

1916



1966

B'NAI EMUNAH

TULSA, OKLAHOMA



IN THE BEGINNING...

Even before Congregation B'nai Emunah became an entity and before Jews emerged as important and active citizens of Tulsa, a number of small Jewish congregations existed in Ardmore, Oklahoma City and other communities.

Ardmore had Oklahoma's first established Jewish community in the 1870's and boasted of a house of worship as early as 1899.

The celebrated April 22, 1889 land rush, which opened Oklahoma for settlement, brought Jews from Kansas into Guthrie, Ponca City and Blackwell. Rosh Hashonah services were held in Oklahoma City in 1890.

The first Oklahoma Jew on record, however, appears to be one Boggy Johnson, a Civil War veteran who settled in Indian Territory shortly after the War Between The States, and married an Indian girl of Chickasaw parentage. His nickname stems from the Boggy Depot, a U.S. government installation in the southeastern part of our state.

Several historians point out that before this time Jews traversed the plains of Oklahoma.

In 1830, Jewish settlers in Arkansas came into the area from Fort Smith to do business with the Indian tribes.

In the 1849 California gold rush, many Jews from the East took the so-called Southern route to the West Coast, leading them through Oklahoma. It is quite possible that some MAY have stopped here and stayed. It is believed that some Jews arrived here in the late 1860's. They were part of the thousands of early Oklahomans who began the illegal occupation of unassigned public lands to which the Indians then held title.

The city of Tulsa, itself, was founded in 1882.

At the turn of the century, Jews began arriving in the city. The Jankowsky family is the first on record, settling here in 1902, four years after Tulsa was officially incorporated.



HEDWIG JANKOWSKY

These pioneers were arriving in Tulsa about the time of the discovery of the state's first commercially important oil well. At this time there were already about 500 Jews in Oklahoma.

Congregation B'nai Emunah had its direct origins in a Minyan begun here by Latvian "landsleit" in 1903. Most of the first Jewish families that arrived in Tulsa came originally from the Varklan, Latvia and had close family and community ties which bound them together immediately.

In those early years, a Rabbi I. Kuperstein arrived from South Africa and served the small group. The original Tulsa Jews, though without a synagogue and without a name, did constitute a congregation. Their leader became Joseph Levine who had arrived here in 1906 from Texas.

Rabbi Kuperstein was soon joined by a Mr. Racow, who served as shochet and chazan.

Into Tulsa and many other communities in the state, during 1901 to 1907, came 145 immigrants. They were brought here by the National Industrial Removal Office. In later years, just before World War I, they came to bear the name of "Galvestons."

Because New York City and the Eastern seaboard were overcrowded with newly-arrived Europeans, this agency was established to bring the refugees into Texas and the Southwest.

Galveston, Texas became a famous port of entry for them and, as they acquired sponsors, they proceeded on their way.

In 1908, a year after Oklahoma statehood, the Rev. M. Himelstein succeeded Mr. Racow. He had come to the United States from Barisseve, Russia and was a son of Rabbi Himelstein of Warsaw, Poland.

Jews in the state now numbered about 1,000.

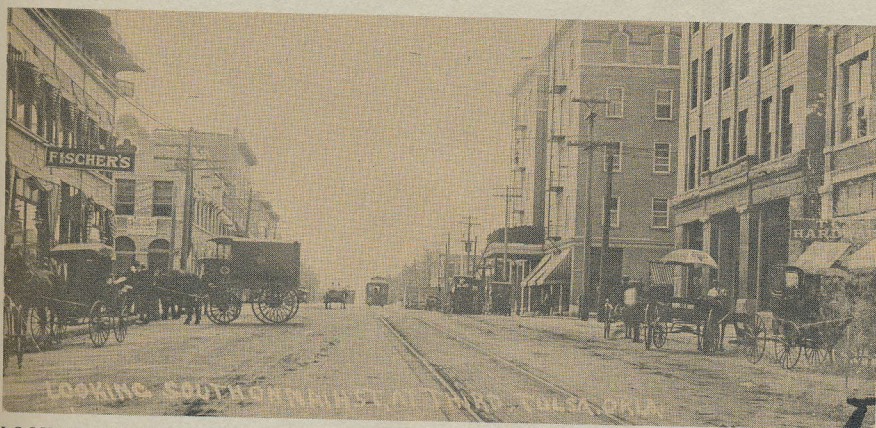


REV. M. HIMELSTEIN

THE EARLY YEARS



MORE EARLY SETTLERS. Front row, left to right: Joseph LeVine, Mrs. Joseph LeVine, Sam Minsky, Mrs. Morten Brown, Morten Brown and Mrs. Sarah Brown. Center row: Moe Adams, Mrs. Moe Adams, Mrs. Abe Minsky and Abe Minsky. Top row: Emmanuel Aaronson, Mrs. Emmanuel Aaronson and Bernie LeVine.



LOOKING SOUTH from 3rd and Main in 1909. Just one block away was Pythian Hall, site of an early High Holyday service.

Miss Lottie Seltner's marriage to Abe Minsky on August 21, 1910 was conducted by Rabbi Kuperstein. Her family had arrived in Tulsa in March, 1906, and Mrs. Minsky remembers, that on the Seltner's arrival, the Jankowsky family, two Kellman families and the Halffs were already here.

The wedding took place in the building occupied by the Producers Supply Co. at the corner of 1st and Elgin. N.C. Livingston had set aside a room on the second floor of the structure as a temporary "shul" and regular services were held there.

Services for the High Holydays, Mrs. Minsky recalls, were held before that time in the home of the elder Kellman family on North Cheyenne street. According to her, these were the first Orthodox High Holyday services in Tulsa—about 1908 and 1909.

Bernard M. Bloch can remember High Holyday minyans of 1909 when there were only nine men scheduled to be present. Mr. Bloch went to Sapulpa and got a man to come to Tulsa and "make" the minyan for that year which was held in the Knights of Pythias building on Second Street.

Between 1906 and 1916, there came into the city families from many states: Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and from the East. The families bore such names as **Travis**, Aaronson, Douglass, Finston, Kornfeld, Davis, Fell, Rubin, Sitrin, Cytron, Stekoll, Feldman, Bloch, Zeligson and others.

One train arriving in March, 1912 from Indiana bore the R.A. Stekoll and the Joe Davis families. Five months later another train arrived with the Jacob Fell, J.M. Stekoll, Harry Stekoll and Sam Diamond families.

In about 1911 Rabbi Kuperstein had departed from Tulsa for a new post and, for a few years, Rev. Himmelstein was the only Jewish clergyman serving the fledgling community. The entire population of Tulsa during this time numbered 18,000.



A VETERAN B'NAI EMUNAH FAMILY GATHERING. Front row, left to right: L. E. Z. Aaronson, Grace Kroll, Cornelius Kroll and Mrs. L. E. Z. Aaronson. Center row: **Marion M. Travis, Esther Travis**. Back row: Jesse Finston, Pearl Finston, Charles Dougliis, Sylvia Dougliis, Alfred Aaronson and Mrs. Alfred Aaronson.



H. I. KORNFELD



JOSEPH DAVIS



ROBERT A. STEKOLL

THE EARLY YEARS

For holidays and special services, visitors came to the minyans from outside the city. For example, the Minskys had moved to Sapulpa in 1911, joining a small Jewish community there.

Although there were services there, Sapulpans for the most part traveled to Tulsa for the holidays, as did Jews from many surrounding towns.

"Memories of the past . . . memories that make one tingle with sentiment, occasions that make one recall joys as well as those which make one sad!"

That's the way Mrs. Jack Gelfand remembers the days before Tulsa had its first synagogue.

"I recall those years from 1911 to 1916," she says, "especially the years just before B'nai Emunah officially began. Like many others, my parents were living in a small Oklahoma town, having recently come there from Ohio.

"At Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur time, my parents would gather us all and depart for Tulsa. We were only fifty miles away, but it took practically all day to get there. We had to take a train to Claremore and wait there for the Tulsa train. But we took this long trip. To my parents, holidays meant they had to be observed to the fullest extent, no matter what the cost in time or money; it was something they looked forward to!"

Mrs. Gelfand easily pictures the places of worship in the years of 1914-16. High Holyday services were held on the second floor of a building on Second Street between Main and Boston; or in the Elks Clubroom at 3rd and Boulder; or in the Ohio Building which was just north of the Mayo building on Main . . . "Any place the few Jewish people could rent."

Regular weekday services were also held often in the Himelstein home, and there were sometimes two minyans — one to the North and one on the Southside. By this time the Jewish population in the city had reached 300. Oklahoma City had achieved that total back in 1908.

It wasn't too much longer and the High Holyday services had outgrown

these places . . . the Livingston "shul" was proving to be inadequate.

By now, two very definite Orthodox "communities" were emerging: a North and a South.

This situation, a population explosion coupled with the many who came to services from out-of-town, touched off many discussions leading to a solution that would involve a new House of Worship.

In the years prior to 1916, Sunday School classes were held in the home of our first principal and teacher, M. Liberman.

The few students gathered on South Baltimore street and there are several today who can still recall the sessions. Mr. Liberman also taught private Hebrew lessons in later years before leaving Tulsa for a new position.



M. LIBERMAN

Far to go to a butcher shop for the kosher meats in those days? Not really, since one had a choice of shopping at Max Feldman's store (brother of Robert A. Feldman) located at the corner of Haskell and Main-Boulder . . . or at M. Green's store on 9th Street between Cincinnati and Detroit. Both stores also had customers in the small northeastern Oklahoma towns to whom they sent their wares.

"Tulsans were very observant Jews, very religious and very congenial"

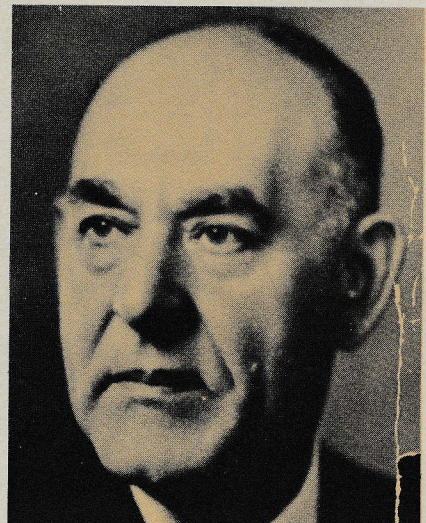
This was the immediate reaction Mrs. Alfred Aaronson had when she

arrived here in 1915. "In general," she says, "my first impressions of the orthodox community here were of a close-knit and happy group."

A CONGREGATION IS BORN

On November 6, 1915, Tulsa attorney Ray S. Fellows of the Bell & Fellows law firm filed with the Oklahoma Secretary of State the articles of incorporation for B'nai Emunah.

The fifth article of this paper noted that "there shall be seven Trustees of this corporation, and at an election held in the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 1st, 1915, the following named Trustees or Directors were elected to serve:



JACOB BEREN

"N.C. Livingston, J. Beren, Alfred E. Aaronson, Emile Offenbacher, Robert Stekoll, M. M. Travis and M. Rubin."

The purpose of B'nai Emunah was set forth as follows:

"To provide for and develop the religious, social and benevolent interests of its members, in any manner whatsoever, and to develop and provide for the religious, social and charitable interests of any other persons in whom the members of said congregation may be interested; to acquire and hold such property, both real and personal . . ."

Marion M. Travis, one of the original trustees, said recently, "Thus we created B'nai Emunah. Our beloved friend, the late Rev. Himelstein, shochet and Ba'al Tefillah, suggested the name which means 'Sons of Faith.'"



MARION M. TRAVIS
President of Congregation
1915 to 1919; 1920 to 1922



SAM TRAVIS

Mr. Travis, a highly successful independent oil producer, became the first president of the new congregation, as it wrestled with its 1915 growing pains.

Mr. Travis added: "When I had given the contract for the construction of the Synagogue to the Blair

brothers, my friends all laughed at me for building a shul for a non-existent congregation. Then, when the building was going up, it generated excitement. My brother Sam joined me, and others, too, expressed a willingness to join a congregation."

Rabbi Randall Falk, who served Tulsa's Temple Israel in the 1940's, wrote his rabbinical thesis on the history of Oklahoma and Tulsa Jewry. In it, he noted:

"When the B'nai Emunah congregation purchased the lot at 919 South Cheyenne to build their first Synagogue, a small cottage stood on there. This cottage was moved to the rear of the lot, and in 1916 it was taken over by the newly created Hachnosas Orchim society as an integral part of the congregation's philanthropic activity. There was, however, no Bikkur Cholim society in the Synagogue."

Hachnosas Orchim was a society which took care of the newcomers and itinerant Jews. "Mr. Himelstein lived in these quarters," Rabbi Falk continued, "and provided lodging and meals for transient Jews who came to Tulsa."

The Bikkur Cholim society is the group that would visit the sick in the community, and also aid the ill who were poor.

Marion Travis continued, "Our Mr. Himelstein distributed charity funds which were sent to him by our members. Neither the recipient nor the giver knew one another. It was all done anonymously"

OUR FIRST SYNAGOGUE

"Well, sir, I was thirty one then and, of course, had never built anything like that before."

The voice is that of John T. Blair who, with his brother, constructed our first house of prayer. He still resides in Tulsa and he was interviewed in November of 1965.

"I guess the memories I have of the old Synagogue are really the human interest ones. At least they seem that way now.

"We started building in November, 1915. I recall my carpenters were getting four dollars a day, plumbers

two dollars and bricklayers six dollars.

Marion Travis and Lionel Aaronson came to me one day and employed me to do the job. I had been building houses for them back then and was right in the middle of doing some.

"Who do I remember from that job? Well, of course Marion and Lionel... and the Douglass's, Finston's... I remember Rev. Himelstein as if it were today. The Kornfelds... Alfred Aaronson was a young man then, and, oh, so many others that I can't recall the names. But I had never been on a job where so many people were so terribly interested in the job.

"And the women! They were there on every good day. And we heard them talking about what they would do when the vestry rooms were finished, and the affairs they could then hold in the Synagogue.

"Really, I guess the main thing about the building I recall was that they said: 'Here's what we want... you build it! And we did!'"

In the thesis mentioned above, Rabbi Falk comments that the Synagogue was built under the supervision of the only Jewish architect in Tulsa, Mr. J. Albert. This name does appear on a B'nai Emunah membership list of 1918, the first available.

Continues Mr. Blair:

"When the roof was on, with that big dome, and we started working inside, along came Rev. Himelstein and Mr. **Travis** and said, 'Mr. Blair, we've got to have a purification pool for the women somewhere in that basement!'

"So there we went... tunneling in under the front wall, under the wood floor of the basement and under the stairs with drainage lines and new plumbing lines.

"Then, a few days later, the women of the Ladies Aid Society, or whatever it was called, decided that the inside of the dome on top of the Synagogue—it was copper—ought to be painted with a mural or scene of some kind.

"We finally lined up a painter from Kansas City to come down and do the job. And he did a beautiful

THE EARLY YEARS

job! And by the way, that dome will be there until Gabriel blows his horn.

"But until he finished, I thought the rest of us were going to have apoplexy. What we didn't know, until he got up on the scaffolding and started working, was that we had gotten a drinker! And you should have seen some of the episodes when the women would be on the floor below, giving instructions to him above.

"We were handicapped then, you know, because the people who owned the little strip of land on the south wouldn't sell it to the Congregation. They wanted to buy that too, the strip right on Highway 66 where the Teamsters Hall building now stands, but couldn't get it.

"That was going to have a house on it, sort of a rectory, for the Rev. Himelstein and his family.

"So with this narrow piece of land, and the congregation wanting definitely to have a meeting room and reception room, we had to go to a basement and so we had the main floor five feet off the ground level. That's why you had so many stairs going up the front of the Synagogue.

"Then, came another last minute emergency! The building committee told me there had to be a partition right down the center aisle of the Synagogue, so that at certain services such as weddings, or other events, the men and women would be segregated on the first floor.

"Well, there just wasn't enough room between the pews or benches to build a partition, so we decided to bring in seventy feet of beautiful velour and a movable frame to hang it on... about seven or eight feet tall... it would go down the middle of the center aisle. Closest place we could find that was in Kansas City."

In relation to this **Marion Travis** relates: "My brothers, who were ultra-orthodox, were against men and women sitting together or for women sitting downstairs. But some of the wives of the members refused to sit in the balcony. Compromise being the art of the possible, we tried to make everyone happy. We, therefore, wound up with men and

women sitting on one side of the building, in family pews, and the men alone sitting on the other side, with a high curtain between the two sides down the center aisle."

Mr. Blair goes on:

"Of course, my people and I were not allowed to work on Saturdays; otherwise, I believe the job could have finished up about a month earlier than it did.

"And those stained glass windows! For the molding between the different pieces, to join them together, we used lead. Now that's really permanent.

"And finally, I remember the day the Synagogue was officially dedicated.

"**Mr. Travis** had called me and asked me to be at the Synagogue about two that afternoon with my bill for the building... that he had the money he was paying... and the bill was to be paid off then since the dedication was scheduled for eight that night.

"When I got there, instead of presenting a bill for \$16,000 which was our original estimate and agreement, the bill came to about \$19,000. The committee had forgotten and NOT figured the extra costs of constructing the purification pool, painting the dome or providing the velour curtain and frame for the center aisle.

"I told them they could certainly pay the balance at a later date, but Rev. Himelstein would not permit this, saying, 'We will NOT dedicate a building to God that is not in some way paid for!'

"I belonged to Holy Family congregation, just a block away, and I came up with an idea that WE had used when we built our cathedral. We had solicited contributions from non-members, Catholic or not, and went way over our goal. But the Building committee that afternoon turned that down.

"Then Rev. Himelstein had an idea.

"They would hold two services that night instead of one... the first, beginning at 7 p.m. would be to dedicate the Scroll of the Law that had been contributed to the Synagogue by someone in the Travis

family. And for that service they would charge admission. And the people sitting in the first rows, closest to the pulpit, would pay more than those in the back rows.

"And so, at three in the afternoon, together with **Marion Travis**, Rev. Himelstein and Lionel Aaronson, I walked down the aisle and we figured out how many people would be sitting in what rows and how much it would take per row per seat to raise the additional money.

"People in the first row finally were to pay \$15, I think it was, and those in the very last row of the balcony would pay \$1.50. And that's what they did... with the official dedication of the Synagogue coming later in the evening."

In a matter of only four or five years, there was to exist in Tulsa still another Synagogue, the Aaronson Chapel, built in the Lionel E. Z. Aaronson home. Regular services and High Holyday services were held. In fact, Cantor Pincus Jassinowsky was brought to Tulsa to conduct year-round services for this Minyan which was attended by many Tulsans.



WAR GOD'S EYE TURNED TO GREECE FOR NEXT MOVE

King Is Being Urged to Move His Forces Toward Entente. Cabinet is Waiting England's Word.

U. S. WARSHIPS MAKE RECORD WITH BIG GUNS

Others Two Fast a New Mark in the Naval Target Practice.

MEXICO KETTLE BOILING AGAIN AS VILLA RUNS

Guards are Forced to Protect the Headquarters of Gonzalez.

MICHIGAN CENTRAL TRAIN IS HELD UP

GANG OF TRAIN ROBBERS HOLD UP NUMBER FOURTEEN AND GET AWAY.

NEW YORK LINES RUN THEIR CARS DESPITE STRIKE

Although Unions Claim Thousands Have Left Work, Claim Denied.

CHINA'S OPEN DOOR POLICY AIDS JAPAN

JAP MINISTER OF FINANCE TELLS AID OF THE UNITED STATES.

DRIVE A WEDGE INTO THE LINE OF ENEMY ARMY

Entente Has Transformed Twenty-one Mile Battle Line Just Won.

Greek Battleship Joins the Fleet of the Allies in Mediterranean.

LONDON, Sept. 27.—(12:34 a. m.)—The Greek battleship, which has been ordered to join the fleet of the allies in the Mediterranean, is expected to arrive in the harbor of Athens.

TULSA AMBULANCE UNIT READY TO GO

Captain La Reau Hears Orders to Move Area on Their Way Here.

BANDIT LEADS MEN AHEAD OF RAMOS

Escorts are Doubled on All Trains, Although Some are Wrecked.

HULL'S STRONG FOR PROSPERITY

In His Special Address He Tells Prosperity to Large Crowds.

UNIONISTS CLAIMING SHORTS WON'T MEET

Police Arrest Several Who Try to Start Trouble by Throwing Rocks.

OBSERVE JEWISH NEW YEAR TODAY

Orthodox Hebrews to Celebrate Occasion With Services in 2 Churches.

NORTH OF THIEFVAL THE FRENCH GAIN

Little News Comes From Russia as to Activities of the Armies.

ATHERS Sept. 28.—(12 noon via London, Sept. 28.)—The Greek battleship, which has been ordered to join the fleet of the allies in the Mediterranean, is expected to arrive in the harbor of Athens.

TULSA AMBULANCE UNIT READY TO GO

Captain La Reau Hears Orders to Move Area on Their Way Here.

BANDIT LEADS MEN AHEAD OF RAMOS

Escorts are Doubled on All Trains, Although Some are Wrecked.

HULL'S STRONG FOR PROSPERITY

In His Special Address He Tells Prosperity to Large Crowds.

UNIONISTS CLAIMING SHORTS WON'T MEET

Police Arrest Several Who Try to Start Trouble by Throwing Rocks.

OBSERVE JEWISH NEW YEAR TODAY

Orthodox Hebrews to Celebrate Occasion With Services in 2 Churches.

NORTH OF THIEFVAL THE FRENCH GAIN

Little News Comes From Russia as to Activities of the Armies.

BANKERS TO BEGIN REAL MEET TODAY

Yesterday Was Spent at Home of Horsewoman Watching Exhibition.

REPUBLICAN CLUBS PLAN A CAMPAIGN

Meeting to be Held in Tulsa, Okla., Sept. 29.

TOM ATKINS CASE COMES UP IN D. C.

PORT SMITH, Ark., Sept. 27.—Application for a writ of habeas corpus for Tom Atkins, who was arrested here last week, was granted by the federal court.

SCHOOL BOYS SEEK SOCIAL POSITION

Students of the Tulsa High School are seeking social position by organizing a club.

ROTARIANS LEARN OF 2 ACTIVITIES

The practice of medicine and the practice of law were the two activities learned of by the Rotarians.

DEATH NEAR WHEN HORSE THROWS HER

Thrown from her mount while riding towards the city, a woman was killed by a horse.

GLAUB SITE FOR 8-STORY EDIFICE

Architects on Hand to Plan Work of New Sinclair Building.

YESTERDAY WAS SPENT AT HOME OF HORSEWOMAN WATCHING EXHIBITION.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Sept. 27.—Bankers attending the annual convention of the American Bankers Association here have had time to play today, following the closing sessions of the various sessions.

REPUBLICAN CLUBS PLAN A CAMPAIGN

Meeting to be Held in Tulsa, Okla., Sept. 29.

TOM ATKINS CASE COMES UP IN D. C.

PORT SMITH, Ark., Sept. 27.—Application for a writ of habeas corpus for Tom Atkins, who was arrested here last week, was granted by the federal court.

SCHOOL BOYS SEEK SOCIAL POSITION

Students of the Tulsa High School are seeking social position by organizing a club.

ROTARIANS LEARN OF 2 ACTIVITIES

The practice of medicine and the practice of law were the two activities learned of by the Rotarians.

DEATH NEAR WHEN HORSE THROWS HER

Thrown from her mount while riding towards the city, a woman was killed by a horse.

GLAUB SITE FOR 8-STORY EDIFICE

Architects on Hand to Plan Work of New Sinclair Building.

OPEN A SYNAGOGUE ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

A NEW SYNAGOGUE AND ROSH HASHONA command headlines on page 1 of the Tulsa World of September 28, 1916.



FIRST HOUSE OF WORSHIP



SUCCOS FINERY EXHIBITED on steps of Cheyenne Synagogue by, left to right, Goldie Weinstein, Lena Seltner Aaronson, Fannie Vinick and Sina Turk — 1916.

IT WAS A YEAR WHEN ...

At the same time that Harry Sinclair could announce formation of the \$50 million oil company bearing his name in this new, sophisticated city, an MK&T train could be stopped and robbed by two men, an hour after it had departed from the North Main Street station.

It was a year when all churches in Tulsa banded together in a "Home Visitation Movement"; 2000 persons went door-to-door interviewing EVERY family in the city and issuing invitations (in seven languages) to attend a church of "your choice" for services the following week. Rev. Himmelstein was an official of the project and **Marion Travis** headed the "Classification committee."

It was a war year: battles raging in Europe but the U.S. was not yet in it. General Pershing's troops crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico

chasing Pancho Villa's renegade bandits... the city's Jewry, with N.C. Livingston at the head, collected money for war sufferers in Poland. After Governor Robert Williams issued a special proclamation, Tulsans gave between \$300 and \$500 a month.

Tulsans at this time were viewing one of the most phenomenal pictures of growth this city has ever recorded. The building permit ledger at City Hall showed that 500 buildings and homes were in different stages of construction. The Tulsa World stated that "a new building start was made every 29 minutes!"

A newspaper summary of building going on in Tulsa included this reference to our Synagogue: "This building, when finished, means the addition to Tulsa's church edifices of one of the most beautiful churches

in the Southwest. The Blair brothers, contractors, hope to have all the work completed by September 1st."

In May of 1916, the Tulsa World noted that the first annual Ball of the Young Men's Hebrew Association was scheduled for the Elks Club building. At two other times attempts were made to organize a Y.M.H.A. but without genuine success.

While workers erected the South Cheyenne house of worship, the Masonic Temple on South Boston was almost ready to be started.

Charles Evan Hughes, Republican, and Theodore Roosevelt, Progressive, were nominated for the presidency. But the Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, would win the 1916 election. Louis Brandeis was approved as a Supreme Court justice, the first Jew to hold this exalted position.

... expressed the hope that America and Japan "will remain as they have been for the last sixty years, fast friends and co-operate in the development of commerce and resources of the regions bordering on the Pacific"

OBSERVE JEWISH NEW YEAR TODAY

Orthodox Hebrews to Celebrate Occasion With Services in 2 Churches.

TODAY marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year or Rosh Hashanah. One hundred and fifty families of the Jewish people resident in Tulsa will attend the ceremonies which will be held in two different places in the city. The orthodox Jews will assemble in the new synagogue, while the reformed or progressive Jews will assemble in Ohio hall.

The date of Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the month of Tishri and the New Year now to be ushered in, is according to the traditional Jewish calendar the year 5677.

The orthodox services will begin this morning at 7:30 and will last until 2 in the afternoon at the new synagogue, 219 South Cheyenne. The New Year will be ushered in by the blowing of the shofar or ram's horn. The Rev. M. Himmelstein will hold this ceremony. The sermon will be preached by the new rabbi, Morris Teller. As the orthodox Jew does not believe the New Year a time for song and festivity there will be no musical program. It is the time for repentance and prayer and with this idea in mind, the services, though impressive, will be quiet.

Rabbi Feldman Here.

Rabbi A. J. Feldman, who has come from Cincinnati, will conduct the services of the Reformed church, which will begin at 10 o'clock at Ohio hall. Rabbi Feldman describes the services as follows:

"There will be the usual prelude at 10 o'clock, after which the officers of the congregation, led by the rabbi bearing the sacred scroll, will march slowly in while the organist plays the processional. All the congregation will stand while the choir will sing, 'Lift Up Your Head O Ye Gates'."

"When the choir stops its song the rabbi will place the sacred scroll into the ark and read the prayer. This prayer has been especially written by Prof. K. Kohler, president of the Union Hebrew college at Cincinnati and head of the progressive Jews of America."

"The choir will then sing, 'It Is the Tree of Light,' and the congregation which has been standing will be seated. The sermon will then be preached during which there will be singing. 'The Torah and Life—Inseparable.' Professor Carson of Kendall college will be in charge of the music."

"The spirit of the New Year services in the progressive church," Rabbi Feldman explains, "is that of self-judgment. As in nature, the harvest season is over and the autumn season is approaching, solemn, serious thoughts arise in the mind. It is the time for forgiveness and repentance."

Tulsa World of September 28, 1916.

A map of the city in this paper showed the city's boundaries as being Pine street on the North . . . 15th street to the South . . . Lewis on the East . . . and the western boundary was a mile west of Denver and portions of West Tulsa.

Finally, in September, as Tulsa Jews and those of surrounding Oklahoma towns approached the High Holyday period, a young Rabbi who recently had graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America came to town to assume B'nai Emunah's spiritual helm—his first pulpit.



RABBI MORRIS TELLER
1916 to 1925

Born in 1890 in Galicia Rabbi Morris Teller had come to the United States when seven years of age. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1912.

Rabbi Teller conducted the new congregation's first Yom Tov service. The Tulsa Democrat said that some stores that year, owned by Jews, "will close for the entire 10 days between Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur."

From miles around, Jews came into the city, which had a total population of 40,000. The Synagogue, "a beautiful edifice of tapestry brick, built to seat 250 persons" was overcrowded as 400 came to pray. The 29 actual members were host to a heartwarming religious observance.



HYMAN APPLEMAN
President of Talmud Torah
1916 to 1923

The words of Mrs. Jack Gelfand, remembering services at the Synagogue, are applicable:

"Each Saturday morning the women of the Congregation," reminisces Mrs. Gelfand, "and there were many of them, including my dear Mother, walked to the Shul.

"The men had gone earlier in the morning. The women climbed the front steps, then reached the lobby, turned either to the right or the left and ascended the narrow steps. From there, they would look down to the main floor where the men of the community were gathered, wrapped in their taleysim.

"And on Kol Nidre night, the aliyahs were auctioned off. I can still hear whoever it was, calling out the rising prices. This was done, first, because we needed the money and second, the members of the congregation considered it a distinct privilege and honor to ascend the Bima and chant part of the service."

One of the first services of the newly chartered Congregation B'nai Emunah was a special one, held to pray for the Jews of all nations who had been slain in battle in World War I.

In 1916, just after completion of the Synagogue a Talmud Torah was organized with Mr. Max Lieberman as its first teacher. This school graduated its first class three years later, a group of eight boys.

1917

This was the year when Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour of Great Britain issued his famous declaration stating that his nation viewed "with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people..." thus giving the Zionist movement its greatest impetus to date.

And it was in the early autumn of 1917, Mrs. Pearl Gordon says, when Rabbi Teller called her to a meeting in the basement vestry rooms of the Synagogue for an organizational meeting of B'nai Emunah Sisterhood.

When she arrived, the Rabbi was standing in front of the Talmud Torah's Aron Kodesh in the basement speaking to only nine women who were in attendance. It was decided since not enough had appeared to form the nucleus, they would try again later.

"Only a month later," Mrs. Gordon relates, "the Rabbi called a meeting and this time eighteen women were present and Sisterhood was born."

Among those present at the second meeting, according to Mrs. Gordon, were Mrs. Dougkis, Mrs. C. H. Lebow, Hedwig Jankowsky,

Mrs. Joe Davis, Mrs. Abe Stekoll, Mrs. Abe Dritch, Mrs. Robert Feldman, Mrs. Jacob Fell, Mrs. Morris Foonberg, Mrs. D. R. Travis, and Mrs. Hyman Appleman.

Thus the strong organization that now, in 1966, numbers over 250 was on its way. Mrs. Dougkis was elected president and later Mrs. C. H. Lebow became a president.



MRS. JACOB FELL



MRS. HYMAN APPLEMAN



MRS. ABE DRITCH



FOUR OF OUR PRESIDENTS are in this wedding group. In fact, the groom was A. E. Lewis shown seated in the center next to his bride, the former Sarah Appleman. Also in the party are former presidents Marion Travis, David Travis and Emile Offenbacher. In the photo are other Travises, Applemans, Sitrins, Rubys, and Mrs. Dorothy Turk.

"Beth Raphael Cemetary?"

That's the name our congregation originally used for its section of ground at Rose Hill Cemetary. How did B'nai Emunah begin its use of this burial area?

When in January, 1917 a funeral and burial were to be held, Lionel E. Z. Aaronson and Marion Travis went to Rose Hill and purchased the plot of ground that is now the B'nai Emunah area.

A small chapel was also built there at this time, but was removed in the 1920's.

N. C. Livingston was the guiding light behind establishment of the Chevra Kadisha organization and its president or Gabbai Rishon for its first years.



N. C. LIVINGSTON
Founder, 1917
Chevra Kadisha

Later, Hyman Appleman donated the funds necessary to acquire additional land holdings in order to more adequately meet the needs of the growing community.

Fanny Hoffman and Betty LeVine and several other ladies organized



MRS. JOSEPH LEVINE
A Founder of Ladies' Division
Chevra Kadisha
1917

a sewing club which met at the mortuary where the 1st National Bank of Tulsa stands in 1966. Their "sewing"? The women prepared the shrouds for the burial of the Jewish dead. These were the beginnings of the Chevra Kadisha in 1917.

During Chol Ha'moed Passover, Marion Travis was re-elected president. Alfred Aaronson served as vice-president and Max Travis, treasurer.

April 6—the date the U.S. entered World War I after trying so desperately to keep out.

"Tulsa County in the First World War," a historical work quoted in a 1953 Tulsa Jewish Review, showed that several congregation members were active in various WWI activities.

Irvin Simons was among the first Tulsans in the Tulsa Ambulance Corps. Busy in the 4th Liberty Loan drive were Mrs. Charles Douglass, Mrs. L. E. Z. Aaronson, Ben Pearlstein, Sam Boorstin, M.R. Travis, Jeb Lewis and J.K. Livingston.

In the 5th Liberty Loan Drive were Marion Travis and L. E. Z. Aaronson.

Joe Olson was in the United War Work Campaign representing the Jewish Welfare Board. He served on its Executive Committee. One of the Team Captains in this campaign was Mrs. Alfred Aaronson.

When the Jewish Welfare Board called on Rabbi Teller and Rabbi Jacob Menkes of Temple Israel to serve as religious secretaries of Camp Doniphan, they cheerfully consented to render the service to their country and to their fellow Jews. It was their duty to visit the Camp from time to time. Camp Doniphan was a training area in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

For the Jewish holidays, all the Jewish boys in the service were invited by the members of the Tulsa Jewish community to spend the holidays with them and through the efforts of the Rabbis and Emile Offenbacher and Mrs. Charles Douglass, arrangements were made by local families to billet them.

The following is a list of Tulsa Jewish men who served in the Armed Forces during World War I accord-

ing to the above mentioned article in the Review:

Maurice Bloch, Alex Karchmer, Harold Aaronson, Julius Livingston, Joseph Feenberg, P.A. Fox, Sidney Jakousky, Louis M. Brenner, Ben Landa, W. R. Livingston, Carl Livingston, Sam Matofsky, Sam Miller, Wolf C. Turk, William Viner, Harry Vinick, Herbert Weisburg, Simon Adler, Sylvan Goldman, H. A. Greenberg, Herman Greenberg, Joseph Kroll, George Lehrman, Milton H. Levy, Maurice Bernstein, E. J. Bernstein, D. A. Finkelstein, Harry Moskowitz, William Rabkin, Herman Rosenthal, William Rosenthal and Charles Vinick.

Many members of B'nai Emunah were at top levels of leadership in active organizations *outside* of the Synagogue.

Rabbi Falk, in his rabbinical thesis, said:

"One of these organizations was the Jewish National Workers Alliance. It was founded in 1917 by Louis Krasner, W. J. Levine and Abe Abend. It was a fraternal, liberal order with socialist tendencies nationally, though in Tulsa the activities of the group were primarily social in nature. The Alliance sponsored the first community Chanukah celebration as well as other holiday events.



ABE ABEND

"A segment of its membership was almost fanatically anti-religious," comments Rabbi Falk, "and on at least one occasion they sponsored a Yom Kippur dance to divert the attention of its membership from the spiritual aspects of this sacred day."

1917



TULSA AND NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA became the 'Golden Land' for these early settlers. Front row, left to right: Abe Dritch, Meyer Dritch, Mrs. Abe Stekoll, Tillie Stekoll, Ann Plost, Sam Plost, Ethel Plost, Mary Stavinsky.
 Center row: Mrs. Abe Dritch, Rose Dritch, Abe Stekoll, Boruch Stekoll, Harry Stekoll, George Roberts, Mike Roberts, Fanny Plost.
 Top row: Joe Freed, Mrs. Harry Freed, Mrs. Meyer Roberts, Meyer Roberts, Abe Skuy, Sarah Roberts, Mrs. Ezra Dritch, Fanny Skuy and Joe Davis.

11952
NO. _____

COMD. 11952

General Warranty Deed

FROM

M. M. Travis, et al

TO

Congregation B'nei Emunah

STATE OF OKLAHOMA, SS.
 County of Tulsa

This instrument was filed for record on the
 17 day of April 1918
 at 140 o'clock P. M. and duly recorded
 in book 245 page 303 of the
 records of this office.

Lucie Reed
Clerk.

W. M. ...
Deputy Clerk.

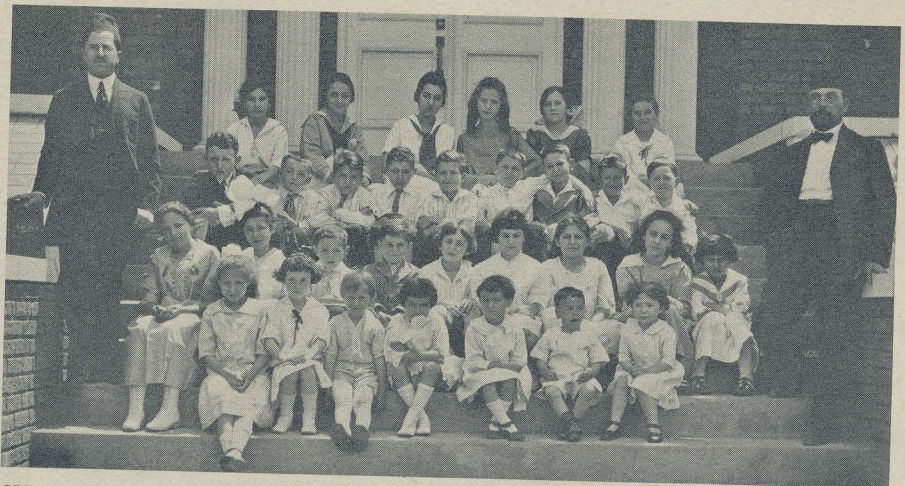
Miss ...
Burkhardt Pkg. & Sta. Co. Tulsa, Okla.
192 - City



SOUTH CHEYENNE PROPERTY, on which our first Synagogue was built, was deeded in 1918 by Mr. and Mrs. Marion Travis to the Congregation.



MRS. BERNARD DOUGLIS
 First President of Sisterhood
 1917 to 1920; 1921 to 1923



SUNDAY MORNING SCHOLARS IN 1917. Their teachers—Rabbi Morris Teller, left, and Rev. M. Himelstein.
 Front row, left to right: Regina Jankowsky, Jean Kantor, unidentified girl, Bessie Davis, Netti Himelstein, Aaron Himelstein and Nan Jankowsky.
 Second row: Betty Kaufman, Sandra Miller, Kaufman boy, Kornfeld boy, Beren girl, Ann Miller, Ida Bercutt, Sara Beren and Sadye Kornfeld.
 Third row: Harry Goodman, Mike Green, Harry Davis, Paul Jankowsky, Joe Kornfeld, Morris Himelstein, Bernie Levine, Kornfeld boy and Stanley Reinstein.
 Top row: Eva Weinstein, Hannah Himelstein, Fannie Green, Mildred Kaufman, Francis Moskowitz and Gertrude Goodman.



36 PIONEERS OF B'NAI EMUNAH! Just before a joyous kiddush in honor of the birth of Ike Ruby's oldest son, about 1918, the group included men whose names were Travis, Green, Beren, Appleman, Stekoll, Kornfeld, Aaronson, Livingston, and YOU will know others. Standing at the left, 2nd and 3rd, are Rabbi Morris Teller and Rev. M. Himmelstein.

MEMBERS CONGREGATION B'NAI EMUNAH

9-1-18

- Aaronson, A.
- Aaronson, Alfred E.
- Aaronson, L. E. Z.
- Abend, A.
- Albert, J.
- Appleman, A. M.
- Appleman, H.
- Appleman, L.
- *Baroff, Chas.
- Bercutt, M.
- Beren, J.
- Bier, S. M.
- Birnbaum, J.
- Davis, J.
- Douglas, B.
- Douglas, Chas.
- Dritch, A.
- Dundee, N.
- Feenberg, D.
- Fell, J.

*In U. S. Army Service.

21

- Finston, J. K.
- Goodman, F.
- Goodman, T. H.
- Green, M.
- Hoffman, M.
- Jankowsky, S.
- Karchmer, A.
- Kaufman, E.
- Kornfeld, H. I.
- Krasner, L.
- Kroll, C.
- Lack, S.
- Lebow, H. C.
- Lebow, M.
- Levinson, M.
- Livingston, H.
- Livingston, J. K.
- Livingston, N. C.
- Marcus, J.
- Martin, N.
- Miller, J.
- Miller, Sam
- Mizel, A.
- Offenbacher, Emile
- Olsan, J., Sr.
- Olsan, J., Jr.
- Olsan, L.
- Perlstein, B.
- Plot, S.
- Poplinger, Ph.

22

- 1635. Tower J. R. Travis*
Yo. O.K.S. Co. B. Robinson
Rubin Plot
3. J. Markowitz
at Markowitz
J. Cohen
Blum
Del. Weintraub
H. Mizel
S. Selinger
- Ravitz, J.
 - Ravitz, R.
 - Reedman, Wm.
 - Reinstein, M.
 - Ripps, Sam
 - Roberts, M.
 - Rosenberg, M.
 - Rubin, M.
 - Ruby, I.
 - Ruby, M.
 - Sitrin, S.
 - Stekoli, H.
 - Stekoll, J. M.
 - Stekoll, L.
 - Stekoll, R. A.
 - Schuman, M.
 - Supnik, H.
 - Tarshis, R.
 - Travis, D. R.
 - Travis, M. M.
 - Travis, Marion M.
 - Travis, S. R.
 - Turner, M.
 - Weitzman, M.

SUBSCRIBERS

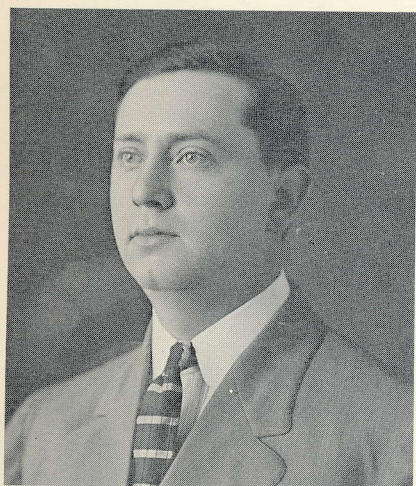
- Kravetz, F.
- Landa, Mrs. H.
- Lewis, A. J.

23

From 1918 Constitution booklet.



ABE MIZEL



SAM SITRIN



FOUR GENERATIONS

J. M. Stekoll, left; his father, Abbo; his son, Abe; and his granddaughter, Emmy Lou.



THE KAUFMANS: Seated in front is Mildred. Seated in the center are Betty (Mrs. Jay Newman), Sam, Mr. E. Kaufman and Reuben. Standing is Mrs. Clara Kaufman.

Elections of 1918 retained Marion **Travis** in the presidency. The vice-president's post went to **Max Travis**; N.C. Livingston was named treasurer and Alfred Aaronson became secretary.

The new Board of Trustees included Max Rubin, R. A. Stekoll, Joseph Davis, Sam Sitrin, J. K. Livingston and **S. R. Travis** which means that several new workers were included.

It was in this year that the Trustees decided to publish and circulate to all members copies of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Synagogue. Several copies of this publication are still to be found in

many homes today.

More than one person who can remember those early days of our history have agreed with Marion **Travis** when he said recently, "It was an uplifting experience to attend our services, not only on Saturday and holy days but on weekdays as well."

In 1918, the Sisterhood worked enthusiastically for the Red Cross in all its drives of World War I. Vice-president at the time was Mrs. Morris Bercutt. During this year, the women's group was also establishing its strong association with the Religious School and the Talmud Torah.



MR. and MRS. MORRIS BERCUIT

Marion M. **Travis** resigned the office of president of the congregation and the Board of Trustees named Emile Offenbacher to become new president.

Serving with Mr. Offenbacher were vice-president N. C. Livingston, treasurer R. A. Stekoll, financial secretary Abe Abend, recording secretary L. Plost and the board of trustees which included Alfred Aaronson, Joe Davis, J. K. Livingston, Sam Sitrin, J. M. Stekoll, and **Sam Travis**.

Born in France, Offenbacher came to the U.S. in 1904 and to Tulsa in 1914 as a result of his friendship with **Sam Travis**. He formed a large independent oil firm here.

During his stay in Tulsa he was a local, and then state, and president of B'nai Brith; also served as a captain of a Red Cross drive.



A VETERAN B'NAI EMUNAH FAMILY. This group includes the Markowitz, Mizel, Lack, Rozen, Miller, Green, Fisher names, and others.

He was appointed a committee member for St. John's Hospital which was just then starting. In his own words, "I accepted and agreed to help raise funds only on the condition that they would arrange facilities that people who want to get kosher food in the hospital would be able to get it. I remember the hospital became a very important institution in the city, but I am afraid that no use was ever made of the Kashrus facilities."

In the autumn of 1919, the first regular publication appeared in Tulsa which would chronicle the news events of the two Jewish con-



EMILE OFFENBACHER
President, Congregation
1919-20

gregations and other secular organizations. The magazine, called "Tulsa Jewish Messenger," was edited by an E. M. Jarmuth and printed by the Butler Printing Co.

Assisting Rev. Himmelstein in his roles as chazan and shochet was M. Robinson, a teacher in the Talmud Torah, who acquired the title of "Shochet Shaynee".

The Talmud Torah, under instructors D. Stern and Robinson, boasted an enrollment of 60 children with an average attendance of 55. Chairman of the school, Hyman

Appleman, sent home a special plea for those "who have cars to help out in taking the children to and from their classes after attending the city's schools."

Chevra Kadisha Day, just before Hanukah, found a banquet enjoyed by all the Association members in the home of Rev. Himmelstein. The banquet was prepared by the members. N.C. Livingston was re-elected president and Emile Offenbacher, secretary.

On Hanukah, 15 of our youth presented a play at the Chamber of Commerce Auditorium, located in the City Hall building at 4th and



solo and Joseph Kornfeld recited "Al Hanism" in both the Hebrew and English.

B'nai Emunah members headed up the Hebrew Mutual Loan Association at this point, its president being Robert A. Stekoll. Others were M. Bercutt and J. Albert, vice-presidents; L. Krasner, treasurer; Samuel Cheifetz and Harry Robinowitz, secretaries.

This loan association did an outstanding service in aiding Jewish



HARRY ROBINOWITZ

Cincinnati. Under the direction of Mr. Stern and Miss Belle Lehrman and Mr. Simon Cohen, "Enemies of Israel" played to a capacity crowd.

In starring roles were Bernie LeVine and Etta Cohen as Mr. and Mrs. Solomon. Also in the production were Ida Bercutt, Isadore Rabkin, Moses Kornfeld, Lena Raschall, Rosa Segal, Lena Manes, Esther Kravitz, Anna Miller, Sam Kaufman, Meyer Birnbaum and George Ludman.

Sam Markowitz played a violin

men who were going into new business in Tulsa. Memberships were sold for one hundred dollars, and any member could borrow up to five hundred dollars from the "Bank." Six percent interest was charged, and the profits of this organization were later used to finance the Jewish Institute, a social and cultural meeting center. (See 1922) In 1929, the Mutual Aid Bank would collapse and the Hebrew Free Loan Society would arise to take its place under David Travis, president, and H. P. Taubman, vice-president.



PIONEER B'NAI EMUNAH family. It includes Shermans, Cohens, Margolins and others.



DR. BERNARD D. REVEL
Early Tulsan, and his son. Dr. Revel later
became the first president of famed Yeshiva
University in New York.

A mass meeting in the High School auditorium protested the massacres of Russian Jews. Emile Offenbacher, B'nai Emunah president, presided and among the speakers were the Tulsa city attorney, Rabbi Latz of Temple Israel, the Rev. Drs. Abel and Barton, the Superintendent of Tulsa schools and Rabbi Morris Teller.

These new members were added since 1918:

M. Bloom, M. Y. Blumenfeld, Julius Cytron, M. G. Cohen, N. J. Cohen, Robert Feldman, Mark Finston, Joe Freed, H. Gore, N. Greenberg, I. Herdan.

Mrs. Simon Jankowsky, I. Jarus, M. Jarmuth, L. Josslowitz, F. Kravitz, I. Leebove, S. Levine, A.E. Lewis, J. Ludman, J. Manes, Alec Markowitz, J. Markowitz, Abe Minsky, J. W. Morris, S. Morrison.

S. Novack, Louis Plost, Dr. B. Revel, J. L. Rivkin, I. Rosen, J. Rosenberg, D. Rubin, George Rudman, Simon Selinger, Jacob Sherman, B. Travis, I. R. Travis, L. Travis, A. S. Viner, M. Wasserman, J. Weinstein, M. Zarrow and J. Zeligson.

Marion Travis came back into office as the president in 1920. Alfred Aaronson was named vice-president, R. A. Stekoll and Abe Abend were re-elected to another year's term as treasurer and secretary. The membership of the Synagogue now numbered 120; population of the city of Tulsa was about 72,000.

When B'nai Emunah Sisterhood started its year at a Sunday meeting called by Mrs. Sam Travis at the Synagogue the presidency was given to Mrs. Max Travis. Mrs. Sam

Travis became chairman of the religious school committee; Mrs. M. Bercutt was appointed chairman of the Propaganda committee; Mrs. L. Krasner, chairman of the membership group; and Mrs. J.K. Livingston, chairman of the House committee.



MRS. MAX TRAVIS
President of Sisterhood
1920 to 1921

A Talmud Torah report indicated an increase in enrollment of 20 students and average attendance now stood at 65. The ladies of the congregation decided to host a picnic for the children of the Hebrew School on June 7 at Sand Springs park. Pupils were to meet at 12:30 at Sand Springs Railway station at Main and Archer streets.

All were also reminded that Mr. Livingston was conducting his morning Talmud class at 7 a.m. studying the tractate "Bovo Metzta."

Formation of a Tulsa High School Jewish Girls' club was held in April. President of the group was Rose Lack. Other charter officers included Mary Novack, Etta Cohen, Irma Ravitz, Lena Manes. Their director was Miss Lena Seltner and Rabbi Teller, their advisor.

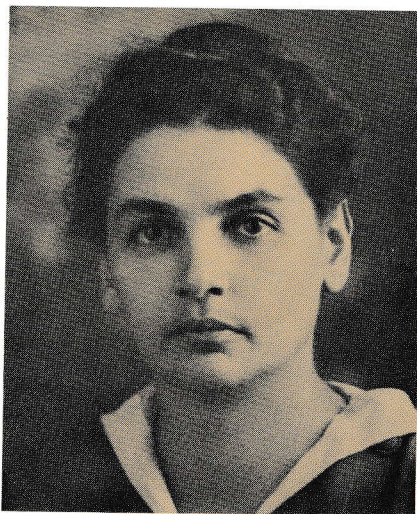
Other members were Ida Bercutt, Dora Goldstein, Dorothy Herdan, Esther Herskowitz, Gladys Herskowitz, Fannie Kessler, Sarah Kessler, Lena Raschall, Frieda Siegel, Pearl Sherman and Ann Weinstein.

In May, a group striving to create a Jewish Institute held a dance at

the Elks Club hall, coupled with a concert. Cantor Pincus Jassinowsky sang, accompanied by Julius Travis. Others in the concert were Adine Travis and Ella Ruby.

The Talmud Torah's Purim play was coupled with an Oratory contest and also preceded by addresses by Hyman Appleman, Nathan Livingston and President Offenbacher. The event was held in the Central High School auditorium. Playing Ahasuerus was Bernie Levine while Rose Lack portrayed Queen Esther. Ida Bercutt was Vashti, Max Cohen was Mordecai and Leo Selinger was the evil Haman.

Costumes and sets were created, and the play directed by the mesdames S.R. Travis, Max Travis, B. Travis, M. Himelstein and B. Revel.



MRS. M. HIMELSTEIN

In the speech competition that evening the first prize of \$10 went to Reuben Kaufman who spoke on "The Jew's Love of Knowledge"; \$5 second prize was won by David Bernbaum who spoke on "Jewish Contribution to the Allies' Triumph"; and third prize of \$2 went to Joseph Tee who addressed the audience on "Accomplishments of the Jews."

As the High Holydays neared, all students in the congregation were advised that "according to arrangements made by Rabbi Morris Teller with Supt. Oberholtzer and Prof. Prunty, principal of the High School, Jewish students will not lose their

1920

chance of promotion merely because of their absence from school on Jewish holidays; such absence will be excused. It is stipulated, however, that the Jewish pupils are to attend some place of worship if they would be excused from attending school on those days."

A group of 60 promoting the Jewish Institute met at the Chamber of Commerce auditorium. It was at this October meeting that the Institute was officially formed, a constitution drawn, and Robert Stekoll elected as its chairman. Also this night the group decided to buy the lot for the future structure for \$5000.

Chevra Kadisha Day was observed in December as the group conducted services in the morning at the Synagogue and then moved to Beth Raphael cemetery for a special service. That evening all members met at Rev. Himelstein's home for a dinner.

President Warren Harding named Emile Offenbacher to head the drive in Tulsa for collection of money for helpless children of Europe; those who were war refugees and those suffering from Russian pogroms.

Still another new organization started: "The Tulsa High School Jewish Boys Club." Officers included Reuben Kaufman, president; Bernie LeVine, vice-president; Max Goldstein, secretary; Moses Kornfeld, treasurer; and Ted Gore, custodian.

A remodeling program was completed during the year with a new wooden floor replacing the old cement floor in the basement vestry rooms. The walls were paneled and repainted. All Jewish organizations in the city had been given permission to use the facilities.



Facilities at the Cheyenne Synagogue were viewed as unsatisfactory for the Religious and Hebrew School this year. Mrs. L. E. Z. Aaronson stated that the main goal "of the Sisterhood is to build a Jewish center in which to house" these two schools.

The attendance at the Sunday Religious School and the Talmud Torah rose to 70 children. They were receiving instruction in Hebrew, Jewish history, religion and ethics. The schools remained under the supervision of Rabbi Teller and his assistant D. Stern.

An article submitted to the Messenger in April stated: "Officers of Jewish Communal organizations would appreciate it if men and women of our community who wish to speak with them would refrain from calling them at meal times. Do not call between 11:30 and 1:30 p.m. or between 6 and 7:30 in the evening."

The new slate of leaders elected by the congregation were: President, Marion Travis; Vice-President, Jacob Beren; Treasurer, R. A. Stekoll; Secretary, Abe Abend; and Gabbai, N. C. Livingston.

Trustees elected were: D. Feenberg, Jesse Finston, F. Kravetz, S. Lack, M. Lebow and J. M. Stekoll. This marked the first of many years that Robert and J. M. Stekoll would serve as leaders of B'nai Emunah simultaneously.

The Sisterhood went through a re-organization at this time with Mrs. Bernard Douglis named president. In June, Mrs. Max Travis was in charge of the picnic for Talmud Torah which Sisterhood sponsored. Articles in the Messenger for this year note that it was becoming a habit for Mrs. Travis to head this function.



THE INSTITUTE BECOMES A REALITY IN 1922

What an eventful year for B'nai Emunah! The Jewish Institute at 627 North Main was built and served for a few years as a Community Center... the Sisterhood began to assume more and more elements of leadership in the Congregation... and one group of members decided to leave the Synagogue and form its own congregation!

The Sisterhood began its 1922-23 year with 84 paid members. Its officers were: President, Mrs. Bernard Douglis; vice-president, Hedwig Jankowsky; recording secretary, Mrs. C. H. Lebow; corresponding secretary, Mrs. J. Feenberg; and treasurer, Mrs. M. Lebow.

Sisterhood's goals were explained in an article by its president, Mrs. Douglis. It noted that the group's membership had grown from 24 to 84.

Her remarks showed that Sisterhood had purchased a piano, was supporting the Hebrew School by providing refreshments and chaperons for events, and sponsored social affairs.

But paramount in its goals was "breaking up the harem, re-introducing husbands and wives" by stopping the practice of men and women segregating themselves from each other when they got together at homes or at dances.

Robert Feldman conceived the idea that if the Hebrew Mutual Loan Association could advance the Jewish Institute pioneers \$2,000, its building could be started. The idea was accepted and the structure was completed that year.

Its first president on completion was Mr. Feldman. Serving as his vice-president was Sam Boorstin and as secretary-treasurer, C. H. Lebow. The building committee that helped realize the project included Abe Abend and M. Liberman.

First directors were Abe Brodsky, H. Dreyfus, Bernard Douglis, H. Epstein, Louis Krasner, W. J. Levine, Dr. M. B. Lhevine, J. Markowitz, R. A. Stekoll, A. Terry and Mrs. Emil Solomon.



ROBERT A. FELDMAN

The B'nai Emunah Sisterhood announced immediately that it would use the Institute for most of its meetings and luncheons.

The Talmud Torah, which had been meeting in the basement rooms of the Synagogue, also moved to the larger and better ventilated quarters in the Institute. It remained there, under the lay leadership of Mr. Feldman, J. H. Bloch, Jake Fell and Abe Abend, until 1930 when financial difficulties made it necessary to close the Institute.

"The Mother of the North Side," Mrs. Ben Rosenfield, arrived this year from Rumania. Her home in Tulsa during the twenties and early 1930's became a gathering place for newly arrived immigrants and for B'nai Emunah friends from the entire city.

During Passover, Nathan C. Livingston became our third president. His fellow officers were Max Rubin, vice-president; R. A. Stekoll, treasurer; and Abe Abend, secretary. Trustees elected were Ben Bloch, J. Cytrin, B. Douglis, H. Epstein, Robert Feldman, and H. Hyden. Max Liberman was principal of the Tulsa Hebrew School.

Early in 1922, a secessionist group of B'nai Emunah members left the Congregation to form a new Orthodox group in the city, named Congregation Ohel Jacob.

Through a stormy period leading to this event, those who departed were critical of the interpretation

1921-22

One of the first was "Who are the Dancing Jews?"

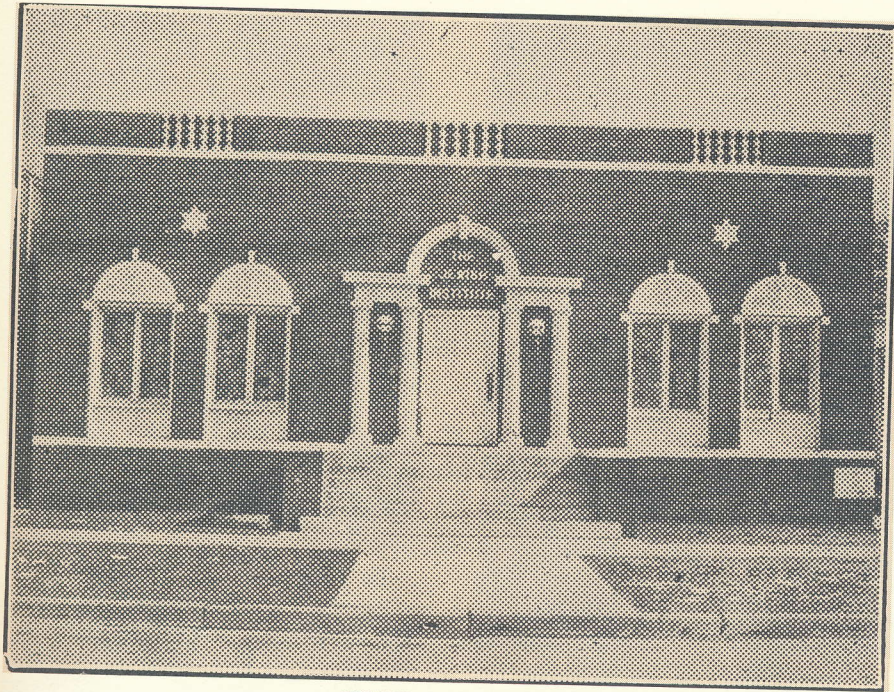
An article, devoted to the Institute, answered that query. It revealed that B'nai Emunah members weren't adverse to joining many social clubs and showing good attendance at dances held in Tulsa but would not come up with as good a record in Synagogue attendance or participation in official "shul" organizations.

Rabbi Teller believed that those Jews in Tulsa who were not affiliated with the Synagogue OR the Temple were those for whom the Institute would have the greatest value. He wrote that "they will drift away altogether from the Jewish fold, by intermarriage or in other ways" and the Institute could be the answer.

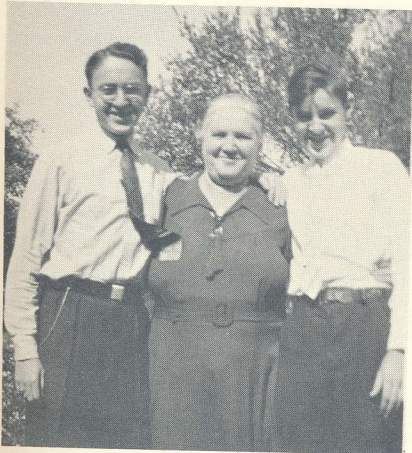
The Theater Guild, at first a "child" of the Sisterhood, was born. The women sponsored and underwrote this group in its first year but were not involved after that.

The Guild presented several plays each year during the early and mid-twenties, most of them at the Institute. It not only staged regular dramas but had guest speakers from the city to teach them.

One of their founders and prime movers was Miss Fanny Friedman.



JEWISH INSTITUTE



MRS. BEN ROSENFELD
Her son Israel, left and Phillip



NATHAN C. LIVINGSTON
President of Congregation
1922-1924

of Orthodoxy by B'nai Emunah and believed in a more strict and closer following of the tenets of Judaism.

They received their papers of incorporation from the State of Oklahoma on April 24. Those who signed the application to the Secretary of State making up the Board of Directors were David R. Travis, Sam Travis and Hyman Appleman.

Through the decade of the Twenties, however, interpretations changed, compromises were made, and the dissident group rejoined B'nai Emunah... until, in the late 1920's, D. R. Travis, the leader of

Congregation Ohel Jacob, would be elected as president of B'nai Emunah.

News of B'nai Emunah began to appear in the Jewish Monitor, a Ft. Worth publication. Rabbi Teller was the reporter from Tulsa. However, in later years many Sisterhood members also contributed, including Mrs. Jack Gelfand, Mrs. Louis Kahan and Mrs. Jack Wolfe.

In the December issue of the Ft. Worth Monitor, Rabbi Teller began carrying from five to ten questions each issue for the readers in Tulsa to answer.



FANNY FRIEDMAN

January was a busy month for the Congregation. The Institute officially opened on January 24 with a representative of the Governor of Oklahoma in attendance. George Watkins of the Tulsa Tribune spoke as did Rabbi Teller, Rabbi Latz of Temple Israel and Hyman Appleman, who spoke in Yiddish. There were 500 persons in attendance. The dedication ceremony was followed by a dance with a five-piece orchestra providing the music.



BESS FELL



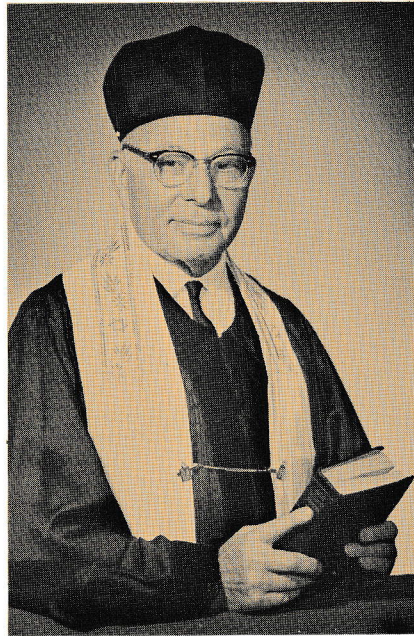
SADIE KORNFELD
First President
Junior Sisterhood

B'nai Emunah Junior Sisterhood was organized in January for girls between the ages of ten to fifteen. Their first meeting was held at the home of Miss Bessie Fell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Fell. At this meeting Sadie Kornfeld was elected president, Bessie Davis the vice-president, and Helen Jacobs, secretary. Sadie Brown was named treasurer. The group began with fourteen members.

The Synagogue held a Bialik festival at the Institute on January 31. Acting as hosts were Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Stekoll and Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Stekoll. All present received sacks of fruit from Palestine.

The evening began with a sumptuous banquet. Following this, Rabbi Teller acted as toastmaster and the group heard talks by M. Sandler, M. Rosenberg, I. Plost, Joe Davis, Emile Offenbacher, J. M. Stekoll, R. A. Stekoll and an M. Sugarman of Kansas City.

The first late Friday night services, then called "Assemblies," were held at the Synagogue in January. Bernard Douglis and David Schnayerson alternated as volunteer chazonim. These services were initiated by Rabbi Teller. The Sisterhood, as its own project, attempted



RABBI DAVID SCHNAYERSON

to spur attendance and provided the Oneg Shabbat refreshments at the conclusion of each Assembly.

In the Question Box column of the Jewish Monitor written by Rabbi Teller, these three questions appeared:

"Why do you expect Messrs. Feldman, Lebow and Douglis to bear the entire financial burden of the Institute? Messrs. Davis and Selinger of the Talmud Torah?"

"Why will the Jew who goes into a restaurant with his non-Jewish friend order "pork," while his non-Jewish friend, out of respect for the Jew, orders beef?"

"Why do our young folks adopt Greek letter names when they could just as well have Hebrew lettered names that are just as mysterious?"

A Siyum Hatorah celebrated in February was for a Torah procured in Europe by the Stekoll brothers.

The order of events included Mincha by Rev. Himmelstein and Congregation; addresses by Rabbi Teller, N. C. Livingston and M. Liberman.

Hagbah and geleeloh were performed by S. Judelow and M. Sandler. Jacob Skuy opened the Ark and Hakofos were by M. Travis, Joe Davis, Emile Offenbacher, M. Roberts and J. M. Stekoll.

Replacing of the scrolls into the

Ark was accomplished by F. Diamond, Abe Dritch, L. Stekoll, Jake Fell, A. Freed and H. Stekoll.

The Tulsa Federation of Jewish Charities issued its second annual report. It listed the names of many B'nai Emunah members who were active in this organization:

President, Emile Offenbacher; vice-president, Julius Livingston; Advisory Board members included Rabbi Teller; and on the Board were Mrs. L. Aaronson, Mrs. B. Douglis, L. Krasner, A. J. Lewis, Mrs. J. Markowitz, Mrs. B. Revel, S. Selinger, Robert A. Stekoll and Mrs. Max Travis. They collected \$2352 this year and had a budget of \$1723.

In February the Sisterhood invited the Temple Israel Sisterhood, the Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah to join them in giving a community ball at the Institute. The Sisterhood pledged to donate the use of the hall and contribute its share for the band and decorations.

Probably one of the reasons that Rabbi Teller had made his earlier remark about "Greek letter clubs" was the formation about that time of a Jewish boys club at the Synagogue called Pi Alpha Gamma for boys 15 years old and over. This group started its calendar with a February dance.

Meantime, the Junior Sisterhood held two meetings during February at the homes of Jennie Diamond and Roseline Nadel.



1923



MR. AND MRS. BEN WATT

The Sisterhood began the sponsorship of the B'nai Emunah Forum. David Schanyerson gave an excellent presentation on "Moses"; Rabbi Teller had started it off with his speech entitled "Abraham Lincoln; the 100% American."

Helping with the costuming and staging for the Talmud Torah's Purim play were the Misses Friedman and Watelsky, Mrs. Watelsky and Mrs. Leebove.

The March 9 issue of the Monitor noted that "Mr. Gershon Fenster, who had arrived from Europe recently, while on a visit to Tulsa with his cousins, the Blochs, spoke at the Synagogue and impressed the congregation with his effective address on the subject, 'The Modern Hamans.' He later addressed the Jewish National Workers Alliance and his talks were well taken."

Myer Rabinowitz, who distinguished himself as an actor in the Talmud Torah's Purim play, also sold more tickets than anyone else in school. Bennie Reedman also succeeded in selling a large number.

The boys social club, Pi Alpha Gamma, elected Sam Diamond as its president. Then followed another flurry of new club organizations: the Sigma Chavrisa club for young women (Pearl Gordon, secretary) made a \$10 contribution to the Talmud Torah in one of its early actions; and several B'nai Emunah men joined the Kroviam

club which started its calendar with a dance at the Hotel Tulsa.

N. C. Livingston was re-elected Synagogue president in March. As his officers R. A. Stekoll was elected vice-president; J. H. Bloch, secretary and J. M. Stekoll, treasurer. Trustees were Bernard Douglis, Louis Friedman, Harry Gore, C. H. Lebow, Emile Offenbacher and Sam Sitrin.

Officers for the Sisterhood who would serve 1923-24 were Mrs. C. H. Lebow, president; Mrs. J. Feenberg, vice-president; Mrs. A. Smith, secretary; Mrs. S. Rips, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. M. Lebow, treasurer.



MRS. C. H. LEBOW
President of Sisterhood
1923-1925

The following were elected to head Junior Sisterhood for the same period: Helen Greenberg, president; Sadie Brown, vice-president; Gertrude Miller, secretary; and Bessie Davis, treasurer.

Because there were too many large fund-raising affairs held during the year, a committee met on May 10 at the Old Stile Sweet Shoppe to discuss the problem.

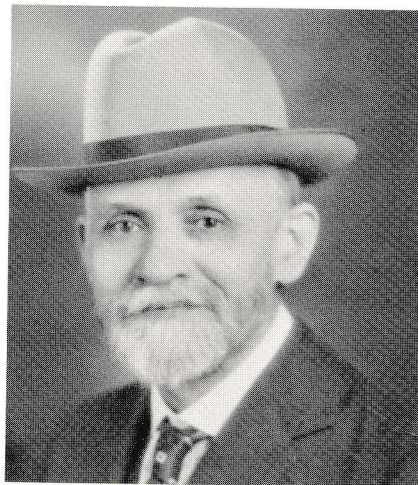
This group consisted of Mrs. Bernard Douglis, Mrs. Solomon of the Council of Jewish Women and the two Tulsa rabbis.

They discussed the idea of having all organizations at the beginning of the year agree to hold only one big money-raising affair, but "let it be well attended, drawing patronage from the entire community."

The Sisterhood held an outdoor social at Owen Park on June 6 with each family asked to bring its own food. The men were to join the women and the children as they got off from work later in the afternoon.

It was then a custom for those attending a Briss Milah to give contributions to the Talmud Torah. The largest total to this date was \$116 contributed at the Briss of Melvin Dan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sol Dan.

In its first two years the Sisterhood amassed an enviable record that Sisterhoods in later years were to try to match. They purchased a \$390 piano for the congregation, gave \$600 to the Talmud Torah, \$250 to help pay off the Synagogue debt, put on the first annual Synagogue membership drive, began the open forums that drew bigger audiences each time, and helped make the Friday night Assemblies a success.



V. S. D. AARONSON

The Talmud discussions continued through the summer with N. C. Livingston assisted by V. S. D. Aaronson at various times. They expounded the week's Sedra on Shabbos, between Mincha and Maariv. Symbolic of the Talmud scholars of whom B'nai Emunah could boast stood Mr. Aaronson. Before his arrival in Tulsa, he had written a weekly column for the

Jewish Standard in Brooklyn, under the pen-name "Ben-Aaron" or "son of Aaron"... Aaronson. He had translated the Laws of Israel, a 3-volume Hebrew text, into English.

Bernard Bloch was a dues collector for the congregation in the early Twenties, going from door to door to get the \$6.25 every three months, when minimum dues were \$25 a year. He went to each merchant at his place of business as well as to the homes of members.

The Religious School opened in October at the Institute, for boys and girls from six to sixteen. Some of the volunteer teachers were Mr. Liberman, Mr. Fenster, C. H. Lebow, Ben and Jacob Putter, and Miss Rose Lack. Musical instructor was David Schnayerson.



BEN PUTTER

Two B'nai Emunah members opened a fine open air motion picture place at 5th and Detroit, downtown. Mr. A. Rabkin and Abe Stekoll called their theater the "Moonlight" and offered plenty of parking space. The best photoplays were booked and they offered two shows a night, at 7:45 and at 9:15.

A special memorial service was held at the Synagogue in early August following the death of U. S. President Warren G. Harding. Rabbi Teller also participated in a large union service in memory of President Harding at Convention Hall along with Mayor Newblock

and all the city commissioners. Over 3,000 attended.

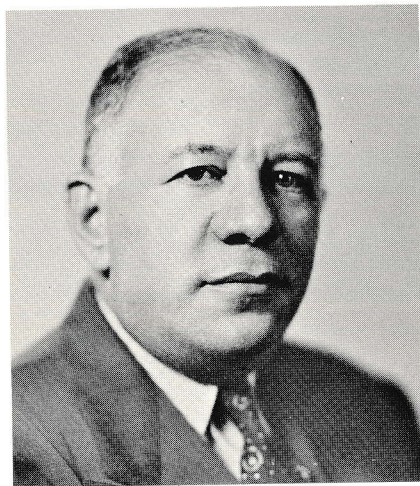
As the High Holydays neared, the committee for the rental of seats announced they would meet, as usual, from 10 until midnight at Slichos and then from 10 in the morning until noon on the following two Sundays.

In autumn, a new B'nai Emunah sewing club was formed in the home of Mrs. Jay Kornfeld... As Sisterhood President Mrs. Bernard Douglis presided, Mr. M. Turner read a paper on "Max Nordau and the Future of the Jewish People"... Rabbi Teller was named to represent Tulsa at the annual American Jewish Congress meeting to be held in October in either Washington or Philadelphia.

THE NEW AND THE OLD OF 1924

A recent arrival quickly assumed a leadership role... another newcomer immediately immersed himself in Synagogue activity... and an "old-timer" left the scene.

Gershon Fenster, who had moved to Tulsa from Okmulgee only a year or two before, gathered fifty men and women together and formed the first local chapter of the Zionist Organization of America. In coming years, in addition to promoting Jewish education for adults, he was instrumental in bringing a finer appreciation of art and music to the general citizenry of the community.



GERSHON FENSTER

Mr. Fenster served as an inspiration in the Talmud Torah, helping to establish its fine image in the community.

Barton Kahn came to Tulsa in the middle of 1924 and immediately affiliated himself with the B'nai Emunah Sunday Religious School and Hebrew School and all other community activities. With the exception of two years which he spent in Israel, Kahn lived in Tulsa until 1942 when he moved to Oklahoma City.



BARTON KAHN

Students of the B'nai Emunah schools from the middle twenties until World War II will remember his patient teaching of Hebrew and Yiddish melodies to them throughout the years.

Late in the same day that a Sunday School picnic was held at Max Meyers farm in Sapulpa, the Rev. M. Himelstein passed away. In the sixteen years that he served Tulsa Jewry he had been in the forefront of those who helped build and strengthen Orthodox Jewry.

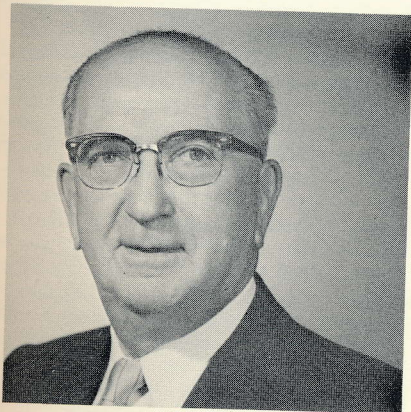
Soon afterward the Chevra Kadisha group, in establishing a memorial fund in his name, commented to the Jewish population of Tulsa:

"...our community sustained a great loss. He was respected and his qualities were admired by all with whom he came into contact.

"...this memorial will be a suitable manifestation of the high esteem in which the late Rev. Himelstein was held by all Jews of Tulsa."



PICNIC AT MAX MYERS FARM. In mid-June, 1924, Sisterhood and the Congregation joined to sponsor a picnic at this farm which was four miles west of Sapulpa. During the 20's and early 30's the farm was the scene of many a get-together featuring swimming, dancing, horseback riding, barbeque and card games.



BERNARD M. BLOCH
President of Talmud Torah
1924

Bernard M. Bloch headed the Talmud Torah. Serving with him were vice-presidents Robert Feldman, Ben Watt and Mrs. Jacob Skuy. J. H. Bloch was secretary and Joseph Davis, treasurer. On the Talmud Torah board were V. S. D. Aaronson, H. Gore, N. C. Livingston, Sam Rips, Sam Sitrin and the Mesdames Joseph Davis, Phil Gordon, C. H. Lebow and Ben Watt.

Instructors for the school were Gershon Fenster and M. Stekoll, with M. Liberman, principal.

Religious School teachers included Mrs. I. Bernstein and Mrs. A. S. Rips, with classes in full swing at the Jewish Institute.

Under the auspices of the Dr. Theodore Herzl branch of the Jewish National Workers Alliance, the children celebrated Jewish Arbor Day at the Jewish Institute. Adults joined in and it became a giant affair filling the hall.

In January, the Tulsa Tribune nominated Rabbi Teller to its Hall of Fame. "He is known throughout the U.S. for his unusual sermons which are modern in tendency," the Tribune said.

Sisterhood's Eleventh Hour study group of the 1960's is apparently a "sequel" to that of 1924 when Rabbi Teller began such an idea one hour before their luncheon meeting in February. The women hoped to continue the practice each month thereafter.



J. H. BLOCH
President of Congregation
1924-1925

Annual elections brought J. H. Bloch to the presidency, taking over from N. C. Livingston. He also served simultaneously as secretary of the Congregation.

Robert Stekoll and J. M. Stekoll continued as vice-president and treasurer. New Board members elected were Bernard Douglis, Jack Gelfand, Sam Miller, Simon Selinger, Ben Watt and Barney Travis.

As the 1924-25 year ended, Congregation president J. H. Bloch and his officers and board issued a printed year-end report of "our congregation's financial standing and a record of what each member did to help carry the financial burden..."

These officials had also hired an S. Katzenellenbogen as acting Shochet and Mohel when Rev. Himelstein passed away during the previous year.

Max Bankoff recalls Rev. Katzenellenbogen with his white beard when he lived at 11th and Cheyenne. "A very fine old man," Mr. Bankoff notes. "He used to come into my grocery store and offer to kill the chickens for nothing... his interest being, all the time that he was here, to see that as many of B'nai Emunah as possible, would observe kashruth."

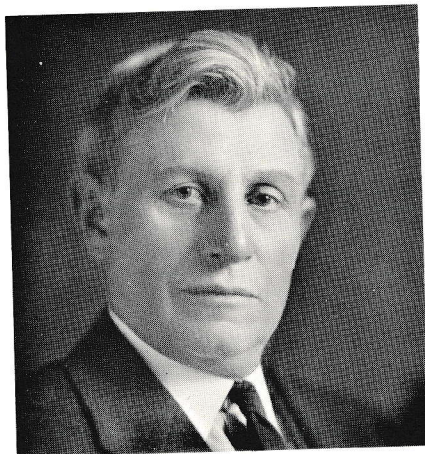
Their report showed that the Congregation had reached a total of 144 members by April 1... that the Sisterhood had pledged to pay the Congregation nearly \$2000 over a four year period and had made the first payment during that year... that the minimum dues was \$25 per year... that the highest dues pledged by any one person was \$200 (pledged by two individuals)... and that an organization called the Utopia Club had also paid \$25 into the membership fund.

It also showed that almost exactly 50% of the membership paid the minimum \$25 dues and that the congregation closed out the year in April, 1925, with members owing \$4300—representing dues, tickets for High Holydays and other donations.

David R. Travis, one of the founders of the Congregation, was elected to the office of President of B'nai Emunah at the Passover congregational meeting.

Saul Sandler was engaged as a teacher in the Talmud Torah to assist Mr. Gershon Fenster, principal-instructor. J. H. Bloch, then president of the school, served with vice-presidents Ben Bloch, Ben Watt, Mrs. C. H. Lebow and Mrs. Jacob Skuy.

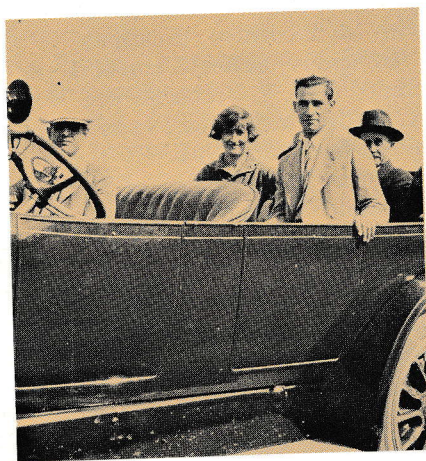
Their secretaries were Mrs. J. Feenberg and Simon Selinger; the



DAVID R. TRAVIS
President of Congregation
1925 to 1928; 1929 to 1932
President of Talmud Torah
1925 to 1926

treasurer was Mrs. Phil Gordon. Talmud Torah directors included Robert Feldman, Harry Mizel, Henry Rozen, Sam Rips, Sam Sitrin and the Mesdames J. Bernstein and W. J. Levine.

In 1925, Morris Teller accepted a call to become rabbi of Congregation B'nai Bezael in Chicago. One of his last duties was to officiate at the wedding of Miriam Ludman and Selig Aaronson.



IN CENTER SEAT of this exciting looking automobile of the '20s sit Selig and Mim Aaronson.

Rabbi Teller left Tulsa on December 30. Later he became spiritual leader of Southside Hebrew Congregation in Chicago. During recent years he received a Master of Hebrew Letters degree and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

B'nai Emunah was now without a spiritual leader for a year and a half, interviewing candidates for its pulpit until 1927.

Rabbi Teller was asked to reminisce with us and tell of his nine years with B'nai Emunah. The following are excerpts from the article which he sent us:



RABBI MORRIS TELLER
In 1966

Dr. Cyrus Adler, president of Jewish Theological Seminary of America, hinted to me that I was coming to a congregation that was not homogeneous in religious views. He hoped that with my traditionalism and my tactfulness I would overcome the disunity that I might find in Tulsa and that, despite my seminary training, even those who would have preferred a Yeshiva-trained rabbi would respect me since in my religious conduct I was virtually orthodox. Even within the ultra-orthodox group there were graduations of 100 proof, 90 proof, 80 proof. For example, Emile Offenbacher became president of my Congregation, although he was of the Frankfurt-am-Main strictly orthodox school.

My real sponsors were Marion Travis and the Aaronson family and the bulk of the non-reform Jewish community of Tulsa. The so-called "radical" Jews of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance whom I befriended, rallied around me. The ultra-pious Jews tolerated me as a rabbi, and showed their personal regard and affection for me; but they were displeased with some of the "innovations" I introduced, such as late Friday night services, reading the opening-of-the-Ark prayer in English, having cards printed and distributed to the audience, as they came into the Synagogue for the late Friday night services, the cards giving an English transliteration of the Hebrew zemiros.

When I came to Tulsa, the Rev. M. Himelstein was virtually the religious leader of the Congregation. He was the shochet, the mohel and the cantor. Since the extremists were in the Congregation and wielded some power over Rev. Himelstein as the shochet, they forbade him to officiate as cantor at the late Friday night service, which they regarded as a bootleg—illegitimate service.

I turned to a layman who had a pleasant voice, Levine by name, who was of the "radical" Farband group, and who enjoyed officiating on Friday night.

Now, to reminisce about the Rev. Himelstein... I tried and, in a short while, I succeeded to convince him that by working together harmoniously we could both build the community as friendly co-workers.

We really soon learned to understand, respect and even love each other. His was a lovable personality. He had a good sense

of humor, with dignity and charm, and he possessed Jewish learning that enabled him to answer ritual questions.

When the extremists insisted upon foisting an additional Shochet upon the Jewish community because of a technical requirement that a town should have two Shochetim to check on each other, I favored Rev. Himmelstein and argued that if his piety is questioned at all, an additional Shochet would not help the Congregation and if he is trustworthy, there is no need for an additional Shochet.

This incident prompted the extremists to start their own minyan in one of their homes. They took with them the additional Shochet that they had brought from Denver. Our congregation kept Rev. Himmelstein. The irony was that since each Shochet worked by himself, the ultra-pious Jews had only one Shochet instead of following the technical requirement!

Coming to Tulsa unmarried, I was fortunate to get as my hosts the Joe and Celia Davis family, and more gracious hosts I could not wish for. They wanted no pay from me. But I felt that they should accept a token, since I did not want to be a free boarder and lodger. So we agreed on \$6 a week. My salary at the beginning was \$1500 a year. When a year passed and I was offered an increase of \$500 a year, I told the officers that since I am single and my cost of living is low, I do not need the increase.

I enjoyed the Yiddish-speaking meetings, especially the learned Yiddish lectures of Gershon Fenster, who became the head of my Hebrew School teaching staff and later went into business and, as I learned, became phenomenally successful.

Saturday night was card-playing night in Tulsa. When Slichos came, Rev. Himmelstein would go to the homes where he knew the game was in full swing about a half-hour before the time for Slichos. He would ring the bell and announce in Yiddish: "*Yiden, shtayt oif tsu Slichos.*" (Jews, get up for Slichos!)

But understanding and good-natured as he was, he would give them a second chance and after about half-an-hour, he would make his second and final announcement. The winners and losers, the stakes being quite high, appeared at the Slichos services and, afterwards, they would return to the game. Then, we had playing and praying alternately.

The Tulsa Reform Temple lost its Rabbi. Some of my best friends in Tulsa were members of the Reform Temple. One day I was visited by members of the Dreyfus-Kahn families, who offered me the following proposition:

Since socially the members of my Congregation and the Temple were friendly and I had so many friends in the Reform Temple, why could we not have a sort of Ecumenical Judaism in Tulsa, both congregations making some concessions and I would become the Rabbi of the United Congregation!

The members of the Reform Temple would be willing to wear yarmulkes at the services, the wearing of talaysim by the laymen could be optional, the traditional prayerbook might displace the Union Prayer-

book, but there should be more English prayers and less Hebrew prayers used in the combined service. Of course, my salary would be almost doubled. If I were a "left-wing" conservative rabbi, I would have been gratified with such an offer, even if they did insist on playing the organ at the services; but as a "right-wing" conservative, I could not accept the gracious offer of the leaders of the Reform Temple.

A double tragedy struck B'nai Emunah in March. Rev. Samuel Katzenellenbogen passed away of pneumonia at the age of seventy. The next day, suffering from the same illness, his widow died. Both

Walked Together Nearly 50 Years; Go on Together



Rabbi S. Katzenellenbogen and his wife, Dorby, who are to sleep side by side in the cemetery here, following their deaths only one day apart, of pneumonia. The rabbi was buried Friday. The funeral service of the wife is to take place Monday morning.

For nearly 50 years Rabbi S. Katzenellenbogen, 921 S. Cheyenne av., and his devoted wife, Dorby, walked life's highway together, leaning on each other and coming always to service for their Friday afternoon the aged rabbi was buried at Rose Hill cemetery. Monday noon the silver-haired wife will be placed beside him in death, as she had always been in life.

Rabbi Katzenellenbogen died of pneumonia, after a brief illness. Just 20 hours later his wife succumbed to the same disease without knowing he had gone, although she knew of his illness and had hoped to die if he did. Their daughter is in a serious condition from a surgical operation at Little Rock. J. Sigel, their son-in-law, here visiting them, is also suffering from pneumonia.

The entire Jewish community of

Tulsa and surrounding towns is in mourning, it was said Saturday. As a mark of highest respect and in recognition of her great devoutness, the body of Mrs. Katzenellenbogen will be allowed to repose in the synagogue during the funeral service, contrary to the usual custom, those in charge of the services stated.

The service will be at 11:30, Monday morning, at B'nai Emunah synagogue, of which her husband was rabbi. Rabbi Kanter of Kansas City will assist. Mrs. C. H. Lebow, president of B'nai Emunah sisterhood, has asked that all members of the sisterhood be present in a body while the same request has been made by J. H. Bloch, chairman of the board of trustees of all members of the synagogue. All Jewish people will atten

Reprinted from a March, 1926 issue of Tulsa Daily World.

rest in Rose Hill cemetery. Rev. Katzenellenbogen had served Tulsa as a mohel and shochet.

His replacement, a man who would endear himself to every Tulsan with whom he came in contact, was born in 1883 in Russian territory near the state of Grodna.

He was Rev. M. Tofilovsky, later "Tofield." A cantor in five European cities, including Minsk, one

of Poland's largest cities, he had been a student at the Yeshiva at Pinsk, Poland at the same time that Chaim Weizman attended a University there.

He illuminated the B'nai Emunah scene in 1926 when named the mohel, shochet and cantor of our Congregation in its eleventh year.

The Tulsa Hebrew School, as we know it today in 1966, had its offi-

cial beginnings in 1926, taking over from the original Talmud Torah. Isadore Nadel, one of its founders, was to become its president, serving into the late Forties.

The B'nai Emunah Religious School also went through a reorganization during the Sisterhood presidency of Mrs. Jack Gelfand. It was at this time that the women's arm of the Congregation took over of-



ISADORE NADEL
President of Talmud Torah
President of Hebrew School
1926-1947



MR. AND MRS. GEORGE TRAVIS



MRS. JACK GELFAND
President of Sisterhood
1926



DANCE AT THE INSTITUTE. Some of those in attendance were Elmer Novak, Rose Esther and Morris Zeligson; Mel, Lester, "Big Lester," Helen and Hannah Greenberg; Sam Diamond, Jay Kornfeld, Dorothy Appleman, Emil Turk, Morris Himmelstein, Rae Stekoll, Bernie Levine, Charles Miller and Sam May. Don't you know the others?

ficial sponsorship of this school.

Mrs. Max Travis was the Religious School's first superintendent and classes were then held at the Jewish Institute. Gershon Fenster headed the curriculum and program department. Succeeding Mrs. Max Travis was Mrs. George Travis.

A public meeting in honor of the first visit to America of Chaim Nachman Bialik, the greatest Hebrew poet of the era, was held at the Institute in February.

Open to the public, it was sponsored by the Tulsa Zionist District. On the program, were William J. Levine, singing some of Bialik's works set to music, and Gershon Fenster, who addressed the full house on "The Soul of Israel!"

In November, the question of engaging a new rabbi for the Congregation was still a pressing issue. President D. R. Travis named a six-man committee to proceed with receiving applications for the post. They were Hyman Appleman, Jack Gelfand, S. R. Travis, Joseph Davis, Simon Selinger and D. R. Travis.

1926-27

B'nai Emunah's second rabbi began his tenure in Tulsa with the High Holyday services of 1927.

Rabbi Harry Epstein was elected rabbi of the Congregation early in the summer to succeed Rabbi Morris Teller.



MRS. ABE KRASNE
President of Sisterhood
1927



DR. HARRY GREEN

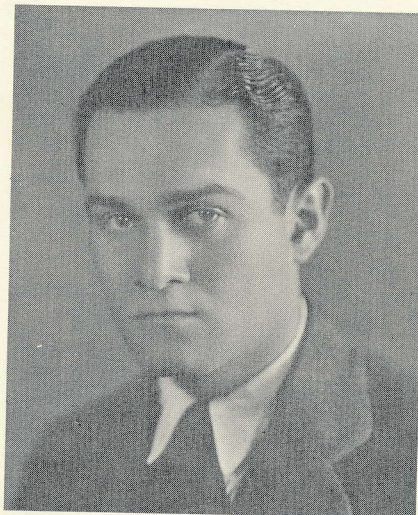


RABBI HARRY EPSTEIN
1927-28

Just 24 years of age, he was selected from a list of ten who had come to the city since the departure of Rabbi Teller in 1925.

Born in Latvia, he had been a student at the University of Chicago and had received his ordination in Jerusalem the year before coming to Tulsa.

David R. Travis was re-elected President this year and his vice-president was Herman P. Taubman; J. M. Stekoll, treasurer; and Simon Selinger, secretary. Newcomers to the Board of Trustees were Dr. Harry Green, Elmer Novak, Jake Fell, Abe Dritch, Leo Selinger, V. S. D. Aaronson, Morris



NATHAN APPLEMAN



Handverker, Nathan Appleman, George Travis and Julius Livingston.

This was one of the largest boards yet named.

The annual picnic, originally billed as one for the children, actually turned out to be a gigantic party for all ages at Max Meyer's farm.

"It is going to be the biggest picnic ever staged by the Jews of Tulsa," the advance publicity said. "People from fifty communities are preparing to come. Invitations were sent out to all Jews who are scattered over the state."

At the picnic that day in June, those who attended could dance, eat barbeque, play bridge, swim, boat; for the men "a large house is provided to accommodate those who smoke and play"...and for the children "H. P. Taubman is arranging a party for all...ice cream, cake and fruits will be served. This party is given by Mr. Taubman on the occasion of the birthday of his son, Sol!"

Also, in 1927, the Maccabean Boys Club was busy under its president Dave Lack.

1927 was the year Lindberg flew to Paris solo in 33½ hours... Henry Ford publicly apologized for the 7 years of persecution his Dearborn Independent had been waging against Jews...the Scopes "Monkey" trial on evolution was held in Tennessee...and Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in Massachusetts.

Also Jewish laborers in Petach Tikvah, Palestine fought Arab workers in the orange groves... A severe Earthquake in Palestine killed 269...but the year in that country was overshadowed by the continuing depression.

Impeachment proceedings against the Oklahoma governor were dropped... Supreme Court fixed the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma.



1. Meyer Stekoll
2. Meyer Moran
3. Art Arnold
4. Tillie Stekoll
5. Mrs. Charles Miller
6. Mrs. Robert Green
7. Mamie Feldman
8. Mrs. Sam Novack
9. Abe Dritch
10. Ezra Dritch

11. Morris Dritch
12. Mrs. Abe Dritch
13. Meyer (Mike) Dritch
14. Michael Green
15. Robert Green
16. Max Feldman
17. Mike Roberts
18. Mrs. Mike Roberts
19. Mrs. Harry Stekoll
20. Harry Stekoll

21. Unidentified
22. Morris Brown
23. Adolph Brown
24. Mrs. Morris Brown
25. Moses Sandler
26. Mrs. Moses Sandler
27. Mrs. Oscar Stavinsky
28. Oscar Stavinsky
29. Shirley Stavinsky
30. Mrs. Rose Kantor

31. Sam Kantor
32. Mrs. Naomi Skuy
33. Joe Freed
34. Louis Stekoll
35. Mrs. Elmer Novak
36. Elmer Novak
37. Mrs. Fred Skuy
38. Unidentified
39. Mrs. Abe Stekoll
40. Abe Stekoll

41. Dr. Harry Green
42. Joe Freed
43. Mrs. Joe Freed
44. Mrs. Joe Davis
45. Harry Freed
46. Robert Stekoll
47. Mrs. Jacob Skuy
48. Jacob Skuy
49. Joe Davis
50. Mrs. J. M. Stekoll

51. J. M. Stekoll
52. Max Travis
53. Joe Kantor
54. I. Oberlander
55. Unidentified
56. Mrs. Max Travis
57. Unidentified
58. Ben Watt
59. Hyman Dundee
60. Sam Moyer



VARKLAN RELIEF SOCIETY — A club which consisted of Latvian "landsleit" who maintained their association together in Tulsa from their arrival through the 1940's. Here, they're pictured after one of their meetings in front of the J. M. Stekoll home.

Throughout the United States during the early nineteen hundreds, Eastern European Jews had begun to form little societies, "landsman-schaften," consisting of those who came from the same hamlet or town or city.

In April of 1928, the Varklaner Relief Society was organized with Joseph Davis as its president. George Roberts was elected to serve as treasurer and Dr. Harry Green as secretary.

The Society was a relief group, devoting its efforts to aiding family and friends of the Varklan region who remained in Latvia. It sponsored numerous social events to raise funds for this purpose.

It had more meaningful goals as the terrible days of the 1930's and 40's approached. And late in the 1930's the Varklaners also found ways to support the construction of a new B'nai Emunah Center.



SANDERS TOFIELD

Under leadership of Rabbi Epstein and Sanders Tofilovsky (Tofield), our Junior Congregation was born. Sanders was affiliated with B'nai Emunah until 1930.

Although the students held their own service as far back as 1923, the group came up with its current name in 1928.

April elections of the Congregation brought A. E. "Jeb" Lewis to the top rank as president. Serving as his vice-president was Joseph Davis and as secretary, Max Travis. J. M. Stekoll continued as treasurer.



A. E. "JEB" LEWIS
President of Congregation
1928 to 1929

The Board of Trustees included Hyman Appleman, Michael Green, M. Handverker, George Roberts and Simon Selinger.

Religious School's graduation took place on a Sunday morning in May. Graduates included Tieby Davis, Roy Stein, Vera Appleman, Meyer O. Dritch, Helen Turner, Anna Freed, Meyer J. Dritch, Mildred Lieberman, William Glazer and Celia Livingston.

Mrs. Max Travis represented Sisterhood as she presented diplomas to the class.

In July, Rabbi Epstein announced his resignation from the B'nai Emunah pulpit. He accepted the spiritual leadership of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia.



MRS. PHIL GORDON
President of Sisterhood
1928-1931, 1933-1935

Today, in 1966, he is still the Rabbi of that congregation. After service in Tulsa he went on to receive his Bachelor of Arts degree, a Masters and a Doctor of Philosophy degree and a Doctorate of Theology.

Here is how Rabbi Epstein recalls his years in Tulsa:



RABBI
HARRY EPSTEIN
In 1966

Because my tenure of office with your congregation was so brief, my reminiscences of the Tulsa ministry will perforce be limited. The lapse of more than 37 years, after so short a stay, has naturally blurred the images of my recollections and somewhat dimmed the impact of the experiences of the eleven month period of my spiritual leadership in your midst.

How pleasant it is to remember even at this distance of the years that, upon returning from a curtailed vacation in July, 1928, to inform the Congregation of my having accepted a new post in Atlanta, Georgia, my many friends not only expressed their regrets but, as a gesture of their friendship and their tribute, they persuaded Delta Lodge, No. 425, A. F. & A. M. to convoke a special session of the Lodge so that I may be raised as a Master Mason before leaving — an expression of genuine testimonial that I can never forget.

There were at least two powerful and distinct factions struggling for supremacy here and, at an early age in my rabbinical career, I had to come to grips with and confront an explosive situation that threatened to dismember the congregation.

The most disconcerting factor in the Congregation was the affluence of some of its leaders. So wealthy were a few of the chief supporters of the Synagogue that they were ready at any time to step in and, for the sake of gaining control, willing to accept the entire budget of the Congregation. Their striving for leadership was matched by their love for B'nai Emunah. But this posed a serious threat to the democracy which is so characteristic of a synagogue.

One afternoon, as I arrived for the Mincha service, I was so stunned to find that there already had been a fist-fight over who had the authority to permit somebody to lead the Service and that the one who had been worsted in the fray was openly announcing that he would organize a new congregation.

The apparent victor of the fistcuffs, however, assured me by saying, "Don't worry, rabbi, let him leave; I'll pay your salary out of my own pocket" Happy to relate, no break resulted from this altercation.

One of the functions that devolved upon the Rabbi was to recruit a minyan periodically to stay up all night, when one or an-

other of our members was drilling a well for oil, and recite Tehilim for the success of the drilling. Much to my sorrow I must confess that in the many times we so gathered no well of oil came in and I consider this impotency of our prayers to be one of the failures of my administration.

On February 9, 1944, fifteen and a half years after I had left, I was invited to be the guest speaker at the Second Anniversary Service and Dinner of B'nai Emunah. The function was held in your new Synagogue and what a transformation the Congregation had undergone!

It was wonderful for me to have the opportunity to refresh old memories and renew old acquaintances. The leadership in the Congregation had radically changed in complexion. Younger men and women were taking a greater and more intensive interest in congregational affairs and were active in the conduct of both Synagogue and community projects. There was an aura of growth and progress and continued development, and the small, limited struggling B'nai Emunah of years past faded from my mind and a vigorous Congregation dedicated to the strength and beauty of Jewish life took its place.

On this milestone of your career as a *kehilla kedoshah* may I say to you "God-Speed!" May you continue with your concerted determination to build a "*bayit ne-eman b'yisrael*," a Congregation dedicated to the continuity of our heritage and unflinching in your resolve to be an integral part of its future.

SOCIALIZING UNTIL MIDNIGHT IN 1929!

This year, in which the Great Depression began, was a meager year as to sources of information about B'nai Emunah.

David R. **Travis** was elected once again as our president... Mrs. Phil Gordon headed the Sisterhood... and Isadore Nadel, the Hebrew School.

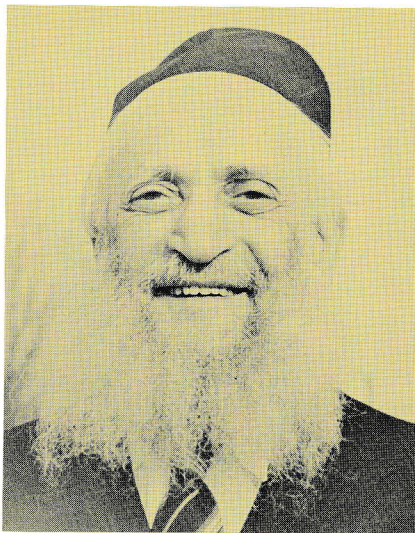
Draw a circle around the point where North Main crosses the Frisco tracks and you'll encompass the area where many of our members in the 20's lived and worked.

This "sort of community center" was especially popular on Thursday and Saturday nights as the bakery and butcher shops, next door to each other, stayed open to midnight. Late shoppers prepared for the Sabbath or stocked up for the coming week.

The Tulsa Jewish Review, which began publication during the following year, listed fourteen groups

active during 1929 in the community. Three of them in which B'nai Emunah members were extremely energetic were the Jewish National Workers' Alliance headed by M. M. Turner, the Pioneer Women, led by Mrs. M. Turner, and the Junior Hadassah, with Mrs. Jennie Kessler as its president.

The Jewish Monitor of Ft. Worth reported that a certain Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman was named by a Congregation to conduct their High Holyday services at a Synagogue in that city.



JACOB SINGER

1928-30

Twenty-two year old Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman was named by the Congregation as B'nai Emunah's spiritual leader beginning with the Rosh Hashanah service in September, 1930.

As the Synagogue's third Rabbi, Tulsans greeted a man who had received his bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago in 1928 and his ordination from the Hebrew Theological College in 1929.



AARON TOFIELD

A new face also appeared as a staff member when Aaron Tofield was placed in charge of the Junior Congregation and began teaching in both Hebrew and Sunday Religious Schools.

He later attended the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and became a rabbi subsequently serving in Oklahoma City.

Rabbi Tofield remembers the days of the early thirties when Sunday School classes were at the Odd Fellows Hall and Hebrew School sessions were at the Institute.

"It is told that in the early days of B'nai Emunah," he says, "it had more millionaires than any other congregation of its size. This fact pales to insignificance when compared to the fact that B'nai Emunah had an outstanding number of learned Jews in those days.



1930 COMMENCEMENT: Outside the Jewish Institute where their graduation took place are front row, left to right: first girl unidentified, Frances Lieberman, Pauline Finkel, Sol Taubman and Charles Dan. In the back row, girl is unidentified, Israel Cohen, Sidney Selinger and Leonard Krasne. Others in the class were Jean Bloch, Isadore Gordon, Leo Markowitz, Ethel Plost, Earl Schuman and Frieda Zackowitz.

"Joining my father, of blessed memory, in the Talmud study sessions were Mr. Livingston, Mr. Appleman, Rev. Gilula and Mr. Singer, may they rest in peace. Also one of the group, God grant him long life, was Mr. I. Nadel. This is the group of fine Talmud scholars which Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman found when he came to Tulsa."

In 1930 financial difficulties made it necessary to close the Institute.

The Hebrew School, late in the year, had to move back to the Synagogue. The Institute WAS used in later years as a place for the Northside High Holyday services.

A small expansion program was completed at the Synagogue as the Sisterhood annexed a modern kitchen and enlarged the social room at the Shul. It was through the combined effort of the women and the Chevra Kadisha that the kitchen was built. This would enable the Chevra Kadisha to hold its annual banquet at the Synagogue rather than at individual homes.



MICHAEL GREEN

Elections for B'nai Emonah found D. R. Travis re-elected. Serving with him were Michael Green, vice-president; Simon Selinger, secretary; and H. P. Taubman, treasurer. Their Board of Trustees included Sam Kantor, Nathan Appleman,

Sam Miller, Jack Gelfand, Jacob Sherman and George Travis.

The end-of-the-year party for the Junior Congregation featured prizes given by Sisterhood for achievement.

A tie for first place brought prizes to Israel Rosenfeld, Paul Markowitz, Norman Finkel and Sidney Lieberman. There was also a tie for the runner-up position between Charles Dan, Israel Cohen, Ben Cohen, Jerome Dan, Earl Schuman, Buddy Feenberg and Milton Taubman.

At a Sisterhood benefit affair held at Akdar Temple, Mrs. William Haas won the drawing at its conclusion. Her prize—a handsome radio... The Passover service for the Junior Congregation attracted 50 boys and girls to their own minyan... As the year came to an end, another new Jewish social fraternity formed for the B'nai Emonah young men called "Club Gamb" with Avrome Dan as president. George Ludman served as vice-president, Bert Schulman, secretary, and Max Sandler, its treasurer. The club opened with a dance in the Red Lacquer room of the Alvin Hotel.

The Jewish Young Men's Club, an auxiliary of the Synagogue, was started on December 10. Its first meeting found A. E. "Jeb" Lewis elected president, Julius Livingston, vice-president, and Phil Landa, secretary-treasurer. The Board of Trustees included Louis Webber, Bernie LeVine, Leon Selinger and Carl Livingston.

The Men's Club's second meeting was a smoker in the French Provincial room of the Alvin Hotel.

Illustrating but one effect of the depression and business crash: The Hebrew Free Loan Association, in 1930, made 26 loans in Tulsa for a total of \$5750. Figures for the previous year had been only 13 loans for \$2650.



1931 SERVICES HELD IN INSTITUTE

One of the important social events this year was the annual Sisterhood Winter Ball held at the Akdar Temple ballroom in October.

Near the end of the evening a raffle drawing was held and a beautiful silver samovar was won by Dr. Mark Marks. In charge of this wonderful dance was Mrs. Sam Sanditen, assisted by the Mesdames Harry Margolin, Arthur Freed, Barton Kahn, Sam Kantor, Morris Foonberg and Dave Bellman.

Gold pieces for prizes! That's what was offered in the first essay contest for students of both our Congregation and Temple Israel, sponsored by the community.

First prize of five dollars in gold went to Rosalie Fenster, for her essay on Palestine. Louis Fenster took second prize in the younger students' division, and his award was \$2.50.

High Holyday services for the North Side were held at the Jewish Institute and were under the direction of Robert Feldman, Jake Bloch and Jack Gelfand. Cantors were W. J. Levine and Abe Borofsky.

The fall term of the Sunday Religious School saw 130 attending.



ABE BOROFSKY

1930-31

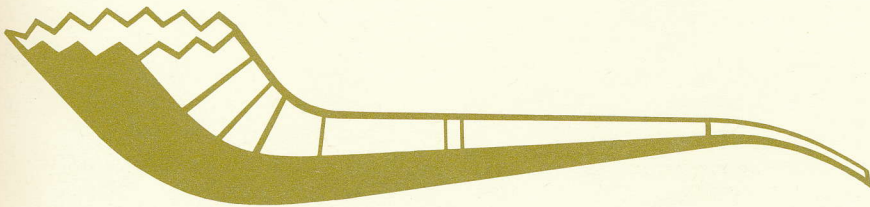


1931 CONFIRMATION CLASS: Held at Jewish Institute, the graduation program included the "March of the Graduates" played by Mrs. Jay Kornfeld, accompanied by Gertrude Livingston; an address of welcome by Jean Bloch; invocation by Sandow Ruby; and the singing led by Barton Kahn.

Above, left to right: Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman, Mrs. George Travis, superintendent, Sam Zeligson, Amelia Kaufman, Sandow Ruby, Ann Fried, Israel Rosenfeld, valedictorian, Rita Lewis, Ben Poznik, Jean Brody, Herman Feldman, Bernice Krasne, Ben Rosenbaum, Dr. Mark Marks, teacher.



MRS. BEN WATT
President of Sisterhood
1931 to 1933



Chevra Kadisho Organization of Tulsa

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
PHONE 2-2001
411 PHILTOWER BUILDING
Tulsa, Okla.

May 24th, 1932.

Mr. H.S. Blufston, Pres.,
Congregation Bnai Emunah,
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Dear Sir:

This is to advise you that at a meeting last night May 23, 1932 of the Chevra Kadisho of Tulsa Oklahoma the question of consolidation of the Congregation and the Chevra Kadisho was discussed at length.

It was finally decided and a resolution was passed that the Chevra Kadisho do stand ready and willing at all times to fully co-operate with the Congregation Bnai Emunah.

However it was the sense of the meeting that the Chevra Kadisho keep separate and distinct its officers and its identity as a separate and autonomous organization and therefore there was no need for a common secretary for both organizations, but each should maintain its own officers and secretary.

We therefore extend our heartiest greeting to your Congregation and hope and pray that both organizations will continue to push forth their best efforts for the furtherance of Judaism.

Yours Sincerely

CHEVRA KADISHO ORGANIZATION

BY J.H. Bloch
J.H. Bloch, Secretary.

N.C. Livingston
N.C. Livingston

Harry Mizel *H Mizel*
J.M. Stekoll *J.M. Stekoll*
R.A. Stekoll *R.A. Stekoll*
Robert Feldman *Robert Feldman*
Abe Dritch *Abe Dritch*
Simon Selinger *Simon Selinger*
Jack Gelfand *Jack Gelfand*
H.I. Kornfeld
H.S. Blufston

Mrs. Sol Lack
Mrs. H. Mizel
Mrs. Levine *Mrs. Levine*

UNTIL 1932 CHEVRA KADISHA was a separate organization. But in this year it was merged into B'nai Emunah. The action was agreed to by the society's members by use of the above letter.



HARRY BLUFSTON
President of Congregation
1932 to 1936

Harry S. Blufston was elected president of B'nai Emunah, taking over the leadership of the Synagogue from outgoing D. R. Travis. Mr. Blufston became our sixth president.

Elected with him were A. E. "Jeb" Lewis, vice-president; Sam S. Miller, treasurer; and Dr. Harry Green, secretary.

Shortly after his election, Mr. Blufston hosted the Jewish Young Men's Club lecture in the ballroom of the Genet building in the 900 block of South Boston. Isadore Nadel continued as Hebrew School president. Rabbi Fasman's lectures continued each month as he reviewed books, biographies and presented talks on Jewish history and current events.

Sisterhood had another active year along with its many youth activities. A Purim dinner at the Synagogue featured addresses by Rabbi Fasman, D. R. Travis; Rev. Tofilovsky and Barton Kahn furnished the singing and were followed by a recitation by Lillian Herdon.

The Sisterhood also announced the purchase of a beautiful permanent "Sadness and Gladness" book for the project which was begun a few years earlier. Later this year, a Sisterhood luncheon was highlighted by the review of the book "Spinoza" by the new rebbitzin, Mrs. Oscar Z. Fasman. The Fasman

wedding had been a July event in Chicago with many Tulsans attending.

Jeb Lewis was elected once again to head the Jewish Young Men's Club.

Sunday School presented its Purim festival which included a three-act play directed by Mrs. George Travis. During intermission, music was provided by Nina June Appleman and Barton Kahn, who directed a choir of fifty Sunday School students.

In the spring, many Synagogue members were in the "Honeymooners," a show directed by Mrs. Ben Putter at the new Little Theater. Among them were Rose Blend, Dorothy Katz and Florence Ludmeyer in "T'aint So Cute," Joe Kantor and Sarah Lack in "Courtin' Time," Reva Fisher in a one-man "mellerdrama," and Sophie Ravitz who sang "Blue Night!"



MRS. BEN PUTTER

The B'nai Emunah baseballers, entered in a city church league, played their games at the University of Tulsa campus. Team managers were Morris Solow and Carl Livingston.

Players included George Travis, George Wilk, Stan Reinstein, George Ludman, Carl Ravitz, Harry Ravitz, A. Solow, Harry Solow, Sam Manes, A. Travis, L. Travis, George Selinger, Dave Rivkin, M. Meisrow, Abe Wallach, B. Cooper, G. Aaronson, Art Silvers and Lou Lipman.

1932

At Religious School graduation, Mrs. William Haas and Miss Gertrude Livingston played the "March of Graduates." Anna Plost delivered the valedictory address. Graduates included Norma Bloch, Florence Brooks, Anna Mae Cohn, Jerome Dan, Zelda Davis, Rosalie Fenster, Walter Kessler, Henry Kraus, Esther Ravitz, Sylvia Selinger and Robert Zeligson.

Lester Bihari was named new president of the Maccabees club with Henry Zarrow to serve as vice-president and Julius Bihari as secretary-treasurer. A social club, Maccabees held their summer stag by going to the home of Nathan and Sid Selinger for a slumber party.

The Young Men's Club opened the fall season by inviting the Congregation membership to a circus night at the Mayo Hotel. It was complete with Hula dancers, a flea circus, swiss yodelers and a sword swallower.

The 1932-'33 Religious School year opened in the Odd Fellows Hall at 619 South Detroit with the following instructors: Sophie Ravitz, Jean Kantor, Mildred Lieberman, Carolyn Brooks, Sarah Werbner, Ruth Sherman, Mimi Appleman, Mrs. Oscar Fasman, Aaron Tofield and Rabbi Fasman.



SISTERHOOD AUXILIARY STARTS IN 1933

Here's the calendar which Sisterhood followed during this year.

It included nine general meetings, two card parties, two luncheons, a play by the Sisterhood members, a play by the Sunday School children, a Purim dinner and a Chanukah dinner, a concert at the Jewish Institute by Cantor Meyer Feldman of Chicago, and the Sunday School picnic, proceeds of which went toward building a new Synagogue. That was a total of nineteen events!

The Purim pageant drew a crowd of 350 persons. It featured a play with a cast of thirty children and the festivities ended with each child getting Shaloch Monos candy, given by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kurtz.

A new organization was formed this year called the Sisterhood

Auxiliary. Active in its formation were Mrs. A. J. Lewis and Mrs. Mose Adams, the latter becoming its first president. Fifty members were initially enrolled.

Religious School graduation honored twelve students. At commencement exercises, Jerome Dan of the class of 1932 welcomed the graduates. Milford Ungerman sang "M'kom Shom Arozim" and Vivienne Kroll gave an oration. The valedictorian in 1933 was Shiphra Stockfish. Best attendance award went to Carolyn Brooks. The graduates included Meyer Bello, Marion Brodsky, Ben Cohen, Norman Finkel, Isabelle Kaufman, Stanley Paul, Florence Pines, Adeline Singer and Lester Starr.

Rabbi Fasman continued his lecture series and Gershon Fenster began one on "Modern Jewish History."

This year in Tulsa the Sandler bakery moved from just next door to the Institute to the "southside" at 1422 South Boston. Meantime, a kosher restaurant opened for business, serving family dinners, at 1008 South Main.

The Hebrew School began its sessions for the 1933-'34 year with 73 boys and girls enrolled, ages six through fourteen. Isadore Nadel noted that only three years before, the enrollment was pitifully small. But in 1933, the Sisterhood, the Auxiliary AND the Tulsa chapter of Council of Jewish Women joined to contribute to its support.

Religious School presented "Enemies of Israel" as its Chanukah play. Directed by Mrs. George Travis and Mrs. Frank Jankowsky, the show was given at the Odd Fellows Hall. This play featured Stanley Bloch and Sylvia Kraus as the leads. The



BOROFSKY'S KOSHER BUTCHER SHOP! And it became a gathering place to exchange gossip and to socialize along with buying for the Shabbos meals and holiday feasts. Man on the left is unidentified. Then, left to right, are Alec Banks, Jake Borofsky and the man on the right, unidentified.

same play, when given back in 1920, had as leads Bernie LeVine and Etta Cohen. In 1933, Miss Sally Feldman presented the music.

Others in the cast were Ray Travis, Mel Dan, Evelyn Freed, Justine Travis, Eleanor Einhorn, Eugene Cohen, George Bloch, Lewis Gelfand, Jerry Borofsky and Shirley Blufston.

Also, in December, Sisterhood's annual dinner drew 150 persons. Chairman of this year's dinner was Mrs. Harry Cohen. Mrs. Oscar Z. Fasman presented an original "Sisterhood Prayer" at this dinner and it was decided that this particular prayer would be read at each Sisterhood meeting from then on.

Junior Hadassah! An active and vibrant organization which, though citywide, was almost 100% comprised of B'nai Emunah girls. It was one of the groups that preceded the BBG and AZA.

Under the direction of Mrs. Ben Putter, who also adapted the script, Junior Hadassah presented "Much Obligated" at the Tulsa Little Theater on two successive nights in April. Over fifty young men and women took parts.

Music was provided by Bess Haas and Mrs. Putter; properties were under direction of Ruth Cohen, Charles Goodall, Sarah Lack and Marion Kravetz. Ushers included Anna Borofsky, Gertrude Katz, Bernice Zeldich, Sarah Werbner, and Ida Feldgreber, all under chief usher Bess Stekoll.

Mary Cohn was in charge of ad solicitations while the program lists Fannie Plost in charge of something called "M.M.S.," the meaning of which eluded us.

The three-act comedy also featured musical numbers by Jimmy Haas, Sarah Lack, Helen Rabkin, Celia Livingston, Bert Shulman, George Ludman and Bill Shapiro. A large chorus line included Rose Blend, Estelle Cohen, Lillian Rips, Fannie Mizel, Sylvia Bankoff, Jean Bloch, Naoma Bookman, Floretta and Serene Bihari, Jeanette Goodman, Esther Ravitz and Carolyn Brooks.

A men's group that presented the "Burglar Dance" included David

Rivkin, Jack Krasne, Hymie Viner, Lester Bihari and Henry Kaplan.

"There's a Ring Around the Moon" was danced by Frances Lieberman, Rose Blend, Fanny Glazer, Fanny Mizel and Marian Kravetz.

Others included were Florence Abend, Charles Goodall, Ruth Sherman, Sophie Ravitz, Inez Cohen, Dorothy Dan and Pearl Schuman.

GIANT PURIM DINNER ENJOYED IN 1934

It was the height of depression! But activities at B'nai Emunah continued, perhaps even increased!

Nearly 300 attended the annual Purim dinner and all came away feeling most grateful to Mrs. Julius Bookman, in charge of the dinner.

Mrs. J. Keller, who headed the program committee, procured the Gypsy Quintet to furnish music throughout the evening; the quartet was composed of Mesdames Hyman A. Iola, A. S. Rips, Grace Bean, B. K. Aaron and James Lewis; Phil Landa, toastmaster of the program, presented Mrs. Philip Gordon, Sisterhood president, who addressed the gathering.

Short talks were also given by Isadore Nadel, D. R. Travis, and a Rabbi A. Eichenstein. Barton Kahn, musical director of the Religious School, rendered several vocal selections in Hebrew and Yiddish, accompanied by Prof. L. Cheveaux. Cantor M. Z. Tofield sang several Purim melodies in which the audience joined.

The program was concluded with the principal address of the evening by Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman. A substantial sum was realized on the turkey donated by Mrs. D. R. **Travis.**

Adult Hebrew classes were begun and held in the Talmud Torah classrooms on Thursday evenings with Rabbi Fasman the instructor. Meantime, Oscar Kenig became the new principal of the Hebrew and Religious Schools. He was born in Poland, and studied at the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago.



OSCAR KENIG

Although not under the direct aegis of the Synagogue, a tremendous evening was held at the Jewish Institute that drew one of the largest attendances that building ever had. Called the "Miniature Art Evening" the event celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Sholom Aleichem.

It included a one-act play entitled "Mazel Tov," vocal solos by Mrs. Phil Landa and Barton Kahn, dramatic presentations by Gershon Fenster and W. J. Levine.

PUBLICITY FLYER for the Miniature Art Evening.

Mrs. Sam Marks was elected president of the Sisterhood Auxiliary early in the year and was followed by Mrs. Frank Jankowsky in October.

Charles Goodall was a scout master of troop 63 for Jewish boys . . . Sunday School enrollment jumped to 135 in the fall. New teachers were Sam Minsky and Milton Gordon . . . The Chanukah Dreidel party, sponsored by Sisterhood, proved to be one of its best . . . Religious School's seventh grade started publication of a newspaper under supervision of Mrs. Ted Langer, teacher. Eugene Cohen became its editor and the editorial board consisted of Lou Gelfand, Betty Freed and Sam Bookman.

In the fall, the Congregation once again began its Late Friday Night services, still called "Assemblies." Joseph Kantor conducted services and Rabbi Fasman delivered the sermons. Congregational singing of Hebrew, Yiddish and new Palestinian melodies was led by Barton Kahn.

Mrs. Harry Cohen, recalls the sign which hung in women's balcony of the old Synagogue which read in Yiddish:

"Der kommitet bet men zol rayden vayneegee oon davnen mehrer!" (The committee requests that you talk less and pray more!)

"The women's minds were not on the 'davening,' for the Cantor, below, could not be heard well in the balcony. Other noises competed: children running up and down the stairs, sliding down the banisters, and cracking of peanuts.

"When the noise got unbearable, the Cantor would lose patience and stare at the balcony. Finally, with the palm of his hand, he would pound on his siddur and shout: 'Sha, sha!'"

President Harry Blufston commented that the problem of decorum in the Shul was left to Jeb Lewis, vice-president. "He used to be in the balcony arguing with the women almost every time!"

Mrs. Cohen also said, "the first hour of any Yom Kippur service was spent listening to the auction of aliyahs." B'nai Emunah continued these auctions finding them an important source of funds for its varied needs.

The basement of the Synagogue continued to be a problem. After a hard rain one night the basement became flooded and the Sisterhood luncheon of the following day had to be hurriedly rescheduled for the Odd Fellows Hall. This caused the committee to cook at the Synagogue and move food and dishes to 7th and Detroit.

The first woman ever to sit at a Congregation Board meeting was Mrs. Pearl Gordon, Sisterhood president. Mrs. Gordon enlarged the Sisterhood Board of Directors putting an end to the era of four or five officers and a very small Board.

Religious School Glee Club was formed under the direction of Barton Kahn, with musical accompaniment by Mrs. William Haas. They rehearsed at her home each Thursday evening. Members were Leon Alexander, Marshall Arky, Leon Bercutt, Ernest Bloch, Eddie Borofsky, Gerald Fedman, Irving Fenster, Manuel Finkel, Morris Glazer, Hannah Goldstein, Curtis Green, Charlotte Karchmer, Charles Margolin, Marcia Moran and Sidney Paul.



GIRLS OF CONFIRMATION of 1934. Left to right, Maxine Appleman Fagin, Ruby Mincks, Lillian Turner, unidentified, Fanny Glazer Argo, Dorothy Dan and Ethel Weinstein Cohen.

1935—RESOLVED: WE'LL BUILD THE NEW SHUL!

Which could be considered more important, more audacious, more forward looking: the plans to build a Synagogue back in 1915, or the decision to start plans for building one in 1935, during a depression?

At the Congregation's annual meeting in June, following re-election of Harry Blufston as president, Julius Livingston rose to make a startling announcement.

Said Mr. Livingston, "We wish to make a resolution which will establish a foundation to build a new Synagogue, Talmud Torah and Jewish Center."

Even though it was in the darkest days of the business collapse, the Congregation was fairly wild with excitement as it looked forward to a new and larger Center.

A building fund, officially begun in August of 1935, finally totalled—in April, 1943—\$123,361 from 223 pledges. Besides the pledges of the members and many out-of-towners, there were pledges from a B'nai Emunah Birthday Fund, a Children's Fund, and a pledge of \$1000 from the Men's Club.

At the same membership meeting, Mr. Blufston was presented a 32nd degree Masonic diamond ring by H. P. Taubman, in behalf of the Congregation for four years of faithful service. Elected that night for the office of vice-president and secretary was Isadore Nadel, and treasurer, Sam Miller.

Mr. Blufston recalls: "Among the workers we had then who worked very hard for the Shul were Jeb Lewis, Dr. Harry Green, Harry Mizel and Mr. Kornfeld. Our board was a "paper board." Only three to five people showed up usually for the board meetings held in the basement."

The Sisterhood voted that 25% of all proceeds coming into their treasury, but not of their dues income, would be set aside to go into the building fund for a new Synagogue.