small minority in the community, they have played a major role in shaping its retail center. (Not all the Jewish merchants lived in Greenville - some commuted daily from as far away as Cleveland, Ohio.).

As small merchants all of Greenville's Jews could be classed as petit-bourgeois with few exceptions. Industrially, two factories are owned by Jews. The owner of one lived in Greenville for a short period but moved to Sharon, seeking a stronger Jewish community. The other also lives in Sharon. Two Jews whose stays in the community were short lived worked in local industry and government. There have been two Jewish owned farms. With the exception of a few short-term residents, there have been no working class Jews in the community. There have never been any Jewish professionals in Greenville and the local college has briefly had only one Jewish professor in its long history, since it does not grant tenure to non-Christians. For Jewish families who have been in Greenville for more than one generation, family enterprises are the source of livelihood.

Hammerman speculates that people who have made similar locational decisions are acting to maximize similar kinds of life situations. This is clearly the case among Greenville's Jews. Most all families

shared similar niches as small town entrepreneurs. Rose concludes that most Jews he surveyed in upstate New York's rural communities went to these small towns for economic reasons (Rose 1977). Both his study and this case suggest that Jews in small towns feel that the opportunity to earn a good living in a comfortable environment was unmatched in cities.

An astute observer of the Greenville Jewish community suggested an additional dimension: "Most people (Jews) came to Greenville to hide." By which she meant that although people saw themselves as Jews with the attendant traditional imperative of "community" if one was to be functionally Jewish, most people did not want close relationships with Jews or others. While the few studies already noted do not analyze locational decisions from this perspective, the lives of the Jews in Greenville and the cases in Rose suggest that this is a critical inter-related factor with that of potential for entrepreneurial success. This hypothesis is given added validity by the observation that removal of families from the religious school car pool (see p. infra.) and daily business life on Main St. means virtually total isolation from other Jews (or Gentiles for that matter) for many of Greenville's Jewish people. Such isolation is increasingly common and self-imposed.

Older community members would dispute the second part of the analysis by telling how in the "old days" there was a strong sense of closeness among Jews. They illustrate this by telling of events which elicited widespread communal feeling such as Clara Rosen's wedding or the Barton's housewarming. While there is no evidence that the close knit community they glowingly describe was

ever such in reality, it seems very possible that the sense of community was greater, in that most Jews shared common requirements, common life situations, and common modes of adaptation. Thomas' observation that "if men (sic) define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." has some bearing here (quoted in Densin, 1970, ch. 10). It is also important to note that physical mobility was much more restricted then because accessibility to automobile travel was limited. Frequently limitations to mobility and potential social relations increase the feeling of community.

Another important element in understanding the social structure of Greenville's Jewish community is that husband and wife worked side by side in the enterprises. Prior to 1948 all Jewish women worked and kept house. Frieda Rosen and Harriet Salkin were the first non-working women (outside the home) in the community. Neither has ever held a job in the community. Thus they had the time as well as the need and desire for stronger ties. Their divergence from the local pattern will be seen to be of critical importance.

Throughout the history of the Greenville Jewish community only a few voluntary Jewish organizations have existed, all within the period being examined. Affiliations and activity with Jewish organizations involves more women than men and some families more than others. The most formal and durable of these local organizations was the Greenville Jewish Women's Study Group. It paralleled the other local women's literary guilds and study groups which did not include Jewish members. Every Jewish woman in Greenville was an active member. The meetings were held in individual homes with the focus being a program (for the most part not oriented to Jewish themes) and a meal. There were a number of annual activities like visiting Jewish children on Jewish holidays in a nearby state hospital. The group's meetings were reported on the society page of the local daily newspaper. In retrospect, the decline of the group centered around a factor that would prove to be a major turning point in the community's history.

Until the mid-1950's all community members had perceived of themselves as equals. While there were undoubtedly differences in income level among families, in terms of daily life style and values the community was rather homogeneous. In the mid-1950's this began to change. The most dramatic change in status distinction revolved around two younger families building new homes. Both built spacious,

amply furnished, contemporary homes with large yards and a fair amount of wall-to-wall carpeting. These were the same two families where the women were not gainfully employed. Until this time, everyone lived in modest but comfortable homes on small lots. While there was no geographic clustering in neighborhoods, almost all Jews lived on the East Side. (Only one couple lived on the West Side, the Catholic neighborhood, in the hotel they owned.) Since the Jewish Women's Study Group met in homes on a rotating basis, the status conferred by owning a large, new home began to break down the sense of homogeneity, eroded the *gemeinschaft*, and fostered a feeling of lack of equality. The other younger members, in particular, felt competitive and resentful of their more visibly prosperous community members. It can be concluded that this status differentiation was the major factor in marking the demise of the Group.

The second Greenville Jewish organization of importance, while reflecting the height of formal Jewish community organization, is ironic in that it never had a name! Referred to as Rabbi Bergman's Greenville Jewish Group, the group met for two years on a regular basis in the late 1950's and included all adults in the Jewish community. People who had not communally identified in years were eager members. The group's focus was very ethnocentric with emphasis placed on basic Judaism, its roots, and relationship to Reform Jewish life. The driving force was Rabbi Robert Bergman from the Reform Congregation in Sharon. An atypical rabbi, who bordered on being a proselytizer, he was committed to reaching out to wandering Jews. The group came together at Bergman's initiative. While not a preacher, Bergman gave "recipes" for Jewish survival.

He explored questions such as, "If you want your children to be Jewish, what must be done?"

The high point of this group was a weekend religious/educational retreat at a motel in a nearby community. Literally all adults attended. This gathering can be seen, in retrospect, as astounding. No other single event; life cycle, disaster, or joy, ever evoked such response.

Bergman had an almost prophetic understanding of where he was. When the first large suburban shopping plaza opened in the county, he observed, "When you don't have Jews on Main Street you don't have a Jewish population." "The end of downtowns will be the end of Jewish people in small towns." The group meetings ended when Rabbi Bergman left the Sharon congregation.

The two other Jewish community organizations revolved around the education of children. Until the late 1940's, formal Jewish education in Greenville was minimal. In the 1920's two families sent their children 45 miles away to Youngstown, Ohio, every Sunday by railroad to a very Reform congregation for instruction. Otherwise formal education was reserved for a few boys, mostly revolving around preparation for Bar Mitzvah. The teacher, Mr. Stecker, worked in a local clothing store. In the late 1940's the Werners came from New York City to open an aluminum ladder factory. They brought with them a strong sense of Jewish identity and a daughter. Both increased the need for the functional imperative of raising and educating a child as a Jew. Thus a religious school was organized, texts purchased, and a permanent location in the basement of a home was set up. The school was short lived because two families who

would have become major supporters decided to send their children to the well-established religious school in Sharon. The initiative for this came from the families where the wives did not hold jobs and who also would soon build spacious homes. Their decision was based on family ties to Sharon; the fact that the women in these households were active members of various Jewish women's organizations in Sharon; and that they wanted a quality religious, social, educational experience for their children.

This decision shortly ended the Greenville school effort and led to the longest and most durable of Greenville's Jewish institutions -- the religious school car pool. In operation from 1954 until 1972, and involving as many as 14 children per trip, the car pool was the major link between Greenville's Jewish children and outside Jewish life. Temple Beth Israel, the Reform Congregation in Sharon, held sessions both Saturday and Sunday with additional weekly classes for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, and Hebrew instruction. The strength of the car pool was both parental dedication and two men and a woman who became dedicated teachers at the religious school. This car pool, linking a large group of post- World War II baby boom children with a Jewish institution, led parents and grandparents, most of whom had no formal ties with a religious congregation, to affiliate with the Sharon congregation.

These links were facilitated by major institutional changes in the Sharon congregation. Up until 1950 the Sharon congregation had been Orthodox; it then completely readjusted its values and affiliated itself with the Reform movement. This dramatic change

undoubtedly made Greenville people more at ease with the requirements of the institution for two reasons. First, Reform services are predominantly conducted in English, not Hebrew and thus more suited to Greenville Jews, most having little formal religious training. Secondly, halacha is basically ignored by Reform. Therefore, religious dicta, such as keeping a kosher home, prohibitions against driving on Shabbat, etc., were no longer issues and one could no longer be judged by the non-performance of these mitzvot. Thus the acculturation of an institution (see Redfield et al., 1936) allowed Greenville's Jews to be more at ease with themselves as individuals and within a wider Jewish context.

Other Jewish institutions outside Greenville enjoy limited support and involvement. A core of five or six women participate and frequently play leadership roles in the Shenango Valley (Sharon plus other smaller communities) Chapters of Hadassah, National Council of Jewish Women and Temple Sisterhood. A few community members participate in the Temple's adult education programs. About half of Greenville's children have joined a B'nai Brith youth group or another affiliated with the federation of Pennsylvania's Reform congregations. Men are generally inactive in Jewish community affairs with the exception of one man who is an active worker for the United Jewish Appeal, has been a member of the Temple's Board of Directors, was a dedicated religious school teacher and is a general macher. (He lives in one of the new spacious homes.) Two men actively worked for Zionism, one participating in Zionist politics on a national level.

Zionism, and more specifically enhancing the relationship of

Jewish individuals and communities to the State of Israel, provides a focus of energy for the contemporary American Jewish community. While most of Greenville's Jews are not formally Zionists, there is a general interest and support for Israel and its policies. Not a very charitable or generous community, Greenville Jews do respond (some reluctantly) to the crises of Israel both through United Jewish Appeal fundraising and buying Israel Bonds. The generosity has increased as the ties to Sharon, a generally philanthropic community, were strengthened. A number of community residents, especially people of late teenage, have visited Israel, and thus furthered linking themselves to world Jewry.

An identifiable core of Jews have played a visible role in the wider civic life of Greenville. Two men were long-time "downtown" representatives on the Greenville Hospital Board of Directors. Rotary, a prestigious men's service organization has had three Jewish members. Many civic and fraternal organizations in Greenville could always rely on Jewish merchants for support. The two women organizers have served on the Public Library Board. One of them has served an appointed term on the School Board -- she would not run for election because of an aversion to partisan politics in school affairs. The other has been a dedicated worker for the Girl Scouts. Children have been active in extracurricular school activities. During this period four boys became Eagle Scouts. Only one Jew has served as Chairman of the Retail Division of the Chamber of Commerce. This is particularly interesting since Jewish businesses during this time dominated Main Street. It seems that they have not been active in the Chamber because their role as merchant was a means to an end -- economic security -- and not embraced as a defined way of life. Jews are

absent from local politics with the exception of two women -- both Democrats -- whose affiliations with any Jewish groups is almost nil. Jews have never had any ties to the banks --except mortgages. The Country Club accepts Jews and four families have belonged but don't use the facilities as a focus for social relaxation. Families who have been in Greenville for many years claim that there is no anti-semitism, while newer community members feel anti-Jewish sentiments to be strong. A few people, (the predictable machers), act as "ambassadors of their people" and make themselves available to churches and community groups to talk about Jewish holidays, Jewish values and Israel.

Life cycle transitions in a Jewish community occur on two levels: the annual cycle of the Jewish lunar calendar with its major and minor holidays and festivals, as well as events associated with age such as birth, bris, consecration, bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation, marriage and death. While no one in the Greenville community "kept the Sabbath day and made it holy", weekly passing over the most important of Jewish holidays, most stores were closed and people attended religious services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two major religious holidays of the year. Since Greenville's stores are open until 9:00 PM on Friday evenings, most men never attend a Jewish service except on these two days. (Nor did they attempt to change this business practice as was done successfully in the Shenango Valley.) Occasionally a small group of women and children will attend the Friday evening Shabbat service.

With few exceptions most Jewish holidays are celebrated either at the Temple or within the confines of an individual home. The

Temple was always the focus of Purim carnivals, model Passover seders, and Hanukkah celebrations. While individual families may also bake hamentaschen for Purim, hold Passover seders, and light candles the eight nights of Hanukkah, this is done as an individual household, not a community-wide or even group event. Two extended families, the Sam Slesnicks and William Rosens, have each at one time held seders at Passover where they invited many community members beyond their own families. Today, people without a place to go for seder are always welcome at the L. Rosens or Salkins.

Most boys that are born are circumcised at a bris. The ceremonies range from the Orthodox of calling in a mohel to the antiseptic use of a local pediatrician. Although not always the case, in the period being examined, all young children were consecrated during Simchas Torah and attended religious school in Sharon. All boys were prepared for Bar Mitzvah and interestingly enough all girls studied to be Bat Mitzvah, an unusual occurrence in any Jewish community. Most community members (especially women and children) attended these ceremonies and celebrations. Some community members clearly took pride in these events, even though the person involved was not kin.

Jewish students live up to the public and family expectation that they should excel in school. Most attend well-known colleges and universities, primarily within the region.

Weddings do not take place within the community, for the most part. No local families were linked by marriage during this period. Given the isolation of Greenville, the frequent lack of institutional ties, and the general trend toward assimilation and inter-marriage, it is surprising that of the ten people from the community who were married during this period, all married Jews. Recently some of

these marriages have ended in divorce -- a new community phenomenon.

This case suggests that a critical variable in the viability of communities such as that of the Jews of Greenville is whether or not children chose to remain in the community or return after higher education. Most children do not return to Greenville after leaving for higher education. This is not a departure from expected behavior. The Jewish parents in this case seem clear in the view that while life in a rural small town has been good for them, it holds little promise for their children. While some older adults express the desire to include their younger kin in business, the reality contradicts such espousals.

While a few sons have returned to join their parents in business in this period, they have rarely stayed for longer than three years. While the reasons for the departures is hard to precisely ascertain, as this is a very sensitive family issue, three factors seem to predominate: First, given the decline of the small business in the economy, these businesses may not produce enough income for two families to live comfortably. Second, and inter-related with the first, business difficulties and disagreements may disturb the harmony necessary in such an enterprise. Thirdly, having experienced the "outside" world and bringing with them wives from that world, the stimuli of Greenville may be seen as sterile or dull.

The only remaining businesses in the community owned by Jews all have younger family members in them. Yet the younger generation from all but one reside in Sharon rather than Greenville. While cause and effect are difficult to <sup>dis-</sup>entangle, it is clear that the departure of the vast proportion of young people from a community is a critical

symbol of its demise.

The final life-cycle event, death, often evokes the most widespread response within this Jewish community. In categorical networks it often makes sense to analyse the network by asking, "Given Event 'A', who will respond?". Deaths bring more people together more reliably than any other event. Since a Jewish death is commemorated by sitting shiva for seven consecutive days after burial, a death may mean more communal interaction will take place than has taken place for months previous. It ranges from joining quickly together for burial, to preparing and serving a funeral meal, to coming to the house of mourning twice a day for proscribed prayers. As in educating the young, tradition and life cycle functions provide the conditions which evoke mutual aid.

Admission of new community members was never formal or particularly warm until the arrival of Frieda Rosen and Harriet Salkin. Now both families and some newer ones almost always invite new Jewish arrivals to dinner and if interest is shown offer an invitation to attend Temple. They have also tried to make the few Jewish students at the college feel welcome and offer them an opportunity to participate.

Since the informal communications networks of the Gentile community always knew who was Jewish; and given Judaism's absence of a central authoritative central religious body; acculturation vis-a-vis the Gentile community has been subtle. While acculturation may lead to assimilation over generations, no one in this community has ever declared themselves to no longer be Jewish. People have been able to define their own roles and relationships. Therefore the

mechanisms of commitment and identification are voluntary and not rigidly defined. The norms are not articulated, but the primary rule is "don't make waves". Social/political issues should never be defined in Jewish terms. For example, in the many years that the state required it, Jews almost never objected to the offensive daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer at the opening of the public school day.

In a final note on acculturation, it should be stressed that all families and individuals could find comfortable niches as individuals and Jews. In the 1970's a new phenomenon of the already assimilated Jew who had usually married a non-Jew was representative of the newcomers. The local manager of a national or regionally based department store may have had Jewish parents but has no interest in establishing any links of identification with the local Jewish population or even declaring themselves to be Jewish. (A generation ago they would have probably been self- and externally-identified Jewish entrepreneurs on Main Street rather than assimilated managers in a shopping plaza store.) Yet the fact remains that both the Gentile community and the Jewish community always know who these people are. Total assimilation, whether by a member of a long term family or a newcomer, is impossible.

In the structural framework of corporate capitalism, Jewish life in small towns as it was known from the beginning of the century was bound to take on new appearances. The Jewish entrepreneur, (actually an entire family, with the children often taking over the business from the parents) equipped with a cultural background to succeed in the process of primitive accumulation and the capitalist

game was being replaced by the verticle integration of the chain store and the franchise.

The decline of entrepreneurial capitalism with its attendant rationalization and bureaucratization has implications not only for the future and fabric of the Jewish community but also the wider community. The Jewish merchant with "contacts" in a city (weak ties) was a major contributor to a variety of life in a locale, through linkages to the outside. Such outside linkages gave the community as a whole a sense of institutional independence. The disappearance of the Main Street Jewish merchant thus leaves the wider community devoid of a dimension of variety and richness. The logical extension of this decline is a small town in mass society with its increasing homogeneity. Not only do goods and services come under the distributive control of institutions with a flare for mediocrity and lack of innovation, but the physical appearance of such small towns becomes homogenized by shopping centers, franchise buildings and logos, standardized menus and food, etc.

If the Jews of Greenville are viewed in the context of the diaspora, the community can be more accurately described as a "tribal network". While tribal identification is anomalous in mass society, the concept can be used to explain the subconscious need of the not assimilated to maintain ties. Since Jews have been wanderers since the destruction of the Second Temple, Jewish life in American small towns with its entrepreneurial base may be best seen as a stopping off point. A few may set down roots for a generation or two, most will not.

If the tribal network is the most accurate portrayal of

Greenville's Jews, then the fabric, strength, and outside linkages of that network must be understood over time. Until the mid-1960's the economic position of Jews and their ecology on Main Street facilitated the maintenance of ties on a daily basis, being it shared coffee breaks, dropping in to see someone at their store, or an encounter at the bank. As Granovetter notes, "If one's normal activities bring him (sic) into contact with the same people with the same frequency, weak ties are likely to result." (Granovetter, 1973). Such ties were weak rather than strong, but the daily flow of information and conversation accounts for a good sense of cohesion. Given that most ties have a tribal base rather than that of friendship, it is fair to say that the network at that time was close knit.

Linkages set in motion by two women who share one of the few strong ties in the community, based on their relationships with family and a desire for a quality Jewish social/religious experience for their children and themselves, set in motion the critical dynamics for the future of Greenville's Jewish people. The fact that this new community level linkage occurred as post World War II baby boom children were beginning to enter school served to strengthen and further extend the boundary of the networks both internally and externally. The Sharon congregation's simultaneous embracing of Reform Judaism allowed for maximal participation of Greenville's Jews on the condition that they face the social and philanthropic demands it proscribed.

The fact that Frieda Rosen and Harriet Salkin were free to establish the basis for such ties and linkages was a double-edged sword: It set up local status distinctions which would eventually limit social cohesion; Yet they paved the way for those who desired

a more identified Jewish life. Given that young Jewish people choose not to return to Greenville, or if they do return to stay only briefly; that no local marriages occurred to link families together; and that the newcomers of the 1970's were so assimilated as to never establish ties of identification; it is doubtful that the local community would have been strengthened in their absence.

This all happened in an era when travel and communications technology were developed to a then unparalleled degree. Yet a dialectic was at work here, for the economy which produced the means to link the local network with a more intricate one was the same that was transcending entrepreneurial capitalism and thus simultaneously undermining the very premises that attracted Jews to Greenville in the first place.

Frieda Rosen and Harriet Salkin, sharing one of the few strong ties in the community, added to the community's viability and strength by sharing that strong tie amid a network of weak ties and then linking that rather isolated network to a series of other networks which ultimately aided the life needs of individual Jews in Greenville. By connecting individuals with a community wider than the immediate circle, a social cohesion was achieved over a wide area of a larger, more intricate network. Without the strength of such weak ties, the Jewish community would have perished, as have nearby communities of Titusville and Farrell, both of which were larger, had visible institutions, and an outwardly more cohesive social structure.

Authors Note:

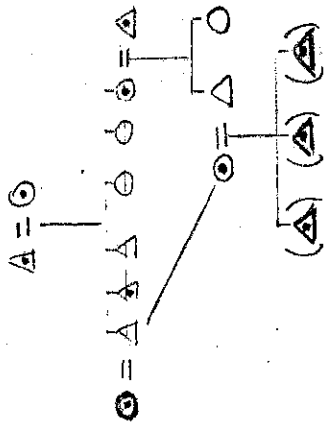
I was born in Greenville Hospital in 1950 and lived in Greenville until leaving for college in the Fall of 1968. I returned during college vacations and summers until 1971. My parents were born in communities nearby, my father coming from 40 miles away in 1945 to work for his maternal uncle who had lived in Greenville since 1916, my mother coming from 15 miles away to marry my father in 1948. My mother's parents were immigrants from Austria-Hungary while my father's parents were born in America, his mother living her entire life in the same small town. My father's paternal grandfather was a poor itinerant merchant who for a short period lived 8 miles from Greenville. During that period a great uncle attended college in Greenville, undoubtedly one of the first Jews to attend.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF JEWISH COMMUNITY MEMBERS 1948-1978

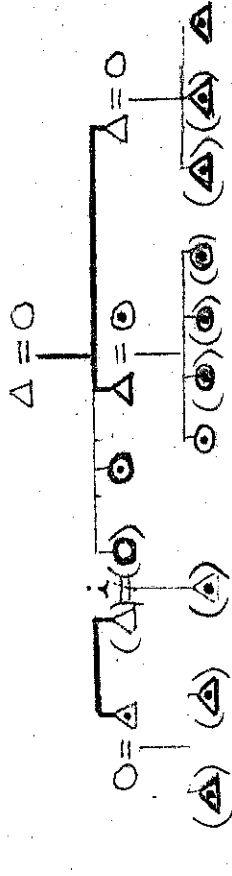
Keller, I.J. & Grace	no children
Salkin, Herman & Harriet	3 sons
Rosen, WM & Jenny	2 sons & 2 daughters
Rosen, Leonard & Frieda	3 daughters
Rosen, Melvin & Rita	3 sons
Yasgur, Milton & Jan	2 sons & 1 daughter
Mehr, Julius & Lucy(Mary)	1 son
Mehr, Harold & Lillian	2 sons
Weiss, Max & Mary	1 daughter & 1 son
Weiss, Buddy	no children
Blau, Sam & Hilda	1 son & 1 daughter
Blau, Alan & _____	_____
Blau, Carol	_____
Rabinowitz, Max & Lena	no children
Slesnick, Sam & Sarah	1 son
Slesnick, Bernie & Bobbi	2 sons & 1 daughter
Friedman, David & Libbye	2 sons
Friedman, Harry & Clara	1 daughter
Friedman, Martin & Jane	1 son
Barton, Ben & Molly	1 son
Barton, George & Jane	1 son & 1 daughter
Goldsmith, Lee & Francies	1 daughter
Goldsmith, Anne	no children
Goldsmith, George & Rena	1 son
Goldsmith, Milton & Sophie	2 sons
Samuels, Paul & Edythe	1 son & 1 daughter
Werner, Leo & Anne	1 daughter
Clark, Hugh & Rosellen	3 daughters & 1 son
Astman, Fred	no children
Brody, Steve	no children
Reubin, Irving & Marcia	1 son & 1 daughter
Keeti, Harvey & Barbara	1 daughter
Shapiro, Harvey & Barbara	1 daughter
Schoenfeld, Ted & Rhoda	2 children
Robins, Aaron & Ruth	2 sons
Robins, Alan & Nancy	_____
Heiman, Bob & Sandy	3 daughters
Slifkin, Julius & Caroline	1 son & 1 daughter
Baker, Lewis	(stay so limited that family never came)

as well as a few students at Thiel College every year



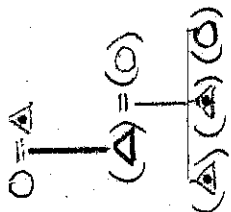
Salkin

Keller

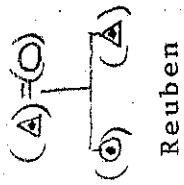


D. L. & H.  
Friedman

Rosen



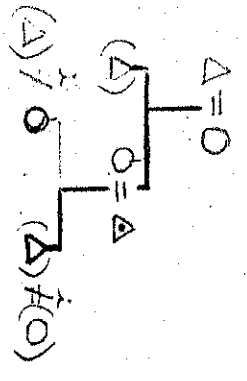
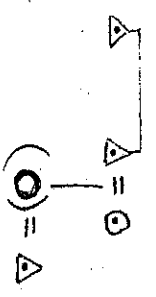
Slesnick



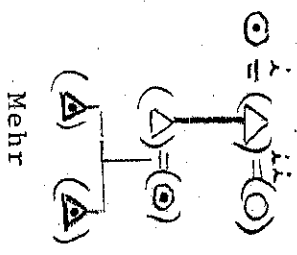
Reuben

APPENDIX B  
KINSHIP TIES

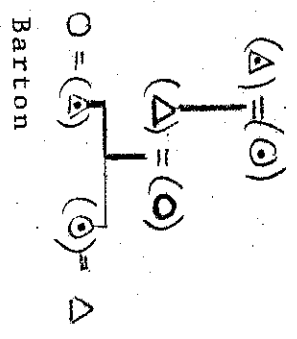
- Key:    Δ = man  
           ○ = woman  
           Δ ⊙ = dead  
           = = married  
           ≠ = divorced  
           ( ) = moved from community  
           i, ii = indicates first and second marriage  
           red dot = youth affiliation with Sharon congregation  
           ○ Δ = graduate of local high school  
                    = family business affiliation



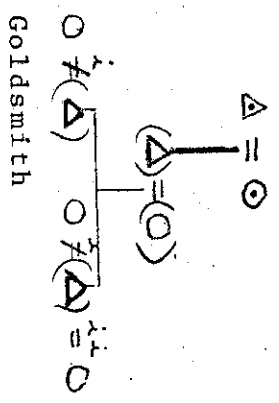
Weiss Blau



Mehr



Barton



Goldsmith

Goldsmith

MAP 1

FAMILY LINKAGES TO OUTSIDE JEWISH COMMUNITIES  
(1=primary; 2=secondary)

Sharon  
Salkin 1  
Slesnick, S. 1  
Slesnick, B. 2  
Rosen, M. 1  
Rosen, L. 1  
Yasgur 1

Mehr, J 1  
Mehr, H 1  
Friedman, D 2  
Barton, B 1  
Barton, G 1  
Clark 1  
Slifkin 1  
Reubin 2  
Rosen, Wm 1  
Heiman 1  
Werner 1

Farrell  
Weiss 1  
Blau 1  
Rabinowitz 1

Youngstown  
Goldsmith, A&F 1  
Slesnick, B. 1  
Friedman, M&J 2

Oil City  
Keller 1  
Salkin 2  
Slesnick, S. 2  
Shapiro 1

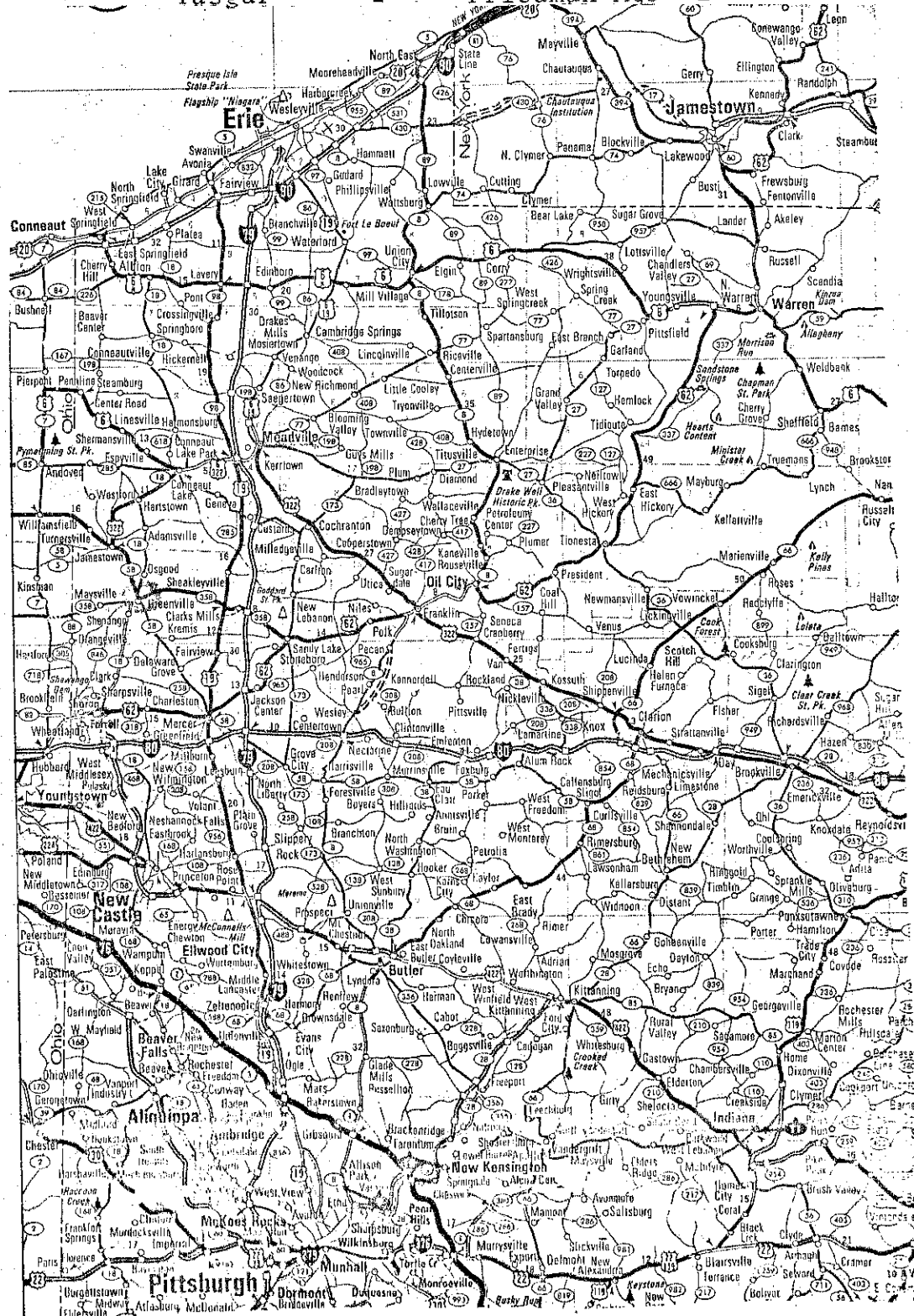
Meadville  
Samuels 1  
Mehr, H. 2

Cleveland  
Keeti 1

Indiana  
Reubin 1

Pittsburgh  
Friedman, D. 1  
Friedman, H. 1  
Rosen, Wm. 2  
Yasgur 2

New York City  
Werner 2  
Robins 1  
Heiman 2  
Friedman M&J 1



MAP 2

LOCATION OF JEWISH MERCHANTS IN GREENVILLE, PA. 1948-1978

MAIN STREET

1948-1978

1 jeweler  
2 army-navy  
1 dry cleaner  
3 bars  
3 furniture  
5 women's clothing  
1 men's clothing  
1 auto dealer  
1 drug store  
1 hotel

NOW

1 drug store

OFF MAIN STREET

1948-1978

2 manufacturers  
2 farms  
1 scrap dealer  
1 sign company

NOW

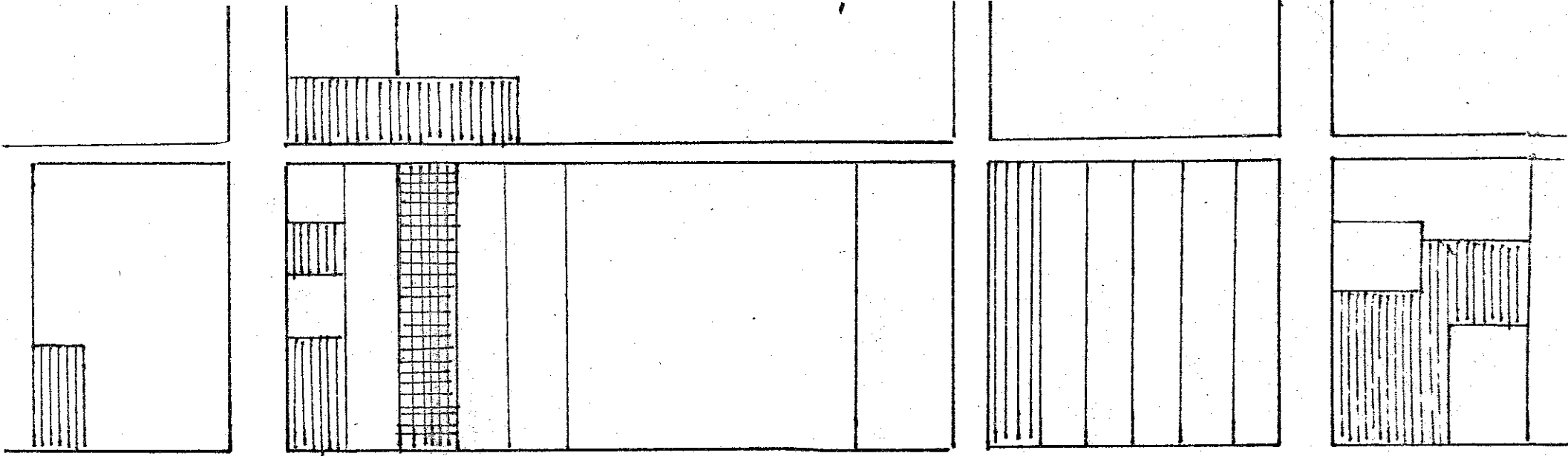
2 manufacturers  
1 auto dealer

KEY TO MERCHANTS

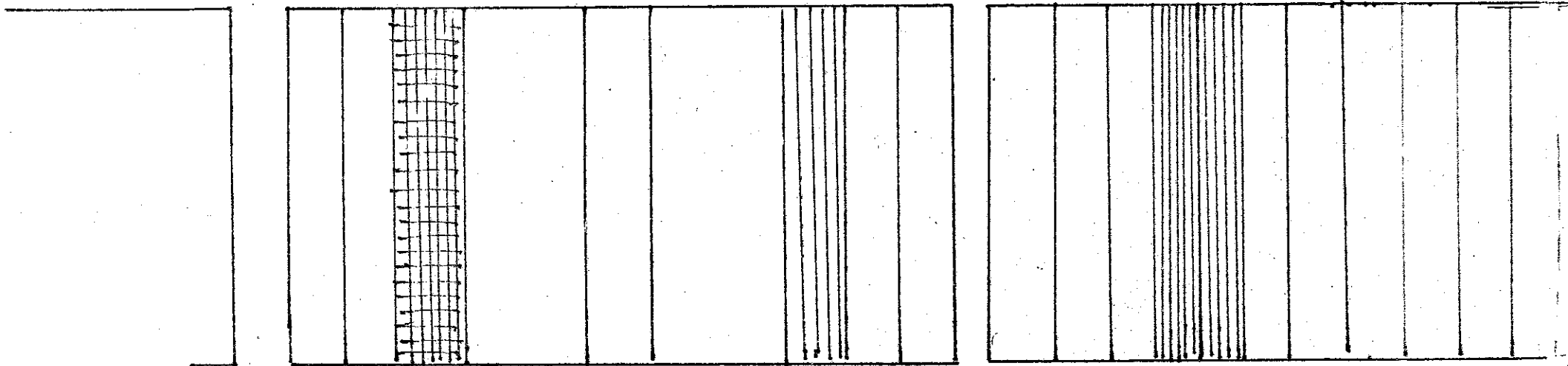


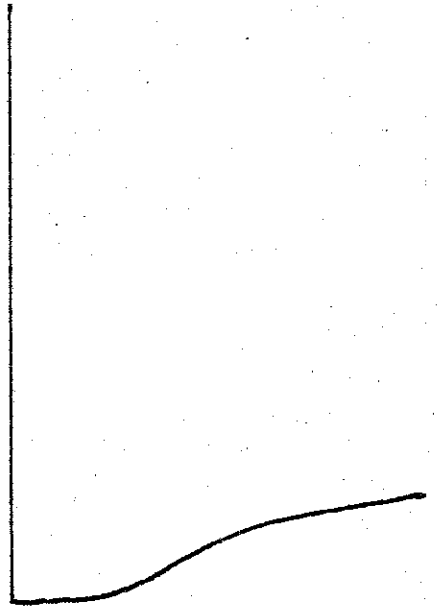
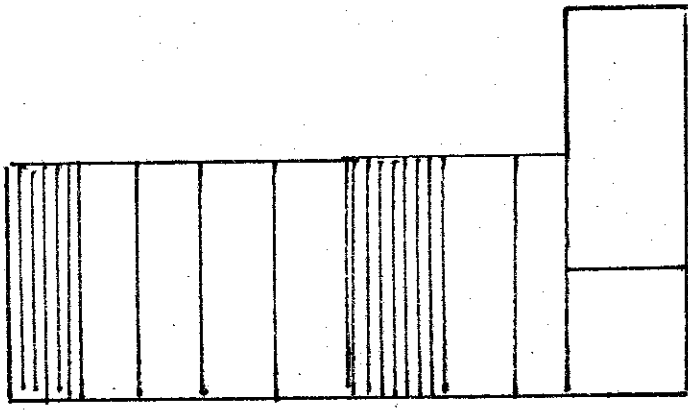
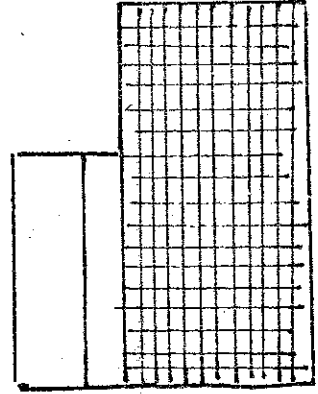
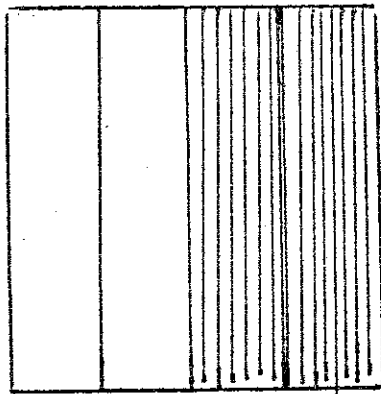
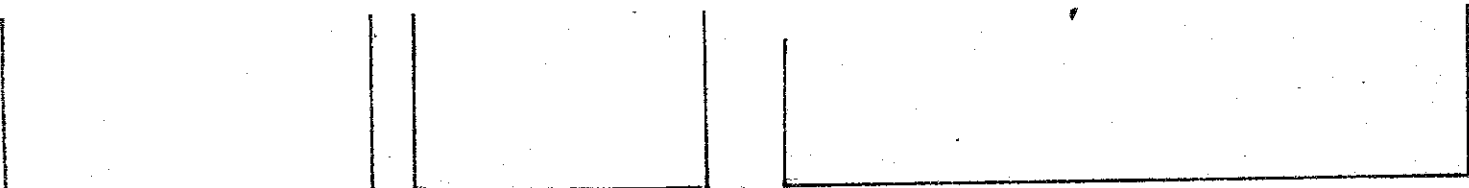
=locals

=commuters

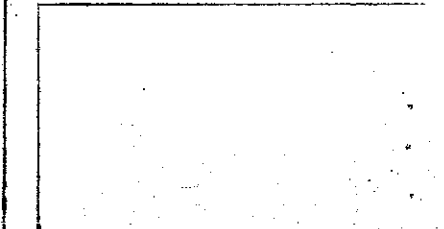
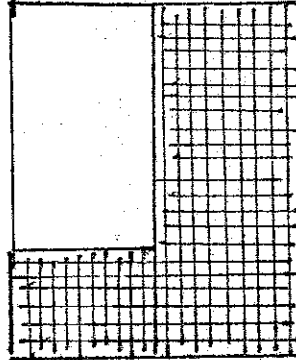
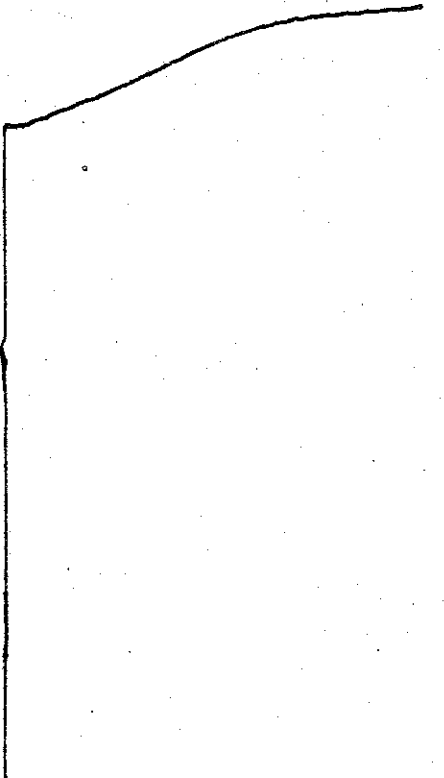
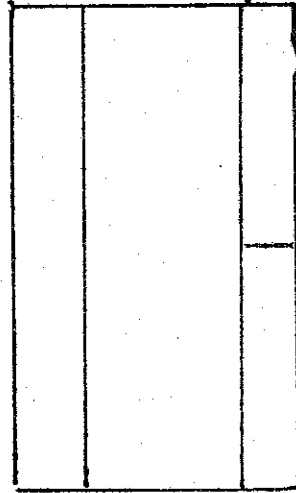
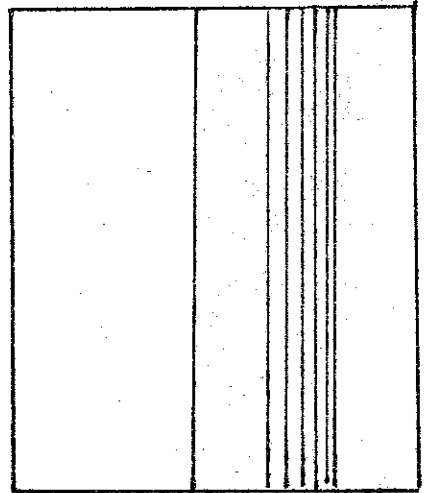
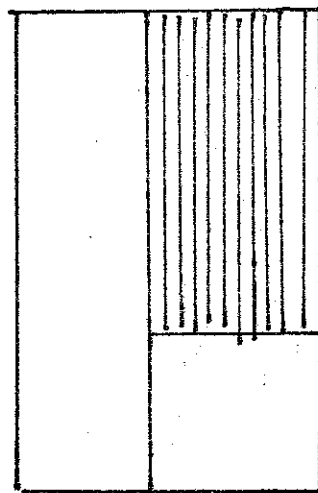
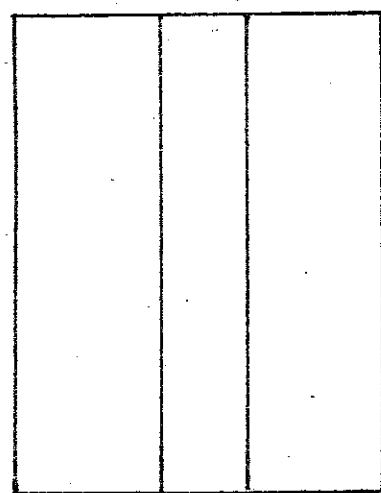


MAIN STREET — GREENVILLE





DA.



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## GLOSSARY

Ashkenazic - Jews of Eastern European and Germanic origin.

Bar Mitzvah - Ceremony for a boy on his thirteenth birthday symbolizing his acceptance as an adult in a Jewish religious congregation.

Bat Mitzvah - Same as Bar Mitzvah for girl of thirteen.

B'nai Brith - men's Jewish lodge

Confirmation - Ceremony at Shavuot to signify the end of formal religious training for youth.

Diaspora - The scattering of Jews throughout the world outside of Israel after the destruction of the Second Temple.

Halacha - Jewish Law

Hadassah - Jewish Women's Zionist Organization (non-partisan in Israeli elections).

Hamentaschen - Triangular pastry baked on Purim.

Hanukkah - Feast of Lights. Celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus.

Haskalah - The Enlightenment. Marks the emancipation of German Jews in the early nineteenth century.

Hebrew - Language of the Jews

Israel Bonds - Major source of investment capital provided by individual purchasers to build up Israeli economy.

Kosher - Generic term for the vast assemblage of Jewish dietary laws.

Macher - A community doer.

Mitzvah - Goodly act.

Mohel - One who performs the ritual circumcision (bris).

National Council of Jewish Women - Liberal Jewish womens social work organization.

Orthodox - Fundamental Judaism

Passover - Holiday celebrating liberation of Jews from Egypt.

Purim - Holiday celebrating the saving of the Jewish community of Persia.

Rosh Hasanah - Jewish New Year.

Reform - Liberal Judaism

GLOSSERY

continued

Shabbat - sabbath

Seders - Meal beginning the celebration of Passover.

Sephardic - Jews of Mediterranean origin

Sisterhood - Women's organization within a Temple responsible for religious and social functions.

Temple - Reform Jewish house of worship

United Jewish Appeal - Federation of diverse Jewish fund raising organizations.

Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement. On this most sacred of days Jews fast and ask G-d and fellows for forgiveness of sins

Zionism - Jewish nationalist movement base on the commitment to a Jewish homeland in Palestine.